

Discussion FORUM

Food for Peace and Office of Transition Initiatives Programs Create Footholds for Democracy

Washington-area professionals gathered on July 14th for the twenty-third IRG Discussion Forum, "Security: The Preconditions for Building Peace. How the Food for Peace and Office of Transition Initiatives Programs Create Footholds for Democracy." Lauren R. Landis, Director of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Office of Food for Peace, and Kirpatrick Day, Field Programs Division Acting Division Chief of USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives, explained how the activities of these two programs help to promote stability and create footholds for democracy in vulnerable states.

According to Nobel Prize-winning economist Dr. Amartya Sen, "No famine has ever taken place in the history of the world in a functioning democracy." This, as he explained in his 1999 book, *Development as Freedom*, is because democratic states "have to win elections and face public criticism, and have a strong incentive to undertake measures to avert famines and other catastrophes."

Dr. Sen had not yet developed his hypothesis when President Eisenhower

signed the Agricultural Trade Development Assistance Act (better known today as Public Law 480) in 1954 to "lay the basis for a permanent expansion of our exports of agricultural products with lasting benefits to ourselves and peoples of other lands." President Kennedy, asserting that "Food is strength,...

The Food for Peace program works under the assumption that if people don't have food in their stomachs, political upheaval is almost guaranteed.

peace,... freedom,... and a helping hand to people around the world whose good will and friendship we want," renamed the program Food for Peace in 1961 and made it part of the newly created Agency for International Development (USAID). Since then, the program has adopted Sen's philosophy to use food assistance to promote peace and democracy around the world.

Food for Peace and the Fragile States Strategy

Today, USAID's fragile states strategy allows for better implementation of that



Pictured, left to right: Timothy R. Knight, Corporate Vice President and Director, Relief and Reconstruction, IRG; Lauren R. Landis, Director, Office of Food for Peace, USAID; Kirpatrick J. Day, Director, Field Programs Division, Office of Transition Initiatives, USAID.

For More Information

USAID Transition Initiatives:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/cross-cutting_programs/transition_initiatives/

Food for Peace:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/

Food for Peace Strategic Plan for 2006-2010:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/ffp_strategy.2006_2010.pdf

Celebrating Food for Peace brochure:

http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/humanitarian_assistance/ffp/50th/FFP_50thAv_Brochure.pdf

USAID Fragile States Strategy:

http://www.usaid.gov/policy/2005_fragile_states_strategy.pdf

philosophy by setting priorities based on realities on the ground and designing programs that directly address sources of fragility to facilitate more ambitious development efforts. While academia continues to debate Dr. Sen's theory regarding famine and functional democracies, according to Ms. Landis, USAID's Food for Peace program "works under the assumption that if people don't have food in their stomachs, political upheaval is almost guaranteed."

The program therefore uses food aid to mitigate food insecurity, stabilize populations and economies at risk, and build platforms for peace and

development. To this end, it dispenses between two- and three-million metric tons of food per year, working with an annual budget that has increased in recent years from \$1 billion to nearer \$2 billion in response to natural disasters such as the 2004 tsunami and emergencies in Afghanistan, Iraq, and a number of African nations. At present, a full 75 percent of the program's resources address such emergencies, with 75 percent of that amount going to the Horn of Africa. Food for Peace is also the primary donor for the UN World Food Programme (WFP).

Among the program's recent notable successes, its tsunami response diverted ships and mobilize resources to provide some of the first food supplies to reach the regions affected. The office operates in a similar manner in refugee situations, providing appropriate commodities in a timely manner. Food can also be a powerful tool in conflict mitigation. Food donated by the US helped to broker the first cease fire between north and south Sudan allowing the passage of the first food

convoys. More recently, Food for Peace supplies have averted famine in Afghanistan and enabled the continuation of the public distribution system that feeds 26 million people in Iraq, where the office continues to monitor for food security among marginal populations. As a result, famine is not a concern in these two countries, even as conflict continues.

Conflict Mitigation

Concerns that providing food aid could allow conflict to continue indefinitely or permit the continuation of corrupt

Relief efforts are often directed to women, who are most likely to ensure that the aid is used to feed their families.

governments are addressed by making good assessments to ensure aid is targeted to populations most in need. Both host and displaced populations are served, so conflict between them isn't exacerbated. Appropriate commodities, such as sorghum, are provided, avoiding food that is more likely to be sold for profit. Relief efforts are often directed to women, who are most likely to ensure that the

IRG Speaks Out

In August, **Sylvia Megret**, Principal and Recruitment Systems Director, will be speaking at the Foreign Service Institute to senior foreign service officers on working on development programs with private sector consulting companies and entering into the private sector work force.

Thomas Wheelock, Vice President, Infrastructure and **Robyn McGuckin** published their article entitled "Iraqi Power Sector: CPA's Legacy and Lessons" in Middle East Economic Survey (www.mees.com) on July 18, 2005.

aid is used to feed their families. The program works through WFP and NGOs including local non-governmental organizations. Local NGOs ensure broad support for the food program in local communities.

In fragile states, Food for Peace is working to develop new programs that provide a safety net to minimize the shock of recurring emergencies. Countries such as Ethiopia, for example, which suffers from frequent droughts during which its system of rainfed agriculture is unable to feed the population, is a prime case in point.

Transition Initiatives

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) was established in 1994 to address security needs other than food in conflict-prone countries undergoing the transition from authoritarianism to democracy or from violent conflict to peace. OTI's goals are to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance to take advantage of windows of opportunity to build democracy and peace and to lay foundations for long-term development. It devotes its resources to countries that are

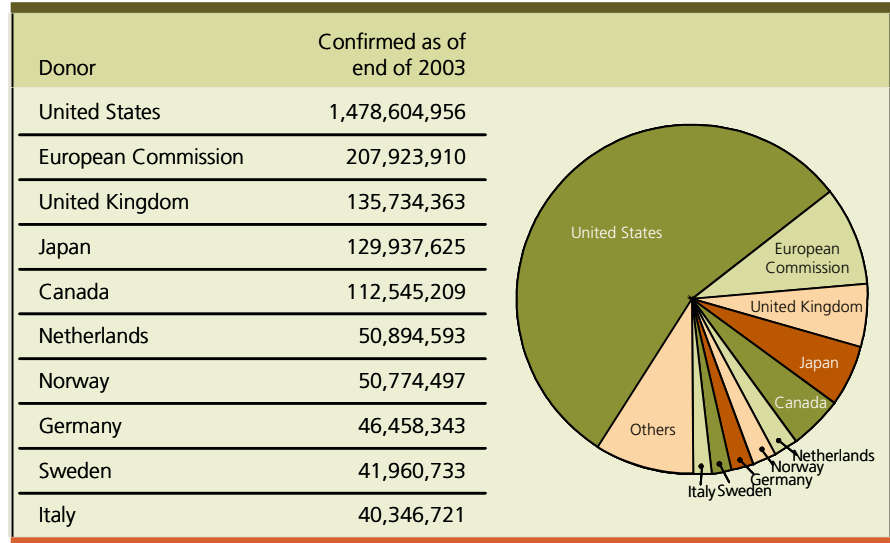
OTI Criteria for Engagement

OTI has defined four key criteria for engagement:

1. The country's importance to U.S. foreign policy;
2. The existence of a "window of opportunity" for democratic development;
3. The likelihood that OTI's efforts would have a significant impact; and
4. The assurance of an acceptable level of risk.

Taken from "A Decade of Transition: 1994-2004," USAID, Office of Transition Initiatives.

Figure 2: Contributions to U.N. World Food Program in 2003



Taken from "Celebrating Food for Peace: 1954-2004: Bringing Hope to the Hungry," USAID, Food for Peace.

significant to U.S. national interests, where there is sufficient local political will to effect change toward democracy, and where U.S. government assistance is desired by local partners. In addition, the operating environment must be sufficiently stable to allow for effective interventions.

According to Mr. Day, "Because OTI's primary goal is to lay the foundation for development of future democratic government structures, its work is inherently political." The office encourages a culture of risk-taking and swift response. Almost all of OTI's work is done through


small grants to indigenous organizations, with innovative contracting mechanisms that

OTI encourages the participation of the local citizenry, most of whom have never before been consulted by government officials about their interests, concerns, or needs, or played active roles in civic life.

preserve the principle of competition while allowing for quick start-up.

Providing Platforms for Democracy

Typical OTI programs are designed to encourage the political participation of previously marginalized groups and link constituents to their elected representatives; to reintegrate ex-combatants into their communities as productive citizens; to assist alternative media and public information



campaigns that promote peace, reconciliation, and informed participation in elections; and to promote transparent, accountable governance. “Special emphasis is placed on encouraging the participation of

the local citizenry, most of whom have never before been consulted by government officials about their interests, concerns, or needs, or played active roles in civic life,” Mr. Day explained. “Support is

given to nascent civil society groups with democratic political agendas, and a particular mark of success for OTI’s efforts is the election to public office of a member of one of these groups.”

FORUM FEEDBACK

- ◆ Like conflict resolution theory, OTI and Food for Peace programs distinguish needs from wants. Because needs are non-negotiable, meeting those needs is a prerequisite to building the capacity and developing the leadership capability that allow for future development efforts.
 - ◆ Increasing concerns for security are best addressed through strict adherence to safety precautions, good communication with local organizations regarding conditions on the ground, and increased reliance on the work of local professionals. In some cases programs are being nationalized sooner than would be the case in more secure environments. Safety issues have also
- resulted in closer cooperation with the military, particularly in Iraq.
 - ◆ While it has been suggested that all food aid be given on a cash basis, in emergency situations developing countries need direct aid and don't regard it as displacing commercial sales. Because the populations served don't have the capacity to purchase food, there is no negative impact on farmers or businesses. In non-emergency situations, direct aid is carefully targeted and designed to further economic and agricultural development. In any case, all food aid worldwide amounts to less than 2 percent of commercial trade.

About the Speakers

As director of USAID's Office of Food for Peace, **Lauren R. Landis** manages \$1.5 billion worth of food commodities that are sent to over 100 countries worldwide to fulfill the office's missions to reduce hunger and malnutrition and assure access to sufficient food for all. Before coming to USAID, Ms. Landis served as director of Emergency Response and Food Security at Save the Children Federation, Inc. and worked with Interaction, a coalition of U.S. non-profit organizations. An international relations alumna of Mount Holyoke College, Ms. Landis previously worked with USAID as Emergency Operations Coordinator in Somalia and a Disaster Operations Specialist in Washington, D.C.

Kirpatrick Day returned from Iraq in September 2004 to assume responsibility for all programs of the newly-created Field Programs Division of USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives. During his year in Iraq he served as the Office's Country Representative and as the senior representative for the Bureau of Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance, where he facilitated an integrated approach to reconstruction in collaboration with coalition forces, including programs in the greater Baghdad area with the U.S. Army's First Cavalry Division. His previous assignments with USAID include work in and assessments of East Timor, Sudan, Haiti, Macedonia, and Kosovo. He authored the initial draft of USAID's conflict strategy and participated in senior-level discussions for Agency reorganization. Before joining USAID, Mr. Day worked for international non-governmental organizations in Rwanda, Zaire, and Bosnia-Herzegovina.

About the IRG Discussion Forum

The IRG Discussion Forum, a monthly event hosted by Henri-Claude Bailly (chairman of IRG's Board of Advisors), addresses issues affecting international development. Each session is informal, with guest speakers and attendees participating in a personal capacity. For comments, questions, or information on the Discussion Forum, contact discussionforum@irgltd.com or call IRG at 202-289-0100.

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include world-renowned specialists who have pioneered many of the analytical techniques employed in their fields. IRG's ability to provide management, economic, and technical advice is further enhanced by the diversity, cross-cultural experience, foreign language skills, and management capabilities of staff based in the Washington, DC, headquarters, corporate offices in India and the Philippines, and 20 project-dedicated offices around the world.



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