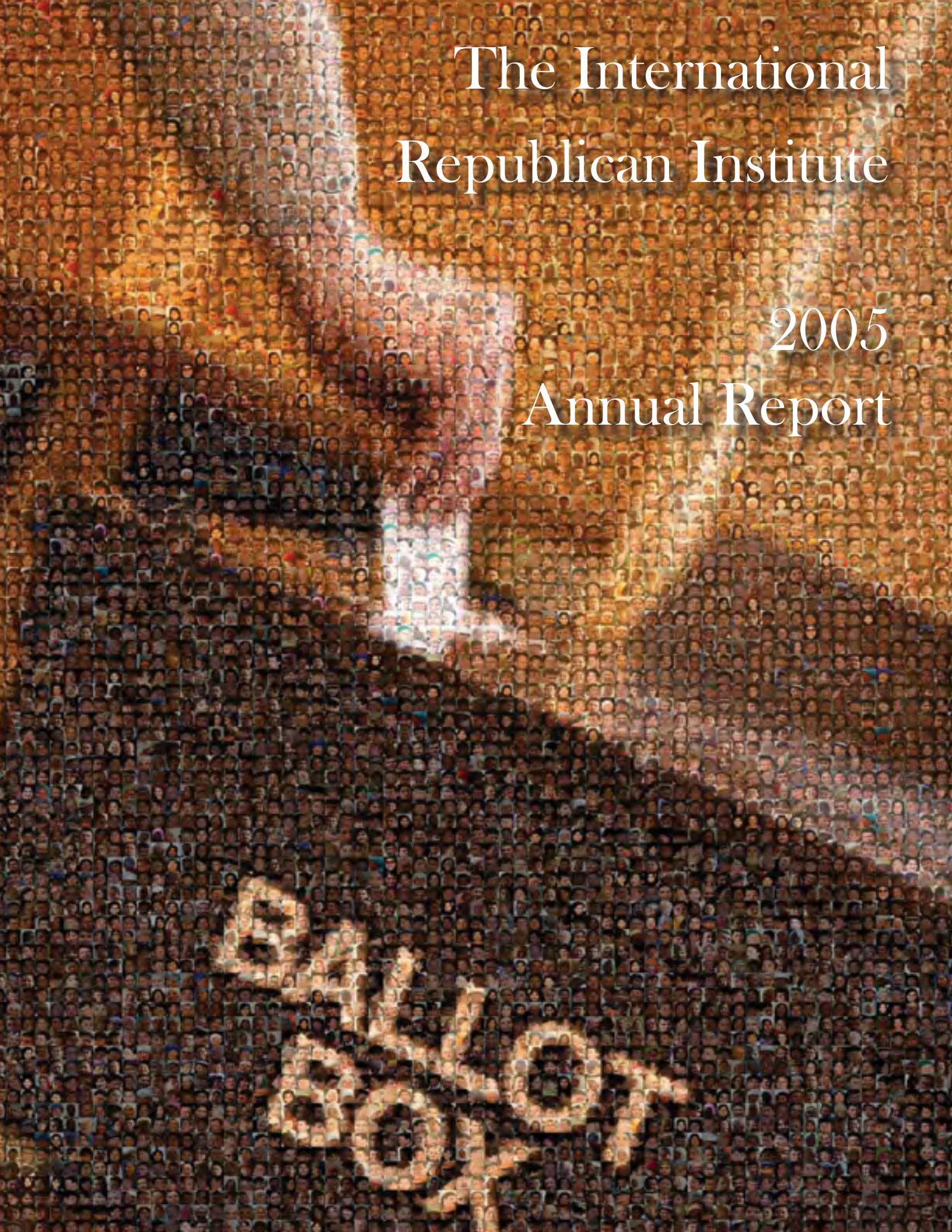




The International Republican Institute

2005
Annual Report

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A Message from

IRI's Chairman

With historic elections in Afghanistan, Liberia and Iraq, 2005 was an important year for the advancement of democracy. What inspired us as we watched these elections – some of us as International Republican Institute (IRI) observers in those countries, others in the comfort of our homes here in the United States – were the brave individuals who were making their new democracy. The disabled who travel for miles to vote. The elderly, many casting the first votes of their lives. Women braving repression to vote – and run as candidates. And the parents who bring their children, knowing they are building a better country for the next generation.

At an abstract level, I am honored to lead IRI because I believe in the universality of democratic values. But my real joy in leading IRI is the opportunity to meet individual heroes who are building democracy in places like Afghanistan and Iraq, or demanding the right to be free in places like Belarus, Burma or Cuba.

In a dictatorship, the will of individuals matters little. In a democracy, it counts for everything. These often unsung individual heroes of democracy are active in every country, fighting against government repression and building free societies. It is to them that we dedicate this Annual Report. Their heroism and idealism are the reasons IRI exists.

A handwritten signature of John McCain in white ink.

Senator John McCain
IRI Chairman

A Message from IRI's President



Over the past few years the world has watched as people in Afghanistan, Georgia, Iraq, the Kyrgyz Republic, Lebanon, Liberia and Ukraine voted for freedom and democracy. The International Republican Institute (IRI) has assisted the makers of these events, activists and ordinary citizens who work to build free societies. Their successes have brought new opportunities to IRI and its dedicated staff. The reactions by some to these events have also brought new challenges to IRI.

Over the last few years, changes in American policy and both sudden and gradual political change in the Middle East itself have led to new IRI programs to advance freedom. At the same time, many of the region's autocratic rulers have begun to stifle even the limited democratic freedoms that have recently grown. This, in turn, has strengthened the forces of violence in the region. In former Soviet Republics where freedom is growing, IRI is helping new democratic governments meet people's rising political and economic expectations. Again, the rulers of other former Soviet Republics see their neighbors' freedom as a threat, and have intensified repression at home. In all of these cases IRI will continue its longstanding commitment to democrats, assisting them as they attempt to increase the space for liberty to grow. We will, however, have to find new ways to respond to growing challenges in the Middle East, the former Soviet Union and elsewhere.

Our belief that democracy is not a system limited to the western world has been borne out over the past 30 years in places as diverse as Indonesia, South Africa and Argentina. Many of the scores of successful new democracies are now lending their experiences to others, a practice IRI is encouraging. Partnering with the European People's Party (EPP), IRI is fostering a greater understanding of U.S. foreign policy amongst traditional and new partners in Europe. Through our work with the EPP, IRI has also been able to tap into a network of trainers and experts who have recently made the transition from authoritarian rule to democracy. Their experiences have already been invaluable to other nations seeking a better future.

Under the leadership of Australian Prime Minister John Howard, the International Democrat Union (IDU), representing more than three dozen countries from South Korea to Georgia to Tanzania, is also becoming a stronger voice for democratic change. Prime Minister Howard himself is initiating democracy building institutes in Australia, an endeavor supported by IRI. In addition to work with the EPP and the IDU, IRI was also active in United Nations efforts to establish a declaration of principles and code of conduct for international election observers. These partnerships have strengthened the network of organizations committed to democracy building, broadening support to democratic

reformers around the globe and making clear that, increasingly, democracy is regarded as a worldwide norm.

In 2005 IRI has also expanded our longstanding effort to involve more women in democratic processes. Representing at least half the vote in a country, usually with a different perspective, women can play a vital role in a country's peaceful transition to what President George W. Bush wisely terms "effective democracy." IRI, through our new Women's Democracy Network, intends to strengthen the role that women play in advancing freedom worldwide.

IRI is also meeting new challenges with new means. As the internet has become an increasingly available medium, IRI has looked for ways to use technology to advance democracy. Through the use of blogs, internet chat rooms and simple e-mail, for example, IRI is training activists and reformers around the globe on the use of technology so that they can learn and gain encouragement from each other.

As democracy takes root in more countries, IRI and its partners will face new challenges, but as it has for more than 20 years, IRI will overcome those challenges. As Senator McCain has said, "We owe the heroes and heroines who are building democracies no less."


Lorne Craner, IRI President

The Faces of Democracy



Democracies are about more than elections and representative governments. They are, at their core, about ordinary people committed to improving life in their countries. Without ordinary people participating in all parts of political and civic life, democracy will not succeed.

Every day millions of people struggle to make a positive difference. Some even risk their lives to demand change. Their reward is knowing that future generations will be free. They will be remembered by their countrymen as the fathers and mothers of democracy.

For more than 20 years, IRI staff have been privileged to work with them in their efforts to build a more hopeful future. IRI is honored to introduce you to four of the many heroes we know. They are the Faces of Democracy.

The Faces of Democracy:

Anatoly Lebedko and Aleksander Milinkevich

Belarus quickly regressed from being a hopeful, newly independent state in 1991 to the police state it is today. It is in the midst of this repression that Aleksander Milinkevich and Anatoly Lebedko have emerged as leaders dedicated to fighting for freedom and democratic change in Belarus. Today they lead the Unified Democratic Forces (UDF), a coalition of pro-democratic activists united in their desire for political and economic freedom for all Belarusians.

Milinkevich began his professional life far from politics; he worked as a physics teacher and later as an assistant professor at Hrodna State University. During the chaos of the early 1990s, he became engaged in the fight for his country's political future. He served as Deputy Mayor of his hometown of Hrodna and later became the International Republican Institute (IRI)-trained campaign manager for Sianion Domash's 2001 presidential bid. Only later would this physics professor-

turned-politician come to embody the Belarusian democratic movement.

In October 2005, more than 800 UDF delegates from 10 political parties and more than 200 nongovernmental organizations gathered to democratically choose Milinkevich to be their candidate during the 2006 presidential election. "Undoubtedly IRI helped Belarusian democratic forces to unite. The Congress of democratic forces which played a major role in the consolidation of the democratic movement in Belarus would never have been possible without IRI's advice and assistance," said Milinkevich. "Thanks to IRI, the Congress received attention both at home and abroad."

One of Milinkevich's challengers during the Congress was Anatoly Lebedko. As the former President of the Belarus Association of Young Politicians and current Chairman of the United Civil Party, Lebedko has faced constant regime harassment. Following a protest

of the rigged 2004 parliamentary elections, he was nearly beaten to death by the Belarusian security services. Since that day, he has been jailed numerous times and was identified as a prisoner of conscience by Amnesty International.

During the voting at the Congress, Lebedko finished behind Milinkevich by a mere eight votes. Instead of abandoning the process to search for personal political power, he embraced Milinkevich and became the Head of the National Committee that was tasked with drafting the coalition's strategy and programs. "IRI is the main investor in Belarusian democracy today. At present, investment in this sphere is most important and needed in Belarus," said Lebedko.

Although they were not victorious in the March 2006 elections, the UDF has offered hope to millions. The tireless efforts of these brave men ensure that Belarus will one day be known as a vibrant European democracy and not as Europe's last dictatorship.

“Both the consolidation of democratic forces and promotion of the Belarusian issue abroad are two major accomplishments of IRI.”

Aleksander Milinkevich



Belarusians turn out to peacefully protest the fraudulent March 2006 election.

AP/Wide World Photo



The Faces of Democracy:

Isti'anah

“Not only did IRI address the issues most relevant to me, but it offered solutions on how to overcome them. For the first time I was truly motivated to become a member of parliament. I gained confidence, and I began taking the initiative to prove that women can take on more important roles.”

Isti'anah

When Isti'anah attended an International Republican Institute (IRI) training for the first time in 2001, she didn't expect to run for the provincial parliament of Yogyakarta, Indonesia; nor could she have imagined receiving the highest percentage of votes from her district, or being elected to serve as vice-chairman of the provincial parliament.

A mother of two, Isti'anah was the Dean of the Faculty of Law of Muhammadiyah University. Despite her position as head of the Women's Empowerment Unit for the National Mandate Party (PAN), Isti'anah was pessimistic about the future of women's opportunities in politics. "The organization was not active in conducting programs for its members because we did not feel like we had enough expertise to share," said Isti'anah.

Isti'anah heard about IRI from a friend and attended IRI's

women's political training with reluctance. She thought, "What could an American organization possibly know of the difficulties facing women in politics in Indonesia?"

As she attended IRI's training, her doubts turned into a renewed hope and confidence in her role as a woman. "Not only did IRI address the issues most relevant to me, but it offered solutions on how to overcome them. For the first time I was truly motivated to become a member of parliament. I gained confidence, and I began taking the initiative to prove that women can take on more important roles," said Isti'anah.

After her first training, Isti'anah went to every training offered by IRI and encouraged her colleagues to do the same. "I even badgered IRI until it conducted single-party training for PAN women members," said Isti'anah. "These trainings gave us expertise, but it also gave us respect. I know my party recognized the changes in me

and my colleagues: we now have more woman parliamentarians than any other party in Yogyakarta."

Since then, IRI has continued to provide training for women in Indonesia. Now that Isti'anah serves as a legislator, IRI provides training on how to pass legislation, develop budgets, and communicate with constituents. "On my first day as a legislator, I suddenly realized how unprepared I was. Thanks once again to IRI, I learned very quickly everything from what my role is to how to write a performance-based budget. Importantly, I learned how to represent my constituency as its elected leader," said Isti'anah.

"I know that without IRI's assistance I would never have become a candidate acceptable to either myself or my party. As I look ahead to the role of women in my party and the next set of elections that I face, I know I can count on IRI; and I know that I will not hesitate to seek IRI's assistance."



Isti'anah answers questions at a press conference releasing the parliament's new website developed with IRI's assistance.



Sayeema campaigns for parliament in Nangarhar.

Sayeema Khogianai was born in eastern Afghanistan, not far from the Khyber Pass and within view of the Tora Bora mountains. At the time, Afghanistan enjoyed stability and relative prosperity. When she was a teenager, Sayeema's family sent her to study in the city of Kabul, but her university studies were cut short when the fortunes of her country reversed as civil war overtook the country in 1991. Fleeing the carnage in the capital, Sayeema returned to her home in the east where she became a teacher in a girl's school. When the Taliban came, education for women was outlawed and the girl's school was closed. Despite the danger, Sayeema continued her work -- teaching girls to read in the secrecy of her home.

After the Taliban fell, Sayeema thrust herself back into public life to help reconstruct her war torn country. She attended the Emergency Loya Jirga in

2002, became a member of the Independent Commission on Human Rights, and reported for Voice of America. When it was announced that women would be included in her country's new parliament, Sayeema decided to seize the opportunity and run for office.

As an independent candidate, Sayeema lacked the support of established party structures, and looked to the International Republican Institute (IRI) in early 2005 for help. Sayeema, and other independent candidates, received training in message development and grassroots campaigning. She credits IRI for her success and the success of many democratic candidates. "I am very thankful for the assistance of IRI. They have assisted us through numerous trainings, and helped us greatly build our own capacities."

In September 2005, Sayeema was elected to Afghanistan's first democratically-elected parliament

in three decades. When she took office in December 2005, Sayeema continued to work with IRI. She helped establish a bloc of pro-democracy independent members of parliament to promote cooperation. She was elected Chairwoman of the Women's Committee and is using her position to strive for women's rights. "We will struggle," she insists brazenly to the faces of religious radicals, "until we have become equal."

Despite her hard life and the struggles ahead, Sayeema is proud of her country and its achievements, and looks forward to expanded freedom and democracy in Afghanistan. "I am strongly optimistic for the future of Afghanistan and the parliament," she says. "For the first time Communists, Mujahideen leaders, and warlords are all talking to each other instead of fighting each other."



“I am very thankful for the assistance of IRI. They have assisted us through numerous trainings, and helped us greatly build our own capacities.”

Sayeema Khogianai

Where IRI Works



IRI Initiatives

European Partnership Initiative

In 2005, the International Republican Institute (IRI) began the European Partnership Initiative, which seeks to expand IRI's ties with colleagues in the governmental, party, and nongovernmental institutions of the European Union and its member states. This project builds on years of IRI cooperation with organizations such as the British Conservatives, the Austrian People's Party, the Spanish Partido Popular and the German Konrad Adenauer Stiftung which work in partnership with IRI on



Senator John McCain (left) and Wilfried Martens, President of the European People's Party, visit during an IRI event in Brussels.

democracy building. IRI is helping to foster better ties between American conservatives and Europe's center-right, by establishing a partnership with the European People's Party. As part of the initiative, IRI launched a high-profile speakers' series in Brussels, bringing together officials like

Sen. John McCain and the U.S. Ambassador to the European Union, C. Boyden Gray, to meet with their European counterparts. Through these efforts, IRI has found important opportunities for policy and programming discussions in Europe and a great willingness to cooperate on a range of activities.

Women's Democracy Network

IRI established the Women's Democracy Network (WDN) to empower women activists

and leaders from around the world by providing them with opportunities to share experiences and create regional

networks. Through the establishment of such networks, aspiring and accomplished women leaders are engaging in the exchange of ideas and training that will better prepare them for the challenges of leadership in their fields. The WDN is involved in Africa, Asia, Europe, Eurasia, Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and North America, with networking forums and activities planned in every region of the world.



Participants of IRI's Women's Democracy Network inaugural conference.



With the October 2005 election of the continent's first female elected president in Liberia, African nations saw an increasing number of women participating in the political process. The International Republican Institute (IRI) supported these democratic leaders and continued to strengthen its political party and civil society partners in East, Southern and West Africa.

Angola

In 2005, IRI provided training for political parties in Angola to establish a strong and stable political party system, and reinforce the national reconciliation process. In preparation for elections expected in early 2007, IRI trained political parties on voter registration, electoral law, message development, grassroots organization and strategic planning.

Côte d'Ivoire

Following the 2003 ceasefire between government and rebel forces, IRI began supporting the Civil Society Collective for Returning Peace to Côte d'Ivoire in its efforts to promote national reconciliation. With IRI support, the Collective trained Peace Committees, with religious, ethnic and political representation, throughout the country. Each Peace Committee served as a means of mitigating conflict and violence and encouraged citizens to find positive ways to settle disputes.

Kenya

Looking to the November 2005 constitutional referendum, IRI worked with political parties to teach them how to develop positions and communicate them to voters. IRI also launched a public opinion polling program to improve the conduct of polls and encourage political leaders to use them to better understand citizens' views. An IRI exit poll predicted within three

percentage points that Kenyans would reject the proposed constitution. IRI continued its work with the Kenyan Parliament, assisting the political parties in building alliances for common legislative agendas.

Liberia

As Liberia prepared to elect its first president following decades of unrest and violence, IRI worked with political parties to promote dialogue and build political capacity. In addition, IRI sponsored the first-ever formal presidential candidate debates, which offered Liberians an opportunity to hear directly from the candidates. IRI fielded two international election observation missions for first round voting and the run-off. Following the election, IRI continued its work to strengthen political parties through trainings, the creation of networks and advocacy workshops.

Mali

IRI began a training program to support elected officials in rural Mali in their efforts to strengthen the country's decade-long decentralization process. Activities focused on encouraging women's participation in the political process, facilitating cooperation among political parties and promoting good governance among newly elected officials.

Muslim Women's Advocacy Program

IRI's Muslim Women's Advocacy Program seeks to increase political participation of Muslim women in African countries. In 2005, IRI worked with women's groups from Liberia, Nigeria, Sudan and Somaliland to help them develop the skills to advocate for policies important to women. IRI also conducted women's workshops to encourage participation in politics and civil society, assisted with the publishing of a booklet focusing on women political leaders, and worked in target communities to foster women's empowerment.

Nigeria

IRI's Nigeria program focused on strengthening and preparing political parties for the 2007 elections and fostering partnerships between the parties and civil society groups. IRI conducted a Women's Forum in Nigeria, which brought together women from various backgrounds to identify strategies to unify, educate and encourage women to participate in the political and electoral process. The forum also officially launched a Nigerian Women's Coalition to help increase women's political participation and electoral representation.

Somaliland

To help Somalilanders prepare for their first-ever national legislative elections in September 2005, IRI trained political party officials and parliamentary candidates on campaign planning, communication strategies, get-out-the-vote techniques and post-

election assessments. To help ensure the elections reflected the will of the people, IRI sent a team, led by former U.S. Ambassador to Djibouti Lange Schermerhorn, to observe this historic poll.

Sudan

The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005 began a hopeful year for Sudan. As the transitional government took shape, IRI continued to work with those Southern Sudanese who had been excluded from the political system. To assist this work, IRI opened a permanent office in southern Sudan's capital city, Juba. IRI also worked with the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly and the democratic political parties in the country, including the National Democratic Alliance. IRI trained parties on party organization, grassroots mobilization, coalition building, transparent political financing and communications strategies.

South Africa

IRI continued to work with the South African Institute of Race Relations (SAIRR) to publicly promote the development of a free and transparent society emphasizing democratic governance, individual liberty, economic openness and the creation of opportunities for the poor. SAIRR advocated for these objectives through its

monthly publication, *Fast Facts*, which is designed to disseminate information about the changing political and economic atmosphere in South Africa.

Uganda

A referendum vote in July 2005 marked the end of the no-party system in Uganda. This left the country's nascent political parties less than seven months to prepare for the February 2006 presidential and parliamentary elections, which would be Uganda's first multi-party poll in two decades. Through interactive workshops, radio programs and public dialogues, IRI helped to strengthen the capacity of civil society organizations and political parties to more effectively advocate on issues important to Ugandan citizens.

Zimbabwe

To bolster political parties and civil society organizations, IRI held leadership workshops emphasizing communication, organizational development and strategic planning. Through the workshops, IRI worked to develop leaders committed to good governance and democratic stability within the country. Despite the growing humanitarian crisis and repressive regime, IRI has continued to support democratic activists in their efforts to improve life in Zimbabwe.



Election officials count ballots during Liberia's October 2005 election.

Thousands of Bangladeshi youth, including those shown below, have participated in Youth For Democracy Fairs.



In Asian nations governed by authoritarian governments, the International Republican Institute (IRI) aided those determined to bring political reform and pluralism to their societies. In other countries that have begun their transitions to democracy, IRI worked to train political parties and government officials in good governance techniques; increase the participation of women, youth and minorities in the political process; and enhance the capacity of nongovernmental organizations as they work to develop civil society.

Alliance for Reform and Democracy in Asia (ARDA)

In 2005, IRI supported ARDA, an alliance of Asian democrats organized to build solidarity among pro-democracy activists, monitor political developments, and initiate new ideas to promote democracy and freedom throughout

Asia. ARDA published its first *Asia Democracy Index*, a comprehensive rating of democratic characteristics of Asian governments, developed from surveys of in-country activists. The data collected was used to rank the level of political freedom of countries in Asia, with Japan rated as the most democratic state and Burma as the least.

Bangladesh

IRI continued its program to strengthen the estates of democracy – media, trade unions, nonprofit sector, private industry and political parties – to overcome political malaise. IRI co-hosted with the Solidarity Center the second of two labor union forums that brought members of a garment workers union together with political party representatives, and continued support for the International Business Forum of Bangladesh, which received official governmental registration in September. IRI also continued its series of civic education youth fairs, hosting two fairs attended by thousands of young people. Finally, IRI initiated advocacy and constituency services work with local women government officials.

Burma

IRI's programs supported the work of the National League for Democracy/Liberated Areas and the Political Defiance Committee (PDC). With IRI's help, the PDC continued to support pro-democracy activists in Burma as part of an ongoing nonviolent resistance campaign. IRI also undertook a series of information technology trainings to help improve the communications capabilities of pro-democracy activists in Burma and in the border areas of Thailand. IRI provided training to political leaders on topics such as economic governance and international relations to help them prepare for good governance in a future democratic Burma. Working with youth members of the pro-democracy movement, IRI initiated a training series to improve basic understanding of democratic principles.

Cambodia

IRI's Cambodia program comprised four major themes: good governance, free expression, human rights and next-generation leadership. To promote

good governance, IRI supported the ground-breaking decentralization of the Sam Rainsy Party (SRP) as thousands of SRP village-affiliates registered their members and held party-leadership elections. IRI also continued to help multi-partisan local government bodies in 80 regions better serve their constituents. To support free expression, IRI continued its sole sponsorship of the *Voice of Democracy* radio network, while also helping a new independent station emerge as a leading provider of unbiased news and civic radio programming. Through the Cambodian Center for Human Rights, IRI supported town hall meetings and human rights investigations, while another IRI partner – the Youth Council of Cambodia – continued to plant the seeds for next-generation leadership.

China

IRI partners made strides to promote improved governance and reform at the village and township levels, and increase rural women's political participation. IRI's outreach to help improve local government included policy conferences and a series of interactive workshops for women village leaders. Election reform work continued, and IRI expanded its work with community-based nongovernmental organizations to fortify and expand civil society networks. As part of its civil society program, IRI distributed legal rights education booklets to Tibetan communities to enhance access to legal, environmental and educational channels.

East Timor

In preparation for the 2007 parliamentary elections, IRI helped form a working group, made up of political party members, civil society activists and local academics, to compare different electoral systems and explore ways to ensure the independence of an election administration body and women's participation in the electoral process. IRI also worked closely with President Xanana Gusmão to conduct a national dialogue program on participatory democracy. The program engaged leading politicians in dialogues with the public in a series of forums, town hall meetings and street theater held in each of the country's districts.

Indonesia

Following the devastating tsunami in December 2004, IRI responded quickly to help elected officials in the province of Aceh understand the role of political parties and elected officials in a reconstruction environment. IRI also worked closely with provincial parliaments on governance programs to strengthen relationships between constituents and elected officials. In the Special Region of Yogyakarta, IRI helped the provincial parliament launch a website which includes information about the parliament's members and activities, and has a message board to help legislators better communicate with their constituents.

Malaysia

IRI continued its domestic election monitoring work in Malaysia, supporting efforts to verify the accuracy and validity of electoral rolls used during the 2004 parliamentary elections. IRI also supported a long-term observation of a parliamentary by-election, a project that demonstrated the increased ability and legitimacy of domestic election monitoring efforts. In addition, IRI continued to strengthen and promote independent, nonpartisan public opinion research to help political parties develop messages and effectively reach out to citizens.

Mongolia

Leading up to the April 2005 presidential election, IRI conducted pre-election polls and party poll watcher trainings, and coordinated domestic monitors in a nationwide election observation. IRI also hosted a study tour for members of parliament that allowed them to see how their U.S. counterparts promote transparency and good governance. The Women's Forum, supported by IRI, created the Partnership of Women in Politics – a multi-partisan organization dedicated to increasing women's political impact and viability in civil society and government. Throughout the year, IRI worked with the parliament to help efforts to develop legislation that would strengthen committee structures, implement open committee hearings and develop ethics guidelines for members of parliament and other government officials.



Leaders of the Mongolian Women's Partnership in Politics and Governance meet with First Lady Laura Bush.



Kyrgyzstanis peacefully protest the fraudulent March 2005 elections, eventually leading to the ouster of President Askar Akaev.

Eurasia

Democracy in Eurasia spans a wider spectrum than it has, perhaps, in the entire post-Soviet history. While several countries are transitioning toward democracy following inspiring revolutions, other countries' autocratic leaders are increasingly clamping down on civil liberties and activities promoting free society. In 2005, the International Republican Institute (IRI) strove to assist reforming countries solidify their democracies, while continuing to encourage democracy activists in the region's oppressive societies to create more democratic space.

Armenia

Gearing up for coming elections, IRI launched an ongoing polling project

which includes a series of nationwide public opinion polls and focus groups, and utilizes the polling data to assist democratic political parties as they reach out to voters. IRI also provided training to local Armenian polling firms to enable them to conduct polling for political parties in the future.

Azerbaijan

In the run-up to the November 2005 parliamentary elections, IRI trained more than 1,000 political party and independent candidate campaign staff to enable them to run viable election campaigns. Prior to the election, IRI conducted election observation trainings for hundreds of campaign representatives to help ensure transparency on Election

Day. IRI also hosted a National Youth Conference – a culmination of a successful year of IRI-sponsored regional youth conferences and community activities involving regions throughout Azerbaijan.

Belarus

In preparation for the 2006 presidential election, IRI trained Belarus' Unified Democratic Forces (UDF) on message development and political campaign tactics, strategy and grassroots organization development. The UDF, a pro-democratic coalition of political parties and nongovernmental groups, united behind a single candidate to oppose President Alexander Lukashenko in the March 2006



presidential election. In addition, IRI provided political training for women and youth. Through these activities, IRI helped democratic leaders and activists prepare for public policy roles in a future democratic Belarus.

Georgia

To help Georgians strengthen their democratic achievements, IRI continued to train political parties through one-on-one consultations and issue-specific workshops to help institutionally strengthen their parties and political system. IRI also continued to conduct quarterly nationwide opinion polls, and provided survey data to the government of Georgia and political parties to assist them in their message development.

Kazakhstan

IRI continued to help strengthen local party structures through multi-party training seminars, individual party consultations and roundtable discussions. The training was supplemented by the development and production of a constituent relations training video for parties and elected officials. IRI also conducted a nationwide public opinion poll in advance of early presidential elections and Kazakhstan's first nationwide exit poll for the December 2005 presidential election.

Kyrgyz Republic

In early 2005, IRI conducted campaign and candidate trainings, open to all officially registered candidates for the March parliamentary elections. In the aftermath of the March events that unseated former President Askar Akaev, IRI offered message development training based on poll findings and door-to-door training for candidates and their staffs in advance of the early presidential election. IRI fielded an international delegation to monitor the presidential election and help ensure transparency at the polls. IRI also provided training for domestic election observers ahead of both 2005 elections. Following the presidential election, IRI assisted political parties in engaging in the constitutional reform process through the establishment of an electoral reform working group, which developed materials on the forms of government that Kyrgyzstanis will consider as part of the constitutional reform process.

Moldova

To support Moldova in its quest to integrate into European institutions, IRI worked with the entire spectrum of political parties to assist them in developing platforms and messages to better address citizens' local concerns. IRI also provided political and governance training for women, which has resulted in increased participation in Moldova's political process. In partnership with the Lithuanian parliament, IRI also worked

to assist Moldova in upgrading its parliamentary process to carry out the people's business in a more open and transparent manner.

Russia

In an increasingly authoritarian Russia, IRI continued to support pro-democracy networks at the local, regional and national levels. Over the last year, IRI helped nongovernmental organizations, political parties, community leaders and independent activists learn the skills and build the capacity necessary to advocate for democratic development in their country. IRI also assisted political parties with training youth leaders to develop political youth organizations and promote youth involvement in politics.

Ukraine

While continuing to provide training for political parties and politically active women and youth, IRI initiated a governance assistance program to help government officials in their efforts to improve communications with voters, develop policies that address issues of concern to Ukrainians, and manage public expectations. Through this effort, IRI trained staff of regional governors throughout Ukraine to help them effectively inform the public about reforms the governors are undertaking.

Uzbekistan

Despite a harsh crackdown by the Uzbek government and the expulsion of numerous international nongovernmental organizations, IRI worked to promote youth participation in Uzbekistan's future political development. As part of its commitment to strengthening democratic culture among citizens and increasing the availability of information on civic rights, IRI conducted a series of roundtables for youth to discuss the principles of democracy and representative government. Through these discussions, IRI has trained hundreds of youth from several parties and movements on representative government, elections and the role of youth in political parties.



Europe

Turkish youth participate in a mock parliamentary session as part of IRI's Capital Internship and Model Parliament program.

The International Republican Institute's (IRI) efforts in Europe promoted the development of mature political parties; encouraged more effective and strategic communications by governments; strengthened political participation by women, youth and minorities; and supported the efforts of civil society organizations. As democracy strengthened in the region, IRI's initiatives highlighted the importance of policy development for political parties, encouraged democracy promotion efforts by the region's new democracies, and helped make governments more accessible to citizens. IRI built on its longstanding ties with parties in the region by launching a new outreach effort to political parties and democracy foundations across Europe.

Albania

IRI completed a two-year program that increased the parliament's transparency and stimulated youth participation in public affairs. IRI's work to help establish parliamentary district offices made parliament more accessible and responsive to the public, and provided new opportunities for outreach to

constituents. A national youth survey contributed to the development of a social and political profile of Albanian youth and encouraged greater participation of young people in civil society and in political debate. Regional workshops and conferences promoted discussion about youth involvement in Albania's civic and political life and helped build awareness of common concerns among young people.

Bosnia and Herzegovina

With the 2006 parliamentary elections approaching, IRI continued to help build faith in the governing institutions, strengthen political parties and energize citizen participation in the electoral process. IRI used public opinion polling to help parties and candidates identify issues of interest to voters, develop issue-based political strategies and move beyond personality-based politics and ethnic appeals. IRI also worked to strengthen the relationship between civil society and political parties through election assistance projects and general advocacy initiatives.

Bulgaria

Prior to the 2005 parliamentary elections, IRI worked with political parties to develop campaign plans and messages to reflect and address the concerns of the voters. IRI provided intensive training for local branches of the main parties to assist them in mobilizing their structures for the campaign and reach out to voters on issues of local concern. To identify these issues and guide parties' campaign strategies, IRI fielded a series of national public opinion polls before the elections. An additional survey, taken 100 days after the formation of the new coalition government tracked the trends of public attitudes after the elections and helped Bulgarian elected officials interpret the voters' mandate.

Croatia

IRI's Croatia program continued its emphasis on political communications, focusing training efforts on helping political parties improve their outreach to media and the voting public. IRI also provided skills training to the parties' youth branches, strengthening the next generation of political leadership. IRI



continued its popular and influential public opinion research, national polls that were recognized by Croatian media and senior party officials as among the most important and independent analyses of Croatian politics. In partnership with the Political Academy of the Austrian People's Party, IRI also trained spokespersons from ministries to build support for controversial reforms by communicating more effectively and strategically.

Europe Regional

IRI's Europe Regional Program provided campaign training for party youth organization leaders from the 15 participating countries, and worked with parties to help them establish internal training institutions. Using experience from the United States and Europe, IRI staff also organized a series of transatlantic seminars to address emerging topics on democracy assistance, including the role of values in politics and the function of ethnic minority parties in the region. IRI continued its Leadership Institute for Central and Eastern Europe (LICEE) training seminars for up-and-coming political leaders and published a widely-

recognized analysis of political party development in the region, entitled *Why We Lost: Exploring the Rise and Fall of Center-Right Parties in Central Europe, 1996-2002*.

Lithuania

Through a small grant from the U.S. Embassy in Vilnius, IRI organized training seminars for Lithuanian parliamentarians, political party officials, journalists and civil society representatives on campaign and party finance issues. Experts from the United States and Europe shared experience on different approaches to campaign finance, debated the merits of public financing, and explored the watchdog role of the media and civil society, providing valuable insights and comparative models as Lithuania examined campaign finance reform.

Macedonia

Following the March 2005 municipal elections, IRI conducted regular public opinion polls to assist governing and opposition parties to develop issue-based campaigns in advance of the 2006 parliamentary elections. IRI provided communications advice and consultations for President Branko Crvenkovski and his cabinet and strengthened a partnership with the Macedonian Women's Lobby by providing media and gender advocacy training for women candidates. IRI organized a series of political development seminars for local party branches, youth auxiliaries and elements of Macedonia's Roma community. Together with the National Democratic Institute and the American Council of Young Political Leaders, IRI organized a Europe and Eurasia Young Leaders Conference, which provided training and networking opportunities for political activists from 15 transitional democracies.

Romania

IRI began a new phase of programming in Romania with the inauguration of a parliamentary assistance program. In addition to its ongoing work with local civil society organizations and political parties, IRI worked directly with legislators, staff and parliamentary institutions to improve

public accountability. IRI conducted an assessment of the legislature, which included research into public attitudes toward their government. To complement the new parliamentary assistance program, IRI also sponsored activities to encourage parliamentary level engagement and improved civic education among youth.

Serbia

Five years after the fall of Slobodan Milosevic, IRI continued to help develop democratic institutions in Serbia. IRI conducted political party training programs and public opinion research to strengthen pro-reform political parties; assisted senior government officials to communicate better and build support for crucial reform projects; trained local governments how to conduct effective outreach with constituents; and worked with nongovernmental organizations to help strengthen civil society. After providing training and polling assistance to Boris Tadic's successful 2004 presidential campaign, IRI worked closely with the new president's team in 2005 to develop and institutionalize the People's Office, a new department that provides constituent services to citizens and serves as the people's advocate on priority reform issues, such as job creation, rule of law reform and Euro-Atlantic integration. IRI provided the People's Office with advanced training on constituent relations, communications and issue advocacy.

Turkey

IRI conducted the second Capital Internship and Model Parliament program, bringing 100 Turkish university-age youth to Ankara for three-week internships in the Turkish Parliament and with political parties, followed by a one-week mock legislature conducted in the parliament chamber. In cooperation with the Ari Movement, a Turkish nongovernmental organization, IRI conducted two Schools of Participatory Democracy, a series of lectures on democratic institutions and civic participation. IRI also conducted several youth campaign schools, offering basic political campaign skills training for the youth branches of Turkey's major political parties.

In a year that saw national elections in 13 Latin American countries and was marked by concerns about the spread of radical populism, the International Republican Institute (IRI) provided training in voter education, civil society development, political party building and public opinion polling. From totalitarian Cuba to the region's modern electoral democracies, IRI actively supported the hemisphere's democratic aspirations.

Bolivia

Ahead of Bolivia's 2005 elections, IRI re-opened its La Paz office to launch a comprehensive voter education program. Using a combination of radio broadcasts, town hall meetings and educational pamphlets, IRI helped first-time voters understand how to participate in legislative and presidential elections. IRI's educational campaign later focused on the constituent assembly, which will rewrite Bolivia's constitution.

Colombia

In preparation for the 2006 legislative and presidential elections, IRI began a program to strengthen political parties and promote civic participation in the political process. IRI worked with the Colombian electoral authorities to encourage voter participation and inform the public about measures to guarantee procedural transparency. In coordination with the Colombian Senate, IRI launched a series of congressional training seminars to equip Colombia's legislators with tools to improve constituent outreach and government accountability. Training seminars featured experts on party organization and political communications from the United States and Latin America.

Cuba

In 1997, the Miami-based Cuban Democratic Directorate (Directorio) began compiling data on Cuba's democratic opposition movement and found evidence of 44 acts of resistance. In 2005, Directorio, with support from IRI, published *Steps to Freedom*, chronicling more than 3,000

Latin America & the Caribbean



Thousands of Nicaraguans turn out to peacefully protest the anti-democratic Pacto in June 2005 in Managua.

acts of resistance. Using a sophisticated network of international contacts, IRI and Directorio have helped create political space for Cuba's nonviolent opposition movement to thrive in one of the world's most repressive societies.

El Salvador

Since emerging from a long civil war in the early 1990s, consecutive governments in El Salvador have implemented a series of structural economic reforms. IRI's polling programs surveyed the public reaction to these reforms and shared the results with policymakers. The poll results showed the importance of emphasizing the link between economic reform and political stability, and of

managing the public's expectations of short-term gains. El Salvador's government now has the communications tools to advance critical reforms which are sometimes difficult to institute.

Guatemala

Experts agree that strong political parties are important components of a functioning democracy. Yet in many countries such as Guatemala, politics is still deeply personalized and subject to corruption. To help build honest and accountable parties that respond better to citizens' needs, IRI launched a Young Political Leader's School in 2005, which offered more than 50 training seminars to youth leaders on ethics, transparency,



communications and governance. Political party staff also received IRI training to help parties form dialogues and partnerships with civil society organizations.

Haiti

In 2005, IRI re-engaged in Haiti in anticipation of the 2006 presidential and parliamentary elections. IRI programming was anchored by efforts to energize civil society, notably women and youth, which led to training for nearly 7,000 women, youth and civil society leaders. In addition, IRI formed the bi-partisan Haiti International Assessment Committee comprising former U.S.

Senator Bob Graham, former U.S. Congressman Ben Gilman, former Canadian Minister of External Affairs Barbara McDougall, and former Assistant Secretary General of the Organization of American States Ambassador Christopher Thomas of Trinidad and Tobago. The committee provided a more sustained perspective and encouragement for Haiti's advances toward democratic governance.

Mexico

Since Vicente Fox's presidential victory in 2000, Mexico has made historic democratic gains. Unfortunately, many Mexicans still view their representatives in congress as fundamentally corrupt and illegitimate. To help Mexican representatives improve their image and connect with their constituents, IRI sent experts from the United States and Latin America to train members of congress in effective constituent outreach methods. In underserved rural communities, politicians and the public learned how to work together to represent their interests in the capital.

Nicaragua

Over the course of 2005, IRI continued to build on its previous work with youth, women, civil society groups, political parties and Nicaraguans of all political stripes to strengthen the country's democratic institutions. In preparation for the November 2006 presidential and legislative elections, IRI has focused on providing technical support for politically-active youth and women, as well as providing a vehicle for peaceful change through support of electoral reform and public dialogue. As a result of these efforts, civil society groups like Movimiento por Nicaragua and Youth for Nicaraguan Democracy (JUDENIC) are promoting civic education initiatives, particularly among youth.

Peru

In many transitioning democracies, the greatest barrier to women's involvement in politics is not any law or edict but a basic lack of practical experience. IRI's Peru program gives women the skills they need to run a professional campaign for local and national

government. Of the 150 women who received training in 2005, more than half became candidates for congress, and many others ran for local or municipal positions. When the final votes for congress came in after recent elections, women's participation had risen by more than 50 percent. Similar trainings for indigenous and Afro-Peruvian activists help minorities find a voice in public life.

Regional Program

IRI's regional program provided party renewal trainings to 18 political parties in Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador and Nicaragua. A regional conference held in Lima, Peru, in February 2005 brought together party leaders from throughout Latin America to develop strategies for successful party modernization. IRI conducted trainings directly with the parties on youth leadership development, party organization, internal democracy and external communications strategies. IRI also conducted additional online courses with the parties via the Bogota-based Thomas Moore School of Government, an internationally recognized school of political management.

Venezuela

Decades of corruption and lack of accountability have left Venezuelans deeply cynical about the political process, contributing to Hugo Chavez's rise to power. Voter turnout for the 2005 parliamentary elections was only 25 percent, as many parties boycotted the elections. Extra-constitutional measures imposed by the autocratic Chavez government have targeted political opposition parties, civil society and the independent media, and have further weakened the prospects of a viable, multi-party democracy. In this context, IRI continued to reach out to all of Venezuela's political parties, training officials in the basics of campaign management, communications strategies and grassroots organization. IRI also worked with local nongovernmental organizations and civil society organizations to increase voter participation and transparency in the electoral process.



A woman casts her ballot in Afghanistan's September 2005 elections.

Middle East & North Africa

Although advocates of democracy in the Middle East and North Africa face entrenched interests that feel threatened by reform, notable progress accompanied the challenges witnessed in 2005. Women now have the right to vote in Kuwait, domestic observers can monitor multiparty elections in Egypt, popular protests in Lebanon led to the end of Syrian occupation, and the first elected parliament in more than three decades took office in Afghanistan. The International Republican Institute (IRI) provided support to these advocates of reform in the fields of elections, civil society and governance programs.

Afghanistan

On September 18, 2005, Afghanistan held its first democratic elections for parliament in 35 years. IRI programming throughout the year was devoted to ensuring the success of the elections and the continued democratic reconstruction of this critical U.S. ally. In addition to ongoing civic education efforts, IRI worked with parliamentary candidates, providing training on effective grassroots

campaigning and coalition-building. The program resulted in a broad coalition of independent candidates, one-third of whom were successful in their bid for elected office. Following the elections, IRI turned its focus to strengthening emerging democratic coalitions within the newly elected parliament.

Egypt

During a pivotal year in Egypt's democratic development, IRI organized international delegations to conduct study assessments for the country's first multi-candidate presidential election in September and parliamentary elections later in 2005. IRI also supported the largest domestic election monitoring effort in Egypt's history for both elections, deploying nearly 6,000 domestic monitors.

Iran

IRI's work supported isolated democratic reformers and strived to expand opportunities for democratic discourse and action. IRI held discussions with reformers working in the United States and overseas on possible avenues of cooperation.

Iraq

Despite the continued threat posed by terrorism, 2005 was a watershed year in Iraq's democratic transformation. The Iraqi people witnessed the realization of their country's liberation with two parliamentary elections and the drafting of a permanent constitution and subsequent referendum. IRI programming supported each of these landmark events with extensive get-out-the-vote campaigns, the filming and airing of candidate debates and issue-based talk shows, and support for advocacy groups pushing for a more forward-looking constitution. In addition to raising awareness and participation in the political process, these activities also helped to strengthen numerous Iraqi organizations such as political parties, women's advocacy organizations and parliamentary committees. Amidst all this political activity, IRI was one of the few organizations gauging the opinion of the Iraqi population. IRI conducted nine public opinion polls during the year on topics ranging from support for democracy to opinions on the government.

Jordan

In 2005, IRI expanded its efforts to overcome political apathy in the country by encouraging citizen participation in the local decision-making process and by developing the political and advocacy skills of emerging community leaders. IRI and two partner organizations conducted public opinion polling at the national and municipal levels to provide decision-makers with an accurate picture of Jordanian public priorities concerning political reform, democratization and the performance of elected officials.

Kuwait

With notable strides toward greater democracy across the Gulf in 2005, Kuwait extended the vote to women for the first time in the country's history. IRI-supported public opinion polling, conducted by Kuwaiti partners, provided valuable insights on public attitudes to these new voters and potential candidates.

Lebanon

The assassination of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and the withdrawal of Syrian troops spurred an outpouring of national unity, yet the country's leaders still face significant challenges to advance democratic reform. Despite the challenges of religious divisions, IRI supported citizen and civil society dialogue to encourage constructive national debate on pressing issues. IRI's use of polling during parliamentary elections provided important insights into the priorities of Lebanese voters. IRI also worked with political party leaders and grassroots activists to help them use the information to develop issue-based platforms that have cross-sectarian appeal.

Morocco

IRI is engaged with the country's main political parties, offering training and technical consultations to party leaders, elected representatives and grassroots activists. In 2005, IRI focused on helping Morocco's political parties build their grassroots support and outreach in preparation for the 2007

parliamentary elections. IRI also conducted groundbreaking public opinion polling to measure the public's perception of political parties and the country's current political dynamics; this research underscores the most pressing voter concerns and reveals significant opportunities for increasingly competitive elections in 2007.

Oman

Since 1999, IRI has provided technical assistance to both houses of the Oman Council. In 2005, while continuing to support committee and research staff, IRI reached a milestone in its program when it trained Majles A'Shura committee chairs and vice chairs on legislative analysis and other topics related to their elected roles. IRI was the first international organization invited to provide training to elected members of the Oman Council. IRI's upcoming programming will initiate greater involvement between elected members, constituents and civil society.

Pakistan

After conducting a political assessment of the country in early 2005 and observing Pakistan's local government elections, IRI opened an office in Islamabad to begin work on a political party support project. IRI trained political parties on policy formulation, the use of public opinion polling, and internal and external communications. In anticipation of parliamentary elections in 2007, IRI began working with the parties on message development, voter identification and constituent outreach.

Qatar

In 2005, IRI supported increased grassroots demand for democratic political reform by building the capacity of civil society and strengthening the nascent nongovernmental sector. IRI conducted extensive training sessions with elected school boards on the fundamentals of board service and function. This training was used by the boards to implement Qatar's first focus groups to gather public perception data about education reform.

Regional Program

Since 2003, IRI has organized regional women's training events as part of Partners in Participation (PiP). The trainings help equip women from the Middle East and North Africa with skills to become elected leaders. In 2005, IRI contributed to a regional PiP training event in Kuwait for Gulf women, and formed the Morocco Women's Coalition to provide women political party members with ongoing assistance and training. In September 2005, IRI hosted a regional public opinion polling conference in Tunisia that brought together activists from Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Kuwait, Morocco, Tunisia, and the West Bank and Gaza. The event included public opinion research experts from the Arab world and the United States who presented political activists with insights on the use and application of public opinion polling, and worked to generate increased appreciation of the value of polling to political parties and civil society.

Syria

In Syria, IRI began several technology-based projects to further the cause of freedom of speech in the country. Working with reformers inside and outside Syria, IRI helped to develop platforms from which democratic activists can discuss their aspirations for their country.

West Bank/Gaza

In 2005, IRI continued to support widely-published public opinion research conducted by the Development Studies Program (DSP) at Birzeit University, which added to the acceptance of survey research in the Arab world. IRI also partnered with MIFTAH (The Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy) to provide support and training for women candidates running in municipal and Palestinian Legislative Council elections.

The 2005 Annual Freedom Dinner

On May 18, 2005, the International Republican Institute (IRI) honored President George W. Bush with the 2005 Freedom Award for his dedication to the advancement of freedom and democracy. U.S. Senator John McCain, Chairman of IRI, presented the award to the President.

In his remarks, President Bush thanked the IRI for its work. "For more than two decades, IRI has been at the forefront of democratic change in more than a hundred countries. You've trained the next generation of leaders, you've strengthened political parties, you've monitored elections, and you're helping to build civil societies. You've made an enormous difference in the lives of millions across the world...the world is safer

and freer and more peaceful because of the International Republican Institute."

IRI also posthumously honored Pope John Paul II. Cardinal Theodore E. McCarrick, then-Archbishop of Washington, D.C., accepted the award on behalf of the late Pope. "...the ideals of the late Holy Father are certainly very much the ideals of IRI and I think he would be so pleased to know of your work, to know of what you do, to know of how you reach out in so many areas. The centerpiece of teaching of Pope John Paul II was the dignity of the human person and the dignity of the human person demands that the person has rights - right to life, right to liberty, right to express one's self - all those

rights that are part of democracy," McCarrick said.

Michael Novak, George Frederick Jewett Scholar on religion, philosophy and public policy at the American Enterprise Institute, also spoke of the Pope's work. "This man was gutsy enough to thrust himself into every one of those nations, in order to create still more opportunities for people to begin to live and to think and to act as free women and men."

In his remarks the President also highlighted the importance of strengthening new democracies. "By helping people build these institutions and develop the habits of liberty, you are helping them transform new democracies into lasting free societies."



President Bush
speaks at IRI's 2005
Freedom Dinner.



Senator McCain
presents President
Bush with the 2005
Freedom Award.



Cardinal McCarrick
receives the 2005
Freedom Dinner Award
on behalf of the late Pope
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“Let us now begin a major effort to secure the best -- a crusade for freedom that will engage the faith and fortitude of the next generation. For the sake of peace and justice, let us move toward a world in which all people are at last free to determine their own destiny.” These words by President Ronald Reagan in a 1982 speech before the British Parliament were the inspiration that led to the establishment of the International Republican Institute (IRI).

In his historic speech, President Reagan set America on a course of assisting those who wanted freedom and democracy around the world. Quoting the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, he said, “We must be staunch in our conviction that freedom is not the sole prerogative of a lucky few but the inalienable and universal right of all human beings.”

Congress responded to President Reagan’s call in 1983 when it created the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) to support aspiring democrats worldwide. Four nonprofit, nonpartisan democracy institutes were formed to carry out this work – IRI, the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), and the American Center for International Labor Solidarity (ACILS).

In its infancy, IRI focused on planting the seeds of democracy in Latin America. Since the end of the Cold War, IRI has broadened its reach to support democracy and freedom around the globe. IRI has conducted programs in more than 100 countries and is currently active in more than 70 countries.

IRI’s president, Lorne Craner, assumed leadership on August 2, 2004. From 2001 to 2004, Craner served as Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the U.S. State Department. Craner previously served as IRI’s president from 1995 to 2001, during which he led IRI to new levels of achievement.

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