Dear Friends,

Welcome to the September 2011 edition of CDI News, as spring finally makes its welcome appearance to Canberra and trees throughout the University start to blossom and bud.

As usual, we have a newsletter packed with reports of the activities that have engaged the efforts of our staff and the many other people with whom we work, both in Australia and throughout the region. We have also included a short review article on a Carnegie Endowment paper about the role of “new” democracies in “democracy promotion”, in other words in supporting democratic change in countries outside their own borders. The issues canvassed in the paper are highly pertinent for CDI and for the international community of democracy promotion organisations. With the changes in Tunisia and Egypt and the dramatic events in Libya, it is time to consider how the idea of democracy promotion might be embraced by countries outside the traditional circles of the major Western powers that have dominated the field till now. CDI’s efforts to support Indonesia’s engagement with Egypt on issues about political transition and democracy is a small contribution to this project.

With this CDI News I would like to welcome two new CDI Associates to our ranks, Dr Orovu Sepoe and Ms Vanessa Johanson Alpern. CDI Associates are individuals who have had a sustained association with CDI and who work with us on a professional basis in conceiving and implementing our programs. Dr Sepoe is a Papua New Guinean scholar, NGO activist and specialist in politics, governance, gender and development.

Ms Johanson Alpern is an experienced manager and trainer in governance and conflict resolution, with special expertise in parliamentary development, elections and the media.

Our existing Associates are:
- Dr Norm Kelly, a specialist on political parties and elections in the Pacific, a former MP from the WA Parliament and experienced trainer.
- Ms Monica Costa, an accomplished trainer and specialist on women’s participation and leadership in politics.
- Hon Kevin Rozzoli, former Speaker of the NSW Legislative Assembly, author and practitioner on the art and science of parliamentary practice.
- Dr Roland Rich, former Director of CDI and now Director of the UN Democracy Fund.

We greatly value our Associates because they enhance the scope and reach of our work and provide us with an expanded web of people committed to the goals of CDI. They complement our full-time staff, tap into new networks and enrich our specialist expertise. We are currently working to increase both the number of our Associates and their role in our program development and delivery. A special goal is to increase the representation of Associates who, like Dr Sepoe, come from our partner countries.

To keep up with continuing CDI activities, don’t forget that we regularly update our website: www.cdi.anu.edu.au

Best wishes

Stephen Sherlock | CDI Director
Women Candidates in PNG - Preparations Underway for the 2012 Elections

PAPUA NEW GUINEA | As PNG’s national elections draw closer, work is gathering pace for the PNG’s Office for the Development of Women (ODW) as it begins to implement its Women Candidates Training (WCT) Strategy.

The Strategy, which was developed by ODW with assistance from CDI and UNDP’s Women in Leadership Project, is a home-grown response to the poor political representation of women in PNG. Dame Carol Kidu, until recently PNG’s Minister for Community Development, is the only woman in Parliament. As she will not be re-contesting her seat, PNG faces the prospect of having no women members of parliament.

ODW’s Strategy aims to increase the chances of women being elected by proposing a structured sequence of training and advisory events for women candidates and their campaign managers in the 10 months leading up to the election. It Draws on the experiences of women candidates in the 2007 elections and on CDI’s experience in conducting candidate training for women in the Solomon Islands and Bougainville. The planned Strategy includes a first round of regional training workshops during October-December 2011 in Alotau, Mt Hagen, Madang and Kavieng and a second round of progress check workshops during February-April 2012 in the same locations.

The success of these events will rely on the Strategy’s network of local civil society partners in regions across PNG. These partners have been closely involved in developing the Strategy and will play a central role in organising and delivering the training and advisory events. Working with regional civil society partners has helped ensure that the events are targeted to local needs. It will support the emergence of enduring local capacity to support women candidates in the future.

These WCT Strategy partners are: Papua Hahine Social Action Forum in Southern Region; in Highlands Region, the Provincial Women’s Council Resource Centre is the focal point for a coalition of women’s organisations; in Momase Region, Soroptomists International is also the focal point for a coalition of organisations; and in New Guinea Islands Region, Namatanai District Council of Women is acting as the focal point for a local coalition.

CDI has worked closely with ODW and UNDP over the last 6 months in support of the WCT Strategy, providing advice and assistance in program design, preparation of materials and workshop organisation and facilitation.

Recently, Dr Orovu Sepoe (CDI’s Special Adviser) and Dr Norm Kelly (CDI Associate) facilitated a Strategy consultation in Goroka on 19 and 20 July. Nineteen representatives of various women’s groups in the Highlands attended the consultation and reached agreement on a program of work to implement the Strategy in the Highlands. And from 15 to 18 August in Port Moresby, CDI facilitated the first major Strategy event - a training-of-trainers (ToT) workshop for 16 trainers (four nominated by each regional Strategy partner) to prepare for the first round of regional candidate and campaign manager regional workshops.

The ToT workshop was opened by Dame Carol with David McLachlan-Karr (the UN Resident Representative), Brian Nakrakundi (Director of ODW’s Director) with Grant Harrison (CDI’s Deputy Director) adding to the welcome. Over the course of four days the participants worked through the structure and content of the regional workshops, gaining familiarity with concepts and materials on issues including:

- campaign strategies, tactics, dynamics, planning, logistics and financing;
- campaign messages, public speaking and media relations;
- electoral rules (including Limited Preferential Voting); and
- campaign team management.

By the end of the workshop all of those involved were confident that the WCT Strategy could be implemented

continued over
successfully and that it would result in:

- 80 women candidates (and 80 campaign managers) more prepared than ever before to contest the national election, with greater understanding and confidence in campaigning; and
- civil society organisations and coalitions in each region with skills and materials to support and advise candidates at the 2012 elections and at other national and local-level elections.

Participants at the workshop argued that the Strategy could make a wider contribution to politics in PNG. It could help encourage a different dynamic in election campaigning, with women candidates offering an alternative to male-dominated money politics. A number of women at the workshop made the point that the strategy could widen the debate on the role of women in politics beyond the reserved seats proposal.

Click on this link for more details on our website:

### New CDI Associates

**CANBERRA** | CDI is proud to announce the appointment of Orovu Sepoe and Vanessa Johanson Alpern as CDI Associates.

Dr Orovu Sepoe is currently working at the ANU in a dual position as both CDI’s Special Advisor co-ordinating the implementation of the PNG Women Candidate Training Strategy, and Pacific Islands Research Fellow at the State, Society and Governance in Melanesia Program (SSGM). Orovu has extensive experience in University teaching, social science research and consultancy work on issues relating to politics, governance, gender and development. She is a former senior lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).

Orovu has a Masters Degree in Politics from the University of Warwick, UK and a PhD from the University of Manchester, UK. Her doctoral thesis was interdisciplinary, combining the fields of politics, gender studies and development studies. Orovu has 20 years of experience in academia. At UPNG she held several senior positions including Head of Political Science; Deputy Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and acting-Pro Vice Chancellor (Academic). After leaving UPNG, Orovu became the National Coordinator, Gender Equality in Political Governance Program with the United Nations Development fund for Women (UNIFEM) Pacific (now UN WOMEN).

Orovu has served as the Women’s representative and Chairperson for the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission established by the Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC). Orovu has published on topics encompassing women’s political participation, electoral politics and democratic governance. Orovu’s PhD thesis was published in 2000, and she has observed and written about elections since 1992. Since the introduction of Limited Preferential Voting in PNG in 2003, she has been heavily involved in election observation, and served as an adviser/consultant with the AusAID funded Electoral Support Program (ESP) Phase 2, in collaboration with the Electoral Commission of PNG.

Vanessa Johanson Alpern is a manager and trainer in governance and conflict resolution programmes, and is involved in a number of current CDI activities, particularly in our work with Indonesia. Her key areas of expertise are:

- Fragile states and peacebuilding
- Elections
- Media development
- Parliamentary development

Vanessa has worked internationally since 1996, in Indonesia, Afghanistan, Yemen and Cambodia as well as other locations. Some of the key positions she has held include Country Director for Search for Common Ground (Indonesia), Director for Elections for The Asia Foundation (Afghanistan), Country Director for Internews (Afghanistan), and Head of Project for the BBC World Service Trust (Cambodia). She also served as an Advisor to Indonesia’s National Human Rights Commission.

An experienced trainer, she has designed and delivered training to audiences including Members of Parliament, women politicians, Elections Commissioners, community leaders, NGO directors, radio station managers, elections observers, and Australian Defence Force officers.

Vanessa holds a Masters in Applied Anthropology and Participatory Development from ANU. She has published a number of feature articles on a range of topics for magazines and newspapers. Vanessa is interested in language and is fluent in Bahasa Indonesia and has studied Dari and Arabic.

Click on this link for more on our website:
In 1997 a system of provincial government was established in the Solomon Islands, with the aim of strengthening the connection between communities and government decision-makers, thereby improving the responsiveness of elected representatives and the quality of service delivery. It has become clear in recent years that these expectations have not been realised. The Solomon Islands Auditor-General has consistently found systemic weakness in revenue collection, financial management, and executive decision-making processes across all provinces. Despite clear audit advice on the action required to overcome these problems, provincial administrations have been unable to make improvements. In many cases the problems have become entrenched. Not only do most provincial executive governments lack the resources or capacity to overcome these challenges, but the absence of oversight from provincial assemblies means that provincial administrations are not subjected to political pressures to initiate and drive change.

In collaboration with the Solomon Islands Ministry of Provincial Government and Institutional Strengthening (MPGIS) and the Solomon Islands National Parliament Office, CDI has devised a series of training workshops for members of provincial assemblies on how they can help improve the quality of provincial government. The workshops start with an emphasis on the responsibilities of provincial assemblies in overseeing executive government and provide a practical introduction to the powerful accountability role that public accounts committees (PACs) can play.

The first workshop was conducted in Honiara on 26-28 July 2011. The workshop involved 24 participants from the 4 provinces of Guadalcanal, Rennell and Bollona, Malaita and Western. Speakers, Clerks, PAC Chairs, and PAC members from each of these provinces attended the workshop, as did Treasurers from each provincial administration.

The workshop was facilitated by Ms Nancy Legua (Under Secretary of MPGIS) and CDI Deputy Director Grant Harrison (formerly Secretary of the Australian Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee). Professor Peter Loney (from the Alfred Deakin Research Institute and formerly Chairman of the Victorian Parliament’s Public Accounts Committee) and James Taeburi (MPGIS’s Director of Finance) contributed throughout the workshop as resource people. The workshop also featured presentations from Edward Ronia (the Solomon Islands Auditor-General) and senior staff from the National Parliament Office, especially David Kusilifu and Albert Kabui. The UNDP’s Provincial Governance Strengthening Programme was instrumental in initiating and organising the training.

The workshop was opened by Mr Lennis Rukale (Permanent Secretary to the Ministry) and Ms Taeasi Sanga (Clerk to the National Parliament) and closed by the Speaker of the National Parliament, Sir Alan Kemakeza MP, and the Minister for Provincial Government, Hon Walter Folotalu MP.

The main themes of the workshop were that:

- Provincial assemblies are an important and separate branch of the system of provincial government, with different responsibilities from provincial executive office-holders, such as ministers;
- PACs are appointed to help assemblies fulfill their responsibility to scrutinise the performance of provincial governments;
- PACs can perform their duties with a series of simple, methodical processes (recognizing that the work of PACs is about accountability not accounting);
- the Auditor-General is an important ally for PACs and is available to provide advice on how to overcome deficiencies in provincial administration.

The workshop involved group exercises in which participants undertook a series of tasks replicating the main activities involved in the work of PACs. Participants prepared terms of reference, briefing papers and press releases and participated in a mock public hearing. Participants also drafted recommendations based on the ‘evidence’ gathered at the public hearing and prepared an Action Plan identifying the actions necessary to establish and operate an effective PAC in their assemblies.

All workshop participants reported that the training had been extremely useful, with 84% reporting that they had greatly improved their understanding of the role and responsibilities of PACs.
CDI at PNG Conference on Political Parties

KO KOPO | Over the last 9 months, and in response to a Supreme Court ruling that core elements of PNG’s Organic Law on the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates (OLIPPAC) were constitutionally invalid, the Integrity of Political Parties and Candidates Commission (IPPCC) has been reviewing the intent and effectiveness of the remaining provisions in the law.

CDI has supported this policy review, most notably by co-designing and facilitating a policy review workshop held at Gaire Village, near Port Moresby in April 2011. This workshop resulted in an options paper summarizing the main policy suggestions made during the workshop and in comments made by participants in written responses to a series of focus questions. The options included administrative actions which could be taken immediately by the IPPCC; legislative actions which require further development; and more substantial reforms which require further public debate. A team comprising Grant Harrison from CDI, Dr Musawe Sinebare and Dr Ray Aneré from PNG’s National Research Institute and Rita Taphorn from UNWomen advised the IPPCC in the preparation of this paper.

The IPPCC’s 3rd annual OLIPPAC conference, held in Kokopo, East New Britain from 11 to 15 July 2011, provided an opportunity to present publicly the options paper (known as the Gaire Dialogue) and to encourage further consideration of these and related issues. The conference, which was attended by senior officials from PNG political parties, academics and political commentators, addressed the theme of ‘Strengthening Political Parties as Institutions of Democracy’. A wide range of topics were discussed, offering the opportunity for party officials to share experiences and learn from each other. Topics included: forming and managing political parties, developing policy, women in party leadership, strategies for promoting integrity and anti-corruption in parties, and the challenges of complying with and administering party registration and disclosure laws.

In recognition of its contribution to the IPPCC’s policy review, CDI was invited to the conference and to lead discussions on the session dealing with political party financing. CDI was represented at the conference by Dr Norm Kelly, a CDI Associate with long experience as political party trainer and official.

During the conference many of the reform options raised in the Gaire Dialogue were debated and, at the conclusion of the conference, participants endorsed the IPPCC’s proposal to continue its policy review and to prepare a package of reform options for Government consideration.

Click on this link for more details on our website:

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enhanced their knowledge of PACs and 89% reporting that they were now much more confident about establishing and operating a PAC in their assembly. High or moderate level learning outcomes were reported by nearly all participants in almost all sessions.

A second workshop for the remaining five provinces of Makira Ulawa, Choiseul, Temotu, Isabel and Central will be conducted in November 2011, with further recall sessions planned for early 2012.

CDI was very pleased to mobilise the expertise of senior officials and staff of the national parliament and national government to contribute to a program to strengthen the capacity of their colleagues in the provinces. Their knowledge of national procedure and understanding of local traditions and working conditions could not be replicated by any international organisation. The involvement of UNDP was also instrumental in ensuring the success of the workshop. For CDI this workshop represents a further step in our efforts to work at sub-national levels in all our partner countries, combining local resources and expertise with international institutions and networks to develop collaborative approaches to capacity building. We are delighted that these strategies have come together so successfully in this project and are keenly looking forward to continuing our support for provincial assemblies in the Solomon Islands.

Click on this link for more details on our website:
CAIRO | The second meeting in the IPD “Egypt-Indonesia Dialogue on Democratic Transition” took place in Cairo on 25 July 2011. Discussion focused on upcoming elections in Egypt, with comparative perspectives and lessons learned offered by speakers from Indonesia. The workshop was attended by a small group of Egyptian participants largely drawn from political parties and the media, together with four visitors from Indonesia.

Highlights of the dialogue

Discussion was lively and focused on technical issues relating to the upcoming elections. The overall tone was summed up in a sobering assessment offered by one Egyptian participant. She mentioned that there had been a change in mood in Egypt since the first “Egypt-Indonesia Dialogue on Democratic Transition” workshop in Indonesia in May. Whereas previously “everyone” was for the revolution, she suggested that now people are divided, adding that the transition period seems almost “too tough” given the enormous challenges still lying ahead and renewed violence in Cairo that broke out less than 48 hours before the workshop. Indonesian commentators replied more than once that, in Indonesia’s experience, reform takes time and that Indonesia is only now entering a “second wave” of reform that will likely define the rest of this decade.

Designing and implementing election laws

Egyptian participants identified numerous problems and challenges in key election legislation that is clouding parliamentary elections — referred to as the most important in Egypt’s history— that are only months away.

The electoral system

This was discussed at length, given the complexity and possible confusion of the electoral system that has recently been decided upon. The system is to be 50% proportional and 50% majoritarian, with allowance for independent candidates. Concerns ranged from how confusing the system is, to the “lost votes” inherent in majoritarian systems, to the fact that remnants of the old regime — explicitly banned from political competition for five years — could co-opt independent candidacies through money, tribal connections and extended family. There was much discussion about how to “deal with” remnants of the former regime, as was discussed in the first workshop held in Jakarta in May.

Many Egyptian participants were in favour of closed party lists to guard against inclusion of former members of the now banned National Democratic Party (NDP) of former President Mubarak. While the push in recent years in Indonesia has been to open up party lists, it was noted that open lists have only aggravated vote buying and have not diminished the overarching control of party chairmen. Alternative solutions currently under debate include decreasing district magnitude (i.e. the number of seats contested per district) from a range of 3-12 to 3-6 seats to promote representatives’ attention to constituents rather than simply the party chairman.

Election legislation drafting

Indonesian participants highlighted the similarity in Egypt and Indonesia of numerous often poorly drafted and contradictory laws governing elections. For this reason, some civil society organisations in Indonesia are advocating one Omnibus Election Law. One Indonesian participant cited the familiar quote that elections should consist of “predictable procedures and unpredictable results.” A further lesson offered from ongoing debate on elections legislation in Indonesia is that the design of the electoral system should be used to democratise the political system and promote effective representative government, rather than simply focus on seat allocation.

More practical concerns for the upcoming Egyptian elections focused on confirmation of polling station locations, and the volume of staff and party witnesses permitted at each polling station. One speaker expressed concerns that the laws on party/candidate witnesses were complicated and vague and could create both organisational and political problems. There are also significant challenges presented by adult illiteracy (over 30 percent), both in terms of voter education and voting procedures.

There was lengthy discussion about international observers and overseas voting, since new legislation bans both for upcoming elections. There was broad support among Egyptian and Indonesian participants for the “reassurances” and skills transfer offered by accredited international observers.

Building political parties and party systems

As in Indonesia in 1998-1999, numerous new political parties are being launched in Egypt in anticipation of elections. A judicial committee now determines eligibility, rather than ruling party control of all registrations, as occurred under the

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While voter registration is supposed to be completed by
administering the parliamentary and presidential elections.
There are two different Election Commissions for
Egypt is facing significant challenges in election administration.
Effective election management bodies
or group.
a monopoly of influence over these parties by one individual
contributions. It was argued that this could, over time, lead to
some parties in Egypt have not set an internal ceiling on
limiting possible sources of funds. Given these challenges,
they no longer receive government financial
support and private sources of donations are scarce. One
Egyptian participant observed that many businessmen
are, as one Egyptian speaker put it, “crawling back.” Public
suspicion of parties is high, complicating the recruitment of
members and the gathering of the 5,000 signatures of support
(from at least 10 of Egypt’s 29 provinces/governorates), which
is required for party registration. All parties are facing the
challenge of promoting internal democracy and clarifying their
own internal procedures, as well as decentralisation beyond
the traditional political and power center of Cairo. The older
parties face an additional challenge of regaining credibility
in the public eye. One Indonesian speaker described how
Indonesia “regained unity” in the reform era by not excluding
Golkar. Golkar’s inclusion did not translate into automatic
legislative victories for that party in subsequent elections.
One participant noted that Indonesia continues to face
the challenge of developing the public credibility and
internal democracy of political parties. An important lesson
from Indonesia has been that parties need to be open to
community involvement from the time of their formation.
Parties that are closed from the beginning tend to remain
closed.
While there are numerous parties in Egypt, emerging
party platforms have a similar focus, notably social justice,
basic freedoms and rule of law. With undeveloped party
organisation and limited time before the elections, there is
concern about the disproportionate significance of symbols
and slogans, in particular religious symbols and slogans. An
Indonesian participant shared Indonesia’s experience with
reconciling religion and politics through the Constitution,
which clarifies that religion is respected by the state but does
not guide the state.

Party finance
One important lesson from Indonesia’s experience is the
enormous expenses required to run and manage a viable
political party. Parties in Egypt are facing an intense financial
challenge: they no longer receive government financial
support and private sources of donations are scarce. One
Egyptian participant observed that many businessmen
“are in prison, under investigation, or have fled”, thus
limiting possible sources of funds. Given these challenges,
some parties in Egypt have not set an internal ceiling on
contributions. It was argued that this could, over time, lead to
a monopoly of influence over these parties by one individual
or group.

Effective election management bodies
Egypt is facing significant challenges in election administration.
There are two different Election Commissions for
administering the parliamentary and presidential elections.
While voter registration is supposed to be completed by
August 2011, voter lists were described by one speaker as a
“catastrophe.”

Important differences from Indonesia include the fact that
the Egyptian Elections Commissions are comprised entirely
of judges and that their decisions cannot be challenged
in the courts. There is debate in Egypt about merging
the separate Commissions into one overarching National
Election Commission. There was discussion about Indonesia’s
experiences in promoting the independence of the Election
Commission, particularly regarding election administration
budgets and the hiring and training of professional secretariat
staff.

Egyptian participants were particularly interested to learn
more about the balance between the independence of
the Indonesian Election Commission and parliamentary
and executive government oversight. Indonesian speakers
elaborated on the importance of the independent selection
process for the Election Commission as well as routine
performance reporting by the Commission to the parliament
and President. The importance of legislating the Election
Commission’s professional and non-political functions was also
discussed.

Click on this link for more details on our website:
**Financial Scrutiny in the Indonesian Parliament | Jakarta Consultations**

**JAKARTA** | Parliamentary oversight of government expenditure is an important aspect of public accountability in democratic systems of government. The Indonesian parliament has recently established a committee, the Badan Akuntabilitas Keuangan Negara (BAKN), to assist in this process. BAKN is keen to develop its role and reputation within the parliament. CDI has supported this ambition by conducting a training workshop on financial scrutiny for BAKN staff in February 2010 and sponsoring the attendance of BAKN members and staff at the Alfred Deakin Research Institute’s Summer Residential Program for Public Accounts Committees in February 2011.

Since then CDI has been in discussion with BAKN about a series of further activities focusing on BAKN’s examination of reports from the State Audit Commission (Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan or BPK). Public accounts committees in many other jurisdictions often find reports from auditors-general to be extremely useful accountability tools. They can provide well-substantiated advice to parliament on areas of management risk within government agencies and on the service delivery performance of agencies.

From 28 to 30 June 2011 CDI Deputy Director Grant Harrison, Professor Kerry Jacobs (Professor of Accounting at the ANU and an expert on parliamentary financial scrutiny) and CDI Senior Researcher Hazel Margaretha had a series of meetings with BAKN members and staff to compare BAKN’s current approach to reviewing BPK reports with approaches taken by public accounts committee elsewhere in the world.

The discussions, grounded in the notion that public accounts committees are about accountability not accounting, touched on methods for analyzing audit reports, selecting topics for further examination, conducting such examinations and preparing simple, value-adding advice to parliament. At the conclusion of these meetings CDI was invited to design a practice development dialogue for members and staff to enable deeper discussion of these issues, with the aim of encouraging more effective use of BPK reports. This dialogue is in the latter stages of design and preparation and will be held in Indonesia in October 2011.

Click on this link for more detail on our website:

**CDI & BAKN Consultations**

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**Democracy promotion and “new” democracies**


**By Stephen Sherlock | September 2011**

Since the early decades of the 20th century, an element of international relations has been the notion that democratic ideals are universal and that their spread across the globe can be encouraged by governments. One of the more recent expressions of the idea has been the “democracy promotion” programs funded by official aid agencies of developed democracies, but the idea has changed and evolved over time. In fact, the first advocates of the idea of universal economic and political rights were mainly non-government organisations, particularly the international labour movement, which organised across borders from the late 19th century onwards to defend workers’ conditions and to fight for the right to vote. But following the First World War and the break-up of a number of European empires, the earliest state-sponsored initiative was US President Woodrow Wilson’s promotion of the ideal of an international system of states based on the rights of peoples to self-determination. While not explicitly an argument for democracy, the motivating principle was that nations and peoples, rather than emperors and kings, were the legitimate source of political authority. Wilsonian values have remained an inspiration and symbol of liberal democratic internationalism ever since.

It was no accident that such ideas emerged from the US, because a strand of liberal thinking in the western hemisphere had long been critical of European political practice, especially in the old pre-WWI multi-national empires. Critics pointed out, however, that Wilsonian partisans tended to steer clear of the issue of self-determination for non-white nationalities in the remaining empires such as the British and French: not to mention the fact that US policies in Latin America and Asia in practice resembled those of European powers. A related line of argument was that US anti-imperialism was a convenient instrument for the advancement of the US’s own economic and political interests in the old European realms. Was it simply the case of a new power wanting to edge out the old? Thus, from the very beginning, debate over the promotion of democracy could never be neatly disentangled from arguments about the interests of the countries doing the promoting. Nor was the internal record of the democracies ever unblemished, as the political exclusion of African-Americans and indigenous Americans exemplified.

WWI had shattered many European monarchies and weakened the grip of colonial powers, but the biggest advance for democracy came with the end of WWII. The naked grab for power by Japanese imperialists had had the unintended
effect of shattering the entire edifice of colonialism, starting a process that ended with today’s global system of “nation-states”, democratic and otherwise. Of the first wave of newly independent states in the post-colonial world after 1945, India emerged as a shining example of how democracy could flourish in the unpromising soil of dire poverty and a mixture of cultures. But it is only recently, with the country’s accelerating economic growth, that India has really been accorded significant recognition and status in what is generally referred to as the “international community”, including regarding the lessons its democratic experience might hold for new democracies. As always, international discourse on ideas cannot be separated from the realities of power—arguments about democracy will always be taken more seriously when they emanate from states with economic and political clout, regardless of any inherent cogence of the ideas.

During the Cold War, the politics of democracy promotion, as it was beginning to be called, was inextricably linked with the struggle between the US and the Soviet Union. In fact, the US’s first formal program of democracy promotion was launched by President Reagan in 1982 in a speech to the British parliament that explicitly advocated the downfall of the USSR. That initiative led to the foundation of the National Endowment for Democracy which has, ever since, formed the umbrella for many US efforts to influence the global spread of democracy. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, there was a wave of euphoria about the prospects for democratisation internationally, based on sometimes unrealistic assessments of the potential difficulties facing post-authoritarian governments. This period was also marked by a degree of triumphalism in some quarters in the US and the West generally. There were even notions that a combination of free-market capitalism and democracy as practiced in the West had finally conquered any alternative, thus ushering in “the end of history”.

Of course, the policy of providing assistance to pro-democratic forces in other countries has not been the monopoly of the US government. Democracies in Europe and other parts of the developed world have also maintained major democracy promotion programs, whether directly by their respective aid agencies, through organisations such as the UK’s Westminster Foundation or by political party foundations such as those run by the German parties. To varying degrees these efforts have been linked to the strategic priorities of the donor countries. The programs of many European countries have often centred on former colonial possessions or on areas of economic or diplomatic interest such as the Middle East and Africa. But only the US has the power and global sweep of interests that make its efforts so prominent and so potentially intrusive and controversial.

Promoting democratic change can mean providing advice and assistance to pro-democracy forces, to political parties and to institutions of democratic governance in new democracies. This is the technical assistance and capacity-building that has largely been the subject of this article so far. But democracy promotion can also be interpreted as more direct and politicised interventions in a country’s political processes. This can take the form of speeches by Presidents, Prime Ministers and Foreign Ministers, motions in international forums such as the UN and other types of bilateral and multilateral diplomatic pressure, as well as assistance to exile groups and asylum to prominent dissidents. Stronger measures include diplomatic and economic sanctions, financial or military assistance to rebel groups. The ultimate measures are direct military intervention on one side of a conflict, such as has occurred in Libya, or full-scale invasion to overthrow an incumbent government and bring about the “regime change” that was the object of the US invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq.

The whole project of democracy promotion entered a new and potentially dangerous period, however, following the September 11, 2001 attacks on the US. The Bush administration’s response to the attacks starkly revealed the dual nature of democracy promotion and the tension that sometimes exists between its two aspects. The US invasion of Iraq was criticised in many quarters but, from the point of view of democracy promotion organisations, the most damaging aspect of the invasion was that it was accompanied by sweeping rhetoric about a new US policy of spreading democracy globally, with the inference that this might be achieved by force. As discussed above, democracy promotion is an inherently politicised project but its association with a perceived arrogation of a superpower’s right to unilaterally intervene in the affairs of smaller countries created deep suspicions in many parts of the world. As Corothers argued in 2006:

> The way that President George W. Bush is making democracy promotion a central theme of his foreign policy has clearly contributed to the unease such efforts (and the idea of democracy promotion itself) are creating around the world. Some autocratic governments have won substantial public sympathy by arguing that opposition to Western democracy promotion is resistance not to democracy itself, but to American interventionism.¹

Despite the passage of time and the change of administration in the US, such suspicions are still encountered by democracy promotion organisations in the developing world. Today, Corothers and Youngs make the point that the wariness about motives has “much longer roots [than Bush administration policies], reaching back across decades and in cases centuries of unhappiness with Western interventions” (p.4).

In today’s world, moreover, new factors have been added to the equation. In a “multipolar” world, where the US no longer holds unchallenged predominance, a range of new economic and strategic powers are emerging. Along with the oft-cited example of China, countries such as India, Russia, Brazil, Indonesia, Turkey and South Africa are undergoing substantial economic growth and their demographic weight...
makes them new and potentially major players on the global scene. In the case of China, India and Russia, they have the capacity to challenge Western-defined norms and conceptions of international relations. And many of the countries are not only “rising” powers, they are what Corothers and Youngs call “rising democracies” who have their own story to tell about what democracy means and how it can be made to work in difficult circumstances. India has six decades of democratic experience, South Africa and Indonesia succeeded in transitions to democracy, while democratic institutions are taking progressively firmer root in Brazil and Turkey. So just as the US and the West can no longer dominate the diplomatic world generally, so they will have to come to terms with the views of the newly emerging powers when it comes to how democracy is promoted internationally.

Secondly, of course, the international environment has been greatly affected by the ground-shaking events in the Middle East and north Africa, called by many the “Arab Spring”. The initially rather guarded US response to the popular movements calling for the overthrow of the regimes in Tunisia and Egypt was symptomatic of what many in the developing world saw as the West’s double standards: preaching democracy to certain autocratic governments but propping up other equally obnoxious dictatorships if they seemed to support Western interests. These events seemed, at once, to raise questions about Western credentials in democracy promotion and to highlight the fact that the “new democracies” might have more to offer in the way of practical support than the “old democracies”. Egyptian democrats might, for example, see more parallels between their situation and that of the new but flourishing democracy of Indonesia than that of the US. Indeed, the Egyptians seem to feel they can more comfortably enter into a dialogue with the Indonesians without being seen as buying into a US-defined view of the world.

Against this recent background and longer history Corothers and Youngs have asked the question in their Carnegie Endowment paper: “will rising democracies become international democracy supporters?”. Will these countries exercise their growing influence in ways that add to the momentum towards global democratisation? The paper examines recent trends in the foreign policy of Brazil, India, South Africa, Indonesia and Turkey to ascertain the views of those governments and the policy measures they have taken. As well as listing the key aspects of each country’s approach, they identify a number of points of commonality. They argue that all five countries:

- Support the international spread of democratic norms, but in a non-prescriptive fashion;
- Insist they support democracy just by being democracies;
- Provide help only if they are asked to mediate;
- Rail at Western double standards;
- Argue that democracy support cannot be de-linked from other Western foreign policies they see as unjust; and
- Prefer to focus on greater interstate justice rather than the traditionally defined democracy support agenda.

The paper provides a short outline of certain aspects of the five countries’ record of support for human rights and democratisation in other countries and the way in which they have attempted to reconcile the inevitable tension between the ideal of democratic change and the need to advance their own country’s interests. Each of the five countries is a growing power in their own particular region and have understandable ambitions to exercise influence amongst their close neighbours. In fact, some of the five, such as India and Indonesia, have even been criticised for punching below their weight on the regional and global scene, with the inference that they should assume a level of responsibility commensurate with their growing stature.

But the centrepiece of the paper is actually not the policies of the new democracies. Given the limitations of space, the studies on each country are quite sketchy and mainly based on secondary sources. The real question the paper considers is how the US and other Western countries should respond to those policies and how the rising democracies’ foreign policies should be engaged with in order to encourage increased commitment to the promotion of democracy. The big underlying question is: has the US, in particular, really lived down the association between democracy promotion and the policy of externally-imposed “regime change” and will the West generally continue to be mistrusted as hypocritical and self-interested? Will the rising democracies become allies in the project of democracy promotion if they remain suspicious about its real intentions and, if they do join the project, just how differently might they approach it?

Carothers and Youngs make a number of observations about what it is necessary for Western policy-makers to do to come to terms with the new realities. They see it as important that there be a “recalibration of expectations”, by which they seem to mean that the West can no longer act on the unspoken assumption that this is “their” cause to which the rising democracies are being enlisted and that the West can therefore define the agenda. Rising democracies will expand their role in actions to support human rights and democracy in response to their own motivations and “not in response to pressure from the West”. The paper argues that engagement with the rising democracies must be low-key and sustained and should not be pre-occupied with highly visible but short term public gestures. The positive examples the authors cite indicate that they see one of the main ways to achieve this objective is for Western governments to use their aid programs as a way to influence the character of the aid initiatives that the rising democracies’ themselves have been pursuing in recent years.

Influencing policy thinking in a country which is strong and self-confident enough to set its own priorities could clearly only succeed if it were undertaken through what the authors
call “slowly developing partnerships”. The question remains, however, whether the governments of major powers, especially the US, can adjust to a new non-directive way of working. It may well be that small and middle-level Western governments, accustomed to working with a little less hubris and carrying less diplomatic baggage, may be more successful at this approach.

The paper emphasises that Western governments need to adapt to the reality that there will be a range of “different and potentially clashing approaches on international democracy support”. The authors cite examples of where the five countries in the paper sometimes have taken initiatives that are not to the liking of Western countries, such as including countries (eg. Burma) in regional forums and dialogues when the West might prefer that they were excluded. This relates to a more general source of tension which can arise from the fact that the rising democracies have generally been inclined to multilateral engagement, while the policy in Western capitals is often bilateral. There is a Western tendency to “pick winners”, to focus on particular countries that are seen as likely to play a role favoured by the West, while forums such as the Indonesia-led Bali Democracy Forum are broadly inclusive. The authors note that European countries have been more comfortable with multilateralism than the US.

Carothers and Youngs’ analysis does not draw a clear distinction between two possible understandings of democracy promotion in practice: diplomatic and strategic policy actions aimed at directly influencing events, as distinct from programs of assistance, advice and dialogue-promotion focused on knowledge transfer and sharing of ideas. The former have traditionally been executed by heads of government, foreign ministries or even the military, while the latter are more the field of official development assistance agencies and government-supported NGOs.

The examples of “low visibility”, long-term engagement that Carothers and Youngs cite as successful or promising instances of democracy promotion are all certainly more akin to technical assistance and policy dialogue than to attempts to assert great power authority. But they seem reluctant to argue explicitly that the field of democracy promotion should be the rightful reserve of such approaches and that the assertion of power, with the implied or actual threat of force, should not in any circumstances be allowed to appropriate the name of democracy promotion.

Democracy promotion should be seen primarily as an element of development assistance and diplomatic dialogue rather than an instrument of strategic-level foreign and security policy. It sits more appropriately in the toolbox of second-track diplomacy rather than at the front line of power relations between states. Suspicions in developing countries about underhanded motives and hidden agendas in democracy promotion have principally been a product of the conflation of democracy promotion with power projection or, more accurately, the use of a benign phrase like “promoting democracy” to paint a veneer of idealism over the exercise of military force. It is only when these associations are eliminated that new and rising democracies will lose their sense of discomfort with actively engaging other governments in dialogue and programs of assistance designed to promote human rights and democratic change.

1 Thomas Carothers, “The backlash against democracy promotion”, Foreign Affairs, Mar/Apr 2006: 55-68