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GOVERNMENTAL SUPPORT OF DEMOCRACY ASSISTANCE AND DEMOCRACY PROMOTION, EXPERIENCES, STRATEGIES AND NEW AREAS IN THE FUTURE

It is my honor and great pleasure to speak to an audience so well acquainted with issues of democracy and human rights and, above all, with their practical implementation to the benefit of people in need of assistance and protection.

Faced by the question of what to say today, I thought about the transformation that the Slovak Republic and its society have undergone over the past 20 years. A fast-forwarded film ran through my mind of how a “gleichschaltet” population changed, a film of an awakening—so slow at the time of Soviet perestroika and so ecstatic in 1989 and afterwards, a film seeking the foundations of its identity, and the journey from political totalitarianism to plurality, from central planning and almost impenetrable isolation from the West to an open society with a market economy. Over these years, Slovak Republic also transformed from a country which was receiving development assistance into a country sharing its wealth with less fortunate countries. I only wish everyone could have enjoyed this fascinating experience.

Our experience is fundamentally about the interest of one country to transform itself and subsequently to influence its neighborhood to become secure and economically viable with invaluable assistance, I might add, from democratic states, such as the USA, Canada and the member states of the EU.

Democracy is not a simple system—for citizens or for politicians. It is more complicated than an authoritarian system of government. The market economy with its competition and limited social security is more complicated as well. We have learned, however, that transformation to a democracy with civil freedoms and rule of law allows citizens to have better opportunities and thus, more authentic lives. Key to successful transformation development is the understanding that historical experience must be shared.

I am very pleased that Slovak diplomacy has been able to establish and maintain good cooperation with Slovak NGOs operating in countries with common interests. Since these are relatively new tasks requiring new methods in areas of development cooperation, there is ample opportunity for the members of our foreign service to develop new knowledge and skills. Microgrants are now available. Our Embassy in Kiev has been allocated SKK 1 million for the promotion of small projects.

The role of the state and civil society differ, but they are at their most effective when they complement one another. It is the role of the state to change democratic structures. While civil society can initiate, correct and control transformation, it does not have the necessary instruments to carry out transformation on its own. In the process of development, activists from non-governmental organizations often get involved in administration, whether at the political or expert level. At the expert level, which is devoid of any political affiliation, this process provides a valuable opportunity to reshape the administration with new thinking and new dynamism.

Can the diplomacy of one country help the democratization of another country? Diplomacy means, above all, communication among states. Therefore, the foremost instrument of assistance is intensive political dialogue at the governmental and parliamentary levels. No less important is deepening economic and trade cooperation, intergovernmental cooperation at the expert level, cross-border cooperation, and the promotion of direct contact between people through visa facilitation, scholarships, promotion of cooperation in science and technology, cultural exchanges, or cooperation between interest groups and civil society. Development assistance plays an important role in changing the environment in another country. Making the link between provision of assistance and implementation of desirable reforms can be extremely beneficial. The monitoring of the use of assistance necessitates the introduction of anti-corruption measures. With the opportunities offered by bilateral relations between countries, multilateral diplomacy and cooperation within international organizations is becoming increasingly important.

The Slovak Government, which is dedicated to supporting opportunities for assistance, focuses its efforts on the countries of the Western Balkans and Eastern European countries—Ukraine and Belarus. These countries are among the priority countries for our development assistance.

Slovak Republic started to play a larger role in the process of support for democratic changes in the Western Balkans in 1999, the launch year of a series of Serbian conferences and workshops attended by pro-democratic representatives of political opposition, media and civil society. This led to the creation of the Community for Change, which helped to unite Serbian opposition to the oppressive regime. Slovak Republic established the Bratislava-Belgrade Fund, the resources of which are direct Slovak development assistance, with the aim of supporting civil society, infrastructure renewal, regional development and integration into the EU and NATO. Throughout the years of its existence, these ODA projects proved to be an influential instrument in Slovak Republic's foreign policy towards Serbia. After opening accession negotiations between the EU and Croatia, Slovak Republic organized several meetings between Croatian negotiators and the former Slovak team of negotiators to pass on our experience from the accession process.

Multilateral diplomacy is an essential addition to bilateral activities. Integration into European and Trans-Atlantic structures is possibly the most influential democratization force on our continent. That is why we supported the early start of accession negotiations between the EU and Croatia and the accession of Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Partnership for Peace. In our opinion, the European prospect also has to play a part in the resolution of the status of Kosovo and is being offered to Ukraine and Moldova more cautiously. The distant time-frame of this perspective is reducing the EU's soft power in the region and complicates further advancement towards the EU's values. What are our options? We can continue to build on the interest of both countries to integrate with Europe and with their interest in cooperation with NATO. Thus, we view the multilateral aspect, in particular EU and NATO programs and resources, as pivotal. The objective of the European Neighborhood Policy is to support economic and political reforms in partner countries towards the EU's values and standards and thus enhance prosperity, stability and security. After two years of existence, further strengthening of the policy is being considered and EUR 11.18 billion has been allocated for the European Neighborhood Policy Instrument for the period of the new financial perspective. Slovak Republic fully supports this line of thinking. For this purpose it initiated another alliance—the Visegrad Group—which has agreed to promote a balanced regional approach to the EU's neighbors in the Mediterranean region as well as in Eastern Europe. The regional multilateral approach in Eastern Europe shall secure deeper political and economic cohesion and cross-sector convergence among the EU and partner countries in accordance with European values and principles. We have lent our support to the creation of

a new instrument, the Governance Facility, which will provide additional funding to national allocations to partner countries which make the best progress in the implementation of their individual action plans. The European Commission is considering allocating EUR 315 million for this purpose in the period between 2007 and 2013. Visegrad Four countries have agreed on the proposal to increase the fund's resources and are prepared to support the British proposal, which advises approximately EUR 595 million. We presented the position of the Visegrad Four at the January session of the foreign ministers of the EU-27 and another more detailed position will be proposed at the informal ministerial meeting taking place in Bremen. In addition, Slovak Republic decided to complement the multilateral instrument, the action plan agreed between the EU and Ukraine, with a bilateral plan of assistance in the implementation of the action plan. In 2007, we started implementing the second annual plan of governmental activities between Slovak Republic and Ukraine aimed above all at reporting Slovak Republic's experience from the association process. This year, Slovak Republic assumed the role of NATO Contact Embassy for Ukraine, in order to improve the information dispensed to Ukrainian society about NATO issues. This position opens up broad opportunities for Slovak diplomacy to cooperate with non-governmental organizations.

Democratic change in Belarus is a special challenge. Our experience with cooperation between the Slovakian Government and non-governmental organizations has been excellent so far. I think we have succeeded in finding the right balance of activities and joint action. I greatly appreciate how we complement each other. Thanks to non-governmental organizations, we have a better understanding of the situation and constantly receive feedback on our ideas, such as the Shadow Action Plan. We take the opinions of non-governmental organizations seriously and try to encourage and support organizations using European instruments, bilateral development assistance or other grant schemes. I believe that our cooperation will continue to be fruitful, that there will be plenty of opportunities, in particular in the second half of this year when Slovak Republic will hold the local presidency of the EU on behalf of Portugal.

Let me also briefly mention the initiative of Slovak Republic as an elected member of the UN Security Council: to direct the attention of the international community to the issue of security sector reform, the UN's role in post-conflict situations, and the method of the UN's cooperation with regional, sub-regional and other organizations in the renewal of post-conflict countries. The idea is to use the opportunity for a turn towards stable development of the country in question

and respect for human rights and freedoms. Coordination between international, governmental and non-governmental organizations is critical.

Slovak Republic's development assistance program has undergone several changes in recent years. We started this year by setting up the Slovak Agency for International Development Cooperation and, in the autumn of this year, we will submit a draft of a new act on development assistance that will more specifically define the competencies of individual central authorities in the field of development assistance. In 2007, we also expect Slovak Republic to join the newly-created Western Balkans Initiative launched by the EBRD, which will also administer this fund. The total volume of Slovak ODA is rising every year and the foreign ministry wishes to increase the proportion of bilateral development assistance within its structure. We are, however, limited by our task to meet the convergence criteria for the adoption of the euro. For 2007, we have allocated SKK 169 million (US\$ 6.6 million) for bilateral development assistance with the greatest single country allocation directed to the development program in Serbia amounting to SKK 64 million. Slovak diplomacy would also like to assist Slovak implementation organizations in applying for European Commission grants; therefore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is open to the opinions of relevant organizations about the possibilities for and methods of implementing this assistance.

Ladies and gentlemen, rather than giving you a complete overview of all governmental instruments and actions, my intention was to briefly explain the priorities of the Government of Slovak Republic on its role in the democratization processes abroad.

I am looking forward to the discussion among the representatives of donor organizations. I am sure that your opinions about issues, such as best practice of democracy promotion or the issue of possible European platform/network, are also of interest to a wider audience.

NADIA DIUK

Senior Director, Central Europe and EuroAsia,
National Endowment for Democracy, USA

“What are the key advantages and disadvantages of the various European approaches and the American approach? Are there any lessons on the best practices to be learned from American or the many European democracy promotion programs?”

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to make some comments from a donor’s point of view.

Looking at the questions addressed to the panel for this session, the first thing I would like to say is that we should not pay too much heed to the idea of “different approaches.” I am not sure I agree that there is an “American” approach and certainly not one American approach, just as there is no particular “European” approach. Each country will promote democracy according to its own historical experience and as a reflection of its own national identity. While there is no right or wrong way, different approaches do have varying levels of effectiveness, and I believe that is what we should be looking at here on this panel.

The first principle, and best guarantee of success for any democracy promotion program and institution, is to find and fund the democrats. This may seem like a simplistic formula, but it’s surprising how many times “democracy projects” get launched without a good sense that the participants are democrats who will drive the program forward with their sense of mission and commitment. It is not surprising then when these programs flounder and run out of steam. Finding democrats, however, can sometimes be a very labor intensive activity, requiring a certain degree of personal contact and instinct for identifying groups and individuals who are dedicated and have an understanding of the basic principles of democracy.

The non-governmental approach is another guarantee that the program of activities will be kept on track. While support for reforming governmental institutions is unavoidable, a thriving third sector creates the foundation of a democratic society. Non-governmental organizations are incubators of the ideas, values and skills that

people need to live in a democratic society: they nurture leadership, encourage consensus building, develop tolerance, promote strategic thinking and give their members a sense of responsibility for their activities.

There are advantages and disadvantages of an in-country presence. At the NED we have found that our modus operandi, with no in-country offices anywhere we work, has actually been very helpful in keeping a clear view of democratic objectives in situations where organizations are sometimes beholden to the local authorities for their office's existence. NED's approach has also helped in situations in which groups are under pressure from the authorities and in which groups that remain unregistered because of government pressure can only exist with assistance from outside the country.

Another rule of thumb is that small and timely amounts of assistance are often more effective than large grants. Time and again we have seen that large amounts of funding have undermined the development of what was a promising start to a group's activities. It is important to assess not only the absorptive capacity of the group, but also look at the environment in which it operates and then to provide funding as appropriate. Often groups have come to the NED with small requests that need to be turned around quickly. This is often the link that is needed to start a chain of fast-paced developments, whereas waiting for the bureaucracy required by larger grants would preclude these opportunities from developing.

A final observation about democracy promotion and what works best: funding regional and cross-border programs are often more cost-effective and productive than simply funding from the source country. Particularly at this juncture and looking at the group gathered here I can see that I am speaking to recipients that prove the rule. Programs in this region, working on an east-to-east basis, often address more difficult issues with responses that have already been given in a similar setting, by activists who have had a great deal of experience. Regional programs foster a sense of community which bilateral funding sometimes fails to achieve.

My final comment regards our experiences at the NED. Even though we do not run programs in the way our core institutes and many other democracy foundations do, the other programs that have grown out of the NED—the Journal of Democracy, the World Movement for Democracy, International Forum for Democratic Studies and the Reagan-Fascell Fellowship Program—have contributed to the creation of a

lively and growing community of activists and intellectuals who work on democracy around the world. The existence of this community has been an important outgrowth of our grant-making activities and has helped to enrich many of the programs we have funded over the years, to the point—as I have already said—that our grantees of a few years ago have now become partners in exploring new and effective ways to fulfill our mandate.

Thank you.

MARIA LEISSNER

Democracy Ambassador, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Sweden

The question posed here today is an interesting one; however, I'm not so sure the answer will be interesting. From the government's perspective, I must say that I don't see a major difference in the way we work as donors. In general, we all use a combination of instruments for democracy support, supply core funding to our national NGOs and to international NGOs and institutions, have our own specific country's strategies, and within those strategies use different kinds of actors. We don't always create democracy assistance projects ourselves, but instead ask national or international NGOs, professional organizations, academia or others to assist in developing our ideas. We use whatever tools we have available that would best do the job on the ground. The coordination of core support with organizations that have their own agenda and their own policies, and that don't come to the table with a foreign policy priority list, is extremely important. It is also critical, however, to consider the country perspective in order to be able to draw on that country's strongest areas of competence. From a donor perspective, therefore, I believe that there is no fundamental difference in our operational methods; we all work with various instruments and support each other through various activities, which occasionally include funding assistance. Sweden has funded American organizations like NDI and IRI and I believe there has been reciprocal support.

My second point is that democracy assistance is based on identifying our willingness to give to others. Within our countries, different traditions and actors have been instrumental in assisting in the process of democracy transition. Sending out a team of inexperienced political scientists is not an effective approach in the process of democracy assistance. Employing colleagues with real experience is vital to the process. Recently I observed an absolutely beautiful example, a very rare example, of Swedish cross-political party cooperation in Guatemala. In this case, a local academic institution had initially established a basic infrastructure on the ground. Afterwards, five or six separate organizations from Sweden, each with a specific area of expertise, contributed to the process. This cooperation resulted in a high-quality, successful program. Such coordinated colleague-to-colleague exchanges and partnerships prove to be very effective and are essential methods of operation in the process of democracy assistance.

The USA and the European knowledge bases each have their own characteristics. In my work with NDI in Baghdad for half a year, I was somewhat able to observe these differences. Sweden, and perhaps other European countries, have the advantage of experience with “popular movements,” a concept which is the foundation of Swedish democracy. Trade unions and church groups were just two of the popular movements which began in Sweden approximately 150 years ago when Sweden was impoverished and afflicted with illiteracy and social problems. At that time, there were few resources; however, there was real motivation to organize people to social change. Groups comprised of five to ten people called “study circles” began to meet on a regular basis without teachers, books or any other resources, simply to discuss and reflect. I don’t mean to suggest that there have not been popular movements in the USA; however, I do believe that the USA has not employed this method as a regular practice.

Internal democracy within organizations, parties and trade unions is vital. A number of years ago, when my daughter was in seventh grade, her school asked me to teach a week-long training seminar on the topic of democracy. I was quite impressed that the administration was interested in pursuing this progressive concept. As I had recently left politics in Sweden after serving as a party leader for the SLP, I suddenly had plenty of time to devote to this challenge. I began to think about how best to engage these young people and I thought that perhaps it would be best to take them to the parliament, to the municipality, let them observe an election campaign, become familiar with all the political parties and then progress to the international arena. I decided instead to begin by having them convene a meeting. I would have them sit around a single table and make a decision. Every child would have the right to speak. No one would be allowed to interrupt. Everyone would enjoy the right to vote. The votes would be counted, the majority would win and the minority would respect the results. That’s democracy, isn’t it?

When one is born into a democracy, one inherently knows what the parliamentary process is about. In Guatemala, for example, it was very clear right from the beginning that citizens had not encountered the popular movement experience. The popular movement process does not involve NGOs, which are social enterprises (groups of academically brilliant people who are doing impressive work and are financed completely by our agencies). A social enterprise cannot be viewed as an element of a popular movement. Our understanding, then, of the core of democracy, involves the sharing our unique experiences and the application of development assistance efforts in the field of democracy.

Another difference concerns political party work. Fundamentally, we all have different systems: in Europe, we have multi-party systems and a parliamentary system, as well as a constitution that differs from that of the USA. Accordingly, our experiences will be slightly different. There are certainly some issues that we should address regarding the multi-party system used in most European countries. For instance, because we are so dependent on the state, our campaign and fundraising efforts are inadequate. In this regard, Americans enjoy an effective system by concentrating on proven work methods, campaigning, fundraising and so on. So in effect, our strengths and weaknesses actually complement one another.

During these two days, I have realized that Central European countries are extremely competent as a result of their transition experience. In my work with a Romanian member of parliament in Iraq, I realized that my experience was irrelevant for the Iraqis, but that the Romanian experience was completely relevant to those of us in this region. It is key that we learn from one another. We still see a number of weaknesses in the worldwide development of democracy assistance. We must make full use of the media and should be utilizing NGOs to a fuller capacity. These challenges should be addressed at the Center which may be based in Prague, as we discussed yesterday.

I'd like to thank the organizers. It has been absolutely fascinating to be here, to listen to interesting people and especially to learn about the democratic assistance competencies of such great countries. You have really opened my eyes.

JOHN K. GLENN

Director of Foreign Policy, German Marshall Fund, USA

I would like to speak briefly about the experiences of the German Marshall Fund (GMF) of the United States as a donor organization, beginning with an introductory remark on the issue of lessons learned and donor organization experiences. My background is in academia. Having worked as a social scientist studying democratization and change in transitional societies, I know that social scientists are often torn between the search for universal laws (as social science seeks to emulate the natural sciences) and the definition of things that are true everywhere, every time, and the search for more contextual explanations that focus on what we use to call similar processes, that work differently at different times. I am a firm believer in the latter, so, as I tell you about some of our work, I am going to focus on some issues that will be familiar to you: American vs. European approaches, public vs. private, large grants vs. small grants, institutions vs. projects, direct funding vs. indirect funding. I'd like to emphasize that I don't make universal laws; I am simply talking about certain experiences that have worked well in particular times and places that I hope might be interesting for discussion.

I would like to talk about one project in which we engaged prior to my employment at GMF, called the Trust for Civil Society in Central and Eastern Europe. This is a project whose initial idea began in the mid-1990's as many private American donors became aware of the pending arrival of European Union funding, which was designed to be long-term, one of these 7-year financial perspectives, and was going to focus a great deal on the investment in infrastructure and investment in social services. Many of these donors thought that they would be transitioning out of the region. Five organizations: the German Marshall Fund, the Ford Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Foundation and the Mott Foundation, came together to talk about that transition; how to manage what they thought of as the bridge between the likely exit of American private foundations in Central and Eastern Europe and the arrival of European Union funding.

Some of the discussions were very interesting. There was a desire to enhance coordination between American and European organizations to have them work together towards the same goals. With this in mind, what they chose to do was

to create the Trust for Civil Society, a private foundation that would be within the German Marshall Fund's legal status, but would contain representatives of each of these five foundations. The aim was to make large grants to these countries, which would then be responsible for re-granting within the region. The logic is not hard to understand. People in re-granted regions would have a better sense of what they needed and re-granting would allow them to accomplish whatever was required.

The lessons were learned over an initial three-year period. Built into the original design was a review process that would take place after three years to assess how things were progressing and determine how effectively assets were being used. They found that the organization had, in fact, become a little more cautious, a little slower, and had created far fewer grants than they had originally hoped. The reason for this was, frankly, a matter of organization.

Within each of these grants, there were five donor organizations, all with different agendas, all with different objectives that they wanted to pursue. Also, it turned out, if you wanted to make a large grant—\$2–3 million in each case, it would take a long time to find a suitable partner institution, to evaluate the institution, to come up with an agreement of how the money would be used to develop procedures that you felt confident about using. Thus, at the end of the first four years, the Trust for Civil Society had only established 12 grants.

They decided to change their strategy and so the organization was restructured. All the donor organizations continue to be involved, but the focus then turned to making smaller grants in the region within a shorter period of time. It is commonly believed that when you are dealing with transitional societies, in which civil society is evolving, the need to be responsive to changing events on the ground far outweighs the desire for a sort of pure vision for some consensus among organizations, as opposed to the idea that larger grants might have a longer, sustainable perspective. I think that what we felt, within the GMF at least, was that the second approach proved to be more cumbersome.

As a result, we learned a couple of lessons. The first is that grant-making, for any donor organization is, in practice, really only a part of what that organization does. If you work in transitional societies where civil society is evolving, it is very difficult for you to remain purely neutral, behind the scenes, simply granting endowments. At some level, you inevitably end up playing an advocacy role. I would like to emphasize that the advocacy role is not a narrow political partisan one. It is one

that focuses on broader issues, like regional cooperation and good governance. Additionally there was a concern about making grants to organizations that accomplished things that were worthwhile, but didn't actually create the impact and the dynamism we sought.

There are three organizations, or three projects if you will, that are based directly on this lesson. The first institution is something we refer to as the Balkan Trust for Democracy, which is a project of the GMF that was founded in June 2003. It is a public/private partnership whereby we re-grant funds from USAID in the region with the objective of promoting good governance and regional cooperation in southeastern Europe. The GMF and the Mott Foundation provide the money for the salaries, the operating expenses and an infrastructure for this organization. All of USAID's money goes directly to the field. That means that, although we work very closely with USAID, we are not bound by the same sort of government restrictions, the same sort of government procedures that others are required to deal with. Instead we work with them as partners. We began offering grants in August 2003. Since that time, our organization has received more than 700 proposals from civic groups and NGOs, local and national governments, educational institutions and the media. We have established almost a hundred grants to date and feel that the effectiveness of having a more, as we refer to it, "nimble," more responsive approach to the region through these kind of smaller grants, has been recognized by the fact that this Trust has received several contributions from European sources. We take this as evidence of the program's effectiveness that the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Belgrade made a € 1 million contribution to the Balkan Trust for Democracy and the Swedish International Development Agency recently made a contribution, as has the Greek government.

Again, I want to emphasize that these are not universal laws that would be effective for every institution in every place, but we feel that working in a way that combines public and private sectors, American and European organizations, appears to create a better response in the field and enables us to recognize that sometimes relatively small amounts of money can make big strides in transitional communities. We have another project that we have started called the Black Sea Trusts for Regional Cooperation, which proposes to work with countries in the Black Sea region. This will involve Turkey and will, for the first time for the GMF, involve the *Oblasts* of Russia that are on that border, as well as the Caucasus, Romania and Bulgaria. We hope that this model, developed in the Balkans, will be fruitful for us as well. We also run a project that seeks to engage Belarus, led by my colleague Pavel Demes.

And finally, it is vital that we evaluate ourselves effectively, reflect on how we deal with change and with the constantly evolving nature of funding. Key to this issue is that donor organizations recognize the changing needs on the ground and are able to respond quickly to unexpected changes, especially in transitional societies, even if they still authoritarian societies where it's extremely difficult to predict when change will occur. I remember my first visit here in August 1989. Everyone told me that change was impossible here, and of course it was ten weeks later that the Velvet Revolution took place. This is truly a tribute to the impact of both American and European donor funding.

JEREMY NAGODA

International Coordination Officer, EuropeAid Cooperation Office, EU

Democracy is not a finished or even partially-finished product that we can export. It is actually more like a growing plant, constantly developing and unfolding. The basic concepts of democracy, as you know, include finding common ground with civic society and agreeing to work long-term to achieve our goals. Funding for democracy continues to increase at a fast pace. Working in a multi-lateral setting allows us to achieve more and we encounter problems when we don't work efficiently together.

Since I only have two minutes and I want to allow time for questions, I would like to simply say that donor coordination is important. It is fundamental that we avoid negative assessments of each others' activities, especially since such assessments are often based on a lack of exchange of accurate information. It is vitally important that we work together effectively. Common sense dictates that that we must build a community of practitioners that engages in information exchange. If donors work together, there will simply be a better result.

PAULA SCHRIEFER

Director of Advocacy, Freedom House, USA

Although Freedom House has been a donor at times in the past, I believe I am the only person on this panel who is not a representative of a donor organization in the traditional sense. Freedom House is an NGO. Our organization actually has to compete for the money that you all dispense. I would like to take this opportunity then to clarify our mission statement. As you are well aware, there are vast differences between the EU and the American approaches. Although considered “one government,” the American government is by no means monolithic in any sense. There are a number of donor assistance mechanisms within the American government, which are funded by the government, including the NED and the State Department. Within the State Department, there are a number of sections which are constantly at odds about how things should be accomplished and about allocating funds: the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor, the new Middle East department, the Bureau for Educational and Cultural Affairs (which used to be a separate agency), and other agencies which are regarded as promoting “soft” democracy (although I totally disagree with this assessment), and of course, USAID. These organizations do not coordinate well with one another, and they often don’t even agree on approaches to democracy promotion. Some of them don’t even think that democracy promotion itself is a particularly good idea. There is a big difference, as Gabi Dlouha rightly pointed out, between development promotion and democracy promotion. As I mentioned in my speech yesterday, the idea that the Agency for International Development would start promoting democracy development was something quite new, and it was not something that everybody at USAID bought into. They were used to providing technical assistance and working in the area of traditional development, which has been associated more with something in which the European Union as a body was engaged.

From this we can conclude (through gross generalization) that, in terms of democracy development itself, neither economic development nor other types of development, there have been two separate approaches by the USA and the EU as a whole (separately the EU member countries have very different approaches). In general, the USA approach has been more of a bottom-up approach in terms of democracy promotion, supporting civil society, independent media, and political

opposition. By and large, we can say that the EU approach has been more of a top-down concept: institutional support for democracy, very heavily supportive of the idea of bringing new member states into the EU and applying this effective mechanism to enforce reform in these countries. But the question before us now is what to do about those countries that are never going to be members of the EU. These countries should be taking steps towards implementing democracy, simply for the practicality of safety and security for all nations in the region. The majority of citizens in these countries often contend with the consequences of a lack of freedom and many are subjected to major human rights abuses. Many of these countries, such as Uzbekistan and Zimbabwe, will never be EU members.

It is unrealistic to think that we can use one common approach; in fact, I would argue that a multi-faceted approach, with multiple fund sources and the engagement of activities with diverse objectives, was tremendously beneficial in Central and Eastern Europe for a number of reasons: it allowed for creativity, flexibility and protection for the individuals and organizations that we were trying to assist. It is much easier for us to provide assistance when governments are able to work with one another, especially if they commit to not being critical of one another and not misrepresenting their objectives. As an example, American actions to prevent regime change were extremely dangerous, which is really regrettable. Let us take a look at the example of Zimbabwe. It is completely unimportant to me that Robert Mugabe is the leader of Zimbabwe; what I do care about is the fact that most Zimbabweans are living under disastrous conditions and exposed to gross human rights abuses; the system in and of itself needs to be changed to become more democratic. If that means that Mr. Mugabe needs to leave, fine, but that is not actually the goal.

A number of people have made certain comments that I think are very important. At a time when a lot of American organizations are being criticized for a lack of transparency as to whom we are actually providing assistance, we nevertheless understand that it is not in our best interest to explain the details of specific activity within a project or program. Who in their right mind, for example, would publish a list of human rights defenders working within Zimbabwe, Belarus, Burma or Cuba? Does this confidentiality indicate that the organization has something to hide? Not at all; it is simply trying to protect its people from governments that abuse human rights. Recently there was an article about an organization run by one of our board members. The organization provided training for Iranian political activists. The article was incredibly critical about this particular organization,

claiming that it wasn't well managed, saying that the Iranians in attendance were being duped into attending this training. As I read this article, I thought it interesting that our colleague, who is attempting to engage people in discussion designed to facilitate progress, is being criticized. Meanwhile there is absolutely no mention of the fact that the Iranian government thinks it perfectly acceptable to imprison people for attending a training conference, not to mention the fact that the GFU then unethically interviewed the Iranians who attend these training sessions. This should be the issue which concerns us. Do you think the attendees would risk admitting that they knew what they were doing when they agreed to attend these sessions? My point is this: let's all work together on the same side. Human rights are important; freedom is important; we must promote these values. Naturally we will have many different approaches, and, frankly, that's a good thing. Let's not be at odds with one another when the dictators of the world are working in an incredibly coordinated fashion right now. They realize that we have all been focused on other countries. We are fools if we cannot effectively work together.

JIŘÍ SCHNEIDER

Program Director, Prague Security Studies Institute, Czech Republic

Good morning. I have been asked by the organizers of this conference to talk to you today about how NGOs and organizations like mine, the Institute for Security Studies, assist countries in different phases of transitional development as they seek to establish viable civilian security sectors and to integrate security mechanisms. While security is a prerequisite for democracy, there is some debate as to whether or not the reverse is true: is democracy a prerequisite for security?

This is obviously a subject for very broad debate and we are in the process of organizing a conference on this very issue, however, at this time I would like to briefly introduce our organization by saying that we do not export democracy. More accurately, we export experience. Primarily we share our experiences about how things should not be done rather than how things should be done, which has been a valuable strategy.

Our institute began six years ago in response to requests from students, future young professionals, who realized that, though military security education existed, there was a lack of education in the field of civilian security. These young people understood that an effective civil security force is a key element of the democracy building process and is required to sustain a viable democracy.

At that time, we started a small, modest course in security studies and since then we have contributed to similar courses in international relations and political science programs at civilian universities around the country. Currently we teach security studies at two universities in the Czech Republic, but it took a decade for us to arrange these courses. Why? The problem stemmed from the fact that we had not inherited any civilian security expertise. In essence this meant that we had to rely on a new generation of practitioners. Currently the number of professionals in this field is growing rapidly.

Our initial program was established by an enthusiastic private American donor who had a vision. We soon realized that there was demand for our services abroad as well. In Ukraine, for example, after the Velvet Revolution, many asked for guidance

based on our experiences and wanted advice on what they should avoid doing. Unfortunately some requests for assistance came a bit late, as in the case of the so-called de-Baathification of Iraq.

In our organization, we have found that there is great benefit to incorporating the experiences of key members of the old regime to help develop policy in the post-transitional phase. Rather than neglect individuals who were key members of the previous administration, we found it beneficial to incorporate their expertise and merge it with the goals of the new generation in our efforts to create policies for the future. President Havel's former security policy advisor and former head of Czech intelligence, in fact, is the head of our Institute. We have others on our team as well who have been able to provide a valuable perspective based on their past personal experiences.

Our approach is not to teach the best practice. On the contrary, our foundation is based on mistakes we have made in the past. Our consumers welcome this approach since they benefit from what went wrong and can avoid making similar mistakes themselves. We had been asked by Gabi Dlouha of the Foreign Ministry, whom you met yesterday, and at Ukraine's request, to start a pilot program in Ukraine. This project began in 2005, the results of which I won't detail here, but we did establish some common objectives. Host country participants should have input in shaping the program. The government is not altruistic in its funding; it has certain objectives. It grants money because it seeks to have a network of people who understand the management of the security sector. These people, in turn, would serve as future contacts for cooperation. Also, this process empowers young professionals in this field. It is essential for them to acquire experience, access, and contacts, even more so than funding.

JEREMY DRUKER

Executive Director, Transitions Online, Czech Republic

Let me just say how proud I am to be here between Jan and Katerina, two old friends from Slovak Republic who opened up their offices to me at the outset of the dark days of Slovak Republic. Those were actually the good old days for me: I was still a journalist, not a manager like I am today. In those days, only 12 years ago, there was very little Internet capability and there were no mobile phones. It was valuable to have people such as those two open up their offices to me back in those days.

Before speaking specifically about individual successes and failures, I would like to say that it is a great accomplishment to have media on this panel today. We have really progressed in our efforts to incorporate governance, security, and economic transition, and the practice of donors adding media components and considering ideas such as training journalists almost as an afterthought, is a thing of the past.

Transitions OnLine is an international publishing and media development organization, a Czech NGO that has existed since 1999. Some of you might have known our print predecessor, Open Media Research Institute, which existed back in the mid-1990's. Although many of us miss the print version, we have, at this point, successfully transferred over to the Internet and created what I hope will be an effective mechanism that will serve us far into the future.

Our mission focus is on Central and Eastern Europe, the Balkans, the former Soviet Union, and not on worldwide dissemination of news media, which would be beyond our means. Our two main operations are: producing the Internet news magazine, which covers transition issues largely using local journalists who understand the climate, local languages and who can keep us informed about topics neglected by the rest of the media. Many of these journalists learn on the job, writing for us as they developed professional skills. Based on our professional requirements and interest on the part of the journalists for more formal training, we created an institute dedicated to new media affairs. In the last few weeks, we have conducted workshops in Kyrgyzstan and in Prague, where we ran a workshop for a new generation of 30

Czech and Slovak journalists on new media and Internet publishing. We also have a series of distance learning courses that we run in cooperation with the BBC World Trust – mostly in Russian, for both Russians and Central Asians.

It is very difficult to look back over the last 15 years and come up with only three successes, so I would like to add one more. First of all, we recognize the value in exposing both older journalism veterans and younger professionals in the field to various new approaches to journalism. Study and exchange programs abroad have enabled journalists to broaden their experiences and subsequently enabled them to become better equipped in their field of expertise.

Media assistance helps support alternative non-state publications during very challenging times. With respect to this issue, we are focused currently on Belarus, Central Asia, and a few other such regions. Critical to our understanding of media development has been our positive experiences in such regions as the Balkans and Slovak Republic.

An inconsistent level of training is an area that can be considered a failure. Many journalists in the Czech Republic still today are wary of the word “training” because they have attended seminars where instructors were temporary visitors to the region who didn’t necessarily understand the local laws, local setting, or journalism climate. Instead of effective teachers and leaders, “trainers” were seen as highly-paid, uninformed individuals who didn’t actually possess much constructive knowledge. We continue to have difficulty attracting professional Czech, Slovak or Polish journalists to any of our training programs, though we do get quite a bit of participation from the Balkans, Ukraine and Central Asia. The word “training” in the Czech Republic still today has a negative connotation and so we have renamed the sessions as symposiums and seminars.

There is too little emphasis on creating self-sustainable media training centers and alternative media. I will speak later about Central Europe more specifically, but the lack of alternative media, a key media mode of support, was a major issue in the Balkans, due to a lack of interest in creating viable business plans and looking for alternative sources of income. Media training centers in Central Europe were, at one time, very productive, viable and lively bases that no longer exist.

There is too little emphasis on co-opting management. This has been a problem since the inception phase. In the early years, there was a lot of emphasis on training

the younger generation and little emphasis on attracting well-established editors and publishers to the idea that training would enable them to update and improve their skills, thus attract readership and allow them to reach a wider audience. Furthermore, we have trained many young journalists who return to their countries and are unable to implement the methods we have taught them because they must contend with managers who disregard innovative ideas. Unfortunately, we are left with frustrated young professionals essentially waiting for their editors to retire or die off.

Another failure might be that we are too slow to embrace new media models, such as Internet publishing and new media. While interest in employing updated forms of media has changed dramatically over the last few years, our donors, some of whom are with us today from NED, GMF, OSI, have come to the realization that new media is a powerful concept with powerful instruments. We work with some donors who are particularly progressive in pioneering this concept, but progress has taken some time. Whereas in the past, many donors were reluctant to fund projects associated with the Internet due to the belief that only a small minority had access, many have now reconsidered.

Another concern in the Czech Republic is there are, at most, only two or three individuals who are conducting training for professionals. There seems to be little understanding of the need for continuous education and ongoing learning in this area. Unfortunately this void of education has resulted in the consequences we see today: that many journalists are restricted from elevating their positions on the workplace.

The quality of media outlets is relatively low. Though some countries have a few adequate media outlets, generally there is much public frustration with the quality across the region. Tabloid news is gaining popularity and is now viewed as a viable source of “serious media”.

Though this was not on the agenda, I would like to take a moment to talk about the future. There is a new realization that new media can be an effective instrument to counter state power and state-controlled media. The idea is to start small: blogging in Belarus, for example, has grown dramatically over the last year and a half. Initially we had a grant to promote blogging in Belarus, but that was ultimately restricted by the tenuous situation on the ground, so our project focused simply on introducing people to the concept of blogging. Belarus now has a lively community of approximately 28,000 bloggers, which is an incredible achievement.

Keep the spirit of independent journalism alive through training and exchange programs. Our work in Central Asia, Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan has proven to be tremendously successful. We have certainly seen the benefit of bringing citizens of those countries to places like Prague to see how things can be done differently. Through their writings for us and for other publications, independent journalists have been able to gain useful skills to enhance their professional development.

Specialized training provides an opportunity to study more than the fundamentals of basic journalism. In our training, we cover theory, European integration, methods used in writing about minorities, about excluded groups, and provide instruction on economic reporting.

We work with journalism faculties to build traditional and multimedia skills. At a seminar we held last week, we received complaints from students from Olomouc and Brno, that there were still too many instructors who had never worked as journalists and had very old-fashioned methods. Currently there is still too much focus on traditional skills where multi-media skills must be employed, especially in today's world where the capability of journalists to write effectively for the Internet and run successful radio and television broadcasts are necessary for the future.

We encourage publishers and journalist organizations to take on more responsibilities that used to be handled by international organizations. Vltava-Labe Press, a German publisher that owns practically all Czech regional publications, has conducted an interesting experiment. They invested money in the Institute of Local Publishing, a commercial publisher that is running a training institute specifically to educate journalists. This academic/commercial venture, designed specifically to train journalists, is an example of just one interesting model.

We must have greater focus on sustainability, but not at any cost. Across the NGO field and in the media sector, there is heightened emphasis on sustainability. At TOL, we are working with a model for a media development organization (with the assistance of commercial activities) that is not so dependent on grants. We must understand that these efforts require time. Individuals working in media development organizations should be encouraged if they are moving in the right direction. In Central Asia and Belarus and other such regions, it must be understood that sustainability is a long-term endeavor.

GRIGORIJ MESEŽNIKOV

President, Institute for Public Affairs, Slovak Republic

I am not an economist, so when I was asked to take part in this panel and to speak about economic transition, I warned the organizers that I would not speak about the economic transition as such, but rather about the role of civil society organizations; which is really very important. Some aspects of the role of civil society actors in economic transition in Central and Eastern European countries are applicable, even transferable, to other transitive, albeit less advanced, countries.

It would be my privilege to speak today not about my institute, but rather about other institutions and independent think tanks that have an economic agenda, and their role in the success of economic reform in European countries, with special emphasis on Slovak Republic's experience. Basically we can identify three dimensions in the overall society transition process in Central and Eastern European countries. The first is the political dimension, which refers to the institutionalization and consolidation of democracy as well as the introduction of a liberal democratic regime, based on the division of power, multi-party democracy and respect for human rights. The second is an economic dimension—the introduction of market economy principles, radical changes in ownership, restructuring of industry, conversion and introduction of competitive principles. The third dimension is an external one—foreign and security policy, aimed at integration into Euro-Atlantic groupings, such as membership in NATO and the EU.

Today, seventeen years after the collapse of the communist regime in the Central European states, these countries are consolidated democracies, functioning market economies; they are members of both integration organizations, the EU and NATO; in essence we could argue that they are an integral part of the West in terms of the economic and political organization of society. In current literature on transition, the whole process of societal transformation in these countries is considered to be a success. The question is, what are the critical factors of this success?

Let us take a closer look at the economic transitional process as we experienced it after the fall of communism. In the beginning, we had stagnating economies that were fully state-controlled. We had a lack of capital, foreign and domestic,

for business activity. We had strong, sometimes even prevailing paternalistic and egalitarian elements in the value orientation of the population in the economic area, which were not very favorable towards sustainable support of radical reform measures. These were three negative, complicating factors. We also had very enthusiastic, pro-transformation political elites, who enjoyed the support of the population at the time but who lacked extensive knowledge of how to transform the economy. In the majority of the Central European countries, after the first steps toward economic transition had been taken, which led to the emergence of social difficulties, open resistance against the reformist course followed. On the political level, it led to a replacement of pro-reform, broadly speaking liberal elites, by their ideological opponents.

Nevertheless, transition continued in all areas, including the economy. Even those ruling political elites who did not openly declare their allegiance to liberal economic reforms failed to stop the process. No doubt the external pressure of the EU played a significant role; however, domestic circumstances were regarded to be as important as the external factors and the civil society factor. So, after the collapse of communism, the rebirth of a civil society tradition took place in all Central and Eastern European countries—the renewal of associations, the application of ethics in society, civic activism, altruism, social philanthropy, volunteerism and commitment to public well-being.

The communist regime managed to destroy many things in its time, but fortunately, failed to transform society into a social desert. Elements of civil society, inherited from the pre-communist era, which lay dormant and undeveloped during that time, started to flourish immediately after totalitarian restrictions disappeared. The political backlash, as a reaction to the introduction of liberal economic principles, occurred in some of the transforming countries. Populations under the pressure of tough social circumstances gave political legitimacy to anti-reformist, or in some countries, even anti-liberal political forces, but civil society succeeded in keeping the reform fire alive. Bulgarian analyst Ivan Krustev of the Centre for Liberal Strategies had argued that it was the independent expert community, the think tanks and policy centers, that took over the liberal reforms agenda in many Central and Eastern European countries when reformist political parties lost elections and failed. I would expand on Krustev's statement by saying that it was self-organized civil society that saved the agenda, in a broader sense, and pressured the ruling elites not to halt the transition completely.

The first and biggest success of civil society in the economic transitions was rescuing the agenda of socioeconomic reforms. Who were the actors of this rescue operation? They were independent policy institutes, think tanks, and experts; but their role at the time was not simply to keep the reform fire alive; they were also the authors and advocates of economic reforms. Think tanks prepared the reform strategies in particular sectors of the economy, and shaped the public debate on reforms, persuading the public that reform measures were necessary, generating additional support for them from the opinion-making community, and eliciting support among politicians for continuing economic transformation, which was a very important role.

The second success of civil society in economic transition was their direct contribution to this process. When reformist political forces succeeded in returning to power, they invited people from think tanks, including economic ones, to be the immediate implementers of reform strategies as state officials. So, they added their names to specific reforms. This, then, was the main success of civil society in economic transition.

Let me now mention Slovak Republic's experience, the experience of a country, which was (at least until last summer) considered the champion of economic reforms in Central Europe. The whole story of the Slovak "reform tiger" is a combination of the will of political elites to continue the reform process with the determination of civil society to keep reform alive, to generate reform strategies and reform practitioners, to educate the population about reforms, and to monitor the process of immediate reform implementation.

In the elections of 1992, pro-reform political forces were severely defeated by nationalist and populist parties, on the wave of the population's disagreement with profound systemic changes, especially in the economy. The prospects for a continuation of reforms were very limited, much worse than in other countries where initiators of reforms were replaced by their opponents. The Slovak anti-reform forces were authoritarian and not liberal in the political sense, using non-democratic methods. They ousted the proponents of the reform course from the state administration, and it was civil society that offered these people safe harbor in think tanks and analytical centers. NGOs emerged in the 1990's, which employed such previously marginalized individuals, as did organizations such as the Center for Economic Development, INECO, the Hajek Foundation and the Space Foundation. Experts working in these organizations monitored and analyzed

the economic policy of the government, publicized their analytical output and participated in the public debate on the overall state of economic transition.

A triple effect took place following this phase: we accumulated a robust knowledge of the country's economy, the reformist approach persisted, and opinion makers changed their minds. This period lasted until 1998, when authoritarian parties were defeated in the elections by reformist elements. After the change of power, economic think tanks offered reform strategies to victorious political elites. In fact, even prior to this time, some ideas from these reform strategies had been included in the economic sections of electoral manifestos of some political parties. Immediately after the elections, these provisions were directly incorporated into the governmental program manifesto.

I would like to mention those sectors in which the independent expert community, represented by independent think tanks, contributed to the elaboration of reform strategies. Those sectors included the tax system, the pension system, health care, welfare and social security system, labor law, public finances, public administration and self-government, including fiscal decentralization, the bank system and natural monopolies. In all these areas, those working in think tanks fundamentally contributed to the creation of reform strategies. Some experts from these think tanks served from 1998 to 2006 as state officials, using their positions to implement reform strategies they had devised. These individuals included the Finance Minister, the Minister of Healthcare, the Minister of Labor and Social Affairs, the State Secretary of the Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, the governmental plenipotentiary for Public Administration and Social Reform, Head of Unit of Economic Policy at the Ministry of Economics; Vice-Chair of the Anti-Monopoly Office, to name a few. After establishing the positive macroeconomic parameters of the country, changes essential to transition began: high GDP growth, lowered rates of inflation, the reduction of unemployment, the influx of FDI, and the increased impact of civil society actors on the process of economic transition including positive changes on the public mindset. It is very important to mention this aspect. Today the vast majority of the opinion-making community, namely journalists, are unambiguously pro-reform, and the level of popular support for economic transformation in society, in fact the introduction of liberal principles as regards the economy, is gradually increasing. Experts from Slovak independent economic think tanks have started to work on the transfer of the reformist experience to other countries: less advanced countries like Ukraine or Serbia. Some

expertise is required in the Czech Republic as well, for example the Czech Republic will soon be undergoing healthcare system reform.

In the area of economic development, there are some issues which should be addressed. I have identified three deficiencies. The first is a lack of pressure on domestic entrepreneurs to force them to use the principles of modern social responsibility and modern social philanthropy. The Pontis Foundation has recently launched an excellent project which encourages the business community in Slovak Republic to make advances in this area; however the domestic business community is still quite reluctant to get involved. Certainly civil society actors could be more engaged in putting pressure on the domestic business community.

The second deficiency concerns a lack of pressure on the economic community to accept rules introducing transparency and reducing capacity for corruption and clientage. Again there should be more pressure toward this end.

The third deficiency relates to the way civil society actors communicate with ordinary people; the link between necessary economic reform, long-term effectiveness and the improvement of citizens' lives.

In conclusion, without developed civil society structures, without traditions of association and the ethos of social altruism and commitment, without the expertise of economic think tanks, the process of economic transition in Central and Eastern European countries would not be very successful. In my opinion, this point deserves special attention as it can greatly benefit less advanced transitional countries in the world today. Thank you.

KATARÍNA VAJDOVÁ

Director, Civil Society Development Foundation, Slovak Republic

IMPACT OF SLOVAK NGOS ON SLOVAK REPUBLIC'S OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (SLOVAK AID)

Impact of Slovak NGOs in the Official Development Assistance (ODA) provision was determined by practical experience as follows:

- Source of alternative solutions for public policies
- Pro bono activities service provider to the society
- Implementation of social experiments
- Democracy and rule of law watchdog

According to official statistics (as of 28 Feb 2006, Ministry Interior SR), there are 31, 698 organizations registered in 7 legal forms. Concrete numbers for example include: civic associations– 27, 906; non-profit pro bono service providers – 1,365; non-investment funds- 555; foundations – 475.

The scope of activities is broad, research of SPACE listed the following proportions: education (39.9%), social welfare (32.3%), free time and leisure (29.6%), art and culture (18.9%), protection of individual and community rights (17.2%), environment (13.3%), charity (11.7%), healthcare (9.5%), research and analysis (7.3%), exchange of volunteers (6.4%).

In relation to the ODA, since 2003 Slovak NGOs contributed to international development assistance in the following areas:

- Stimulation of social reforms in the target countries
Občianske oko, Nadácia PONTES, INEKO, Človek v ohrození, DAPHNE, Partners for Democratic Change, MEMO' 98
- Transfer of know-how about the process of transition:
SFPA, INEKO, NISPACee, Transparency International, Institute for Public Affairs (IVO)
- Organizing collections for humanitarian aid:
People in Peril, Slovak Red Cross, ADRA

- Christian organizations organized charities, social services provision, worked with young people and were active in education and volunteer work: eRko-Hnutie kresťanských spoločností detí, Caritas, Tabita, Evanjelická diakonia
- Awareness on ODA
NGDO platform (members 19 + 7)
- Consulting and advising decision-making in the area of ODA:
NGDO Platform serves as the member of the ODA Coordination Committee and as the member of the Steering Committees for Trust Fund and the Bratislava Belgrade Fund
- Administration of the ODA funds (Civil Society Development Foundation administered the Bratislava Belgrade Fund for Serbia and Montenegro)

Slovak NGOs have been actively engaged in the formulation and start up of the Slovak ODA. For instance, the research Study by M.E.S.A. 10 defined the potential of Slovak Republic in the area of ODA as follows:

- The necessity of joining principles of the international development assistance millennium Development Goals, poverty reduction, conflict prevention, democratization and protection of human rights
- Respect for the needs of the target country
- Using comparative advantages of Slovak Republic
- Orientation on programs and projects to be effective

Specific Slovak experience in transition and implementation of reforms was envisaged as useful for the target countries due to following reasons:

- Citizens in target countries have difficulties in understanding market economy
- Paternalistic thinking is prevailing
- Interest groups benefit from unfinished reforms
- There is a need to create tradition in democratic principles

Slovak ODA target countries included 1 program country (Serbia and Montenegro) and 12 project countries: Afghanistan, Albania, Bosnia Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Sudan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan

In line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) main priorities of the midterm strategy of the Slovak ODA includes:

- Building democratic institutions and market environment

Slovak ODA implementation in Serbia and Montenegro (SMN) (by end of 2006 the only Slovak ODA Program country) serves as a good concrete case study:

- Infrastructure (technical and social)
- Landscape, protection of environment, agriculture, food safety and proper use of raw materials

Slovak Republic and SMN signed the intergovernmental agreement on the ODA provision and agreed on the common document – Country Strategy Paper for Serbia and Montenegro. This document defines 3 main priorities:

- Civil society development, social animation and regional development
- Rehabilitation of infrastructure and development of SMEs
- SMN integration into international organizations and groupings

Slovak Republic can now share case studies that reflect all three main priorities such as:

PRIORITY 1: BUILDING DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS

Občianske oko (Civic Eye) in partnership with – CESID in Belgrade

Implemented the project “Citizens for the Future” which focused on voters’ mobilization and monitoring elections (i.e. June 2004 presidential elections) and campaigns in Serbia.

Project resulted in:

- 40% voter turnout
- Pro-democratic candidate elected
- Valid elections

NISPACee implemented the project under the title “How to become a better policy advisor in public administration reform” for participants from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Macedonia, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

The first of three projects in Kosovo, it was implemented by the People in Peril Association and focused on strengthening multi-ethnic radio in Kosovo. Final beneficiaries were 4 radio stations in Kosovo. Concrete outputs of the project were:

- Stronger transmitter

- Professional training and development for reporters
- Program exchange among various ethnic stations
- Internships in Slovak Republic
- Improved multi-ethnic communication through the media

Slovak Foreign Policy Association – Research Center implemented the project named “Support to the Public Debate on the EU in Serbia.” The project focused on:

- Elaboration of analysis, studies, transfer of know-how
- Conferences, material support, education
- Two partners in Serbia in Belgrade and Kikinda
- Internships of young Serbian fellows to Slovak Republic

PRIORITY 2: REHABILITATION AND BUILDING OF INFRASTRUCTURE (TECHNICAL AND SOCIAL)

Foundation INTEGRA implemented several projects, (e.g. one in Kenya under the title Business Serving Local Communities), introducing the principle of “corporate social responsibility”. Within this project, 170 entrepreneurs (Kenyan representative), were trained and some visited Slovak Republic. INTEGRA Foundation in Serbia implemented the project Micro-Enterprise for Women at Risk in Serbia. The project included provision of micro loans and setting up the micro loan fund for unemployed women.

Projects designed to assist in building technical and social infrastructures:

Union of Blind and Partially Sighted in Slovak Republic. Thanks to the delivery of 168 Braille typewriters of Slovak production, Tatrapoint was organized and placed into schools and libraries in order to integrate handicapped individuals and provide them with access to information and education.

Foundation Pontis in partnerships with two NGOs and local administration in Smederevska Palanka and Smederevo has created 2 youth clubs for IDP (refugees) in Central Serbia. Results of the project serve as model solutions for both urban and rural environments.

People in Peril in Afghanistan was active in building the school, training teachers and providing literacy courses in writing and reading. The project provided access

to education, contributed to the elimination of illiteracy and increased the number of girls and women attending schools (currently only 30 % of girls attend school).

MAGNA was active in Cambodia through the project “Hope for the Better Life of HIV Positive Children”. As a result, an education center was built. The project contributed to the elimination of discrimination and isolation of ill individuals.

PRIORITY 3: LANDSCAPE, PROTECTION OF ENVIRONMENT, FOOD SAFETY AND USE OF RAW MATERIALS

NGO DAPHNE – Institute of Applied Ecology implemented the project “Support and Capacity Building in the Area of the Ramsar and Carpathian Convention”.

The project focused on provision of geographic information systems, database for collection and evaluation of data, training, internships and technical support. An unexpected positive result was that applied methodology was used in another 6 countries.

Carpathian Environmental Outlook (environmental and socio-economic conditions in Carpathian region).

Slovak NGOs have by now significantly contributed to successful ODA implementation. They have demonstrated the capability to transfer expertise, gain experience in transition and became a significant ODA player. A number of Slovak NGOs projects were co-financed by the Canadian Agency for International Development. This fact proves that the Slovak ODA projects correspond with international standards.

BREAK-OUT SESSIONS

Sharing experiences on delivering assistance in challenging environments. Ideas for better cooperation and future strategies in the relevant geographical areas.

THE BALKANS – GROUP REPORT

RAPPORTEUR:

ZUZANA DZÚRIKOVÁ, DUŠAN KUŽEL

Our group was small as well, but it gave us an opportunity to dig deeper into the subject and share practical experiences from working in the Balkans. Mostly we discussed three countries where we work-- Serbia, Montenegro and Kosovo. The areas in which we provide assistance fall into four major categories--working with parliaments, political parties, local governments and organizing exchange programs and study tours. To summarize a bit and give some structure to the endeavor, we agreed on basically two challenges that are very typical for the Balkans. The first one was the problem in overcoming post-war emotional attitudes and coping with the past. This is definitely something that could unite the Balkan region, but it definitely makes it difficult to share experiences between neighboring states. Some people were referring to different examples about how they managed to overcome these problems and how to unite Croats and Serbs. One of the ways to do it is to bring in outside people. If you have at least two trainers coming to instruct – one representing a neighboring country and the second one representing Central Europe or Western Europe or United States – the tensions dissipate, and it is much easier to achieve constructive cooperation.

The second problem that exists in the region, and some of my colleagues already mentioned it, is the visa problem. People from the Balkans cannot travel, they lack language skills, and they have great problems in accessing external information. It is of great importance to take people out of these countries and expose them to the wider world. Peter was mentioning that sixty percent of university students in Belgrade have never been abroad. As a result, these young people are more likely to support less democratic parties. In Belgrade, for instance, young people are supporting the radical party in Serbia. It is partly because of the lack of contact with the outside world. As I mentioned, we at NDI have great examples from several study tours when we took MPs from countries like Montenegro to Slovak Republic or to Hungary, and it worked really well. For people in their forties and fifties, who still remember how great a country Yugoslavia once was and who can now see where we are today in the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Hungary, it is definitely

very motivating for them. This is truly what we recommend. Basically, it comes down to taking people from there and bringing them here. And not only the young ones but those who are actually making decisions in these countries, i.e., people in their late forties and early fifties.

Moving on, we said that the experiences from the four Visegrad countries are very relevant. There is a demand for this sort of information. Even institutes like IRI and NDI discovered, a long time ago, that it is better and less expensive to hire trainers on the spot or to bring trainers from neighboring countries rather than flying them in from another part of the world. That was not a very surprising conclusion.

The composition of our group was actually very, very unique because there was excellent cooperation between IRI and NDI. In addition, we had people from the donor side of the community like Katarína and other NGOs. Some people posed this question: Is it better to work more on a local level or on a national level? Katarína was saying that in Serbia they have much better results from working on a local level. It is easier for them to find partners and matching funds, it is less expensive, people are less spoiled and the results are quite visible. Katarína was referring to a project where they built bridges in six cities in Serbia. I was arguing that institutes like ours have good access to political parties and to people in the parliament. So, for us it makes sense to work on a national level, because we know people there and this is where we feel we have the greatest amount of influence. Perhaps the recommendation is to work on both, but unless you have good access at the national level, and, speaking specifically of Serbia, maybe it's easier to be more successful and work on the local level with local partners.

For organizations like NDI and IRI, our great advantage is that we have in-country presence, that we can build long-term partnerships and that we have access to people and information on the ground. At the same time we know that funding for the region is declining. As a consequence, we had to close a number of our offices. The question then is: What to do next and how to build on these advantages? One of the recommendations made was to cultivate relationships with local partners who can do the work for us while we are there to consult so that we do not lose touch completely. This is definitely one of the challenges for organizations like Partners for Democratic Change and NDI, IRI.

Number six is very simple--it's all about people. To a great extent, how successful different projects are is a direct reflection of the people who are implementing them,

how flexible they are, whether they are able to determine needs and to respond well to the existing needs. It is, therefore, important to work with good people and to hire the right people for the right positions.

The final one is the funding issue. That, once again, generated some emotion in our group. There is a need for both institutional funding and project funding. But basically there is a need to allocate some funding for institutional support for the needs of those organizations so that they can survive from one project to another. A good response came from Katrina, who told us that ODA in Slovak Republic wants to divide its assistance into institutional support and program funding. We think that this is the correct approach, which is to think of the institutional approach as well, because we need organizations to implement those projects, and these organizations have to be viable and have to survive the periods in between projects.

BELARUS, GEORGIA, MOLDOVA, UKRAINE – GROUP REPORT

RAPPORTEURS:

DAVID STULÍK, PAWEŁ KAZANECKI

We decided to include Russia as well at the beginning of the meeting. It was a donor's request. We focused on three topics, and I will speak about the first one. The first topic was about working with partners. How do we find partners in these countries, how do we select them, and how do we verify them? The second point was related to the funding – how the NGOs or the donors can influence the shape of funding coming from state sources like national ministries or EU funding programs? The third topic was dealing with the distinction or kind of dividing line between democracy-promoting projects and development projects – working with official institutions in rather difficult countries on economic development projects (whether it's not just like the feeding regime and things like that). So, I will say few words about some practical recommendations or best-practice lessons. We came to the conclusion that sometimes it is better to work with smaller groups, to focus more on the quality and not on the quantity, because there are examples like the scholarship programs for Belarusian students when it did not make so much sense to work with large quantities of students. There is still a danger that we might exclude some people, people who do not have the social capital, who do not have the contacts abroad, who do not have the language skills. We have to keep in mind that quality is not always the only solution. The other thing is regular contact among organizations that work in these countries so they can exchange information about their partners. They should meet regularly to share their experiences – good and bad. Similarly, regular contact should be maintained with partners in those countries. How can you find these partners? If you are a new organization, one should go to the older organizations and ask for their advice. We also concluded that one should not trust rumors about some people. It is better just to investigate on your own or through some trusted entities. Or, if you are a network – like some people who were in our workshop who were representing some networks -- you can have some formal requirements for accepting new members. You can have peer review, and you can set certain standards that the others have to meet. Alternatively, the new partners from these countries would be required to get recommendations

from existing members of these networks. The other thing which is very important is that the organizations working in these post-Soviet countries should be aware of cronyism. They should be aware that working with the same people is not always a good thing. That is why it is important to share information. The other thing that we could and should also try to do is to meet our partners in their offices – not in hotels, but in their offices – because their offices can tell you a lot about them. Also, when you return from these trips, you should write reports about the meetings. You should write down your impressions and share them with the other organizations from abroad so they can give you some feedback.

The second topic we discussed was the question of the integration of programs and strategies of new donor countries in the European Union, by which we mean the Czech Republic, Slovak Republic, Poland, Lithuania and all the new countries that started to work out their own aid programs. We discussed the following things: First, we believe that they should consult with all donors who have more experience in these countries and who know more partners in the countries which we discussed. Second, they should have special meetings to work out common strategies not only as regards donors but also to formulate broader common policies regarding Eastern neighbors in the EU. We also discussed the questions and problems concerning visas and some very practical questions about certain obstacles in implementing programs in those countries. We also discussed the need for meetings in each country to determine how much each donor gave to which country. Someone brought up the example of Belarus, where there has been a very good experience with donor meetings. We also thought about policy coordination and monitoring of donor activity, especially as regards EU funds. All EU countries should work on a common EU donor policy. There was also a question of evaluation of the EU instruments, which could be done now, and especially during the Czech presidency, which is coming at the EU. We also discussed the case of overload-funding in different countries. Many of us sitting at the table believe that we have such a situation now in Belarus, where we have more funds available than projects and ideas about how to use those funds. We discussed the problem of lobbying and different changes and common strategies and the lobbying of those strategies by NGOs on the national level, towards our own authorities. And those strategies should also be coordinated among us, on the NGO level. We also discussed problems which we have now in the Czech Republic and in Poland on aid institution building. And we discussed the fact that this system is still not stabilized, there are no procedures worked out and it still has not been decided which institutions should take responsibility for those programs. And

the third point that we discussed was the question of contradictions sometimes between democracy programs and development programs. We agreed that both kinds of programs are, of course, needed but it is important to monitor the mechanisms and how they are implemented. All donors should take into account public criticisms of various programs and especially in such cases as Belarus, for example, where the development programs were working in support of the regime, which was, of course, at odds with democracy building. We also agreed that donors should not claim that they work for democratization if they create programs that are counter to this aim. And it should be openly stated that the aims of those donors' programs are different. We discussed democracy promotion as a separate element of the state donors' strategies, and we agreed that it is very important that this element is visible. It has its special place, because working only on development, especially economic development, can be completely counterproductive. For example, we discussed joining Russia to the former Soviet states, and we agreed that building a free-market economy is not enough to guarantee a democratic environment in the country.

MIDDLE EAST – GROUP REPORT

RAPORTEURS:

IGOR KLIMEŠ, MICHAEL DIEDRING

CHALLENGE:

How to effect an understanding of democracy and civil society.

- Restrictive government is the obstacle to democracy (the case of Burma, China, etc.). In this case, change is relatively easy because people fundamentally understand the basic concept.
- A complex approach combines the following: understanding the basis of the culture and society, carefully choosing terminology that conveys the meaning and intent. Understanding the society is necessary before choosing the terminology as some terms are taboo though the topic itself is not. Democracy promotion in these settings is closely connected to provision of basic services.

FOR BOTH:

- Offer our experience
- The right of recipients to choose the kind of assistance that they think they need the most.
- Breakdown the bigger concept into smaller parts, where the experience is transferable regardless of cultural differences.

PROBLEMS:

- Foreign funds
- Overtraining – not only training, but also follow up funding
- Monitoring evaluation
- The role of diasporas – important role in the Far East. Groups already active in home countries. Middle East is more difficult because of its problematic composition of groups in diaspora and limited knowledge about the groups.

LATIN AMERICA – GROUP REPORT

RAPPORTEURS:

MAE LIZ ORREGO RODRIGUEZ, KRISTINA PRUNEROVÁ

1. update on the Cuba project
2. challenges – island, outside advocacy
3. cooperation, coordination, funding

COOPERATION ON CUBAN PROJECTS DISCUSSED.

Mr Surotchak – former director of Freedom House Slovak Republic and IRI resident program director in Bratislava

- finding other organizations in Venezuela and Mexico
- increasing funding of Venezuela and other states because they cannot operate there and find cooperation from Europe (Eastern Europe)

Mexico – more politically oriented program with PAN party and relationship with civil society organizations – regards particularly election campaign

- identifying parties and concrete contacts for dialogue
- Americans, Spanish and Germans not welcomed
- therefore tried to start talks with Austrians
- dealing with campaign situations
- use of radio in election campaign etc.

Cuba – June 2007 – Jim Nelson's project

- inviting media from the USA: CNN, Associated Press, Wall Street Journal and members of the European Parliament and congressmen
- part of an overall Cuba project
- suggestions for participation of Czech MEPs – Hybášková, etc.
- appreciating participation of Central and Eastern Europeans
- indirect cooperation with Pontis, but no official relationship
- building bilateral relationship with the directorate

Venezuela – planned more like Cuban project, it is in the early stages
Maelliz Orrego Rodriguez

SILK = Swedish International Liberal Centre–

- associated with Swedish Liberal party
 - avoids dealing with embargo
 - five main projects
1. cooperation with KIK – sending delegations and contributions to 15 adopted families
 - private donors, MPs support, cooperation with the right coalition,
 - money from companies, public and government
 - publishing books – money saved for other projects
 2. working with the opposition – PSD more left, PLC more right
 - cooperation with SGM – youth movement?
 - training, three delegations a year – involving journalists
 - working with, Serbia, Belarus, Russia
 - implementing experiences from Eastern Europe for Cuba
 - sending materials to teacher for workshops, etc.
 - receive projects and send money for it
 3. independent libraries – delegations with money to buy books
 - reach as many libraries as possible – finished last year (since 2002)
 - related to the information monopoly
 4. publishing various types of books – six per year
 - send jailed people letters, etc.
 5. Opinion Builder – in Sweden – organizing debates, writes articles says that the fight in Sweden is as important as on the island, as is mutual cooperation.

Martin Pašiak – Pontis Foundation

- inside island – trips to support prisoners with money
- outside – raising public awareness project in Slovak Republic and other states – Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia (Hungary has a different initiative, so they do not cooperate)
- support the debate on the EU level as well
- advocacy: Minister of Foreign Affairs and on the EU level

- at the moment: campaign on political prisoners started in November 2006 and ended in March – sending postcards for symbolic prize
- they are to continue the campaign in Easter – 12 bookstores as major partners for collecting postcards
- thinks that targeted campaign would be more efficient than bookstores
- trips not scheduled yet – one planned for summer
- problems with funding individual trips

Pontis – cooperation with SME, but thinking about cooperation with Hospodárské noviny

- involved in Lithuania, suggesting cooperation

Kristina Prunerová – People in Need

- 15 trips to Cuba – divided
- support of independent journalism, manual for them + equipment – 2 years
- connection of independent journalists with European media, especially right wing media
- free info from Cuba for Czech media and Cubans get money for that – started in January
- 15 journalists and 15 media contacted, choice needs to be made
- attempt to make the media more open, contacting European media as well
- couple of trips focused on APs who ask for visa, etc.
- trying to get Germans and Slovaks (Pontis), other countries for cooperation
- politicians generally use it for their interests but do not help
- depends on the access to the ministry
- decided not to send Czechs on the trips in the future

CHALLENGES

ISLAND:

- Problems – a lot of people arrested – security
- Why? Security measures not sufficiently respected.
- Better guidelines and training needed in Slovak Republic and Czech Republic, in Sweden there are preparation seminars
- Consider sending other Eastern Europeans, others do not have the sense for the situation

OUTSIDE ADVOCACY:

- Better cooperation with politicians emphasized
 - on the national as well as EU level
- MEPs presenting their reports
- Cooperation with other movements and NGOs

Problems with funding of trips

Emphasis placed on effectiveness of public campaigns

All speakers: agreement on lack of quality media, especially newspapers, lack of cooperation, they are not open enough

COOPERATION, COORDINATION:

- Discussing Berlin meeting
- Agreement to cooperate on formulating common proclamation
- Sharing contacts on MEPs etc.
- Considering cooperation with youth organization

DISCUSSION OF CHALLENGES:

- Talking about meeting of ambassadors of Eastern European countries Visegrad, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovenia and the USA department – through ambassadors get the countries to do more (as a follow-up to the conference in Miami)
- find other organizations, start advocacy and create pressure on governments to do something
- meeting of Latam and Austrian NGOs – main topic – exploitation and cultural relations (Kristina)
- leadership, put pressure on people in management of NGOs
- discussing participation of French colleagues – groups here do not communicate with each other (MaelLiz) – missing organization
- uniting the opposition
- funding?