



# LOOKING FOR HELP

**Will Rising Democracies Become  
International Democracy Supporters?**

**Thomas Carothers  
and Richard Youngs**

**DEMOCRACY AND RULE OF LAW | JULY 2011**



**CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT**

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## Summary

The emergence of a multipolar world gives Western democracy advocates cause for both optimism and anxiety. China's success sparks fears of the spread of an autocratic development model. Yet democratic states such as Brazil, Indonesia, India, South Africa, and Turkey are also gaining ground. These countries serve as powerful examples of the universal appeal of democracy and possess unique experiences with democratization. The United States and Europe understandably hope that rising democracies will use their growing prominence to defend democratic values abroad, potentially revitalizing international democracy support.

Rising democracies, however, are often reluctant to publicly embrace a democracy and human rights agenda. Most of them are exponents of the pro-sovereignty, anti-interventionist approach to international politics. They emphasize inclusive cooperation among developing countries and are disinclined to confront autocratic leaders. They are also habitually wary of Western, especially U.S., intentions in the developing world and thus frequently suspicious of Western democracy promotion.

Western powers should not dismiss the potential contribution that rising democracies can make to democracy support, but they should moderate their expectations and proceed with caution. They should start building cooperation with rising democracies through low-visibility, sustained endeavors rather than high-visibility, short-term gestures. Western actors must also be flexible in considering rising democracies' differing conceptions of how best to support democracy. Support for partnerships between nongovernmental actors in established and rising democracies may offer the best way forward.

An engaged but balanced Western approach is the best option for encouraging rising democracies to play a productive role in the challenge of responding to the serious backlash against international democracy support that emerged over the last decade.



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## Introduction

Will a more multipolar world be a less democratic one? Some observers fear that the rising assertiveness of China, Russia, and other emergent nondemocratic powers will make it so, both by reducing the relative power of the United States and other Western democracies and by popularizing alternative, non-democratic models of governance. Yet the changing international political balance is not necessarily all about democracy being outweighed by non-democracies. Multipolarity also entails the rise of a number of sizable democratic states, among them Brazil, India, South Africa, Indonesia, and Turkey. These states are seeking and starting to find a larger place for themselves on the international stage. The news for democracy would be even better if these rising democratic powers committed themselves to supporting democracy outside their borders.

President Barack Obama and his foreign policy team are keen to encourage just that—to urge these rising democratic powers to join Western efforts to support democracy and human rights around the world. Doing so is one part of the administration’s effort to move U.S. democracy policy away from the unilateralist approach of President George W. Bush toward a less United States–centric, more multilateral approach. In his address to the UN General Assembly in September 2010, President Obama made a pointed appeal to rising democracies, declaring that “we need your voices to speak out” and reminding them that “part of the price of our own freedom is standing up for the freedom of others.” In one-on-one meetings with leaders of some of these countries, President Obama has stressed the potential value of their standing up for democracy and urged joint work on issues such as open government.

The idea of enlisting rising democracies in the broader community of actors that seek to foster democracy and human rights in the world also appeals to European policymakers. It conforms to the European inclination to be inclusive on issues of political values and to forge progress on democracy and human rights through the gradual expansion of multinational consensus on these issues.

The potential value of rising democracies becoming active players in international democracy support is considerable. These countries are powerful symbols of the potentiality of democracy. Their very existence refutes the notion that democracy is not suited to non-Western societies or to countries struggling with development. Their democratic transitions are compelling stories with both inspirational power and practical utility for other countries still mired in

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authoritarianism or attempting democratic transitions. Particularly at a time when the United States and Europe are grappling with their own economic and political challenges, active engagement in democracy and rights issues

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**At a time when the United States and Europe are grappling with their own economic and political challenges, active engagement in democracy and rights issues by the rising democracies could help energize and renew international democracy support.**

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by the rising democracies could help energize and renew international democracy support.

Yet at the same time, a deep tension is present: The very countries that Western officials and democracy activists hope will join the cause of international democracy support are leading exponents of the pro-sovereignty, anti-interventionist approach to international politics. And they are deeply wary of Western, especially U.S., intentions in the developing world. This wariness gained force during the past decade as a result of the United States–led intervention in Iraq and the connections drawn between the U.S. democracy agenda and the U.S. “war on terror-

ism.” But it has much longer roots, reaching back across decades and in some cases centuries of unhappiness with Western interventions.

Given this glaring tension between the great potential value of rising democracies as international democracy supporters and their deep, long-standing commitment to policies of nonintervention and respect for national sovereignty, some significant questions present themselves. To start with, what roles do democracy and human rights concerns currently play in the foreign policies of the major rising democracies? Do the rising democracies, a highly diverse set of countries along many dimensions, share a common approach to transnational support for democracy and rights? Is it realistic to envisage increased engagement of those countries on such issues in the decade ahead? If so, how should the United States and Europe go about encouraging that?

Based on an overview of the evolving foreign policies of five rising democracies, we argue here that there is genuine merit in Western democracy promoters seeking cooperation with rising democracies on support for democracy in other countries. The United States and the European Union (EU) must strike a fine balance: On the one hand, they should not overlook or dismiss rising democracies’ potential in this field; on the other hand, they must avoid overly assertive pressure for these states to sign onto Western initiatives in a way that unwittingly turns them against democracy support. It may be that some in the United States require reining back from seeing rising democracies in overly instrumental terms, while some European governments may need to be reminded that the worth of these rising democracies should not be seen in terms of purely realpolitik alliance building. Western powers should start building cooperation with rising democracies in a low-key fashion on micro-level questions rather than aiming for dramatic, high-level diplomatic partnerships. They must also be flexible in accepting rising democracies’ differing conceptions of how best to foster political reform. Support for partnerships

between nongovernmental actors in established and rising democracies may offer the most propitious way forward in the near to medium term.

## Democracy and Rights in the Foreign Policies of the Rising Democracies

An overview of the foreign policies of Brazil, India, South Africa, Indonesia, and Turkey reveals a complex, mixed picture with regard to their engagement in supporting democracy and human rights outside their borders.

### Brazil

In the past decade, Brazil has occupied an increasingly prominent and confident place in world affairs. Its economic growth has placed it among the world's ten biggest economies, and its democratic consolidation and social development have won it international recognition.<sup>1</sup> Seeing an opportunity, President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva made expanding Brazil's global presence a key priority. During his eight years in office, he presided over a significant increase in the number of Brazilian diplomats and overseas postings as well as enhanced multilateral engagement.<sup>2</sup> Brazil has used its new place within the G20 to influence international economic policy and has pushed for permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council and more voting power within the World Trade Organization and the International Monetary Fund.

Even as it gains power, Brazil remains strongly identified with the developing world. Its foreign policy is based on the traditional principle of national sovereignty, and it has made enhancing South-South cooperation a central priority. To deepen coordination among emerging economies, it helped form the IBSA grouping with India and South Africa, the BASICs with these countries plus China, and the BRICS with the addition of Russia. Brazil has also promoted Latin American integration through its support for Mercosur (Southern Common Market) and the Union of South American Nations (UNASUR). Brazil has sought to position itself as a voice for the developing world, helping to lead blocs of developing nations at trade negotiations in Doha and climate talks in Copenhagen. This advocacy has sometimes put it at odds with the United States, and also European governments. The country has also established itself as an emerging international development donor.<sup>3</sup> This outreach to the developing world serves several purposes. It helps Brazil build relationships with important trade partners, gain foreign policy autonomy, and build legitimacy and support for a greater role in global governance—particularly on the Security Council.

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Brazil's constitution lists human rights and self-determination as central principles of Brazilian foreign policy, and the country has taken some steps to support democracy and human rights abroad. Its efforts have focused on responding to democratic interruptions in Latin America and supporting multilateral democracy and human rights frameworks. Brazil assisted in averting a coup in Paraguay in 1996, helped coordinate the regional response to the coup attempt against Venezuela's Hugo Chávez in 2002, and strongly condemned the coup that ousted Manuel Zelaya of Honduras in 2009.<sup>4</sup> Brazil has also pushed for the inclusion of democracy requirements within regional institutions, including the Inter-American Democratic Charter of the Organization of American States and the democracy clauses in Mercosur and UNASUR.

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**Brazil has sought to position itself as a voice for the developing world, helping to lead blocs of developing nations at trade negotiations in Doha and climate talks in Copenhagen.**

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Outside its region, Brazil was a strong proponent of including the Universal Periodic Review in the UN Human Rights Council.<sup>5</sup>

Brazilian development assistance is centered on socio-economic issues rather than democracy and does not come attached with political conditionality. Nevertheless, Brazil has made some initial efforts at post-conflict governance support. Brazil leads the United Nations peacekeeping force in Haiti, where it has assisted in rebuilding institu-

tions. It also coordinates the Guinea-Bissau agenda of the UN Peacebuilding Commission and, in partnership with the United States, supports a parliamentary strengthening program in the country.

Yet Brazil is hesitant to support democracy and human rights policies that threaten its bilateral relationships with nondemocratic states or interfere with their national sovereignty. It has sought to foster good relations with a range of authoritarian countries to fulfill multiple aims, both realist and ideational. Brazil has clear economic and strategic reasons to strengthen ties with countries such as China and Venezuela, but President Lula at times seemed to go beyond pure national interests in his support for populist leaders in Latin America of uncertain democratic fidelity as well as for President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Iran. Lula criticized the hunger strike of a Cuban dissident and brushed off Iran's violent crackdown on demonstrators after its contested 2009 presidential election, likening the protesters to sore losers after a football game. President Lula's foreign policy was more nationalist, more questioning of the liberal order, and more indulgent of autocracies than was that of the preceding Cardoso administration. Many on the left of the ruling Brazilian Workers' Party harbor sympathies for the participatory populism that has gained a foothold in Latin America in the past decade.

Brazil also sees human rights criticism as a possible violation of national sovereignty and has often abstained from country-specific human rights resolutions at the United Nations. Brazil defends its reluctance to condemn human

rights abusers or democratic regression by contending that exercising pro-democratic influence behind the scenes can be more effective than publicly criticizing and thereby potentially alienating governments. Yet it is unclear how much, if at all, it has lobbied its partners for democratic improvements, and Brazil appears unwilling to take diplomatic risks in support of democracy.

There are some signs that Brazil will be more willing to speak out on human rights and democracy under the administration that has succeeded Lula's. President Dilma Rousseff has noted her personal history as a dissident in stressing her support for human rights abroad and said she believes it was a mistake to abstain from a UN Human Rights Council resolution on Iran. In the first months of her term, Brazil voted in favor of sanctions against the Qaddafi regime in Libya and in favor of appointing a special rapporteur to investigate the human rights situation in Iran.<sup>6</sup> During President Obama's visit to Brazil in March 2011, Rousseff and Obama promised to work together on elections assistance, human rights, and anticorruption.<sup>7</sup> The two leaders also announced that Brazil and the United States will co-chair a global initiative to advance open government.<sup>8</sup> This Open Government Partnership includes nine countries, including the United States and Brazil, and plans to seek wider support for open government principles at the UN General Assembly in September 2011.<sup>9</sup> Still, Rousseff has not indicated whether she will change broader Brazilian policy toward national sovereignty, and her foreign policy adviser has called U.S. concerns over President Chávez's centralization of power "impertinent" interference in Venezuelan affairs.<sup>10</sup>

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## India

As the world's second-most-populous country and one of its fastest-growing economies, India sees itself as an emerging global power even as it maintains a steadfast commitment to national sovereignty and struggles with serious internal challenges. India aspires to international influence befitting its size and importance and has pressed for admission to the most exclusive clubs of global governance. It now has a seat at the G20, and President Obama recently endorsed India's bid for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council.

However, the United States and other Western powers express frustration at what they see as India's unwillingness to take on global responsibilities. While India has built stronger relations with the West since the fall of the Soviet Union, its foreign policy remains strongly influenced by anti-imperialism. Like Brazil, India emphasizes foreign policy autonomy and South-South cooperation. It has prioritized ties with other emerging powers and shied away from positions that would appear to place it on the side of the West against

developing nations. It has opposed trade and climate agreements seen as overly favorable to developed economies and is often accused of obstructing international negotiations rather than providing constructive solutions.<sup>11</sup>

India has serious practical reasons to prioritize good relations with the developing world. India is in a highly unstable neighborhood and has critical national security concerns. It faces multiple terrorist threats and borders two sizable rivals, Pakistan and China, as well as several fragile states. It is also concerned about the safety of thousands of Indian expatriates living in the

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**India's success in combining democracy and development in a highly diverse society provides a powerful argument in favor of democracy.**

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Persian Gulf and other volatile areas.<sup>12</sup> Beyond security, India needs to expand its economic relationships to sustain rapid growth and help overcome high levels of poverty. On both issues, India relies on a stable relationship with China even as it competes with its larger neighbor for influence and partners across the developing world. India also needs as many friends as possible to support its Security Council bid. Advanced democracies such as the United States,

South Korea, and Japan are important to some of India's foreign policy goals, such as balancing the influence of China, but are also seen as sometimes unreliable partners and unwilling to help India on a range of pressing problems.<sup>13</sup>

India is willing to support democracy abroad when such assistance coincides with its foreign policy goals of improving India's international standing, regional stability, and South-South cooperation. India's rise on the world stage is arguably a form of democracy promotion by example. Its success in combining democracy and development in a highly diverse society provides a powerful argument in favor of democracy. India has sought to capitalize on its status as the world's most populous democracy and has emphasized its democratic nature in its relations with other democracies. India is the second-largest contributor to the UN Democracy Fund and was a founding member of the Community of Democracies as well as the first host of the World Movement for Democracy.<sup>14</sup> Additionally, India has played an active diplomatic role in trying to promote democratic stability in its region and claims a significant role in upholding democracy in Nepal, Bhutan, and Bangladesh. Despite China's displeasure, India also provides safe haven to the Dalai Lama. Furthermore, India's unique democratic experience has created demand for its expertise abroad, and it has taken some steps toward democracy assistance. India deploys teams of election management experts in Asia and Africa and offers internships and study tours to its lively parliament as well as extensive capacity-building programs. During President Obama's visit to India, the United States and India announced an Open Government Partnership to begin a dialogue among senior officials on open government issues and disseminate innovations that enhance government accountability.<sup>15</sup> In Afghanistan, India has funded more than \$1.3 billion worth of local governance capacity-enhancing and civil

society projects. It funded most of the costs for Afghanistan's parliamentary building and sent a team of constitutional experts to Kabul.

At the same time, India is suspicious of democracy promotion as an explicit foreign policy goal and is hesitant to confront dictatorships. This is driven by a strategic need to maintain good relations with various authoritarian regimes and a continued emphasis on national sovereignty, driven in part by sensitivity over India's own human rights record in Kashmir. India has stayed relatively silent in the face of human rights abuses in nearby Myanmar and Sri Lanka and does not publicly condemn flawed elections. It also resists voting for UN Human Rights Council resolutions regarding country-specific human rights abuses. Unlike Brazil, which lives in a much more democratic region, India has not attempted to insert democracy clauses in its regional agreements. Despite persistent American efforts to include India in its democracy promotion initiatives, India has been reluctant to take a stronger pro-democracy stand or associate itself with U.S. foreign policy. India may feel that a more democratic world is in its long-term interest, but it worries that introducing democracy and human rights concerns into its bilateral relations could create unproductive tensions and reduce India's room to maneuver on other issues.<sup>16</sup>

India rejects suggestions that it does not care about democracy beyond its borders. It is skeptical of the efficiency of isolating authoritarian regimes and claims to engage its bilateral partners behind the scenes on political reform, for instance lobbying the ruling junta in Myanmar in favor of Aung San Suu Kyi's release. Indian diplomats complain: The West chides us for our engagement with the Burmese junta, but anti-Indian insurgent groups in Burma need containing, in exactly the same way that the West cooperates with Arab dictators to contain Islamists. Western support for the 1999 coup by Pervez Musharraf in Pakistan was seen as particularly irksome. An increasing point of contention is Western support for the reintegration of the Taliban: This is seen as problematic for India's strategic interests and is criticized by Delhi as sitting uneasily with the West's strictures on democracy. Rebutting European criticism, India insists it cooperated on the recent UN report critical of Sri Lanka.

### South Africa

Like Brazil and India, South Africa is a regional power with global aspirations. It is economically less powerful than its IBSA partners but has arguably taken a more assertive continental role. As Africa's largest economy and one of its most heralded democracies, South Africa sees itself as a key player in the region's stability and development. Nelson Mandela served as a potent symbol of African progress in the 1990s, and his successors have actively sought continental

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leadership and emphasized their commitment to African solidarity. In one of his most high-profile initiatives, Thabo Mbeki, Mandela's immediate successor, promoted the idea of an "African Renaissance" and pushed for the African Union's New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), which sought to attract increased foreign assistance in return for commitments from African leaders to improve governance.<sup>17</sup> South Africa has also contributed to multiple peacekeeping missions in Africa, and its presidents have taken active roles, with varying degrees of success, in mediating conflicts across the continent. The country has played a leading role in corporate social responsibility and initiatives such as the Kimberley Process.

South Africa has pushed actively over the past decade for greater international influence. It is a member of the G20 and is serving its second term in five years on the UN Security Council. Like Brazil and India, South Africa sees itself

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as a leader and a representative of the developing world. It advocates for the democratization of global institutions and has prioritized South-South cooperation, particularly with other emerging powers. South Africa does not face serious external security threats, but it regards ties with the developing world as crucial to both its global diplomatic influence and its domestic economic progress. South Africa reached out to Brazil in 2003 to form a strategic partnership, which grew to incorporate India and became IBSA. President Jacob Zuma also lobbied the BRIC countries for South African inclusion and won an invitation to their third summit in 2011, despite South Africa's relatively smaller and slower-growing economy.<sup>18</sup> China is South Africa's single biggest trade partner, and the two countries recently elevated their relationship to a strategic partnership.<sup>19</sup>

When Nelson Mandela set out his priorities for South African foreign policy in 1993, he promised that human rights would be "the light that guides our foreign affairs," and many Western observers hoped South Africa would play a unique role in promoting democracy abroad.<sup>20</sup> Its successful transition provided a powerful example of the possibility of peaceful democratic change, and South African leaders have shared their model of truth and reconciliation in conflicts around the world. In 1995 President Mandela took an early stand in support of human rights by withdrawing South Africa's representative in Nigeria to protest the execution of a human rights activist.<sup>21</sup> Yet that incident provoked a strong backlash from other nations on the continent, which accused South Africa of siding with Western powers against an African country.<sup>22</sup> A subsequent South African-led intervention in Lesotho in 1998, ostensibly to protect a democratically elected government, also spurred accusations that South Africa was trying to act like a regional hegemon.<sup>23</sup>

In light of these experiences, South Africa's recent advocacy for human rights and democracy has been more cautious. It has emphasized voluntary and multilateral mechanisms rather than bilateral confrontation, though it has condemned clear democratic interruptions. South Africa actively promoted the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), which was established in 2002.<sup>24</sup> The APRM has yet to show clear results, but it has been accepted by more than half of the African nations and provides an opening for them to review each other's governance records and share best practices.<sup>25</sup> South Africa has also provided technical assistance for elections across Africa. Under an African Union mandate, South Africa has sent peacekeepers to assist mediation efforts in such conflict-ridden areas as Burundi and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.<sup>26</sup> Additionally, South Africa has supported suspending members from the African Union after coup d'états and played an active role in preventing a coup in Equatorial Guinea and reversing one in Sao Tome and Principe.<sup>27</sup> President Mbeki also encouraged Charles Taylor's exit from Liberia and worked within the framework of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) to pressure leaders in several member countries to leave office once their terms expired.<sup>28</sup>

Nevertheless, South African foreign policy has disappointed democracy and human rights advocates. Many hoped that, as the beneficiaries of an international movement against apartheid, South African leaders would support fellow freedom fighters abroad. Yet, as the Nigeria incident illustrated, South Africa's need to maintain good relations on the African continent has constrained its engagement on human rights and democracy. Like other emerging powers, South Africa is eager to preserve its growing trade relationships with undemocratic countries. It is especially wary of angering China. In 2009 South Africa denied an entry visa to the Dalai Lama to attend a peace conference in the country, sparking domestic public outcry.<sup>29</sup> Additionally, the fight against apartheid is seen by many within South Africa as being as much about anti-imperialism and South-South solidarity as democratic struggle. Thus, even under President Mandela, South Africa maintained close ties with authoritarian countries such as Cuba, Libya, and Suharto's Indonesia, which had opposed apartheid.<sup>30</sup> Most visibly and controversially, South Africa stood by Zimbabwe's nationalist leader Robert Mugabe despite his escalating human rights violations. Mugabe orchestrated a violent postelection crackdown in 2008 but was able to stay in power in part because of President Mbeki's support. Furthermore, South Africa has not consistently supported human rights in international fora. In its first Security Council term, South Africa voted against condemning Zimbabwe and Myanmar for human rights abuses and opposed the International Criminal Court's prosecution of Sudan's Omar al-Bashir.<sup>31</sup> Its performance on the UN Human Rights Council in defense of

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**South Africa's recent advocacy for human rights and democracy has been more cautious.**

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human rights was ranked by UN Watch among the bottom three, above only China and Egypt.<sup>32</sup>

Yet South African foreign policy remains in a process of definition, and there are tentative signs it may be open to a more assertive role on democracy and human rights. As with Lula in Brazil, President Mbeki's brand of South-South solidarity seemed to bring him particularly close to autocrats shunned by the West. This approach was not universally accepted within the ruling party in South Africa. The Zuma administration has signaled some increased flexibility on sovereignty and human rights issues. This shift is particularly noteworthy in South African policy toward Zimbabwe. After a new crack-down on the opposition, President Zuma reportedly told Mugabe explicitly

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**A founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Indonesia identifies its foreign policy as “independent but active” and stresses respect for national sovereignty and increased cooperation among developing nations.**

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that human rights needed to be respected.<sup>33</sup> In what some have called the end of appeasement, South Africa then joined Zambia and Mozambique in adopting an unusually strong statement in March 2011 condemning intimidation and violence in Zimbabwe and setting out a road map for free and fair elections that will involve more direct involvement from regional facilitators.<sup>34</sup> This communiqué was adopted by the full SADC in June. After initial ambivalence on Laurent Gbagbo's refusal to step down after an election defeat in Cote d'Ivoire, South Africa voted on the

UN Security Council to sanction the Gbagbo regime. It also voted to authorize a no-fly zone to protect civilians in Libya, though President Zuma later said NATO was abusing the UN resolution for other ends and called on the alliance to allow the African Union to mediate the crisis.<sup>35</sup> President Zuma met with Muammar Qaddafi in May to promote an AU road map to end the crisis, but his proposal was strongly criticized by Libyan rebels for proposing a cease-fire without demanding that Qaddafi leave power.

### Indonesia

Just over a decade since the Asian financial crisis and the fall of Suharto, Indonesia is an emerging power. The world's fourth-most-populous country and largest Muslim-majority nation has enjoyed economic growth around 6 percent for the past five years and is currently the only Southeast Asian state represented in the G20. A founding member of the Non-Aligned Movement, Indonesia identifies its foreign policy as “independent but active” and stresses respect for national sovereignty and increased cooperation among developing nations.<sup>36</sup>

Like other rising democracies, Indonesia has sought to maximize its economic partnerships and leadership in multilateral organizations while avoiding confrontation. Indonesia's foreign minister, Marty Natalegawa, expresses his nation's foreign policy motto as “million friends and zero enemy.”<sup>37</sup> The Indonesia government sees this as the best way to protect its economic

development and promote regional stability. Indonesia's influence is strongest in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), where it is the largest state and currently serves as chair.<sup>38</sup> Indonesia has sought to position itself as an honest broker in a region fraught with territorial disputes and has avoided taking sides in the U.S.-China rivalry in Southeast Asia.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, Indonesia is beginning to assert influence beyond ASEAN and has pushed for democratizing global governance. Yet for the moment it appears less ambitious than many of its emerging power peers, and it has not joined the BRICS or openly sought permanent Security Council membership.

While Indonesia's democracy is still very new, the country has been one of the most active among rising democracies in high-level democracy advocacy. As early as 2001, then-Foreign Minister Hassan Wirajuda used a speech to the UN General Assembly to discuss his nation's political progress and urge a democratic response to global challenges.<sup>40</sup> Indonesia has expressed concern over the "democracy gap" in ASEAN and pushed for the inclusion of democracy and human rights principles in the organization's charter.<sup>41</sup> It has promised that ASEAN will push Myanmar to move toward greater democracy and claims it has engaged in high-level, behind-the-scenes dialogue with the Myanmar junta on democracy and human rights.<sup>42</sup> In 2008, Indonesia established the Bali Democracy Forum to promote dialogue on democracy in Asia. The annual forum is open to both democracies and non-democracies and hosted 42 members in 2010.<sup>43</sup> Indonesia contends that the meeting's inclusive nature allows engagement with countries such as China and Myanmar that have not responded well to Western pressure on democracy and human rights. It forces officials from those regimes to recognize democracy as a goal and listen to other countries discuss their democratic experiences.<sup>44</sup> The Bali Democracy Forum is supported by the Institute for Peace and Democracy, a state-sponsored research institution. The institute helps prepare the forum and sponsors programs to share Indonesia's democratic experiences abroad. It also brings together parliamentarians and constitution writers from other countries to discuss lessons learned in their respective areas. In November 2010, the United States and Indonesia announced a Comprehensive Partnership that will include cooperation on democracy and civil society.<sup>45</sup> As part of that partnership, the United States has pledged \$15 million to support Indonesian civil society actors who wish to engage in democracy and human rights projects abroad.<sup>46</sup> The United States and Indonesia also worked together on a UN resolution in 2010 to create a special rapporteur on freedom of assembly and association.

At the same time, Indonesia is often even more hesitant than other rising democracies when it comes to publicly confronting antidemocratic practices. Indonesia is wary of undermining bilateral relationships and skeptical of the

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effectiveness of naming and shaming approaches. It tends to vote against country-specific human rights resolutions in the United Nations. It was one of just five countries on the Human Rights Council—and the only democracy—to vote against condemning North Korea’s human rights record.<sup>47</sup> Indonesia also maintains good relations with Cuba, Sudan, and Iran, and has declined to criticize their records.<sup>48</sup> Indonesia has nudged Myanmar on democracy issues and abstained on a resolution condemning its record in the General Assembly, but it also “welcomed” the results of the country’s tightly controlled

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**Turkish foreign policy has evolved from a Eurocentric approach to an expansive vision of Turkey as a central power straddling Eurasia and the Middle East.**

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elections and has called for the lifting of sanctions on its ruling junta.<sup>49</sup> Additionally, critics of the Bali Democracy Forum contend that the meeting gives autocrats a platform to extol the virtues of their political models without facing any serious pressure to meet universal democratic standards.

There are, however, some signs of increasing Indonesian willingness to speak out on human rights issues. U.S.

officials have expressed optimism that Indonesia is moving toward abstaining on rather than voting against country-specific resolutions in the United Nations, and it has lately provided stronger explanations of votes on these issues. Additionally, while democracy promotion is still not a significant domestic political issue, lawmakers in the Indonesian Parliament have formed a Myanmar Caucus to push for greater attention in Indonesian foreign policy to human rights in the reclusive nation.<sup>50</sup>

### **Turkey**

Under the Justice and Development Party (AKP), Turkish foreign policy has evolved from a Eurocentric approach to an expansive vision of Turkey as a central power straddling Eurasia and the Middle East. Like other emerging powers, Turkey has experienced robust economic growth over the past decade and is seeking greater influence both within its region and on the global stage. Yet Turkey does not fit easily into the emerging power mold. As a member of NATO and a candidate country of the European Union, Turkey has strong alliances in the West. It also sits in one of the world’s most conflict-prone neighborhoods, with the Balkans to the west, the Caucasus to the north, and the Middle East to the south and east. As a result, Turkey is centrally concerned with promoting regional stability and perceives a unique role for itself as a regional leader and bridge builder.

Turkey advocates increased trade and dialogue as the best ways to improve regional security and, similarly to Indonesia, has pursued what Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu calls a “zero problems with neighbors” policy.<sup>51</sup> Under this principle, Turkey repaired tense relations with some important neighbors, notably Iran, Syria, and Russia. It has sought to play a leading role in mediating

conflicts from the Balkans and the Caucasus to Lebanon and Iraq. Turkish soft power and cultural influence have also increased across the region, and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan is now one of the most popular politicians in the Arab world.<sup>52</sup> Beyond its immediate neighborhood, Turkey has intensified diplomatic ties in Latin America and Africa and gained membership in the G20 as well as a seat on the UN Security Council for its 2009–2010 term.<sup>53</sup> Yet there are limits to Turkey’s ability to get along with everyone. Its rising status in the Arab world is due at least in part to its increasing criticism of Israel, once a close ally, and its outreach to Iran unsettles Western allies.

Turkey’s relative democratic success in a largely autocratic region gives it a natural scope to support democracy abroad. Turkey does continue to face international criticism of its domestic human rights record, especially concerning Turkey’s Kurdish population, and the rise of the AKP has provoked polarizing internal debates on the role and future of Islam, secularism, and the military. Seen from abroad, however, Turkey’s relatively successful incorporation of political Islam into a pluralistic democracy marks a sharp contrast to its repressive Arab and post-Soviet neighbors. Turkish leaders have embraced this distinction as an important source of soft power and an opening to promote democratic ideas. Following the elimination of visa restrictions with several neighbors, Turkey claims that increased people-to-people ties with Arab citizens have helped spread its democratic example in the region. Turkish leaders have also publicly encouraged Arab countries to undertake political reform. As early as 2003, then-Foreign Minister Abdullah Gül urged the Organization of the Islamic Conference to “put our house in order” with regard to good governance and fundamental freedoms.<sup>54</sup> While democracy support is not a central foreign policy priority, Turkey has participated in election monitoring missions abroad and claims its mediation efforts have helped preserve democracy in Lebanon and Iraq. Turkey now provides over \$1 billion a year in development assistance. In 2008, around 10 percent of this aid fell into the category of support for “government and civil society.” Recent Turkish political projects have included judicial training in Central Asia; state reform in Georgia; security sector reform in Afghanistan; and police training in Kyrgyzstan to reduce repression after ethnic violence erupted in 2010. While it is sensitive to international criticism of its treatment of the Kurds, Turkey is more flexible on sovereignty issues than many other rising democracies and has been willing to vote for country-specific human rights resolutions at the United Nations. It has also used democratic rhetoric to express support for Hamas and criticize Israel’s human rights record.

However, Turkey’s good neighbor policy sometimes clashes with strong support for democracy and human rights. Building closer political and economic

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**Turkey’s relatively successful incorporation of political Islam into a pluralistic democracy marks a sharp contrast to its repressive Arab and post-Soviet neighbors.**

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ties across its region has necessitated outreach to autocratic regimes in Russia, the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. Many of Turkey's fastest-growing trade partners are distinctly undemocratic.<sup>55</sup> Turkey hosted Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir after his indictment by the International Criminal Court. Before al-Bashir's visit, Prime Minister Erdogan said he was skeptical of the charges against al-Bashir because he did not believe Muslims could carry out genocide.<sup>56</sup> New friendships with Iran and Syria sparked particular concern about Turkey's commitment to democratic principles. Prime Minister Erdogan was one of the first foreign leaders to congratulate President Ahmadinejad on his election victory in 2009 and stayed conspicuously silent

in the face of postelection repression.<sup>57</sup> Turkey also made improved ties with Syria a central foreign policy goal. Starting in 2009 the two countries strengthened military cooperation, signed new trade agreements, and eliminated visa restrictions.<sup>58</sup> Like other rising democracies, Turkey defends these relationships by claiming it can more effectively mediate conflicts if it is friendly with everyone. This was true of its efforts to promote peace talks between Israel and Syria and secure safe passage for foreigners out

of Libya. Turkey's attempt to negotiate a solution to the Iranian nuclear crisis, however, was roundly criticized by its Western allies.

As popular protests spread through the Arab world, Turkey—like the United States and Europe—wants to appear to be on the right side of history but retains strong interests in regional peace and security. The upheavals across the region have revealed the tensions and inconsistencies in Turkish policies. After the onset of mass protests in Egypt, Prime Minister Erdogan was one of the first leaders to publicly call for Hosni Mubarak to leave office, asserting that Turkey has always taken a position against oppression.<sup>59</sup> In Libya, Turkey has sought to balance its role as a member of NATO with its economic interests in the North African country and wariness of being too closely associated with Western intervention. Turkish leaders have criticized foreign air strikes on Libya and warned of possible hidden agendas in international intervention.<sup>60</sup> Yet Erdogan also called on Muammar Qaddafi to resign and supported a NATO takeover of the international military operation.<sup>61</sup> In Iran, Turkey signed a new trade deal with the Islamic Republic the same day that new protests erupted in Tehran and remained largely silent in the face of intensified repression of dissent.<sup>62</sup> Yet it is in Syria—the centerpiece of its “zero problems” foreign policy—where Turkey has faced the greatest test of both its willingness to tolerate human rights abuses and its claims to regional influence. As the Syrian government stepped up violence against demonstrators, Turkish leaders increased both private and public calls for Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad to move forward on political reform, with Foreign Minister Davutoglu calling for “shock therapy.”<sup>63</sup>

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**As popular protests spread through the Arab world, Turkey—like the United States and Europe—wants to appear to be on the right side of history but retains strong interests in regional peace and security.**

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Turkey hoped that reform within the Syrian regime could still prevent wider chaos, but it found it had limited sway over Assad's behavior. Turkish-Syrian relations deteriorated significantly as thousands of Syrian refugees flooded into Turkey and Erdogan condemned "savagery" against civilians.<sup>64</sup>

## Common Elements

As this country-by-country summary makes clear, the foreign policies of the various rising democracies share many important elements. These include:

- An emphasis on the importance of respecting the national sovereignty of all states.
- An emphasis on multilateralism, especially related to South-South cooperation.
- A dual self-concept as a key actor in the immediate neighborhood and a growing aspiration to be considered a global actor as well.
- A wariness about associating closely with the U.S. geostrategic agenda.
- An increasingly important relationship with China based on China's growing economic reach.
- A strong preference for consensus and cooperation with all rather than criticism of and confrontation with some.

Of course these elements are in some cases stronger in rhetoric than in practice or are leavened by exceptions. For example, despite their frequent insistence on the importance of respecting national sovereignty, these states sometimes criticize others for failing to respect human rights norms. While professing an ardent attachment to multilateralism, they tend to view themselves as having a leadership role in their own regions that requires them at times to act independently or ahead of others. Brazilian-style multilateralism in South America, for example, appears to some of Brazil's neighbors more as Brazilian assertiveness than as multilateralist partnership. Wariness about the U.S. geostrategic agenda does not prevent rising democracies from sometimes closely linking up with Washington, such as India's special nuclear deal with the United States. Nevertheless, these elements are central to how the rising democracies conceive of their foreign policies.

Underlying this common foreign policy vision is a deep sense that the current international order gives unfair advantages to Western states and must make room for new actors. Rising powers are skeptical of international rules and organizations that they believe favor established powers, particularly in the areas of trade and nonproliferation. They are also focused on development

challenges at home and are wary of demands to sacrifice for global public goods such as climate change, arguing that developed nations should bear a larger burden. This has led some analysts to argue that the rise of new powers will undermine a liberal rules-based international order, while others contend that the best way to ensure these states will be responsible international actors is to give them a greater say in global governance.<sup>65</sup> What is certain is that rising powers will continue to demand what they see as their rightful place in a reformed international order.

These states' approach to the issue of supporting democracy and human rights flows directly from this common overall foreign policy outlook. They

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**A deep-seated suspicion of the very concept of democracy promotion as being a rhetorical cover for assertions of Western geostrategic hegemony undercuts the willingness of rising powers to embrace the issue publicly.**

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share a strong inclination for a cautious, quiet approach toward democracy and rights outside their borders, one that generally eschews public criticism of other governments and favors working through regional institutions or other multilateral mechanisms. They are searching for new allies and trading partners abroad as they seek to expand their influence and develop their economies. This makes them especially wary of endangering commercial ties through antagonistic pressure on democracy and human rights. They only rarely seek to isolate politically problematic leaders or regimes and instead look for ways to include

them in bilateral or multilateral dialogue processes in the belief that inclusion is more likely than exclusion to foster political moderation. An instinct toward underdog solidarity with leaders of other developing countries often takes precedence over any differences on democracy or rights issues they may harbor with those leaders. A deep-seated suspicion of the very concept of democracy promotion as being a rhetorical cover for assertions of Western geostrategic hegemony undercuts their willingness to embrace the issue publicly.

## Finding the Right Approach

Enthusiasm is high within at least parts of the Obama administration for the idea that the world's rising democracies can become important partners in the cause of international democracy support. As noted in the introduction, the idea is an integral part of President Obama's effort to recast democracy support away from the unilateralist, military-oriented, and regime-change associations of the Bush years. European democracy supporters favor the idea as well, seeing it as a natural extension of Europe's instincts toward multilateral, inclusive approaches to policymaking.

This interest in a potentially growing role for rising democracies in international democracy and rights support makes sense. These countries have valuable experiences, fresh perspectives, and new energy to bring to the table.

Yet given how policy elites and publics in these states view both their own countries' roles in the world and the overall enterprise of democracy support, Western enthusiasts should approach the matter with considerable finesse and also caution. Otherwise they risk alienating the very people with whom they are hoping to work and creating the conditions at home for an eventual backlash against the idea when it fails to take shape rapidly or decisively, as will almost certainly be the case.

It is crucial that Western enthusiasts start by setting their expectations for this endeavor at a reasonable level. Doing so involves accepting the unfortunate but unavoidable reality that many people in the rising democracies feel a deep aversion toward or at least a powerful skepticism about the very idea of democracy promotion. Some people in Washington hoped that Barack Obama's arrival in office would quickly reverse the stigma that democracy promotion has come to hold for many people in the developing world. "We've turned a page," the thinking has been in parts of the Washington policy community, "so now they [people in the developing world] can too." Yet this line of thinking fails to recognize how deeply rooted suspicion is in the developing world about Western political interventionism—reaching back not just to the Bush years but many decades earlier—and how long and slow the process of overcoming it will inevitably be.

As part of this recalibration of expectations, Western policymakers must avoid at all costs the notion they sometimes put forward behind closed doors that "we must enlist them in our cause." Instead they must articulate—and believe in—the idea that international democracy support is not intrinsically a pro-Western policy cause but rather an endeavor that can advance the national interests of non-Western countries whose foreign policy goals overall are very different from those in the West. Similarly, they should abandon the idea, also heard in gatherings of Western policy officials, that "it is up to us to explain to them how supporting democracy internationally is in their interest," as if non-Western policymakers cannot see through the fog of complex policy realities without a Western flashlight illuminating their path.

Setting reasonable expectations for what role rising democracies are likely to play in international democracy support also requires full acknowledgment by Western democracy promoters of the serious limitations of Western democracy support. Hearing some Western enthusiasts lament what they view as the disappointingly inconsistent and low commitment of rising democracies to international democracy support, it is hard not to wonder what standard they are applying. Certainly rising democracies often soft-pedal shortcomings on democracy and rights in other countries for the sake of nurturing friendly

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relations with authoritarian governments. Yet are they really any more inconsistent in this regard than the United States and Europe, which maintain cordial relations with an array of nondemocratic governments—in Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam, and elsewhere—for the sake of multiple economic and security interests? Similarly, it is true that leaders in rising democracies prefer to avoid publicly criticizing other leaders for their political shortcomings. Yet most Western governments act similarly. By far the bulk of high-level public criticism by Western governments of the democratic shortcomings of other governments is directed against a small number of strongman leaders in states of only marginal economic and security importance to the West, such as Zimbabwe and Cuba. This means that cooperation will be hindered unless the United States and EU are honest with themselves and others about the (very old) issue of double standards. Rising democracies' diplomats, without fail, raise Western inconsistency as justification for their own lack of enthusiasm for the democracy agenda.

Despite the widespread negativity in rising democracies about democracy promotion, the basic idea of encouraging these countries to play a more active role in this domain is by no means a futile one. The negativity tends to be directed very much at the term “democracy promotion,” because of all of its associations with Western political interventionism. If one gets beyond the label, into the domain of more specific values and actions relating to supporting democracy and rights, policymakers in these countries will be quick to say that of course they are interested in making such values part of their foreign policies and will point to various small but real efforts they have taken in that regard.

This analysis points to several recommendations (beyond setting realistic, modest expectations about likely intensity and consistency) for Western policymakers and democracy advocates keen to encourage a greater role for rising democracies in international democracy and rights support.

First, *emphasize low-visibility, sustained endeavors, not high-visibility, short-term impact gestures*. Expansion of rising democracies' role in democracy and rights support will most likely come from the gradual multiplication and accumulation of small-scale, low-visibility initiatives, not high-visibility policy sign-ons. For example, it is unquestionably vexing that the Indian government has long refused to exert more public pressure on the government of Myanmar to respect democracy and rights norms. Yet pushing Indian leaders on that issue has largely been a study in frustration. Instead, Western policymakers should look for less politically sensitive and lower-visibility issues to emphasize. The quiet way in which the French government has recently backed India's work on the transparency of information flows in public administration may serve as an illustrative example of the most propitious way forward.

If governments of rising democracies take more and firmer public stances against noxious strongmen in their neighborhoods—whether it be India and

the Burmese generals, Brazil and Hugo Chávez, or South Africa and Robert Mugabe—it will be only if they feel they are doing so *not* as part of a U.S. or European agenda and *not* in response to pressure from the West.

In the same vein, trying to establish high-level joint policy ventures on democracy support between Western organizations and rising democracies is likely to be a tough slog. Leaders of the rising democracies are happy to greet visiting Western leaders and exchange warm statements about their countries' common embrace of democracy. They are not especially interested, however, in aligning themselves publicly with assertions of specific U.S. or European democracy campaigns vis-à-vis particular countries. In the same light, pushing for the rising democracies to play a major role in the Community of Democracies is likely to bear only very modest fruit. The Community of Democracies remains widely viewed by policymakers in the rising democracies as being led or directed by the United States, rendering unlikely anything more than very quiet, low-level cooperation on their part with the venture. As a former Brazilian ambassador to the United States stated recently at a Washington conference on the role of rising democracies in international democracy support: "Brazil still looks somewhat askance at the Community, which it considers to be a small club strongly influenced by U.S. entities and which it feels might sometimes act especially at the UN in ways that Brazil does not deem appropriate."<sup>66</sup>

A promising approach might be to focus on shared areas of domestic concern and lesson learning. During President Obama's trips to India, Indonesia, and Brazil, he and his foreign counterparts promised to work together and share experiences on issues of mutual concern such as open government and civil society. These proposals could serve as a promising start if the pleasing high-visibility statements are translated into sustained low-visibility work. Additionally, rising democracies are beginning to implement aid programs that include some elements relevant to political reform. So far these programs constitute extremely cautious moves. Very little of this new aid resembles "democracy assistance" as it is traditionally defined. But it is a start. The U.S. and European governments should offer dialogue and low-level cooperation to share lessons on what has worked in politically oriented aid and what has not worked.

Potential does exist here, but it needs to be cultivated. For instance, nearly all of Turkey's "government and civil society" aid goes to state bodies and it is just beginning to explore possible funding in the core areas of elections and human rights protection. Ankara claims to be keen on supporting the role of middle classes in political liberalization. It also insists it can contribute on the question of security guarantees for incipient processes of democratization,

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using its own experience of how “new actors” can be brought into the political process while protection persists for the secular constitution.

Notwithstanding a few ad-hoc political projects, Brazil’s growing aid program, which some observers estimate at about \$1 billion a year, so far includes virtually nothing on human rights or good governance, even though it formally accords to such principles.<sup>67</sup> Brazil can and should be helped to meet its declared aim of ensuring that its aid projects are sensitive to human rights. South Africa funds security sector reform programs, seeing these as a distinctive contribution to stabilizing troubled African countries. At present, such initiatives are skewed heavily toward hard security assistance and fail to counter the notorious influence of South African private security companies. But there may be scope for prompting their genuinely reformist elements. In all of these cases, Western governments will meet resistance in nudging emerging powers to refashion their aid profiles. But they should persevere in slowly developing partnerships with rising democracies from the bottom up, rather than attempting top-down, high-profile political initiatives.

Second, *keep an open mind with regard to different and potentially clashing approaches on international democracy support*. If emerging powers perceive they are simply being asked to sign onto a Western agenda, it is obvious that they will resist association with democracy promotion. At least some American organizations already seem to be adopting an overly instrumental attitude of “how do we get *them* to help *our* democracy policies?” This feature is not so prominent in European positions, but neither is it entirely absent. It should be clear from the mistakes committed in democracy promotion during the past decade that this is exactly the kind of posture likely to do harm.

For example, a growing concern that emerges from Indian diplomats is that the West is backing away from focusing on India’s still acute development problems and trying to get Delhi to do the West’s geopolitical “dirty work” in other countries, such as Burma. Turkey complains in private that it is being prompted by Western governments to “be their fall guy,” engaging on reform agendas with the likes of Hamas and Hizbollah. Ankara expresses anger at the West’s refusal to engage with Islamists but has itself been extremely reluctant to act as the bridge to Islamist opposition groups across the Middle East.

Democracy support must be a genuinely shared agenda. Many aspects of rising democracies’ foreign policies engender concerns and raise eyebrows in the West. But if established and new democracies are to cooperate, there must be give and take. This need not entail an unhealthy suspension of disbelief. New democracies must be kept under scrutiny for instances in which their pro-democracy protestations clearly ring false. However, Western democracy promoters must be ready to absorb new ways of doing things. If cooperation becomes a cloak for merely signing up new democracies to Western policies, it is unlikely to progress far.

Recent examples show how germane this danger is. Turkey was hostile to the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative in part because it was not extensively consulted while the initiative was being formulated. Proposals abound now to include Turkey in EU Common Foreign and Security Policy positions and security dialogues, but diplomats say these hold little appeal if Turkey is still treated as a “passive recipient” of internal EU trade-offs rather than a proactive shaper of democracy-support strategies. Indonesian diplomats ask Western governments to demonstrate greater support for the “best practices” model of the Bali Forum, rather than pushing Jakarta to sign up to precooked positions on the most controversial cases of authoritarianism in the region.

Policymakers in rising democracies are serious when they argue that their instincts and ideas about how best to encourage democracy are different than those of their Western counterparts. Even if Western policymakers view some of these as misguided or dangerous—like, for example, the tendency to include problematic leaders in regional diplomatic processes—they should start by taking rising democracies at their word. A variety of approaches is in fact valuable in democracy support—in many places, Western efforts have bounced off stubborn contrary realities. New approaches are needed, especially when it comes to entrenched strongmen who cultivate pressure from the West as a political badge of honor and legitimacy. Giving the governments of rising democracies some benefit of the doubt with regard to their approaches to democracy and rights issues will encourage them to try more in this domain. And only by taking these governments at their word, and taking their efforts seriously no matter how dubious their methodologies may seem, will Western policymakers accumulate the needed credibility over time to challenge these governments with analysis and evidence of whether their efforts are in fact bearing fruit.

In this light, the United States and EU will need to reflect in particular on the principle of equidistant mediation, which is prominent in emerging democracies’ foreign policies. Turkey has mapped out an approach predicated on mediation between rival factions. It has applied this approach in Lebanon, the occupied Palestinian territories, Iraq, and Bosnia. Turkish diplomats insist this strategy has merit in facilitating dialogue with a broader range of actors than Western democracy promoters habitually embrace. Such all-inclusive dialogue is presented as a prelude to power-sharing democratization, avoiding the tendency of the West to see democracy through the prism of “picking winners.” Likewise, India insists that the notion of neutral, but pro-democracy mediation is a central pillar of its foreign policy: India mediated in Nepal, exhorting the Maoists to buy into the political process. And South Africa has also brokered peace deals with regimes and military groups of questionable democratic pedigree, ostensibly in the name of setting the foundations for peaceable dialogue on reform. One example of this was in Burundi. The notion of non-judgmental mediation may not be entirely convincing. But emerging democracies’

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**Western officials looking to encourage rising democracies to play a greater role in democracy and rights should seek out ways to create incentives and opportunities for their own nongovernmental communities to reach out and work in genuine partnerships with counterparts in the rising democracies.**

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reasoning should not be immediately rejected. Some leeway might wisely be granted in the initial stages of coordination on democracy promotion.

A third and final route forward is to *emphasize nongovernmental rather than governmental approaches and links*. As in established democracies, the policy environments within the rising democracies are a complex cacophony of actors, voices, and views, governmental and nongovernmental alike. The foreign ministries of the rising democracies are citadels of traditionalist thinking about sovereignty and nonintervention, but other parts of the policy commu-

nities in these countries, especially in the nongovernmental sector, are involved in many types of values-based political linkages and activism across borders, whether having to do with anticorruption, women's rights, or media freedom. It will be much easier to foster ties between Western nongovernmental actors engaged in democracy and rights issues and their counterparts in rising democracies than it will be to create common positions among high-level policymakers. Thus, Western officials looking to encourage rising democracies to play a greater role in democracy and rights should seek out ways to create incentives and opportunities for their own nongovernmental communities to reach out and work in genuine partnerships with counterparts in the rising democracies. The nascent U.S.-Indonesian effort to encourage ties between U.S. and Indonesian civil society and assist Indonesian actors in sharing their democratic experiences abroad is one interesting initiative in this direction.<sup>68</sup>

## Conclusion

The emergence of a multipolar world is commonly seen as inimical to the global extension of democratic norms. But the new world order is not just about China's rise and democratic backsliding in places like Russia. Another part of the new multipolarity—the increasing international reach and influence of rising democracies—can be good for democracy's overall place in the international system. This is especially true if these countries, some of which were once recipients of international democracy support, can be encouraged to become more favorably disposed in their turn to help advance political liberalization in still-autocratic states.

These emerging democracies adhere to a “sovereigntist” notion of international relations. They abjure interference in other countries' domestic politics. Their efforts to develop more proactive foreign policies are centered overwhelmingly on cultivating friendly relations with other governments. They frequently berate Western governments for haranguing authoritarian regimes over human

rights abuses. At the same time, none of the principal rising democracies say they are *against* the international spread of democracy, and indeed all claim to be in favor of it. It is legitimate for Western democracy promoters to seek to nurture this potential. Some, especially European governments, may still need to be convinced that failure to invest meaningful effort to this end would do a real disservice to global democracy.

Several points of commonality are evident across the main rising democracies. They all claim to support the international spread of democratic norms in their foreign policies but in a non-prescriptive fashion. They all insist they support democracy in a passive sense, simply by being democracies in regions still replete with autocracy. They all say they help only where invited to mediate. They all rail at Western double standards and the great powers' use of human rights "for their own interests." They all argue that democracy support cannot be delinked from other areas of Western foreign policies that they see as unjust. All rising democracies prefer to focus more on the need for greater interstate justice than on the traditionally defined democracy support agenda.

It is important not to be seduced into a romantic idealization of these emerging powers. Their own foreign policies are as shot through with inconsistency and predatory self-interest as are Western policies. Many of their arguments about international justice are patently self-serving. Emerging democracies are more interested in increasing their own power vis-à-vis regional rivals than in seeing a more democratic world. They also need to work out how they wish to be treated by Western powers. At present, they hold clearly contradictory positions. They complain at being treated as aid recipients rather than equal political partners, but then also moan when the West shifts the focus away from support for their own development challenges. Indeed, adding to the sense of necessary give and take, it should be remembered that most of these countries still seek international support for their own democratic deepening. A common reaction from Turkish diplomats is: "You cannot expect us to help you promote democracy in the Arab world while you refuse to underwrite our democracy through EU membership."

The United States and the EU will have to live with such contradictions, which derive from a new feature of the emerging global order: the rise of states that are gaining significant international power yet at the same time are still struggling with many basic elements of social and economic development. The countries examined in this paper are certainly not paragons of international democratic progressivism. We should expect their commitment to sovereignty-compromising engagement to remain anemic. But if the West handles its relations with the rising democracies with patience and a degree of subtlety and

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**All rising democracies prefer to focus more on the need for greater interstate justice than on the traditionally defined democracy support agenda.**

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**Quiet and meaningful coordination and confidence building should take precedence over grandstanding calls for high-profile alignment of policies and self-righteous strictures.**

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critical self-reflection, it can help encourage positive action by them. We have argued here for a balanced approach. It is important for Western organizations to strongly encourage emerging democracies to do more in support of political reform around the world, rather than seeing these countries merely as vassals of realpolitik gain. But quiet and meaningful coordination and confidence building should take precedence over grandstanding calls for high-profile alignment of policies and self-righteous strictures. Aided

by such nuance, the rising democracies may over time demonstrate that they have the legitimacy and the will to contribute to the outstanding challenge of today's democracy support agenda: how to encourage a productive, lasting response to the serious backlash against international democracy support that emerged during the past decade.

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