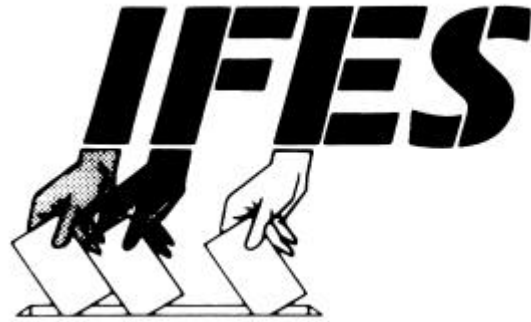


Europe and Asia Report



April 1999

Moldovan President Petru Lucinschi Meets with IFES President Richard Soudriette

During his visit to Washington, D.C. to attend the celebration of the 50-year anniversary of NATO, President Petru Lucinschi of Moldova met with IFES President Richard W. Soudriette. The meeting was also attended by Mr. Nicolae Tabacaru, Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Valeriu Pasat, Minister of Defense, and Mr. Ceslav Ciobanu, Ambassador of the Republic of Moldova to the United States. In addition to President Soudriette, IFES was represented by Ms. Juliana G. Pilon, Program Director for Europe and Asia, and Mr. Michael Conway, Program Officer for Europe and Asia.

President Petru Lucinschi thanked President Soudriette for the support IFES has provided Moldova in making the transition to democracy and discussed areas for future cooperation. Among the issues discussed at the meeting were the socio-political situation in Moldova, the need to refine the legislative framework regulating elections, the means to strike a balance between the responsibilities of the national and local governments. President Lucinschi expressed the hope that IFES would provide assistance to identify ways to improve the transparency and fairness of election campaigns and increase the efficiency of the electoral process through the introduction of technology.

(Moldova continued on page 3)

From left to right: Juliana Pilon, Director of Europe and Asia,

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President Petru Lucinschi, IFES President Richard Soudriette and Ambassador Ceslav Ciobanu



EUROPE

ALBANIA

Return of IFES International Presence to Albania

In April, IFES Election Assessment Advisor Charlotte Souibes traveled to Tirana to assess the progress on electoral reforms since the November referendum on the Constitution and manage the transition to incoming Project Manager Dickson Bailey. Ms. Souibes was responsible for designing and implementing the IFES voter education campaign for the referendum. She is currently meeting with key officials involved in this process and will develop a comprehensive plan for IFES assistance activities in the coming year.

Minister of Local Government Convenes Task Force to Implement Constitution

IFES' Charlotte Souibes met with Minister of Local Government Demeti this month. Mr. Demeti presented Ms. Souibes with a briefing on the status of the Ministry's programs. A large decentralization program was initiated earlier this year in preparation for the local elections in 2001 and is being overseen by the National Committee for Decentralization. The committee is comprised of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Legislative Reforms and Relations with Parliament, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Public Administration and three local associations. The task force is charged with ensuring conformity and compliance with the provisions of the new Constitution and the creation of a new regional administrative unit.

Ministry of Local Government to Undertake Widespread Electoral Reforms

The Ministry of Local Government is involved in another large-scale reform focusing on the development of the electoral code. The code will include federal and local laws on elections and referenda and the creation of the new and permanent Central Election Commission (CEC). Minister Demeti wants to include government and parliamentary decisions in new law. A sub-task force was created by the Minister of Legislative Reforms and Relations with the Parliament to work on electoral code drafting, and liaise with the Ministry of Local Government.

New Resource Center Announced

IFES/Tirana reported that plans for an Election Information Center have been announced by the Ministry of Local Government. The Center, which would be supported by the Ministry of Local Government, would centralize and verify all information on computerized voter lists.

Completion of the Civil/Voter Registry Pilot Projects

With the completion of the OSCE/ODIHR Civil/Voter Registry Pilot Projects in late March, a final report on the project is being prepared by Penny Martin, IFES Civil/Voter Registration Specialist. Initiated in October 1997 as a joint effort with the Albanian government, six municipalities were selected to test the computerization of a national civil registry. The project included the creation of a registry database and local registrar training as well as the administration of a follow-up program to assist local registry officials in the takeover of the project.

Impact Summary

Charlotte Souibes met with Valentina Zace, the head of the Minister of Legislative Reforms' sub-task force on electoral law development. During that meeting, IFES agreed to assist and advise the sub-task force, who welcomed assistance on CEC procedural development and the voting procedures for the local and parliamentary elections. Ms. Zace was interested in items such as European electoral codes that the IFES/Washington and IFES/Albania resource centers could offer for comparative analysis. In order to formalize IFES' technical assistance with the development of the electoral code, the Ministry of Legislative Reforms and Relations with Parliament provided IFES with a letter outlining these areas of cooperation. Moreover, Minister Demeti sought IFES assistance concerning registration issues.

BELARUS

Survey Fieldwork Underway

Under a contract with IFES, the Center for Sociological and Political Research conducted more than 1,200 interviews in Belarus in the month of April. A first for IFES in Belarus, data is being collected to assist NGOs operating in Belarus. Among the attitudes the survey seeks to better understand are the public's views on Belarus' economy, politics, and voting patterns. The survey comes at an interesting time in Belarus, as members of opposition parties are staging a presidential election in May that has not been sanctioned by the government. The controversy surrounding this election stems from a 1996 referendum, which resulted in President Alexander Lukashenko extending the term of the presidency by two years. Prior to the 1996 changes, President Lukashenko's term was due to end in 1999. Critics have charged that the referendum was illegal and that the manner in which the change in the Constitution was promulgated was illegal. Shortly after the referendum, President Lukashenko dismissed the Supreme Soviet and formed a new legislature composed largely of members of his own choosing. Since that time, a parallel opposition government, complete with a Central Election Commission, has been operating in Belarus. The public's understanding of, and attitudes towards the opposition government's election is one of the issues the survey will explore.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA (BIH)

Poplasen's Dismissal on Hold

On 5 March, High Representative for Bosnia Carlos Westendorp dismissed Republika Srpska (RS) President Nikola Poplasen from office for preventing the formation of a new Bosnian Serb

government. Poplasen has refused to step down, in spite of pressure from the West. On 28 April, Westendorp announced that the decision on whether to replace Poplasen will be put on hold until the NATO bombing is over. Westendorp explained that "...decisions made in tense and difficult situations are not the best decisions." (RFE/RL, 28/4/99). The political environment in the RS has been very tense as a result of NATO bombing in neighboring Yugoslavia, and the situation is further aggravated by

the internal political crisis.

Reaction to NATO Attacks

Reactions to the bombing have been very emotional throughout BiH, though sentiments are very different between Bosnian Serbs and Muslims and Croats. These differences have raised concerns among the international community that tensions between the ethnic groups within BiH may escalate as a result.

On 27 April, the Bosnian Serb Parliament adopted a declaration condemning NATO's military action against Yugoslavia. The parliamentary assembly warned that the attacks "threatened to destabilize Bosnia's Serb entity and endanger the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement" (RFE/RL 27/4/99). Many Bosnian Serbs have expressed the view that the NATO bombing is in fact an attack on all Serbs.

In contrast, to some of the reaction in the RS, the Federation's inhabitants have been more supportive of the bombing including coverage in the media. Some perceive the bombing as a long-awaited necessary strike against Milosevic's aggressions. In addition, Federation leaders have expressed their support for the NATO action.

IFES/OSCE Initiate Voter Registration Program

In anticipation of elections later this year, OSCE and IFES, under the leadership of IFES' Linda Edgeworth have initiated the voter registration program. The program for voters living outside BiH began during the first week of April. The by-mail registration program will continue until 10 July. The by-mail registration program in Yugoslavia was interrupted by the NATO action. Completed forms have already started arriving.

In order to inform voters about the upcoming election and the voter registration drive proceeding it, an election information and civic education campaign is under way. A Bosnian-language brochure was prepared for BiH citizens living abroad, explaining the registration and voting procedures they must follow. The brochure, including registration materials have been sent to BiH embassies and consulates worldwide, foreign governments where BiH citizens are residing, international and non-governmental organizations, BiH citizens' clubs, and media targeting BiH citizens. A total of 25,070 pamphlets will be distributed.

The voter registration program within BiH will also be initiated soon. There are four elements that must be met before voter registration can begin in each municipality: completion of a geographic infrastructure determining divisions and subdivisions; approval of the voter registration plan that has been designed by the local election commissions; distribution of registration forms and other essential materials; and training of local voter registration personnel. As part of the transition toward Bosnian-administered elections, local election commissions have been handed over many of the responsibilities associated with the preparations for voter registration. Registration will begin in municipalities that are prepared on 3 May.

In addition to the pamphlets for BiH citizens living abroad, other

informational materials are being prepared as well, for the benefit of BiH citizens both within the country and abroad. This includes motivational and information posters in all three languages, videos, and Internet information to be accessed through the OSCE's webpage (www.oscebih.org).

IFES/OSCE Assist in Candidate Registration

As preparations for elections proceed, the IFES/OSCE team has made significant progress in the design of the 1999 registration program for political parties, coalitions, and independent candidates. By the beginning of April, all the applications, confirmation forms, and accompanying instructions were printed in the three BiH languages and English.

Permanent Election Law Project Progresses

IFES' Jessie Pilgrim and Ben Goldsmith continued their work, assisting with the drafting of the permanent election law (PEL). A PEL Secretariat has been established. Some of the issues being considered are: rights and regulations of the media and advertising; a code of conduct regulating parties, coalitions, candidates and supporters; the role of domestic and international observers; and the registration of voters.

In preparation for the completion of the permanent election law, the Voter Information and Civic Education team, under the leadership of Elise Schoux, developed a brochure which explains the current electoral system, the process of drafting a permanent election law, the current electoral system, possible changes to the system, and applicable concepts. It is general and simple, so that it can be easily read and understood even by those who do not understand many of the basic concepts of elections. Two hundred thousand copies of the brochure will be produced and distributed: 84,000 in Bosnian, 60,000 in Serbian, and 56,000 in Croatian.

Civic Education Program Reports More Successes

In spite of the tensions caused by NATO air strikes in Yugoslavia and by the recent political crisis in the RS, most of IFES' civic education programs continue unfettered. The work of some of the civic trainers, especially those in the Doboje region, is considerably more difficult in the current environment, because people are preoccupied with political events and the officials have political issues high on their agendas. However, the relations developed by IFES' Ed Morgan and his staff with municipal officials are not forgotten, and IFES staff continues to be welcomed even in such times when contacts with the international community are almost entirely frozen in the RS.

Between 15 March and 16 April, IFES initiated an additional 25 local level initiatives known as GAINs, bringing the total of citizens groups trained and assisted by IFES to 208. At the same time, existing GAINs continued to make significant progress.

IFES is proud to report several successes this month. In Gornji Dolac, Travnik municipality, the citizens' group received a trash container within ten days of filing their request. They had been requesting the container the local utility company for the trash container for quite some time, but it was only with the help of IFES trainers that the efforts came to fruition.

Another success story is reported in Zelinja, where IFES recently initiated a GAIN. The children of this remote village previously had to walk seven kilometers to the first bus station. Having received civic education and training from IFES staff, the group requested a bus line to their village. Their request was approved by municipal officials, which also agreed to cover some of the pupils' travel expenses.

MOLDOVA

Training Schedule Finalized

In preparation for the 23 May local elections, IFES, in cooperation with the Central Election Commission (CEC), finalized a training schedule for election officials. Four IFES/CEC sponsored training seminars for election officials will be held, two in Chisinau, one in the northern Moldovan town of Balti and one in the southern Moldovan town of Cahul. As a compliment to the election official training, distribution continues of the *Poll Worker Guide* developed by the CEC and IFES. Copies of the *Guide* will be available to every poll worker on election day.

Assistance with Territorial Restructuring

As the date of local elections nears and with it a territorial restructuring of the nation, problems are beginning to emerge. These difficulties were not unforeseen as the territorial reform package represents a substantial reorganizing of Moldova from nearly 40 provinces into 12. The government has begun to receive complaints from citizens that because their locality is being incorporated into a larger province, they will be forced to travel farther to access courts and government offices. In response to these concerns, Andrei Funieru of the Juridic Direction of Parliament met with representatives of IFES/Moldova to discuss strategies to address these issues.

Andrei Neaga of the Moldovan Department of Local Public Administration approached IFES/Moldova in March to develop a training program for the soon to be elected Prefects. The office of Prefect is a new position created by the administrative-territorial reforms. One Prefect, appointed by the president is to serve in each province. The position of Prefect is envisioned as a link between the local and national government.

Political parties and other interested groups are increasingly approaching IFES seeking election-related materials in preparation for the local elections. IFES continues to provide such information and materials through its resource center, which is open to the public. In response to an information request from the Social-Democratic Party, IFES supplied the organization with copies of the *Poll Worker Guide* and the *Local Observer Guide*, both of which were produced by IFES/Moldova. On 15 April representatives of the Gauz-Yeri Popular Assembly visited the IFES Resource Center in search of comparative materials and on 23 April, IFES provided them with the materials. IFES also provided the Embassy of China with a copy of the Law on Local Public Administration at the Embassy's request.

IFES Works Towards the Development of Civil Society

As part of its efforts to support the development of a vibrant civic culture in Moldova, IFES continues to play an active role in the non-governmental organization (NGO) community. In April, IFES/Moldova met with Boris Steinman, Chairman of the NGO Club to discuss public service certification procedures. NGOs that receive certification from the Ministry of Justice are entitled to reduced taxes, as well as other benefits. Currently, only about 10% of NGOs registered with the Ministry of Justice have been awarded certification. Critics have complained that the procedures for applying for and receiving public service certification are unclear and too difficult to satisfy. The NGO Club has requested IFES/Moldova's assistance in researching the current legislation regarding this matter and suggesting changes to Moldova's Law on Sponsorship.

The issue of public certification was also discussed at a meeting with Natalia Izdebski of the Ministry of Justice. One of the difficulties with the legislation governing NGOs that has emerged is with the status of branches of international NGOs. The Civil Code of the Republic of Moldova stipulates that branches of international NGOs are not themselves legal entities, but the Ministry of Justice has declared that all international NGOs operating in Moldova must establish themselves as legal entities. Ms. Izdebski discussed the seemingly irreconcilable differences between these two positions with IFES/Moldova's staff. The Moldovan government has been responsive to the needs of the NGO community in Moldova. In an April meeting, Petru Gorbunenco, member of the NGO Certification Commission, informed IFES/Moldova that President Lucinschi intends to establish a permanent liaison between the NGO sector and the Moldovan government.

IFES/Moldova continued its work with NGOs in April by attending the seminar "Local Elections and Their Impact on Society," hosted by the European Council and the Association of Mayors and Local Communities. One of the issues addressed at the seminar was the role the media has been playing in the campaign leading up to local elections. Unfortunately, many of the campaign advertisements have been negative, attacking other candidates rather than focusing on issues. In the opinion of many of those present at the seminar, these ads can lessen voters' enthusiasm for the electoral process.

IFES Continues Public Education Efforts

Beginning 6 April, IFES/Moldova, together with LADOM, aired the first broadcast of Civic Voice, Voters' Radio Guide. The program is broadcast over ANTENA C Chisinau Municipality Radio Station. The program focuses on the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a democracy, the coming territorial reforms, and the role of government officials in the electoral process. The program will be broadcast weekly until 21 May. The April broadcasts focused on the role of the Central Election Commission, voter registration, the provisions of the Hague Declaration relating to elections, and election monitoring.

Issue No. 23 of *Civic Voice* was released in late April. In addition to an article about the 23 April meeting between President Petru Lucinschi and IFES President Richard Soudriette, the issue also

featured interviews with Mihai Perebinos, Chairman of the Association of Mayors and Local Communities and Victor Popa, an expert in local public administration with the Viitorul Foundation. Distribution of *Civic Voice* continues in both the state language and Russian. At the request of *SEAL* (Social Economy and Law) published by the European Foundation Center, IFES/Moldova has provided an interview with Natalia Izdebski of the Ministry of Justice from issue No. 21 of *Civic Voice* for reprinting in *SEAL*.

In preparation for the 23 May elections, IFES/Moldova completed production of the *Local Observer Guide*. The *Guide* will be used in conjunction with the training of local election observers sponsored by IFES and LADOM. The *Local Observer Guide* will be distributed to 400 local election observers.

RUSSIAN FEDERATION

IFES Recommendations Impact Voting Rights Act Amendments
Amendments to the Law on Basic Guarantees of the Electoral Rights of Citizens of the Russian Federation (Voting Rights Act) were signed into law on 30 March 30 1999. IFES/Russia reviewed the 48 amended articles and came to a conclusion that IFES' recommendations were used in at least a third of them. For example, The Voting Rights Act now provides for ballot access for candidates and electoral associations either by an electoral deposit or by minimum number of signatures. The Law also allows election commissions to verify a random sampling of such signatures, rather than each signature one by one (art.32(4)), thus eliminating an unrealistic and cumbersome feature of the previous law. Central Election Commission (CEC) Chairman Alexander Veshniakov hailed the changes as "great advances."

Additional changes in the new law include improvements or procedural refinements in the following areas: a more explicit election administration calendar, a stronger ballot access regime, and a more hierarchical CEC. The law provides more clearly defined rules regulating the media in the electoral processes, the granting of free air time Election Commissions for public service announcements, and the requirement that candidates disclose their assets in order to register. In an attempt to limit corruption, the law requires the criminal background of candidates to appear on the ballot itself and prohibits candidates and electoral associations from organizing transportation of voters on the day of the election.

A potentially problematic addition to the law is a limit on the right of incumbents to be elected in the case of runoff elections. Moreover, the regulation of campaign financing was left to individual jurisdictions as they see fit, and the obligation to report financial activities is still imposed on banks rather than candidates.

Contrary to IFES' recommendations, the minimum threshold of voter participation was left at 50% for referenda. More troubling, the law ambiguously allows election commissions to declare invalid elections where "irregularities ... make it impossible to reliably establish the result of the expression of the will of voters..."

Draft Duma Election Legislation Under Review

State Duma Deputy Victor L. Sheinis reported that the Lower House has scheduled the second hearing of the Duma Elections Draft Legislation for 19 May, and that the third and fourth hearings on this law will occur on 21 May. Dr. Sheinis admitted that the presidential impeachment procedure scheduled by the State Duma for 15 May could distract deputies' attention from more pressing legislative issues and delay the passage of the law indefinitely. There has also been some resistance to the legislation by the presidential administration, which is seeking to convert the Duma's mixed electoral system (50% of the seats are filled by single mandate, 50% by proportional representation) to all single mandate districts.

In his recent review of the draft legislation, IFES/Russia domestic legal expert Dr. Alexander Postnikov concludes that the new draft law on elections to the State Duma is in compliance with the Voting Rights Act of 1995 and its 1999 Amendments. Should the law be passed, it would promote a more refined and flexible legal base for free and fair elections to the State Duma.

The new draft is comprehensive in approach and seeks to eliminate many of the ambiguities found in the current law. However, in Dr. Postnikov's opinion, the new draft allows little flexibility in election administration procedures, instead dictating specific instructions that regulate each stage of the election process. Furthermore, noted Dr. Postnikov, the draft law has significantly grown in volume compared to the current law and the language used in it is sometimes overly complex. Nevertheless, the draft law marks an important step in removing contradictions from Russia's election laws.

Registration for Duma Elections to Begin in Mid-August

CEC Chairman Alexander Veshniakov has announced that the registration of election associations for the upcoming Duma elections will begin in the middle of August. The current legislation regulating elections to the State Duma requires that registration of parties and election associations is to begin no later than four months prior to elections, which are now scheduled for 19 December. Chairman Veshniakov also stated that the formation of the CEC Administrative Apparatus would be completed by 15 May.

IFES/Russia Resource Center to be Linked to Other NIS Resource Centers

The IFES/Russia Resource Center will soon become part of an NIS-wide project designed to electronically link IFES' other resource centers in the Caucasus, Central Asia, Ukraine, and Moldova. The goal is to continue expanding the holdings of the regional resource centers and to create a unified database on the Internet and make it available to all NIS citizens. The site will also offer numerous documents from the Resource Centers' holdings on-line, and users will be able to locate and order materials available only in hard copy. A full-time Coordinator will manage the project from Moscow.

Institute for Election System Development Seeks

First Projects

The Institute for Election Systems Development (IESD), the official successor of IFES/Russia, is in the process of registration with the Russian federal government and tax authorities. It is estimated that the registration procedure will be completed on 15 May. Meanwhile, IESD has drafted a proposal to IFES/Washington seeking funding for the implementation of a project that will put the organization in operation. During the next few months, IESD hopes to begin implementation of new projects now in development, and to continue building on its experience working with IFES/Russia in order to establish IESD in the Russian NGO community as a professional, reliable, and customer-oriented organization.

Redesigned IFES/Russia Web Site Now In Operation

The new web site of IFES/Russia is up and running, and can be accessed at www.ifes.ru. IFES intends to equip the newly revived web site with more resources and eventually make all the documentation from its Resource Center available online as part of the NIS Resource Center (see above).

SLOVAKIA

Former PM Meciar Enters Presidential Race

On 9 April, the deadline to declare candidacy, former Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar announced that he would stand as *Movement for a Democratic Slovakia's* (HZDS) candidate. At an extraordinary HZDS party congress on 17 April, Meciar was re-elected as Party Chairman at which time he criticized the ruling coalitions' policies as chaotic. Meciar asked that the party be prepared for an early parliamentary election that he expects by the end of 2000. Meciar's candidacy makes it likely that there will be a second round of elections on 29 May. In addition, it has been reported that some of the independent candidates have been urged by civic organizations to step down in order to narrow the field; as of yet no candidate has agreed to step down.

Ruling Coalition Agreement Being Violated

The *Party of Civic Understanding* (SOP) chairman Rudolf Schuster announced at the party national conference on 24 April that SOP is watching the violation of the coalition agreement by some members of the ruling coalition with concern. Several members have voiced support to other candidates for the presidential race, as is the case of *DU's* support of Juraj Svec as its candidate. However, ruling coalition officials Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda, Parliament Chairman Jozef Migas and Hungarian Coalition Party deputy head Arpad Duka-Zolyomy expressed their support for ruling coalition candidate Rudolf Schuster at a press conference on 21 April. Dzurinda said that he was "aware of his signature under the coalition agreement" which named Schuster as the coalition's official joint candidate for the presidential elections. (Czech News Agency, 4/21/99) Nonetheless, Schuster has expressed that the SOP would initiate talks to review the fulfillment of the coalition agreement immediately after the presidential elections.

IFES to Begin Assistance with Electoral Reform

This month IFES received USAID/Bratislava's approval to begin assistance to the Commission on Review of the Constitution (CRC), the recently formed commission mandated by parliament to examine issues of constitutional and electoral reform. IFES Election Law Specialist Carol Conragan will arrive in country on 8 May to assist the commission in their efforts. Ms. Conragan will focus on comparative models from existing democratic governments, offer objective commentary when working through difficult and controversial laws, help the group to identify the current systems' major weaknesses and create a summary of recommendations for the continuation of the reform process. She will also encourage the commission to initiate public information efforts and be available to serve as a link between the CRC, MOI and the NGO community, essentially keeping IFES local partners and other interested NGOs abreast of the progress being made toward electoral law reform.

IFES believes such assistance will fortify the Slovak government's efforts to address the issue of electoral and constitutional reform sooner rather than later. In light of the recent friction among the governing coalition members regarding presidential candidates this could become of even greater necessity. The above outlined assistance will help to ensure that a parliamentary election law that meets international standards is in place for the next parliamentary elections.

UKRAINE

IFES Director Visits Ukraine

As part of a working trip in the New Independent States (NIS), IFES Director for Europe and Asia Dr. Juliana Pilon visited IFES' offices in Kyiv. While in Ukraine, Dr. Pilon took part in a series of meetings to plan IFES' strategies for the coming election cycle. The date for the first round of the 1999 presidential elections has been set for 31 October.

While in Ukraine, Dr. Pilon met with Chairman Igor Tymchenko of the Constitutional Court. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss ways in which IFES might work with the Constitutional Court to strengthen the courts of Ukraine. Chairman Tymchenko proposed at the meeting that IFES and the Constitutional Court might co-sponsor a series of seminars on the rule of law for judges and legislators.

In April, Dr. Pilon also met with Chairman Boyko of the Supreme Court. Dr. Pilon and Chairman Boyko discussed the recent Adjudication of Disputes Conference by sponsored by the Court, IFES and ARD/CHECCHI Rule of Law Consortium. The conference held 18-19 March addressed the legislative, judicial, and normative aspects of resolving contested election disputes (see *IFES Europe and Asia Report*, March 1999). Chairman Boyko expressed the hope that IFES will be able to host other conferences on the subject. Tentative plans are underway to develop a series of conferences on the adjudication of election disputes at the regional level. It is hoped that by addressing the issue of contested elections

prior to the presidential election, much of the administrative and judicial confusion encountered during the 1998 parliamentary elections can be avoided. Currently, two seats in Parliament remain vacant due to an unending series of suits and counter suits filed in Ukrainian courts.

Also during her visit to Kyiv, Dr. Pilon met with representatives of local NGOs to discuss the development of a civic education program in Ukrainian secondary schools. The program as envisioned by IFES would include both classroom and practical elements. Students would spend part of the school year learning about elections and their future responsibilities and privileges as participants in the democratic process. Later in the year, the students would take part in a mock election, playing various roles including candidates, campaign workers, the press, members of the election commission, and voters. During her visit Dr. Pilon met with Dr. Sergei Riabov of the University of Kyiv, Mohyla Academy to discuss the project. Dr. Riabov indicated his support for the project and his desire to take part in the activity. Dr. Pilon also met with Polina Verbitska, President of the Regional Association of Teachers (DOBA) to discuss the project. DOBA is based in Lviv with branches throughout Western Ukraine. The organization seeks to support the continued democratization of Ukraine and to improve the methods of teaching social studies and history. Dr. Verbitska expressed her interest in the mock election program and plans for future meetings on the subject were made.

Dr. Pilon also met with representatives of the United States while in Kyiv. During her visit, Dr. Pilon met with Greg Huger, Head of Mission for USAID, Marilyn Schmidt USAID Democracy Officer and David Black of USAID's Office of Democratic and Social Transition (ODST) as well as John Didiuk from the State Department. The purpose of these meetings was to discuss IFES activities in Ukraine and coordinate strategies for the coming election cycle.

Mirror Web Site Up and Running

Work was completed in April on the mirror web site of the IFES/Ukraine homepage. The site (www.ifes-ukraine.org) offers election-related material in English. Recent additions to the site include the Law on the Election of the President of Ukraine, which was passed by Parliament 15 March, and an election calendar detailing important dates in the 1999 presidential election cycle. The mirror web site is important because in the past, use of the IFES/Ukraine's web site has been limited by technical problems. An increase in the demands placed on Ukraine's aging communication infrastructure has often resulted in the web site being inaccessible.

1999 Survey

As part of its project activities, IFES has begun work on the *Survey of Public Opinion in Ukraine 1999*. The survey is the 6th in a series to examine the Ukrainian Public's attitudes towards their government, democracy, and the economy. In addition to tracking long term trends of Ukrainian public's attitudes towards reforms, the survey will also ask respondents to share their expectations regarding the October 1999 presidential election. The overall goal of the survey is to provide those organizations supporting

Ukraine's transition to democracy with a tool to measure their success and identify the various needs of Ukraine's electorate. Once completed, the survey report will be released in both Ukrainian and English.

In April, IFES began work on the drafting of the survey questionnaire. IFES relied upon the expertise of survey analyst and Senior Vice President of American Viewpoint, Gary Ferguson, in the development of the questionnaire. Representatives from the US embassy in Ukraine and the USAID office in Kyiv also provided input. Taking these comments into consideration, additions and corrections have been made. The survey fieldwork is scheduled to begin in Ukraine this summer.

Future Activity

For most of the month of April, the Central Election Commission (CEC) has been on break. The CEC returns from break in the first week of May and IFES will begin to coordinate with the CEC to provide assistance in preparations for elections. This summer, IFES will conduct training exercises for poll workers as well as develop a poll worker guidebook for use in each polling station. In addition, IFES will create and air a series of public service announcements (PSAs) intended to inform voters of the dates of the elections and of relevant changes in the election laws. Work has already begun on the PSAs. IFES voter education expert Hank Valentino is currently on creating scripts for the proposed television spots, which are equally adaptable to a radio format. Work has also started on the staging of mass-media conference in Kyiv. The purpose of the conference is to bring together members of the press and legislators to discuss issues relating to the media's coverage of the upcoming elections.

CAUCASUS/CENTRAL ASIA

ARMENIA

New Election Commission Members Appointed

On 26 April, in accordance with the Universal Electoral Code (UEC), members of the Central Election Commission (CEC), as well as members of Regional Election Commissions (REC) were appointed anew by qualifying political parties and the government. According to the code, electoral commissions shall be composed of 13 members: 3 persons appointed by the government, 5 representatives of political parties or alliances with current representation in the National Assembly, and 5 representatives of political parties or blocs who have submitted at least 30,000 signatures of support to the CEC.

Turnover within the commissions was much less than had been expected. Seven of the 13 newly appointed members to the CEC previously served on the commission. Subsequent to the appointment of new members, the CEC and the 75 RECs convened on 27 April to elect Chairmen, Vice-Chairmen and Secretaries. CEC members elected Artak Sahradian, a government appointee, formerly the Director of the National Institute of Labor and Social Research in the Social Security Ministry, to serve as Chairman. Vanya Mkhitarian, an appointee of the Communist Party will serve as Vice-Chairman.

and Armenian National Movement, 12.

IFES Meets with New Chairman of the CEC

Following Mr. Sahradian's election as CEC Chairman, IFES/Armenia Project Manager Andre Bouchard met with the Chairman to underscore the importance of the commission's work in preparation for May's parliamentary elections. Bouchard outlined IFES support for the May elections in the areas of election administration training and voter education - areas which the previous CEC had collaborated actively with IFES.

In response, Chairman Sahradian expressed his appreciation of the election support of IFES in the past and added that the CEC wishes to continue its cooperation with IFES in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed earlier this year between the CEC and IFES.

CEC Adopts Procedures for Military Voting, and Voting by Citizens Residing Abroad

On 8 April, the CEC adopted procedures for both military voting and voting for Armenians residing abroad. New voting procedures for these two sizable populations of potential voters were necessary due to new requirements in the UEC. IFES provided advice and commentary to the CEC on these and other important procedural issues.

Under the procedures passed for military voting, commanders of military units will draw up lists of soldiers and the members of their families residing in their respective territories. These voters' lists are to be placed in the military units at least 15 days before election day. At least five days before the poll, the commanders of military units must present the voters' lists to the leaders of the relevant communities and these community leaders must then hand the lists over to the chairpersons of the relevant electoral commissions. The population of eligible voters in the military is estimated to be 60,000.

Meanwhile, eligible voters residing abroad will be allowed to register with the Embassy or Consulate in the country where they presently live up until 5 days prior to election day. Voting in the United States will take place on 30 May at the Armenian Embassy in Washington, D.C., the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Armenia to the UN in New York and at the Armenian Consulate in Glendale, California.

CEC Announces Party and Candidate Registrations

With the completion of the party and candidate registration process in April, the CEC announced that 21 parties and/or blocs would compete for the 56 seats allocated proportionally in the elections to the National Assembly scheduled for 30 May. In addition, the CEC certified that 808 single-mandate candidates filed and qualified for the majoritarian races that will take place in 75 districts around the country.

Of these 808 single-mandate candidates, 424 are affiliated or represent political parties or blocs. The highest number of candidates was nominated by the Communist Party (63). Meanwhile, the Republican Party nominated 62 candidates, the National-Democratic Union, 45, Armenian Revolutionary Federation, 41, People's Party, 39, Self-Determination Union, 36,

IFES Undertakes Joint Voter Education/Information Campaign

In cooperation with the CEC, IFES Voter Education Consultant, Leanne McDonald began initial preparations for a voter education/information campaign to support the 30 May elections.

The IFES/CEC joint voter education/information effort includes a targeted design focusing on the legal aspects of the voting process and the UEC. The design utilizes a combination of televised public information spots, radio spots, newspaper inserts, brochures and posters.

IFES plans to air nine TV spots on the electoral process between 21 April and 30 May. Eight of the spots will be new productions. By the end of April, production on three spots had been completed.

The first spot is designed to remind voters of the importance of checking the voters list prior to election day. The Secrecy of the Ballot spot uses humor and an older female voter to emphasize the right to a secret ballot. The "Be an Informed Voter" spot lists the many elements involved in building free and fair elections such as the constitution, election law, election officials, observers, proxies, and mass media. The spot ends with the informed voter highlighted as the key to the electoral process. These PSAs are running on the state-owned Armenian National Television nationwide as well as 13 additional independent stations in Yerevan and throughout the country.

Apart from the TV spots, IFES is also involved in the production and airing of radio PSAs – six in Armenian and three in Russian. These spots are scheduled to run on state-owned Armenian National Radio and the popular private station HAI-FM. Independent stations in Vanadzor and Gyumri have also offered to air the PSAs free of charge. Two popular Russian-language stations covering Yerevan and the surrounding communities will air the Russian language PSAs. By 30 April, three PSAs had been completed and were airing nationwide. IFES Plans Training Assistance Program IFES is currently supporting the CEC in the preparation of a procedures guidebook for the Precinct Electoral Commission (PEC) officials. The PEC Guidebook will serve as the basis for the training of the PEC members by the regional elections officials prior to the elections. Seven manuals will be distributed to each precinct for use on election day.

In May, IFES election administration consultant, Judith Davis, will be supporting the REC chairs in training the precinct level officials as mandated by the UEC. IFES will provide the training assistance program in all 11 regions of the country.

Impact Summary

In reaffirming its commitment to work with IFES under the present IFES/CEC MOU, the newly appointed CEC is expressing its good faith in striving toward a more responsible and transparent system of elections in Armenia. IFES, as the primary technical assistance provider to the CEC, has provided the commission with consultation resulting in the adoption of voting procedures for significant populations of voters—soldiers and those Armenians

living abroad. Meanwhile, collaboration in the areas of voter education/information and in the training of precinct-level election administrators between IFES and the CEC remains strong and will provide Armenia's electoral system with both informed voters and informed, well-trained election officials.

AZERBAIJAN

Coordination with International NGOs Operating in Azerbaijan

IFES/Azerbaijan Project Manager Alan Wall and Project Assistant Farida Babayeva met with several international NGOs working in the democracy and governance field in Azerbaijan, to exchange information on current developments and work plans and to develop future coordination activities. Discussions with ISAR and the Eurasia Foundation focused on the roles of local NGOs. In addition, IFES discussed enhancing the complementarily aspects of their respective democracy and governance programs with NDI, IRI, American Bar Association (ABA), and the Friedrich Neumann Foundation. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) and the Organization for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) indicated their interest in continuing their partnership with IFES that developed during the 1998 Presidential elections, by pursuing similar joint training material development and training presentation strategies for the local government elections scheduled for this year. All participants discussed maximizing information sharing and increasing access to resource materials held individually.

Assistance for Local Government Elections

IFES/Azerbaijan held a series of meetings with the staff of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Local Government regarding the proposed content of local government legislation – on which IFES has discussed relevant international standards with the committee's drafting staff – and the assistance that IFES can provide in informing voters about local government issues and the local government elections. The committee is seeking an agreement with IFES that will complement the assistance being provided by the Council of Europe. Discussions on these issues, and provision of IFES comments on the legislative framework for local government are continuing as the shape of the legislation and the timing of its passage through the Milli Majlis gradually emerge.

IFES/Azerbaijan Staff Attend Parliamentary Committee Meetings

Alan Wall, Farida Babayeva, and Office Manager Shahla Mahmudova were invited to attend the meetings of the Permanent Parliamentary Committee on Local Government held on 26 and 29 April. At these meetings local government status and the latest draft laws on local government elections were formally presented and discussed. The chair of the Committee, Prof. Zahid Qaralov, emphasized that these drafts were a mere skeleton of the legal framework required for local government, to which much more flesh would need to be added.

IFES was the only international organization invited to these discussions. The attendees included: the Speaker and Deputy

Speakers of the Milli Majlis; the Chair, Deputy Chair and Secretary of the Central Election Commission (CEC); the Mayor of Baku; representatives from the Department of Justice and the Supreme Court; and other permanent parliamentary committee chairpersons. In a committee dominated by government supporters there was considerable debate about a number of provisions included in, and issues omitted from, the draft laws.

At these meetings, the first publicly released draft of the law governing the status of local governments was presented. It outlines a single-tier local government, with citizens determining whether they should have a separate local government, with no minimum restrictions on size, in their area. Notably, it does not define the powers and functions of local governments, particularly how they will relate to local appointed organs of state that will continue to exist in parallel with elected structures. In addition, it does not address issues such as the determination of local government boundaries, or fully define the structure of local government in the two major cities – Baku and Gandja. These omissions were the subject of intensive discussion during the committee meetings.

The local government elections draft law provoked lively exchanges of views both within the committee and between the committee and representatives of other organizations present. In a number of respects this draft differs significantly from earlier drafts proposed by the government. Major changes are:

- The election system is now proposed to be solely majoritarian, using multi-mandate constituencies from each, of which three representatives will be elected. The previous proposal envisaged local municipal councils made up of representatives elected by a majoritarian system from single mandate constituencies, and other representatives elected by local government-wide Proportional Representation of candidates from party lists.
- Unlike earlier proposals, political parties would play no part in these elections and have no rights to nominate candidates. The framework for nomination of candidates would allow self-nomination of individual 'independent' candidates, or nomination by local 'initiative groups of voters'.

Leading opposition parties have strongly indicated that these two significant changes in the framework are not acceptable to them.

Other significant changes include the devolution of operational control of elections to Territorial Election Commissions (TEC) in each local government area. Members of the TEC will be selected by lottery from nominated persons. An open, public meeting, rather than an election will select representatives for municipal councils in local government areas with a population of less than 500 (estimated at between 10 and 25% of all local governments).

During the committee meetings there was intensive debate over the respective roles of the CEC and TECs in these elections. In addition, the participation of Internally Displaced Persons in

municipal elections and the method, still to be decided, of selecting municipal councils for local government areas whose population is less than 500 was debated.

Milli Majlis Considers Draft Local Government Legislation

On 30 April, the first two of the planned 21 laws and regulations that will form the framework for local government operations and elections in Azerbaijan were introduced for first reading to the Milli Majlis. These two draft laws deal with local government elections and the status of local government. Members of the opposition parties' Democratic Bloc boycotted the parliamentary session, in part due to their existing boycott of parliamentary business resulting from disagreements over the application of parliamentary procedures, and in part due to what they regard as inadequate consideration being given to their member parties' own draft proposals of these laws.

Legislation to be drafted will deal with issues such as local government boundaries; local government taxation and financial systems; relationships between local governments and organs of the State; the transfer and management of state property placed under the control of local governments; services to be provided by local governments; and local government referendums.

Meetings With Opposition Leaders and Leaders of Local NGOs

During April, IFES met with leading figures in opposition parties and affiliated NGOs. IFES staff held highly constructive meetings with Isa Gambar, chairman of Musavat Party and with Etibar Mamedov, chairman of the Azerbaijan National Independence Party, as well as with two leading figures allied with the Popular Front Party – Assim Mollazade, President of the NGO Euro Atlantic Centre, and Sabit Bagarov, President of the NGO FAR. At these meetings IFES emphasized its commitment to wide consultation on electoral and governance issues. In turn, these leaders welcomed the involvement of IFES in the preparation for the planned upcoming local government elections. Major issues included the composition of the CEC (which all these leaders believed required amendment), a number of integral points for the formation of local governments, the timing of local government elections, the powers and functions that should be devolved to local government, and the election system to be used.

GEORGIA

Assessment of Voter Registration

As part of its commitment to supporting and strengthening the election system of Georgia, IFES conducted a two-week assessment visit to review the current voter registration system and to recommend feasible alternatives for its improvement. IFES Voter Registration Specialist Enrique Saltos spent two weeks from 12-25 April conducting a study. During this time he held meetings with officers from all levels of election commissions, the Central Election Commission (CEC) and Precinct Chairpersons. Interviews with representatives of political parties and NGOs provided non-governmental viewpoints, while discussions with the heads of the Census and Passport/Visa Offices explored possible linkages between citizen registers and voter registers. At a meeting with the Legal Affairs Committee of Parliament, Saltos promoted

the need for any new system of voter registration to be supported by a legal structure. The Deputy Chairman assured him that the Committee would fully support any new system with necessary amendments in the election law. Near the conclusion of the assessment, USAID sponsored a briefing on the voter registration assessment, to which international donors and NGOs were invited. Saltos reported on his findings and outlined several alternative plans for improving the voter registration system.

Slow and Careful Process of Amending the Election Law

The election law of Georgia is incorporated into the Organic Law of Georgia. The work of amending it before the October 1999 parliamentary elections has proceeded slowly and carefully, in order to garner the necessary broad-based support needed to pass such major legislation. The present election law was passed in 1995, immediately before the last parliamentary elections; four years later the law stands in need of revision, both to meet changing technical election requirements and to address political considerations of a rapidly changing transitional democracy. In February, Parliamentary leadership assigned the task of shaping amendments to the election law to its Legal Affairs Committee, and the task is still ongoing three months later, with hope of completion by early summer. IFES has contributed to the ongoing work of election law change in numerous ways: in holding a post-election conference that highlighted needed changes; by bringing IFES Election Law Specialist Antonia Dolor to Georgia for a two-week consultation; through providing ongoing comment and advice on amendment of the law; and by providing English translation of draft amendments in order to make them available for study and comment by other international partners. In addition, when the CEC sought information based on the election laws of other countries, IFES/Georgia prepared a review of how central election commissions are constituted according to the election laws of 29 countries in Europe, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia.

Georgia admitted to the Council of Europe

In a ceremony in Strasbourg on April 27, the flag of Georgia was raised in front of the Council of Europe Parliament Building, marking Georgia as the 41st and newest member. Later, President Shevardnadze acknowledged COE membership as an increased commitment to meeting international standards of democratic governance, human rights, and international conduct. Earlier this spring IFES/Georgia compiled resource workbooks containing a selection of international human-rights documents that pertain to elections, in Georgian and Russian languages. IFES presented these workbooks to the CEC, the Legal Affairs Committee of Parliament, and to NGOs, in addition to placing copies in the IFES/Georgia resource library.

Report on Sakrebulo Elections

Though the Sakrebulo (local government) elections took place on 15 November last year. The CEC recently completed a comprehensive 600-page report on those local elections. The impressive report contains detailed information on numbers of voters in districts and municipalities; finances provided through the CED; parties and block including numbers of candidates by parties; activities of observers; activity of voters by municipality,

district (rayon) and region; and results by parties, cities, regions, and municipalities. Data lists are supplemented by forty colorful pages of computer-generated graphics: charts, maps and graphs.

The CEC hopes to publish their report, with assistance from IFES, in order to make it available to political parties and other interested groups before the October parliamentary elections.

Impact Summary

The assessment of the voter registration system and the reactions of the Georgians reflect a commitment to build more trust, increase transparency and ensure a fair and equitable process of voter registration. The work of the CEC in painstakingly preparing the detailed data report on the 15 November 1998 local elections emphasizes the CEC's commitment to transparency. Publishing and distributing the report, with support from IFES, will further demonstrate the CEC's commitment to building a more democratic election process.

KAZAKHSTAN

Curriculum Development Project Continues

IFES/Central Asia Regional Project Manager Tom Leckinger, Regional Program Coordinator Saule Buldekbaeva, and Baghlan Yerzhan, Regional Communications Coordinator, participated in a meeting with new Chairperson of the Committee on Education, Rysty Zhumabekova, to discuss the IFES curriculum development project. Mrs. Zhumabekova expressed her interest and support for the project, and promised to review the IFES draft textbook and appoint a liaison from her committee to help coordinate and manage its implementation. The book will be edited taking into consideration the feedback received from Kazakhstan's teachers and scholars in order to produce a text that can best reflect country-specific issues as well as educate high school students about democracy and their duty as citizens.

Tom Leckinger, Program Officer Anthony Bowyer, and Buldekbaeva met with USIS Director Richard Brown and Public Affairs Officer Vivian Walker to discuss the IFES textbook and curriculum development project. Brown and Walker presented information on the USIS-sponsored "Project Citizen" initiative focusing on teaching students about their rights as citizens vis-à-vis the government and of the importance of government accountability. They suggested that the IFES draft textbook, which focuses on the elements of a democratic system for students in the 10th and 11th levels, and the accompanying curriculum be broken into two parts to be taught over two years. Moreover, it was determined that the text, as currently written, is a general progression from the existing texts being used currently at lower levels. Walker underscored the need for teachers of higher education to review the text, an idea already proposed by IFES to the Department of Education.

The IFES team also met with Nazilya Irgebayeva, Special Liaison with the Department of Education, at her office in Almaty. Mrs. Irgebayeva was appointed as the official liaison of the Department of Education with IFES following an earlier introductory session held between IFES and Education Chair Rysty Zhumabekova to discuss the textbook and curriculum development initiative. Irgebayeva indicated that the IFES text could be integrated into the

"State and Law" curriculum currently being taught between the 9th and 11th levels in Kazakhstan. Irgebayeva was presented a Kazakh-language translation of the IFES text and indicated that she would pass it on to the Department of Education's Methodological Department for analysis and review. Following a review and revision of the basic text, the book and curriculum will be adopted to meet specific needs of the students of Kazakhstan, with each chapter focusing on relevant Kazakhstani laws and norms. Upon adoption of the text, which will incorporate material provided by local, independent authors, a curriculum will be prepared that will provide the basis for teaching training. The training is projected to take place after the selection of 32 schools nationwide to host the pilot project.

IFES Renews Commitment to Region

IFES staff met with USAID/Central Asia Mission Director Glen Anders to discuss our commitment to conducting civic education in Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan and establishing an enhanced presence in Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan in support of electoral sector development. Anders reaffirmed the Mission's own pledge to support democratic transition efforts in the region and praised IFES for its work in addressing the needs of emerging democracies through its programs.

Legislative Amendments

On April 28 at the second joint session of the Majilis parliamentary deputies discussed and passed changes and amendments to five basic laws affecting elections and interaction between branches of power. The main election amendments include: reducing the registration fee for candidates for deputy in the Senate and Majilis from 100 times to 50 times the monthly wage, abolishing the provisions that elections are considered to have been held if more than 50% of the population voted, campaign finance funding for political parties, and vote counting, including introduction of a mixed system in which seats in the Majilis will be elected using party lists. Article 4 of the Decree on Elections, which prohibits candidates from registering to run in the election who have administrative violations, was not amended, and though the principle of "one person, one vote" was explicitly mentioned among the revisions, the concept of proxy voting has been formalized in a separate amendment to the Decree on Elections. IFES worked to provide deputies with copies of past election observation reports which detail concerns with many issues ultimately addressed in the new draft. The timeline for consideration of a revised election code, however, allowed very little time for commentary by the international community, and the version passed in the Majilis awaits ultimate Presidential approval.

Akezhan Kazhegeldin, Head of the RNP, Visits IFES/Washington

Former Prime Minister and Republican National Party of Kazakhstan Chairman Akezhan Kazhegeldin visited IFES/Washington on 22 April. Kazhegeldin met with IFES President Richard Soudriette, IFES Europe & Asia Director Juliana Pilon, Program Officer Anthony Bowyer and Program Assistant Elena Wolf to reiterate RNP commitment to democratic transition. Kazhegeldin implied that his party would field

candidates in October's parliamentary elections, though he himself remains prohibited from personally seeking a seat in parliament.

When questioned whether or not the RNPk would be able to take advantage of the 10 seats available via proportional representation, Kazhegeldin implied that it would be a possibility should the Party succeed in its efforts to register in greater than half of all oblasts in the country. Kazhegeldin urged IFES not to give up its important role in contributing to the development of democratic institutions in Kazakhstan and reform in election legislation.

Local Akimiat Elections Scheduled

President Nazarbayev announced that direct elections of local *akims* (governors) will begin in the year 2000. The first pilot election of local *akim* is scheduled for 29 May in the Chemolgan settlement of Karasay, Almaty Oblast. The current election law does not contain provisions relating to the election of local governors.

Symposium on Comparative Politics Held

On April 28 IFES/Kazakhstan, in close cooperation with the Center for Support of Democracy (CSD) and the Public Policy Research Center of the Kazakhstan Institute for Management, Economy and Strategic Research (KIMEP), as well as TACIS and the British Know-How Fund, conducted a symposium entitled "Kazakhstan in the Next Millennium: A Look at Domestic and Foreign Affairs". The full-day symposium, consisting of four thematic panels dealing with diverse but related topics, included a panel devoted to elections. More than 100 participants representing the Government of Kazakhstan, opposition political parties, NGOs, media, members of academia, and international community donors and NGOs, participated. IFES, in conjunction with the CSD organized the panel on "Local Elections: A Comparative View of the Kazakh and U.S. Election Systems." Natalia Chumakova (Vice Director, CSD) served as moderator, while IFES/Astana Program Coordinator Marat Bigaliev presented a paper on "The Participation of Kazakhstani Voters in Local Elections." Svetlana Eselbaeva, Director of the CSD, who has also participated in a training and observation tour of the U.S. Congressional election last year, introduced the participants with her impressions and experience of local elections in the U.S. Ms. Bigaliev outlined the reasons for voter apathy during local elections and prescribed greater efforts be targeted at voter outreach on the part of local election commissions and candidates in order to increase interest and support in electoral participation.

Partnership Planned on Social Survey Work

Rinat Akmetchin, Project Coordinator at the Kazakhstan 21st Century Foundation, invited IFES to submit questions for inclusion in a public opinion survey it will be conducting this summer. The survey will focus on political party development issues, and IFES has been asked to participate based on its experience in public opinion polling in Kazakhstan. The IFES submission will consist of questions related to civil society development and NGOs, data from which will prove valuable as civic education continues in the regions of Kazakhstan. Additionally, IFES/CAR will be able to gauge changes in public attitude based on survey questions and results from the 1996 report.

Impact Summary

As of 23 March, twelve political parties have been registered by the Government of Kazakhstan, many of which intend to launch campaigns for seats in the 9 October Majilis elections. IFES has continued to promote an open dialogue with the government and among various parties, such as through the recent symposium on comparative politics. It has also provided unbiased information concerning the rearticulation of election laws to the Government of Kazakhstan, as well as to non-governmental organizations, in order to assist Kazakhstan in its transition towards adopting an election law that meets international standards for democratic elections. IFES has kept working towards its goal of achieving greater civic awareness among young and future voters through its curriculum development efforts and projects aimed at bringing about greater understanding of issues related to elections and democracy.

KYRGYZSTAN

IFES Program Officer Anthony Bowyer met with IFES/Bishkek Election Specialist Tom Parkins to discuss forthcoming initiatives in the area of election administrator training and voter education. Parkins set out a timeline for development of a poll worker training manual that corresponds to the forthcoming election law. A training module will be developed which can be used in training of election administrator core trainers representing all six oblasts and Bishkek city in advance of the October local elections. While the poll worker manual and training module are being developed with the March 2000 parliamentary elections in mind, the October 1999 local elections offer a unique opportunity to pilot test the manual and refine the training component. While in Bishkek, Bowyer reiterated to USAID/Kyrgyzstan Mission Director C.J. Rushin-Bell IFES' dedication to supporting the forthcoming election cycle with technical assistance and voter education programs, the latter to be patterned after the recently-successful Slovakia voter education and motivation program.

Election Law Passes – Awaits Presidential Signature

On 23 April the two years' worth of discussion, drafting and debate on the election code were completed as the Jogorku Kenesh approved a new election law. In contrast to the previous legislation this law secures the rights of observers to participate more fully in the election process. The law likewise provides for multi-candidate and multi-political party participation in the work of election commissions at all levels, which, if implemented, will enhance the overall transparency of the voting process. Debate during the final week centered on several controversial issues: first and foremost was the provision supported by the president to establish a mixed single-mandate and proportional legislative system. The mixed system passed in parliament provides for a 60-seat Legislative Assembly, 45 elected from single mandate districts and 15 elected from party lists apportioned according to votes received. A threshold was established of 8 percent to attain a single seat in the multi-mandate constituency. President Askar Akayev, who spearheaded the drive for the new election law, is expected to sign the measure into law early in May. The Parliament will next begin work on the Law on Political Parties in the near future. Central Election Commission Chairman Sulayman Imanbayev praised the contribution IFES made on the electoral legislature revision

process, and in particular the ongoing legal analysis work of IFES consultant John Christman. In its continuing support for the state program, IFES will continue working with the CEC on election administration initiatives.

The challenge before Kyrgyzstan now lies in ensuring the implementation and integrity of the election code through responsive and legitimate use of the legal framework. IFES suggested that the primary strategy to address these issues should be a solid training program for election officials at all levels, an extensive voter education program, and a strong domestic and international observer component in future elections.

Election Commission Training Program

Nina Mukhina, CEC Director of Information and Analysis, requested IFES assistance in preparing for local elections during a mid-April meeting. The elections, which will be the first held under the new law, are scheduled for late October, 1999. Tentative plans call for a two-day seminar on election administration in mid-June bringing together the oblast commission Chairs and Secretaries. The seminar program will cover two basic areas: the first covers responsibilities of superior commissions under the new law, with the second consisting of a polling station procedures training-of-trainers session. Participants will act as core trainers who will in turn train election managers in their respective oblasts, who will then train polling station commissions. IFES technical advisor Tom Parkins is working on the polling station manual which will eventually be translated into Russian. In the process of preparing the manual several areas have been identified where the law needs clarification or further explanation. These items will be addressed to the CEC for consideration.

IFES to Work with Women on Voter Education

Early in April IFES met with Gulnara Iskakova, leader of the Bishkek NGO Human Dimensions Development. Human Dimensions focused on raising the profile of Kyrgyz women in politics. Within the context of a model voter education program recommended by USAID, Human Dimensions and IFES will target women for involvement in upcoming elections. The voter education program will be modeled on "OK '98," the sample program modeled in Slovakia and driven by NGOs with support from the international community.

Impact Summary

IFES Election Law Consultant John Christman recommended a series of checks and balances in the electoral legislation be inserted to provide for a law under which elections can take place that conform to international standards. Christman provided guidance to the CEC and parliamentary deputies through discussion and detailed written analysis of specific narratives dealing with a wide range of provisions throughout the lengthy legislative process.

IFES is continuing its efforts in providing electoral assistance to Kyrgyzstan with the contribution of on-site technical advisor Tom Parkins. Parkin's experience in poll worker development and professionalization of election administration will be a key asset as the CEC moves to practical implementation of the election code. Representatives from the CEC have not only expressed a need for IFES assistance, but also a strong desire for exposure to new

training methods and training materials. In partnership with its international and domestic colleagues, IFES plans to play a prominent role in the CEC's preparation for local elections to be held later this year, as well as presidential and parliamentary elections planned for 2000.

TAJIKISTAN

Anthony Bowyer and Lola Maksudova met with OSCE Elections Expert Rainer Hermann in Tashkent to discuss common approaches to domestic observer training in Tajikistan. Hermann indicated that OSCE's focus would be on training observers to participate in the parliamentary elections, though would consider conducting limited training of observers to monitor the nationwide constitutional referendum scheduled tentatively for Fall 1999. Bowyer recommended that the referendum would provide a unique opportunity to pilot test the training program in a national electoral event. Hermann agreed, though emphasized as relevant that the referendum and parliamentary elections be held in a relatively close timeframe, in order to make maximum benefit of the training schedule. Both IFES and OSCE pledged to continue an ongoing dialogue on domestic observer issues.

Anthony Bowyer and Lola Maksudova met with Lisa Coll, director of the Eurasia Foundation in Uzbekistan to discuss a domestic observer training initiative involving local NGOs in Tajikistan. Eurasia suggested that the Dushanbe-based NGO Modar may be a viable candidate to include in any training activities, along with SHARQ and Traditions and Modernity. IFES has worked to identify local candidates to take the lead in domestic election observer training issues in Tajikistan in advance of national referenda and elections to be held in the coming months. Together with USAID, OSCE, Eurasia, the Academy for Educational Development and the United Nations, IFES is pursuing the establishment of a nationwide network of domestic NGO "watchdogs" that will be able to monitor the entire electoral process, including but not limited to polling day procedures, and conduct voter education activities.

Election Law Seminar

IFES Regional Director Tom Leckinger, and Behzod Mingboev, IFES/Dushanbe Project Coordinator, met with Central Election Commission Chairman Mirzaoli Baltuyev, OSCE Ambassador Marin Buhaora, Laura Meenk of AED, and Abdulmageed Dostiyev, parliamentarian and Deputy Chairman of the Coalition for National Reconciliation (CNR), to discuss the recently-rescheduled election law seminar. The event, now scheduled to take place 25-27 May, will include participation of members of the legal and political subcommissions of the Committee on National Reconciliation (CNR), the Majlisi Oli, Presidential aparat, several ministries, and local NGOs.

Among the topics to be presented and discussed by the international panel of experts will be the advantages and disadvantages of various types of electoral systems. This will help guide the election law drafting committee in determining the most optimal variant taking into consideration Tajikistan's post-conflict developmental situation. Observer rights, transparency, voter

registration, media coverage, ballot access and many other elements of standard election legislation will be reviewed. It is hoped that the seminar will serve as a prelude to serious, sustained dialogue on election issues with an eye towards the forthcoming parliamentary and presidential elections.

Voter Registration Project -Establishing a Secure Environment

IFES and the CEC have petitioned the Prime Minister's office in support of the designation of a Computer Center that will serve as the nerve center of the voter registration project. The building, once committed, would be fully administered by the CEC, who would maintain responsibility over the Computer Center and its contents for the duration of the election cycle. The Center will house the central electronic voter database to be used in the upcoming national elections and referenda, with the building itself becoming the permanent home of the CEC. The Government of Tajikistan has pledged to support the initiative.

Behzod Mingboev met with Ivan Karatsychev of the Ministry of Security to discuss questions regarding the safety of the voter registration computer system, and the ability to maintain the integrity of the voter registration data. Karatsychev has suggested drafting a legislative provision in the election law designed to deal with computerized registration as well as the technical aspects of conducting and securing elections, which would cement in legislation the parameters for computerized voter registration.

Domestic Observer Training Project

Tom Leckinger and Behzod Mingboev met with representatives of the local NGOs Sharq, Traditions, and Modar, who have agreed to participate as the main implementing partners with IFES in a domestic observer training program. The territory of Tajikistan will be partitioned so that an equal number of observers receive training. According to initial discussions, Modar will be responsible for the Garm area, Sharq for Leninabad Oblast, and Traditions for Khatlon Oblast. The training program is designed to consist of two phases: a three day training session in Dushanbe, where 60-65 NGO representatives from across Tajikistan will be trained in how to conduct seminars on a regional level for domestic observers, and will be followed by approximately 90 one- day seminars in all areas of Tajikistan, in which 3000 individuals will be trained as observers. Training 3000 individuals will allow at least one observer to be present in each polling station on the day of the election. Representatives of the local election commissions and political parties will also be invited to participate in the training. A request has been forwarded to the CEC that all persons trained receive immediate certification as accredited domestic observers which would in turn allow access to local election commission meetings in addition to all elections/referenda in the coming year. This would represent a significant step towards creating a legitimate and transparent atmosphere surrounding domestic observers.

Impact Summary

Working under the guidance of the USAID, local grassroots organizations, and the international donor community, IFES is committed to cooperation with its international partners in helping Tajikistan implement the legislative and procedural development

phases of the Peace Accords. IFES continues to provide information to the Government of Tajikistan and the CNR to assist in achieving consensus on constitutional and electoral issues. IFES is dedicated to providing technical assistance to support the building of an electoral infrastructure for future elections and referenda. The rescheduled Election Law Conference will help the CNR and the Government of Tajikistan pursue a common approach to guiding the future election process.

The establishment of an effective, mutually supported voter registration system is critical to the successful development of democratic institutions in Tajikistan. Initiatives planned in support of the Peace Accords and electoral sector development are all designed to magnify transparency and encourage frank discussion among all interested parties. Full confidence in the electoral institutions is critical to ensuring elections that not only meet international standards, but also achieve a sense of legitimacy among the voting citizens of Tajikistan.

UZBEKISTAN

Extending Civil Society Involvement

IFES Program Officer Anthony Bowyer and IFES/Tashkent Project Coordinator Lola Maksudova met with OSCE Ambassador Gantcho Gantchev, Human Dimension Expert Sabine Freizer, and Elections Expert Rainer Hermann to discuss collaborative efforts in the sphere of civic education in Uzbekistan. Ambassador Gantchev indicated that OSCE was reconsidering elements of its electoral assistance strategy in light of recent discussions stemming from an international assistance strategy meeting held in Warsaw in February. Gantchev underscored the need to work at the grassroots level in Uzbekistan and support the development of civil society and the work of domestic NGOs. Bowyer expressed his agreement and invited the OSCE representatives to consider possible opportunities for cooperation in civil society-building initiatives. One such project, as outlined by Sabine Freizer, involves a seminar series planned by OSCE to increase citizen involvement in the work of NGOs and to help NGOs better strategize and increase effectiveness in communicating with their constituencies. IFES promised to share materials from its Strategies for Citizen Involvement seminar series as a first step in integrating efforts. Bowyer added that IFES is considering conducting an enhanced, rapid appraisal survey of public opinion in selected oblasts to help provide data in support of the seminar series.

Project on Women's Civic and Legal Education

With Uzbekistan declaring 1999 the "Year of the Woman," IFES has taken steps to foster promote increased awareness of the role women play in a democratic society. IFES/Tashkent Project Coordinator Lola Maksudova has fostered close contact with a number of independent Uzbek NGOs to discuss cooperative activities in the area of civic education and democracy development, with particular emphasis on the involvement of women in politics and society. Maksudova held a meeting with Larisa Rossinskaya, Chairwoman of the Bektemir Rayon NGO Kridi, a rehabilitation center for women and children, to discuss the role of women's NGOs and the development of civil society in

Uzbekistan. Kridi requested IFES support in a range of seminars centered on the protection and promotion of women's rights. IFES, with its emphasis in Uzbekistan on civic education, considers the work of women's organizations paramount in the ongoing development of the private sector in Uzbekistan. IFES supports fully the commitment of USAID to increasing women's profile in civil society and broadening understanding of their rights in a democratic society. Particular emphasis needs to be placed upon developing women's NGOs in the regions of Uzbekistan.

Lola Maksudova met with Marina Sereda, spokesperson for a group of leading women's NGOs to discuss possible IFES participation in a multi-lateral initiative with the OSCE to promote women's rights, women in politics, and women's involvement in civil society. Sereda held a follow-up meeting with Sabine Freizer, OSCE expert on gender issues, who outlined a program on women's rights, women in politics, and women's involvement in civil society. IFES has been invited to play a large role in producing a series of seminars on democratization, integrating women's issues. The main focus of the project concerns encouraging women to be more involved in politics and to participate in civil society strengthening organizations.

In addition to the training sessions, at least one general meeting bringing together women leaders and women NGOs involved in "field training" may be organized to enable both groups of women to identify and discuss the most important "women issues" effecting Uzbekistan. This meeting would further help develop an Uzbek network of women's NGOs, which could potentially lead to the creation of a women's NGO coalition.

"Model of Democratic Society" Summer Camp

A summer camp targeting young students and future leaders remains at the forefront of IFES programming activities in Uzbekistan. Together with Mubarak Tashpulatova and the Public Education Center, IFES is making preparations to host a group of talented youth in a forum focusing on democracy development and increasing students' understanding of democratic ideals. The agenda will include a discussion of civic responsibility, democratic elections, media, and election campaigns. The camp is scheduled to take place at the end of June/beginning of July, with 100 high school students from all regions of Uzbekistan participating.

New Project Opportunities in Western Uzbekistan

Tom Leckinger and Lola Maksudova met with Gulnara Dosumova, leader of the Nukus-based NGO "Renaissance," to discuss the possibility of IFES involvement in activities in Karakalpakstan. Leckinger proposed the idea of a democracy pilot project on curriculum development in secondary schools using the IFES model being prepared in Kazakhstan. Once the pilot teacher training effort is completed in Kazakhstan, it may serve as a viable model to adopt for specific use by the education department in Karakalpakstan

IFES Program Officer Anthony Bowyer and Program Coordinator Lola Maksudova met with Teresa Ware and Liana Ibragimova from USAID/Tashkent and J.P. Shutte, U.S. Embassy Second Secretary. Bowyer reaffirmed IFES commitment to civic education in

Uzbekistan and to working with its partners in the international community. The idea of conducting an enhanced rapid appraisal survey to benefit the NGO development series was discussed and received conditional support. Further discussion and consultation were recommended with USIS and SOROS, who are also conducting public opinion polls in Uzbekistan.

Impact Summary

Under the guidance of the US Embassy and USAID, IFES continues to focus on conducting civic education. Together with its international and local partners, IFES is working to support civic education initiatives in Uzbekistan including a recent joint seminar with the Public Education Center, which helped IFES to establish links and reach out to the majority of NGOs actively involved in civil society-development projects. IFES' cooperative efforts with local NGOs in women empowerment serves as an example of such outreach. Launching the summer camp project will initiate IFES' work with the young and future voters of Uzbekistan, a sector it hopes will develop into active participation in civil society and work to hold government accountable.

ASIA

ASSOCIATION OF ASIAN ELECTION AUTHORITIES (AAEA)

Upcoming Observation Mission

Preparations were initiated in the month of April for the AAEA observer mission to Indonesia for the national parliamentary elections scheduled for 7 June 1999. IFES, as interim secretariat, is working on the parameters and details for the AAEA delegation.

The Indonesian elections will be a historic event in which over 112 million voters are expected to go to the polls to choose a new government in the post-Suharto era. This will be the AAEA's second observation mission since its founding, and it is hoped that the successes of last July's observation of the Cambodian elections can be replicated in Indonesia.

IFES Program Assistant for Asia Du Tran will be deployed to Jakarta in late May to finalize the details and prepare for the arrival of the AAEA participants. AAEA delegates have been invited from the following member countries: Bangladesh, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Taiwan, and Tajikistan. Funding for this observation was provided by USAID. It is IFES' hope that these missions reflect the concern of the international community, and the Asian community in particular, that the elections be conducted in as free and fair a manner as possible for the long-term stability of Indonesia and for the benefit of the Indonesian people.

Impact Summary

As the Association continues to grow in membership size and strength, observation missions such as these to Indonesia and Cambodia help to broaden the professional experience of the election commissions' members. They also serve to inject transparency into the election process, and to build the confidence of the voters in the host country for the integrity of the election process.

INDONESIA

Impact Summary

In April 1999, IFES' technical assistance to the General Election Commission (KPU) continued to sustain and create major impact in support of the electoral process in Indonesia. Programmatic activities included the following: (1) technical assistance to analyze the election laws; (2) analysis and advice on election administration issues such as regulations, procedures, ballot controls, and voter registration; (3) dissemination of the findings from a national survey of the Indonesian electorate; (4) implementation of a voter education media campaign and development of a joint operations/media center for the KPU; and (5) production of poll worker training materials and planning for a poll worker evaluation effort during election day.

Election Laws

IFES continued to provide analysis and reporting on the election laws and their implications to the upcoming elections. IFES' election law specialist, Bob Dahl, released a report in April commenting on the situation pertaining to the allocation of seats in the national parliament. This report was translated into Bahasa Indonesia and distributed to all members of the KPU for their review.

Election Administration and Regulations

The regulations and procedures for the conduct of the June 7 elections continued to be determined by the KPU in April. IFES' election administration specialist, Theo Noel, made recommendations and proposals to the KPU on these issues and continued to serve as a resource to the commissioners as they finalized the internal rules and structures of the election committees. Moreover, Mr. Noel provided analysis and advice to the KPU on fine tuning the election calendar and the registration of electors. More work is presently needed in the support of transparency mechanisms at the KPU, and an assessment of this need was initiated in April.

National Voter Survey

IFES' national survey of the Indonesian electorate continued to draw interest from the international donor community as well as other NGOs working on supporting the election process in Indonesia. IFES' survey analyst, Steve Wagner, returned from Jakarta in early April to brief the State Department, USAID, and present to the public on the survey's findings. Also in April, briefings were held for the World Bank and a group of Dutch Parliamentarians here in Washington.

Voter Education

The work establishing the Joint Operations and Media Center (JOMC) for the KPU was initiated in the month of April. This project would provide the KPU with a means for disseminating the election results and managing the flow of information to the national and international press covering the June 7 election. IFES election logistics and information specialist, Kate Birsell, is implementing the project activities in this area and will serve as the JOMC coordinator throughout the elections.

IFES voter education specialists Hank Valentino and Javier Calero continued to draft plans and arrange production for a voter education media campaign. Activities in this area include the production of television, radio, and print media spots to explain the voter registration process and the new voting procedures. Plans were also made for the airing of a television show in which a KPU representative would field call-in questions from voters around the country on issues pertaining to the elections.

Poll Worker Training

In April the production of the poll worker training video was initiated and a draft poll worker training manual was completed. IFES poll worker training specialists Connie Kaplan and Jessica Hunter continued to serve as resources to the KPU in its efforts to plan and coordinate the training of Indonesia's election workers. Later on in the month, Ms. Kaplan and Ms. Hunter researched the feasibility of conducting an evaluation of the training efforts and the operations of the polling stations on election day.

NEPAL

Background

The democratic process has struggled for popular confidence in Nepal since pro-democracy protests in early 1990 destabilized the reign of King Birendra Bir Bikram, who in response ended the ban on political parties. In the years since, multiparty coalition governments have ruled and a new constitution was adopted. National parliamentary elections have been conducted twice since then, and will be held again in two phases on May 3 and 17, 1999. A general election has become imperative as Nepal has seen a constantly fluid political situation in the last four years due to its hung parliament status after the second general election of 1994. The new coalition government headed by Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala won a trust vote in the House of Representatives in early January 1999, and the Prime Minister has since made it clear that the chief objective of this government is to hold fair, free, and impartial elections. Indicating the difficulty of the political situation of the past few years, Koirala stated that a new election is the only way out of the present political impasse.

Delivery of a Voter Registration Backup Computer Server

In Nepal, the national registry of thirteen million people is housed on a single computer, and a request was made by the Election Commission of Nepal to provide a backup computer server in case the Commission's primary equipment should fail. IFES Senior Information Technology Officer Roger Plath worked with EC Technical Advisor Neel Kantha Uprety to identify the appropriate technology and provide the assistance necessary to the project. IFES submitted the order for the computer, which was subsequently delivered to the EC and installed by Dr. Uprety in the Commission's headquarters in Kathmandu. The program included the procurement of supplementary hardware and software to allow the EC to have the ability to securely house the results.

Program for Results Transmission

In past elections, the Election Commission received hourly tabulations of election results by fax from the 75 district counting centers, and distributed paper copies of those results to the media

in Kathmandu for publication. This process, however, inevitably resulted in a slow, narrow, and incomplete distribution of results to select media outlets in Kathmandu alone. In order to promote the electoral process in Nepal as open and fair, the rapid publication and dissemination of results nationwide is crucial to increasing public confidence in the electoral system and the validity of the results.

The EC requested assistance in ensuring that the presentation of results was as accurate, quick, and user-friendly as possible, with a breakout of results by constituency, region, party, and other significant variables. Of further need was assistance in establishing links to the new system for the mass media outlets throughout Nepal. It was hoped that this enhanced results transmission system would facilitate access and coverage by the media, enhance the integrity and credibility of the electoral process by improving transparency, and speed the tabulation and release of reliable data to the public.

IFES Election Administration Specialist Jorge Tirado traveled to Kathmandu in late April to work with EC Technical Advisor Neel Kantha Uprety to establish a results transmission system for the Election Commission in time for the vote tabulation beginning on 17 May 1999. The program was designed by the Election Commission to offer voting results from the seventy-five district counting centers to the mass media and other interested parties on a rolling basis as the information is received in Kathmandu. The EC is also working to establish a webpage for the Commission, which will house not only past electoral results but current results as they are received. A local company, Professional Computer System (PCS), was contracted to program the equipment, tailor the software, and offer technical support leading up to and through the final round of elections. It is hoped that this broad dissemination of information to the Internet and the mass media outlets (press, television, and radio) will reach the major municipalities in Nepal and beyond.

Impact Summary

In response to a request for assistance by the Election Commission of Nepal, and a request for proposals coordinated by the U.S. Embassy/Kathmandu and USAID/Washington, IFES initiated a project in March 1999 to provide technical assistance to the Election Commission of Nepal with USG funding. While the initial focus of this technical assistance project was the delivery and installation of a computer server to improve the management of the Election Commission's voter registry of thirteen million people, the project has since incorporated a results transmission program by which the public and mass media have access to the vote tabulation as counting proceeds after the final round of voting on 17 May. Through close collaboration with the Election Commission and the US Embassy, IFES hopes to assist the Government of Nepal in ensuring a transparent electoral process.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA

Status of the Electoral Situation in Bougainville

At the end of March 1999 the Bougainville Interim Government (BIG) and the Bougainville Transitional Government (BTG)

announced that they were going to hold an election between 24-30 April in the province of Bougainville. With the support of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army (BRA), the BIG and the BTG intended to conduct a balloting process for the Bougainville Reconciliation Government (BRG). This process was cited as extra-constitutional by the Election Commission (EC) of Papua New Guinea (PNG) since it would have no authority to administer the balloting. By the end of April, these proposed elections were canceled by the BIG and the BTG, and as of this writing no alternative date has been set to reschedule the elections. Press reports in PNG note that representatives of the BIG and BTG are in ongoing negotiations over when to conduct the balloting; whether these talks will eventually involve the national government of PNG is unclear.

IFES continues to monitor the electoral situation in the province of Bougainville. With political developments in a state of flux regarding the planned elections for the Bougainville Reconciliation Government (BRG), IFES' technical assistance program remains in the planning and preparation stages. Communications with the Electoral Commission of PNG and the American Embassy/Port Moresby are ongoing as the electoral scene is constantly being reassessed.

Pending involvement by the EC of PNG, IFES' intended technical assistance program to the EC on conducting the elections in Bougainville will have to remain flexible and ready to implement when the political decisions are made to move forward with the balloting.

PHILLIPINES

Voter Registration in the ARMM

In mid-April, IFES Project Director Gwenn Hofmann returned to Manila to prepare for the voter registration, voter information, and Election Officer (EO) training projects in the Autonomous Republic of Muslim Mindanao (ARMM). These projects are to be implemented as part of the preparation for the regional elections to be held in the ARMM in September 1999.

In November 1998, COMELEC nullified the voter registration list in all of the ARMM provinces because they were inflated with both fraudulent registrants and voters registered in multiple precincts.

Prior to the registration exercise and based on IFES' recommendations, COMELEC undertook a complete precinct mapping so that the EOs would have a better way of determining how many potential voters are in each precinct. In addition to developing and mapping all precincts, COMELEC implemented the voter picture identification process recommended by IFES as a safeguard to multiple registrations. Ms. Hofmann developed and prepared materials for use in the training of the Election Officers who will subsequently train the Board of Election Inspectors (BEIs) for the re-registration of ARMM voters scheduled in May 1999.

Focus Group Report Completed

The Notre Dame University Center for Policy Advocacy and Strategic Studies (NDU/CPASS), based in Cotabato City, completed an analysis of the eight focus groups run in the ARMM

which were commissioned by IFES. The analysis and recommendations were presented to representatives of COMELEC, USAID/Manila, the US Embassy in Manila, and USAID/Washington's Office of Transition Initiatives (USAID/OTI). The report also contains data from previous IFES surveys and focus groups, and is being used by IFES to target voter information messages, programs, educational opportunities, and assistance to COMELEC.

Voter Information Program

In the ARMM, radio is the primary source of information for the electorate. IFES had designed nine radio spots for the ARMM voter registration information campaign, which were subsequently presented to COMELEC for consideration and production. In late April, Ms. Hofmann and IFES voter education specialist Hank Valentino rewrote five of the original spots with COMELEC senior staff members. They gave the spots to the Parish Pastoral Council for Responsible Voting (PPCRV) for translation and will begin airing them every four hours on 1 May 1999. COMELEC radio spots will start airing on 4 May.

COMELEC asked for IFES' assistance with their voter information brochures, which IFES edited so that it would be understandable by the average ARMM voter. IFES had the brochure translated and printed through PPCRV, which then distributed it throughout the ARMM region. IFES also made recommendations to COMELEC for the voter information newspaper ads, which were initially to be run only in Manila-based publications. IFES convinced COMELEC to run several ads in the local ARMM papers that better penetrate the ARMM region.

Civic Education Curriculum

The first draft of the civic education curriculum for the non-formal education program of the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports (DECS) was presented to DECS in late April. This curriculum is being developed and edited by a team facilitated by IFES for DECS, and will be piloted in the ARMM non-formal school program in June. The curriculum consists of five modules that define basic concepts of government, civic education, civil society, civic participation, and electoral process and procedure.

There are discussions about the development of democracy in the Philippines, constitutional guarantees and rights, role of the media, and the significance of citizen participation in elections. The curriculum includes teacher and student exercises, resource materials, and practical information about the upcoming elections in the ARMM region and the rest of the Philippines.

While it agreed to both the curriculum and content, DECS requested that the text be written for a lower level of education, as the non-formal education program targets adults finishing high school who may not have a reading comprehension level higher than grade six. Furthermore, in this program, adult students are either taught by facilitators who are not college-educated or by teachers who may not be experts on the subject matter.

After this initial feedback, IFES contacted Professor of Political Science Antonius C. Umali to edit and incorporate Philippine materials and examples into each module of the curriculum. The

curriculum further incorporates additions of DECS social studies materials and text from Congressman Ding Tanquatco, Attorney Alberto Agra, and Attorney Tony Umali. Other contributions from election officials will be added after the second draft is written.

Impact Summary

With funding made possible by the USAID Office for Transition Initiatives, IFES forged ahead with preparations for the upcoming September regional elections in the Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao. IFES is working across the spectrum of assistance needs with plans for training election officials in voter registration and election day procedures, a voter information campaign, and a civic education curriculum in the ARMM with applicability to the rest of the Philippines. IFES continues to collaborate closely with the Philippine Commission on Elections, the Department of Education, Culture, and Sports, and NDU/CPASS to ensure that the elections in the ARMM are conducted through an open and transparent process, with an informed electorate and active citizenry.