12

The Persisting Poverty of Strategic Analysis in U.S. Democracy Assistance

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The year 2004 marked the thirtieth anniversary of the so-called third wave of democratization. During the third wave, approximately a hundred countries have embarked on a democratic transition.[1] Given the many difficulties inherent to democratization (as evidenced in the experience of older democracies), many of the newly transitional countries are, not surprisingly, still struggling within a gray zone between consolidated liberal democracy on the one hand and outright authoritarianism on the other.[2] The third wave nevertheless represents the most widespread advance of democracy in world history. Yet until very recently, "democracy" was still a virtually forbidden word in the lexicon of an international development community that had grown too comfortable with the cold war–era maxim that politics does not matter to development. This maxim, although patently false, had been invented as a necessary fiction of sorts so that development cooperation could straddle the East-West and North-South ideological divides of the period.

Even in the late 1990s, when as a U.S. democracy promotion official I used to attend meetings of the OECD's Development Assistance Committee,

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the preferred multilateral term for democratic governance was "participatory development and good governance." Sitting in the elegant salons at the OECD's headquarters in Paris, I avoided the temptations of diplomatic politeness and proudly used the d-word: "democracy." I did so for several reasons: because I suffer an incurable allergy to bureaucratic euphemism; because the few times I did try to pronounce the Gallic-sounding PDGG acronym, my European counterparts looked at me as if I were trying to play a B-movie version of Gerard Depardieu; and because as an unapologetic Wilsonian I was thrilled to carry the democracy banner back to France (as the president had originally done at Versailles after World War I). But I used the d-word mostly because I believed that in doing so I was defending the U.S. policy of explicitly promoting democracy worldwide.[3]

In the past few years, the development community has caught up with history. Democratic governance is now seen as not only an integral component of human development overall but also one of the main keys to unlocking socioeconomic progress in poorly performing countries.[4] In the foreword to UNDP's Human Development Report 2002, then UNDP administrator Mark Malloch Brown writes, "This [report] is first and foremost about the idea that politics is as important to successful development as economics. Sustained poverty reduction requires equitable growth—but it also requires that poor people have political power. And the best way to achieve that in a manner consistent with human development objectives is by building strong and deep forms of democratic governance at all levels of society."[5]

Examples of the new international consensus about the relationship between democracy and development abound. In the historic "Millennium Declaration" of September 2000, the world's leaders state that "men and women have the right to live their lives and raise their children in dignity, free from hunger and from the fear of violence, oppression or injustice." These rights, they continue, are best ensured by "democratic and participatory governance based on the will of the people."[6] At the International Conference on Financing for Development in March 2002, world leaders issued the equally important "Monterrey Consensus," upon which the Bush administration's innovative Millennium Challenge Account is based. The consensus asserts that "sound economic policies, solid democratic institutions responsive to the needs of the people and improved infrastructure are the basis for sustained economic growth, poverty eradication and employment creation."[7] A 2003 USAID report puts the new consensus into its most blunt and vivid terms yet. "Predatory, corrupt, wasteful, abusive, tyrannical, incompetent governance is the bane of development. Where governance is endemically bad,

rulers do not use public resources effectively to generate public goods and thus improve the productivity and well-being of their society. Instead, they appropriate these goods for themselves, their families, their parties and their cronies. Unless we improve governance, we cannot foster development."[8]

Debating the Efficacy of U.S. Democracy Aid

With the raising of democratic governance to the highest reaches of the development agenda, donor budgets for democracy programs have grown steadily. The best rough measurement of donor aid in the area of democratic governance is the government and civil society budget category maintained by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee (DAC). This broad category includes the following: economic and development policy planning, public sector financial management, legal and judicial development, government administration, strengthening of civil society, postconflict peace building, elections, human rights, demobilization, free flow of information, and land-mine clearance. According to the DAC, total aid provided by all donors (bilateral and multilateral) in this category rose from US$2.1 billion in 1991 to US$3.4 billion in 2001. During this period, the U.S. share of the total stayed relatively constant: 33 percent (US$0.7 billion) in 1991; 38 percent (US$1.3 billion) in 2001.[9]

Between 1993 and 2003, USAID's budget for democracy programs nearly tripled, rising from US$315 million in fiscal year 1993 to US$864 million in fiscal year 2003. In fiscal year 2003, this budget was divided among USAID's four geographical regions in the following manner:

—Africa: 11 percent, or US$95 million.

—Asia and the Near East: 18 percent, or US$154 million.

—Europe and Eurasia: 57 percent, or US$492 million.

—Latin America and the Caribbean: 12 percent, or US$108 million.

The remaining 2 percent, or US$15 million, was for global programs run by the Office of Democracy and Governance.

The budget is spread across USAID's four democratic-governance subsectors. In fiscal year 2001, this spread was as follows:[10]

—Rule of law: 22 percent.

—Elections and political processes: 7 percent.

—Civil society: 47 percent.

—Governance: 24 percent.

At the same time as democracy promotion budgets increased, more attention has rightfully been focused on the efficacy of international democracy

aid. The founder and still-reigning dean of democracy assistance studies, Thomas Carothers, stunned the development community in early 2002 with the publication of his article "The End of the Transition Paradigm." Carothers argues that the transition paradigm, which he conceives as a set of five overoptimistic donor assumptions about the nature of democratic transition, has rendered USAID and other providers of democracy aid unable to identify the core "political syndromes" that constitute poor performance in the gray zone. In Carothers's view, the continued existence of the paradigm has resulted in unfocused and inappropriate aid programs. "A whole generation of democracy aid," he writes, "is based on the transition paradigm, above all the typical emphasis on an institutional 'checklist' as a basis for creating programs, and the creating of nearly standard portfolios of aid projects consisting of the same diffuse set of efforts all over." "This smorgasbord of democracy programs," he continues, is "based on the vague assumption that they all contribute to some assumed process of [democratic] consolidation."[11]

In the wake of this article, other authors have issued variations on the theme of Carothers's central point. Marina Ottaway, who along with Carothers co-directs the Democracy and Rule of Law Project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, argues that providers of democracy aid fail to understand the "structural obstacles" to democratization in "semi-authoritarian" states.[12] Hilton Root and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita assert that donors have misunderstood how poverty is rooted in the interlinked politicoeconomic maladies of autocracy and patronage.[13] USAID's own study urges donors to base their democracy programs on a clear analysis of where a recipient country is located within a five-part typology of political regimes.[14]

Having reviewed U.S. democracy strategies during the 1990s while serving in democracy promotion posts at USAID and the State Department, I am painfully familiar with the diagnostic and prescriptive failings that Carothers and others identify. At formal Washington reviews of the multiyear strategies governing USAID's aid programs or of the State Department's country-specific annual "performance plans," I, to the chagrin of my regional bureau colleagues in both agencies, regularly voiced this refrain: "Excuse me, but did the embassy (or USAID mission) forget to include its analytical section?" Therefore, based on my own bureaucratic experience, I accept Carothers's conclusion: in my view, most democracy programs do seem to subscribe to a scattershot theory of development aid. Yet I reject Carothers's premise: the analyses underlying the programs, I find, do not necessarily consist of naïve assumptions about democratization. During my many years in the trenches of U.S. democracy promotion, I never met rose-colored notions

such as the ones that Carothers alleges make up the "transition paradigm" (for example, "structural conditions won't impede democratization," "all current democratic transitions are based on functioning states," "democratization always unfolds in a strict sequence of 'opening,' 'breakthrough,' and 'consolidation'").[15]

Instead, I start from a simpler premise. That is, donor strategies for democratic governance are still rudimentary at best and inadequate at worst because the task of analyzing the "core political syndrome" of a poorly performing country is very difficult—both intellectually and practically—to carry out. While I tried (usually without success) to veto USAID democracy strategies that I deemed to be insufficient, I also wondered if I could do any better in conducting such a daunting analytical task. Once the moments of bureaucratic confrontation had passed, I would become terrified of the prospect of being invited (by the USAID mission whose strategy was in question) to the field as a "democracy expert" from headquarters, landing in Ulaanbaatar or Rabat, jet-lagged and missing my family, equipped with only my memorized eleven-part definition of liberal democracy by Larry Diamond (the leading scholar of comparative democratic development in the third wave), and expected to supply the mission with a comprehensive analysis of the country's dysfunctional political economy and a practical program of assistance—all within a few weeks![16]

In sum, where Carothers sees a nasty five-headed hydra blocking the path to democracy promotion enlightenment, I have seen—and continue to see—a still relatively new field of development assistance without anything but the most basic understandings of democracy and democratization to guide it.

In this chapter, I take stock of USAID's democracy strategies in poorly performing states from the perspective of a former insider. By democracy strategy, I specifically mean the section on democratic governance contained in the multiyear country strategies that each USAID field mission is required to submit and that USAID's headquarters, in cooperation with other U.S. foreign affairs agencies, is required to approve.[17] Thus the scope of this chapter is not as broad as that of Carothers's critique, for he believes that all democracy promotion organizations—bilateral and multilateral donor agencies as well as all of the nongovernmental implementing partners of these agencies—uniformly suffer from the misconceptions of the transition paradigm and the resulting mishmash of aid programs.[18]

Given the severity of Carothers's thesis ("much of the democracy aid based on this paradigm is exhausted"), I believe that it is important for the democracy promotion community to engage his argument in as detailed and fair a

manner as possible.[19] Accordingly, in this chapter I evaluate the democracy strategies of only one organization (USAID), leaving it to others to assess the relevance of the transition paradigm to the host of other democracy promotion organizations in the governmental, intergovernmental, and nongovernmental sectors.

Like Carothers, I also believe in the fundamental importance of strategy. Many of my colleagues both within and outside the U.S. government argue that the USAID strategic plans are unimportant, perhaps even useless documents that have significance only within the foreign aid bureaucracy, wherein officials are required to justify their funding decisions using the cutting-edge but often misguided tools of contemporary management theory—including hyperrational "results frameworks" and hyperquantitative "indicators" of achievement.[20] Accordingly, my colleagues say, the real test of democracy promotion lies in the more concrete analyses, programs, and results of USAID's many implementing partners.

No doubt there is some truth to this argument: the activities of an implementing partner do bring to life the words contained in a donor's strategic plan. For that reason, an implementing partner might be in a position to remedy the flaws of USAID's strategic vagueness. However, it is nonetheless true that USAID's strategic plans identify the most critical development goals and the best methods by which the goals can be pursued. In turn, these goals and methods inform the "requests for proposals" that USAID issues to its prospective partners. To succeed, the partners must achieve the specific targets included in the strategy. Thus to a very large degree USAID strategies shape—and limit—the actions of an implementing partner, regardless of whether the partner is a nonprofit organization that has received a USAID "grant" or a for-profit consulting firm that has signed a USAID "contract." That is why the quality of democracy strategies of USAID and other donor agencies truly matters to the success or failure of the democracy promotion enterprise.

Again in the spirit of fairness and attention to detail, I attempt to measure the quality of USAID's democracy and governance strategies by using the agency's own tool for formulating such strategies as put forth in *Conducting a DG [Democracy and Governance] Assessment: A Framework for Strategy Development*.[21] I choose this document (hereafter referred to as the *DG Framework*) not only because of its general excellence but specifically because Carothers and his USAID interlocutors agree that it should be the starting point for USAID's strategic planning in the area of democratic governance.

Beneath the contentious debate about whether the transition paradigm truly exists, there has emerged an important agreement about which are the

right analytical questions to ask in regard to the democratic deficits of poorly performing countries.[22] In USAID's formal response to Carothers's article, Gerald Hyman, the director of USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance, characterizes the five elements of the transition paradigm as "straw men" and points to the *DG Framework* (of which Hyman was the principal author) as prime evidence of USAID's serious approach to democratic governance. In replying to Hyman, Carothers calls the *DG Framework* "a sophisticated tool and a valuable advance"; yet, he observes, "it is only just starting to translate into significantly different programming." Carothers concludes: "In sum, Hyman and I share many views about how democracy aid can and should evolve. What we disagree about is how far along USAID is on that path."[23]

In seeking to chart progress on the path, I undertake this review as follows. I first introduce the main analytical questions posed by the *DG Framework*. Next I evaluate USAID democracy strategies from three poorly performing states (all of which have been mired in the gray zone): Haiti, Kenya, and Cambodia. Specifically, of each strategy I ask three questions:

—To what degree does the analysis address the fundamental questions posed in the *DG Framework*?

—To what degree is the program informed by such a comprehensive analysis?

—To what degree do the results of the program contribute to a solving of the basic problems of democracy (again as outlined by the *DG Framework*)?

For the democracy strategies in each case study, I find three fundamental flaws (corresponding to the three questions above):

—An unacceptably short formal analysis that barely scratches the surface of the complex analytical agenda recommended by the *DG Framework*.

—A proposed aid program that consequently lacks clarity, purpose, and verisimilitude.

—Limited programmatic results that reflect a conceptually shallow approach to democracy promotion.

In short, the documents suffer from a persisting poverty of strategic analysis and the programmatic consequences thereof. In the concluding section, I argue that the analytical poverty, programmatic vagueness, and slight results can be remedied only through a comprehensive reform of USAID's strategic planning process for democracy aid.

Introducing USAID's *Democratic Governance Framework*

The *DG Framework* defines a strategy as "an objective or set of objectives along with a general plan for the deployment of resources to achieve those

objectives." Therefore, it notes, a strategy is "neither an analysis by itself nor a program by itself" but "the relation between the two."[24] The *DG Framework* lays out three main steps in the formulation of a democracy strategy: diagnosing the country's problems, identifying the country's key actors, and examining the country's political arenas.

The first step diagnoses the country's primary problems for the transition to or consolidation of democracy. In particular, it inquires into the state of five basic elements of democracy:

—Consensus: Is there a consensus about the fundamental rules of politics?

—Rule of law: Is politics governed by a rule of law?

—Competition: Is there competition in the political system (including in elections, ideas, the media, civil society, the economy, and between branches and levels of government)?

—Inclusion: Are parts of the population formally excluded from political, economic, or social participation? Is political participation high or low?

—Good governance: Is there the capacity for good governance (including transparency, accountability, and efficiency) by the state as well as by social institutions generally?[25]

According to the *DG Framework,* these five factors "define the structural basis for democracy." It states: "No country ever completely resolves the many, sometimes conflicting, elements within and between the five. . . . Nevertheless, at least minimum thresholds must be reached in each of the five in order to create the basis for a transition to, let alone the consolidation of, democracy."[26] The diagnosis thus begins not with a long, undiscriminating checklist of institutions belonging to the state and civil society but rather with an analysis of democratic processes that intersect and link a country's many governmental and nongovernmental institutions. It is the particular problems concerning these processes that collectively form the larger structural problems for a country's democratization.

Once these structural problems are diagnosed, the *DG Framework*'s second step analyzes the key actors involved in these political processes. Specifically, the strategic planners are asked to identify "the forces which support democratization, those that oppose it, and their respective interests, objectives, resources, strategies, and alliances." This analysis about the balance of political forces in the country should allow the strategic planners to determine which of the structural problems identified in the first step would benefit the most from the intervention of donors.[27]

The *DG Framework*'s third step examines the institutional arenas in which the prodemocratic actors identified in the second step are best positioned to

address the structural problems identified in the first step. The *DG Framework* asks the strategic planners to analyze four broad arenas:

—The legal arena (including constitutional law, subsidiary substantive law, and the implementation of law through the judiciary).

—The competitive arena (including elections and the balance of power among branches of government).

—The governance arena (including the legislature, executive, and local government).

—The civil society arena (including its functions of aggregating interests, organizing itself within associations, and petitioning government).

While the *DG Framework* stresses that the analyst must understand how the rules governing each arena create incentives favoring or disfavoring democracy, it at the same time points out that the institutional arena is not itself the structural problem but merely the "organizational sphere" in which the problem can be addressed.[28] Again, this warning is clearly meant to steer USAID missions away from the pitfall of constructing strategies as long institutional checklists.

The remaining task would be to translate the results of this three-part strategic analysis into a concrete and focused program of democracy assistance.[29] The program's overall goal and supporting activities—or, "strategic objective" and "intermediate results," respectively, in USAID's planning lingo—would flow directly from the prior analysis.

Evaluating USAID's Democratic Governance Strategies

In this section, I evaluate the democracy strategies of USAID's missions in Haiti, Kenya, and Cambodia. I do so by judging whether the missions have analyzed the five key elements of democratic governance (including the problems, actors, and institutional arenas relevant to each element); whether the missions have based their program on this analysis; and whether the programmatic results (cited by the missions in their annual reports) have relevance to the five problems. At the end of each case study, I offer specific examples of how a fuller analysis (that is, one more in accord with the *DG Framework*) would produce a more sharply focused program and a more pertinent set of results.

As a preface to this discussion, I must point out the extreme shortness of the formal democracy analyses contained in the overall country strategies. Any description or explanation of the weakness of USAID's analysis of democratic problems must begin with this simple fact.

In spite of the central emphasis placed on democratic governance in each of the strategies (as is shown below), the democracy analyses represent only a small fraction of the space in all three documents. For Haiti, the main text of the document runs over 150 pages, but democracy analysis takes up less than 5 pages.[30] Of these 5 pages, a third are devoted to the presentation of a public opinion survey that the mission conducted as part of its strategic planning. While these data are useful, they do not constitute the mission's independent analysis of the problems. In the Kenya country strategy, the formal analysis of the democracy problem consists of just 2 pages in a document whose main text encompasses almost 180 pages. Moreover, over half of the second page is not part of the analysis per se but rather a preview of the program.[31] In the Cambodia mission's document, the democracy analysis fills the equivalent of just a single page in a document of 40 pages.[32]

To be fair to the missions, I should note that they supply some additional information regarding the state of political development in their countries in the introductory sections of the strategic plans. However, befitting an introduction, the missions present the information descriptively rather than analytically—and thus the additional material, which itself is brief, does not serve as either a substitute for or a supplement to the formal analytical sections. Simply put, the brevity of the analytical sections on democratic governance is astounding.

Haiti

The USAID strategy for Haiti discussed here covers the fiscal years 1999 to 2004. The strategy includes "strategic objectives" in five areas: economic growth, environment, health and family planning, education, and democratic governance. The overall goal of the strategy is "sustainable democracy with equitable economic growth."[33]

Submitted by the Port-au-Prince mission in early 1998, the strategy was formulated during the period in which the disputed parliamentary elections of April 1997 had resulted in a bitter political stalemate between President Andre Preval and his opponents over the appointment of a new prime minister. (A similar impasse between President Jean-Bertrand Aristide and the opposition party Democratic Convergence over the 2000 presidential and parliamentary elections resulted in a protracted crisis and ultimately in Aristide's resignation and exile in February 2004.) Thus the strategic plan is realistic about the huge challenges facing democratic governance in Haiti. "After more than 200 years of dictatorship and tyranny," the mission writes, "it is to be expected that the new state has not found its equilibrium in only its first

four years of democracy." The mission envisions that the achievement of "sustainable democracy" will require "at least a generation," and it describes the level of democratic institutionalization in Haiti as "low to non-existent."[34]

Given that the mission's strategy predates the *DG Framework*'s publication by several years, the mission of course does not systematically use the concepts contained in the *DG Framework*. To facilitate a comparison of the strategies included in this study, I nevertheless evaluate the mission's democracy strategy in the context of the *DG Framework*.

CONSENSUS. The Haiti mission states that one of the major problems with Haiti's new democracy is "a lack of clear consensus on the rules of the game." As evidence of this problem, it cites the disagreements regarding the establishment of the Permanent Elections Council, the recent parliamentary elections, the lengths of terms in office, and the enabling legislation for the constitutionally mandated decentralization of authority.[35] It identifies these issues, but it provides no analysis of the nature of the problems or of the actors and institutional arenas involved in addressing the problems.

RULE OF LAW. The Haiti mission identifies "a lack of adherence to the rule of law" as another major problem. Specifically, it writes, "one of the most serious constraints to democracy in Haiti is the weakness of the judicial system." In explaining the problem, the mission points to the following aspects: lack of judges, low judicial salaries and status, political control of the judiciary by the executive, lack of lawyers for the poor, bad prison conditions, police misconduct, and outdated legal codes.[36] In this area, the mission provides a slightly more detailed picture of the problems, but it does not delve into the causes of the problems and it does not analyze the actors or arenas involved in current reform.

COMPETITION. Although the Haiti mission does not address competition directly, it does briefly discuss the weakness of various institutions that could provide competition within the political system. According to the mission, elections have not been free and fair, political parties "are not functioning to represent real interest groups or offer meaningful choices," the parliament is poorly organized and there is little interaction between the legislators and their constituents, local governments lack the funds to deliver basic services, and civil society "has yet to find its voice."[37] The mission does not expand its analysis beyond these assertions, and it does not discuss any reform initiatives regarding these problems.

INCLUSION. The Haiti mission states that another major problem is "a lack of political inclusion in which an overwhelming percentage of the population feel unrepresented and excluded from the political center." It cites as

evidence the steep decline in voter turnout, from 70 percent in the 1990 presidential election to just 5 percent in the 1997 parliamentary election. The mission believes that the drop in participation is due to the lack of communication between governmental officials and their constituents and to the failure of local governments to provide services.[38] This is the extent of the mission's discussion in this area.

GOOD GOVERNANCE. The Haiti mission states that another of the major problems with Haiti's new democracy is "weak governance characterized by a lack of transparency, accountability and adherence to the rule of law."[39] But it does not provide any analysis beyond the issues discussed above.

SUMMARY OF HAITI'S DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE ELEMENTS. Overall, except perhaps for the rule-of-law area, the Haiti mission provides very little description or explanation of the democratic problems that Haiti faces. Given the paucity of analysis, it is not able to relate the five democratic elements to each other or to rank the problems in terms of their severity. Across all five areas, the mission provides no analysis of existing or potential reform initiatives.

DEMOCRACY PROGRAM. The Haiti mission states the strategic objective of its democracy program as "more genuinely inclusive democratic governance attained."[40] It proposes four areas of intervention: civil society, elections, governance, and rule of law.[41]

—Civil society: the mission says it will aid civil society organizations to conduct civic education, to influence public policy, and to monitor governmental institutions. It will support training to strengthen nongovermental organizations (NGOs) in terms of their management, advocacy, and knowledge of substantive issues. To simultaneously support its strategic objectives in nondemocracy sectors, the mission envisions targeting such issues as reproductive rights, property rights and economic growth, the environment, and the rule of law.

—Elections: the mission says it will support voter education, political parties, and electoral administration and monitoring. It will thus train civil society organizations to conduct education and monitoring, political parties to craft "genuine issue-oriented platforms that reflect views expressed by civil society," and electoral administrators to organize voter registration and polling.

—Governance: the mission says it will focus on the parliament and local governments. It will strengthen the ability of legislators to communicate with their constituents and respond to their needs. It will also aid the parliament in developing a research capacity. Regarding local government, the mission will train local officials in the areas of policy analysis, revenue administration,

development planning, and community outreach. It will also support the completion of the legal infrastructure for decentralization.

—Rule of law: the mission says it will train judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and court clerks; support new case-tracking systems in model jurisdictions; and expand its existing support for legal aid to the poor. It will also work with civil society organizations to advocate for the establishment of sanctions for judicial misconduct and to monitor human rights abuses.

The glaring weakness of the mission's program is that it is not at all rooted in a specific analysis of Haiti's democratic problems. The program is at once comprehensive and superficial. Its premise seems to be that because all of Haiti's political institutions are weak, USAID should provide aid across the board. In sum, there is no real democracy strategy, just a collection of anecdotal analyses and cookie-cutter programs.

RESULTS. The prolonged political impasse arising from the flawed elections of 2000 forced the Haiti mission to alter its original program greatly. Most donor organizations ended or curtailed their assistance. From fiscal year 1999 to fiscal year 2002 USAID's budget for Haiti decreased by 60 percent. In the mission's view, the domination of the judiciary and the legislature by the executive increased and the human rights situation deteriorated. The mission cites "a growing culture of impunity and institutionalized lawlessness," yet it reports that the media and civil society persevere in the face of this repression.[42] Accordingly, the mission stopped its democracy aid to Haiti's central government (including the judiciary and the electoral administration) and focused its support on the independent media, civil society organizations, and political parties. Its revised goal was "to help Haitian society stand up to increasing authoritarianism and lawlessness and to demand greater accountability and better performance by the Haitian Government."[43]

In its annual reports of 2002 and 2003, the mission presented three major results from its pared-down democracy program.[44] First, the network of domestic electoral observers played the leading role in detecting and publicizing the fraud in the May 2000 election. Second, at the national level a coalition of civil society organizations emerged from this electoral observation network to demand that the fraud be addressed and, more generally, to check the government's move toward authoritarian rule. This movement also spawned a coalition of more than forty NGOs (spanning the commercial, legal, human rights, and media sectors) to advocate for greater judicial independence. Third, at the local level similar coalitions of NGOs successfully engaged with locally elected officials to design and implement community projects.

Overall, the lack of focus of the mission's original program was fortuitously remedied by Haiti's unfortunate political crisis. Indeed, the mission deserves much credit for the rapid revision of its democracy program in the face of an extremely tense environment. Yet even in its scaled-back program, the mission presents results whose impact on the structural problems of Haitian democracy is unclear. No doubt, the two postelection results cited by the mission—the emergence of a coalition of NGOs at the national level and the increased cooperation between NGOs and elected officials at the local level—are promising signs. But the mission would benefit from a deeper analysis of the democracy problems that it is attempting to address. This can be demonstrated by a closer look at the mission's efforts to support civil society and local governance.

In regard to its aid to the nationwide coalition of civil society organizations, the mission could have first arrived at a better understanding of the coalition's target. That is, it could have analyzed the specific ways in which the Aristide government tightened its authoritarian rule. For example, did it formally revise laws and regulations that governed the operations of the media, NGOs, and political parties? Or did it simply fail to enforce existing legal protections for these political actors? Furthermore, did the government increase its grip on economic resources both in the public and private sectors? Finally, did President Aristide politicize the use of the Haitian National Police (the creation of which, along with the dismantling of the armed forces, had earlier held great promise for democratization)?

Based on this deeper analysis, the mission could have then crafted a more targeted program. It could, for instance, have used such analysis to distinguish among the various roles being played by the media, NGOs, and political parties in checking President Aristide's monopolization of political and economic power. How were these three types of actors trying to preserve the dwindling political space in Haiti? What were the most important of the reforms they were pressing for? The mission mentions one specific example: the case of a new subcoalition advocating for judicial independence. But what reform program was this movement undertaking and how was it related to initiatives being carried out by reformist elements within the government?

Concerning the relationship between community-based NGOs and local elected officials, the mission could have made similar inquiries. It could have asked how, if at all, the increased cooperation served to remedy structural problems pertaining to local governance generally. Was local governance in Haiti part and parcel of the central government's authoritarian rule? If so, how? Specifically, how did the Aristide government control political and

economic resources at the local level? And how could increased NGO-government cooperation at the local level have undermined this monopoly? Conversely, if Haiti's scheme of local governance was somehow insulated from the central government's control, how could the greater cooperation between NGOs and local officials widen this remove—or even create ripples of reform that might flow toward the national level?

Answers to these and other questions would have strengthened the mission's democracy program and have suggested more specific and more compelling indicators of structural political reform.

Kenya

During a decade of turbulent but productive political liberalization in Kenya, USAID was a key provider of aid for democratic governance by advocating political, legal, and constitutional reform. The USAID strategy for Kenya that covered the years 2001–05 expanded U.S. democracy aid to include governmental institutions. Submitted in November 2000 by the mission in Nairobi, the strategic plan contains "strategic objectives" in four areas: democratic governance, economic growth, population and health, and natural resource management.[45]

In his cover letter to the strategic plan, then U.S. ambassador Johnnie Carson notes that despite a long period of "economic decay" and "bad governance" in Kenya, "signs of new hope abound." He cites a vocal civil society, an increasingly independent legislature, and several new executive branch anticorruption measures as evidence of genuine change. "Now is the time," he writes, "to help Kenyan reformers prepare their country for a better future." In the preface to the strategy's section on democracy, the mission makes clear its view that democratic governance is the key to the entire country strategy. The guiding hypothesis of USAID's work during the first three decades after Kenya's independence in 1963, the mission states, was that "economic development is a prerequisite for democracy." Kenya's hard experience, it observes, had forced a revision of this hypothesis: "While economic growth can contribute to democratic governance, in the long run it is clearly insufficient and is itself dependent on broad popular participation and strong institutions of governance."[46]

Because the mission's strategic plan was submitted to USAID's headquarters in the same month that the headquarters issued its strategic framework for democratic governance, the mission presumably did not have the opportunity to use the new framework in the formulation of its democracy

strategy. However, as with the Haiti strategy, I use the *DG Framework* as a means to measure the breadth and depth of the mission's analysis of Kenya's democratic problem.

The mission opens its analysis by stating that Kenyan politics was characterized by "personal rule rather than the rule of law." In the mission's view, Kenya's democratic problems all derived from this root problem.[47]

CONSENSUS. The mission identifies several basic problems of Kenyan politics that had yet to be resolved: "A lack of consensus [regarding these rules] is feeding the primacy of personal rule." Specifically, there was no consensus concerning how political power should be transferred, an issue that includes not only specific questions about elections (such as the registration of political parties, the size of voting districts, and the adjudication of electoral disputes) but also broader questions pertaining to "distributive justice" ("how should power be rotated among heterogeneous communities?"). There was also no consensus in regard to the legitimate roles of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government or to the separation of powers among them. Furthermore, Kenyan society lacked agreement regarding the relationship between the central government and local governments: "A serious disagreement over federalism or other forms of decentralized governance dates back to the independence era and to the independence constitution." Finally, the mission highlights the absence of consensus regarding the fundamental rights of individuals and the limits on governmental actions vis-à-vis individuals, civil society, and the private sector.[48]

The mission was right to identify these core issues pertaining to "consensus." However, the identification of the issues should be the starting point of the mission's analysis; instead, it was the end point. Except for a single paragraph in the overview of the entire strategy, the mission provides no analysis of the politics of constitutional reform in Kenya.[49] Who were the main advocates for constitutional reform in civil society, the parliament, and the executive branch? Who were the main opponents? What were the key substantive and procedural issues within the proreform and antireform camps? Given these issues, what types of alliance exist or were possible within each camp? What compromises were possible between the camps? How did ethnic group politics intersect with the politics of constitutional reform? In which institutional arenas (for example, civil society, parliament, the executive) could the agenda for constitutional reform have been most productively advanced? None of these basic questions are addressed.

RULE OF LAW. In the rule-of-law area, the Kenya mission devotes literally one sentence: "The selective use of law enforcement and the court system to

serve the interests of the ruling political coalition results in the common citizen . . . having no confidence that public institutions will guarantee him or her justice." Earlier in the document, the mission, again using a single sentence, presents its view of the judiciary: "The judiciary is largely corrupt and inefficient." Obviously, it would be useful to know in detail about the means by which President Moi and his associates had corrupted the many parts of the legal system, the political actors pushing for legal reform, and the arenas in which such reform was being attempted.[50]

COMPETITION. The Kenya mission's analysis is equally clipped in this area. In its formal section devoted to analyzing the democratic problem, the mission mentions only one area of competition: elections. Even here, the brief discussion merely explains that past electoral manipulation by the Moi government had eroded faith in the integrity of the electoral system. There is no analysis beyond this general point, nor is there analysis of the other main areas of political competition. For example, although the strategy describes the relative freedom of the media and civil society, there is no explanation of how secure this freedom was (what is the legal structure governing the media and civil society?) and how this freedom related to the otherwise "personal rule" by which the mission characterizes Kenyan politics. Similarly, although the document refers to the system of political patronage in Kenya, there is no explanation of the structure of this system either at the national or local level, resulting in a blank analysis of the degree to which the Moi government controlled economic resources. The mission does assert that the government's "patronage base" was "shrinking," but it does not explain what opportunities for political reform might have arisen from this shrinkage. Finally, the key relationships between the parliament and the executive branch and between the central and local governments are not covered at all in the main analytical section.[51]

INCLUSION. The Kenya mission presents no analysis in the area of inclusion. Such an analysis would have been useful, given Freedom House's claims that "Kenya's politics have traditionally been divided along ethnic lines" and that "ethnically based tension continues."[52]

GOOD GOVERNANCE. The Kenya mission states that the corruption associated with personal rule resulted in a decline of the government's public services across the board: "Kenya's roads and other economic infrastructure have deteriorated, vaccination rates have fallen, schools have declined, and the time required to obtain licenses, permits, passports, and other government services has increased." It is in this area that the mission presents its fullest analysis, noting several anticorruption initiatives that were taken by the executive or the parliament since the mid-1990s. It cites as examples of reform

the establishment of the Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority (which investigates corruption in the executive branch) and the parliament's Anti-Corruption Committee (which published a report naming officials involved in corruption and which drafted anticorruption legislation). The mission also identifies the government's initiatives to reform the civil service, to strengthen the Office of the Controller and Auditor General and the Office of the Attorney General, to disclose the assets of officials and to introduce conflict-of-interest rules and regulations for procurement.[53]

The review of the anticorruption initiatives is useful, but what is missing is a deeper analysis of the systemic corruption that the initiatives were attempting to address. What is also missing is the mission's analysis of the politics of these reforms and thus its assessment of which of these many anticorruption initiatives held the most promise for sustained progress. Finally, except for a brief comment that "civil society organizations generally mirror the pathologies of Kenyan society," the mission does not evaluate the capacity of civil society for governance.[54]

DEMOCRACY PROGRAM. Based on its diagnosis of "personal rule" as the root problem of democratic governance in Kenya, the mission prescribes a program whose overall objective was to diffuse the excessive power of the executive branch to the other branches of the central government, to local levels of government, and to civil society and the private sector. Accordingly, the mission formally states its "strategic objective" as the following: "Sustainable reforms and accountable governance strengthened to improve the balance of power among the institutions of governance." The achievement of this strategic objective, in the mission's view, requires two basic tasks: the creation of a social contract in the form of a new constitution and a set of other wide-ranging legal and political reforms; and governmental mechanisms that would hold the executive branch accountable for its actions in accordance with the new social contract.[55]

In regard to the first task, the mission assumes that a social contract will not be made without the continuing demand for one from civil society: "The need to support a viable, constructive, capable civil society in Kenya has been and remains the most critical element in the promotion of democracy." Hence the mission sought specifically to foster "civil-society organizations [that] effectively demand reforms and monitor government activities." In aiding civil society organizations (including the media), the mission was to help them in the areas of analysis and advocacy, management, conflict resolution, and engagement with governmental institutions (such as through hearings with parliamentary committees). Given that membership organizations

wield more political clout, the mission was to focus on business associations, labor unions, religious organizations, and women's groups. Finally, because the mission believed that focusing on a handful of substantive areas would increase the impact of its civil society program, it would do so "in accordance with emerging political opportunities."[56]

The mission's second task in pursuing its strategic objective required that governmental institutions transform the demands of civil society for a new social contract into a practical reality and then hold the executive branch accountable to the new contract. In supporting this second task, the mission would aid governmental institutions "only when there is evidence that the foundations for and commitment to increasing independence are in place." The choice of institutions would be determined by the outcome of the constitutional reform process and the 2002 elections. At the time the strategy was drafted, the mission was considering the following as possible recipients of aid: parliament, the judiciary, local government, the Office of the Ombudsman, the Police Review Commission, the Office of the Attorney General, the Office of the Controller and Auditor General, and the Kenya Anti-Corruption Authority. For the selected institutions, the mission would support the establishment of their legal structure (the "enabling environment" for their independence), their knowledge of how their counterparts work in other countries, and their capacity to analyze issues and shape policy or legislation.[57]

The mission also included elections in its support for institutional mechanisms of accountability: "Regular elections are the ultimate expression of accountability." In the context of its strategy, the mission viewed elections as another means by which citizens can demand reforms and then hold the government accountable for implementing them. While the mission viewed the 1997 elections as a "major improvement" over those in 1992, it says that there was still "much room for improvement." In particular, the mission aimed to support improvement in the following areas: electoral laws and regulations, electoral administration, electoral monitoring, political parties, and voter education.[58]

In all three areas of its program—civil society, governmental institutions, and elections—the mission provides no details about the issues, actors, and institutional arenas that would constitute the focus of its work. The lack of specificity mirrors—and directly derives from—the lack of specificity of its analysis. As with the Haiti democracy strategy, the Kenya democracy strategy was merely a shell of a strategy.

RESULTS. In its 2002 and 2003 annual reports, the Kenya mission cites progress in three areas: parliament, civil society, and elections.

Two types of achievement are identified with the parliament. First, the parliament took unprecedented action to exercise oversight of the executive's annual budgets for the entire government. In 2001 it made six major amendments to the executive's proposed finance bill, whereas in the past the parliament's review of the proposed budget had been perfunctory. Second, the parliament produced more effective legislation. For example, it legislated reform in the sugar industry whereby farmers were given formal representation in the processing and marketing of their commodity.[59]

The strengthening of parliament was, according to the mission, in large measure due to the increased effectiveness of civil society. In 2002 Kenyan NGOs supported by USAID engaged parliament's budget committee on forty-four issues and successfully influenced the final budget on twenty-four of them. In addition, when the Kenyan courts ruled a key anticorruption law unconstitutional, USAID-supported NGOs established the Kenya Anti-Corruption Coalition, which includes representatives from parliament, the Office of the Attorney General, the private sector, and civil society. The coalition worked to formulate an anticorruption law that would enjoy broad political support and addressed the constitutional issues raised by the courts. Finally, in regard to the landmark elections of 2002, the mission asserts that there were improvements in the electoral laws and regulations, the electoral administration, and the monitoring by NGOs of election-related violence and intimidation.[60]

Although the mission does not elaborate on the results of its electoral programs, it no doubt provided invaluable support to that historic election. The evidence cited in support of its aid to legislators and NGOs regarding the annual budget bills is also potentially important. Yet the mission's very success—the effective budget advocacy of NGOs vis-à-vis the legislature—reveals at the same time the program's continuing lack of strategic focus. It is one thing to quantify an NGO success rate of 55 percent (twenty-four of forty-four), but what do these numbers really represent?

To be truly effective, a democracy strategy should aim to do more than merely make the legislature or civil society "more effective." The strategy should locate its aid efforts in the specific struggles for political, economic, and social reform in these societies. Beyond the citing of broad statistics, the mission would do better to develop a clear plan for bridging the gap between civil society and the government on especially promising issues of reform.

What are the forty-four issues in the mission's civil society portfolio? What do they add up to? What are the linkages between various political, economic, and social issues included in the basket of forty-four? And most important, how are these many issues related to the major currents of reform initiated by the government of President Kibaki? After all, in its strategy the mission claimed that its civil society program would focus on a few substantive areas "in accordance with emerging political opportunities." Where is the focus and what are the opportunities?

In sum, the mission's strategic plan as well as its annual reports portray an image of a donor casting many seeds to the wind in the hope that some will find fertile soil. In my view, the image that the mission should aspire to portray is of a donor that understands the theoretical linkages between political, economic, and social reform; that possesses an equally strong understanding of the current opportunities for reform in Kenya after the victory of the present leadership; and that can act on both this theoretical and practical knowledge. The mission could seek to bind together the various components of its democracy program and, moreover, to integrate that program with its support for related reforms in its economic and social programs. Simply put, the mission needs to multiply its single example of integrated success—its anticorruption work; multiply it if not by forty-four, then at least by five.

Cambodia

USAID has actively provided aid for democratic governance in Cambodia since the United Nations implemented the Paris Peace Accords of 1991. The USAID strategic plan for Cambodia that I reviewed covers the years 2002 to 2005.[61] It contains "strategic objectives" in three areas: democratic governance; population, health, and nutrition; and basic education.

In May 2002, the mission in Phnom Penh submitted the plan as an "interim" strategy. According to the mission, the reason for the interim status was that continuing U.S. congressional restrictions and Cambodia's "limited progress" in democratic governance prevented the formulation of a "full sustainable development strategy" at this time.[62] In July 1997, after Second Prime Minister Hun Sen ousted First Prime Minister Norodom Ranariddh in a violent coup, Congress banned direct U.S. assistance to Cambodia's central government. Subsequently, Congress made exceptions to this restriction in the areas of fighting drug trafficking and providing basic education.[63] Under this interim strategic plan, U.S. assistance for democratic governance therefore continues to be limited to Cambodian NGOs and local governments.

The overall strategy opens by stating that the U.S. national interest lies in making good on its investment in the 1991 peace agreement that ended decades of civil war. The main U.S. objectives in Cambodia, the mission states, are "democracy, good governance and continued improvement of human rights." In setting the context of the proposed aid program, the mission observes that there is "little sense of urgency" for political reform on the part of the Cambodian government. It also notes that most Cambodians and donors believe that "true change will only come over the course of a generation." But the mission warns that a passive stance will backfire: "Waiting for genuine political change leaves Cambodia vulnerable to renewed conflict and a deterioration of the fragile progress that has been made in improving democratic practices." The mission's assumption, then, is that the United States must seek out and support opportunities to advance democratic governance in Cambodia. It concludes that although the Cambodian government places a low priority on democracy, "there are, however, significant short-term opportunities for helping Cambodians achieve reform" in this area.[64]

Because the strategy was written several years after the publication of the *DG Framework,* the mission (in contrast to the Haiti and Kenya strategies) explicitly uses the concepts of the framework in presenting its analysis of the democratic problem in Cambodia. The brief analytical section starts by explaining that "consensus" and "inclusion" are the "least problematic" of the five elements of democracy. The mission states that of the three remaining factors in the *DG Framework* (rule of law, competition, and governance), "serious problems" exist in all three.

CONSENSUS. The mission asserts that the legitimacy of Cambodia's statehood, borders, constitution, and form of government are not in question. But it notes that regarding the basic relationship between the state and individual citizens, the existing consensus is fraying as opposition political parties and civil society activists "vie for greater voice in national life."[65] The mission's observation on this point represents a significant qualification to its overall assertion regarding a national consensus and thus warrants much more analysis than is presented. For example, where does the current consensus about the relationship between the state and the individual—which presumably allows for considerable governmental curbs on individual liberty—lie? In the constitution? In an unwritten post-1991 consensus among political elites? In Cambodia's traditional political culture? In the still lingering psychological effects of Cambodia's tragic contemporary history? Elsewhere? Without answers to this fundamental question, the mission has not

made a compelling case that a strong consensus about first principles truly underlies Cambodian politics.

RULE OF LAW. According to the mission, the "rule of law" is "severely lacking" because disputes are resolved on the basis of wealth and political power rather than on the basis of impartial justice. It also states that the "structural base for rule of law is incomplete" and that existing laws are "only rarely enforced."[66] Instead of presenting an in-depth explanation of how this dysfunctional legal system works, the mission merely makes this blunt assertion. Thus, for instance, there is no analysis of how the political and economic elites wield their power over police, judges, and prosecutors. Likewise, there is no analysis of whether the ruling party (the Cambodian People's Party, or CPP) is the sole perpetrator of this corruption or whether the other main political parties (the royalist United Front for an Independent, Neutral and Free Cambodia, or FUNCINPEC, and the reformist Sam Rainsy Party, or SRP) also participate in it.

COMPETITION. The mission views "competition" in Cambodian politics as being tightly controlled. It cites the use by the ruling party of intimidation, restrictions on press coverage, and procedural manipulation to have unfairly advantaged itself in recent elections. It observes that while Cambodian civil society grew in numbers and maturity in recent years, "even the most daring [NGOs] self-regulate their activities." The written media is relatively free, the mission says, but the readership of newspapers is located mostly in the cities. The mission states that the CPP dominates FUNCINPEC in the coalition government and that the SRP has very little influence on policy. It says that legislators are beholden to their political parties rather than their constituents, resulting in the lack of "meaningful discussion" in the National Assembly. Overall, it states that the executive branch controls the legislative and judicial branches of government.[67]

In these and other areas of competition, the mission again does not provide analyses but instead only makes blanket assertions. Moreover, on two critical areas of competition—the distribution of economic resources in society and the balance of power between the central government and local governments—the mission is virtually silent. Without an analysis of the former, the mission is unable to supply an explanation of the political economy of injustice to which it alludes in its discussion of the absence of rule of law above. Without an analysis of the latter, the mission cannot back up its subsequent claim (when presenting its proposed democracy program) that opportunities for local government reform have arisen in the wake of the first-ever commune elections held in 2002.

INCLUSION. The mission leaves much analytical ground uncovered in regard to inclusion. The strategy states that while discrimination against former members of the Khmer Rouge and members of ethnic minority groups (such as the Vietnamese) no doubt remains, the members of these groups are "by and large" considered to be Cambodian citizens and can accordingly exercise the rights of citizenship. However, this conclusion sidesteps one of the largest questions in Cambodian politics: How should Cambodia bring to justice former Khmer Rouge leaders who committed genocide and crimes against humanity? Until there is resolution of the issues concerning what type of tribunal to establish and what level of former Khmer Rouge officials to try, the basic problem of inclusion will not be resolved—if only because many of the current leaders of Cambodia were complicit in the past crimes.[68]

GOOD GOVERNANCE. About the element of good governance the mission simply states that, in this regard, "Cambodia also falls very short." It notes that the Cambodian government initiated an ambitious Governance Action Plan but that progress on the plan was slow and that the initiative stemmed more from "the need to appease donors" than from "a sincere desire to change."[69] Notwithstanding the congressional ban on direct U.S. aid to the central government, the mission's strategy would have benefited from an analysis of how, for instance, key Cambodian ministries failed in the areas of transparency, accountability, and efficiency. In addition, as recommended in the *DG Framework,* the mission could have usefully evaluated the general capacity of Cambodian civil society to supply good governance, especially given the failure of the government to provide services and the congressionally mandated reliance of the U.S. aid program on Cambodian NGOs.[70]

SUMMARY OF DEMOCRATIC GOVERNANCE ELEMENTS. After its brief evaluation of the five elements of democratic governance in Cambodia, the mission presents an even shorter analysis of the initiatives for political reform in these areas and of the opposition to such reform. Rather than presenting (as suggested by the *DG Framework*) a detailed analysis of the allies and opponents of reform and an analysis of the institutional arenas in which these actors vie, the mission simply restates its observation that the Cambodian political system is corrupt. "Given the rent-seeking opportunities available in government positions," it writes, "incumbents have strong financial and personal interests in maintaining power." Fundamental change is difficult, the mission concludes, because the current power holders are entrenched, because reformers fear that if they push too hard their lives would be endangered, and because after all it has been through in past decades, Cambodian

society prefers peace over a renewal of conflict that a head-on challenge to entrenched power might provoke.[71]

DEMOCRACY PROGRAM. Of the three democratic problems that it characterizes as serious, the mission rules out programmatic interventions in rule of law and governance due to the absence of political will in the Cambodian government. Thus the mission is left with the issue of competition as its focus, and it defines its overall strategic objective in the area of democratic governance as "increased competition in Cambodian political life." Specifically, the mission's goal is to strengthen the competitiveness of the reformers: that is, "to increase the power of those groups within Cambodian society who seek equitable treatment for Cambodian citizens to compete for their demands." The mission sets out four main ways in which to pursue this overall goal. As with the Haiti and Kenya programs, the Cambodia program lacks verisimilitude, given the shallow analysis upon which it is based.[72]

First, the mission seeks to establish "political processes and parties that meet international standards" by aiding political parties, electoral monitors, and electoral administrators. Regarding political parties, the strategy states that the mission will offer help to build internal democratic procedures, to strengthen organizational capacity, to sharpen the focus of campaign platforms, and to foster new leaders (especially women). While the mission will follow USAID's standard nonpartisan practice of offering aid to all political parties, the strategy, given its goal of advancing reform, notes that "both FUNCINPEC and the SRP offer alternatives [to the CPP] that could help develop a broader basis for competition on political issues." Concerning the electoral process, the mission proposes to support Cambodian NGOs in their efforts to advocate for fairer electoral rules and institutions and to monitor local and national elections; and to support international NGOs in their efforts to monitor the entire electoral process from the preelection construction of the legal framework and registration of voters to the postelection adjudication of disputes and formation of the new government. The strategy includes the possibility of aid to national electoral authorities for organizing and administering the 2003 national elections, provided that "there is genuine reason to believe that the rules will meet democratic norms and authorities will be impartial."[73]

Second, the mission aims to increase "transparency and accountability on key economic and political issues." To accomplish this end, the mission will support the efforts of Cambodian think tanks to research significant areas of corruption, foster public debate based on this research, and advocate for specific governmental measures to address the corruption. The mission will

target sectors in which corruption is known to be very high, such as customs, public procurement, and the judiciary. It will also provide support to Cambodian business associations to highlight the bribery and red tape faced by entrepreneurs that try to start and maintain a business. The mission stresses that its objective is "not simply to raise public awareness about corruption but to establish the basis for enforcement."[74]

Third, the mission will support the "focused monitoring and defense of human rights." In its previous democracy strategy, the mission focused its human rights activities on the provision of basic education and legal services. Now the mission will shift beyond "general awareness raising" to support for "cutting-edge cases" that could shape government policy. Regarding these cases, the mission will encourage indigenous NGOs to collaborate with international human rights NGOs in order both to obtain a degree of protection and to ensure the application of global norms. The mission targets the areas of women's rights (including sex trafficking, rape, and domestic violence), the rights of ethnic minorities (especially in regard to the titling of their land), and the rights of workers (particularly in the important industries of textiles, construction, hotels, and teaching).[75]

Fourth, the mission seeks the "engagement of newly elected local officials with central, provincial, and district level officials on key development issues." It notes that since the local elections in February 2002 the donor community has been paying much attention to the training of the newly elected "commune" officials. Because of this attention from other donors as well as "the unclear legal and policy environment in which these new officials will work," the mission instead will focus its efforts on organizing associations of local officials. Its premise is that through these new associations local officials would be able to lobby their central government counterparts at the national, provincial, and district levels for the laws, policies, and funds needed to make Cambodian decentralization a success.[76]

RESULTS. In its 2003 annual report, the Cambodia mission does not present any results of its democracy strategy, explaining that the reporting period (2002) was devoted to completing the previous strategy.[77] Therefore, given the absence of results to evaluate, I instead suggest here how the mission could increase the prospect for meaningful results by undertaking a fuller analysis in each of its four programmatic areas.

First, regarding political parties and the electoral process, the mission's proposed assistance is neither innovative nor unsound. The proposal represents the standard package of USAID support in this area. The problem with this first area of intervention is that the mission does not base its program in

any analysis and thus it cannot flesh out the program in any meaningful way. For example, concerning the political parties, what are the prospects for the emergence of reformist factions within the CPP and FUNCINPEC? What prevents the SRP from becoming a more broad-based party of reform? In the area of electoral monitoring and administration, what changes are needed in the electoral laws or administrative procedures based on the experience of flawed national elections in 1993 and 1998 and flawed local elections in 2002? Is there an existing or prospective alliance of indigenous NGOs, political parties, or individual legislators pushing for such changes? None of these basic questions are either posed or answered.

Second, given that corruption lies at the heart of the mission's analysis of the democratic problem in Cambodia, the proposed assistance to foster transparency and accountability is right on target. However, the mission does not provide any assessment of the think tanks or business associations that might carry out the intended research and advocacy. Do such organizations exist? If so, are they sufficiently capable and independent to carry out this analytically difficult and politically dangerous function? Moreover, while the mission aims to "establish the basis for enforcement" of anticorruption measures, it paints a picture of a government that would not be receptive to such initiatives. For example, the mission cites the establishment of several anticorruption units in both the executive and legislative branches. But it concludes that none of them "are sufficiently independent from the government to provide effective oversight." If that is the case, what is the mission's strategy for linking the research and advocacy of the NGOs with reform initiatives in the government?

Third, as with the aid for anticorruption efforts, the weakness of the proposed support for human rights is the lack of analysis linking these projected high-profile legal cases with current reform efforts within the government. The mission makes a passing reference to the Ministry of Women's Affairs regarding women's rights and an equally brief reference to the "new land law" regarding the rights of ethnic minorities, but there is no indication of how the ministry in the one case and the new law in the other is evidence of genuine prospects for political reform in the respective areas.

Fourth, the proposed aid to local governance no doubt has merit. USAID has had success with organizing such local government associations in many countries. Yet without a detailed analysis of the political economy of local governance (especially in the wake of the 2002 election), this initiative bears an air of unreality. After all, the CPP won 1,600 of the 1,621 communes, thereby "keeping control of local security forces and resources in the hands of

trusted [CPP] officials."[78] To be fair to the mission, the other political parties won many seats on the commune councils even though they are in the minority. However, given the size of the CPP victory (coupled with the "unclear legal and policy environment"), it is incumbent on the USAID mission to present a compelling case of why, under such political and economic circumstances, local officials (especially those representing the CPP) could be expected to challenge the CPP on issues pertaining to decentralization.[79] In essence, has decentralization in general, or the CPP's electoral victory in the local elections specifically, altered the basic contours of the CPP's political and economic dominance at the local level? If so, how? If not, why not? The mission provides no answers to these fundamental questions.

Recommending a Comprehensive Reform of Strategic Planning for Democracy Aid

Needless to say, USAID's implementing partners in the area of democratic governance do excellent work through their diverse training programs. These talented and committed partners, supported by USAID funds, help thousands of struggling democrats across the developing world. What is in question here—that is, the very question of strategy—is whether USAID, through its partners, is working on the most important democracy problems, with the most effective reformers, and in the most promising institutional arenas. Unfortunately, the limited answer provided by the three case studies above is not positive: USAID's democracy strategies for poorly performing states still suffer from shallow (or absent) analysis, vague programs, and scattered results. Lack of analysis is the root of the problem. If the analysis could be strengthened, then the programs and results would follow in turn. Without better analysis, the programs and results will continue to be diffuse.

Based on my experience of having reviewed tens of USAID democracy strategies during my service in government and having read many more since, I believe that these three case studies are representative of the overall state of USAID's strategic planning for democracy. Moreover, I believe that the problem of poor analysis is so serious that it can be remedied only through a comprehensive reform of USAID's strategic planning for democracy. I thereby recommend—in the spirit of "fives" (Carothers's five assumptions of the "transition paradigm" and Hyman's five elements of democratic governance)—the following five-step program for producing more effective strategic analysis in USAID's democracy assistance.

Step One: Acknowledging the Problem of Poor Analysis

USAID must acknowledge that the lack of analysis underlying its democracy strategies is simply unacceptable. The analytical weakness not only renders its programs vague and often unjustified but also tarnishes USAID's deserved reputation as a leading donor in the field of democratic governance. In defense of their strategic plans, USAID field missions often claim that the formal presentation of their analysis is so short because it is just a summary—indeed, some missions say, the strategic plans are intended to be public relations documents. The full analysis, they argue, resides in the many commissioned studies, including ones based on the *DG Framework* and conducted by USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance, which fill up drawers and drawers of their filing cabinets. For a simple reason, I do not find this argument compelling: the commissioned studies represent the views of private consultants or experts from headquarters; they do not yet constitute the views of the missions themselves. For such a transformation to take place, the missions must filter the studies through their own understanding of the country, only then arriving at a comprehensive analysis that is wholly owned by the mission itself.

Step Two: Refining the Democratic Governance Framework

The *DG Framework* is an excellent starting point for the formulation of democracy strategies. But in several ways the framework, as currently written, might unintentionally contribute to programmatic sprawl. The framework's first step—the assessment of the five elements of democracy—does not address the thorny question regarding prioritization among the problems. In many if not most poorly performing states, serious problems exist in all five of the elements. However, the framework confidently states that "the completion of [the first step of the] analysis and inventory should point to the primary, secondary, and tertiary problems."[80] Yet it is not at all clear from the *DG Framework* which of the five elements is inherently most critical to laying the foundation of democratic governance in poorly performing states.

Moreover, the *DG Framework*'s third step—the analysis of institutional arenas wherein the struggles for reform on the identified problems are taking place—asks the analyst to undertake full-scale evaluations of all the country's governmental and nongovernmental political institutions. Such a task is not only impossible practically, it also undermines the more narrow conceptual focus of the third step, which is simply to place the identified reformers in their institutional context. The broader institutional analysis would more

properly belong in the *DG Framework*'s first step. However, the authors of the document choose not to do so, probably because they want to conceive of basic democracy problems as thematic (that is, cutting across multiple institutions) rather than institutional (that is, specific to a single institution). But in pushing the analysis of institutions to the third step, the authors have not resolved the tension between thematic and institutional constructions of democratic governance problems; they have merely disguised the tension. Without a satisfactory theoretical resolution of this core issue, the analyses and programs of missions will continue to produce the institutional "checklists" and "smorgasbords" that Carothers abhors.

To help it tackle these two vexing conceptual issues—prioritizing among multiple democratic problems and synthesizing the thematic and institutional approaches to the conceptualization of democratic problems—USAID could tap the best thinkers in the booming field of comparative democratic development (as evidenced, for example, in the impressive scholarship contained in the *Journal of Democracy* since its establishment in 1990).

Step Three: Adopting the DG Framework *as USAID Policy*

Currently, USAID's headquarters only recommends that missions use the *DG Framework* as the basis of their democracy strategies.[81] To demonstrate the utility of the *DG Framework,* the Office of Democracy and Governance should undertake a formal review of the "more than two dozen" countries in which the framework had already been applied by 2002.[82] This review could also contribute to step two above by clarifying which aspects of the framework might be in need of revision. After completing the review of the framework's prior use and the refinement of its rough edges, USAID should then require its field missions to use the document as the basis for all future democracy strategies. The adoption of such a requirement would ensure that USAID headquarters and field missions are using a shared conceptual framework and a common vocabulary across the democracy sector.

Step Four: Conducting the Strategic Analysis

In addition to refining various conceptual aspects of the *DG Framework,* USAID also needs to revise upward its estimates of the time and personnel needed for formulating a democracy strategy. According to its introduction, the framework was "designed to construct a DG strategy in three weeks by a team of three people—one of whom should know the country very well."[83] Practically speaking, there is no way that the *DG Framework*'s complex analytical

agenda could be carried out in such a short time and by so few people. Indeed, missions regularly allot a full year or more to prepare a new country strategy.[84] However, they are not in the practice of conducting rigorous analytical assessments of the type presented in the *DG Framework*. To produce better analysis, the missions should combine their longer time frame with the framework's more serious analytical agenda. Moreover, the missions are overly dependent on external advisers (from either headquarters or consulting firms), who have very little knowledge of the country. Instead, the mission's resident democracy officer should take the lead on conducting the strategic analysis, tapping the expertise within the country and orchestrating a wide-ranging consultation that culminates at the year's end with the drafting of the strategy.

Step Five: Reviewing the Strategic Analysis in Headquarters

The mission should be required to submit not just a summary of its analysis but rather a full-length treatment that covers the entire agenda included in the *DG Framework*. Without such a written requirement, the review of the democracy strategies by USAID's headquarters will continue to be more or less rubber-stamp affairs, during which the missions pretend to have done serious analysis and headquarters officials pretend to seriously review the mission's phantom analysis. If USAID prefers to maintain its current practice of having brief sectoral chapters within its overall country strategies, then it should require the democracy sector to submit a separate document that would be reviewed in tandem with the overall strategy. To further ensure that the review is a serious exercise, the strategies should be approved not only by the relevant regional bureaus of USAID and the State Department but also by the relevant functional bureaus (USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance and the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor).

Conclusion

Although the field of democracy aid is still relatively new compared to the more traditional fields of international development, the newness of the field is not the only reason that USAID's analysis of democratic governance is so weak. Instead, the problem is a much larger, even systemic one: a strategic planning revolution that has run amok. With laudably good intentions, donor organizations in general and USAID in particular have sought to counter the perennial charges of bloated and wasteful foreign aid budgets by

designing and implementing systems of "results-based management." While the theory of such management may be sound, its application to USAID's democracy sector has produced the exact opposite of what it intended: shallow rather than deep analysis, generic rather than tailored programs, and minute rather than overarching indicators of achievement.

How did USAID's strategic planning revolution get so derailed? A full answer to this question is beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it here to say that the story of USAID's management revolution is a variation of the age-old theme of good intentions producing unintended (and often ironic) consequences. From my perspective, the entire apparatus of "results frameworks," "strategic objectives," "intermediate results," and "quantitative indicators" has served to constrain rather than liberate the creativity of USAID's able corps of field officers not only in democratic governance but across all sectors of the agency's work. In its zeal, this revolution has driven out the old-fashioned strategic pillars of full-bodied analysis and expository narrative in favor of the newfangled claptrap of multidimensional diagrams and omnipresent numbers. Thus the analytical poverty of USAID's democratic governance work is not unique within the agency. Yet given its very newness and abiding spirit of innovation, the democracy sector has the potential for leading USAID out of its current strategic planning fog.

In conclusion, the big questions regarding the promotion of democratic governance in poorly performing states can be answered only by deeper and broader strategic analysis. Which of the five elements of democracy is key for a particular poor performer can be known only through better analysis of each of the elements and of the interrelationships among the five. In such cases, whether a donor should support government or civil society (or what types of civil society organizations) is also unknowable a priori. Ditto for the overarching strategic question of whether core U.S. interests would be better protected vis-à-vis a poor performer by supporting potentially destabilizing reform initiatives or by taking a more gradualist approach. "It all depends" is perhaps never a compelling thesis. In the case of the effectiveness of USAID's current and future democracy aid, however, knowing the details would make all the difference in the world.

Notes

1. Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 9. The term "third wave" was coined by Samuel Huntington. See his *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

2. The term "gray zone" was coined by Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," p. 9.

3. For a discussion of U.S. democracy promotion policy during this period, see Madeleine Albright, *Madam Secretary* (New York: Miramax Books, 2003), pp. 442–47.

4. For the fullest exposition of this view, see Amartya Sen, *Development as Freedom* (New York: Anchor Books, 1999).

5. UNDP, *Human Development Report 2002: Deepening Democracy in a Fragmented World* (Oxford University Press, 2002), p. v. For a further discussion of the relationship between democratic governance and poverty reduction, see UNDP, *Human Development Report 2003: Millennium Development Goals: A Compact among Nations to End Human Poverty* (Oxford University Press, 2003), esp. chap. 7.

6. United Nations, "Millennium Declaration," UN doc. A/RES/55/2, September 18, 2000, pp. 2, 6.

7. United Nations, "Final Outcome of the International Conference on Financing for Development," UN doc. A/CONF.198, March 22, 2002.

8. Larry Diamond, "Promoting Democratic Governance," in *Foreign Aid in the National Interest* (Washington: USAID, 2003), p. 33. Also see Morton H. Halperin, Joseph T. Siegle, and Michael M. Weinstein, *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace* (London: Routledge, 2004).

9. OECD/DAC, "International Development Statistics Online" (www.oecd.org/dataoecd/50/17/5037721.htm [June 2003]).

10. All of USAID's budget figures were provided by USAID's Office of Democracy and Governance upon my request. I would like to thank Shamila Chaudhary of that office for her assistance. For an explanation of the type of aid provided in each of the four subsectors, see USAID, *Democracy and Governance: A Conceptual Framework* (Washington: 1998).

11. Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," pp. 10, 18–19.

12. Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), esp. chap. 7.

13. Hilton Root and Bruce Bueno de Mesquita, "The Political Roots of Poverty: The Economic Logic of Autocracy," *National Interest* (Summer 2002): 27–37.

14. Diamond, "Promoting Democratic Governance," pp. 45–47. For a review of comparative democratic development in the gray zone, see Larry Diamond, "Thinking about Hybrid Regimes," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 2 (2002): 21–25.

15. Carothers, "The End of the Transition Paradigm," pp. 6–9. Carothers provides only anecdotal and impressionistic evidence for the existence of the five assumptions, mostly citing in USAID's public-relations-type documents what are, in my view, merely examples of self-interested and inflated donor claims of democratic progress. See, for example, pp. 20–21, nn. 4, 13. But the citation of USAID's loose usages of the adjective "democratic" does not prove that such laxity necessarily stymies USAID's capacity to diagnose a country's "particular core syndrome" or prescribe remedies for it. Carothers implicitly acknowledges the lack of documentary evidence for his thesis. The transition paradigm, he writes, is "not something I just made up after a casual perusal of the USAID website" but rather it is based on his fifteen years of experience in this field, including hundreds of interviews with aid donors and recipients in every region of the world. See Thomas Carothers, "A Reply to My Critics," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (2002): 37.

16. For Diamond's discussion of liberal democracy, see Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), pp. 10–12.

17. For USAID's requirements for the strategic plans of its missions, see USAID, "Functional Series 200—Programming Policy, ADS 201—Planning," October 11, 2001.

18. Carothers demonstrates his argument with the use of USAID documents "because they are the most readily available practitioners' statements of guidelines and political assessments." However, he believes that his analysis "applies equally well to most other democracy promotion organizations in the United States and abroad" ("The End of the Transition Paradigm," p. 20, n. 4).

19. Ibid., p. 18.

20. For Carothers's critique of USAID's methods for reporting results, see his seminal book, Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy: The Learning Curve* (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), chap. 10.

21. Center [now Office] for Democracy and Governance, *Conducting a DG Assessment: A Framework for Strategy Development* (Washington: USAID, 2000). Hereafter referred to as *DG Framework.*

22. For a debate between Carothers and several of his critics, see section entitled "Debating the Transition Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (2002): 5–38.

23. For USAID's formal response to Carothers, see Gerald Hyman, "Tilting at Straw Men," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 3 (2002), quotations on pp. 26, 30. For Carothers's reply to Hyman, see "A Reply to My Critics," p. 38.

24. *DG Framework,* pp. 8–9.

25. For a discussion of these five elements, see ibid., pp. 2–3, 13–30.

26. Ibid., pp. 29–30.

27. For a discussion of the second step, see ibid., pp. 3, 31–35. The quotation is taken from a summary in the document's appendix B.

28. For a discussion of the third step, see ibid., pp. 3–4, 37–51.

29. The *DG Framework* actually contains a fourth step in this strategic planning process. The purpose of this step is to identify the interests, constraints, and resources of the donors themselves. The issues to be considered here include U.S. foreign policy priorities; the availability of funding and staffing for the USAID mission; the mission's existing portfolio; USAID's comparative advantages as an agency; and the interests, skills, and resources of other donors (ibid., pp. 4, 53–55). (I do not cover this fourth step because of my focus on the donor's analysis of the recipient country's democratic problems.)

30. USAID/Haiti, *Strategic Plan for Haiti, Fiscal Years 1999–2004* (Washington: USAID, 1998), pp. 80–84.

31. USAID/Kenya, *Integrated Strategic Plan, 2001–2005* (Washington: USAID, 2000), pp. 39–40.

32. USAID/Cambodia, *Interim Strategic Plan, 2002–2005* (Washington: USAID, 2002), pp. 2–3.

33. For an overview of the country strategy, see USAID/Haiti, *Strategic Plan for Haiti,* pp. 2–7.

34. Quotations from ibid., pp. 81.

35. Ibid., pp. 82, 84.

36. Ibid., pp. 83–84.

37. Ibid., pp. 82–83.

38. Ibid., pp. 82–84.
39. Ibid., p. 84.
40. Ibid., p. 80.
41. Ibid., pp. 90–91.
42. USAID/Haiti, *FY 2002 Annual Report* (Washington: USAID, 2002), pp. 6, 12.
43. USAID/Haiti, *FY 2003 Annual Report* (Washington: USAID, 2003), pp. 3–4.
44. USAID/Haiti, *FY 2002 Annual Report,* annex on "selected performance measures"; USAID/Haiti, *FY 2003 Annual Report,* pp. 12–13.
45. For an overview of the country strategy, see USAID/Kenya, *Integrated Strategic Plan,* pp. v–vii. For a brief description of the democracy strategy, see p. 37.
46. Quotations from ibid., unnumbered page at the beginning of the document and p. 37.
47. Ibid., p. 39.
48. Ibid., p. 40.
49. Ibid., p. 11.
50. For quotations, see ibid., pp. 39, 13.
51. In the "overview" section, the mission briefly comments on these two relationships, noting that the creation of the Parliamentary Service Commission might result in the financial and administrative separation of the legislature from the executive, thereby increasing the parliament's independence. "Local government is an implementing arm of the executive branch," according to the mission, "rather than an autonomous authority responsive to local communities." For sources in this paragraph, see ibid., pp. 39, 10, 11, 13.
52. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World, 2003* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield), pp. 300–01.
53. This information is presented in the strategy's introductory overview section rather than in the section on democratic governance. USAID/Kenya, *Integrated Strategic Plan,* pp. 11–12. Earlier quotation from ibid., p. 39.
54. Ibid., p. 49.
55. See ibid., pp. 40, 45.
56. See ibid., pp. 49–52.
57. Ibid., pp. 45, 52.
58. Ibid., pp. 46, 53–54.
59. USAID/Kenya, *FY 2002 Annual Report* (Washington: USAID, 2002), p. 6.
60. Ibid.; USAID/Kenya, *FY 2003 Annual Report* (Washington: USAID, 2003), p. 6.
61. For an overview of the country strategy, see USAID/Cambodia, *Interim Strategic Plan,* pp. i–iii.
62. Ibid., pp. 1–2.
63. Ibid., p. 1. The USAID mission also was allowed to use global "notwithstanding authority" to provide assistance in the areas of HIV/AIDS (and other infectious diseases) and anticorruption.
64. Ibid., pp. 1–2, 16.
65. Ibid., p. 2.
66. Ibid., pp. 2–3.
67. Ibid., p. 3.

68. Ibid., p. 2. The mission does mention in one sentence (as part of its analysis of rule-of-law issues) the need for a tribunal. But it does not raise the implications concerning inclusion.

69. Ibid., p. 3.

70. See *DG Framework,* pp. 23–26.

71. USAID/Cambodia, *Interim Strategic Plan,* p. 3.

72. Quotations from ibid., pp. 16, 18. The mission actually offers a fifth "intermediate result"—the long-term training in the United States of future Cambodian governmental and NGO leaders (ibid., p. 23). Because of the measure's generality, I do not evaluate it here.

73. Ibid., pp. 5, 19. The mission does not address the issue of whether the U.S. Congress would need to revise its ban on assistance to the central government if aid is offered to the "electoral authorities." That is, it is unclear if the mission considers the electoral authorities part of the central government or independent from it.

74. Ibid., p. 20.

75. Ibid., pp. 21–22.

76. Ibid., p. 22.

77. USAID/Cambodia, *FY 2003 Annual Report* (Washington: USAID, 2003), p. 5.

78. Freedom House, *Freedom in the World, 2003,* pp. 123–24.

79. Quotation from USAID/Cambodia, *Interim Strategic Plan,* p. 22.

80. *DG Framework,* p. 30.

81. Hyman, "Tilting at Straw Men," p. 30.

82. For the "more than two dozen" quote, see ibid.

83. *DG Framework,* p. 10.

84. For instance, the Kenya mission submitted its finished strategy in November 2000, even though it had already held its first consultation on the strategy with its local implementing partners in February 1999. USAID/Kenya, *Integrated Strategic Plan,* p. 3.