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CLOSE HOLD

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

October 9, 1996

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

10-12-96

96 OCT 9 P7:16

MEMORANDUM TO THE PRESIDENT

FROM: LAURA TYSON AND FRANK RAINES *LT*

SUBJECT: BUDGETARY CONSTRAINTS AND NEW POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS

We understand that you may be interested in making more new policy announcements during the closing days of the campaign. In the budget and continuing in the initiatives surrounding the Chicago Convention, you have consistently shown how you plan to pay for each new initiative "line by line and dime by dime." Maintaining the fiscal credibility of your balanced budget plan will require that any new policy announcements with budgetary costs be accompanied by specific offsets.

As we know from our efforts to fashion offsets for the policy initiatives you have already announced--including most recently the literacy challenge and the welfare to work transition proposal--few if any easy offsets remain. As we look ahead to the FY 1998 budget process, based on our preliminary review, it appears that the situation if anything has gotten worse. As a result of likely changes in both the technical and economic assumptions underlying budget projections, it will be more difficult to balance the budget by 2002 than we projected in our last formal budget submission.

In short, the budgetary constraints that will confront you after the election will be tighter than our current budget projects and the tradeoffs will be even more painful. Any new policy you announce now means fewer resources later for other priorities, such as adding resources back for immigrants or food stamps, or extending the work-opportunity tax credit or the R&D tax credit beyond 1997. And the more resources you commit to new policy announcements now, the less flexibility you will have as you develop your budgetary strategy after the election.

We would like to meet with you at your earliest possible convenience after the election to provide you with an analysis of the budgetary situation and options for your budget strategy for FY 1998-2002. We will work with Leon to find an appropriate time. In the meantime, however, we strongly advise against new policy initiatives that emphasize future budget commitments. Such commitments will aggravate the difficult budgetary choices you will face at the beginning of your second term.

cc: [unclear] [unclear]

cc: w/incoming:
Scheduling
Gift Unit

WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

te Boulevard
A 90025
Fax

Kate Bales-Moulene
InStyle
Suite 1700
11766 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90025

Dear Kate:

Thanks for your note of September 30 and for letting me know about the good work of Victory Over Violence. While I'm not yet sure what my schedule will hold next month, I've made my schedulers, Anne Hawley and Stephanie Streett, aware of the event.

Thanks, too, for the Magic Pillow. I'll surely have need for it in the coming weeks.

I'm sorry we came so close and still missed each other while I was in California last month -- I hope we'll be able to visit before too long.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

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InStyle

President Bill Clinton
THE WHITE HOUSE

September 30, 1996

Time Inc.

In Style
11766 Wilshire Boulevard
Suite 1700
Los Angeles, CA 90025

310-268-7236
310-268-7267 Fax

Dear Bill,

I hope this note finds you well. I have said to Jean-Maurice several times now that we are back in America that it is such a relief to know you will be in office for the next four years. By coincidence, my husband and I were walking out of Fred Segal in Santa Monica last week as several police officers started to block the street. Within seconds, your motorcade drove by and we happened to be two of the bystanders as you waved to folks. In the store, we had been buying these wonderful little pillows--which my three year old calls the "magic pillow". Jean-Maurice thought that with the travel and stress you face daily that we ought to send you one. Hope you enjoy it.

I also want to mention to you an event that might be of interest to you or Hillary to attend after the election. There is a wonderful group called VICTORY OVER VIOLENCE that supports abused women and their families. Often a battered woman won't leave her home because she won't leave her children in a dangerous and threatening environment. This group is founding shelters for women to go to with their children.

On November 10th, there will be a fund-raiser in Los Angeles to raise money and awareness. By luck, I was able to introduce the design house ESCADA to the founders and they have donated \$350,000 for the event. Michelle Pfeiffer is hosting along with Governor Wilson. The honorary committee is quite exceptional--even by Hollywood standards, and it seems like a wonderful opportunity to put politics aside after the election and support a marvelous cause. In any event, I appreciate your consideration and I hope on one of your up-coming trips to Los Angeles we will finally have a moment to catch up.]

Sincerely yours,



Kate Bales-Moulene
West Coast Bureau Chief
310-268-7301

THE DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE

Saturday, October 12, 1996

Chief:

Here's a copy of a piece I've written for the forthcoming issue of *Foreign Affairs*. It'll be out in a couple of weeks. I hope you'll permit me these occasional recidivist lapses back into journalism. Working on this piece helped concentrate my mind on one of the many powerful and positive aspects of your vision of the world.

Congratulations on the debate — and on much else.

Cheers,

Strobe

to Doug / Sweeney Fyfe
Good piece
B.

Democracy and the National Interest

Strobe Talbott

IDEALPOLITIK AS REALPOLITIK

NEARLY FIVE years ago, early in his first campaign for the White House, Bill Clinton delivered a speech at Georgetown University about democracy as a factor in international life. Countries whose citizens choose their leaders, he said, are more likely than those with other forms of government to be reliable partners in trade and diplomacy, and less likely to threaten the peace.

As president, he has put that principle into practice by making the support of democracy a priority of his administration's diplomacy in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Central Europe, and the former Soviet Union. Even in straitened times he has pressed Congress to fund foreign assistance programs that promote elections and the rule of law, arguing that relatively modest expenditures today are an investment in the long-term interests of the United States.

Two years ago President Clinton dispatched 21,000 American troops to Haiti as the vanguard of a multinational force that restored an elected leader who had been deposed in a coup d'état. Earlier this year he urged Russia to go through with its first post-Soviet presidential election, rejecting the view that cancellation would be better than a victory by the "wrong" candidate. And on September 14 the 53,000-strong, NATO-led military force in Bosnia made possible elections that, for all their imperfections and troublesome aftermath, give that shattered land a better chance of achieving lasting peace within its borders and with its neighbors.

STROBE TALBOTT is Deputy Secretary of State.

Strobe Talbott

Those three exertions of American political will—and in two cases, of military muscle—have entailed costs and risks and, therefore, have generated controversy. In none of the three countries is the ultimate triumph of democracy certain. The last several years have provided reminders, in every corner of the globe, of how painful, suspenseful, and downright messy the transition to democracy can be. In many states emerging from decades, if not centuries, of tyranny, euphoria has given way to the sobriety of the morning after.

In the United States, criticism of the administration's emphasis on democracy overseas has come not just from isolationists but also from some internationalists who warn that a "crusade" on behalf of democracy will overstretch American resources and mire the United States in endless, debilitating brawls, often on the side of undeserving clients. The U.S. government, they argue, should concentrate on influencing other countries' foreign, military, and trade policies, since those are most germane to the United States' own national security interests.¹

Those who hold that view often claim to be realists, to distinguish themselves from woolly-minded idealists enamored of the notion that the United States can, and should, affect other countries' internal affairs. Yet the so-called realist critique is anachronistic: it fails to take account of the growth of the global marketplace, along with the deepening and widening of interdependence among regions. It is in that sense unrealistic.

A combination of technological, commercial, and political trends is shortening distances, opening borders, and connecting far-flung cultures and economies. With this phenomenon have come new benefits and new dangers. As goods and services move more quickly and freely among countries and continents, so do viruses, narcotics, criminals, and terrorists, as well as the causes and consequences of ecological degradation.

In an increasingly interdependent world Americans have a growing stake in how other countries govern, or misgovern, themselves. The larger and more close-knit the community of nations that choose democratic forms of government, the safer and more prosperous Americans

¹See, for example, Michael Mandelbaum, "Foreign Policy as Social Work," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 1996, pp. 16-32; and Henry Kissinger, "Beware: A Threat Abroad," *Newsweek*, June 17, 1996, p. 42.

Democracy and the National Interest

will be, since democracies are demonstrably more likely to maintain their international commitments, less likely to engage in terrorism or wreak environmental damage, and less likely to make war on each other.²

That proposition is the essence of the national security rationale for vigorously supporting, promoting, and, when necessary, defending democracy in other countries. It is the basis for asserting, in rebuttal to some self-described realists' insinuations to the contrary, that American values and interests reinforce each other.

This conviction reflects the political realities on the home front of U.S. foreign policy. The American people have never accepted traditional geopolitics or pure balance-of-power calculations as sufficient reason to expend national treasure or to dispatch American soldiers to foreign lands. Throughout this century the U.S. government has explained its decisions to send troops "over there" with some invocation of democracy and its defense. America's participation in both world wars and in the Cold War was not just about the international behavior of states, i.e., stopping or deterring aggression. It was also about adversary visions of the relationship between the individual citizen and the government. Fundamentally, it was about freedom versus tyranny.

The American people want their country's foreign policy rooted in idealpolitik as well as realpolitik. The United States is uniquely and self-consciously a country founded on a set of ideas, and ideals, applicable to people everywhere. The Founding Fathers declared that all were created equal—not just those in Britain's 13 American colonies—and that to secure the "unalienable rights" of life, liberty, and the

²This principle has been prominent in the thinking of American statesmen in the twentieth century. Woodrow Wilson called democracy "the best preventive of such jealousies and suspicions and secret intrigues as produce wars," and Franklin Roosevelt said that "the continued maintenance and improvement of democracy constitute the most important guarantee of international peace." A substantial body of empirical evidence and political science scholarship supports the premise that democracies are less likely to fight wars with each other—and more likely to win wars against autocratic states. See, for example, David A. Lake, "Powerful Pacifists: Democratic States and War," *American Political Science Review*, March 1992, pp. 24-37. For the case that democracies make better international partners, see G. John Ikenberry, "The Myth of Post-Cold War Chaos," *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 1996, pp. 79-91. However, there has been considerable debate over whether democracies are more or less likely to go to war against nondemocratic states. The issue has been examined in depth in *International Security*. See, for example, Christopher Layne, "Kant or Cant: The Myth of Democratic Peace," Fall 1994, pp. 5-49; and Edward Mansfield and Jack Snyder, "Democratization and the Danger of War," Summer 1995, pp. 5-38.

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pursuit of happiness, people had the right to establish governments that derive "their just powers from the consent of the governed."

THE CURRENT WAVE

WHEN THAT idea became the foundation of the American political system in 1776, democracy had been largely in abeyance for more than two millennia, since the Age of Pericles. For much of its own history the United States was one of a small group of nations that had institutionalized the right of citizens to govern themselves. But that characteristically American ideal has gathered force over the last two decades. In 1974 less than 30 percent of the world's countries were democratic. Today the figure is over 61 percent. For the first time in history a slim but clear majority of the world's population—54 percent—lives under democracy.³

The current, so-called third wave of democratization started in the mid-1970s with the demise of right-wing dictatorships in Portugal, Spain, and Greece, and in the 1980s it gathered momentum and spread.⁴ Technology was a major factor. Even the most heavily fortified borders became increasingly permeable to the onslaughts first of radio, then of television, and eventually of fax machines and E-mail.

To cite just one example: In May 1992, when Thailand's military tried to suppress student-led pro-democracy demonstrations, the army-controlled television stations blocked all reporting on the violence. But the Thai business and professional classes saw what was happening on CNN and took to the streets of Bangkok in protest. By September, elected civilian government returned to Thailand.

Modern technology may be a mixed blessing, since it has also increased authorities' ability to keep citizens under surveillance and pry

³Freedom House's most recent survey of political rights and civil liberties found that the breakdown in 1995 was between "radically divergent polities—generally free societies characterized by democratic governance and unfree societies characterized by arbitrary rule." See Adrian Karatnycky, "Democracy and Despotism: Bipolarism Renewed?" *Freedom Review*, January-February 1996.

⁴Samuel P. Huntington characterizes the expansion of democracy around the globe since 1974 as the most recent of three waves of democratization that have shaped the modern world. The first lasted from 1828 to 1926 and the second from 1943 to 1964. See *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century*, Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991.

Democracy and the National Interest

into their private lives. But the net effect has been positive. George Orwell's prediction for 1984 was wrong; the electronics and communications revolution has weakened Big Brother rather than strengthening him.

Democracy has also spread because it can help countries modernize their economies, ameliorate social conditions, and integrate with the outside world. Under a representative system of government, leaders are more likely to be accountable to their people. While corruption is all too common in democracies, including well-established ones, an independent parliament and judiciary, along with a free press, can check abuses of power.

Authoritarian regimes and their apologists sometimes claim that democracy is economically inefficient, and that, particularly in impoverished nations, "enlightened authoritarianism" is a more effective means of generating economic growth. Here the record is ambiguous, but it is far from vindicating dictatorial rule. A strong hand may steer a nation out of misery and chaos, but even the most benevolent dictator is likely to end up proving Lord Acton's dictum about the corrupting influence of power—and if not the enlightened strongman himself, then his distinctly unenlightened successor.⁵

In some of the world's poorest countries, such as Nicaragua and Malawi, elected leaders have proved more inclined than their authoritarian or totalitarian predecessors to adopt policies that benefit their people. Democratic authorities, because of the way they came to power, have an important additional source of legitimacy that can reinforce their ability to make painful but necessary economic choices, including allocation of scarce natural resources.⁶ Amartya Sen, an economist at

⁵Nicéphore Soglo, the former president of Benin, wrote after his defeat in an election in March that too many African leaders have tried to justify their repressive rule in the early years after independence by claiming to be enlightened authoritarians: "We have been living with their legacy of economic devastation and political violence ever since. Africa can't afford to be held to a different democratic standard by the world." Although he lost the election to former President Mathieu Kerekou, Soglo called the vote a victory for democracy and noted that turnout was nearly 80 percent. Kerekou had first ascended to power in an army coup in October 1972, but, Soglo observed, "this year it was by way of the ballot box." See Soglo, "An African Election: I Lost, but Democracy Is Winning," *The Washington Post*, August 21, 1996, p. A25.

⁶See Huntington, "Democracy for the Long Haul," *The Journal of Democracy*, April 1996, and Mancur Olson, "Dictatorship, Democracy, and Development," *American Political Science Review*, September 1993.

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Harvard University, has argued that "no substantial famine has ever occurred in a country with a democratic form of government and a relatively free press." He points out that throughout its history India endured widespread famines, including one in 1943 that claimed between two million and three million lives. But since becoming the world's largest democracy in 1947, the country has not had a single substantial famine, despite frequent crop failures and food scarcities. Similarly, famine prevention programs run by democratically elected governments in Botswana and Zimbabwe enabled those nations to withstand crop failures in the early 1980s. During the same period, Sen notes, Sudan and Ethiopia, faced with relatively smaller declines in food output but ruled by authoritarian regimes, suffered severe famines.⁷

A WIDENING CONSENSUS

FOR THE United States, the attractions and advantages of supporting democracy abroad must be balanced against other strategic interests—and against the difficulty of sponsoring transitions that will inevitably entail a degree of disruption, if not instability. Arguing 178 years ago for U.S. support of independence movements in the Spanish colonies of Latin America, Henry Clay articulated a standard that holds up today: "I would not force upon other nations our principles and our liberty, if they did not want them. But, if an abused and oppressed people will their freedom; if they seek to establish it; if, in truth, they have established it; we have a right, as a sovereign power, to notice the fact, and to act as our circumstances and our interest require."

Support for democracy is not an absolute imperative that automatically takes precedence over competing goals; rather, it is a strong thread to be woven into the complex tapestry of American foreign policy. In the last 20 years, under both Republican and Democratic presidents, the United States has at a number of key moments adjudged "our circumstances and our interest" to justify giving priority to the promotion of democracy.

⁷Sen, "Freedoms and Needs: An Argument for the Primacy of Political Rights," *The New Republic*, January 10, 1994, pp. 34-35.

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In the mid-1980s, during the largely peaceful uprising against Ferdinand Marcos in the Philippines, the U.S. Congress and private human rights groups prevailed on the Reagan administration to back the forces of "people power" and help ease Marcos into exile. Even the Reagan administration's most controversial foreign policy initiative, its backing of the *contra* guerrillas in Nicaragua, turned out well for the cause of democracy: U.S. pressure contributed to the Sandinista regime's decision in 1990 to submit to a free and fair election. The opposition candidate, Violeta Barrios de Chamorro, won, and the Sandinistas accepted the results. Nicaraguans have just gone to the polls again to choose their leaders at every level of government, passing one of the critical tests for a young democracy: holding a second election.

The Bush administration led the United Nations in its sponsorship of the first free, fair, comprehensive elections ever held in Cambodia. When the Cambodian people had the chance to vote in early 1993, more than 90 percent of those eligible cast ballots. Many defied death threats from the Khmer Rouge and walked through minefields to the polling places.

In Latin America, the trend that began in the 1980s when Argentina, Brazil, and Chile made the transition from military dictatorship to civilian, parliamentary rule has proved to be not only durable but self-reinforcing. In 1991 the Organization of American States, at Washington's urging, adopted Resolution 1080, which requires the foreign ministers of member states to convene in the event of any interruption of the democratic process in the hemisphere. When President Jorge Serrano of Guatemala suspended constitutional rule in 1993, the OAS invoked Resolution 1080 to condemn the action and to raise the specter of economic and political sanctions. In the face of that threat, Serrano resigned and constitutional order was restored.

In January 1995 a flare-up of fighting on the border between Peru and Ecuador challenged the rule that democracies do not go to war against each other. But a wider war was averted with the assistance of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and the United States. One of the main forces

When America
promotes democracy,
values and interests
reinforce each other.

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for peace was that neither of the conflicting parties wanted to be ostracized from the hemisphere's community of market democracies.

In April 1996 the United States, the OAS, and Mercosur, the South American customs union, helped to defend democracy in Paraguay from overthrow by the commander of the armed forces. Mercosur has since amended its charter to exclude any member country that "abandons the full exercise of republican institutions."

With the exception of Israel, the political, religious, and cultural terrain of the Middle East has not been fertile ground for democracy. But in that region, too, there are tentative signs of progress. With American encouragement, a number of Arab states—notably Kuwait, Yemen, and Jordan—have conducted successful competitive parliamentary elections. In January 1996 Palestinians elected the governing council called for in their peace accords with Israel.

Even in Africa, where democratization has faced some of its biggest obstacles and suffered some of its most discouraging reversals, there is reason for hope—and for sustained American engagement. South Africa, now that it has finally emerged from apartheid, is a powerful and positive example throughout the region. In Sierra Leone, elections in March brought a respite in the country's five-year-old civil war; the civilian leadership and the rebels have responded to the voters' demand for an end to the fighting.

Progress in individual African countries has led to cooperative efforts to consolidate the trend. When the monarch of Lesotho threatened to disband parliament in August 1994, the elected presidents of South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Botswana banded together to pressure him to uphold democracy. Later that year the leaders of the former front line states, which had opposed white rule in South Africa, joined those of post-apartheid South Africa, Lesotho, Swaziland, and Malawi in persuading the competing parties in Mozambique to participate in and then respect the results of U.N.-supervised elections there.

The most dramatic burst of democratization has come in the former Soviet empire. There, too, Orwell had it wrong, and some hawkish theoreticians of the Cold War had it only half right: the Soviet communist system collapsed not just because it was contained by Western military power but also because it was penetrated and ultimately subverted by information and ideas, including the big idea of

Democracy and the National Interest

democracy. After the collapse of the Iron Curtain, the disbandment of the Warsaw Pact, and the dissolution of the U.S.S.R., the domino theory operated in reverse: one formerly communist country after another held free elections. The most recent example came in June, when the Mongolians participated in their country's third democratic election. Over 92 percent of those eligible cast ballots, many after traveling for hours on horseback to vote, and they handed an unexpected and overwhelming victory to the democratic opposition.

This globe-spanning sequence of events—which has included the grassroots Chinese democracy movement of 1989, the elections in the Philippines, Thailand, and Cambodia, and the more recent voting that legitimized the Palestinian Authority in Gaza and Jericho and gave Taiwan its first freely chosen president—should have discredited the claim that democracy is an exclusively Western idea. It should have laid to rest the contention that some peoples and cultures are unsuited to democracy—that Asians are predisposed to live under Confucian authoritarians, Latin Americans under *caudillos* or *comandantes*, Africans under tribal chiefs, Arabs and Persians under repressive theocrats, Russians under czars or commissars. Allowing stereotypes of national character to become the basis for policy would consign whole nations to despotism on the perverse theory that it is the fate they deserve, or that it is encoded in their genes.

A GLASS HALF FULL

WHILE THE idea of democracy is potentially viable everywhere, the process of democratization is long and hard, especially for countries where political progress is hostage to economic disadvantage. Poverty, underdevelopment, and stagnation are not alibis for tyranny, but they are obstacles to freedom. In many countries the gap between the poor and the wealthy is widening as the state undergoes a double transition—from authoritarian to democratic politics and from centralized to market economies. Some regions have the added burden of unsustainable population growth. Even with freely elected and well-intentioned leaders, a country where a rising birthrate outpaces economic growth and exhausts natural resources is unlikely to sustain democratic rule.

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Many newcomers to the democratic fold qualify only as partly free.⁸ In fledgling democracies, especially countries where the wounds of civil war are still raw and the memory of oppressive rule still weighs heavy, politics can be especially volatile. The old regime's surviving elites divide into factions and vie for advantage in the new order, or for the spoils of the new disorder. Newly elected leaders, unsure of their hold on power or too sure of their infallibility and indispensability, use a heavy hand to silence the opposition, loyal and otherwise.

In Albania, after five years of progress toward democracy, the government of Sali Berisha presided in May over parliamentary elections that were marred by ballot-box stuffing, intimidation of voters, and irregularities in the vote count. Cambodian politics, while a vast improvement on the not-too-distant past of Khmer Rouge brutality, continue to be turbulent, often to the point of violence.

Throughout the post-communist world, especially in the former Soviet Union, relief and a sense of good riddance at the dismantling of the inefficient, top-heavy command system has given way to widespread resentment at what often seems to be the capriciousness and inequity of the market, and to insecurity over the absence of a safety net. Without the prospect of broad-based economic development, voters are likely to become disillusioned with politics and politicians, and thus with democracy itself. Newly enfranchised citizens tend to have unrealistically high expectations about what their elected leaders can accomplish, how long it will take, and how much hardship will be involved. When those expectations are disappointed, voters become vulnerable to demagogic purveyors of foolish or dangerous nostrums based on nostalgia or fear.

In short, the third wave has created an undertow in many countries that have embarked on democratization.

⁸See Larry Diamond, "Democracy in Latin America: Degrees, Illusions, and Directions for Consolidation," in Tom Farer, ed., *Beyond Sovereignty: Collectively Defending Democracy in a World of Sovereign States*, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996. In its annual survey of democracy and freedom around the world, Freedom House divides countries into three broad categories based on their support for political rights and civil liberties: "free," "partly free," and "not free." Partly free countries have extended significant political power or civil rights or both to their citizens but remain less free than liberal democracies such as the United States. The 1996 survey lists Sri Lanka, Colombia, El Salvador, and Guatemala, for example, as "partly free" democracies.

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There are also hard-core holdouts. Cuba is the Western hemisphere's lone authoritarian regime, and North Korea stands in stark contrast to the thriving democracy to its south. In Burma, a junta of military strongmen suppresses the democracy movement; Aung San Suu Kyi, whose party won a resounding electoral victory in 1990, remains under house arrest.

Then there is China, by virtue of its size the most notable exception to the worldwide trend toward democracy. Chinese leaders maintain that economic development must precede democratization, and they cite the recent history of South Korea, Taiwan, and other "Asian tigers" to support their case for authoritarian rule in China. In fact, the experience of those nations conveys a more complicated lesson: promoting economic growth while monopolizing political power is an almost impossible balancing act over the long term, especially in a world increasingly linked by communications and trade. As people's incomes rise and their horizons broaden, they are more likely to demand the right to participate in government and to enjoy full protection under the rule of law. The pro-democracy demonstrations that culminated in the bloody crackdown by the military in Tiananmen Square in 1989 suggested that China's urban dwellers were impatient with their leaders' timetable for extending political freedoms.

The third wave of democratization has created an undertow.

U.S. policy toward the People's Republic is predicated on the conviction that continued economic and cultural engagement is the best way to induce democratization. That approach does not mean giving the Chinese authorities a pass on human rights, but it does mean recognizing how far China has come in the relatively recent past, and taking the long view on the future. The powers that be remain fearful about loosening political controls, but ordinary Chinese are much freer today than when China began opening to the outside world in the 1970s. It is by no means certain that the liberalizing trend will culminate in full democracy, but the prospects would be worse without active American engagement.

Precisely because the future of democracy is not assured in much of the world and because its survival is in the American interest, the

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United States, in collaboration with its democratic allies, must work hard helping nascent democracies through their phase of greatest fragility. In many of those countries, U.S. support is indispensable to the continuation of democratization.

Through a combination of government programs and cooperation with American and foreign nongovernmental organizations, the Clinton administration has provided technical assistance on the conduct of elections and institution-building. It has worked especially closely with the Asia Foundation, which has been promoting democracy since 1956, and with the National Endowment for Democracy, which has been active around the world since 1984. American assistance has been critical to democratic transitions in countries from South Africa to Nicaragua. The allocation of relatively modest amounts of money has often made an important, even decisive, difference.

GIVING PEOPLE A CHANCE

BUT SOMETIMES more is required. When the Clinton administration came into office in January 1993, Haiti was an acute challenge. That country, the poorest in the hemisphere and one of the poorest in the world, had held the freest and fairest election in its history in December 1990. Sixty-three percent of eligible voters had gone to the polls, giving Jean-Bertrand Aristide 67 percent of the vote in the presidential race, only to see him overthrown in a military coup nine months later.

Under the ensuing dictatorship, economic collapse and brutal repression impelled tens of thousands of refugees to take to the sea in rickety boats, fleeing toward the United States. President Clinton's desire to defend democracy and his obligation to protect American borders combined to justify the use of military force. In July 1994 the United States prevailed on the U.N. Security Council to authorize "all necessary means" to remove the coup leaders and restore Aristide to the presidency. It was a landmark: for the first time the United Nations had called for international action to restore a democratically elected leader.

Skeptics predicted that Aristide, once returned to power, would set himself up as president-for-life. Instead, he stuck to a constitutionally mandated schedule for elections, and this February he turned over the presidency to René Preval. It was the first time in Haitian history that

Democracy and the National Interest

one democratically elected leader peacefully succeeded another. In spite of continued poverty and recurrences of political violence, the Haitian government is moving ahead with efforts to reform its economy, address its people's needs, and strengthen—or in some cases build virtually from scratch—the institutions of a civil society.

Russia has been another major test. As recently as the beginning of this year, the prospects could hardly have been bleaker. The Communists had just won big in the parliamentary elections of December 1995. President Boris Yeltsin's approval rating was in the single digits, and polls showed him trailing at least four of his likely challengers. In the months that followed, the conventional wisdom in the West moved through a progression of gloomy predictions: first, that Yeltsin would lose the election; next that he would cancel it; then that he would steal it; then that he would not survive it; then that no matter who won, Russia would return to the territorial offensive.

The realists were out in force. Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger worried, "As in 1930s Germany, it is quite possible that an elected Russian leader might pursue a most unsettling foreign policy," and suggested that "what passes for Russian democracy too often encourages an expansionist foreign policy." He and others argued that the Clinton administration's focus on building democracy in Russia was misguided, and that the United States should confine itself to concern about Russia's conduct abroad.⁹

Throughout this long period of uncertainty, the U.S. government was prepared for any outcome. We recognized that, particularly in a country emerging from tyranny, civil war, or economic depression, elections can produce a winner who then suspends democracy and exploits newly acquired power to suppress his opponents. We were well aware that Hitler established Nazi rule in the aftermath of an election. That is why the United States always included in its endorsement of the election in Russia—as it does for elections everywhere—

The U.S. had no crystal ball, but it believed in elections for Russia.

⁹Henry Kissinger, "Moscow and Beijing: A Declaration of Independence," *The Washington Post*, May 14, 1996, p. A15.

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the qualification that the process must be sustained to serve the citizenry's needs and to merit American support.

With that caveat, we stuck by the conviction that Russians should be given their first chance in the thousand-year history of their state to choose their leader. How the Russian people answered the questions facing them was up to them and no one else. The United States did not have a vote in the Russian election, nor a crystal ball. But the United States did have an interest in the policies that the victor would pursue. It had mattered deeply to the United States that Russia, for most of the century, was a communist dictatorship that repressed its own citizens and many of its neighbors and tried to intimidate American allies. By the same token, it will matter deeply to the United States what course Russia's leaders take in the 21st century.

That course is still uncertain, but the Russian election was nonetheless a provisional vindication of both Russian democratization and American support for the process. On July 3 more than 72 million citizens, over 67 percent of eligible voters, turned out at 96,000 polling places across 11 time zones. Those figures were nearly as significant as the 14-point margin of Yeltsin's victory.¹⁰

The election provided some reassurance about the direction of Russian foreign policy. In March, with ominous parliamentary fanfare, Communists had pressed for the reconstitution of the Soviet Union. This display of the Communists' true colors backfired with Russian voters, who cared more about pocketbook issues, and it contributed to Yeltsin's extraordinary comeback. The jury is still out on what sort of state Russia will be in the next century. But in rejecting the Communists' irredentist program, the Russian people offered at least partial, preliminary refutation of Dr. Kissinger's apprehension that Russian democracy would necessarily abet Russian expansionism.¹¹

A more recent test of democracy was the round of voting in Bosnia on September 14. Many commentators opposed holding these elections on schedule because of widespread limits in the country on freedom of

¹⁰Turnout was particularly impressive given that 70 percent of Russian voters had already gone to the polls in the first round of the election two and a half weeks earlier, on June 16.

¹¹For a forceful rebuttal of the idea that Russia is inherently, incurably expansionist and that Russian democracy will fuel that tendency, see Stephen Sestanovich, "Geotherapy: Russia's Neuroses, and Ours," *The National Interest*, Fall 1996.

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movement, of the media, and of expression. The Clinton administration, however, believed it was essential to proceed. Postponement would have further impeded the establishment of the central government and the institutions envisioned under the Dayton peace accords—a collective presidency, a national assembly, a national constitution, and judicial authorities—that were to be the principal venues for gradual reconciliation and cooperation among Bosnia's ethnic communities. Delay would also have encouraged the political parties that represent those communities to believe they could ignore other important deadlines for progress toward democratic rule.¹²

When they were finally able to vote, under the watchful eyes of 1,200 international election supervisors and other observers, a sizable majority of eligible Bosnians went to the polls. If there is one rule of democratization it is that, given a chance, and particularly if given a new chance, people like to vote; they take seriously the opportunity to have a say in their country's governance. This was the lesson of Haiti in 1990 and 1995, Cambodia in 1993, and Russia in July, and Bosnia emphasized it again.

These four cases also illustrate a more somber point: elections are necessary but by themselves insufficient to ensure that democracy becomes a permanent condition of national life. If elections become the vehicle for politicians who pander to separatist or ultranationalist sentiment, they can expose or, worse, aggravate the divisions in society. But even in regions where ethnic-based parties win, such as the Balkans, the democratic process is still better than any alternative: if leaders with popular support are not given opportunities at the ballot box, they may well resort, once again, to bullets. As H. L. Mencken put it, in one of his less dyspeptic comments on the subject, "The cure for the evils of democracy is more democracy."¹³

¹²The International Crisis Group, which monitored the lead-up to the elections, argued vigorously for postponement, as did many observers in the press. See, for example, "Mr. Clinton's Dayton Deal," *The Wall Street Journal*, August 28, 1996, p. A12. In August, Robert Frowick, chairman of the Provisional Election Commission and chief representative of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, postponed Bosnian municipal elections because of flagrant Serb attempts to manipulate registration and rig the outcome. Ambassador Frowick's swift and decisive action sent a strong signal of international resolve and helped keep on track the more important elections at the national, "entity," and cantonal levels.

¹³Reinhold Niebuhr made the same point in *Children of Light and Children of Darkness*: "Man's capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man's inclination to injustice makes democracy necessary."

Strobe Talbott

A WORK IN PROGRESS

MORE DEMOCRACY means, first, letting the people vote fairly and frequently. But it goes beyond that. Elections are an important part of the treatment for what ails a country, but they are neither an overnight nor a guaranteed cure. No society can easily or quickly transform the way it governs itself. Tearing down a wall, like the one that divided Berlin, or a statue, like the monument to Felix Dzerzhinsky in central Moscow, is much easier than building institutions like a nonpolitical police force and an independent judiciary. Structural reforms, if they are to take hold, must be matched by a corresponding change in public attitudes, or what is sometimes called political culture.

In his 1991 book *Pericles of Athens and the Birth of Democracy*, Donald Kagan, a professor of classics at Yale, propounds a principle that is as valid today as it was 2,500 years ago. Democratic governance, he writes, relies on three conditions: "The first is to have a set of good institutions; the second is to have a body of citizens who possess a good understanding of the principles of democracy, or who have developed a character consistent with the democratic way of life; and the third is to have a high quality of leadership, at least at critical moments." All this takes time—not just years but decades, the passing of a generation or more.

As Sergei Kovalyov, the human rights activist and Yeltsin adviser-turned-critic, put it after the Russian election, "The quality of democracy depends heavily on the quality of the democrats. We have to wait for a critical mass to accumulate—a critical mass of people with democratic principles . . . Without this, everything will be like now, always in fits and starts." Looking back on the tumult and exasperations of the past year, he concluded, "Our era of romantic democracy is long over. We have finally fallen to earth."¹⁴

The American response to democrats in Russia and everywhere should be: Welcome to the terra firma of real politics, which for us is terra cognita; as you find your way, we'll be with you, through all the fits and starts, so long as you keep moving in the right direction.

¹⁴Quoted in David Remnick, "Letter from Russia: The War for the Kremlin," *The New Yorker*, July 22, 1996, p. 57.

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America's own experience should make us patient, persistent, and respectful with those who are in the early stages of the transition from colonialism and autocracy. After the United States became a "new independent state" in 1776, it took 11 years to draft a constitution, 89 to abolish slavery, 144 to give women the vote, 188 to extend full constitutional protections to all citizens. And four score and seven years along the way, we were in the midst of a civil war.

As Americans go to the polls on November 5 to choose a president for the fifty-third time and to elect the 105th Congress, we should keep in mind that modern democracy is a work in progress, even in its birthplace—but that the world continues to look to the United States for leadership not just because of our economic and military might, but also because we are at our best when promoting and defending the same political principles abroad that we live by at home. To sustain the support of the American public for international leadership, American foreign policy must continue to be based on the nature of our society and on our character as a people as well as on our interests as a state. Only in an increasingly democratic world will the American people feel themselves truly secure. ②