



minimal	moderate	moderate	moderate	limited	limited	minimal	strong	minimal	very strong	moderate
▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲	▲
Brazil	European Union	France	Germany	India	Indonesia	Japan	Poland	South Africa	Sweden	United States

support for democracy and human rights

The Democracy Support Deficit: Despite Progress, Major Countries Fall Short

Daniel Calingaert, Arch Puddington, and Sarah Repucci

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The world’s leading democracies are making significant efforts to promote democracy and human rights, but their policies are inconsistent, and they often overlook authoritarian threats. As authoritarian states collaborate to push back against political and human rights around the globe, democracies must reassess their approach and adopt a bolder and more coherent strategy.

Among the 11 regional and global powers examined in this study, the democracies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia were less likely to exert pressure on rights violators in their regions and less inclined to condemn the abrogation of democratic standards by major powers than were the United States, the European Union, and individual European countries. The disparity is largely attributable to the emphasis placed by the former group on the principle of noninterference and respect for sovereignty.

Nearly all of the countries assessed provide strong support for elections abroad, but they largely fail to promote democracy

and human rights through their trade policies and in their responses to coups.

In relations with China, immediate economic and strategic interests almost always override support for democracy and human rights. Virtually none of the democracies under review have been willing to confront Beijing directly or consistently, despite the regime’s pattern of abuses.

The study also found that although support for democracy through regional or international bodies can aid legitimacy, these organizations are rarely effective without the leadership of a major country. Indeed, democratic powers sometimes use multilateral organizations as a screen to avoid more direct or decisive action against repression.

The report’s recommendations for leading democracies include the following:

- Vigorously counteract encroachments by large authoritarian states—such as Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran—that seek regional hegemony and are openly hostile to democratic change among their neighbors.

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

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- Devote greater attention to the settings where democracy and its advocates are most under threat, and jointly adopt more robust methods when responding to coups and massive human rights abuses.
- Ensure that major democracies take the lead in firmly addressing democratic setbacks and gross human rights violations in their own regions.
- Actively engage in regional and international institutions to mobilize strong collective responses to democratic disruptions and human rights abuses, and to oppose efforts to water down any joint action.
- Establish a united front when dealing with China and Russia in order to check their coercion of neighboring states and address antidemocratic practices within their borders.

Introduction

The world's leading democracies are making significant efforts to promote democracy and human rights, but their policies are inconsistent, and they often overlook authoritarian threats in their own regions in particular. The democracies are notably reluctant to respond to systematic repression or disruptions of democratic processes (such as coups). Especially disappointing is the unwillingness of countries that possess massive economic and political power to apply diplomatic pressure, even privately, when neighboring governments engage in blatant cases of vote fraud, media suppression, or the persecution of minority groups. Moreover, democracies have not effectively countered efforts by authoritarian regimes to block democratization efforts in other countries. In important respects, the 11 regional and global powers examined in this report are failing to use their influence to defend democracy beyond their borders.

Thus France, while placing increased emphasis on human rights diplomacy under President François Hollande, continues to prop up autocrats in former colonies like Algeria, and has not yet canceled its con-

tract to sell warships to Russia. Brazil has remained silent about widespread repression in Cuba and the step-by-step dismantling of democratic institutions in Venezuela. Despite its public commitment to a values-oriented foreign policy, Germany has until very recently given precedence to economic interests in its relations with Russia, even as the Kremlin suppressed media independence, marginalized civil society, and threatened and invaded Ukraine. South Africa has failed to take decisive steps against crackdowns on fundamental freedoms in Zimbabwe and Swaziland. And the United States, the one country with truly global influence assessed in this study, has soft-pedaled its responses to serious human rights abuses in the Middle East, Asia, and elsewhere.

In addition to their reluctance to act in their home regions, leading democracies have failed to meet the challenge posed by authoritarian powers with international reach, which have increasingly threatened the status of rules-based governance as a global norm. Particularly noteworthy is the near-universal unwillingness to criticize the growing abuses of human rights and civil liberties in China, even as censorship is intensified, the roster of political prisoners grows, and persecution of Uighurs and Tibetans worsens.

At the same time, the report's findings show that democratic powers are beginning to recognize the danger emanating from major authoritarian states and are taking steps to counter their initiatives.

Democracies are making use of an array of strategies, some modest and others more ambitious, to promote free institutions in authoritarian and quasi-authoritarian settings. At the bilateral level, they train governments in the techniques of honest elections and participate in missions to monitor the balloting process. Major democracies also use their influence at the United Nations and other international and regional bodies to press for collective action, urging these entities to defend democratic freedoms and send peacekeepers to crisis zones. Even democracies with limited resources provide support for independent media, civil society groups, and persecuted minority populations around the world. In a few cases, free countries have placed principles above short-term interests by standing firm for democracy in the face of the competing demands of economics and diplomatic realpolitik.

Most importantly, a number of the countries in this study have advanced beyond traditional policies that eschewed democracy concerns and favored strict

noninterference in the internal affairs of sovereign states. In the governments examined, heads of state, foreign ministers, and other high officials now feel obliged to include democracy and human rights themes in statements on broad foreign policy objectives. When confronted with questions at the United Nations that involve violations of fundamental rights, coups, or aggression against neighboring states, they have voted to condemn abuses and take remedial action. While the inclusion of democracy standards in foreign assistance programs has varied considerably, almost all of these powers encourage the spread of free institutions through programs supporting adherence to the rule of law, anticorruption measures, honest elections, and gender equality.

Purpose of the Study

Supporting Democracy Abroad assesses the degree to which 10 leading democratic countries and the European Union promote democracy and human rights in their foreign policies. These countries are regional or global powers on five continents, and most are members of the Group of Twenty (G20). They range from long-established democracies to states that became democratic in the last 25 years. At a time when major developing countries are joining existing powers on the global stage, the records of both groups in meeting their international obligations warrant closer scrutiny.

Although democracy and human rights are traditionally subordinated to strategic and economic interests in a country's foreign policy, in fact they serve these interests in the long term and extend the influence of democratic nations in the world. Democracies tend to address their disagreements with other countries constructively, as their political systems are built on negotiation, compromise, and respect for the rule of law, and they rarely threaten violent conflict against one another. They also are more likely to agree with other democracies than with authoritarian governments on international structures that strengthen security, promote economic integration, and uphold the rights of citizens. Because many people living under authoritarian rule aspire to democracy and want their rights respected, a democratic country's support for political freedom and human rights abroad provides a form of soft power that enhances its influence.

However, authoritarian states are alert to these tendencies, and they are collaborating economically,

militarily, and politically to push back against democracy around the world. They share expertise to strengthen repressive laws and practices, and they work together to undermine accepted international standards and institutions that protect political and civil rights. Freedom House's annual *Freedom in the World* report shows that their efforts have had some success, documenting eight consecutive years in which countries suffering democratic decline have outnumbered those experiencing gains. These developments merit a concerted response by democratic countries in all regions of the world. If they are to turn the tide, leading democracies must reassess their existing policies and adopt a bolder and more consistent strategy. The present study is intended to stimulate such a process.

Major Findings

- **Significant gap between north and south:**

Among the countries examined, the democracies in Latin America, Africa, and Asia were less likely to exert pressure on rights violators in their regions and less inclined to condemn the abrogation of democratic standards by major powers. The United States, the European Union, and individual European countries consequently earned higher ratings than did Brazil, India, Indonesia, Japan, and South Africa. The disparity is largely attributable to the emphasis placed by the latter group on the principle of noninterference and respect for sovereignty.

Powers outside the United States and Europe refrain from unilaterally denouncing abuses or pressuring foreign governments. They seldom include aid for democracy support in their foreign assistance budgets. Instead, they prefer dialogue with the offending governments and engagement through multilateral institutions. While governments from the global south often assert that strategies of condemnation and sanctions are ineffective or counterproductive, they have yet to demonstrate that their alternative approaches generate positive and lasting change. In some cases, such as Zimbabwe and Venezuela, dialogue and engagement by neighboring democracies have clearly failed to restrain repressive governments.

- **Strong support for elections, weakness on trade and coups:** Nearly all of the countries assessed have a systematic program of electoral support, whether through observation missions, assis-

ABOUT THIS PROJECT¹

Supporting Democracy Abroad examined 10 countries, plus the European Union (EU) as an institution, over the period from June 1, 2012, through May 31, 2014. The countries included are Brazil, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Poland, South Africa, Sweden, and the United States. This selection presents a variety of experiences with democracy and human rights support across a range of population and income levels and geographic locations. All countries assessed are electoral democracies, already support democracy and human rights in some form, and have significant influence within their regions. More established powers are examined alongside rising democracies and those that are attempting new approaches to maintaining a values-oriented foreign policy.

Although it lacks many of the structures of a nation-state, the EU was assessed due to its prominent role in global affairs and its explicit policy of democracy and human rights promotion. For the sake of simplicity, references in this essay to the “countries” examined in the study should be read to include the EU, unless otherwise noted.

The rating assigned to each country is based on its performance across the categories covered

in this project: foreign policy objectives, development assistance and trade, support for free elections, responses to disruptions of democratic processes and gross human rights violations, and support for civil liberties and marginalized communities. The context of the country was also considered, including its economic power, global influence, and domestic history with democracy.

Ratings are based not on outcomes but on the alignment of each country’s actions with its rhetoric, and the rigor of those actions in supporting democracy and human rights. The scale of comparison underlying the ratings spans only the selected countries; it is not global. All of the countries studied provide at least some support to democracy beyond their borders.

Each country report was written by an in-country analyst using a common methodology provided by Freedom House, and each was reviewed by a senior adviser. The ratings are the result of a Freedom House review process that included internal and external experts. The report authors are not responsible for the ratings.

1. For a full description of the project methodology, including a description of the meaning of each rating, please see <http://www.freedomhouse.org/report/democracysupport/methodology>.

tance to electoral bodies, training and knowledge sharing, or condemnations of vote fraud. Most concentrate their energies in their own regions, but some reach further afield. The willingness of governments to support elections reflects a near-universal consensus on support for honest balloting and a widespread view that governments chosen without a free popular vote are illegitimate. However, almost all governments in the study believe that economic interests should determine trade policies, meaning human rights issues take a back seat. Countries also frequently take a neutral stance toward coups, perhaps because of the

ambiguous risks and opportunities involved in a change of regime.

- **China gets a pass:** All countries have immediate economic and strategic interests that compete with, and often override, their support for democracy and human rights. Nowhere is this more evident than in policies toward China. Various states either openly proclaim a policy of unconditional cooperation, as does Brazil; respond unevenly, as does the United States; or simply withhold criticism, as with France. Virtually none are willing to confront Beijing directly or consistently, despite the regime’s pattern of torture, show trials, censorship, and

violations of the rule of law that affect foreign economic interests. In no other country could a Nobel peace laureate languish in prison for political crimes, as Liu Xiaobo does, without provoking sustained pressure from diplomats and global civil society alike.

- Multilateralism aids legitimacy but dilutes impact:** Many countries put a strong emphasis on supporting democracy through regional or international bodies, such as the Organization of American States, the African Union, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the European Union, and UN Human Rights Council. Countries like Indonesia (in ASEAN) and Poland (in the EU) have worked to make democracy promotion a high priority for these bodies, while Brazil and South Africa have brought violations of political and civil rights to the attention of their respective regional organizations. However, although regional entities issue statements, engage in some diplomacy, and may suspend funding or occasionally country membership, they rarely act forcefully or effectively without the leadership of the region's dominant power. Democratic powers sometimes even use multilateral organizations as a screen, supporting joint statements of concern about violations of democratic norms or human rights in order to avoid criticizing an authoritarian government directly or taking responsibility for a stronger response.

Country Performance

Brazil's international prominence continues to grow, particularly in the Americas and Lusophone Africa. The country is firmly embedded in regional organizations—such as Mercosur and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)—that support democracy and human rights, and in the past it has occasionally taken clear stances to protest threats to democracy in the region. Brazil provides some democracy-related assistance, such as voting machines and other support for Guinea-Bissau's 2014 elections. However, its actions over the period covered by this report have been particularly weak. Brazil has refused to respond to extensive human rights abuses in Cuba and in Venezuela, where the government violently cracked down on protesters in 2014. While Brazil condemned the flawed impeachment of Paraguay's president in 2012, its credibility was undermined by its subsequent push to suspend Paraguay from Mercosur and then immediately include Venezuela as a member, which Paraguay

had opposed. Nor has Brazil acted as a leader on democracy issues at the global level. *Brazil's support for democracy is rated "minimal."*

France's foreign policy is global in reach, though concentrated on its former colonies in Africa and the Middle East. With the fifth-highest military spending in the world, it has made assertive use of military force in countries where democratic structures or values were under direct threat from armed groups. France has taken principled stances on issues such as the gross human rights violations in Syria, and over the past two years it has sent troops to reestablish the rule of law in Mali and the Central African Republic. It has also advocated strongly for taking action to protect human rights in these countries through the United Nations and the EU. However, France continues to prop up the authoritarian regimes of historic allies and trading partners, especially in Africa, and its responses to violations of civil liberties and the rights of marginalized communities have been inconsistent. In contrast to other European powers in this survey, France devotes limited development assistance to the strengthening of democratic institutions. *France's support for democracy is rated "moderate."*

Germany's history has influenced its gradualist, nonconfrontational approach to the promotion of democracy and human rights. Although Germany speaks often of its commitment to a foreign policy anchored in democratic values and is generous in its democracy assistance spending, it prefers technical aid to outspoken criticism of violations, and its support is more consistent in places where democracy is already taking root than in the territory of entrenched authoritarian regimes. Nevertheless, Germany manages to have a positive impact even while it avoids singling out egregious cases for condemnation. Its strength lies in its innovative methods for support, such as attaching positive governance requirements to financial aid to encourage good performance, making a connection between socioeconomic and political change, and encouraging the leadership of local actors. Its rhetoric has been robust, though it has given priority to competing interests in key cases, especially Russia. *Germany's support for democracy is rated "moderate."*

India's power is most prominent in South Asia, where it makes a focused effort to support unstable democracies. Its actions have included bilateral assistance to democratic institutions in Afghanistan, a leading role in diplomatic intervention in

Nepal's constitutional disputes, systematic work to bring about new elections after a quasi-coup in the Maldives, and mediation in Bangladesh's electoral conflict. India is taking steps to become a hub of support for democratic electoral management through exchange and training programs. However, not only has New Delhi's emphasis on sovereignty held it back from action in key cases—as with its abstention from a 2014 UN resolution to investigate human rights violations in Sri Lanka, or its reluctance to criticize Myanmar's dismal human rights record—but it has also sided with authoritarian regimes in numerous international debates, such as the joint UN statement on the promotion and protection of civil society space in March 2014. India has yet to demonstrate that support for democracy beyond elections is among its global concerns. *India's support for democracy is rated "limited."*

Among emerging powers, **Indonesia** shows a rare commitment to supporting democracy abroad. Although it is the only country in this report that is currently rated Partly Free in *Freedom in the World*—reflecting restrictions on the activity of nongovernmental organizations and infringements on the rights of religious minorities in certain provinces, among other problems—Indonesia's foreign policy puts explicit emphasis on finding ways to promote democracy, albeit within the limitations of a simultaneous belief in noninterference in the affairs of other states. Its most significant activities include its creation and support of the Bali Democracy Forum and its work to increase attention to democracy within ASEAN. Through these and other initiatives, Indonesia is seeking a means to support democracy and human rights—which it considers to be in its national interest—that is both multilateral and respectful of sovereignty. While this approach has produced some positive results in recent years, its inherent constraints may reduce its effectiveness. *Indonesia's support for democracy is rated "limited."*

Japan is a consolidated democracy with the world's third-largest economy, but it has yet to undertake significant efforts to support democracy and human rights, even in Asia. It is true that Japan has begun to invoke the importance of democratic solidarity in the face of China's growing influence in the region. In practice, however, it maintains its traditional heavy emphasis on economic interests in diplomacy and foreign assistance, and it has shown a reluctance to break with its history of understated relations with

outside powers. The relatively recent shift in rhetoric may translate into concrete action in the future. But for the moment, there remains a yawning gap between Japan's actual strengths and its willingness to use those strengths to encourage free elections, press freedom, the rule of law, and other democratic values in its relations with other countries. *Japan's support for democracy is rated "minimal."*

Poland punches above its weight in its support for democracy and human rights. Although it is a relatively new democracy with a small foreign assistance budget, the country has prioritized democracy and human rights and followed through with sustained action. Poland is primarily a regional power, with a particular focus on neighboring countries. It has pressed the EU for greater engagement in democracy support, for example by helping to found the European Endowment for Democracy. In 2014 Poland took the lead in consistent condemnation of Russia's intervention in Ukraine and lobbied the EU for stronger action. While Poland has failed to speak out in some cases—such as in response to fraudulent elections and human rights abuses in Azerbaijan—and its minimal geostrategic responsibilities give it more leeway to prioritize democracy, its ability to effect change relative to its size makes it stand out among the countries in this survey. *Poland's support for democracy is rated "strong."*

South Africa emerged from apartheid with high expectations for its regional and even international leadership on democracy and human rights, but its foreign policy has become increasingly conservative, driven by the government's narrowly defined vision of national interest. South Africa has the potential to exercise influence across Africa, especially in Southern Africa. But beyond peacekeeping operations, most recently in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo, it has rarely taken action in response to rights violations or breaches of democratic standards. The government emphasizes its respect for sovereignty, and thus engages in diplomacy through regional mechanisms. This policy in practice has meant that little pressure is brought to bear in key cases like Zimbabwe. The current South African government has shown little commitment to promoting democracy and human rights abroad in any meaningful way. *South Africa's support for democracy is rated "minimal."*

Sweden's support for democracy and human rights is consistent across all areas of its foreign policy.

Although less of a geostrategic actor than some others examined here, the country stands out for placing democratic values at the forefront of its diplomacy and foreign assistance programs, and for following through with action in nearly every category covered by this report. Sweden has distinguished itself by making the promotion of human rights a priority of the foreign service, taking a leadership role on internet freedom, providing strong support for gender equality around the world, and involving itself in controversies outside its immediate region, such as in Iran and Zimbabwe. Although the government in power during the coverage period was voted out of office in September 2014, its commitment to a rights-based foreign policy reflected a strong consensus across the political spectrum. *Sweden's support for democracy is rated "very strong."*

The **United States** is exceptional in its size, influence, and genuinely global reach. As a result, the international spotlight shines more intensely on the United States than on other countries, and contradictions in U.S. policy have broad implications. Over the two years covered in this report, the United States' commitment to democracy and human rights has wavered, but the substantial infrastructure supporting these ideals has continued to function. Active in all of the categories under review, the United States devotes substantial foreign assistance to democracy and human rights, speaks out against abuses across topics and regions, and has spearheaded initiatives in areas such as support for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender people. At the same time, the U.S. responses to major events such as the coup in Egypt and serious rights violations by Persian Gulf monarchies demonstrate that Washington continues to place support for certain authoritarian regimes above its interest in democracy and human rights. These inconsistencies are a blot on the U.S. record and weaken the country's credibility on democracy support. *The United States' support for democracy is rated "moderate."*

The **European Union** is distinct from all others in this study because, as a supranational institution, it lacks many of the structures of a nation-state. This is both a strength and a weakness for its democracy support. On the one hand, due to its size and its transcendence of certain national interests, the EU has been able to establish robust mechanisms for democracy support, such as human rights and

democracy criteria in foreign assistance and the creation of the European Endowment for Democracy—not to mention its membership criteria, which have played a critical role in transforming the political landscape across the continent. On the other hand, the member states still have control over key aspects of foreign policy, inhibiting action, for example, on sanctions against the Russian government in spring 2014 or a collective response to Russia's internal human rights abuses. Disagreement among the member states often limits the EU to slow, incremental steps, giving foreign governments less reason to abide by its many policy prescriptions. *The European Union's support for democracy is rated "moderate."*

Recommendations

The global decline in respect for political and civil rights, as documented in Freedom House's *Freedom in the World* report, underscores the need for leading democracies to step up their support for democracy and human rights in their areas of influence. Such support could be improved in several important ways:

- As authoritarian governments increasingly assert their power domestically and internationally, leading democracies need to move beyond their support for countries that already embrace democracy and vigorously counteract authoritarian encroachments in transitional, contested, or repressive societies. Democratic powers should pay special attention to the actions of large authoritarian states—such as Russia, China, Saudi Arabia, and Iran—that seek regional hegemony and are openly hostile to democratic change among their neighbors.
- Democratic powers should devote greater attention to the settings where democracy and its advocates are most under threat, whether in entrenched dictatorships like Sudan, or volatile and polarized countries like Thailand. They should coordinate more closely and adopt more robust methods when responding to coups and massive human rights abuses.
- Regional powers need to take the lead in responding firmly to democratic setbacks and gross human rights violations in their neighborhoods. Absent such leadership,

multilateral action is unlikely to sway the perpetrators or produce real change.

- All leading democracies should be fully engaged in regional mechanisms and international institutions, working to mobilize strong collective responses to democratic disruptions and human rights abuses, and to oppose efforts to water down any joint action.
- On China, greater coordination among democratic powers is essential if the free world is to mount an effective response to human rights violations and antidemocratic initiatives by Beijing. Without enhanced cooperation, individual democracies will continue to defer to their narrow economic interests, compete with one another for trade advantages, and succumb to Chinese demands for silence regarding political reform and other taboo subjects.
- Democratic countries must also establish a united front to counter Russia's coercion of its neighbors. The Russian government today is systematically intimidating democracies and co-opting authoritarian regimes in its region, partly to stave off pressure for democratic change at home. Combating the Kremlin's efforts will require sustained support for vulnerable democracies, a strategy for encouraging democratic activism within Russia and other authoritarian states, and unified policies on crucial energy and security issues that the Russian government has exploited for leverage.



Freedom House is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that supports democratic change, monitors freedom, and advocates for democracy and human rights.

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Brazil | European Union | France | Germany | India | Indonesia | Japan | Poland | South Africa | Sweden | United States

minimal

support for democracy and human rights

Brazil

Oliver Stuenkel

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the end of the Cold War, Brazil has emerged as a regional leader that has at times actively defended democracy and human rights. However, Brazil's support for these values has not been consistent, particularly over the past two years. Brazil generally has not spoken out against violations of human rights and civil liberties, nor does it attach political conditions to its foreign assistance. Venezuela is a prime example of Brazil remaining silent in face of systematic human rights abuses. Although Brazil supported suspending Paraguay from regional bodies in 2012 in response to the president's questionable impeachment, this controversially enabled Venezuela's unlawful inclusion in Mercosur, a move opposed by Paraguay.

Outside of the region, Brazil has regularly condemned democratic ruptures, though regime type does not determine its relations with other nations.

Introduction

Over the past two decades, Brazil has quietly become a cautious supporter of democracy and human rights. Brazil's low-key approach has been criticized at home and abroad. Yet when compared to other rising democracies, Brazil has taken some principled stances, dissuading unsatisfied generals from staging coups and taking punitive action against illegitimate governments. Brazil also has condemned the disruption of democratic processes, although it has refrained from making regime type into a key determinant of its relations with other nations or consistently criticized authoritarian governments.

While Brazil's policy has been relatively clear regarding attempted coups in the region, it generally has not taken a forceful stance on violations of human rights and civil liberties. In early 2014, when the Venezuelan government cracked down severely on protesters, Brazil's foreign minister insisted that it was not Brazil's role to send a message to Venezuela's president, Nicolás Maduro.¹ In the same vein, its aid projects are generally free from human rights or political conditions.²

Outside of its own region, Brazil's stance has often been ambiguous, as in the cases of the civil war in Syria and Russia's unlawful annexation of Crimea. Brazil has taken the position that external pressure is rarely constructive. Therefore, it is reluctant to openly name and shame international miscreants and strongly opposes military interventions to address humanitarian crises.

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

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The most frequent outside criticism of Brazil's foreign policy is that it betrays a leftist bias. While President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva did express personal sympathy for left-wing leaders such as Cuba's Fidel Castro and Venezuela's Hugo Chavez, ideology alone does not explain Brazil's stance, as foreign policy changed relatively little when President Lula took office in 2002. Brazil's close ties with Venezuela during the past decade and its reluctance to criticize human rights abuses there derive more from economic interests than ideology. Brazilian president Dilma Rousseff disliked former president Chavez's abrasive style and is said to be highly critical of current president Maduro's economic management.

Brazil's increased international influence brings with it a responsibility to more assertively stand up for democracy and human rights. Brazil's rise also means that, like other major powers, it has broader economic and strategic objectives that sometimes conflict with defending human rights and democracy.

Foreign Policy Objectives

Brazil's foreign policy goals have become more sophisticated and ambitious since it successfully dealt with its most urgent internal challenges: inflation, economic instability, and high poverty rates. From the time of Fernando Henrique Cardoso's presidency (1995–2002), Brazil has assumed regional leadership, taking the initiative in the creation of a network of regional rules and commitments that have strengthened cooperation among South American countries. Brazil has realized that the political unrest from neighboring countries that cannot provide basic levels of public order is likely to affect many of its own core interests. Protecting democratic norms and stability in the region has thus become an important foreign policy goal.

Although South America remains Brazil's priority, a second important objective is the transformation of international institutions by increasing the influence of emerging powers. It is in this context that Brazil frames its global engagement, calling for a stronger G20, reformed Bretton Woods institutions (the World Bank and International Monetary Fund), and a permanent seat for itself on the UN Security Council.

Over the past two years, Brazil has placed increasing importance on the BRICS grouping (consisting of Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) at the expense of the IBSA grouping, which is made up of

democratic India, Brazil, and South Africa. Created as an investment category by Goldman Sachs in 2001, the BRICS gained a political dimension in 2006 when their foreign ministers (initially without South Africa) gathered for the first time. However, the grouping remains relatively informal and the countries do not coordinate their foreign policy positions in any systematic way. IBSA is an informal grouping created in 2003 that has led to a series of working groups and several presidential summits. Brazil has favored the BRICS mainly because China, Brazil's largest trade partner, has become too important—both economically and strategically—for Brazil to focus on a group that excludes it.

Development Assistance and Trade

Brazil's aid program was only recently established, and its ideas about foreign assistance are still evolving. Brazil's transformation into a donor country occurred against the backdrop of two important trends. First, its newfound economic strength and political stability have given it significant global ambitions, a position reflected in its membership in the BRICS grouping and its growing economic and diplomatic presence around the world.³ Second, Brazil is undergoing a profound domestic transition, symbolized by decreasing levels of inequality and poverty and the emergence of a new middle class.⁴ These development trends have led to a series of new ideas about poverty reduction that shape the way Brazilian policy makers think about Brazil's role in international development.

One of the flagship projects Brazil cites frequently is the IBSA Facility Fund for Alleviation of Poverty and Hunger, which was created in 2004 and became operational in 2006. Financed and coordinated by the IBSA governments, the fund finances projects submitted by governments of developing countries. The primary goals are capacity building among project beneficiaries, built-in project sustainability, and knowledge sharing among experts and institutions from the Global South. The fund is small, with each country contributing only \$1 million. In 2012, the fund earned the UN South-South and Triangular Cooperation Champions Award for its innovative approach. Nevertheless, IBSA's contribution to democracy support in recipient countries could not be described as meaningful.

The Brazilian government reported that \$400 million in aid was disbursed in 2010, although this number is difficult to verify given the lack of transparency

regarding what counts as aid in Brazil's budget.⁵ Brazilian aid—both development and humanitarian—is still not well institutionalized. Yet, it is clear that Brazil does not seek to emulate the traditional practice of attaching human rights conditions to foreign assistance. This reflects skepticism that outside intervention can meaningfully affect domestic policy. As a result, Cuba is an important recipient of Brazilian aid and investment projects with no political conditions attached.⁶ In the same way, the new BRICS development bank, set to become operational in 2016, is highly unlikely to lend money based on human rights or democracy conditions.

Nor has Brazil imposed bilateral economic sanctions on any country during the two-year period covered by this report. It only reluctantly agrees to UN-imposed sanctions on countries such as Iran and North Korea. Brazil mostly applies targeted sanctions, such as restrictions on banks involved in human or drug trafficking or visa denials for individuals suspected of terrorism. As a rule, the broader the sanction, the more skeptical Brazil is likely to be.

Ultimately, Brazil's stance regarding most sanctions is based on the perception that economic sanctions only rarely change a country's policies and disproportionately affect the poor.⁷ This position was best displayed during U.S. efforts to tighten UN sanctions against Iran. During Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's meetings in Brazil in March 2010, President Lula said that it was "not prudent to push Iran against the wall," and Foreign Minister Celso Amorim said that sanctions could be "counterproductive." In fact, Brazilian policy makers may see sanctions as a prelude to undesirable military intervention. Key decision-makers in Brazil have said that the 2003 intervention in Iraq was the result of a Security Council vote on the basis of inconclusive evidence, undermining the principle of collective security.⁸ The U.S. economic embargo on Cuba, which has failed to affect human rights policies, is largely seen by Brazilian policy makers as a Cold War anachronism and a result of internal U.S. politics, rather than a well-thought-out pro-human rights policy.

Reflecting Brazil's position on sanctions, the BRICS foreign ministers issued a joint statement in March 2014 expressing their opposition to Australian foreign minister Julie Bishop's threat to bar Russian president Vladimir Putin from participating at the G20 Summit in Australia as punishment for Russia's annexation of Crimea. "The custodianship of the G20 belongs to all member-states equally and no one

member-state can unilaterally determine its nature and character," the BRICS statement said.⁹

As in other instances, Brazil's unwillingness to criticize Russia had less to do with its opinion on Russia's annexation of Crimea—privately, Brazilian diplomats disapproved of Russia's move—than Brazil's concern about Western attempts to turn Russia into an international pariah. Brazil was also disturbed by what it saw as the West's tacit support for attempted coups against democratically elected governments, including in Venezuela in 2002, in Egypt in 2013, and in Ukraine in 2014. The final document of the BRICS meeting also stated that "the escalation of hostile language, sanctions and counter-sanctions, and force does not contribute to a sustainable and peaceful solution, according to international law, including the principles and purposes of the United Nations Charter."¹⁰

China became Brazil's largest trade partner in 2009, symbolizing a greater shift of Brazilian interests toward Asia. China's share of overall trade with Brazil is likely to continue to grow, and a consensus in Brazil believes that Chinese demand for its products saved the country from recession during the global financial crisis that began in 2008. Brazil does not make any attempts to influence China's internal affairs, and in 2011 President Rousseff chose not to meet the Dalai Lama personally after the Chinese government had openly criticized Mexico's president for doing so.

Elections

Brazil is generally reluctant to comment on the quality of other countries' elections; its primary concern is political stability. Under President Cardoso, Brazil occasionally reacted to situations in which governments blatantly falsified results, such as in 2000, when Brazil's president boycotted President Alberto Fujimori's inaugural ceremony after the latter had allegedly rigged the outcome of the election in Peru.¹¹ Yet in most notable regional cases of flawed elections—such as in Venezuela, where the 2013 presidential election was free from fraud but media control heavily tilted the election toward the ruling party—Brazil has been largely silent.

Over the past few years Brazilians have participated in several electoral monitoring missions, such as in Haiti and Guinea-Bissau, though less so in South America.¹² Brazil's proactive role in Guinea-Bissau, which is a fellow member of the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries, was notable. Brazil made democracy and human rights promotion

a key component of its cooperation with that country, working both in support of the 2014 elections as well as to strengthen democratic institutions, such as through the donation of voting machines.¹³ However, it would be an exaggeration to say that this example symbolizes a larger pattern of Brazilian democracy promotion outside of its region.

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

In recent years, Brazil has regularly condemned disruptions of democratic process in Latin America. It pressured the Paraguayan military not to oust then-president Juan Carlos Wasmosy in 1996 and 1997, it contributed to reinstalling President Hugo Chavez after a coup in 2002, and it actively sought to isolate and pressure Honduras after a coup against President Manuel Zelaya in 2009. In the latter case, Brazil was originally one of the most critical voices, suspending aid and military projects and canceling a visa-waiver agreement signed previously. Partly thanks to Brazil's regional engagement and the introduction of institutional mechanisms to strengthen democracy—such as the democracy clauses applied by Mercosur and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR)—coups and other democratic disruptions have become increasingly rare in South America.

The only recent such case took place in June 2012 in Paraguay, which is economically dependent on Brazil. Within a mere 36 hours, Paraguay's Senate moved to impeach President Fernando Lugo, whose election in 2008 ended decades of one-party rule and marked a peaceful transfer of power. While the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate can, in principle, impeach the president, this is supposed to occur only under specific circumstances, such as when a crime has been committed. In this case, Brazil took the position that the impeachment was unacceptable. However, rather than coming to a unilateral response—something it could easily have done given its dominant size—Brazil exerted pressure on Paraguay through regional bodies. While the United States swiftly recognized Paraguay's new government under Federico Franco, Brazil—together with its neighbors—decided to suspend Paraguay from both Mercosur (a customs union consisting of Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, and Paraguay) and UNASUR until fresh elections were held. The speed of the decision to exclude Paraguay from Mercosur—a first in the organization's history—showed that Brazil can play an active leadership role when its values are aligned with its interests. Although it is possible to

question whether a disruption of democratic process had indeed taken place in Paraguay, no vocal observers in Brazil argued that the country should simply stay out of Paraguay's affairs. This suggests that Brazilian society has accepted the notion that Brazil has a special responsibility in promoting and defending political stability and democracy in the region.

On the other hand, Paraguay's suspension was succeeded by a quick vote to accept Venezuela into Mercosur. Venezuela's inclusion had previously been blocked by Paraguay (though supported by all other members) for unclear reasons that were not strongly related to human rights; Paraguay's temporary suspension gave President Rousseff a window of opportunity to push through ratification of Venezuela's membership. This made Brazil appear opportunistic and unconcerned about violating Mercosur's rule of consensus for adding new members, thus weakening the grouping's institutional foundations. In addition, Paraguay rightly criticized Mercosur for not giving it an opportunity to clarify its position during the suspension debates.

Brazil has traditionally condemned democratic ruptures outside of the region as well, such as in the 2014 events in Thailand¹⁴ and the 2013 overthrow of President Mohamed Morsi in Egypt. In the case of political instability and violence in Guinea-Bissau, Brazil led an effort to bring the issue to the UN Security Council's attention in 2012.¹⁵ With strong Brazilian support, the Community of Portuguese Language Speaking Countries also issued a statement of condemnation and called for a UN-authorized military intervention.¹⁶

Gross Human Rights Violations

Brazil seldom presses governments outside Latin America to honor their human rights obligations. Brazil regularly condemns and expresses concern about large-scale human rights violations in places like Syria, the Central African Republic, and Sudan and South Sudan. Yet while the Lula administration sought to play a more active role outside South America, President Rousseff has kept a lower profile, and only rarely has Brazil done more than issue an official condemnation.

Brazil's UN voting record on North Korea has been the subject of much domestic debate, since at several points Brazil has been one of the few countries that did not condemn the regime in Pyongyang for its human rights abuses. Similar to several examples

above, this choice was made because Brazil believes that universal condemnation will cut off all channels of communication at the expense of dialogue that could lead to liberalization. In accordance with this goal, Brazil has financed agricultural cooperation projects that brought North Korean scientists to Brazil in the hope that people-to-people exchanges can bring change to the country.

In April 2011, Brazil undermined the effectiveness of regional human rights bodies when President Rousseff cut all relations with the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. This came in response to the court's decision to request that the construction of the Belo Monte dam in the Brazilian Amazon be suspended, following an appeal from indigenous groups. Brazil has gradually returned to its previous engagement since then.

Civil Liberties

The 2013 political crisis in Venezuela served as a litmus test for Brazilian regional leadership in respect for civil liberties. Since the start of the crisis, more than 30 people have been killed and more than 1,500 detained, resulting in a paralyzing standoff between the government and the main Venezuelan opposition parties. Reporters have been arrested, beaten, and robbed, and opposition figures have been held on trumped-up charges.¹⁷ However, rather than making hard-hitting statements on the violations of both the government and the opposition, Brazil initially co-issued three bland communiqués through UNASUR, the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States, and Mercosur. The latter was particularly controversial, as it was interpreted as soft on the Maduro government and characterized protesters as antidemocratic forces. As a consequence, many influential voices strongly criticized Brazil's reluctant stance on the deepening political crisis.¹⁸ Criticism has come from within Brazil as well: former president Cardoso wrote in early March that Brazil's current government was acting with "incredible timidity" in the face of human rights abuses in Venezuela.¹⁹

As the crisis progressed, Foreign Minister Luiz Alberto Figueiredo became a key actor in UNASUR's attempt to restart a constructive dialogue between President Maduro and the opposition. In mid-April 2014, after the first UNASUR-facilitated meeting between the government and the opposition in Caracas, Figueiredo expressed optimism, stating that both sides seemed willing to talk.²⁰ In early May,

he attributed lower levels of violence in Venezuela to UNASUR's efforts.²¹ Nevertheless, the situation has deteriorated since the beginning of the talks.²² Brazil's unwillingness to exert more pressure on the Venezuelan government and the protesters to cease violent acts and respect human rights will hamper its ability to exert regional leadership going forward.

Regarding the long-term challenge of human rights violations in Cuba, like other Latin American countries Brazil has taken a notably noncritical stance. While Brazil's foreign minister under President Cardoso insisted on meeting opposition figures during a visit to Cuba, this policy was not continued under presidents Lula and Rousseff, both of whom have been friendly with the Castro regime.²³ From Brazil's perspective, isolating and openly criticizing Cuba is unlikely to bring change to the island. At the same time, Brazil has no clear policy to apply pressure on the Cuban government to respect human rights and civil liberties. Given regional dynamics and the respect the Castro regime enjoys in Latin America, even diplomats who are critical of Cuba's government are skeptical of Brazil's capacity to make a difference. In this context, Brazil's Cuba policy is mostly motivated by economic interests. In the absence of U.S. companies in Cuba, Brazil has sought an economic foothold, as symbolized by Brazil's significant investment in Cuba's Mariel Special Development Zone.

Regarding human rights abuses outside of its region, Brazil has usually taken a cautious—its critics would say passive—stance. In the cases of violence against the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and ethnic violence in Myanmar, Brazil frequently voices its "concern" and "consternation," yet this generally does not translate into an active policy of isolating governments. In addition, most statements criticize violence in general without blaming any side specifically.²⁴

Marginalized Communities

In 1966, Brazil hosted the first major UN seminar on apartheid, an event that fed into an initiative in the General Assembly to diplomatically isolate South Africa's regime. Despite considerable challenges at home, Brazil has often spoken out against racism on an international level over the past decades, and has consistently voiced support for marginalized communities. In 2011, it cosponsored a resolution in the UN Human Rights Council on human rights violations based on sexual orientation and gender

identity, a key achievement for upholding the principles of the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Brazil originally tabled the historic resolution on human rights and sexual orientation in 2003 at the UN Commission on Human Rights (now the Human Rights Council) in Geneva with the support of 19 other countries. It calls on all UN member states to promote and protect the human rights "of all persons regardless of their sexual orientation."²⁵

This positive trend continued in 2012 when, during a vote in the UN General Assembly regarding extrajudicial killings, Brazil condemned the proposed amendment to remove reference to sexual orientation and gender identity. However, the country's position was weakened when, despite civil society pressure on Rousseff to speak out against antigay laws in Uganda, Brazil did not issue any statement.

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support for democracy and human rights

European Union

Rosa Balfour

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The European Union (EU) has incorporated a commitment to the promotion of democracy and the universality of human rights into its policies for prospective members as well as in its international action. However, it remains limited in its ability to ensure that these principles are coherently and consistently applied. Trade and business interests, especially with large economic partners such as China, sometimes conflict with human rights diplomacy. The fact that all member states must reach consensus on responses to human rights and democracy deficits, such as those in Russia, dilutes criticism. The search for allies on security matters has meant that the EU has not criticized repression in countries like Egypt. Moreover, because foreign policy is still controlled in part by the member states, there are contradictions at the national level. Nevertheless, the EU has taken important steps to engage on these topics and to push for change, especially through EU-level diplomacy and its large foreign assistance budget.

Introduction

The European Union (EU) made the promotion of “democracy, the rule of law, the universality and indivisibility of human rights and individual freedoms” the guiding principle for its international action.¹ The EU’s most significant impact on global democracy has been its own enlargement, which has supported processes of democratization in Portugal and Greece in the 1970s and 1980s, in Central Europe after the end of the Cold War, in Turkey during the 2000s, and today in aspiring members from the Balkan region. But the EU has also made efforts in recent years to include democracy and human rights standards and guidelines in most of its external policies.

The EU promotes democracy and human rights through its budget for foreign assistance, which is managed by the European Commission (the EU’s executive institution); through its Development Cooperation and its Humanitarian Aid offices; and through its recently created diplomatic service, the European External Action Service (EEAS), which coordinates EU foreign and security policy.

In practice, however, there is a gap between the EU’s ambitions and its performance. Conflicting priorities in the fields of security and economics often trump good intentions, and member states frequently diverge from the EU’s overall approach to foreign policy. Internally, too, instances of faltering democratic standards have tarnished the EU’s image.

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

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The mismatch between intentions and outcomes can be explained by the complex relationship between the various actors working on foreign policy at different levels of the EU system. EU foreign policy has always suffered from coordination difficulties as well as a lack of commitment and diversity of positions from EU member states. In recent years, for example, the relationship has been strained between the “old” European Commission, traditional guardian of a more integrated community, and the newly created EEAS as a sui generis body.

As opposed to economic policies, EU member states cooperate in foreign and security affairs only to the extent that they are willing. While their size and resources demonstrate the vast potential that further cooperation could have, members continue to be attached to their own national sovereignty and particular interests in this area. This has prevented greater joint action in international affairs.

Foreign Policy Objectives

Over the past few years, the EU has strengthened its ability to address human rights and democracy issues. Since the end of the cold war, the EU has included the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law into all its relations and cooperation with third countries. It has also gradually integrated these principles into its external assistance.

In June 2012, the EU approved the ambitious Strategic Framework on Human Rights and Democracy, accompanied by a 36-point action plan.² In essence, the framework is designed to integrate human rights and democracy into all external action, to promote them through bilateral and multilateral means, and to make the EU system work together more coherently. The Strategic Framework updated the EU’s approach to the changing global environment: to the three traditional conceptual clusters of political rights, economic and social rights, and group and minority rights, it added lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender (LGBT), and intersex rights, freedom of religion or belief, freedom of expression on- and offline, the rights of indigenous peoples, and the rights of people with disabilities. The action plan also sets out objectives for integrating human rights into other external policies, with a particular focus on trade, conflict prevention and crisis management, counterterrorism, freedom, security and justice, employment, and social policy. Finally, it indicates the institutions responsible for actions, together with a time frame, in an effort to overcome the

long-standing challenge of integrating human rights across the EU’s complex system.

Institutionally, the EU’s 140 delegations around the world were strengthened to include a human rights and democracy focal point by the end of 2012. These are staffed by officials and specialists to manage projects carried out under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), designed to support local actors directly without interference from government authorities. The delegations also conduct analysis of the situation in their respective countries. Implementing the Strategic Framework also entailed the drafting of 146 country human rights reports in 2013. In addition, in September 2012 Stavros Lambrinidis was appointed special representative for human rights, a new role considered parallel to the U.S. assistant secretary for democracy, human rights, and labor. Lambrinidis has been actively shuttling around the globe to carry out EU human rights diplomacy, meeting with civil society organizations and conducting the human rights dialogues that the EU has institutionalized with many countries.

Ultimately, human rights remains a modest part of EU diplomacy. Even while the EU has improved its ability to address shortcomings in human rights and democracy, the bulk of its foreign relations is determined by economic, security, or energy interests rather than universal principles.

Development Assistance and Trade

The EU and its member states together make up the world’s largest donor, despite cuts to national European budgets for development assistance.³ Support for democracy is spread across different categories of funding. Roughly 10 to 20 percent of EU external assistance targets human rights, democratic reform, good governance, and rule of law. Priorities for good governance and the rule of law are included in all mainstream assistance, and grants are contingent on recipients satisfying human rights and democracy conditions. For example, of the €449 million (\$584 million) committed to Egypt in 2011–13, €50 million (\$65 million) was earmarked for reforms in the area of human rights, democracy, and justice. This assistance is channeled through national governments, while civil society organizations are directly supported through the EIDHR and the nonstate actor instrument, which have average annual global budgets of €160 million (\$212 million) and €230 million (\$305 million) respectively.

These instruments have been strengthened in recent years, and their funding will continue to grow; the EIDHR budget will increase from €1.104 billion (\$1.463 billion) to €1.33 billion (\$1.76 billion) for 2014–20.⁴ More than 530 new EIDHR initiatives were developed in 2013, and a small grant scheme gave emergency assistance to hundreds of at-risk human rights defenders. EU delegations in 107 countries have called for project proposals by grassroots civil society organizations in the fields of human rights and democratization, conflict resolution, and political participation.⁵

The main problems for EU assistance are related to the gap between commitments and actual disbursements, especially in times of change. In 2012, for instance, the EU committed over €1.6 billion (\$2.1 billion) to the 16 countries that border it in Eastern Europe and North Africa and the Middle East, but it disbursed only €1 billion (\$1.29 billion). Egypt in particular received far less than planned while undergoing postrevolutionary turmoil. Although choices made by the Egyptian government impacted disbursement, the shortfall also reflects the EU's inability to reach all of its intended targets.

Partially in an effort to better tailor aid disbursements to the principles of human rights and democracy, the EU strengthened the funding mechanisms for 2014–20. Development assistance will now include a rights-based approach, and the EU's principles for international action cited above have been included in the regulations that govern such funding.⁶

Europe's international trade, which is fully under the competence of the EU and managed by the European Commission, will also see its human rights component strengthened. Nearly all of the EU's trade agreements are part of a broader agreement that includes a human rights clause, which allows the parties to review or suspend the agreement if these principles are violated. However, in practice this clause has rarely been used except in the context of UN sanctions. From 2012 to 2014, trade was withheld for policy reasons only in the extreme cases of Iran and Syria. On the other hand, trade was used as an incentive in the case of Myanmar. In May 2012, about one year after the new civilian government announced its reform path, the EU began suspending its restrictive measures; by April 2013 it had lifted all sanctions except for an arms embargo.

In Bangladesh, the EU was able to improve labor standards by making use of its role as Bangladesh's largest trading partner. Following the 2013 collapse of an illegally constructed building in which over 1,000 factory workers died, High Representative Catherine Ashton and Trade Commissioner Karel De Gucht issued a joint statement criticizing labor, health, and safety standards. The threat of suspension from the Generalised System of Preferences (a program allowing developing countries preferential access to the EU market through reduced tariffs) led the Bangladeshi government to make commitments toward improving its labor rights and factory conditions. Nevertheless, as the EU's action was triggered by an especially dramatic episode, it may not represent a change in the EU's otherwise weak record in this area.

Indeed, where major trade partners are concerned, the picture is different. EU-China relations are a case in point. On paper, the EU has continued its diplomatic activity in support of human rights in China: in multilateral institutions and bilaterally, through statements and declarations, through a long-standing human rights dialogue (in which it is very hard to address the broad range of human rights and democracy shortcomings in the country), and through a September 2013 visit by Lambrinidis, who was granted unprecedented access both in the Tibetan areas and in Beijing. At the end of 2013, however, the EU and China marked the 10th anniversary of their strategic partnership with the EU-China 2020 Strategic Agenda for Cooperation. The agenda calls for greater cooperation on global peace and security, intensified and expanded trade cooperation, sustainable development, and increased people-to-people contacts—while barely mentioning human rights issues, despite a lack of change in Chinese conditions.

China is the EU's second-largest trading partner after the United States. Intense commercial contacts flourish particularly with Germany—which since the economic crisis has become China's biggest trading partner among the EU member states—and the United Kingdom. Bilateral visits of German and UK leaders have led to deals that are expected to give an extraordinary boost to trade. Accompanying a new focus on business has been a sharp toning down of criticism of China's human rights conditions and conditions in Tibet. For example, while European leaders had previously maintained diplomatic contacts with the Dalai Lama, they have not provided

support when it might in any way jeopardize economic interests with China.⁷

Elections

The EU has considerably bolstered its capacity for sending election observation missions (EOMs) to monitor the preparation and conduct of elections. However, while the EU defines these as technical missions guided by an internationally accepted methodology, the highly political context in which the missions take place means that, collectively, the EU and its members may send mixed messages to individual countries. Moreover, the focus on electoral procedures often leads to unclear conclusions upon which EU actors can base various responses to elections.

For example, the EU mission's assessment of the March 2013 presidential and legislative elections in Kenya praised the democratic commitment of Kenyans; the ensuing statement from the EU's high representative followed that line, expressing confidence that the country's institutions would be able to address the electoral shortcomings. However, the statements did not deal with the fact that the elected president and vice president are on trial at the International Criminal Court. Although in line with those of the UN and most Western countries, the EU's assessment fails to consider the core question of whether suspects of war crimes should be eligible for election while on trial.

Over the past two years, the EU has sent EOMs to 20 countries around the world (and contributed to Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE] missions in Eastern Europe) mostly headed by a member of the European Parliament. It also has provided technical assistance to more countries. The EU implements these missions upon request from the governments of the countries where elections are taking place, but they can be canceled if the EU deems the situation not conducive to monitoring or when conditions do not allow for a "free and fair" electoral process. Such was the case in Bangladesh, where the EU canceled its EOM in December 2013.

However, in May 2014 the EU monitored the uncontested electoral process in Egypt, which was marked by repression of the opposition by the caretaker government that had assumed power after the forcible removal of President Mohamed Morsi in July 2013. The EU justified its decision to move forward with election monitoring on the

grounds that the EOM would allow it to continue engagement with Cairo and press for the improvement of basic political conditions before upcoming parliamentary elections. The decision was seen as legitimizing the new regime and abandoning the liberal opposition that the EU had earlier supported.⁸ Meanwhile, despite the moderate criticism made by the preliminary EOM report, national European leaders reacted with varying degrees of acceptance of the election of Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. In short, whatever the original intentions of the mission, the result was a de facto legitimization of the new regime in Egypt notwithstanding its repression of the opposition.

Another noteworthy case is Azerbaijan in 2013, when President Ilham Aliyev was reelected with over 80 percent of the vote. The praise that members of the European Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe offered to the electoral process was in stark contrast to the assessment of the long-term mission of the OSCE. This undermined the credibility of the European Parliament mission, which some claimed was manipulated, while legitimizing a fraudulent election.⁹

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

In 2013 and 2014, two large EU neighbors saw severe disruptions of democratic process. In July 2013 the Egyptian military ousted President Morsi in what was a coup in all but name. This was followed by mass repression, including the killing of supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood. Beyond condemning the violence, the EU pursued a twofold strategy in Egypt: it attempted to facilitate a process of dialogue between the various parties and political actors while avoiding condemnation that might alienate the new government. Thus, High Representative Ashton—who had already attempted to persuade then-President Morsi to develop a more inclusive political dialogue following the breakdown in the constitutional process in November 2012—traveled to Egypt and managed to meet Morsi in detention. Through 14 official visits during her mandate, Ashton attempted to mediate among the various parties in Egypt. This is a role in which the EU has promoted itself, following mediations and/or facilitations in Serbia/Kosovo, Yemen, and Myanmar (through support of the Myanmar Peace Center). However, in Egypt, Ashton found a context too polarized for any dialogue. Moreover, engaging all actors

in Egypt somewhat stifled the EU's ability to criticize the repressive actions of the government.

The other EU neighbor to experience an uprising was Ukraine, where the trigger for the unrest was the nature of its relations with the EU. Beginning in summer 2013, Moscow was sending clear signals to Ukraine (and other countries in Eastern Europe) that political and trade agreements with the EU were not compatible with their relations with Russia. Toward the end of the year, then-president Viktor Yanukovich did a U-turn by refusing to sign previously negotiated agreements with the EU. This prompted a mass mobilization of Ukrainian citizens, leading to state violence, the flight of President Yanukovich to Russia, Russian annexation of Crimea, and an insurgency in eastern Ukraine, where fighting continues. The EU responded with a range of financial and diplomatic tools, including a mediation attempt by three EU foreign ministers. It also supported the presidential election in May 2014, and bolstered the new government by signing the agreements that had sparked the original protests. Nevertheless, the EU was unable to influence Moscow to change course in Crimea and eastern Ukraine, where fighting continues, and it took a backseat to the United States in direct negotiations. Furthermore, the EU struggled to maintain internal unity over relations with Russia, which remains the most divisive country in EU foreign policy. The crisis revealed the depth of the divisions between those more critical of Moscow and more willing to use punitive tools such as sanctions (Poland, the Baltic states, Sweden, and to a lesser extent the United Kingdom), and those keen to maintain a dialogue with Putin (Germany, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Hungary, Greece, and Cyprus).

Outside its so-called neighborhood of Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus, North Africa, and the Middle East,¹⁰ the EU as an institution is less active. Venezuela's mass street protests and their violent repression by security forces, for example, did not warrant more than a few statements of condemnation from the EU's external action service. The EU has no structured political dialogue with the Venezuelan government, so discussions on human rights take place on an ad hoc basis during meetings between the EU delegation in Caracas or member state embassies and Venezuelan authorities.

Editor's note: With the continuation of fighting in eastern Ukraine and the shooting down of a civilian flight in July 2014—as well as pressure from Washington—the EU agreed at the end of

July on a broader package of sanctions against Russia including restrictive measures on trade, financial assets, access to markets, and arms exports, though excluding Russia's gas market.

Gross Human Rights Violations

Gross human rights violations are addressed through EU delegations, public statements, the diplomacy of its special representative, and its action in international institutions.¹¹ However, it is extremely rare that such violations are raised in diplomatic relations with governments that perpetrate them, or that relations are affected by violations of international law.

The EU works through multilateral channels at the UN General Assembly and the UN Human Rights Council, where in recent years the EU increasingly has achieved approval of its initiatives.¹² In 2013, the EU claimed to have met all of its objectives in the Human Rights Council: extending the mandates of the special rapporteurs for Myanmar, North Korea, Belarus, and Iran, as well as the special rapporteur for freedom of religion or belief; and renewing the mandate of the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic. At the UN General Assembly Third Committee, all four initiatives put forward by the EU were adopted. EU resolutions on Myanmar and North Korea passed without a vote and with broad backing, and resolutions on Iran and Syria were passed with cross-regional support.¹³ Still, the EU has failed to provide leadership on key issues such as the war in Syria.

Other violations are also addressed systematically in multilateral forums, such as the use of torture. The EU approved guidelines on torture and other cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment in 2001. These are not legally binding on member states, but they direct diplomatic action in cases of violations. They are occasionally complemented by financing of nongovernmental organization (NGO) projects against torture.

Civil Liberties

In 2012 the EU approved a strategy to support civil society organizations, reflecting the growing role of these groups as recipients of EU assistance that consult with EU representatives on policy choices and programming strategies. The new strategy includes, among other things, the promotion of an environment of civil liberties in which civil society can operate freely, action at the multilateral level to

ensure the participation of NGOs in UN meetings, and a stronger focus on understanding the domestic conditions in which civil society organizations work. One example of how this has been implemented is the creation of the human rights focal points in the EU delegations around the world, which support human rights defenders in need and in some cases offer protection.

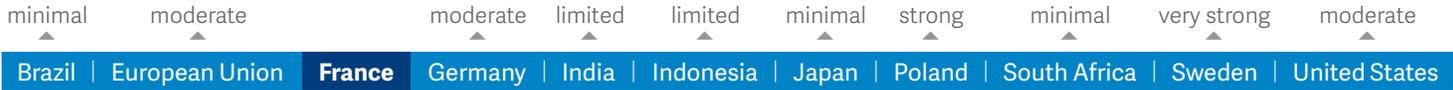
Marginalized Communities

On paper, the EU has embraced the broadest range of human rights, including ethnic, religious, and linguistic minority groups; however, internally it encompasses different traditions and approaches, and some member states do not recognize collective rights to minorities. In external policy, although the EU has devised approaches in support of children's rights and economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as indigenous rights, most of its activity is limited to multilateral diplomacy and public statements; its support of marginalized communities rarely plays a role in bilateral relations.

In contrast, the EU has supported numerous programs and projects on gender equality and has a long track record in this field. High Representative Ashton has been particularly active in this regard, meeting women's groups and leading gender-focused initiatives. In addition, in 2013 the EU approved guidelines to support freedom of religion and belief, as well as the rights of LGBT and intersex people. The only place it has applied the latter to date has been in Uganda, which outlawed homosexuality in 2014.

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moderate
support for democracy and human rights

France

Christian Lequesne

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

French foreign policy combines support for democracy and human rights with a strong Realpolitik dimension. Development assistance increasingly funds human rights and governance-related activities, primarily in France’s former colonies. France is also very willing to use military intervention to counter authoritarian regimes and prevent violations of human rights and democracy, most recently in Mali and the Central African Republic. France has provided support for democratic electoral processes in countries such as Guinea and Madagascar. It has also been a firm supporter of the rebels in Syria against the abuses of President Bashar al-Assad.

However, among repressive regimes with which France has close historical ties, the government tends to engage rather than criticize. For example, France has supported the undemocratic leadership of Algeria and Morocco, even going out of its way to repair strained relations. In addition, France’s contract to sell Mistral warships to Russia has been highly controversial given events in Ukraine and the backing of France’s allies for strong sanctions against Russia.

Introduction¹

France has a foreign policy with global interests and is involved diplomatically in developments in every part of the world. The 1789 Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen is among the inspirations for the diplomacy of the current French state. But French foreign policy also has a Realpolitik dimension that at times clashes with democratic principles. French policy thus reflects two extremes: support for democracy in some cases, and strong protection of the national interest in others.

The promotion of democracy and human rights has become increasingly important for French diplomats in the context of a globalized world. More than ever, French governments are inclined to consider that values, not just interests, matter in foreign policy as a source of legitimacy. This evolution has clear consequences for both the soft and hard power of France. The country takes seriously debates at the United Nations, which it sees as the place where democracy and human rights issues should be discussed. The old Gaullist line that the United Nations is just a “thingamajig” has been set aside.

Meanwhile, France still considers military intervention as a legitimate means for countering authoritarian regimes and preventing violations of democracy and human rights. France at times has been aggressive in confronting dictatorships and supporting democratic opposition. France also has implemented sanctions in response to breaches of democracy, mostly in the European Union (EU) context.

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

About the author

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In development policy, France continues to focus its actions mainly (though not exclusively) on former French colonies in sub-Saharan Africa, some of which are under authoritarian control. Where France has close historical ties, the government usually prefers engagement with, rather than criticism of, repressive regimes.

Foreign Policy Objectives

In principle, the current Socialist government is more willing than its predecessors to call for improved human rights conditions in its diplomatic relations. President François Hollande, elected in May 2012, has declared that “the time of *Françafrique* is over,”² referring to the past French policy of supporting authoritarian regimes in Africa solely for economic reasons. Nevertheless, the Hollande administration often emphasizes France’s strategic interests, which are especially dominant when they relate to the fights against terrorism and extremism.

As a candidate, Hollande outlined 60 priorities for his administration. Priority 57 on a renewal of French multilateral diplomacy and priority 58 on relations with Africa broadly reflect his main foreign policy ideas. Hollande said that partnerships with Middle East and North African countries will be built on economic, democracy, and cultural projects, in direct response to the Arab Spring.³

Hollande’s inaugural address on May 15, 2012, provided further detail on his ideas for supporting human rights and democracy in foreign policy. His five-year term in office was presented as a period during which France must uphold the principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as much as possible: personal freedoms, women’s rights, the fight against political repression, and humanism are all presented as priorities for French diplomacy in the period 2012–17.⁴ France also outlines its own path for democracy support and human rights based on healthcare diplomacy (support to UNITAID), as well as bilateral economic and financial support to the least developed countries. France insists that the integration of democracy, the rule of law, and human rights should be supported within UN multilateral policies.

In practice, France continues to lend support to undemocratic regimes, especially in Africa. Its intervention against militant jihadists in January 2013 in support of the Malian regime, which had come to power through a military coup, is a prime example. Hollande has called for democracy and transparency

in the authoritarian regime in Algeria, but continues the tradition of his predecessors of maintaining stable relations due to the strong historical connection between the two countries.⁵

France also continues to turn a blind eye to rights abuses by Moroccan authorities, including in the disputed territory of Western Sahara. France has described Morocco as “an intimate, very close partner,”⁶ with which it has strong historic and economic ties. Relations between Morocco and France have been tense since early 2014, when French-Moroccan activists filed lawsuits against Morocco’s intelligence chief, prompting an investigation into his alleged involvement in the torture of prisoners in Morocco. Rather than supporting the call against torture, Hollande reportedly called the Moroccan king in February 2014 “to send a message of confidence and friendship.”⁷

Development Assistance and Trade

Development assistance, both multilateral and bilateral, is implemented by the French Development Agency (AFD), a public agency that is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development. The AFD carries out programs in close connection with French embassies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). Although President Hollande’s campaign speeches emphasized its interest in working with Arab countries, most AFD programs are still oriented toward sub-Saharan Africa.

The AFD increasingly works directly with NGOs, which are selected based on their use of local resources and their local impact. Its emphasis on a participatory approach is a major development in contrast to 10 years ago, when France implemented development projects directly with governments, of which most were African. In 2013, the areas of human rights, governance, education for development, and creation of associative networks represented 44 percent of AFD projects managed by NGOs.⁸ According to the AFD’s strategic plan for 2012–16, one of the four aims of French support to NGOs is promotion of democratic governance and human rights as recognized by the French state and international conventions.⁹ Priority countries include 17 former colonies in Africa, as well as some in North Africa and the Middle East. Projects support the rule of law, respect for human rights, the fight against corruption, and effective governance.¹⁰

France rarely emphasizes human rights and democracy issues in trade deals. The country has a strong

defense industry that is a major source of its global exports. Local employment is directly dependent on these weapon sales and is prominent in the public eye. Moreover, a weak French economy has led politicians to push for stronger international trade regardless of the partner.

For this reason, the French government has not given up the controversial plan to sell two Mistral-class warships to Russia, despite Russia's 2014 invasion of Crimea and Russian support for violent separatists in eastern Ukraine. Signed in 2011 under former president Nicolas Sarkozy, the Mistral contract is worth €1.2 billion (\$1.7 billion) and includes a large penalty for breach of contract if France fails to deliver the ships. More than 1,000 French jobs are also linked to completion of the contract.¹¹ [Editor's note: In September 2014, France postponed delivery of the warships due to Russia's actions undermining security in Europe, although it did not cancel the contract.] Similarly, France supports a flexible interpretation of the EU arms embargo that has been in place against China since the crackdown on Tiananmen Square in 1989, and continues to export technology that has some military applications.¹²

Elections

Despite the global reach of French foreign policy, in practice, French electoral observation concentrates on sub-Saharan Africa. Most of this takes place through electoral observation missions run by international organizations such as the United Nations, the EU, or the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe. In general, France rarely responds to an election beyond making statements—what is referred to as “discursive diplomacy”—on human rights. However, France has often criticized election fraud and manipulation.

For example, in the Republic of Guinea, parliamentary elections on September 28, 2013, demonstrated steady progress in the electoral system. However, the EU, after an election mission supported by France, noted infringements on democracy and human rights immediately following the elections, including illegal detentions, violations of freedom of speech, and cases of torture.¹³

In Mali, parliamentary elections of November–December 2013 led to a long list of EU recommendations that France likewise supported. These included reform of the electoral system through creation of new constituencies, clarification of rules for incumbent officers to be candidates, and a

redefinition of the role of political parties within the political landscape.¹⁴ France also considered the January 2013 military intervention to be linked to the July 2013 presidential elections. As Hollande said in May 2013, “We must ensure Mali's authorities can actually have control over the territory, in order to organize these elections everywhere. No part of Mali can be detached from the electoral process.”¹⁵

In Madagascar, France supported the August 2013 decision of a new electoral court that addressed the list of candidates for the December presidential election. Madagascar had been facing a protracted political crisis since a military coup in 2009. The court decision canceled the candidacies of both the coup leader and the wife of the ousted president, both of whom had been prolonging a stalemate over holding the first post-coup elections. The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs said that the court decision “represents significant progress in the process to resolve the crisis in Madagascar, which must involve the holding of free, transparent, and credible elections.”¹⁶ The December election was peaceful and the EU did not report widespread fraud.

In response to the campaign process in Egypt that led to the election of Mohamed Morsi in June 2012, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphasized the need for a peaceful environment and for legal protection of freedom of speech. France also regularly denounced inappropriate use of force against protesters during the electoral campaign.

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

French diplomats have responded to disruptions of democratic processes in several countries in recent years, but have also been hesitant when economic interests were at stake.

France took an active position in the UN Security Council to gain support for unilateral military intervention in Mali in January 2013. When French intelligence provided evidence of progress of militant jihadist groups from Northern Mali toward the capital city, Bamako, Hollande determined that military intervention was the best option to stop them. After a bombing and ground offensive, France fostered support from the UN Security Council in April 2013 to deploy a peacekeeping force in Mali.

In 2013 and early 2014, France again determined that international mobilization, and ultimately unilateral military intervention, was necessary, this time in the Central African Republic. Sectarian killings

prompted a fear of civil war between the Muslim and Christian communities and of the potential for violent anarchy. In August 2013, President Hollande called for the African Union and the UN Security Council to address the situation.¹⁷ In December 2013, France called for reinforcement of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic and decided to intervene with its own troops in Operation Sangaris. The following month, France proposed to its EU partners the launch of Operation EUFOR RCA, which began its first mission in April led by French major general Philippe Pontiers. Thus, France has played a key role at all stages of military intervention in Africa.

Throughout the past two years, France has periodically condemned the political situation in Egypt. Criticism increased after the army's July 2013 arrest of President Mohamed Morsi, legally elected in June 2012. In August 2013, President Hollande voiced support for setting up a new democratic electoral process in Egypt.¹⁸ France has also supported the action plans of the European External Action Service (the EU's diplomatic corps) to enhance political dialogue and the protection of human rights in Egypt. France's stance is that the Egyptian government's efforts at democracy must be supported through the Euro-Mediterranean partnership.

After two attempted military coups in Comoros in April and May 2013, France joined the European External Action Service statement calling for respect of democratic values.¹⁹ However, Comorian political leaders have alleged that French mercenaries were involved in the military coups, and have launched legal procedure in a French court. These allegations are not without precedent; French mercenaries have been involved in African coups in the past.

Violence against protestors in Ukraine in 2014, mostly perpetrated by the government of then-president Viktor Yanukovich, as well as the subsequent Russian invasion of Crimea and Russian support for violent separatists in eastern Ukraine, have led the EU to contentious discussions of sanctions against Ukrainian and Russian individuals responsible for breaches of democratic process and civil liberties. While the Hollande administration supports an independent Ukraine in face of Putin's politics of hegemony, and France has accepted limited EU sanctions, France does not support strong sanctions against Russia due to its extensive economic ties. France is second only to Germany among Russia's largest foreign investors.²⁰ [Editor's note: France did

support the tighter sanctions that the EU imposed on Russia in July 2014.]

Gross Human Rights Violations

France has developed an active role within the United Nations, its primary place of focus for human rights diplomacy. France defined a political agenda for its candidacy to the UN Human Rights Council, to which it was elected in November 2013. Gérard Araud, French permanent representative to the United Nations, has said that the notion of "responsibility to protect" must be redefined by strengthening international law.²¹ In an effort to improve accountability, President Hollande has called for a code of conduct to end what France considers the reckless use of veto power in the UN Security Council and the resulting failure to end serious violations.²²

Hollande's suggestion came at the end of a speech detailing numerous world challenges, the first of which was the civil war in Syria.²³ France was the first country to recognize the Syrian opposition in November 2012. In September 2013, France was prepared to engage in military action against the Assad regime, but renounced the idea due the refusal of the United States and the United Kingdom to participate in a military coalition. France has broken diplomatic relations with Syria and recalled its ambassador to Damascus. The Syrian ambassador in Paris also has been expelled, although she may remain because of her accreditation with Paris-based UNESCO. France now supports the installation in Paris of an ambassador representing the Syrian opposition and is helping to fund an embassy.

In contrast, France has shied away from further military intervention in Libya after the Sarkozy administration played a key role in NATO's campaign to overthrow Muammar al-Qaddafi in 2011. While France makes regular statements against ongoing violence in Libya,²⁴ Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius announced in February 2014 that France had ruled out Western military action.²⁵

France has engaged in a global campaign against the death penalty, calling for an international moratorium in November 2012. Every French embassy has been requested to hold international forums and conferences, and to support public diplomacy by NGOs.²⁶

At the EU level, France has supported mediation by High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Catherine Ashton and by the European External Action Service to ease several

dramatic political situations around the world. By supporting EU diplomacy, France is able to project its interests further.

Civil Liberties

The protection of freedom of expression and free media was at the core of the French international agenda in 2012 and 2013. French policy was defined after Paris-based NGO Reporters Without Borders reported that 88 journalists were killed globally in 2012.²⁷ In a speech on May 3, 2012, the spokesperson at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated that France will consistently speak out when journalists are victims of violence, condemning the crimes and calling for justice.²⁸ UN Ambassador Araud declared on July 17, 2013, that the international community must work to provide journalists sufficient protection to accomplish their “democratic mission.”²⁹

France supported the European External Action Service’s condemnation of the May 2014 arrests and detentions in China of human rights activists marking the 25th anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre.³⁰ It regularly supports other EU statements on human rights in China as well. However, France itself rarely condemns Chinese crackdowns on civil liberties, preferring to emphasize the positive aspects of French-Chinese economic cooperation. In a speech in Nanjing in February 2014, Foreign Minister Fabius obliquely said, “Sometimes, these two great countries can have different approaches. . . . I’m thinking of certain international issues. I’m also thinking of the issue of human rights, where different historical trajectories have produced different sensibilities: nobody should force their views upon anyone else, but we believe that certain principles and rights are universal and should benefit every woman and every man in every country.”³¹

Marginalized Communities

France hosts the second-largest number of refugees and asylum seekers in the EU, after Germany. In 2013, 13 percent of the total candidates who obtained the status of refugee or asylum seeker in the EU were in France. In 2013, one in four refugee candidates gained legal status.³² This openness is new since the left-wing government came to power. Refugee status allows the beneficiary to work and to receive social welfare in France. Refugees in France come from countries such as Syria, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Russia, and Albania.³³

The French public has a general sympathy for Christians from the Middle East, supported by Christian churches but also by parliamentarians and the media. This stems from the close historical links that France has built with these communities, especially in Lebanon and Syria. In his meeting with the president of the Conference of French Catholic Bishops on October 7, 2013, President Hollande publicly expressed his concern about the future of these communities in Syria, Iraq, Egypt, and the Palestinian territories. The French president declared that France has the clear wish to support all the Christians from the Middle East.³⁴ During his visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories in November 2013, President Hollande reiterated that there is nothing worse “than imagining that the Middle East could be a land where Christians could no longer live in peace.”³⁵ As a consequence, the French refugee agency has been keen to support refugee status for Christian Syrians escaping the civil war.

Since France passed a law in May 2013 legalizing same-sex marriage, French diplomacy has been more supportive of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender rights abroad. In January 2014, for instance, the foreign ministry criticized a bill in Nigeria to criminalize same-sex relationships.³⁶

Gender equality is not a primary area of focus for French foreign policy, although diplomats make occasional statements in support of equality issues. The AFD is in the process of finalizing a strategy on gender and development.³⁷

France continues to issue statements in response to the killings of ethnic Rohingya in Myanmar, including acknowledging a Human Rights Watch report that referred to the violence as ethnic cleansing.³⁸ President Hollande raised the topic in a meeting with Burmese president Thein Sein in July 2013. In that meeting, Hollande also mentioned that France supports everyone who is working for democracy and respect of human rights in Myanmar.³⁹

Tibetan rights activists were encouraged that Hollande reportedly raised the topic of human rights with Chinese president Xi Jinping on an April 2013 visit whose primary purpose was to improve economic relations; the visit came just after two Tibetan monks had set themselves on fire to protest China’s policy in Tibet.⁴⁰ However, despite encouragement by various NGOs and French parliamentarians,⁴¹ Hollande did not explicitly raise the topic of Tibet during President Xi’s visit to France the following

year, in March 2014. France hosted a visit by the Dalai Lama most recently in 2011.

Nor has France spoken openly against China's treatment of the Uighurs, who face religious repression, crackdowns on peaceful protestors, imprisonment, and torture. After terrorist attacks occurred in March and May 2014 that were blamed on Uighur separatists, France issued statements condemning the violence and expressing solidarity with the government and the Chinese people.⁴²

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Germany

Jörg Faust and Julia Leininger

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Human rights and democracy have been core values of German foreign policy since the foundation of the Federal Republic in 1949. Germany predominantly draws on civic and peaceful means to promote human rights and democracy. Its substantial democracy aid is determined in part by recipient countries’ level of governance.

German governments have sometimes hesitated to demand democratization in authoritarian regimes, tending to criticize electoral fraud where democracy has already taken root. In general, German governments have tried to consistently link their democracy promotion strategies with the foreign policy of the European Union (EU). The country’s political foundations also play a significant role in democracy promotion. Similar to other major European countries, democracy promotion is restricted in cases where economic interests are dominant, as in relationships with China or Russia.

Introduction ¹

Germany derives moral authority to support democracy and human rights from its own historical experience after World War II. As a result of the support of the Marshall Plan, West Germany underwent a democratization process, and after the fall of the Berlin Wall, a united Germany embraced the promotion of democracy and human rights as an element of its long-term foreign policy goals. At the same time, Germany has been hesitant to intervene in other nations’ affairs because of its role as the aggressor during the war. Indeed, West Germany’s *Ostpolitik* (“Eastern policy”) toward Eastern Europe—arguably its most significant Cold War foreign policy initiative—was aimed less at the encouragement of democracy than at peace and rapprochement. In particular, *Ostpolitik* did not pursue democratization in East Germany. Today, Germany’s hesitant approach to Russia can be partly explained by the legacy of this noninterventionist history.

All German governments, irrespective of their political party affiliation, have committed themselves to the principles of human rights. While democracy is also a foreign policy priority, German governments have not given it the same emphasis as human rights.²

German support for democracy and human rights is implemented through a heterogeneous set of government ministries, state aid agencies, and civil society organizations. Germany has an especially rich community of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and think tanks, often at least partly state-funded, that contribute to democracy promo-

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

About the authors

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tion initiatives. Political foundations such as the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung are distinctive actors in German democracy promotion. Originally founded to promote democracy through civic education in West Germany after World War II, they have since broadened their mandate and conduct numerous projects abroad. While political foundations are ideologically linked to the political parties represented in parliament, their financial support is derived from the government and is independent from the parties.

Internationally, Germany's most important point of reference is the European Union (EU). The EU influences and in some cases determines Germany's foreign policy, and Germany frequently influences EU policies. In contrast to other, more interventionist nations such as the United States or the United Kingdom, Germany has been particularly reluctant to use military means for removing repressive regimes.

Given its high commitment to multilateralism, Germany declined membership in the Community of Democracies in 2000, as it perceived the group to be a coalition to circumvent UN authority in order to justify interventions in third countries. At the same time, Germany has strengthened its engagement in the UN Human Rights Council during its membership since 2012, and the government has announced its candidacy for the council's presidency.³ While Germany has had a strong voting record since 2013 on joint statements in the council that are country specific, it has not taken the lead to bring unaddressed, critical situations to the council's attention.⁴

Geographically, Germany gives support to all regions, with recent focus on developments in Germany's eastern and southern neighborhoods. Germany tends to focus its democracy support on those countries where political liberalization has already gained a foothold, placing less emphasis on comparatively stable authoritarian regimes.

In 2014, Foreign Minister Frank-Walter Steinmeier initiated the reform project "Review 2014," which addresses the role of military engagement in Germany's foreign policy. Initial policy recommendations of this process are expected at the end of 2014.

Foreign Policy Objectives

Human rights and democracy have been core values of German foreign policy since the foundation of the

Federal Republic of Germany in 1949, though during the Cold War they were secondary in importance to strategic considerations. Germany pursues a value-oriented foreign policy based on the principle of peace. Inviolability of human rights—in Germany and other countries—is anchored in the German constitution (*Grundgesetz*).⁵ Moreover, the peaceful support of both democracy and human rights is strongly backed by public opinion: large majorities (almost 80 percent) of the public support promoting human rights and democracy elsewhere as long as this does not involve military means.⁶

German foreign policy is mainly formulated and implemented through the Federal Foreign Office, while the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) is responsible for the country's development cooperation. Official documents often do not explicitly refer to democracy as a policy objective in relations with individual countries, but rather as an overarching goal. They also often refer to democratic principles such as civil society participation, civil rights, and political liberties while framing democratization as a long-term process that must be nurtured by the respective society.⁷ A strong emphasis on supporting the rule of law links the country's human rights approach with its aim of supporting democracy.

Nevertheless, the goal of strengthening democracy often competes with other German interests and is sometimes soft-pedaled in relationships with more stable autocracies such as China, Russia, Rwanda, and Saudi Arabia. For instance, China and Germany have had an ongoing dialogue about the rule of law since 2000,⁸ but this engagement does not explicitly involve a value-oriented stand on human rights and democracy. Pursuit of economic interests is not the only motive for the deemphasis of democracy in bilateral relations: Germany at times refrains from criticizing authoritarian countries when it seeks partners to address global problems such as climate change or poverty.

In general, continuity has shaped German foreign policy. Since the conservative-liberal government came to power in 2009, Germany has aimed its diplomacy at strengthening its role as a human rights defender in international forums, especially in the UN Human Rights Council. Germany usually draws on civic, nonmilitary means to defend human rights. However, after the military coup in Mali in 2012 and the outbreak of civil war in the Central African Republic in 2013, the government of Angela Merkel

launched a debate over military interventionism that goes beyond North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) obligations for the sake of global security, human rights, and democracy. An expansion of Germany's traditionally limited military role draws only partial support among the public. While 66 percent agree that peace and freedom should be top priorities and support for human rights a main task of German foreign policy, only 37 percent believe that Germany should take more responsibility in international crises. In contrast, more than 80 percent supports the engagement of German troops to stop genocide and provide humanitarian aid.⁹

Development Assistance and Trade

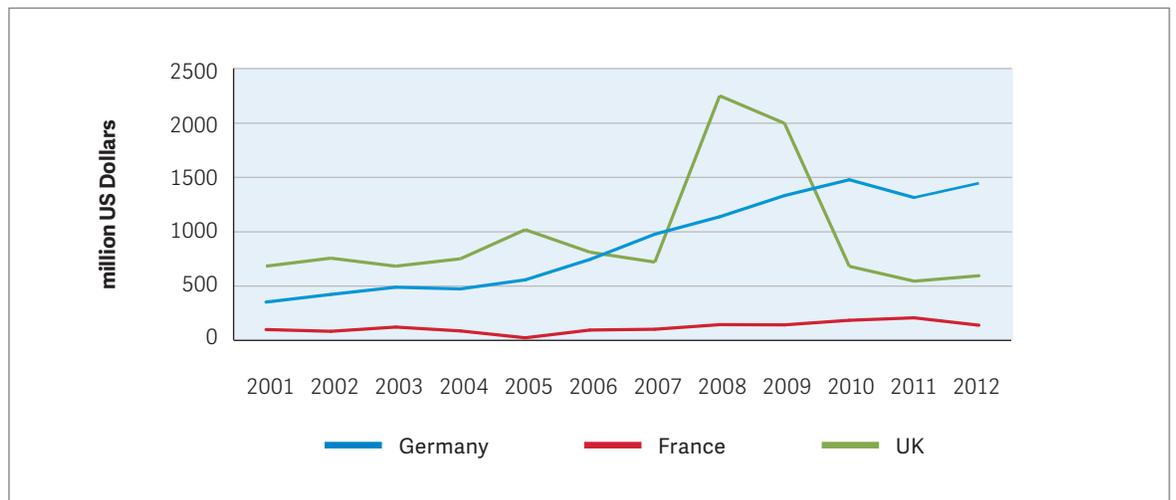
In its 2013 Development Policy White Paper, the BMZ highlighted human rights and democracy as the basis for development cooperation and emphasized its commitment to democracy support and a human rights-based approach to development assistance.¹⁰ Germany is not only Europe's largest bilateral provider of democracy aid but also among the few major donor countries that have explicitly named democracy support as a foreign aid objective.

Germany's official development assistance includes resources distributed through bilateral state-owned agencies such as the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) and the KfW Development Bank; NGOs such as the political foundations; and multilateral institutions such as the UN Development Programme (UNDP), EU institutions, and the UN Democracy Fund. Most of Germany's bilateral

aid for improving democratic governance and state modernization is channeled through the GIZ. While the good governance programs it implements often do not explicitly aim at democracy promotion, they are intended to strengthen transparent and democratically accountable state institutions, and often include aspects of local governance and decentralization. Democratic participation and civil society comprise the largest part of German governance support (€312 million [\$403 million] in 2012), followed by public sector management (€212 million [\$274 million] in 2012), and legal and judicial development (€166 million [\$214 million] in 2012).¹¹ Crosscutting issues such as transparent and accountable governance in water management or the rights of women in local politics are often not reported as democracy assistance or human rights support, making them difficult to capture.

Germany has had a steadily growing financial commitment to democracy and human rights policies during the last decade. According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) aid statistics (see Figure), Germany spent more than \$1.4 billion to support "civil society and governments" in 2012, which is equivalent to support for democracy and human rights; general aid to development is not included. Afghanistan is by far the largest recipient of aid to good governance (€278 million [\$359 million] in 2012), followed by sub-Saharan African countries such as Ghana (€ 26 million [\$33.5 million]) and Tanzania (€21 million [\$27 million]).¹²

Figure: German support to democracy and human rights (2001–2012)



*Figures are commitments in constant millions of 2012 USD.

Source: OECD Aid Statistics 2014; Database of the Creditor Reporting System.

The Federal Foreign Office spends only €24 million (\$31 million) per year on small-scale projects, a figure that was complemented during the Arab spring with “transformational partnerships” that have had a budget of around €30 million (\$39 million) per year since 2012.¹³ Both types of foreign ministry funding go toward microprojects on topics including human rights, civil society, and free media. In addition, the foreign ministry supports the German Institute for Human Rights (*Deutsches Institut für Menschenrechte*), which monitors German human rights policies.¹⁴

In order to allocate aid according to the principles of democracy and human rights, BMZ has systematically analyzed the governance situation in its partner countries on an annual basis since 2006. Empirical evidence has shown that a developing country’s level of democracy plays a statistically significant role in the allocation of aid and whether it becomes a partner country for development assistance.¹⁵ German governments have argued in favor of this standard-based allocation, and tend to sanction the violation of basic democracy principles with a reduction or suspension of bilateral aid flows. For example, Germany cut budget support to Uganda in 2012 because of apparent government involvement in a corruption scandal as well as legislation that discriminates against lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals.

However, Germany’s policy has not been without problems of consistency. Similar to other donors, Germany provides large amounts of foreign aid to countries that have been identified as not free by Freedom House and where there has been no significant trend toward political liberalization, such as Cambodia, Vietnam, and Uzbekistan. Ethiopia and Rwanda are examples where the pursuit of economic development has outweighed democratic objectives.

The German government frequently assesses its efforts to promote and protect human rights in Germany and abroad, publishing its activities in a public, biannual report.¹⁶ While GIZ and other implementing agencies as well as political foundations regularly evaluate parts of their individual programs, neither the foreign ministry nor the BMZ has so far issued an overarching evaluation of Germany’s efforts in the field of democracy support.

The EU Commission is responsible for formulating and implementing trade policies, thus constraining Germany’s ability to use trade policy as an instru-

ment for supporting democracy. Current debates about German arms exports to the Kurds in Iraq and Saudi Arabia illustrate the conflict between trade interests and democracy support.

Elections

Broadly speaking, German governments tend to criticize electoral fraud in democratized or partly free countries as an attempt to halt democratic decay. German governments also have raised concerns with regard to potential electoral outcomes when radical organizations were likely to win or have won power. The primary example of this is the Arab world, where German officials worried that Islamist groups such as the Muslim Brotherhood or Hamas might not respect basic principles once elected. However, Germany has been supporting democratic governance in the Palestinian territories.

In general, Germany has applied sanctions inconsistently in response to electoral fraud and manipulation. Moreover, German governments have tended to avoid open criticism of manipulated elections in authoritarian countries. In Central Asia—a geostrategically important, neighboring region dominated by authoritarian regimes—German criticism of electoral manipulation has been modest, particularly in Uzbekistan, where the German air force operates a key base.

Electoral observers sent by the German government are embedded in official missions of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and the EU institutions. Germany relies on a government-controlled institute to train international personnel (the Center for International Peace Operations), including electoral observers.¹⁷ In 2013, Germany participated in electoral observation missions in 10 countries with 165 electoral observers.¹⁸ The foreign ministry and the BMZ provide additional technical support for democratic elections when requested by partner countries. Political foundations are also important actors in supporting free and fair elections, through training in electoral procedures and in establishing democratic internal party procedures.

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

In most cases, Germany has openly criticized and condemned coups against democratic regimes. For example, the coup against democratically elected president Amadou Toumani Touré of Mali in 2012 led to massive criticism by the German government

and the suspension of aid disbursements until democracy was restored in 2013.¹⁹ However, Germany is less willing to publicly criticize the steady decay of democratic structures and behavior (for example persistent or increasing levels of corruption, shrinking space for civil society, or the expansion of executive power).

Democratic deterioration in Ukraine has been a concern of the German government since Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich obstructed a trade agreement between Ukraine and the EU in 2013. During the Ukrainian Revolution in early 2014, Foreign Minister Steinmeier signaled support to the transitional government, and Germany also provided emergency assistance. Germany's policy toward Ukraine is embedded in the EU framework and relies on the OSCE. Given Russia's high importance for German energy, security, and trade, Germany has long opted for a consensus-oriented solution to address Russia's unilateral intervention in the Ukraine. [Editor's note: Germany finally agreed to EU sanctions in July 2014.]

When the military ousted democratically elected Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013, Germany was critical, stopping arms exports and freezing aid. Foreign Minister Guido Westerwelle demanded freedom of religion and pluralism.

Most debates about and changes in German policy formulation in the last two years have been connected to liberalization of authoritarian rule. In particular, the short-lived democratic prospects in North Africa and parts of the Arab world triggered discussions about developing better concepts of democracy promotion in authoritarian regimes and the need to react quickly to breakdowns of autocracy. As a consequence, support to individuals and movements in third countries has become more prominent in German policy formulation.

The EU criticized the Hungarian government's repeated, profound changes to the constitution after 2011 because they were not deemed compatible with the European values enshrined in the Lisbon Treaty.²⁰ However, EU collective action against the government's dubious respect of the Hungarian constitution was not possible due to diverging political interests among member states. German reactions to democratic challenges among EU members are bound by EU norms and regulations. Germany took a clear stance by criticizing the Hungarian government, but it declined to apply economic sanctions.

Gross Human Rights Violations

Germany supports and defends the Responsibility to Protect in global politics and forums such as the UN. The country recently launched technical and administrative initiatives intended to facilitate the implementation of this norm. For example, in 2012 Germany granted financial support to the UN Secretary General's annual report on the Responsibility to Protect and established a National Focal Point, which is intended to enable a whole-government approach.²¹

Germany supports military interventions to impede gross human rights violations only through multilateral engagement based on a mandate of the UN or NATO. For instance, Germany has contributed personnel and financing to UN peacekeeping missions (e.g., South Sudan, Democratic Republic of Congo) and has deployed troops or contributed material under the auspices of NATO (e.g., Afghanistan). It also indirectly supports multilateral military actions by granting substantial financial support to the African Peace and Security Architecture of the African Union, whose African Standby Force is intended to prevent and resolve conflicts on the African continent. However, despite its substantial advancements, this body is still not fully functional.

Backed by public opinion, Germany has objected to intervention in situations perceived to be too complex and requiring substantial financial and human commitments. The most prominent examples are Germany's position in the Libyan crisis of 2011 and the ongoing Syrian war. In both cases Germany emphasized the Responsibility to Protect and organized talks with the opposition on its territory, but was reluctant to support an international intervention. This policy might be changing in cases with less political relevance for Germany. A sign in this direction is German support to the French-led military missions to Mali (2013) and the Central African Republic (2014).

Overall, programs to proactively support the protection of human rights in third countries seem to be weak as compared to foreign policy rhetoric. The foreign ministry spends only €4 million (\$5.2 million) on microprojects and supports the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights with €5 million (\$6.5 million).²² Germany prioritizes preventive action and programs over ad hoc humanitarian assistance. Compared to other large donors, Germany's humanitarian assistance makes up only a small share of its official development assistance

(less than 5 percent).²³ Germany also offers the possibility of gaining asylum as an instrument of emergency response. In addition, in 2000 Germany created a national human rights institution to monitor human rights policies in Germany and abroad and to provide research on various human rights topics.²⁴ Germany aims to support the establishment of this institutional model in other countries, with Azerbaijan as a pilot country.

Civil Liberties

Beyond diplomatic encouragement, Germany's support to free and peaceful civil society is primarily channeled through its political foundations, sometimes through church-based NGOs, and partly through its foreign aid agencies. While they mostly do not cooperate directly with civil society organizations, state aid agencies aim at strengthening relations between state and society through capacity development in public institutions in order to enable them to act in a more transparent and rule-based manner, and by supporting human rights ombudsmen.

With regard to support for free expression and a free press, Germany depends on the state-owned media broadcaster Deutsche Welle (DW), which receives state funds not only for disseminating information about Germany but also for providing neutral information about politics worldwide and for promoting free media in developing countries. Beyond its broadcasting activities, DW also provides training to journalists from developing countries and promotes free new social media through small-scale projects.

The political foundations actively train political civil society groups and attempt to provide sheltered spaces for civil society activities. They also alert the German government about cases of less visible restrictions on civil liberties and crackdowns on political activists. Recently, these foundations have expressed increasing concern about NGO laws in developing countries that attempt to restrict freedom of expression and assembly, as well as the possibilities for cooperation between domestic and foreign organizations. On several recent occasions, German political foundations have faced serious hostility and restrictions under authoritarian or semiauthoritarian governments for cooperating with political activists, opposition groups, or politically active NGOs. For instance, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung and other

international NGOs faced serious reprisals from the Egyptian government between 2011 and 2013. This culminated in a prison sentence in an Egyptian court after the foundation and some of its officials were found guilty on politically motivated charges. For similar reasons, the two biggest political foundations as well as other German NGOs faced repercussions in Russia during 2012 and 2013. The German government issued criticisms in both the Egyptian and Russian cases. In 2012, the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung closed its office in Ethiopia because ongoing restrictions of human rights and democratic development made it impossible to continue its work with civil society.

Marginalized Communities

Freedom of religion and belief has become a higher German priority since the Arab Spring, and particularly in response to the rise of the Muslim Brotherhood. The current Christian Democratic majority in the government emphasizes the need to protect Christian minorities. For instance, it condemned violence against Christian communities in Egypt in recent years. In addition, the German government has initiated interreligious dialogue.

The German government has made a strong rhetorical commitment to promoting minority rights. This was especially true from 2009 to 2013, when the foreign and development ministers belonged to the liberal party, which traditionally emphasizes civil liberties. A global trend toward limiting the rights of LGBT people in various countries has caused a shift in the focus of German policy. In several instances—including in Russia—Germany has publicly condemned antigay laws.

Improving the situation for women is an important theme in German foreign aid and diplomacy. Germany pursues a preventive approach and also lobbies for international norms against the violation of women's rights. All bilateral aid programs are required to include at least an indirect gender component. Specific programs also directly support gender equality in public institutions and women's role in politics and society. Germany has taken a particularly strong stand with regard to the fight against female genital mutilation in developing countries.

However, the German government has not responded thoroughly to violations of ethnic minority rights in the absence of serious human rights violations

that attract the attention of the domestic public. For instance, the government has not officially criticized the continuous Chinese governmental discrimination against the indigenous Uighur minority. Prior to her official visit to China in July 2014, German chancellor Merkel emphasized that economic development and human rights must go hand in hand, but that she would not openly criticize China's Uighur policy. This pragmatic approach is likely due to the intensifying economic relationship between the countries.²⁵

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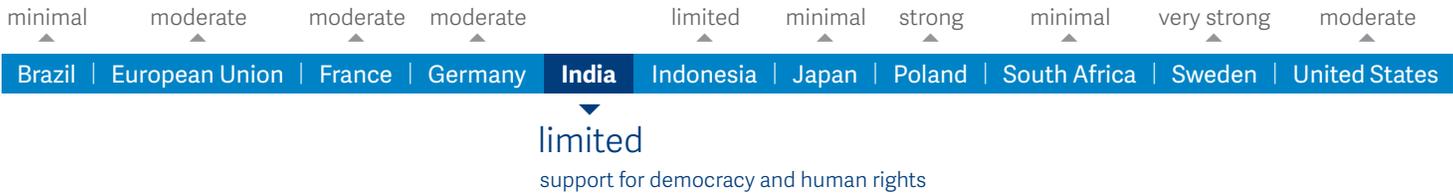
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India

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

India’s foreign policy is primarily driven by strategic, economic, and political interests. However, as the world’s largest democracy, India is sensitive to the ideological values of democracy and human rights. India is also gradually emerging as a hub of training and dissemination of democratic best practices in its region. During 2012–14, India has grappled with disruptions in the democratic processes in Nepal, Bangladesh, and the Maldives. It has also tried to gently nudge the Burmese government toward reconciliation with democratic forces and to improve its record on protection of human rights.

However, India has maintained a careful silence on cases outside its immediate region. Moreover, its positions on human rights violations in countries like Sri Lanka and Syria have been shaped by its sensitivity to sovereignty as well as its competing interests. In China and Pakistan, India has not responded robustly to human rights violations and curbing of civil liberties.

Introduction

As the world’s most populous democracy, India is instinctively supportive of democracy elsewhere. The rise and growth of democracy in other countries is seen as conducive to India’s wider national interests. However, the Indian government has not viewed active promotion of democracy and human rights as integral to India’s economic, political, and strategic interests.¹

India has traditionally stood against interference by outside powers in the internal affairs of independent countries. During the cold war, India was a leader of the nonaligned movement and took independent positions on critical issues, many of which were also supported by the Soviet Union. Today, India has become one of the leading non-Western democracies, and continues to be at odds with the West on a range of international issues.

India’s support for democracy and human rights is discernible at three levels. First, India supports democratic processes in its immediate neighborhood of Nepal, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, the Maldives, and Afghanistan. Second, it supports electoral processes, both in its region and elsewhere. And third, it promotes democracy through international institutions dedicated to this cause. India has participated continuously in programs and initiatives of the Community of Democracies. It has also been part of the Bali Democracy Forum since its establishment in 2008—although it only did so once at the ministerial level, in 2010. India cofounded the UN Democracy Fund along with the United States and is currently its second-largest contributor.²

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

About the author

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India has been quite active in supporting evolution and consolidation of democracy in its neighborhood. Four of India's immediate neighbors have faced recent challenges in this regard, all rooted in internal political conflicts and rivalries. In Nepal and Myanmar, difficulties arose over the writing of constitutions. In Bangladesh and the Maldives, the hurdles were related to power transition through elections. India engaged the main political actors in all of these countries through diplomatic channels and exchange of visits, helping them reach consensus.

While it has taken positions on human rights issues at the United Nations on critical situations such as those in Syria and Sri Lanka, the Indian government has distanced itself from the West on issues of sovereignty and use of force. It has played the role of facilitator in the resolution of internal political obstacles that were interfering with democratic advancement, and has extended material and institutional assistance to ensure smooth conduct during elections around the world. Thus, rather than a proactive promoter of the concept of democracy, India has been a sympathetic supporter of emerging and evolving democracies, mostly in its close neighborhood.

Foreign Policy Objectives

Though India is sensitive to the cause of democracy promotion, its stance has been one of noninterference. The word "democracy" did not appear when, in September 2012, the foreign secretary listed India's priorities at the 67th UN General Assembly session in New York. Nor did democracy promotion figure among the foreign policy objectives in the Ministry of External Affairs Annual Reports for 2012–13 and 2013–14, although in specific chapters India's support for democracy was emphasized in relevant neighbors and other countries.³ India has consistently made clear its preference for secular, multiparty, parliamentary democracy but avoids active promotion.

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh officially underlined a link between democracy and India's foreign policy when he addressed the Annual Conference of Indian Envoys in New Delhi in November 2013. Prime Minister Singh listed five defining principles of India's foreign policy, the last of which was, "Our foreign policy is not defined merely by our interests, but also by the values which are very dear to our people." However, the thrust in promoting democracy was limited to the fact that India's economic develop-

ment within a democratic framework "has inspired people around the world and should continue to do so."⁴

This refrain on doing little more than "inspiring" democratic change has been consistent in India's policy. In December 2013, Minister of External Affairs Salman Khurshid said:

We are in favour of democratic pluralism and religious moderation but it is up to the people of the region to decide the pace and the means to achieve those goals, keeping in mind their traditions and history. We are also against armed conflict or external intervention as a way of resolving political issues in the region or elsewhere in the world.⁵

Referring to a "democratic upsurge in South Asia," Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai (the administrative head of the Ministry of External Affairs) told a gathering in July 2012 that "We can best influence this by being an example—rather than trying any policy presumption."⁶ As for the potential for democracy in the Arab world, he said:

India's policy towards the region and developments there, and our posture in the Security Council have also been guided by our principled desire not to interfere in the internal affairs of States and being non-prescriptive. . . . We are absolutely clear. . . that societies cannot be re-ordered from outside through military force and that people in all countries have the right to choose their own destiny and decide their own future.⁷

On April 2, 2014, his successor, Foreign Secretary Sujatha Singh, observed that in South Asia, "Democracies are still nascent in many respects but they bring with them larger constituencies for peace, for economic progress, and for development."⁸

India's membership in the BRICS grouping (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) helps in its push toward democratization of the world order, especially in terms of the governance of international institutions. This group is not active on democracy-related issues of specific countries.

Development Assistance and Trade

India has not proactively used economic policy instruments such as trade and development assistance to promote democracy and human rights abroad. The trade-democracy relationship

appears only incidentally and occasionally. For example, in its trade relations with Pakistan, India has an unexpressed hope that economic ties, while helping to normalize relations, will also boost the strength of democratic forces and the civilian regime in Pakistan. Although this has not been argued officially by India, well-respected analysts and commentators have drawn attention to it.⁹

In the case of Bhutan, India withdrew a subsidy on liquefied petroleum (cooking) gas cylinders and kerosene during the final phase of parliamentary elections in 2013. The decision to stop subsidies followed the end of their terms under Bhutan's Five Year Plan on June 30, 2013. However, when the ruling party in Bhutan was then defeated on July 13, some commentators considered this a setback to democracy and interference by India in Bhutan's nascent democratic evolution.¹⁰ India has maintained that the decision was nonpolitical.

In Afghanistan, India's support has built infrastructure, institutions, and capacities to sustain democratic functioning, with total assistance exceeding \$2 billion. For example, India constructed Afghanistan's Parliament house, and provided training in administration, farming, and the health and educational sectors.¹¹

India's development assistance tends to be at the multilateral level. India annually contributes \$50,000 to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), which is committed to democratic capacity building around the world. India also contributes regularly to the United Nations Democracy Fund. In total, India has contributed \$31.56 million to this fund since its inception.¹²

Elections

India considers free and fair elections as an essential part of the institutionalization and reinforcement of democracy. Thus, India is in the process of becoming a hub for training and support of efficient and transparent democratic electoral management. This is being conducted through the India International Institute on Democracy and Electoral Management (IIIDEM), developed as a collaboration between the government, the United Nations, the Commonwealth, and intergovernmental organizations such as International IDEA.¹³ IIIDEM's goal is to provide "meticulous, accurate, voter friendly implementation of election processes by committed, competent, credible, and skilled managers

and associated groups." In June 2013, it agreed to provide training to Commonwealth officials in various aspects of electoral management.¹⁴ It also facilitated visits from seven African and Middle East countries to observe India's state elections in November 2013, and from 20 countries to witness the management of India's massive parliamentary elections in April to May 2014.

India also has trained election officials from other countries, sent Indian election officials to assist in the conduct of polls, sent election observers abroad, and supplied electronic voting machines, vehicles, and other material. For example, India has committed to provide 10 vehicles, along with indelible ink and training, to election officials in Fiji for elections scheduled for September 2014.¹⁵ Such support has also been extended to Afghanistan, Bhutan, and the Maldives, as well as Egypt and Tunisia.

Though no electoral support was extended to Pakistan, in 2013 India hailed the first peaceful transition of power there, which brought Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League to power. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh congratulated Sharif for his "emphatic victory," and Foreign Minister Salman Khurshid hoped that India and Pakistan would "continue to have good relations under Sharif's leadership."¹⁶ The then-opposition Bharatiya Janata Party also welcomed the change in Pakistan.¹⁷

India's commitment to supporting free and fair elections faced a formidable challenge in the case of Nepal's Constituent Assembly elections in November 2013. Nepal's outgoing prime minister had refused to resign in the face of political paralysis and increasing instability, and the other major parties said they would participate in elections only under a neutral, interim arrangement, all of which called into doubt whether elections would be held at all. India's diplomatic efforts contributed to the March 2013 establishment of an independent interim election government led by Chief Justice Khilraj Regmi for conducting elections. India also provided 764 vehicles that helped ensure peaceful conduct at the polls.¹⁸

In the Maldives, Indian efforts contributed to the holding of free, fair, and inclusive elections in November 2013, after a controversial Supreme Court annulment of the first round of polls held in September of that year.¹⁹ India officially expressed disappointment about the court's decision to annul the results—which was seen as a politico-judicial intervention against Mohamed Nasheed of the

Maldives Democratic Party, who in February 2012 had been forced to resign as president. India subsequently worked with the international community to ensure the declaration of a new schedule and the efficient completion of the electoral process to avoid political instability.²⁰

In Bangladesh, the ruling regime and the main opposition were in conflict over the mechanism for holding elections that took place January 5, 2014. India and the wider international community initially strove for participation of all major political players through a process of reconciliation. This included a visit by India's foreign secretary to Bangladesh to try to persuade the contending political forces to take part,²¹ and an invitation to opposition leader Khaleda Zia for discussions at the highest political levels in India as a part of "our ongoing engagement with a democratic and multiparty polity in Bangladesh."²²

As a result of these and other international efforts, the Awami League-led government agreed to form a multiparty government for holding the election under their party's leadership. However, the opposition insisted on an interim administration, which had been used in the past under a constitutional provision that had since been amended. In a detailed explanation of India's role, Zia told an Indian newspaper in June 2014:

Their foreign secretary [Sujatha Singh] came here, and said publicly that H. M. Ershad [leader of the smaller Jatiya Party] should participate, otherwise. . .the fundamentalists will come to power. She tried to convince us also but could not. . . I don't know whether the [Indian] Congress-led government played a role; many believe that [it did]. . .In fact, Ershad said later that the foreign secretary put pressure on him.²³

In this stalemate, the United States, the United Kingdom, and the United Nations thought that elections should be delayed until the main opposition would participate. India, however, stood by the constitutional process and recognized the election, sparking criticism from Bangladesh and others. India felt that ignoring the amended constitutional provision by holding elections under an interim government would lead to the emergence of radical and militant forces. As India's foreign secretary stated, "Democracy also means the ability to resolve differences through dialogue and peaceful means, without recourse to violence."²⁴

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

India tends to treat disruptions of democratic processes as internal developments in which it is not involved, generally maintaining existing relations after coups take place. In Thailand, for example, the removal of the elected government of Yingluck Shinawatra by the Constitutional Court in May 2014 and the military's subsequent takeover was a setback to both democracy and India's relations with Thailand. However, in reaction to the coup, India simply "noted the recent developments in Thailand" and hoped that "the people of Thailand resolve the political situation peacefully through dialogue and uphold the rule of law."²⁵ India recalled its troops from Thailand, where they had been participating in a military exercise, and cautioned its citizens to take security precautions.²⁶ Events in Thailand took place at the time of India's own change of power after national elections in April and May. The new government, led by Bharatiya Janata Party leader Narendra Modi, has maintained relations with the military regime in Thailand.

India had a similarly subdued response to the military's takeover of Mohamed Morsi's government in Egypt in July 2013. India only said, "We are closely monitoring the evolving situation in Egypt. . . [We urge] all political forces to abjure violence, exercise restraint, respect democratic principles and the rule of law, and engage in a conciliatory dialogue to address the present situation."²⁷ The Indian government kept silent on the violence the military rulers unleashed on the ousted president's supporters, and then welcomed the new Egyptian foreign minister, Nabil Fahmy, in December 2013, arranging meetings with the vice president and the minister of external affairs. After the 2014 elections in Egypt, the Indian government extended its congratulations to President-elect Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, the chief of the military regime. Meanwhile, Indian Muslim leaders had condemned the 2013 coup and asked India to place an embargo on Egypt.²⁸

India's stance on Myanmar likewise reflects its principle of noninterference, as well as its close relationship with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Myanmar is a member. India has worked toward reconciliation between the government, led by President Thein Sein, and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, but has declined to pressure the government to improve on democracy and human rights. During his visit there in May 2012, Prime Minister Singh visited Suu Kyi. In a subsequent press conference, the prime minister said that

“India is very appreciative of the efforts being made by the President of Myanmar for national reconciliation and democratisation.” He also said that he told Suu Kyi “that we would be very happy to engage with the Government and people and civil society of Myanmar. Not that we have . . . to tell Myanmar what to do or what not to do but to work out joint common pathways to find productive, mutually acceptable solutions to these difficult problems of development and inclusion.”²⁹

In August of that year, Foreign Secretary Ranjan Mathai explained that “India remains committed to extending all possible assistance and support to the process of national reconciliation and the further strengthening of democracy in Myanmar. Our own experience is that in fact these processes are inter-linked and democracy helps take national reconciliation forward.”³⁰ However, Suu Kyi subsequently expressed dissatisfaction that India was content to work within the framework of reconciliation as initiated by the Burmese president, rather than pressure Myanmar as strongly as she desired.³¹

After the invasion of Crimea in February 2014 and amid ongoing violence in Eastern Ukraine, India generally remained silent and did not take a strong stance, reflecting India’s endorsement of Russian interests in Ukraine. As India’s national security adviser Shivshankar Menon said on March 6, 2014, “There are, after all, legitimate Russian and other interests involved and we hope those are discussed, negotiated and there is a satisfactory resolution to them.”³² However, India did not approve of the separation of Crimea from Ukraine as managed by Russia. Moreover, India was torn between its strategic friendships with the United States and Europe on the one hand, and Russia on the other.

Gross Human Rights Violations

India’s stance on gross violations of human rights has been mixed, affected by considerations of sovereignty, terrorism, economic and strategic interests, and India’s approach to its own domestic human rights issues. Over the past two years, this has been evident in India’s position on violations in Sri Lanka and Syria.

On Sri Lanka, India had voted in favor of U.S.-sponsored resolutions in 2012 and 2013 at the UN Human Rights Council on the gross violation of human rights by the Sri Lankan armed forces in the final phase of eliminating the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam. However, in March 2014, it

abstained from voting on the U.S.-sponsored resolution that sought to independently investigate the human rights violations. This inconsistency in India’s vote generally has been explained on the basis of domestic politics: the Indian Tamil community pressured the Indian government to take a tough stance against Sri Lanka’s Sinhalese-led government. However, it is also possible to argue that India’s position was consistent, as it underlined the country’s distaste for provisions of resolutions that militate against sovereignty. India believed that while Sri Lanka needed to do more to work toward “broad-based, inclusive, meaningful, and genuine reconciliation with the minority Tamil community,” an intrusive resolution was unacceptable. In 2012 and 2013, India ensured that the original resolutions were amended to remove provisions that it saw as intruding on Sri Lanka’s sovereignty, such as imposing international investigations on the conduct of the Sri Lankan army; but in 2014 it failed to achieve such revisions. In explaining its vote in 2014, India said that “the means of addressing human rights violations” should be through “robust national mechanisms” and not imposed from outside. India firmly believed that

Adopting an intrusive approach that undermines national sovereignty and institutions is counterproductive. . . . Any external investigative mechanism with an open-ended mandate to monitor national processes for protection of human rights. . . is not reflective of the constructive approach of dialogue and cooperation envisaged by [the] UN General Assembly resolution[s].³³

Nevertheless, India’s restraint also emanated from its extensive economic and strategic stakes in Sri Lanka.

The question of sovereignty was also at the core of India’s approach to the conflict in Syria. India has kept consistently cordial relations with the Bashar al-Assad regime, which supports India’s position that Kashmir is a bilateral issue. India also strives to maintain a delicate balance in Syria by remaining engaged with mutually competing powers such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, and Israel.³⁴

On Syria, India’s position was that all sides—the regime as well as the rebels—had resorted to violence and “undermined the efforts for a political solution to the crisis.”³⁵ India did not approve of the use of force, even under the UN umbrella, but supported UN efforts. For example, India supported efforts by Joint Special Representative Lakhdar Brahimi to

bring about a political resolution of the Syrian crisis, although he ultimately failed to do so.³⁶ India also welcomed the Geneva-II meeting of the “Action Group” and all Syrian parties, initiated by Russia and the United States. At this meeting, held in Monteux on January 22, 2014, Foreign Minister Khurshid reiterated that there was no “military solution” to the crisis in Syria and he supported “an all-inclusive Syrian-led process to chart out the future of Syria, its political structures, and leadership.” He also said that “India was fully prepared to play its part in the peace process in any manner required of it, conscious of its larger regional and global responsibilities.”³⁷ India had, in December 2013, pledged assistance of \$1 million and technical experts to assist in the destruction of Syria’s chemical weapons.³⁸

Civil Liberties

Wed to the principle of sovereignty, India has refrained from taking positions on the suppression and restraint of civil liberties in other countries. In Sri Lanka, for example, India has not commented on the killings and persecution of journalists and restraints on freedom of expression. In China it has not taken any official note of the suppression of democratic protests, control of media and social networks, or violent state repression.

India has also ignored China’s hardhanded methods to control protests in its restive regions of Xinjiang and Tibet. In Xinjiang, India has disapproved of the violent acts of Uighur Muslims fighting for autonomy and independence, joining China’s official position that they are terrorists. In response to one such act of violence on May 22, 2014, a spokesman for external affairs said, “We strongly condemn the terrorist attack which took place earlier today at Urumqi, China. India opposes terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. We extend condolences to the families of the victims.”³⁹ Delhi had no reaction to the widespread arrests of Uighur people in Xinjiang since May 2013, or the execution of 13 Xinjiang “militants” on June 16, 2014. Meanwhile, India has welcomed various business delegations from Xinjiang officially sponsored by China in support of direct trade and economic links with India.

In the case of Tibet, Chinese prime minister Wen Jiabao appreciated India’s neutral position during serious Tibetan uprisings in 2008.⁴⁰ However, India does not restrain the activities and cultural affairs

of the Tibetan government-in-exile in India, nor prevent international contacts of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan refugees. Against China’s wishes, India allowed the Dalai Lama to address the International Buddhist Sangha Conference held in Patna, Bihar, on January 5, 2013.

Marginalized Communities

India has raised its voice against violence, persecution, and discrimination against minorities in neighboring countries, but has done so in a guarded and selective manner. While the treatment of Tamils in Sri Lanka is a major issue between India and Sri Lanka,⁴¹ India had no official reaction to the violence against Muslims in Sri Lanka in June 2014.

In the spring of 2014, the plight of Muslims in Myanmar’s Rakhine state drew international attention, as communal clashes with Buddhists led to a humanitarian crisis. Human Rights Watch and others have accused the Burmese government of complicity in the violence.⁴² However, India spoke in support of the government’s effort toward “restoration of law and order and ensuring peace and stability in the areas affected by the violence and in meeting the needs of relief and rehabilitation of all the affected communities.”⁴³ In view of Myanmar’s “improvement of the human rights situation” and cooperation with the United Nations, India asked the Human Rights Council in March 2014 to take Myanmar off its agenda.⁴⁴ In December 2012, the Indian external affairs minister had committed \$1 million toward “religious tolerance, communal harmony, peace, and reconciliation between the two communities” in Myanmar.⁴⁵

India has occasionally raised the question of the treatment of Hindus in Pakistan and Bangladesh. It also has drawn attention to violations of the human rights of the Baluchis in Pakistan’s Baluchistan province. Pakistan accuses India of interference in Baluchistan and support for what it calls an insurgency there.

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Indonesia

I Ketut Putra Erawan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Indonesia only embraced democratic institutions in 1998, but it has become active in supporting democracy and human rights in its region. Indonesia’s foreign policy emphasizes the sharing of lessons learned while respecting the sovereignty of neighboring states. The country encourages finding solutions to human rights problems both through national processes and regional mechanisms, rather than singling out states for criticism.

Indonesia’s most significant achievements in democracy and human rights promotion have been in strengthening these aspects within the structures of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and in support for the Bali Democracy Forum, which brings together representatives from across the wider region to discuss democracy topics on an annual basis. On the other hand, Indonesia’s work in this area has been hampered by its policy of noninterference as well as continued domestic shortcomings, which undermine its ability to lead on certain issues.

Introduction

Despite its relatively recent embrace of free institutions, Indonesia believes that the practices and values of democracy have been an important part of Asian political culture for centuries.¹ While Indonesian policy has emphasized closer economic integration in its region, it considers political and security cooperation to be important as well. Indonesia sees the spread and consolidation of democracy as a crucial component of the response to major global challenges. It also believes that advancing democracy in Asia will enable the region to assume a more important role in world affairs.²

Indonesia’s own transition to democracy since the fall of authoritarian president Suharto in 1998 has been built on the interaction between the state and civil society. Indonesian democracy also benefited from international and regional actors during its transition. This in turn has led Indonesia to engage societies in its region that are undergoing political change. At the same time, Indonesian policy believes that the most successful strategy focuses on the sharing of lessons learned while refraining from interference in the internal affairs of neighboring states.

Indonesia has increased its promotion of democracy and human rights over the period from 2012 to 2014. Initiatives include exchanges with other countries, building democratic norms through the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN),³ and providing institutional support. Indonesia encourages finding solutions to human rights problems both through national processes and

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

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regional mechanisms, rather than singling out states for criticism.

Although promotion of democracy and human rights is among the stated objectives of Indonesian foreign policy, its implementation has not been straightforward. Despite significant progress, Indonesia faces particular challenges in supporting democracy abroad due to its own domestic performance. Rights violations such as mistreatment of minorities and limitations on free expression have led to serious questions regarding Indonesia's internal commitment to democracy and human rights. Action in support of democracy is also hampered by Indonesia's adherence to the principles of noninterference and respect for national sovereignty.

Foreign Policy Objectives

According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Strategic Plan 2010–14 and its strategic implementation report, Indonesia's support for the promotion of democracy and human rights shares equal priority with other foreign policy objectives.⁴ The democracy promotion theme has been included in sources ranging from the annual presidential opening speech at the Bali Democracy Forum in 2008, to the annual presidential speech for the anniversary of the Republic of Indonesia in 2009, to the annual Ministry of Foreign Affairs press statement in 2014.⁵ In the latter speech, Minister for Foreign Affairs R. M. Marty M. Natalegawa said that Indonesia's diplomacy will contribute to the attainment of Indonesia's national interests, including to consolidate democracy.⁶

Promotion of democracy falls under the directorate general of information and public diplomacy,⁷ although in practice it is supported by all sections of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Similarly, the promotion of human rights is the domain of the directorate of human rights under the directorate general of multilateral affairs, but also engages multiple actors.

Much of Indonesia's support for democracy is carried out through the framework of ASEAN, which does not prioritize democracy and human rights above other areas. According to the Indonesian director-general of ASEAN cooperation, "There are several concentric circles of Indonesian foreign policy. ASEAN is the first and the closest and becomes one of the main foundations of Indonesian foreign policy."⁸

Promoting democracy and human rights through support of the ASEAN Political-Security Community—which works to ensure that countries in the region enjoy a just, democratic, and harmonious environment—and implementing the ASEAN Charter are among Indonesia's projected values and foreign policy objectives. However, implementing these has not been easy, as not all ASEAN members have accepted the idea that democracy and political development are among core ASEAN values.⁹ According to the Indonesian minister for foreign affairs, integrating democratic values into ASEAN policy requires cooperative efforts by many nations; Indonesia has worked with other ASEAN countries in a measured manner since 2003 to push forward democracy and human rights as a priority of the ASEAN community.¹⁰

Another achievement is the Bali Democracy Forum, which the government initiated in 2008. The first intergovernmental forum in Asia with a democracy focus, the forum aims to promote regional and international cooperation on peace and democracy. Participants from across Asia, the Pacific, and the Middle East come to Indonesia annually to share ideas and experiences. In 2013, for example, leaders discussed the challenges of consolidating democracy and balancing human rights with internal stability. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs created the Institute for Peace and Democracy (IPD) with the support of the state-run Udayana University to implement the Bali Democracy Forum; both the management and funding of the IPD are independent of the state. The Bali Democracy Forum is an important means by which Indonesia supports democracy in other countries by encouraging them to initiate their own reforms.

Development Assistance and Trade

Programmatic support for democracy and human rights takes place through a combination of state and nonstate diplomacy. For example, in the case of Myanmar, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (track one diplomacy) designed and implemented programs to support the democratic transition in cooperation with the IPD (track one and a half diplomacy), all of which were supported by various civil society organizations in Indonesia (track two diplomacy).

Since 2012 Indonesia has engaged in a dialogue on constitutional reform with Tunisia, which includes exchanging experiences in guaranteeing rule of

law, implementing checks and balances, upholding political and economic rights in the constitution, and promoting public engagement in constitutional reform processes. Indonesia also facilitated election management dialogues with Egypt and Tunisia together, during which the three governments shared experiences on designing laws, administering elections, engaging local communities, and managing election-related conflicts.

Indonesia separates democratic and human rights objectives from economic cooperation such as development assistance and trade negotiation. Despite close coordination to ensure coherence, each of these objectives is conducted by its own department inside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, each with its own budget. Indonesia does not follow the practice of conditionality for its development assistance and trade relationships: democracy and human rights, economic cooperation, and trade are served by separate mechanisms and conditions from one are not placed on the others.¹¹

The absence of democracy and human rights conditionality is rooted in the principle of noninterference.¹² Indonesia believes that foreign relations should be grounded in cooperation and synergies, with democracy and human rights support based on mutual ownership of results rather than concepts imposed from outside. As stated by Rafendi Djamin, Indonesian Representative for the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights, “Democratic support is initiated not by conditionality or external enforcement but invitation in consideration of national ownership of the processes of democratization. The principle is providing citizens’ protection.”¹³

IPD has been working closely with Australia, Denmark, Japan, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the United States, and the European Union to promote assistance for initiatives on democracy and human rights. Like the Indonesian government, IPD does not agree with attaching conditions to assistance. While democracy and human rights initiatives are related to other areas of cooperation such as development, IPD respects mutual ownership of the initiatives with partner countries.

Elections

Indonesia considers election fraud and electoral manipulation as internal problems of sovereign states. As a result, although it may make statements expressing concern and encouraging solutions, the

Indonesian government will not comment on the legitimacy of any given election. The IPD and broader civil society have more freedom to directly respond to election fraud and manipulation.

However, the Indonesian government does urge integrity in elections by working in close partnership with other countries. Indonesia has been active in promoting free and fair elections predominately through a focus on norms and sharing experiences, as well as technical assistance in electoral management. Support primarily takes place through engagement with partner countries. The most significant work in this area are election visiting programs, which the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the IPD have conducted beginning with the Indonesian presidential election in 2009 and continuing through the 2014 presidential election. The program also includes visiting programs for local and parliamentary elections. During an election visit, participants from various ASEAN member states and other countries come to Indonesia, where they observe the drafting of election rules, management of the election process, resolution of disputes, and efforts to engage the public in elections. Similarly, Indonesian officials have observed election practices in Japan, Australia, the Philippines, and Thailand.

During the 2014 presidential election, the IPD and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducted three sequential election visiting activities. The first was a regional workshop to implement the ASEAN Political-Security Community Blueprint to engage ASEAN member state representatives and researchers. Adopted in 2009, the blueprint is designed to encourage shared values and norms among all ASEAN members. The workshop, scheduled for July 2014, was to be followed by a meeting of representatives of think tanks, academic institutions, and election commissions. The second activity was a presidential election visiting program attended by 30 delegates from Myanmar. The third was the Asia-Pacific Political Leadership Program, attended by 14 delegates from 10 countries in Asia and the Pacific. All of the participants from the three programs visited polling stations and witnessed activities from the beginning of the voting process through the vote counting on July 9. These activities were accompanied by dynamic debates on Indonesian politics and election management with relevant representatives from the Indonesian electoral commission, think tanks, the media, and political parties.

After directly witnessing previous election processes, participants from Tunisia, Egypt, Myanmar, Fiji, and other ASEAN countries have invited the IPD to provide further support. Working closely with the partner countries, the IPD shares experiences and provides technical assistance on electoral management.

The promulgation of the ASEAN Charter in 2007 marked a new agreement among member states, providing a foundation to promote democracy in the region through free and fair elections. Indonesia remains active in maintaining election integrity on the international agenda through its various election-related activities.¹⁴

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

In countries in the inner circle of Indonesia's foreign policy, especially in Asia, disruptions of democratic processes are a serious concern. Such events generally are addressed through the framework of ASEAN. When coups or other disturbances occur, Indonesia will first express its concern through a Ministry of Foreign Affairs statement, following the ASEAN Political-Security Community blueprint and articles of the ASEAN Charter. Often, the issues are discussed in meetings of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.¹⁵ After this, Indonesia usually emphasizes that solutions should be sought through bilateral and multilateral dialogue and through the internal mechanisms of ASEAN.

In the case of the military coup in Thailand in 2014, some important Indonesian foreign policy actors saw the events as an unconstitutional power grab and a violation of the ASEAN Charter.¹⁶ However, others in the state administration viewed the coup as a domestic affair and urged a policy based on respect for Thailand's sovereignty.¹⁷ Indonesia's official response was that the coup was a violation of the ASEAN Charter and should be handled through that organization. According to Indonesian sources, ASEAN had difficulty responding to the coup, given Thailand's strong position in the organization.¹⁸

Despite its various ties with Egypt, Indonesia issued no official response to the 2013 coup in that country. This is likely because it sees Egypt as outside of its immediate sphere of influence.

Gross Human Rights Violations

Indonesia supports bilateral, regional, and multilateral mechanisms to end gross human rights violations. As in other areas, it first invites national solutions

based on the principles and mechanisms stated in the ASEAN Charter. It also seeks multilateral solutions through its membership on the UN Human Rights Council. As a member of the council since 2007, Indonesia has supported resolutions that respect sovereignty and territorial integrity, abstaining in other cases.¹⁹ Aiming to play a role as an honest broker, Indonesia also responds to violations by conducting informal diplomacy and instituting dialogue processes among governments and other actors.²⁰

Indonesia has three main responses to address gross human rights violations. The first is to encourage the development of an independent, national institution with responsibility to receive complaints, conduct fact-finding missions, and adjudicate. The second is to encourage the creation of regional bodies to share experiences, provide technical assistance, and coordinate initiatives to support human rights in the region of concern. The last is to coordinate efforts among ASEAN members, share experiences, and mobilize support to national and regional initiatives. In no case does Indonesia issue explicit condemnations of the conduct of other governments, regardless of the scale of the abuse.

In practice, ASEAN has been criticized for failing to uphold the Responsibility to Protect, which was unanimously adopted by ASEAN and other world leaders in 2005 to protect populations from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity.²¹ ASEAN's principle of nonintervention and its national shortcomings have prevented action in places such as fellow ASEAN member Myanmar, where there have been ongoing widespread abuses of the Muslim Rohingya population in Rakhine state.

Civil Liberties

Indonesia has promoted protection of freedoms of association, assembly, and expression through its dialogues on constitutional and political reform with Egypt, Tunisia, Myanmar, Fiji, and other ASEAN countries. The foundation of Indonesian democracy is explored in these relationships, especially its grounding in civil liberties. Indonesia has also defended freedom of association in the UN Human Rights Council and other international forums.²²

In the Bali Democracy Forum IV in 2011, in response to the recent Arab Spring, an important theme was how to expand political space for the participation of civil society. In addition, two ongoing side events to the forum have addressed key civil liberties issues.

The first one, started in 2009, is the Bali Media Forum, convened by the Indonesian Press Council and the International Federation of Journalists and supported by the IPD. In this forum, freedom of expression, censorship, and prosecution of advocates of free expression are discussed among national and international journalists. This annual meeting also provides skills training for journalists and an opportunity for network building and support for journalists' initiatives. The second related side event is a forum among civil society organizations working on democracy and human rights issues. Participants in this event share their experiences, strategies, and support for each other's initiatives.

In face of censorship and prosecution of journalists, Indonesian state actors always encourage systematic solutions that do not impinge on national mechanisms or internal processes. For example, Indonesia has not responded to Vietnam's imprisonment of bloggers and other journalists over the past few years. When the UN Human Rights Council discussed surveillance and other Internet issues in September 2013, Indonesia sided with the governments of Russia, China, and others in criticizing international telecommunications companies for their role in privacy violations.²³

Indonesia continues to strive to build trust in order to play the role of neutral mediator and conduit for information with other countries. However, Indonesia's confidence and capacities in responding to efforts to limit civil liberties abroad depend on its own domestic context, which includes incidents of censorship, prosecution of journalists, and limitations on freedom of expression.²⁴ These violations hurt Indonesia's position when it attempts to promote such rights in its foreign policy.

Marginalized Communities

Indonesia has developed a range of initiatives to encourage protection of marginalized communities and prevent systematic discrimination in other countries. For example, Indonesia has instituted dialogues with Myanmar that address marginalized communities (especially religious minorities and women). In these discussions, Indonesian participants have emphasized the potential of decentralization to help protect these populations and minimize discrimination, thus helping to maintain peace. In Indonesia's experience, systematic discrimination can be reduced through devolution, although this also creates opportunities for local

policies that run counter to national and international human rights laws.

According to senior Indonesian foreign policy officials, support for marginalized communities in other countries is based on strategic political assessment. Most responses from Indonesia are normative statements that do not result in sustained pressure. For example, senior Ministry of Foreign Affairs officials have worked closely with communities and state officials in countries such as Egypt and Tunisia to help foster peace through mutual dialogue and to support victims in the aftermath of the conflicts since the Arab Spring.

Indonesia has been committed to women's rights, as demonstrated by its support for the Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women and Elimination of Violence against Children in ASEAN. While Indonesia has not provided bilateral funding for gender equality, it has worked with ASEAN on the Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, which implements programs to support women's and children's rights and conducts capacity building and other activities.

As in other areas, Indonesia's domestic situation affects its ability to promote protection abroad. Recent threats, coercion, and discrimination against ethnic and religious minorities in Indonesia have affected the country's credibility in promoting democracy in this area.²⁵

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Japan

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Support for democracy and human rights is a small component of Japan's foreign policy. This stems from the country's history of putting economic development before democratization, as well as its emphasis on noninterference due to its role in World War II. As a result, while Japan is showing increased interest in this area, it lacks experience in promoting democracy abroad.

Japan's official statements increasingly incorporate universalist language that includes promotion of democracy and human rights, but some ambivalence is still reflected in official statements regarding promotion of human rights and democracy. Japan does not demand observation of these values in foreign assistance or trade, though it has contributed financially to some election-related activities in Asia. Overall, Japan has shown some promise for increased attention in this area, but has not yet demonstrated that it is prepared to take action to support democracy and human rights.

Introduction

The role of democracy assistance in Japan's foreign policy remains small, a product of the country's history and its traditional emphasis on economic development. Although Japan's industrialization and economic growth prior to World War II led to the emergence of democratic politics in the 1920s, the trend reversed as the global depression led to overheated Asian security conditions and intervention by the military in Japan's national politics. Democratization was imposed by the occupying U.S. forces after Japan's defeat in World War II. Subsequently, Japan's economic bureaucracy gained a measure of dominance over national political affairs, and pressed forward the goal of rebuilding the nation's economy. Political life also became more democratic within a national context that supported the emphasis on building prosperity while at the same time reducing the influence of the economic bureaucracy. Postwar experience has thus driven home a message that economic growth comes first, and then contributes to a strengthened democracy, not the other way around.

During the Cold War period, Japan's foreign assistance was heavily concentrated in East Asia, focused on economic development with a few exceptions of strategic aid to allies of the United States, such as Egypt and Pakistan.¹ By the early 1990s, democratic transitions in Southeast Asian states (such as Thailand and the Philippines) further enhanced Japan's belief in its "economy first" doctrine, as well as the principle of noninterference in domestic political affairs. Japan thus lacks experience in promoting democracy abroad.

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

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However, in the 2000s, support for democracy became—at least rhetorically—one of the themes of Japan’s foreign policy. This was manifested mainly in two ways. First, Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi’s (April 2001–September 2006) active pursuit of permanent membership in the UN Security Council was an incentive for closer diplomatic ties with African states. Seeking visibility in various UN-led agendas focusing on that continent, including economic development and peacekeeping missions, Japan gradually adopted the language of democracy promotion in its foreign policy.

Second, Japan’s worsening relations with China over conflicting territorial claims and the maritime demarcation dispute in the East China Sea led Japan to seek closer security partnerships with like-minded democratic states. Prime Ministers Shinzo Abe (September 2006–September 2007 and December 2012–present) and Taro Aso (September 2008–September 2009) attempted to enhance security cooperation with the United States, Australia, and India to check China’s maritime expansion in the Western Pacific and the Indian Ocean, where Japan’s economic vitality depends on the safety of the sea-lanes. Democratic solidarity became an explicit rationale of the partnership, although deterrence of China remained the principal goal.

The defeat of the UN Security Council reform plan in 2005 temporarily took the steam out of Japan’s drive for a seat, while Japan’s worsening budget deficit has resulted in a reduction in official development aid. As most of Japan’s earlier contributions to UN-led multilateral initiatives have expired, the country’s support for democracy today is found primarily in bilateral assistance to specific countries, with increased emphasis on the implications for Japan’s own security. The more bilateral approach might partially reverse as Japan relaunches its drive for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council leading up to 2015, but a full return to the generous multilateral assistance levels of the pre-2005 period is unlikely. While the Japanese government will publicly stress the goal of the “consolidation” of new democratic states, it will in practice base its actions on whether a country supports its bid for a Security Council seat.

While the end of internal strife in several East and South Asian countries has opened up new opportunities for Japan to expand cooperation among democratic states in opposition to China’s expansionism, economic and security interests

still drive Japan’s foreign policy in Asia. However, Japan’s cautious embrace of universalist norms of human rights and democracy as well as active contributions to multilateral efforts promoting these values has yielded more pragmatism and flexibility as the country pursues national security in a deteriorating regional environment. This represents a shift that appears to be part of a long-term trend of increased interest in supporting human rights and democracy.

Foreign Policy Objectives

Despite some formal reservations, Japan has largely incorporated the norms from key international treaties and conventions on human rights into its domestic laws.² While the country has not fully incorporated these treaties in national law, Japan’s reluctance to apply the same norms to its foreign policy is nevertheless notable.

Japan’s official statements increasingly integrate universalist language that includes promotion of democracy and human rights. For example, according to the December 2013 strategic document of Japan’s newly created National Security Council,

The maintenance and protection of [the] international order based on rules and universal values, such as freedom, democracy, respect for fundamental human rights, and the rule of law, are likewise in Japan’s national interests . . . [and Japan will] improve the global security environment and build a peaceful, stable, and prosperous international community by strengthening the international order based on universal values and rules, and by playing a leading role in the settlement of disputes, through consistent diplomatic efforts and further personnel contributions.³

Likewise, the country’s common core document of 2012, which reports on its adherence to UN human rights treaties, stated,

While it is important that human rights and fundamental freedoms, as universal values, are guaranteed not only in Japan but in all countries and regions around the world, each country has its unique history, traditions, etc. Therefore, the Government of Japan has considered the unique situations specific to each case and has provided proper international support for improvement of human rights through dialogue and cooperation.⁴

Prime Minister Abe in particular has embraced the rhetoric of democratic norms in order to emphasize the unity of democratic countries in opposition to the nondemocratic neighbors (especially China) that threaten Japan's security.

However, there is still some ambivalence regarding promotion of human rights and democracy in official statements. The government's basic stance on human rights diplomacy on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, dated March 14, 2014, shifts the emphasis from "unique situations" to "universality," stating,

All human rights and basic liberties are universal values. [The] human rights situation in each country is a legitimate concern of the international society, and such interests should not be considered as interference in domestic politics. . . . The means and the speed of achieving human rights protection may vary, but human rights must be respected regardless [of] culture, tradition, political-economic system, and the stage of socioeconomic development. Protection of human rights is the fundamental responsibility of all states.⁵

The fact that the government has not developed a unified stance on democracy and human rights has meant that Japan has remained generally passive and minimalist in terms of promoting these values.

Development Assistance and Trade

In spring 2014, Japan started revising its guidelines for official development assistance, which had last been revised in 2003. Given the reversal or deadlock

in many democratic transitions at that time, several members of the committee that were tasked with the revisions felt that continuous assistance for democratic consolidation should be emphasized in lieu of democracy "promotion," which often focused on initial transitions.⁶ In April 2013, Parliamentary Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Shunichi Suzuki attended the Seventh Ministerial Conference of the Community of Democracies, held in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. Suzuki emphasized continuous support for young democracies through training of young bureaucrats to improve administrative capabilities in order to foster "a form of equal society" following the initial establishment of democratic institutions.⁷

In East Asia, consolidation of democratic transition is implemented through administrative training for bureaucrats to improve governance capabilities. As Table 1 shows, however, the recipients include two nondemocratic (socialist) states.

Japan's assistance to Africa is increasing as a priority. Yet Japan's Africa aid policies do not stress democracy promotion. Reasons for this include Japan's traditional focus on economic development, its political culture of noninterference, a lack of cultural and social science expertise, and reluctance to tie aid to democracy in the face of China's aggressive aid drive in nondemocratic African states. Japan also has a request-based system of assessing aid needs: the aid decision begins with an official request from the government of a would-be recipient, and local needs are articulated through collaboration between the local elite and Japanese

Table 1: Japan's Development Assistance for Governance-related Administrative Training in Asia

	2013	2014
Cambodia	¥258 million* (\$2.65 million)	¥295 million* (\$3.03 million)
Philippines	¥263 million* (\$2.70 million)	¥239 million* (\$2.45 million)
Vietnam	¥324 million (\$3.33 million)	
Myanmar	¥456 million (\$4.68 million)	¥468 million (\$4.80 million)
Mongolia	¥236 million (\$2.42 million)	¥242 million (\$2.48 million)
Laos	¥250 million (\$2.57 million)	¥257 million (\$2.64 million)
Sri Lanka	¥192 million (\$1.97 million)	¥215 million (\$2.21 million)
Bangladesh	¥180 million (\$1.85 million)	¥206 million (\$2.11 million)

* for young administrators to study in Japan

Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, http://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/oda/data/gaiyou/odaproject/asia/cambodia/index_01.html.

businesses.⁸ Grassroots civil society organizations have very limited input in this process.

The year 2013 marked the 20-year anniversary of the Tokyo International Conference on African Development process, and Japan hosted its annual meeting in Yokohama. Although the recurring themes of good governance, rule of law, and consolidation of democratic governance were referred to in the official press release,⁹ Japan's aid is heavily devoted to food assistance (despite renewed emphasis in the country's aid policy on self-help). Moreover, aid projects in Africa have concentrated heavily on infrastructure and energy development, health and sanitation improvement, agriculture, and law enforcement—with little spent on governance and social capital development.¹⁰ Bilateral development assistance for governance-related administrative training in African states will likely expand, especially in Ghana. Other African states will probably receive assistance as Japan solicits votes for its next UN Security Council drive in the run-up to 2015.

Japan has actively cosponsored resolutions at the UN's World Programme for Human Rights Education. The program's second phase action plan (2010–14) emphasized human rights education in universities and for educators, public administrators, and law enforcement and military officers.¹¹ Similar programs of training and skill development for democratic consolidation are increasingly found in Japan's bilateral assistance to Asian countries, though in practice they are not being targeted to states with strong democratic prospects.

Japan's policy of rewarding domestic firms with official development assistance contracts takes priority over the encouragement of political reforms in Africa and Asia. In 2014, a Japanese trading firm, Marubeni, was charged by the U.S. Department of Justice with bribing Indonesian officials in connection with a power plant project funded by Japanese assistance; the company settled the case for a fine of \$8.8 million.¹² The same company also had settled a bribery case in 2012 brought by the U.S. Department of Justice in relation to development of a Nigerian liquified natural gas plant.¹³ After the Indonesian case came to light, the Japanese government suspended Marubeni from development assistance projects, but only for nine months. In 2014, another charge was brought by the Tokyo tax office against Japan Transportation Consultants for paying disguised rebates totaling nearly \$1 million to Vietnamese officials in relation to an assistance

project to design railroads. Although the tax office imposed punitive taxes on the firm totaling approximately \$900,000,¹⁴ no criminal charges based on the anti-graft law have been brought against the company to date; meanwhile, the Vietnamese government quickly punished the officials involved. As Japan's aid process is penetrated by its own business interests, incentive to use aid to improve rule of law and fight corruption in recipient states is low.

Elections

No Japanese government personnel were dispatched as election observers during the 2012–2014 period. However, although Japan has not played a proactive role in facilitating elections, it does make modest financial contributions. Japan provided ¥149 million (\$1.53 million) to Nepal to assist a parliamentary election in November 2013, when that country's monarch accepted a transition to democracy and called an election for a provisional parliament mandated to draft a new national constitution.¹⁵ This direct contribution to Nepal's democratic transition was unusual given Japan's history of political noninterference. It was preceded—and to some extent facilitated—by the dispatch of Japan Ground Self-Defense Force personnel as observers to the UN peacekeeping operation in Nepal during the early stages of a cease-fire between the national military and Maoist insurgents. Japan contributed similarly to the democratic transition within a comprehensive reconstruction framework in East Timor.

Japan's aid to help Pakistan grow into a "moderate and modern Islamic nation" explicitly identified consolidation of democracy as one of its objectives.¹⁶ In 2012, Japan contributed ¥183 million (\$2.29 million) to the UN Development Programme effort to assist the parliamentary election in Pakistan in the following year. Japan also provided ¥808 million (\$8.29 million) in 2013 for promoting intermediate education for female students in Hyderabad and five adjacent provinces in southern Pakistan.¹⁷ Through close donor coordination with the United States, Japan's aid supplements the U.S.-led effort to discourage radicalization of Islamic politics in Pakistan.

Japan took a proactive stance in hosting the Tokyo Conference on Afghanistan in July 2012 in order to publicize its contributions to Afghanistan's reconstruction.¹⁸ Japan contributed to Afghanistan's presidential and provincial parliamentary elections in 2014. After the presidential election faced charges

of fraud during the second round, Japanese foreign minister Fumio Kishida expressed the government's concern using carefully chosen words; while he did not confirm the fraud, he acknowledged the reports of fraud.¹⁹

Japan accepted the election of former military leader Abdel Fattah el-Sisi as president of Egypt despite an opposition boycott, media bias, and a Sisi tally of 96.91 percent. The Japanese government called Sisi's triumph "an important step towards political normalization in Egypt."²⁰ The Japanese government has not issued any critical statement on Egypt in face of widespread allegations of electoral fraud and continuing suppression of protestors by the new government.

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

The military coup in Thailand on May 22, 2014, was a key event for Japan. In response to the coup, Japanese foreign minister Kishida called the situation "regrettable" and "strongly urged those concerned that democracy in Thailand be quickly restored."²¹ However, the government did not adopt any punitive measure (including travel restrictions on high-ranking military personnel) against the coup government.

Japan welcomed the democratic transitions of the Arab Spring, but the resulting instability and economic stagnation in some countries have led Japan to support military rule. In Egypt, after the armed forces intervened to suspend the legislature in summer 2013 and suppressed the opposition Muslim Brotherhood, Japan sent its special envoy Yutaka Iimura to Egypt in April 2014 to meet Foreign Minister Nabil Fahmy. According to the foreign ministry, Iimura expressed that

- (a) Japan watches closely the progress of [the] roadmap towards the normalization of [the] political situation in Egypt and hopes the coming presidential election will be conducted properly.
- (b) While Japan is well aware of the efforts of the interim government for maintaining security and public order, Japan expects that issues such as human rights would be dealt with properly.
- (c) Japan hopes to further strengthen the cooperative relations with Egypt. Japan will continue to extend assistance to Egypt for democratization and socio-economic stability.

In Fiji, Japan has adopted a neutral stance toward the coup regime since December 2006. Despite the provisional government's failure to follow the road map to hold an election by March 2009 and return to democratic governance (which has resulted in Fiji's suspension from the meetings of the Pacific Islands Forum), Japan has not suspended aid to Fiji. Japan expressed its support for Fiji's new constitution, provisional prime minister Frank Bainimarama's retirement from the military, and appointment of the members of the electoral commission as positive steps toward democratization.²²

Gross Human Rights Violations

Myanmar's political reform since 2011 has led to its removal from Japan's list of gross human rights violators. In February 2013, Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs Toshiko Abe attended the 22nd session of the Human Rights Council in Geneva. In her statement, Abe praised Myanmar's democratic transition and expressed Japan's willingness to play a "leading role" in supporting further reforms in Myanmar.²³

The other main violator on Japan's list has been North Korea. However, Japan's diplomacy toward North Korea focuses on nuclear disarmament and the issue of abduction of Japanese citizens, with less emphasis on North Korea's human rights abuses against its own citizens. Despite public criticism against the North Korean government for these abuses, Japan has been reluctant to accept North Korean asylum seekers and has severely curtailed the flow of remittances from North Koreans residents in Japan as a part of the economic sanctions.

Prime Minister Abe's policy of "proactive contribution to peace"²⁴ centers on consolidation of mutual collective defense with the United States through more active regional security roles for the Japanese Ground Self-Defense Force. The policy also encompasses broader security cooperation with other democratic allies of the United States (such as Australia and the United Kingdom) and through active contributions to and participation in UN activities. The new policy will likely involve dispatches of not only military but also civilian personnel overseas, in a broad range of peacekeeping missions, including some related to governance reform. While Japan's currently limited civilian dispatches may expand as the country shifts to a more proactive security posture, the Ground Self-Defense Force is not likely to commit itself to more than one large peacekeep-

ing dispatch of approximately 600 personnel at any given time due to its limited human resource availability. Japan has sent a 300-member-plus contingent to the UN peacekeeping operation in South Sudan beginning November 2011—the largest deployment Japan has conducted since the withdrawal of ground troops from Iraq in 2006.

Civil Liberties

Japan has maintained silence on specific cases of restrictions on civil liberties by Asian governments. In response to notable occurrences, such as the house arrest of Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi (1989–2010), the Japanese government has expressed moderate concern and expectation of expeditious return to normalcy.

The Japanese government strictly refrains from specific criticism of civil liberty restrictions in China. For example, the jailing of Chinese activist and Nobel Prize winner Liu Xiaobo (2009–present) hardly has been mentioned in Japanese leaders' speeches on China. However, visits by the Dalai Lama in November 2012 and 2013 and April 2014 triggered a more forthcoming response from the Japanese government as compared to the past, in defiance of Chinese government protests. The Dalai Lama was received by senior parliamentarians on his visits and addressed large, all-party audiences from parliament.²⁵

Japanese civil society is not active in promoting democracy.

Marginalized Communities

On ethnic and other minority issues, Japan has largely refrained from criticizing other governments unless large-scale bloodshed takes place. For example, although the new civilian government of Myanmar treats the Rohingyas as illegal residents from neighboring Bangladesh, and Russia engages in official and legal discrimination against gays and lesbians, Japan has completely refrained from criticism in both cases.

Japan's national news widely covers China's heavy-handed crackdown on the Uighur protestors in Xinjiang, yet the government has not officially condemned China with explicit reference to the Uighurs. The Japanese government did issue a visa to the leader of a Munich-based Uighur exile organization, Rebiya Kadeer, to attend the fourth World Uighur Congress in Tokyo in May 2012.²⁶

Japan's actions serve as a subtle reminder that its noninterference stance on China's domestic minority issues is contingent upon China's peaceful international behavior.

Japan's emphasis on economic development instructs its policies toward women's rights in other countries. While Japan has actively promoted women's status in South Asia through economic empowerment, its emphasis is on general economic development rather than women's rights. Even the Abe government's setting of numerical targets for women in the Japanese workforce lacks concrete steps to improve women's work environments through supportive measures (most importantly in the area of child care). Japan thus is not in a strong position to promote women's rights in other countries.

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Poland

Piotr Kościński

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the end of communism, democracy and human rights have become key values in Poland’s foreign policy. Although restrained by its capacity as a mid-sized economy, Poland has at times played a leadership role in providing support and condemning abuses. Poland’s democracy and human rights promotion focuses on the former Soviet republics, especially Belarus, as well as multilateral efforts through the European Union.

Poland’s main activities in this area are election observation and assistance for free expression and free association in its neighbors to the east. Official statements regularly express concern at electoral fraud and other abuses. A vocal critic of Russia’s interference in Ukraine in 2014 and a strong proponent of punitive action, Poland lobbied its allies for similar defense of democratic principles. Poland’s support for the rights of marginalized populations in other countries generally aligns with the interests of its domestic constituents.

Introduction

Twenty-five years have passed since communism was overthrown and Poland made the transition to democracy. During this period, key actors from Poland’s struggle to overthrow communism have become involved in efforts to build democratic political systems and independent civil societies in countries in Eastern Europe and beyond. Poland’s successful domestic transition has served as a powerful context for its democracy and human rights support abroad.

Another important factor has been Poland’s entrance into the European Union (EU) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Poland’s integration into key European institutions has enhanced economic and social development and ensured security, which in turn have facilitated Poland’s active participation in organizations such as the European Endowment for Democracy (of which Poland was a cofounder at the beginning of 2013 and is the largest contributor). Warsaw also became the host to major human rights organizations such as the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), and the secretariat of the Community of Democracies. Poland played a significant role in the creation of the latter, and has demonstrated sustained commitment to its goal of supporting democracy. In 2012, Poland established the Warsaw Dialogue for Democracy, an annual conference bringing together more than 200 prodemocracy activists, policy makers, and analysts from around the world to discuss transition and democracy.

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

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Poland

For historical and security reasons, Poland focuses its foreign policy on its neighbors. This includes the former Soviet republics, which have the largest democracy and human rights deficits in the region. Poland also has interests in other parts of the world, some of which it does not address as fully as it might.

Poland's support for democracy and human rights has been restrained by its capacity. In 1995, the country's gross domestic product (GDP) per capita was 43 percent of the EU average, moving to just 64 percent in 2011. Thus, the Polish economy continues to lag behind the West. Despite high GDP growth since 2003, Polish politicians—and Polish society—appear convinced that an expansion of its current level of democracy support is not possible at this time.

Nevertheless, while Poland could do more to advance democracy and human rights beyond its borders, it has become a respected voice on the world stage.

Foreign Policy Objectives

As in any country, democracy support plays a secondary role to strategic priorities in Poland's foreign policy. In the case of its closest neighbors, however, Poland's support for democracy can be quite significant. In Belarus, Poland plays a greater role in pressing for democratic change than any other country. Meanwhile, although Polish politicians frequently invoke terms such as "democracy" and "human rights," there is no agreement on what these words mean (Poland has no stated definitions in its foreign policy) or how they should be achieved.

The minister of foreign affairs presents Poland's foreign policy priorities annually at a meeting of the lower house of parliament (the Sejm). In May 2014, Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski emphasized that "Poland's priorities when it comes to expert assistance will continue to be: the promotion of democracy and the rule of law, fighting corruption, cooperation of border services, energy coordination, and support for the development of rural regions."¹

In March 2013, Sikorski announced that support for the development of civil society in Eastern Europe was a leading priority, with Belarus as a key recipient of assistance. He also identified the Arab world as a target area for democracy promotion. Sikorski added, "We are glad that we were successful in our efforts to establish the [European Endowment for

Democracy], and that a Polish candidate—Jerzy Pomianowski—was chosen as its first director. The Endowment will promote democracy in the entire EU neighborhood."² On China, the minister said only that "we are ready to share our experiences should China one day opt for a system of political pluralism."

Although the priorities for the promotion of democracy remained similar in the 2014 address, the minister gave special attention to Ukraine. He also referred to changes in other countries: "Today a number of countries, including Egypt, Myanmar, and Tunisia, look up to us as a model of transition from a totalitarian regime to a free-market democracy." In contrast, civil rights and liberties were not mentioned in relation to China in 2014.³ Thus, democracy is a priority for Poland, but the area of focus consists of the former Soviet republics and other countries in the region.

Development Assistance and Trade

The promotion of democracy has been integrated into Poland's development aid since 2012. According to the "Long-term development cooperation program for 2012–2015,"⁴ there are only two thematic areas of Polish development cooperation: system transformation, and democracy and human rights. A program for 2012 to 2015 presents the general principles of Polish aid. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs conducts planning and coordination of the democratization agenda, while its implementation is carried out by other ministries, embassies (for small grants), the state aid agency (Solidarity Fund PL, formerly the Polish Know How Foundation for International Development Cooperation), and civil society organizations.

Poland is not at the forefront of development assistance, and indeed was an aid recipient until recently. The Center for Global Development's Commitment to Development Index put Poland in last place out of 27 rich countries in 2013 in terms of quantity and quality of aid to poor countries. The Polish government also gives the lowest net volume of aid as a share of GDP among those countries included in the index (0.08 percent).⁵ According to Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) data, Poland spent \$421.06 million on development assistance in 2012, and \$417.5 million in 2011.

A portion of official aid figures includes cancellation of other countries' debt as well as credits granted on preferential terms, which are not related to democracy support. The remaining money is distributed

by other ministries, with an intention to promote human rights and democracy. A large portion of the funds goes to the EU for joint projects, over which Poland has little influence. In 2013, the foreign ministry planned to give €72 million (\$94 million) to the European Development Fund, and in 2014 the figure was €87.5 million (\$114.5 million).⁶

The reason for low aid figures appears to be a lack of public interest in development assistance. Although the standard of living of the Polish population is still lower than among its Western neighbors, in 2013 Poland became a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD, which brings together donor countries.

The foreign ministry and Solidarity Fund PL have organized competitions for nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) aimed at promoting development assistance and supporting democracy. In 2014, the ministry gave grants aimed at democratization, system transformation, education, and to a lesser extent humanitarian aid for the following: 6 projects targeting Belarus, 10 for Georgia, 8 for Moldova, 16 for Ukraine, 9 for East Africa, 5 for Central Asia, and 2 for the Palestinian Authority. The total sum was rather small, at \$8.7 million. The recipients of grants were varied, and the projects were related to the promotion of democracy, local communities, and marginalized groups. Members of the EU's Eastern Partnership⁷—mainly Belarus and Ukraine—received more than half of the funds, of which 70 percent was aimed at democratization and transformation. East Africa, North Africa, and Central Asia received 40 percent of Poland's development aid. Other major recipients were Afghanistan and, to a lesser extent, the Palestinian Authority. In 2014, Solidarity Fund PL initiated projects aimed at the former Soviet republics as well as Tunisia (\$1.4 million in total).⁸

Human rights and democracy play a minor role in Poland's trade policies. However, Poland has supported the limited economic sanctions imposed on Belarus in recent years. Furthermore, in 2014 Warsaw strongly supported the imposition of sanctions on Russia in response to the invasion of Crimea and the de facto military deployment in the east of Ukraine, both for security reasons and in defense of democracy. Minister Sikorski said, "These sanctions should convince President Putin that the West as a community of values does exist, and is able to unite when the elementary principles of international law are violated."⁹

Elections

Polish politicians have emphasized repeatedly that democracy in neighboring countries is in Poland's national interest. Hence, Poland pays close attention to elections in those countries where democracy is severely repressed—as in the case of Belarus—or where it is fragile, as in Ukraine.

Poland's principal democracy agency (formerly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, now Solidarity Fund PL) regularly sends large numbers of observers to monitor elections in Belarus, most recently for the House of Representatives elections in September 2012. After the elections, the Polish foreign ministry stated that it was "deeply disappointed" that the elections fell well short of international standards. The ministry also expressed concern over the detention of human rights defenders, political opponents, and journalists during the campaign period.¹⁰

Poland did not acknowledge the results of these elections (nor did the European Parliament). As a result, there is no possibility of cooperation between the Polish Sejm and the Belarusian House of Representatives. Poland also supported the exclusion of Belarusian parliamentarians from Euronest, which brings together members of the European Parliament with representatives of parliaments from the EU's Eastern Partnership countries to promote political association and economic integration.¹¹ In the October 2012 parliamentary elections in Ukraine, Poland sent 212 representatives, the largest group of observers in the country.¹² The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was restrained in its response to the findings: "The Foreign Ministry [. . .] notes that during the elections many infringements took place, relating, among other things, to the use of administrative pressure, lack of transparency with regard to the financing of political parties, and the restriction of media access for opposition and independent candidates. Thus, the electoral process was not fully consistent with democratic standards."¹³ Despite the concerns, Poland endorsed the results.

For the high-profile Ukrainian presidential election in May 2014, Poland sent more than 100 observers. This time the vote was judged more positively. The foreign ministry stated that "Poland looks on the organization of the presidential elections in Ukraine with satisfaction."¹⁴ Other Polish officials took a similar position.

Large numbers of observers were sent to the October 2012 parliamentary elections and the October

2013 presidential elections in Georgia, which were assessed favorably.¹⁵ Having limited personal and financial capabilities, Poland has sent smaller numbers of observers to other countries. In these cases, the positions held by international organizations such as the OSCE, the Council of Europe, or the EU have guided Polish authorities in their assessments. Sometimes Polish authorities are silent, even in the face of election law violations in Eastern Partnership countries. For example, Poland did not criticize fraudulent elections in 2013 in Azerbaijan. Nor did Poland call for the release of Anar Mammadli, president of the Azerbaijan-based Election Monitoring and Democracy Studies Center (EMDS), after a Baku court sentenced him to five and a half years' imprisonment; this lack of response provoked criticism from Polish human rights organizations.¹⁶

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

The events in Ukraine in late 2013 and early 2014 were regarded as important in Poland. As the opposition protestors survived brutal attempts to disperse them, leading Polish politicians, as well as Polish society generally, supported the protest movement. At first, official Polish statements were careful to avoid the appearance of interfering in the affairs of a foreign state. As events continued, however, the Polish government has been intensively engaged with the Ukrainian crisis.

During the violent clashes in Kiev in February 2014, Polish president Bronislaw Komorowski met with Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich and called for the immediate cessation of the use of force and a return to negotiations with the opposition.¹⁷ Polish foreign minister Sikorski took on mediation efforts, with the participation of the foreign ministries of France and Germany.

After Yanukovich fled to Russia at the end of February and an interim government was established in Ukraine, the Polish leadership assured Kiev of its support. Komorowski indicated that Poland might share with Ukraine its positive experience of building a system to combat corruption, reform local government, and support the development of small- and medium-sized enterprises.¹⁸ Poland was also a key player in forging the EU consensus for active engagement in Ukraine and the eventual signing of the Association Agreement (which had been the original impetus for the demonstrations).

Warsaw has taken a critical view of Russia's occupation of Crimea. Sikorski has emphasized that Russia

is violating the rules of international coexistence and exporting terrorism, and that Poland condemns the annexation of the peninsula.¹⁹ Authorities in Warsaw did not recognize the March 2014 referendum in Crimea that led to the formal attachment of the peninsula to Russia.

Warsaw has also adopted a negative stance toward Russian interference in eastern Ukraine, not recognizing the referendums on the creation of the so-called People's Republics in Donetsk and Luhansk. Meanwhile, Poland supported Ukraine's presidential election held on May 25. Recognizing that the demonstrations had driven out an elected government, Komorowski said on May 23, "The elections will give legitimacy to the new authorities and bring stability."²⁰

Beyond Ukraine, the authorities in Warsaw have tended to react cautiously to disruptions of democratic processes. While Polish media and human rights organizations have criticized the ruling party's tightening of control in Hungary, Polish authorities have not. "I'll be at the disposal of Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, if I could come in handy where opinions on Hungary are exaggerated or unfair. And I feel that part of the reaction is exaggerated,"²¹ concluded Prime Minister Donald Tusk in 2012. A stronger official statement was made in response to Hungarian prime minister Orbán's reluctance in March 2014 to support Ukraine (he demanded autonomy for ethnic Hungarians there): Prime Minister Tusk declared Hungary's hesitation "unfortunate" and de facto support for pro-Russian separatists.²²

Poland reacts in an especially careful manner to cases outside its region. After the coup in Thailand, the foreign ministry statement on May 22, 2014, declared that "Poland is concerned about the development of the conflict in Thailand and the seizure of power by the military. Invariably, we stand on the side of democracy, rule of law, and civil liberties."²³ They adopted much the same position after the coup in Guinea-Bissau in 2012. In most cases, Poland's stance is similar to those presented by the EU and other international organizations.

Gross Human Rights Violations

Poland promotes respect for fundamental human rights according to its capabilities, mainly through its presence in international organizations that address these matters. Poland is an active member of the Council of Europe, and representative Wojciech Sawicki is the secretary general of the

Parliamentary Assembly. Poland was elected to the UN Human Rights Council for the years 2010 to 2016; in 2013, Polish representative Remigiusz Henczel headed this body. Other organizations in which Poland participates include the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, and the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment.

The Polish stance on the fighting in Syria has been generally analogous to that presented by the EU, whose member states largely recognized the Syrian opposition as the representative of the Syrian people in November 2012. However, in July 2012, Poland was one of the last states to close its embassy in Syria. The embassy remains closed today for security reasons, but the Syrian embassy in Warsaw is functioning normally. Thus, Poland has not taken a strong stance against the Assad regime.

In August 2013, after receiving information about the use of chemical weapons by Syrian government forces, Prime Minister Donald Tusk declared that Poland would not participate in any intervention in Syria: "We have experience in this part of the world, which shows that military intervention, even from the most obvious and noble motives, rarely produces the desired effect."²⁴ According to media reports, it was Foreign Minister Sikorski who initiated the solution to the problem of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal without the use of force, a strategy that was later adopted by the United States and Russia.²⁵

When bloody clashes between government forces and demonstrators occurred in Turkey in May and June 2013, Polish authorities avoided taking a position on the events. The Polish foreign ministry issued a warning for tourists, assuring them that Turkish coastal resorts were still safe. Poland has responded similarly to events in other countries, alerting tourists about expected riots in 2012 in Venezuela and Egypt.

In contrast, in South Sudan, Poland has provided assistance to victims, particularly through NGOs such as the Polish Humanitarian Organisation. Poland was also engaged in the EU peacekeeping mission (EUFOR RCA) in the Central African Republic. As emphasized by representatives of the Polish authorities, participation in this mission was in part related to improving relations with France, which led the operation. According to a Polish defense ministry official, that mission "reinforces the Polish image as

a reliable and important partner committed to building a secure international environment."²⁶

Civil Liberties

Polish authorities recognize the problems surrounding freedom of association, assembly, and expression in other countries, but not always consistently. Poland's most constant support is for human rights forces in Belarus. Many independent or opposition Belarusian centers exist in Poland, acting with the support of the Polish authorities. The most important are Belarusian House in Warsaw, the Internet portal Charter97, and the Solidarity with Belarus Information Office.

However, the most significant achievement of Polish assistance has been the creation and support of Belsat TV. The channel was established under an agreement signed by the Polish foreign ministry and Polish Television (TVP SA) in 2007; today, Belsat continues to be funded by both.²⁷ Belsat is the only independent Belarusian television channel, with programming created by Belarusians. Based in Warsaw, the channel is transmitted by satellite and over the Internet. According to research conducted in April 2014, its audience includes 7 percent of the adult population of Belarus.²⁸ Belsat's impact is limited, however, as most Belarusians watch TV from Russia.²⁹

In addition, two radio stations broadcast to Belarus from Polish territory. The audience for the Belarusian channel, Radio Ratsya, was estimated at 1.5 million people in 2013, but due to the closed environment in Belarus it is difficult to determine the actual number of listeners. The second is the European Radio for Belarus, whose programs are broadcast on Polish Radio, as well as private radio in Ukraine and Lithuania. In 2012, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs allocated \$1.2 million to these radio stations,³⁰ although the current impact of these stations is not significant.

To a much lesser extent, Poland supports the media in Ukraine. Various NGOs, using Polish government money, organize trainings for Ukrainian journalists. Polish NGOs also actively support civil society in Ukraine.

Poland maintains a cautious stance on human rights in China. In mid-2013, controversy and criticism, especially from human rights organizations and the media, was triggered by a delegation from the Polish parliament to Beijing on the anniversary of the massacre in Tiananmen Square. In defending

the decision, Speaker of the Sejm Ewa Kopacz said that she would discuss human rights during a meeting with the chairman of the National People's Congress of China on the anniversary of the violence.³¹ Separately, in June 2013, Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski met with Chinese bloggers known for their criticism of the authorities.³²

In March 2014, while visiting Iran, Sikorski criticized censorship and restrictions on freedom of the media. As a result, his speech was censored in Iranian state media.³³

Marginalized Communities

With respect to marginalized communities, Poland is primarily interested in challenges faced by ethnic Poles in Belarus and Lithuania. Belarusian official data shows 294,000 ethnic Poles living in the country. In 2005, Belarusian authorities canceled democratic elections in the biggest Polish organization, the Union of Poles in Belarus (ZPB), and created their own union with an obedient leadership. As a result, ZPB still has two leadership factions. The democratically elected but illegal leadership is to some extent tolerated, though its members are often discriminated against and persecuted. However, opportunities for diplomatic intervention are limited. Poland primarily supports ZPB financially, including helping with the issuance of its publications.

There are 213,000 ethnic Poles in Lithuania, representing up to 80 percent of the population in some regions. Poland has repeatedly intervened in cases such as when Poles are not allowed to write their names in their own language, or when the Polish language cannot be used on road signs. "I hope that in the end there will be a majority in the Lithuanian parliament which will respect the obvious rights of minorities," said Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk in February 2014.³⁴

Other support for marginalized communities includes the MFA-initiated Lech Walesa Solidarity Prize, which was awarded to Crimean Tatar leader Mustafa Dzhemilev in May 2014.

In Muslim countries, Poland has advocated for the rights of Christians. In March 2013, Minister Sikorski said, "Poland is one of those countries that is not afraid to say that Christians are the most persecuted religion today in the world. We will defend the rights of Christians as much as we can."³⁵ In October 2013, the Sejm called for "bold action in defense of Chris-

tians in Syria and Egypt." Foreign Minister Radosław Sikorski supported the resolution, although no strong action was taken.³⁶

Poland has not taken a position in other cases of persecution of marginalized groups. One example is abuses against the LGBT community in Russia, for which Poland has had no response.

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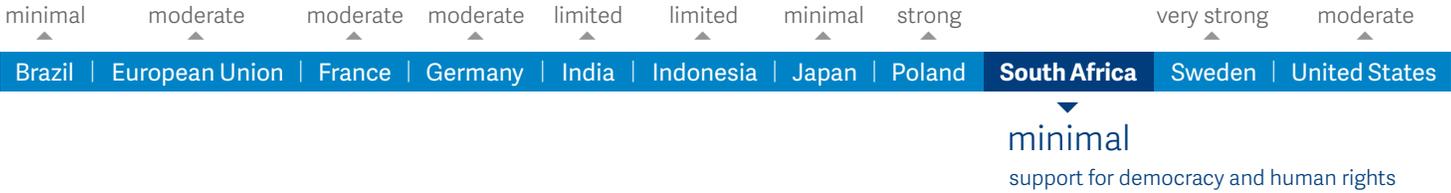
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South Africa

P. M. Graham

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

South Africa, as the strongest and most diverse economy in sub-Saharan Africa, plays an assertive international role. In combination with its history, this has created an expectation both domestically and abroad that the country will provide leadership in support for democracy and human rights. At present, however, South Africa does not meet this expectation.

South Africa’s approach to upholding justice and the protection of human rights emphasizes domestic and regional solutions to conflict, respect for sovereignty, and international action through multilateral institutions. It believes that, to date, international solidarity to support democracy and human rights has often been selective and hypocritical. However, South Africa has not demonstrated that its own approach achieves its stated ambition to help guarantee that the rights of its own constitution extend to all people. Many supporters of human rights and democracy have been frustrated by South Africa’s policy choices, which increasingly appear self-interested and conservative.

Introduction

In June 1946, the Indian government requested that the UN Secretary-General include the discriminatory treatment of Indians, which was enshrined in South African law, on the agenda of the first session of the new United Nations. From that moment, international organizations and civil society solidarity movements, in partnership with South Africans in the country and in exile, began a struggle for freedom and an end to apartheid. When, in 1994, the first democratic election was held and Nelson Mandela was inaugurated, the celebration was not only for South Africans but for all those who believed in the ultimate triumph of human rights and democracy over discrimination and violence.

Beginning with the Mandela administration, South Africa reoriented its policies toward the goal of promoting democracy and fighting poverty internationally. In particular, during Thabo Mbeki’s presidency (1999–2008), the country began an assertive program to make the 21st century the African century based on a new understanding of self-reliance that included economic independence and “African solutions to African problems.” The new program was manifested in the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the transformation of the Organisation of African Unity into the African Union (AU), which was established in 2002.

Many observers expected South Africa to provide leadership for the emerging democracy and human rights architecture of the time. Its own aspiration for a seat on a reformed UN Security Council and its willingness to take on UN leadership through

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

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hosting both the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and Related Intolerance in 2001 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002 encouraged this expectation.

These expectations thus far have not been fulfilled. South Africa is now celebrating 20 years of democracy in a different world. Its foreign policy appears self-interested and conservative; it has adopted a rhetoric that stresses sovereignty and support for its traditional relationships. The White Paper on South Africa's foreign policy published in 2011 emphasizes a cautious vision: "We therefore champion collaboration, cooperation, and building partnerships over conflict. . . . This philosophy translates into an approach to international relations that respects all nations, peoples, and cultures."¹

South Africa does still claim to support the proposition that the rights it aims to guarantee for its own citizens should be extended to all people. "As a beneficiary of many acts of selfless solidarity in the past," the White Paper continues, "South Africa believes strongly that what it wishes for its people should be what it wishes for the citizens of the world."² But the government has not found a way to advance global rights while managing its bilateral and multilateral relationships in a way "that respects all nations, peoples, and cultures." Instead, it has moved away from the leadership role it aspired to under Mandela to an approach based on national interests. Moreover, it has not been able to explain its approach to those whose rights are abused and whose aspiration to democracy is blocked by the very states with which South Africa maintains cordial relationships.

Foreign Policy Objectives

"South Africa's foreign policy is generally interpreted as the externalisation of its domestic policy, i.e., a better South Africa, a better Africa, and a better world. The values that underpin the country's foreign policy include democracy, human rights, human dignity, non-racialism, non-sexism, and prosperity for all."³ That is the summary of South Africa's foreign policy contained in the guidelines developed by the Department of International Relations and Cooperation (DIRCO, formerly the South African Department of Foreign Affairs), which serve as a directive to South Africans who participate in international events, make public statements, lead delegations, or consider agreements and appointments of South Africans to

international bodies. This policy has remained remarkably consistent over time, underpinned by five pillars, as described in the 2011 White Paper:

South Africa therefore accords central importance to our immediate African neighbourhood and continent; working with countries of the South to address shared challenges of underdevelopment; promoting global equity and social justice; working with countries of the North to develop a true and effective partnership for a better world; and doing our part to strengthen the multilateral system, including its transformation, to reflect the diversity of our nations, and ensure its centrality in global governance.⁴

These values are taken directly from the South African constitution.

Nevertheless, among South African international relations think tanks, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) involved in development and democracy work outside South Africa, and civil society organizations focused on human rights causes, skepticism is growing about whether South Africa has a democracy and rights agenda at all. Instead, the government appears focused on the promotion of narrowly defined national interests, placing secondary importance on the interests of the region and only when those coincide with its own.

DIRCO's annual report focuses primarily on achievements in institution building on the continent, in socioeconomic dialogues, in reform of international institutions, and in public diplomacy. Direct democracy support is limited to election observation and the improvement of election processes. Human rights, however, are not neglected. The report states that "human rights remained a key priority for South Africa's foreign policy."⁵

Nevertheless, from January to May 2014, no statements released through the DIRCO website directly mentioned human rights abuses or promoted human rights values. A number of statements decried terrorist attacks (in Nigeria, China, and Kenya), and addressed political developments in Thailand, Ukraine, Libya, and Lesotho. Two general statements were issued: the first dealing with the rise of military nonstate actors in a number of African countries, and the other defending the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex (LGBTI) individuals.⁶ The latter was provoked by legislative action against LGBTI groups and individuals in Uganda, although that country was not named explicitly.

The Community of Democracies was in part established to provide an informal, multilateral caucus in which countries could act in concert but with less formality than in treaty-based regional or global institutions. While South Africa was not one of the original convening countries of the Community of Democracies, it later became one of the Convening Group members and remains a member of the Governing Council. However, its voice has become increasingly muted in community affairs. South Africa has not volunteered its services to any of the working groups, including that concentrating on the protection of civil society. In its strategic plan, South Africa identifies its achievements in multilateral organizations, and the long list of organizations it names does not include the Community of Democracies.⁷ Nor is the community mentioned in DIRCO's Annual Report 2012–2013.

The most notable change in South Africa's diplomatic and economic relations has been its acceptance as a member of the now formally established BRICS entity (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa). South Africa joined this community to promote its national interests, to support its regional integration and related continental infrastructure programs, and to partner with key players of the Global South on

issues related to global governance and reform. It considers itself a representative of Africa in BRICS.

Development Assistance and Trade

Development assistance projects from South Africa are few and varied, and their combined effect on either development or governance outcomes is uncertain. A recent report, "Investments to End Poverty," stated that South Africa's development cooperation by 2011 was equivalent to 0.05 percent of its Gross National Income.⁸ However, as South Africa does not report on these financial flows in a comprehensive way outside of its audited report on the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund (see Table),⁹ "Investments to End Poverty" is only an estimate.¹⁰ Specific projects include support for the UN Human Rights Council's independent expert on human rights and extreme poverty, and electoral assistance to the Democratic Republic of Congo.

South Africa prepared economic aid packages for Cuba, Swaziland, and Zimbabwe in recent years. The Cuban package, announced in 2010 but still incomplete,¹¹ appears to have no political conditions attached. In the 2.4 billion rand bailout package pre-

Table: Expenditures on the African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund

National Treasury Budget Estimates	Final Estimate 2010–11*	Final Estimate 2011–12*	Adjusted Estimate 2012–13*	Estimate 2013–14*	Medium-term Estimate 2014–15*
Support socioeconomic development and integration	R4,000 (\$546)	R70,380 (\$8,580)		R85,204 (\$8,898)	R41,961 (\$3,936)
Promote democracy and good governance		R25,000 (\$3,048)	R378,287 (\$46,115)	R84,355 (\$8,809)	R43,395 (\$4,071)
Cultivate human resource development		R7,000 (\$853)	R15,000 (\$1,829)	R15,000 (\$1,566)	R16,942 (\$1,589)
Provide humanitarian assistance and disaster relief		R62,792 (\$7,655)	R577,924 (\$70,452)	R134,731 (\$14,070)	R121,963 (\$11,441)
Encourage cooperation between SA and other countries, particularly African countries		R54,990 (\$6,704)	R49,095 (\$5,985)	R35,404 (\$3,697)	R28,174 (\$2,643)
Foster prevention and resolution of conflicts		R60,000 (\$7,314)	R50,000 (\$6,095)	R130,748 (\$13,654)	R25,125 (\$2,357)

* In thousands

Source: Department of International Relations and Cooperation Annual Reports, 2011–13, <http://www.dfa.gov.za/department/report/index.htm>.

pared for Swaziland, South Africa included a series of diplomatically worded conditions,¹² but after receiving a revenue boost from the South African customs union, the Swazi government declined the package. The Zimbabwe package likewise did not go forward. However, a recent study suggests substantial support has gone to Zimbabwe over the past few years, culminating in a large loan reportedly approved in April 2013, also with political conditions attached.¹³ The primary nonfinancial condition appears to have been that the political parties should implement in full the Global Political Agreement that was designed to decrease political tensions and democratize Zimbabwe; South Africa, on behalf of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), had been responsible for facilitating this agreement.¹⁴ With Swaziland and Zimbabwe refusing to agree on the diplomatically couched political conditions, however, South Africa has failed to apply pressure through assistance.

South Africa has many commercial interests throughout the African continent and beyond. A Department of Trade and Industry grant to a South African company, VASTech, to enable it to deliver a mass surveillance package to Libya between 2005 and 2008 generated controversy in 2013.¹⁵ The Department of Trade and Industry responded that, while it and its adjudication panel were aware of the package's purpose, they assumed it would be used for crowd and border control rather than spying on citizens. South African private sector expertise in telecommunications and security has been a source of controversy in other countries as well. It is unclear whether this is a pattern of behavior by the private sector (or parts of the private sector acting in concert with the state), or merely a weak regulatory environment in which international law is followed rather than a more consistent human rights-based approach.¹⁶

Elections

While the South African government has been highly committed to support for election observation, particularly in the SADC region, it has been less willing to make public judgments on these elections. For example, although in February 2013 the *Mail & Guardian* newspaper won a high court battle to force the South African government to release a report on the 2002 Zimbabwe elections—which justices Sisi Khamepe and Dikgang Moseneke (both presently on the bench of the Constitutional Court) prepared for then-president Thabo Mbeki—

the government has not yet made the document public.¹⁷

The African Renaissance and International Cooperation Fund, which provides foreign assistance, supports election observation and electoral assistance. In addition, the South African government, in line with its commitment to multilateralism, sends observers to join SADC or AU observer teams. The South African parliament has sent its own observer missions to Zimbabwe in the past,¹⁸ although it now appears to prefer to work through the Pan-African Parliament missions. These missions are not always effective in their efforts to ensure transparent, free, and fair elections, and have been accused of unwillingness to criticize host governments.

South Africa takes pride in its electoral practice and in the competence of its Independent Electoral Commission. It also has an international reputation for election administration garnered in 1994 and enhanced by the first post-apartheid electoral commission. As a result, the commission has a number of peer-to-peer contacts with foreign counterparts. Its mandate includes "interaction and liaison with organisations, institutions, and governments (nationally and internationally) in order to promote the acceptance of and adherence to democratic electoral principles."¹⁹ In addition to substantial financial support to the Democratic Republic of Congo for elections, the Independent Election Commission has had contact with commissions in Egypt, Lesotho, Kenya, Angola, Botswana, Zambia, Guinea-Bissau, India, Brazil, Indonesia, Ireland, and the administrations in the United States and Mexico.²⁰ There seem to be no criteria for offering assistance other than a request by the recipient country.

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

South Africa is particularly punctilious in its response to coups. South Africa has ratified the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, which defines forms of unconstitutional change of government that are grounds for suspension from the AU.²¹

South Africa's reaction to the situation in Egypt during 2013 is a case in point. After insisting that an unconstitutional change of government did take place,²² South Africa responded robustly to criticism by the Egyptian government, suggesting that "rather than attacking the integrity of the AU, Egypt should

respect the AU processes and cooperate with the AU High Level Panel in support of a peaceful and inclusive transition and restoration of constitutional order in Egypt.”²³

As this statement shows, South Africa’s approach is to associate itself specifically with the AU and its rules. With regard to solutions in Egypt, as in other cases, South Africa maintains “that national reconciliation and an Egyptian-led, all-inclusive negotiated process remains the only option for Egypt to get out of the present impasse.” However, while it does not aim to export its version of national reconciliation, South Africa is ready “to share with Egypt experiences and lessons from its own political transition from apartheid rule to a genuine multi-party democratic dispensation.”²⁴

South Africa has a substantial program with many countries of track two diplomacy that is either explicitly or implicitly supported by the government. It also has formal responsibility, delegated by SADC, to deal with the political crises in Zimbabwe and Madagascar, and has recently allocated responsibility for interaction with South Sudan and Sri Lanka to the deputy president, Cyril Ramaphosa.

Civil society has urged stronger public criticism and further diplomatic action against Zimbabwe and Swaziland, in place of South Africa’s current multi-lateral and understated approach. In Zimbabwe, the South African government was lead facilitator of the process that resulted in the Global Political Agreement in 2008; it has been criticized for not enforcing the various provisions. The South African government argues that the Zimbabwean actors continue to participate in the structures of the agreement and in the elections run, in theory, under its auspices.²⁵ Swaziland—a feudal monarchy—remains recalcitrant despite agitation for reform by the influential Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), which is aligned to the African National Congress (ANC), and its affiliates.²⁶

Gross Human Rights Violations

A speech given by South Africa’s permanent representative to the United Nations on November 9, 2011, on the protection of civilians remains the policy of South Africa. While affirming that diplomats “support international efforts to ensure that the normative and legal framework developed to defend the weak and vulnerable trapped in armed conflict is strengthened and further enhanced,” a substantial portion of the speech was devoted to the problem

of selective application of the right to protect. “Selectivity gravely limits the credibility of the [UN Security] Council in advancing protection of civilian mandates and to seek accountability.” Also reiterated in the speech is the belief that the primary responsibility lies with states, including that accountability should be found at the national level.²⁷

An analysis of South Africa’s performance in the UN Human Rights Council published recently in *Human Rights Quarterly* paints a dismal picture of South Africa’s actions and voting record.²⁸ Its only consistency is that South Africa will not support country-specific resolutions other than those, it appears, related to Israel and Palestine.²⁹ As the author of the article notes, when South African representatives do comment on Universal Periodic Reviews or reports, any criticisms are couched in diplomatic language.

However, South Africa does play an important role in security and peacekeeping mechanisms, mostly on the continent. Since 1994, the country’s unilateral deployment of troops outside its borders has invariably been in support of a political process; otherwise, South Africa has acted as part of an AU or UN mission. South Africa’s contribution is substantial both in terms of personnel and financial resources.³⁰ Interventions in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2013 are prime examples. South Africa was heavily involved in the development of the Constitutive Act of the African Union, which says that the AU will intervene in a member state’s affairs in cases of war crimes, genocide, or crimes against humanity. South Africa has maintained studied support of international law and international frameworks, criticizing those who appear to be acting unilaterally or out of political motives. This is reflected in former deputy minister Ebrahim’s 2014 speech in regard to Syria:

We do not see any value added to the processes by alternative international processes such as the Friends of Syria grouping or the alternative conference called by Iran. Furthermore, the supply of weapons to either side is at cross-purpose to that of the mediation efforts and creates a false impression that a military solution can be achieved. It is essential that the political process is supported by a united and cohesive international community.³¹

Civil Liberties

As in other areas, the government’s default position is not to comment on individual cases of viola-

tions of civil liberties. The public record is silent on whether South African government representatives have taken up individual or systemic abuses of civil liberties during bilateral discussions with countries such as Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe. For example, there is no evidence that the topic was raised in Venezuela, where the minister of international relations visited in 2013,³² or on the sides of multilateral gatherings such as the G77. Anecdotal evidence suggests that global human rights issues are not on the agenda.

Nevertheless, individual South Africans, with the support of their government, are intimately involved in the international human rights architecture. Most eminent is Navanethem “Navi” Pillay, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights. South Africans also serve as special rapporteurs on extrajudicial executions, contemporary forms of slavery, gender violence, and the use of mercenaries, as well as freedom of expression and access to information within Africa. South Africa expended considerable diplomatic capital to obtain the appointment of Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma as chairperson of the African Union Commission, and previous deputy president Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka as executive director of UN Women. It is not clear whether South Africa has an intentional policy of encouraging nonstate actors and leaders in intergovernmental institutions to play activist roles while the state maintains a more neutral stance. However, the action of COSATU in support of democratization in Swaziland suggests that differences between the state and its citizens are permissible, if not always encouraged.

In response to a parliamentary question on the subject of follow-up to the World Conference against Racism,³³ Minister Maite Nkoana-Mashabane raised a concern that may well underpin the country’s unwillingness to engage in joint statements: “At the international level, it should sadly be stated that many of our partners from the Global North have not seen it convenient to withdraw their reservations on Articles 4 & 5 of the ICERD [International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination] and the General Recommendation 15 of the CERD [Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination] and Articles 19 and 20 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).”³⁴ Thus, South Africa feels a lack of cooperation from countries in Europe and North America.

Frustration about lack of progress on the Durban agenda (including the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination) and discrimination against people of African descent also taints multilateral amity in the Human Rights Commission.

Marginalized Communities

South Africa stands out among most AU members in its domestic commitments to LGBTI rights. While its international behavior is not universally supportive of the rights of LGBTI communities, South Africa does speak out against abuses, such as the general statement it made in February 2014.³⁵

Most public debate on questions of marginalized groups has focused on South Africa’s treatment of those who have sought asylum in South Africa, rather than on its actions to protect marginalized communities in other countries or across country borders. South Africa has 65,000 refugees and 232,000 asylum seekers from a wide range of African countries,³⁶ and the UN Human Rights Council has described South Africa’s asylum environment as liberal. However, the environment within which these refugees live is increasingly illiberal in terms of treatment both by other citizens and by local authorities and state institutions.³⁷

South Africa does contribute to national dialogue and constitutional reform processes intended to resolve matters of exclusion and discrimination. For example, DIRCO has collaborated with the NGOs ACCORD and In Transformation in various conflict areas inside and outside Africa. Internationally, South Africa is dedicated to the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, which it supports through an elected member. It appears that South Africa judges the bona fides of its partners on other treaty bodies based on their performance in this committee.

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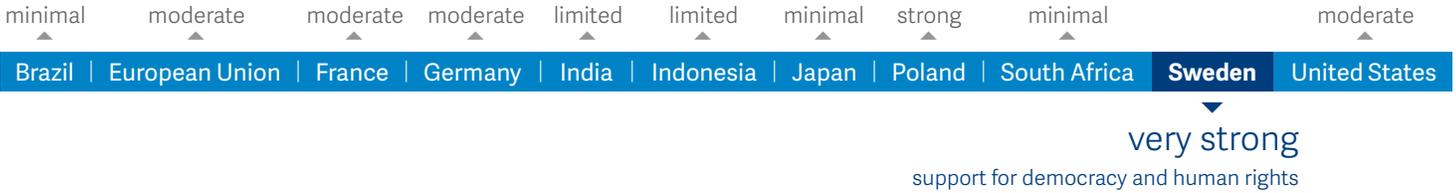
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Sweden

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Sweden is one of the world’s most outspoken supporters of democracy and one of the world’s largest donors of democracy assistance. With a long-standing consensus across all major political parties, Swedish politicians and diplomats consistently raise democracy and protection of human rights in bilateral relations and multilateral organizations.

According to the government, all parts of Sweden’s foreign policy should promote human rights. Gender equality is central to Swedish development assistance, and a significant portion of the foreign aid budget for these topics is distributed through civil society organizations. The government also emphasizes the importance of defending the defenders of human rights and democracy, such as journalists.

Sweden was, however, reluctant to call the July 2013 removal of the democratically elected Egyptian president a military coup. Sweden has also faced criticism for exporting arms and defense equipment to non-democratic states.

Introduction

Support for democratic development abroad is a primary goal of Sweden’s foreign policy.¹ Sweden is one of the most outspoken supporters of democratic values, and one of the world’s largest donors of democracy assistance in both absolute and per capita terms. In 2013, Sweden allocated some 29 billion kronor (\$4.4 billion) to development assistance, of which about 20 percent was dedicated to democracy, human rights, and gender equality.²

An important share of democracy assistance is funneled through Swedish civil society organizations such as political parties, labor unions, volunteer associations, and churches that in turn work with civil society counterparts seeking to strengthen democracy in more than 70 countries. Sweden’s policy has a particular focus on women’s rights, gender equality, and protection of minorities.

Sweden’s approach to international democracy promotion can be traced to its domestic experience with civil society actors committed to strong democratic institutions. In comparison to many other countries, Sweden’s path to democracy was piecemeal and nonviolent, with small farmers and labor organizations playing a key role. By about 1920, the political institutions generally considered necessary for a parliamentary, liberal democracy had been established. A high degree of consensus and willingness to compromise made the transition peaceful. Sweden also remained democratic during the interwar years when many other European countries experienced a rupture in democratic governance.

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

About the author

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Foreign Policy Objectives

Sweden has experienced a long-standing consensus across all major political parties for supporting democratic development as an important element of its foreign policy. Human rights and democracy promotion are a central theme of its foreign policy, and Swedish politicians and diplomats frequently raise these issues in bilateral relations as well as in multilateral organizations. In the Swedish Foreign Service, promoting human rights is a prioritized mission. According to the Swedish government, all parts of its foreign policy should reflect this mission, including development cooperation, migration, security policy, and trade.³ To this end, the Swedish government has developed a dedicated website for the protection and promotion of human rights in both Sweden and internationally.⁴

In the Swedish government's annual foreign policy declaration to parliament on February 18, 2013, which laid out the main priorities of the current government, Foreign Minister Carl Bildt stated that "human rights, democracy and the rule of law are fundamental principles for our actions, as is respect for international law."⁵

Sweden promotes the importance of democratic values both in its relations with significant geopolitical actors such as Russia and China and in its relations with smaller countries such as Belarus and Cuba. With both Russia and China, Sweden was ranked among the most outspoken European governments in promoting the rule of law, human rights, and democracy in its bilateral relations, as well as on the European level, in the 2012 and 2013 European Foreign Policy Scorecards.⁶ For example, in the Swedish government's 2013 foreign policy declaration on Russia, the foreign minister stated that although Sweden strives for closer and broader contacts, Sweden is "concerned to see that respect for human rights is deteriorating, that the scope of civil society is shrinking, and that the country's leaders appear to give priority to modernizing the armed forces ahead of modernizing Russian society."⁷

In the sections on China, the foreign minister pointed out that "China's increasingly prominent role as a global actor also increases our expectations of it taking greater responsibility in global issues. This responsibility also includes respect for the human, civil, and political rights and freedoms of its own citizens."⁸ Sweden continues to press for greater respect for human rights and democracy in its relations with China, condemning corruption

and the neglect of human rights in official communications and in Swedish government interactions with Chinese counterparts.⁹ An example is Chinese prime minister Wen Jiabao's visit to Sweden in April 2012. The official agenda of the meeting between Wen Jiabao and Swedish prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt focused on sustainable development, but democracy and human rights were also discussed.¹⁰ The Swedish government also publishes an official human rights report on China that openly criticizes China's human rights deficits.

Swedish ambassador Stefan Eriksson frequently participated in meetings with opposition leaders in Belarus until the government expelled him in August 2012 in response to active and vocal Swedish support for civil society groups and human rights activists. Foreign Minister Bildt stated that the expulsion was "about Sweden being engaged in democracy and human rights in Belarus."¹¹

Other examples include Zimbabwe, where Development Minister Gunilla Carlsson stressed the importance of respect for human rights and the rule of law in meetings with the government in March 2013.¹² In Iran, during a February 2014 visit with President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, Foreign Minister Bildt focused on not only the nuclear issue but also the human rights situation. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the leaders discussed the increasing use of capital punishment and limitations on the Internet in Iran.¹³

Development Assistance and Trade

In 2013, Sweden allocated around 5.3 billion kronor (\$806 million) to democracy assistance and human rights.¹⁴ The distribution of assistance is guided by the 2008 Swedish government communication titled "Freedom from Oppression," which emphasizes support for democratization and respect for human rights.¹⁵

In order to avoid spreading itself too thinly across too many countries, Sweden initiated a policy in 2008 to concentrate its aid efforts in a limited set of countries and issue areas. However, the government has found it harder than anticipated to pare down the number of aid recipient countries. In 2013, Sweden contributed more than \$4 billion in development assistance to nearly 12,000 projects in 136 countries and regions around the world.¹⁶ The Swedish government's most recent paper on the topic underlines that democracy promotion and

a gender perspective should permeate all Swedish development aid and aid programs.¹⁷ Accordingly, Swedish aid projects have supported the conduct of elections, trained journalists, and provided legal assistance to persecuted peoples and groups.

An important part of the Swedish foreign aid budget allocated to democracy promotion and human rights is distributed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) to Swedish civil society organizations, which in turn cooperate with more than 1,800 local civil society organizations in the recipient developing countries. Sida is the major Swedish aid actor, distributing more than half of the Swedish foreign assistance budget. It is also the major government agency, under the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, that implements Sweden's democracy assistance around the world. In recent years, Sida has undergone several reorganizations that included rethinking its mission and methods. Although it has been heavily criticized at times for inefficiencies, Sida's own evaluations have found that Sweden's support for democracy and human rights has contributed to significant change.¹⁸ From 2012 to 2013, for example, Sida concluded that Sweden's support to civil society organizations in Russia had yielded positive results, in large part due to long-term and flexible support to partner organizations.¹⁹ In Turkey, Swedish democracy support has contributed to the law establishing the first ombudsman in the history of the country.

Sweden has a long-term commitment to Afghanistan, where it will spend 8.5 billion kronor (\$1.22 billion) over the next 10 years to support the fight against corruption and the promotion of human rights and democratic principles. Support is provided in many forms, including education, infrastructure, and training. Women's rights are of particular importance.²⁰

In Georgia, Sweden's long-term bilateral support is focused on democracy promotion, human rights, and gender equality as well as strengthening the foundations for free and fair elections. In October 2012, Sweden expressed early support for the democratic and peaceful transition of power after parliamentary elections. The political situation in Georgia was highly polarized after an election campaign characterized by sharp rhetoric and instances of violence. To stabilize the situation, the Swedish government pledged both political and monetary support to the newly elected government.²¹

Often labeled "the last dictatorship in Europe," Belarus, a close neighbor, is of major concern for Sweden. Sweden has been a long-standing and vocal critic of the regime in Belarus, but it also conducts broad-based development work there. Swedish support is concentrated in three areas: (i) democracy, human rights, and gender equality; (ii) the environment; and (iii) market development. Support is provided for activities that contribute to greater public and political pluralism. The annual aid to Belarus in 2011–14 is estimated at 120 million kronor (\$17.7 million).²²

Sweden also funds nongovernmental organizations such as the Raul Wallenberg Institute (RWI), which organizes human rights capacity development programs in China for government agencies and universities. RWI cooperates with the National Prosecutor's College and others in China in order to improve human rights training for prosecutors, among other initiatives. In 2012, the RWI human rights program in China was evaluated as a "remarkable example of foreign engagement that has had a measurable impact in the key area of human rights education."²³

In 2010, the Swedish government published its "Strategy for Development Cooperation with the Middle East and North Africa, September 2010–December 2015," covering Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Yemen, and Syria. The overarching objectives are stronger democracy and greater respect for human rights, and sustainable development that improves conditions for peace, stability, and freedom in the region. Democratic governance and human rights is one of three sectors of focus.²⁴ This policy was amended in 2011 and 2012 to further support the democratic transitions taking place in the region.²⁵

In contrast, Sweden has scaled back its development and democracy support in Latin America. Prior to 2010, Sweden supported regional institutions promoting human rights and democracy, and worked for decades to strengthen civil society and improve equality. Since 2010, Sweden no longer has a region-wide development cooperation program there.²⁶

Sweden was the third-largest arms exporter in the world per capita and the 11th largest overall from 2009 to 2013. While the majority of exports goes to Western Europe and the United States, governmental customers of Swedish defense equipment can be found in such controversial places as Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Thailand.²⁷ On paper, Sweden has one of the most restrictive arms export policies in the

world. The general rule is that no arms export is allowed without an overriding national foreign or security policy interest at stake. However, since the Swedish military was radically scaled down after the end of the Cold War, the industry has been forced to focus increasingly on export. After widespread public criticism of recent arms deals to Saudi Arabia in particular, Sweden is considering adding a democracy and human rights criterion to its arms export policy. A parliamentary commission is currently investigating the potential consequences of such an addition.²⁸

Elections

As one of the architects and main promoters of the European Union's Eastern Partnership, Sweden has consistently pushed for democratic development in countries such as Ukraine and Georgia. Foreign Minister Bildt traveled extensively to Ukraine during 2012–14 to press for democracy and free and fair parliamentary elections.²⁹ Despite official protests from the Ukrainian government, Sweden argued for the release of opposition leader and former prime minister Yulia Tymoshenko in both multilateral meetings and directly with the Ukrainian leadership.³⁰ Sweden sent 37 observers for the May 2014 presidential elections.³¹

Through its bilateral electoral support in 2013, Sweden contributed to relatively successful elections in Kenya, Mali, and Somaliland (local elections). Sweden also contributed to election reform in Zimbabwe. Since ending bilateral aid to Zimbabwe in 2001 due to lack of democracy and poor respect for human rights, Sweden has instead given 200 million kronor (\$29 million) annually to civil society groups and multilateral organizations focused on democracy promotion and human rights.³² When Zimbabwe denied admission to election observers from the European Union in 2013, Sweden became the largest donor to the Zimbabwe Election Support Network, comprised of civil society organizations that trained local election observers and promoted women's and youth participation.³³ Moreover, during the development of Zimbabwe's new constitution in 2010–13, Sweden gave \$4.7 million out of a total budget of \$50 million, the largest outside contribution to the project, while serving as coordinator between donors and the Zimbabwean government.³⁴

Swedish support made possible the training of African Union election observers in international

standards and methods. Sweden also has trained more than 50 election observers from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) over the past two years.³⁵ Moreover, Sweden has provided approximately 81 million kronor (\$11.6 million) to the Carter Center for its work on elections and election monitoring.³⁶

Finally, a major Swedish contribution to the promotion of free and fair elections is the support and hosting of the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA). Headquartered in Stockholm since its founding in 1995, International IDEA is the only global intergovernmental organization with the sole mandate of supporting sustainable democracy worldwide by strengthening democratic institutions and processes. It shares Sweden's objective to support new constitutions, electoral system design, and political parties. Apart from being a founding member and host country, Sweden provides approximately 50 percent of International IDEA's total budget.³⁷

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

Sweden generally responds aggressively to disruptions of democratic processes such as coups. However, similar to many other Western democracies, Sweden was reluctant to call the removal of democratically elected Egyptian president Mohamed Morsi in July 2013 a military coup. The government did make clear that it could never approve of a nondemocratic takeover of power, even if the action in Egypt had widespread popular support. The government also summoned the Egyptian chargé d'affaires in Stockholm to express its concerns.³⁸

Sweden was likewise quiet in response to the military coup in Thailand in May 2014. Some commentators and media criticized the Swedish government for its passivity in failing to condemn the coup. One explanation for this reluctance, according to observers, could be the ties between the Swedish and Thai militaries. Thailand recently bought both fighter jets and advanced naval radar systems from Sweden.³⁹

Gross Human Rights Violations

Sweden has a long tradition of expressing concerns directly to regimes deemed to be carrying out gross violations of human rights. Swedish politicians and diplomats consistently raise the issue of human

rights in international forums, whether or not it is a topic otherwise under discussion.

In 2012 Sweden was the world's third-largest national humanitarian aid donor, providing over 5 billion kronor (\$739 million) in funding to humanitarian operations around the world.⁴⁰ In response to the unfolding humanitarian catastrophe in Syria due to the civil war, in September 2013 Sweden became the first EU country to offer Syrian refugees permanent residency.⁴¹ Widespread killing of civilians and even use of chemical warfare agents have led some 3 million Syrians to flee the country.⁴² While the vast majority of refugees have stayed in Syria's neighboring countries, Sweden granted permanent residency to at least 14,000 refugees in 2013 alone, by far the most of any Western nation.⁴³

Sweden maintains ongoing in-depth dialogues on human rights with Cambodia and South Africa. These dialogues are not only discussions between government representatives but also practical exchanges of experiences, study visits at institutions, and interactions with civil society organizations. Dialogue can then be extended to provide expert advice on how to develop processes to address challenges such as prison conditions or human rights training for court officials. Earlier dialogues have engaged Laos, China, and Indonesia.⁴⁴

In addition, Swedish aid has contributed to the establishment of legal aid centers for victims of torture in 13 Egyptian governorates.

Civil Liberties

Swedish government policy continuously emphasizes the rights to free assembly and free speech, and increasingly prioritizes support to democratic opposition groups and civil society groups. Since 2008, Sweden has supported democracy activists and their organizations in countries such as Cuba, Belarus, Zimbabwe, and Myanmar through funding, practical training, and diplomatic support.⁴⁵

In addition to supporting Burmese refugees in Thailand and providing humanitarian support, Sweden has supported the Burmese media in exile during the past two decades.⁴⁶ No Swedish funds are channeled through central government authorities due to the political environment. In November 2012, Sweden pledged to double its foreign aid to Burmese civil society, focusing on building up democratic institutions and independent media.⁴⁷

Over the past few years, Internet freedom has become a priority throughout Swedish foreign, development, and trade policies. Sweden was a major supporter of the UN resolution for Internet freedom that was passed in July 2012.⁴⁸

Led by Foreign Minister Bildt, the Swedish government has also provided foreign assistance to Internet activists in a number of countries, and strengthened dialogue with companies on Internet freedom.⁴⁹ Rather than seeking a special set of Internet human rights, Sweden strives for deeper analysis of how freedom of expression and other human rights are to be applied in the Internet age. It encourages more extensive discussion on the topic between states, in international organizations, with civil society, and in the business world.⁵⁰

One of the major international initiatives Sweden has taken in this area was the establishment of the Stockholm Internet Forum on Internet Freedom for Global Development, which has taken place annually since April 2012.⁵¹ Another measure was the convening on February 29, 2012, of a panel discussion on freedom of expression and the Internet during the 19th session of the UN Human Rights Council. The panel, which had the active support of more than 60 countries, marked the first time this subject was discussed by the council.⁵² Some observers criticized the Swedish approach for paying insufficient attention to major activists such as Edward Snowden.⁵³ Revelations that Swedish government agencies have collaborated with U.S. and British signals intelligence agencies also have cast some doubt on the sincerity of the Swedish push for Internet freedom.⁵⁴

Foreign Minister Bildt was criticized by the leading Swedish press for not taking a stand for Internet freedom and against political repression in Turkey.⁵⁵ On the contrary, Sweden received both the Turkish president and prime minister in 2013, and Swedish prime minister Fredrik Reinfeldt visited Turkey. As one of the strongest supporters of Turkish membership in the EU, Sweden has developed an increasingly robust link with Turkey.

Marginalized Communities

The government's communication on democracy promotion titled "Freedom from Oppression" states that the most at-risk groups (including women; children; the disabled; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) people; native or indigenous groups;

and HIV-positive individuals) are at the center of Sweden's work against discrimination in its foreign policy.⁵⁶ The government also emphasizes the importance of defending the defenders of human rights and democracy, such as journalists.⁵⁷

An example of Swedish policy is the government's decision in March 2014 to revoke its bilateral foreign aid (excluding research cooperation) to Uganda in response to the country's new antigay legislation. Swedish foreign aid minister Hillevi Engström stated that Swedish aid is not without conditions and that her government wished to send "a strong signal" to the government of Uganda that its actions will have consequences. Engström also said that other forms of aid will be used to support the LGBT community in Uganda.⁵⁸

The role of women is emphasized in Swedish foreign policy. An example is the international meeting in Stockholm in April 2014 focused on the lives of young women and girls in the developing world and their right to not be forced to wed at a young age. Organized and hosted by the Swedish government, the meeting convened parliamentarians from around the world to discuss how to protect girls under 18 from being wed.⁵⁹

In addition, the Stockholm Workshop on Combating Impunity for Sexual and Gender Based Crimes, held on May 20, 2014, and organized and hosted by the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, focused on sharing experiences and building national partnerships among governments, prosecutors, and civil society organizations.⁶⁰ A special focus was placed on the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where Sweden is a leading partner and funder of justice reform. Swedish support there is particularly focused on improving access to legal assistance to women and victims of sexual violence.⁶¹ Swedish support for countering gender-based violence also has contributed to three UN resolutions in the UN Security Council as well as to annual reports on the topic from the UN secretary-general.⁶²

In authoritarian countries such as Myanmar, Sweden gives priority to civil society organizations focused on furthering democratization and promoting greater pluralism. Among other things, Swedish aid supports groups working for LGBT rights in Myanmar.⁶³ In its country strategy for Myanmar, the Swedish government allocates a maximum of 750 million kronor (\$107 million) for the period 2013–17, targeting mainly women and ethnic minorities.⁶⁴

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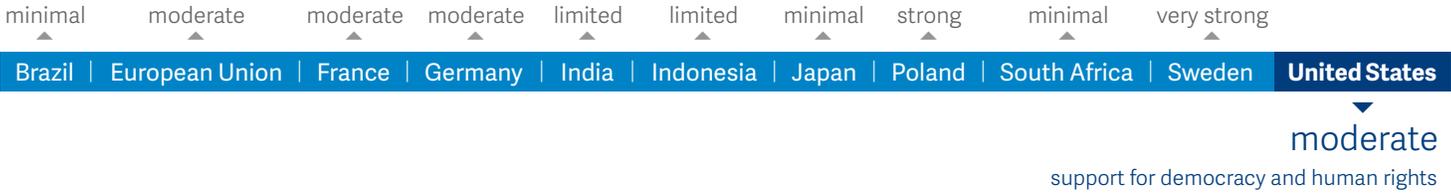
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United States

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United States has been deeply involved in democracy promotion for decades. In addition to the broad network of democracy organizations that it supports, it has integrated the promotion of democracy into all aspects of its foreign policy. The United States seeks to support human rights and democracy not only through programs and policies, but also through rhetoric and example. However, it simultaneously bolsters friendly nondemocratic regimes and has frequently refrained from criticism when other interests are involved.

The United States provides impressive technical support to political parties, election commissions, and civil society. It has also been committed to strengthening civil liberties abroad, even in challenging environments. The country has been part of a global movement working to expand the rights of LGBT people. Its record has been much more mixed on responses to coups and other disruptions of democratic processes, as well as to gross human rights violations.

Introduction

More than any other country, the United States seeks to promote democracy on a global scale. It has taken action to this end in places ranging from authoritarian Belarus and transitional Myanmar and Georgia, to those such as Mexico that are more or less democratic but face a variety of threats and challenges. This global reach is a result of the U.S. government's integration of democracy promotion into its larger foreign policy, and the success or failure of its efforts has worldwide significance.

The United States has a long, if sometimes flawed and inconsistent, record of supporting democracy. While the U.S. government has played a crucial role in fostering and defending democratic rule in Germany, Japan, and postcommunist Europe, as well as other states in Asia and Latin America, it has also bolstered strategically important authoritarian regimes and tailored its definition of democracy to suit its own, separate foreign policy priorities. Moreover, the U.S. government has made decisions about where to work based on what is politically possible, as opposed to steadfastly selecting the places where the greatest need exists. This inconsistency in part reflects the unique position of the United States as the world's most powerful country, with a complex set of interests and imperatives. Some believe that the country has a duty to address a broad range of global concerns that at times conflict with democracy support.

Democracy promotion is nonetheless deeply embedded in the American system. Although the extensive network of U.S.-based democracy

About this project

This project analyzes support by 11 democratic powers for democracy and human rights during the period June 2012–May 2014.

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organizations—donor agencies, nongovernmental groups, think tanks, specialized academic centers, and congressionally chartered institutions—has been critically described as the “democracy bureaucracy,”¹ its existence also indicates the sophistication of the enterprise. Well-established entities like the National Democratic Institute, the International Republican Institute, and the National Endowment for Democracy are central to U.S. and indeed global efforts to support democratic governance. The United States is also active in multilateral organizations such as the Community of Democracies, holding a seat on the governing council and the executive committee.

Meanwhile, the United States still faces its own internal challenges. Although it is a consolidated democracy, universal suffrage in practice dates only to the mid-1960s. The country is currently confronting a number of chronic problems such as weak voter participation, the outsized and potentially corrupting role of moneyed interests in politics, and the effective disenfranchisement of some voters through the manipulation of electoral laws. Human and civil rights issues including racial disparities in the criminal justice system, mass data collection by intelligence agencies, and the use of torture on terrorism suspects all damage the country’s ability to present itself as a model for democracy.

Foreign Policy Objectives

According to the 2010 U.S. National Security Strategy, one of the goals of U.S. foreign policy is “to promote democracy and human rights abroad.” It continues, “The United States supports the expansion of democracy and human rights abroad because governments that respect these values are more just, peaceful, and legitimate. We also do so because their success abroad fosters an environment that supports America’s national interests.”² Notably, this is a subsection of the “Values” portion of the document, indicating that at least with regards to rhetorical emphasis and strategic planning, democracy promotion is not a top-tier priority of the U.S. government.

USAID, the world’s largest bilateral donor organization working on democracy issues, released a new strategy in mid-2013 that stated, “Support for DRG [Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance] is vital to the pursuit of freedom and national security, and is essential to achieve the Agency’s and the United States Government’s broader social and

economic development goals.” This reflects the fact that operationally, U.S. commitment to the promotion of democracy remains constant and strong. This document also spells out the U.S. government’s definition of democracy: “A civilian political system in which the legislative and chief executive offices are filled through regular, competitive elections with universal suffrage. Democracy is characterized by civil liberties, including the rights to speech, association, and universal suffrage, as well as the rule of law and respect for pluralism and minority rights.”³

Stating the centrality of democracy promotion to U.S. foreign policy goals is nothing new for American leaders. U.S. diplomatic approaches to democracy promotion during the Obama administration have been, like in every U.S. administration, inconsistent. Though George W. Bush was more emphatic than Barack Obama regarding democracy promotion, in practice that has not translated into a qualitative difference in U.S. support for these programs.

The current administration has made the promotion of democracy and human rights a less visible part of diplomacy than it has been at some points in the past. This became clear, for example, during discussions with China in the early days of the Obama administration, when the subject of human rights was only lightly broached.⁴ Some observers viewed the “reset” with Russia as an additional example of this pattern. Similarly, U.S. diplomacy with Egypt since the fall of President Hosni Mubarak in 2011 has been driven more by the need to maintain relations with whoever is in power, rather than a substantial concern for promoting democracy in that country.

Development Assistance and Trade

Democracy is an important component of U.S. development and trade policy, but it is always part of a broader set of goals. The United States tends to focus on democracy support in countries where the United States is unhappy with a regime that is also vulnerable, or those that are heavily dependent on assistance and are thus good targets for democracy projects.

As a result, the role and priority of democracy promotion in U.S. assistance and trade policies vary substantially. In authoritarian countries with which the United States has extensive trade relations, such as Saudi Arabia and China, human rights and democracy issues are given at best peripheral treatment; in contrast, the United States raises issues

of human rights and democracy more frequently in Iran and Cuba, countries with which it has almost no trade relations. This reflects the complexity of the current U.S. role as the global hegemon, as well as the strategic interests of Saudi oil and strong economic ties with an ascendant China. Similarly, although nearly every beneficiary of U.S. development assistance receives some funding and support for democracy and human rights, failure to address these issues rarely jeopardizes assistance.

In fiscal year (FY) 2013, 5.4 percent of U.S. foreign assistance was spent on democracy and governance. For FY 2014, democracy and governance represented 5.8 percent of obligated funds. However, these data may be misleading, as U.S. government reporting often defines democracy and governance programs very broadly, while undercounting the democracy promotion work funded from other parts of the budget.⁵ The proportion also varies substantially from country to country. In FY 2013, 86 percent of the \$5.7 million in foreign assistance for Venezuela was slated for democracy and governance, compared with Myanmar, where the number was a much more modest 8 percent of \$54 million, and China, with only slightly more than 1 percent of \$15.1 million in assistance. In Egypt, economic development needs restricted democracy and governance to just below 3 percent of the \$614 million in U.S. assistance.⁶

Elections

The United States has an extensive set of programs and policies to promote and support free, fair, and democratic elections around the world. The primary areas of focus are supporting and cultivating domestic election observers, participating in multinational election-observation missions, and capacity building to support the development of functioning and democratic political parties.

From a programmatic perspective, the United States is very committed to free and fair elections. In FY 2013, the United States spent \$170 million globally on “Political Competition and Consensus-Building,” which is largely election-related work. This was about 14 percent of the total democracy and governance budget for the fiscal year, and is probably a slight undercount as it does not include money sent to multilateral organizations for election monitoring and related activities.⁷ The United States provides impressive technical support to political

parties, election commissions, and relevant civil society organizations, in addition to a high degree of engagement in and support for international election-monitoring efforts.

Meanwhile, U.S. support for the election process is subject to major political considerations. Election monitors provide technical information and data that are open to interpretation, which often leads to final reports and statements that are influenced by other interests.

The international election observation and support community, in which the United States plays a very big role, is increasingly in the position of identifying election fraud and other related problems; however, they are unable to address them in any meaningful way. This raises the question of whether the goal of election observation is simply to document fraud or in fact to make a difference in the election. For example, in 2013, Ilham Aliyev was reelected as Azerbaijan’s president with 84.5 percent of the vote. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) said about the election, “Significant problems were observed throughout all stages of election day processes.”⁸ However, the United States has never sought to significantly question the legitimacy of Aliyev’s presidency or his election. Regardless of whether this is a realistic expectation, it demonstrates the conundrum facing U.S. election support efforts.

In general, U.S. efforts remain deeply tied to broader aims of U.S. foreign policy that occasionally, but not always, overlap with those of democracy. For example, U.S. support for the 2014 election of a generally pro-Western leader in Ukraine, Petro Poroshenko, dovetailed nicely with the interests of democracy and fair elections. However, in Georgia in 2012, the United States was reluctant to confront the depth of election abuses and intimidation that were perpetrated in an (unsuccessful) effort to ensure victory for the party of then-president, and staunch U.S. ally, Mikheil Saakashvili. In Venezuela, the United States was particularly attentive to fraud in the 2013 election of President Nicolás Maduro, an opponent of U.S. influence. The United States sought to overturn the election, or at least conduct a recount based on somewhat controversial assertions of election irregularities there.

Disruptions of Democratic Processes

The United States has a deeply mixed record in responding to disruptions of democratic and constitutional processes. The issues are particularly complex because most ousted leaders are not clear liberal democrats overthrown by blatantly authoritarian governments, but rather flawed politicians who have severely compromised whatever democratic credentials they once had.

In recent years, the two cases best exemplifying this complexity and the various U.S. responses are Egypt and Ukraine. In July 2013, the Egyptian military ousted President Mohamed Morsi, who had been elected in a flawed but competitive election in June 2012. The military consolidated power, cracked down on opposition, killed and imprisoned hundreds, and declared Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood a terrorist organization. While his removal from office can be called a coup, it did not dislodge a democrat in any meaningful sense of that word. During Morsi's first months in office, he had concentrated power in the presidency, reduced the power of other governing institutions, and restricted opposition. The United States, with many competing strategic priorities in Egypt, condemned the abuses of the post-Morsi government after some pressure from Congress, but stopped short of using the word "coup." Although it froze much of the military aid it usually sends to Egypt, it did so only reluctantly, after several months and some debate in Washington.

Events in Ukraine from November 2013 through the summer of 2014 were similarly complicated. A largely, but not entirely, peaceful protest movement ultimately led to the removal of President Viktor Yanukovich, who had been elected democratically in 2010. Like Morsi, Yanukovich had not governed as a democrat, violently limiting rights of assembly and notably the media, in addition to engaging in extreme corruption. Moreover, Yanukovich was, at the time of his resignation, trying to stop his country's movement toward the West and especially the European Union, while the demonstrators who ousted him were geopolitically oriented toward the West. Washington greeted Yanukovich's removal as an unequivocal victory for democracy, despite its own strained relationship to constitutional processes, while authoritarian Russia derided the events as a coup. The truth probably lies somewhere in between, but this nuance was never publicly entertained by the U.S. government.

Following the conclusion of Yanukovich's presidency and the subsequent Russian invasion of Crimea and incursions into other parts of Ukraine, the United States sought to help the interim government function better, to bolster the now-freer Ukrainian civil society, and to support the May 2014 presidential election. These actions support Ukrainian democracy. However, they also stem from a one-sided view of the complex events that ended Yanukovich's presidency. Yanukovich was corrupt and ultimately responded violently to protests, but he was also democratically elected and enjoyed support in much the country. This raises the question of how the United States would respond to a semiviolent ouster of a corrupt but fairly elected leader who happened to be, unlike Yanukovich, an American ally.

Thus, the U.S. commitment to democracy is not clear in either the Ukraine or Egypt case, or in similar cases around the world.

Gross Human Rights Violations

The U.S. response to gross human rights violations during the period covered by this report has been mixed. This is partially due to the vexing nature of many human rights abuses—which rarely lead to straightforward or unchallenging policy options. The United States also demonstrates a reluctance to influence human rights policies in powerful countries or those on whom it relies for valuable economic or security cooperation.

The most glaring example of this is the extensive and multilayered relations between the United States and China, one of the world's biggest human rights violators. Despite China's terrible human rights record, the United States has failed to speak out against abuses unless they directly involved U.S. interests. It has fallen back on narrowly defined economic and political interests rather than taking a bold stance.

A further example is Syria. In late 2013, extensive debate in the United States centered on how best to respond to the deteriorating human rights environment related to the civil war in that country. Much of this debate focused on the use of chemical weapons against civilians, which is clearly an important human rights issue. However, that focus ignored the thousands who had died at the hands of the murderous Assad regime through the use of conventional weapons. The Obama administration explored

a military response to President Bashar al-Assad's use of chemical weapons, but without the support of Congress the administration decided not to pursue it. Instead, Russia brokered a deal leading to the destruction of many of Syria's chemical weapons. Meanwhile, killings, a refugee crisis, and widespread human rights violations continue in Syria, indicating that the "responsibility to protect" is not a driving force of American foreign policy.

Finally, because the United States seeks to promote human rights and democracy through rhetoric and example as well as programs and policies, its failure to address domestic human rights problems, such as the American prison system, can undermine foreign policy.

Civil Liberties

As opposed to other areas, the United States generally has taken a clear position in favor of civil liberties, particularly with regards to freedom of the media. Strong programmatic and political support for freedoms of association and assembly, and civil society more broadly, has been central to the U.S. democracy promotion strategy for many years. This includes contributing financially to watchdog and advocacy-based civil society organizations across the globe, and drawing frequent attention to violations of these basic freedoms. As in other areas, this support has often been filtered through broader political considerations and the demands of specific bilateral relationships.

In FY 2013, 23.2 percent of U.S. democracy and governance funding was spent on civil society support. This is more money than was spent on elections, which is generally thought to be the linchpin of democracy assistance. This funding goes to a range of programs providing support to countless civil society organizations, and generally takes the form of capacity building, technical support, and related work. Although this measure is a good heuristic, it is not a precise figure; some civil society funding is allotted to service organizations, and some support for freedoms of speech and assembly come from other budget lines.

The United States promotes and encourages civil liberties from many angles. It facilitates hundreds of visits to the United States each year by journalists and other civil society representatives, supports training programs for journalists in challenging environments on blogs and other media, and helps

journalists protect their physical and digital security in countries where they are under threat.⁹ The United States not only draws attention to violations of these freedoms under unfriendly regimes such as Russia or Venezuela—where the United States has reliably spoken out against the absence of media freedom¹⁰—but also under pro-U.S. regimes. For example, regarding Saakashvili's Georgia in 2012, a State Department report said that "direct or indirect government influence over the most watched countrywide media outlets remained a problem. . . . While print media frequently criticized senior government officials during the year, some individuals affiliated with newspapers reported facing pressure and intimidation by the preelection government for doing so."¹¹

Nevertheless, the ability of the United States to strengthen civil liberties and freedoms has varied. Despite the country's occasionally strong positions regarding Russia, China, and others, media restrictions continue and freedom of association is limited. Although the United States has been unambiguous in seeking to protect freedom of assembly in Maduro's Venezuela, it has been inconsistent in responding to and speaking out against ongoing restrictions on journalists and civil society activists in China, Russia, the Gulf states, and elsewhere. This further demonstrates the significant challenge of turning intent, commitment, and resources into outcomes.

Marginalized Communities

The United States has frequently sought to ensure the protection of marginalized communities in other countries. For example, the U.S. democracy and governance portfolio has incorporated into its core programming efforts to empower women and reduce discrimination against them. Moreover, in recent years the United States has been part of a global movement to strengthen respect for the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) individuals around the world, with significant impact. Over the last decade or so, issues of LGBT equality have been integrated into the U.S. democracy and governance portfolio in a way that sends a clear message of support. The United States cannot take full credit given the involvement of European governments and others, but the accomplishment is nonetheless important. Allies and other countries that receive U.S. assistance now know that the United States will not look away from cases of discrimination against LGBT citizens.

Efforts to protect ethnic and religious minorities have met with mixed results, and in some cases little action has been taken. For example, the United States has been less vocal in defending the rights of Uighurs and Tibetans in China than it has been with regards to minorities in less powerful countries. In certain cases, fighting discrimination has been folded into broader democracy and governance programs. In Pakistan, for example, programs to create opportunity and protection for Shia and non-Muslim minority groups have been an important target of USAID funding.

In Myanmar, although the United States has put substantial resources into the democratic transition and the election that is scheduled to occur in 2015, it has done almost nothing in response to the widespread human rights violations being inflicted upon the Rohingya, a Muslim minority group. In Rakhine state, where most of the Rohingya live, these people have been killed in attacks by members of the Buddhist majority; thousands have been placed in internment camps. Other ongoing human rights violations for which the United States has had little response include the treatment of Muslims in the Central African Republic, and human rights violations during the recent conflict in Mali.

In Latin America, the United States has strongly emphasized the protection of the rights of indigenous peoples. In Ecuador, Guatemala, Colombia, and numerous other countries, the United States has supported efforts to empower these groups, primarily through supporting local civil society organizations.

ENDNOTES

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