



## **A New Democratic Moment: Lessons for the Arab Spring**

**Washington, DC  
September 15, 2011**

**Venue:**

The Cannon House Office Building Caucus Room  
*(Southeast of the Capitol on a site bounded by Independence Avenue,  
First Street, New Jersey Avenue, and C Street S.E.)*

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Until recent developments in the North Africa and Middle East, the spread of liberal democracy had stalled -- with Freedom House reporting a decline in the advance of democracy over the past five years. While developments in the Arab world hold the promise for a new democratic wave, the outcome of the Arab Spring remains uncertain and democratic progress in the region is unlikely to be linear. The conference is intended to highlight challenges and opportunities that nascent and prospective democracies face in today's world.

Conference participants will discuss the successes and setbacks of democracy over the past several decades and consider their implications for transitions currently underway in North Africa and the greater Middle East. Participants will also discuss the interrelation of democracy and development, and the need to ensure that democracy delivers improved lives for citizens in the Middle East, if recent advances are to be consolidated and sustained. The conference will also address the particular role of parliaments in democratic transitions, and the need to develop parliamentary institutions that are not only democratically elected, but that also govern democratically.

8:45-9:00 AM

**Registration**

9:00-9:30

**Opening Remarks**

**Mr. Emanuelis Zingeris**, President, CoD Parliamentary Forum

**The Honorable John A. Boehner**, Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives

**Mrs. Irena Degutiene**, Speaker of the Lithuanian Parliament

**Rep. Nancy Pelosi**, Minority Leader, U. S. House of Representatives (tbc)

**Mr. Chimed Saikhanbileg**, Head of the Democratic Party Fraction of the Mongolian Parliament, Chairman of Mongolia-U.S. Parliamentary group (tbc)

9:30 -10:30

**Drawing Lessons from Past Democratic Transitions for the Arab Spring**

What lessons can be drawn from the democratic transition experiences in Central and Eastern Europe in context of the Arab Spring? What lessons can be drawn from other successful transitions, such as Indonesia? Will a new democratic moment, recently witnessed in the Arab world, be sustained and what role can the international community play in supporting these transitions?

Moderators: **K. Scott Hubli**, Director, Governance Programs, NDI

Keynote speakers:

Rep. from **Indonesia** (tbc)

Rep. from **Tunisia** or **Egypt** (tbc)

Discussants:

**Mrs. Jozefina Topalli**, Speaker of Albanian Parliament

**Rep. Dan Burton**, Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives

**Mr. Vytautas Landsbergis**, Member of the European Parliament

**Mr. Boris Nemtsov**, Russian opposition leader

**Rep. David Dreier**, Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives (tbc)

**Rep. David Price**, Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives (tbc)

*Comments and discussion of the PF participants*

10:30-11:30 PM

**Responding to Authoritarian Capitalism and Helping New Democracies to Deliver Socio-Economic Development**

Despite economic advances under the Chinese model of “authoritarian capitalism,” events in the Arab spring remind us that, unless accompanied by political liberalization and democratization, this approach is unlikely to be politically sustainable over the long-run. What role do Western democracies play in ensuring that the authoritarian capitalist systems are forced to play on a level playing field with democratic market economies? How (and can) the West use economic engagement to support political liberalization in authoritarian capitalist systems, such as China and Russia? At the same time, however, new democracies find themselves under pressure to deliver rapid socio-economic development. This is particularly true in the wake of democratic transitions, where expectations for rapid socio-economic development are often unrealistically high. What role do parliaments play in “helping democracy deliver”, particularly in the context of democratic transitions?

Moderator: **Mr. Carl Gershman**, President of NED

Keynote speaker: (tba)

Discussants:

**Mr. Giorgi Baramidze**, Vice Prime Minister of the Republic of Georgia

**Rep. Mario Diaz-Balart**, Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives

**Mr. Marian Lupu**, Speaker of the Moldovan Parliament (tbc)  
**Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen**, Congresswoman, U. S. House of Representatives, Chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (tbc)  
Rep. of opposition leader from **China** (tbc)

### **Comments and discussion of the PF participants**

11:30-12:30

#### **Working lunch: Addressing Resilient Authoritarian Rule**

Examples of Belarus and Cuba shows that authoritarianism can be sustained even if it fails to deliver modernization. Actually, many observers – journalists, politicians, and activists - have been foreseeing the collapse of the Cuban regime at least since the end of the Cold War, yet Cuba persists. Cuba shares much in common with Belarus. Are Cuba and Belarus special cases with unique forces that do not operate elsewhere? Why have well-educated Cubans and Belarusians failed to produce democracy? What lessons can be drawn from these cases?

Moderators: **Mr. Steve Nix**, Regional Director for Eurasia, IRI

Keynote speaker:

**Mr. Anatoly Lebedko**, Belarusian politician and the head of the United Civil Party of Belarus (tbc)

Discussants:

**Mr. Lincoln Diaz-Balart**, Former the U.S. congressman

**Mr. David Kramer**, President of Freedom House

**Rep. Howard Berman**, Congressman, U.S. House of Representatives (tbc)

Rep. of opposition leader of **Cuba** (tbc)

#### ***Comments of the PF participants***

12:30 – 12:40

#### **Closing remarks**

**Mr. Emanuelis Zingeris**, President, CoD Parliamentary Forum

Adoption of the Resolution of the Community of Democracies Parliamentary Forum on the occasion of the International Day of Democracy

***For PF members and stakeholders only:***

1:00 – 4:00

Strategic discussion on the Parliamentary Forum for Democracy perspectives

Venue: tba

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**For more information, please contact:**

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