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Promoting Democracy? The Role of Transnational Non-State  
Actors in Inter-American Relations 1980-1993

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I, Mara Elizabeth Sankey, confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own. Where information has been derived from other sources, I can confirm that this has been indicated in the thesis.

## Abstract

This thesis examines the role of three non-state actors -- Freedom House, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) -- in the creation and implementation of US policy towards Latin America from 1980 to 1993. The Reagan administration oversaw a key change in US Latin American policy to a focus on democracy promotion, which took over from Carter's human rights policy as the moral justification for US policy towards the region. This created a tension in the US between the liberal human rights movement of the 1970s and a new neo-conservative human rights movement which supported Reagan's democracy promotion policies. The years that frame this study cover the establishment of democracy promotion as the primary inter-American policy. Moreover, the inclusion of the early 1990s allows for an assessment of the extent to which this policy changed after the end of the Cold War.

This thesis will take a comparative approach allowing me to examine the role played by different types of non-state actors as well as the relationships between the Reagan administration and both the liberal and neo-conservative human rights movements. Furthermore, this thesis will provide two case studies (Chile and Nicaragua) to examine how these organisations interacted with US foreign policy in the context of specific Latin American countries. The first four chapters of this thesis examine the three organisation's various backgrounds, their sources of funding and their networks in the US and Latin America, while the final two chapters examine the consequences of these findings for their policies towards Chile and Nicaragua. This research hopes to contribute to the historiography of human rights, of inter-American relations and of the interactions between non-state actors and the US government.

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## Glossary of Acronyms

AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations
AIFLD	American Institute of Free Labor Development
AoJ	Administration of Justice
APF	American Political Foundation
ARDE	Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática
CAPEL	Inter-American Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance
CAWG	Central America Working Group
CDT	Central Democrática de Trabajadores
CFJ	Centre for Foreign Journalists
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
CI-IR	Catholic Institute for International Relations
CIPE	Center for International Private Enterprise
CNT	Comando Nacional de Trabajadores
CPJ	Committee to Protect Journalists
CSE	Supreme Electoral Council
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CUS	Confederación de Unificación Sindical
CUT	Central Unitaria de Trabajadores
FMLN	Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional
FTUI	Free Trade Union Institute
GBGM	General Board of Global Ministries
ICS	Institute for Contemporary Studies

IHRLG	International Human Rights Law Group
INSI	Institute of North-South Issues
IPS	Institute of Policy Studies
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NEPL	National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisations
NRI	National Republican Institute for International Affairs
OAS	Organisation of American States
PRODEMCA	Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America
SDUSA	Social Democrats USA
SERPAJ	Servicio de Paz y Justicia
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNO	Unión Nacional Opositora
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
USIA	United States Information Agency
WOLA	Washington Office on Latin America
YPSL	Young People Socialist League



## Introduction

For US-Latin American relations, the 1970s represented a decade of change; the aggressive policy of Chilean regime change and regional control put forward by Nixon in the early 1970s was followed by the human rights-led policies of the Carter administration. As the Cold War thawed, Latin America moved from being a “Cold War battleground” to a test centre for US moral credibility. Carter’s human rights policy grew out of a national feeling, which followed Vietnam and the corruption of the Watergate scandal, that a more moral politics was needed.<sup>1</sup> The election of Reagan in 1980 saw the human rights policy of the Carter administration replaced by one of “democracy promotion”, under the auspices of which the United States intervened repeatedly (financially, politically and militarily) in Latin American domestic politics during the 1980s. This thesis hopes to answer three main questions: first, how did the conception and implementation of US human rights policy in the Americas change with the election of Reagan? If so what consequences did this change have for inter-American policy? Finally, what role was played by non-state actors in the creation and implementation of US human rights and foreign policy in the 1980s and early 1990s?

In order to answer these questions this thesis will examine the work undertaken by three US-based non-state actors in Latin America: Freedom House, the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). All three of these organisations state their main interests to be human rights and

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<sup>1</sup> Stuckey, Mary E, *Jimmy Carter, Human Rights and the National Agenda* (USA: Texas A&M University Press, 2008) pp. 8-9. See also Whitehead, Laurence, “Explaining Washington’s Central American Policies” in *Journal of Latin American Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1983) pp. 321-363. For a full analysis of the Carter administration’s human rights policy see Mower, A. Glenn, *Human Rights and American Foreign Policy: The Carter and Reagan Experiences* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987); Muravchik, Joshua, *Uncertain Crusade: Jimmy Carter and the Dilemmas of Human Rights Policy* (Lanham, MD: Hamilton Press, 1986); Schmitz, David F. and Walker, Vanessa, “Jimmy Carter and the Foreign Policy of Human Rights: The Development of a Post-Cold War Foreign Policy” in *Diplomatic History*, No. 28, (2004) pp. 113-143; Schoultz, Lars, *Human Rights and United States Policy toward Latin America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981) and Strong, Robert, *Working in the World: Jimmy Carter and the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2000)

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democracy. While there were many human rights groups in operation by the 1980s, these three were the key US-based organisations engaged with Reagan's democracy-promoting crusade. They represent a cross-section of historical periods, political leanings and "types" of non-state actor. Freedom House was founded in the 1940s and for much of the post-war period represented the liberal centre of US politics.

Established before the institutionalisation of human rights in the United States, Freedom House initially stated that it stood for "freedom and democracy" and sought to act as a clearing house for information concerning these issues.<sup>2</sup> WOLA had been founded in the early 1970s in response to Chile's military coup of 1973; ideologically to the left of US politics, it, too, acted primarily as a disseminator of information but was also a lobbying organisation. The NED was the hardest to classify of the three organisations. A creation of the 1980s with strong right-wing leanings, the NED was a grant-making organisation which provided money to groups and organisations abroad for the purpose of promoting and consolidating democracy. While legally not a branch of the US government, the NED was established by and received its budget from Congress. The framework for comparison of the three case studies is discussed further below (pp. 27-28).

### Historiography

In recent years, there has been a trend towards the re-examining and rewriting of both the history of US-Latin American relations during the Cold War and the history of human rights and the human rights movement. Samuel Moyn and Barbara Keys have shown that the history of human rights is far shorter than described by scholars such as Micheline Ishay and Paul Gordon Lauren, emerging apparently from nowhere in the 1970s and rapidly becoming a powerful international norm publicly championed by the

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<sup>2</sup> Princeton University, Freedom House Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Certificate of Incorporation, (1941).

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Carter administration in its dealings with Latin America.<sup>3</sup> Although this human rights literature discusses the role played by Congress and certain non-state actors in the institutionalisation of human rights and human rights policy in the United States, for the most part, questions of inter-American relations are examined through investigations of the actions of the US executive branch. While the relationship between the Carter administration and human rights, particularly in Latin America, has been thoroughly studied, there is little scholarship concerning the question of human rights under the Reagan administration and still less on the position held by US-based non-state actors in relation to US inter-American policy in the 1980s and 1990s. This thesis will be engaging primarily with four schools of historiography, addressing the history of human rights, non-state actors, inter-American relations and democracy promotion.

i) Defining Human Rights

Although the concept of human rights has become a powerful norm, enshrined in international law and considered an essential aspect of “good” governance, there is little consensus concerning what the term actually means. Human rights is a complex, shifting concept and, for much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, definitions of human rights have varied with geography and political ideals. According to Moyn, around the 1970s these conceptions converged (albeit briefly as this thesis will show) into a transnational human rights movement which brought the issue to the forefront of international consciousness. While the concept of “rights” does, in various forms, pre-date the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the first concrete definition of human rights came with the United Nations’ Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. The Declaration laid out a selection of

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<sup>3</sup> Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: First Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2010) pp. 3-5; Keys, Barbara, *Reclaiming American Virtue: The Human Rights Revolution of the 1970s* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) p. 19. For more on the history of human rights see Ishay, Micheline, *The history of Human Rights from Ancient Times to the Globalization Era* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008); Hunt, Lynn, *Inventing Human Rights: A History* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2007) and Lauren, Paul Gordon, *The Evolution of International Human Rights: Visions Seen* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2011).

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rights which, to this day, form the basis of the international legal definition of human rights and include socio-economic rights and civil and political liberties.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, for the most part, when people talk of human rights they are referring to those rights set out by the Declaration, ranging from basic rights to life, liberty and freedom from torture and arbitrary imprisonment to promises of work, social security, education and a basic quality of life.<sup>5</sup> While the Declaration provided a definition of what constituted basic human rights in international law, different regions and countries understood and used the concept in different ways between 1948 and the mid-1970s. Patrick William Kelly argues that the language of human rights was not widely used in the Americas prior to the 1970s. Utilised by many Latin American Marxists as a tactical weapon to deploy against the capitalist world order and by others as a new paradigm through which to see the world, the concept of human rights in the region was far from homogenous.<sup>6</sup> Similarly, in the United States the Democratic and Republican parties both picked up the concept of human rights, although the US interpretation generally tended to emphasise individualism in contrast to the collectivism of the Latin American left. While the liberal vision of human rights, which triumphed in the mid-1970s, sought to transcend the nation state and hold all governments accountable to a universal norm, the alternative view focused on a more politicised conception of human rights.<sup>7</sup> This

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<sup>4</sup> The full text of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights can be found here <<http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/RESOLUTION/GEN/NR0/043/88/IMG/NR004388.pdf?OpenElement>> (accessed 23/10/2015).

<sup>5</sup> Moyn, *The Last Utopia* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 2012) pp. 62-63.

<sup>6</sup> Kelly, William Patrick, "Magic Words": The Advent of Transnational Human Rights Activism in Latin America's Southern Cone in the Long 1970s" in Eckel, Jan and Moyn, Samuel, *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) pp. 89-90.

<sup>7</sup> Bon Tempo, Carl J., "Human rights and the US Republican Party in the Late 1970s" in Eckel and Moyn, *The Breakthrough*, p. 158. For more on the institutionalisation of human rights in US policy in the 1970s see Cmiel, Kenneth, "The Emergence of Human Rights Politics in the United States" in *The Journal of American History*, Vol. 86, No. 3 (1999) pp. 1231-1250; Iriye, Petra Goedde and Hitchcock, William I., *The Human Rights Revolution: An International History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012); Schmidli, William Michael, *The Fate of Freedom Everywhere: Human Rights and US Cold War Policy Towards Argentina* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013); Sikkink, Kathryn, *Mixed Signals: US Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) and Snyder, Sarah, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

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combined the issues of democracy and human rights; it was this that won out in the 1980s with the election of Reagan and not only served as the basis for US human rights policy for the following thirteen years, but also gave rise to a neo-conservative human rights movement to counter the liberal human rights groups of the 1970s.<sup>8</sup>

According to Barbara Keys, the rise of human rights as an issue in the United States in the 1970s came about in an attempt to assuage the national guilt and shame that marred the post-Vietnam era.<sup>9</sup> She claims that the US human rights movement of that decade emphasised civil and political rights over social and economic rights, although conservatives tended to prioritise freedoms of religion, movement and speech rather than the issues of torture and arbitrary imprisonment which primarily interested liberals.<sup>10</sup> Keys argues that around the mid-1970s a group of conservative Democrats, led by Henry “Scoop” Jackson, began to redefine human rights in terms of anti-communism and claim the concept for what eventually became the neo-conservative movement.<sup>11</sup> Initially interested in and linked to the Soviet dissident movement and weary of the national discourse of post-Vietnam guilt, this group sought to regain the global moral high ground and re-frame anti-communist rhetoric with a strong focus on democracy. As the 1970s progressed and the US government embraced liberal human rights as a key part of foreign policy, this conservative reaction grew in prominence and was adopted by members of the Republican Party as well. Indeed, this conservative Democratic human rights movement had a strong influence on Reagan’s anti-communist democracy promotion programme and it is the progression and spread of this movement that this thesis hopes to examine.

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<sup>8</sup> For more on the tension between democracy and human rights see Hartmann, Hauke, “US Human Rights Policy under Carter and Reagan, 1977-1981” in *Human Rights Quarterly*, No. 23 (2001) pp. 402-430.

<sup>9</sup> Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) pp. 3-4.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid*, p. 13

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 103-104.

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ii) Non-State Actors

Although there is some discussion of the place of non-state actors in the history of human rights, neither Keys nor Moyn really go into the position such organisations and groups held in the process of institutionalisation. Both do make some mention of Amnesty International and the work it did for human rights advocacy, but aside from brief engagement with this case, the only detailed discussion of non-state actors in the institutionalisation of human rights comes from Sarah Snyder in her work on the Helsinki Accords and Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink in their work *Activists Beyond Borders* (2014).<sup>12</sup> Keck and Sikkink highlight the role played by non-state actors in the inclusion of human rights language in the UN charter of the 1940s but suggest that it was not until the early 1970s that organisations specialising in human rights began to proliferate.<sup>13</sup> While Keck and Sikkink provide an excellent, detailed description of the role played by non-state organisations in wider transnational advocacy networks, this description contains only a nod to the role of such organisations in championing human rights in US foreign policy-making. They make reference to the fact that during the Carter administration, the Bureau of Human Rights sought out contact with and information from non-state actors and that these actors continued to influence policy under both Reagan and Bush. This account of non-state involvement in foreign and human rights policy is far from the whole story, particularly during the Reagan and Bush administrations. By the 1980s, the non-state human rights movement was far from homogenous and, for the most part, liberal human rights

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<sup>12</sup> The main debate concerning Amnesty International mostly concerns the impact it had in the United States. While Moyn hails Amnesty International as the inventor of grassroots human rights advocacy and the driver of the public awareness of human rights, Keys claims that Amnesty International USA was, in fact, almost ignored in the United States until the mid-1970s by which time human rights issues had already captured the imagination of the American public.

<sup>13</sup> Keck, Margaret and Sikkink, Kathryn, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014) pp. 85 and 89; Snyder, *Human Rights Activism and the End of the Cold War: A Transnational History of the Helsinki Network* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011). See also Schmidli, *The Fate of Freedom Elsewhere: Human Rights and U.S Cold War Policy Towards Argentina* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2013).

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organisations were actively distrusted by the Reagan administration. Moreover, very rarely did the Reagan administration approach non-state actors for anything; more often, it was the organisations which approached the administration to put forward their ideas and to lobby for policy changes.

In most of the scholarship concerning both inter-American relations and the history of human rights, the main focus is on the agency and actions of governments and inter-governmental organisations. While studies have been undertaken into the work of individual non-state organisations and mentions made of the Bureau of Human Rights' relationships with non-state groups, these have tended to place non-state actors in the periphery, viewing their role as little more than the provision of occasional information. Some of the scholarship, particularly that which concerns the history of human rights, does engage with the role of Congress in foreign policy-making, but even this is usually viewed through the lens of its relationship with the executive branch. This focus on governments and inter-governmental organisations does not do the process of foreign policy-making full justice. This thesis hopes to show that the development of foreign policy, particularly in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, was considerably more complex and involved both governmental and non-state actors. While, as discussed previously, mentions have been made of non-state actors in the institutionalisation of human rights policy in the 1970s there has been no real attempt to examine how the role of non-state actors changed with the inauguration of Reagan. The Reagan administration had a great distrust of the liberal human rights groups which had come to prominence in the 1970s and this led to such groups being largely cut out of executive policy-making, making way for the new neo-conservative groups to gain influence.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Sikkink, Kathryn, *Mixed Signals: U.S. Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) pp. 178-179.

While little scholarly attention has been paid to the role of non-state actors in foreign policy-making, work has been done on the involvement of non-state actors in wider transnational networks and there is some discussion concerning best practice and governance for non-state organisations. Evidence from this thesis suggests that much of this scholarship does not apply to organisations engaged with democracy promotion and human rights work. According to Keck and Sikkink there are a number of things that are essential for the functioning of non-state actors seeking to engage transnationally; these include reciprocal information exchange and relations with activists from target countries.<sup>15</sup> While this was, indeed, the approach adopted by many liberal human rights organisations in the 1970s, the neo-conservative human rights movement did not appear to follow this method and, although questions could be asked about how well informed these organisations really were, this lack of contact did not impact negatively on their ability to achieve their aims. The consensus in the scholarship is generally that legitimacy and independence are the two most important traits non-state actors require. The most significant factors affecting these traits are funding sources and internal bureaucracy. According to Carrie Meyer and Glenn Wright the primary cause of a loss of independence and legitimacy in non-state actors is an over-reliance on “official donors”, defined as bi-lateral and multi-lateral organisations and governments.<sup>16</sup> Meyer actually takes this line further to suggest that any large single donor causes tensions between non-state actors’ need to be accountable to their donors and to be independent.<sup>17</sup> While this definitely holds true for service providing non-state actors dealing primarily in humanitarian and development issues, for those organisations which deal in human rights and democracy promotion it is not necessarily the case. Theories concerning non-state actor legitimacy and independence also claim that

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<sup>15</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014) p. 28.

<sup>16</sup> Meyer, Carrie, *The Economics and Politics of NGOs in Latin America* (Westport: Praeger, 2000) p. 51.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*



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extensive funding by foundations causes a process of “bureaucratisation” within the organisations forcing them to divert essential resources away from projects to deal with the bureaucracy created by these grants.<sup>18</sup> However, again while this increase in bureaucratisation is certainly problematic for organisations working directly on the ground and therefore requiring high levels of flexibility, for the groups in question here foundation funding often did not result in bureaucratic expansion. In the few situations in which extra bureaucracy did fall on these organisations as a result of foundation funding, they managed it with comparative ease and it does not appear to have impacted on their ability to carry out their stated aims. Overall, few of the previous theories concerning non-state actors apply to these organisations. Many of these groups were far from transnational, having minimal contact with local activists in Latin America and, when it came to governance and questions of legitimacy and independence, these organisations did not appear to face the set of struggles laid down in the literature.

iii) Human Rights, Non-State Actors and Inter-American Relations

With the exception of the human rights policy of the Carter administration, there is surprisingly little literature which examines Cold War-era US policy towards Latin America through the lens of human rights and still less which examines the role of non-state actors in foreign policy-making generally. Moreover, scholarship concerning the inter-American policy of the Reagan administration is still in its early stages and, as a result, is also minimal. Much of the scholarship regarding US-Latin American relations in the Cold War is concerned with how the region fits into the overarching narrative of the Cold War and anti-communism. The primary debate in this literature addresses the level of agency Latin American actors had during this time. Scholars such as Peter Smith believe that US policy towards the region shaped Latin America’s experience of

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<sup>18</sup> Edwards, Michael and Hulme, David, “Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organisations” in *World Development*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (1996) p. 964.

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the Cold War.<sup>19</sup> By contrast, the work of individuals such as Hal Brands and Gilbert Joseph and Daniela Spenser argue that Latin American actors were largely responsible for the region's Cold War experience and that this was only exacerbated by Washington.<sup>20</sup> While the question of Cold War agency is important, it will not be central to this thesis, which is primarily concerned with US policy towards Latin America. That said, this debate warrants mention since at least one of the non-state actors under examination here did attempt to provide a platform for local actors to influence US inter-American policy, thus seeking to give agency to the countries of the region.

What is important for an understanding of inter-American policy is how the Reagan administration perceived the region. Scholars such as Greg Grandin view Latin America as merely another battlefield in the ideological battle of the Cold War, but one in which the United States ruled almost absolutely.<sup>21</sup> He suggests that Reagan's policy towards the region, particularly in Central America, was possible precisely because the region was of very little international significance and, as a result, any fallout would be easily managed. This appears to be an over-simplification of the Reagan administration's interest of the region since it largely ignores the policy of democracy promotion, focusing instead on the overtly aggressive actions taken by the United States. Sikkink, in her work *Mixed Signals: US Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (2004), provides a clearer and more nuanced understanding of the Reagan administration's regional policy. She argues that democracy promotion became the Reagan

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<sup>19</sup> Smith, Peter, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States and the World* (New York: Oxford University press, 2008) p. 113. See also Rabe, Stephen, *The Killing Zone: The United States Wages Cold War in Latin America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

<sup>20</sup> Brands, Hal, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) pp. 255-258; Harmer, Tanya, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011) and Joseph, Gilbert and Spenser Daniela, *In from the Cold: Latin America's New Encounter with the Cold War* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008).

<sup>21</sup> Grandin, Greg, *Empire's Workshop: Latin America, the United States and the Rise of the New Imperialism* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006) p. 12.

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administration's major inter-American policy legacy and that democracy promotion and human rights were closely linked. In fact, Keys takes this one step further by stating that human rights policy was actually recast in the form of democracy promotion by Elliott Abrams when he became Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs.<sup>22</sup> This thesis will draw upon the work of Keys, Sikkink and Grandin to suggest that, in the 1980s, human rights policy was redefined and subsumed into the democracy promotion mission and that Latin America proved to be an excellent testing ground for the new human rights policy. As Sikkink suggests, while the policies of human rights and democracy promotion combined in the 1980s, those who had campaigned for human rights, particularly in the 1970s, often maintained that the two were separate phenomena and did not take part in democracy promotion.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, this tension between conflicting conceptions of human rights will form one of the main themes of this thesis.

iv) Promoting Democracy

As Keys and other scholars of US foreign policy suggest, the United States has a long history of espousing the values of freedom and democracy abroad.<sup>24</sup> Peter Smith argues that the political mission to spread democracy was a central tenet in the national creed of the United States and formed a key part of American exceptionalism.<sup>25</sup> He sees this interest in democracy promotion as an explanation and a justification for US imperialism abroad, claiming that it helps mobilise support domestically and engender a rationale in subjugated nations for the new arrangements of power.<sup>26</sup> Smith's claim that democracy promotion was part of the national creed of the United States maybe overstating its significance in the early life of the country, but by the 1900s it was certainly a

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<sup>22</sup> Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) p. 273.

<sup>23</sup> Sikkink, K., *Mixed Signals: US Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) p. 158.

<sup>24</sup> Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) p. 5.

<sup>25</sup> Smith, Peter, *Talons of the Eagle: Latin America, the United States and the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008) p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 43-44.

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driving force in US foreign policy. It would be more accurate to suggest that democracy promotion had been brought to the fore of US foreign policy by Woodrow Wilson. Wilson believed firmly that the United States could, given time, promote the spread of constitutional democracy abroad and this belief was formative in Wilsonian foreign policy.<sup>27</sup> Although the democracy promotion mission fell in and out of favour at different times since its institutionalisation by Wilson in the 1900s, the redefinition of human rights policy in the 1980s represents a key part of its history.

A great deal of the scholarship concerning the Reagan administration's policy towards Latin America has focused on the flashpoints of US aggression (such as the Contra War) and the abandonment of containment.<sup>28</sup> Indeed, even when scholars do make mention of Reagan's democracy promotion project, it is usually dismissed as being a convenient justification for US aggression in the region.<sup>29</sup> According to Abraham Lowenthal, the Reagan administration's commitment to democracy promotion was little more than a rhetorical excuse for neo-imperialism.<sup>30</sup> However, when placed within the broader context of Reagan's re-heated Cold War, democracy promotion was a concrete policy driven by the desire to ensure that Latin America remained on the ideological side of the United States. Moreover, as this thesis will show, democracy promotion was a vital part of the Reagan administration's foreign policy legacy. While there were elements of the policy that certainly resembled neo-imperialism, the claim

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<sup>27</sup> Smith, Tony, *America's Mission: The United States and the Worldwide Struggle for Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012) pp. 61-64.

<sup>28</sup> See Brands, *Latin America's Cold War* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010); Grandin, *Empire's Workshop* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); Joseph and Spenser, *In from the Cold* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Livingstone, Grace, *America's Backyard: United States and Latin America from the Monroe Doctrine to the War on Terror* (London: Zed Books, 2009); Rabe, *The Killing Zone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012); Scott, James M., *Deciding to Intervene: The Reagan Doctrine and American Foreign Policy* (Durham, NY: Duke University Press, 1996) and Smith, P., *Talons of the Eagle* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

<sup>29</sup> Lowenthal, Abraham, *Exporting Democracy: the United States and Latin America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991); Robinson, William, "Globalization, the World System and "Democracy Promotion" in *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 5 (1996) pp. 615-665 and Sikkink, *Mixed Signals* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press 2004).

<sup>30</sup> Lowenthal, *Exporting Democracy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991). See also Sikkink, *Mixed Signals* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) pp. 149-150, 155-158.

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put forward by Keys that, for the Reagan administration, human rights promotion became indistinguishable from anti-communism seems to be a more accurate explanation for democracy promotion policies.<sup>31</sup>

### Periodisation and Definitions

This thesis seeks to highlight the significance of the role of non-state actors in foreign policy debates, but what exactly is meant by non-state actors? There have been many attempts over the years to create a concrete definition of the term “non-governmental organisations” (NGOs); not only has a consensus never been reached, but none of the definitions really encompass the full range of organisations and groups involved in political activity while not being part of or affiliated to the state. Democracy promoting organisations are not well represented by the terms most commonly used when discussing organisations outside the state so, as a result, this thesis will use the term “non-state actors” to refer to the type of organisation in question here. For the purposes of this thesis, the term non-state actor will be defined using an amalgamation of David Lewis and Nazneen Kanji’s basic definition of NGOs and Alison Van Rooy’s definition of civil society organisations (CSOs). According to Lewis and Kanji, NGOs are “independent organisation[s] that [are] neither run by government nor driven by the profit motive”.<sup>32</sup> Van Rooy states that CSOs are organisations that are political agents as opposed to NGOs which usually occupy a service delivery role. She quotes from a research report stating that “a concern with democratization [sic] highlights the more political role played by civic organisations”.<sup>33</sup> Essentially this implies that CSOs typically work on political issues such as democratisation, human rights and socio-

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<sup>31</sup> Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) p. 273.

<sup>32</sup> Lewis, David and Kanji, Nazneen, *Non-Governmental Organisations and Development* (London: Routledge, 2009) pp. 2-3.

<sup>33</sup> van Rooy, Alison, *Civil Society and the Aid Industry* (London: Earthscan Publications Ltd, 1998) p. 35.

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economic questions, unlike traditional NGOs which typically do not concern themselves with political matters. So, for the purposes of this thesis the term non-state actor denotes a political agent which is run neither by a government nor for profit.<sup>34</sup>

Since, as has been established by Keys and Moyn, the 1970s was the decade in which human rights was institutionalised and became an international norm, why examine the 1980s and early 1990s? The inauguration of Reagan in 1980 represented a significant shift in US foreign policy in several key ways. First, the Reagan administration instigated a reheating of the Cold War and, alongside this came a return to the strongly ideological rhetoric of democracy versus communism which had faded during the détente era of the 1970s. Second, given the Reagan administration's seeming lack of interest in human rights abuses, it is important to examine how this attitude fit in to a world in which human rights had become a key international issue. During the 1980s, in part thanks to the return to prominence of the Cold War as a war of ideologies, human rights became irreversibly redefined, not just in the United States but globally. The addition of procedural democratic rights, specifically US-style democratic rights, to the common definition of human rights began in the 1980s and has persisted to this day. Moreover, alongside this redefinition arose a neo-conservative human rights movement to counter the liberal movement of the 1970s and this, too, changed the way in which human rights were advocated for and viewed. This neo-conservative definition of human rights rose to prominence throughout the Reagan and Bush administrations and, as a result, the period 1980 – 1993 is key to an understanding of the history and current conception of human rights.

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<sup>34</sup> The debate concerning the definition of NGOs is extensive and includes scholars such as Ahmed, Shamima and Potter, David, *NGOs in International Politics* (Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press Inc, 2006); Grugel, Jean, "Romancing Civil Society: European NGOs in Latin America" in *Journal of Interamerican Studies and World Affairs*, Vol. 42, No. 2 (2000) pp. 87-107 and Mendelson, Sarah and Glenn, John, *The Power and Limits of NGOs: A Critical Look at Building Democracy in Eastern Europe and Eurasia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002).

For the purposes of this thesis, the two human rights movements will be referred to as the liberal movement and the neo-conservative movement. The use of the term “liberal” to denote the universalist movement of the 1970s is a continuation of terminology commonly used by previous scholars to refer to the beliefs and attitudes which formed this movement. The use of “neo-conservative” to describe the movement of the Reagan era may, at first, seem surprising given the term’s current association with leading members of George W. Bush’s administration, but early neo-conservatism was a far cry from that which pushed the United States into war in 2003. Neo-conservatism was a diverse movement which, according to Justin Vaïsse, went through three incarnations.<sup>35</sup> The first, the neo-conservatism of the 1960s and (in the case of foreign policy issues) the 1970s grew out of a negative reaction to a perceived leftward trend in US liberalism.<sup>36</sup> The second, was mostly made up of Democratic Party activists who saw themselves as guarding the centre of US politics. They favoured domestic policies focusing on social progress and civil liberties while being staunchly anti-Communist in their foreign policy. It was from this group that many members of NED and Freedom House staff came. Towards the end of the 1970s, this movement grew within the Republican party as well and, as a result of a shared common enemy in the form of Communism, the neo-conservative movement enjoyed a great deal of influence under Reagan.<sup>37</sup> The neo-conservative movement of the 1970s and 1980s opposed the New Left’s human rights-focused foreign policy but also the centre-right and center-left’s consensus on détente.<sup>38</sup> These neo-conservatives believed that democracy was

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<sup>35</sup> Vaïsse, Justin, *Neoconservatism: the Biography of a Movement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011) p. 6. For more on the history of neo-conservatism see Dorrien, Gary J., *The Neoconservative Mind: Politics, Culture and Ideology* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993); Ehrman, John, *The Rise of Neoconservatism: Intellectuals and Foreign Affairs 1945-1994* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); Gerson, Mark, *The Neoconservative Vision: From the Cold War to the Culture Wars* (Lanham, MD: Madison Books, 1996) and Heilbrunn, Jacob, *They Knew They Were Right: The Rise of the Neocons* (New York: Doubleday, 2008).

<sup>36</sup> Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 7.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 9-11.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid*, p. 100.

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important and that American might was the only thing that could protect democracy against the destabilising force of the Soviet Union.<sup>39</sup> This belief carried over into the work and principles of both the NED and Freedom House and it is for this reason that these organisations will be referred to as the “neo-conservative” human rights movement.

### Case Studies

The three case studies – Freedom House, WOLA and the NED – were chosen for the following reasons. These three organisations represent both sides of the debate concerning human rights within the United States; the NED and Freedom House were leading players in the neo-conservative human rights movement while WOLA represents the more traditional liberal human rights movement of the 1970s. By examining and comparing the three organisations it is possible to gain an insight into how these movements differed from each other and how the two human rights movements fared in the 1980s, but why these specific organisations? There is a case to be made for studying more publicly visible actors such as Amnesty International and Americas Watch, but not only were neither of these were born-and-bred US organisations, they also did not seek to engage with the policy of democracy promotion. Freedom House, WOLA and the NED were all home-grown US institutions seeking primarily to influence US foreign policy-making. This meant that during the 1980s, all three took a keen interest in Reagan’s democracy promotion policies. In addition to their differing priorities, they represent a political cross-section and two different types of non-state actors. Although by the 1980s Freedom House had been taken over by a neo-conservative group, its founding ideals were largely centrist and it did remain, for the most part, an organisation of the centre-right. Having been founded in the 1940s as a

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.



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response to totalitarianism in Europe, Freedom House had a long standing interest in issues of democracy and, while it picked up human rights rhetoric as human rights became institutionalised in the 1970s, the return to democracy promotion came easily to it. By contrast, as a creation of the 1970s, WOLA's primary interest was human rights and it was a key part of the liberal human rights movement in Washington in the 1970s. It was an outgrowth of the left-wing Christian social justice movement and was a strong proponent of liberal, universalist human rights. While the inclusion of the NED as a non-state actor may seem controversial, by its own description it does fit the definition in use in this thesis. Despite being created by Congress, the act which founded the organisation insisted that it would "not be considered an agency or establishment of the US Government".<sup>40</sup> Given the NED's insistence that its board and decision making processes were completely independent of the US government this thesis will examine the NED by the parameters it set for itself. Measuring it by its own definition allows us to analyse whether or not it was a completely independent entity or whether the financial and historical connections it had to the government compromised its non-state status. In addition, the NED and many of its staff were key players in the neo-conservative wing of the US' New Right and indeed the burgeoning neo-conservative movement.

As well as representing a cross-section of the US political spectrum, these organisations also allow us to examine non-state actors engaging in two different types of work. Freedom House and WOLA operated almost like think tanks. Both of these organisations sought primarily to gather and disseminate information concerning the state of democracy and human rights in the region. As an extension of this, both also

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<sup>40</sup> Library of Congress, US Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Authorizing appropriations for fiscal years 1984 and 1985 for the Department of State, the United States Information Agency, the Board for International Broadcasting, the Inter-American Foundation and the Asia Foundation, to establish the National Endowment for Democracy and for other purposes* (16<sup>th</sup> May 1983) Bill (98) H.R. 2915, p. 87.

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acted as lobbyists, seeking to influence US policy using the information they delivered to the foreign policy community. Both also engaged in a small amount of advocacy work, although this was not the main priority of either organisation. By contrast, the NED did not participate in information gathering or lobbying; instead it was a grant-making organisation which provided funds for organisations and projects which it saw important for the promotion and consolidation of democracy abroad. It is worth noting at this point that Freedom House and the NED did not only work in Latin America. While WOLA's sole area of operation was the Americas, both the NED and Freedom House worked globally and, as a result, although both had permanent Latin American programmes, at times these took a back seat to priorities in other parts of the world (for example, the Middle East took priority with the Gulf War in the early 1990s).

In order to understand the work and role of these organisations more clearly, the last two chapters of this thesis will compare their work in Chile and in Nicaragua. At this point in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, both Chile and Nicaragua were undergoing a form of democratic transition, but the experiences of authoritarian and transitional governance in these countries was quite different. Moreover, both countries experienced radically different relations with the US government throughout this period. By 1980, Chile had endured seven years of General Augusto Pinochet's military junta, a regime characterised by widespread violence against the left and the centre, human rights abuses and disappearances. In 1980 Chileans had voted in a new constitution which laid out a timetable for democratic transition. This constitution stated that Pinochet would remain President (with greatly increased powers) for eight more years, until 1988, at which point a plebiscite would be held concerning the continuation of his presidency. This plebiscite was held and Pinochet lost, which resulted fully contested elections the

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following year and Chile's return to democracy with the inauguration of the Christian Democrat Patricio Aylwin in 1990.<sup>41</sup>

Nicaragua, on the other hand, had experienced a revolution in 1979 which overthrew the US-backed dictatorial Somoza dynasty.<sup>42</sup> In the aftermath of this revolution, the Sandinistas took power in Nicaragua and began a programme of social mobilisation and redistribution. Despite the declaration of a State of Emergency in 1982 which curtailed some civil liberties, particularly freedoms of the press and of protest, the country held elections in 1984 which were declared free and fair by a majority of international observers, although the main opposition parties had not participated.<sup>43</sup> However, as the economic situation in Nicaragua deteriorated due to US sanctions and a US-funded civil war, the Sandinistas became increasingly unpopular and when elections were held again in 1989, they lost to a coalition of Nicaragua's opposition parties funded by the United States.<sup>44</sup> Despite the declared fairness of the 1984 elections, it was only after the Sandinistas' defeat that the United States recognised Nicaragua's "return to democracy".<sup>45</sup>

Chile and Nicaragua also represent two very different US policy approaches towards the region. While Chile, until the election of Socialist Salvador Allende in 1970, had not been at the forefront of US foreign policy, the US had taken a continuous interest in Nicaragua in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, particularly following its occupation by the United States in 1912 (an occupation which effectively lasted for twenty-one years).

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<sup>41</sup> On the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century US-Chilean relations see Mares, David R. and Aravena, Francisco Rojas, *The United States and Chile: Coming in from the Cold* (New York: Routledge, 2001) and Sater, William, *Chile and the United States: Empires in Conflict* (London: University of Georgia Press, 1990).

<sup>42</sup> Soler Torrijos, Giancarlo, *In the Shadow of the United States: Democracy and Regional Order in the Latin Caribbean* (Boca Raton: Brown Walker Press, 2008) p. 81.

<sup>43</sup> Vanden, Harry E. and Prevost, Gary, *Democracy and Socialism in Sandinista Nicaragua* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 1993) p. 131.

<sup>44</sup> Scott, *Deciding to Intervene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996) pp. 157-180.

<sup>45</sup> On the history of US-Nicaraguan relations in the 20<sup>th</sup> century see Morley, Morris, *Washington, Somoza and the Sandinistas: State and Regime in U.S. Policy Toward Nicaragua, 1969-1981* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and Pastor, Robert, *Not Condemned to Repetition: the United States and Nicaragua* (Boulder: Westview Press, 2002).

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The United States had had a hand, at least in the timing, of the military coup which brought Pinochet to power in Chile and had been, until the Carter administration, a tacit supporter (and sometimes an active enabler) of the Pinochet regime.<sup>46</sup> Although relations between the United States and the Pinochet regime soured due to the assassination of Orlando Letelier (a minister of Allende's government living in exile) on US soil in 1976 and Carter's human rights policy, in the early 1980s, the Reagan administration actively sought to normalise relations with Chile, returning to the policy of overlooking the Pinochet regime's war on the Chilean left.<sup>47</sup> As the 1980s progressed, anti-Pinochet protests grew in strength and, with the rise of Reagan's democracy promotion policy and the appointment of Harry Barnes as Ambassador to Chile in 1985, US policy began to shift towards support for the Christian Democratic Party and democratic transition.<sup>48</sup> By contrast, in Nicaragua the United States engaged in a highly aggressive policy of regime change in the 1980s. The Reagan administration had taken a keen interest in events in Central America, maintaining a militant anti-communist policy in the area under which the left-wing Sandinista government could not be allowed to survive. As a result, the Reagan administration engaged in all out economic and covert warfare against the Sandinistas, blocking multinational bank loans, imposing sanctions and funding guerrilla movements based in Honduras to wage a civil war on the Sandinista government.<sup>49</sup> Examining the work of Freedom House, WOLA

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<sup>46</sup> On US policy towards the Allende government see Harmer, Tanya, *Allende's Chile and the Inter-American Cold War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Haslam, Jonathon, *The Nixon Administration and the Death of Allende's Chile: A Case of Assisted Suicide* (London: Verso, 2005); Kornbluh, Peter, *The Pinochet File* (New York: New Press, 2013) pp. 79-115; Petras, James and Morely, Morris, *The United States and Chile: Imperialism and the Overthrow of the Allende Government* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975), and Qureshi, Lubna Z., *Nixon, Kissinger and Allende: US Involvement in the 1973 Coup in Chile* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2009). For more information on Carter's human rights policy towards Chile see Carleton, David and Stohl, Michael, "The Foreign Policy of Human Rights: Rhetoric and Reality from Jimmy Carter to Ronald Reagan" in *Human Rights Quarterly*, 7, No. 2, (1985) pp. 205-229.

<sup>47</sup> Morley, Morris and McGillion, Chris, *Reagan and Pinochet: the Struggle of U.S. Policy towards Chile* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press, 2015) pp. 11-13.

<sup>48</sup> Sikkink, *Mixed Signals*, (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) p. 175.

<sup>49</sup> Smith, Christian, *Resisting Reagan: The U.S. Central American Peace Movement* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996) p. 38. For more on the funding of the Contras and economic policy towards

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and the NED in these contexts allows us to see how they interact, not only with different types of US policy and attitudes, but also whether they behave differently under different local circumstances.

### Methodology

In addition to showing the role of non-state actors in democracy promotion in the 1980s and 1990s, part of the purpose of this thesis is to highlight the differences and similarities between, not only the two definitions of human rights which were competing at this time, but also between the Chilean and Nicaraguan experiences of US foreign policy. In order to do so, this thesis will take a comparative approach on two different levels; first, comparing the work and positions of the three organisations within US foreign policy and the international community and second comparing how these organisations interacted within specific national contexts and the relationships these nations had with the United States. As John Breuilly suggests, comparison should allow us to examine the significance of differences between subjects.<sup>50</sup> Through comparing the work of these organisations and highlighting the differences between them, this thesis will show how these differences affected the success these organisations had and the role they played in foreign policy-making as well as in the lived experiences of Chile and Nicaragua's relations with the United States. In addition to organisational comparisons, this thesis seeks to compare the national experiences of Chile and Nicaragua. By encompassing two very different US foreign policy

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Nicaragua see Pach, Chester, "The Reagan Doctrine: Principle, Pragmatism and Policy" in *Presidential Studies Quarterly*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (2006) pp. 83-84 and Roberts, Kenneth, "Bullying and Bargaining: The United States, Nicaragua and Conflict Resolution in Central America" in *International Security*, Vol. 15, No. 2 (1990) pp. 67-102. For a more general overview of the Reagan administration's policies in Nicaragua see Kagan, Robert, *A Twilight Struggle: American Power and Nicaragua 1977-1990* (New York: The Free Press, 1996); Robinson, William, and Norsworthy, Kent, *David and Goliath: the U.S. War against Nicaragua* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1987) and Vanderlaan, Mary, *Revolution and Foreign Policy in Nicaragua* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986).

<sup>50</sup> Breuilly, John, *Labour and Liberalism in Nineteenth-Century Europe: Essays in Comparative History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992) p. 3.

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approaches and two distinct transitional and political experiences, this comparison will not only show how these differences impacted on the work of the three organisations concerned, but will also allow us to draw some broader conclusions about how the two competing definitions of human rights were adapted and implemented across the region by both the US government and the three organisations in question here. Although these two countries were not necessarily “typical” of inter-American relations throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, they are representative of two different types of US policy towards countries in the region and this makes them excellent candidates for comparison.

### Sources

This thesis is based primarily on documents from the archives of the three organisations themselves and papers from the State Department’s Freedom of Information archive. These will be supplemented by articles from US and Latin American newspapers, some pamphlets published by the organisations themselves, some of Reagan’s speeches and personal papers and the Congressional Record. The archives of these organisations contain a selection of sources concerning their running, funding and projects; these include board meeting minutes, grant proposals and reports, correspondence, press releases and policy documents. However, although these archives provide a wealth of information they also present a number of difficulties. First, these archives are not comprehensive and they contain an uneven spread of information. For example, while the Freedom House archive contains a decent amount of information concerning the grants it received, detailing where they came from and, sometimes, how much they were for, WOLA’s archive contains considerably less material on this subject and to find this information for the NED one has to look through congressional appropriations bills instead. Moreover, while the Freedom House and WOLA archives (housed in Princeton and Duke Universities respectively) are well catalogued and, for the period in question,

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quite extensive, the NED's archive in the Library of Congress was, at the time of visiting, a restricted archive and neither fully catalogued nor complete. Despite this, the archive did contain enough information concerning the running of the NED and its projects relating to Latin America to make it a useful collection, especially since gaps concerning funds could be filled in using congressional bills.

One of the most challenging factors of working with non-state actor archives is that they do not require the same level of documenting and transparency as public sector organisations. As a result of the often more informal structures of non-state actors, there is not always extensive documentation to show exactly what occurred in internal and external meetings. Although Freedom House and the NED did minute some board meetings, this does not appear to have been standard practice or, if it was, only a selection of the minutes made it into the archive. By contrast WOLA does not appear to have taken minutes of any of their board meetings and none of the three organisations habitually documented what was said in meetings with external parties or other organisations. While this lack of consistent documentation is frustrating, it does not completely prevent researchers from knowing the content of meetings or understanding the processes used by these organisations internally. Through correspondence, memoranda and other such documents, it is possible to piece together a coherent picture of the internal workings of these organisations. Overall, the documentation in the archives of the three organisations allows us to develop a decent understanding of the internal processes, funding, relationships and projects of the groups in question. However, it is necessary to supplement these sources in order to develop a broader picture of the work and position of these groups.

For the most part, documents from the State Department take the form of cables, reports and correspondence between Washington and various embassies in Latin America. These documents provide an insight into how these organisations engaged

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with the State Department, whether relationships were developed and how these organisations fit into the world of executive branch foreign policy-making. State Department documents can also give some indication of what the State Department thought about these organisations and their work. Although the question of public perception is not one this thesis seeks to answer, newspaper articles, particularly those from Latin America, can serve as evidence for the problems or successes these organisations had in their work. Examining Reagan's speeches and personal papers shows whether the President (publicly at least) took an interest in these organisations and their work. Similarly, searching the Congressional Record for mentions of the three institutions gives an indication of the level of engagement they had with Congress and whether or not their work was used, respected or seen as useful to Congress in foreign policy debates and policy-making.<sup>51</sup> Through this mix of archival, state and press sources this thesis will provide a clear picture of how these organisations functioned internally, how they fit into the broader world of foreign policy-making and how they fit into a broader debate about the definition of human rights.

### Thesis Structure

In order to provide a clear understanding of these organisations and their role in policy-making this thesis will be structured around those issues deemed in the existing literature to be vital to the "proper" functioning of non-state actors. The first four chapters will examine the organisations themselves, their principles, funding and wider relationships, and the last two chapters will provide a detailed look at these organisations in action in Chile and Nicaragua.

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<sup>51</sup>While some of the individuals who sat on the boards of these organisations are still alive, this thesis will not be using any oral history sources. This is partially due to the impossibility of achieving balance, very few of the Freedom House board are still alive while the majority of WOLA and the NED's boards are, and partially because only one of the individuals I contacted was available for interview.



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The first chapter will set the scene for the rest of the thesis by investigating the histories and principles of these organisations. It will set out their founding stories and show what their founding principles were and how (or if) they had changed by the 1980s. Through detailing these principles, this chapter will highlight the balance and tensions between democracy promotion and human rights within the organisations concerned as well as explaining what exactly these organisations meant when they talked about “democracy” and “human rights”. Furthermore, this chapter will begin to show the links within the foreign policy community by providing short biographies of key individuals within the three organisations, examining the connections between them and placing them in broader contexts.

Chapter two will show the effects (or lack thereof) of funding and internal structures and processes on the legitimacy, independence and functionality of the three organisations. This chapter will detail the sources of these organisations’ funding and analyse the impact these donors had on the running of the organisations and the perception and legitimacy of the organisations on the ground in Latin America. Moreover, it will examine the claim made by much of the theory that “official donor” and foundation funding inherently alters the internal processes of non-state actors, adding layers of bureaucracy which make actors less effective, in relation to these organisations. Through examining their decision-making processes and internal structures, this chapter will show whether donors did, in fact, have any influence over how these organisations were run and what the effect of this was on their work and legitimacy. Combined with the first chapter, this chapter hopes not only to provide a solid understanding of how these organisations functioned and what they believed, but also to show how they were distinct from other non-state actors and NGOs normally discussed in theoretical literature.

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Building on the analysis of connections in chapter one, chapters three and four will examine how these organisations fit into the Washington foreign policy community and how they fit into broader transnational networks. Chapter three will examine the relationships between these organisations and the three key branches of the US government involved with foreign policy: the White House, the State Department and Congress. By investigating how these organisations interacted with the US government we can examine the role they played or sought to play in the policy-making process and assess how successful they were in their attempts. Moreover, investigating these relationships will shed some light on how the attitude and, particularly in these period, political leaning of the US government affected how these organisations were able to work. This chapter will also show how the institutionalisation of the neo-conservative conception of human rights affected the groups concerned.

Chapter four will examine these organisations in a more transnational context. According to Keck and Sikkink, relations with local actors were essential for organisations such as these to be effective; this chapter will look at the relations between the organisations in question, Latin American actors and their peers in the United States. Relationships and collaboration with other international non-state actors and a network of contacts on the ground in Latin America both contributed to the legitimacy of these organisations. For the most part, the human rights organisations of the 1970s relied on extensive networks to help them work effectively. The creation of networks affords non-state actors greater access to resources and a better understanding of the situation within their target countries. This chapter will show that while the traditional networking method of operation was still very much being used, the neo-conservative human rights movement adopted a different approach to its work, having very few local contacts and rarely collaborating with its international peers.

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The final two chapters of this thesis will examine the two country case studies: Chile (Chapter 5) and Nicaragua (Chapter 6). They will examine in detail the networks these organisations had on the ground, tensions between the two competing definitions of human rights and two key events, the 1988 plebiscite in Chile and the 1989 election in Nicaragua. Combining the findings of the previous four chapters, these case studies will put these findings into specific contexts and show how the organisations worked in practice. These two chapters will show how the priorities of the US government often affected the work, interests and even the networks these organisations had on the ground. Moreover, these chapters will illustrate how the different definitions of human rights were applied within the contexts of the two countries and show the interaction between the work of the three organisations and US policy towards the countries.

Examining the issue of democracy promotion, so central to Reagan's foreign policy, provides an opportunity for greater understanding of not only the period in question, but also the foreign policy decisions of subsequent US governments. The rise of this new conception of democracy promotion in the 1980s fundamentally changed the context in which human rights and foreign policy were discussed within the United States. This context brought with it a new divide in the non-state community and a change in how non-state actors interacted with the executive branch of the US government. Understanding these changes and the impact they had on US foreign policy (and by extension the international community) is vital to the history both of inter-American relations under Reagan and to the broader international history of human rights.

## Chapter 1 - Democracy or Human Rights? Founding Principles and Changing Priorities

The three organisations that are the focus of this thesis have diverse backgrounds. The three periods in which they were founded had distinctive geopolitical conditions, domestic US attitudes towards foreign policy and conceptualisations of human rights. By the 1980s these organisations represented two distinct movements within the world of human rights advocacy, one a product of the traditional left, the other a new neo-conservative movement. The 1980s saw the liberal human rights language of the 1970s (as described by Moyn, Keys and Snyder), based on a utopian programme seeking protection for individuals against the state through international law, applicable to any nation regardless of its political system or affiliations,<sup>52</sup> lose ground to a new dialogue.<sup>53</sup> While WOLA represented a variation of this traditional, liberal approach to human rights, institutionalised during the Carter administration, the NED and Freedom House formed part of a new neo-conservative human rights movement which emerged during this time and redefined the concept. Epitomised by the thinking of Jeane Kirkpatrick and her mission to the United Nations, this movement sought to use human rights as a key aspect of the Cold War ideological conflict and saw the exportation of democracy as central to this greater human rights project.<sup>54</sup> As Barbara Keys suggested, anti-Communists fashioned an anti-Communist policy around the utopian human rights language and, while this was primarily directed against the Soviet Union, extensive use of this language was made in Central and South America as well.<sup>55</sup> By examining the stated principles and founding contexts of these three organisations, this chapter hopes

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<sup>52</sup> Ibid, pp. 4-7.

<sup>53</sup> Moyn, Samuel, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) p. 216.

<sup>54</sup> Guillhot, Nicolas, *The Democracy Makers: Human Rights and the Politics of Global Order* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) p. 78.

<sup>55</sup> Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2014) p. 104.

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to show how the neo-conservative movement assimilated human rights and democracy promotion, how the traditional human rights movement understood its own principles and whether these changed between 1980 and 1993 in response to the new dialogue.

### Founding and Personnel

Freedom House, the oldest of the three organisations, did not start out as the neo-conservative organisation it became in the late 1970s. Founded in 1941 by journalists Herbert Agar, Dorothy Thompson, George Field and Ulric Bell, it was a coupling of the liberal interventionism of the Roosevelt presidency and the anti-fascist movement of the wartime era. Its creation was supported by President Roosevelt as a means of encouraging popular support for US involvement in the Second World War.<sup>56</sup> In Freedom House's early years, the concept of human rights was still in its infancy, so its founding documents state the promotion of "freedom and democracy" as its key aims in the fight against totalitarianism.<sup>57</sup> Freedom House retained this ill-defined concept of "freedom" in its vocabulary, although as the 20<sup>th</sup> century progressed it was mostly replaced by more specific references to human and civil rights, particularly during the Carter era.<sup>58</sup> At its founding, Freedom House received support from many sectors of US society including business and labour leaders, former government officials such as Wendell Willkie (the 1940 Republican presidential candidate) and, perhaps most famously, Eleanor Roosevelt. However, between its founding in 1941 and 1980, the ideology of Freedom House shifted. The liberal interventionism of the 1940s fell out of favour in the US domestic debate as the shame of Vietnam dissipated the optimism of

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<sup>56</sup> Freedom House, "Our History" <<http://www.freedomhouse.org/content/our-history>> (Accessed 15/01/14).

<sup>57</sup> FH Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Certificate of Incorporation, (1941).

<sup>58</sup> Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014) p. 179.

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the post-war era, and changes to Freedom House's board and staff distanced it from its liberal roots until it became a strong voice in the budding neo-conservative movement.

Unlike Freedom House, WOLA began its life very much on the fringes of US politics and was religious rather than secular in origin.<sup>59</sup> It was founded in 1973 by Joe Eldridge, a Methodist missionary to Chile, in the wake of the coup which brought General Pinochet to power. WOLA hailed from a background of liberal Christianity, which was similar to that of the early religious peace movements and the US-based supporters of liberation theology.<sup>60</sup> It took some of the form of a US-based version of the Christian opposition to the military governments in Latin America, often bringing into the open cases of human rights violations and presenting them to the Washington audience. Its founding story, one of a grassroots organisation, echoed that of other traditional human rights groups such as Amnesty, albeit WOLA had the benefit of pre-existing religious organisations and structures behind it. Initially, WOLA worked almost entirely with religious groups and missionaries to develop a large network on the ground in Latin America from which it could draw testimony and information. WOLA was very much a product and a part of the growth of the transnational human rights advocacy movement described by Keck and Sikkink, making use of extensive networks of local contacts to acquire testimonial accounts for use alongside statistical information to seek policy change and develop awareness of human rights issues.<sup>61</sup> It was one of the key organisations involved in lobbying the Carter administration to take a stand against Pinochet and was well respected within Carter-era foreign policy circles. WOLA was founded as the utopian human rights vision was gaining traction internationally and the commitment to the upholding of international law across state borders (and regardless

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<sup>59</sup> Youngers, Coletta, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) p. 3.

<sup>60</sup> Moyn, *The Last Utopia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010) p. 131.

<sup>61</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) pp. 18-19.

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of a state's political affiliation) is clear in its principles and its work throughout the 1970s and the first half of the 1980s.

The NED grew out of a project undertaken by the American Political Foundation (APF) in 1982 and was a product of the revived Cold War of the Reagan era. The APF, the brain-child of George E. Agree, a seasoned Washington operator, was (primarily) a research centre designed to be a means of promoting understanding between the two main US political parties and democratic parties abroad.<sup>62</sup> The NED was the poster child for Reagan's democracy promotion policy, constituting another side of the USAID "Democracy Program" which was an outgrowth of the original Carter human rights programme.<sup>63</sup> The APF project was a study to "determine the feasibility of various programs and institutional arrangements to promote the development and strengthening of democratic forces overseas".<sup>64</sup> It was proposed in a personal letter to Reagan from Charles Manatt and Richard Richards (the national chairmen of the Democratic and Republican parties respectively) and enjoyed the full support of many senior members of the Reagan administration as well as Reagan himself. In 1982, in a speech to the UK Parliament in Westminster, Reagan announced the project publicly, claiming that it would determine how the United States could "best contribute – as a nation – to the global campaign for democracy".<sup>65</sup> The APF called for the creation of an umbrella organisation through which four core organisations would receive their funding and which would approve grants to other private sector

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<sup>62</sup> Goldman, Ralph Morris, *The Future Catches Up: Transnational Parties and Democracy* (Lincoln, NE: Writers Club Press, 2002) p. 134.

<sup>63</sup> MacDonald, Laura, *Supporting Civil Society: The Political Role of Non-Governmental Organisations in Central America* (London: Macmillan 1997) p. 93.

<sup>64</sup> Library of Congress, NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 2, Letter from L.E. Stanfield to George Agree (1<sup>st</sup> December 1982).

<sup>65</sup> NED website, Promoting Peace and Democracy, President Ronald Reagan, Westminster Address, 1982 <<http://www.ned.org/ronald-reagan/promoting-democracy-and-peace>> (accessed 10/12/2013).

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organisations whose proposals matched its purposes.<sup>66</sup> After these suggestions were put to the Reagan Administration in May 1983, the NED was founded by an act of Congress to serve as this umbrella organisation. The act stipulated an organisation which would serve as an “intermediary between private sector groups and as a clearing house for inquiries and proposals to bring groups together and create new opportunities for democratic assistance”.<sup>67</sup> Four core grantees were also established by Congress: the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), a non-profit organisation affiliated to the Democratic Party; the National Republican Institute for International Affairs (NRI), the Republican Party’s equivalent of the NDI; the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE), a branch of the Chamber of Commerce; and the Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI), a branch of the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organisations (AFL-CIO). Despite being established by Congress and being subject to Congressional oversight, the act also stated that the NED would “not be considered an agency or establishment of the US Government”.<sup>68</sup> This meant that although the NED had to provide annual and financial reports to Congress and the Government Accountability Office, legally no branch of the US government would be involved in internal programming or funding decisions which would be taken by an independent board.

The NED and Freedom House had a number of senior personnel in common: Carl Gershman had been a resident scholar at Freedom House before moving into the presidency of the NED in 1983 and John Richardson had been the President of Freedom

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<sup>66</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Bolder 25, *The Commitment to Democracy: A Bipartisan Approach* (18<sup>th</sup> April 1983).

<sup>67</sup> US Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Authorizing appropriations for fiscal years 1984 and 1985 for the Department of State, the United States Information Agency, the Board for International Broadcasting, the Inter-American Foundation and the Asia Foundation, to establish the National Endowment for Democracy and for other purposes* (16<sup>th</sup> May 1983) Bill (98) H.R. 2915, p. 87.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid.



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House before taking a position on the NED board in 1984.<sup>69</sup> Indeed, interchange of personnel between organisations in both the neo-conservative and liberal human rights movements were not uncommon as demonstrated by the move of Penn Kemble from Friends of the Democratic Center in Central America (PRODEMCA) to Freedom House in 1988 and, indeed, the eventual merger between Freedom House and PRODEMCA. There was no movement of personnel between either the NED or Freedom House and WOLA. The majority of the individuals discussed in this section were in their roles for the entirety of the 1980 – 1993 period. The stability of personnel in these organisations during this time ensured a continuity of principles and organisational ethos which was evident in the programming of the three organisations.

The top personnel of Freedom House and the NED during this period came from broadly similar political and educational backgrounds. Carl Gershman, John Richardson, Frank Fahrenkopf (NED Vice-Chairman and president of the NRI), Brian Atwood (NED board member and director of the NDI), Bruce McColm (Director of Freedom House's Centre for Caribbean and Central American Studies and later Freedom House Executive Director), Penn Kemble (Freedom House resident scholar) and Leonard Sussman (Freedom House Executive Director) were all born on the East Coast and through the course of their educations and early careers all six men entered into US policymaking circles. Gershman and Kemble had a shared background in the Old Left and began their political careers in the Young People's Socialist League (YPSL) which they and others revived in 1964 after it had been dissolved by the Socialist Party-Social Democratic Federation on account of its Trotskyite affiliations.<sup>70</sup> Under their revival, the YPSL took on a much more mainstream appearance as, with the

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<sup>69</sup> FH Records, Box 3, Folder 16, Minutes of the Executive Committee of Freedom House, (11<sup>th</sup> April 1984).

<sup>70</sup> Alexander, Robert, "Schisms and unifications in the American Old Left, 1953 – 1970", *Labour History*, Vol. 14, No. 4 (1973), pp. 544-545.

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assistance of Albert Shanker (who later also sat on the NED board), they sought to create and maintain unity between the YPSL, the AFL-CIO and the liberal wing of the Democratic Party.<sup>71</sup> All three men worked as organisers for Henry Jackson's campaign for the presidential nomination in 1972. Jackson had a solid reputation as a "Democratic hawk" and, although he never used the term himself, was an early neo-conservative. This work placed the Gershman, Kemble and Shanker firmly in the burgeoning neo-conservative movement alongside individuals such as Richard Perle and Paul Wolfowitz, both of whom also worked for Jackson.<sup>72</sup> In 1974 Gershman became the executive director of the newly renamed Social Democrats USA (SDUSA). Like the YPSL, the SDUSA was a formative political experience for a number of the individuals who later sat on the NED and Freedom House boards. In addition to Gershman, both Kemble and later McColm were key members of the SDUSA. Gershman and Kemble's years in the YPSL and working for Jackson had cemented in both men profoundly anti-Communist feelings and this carried through into their leadership of the SDUSA. The organisation became something of a recruitment ground for the Reagan Administration's State Department and the neo-conservative US human rights movement, with many members (including Gershman) going on to work, not only at the NED and Freedom House, but also on Jeane Kirkpatrick's staff at the US mission to the UN.<sup>73</sup>

Due to the requirements of its founding act, the NED's board was populated with individuals from the business world as well as the AFL-CIO and Congress. In accordance with its founding document's claims to bipartisanship, the NED's initial board contained a cross section of members of Congress from both the Democratic and

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<sup>71</sup> Guilhot, *The Democracy Makers* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2005) p. 88.

<sup>72</sup> Vaïsse, *Neoconservatism* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2011) p. 9.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid*, p. 90.

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Republican parties. The initial board of the NED was somewhat bipartisan, including not only clear Reagan supporters or those who believed in interventionist foreign policy (such as Gershman, Richardson and Henry Kissinger) but also two more moderate critics of Reaganite foreign policy in Rep. Dante Fascell (D, FL), who was highly critical of Reagan's handling of El Salvador, and Carter's Vice-President Walter Mondale.<sup>74</sup> Of a board of approximately sixteen, around eight could definitely be said to hold interventionist foreign policy beliefs while only two were primarily opposed to Reaganite foreign policy. It seems that few proposals were ever challenged by these more liberal voices and, by 1992, the nearly all of NED board members were either proponents of directly interventionist foreign policy or were believers in the more Wilsonian brand of US internationalism. This suggests that, in reality the claim of bipartisanship carried little serious weight since, when it came to foreign policy issues, all but a very few were pretty much of one mind. All of the NED's board members were part of the US political establishment and at least three of them, Lane Kirkland of the AFL-CIO, Charles Manatt of the NDI and Frank Fahrenkopf of the NRI, were also members of the boards of its four core grantees. The majority of the initial board was not only close to Washington but many were part of the government, with eight members being either sitting or ex- members of Congress and executive staffers.

Although more diverse in background, the majority of the Freedom House board were no less embedded in the US political establishment of the 1980s than their NED counterparts. Freedom House had fewer personnel who worked for or were part of any branch of the US government. By 1985 around six of its Board of Trustees were representatives of the US business and legal establishment or career political activists. Leonard Sussman was a journalist and campaigner for press freedom who had sat on the

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<sup>74</sup> LoC, National Endowment for Democracy, *Annual Report*, JC421.N37a (1985)

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US National Commission for UNESCO and the Council for World Communications. Alongside him on the board sat Bayard Rustin, a Civil Rights leader who had, like Gershman, Kemble and McColm, an earlier history of involvement in the SDUSA, John Richardson, a lawyer, businessman and ex-Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs (1969-1977), and Max Kampelman a career diplomat with a history of involvement in European policy, including negotiating weapons treaties with the Soviet Union, and a strong anti-communist streak.<sup>75</sup> In 1983, McColm was elected by a majority of Latin American states to be the American representative on the Organisation of American States (OAS) Inter-American Human Rights Commission, indicating not only that he was strongly connected to formal foreign policy channels but also suggesting the reputation of Freedom House as an organisation in the international community.<sup>76</sup> He continued to hold this position alongside his job at Freedom House's Centre for Caribbean/Central American Studies until 1987 when direct criticism from the Sandinista government concerning his writings in *Freedom at Issue* meant he was not nominated for a second term.<sup>77</sup> Throughout this period, the board of Freedom House was overwhelmingly anti-Communist in its attitude; the individuals who made up the Freedom House board were, by and large, favourable to the Reagan administration's aggressive Cold War stance and were strong, vocal supporters of the ideological anti-Communism of the Reagan era. It is likely that the prevalence of such voices is responsible for Freedom House's move towards the neo-conservative movement at this time.

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<sup>75</sup> Yardley, William, "Max Kampelman, Who Led Arms Talks, Dies at 92", *New York Times* <[http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/29/world/europe/max-kampelman-who-led-arms-talks-with-soviet-union-dies-at-92.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/29/world/europe/max-kampelman-who-led-arms-talks-with-soviet-union-dies-at-92.html?_r=0)> (28<sup>th</sup> January 2013) (accessed 31/01/14).

<sup>76</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 11, Memorandum from Leonard Sussman to the Executive Committee (21<sup>st</sup> November 1983).

<sup>77</sup> FH Records, Box 1, Folder 3, Memorandum from Leonard Sussman to John Riehm (15<sup>th</sup> September 1987).

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In contrast to the NED and Freedom House, WOLA's personnel existed very much on the fringes of Washington policy circles, particularly in the early 1980s. In this period, most of WOLA's board members were priests and nuns from various Christian denominations, including two members of the National Council of Churches, along with a few career activists and academics. For example, Joseph Eldridge, WOLA's president, was a Methodist reverend with strong missionary connections in Latin America but very little experience of the workings of Washington.<sup>78</sup> For the most part, the individuals who made up the board had few connections to US policymaking networks and what contacts they maintained had mostly been made under the Carter administration which was more favourable to human rights groups. At the time of its founding, none of the individuals involved had much experience of lobbying or working within Washington; although WOLA could draw upon the expertise of the National Council of Churches which had been providing testimony to Congress regularly since its founding in the 1950s. WOLA's board and personnel, while often prominent figures in their own orders and denominations, lacked the personal connections to policymaking networks enjoyed by the NED and Freedom House. The congressional connections WOLA was able to retain through the change of administration, had been developed through its work providing information to members of Congress and lobbying for a human rights led policy towards Chile under Carter. The flexible management and style of work which initially characterised WOLA continued throughout the 1970s and into the mid-1980s when WOLA began to "professionalise" as an organisation.

As WOLA professionalised and cemented itself as a more formally structured organisation after receiving a large grant from the Ford Foundation, the make-up of its

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<sup>78</sup> Duke University Library, WOLA Records, Box 3, Washington Office on Latin America Board of Directors, (10<sup>th</sup> May 1985).

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staff began to change accordingly.<sup>79</sup> In 1987, Eldridge left WOLA and the directorship passed to Alexander Wilde. Unlike his predecessor, Wilde came from an academic background, having previously held senior research and management positions in the Helen Kellogg Institute for International Studies at Notre Dame University and the Woodrow Wilson Centre.<sup>80</sup> Wilde's previous engagement with academic and policymaking communities enabled him to expand WOLA's board to include members of both these groups.<sup>81</sup> As a result of both this increased professionalisation and the reputation WOLA had built since 1973, by the 1990s WOLA was able to attract staff such as Rachel Neild, previously a researcher for the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights and a consultant to several inter-governmental organisations, who were well informed about the internal workings of Washington and the international legal community. This brought with it a more professional institutionalised attitude to the advocacy and lobbying work WOLA was undertaking. Although WOLA's early staffers were not strongly connected to the US policy-making establishment like those of the NED or Freedom House, the organisation always had strong relationships with other human rights organisations as well as an extensive network on the ground in Latin America. In many ways, these relationships and the reputation WOLA gained as a result of its extensive network of non-state contacts made up for WOLA's early lack of personal and institutional connections to foreign policymaking circles.<sup>82</sup>

In 2001 Martina Vandenberg, a former researcher of Human Rights Watch, stated that previously "human rights NGOs were a conglomerate of the elite, but with grassroots and idealism as their guide... Now they are a community of elite voyeurs

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<sup>79</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) pp. 57-58.

<sup>80</sup> Biography of Alex Wilde < <http://www.wilsoncenter.org/staff/alexander-wilde> > (accessed 31/01/14).

<sup>81</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos* (Washington: WOLA, 2006) p. 65.

<sup>82</sup> WOLA Records, Box 15, Programme Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America: Prepared for the Ford Foundation by Carlos Chipoco and Lars Schoultz, (1991).

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with a few wild haired exceptions”. The biographies of the staff of these organisations support the theory that human rights and democracy promotion in the 1980s remained the reserve of the establishment.<sup>83</sup> Until the late 1980s, WOLA very much represented the former description, while its staff were part of the establishment, they were driven by a grassroots idealistic idea of human rights. By contrast, the NED and Freedom House fit the description of “elite voyeur”; they operated at arms-length from the situation on the ground and were driven primarily by their own interests or those of the United States. In the cases of the NED and Freedom House, the majority of their high ranking staff came from the top of US policy-making circles. Both organisations were well connected within the US government and US foreign policy-makers and were run in a top-down manner, driven by the desire to promote US policy and national security interests abroad. Unlike the NED and Freedom House, due to its strong network of missionaries, local actors and peers, WOLA definitely retained this concept of “grassroots and idealism” with the majority of decisions being guided by the volunteers, missionaries and on-the-ground staff, although this became less true by the early 1990s. While neither the NED nor Freedom House were guided by a grassroots movement, both were certainly driven by idealism.

### Principles, Purposes and Ideologies

As can be seen, these organisations came from very different ideological backgrounds. Freedom House began as a nationalistic, centrist extension of the anti-fascist movement and, by the 1980s, had adopted many aspects of the same neo-conservative ideology as the NED. WOLA came from the Christian social justice tradition driven by a strong commitment to utopian human rights and the upholding of international law, and the

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<sup>83</sup> Mertus, Julie, “Raising Expectations? Civil society’s influence on human rights and US foreign policy” in *Journal of Human Rights* 3:1, (2004) p. 22.

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NED arose from an early incarnation of the neo-conservative foreign policy ideal.<sup>84</sup>

Although all three organisations claimed to promote and support democracy and human rights abroad, their proposed methods, principles and priorities within this broader aim differed greatly. It should not be surprising that the concept of “democracy” is a strongly contested one. The modern idea of democracy lacks a single unifying theory, although certain types and elements of democracy have been theorised.<sup>85</sup> Despite many attempts to devise a comprehensive list of rights and issues that constitute “human rights” this too remains contested. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century US presidents and other world leaders have struggled with the question of what human rights actually means.<sup>86</sup> In order to fully investigate the position of these organisations within the history of human rights and inter-American relations we must first grasp how they understood their own activities and their guiding definitions and ideologies.

How these organisations interpreted the concepts of “democracy” and “human rights” is vital to understanding and analysing their activities and engagement both in the United States and in Latin America and to illustrating the shift in human rights language that occurred in the 1980s. The NED’s *Statement of Principles and Objectives* set out six purposes and five programme areas for the organisation. These can be summarised as the encouragement of democratic institutions, the facilitation of exchange between US and foreign private sectors, the strengthening of democratic processes abroad and the encouragement of the growth of democratic development in a “manner consistent both with the broad concerns of US national interests and with the requirements of groups abroad funded by NED”.<sup>87</sup> While the NED did see human rights

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<sup>84</sup>WOLA Records, Box 5, South America Team Planning Document: Ford Proposal (1988).

<sup>85</sup> Robinson, ‘Globalization, the world system and “democracy promotion” in U.S. foreign policy’ in *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 5, (1996) pp. 623-624. This article provides some discussion of these theories.

<sup>86</sup> Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014) p. 13.

<sup>87</sup> National Endowment for Democracy, *Statement of Principles and Objectives*, <<http://www.ned.org/docs/Statement-of-Principles-and-Objectives.pdf>> (accessed 17/02/2014).



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as relevant to its remit, it chose to allow its grantees to define the role human rights would take in their programming.<sup>88</sup> In a document responding to questions raised in the House of Representatives about the NED it stated that “It will be the task of the core grantees to define the role that human rights will play in their programmes”.<sup>89</sup> For the NED the language of human rights was something to be picked up when convenient but it never formed a key part of its principles. In the *Statement of Principles* the NED states that “democracy and human rights are not identical objectives but they reinforce each other”. While it does not explicitly state human rights to be part of the NED’s remit, it does allow scope for the raising of human rights issues. Freedom House saw itself as speaking for the American centre and believed the key to the promotion of democracy was a commitment to individual political rights and civil liberties and the supporting of dissidents.<sup>90</sup> Although Freedom House had a similar commitment to democratic and legal structures as the NED, it spoke of these structures as being necessary to the securing of rights rather than as just an end in themselves.<sup>91</sup> While in practice, Freedom House was often, especially by the end of the period, more concerned with issues of democracy than human rights, in its policy documents of the early 1980s at least it represented something of a middle ground between the traditional language of human rights and the democracy-led language of the 1980s. By contrast, WOLA stated its mission to be promoting “human rights, democracy, and social justice” by working with partners in Latin America and the Caribbean to shape policies in the United States and abroad.<sup>92</sup> WOLA put human rights at the centre of its work in the early years and, while it continued to focus on rights based issues, as the conversation in US policy-

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<sup>88</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 26, Answers to Congressman Yatron’s Questions: Hearing on Project Democracy, (19<sup>th</sup> April 1983).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> FH Records, Box 3, Folder 14, What is Freedom House? (13<sup>th</sup> August 1982).

<sup>91</sup> FH Records, Box 3, Folder 14, Freedom House: Who We are, What do we do (a “new image” statement), (1982).

<sup>92</sup> Washington Office on Latin America, *About US* < [http://www.wola.org/about\\_wola](http://www.wola.org/about_wola) > (accessed 2012).

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making circles became dominated by the new language of the neo-conservative and anti-Communist movements through the 1980s, WOLA too began to move away from the traditional language of human rights and towards that of economic and social justice.

In these organisations' definitions of democracy and human rights the divide is clear. The NED and Freedom House conceived of a democracy that included elections, party pluralism and capitalism, while WOLA was more flexible, allowing for democratic experiments such as that of Nicaragua. Similarly, WOLA worked with a very broad definition of human rights compared to that used by Freedom House or the NED. For the NED, democracy was inextricably bound up with economic liberalism and development. In its statement of principles, the NED placed a strong emphasis on the "interdependence of sound economic development and real democracy".<sup>93</sup> Indeed, the Democracy Program's report stated that NED projects should "reinforce ongoing programmes of economic assistance".<sup>94</sup> When it came to Latin America, Freedom House held economic issues to be of great importance in the struggle for democracy. In 1982, it expanded its Freedom Survey (a yearly study carried out by Freedom House which ranked nations on a scale of 1 (most free) to 7 (least free)) to include "democratic economy" which was defined as a "political-economic system with economic arrangements and relationships legitimised through popular participation in[...]economic decision making".<sup>95</sup> In the eyes of Freedom House the ability to vote and select from a variety of individuals or parties was integral to popular participation in economic decision making.<sup>96</sup> In a document entitled *Latin America: Crisis of*

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<sup>93</sup> National Endowment for Democracy, *Statement of Principles and Objectives* <<http://www.ned.org/docs/Statement-of-Principles-and-Objectives.pdf>> (1983).

<sup>94</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 25, *The Commitment to Democracy: a Bipartisan Approach (an Interim Report of the Democracy Program)* (18<sup>th</sup> April 1983)

<sup>95</sup> FH Records, Box 130, Folder 2, *Freedom at Issue* No. 64 (January-February 1982) p. 15.

<sup>96</sup> Gastil, R.D., *Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1986 – 1987* (Westport: Greenwood Press Inc., 1987) p. 5.

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*Democracy* Douglas Payne wrote that democracy and development form a “seamless web” and that economic crises in the region threatened democratic centrist governments by generating “regressive, left-wing populism”.<sup>97</sup> While WOLA did not place a great emphasis on economic systems, it did see a connection between civil and political rights and social and economic rights.<sup>98</sup> It saw economic rights as an aspect of the human rights struggle and, like Freedom House, it recognised the influence US economic aid could have on the region as evidenced by its work on development bank loans to Chile.<sup>99</sup> By 1990, WOLA had also become more interested in economic issues, particularly questions of social equality and justice.

The NED primarily sought to promote a form of US-style democracy, termed “polyarchy” by William Robinson. According to Robinson, polyarchy is a system in which a small group rule the many and mass participation occurs only in carefully managed leadership contests. It focuses primarily on the processes of democracy irrespective of outcome, although it must be said that in many situations the NED was very interested in the outcome of the democratic process and was prompted by this interest to involve itself in foreign elections.<sup>100</sup> In the case of Nicaragua (which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6) for example, the NED’s primary reason for involvement in the 1989 elections was to manipulate the outcome to suit US interests. That said, the form in which these interventions took place and much of the language used to justify them centred on the principle of ensuring or consolidating “proper” democratic procedures.

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<sup>97</sup> FH Records, Box 70, Folder 7, Payne, Douglas *Latin America: Crisis of Democracy*.

<sup>98</sup> WOLA Records, Box 15, Program Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America: Prepared for the Ford Foundation by Carlos Chipoco and Lars Schoultz, (1991).

<sup>99</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Chile, the Multilateral Development Banks and US Human Rights Law: A Delegation Report (1986).

<sup>100</sup> Robinson, “Globalization, the World System and “Democracy Promotion” in U.S. Foreign Policy”, *Theory and Society*, Vol. 25, No. 5 (1996) pp. 624-625.

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In its Statement of Principles, the NED stated that “a precondition for democracy [was] a multiparty system” of “strong, broadly-based and well-organized political parties”.<sup>101</sup> It also specified that a “democracy requires a system of representative government in which leaders are chosen in freely contested, fair and periodic elections”.<sup>102</sup> In addition to its strong emphasis on democratic processes, the NED cited the creation of “pluralism” as one of their key aims. Although the NED stressed that democratic systems “need not follow the U.S. or any other particular model” the descriptions it gave of the democracy it sought to promote closely resembled the democracy of the United States and this ensured that, particularly, left-wing experiments such as that of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua could never be considered democratic.<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, there was no recognition from the NED that other traditions of democracy, even those which provided much the same rights and freedoms as polyarchic democracy, were valid. This shared characteristics with the tactic the Reagan administration applied to those left-wing governments it sought to discredit. This deeply prescriptive US-centric definition of what constitutes democracy sometimes led to accusations of cultural imperialism against the NED by its opponents in Congress and the non-governmental community, but if the NED responded to these criticisms at the time, the responses are lost.

While neither Freedom House nor WOLA laid out set definitions of democracy in their founding literature, Freedom House did establish its parameters for “freedom” in its Freedom Survey. By 1980, “freedom” encompassed a blend of civil and democratic rights and some basic discussion of human rights. It placed a similarly strong emphasis on the structures and processes of democracy to that of the NED. In an

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<sup>101</sup> National Endowment for Democracy, *Statement of Principles and Objectives* <<http://www.ned.org/docs/Statement-of-Principles-and-Objectives.pdf>> (1983).

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

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internal statement redefining its image, Freedom House stated that one of its key purposes was to “defend and promote democratic institutions”.<sup>104</sup> Indeed, in the preamble to its Freedom Survey of 1986, it stated openly that it took democracy to mean “liberal democracy” (although this was changed in later editions outside the period in question).<sup>105</sup> Freedom House listed a number of political rights it saw as key to “freedom”, one of the first of which is that the “chief authority” was “elected by a meaningful process”.<sup>106</sup> Like the NED, it indicated a strong commitment to pluralism with multiple political parties taking part in regular elections with equal campaigning opportunities. Although choice is a key aspect of any democratic system, the emphasis Freedom House and the NED placed on the importance of political parties specifically had complicated ramifications in parts of Latin America where political parties were not always trusted or deemed to be representative. Corruption and cronyism had led to disillusionment among citizens in many areas in the region and, particularly in Central America, political parties were often viewed very much as part of the problem; moreover, in those countries that had existed under military dictatorships, many parties were illegal or severely weakened. Perhaps most interestingly Freedom House also required “free” countries to have “decentralised political power”.<sup>107</sup> Again, this requirement presented challenges when applied to Latin America. Although several of the dictatorships of the 1980s had pushed decentralisation policies, the region had a strong tradition of centralised governments and political decentralisation was only just beginning to take hold in the 1980s and 1990s.<sup>108</sup> Despite stating that the United States was “not committed to recreating any nation in [its] own image”, like the NED,

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<sup>104</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 1, Freedom House Stands for What? (1982).

<sup>105</sup> Gastil, R.D., *Freedom in the World: 1986 – 1987* (Westport: Greenwood Press Inc., 1987) p. 4.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> FH Records, Box 130, Folder 1, *Freedom at Issue*, No. 54 (Jan-Feb 1980).

<sup>108</sup> Willis, Eliza, Garman, C. C. B., Haggard, Stephen, “The Politics of Decentralization in Latin America” in *Latin American Research Review*, Vol. 34, No. 1 (1999) pp. 9 – 10.

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Freedom House upheld a very US-centric conception of democracy.<sup>109</sup> These prescriptive definitions of democracy brought both organisations into conflict with many Latin American political systems which, while often democratic, failed to fit the mould.

Although democracy did not lie at the heart of WOLA's interests (and certainly not democratic procedures), it did have some conception of what form democracy should assume. It saw US policy as having a "narrow electoral and market-economy"-based view of democracy.<sup>110</sup> Like both the NED and Freedom House, WOLA was committed to democratic pluralism. In articles published in its bulletin *Update Latin America*, it criticised the Uruguayan military for limiting political parties and placing restrictions on the press and political discussion during elections.<sup>111</sup> Yet, despite this, WOLA did not place the same emphasis on the importance of political processes as the other two organisations. This is not to say it took no interest in electoral procedures, indeed, it often acted as an international observer for Latin American elections, merely that it was more concerned with the upholding of civil and political rights. It sought to promote fair media coverage and elections that were free from fraud, but beyond basic assurances of fairness in electoral processes it was open to many types and traditions of democracy. This is evidenced in its willingness to declare the 1984 Nicaraguan election free and fair, something many US-based organisations were unwilling to do.<sup>112</sup> Overall, although WOLA saw democracy and human rights in a symbiotic relationship, its

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<sup>109</sup> FH Records, Box 23, Folder 20, Outline of a Draft Statement on Human Rights and Foreign Policies (16<sup>th</sup> September 1976).

<sup>110</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Interim Grant Report Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934 (1<sup>st</sup> July 1988 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 1989).

<sup>111</sup> "Uruguay: Rejection of Military Expected in Party Elections" in *Update Latin America*, Vol. VII, No. 5 (September/October 1982) p. 2.

<sup>112</sup> WOLA Records, Box 29, Washington Office on Latin America 1984 Annual Report (1984).

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primary focus was on traditional liberal human rights issues and international law, not democracy.

WOLA's understanding of human rights was a combination of legislation-focused principles and broader, more radical ideals. While it aimed to hold the US administration and Congress accountable to existing international human rights legislation, it also lobbied for issues not part of international law at this time such as the rights of refugees and indigenous rights.<sup>113</sup> During the civil wars in Central America WOLA pushed for the upholding of the Geneva Conventions in the region, publishing reports on the human rights abuses of the various factions and governments and sending delegations to Guatemala and El Salvador to assess the human rights situation there.<sup>114</sup> According to one of WOLA's programme evaluations from 1991, its operational framework emphasised, at the most basic level, the "right to life, liberty and security" and the right to be "free from torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment".<sup>115</sup> In this document it also stated that WOLA worked to ensure respect for the right to equality before the law, freedom from arbitrary exile, the right to asylum and the right to be innocent until proven guilty.<sup>116</sup> These rights, for the most part, follow those laid down in the UN Declaration on Human Rights and are not dissimilar to those advocated by other organisations such as Amnesty International or the International Human Rights Law Group.<sup>117</sup> However, as it became clear that US and international interest was moving away from the traditional human rights dialogue, WOLA began to expand its remit to include other universal rights-based issues. In its 1991 programme

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<sup>113</sup> "WOLA Roundup" in *Update Latin America*, Vol. IX, No. 6 (November/December 1984) p. 6.

<sup>114</sup> "Reagan Administration Launches Battle to Win Congressional Approval for Contra Aid" in *Update Latin America*, Vol. X, No. 2 (March/April 1985) p. 3.

<sup>115</sup> WOLA Records, Box 26, Program Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America (May 1991).

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> Amnesty International, "About Amnesty International" <<http://www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/about-amnesty-international>> and International Human Rights Law Group, "About IHRLG" <[http://www.hrlawgroup.org/about\\_ihrlg/default.asp](http://www.hrlawgroup.org/about_ihrlg/default.asp)> (Both accessed 30/04/14).

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evaluation, it also stated that it wished to ensure the right to basic social security and to a “standard of living adequate for health and well-being”.<sup>118</sup> In the 1990s WOLA began to engage with issues of social and economic rights which helped it to stay relevant in the new human rights culture, to fit into the interests of the Bush administration and to involve itself more fully in the internal dynamics of Latin American nations. According to the Ford Foundation’s evaluation of WOLA, this was one of the aspects Latin American organisations and citizens considered of value in it.<sup>119</sup>

In addition to espousing a broad definition of human rights, WOLA saw human rights and democracy as mutually reinforcing. In a grant report for the Ford Foundation WOLA stated that “to the degree that democracy is actually achieved, it should serve human rights”, suggesting that WOLA believed democracy acted as a guarantor for human rights but was not a prerequisite for their upholding.<sup>120</sup> Freedom House also stated the belief that human rights and democracy were connected, but it claimed that human rights required “democratic and stable legal structures”.<sup>121</sup> Instead of seeing democracy as a method of upholding human rights, Freedom House believed it to be a prerequisite to the existence of human rights. In a speech in 1982 Leonard Sussman stated that the “root cause of human rights abuse is the style of governance in less-than-free-countries”.<sup>122</sup> This was a key part of the redefinition of human rights in the 1980s. While democratic rights and processes had always been a part of the human rights movement, this language reversed the importance of the two creating a cause-and-effect

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<sup>118</sup> WOLA Records, Box 26, Program Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America (May 1991).

<sup>119</sup> WOLA Records, Box 15, Program Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America: Prepared for the Ford Foundation by Carlos Chipoco and Lars Schoultz (undated).

<sup>120</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Interim Grant Report Ford Foundation, Grant No. 830-0934 1<sup>st</sup> July 1988 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 1989 (1989).

<sup>121</sup> FH Records, Box 3, Folder 14, Freedom House: Who are we, what do we do? (a new image statement) (1982).

<sup>122</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 3, Human Rights Abroad: What Can be done? - text of a speech given at the Council of Foundations 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference (1982).



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relationship rather than a symbiotic one. For the most part, Freedom House's definition of human rights, followed the pattern of the UN Declaration – freedom of speech, worship and assembly and freedom from terror and unjust imprisonment made up the majority of its definition.<sup>123</sup> Like WOLA, Freedom House's conceptualisation did include some economic rights, but these were primarily the rights afforded by liberal economic ideology. It spoke of economic rights as the “freedom from dependency on landlords, bosses, union leaders or bureaucrats”.<sup>124</sup> While these economic freedoms were mentioned, for the most part they did not form a large part of Freedom House's work outside of a keen interest in land reform policies in El Salvador (which was a decidedly political objective). Instead Freedom House emphasised political rights and civil liberties as “the keystone of all personal and group efforts to improve the human condition”; without which it would be impossible to decrease “gross socioeconomic inequality”.<sup>125</sup>

Like Freedom House, the NED believed that democracy was the “guarantee for human rights” and that “democracy and human rights [were] not identical objectives”.<sup>126</sup> However, it did see human rights and democracy as mutually reinforcing in practice: its *Statement of Principles and Objectives* makes the point that human rights groups protect democratic activists and expand the political space available to them.<sup>127</sup> This would suggest that, unlike Freedom House, while the NED put democracy at the heart of their work, it saw the infrastructure created by an international and local interest in human rights in the previous decade as useful for the establishment and consolidation

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<sup>123</sup> Gastil, *Freedom in the World: Political Rights and Civil Liberties 1986 – 1987* (Westport: Greenwood Press Inc., 1987) p. 10.

<sup>124</sup> Ibid.

<sup>125</sup> FH Records, Box 44, Folder 9, Memorandum – The Rationale and Operation of Freedom House, (undated 198?).

<sup>126</sup> National Endowment for Democracy, *Statement of Principles and Objectives* <<http://www.ned.org/docs/Statement-of-Principles-and-Objectives.pdf>> (1983).

<sup>127</sup> Ibid.

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of democracy. The NED saw human rights in far narrower terms than either WOLA or Freedom House. In fact, its conceptualisation was limited to those basic civil liberties afforded by the founding documents of the United States. Its *Statement of Principles* indicated a commitment to “honouring [sic] the fundamental rights that are guaranteed to citizens of the United States” and expresses a willingness to uphold the rights of freedom of expression, association and belief as well as the “inalienable rights of individuals and minorities”.<sup>128</sup> The inclusion of the Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI) as one of its core grantees would suggest that the NED also believed in the right to unionisation and free trade unions, at least within certain parameters. Unlike WOLA and Freedom House, the NED does not appear to have seen economic issues as a key part of its work, despite the inclusion of the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) as one of its core grantees, although it did emphasise the importance and merits of liberal economics. There is no suggestion in its programmes or literature that it saw concepts of socioeconomic equality or basic quality of life as part of its remit.

Freedom House tied the promotion of human rights and democracy directly to the strength and moral authority of the United States. In 1981, Freedom House drafted a statement entitled *The Opportunities for Freedom House to Help Sustain the New National Spirit* which claimed that “advocacy of human rights abroad ultimately [depended] on US power, prestige and human values”.<sup>129</sup> It claimed that the United States should use its good reputation to reduce inhumane acts abroad because “to remain silent would diminish US values”.<sup>130</sup> In an outline of a policy statement, Freedom House claimed that “military and ideological support for... authoritarians...

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid: It should be noted that exactly what constitutes these rights is not explained in this document. However, in the 1990s the NED funded programmes seeking to foster civic awareness and participation among women, indigenous populations and “other marginalised sectors” – See, National Endowment for Democracy, *Annual Report 1992*, LoC, JC421.N37a (1992).

<sup>129</sup> FH Records, Box 3, Folder 13, Draft: *The Opportunities for Freedom House to Help Sustain the New National Spirit*, (23<sup>rd</sup> February 1981).

<sup>130</sup> Ibid.

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[emanated] from the Soviet Union” and the United States “cannot avoid being regarded as the primary generator of human freedom”.<sup>131</sup> It is clear that Freedom House saw itself very much as a part of the ideological Cold War with authoritarianism on one side and the United States as a beacon of democracy on the other. Freedom House had retained this Manichean outlook from the era of its founding, merely replacing anti-fascism with anti-Communism. This attitude does not appear to have changed as the 1980s progressed or, indeed, after the Cold War ended. Freedom House viewed much of the instability and unrest in Central and South America and the Caribbean as directly connected to “Cuban and Soviet exploitation”, an outlook which coloured its ability to work impartially within the region.<sup>132</sup> While Freedom House, like the NED, regularly emphasised that it was not seeking to make other countries in the image of the United States, it also seemed to believe that advocating for human rights and democracy was worthless without the reputation and influence of the United States to back it up. The fact that it lobbied at home for the United States to be a good international citizen and to serve as a “model” for states seeking to develop politically and socially suggests that, while it may not have sought to make other countries in the US image through its own work, it certainly hoped that nations would make *themselves* in the US image.<sup>133</sup>

Throughout its founding literature, the NED placed a great deal of importance on the private sector; the organisations which comprised its core grantees saw as their respective foci political parties, labour union programmes and the business sector. The core principles of the four grantees were largely identical to those of the NED since all four had been established especially to receive NED funding.<sup>134</sup> Although this

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<sup>131</sup> FH Records, Box 23, Folder 10, Outline of a Basic Statement (undated).

<sup>132</sup> Ibid.

<sup>133</sup> FH Records, Box 44, Folder 9, Memorandum – the Rationale and Operation of Freedom House (198?).

<sup>134</sup> For complete details of the key priorities of the NED’s four core grantees see their respective Articles of Incorporation in LoC, NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 41.

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prioritisation of the private sector may have been expedient in some beneficiary nations, (particularly in the Soviet Bloc), it demonstrated a questionable understanding of the situation in Latin America. For the most part, with the exception of certain elements of the business sector, 1980s Latin America lacked a strong, private sector. In the Southern Cone, previous and on-going military dictatorships had left labour unions, political parties and free press organisations weak, clandestine or non-existent. Similarly, in Central America, years of authoritarian dictatorships and the start of violent civil war had left the region with underdeveloped and fragmented private and public sectors.<sup>135</sup> The decision to work primarily with private sector organisations was, in practice, mostly ignored in countries of interest to US foreign policy aims. As will be discussed in detail in later chapters, in countries such as Chile, Nicaragua and Panama the NED had no qualms about working not only with the public sector but also directly with opposition parties. Although neither WOLA nor Freedom House had such prescriptive requirements regarding what types of organisation they should work with, both did have patterns and preferences when it came to the individuals and groups they chose as beneficiaries.

Freedom House also expressed a strong commitment to working with the private sector. Within the United States, Freedom House primarily engaged with private or voluntary organisations such as the SDUSA. However, it did also accept funding from and work closely with the NED on a number of projects in the 1980-1993 period. Indeed, several members of its Board of Trustees worked for private sector corporations such as Unilever.<sup>136</sup> As its main activity on the ground in Latin America was election monitoring, its direct engagement with organisations in Latin America was limited. On occasion its election monitoring services were solicited by Latin American governments

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<sup>135</sup> Macdonald, *Supporting Civil Society* (London: Macmillan, 1997) pp. 30 – 31.

<sup>136</sup> FH Records, Box 15, Folder 8, Biographical Information of Trustees (1985).

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as in the case of the elections in El Salvador, for which President Duarte requested the organisation act as an “independent observer”.<sup>137</sup> Outside of these situations, the majority of Freedom House’s work on the ground was either undertaken independently without a direct Latin American connection or with private and “third” sector groups. Freedom House stated that it particularly sought to work with centrists.<sup>138</sup> Like the NED, in practice Freedom House primarily worked with Christian Democrats and centre right organisations within Latin America. Again, as in the case of the NED, this partisan preference limited the organisations with which Freedom House could engage and, as will be discussed in later chapters, compromised their ability to act as an impartial and accurate source of information for the region.

In its early years, WOLA primarily worked with religious organisations both in the United States and in Latin America. Although this propensity to work with religious organisations and use missionaries for information gathering remained throughout the period, by the late 1980s WOLA was also working regularly with secular civil society groups. Their relationships, for the most part, were with the public and “third” sectors as opposed to the private sector – they engaged frequently with democratic politicians, unions and peasant associations and human rights groups throughout the region.<sup>139</sup> In addition, WOLA worked periodically with intergovernmental organisations such as the UN and the OAS; it was the only US non-governmental observer at the 1988 General Assembly of the OAS in San Salvador and was also heavily involved in monitoring the Central American peace process.<sup>140</sup> The Central American peace process was an agreement, proposed by the Costa Rican president Oscar Arias and signed by the

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<sup>137</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 3, Memorandum from Sussman to the Board of Trustees (undated).

<sup>138</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 9, A Freedom House Proposal for a One-Year Southern American Visitors’ Program for the North American Public (1982/3).

<sup>139</sup> WOLA Records, Box 2, A Decisive Moment for Central America: A Proposal to Oxfam (23<sup>rd</sup> April 1990).

<sup>140</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Interim Grant Report: Ford Foundation Grant No. 830-0934 1<sup>st</sup> July 1988 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 1989 (1989).

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Central American heads of state in 1987. This agreement set out a series of terms for economic cooperation and a framework for peaceful resolutions to the Central American civil wars. Regarding the politics of the organisations it worked with, WOLA favoured centrist and centre-left parties and organisations. However, unlike the NED and Freedom House, it did not restrict itself to such organisations. As long as the parties and organisations were willing, WOLA would engage with them as evidenced by a forum of Nicaraguan politicians it organised in 1986, which included representatives of political parties across Nicaragua's political spectrum.<sup>141</sup> Similarly, WOLA's involvement with the Contadora peace initiative suggests that it was less driven by political partisanship than the NED and Freedom House. Moreover, its willingness to work with those organisations that had been declared off limits or were suspect to the US government (such as the Sandinistas and the Chilean Socialist Party) suggests an approach less habitually aligned with US foreign policy interests. This is not to say it actively sought to work against US foreign policy or that it was consistently opposed to the policies of the Reagan and Bush administrations, rather that its adherence to the traditional language and principles of the human rights movement often brought it into direct conflict with the Reagan administration's anti-Communist policies.

This discussion of the principles of the three organisations provides some illumination of the shift in language from a utopian vision of human rights towards a more politicised, democracy-led conception. Through altering the perceived relationship between democracy and human rights to one of almost cause-and-effect, the NED and Freedom House changed the dialogue to prioritise democracy and to redefine democracy as a human right in its own right. This, alongside the definition of democracy to which these organisations adhered, meant that not only did human rights

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<sup>141</sup> WOLA Records, Box 3, Human Rights and Latin America: A Final Report to the Ford Foundation from the Washington Office on Latin America (30<sup>th</sup> June 1988).

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increasingly become understood to mean political rights, civil liberties and a basic right to life, but also that the concept ceased to occupy the universally applicable place it had found through international law and became politically charged. The employment of such a US-centric definition of democracy precluded countries and systems which erred from the US model from being perceived as democratic, no matter how many free and fair elections they held. The evidence of the lasting impact of this reshaping of the definition of democracy is clear, not only in the fact that traditional, left-wing human rights organisations such as WOLA had to move away from their utopian roots in order to remain relevant, but also in the fact that the combined association of democracy and human rights remains an international norm today. In the context of the 1980s, the new language gave the Reagan administration a new and “worthy” justification for its involvement in and opposition to communist countries and any regime that could be defined as “undemocratic” by these standards.

Despite the fact that Freedom House was the only one of the three organisations that framed its approach to its work in relation to the power of the United States, the activities of WOLA and the NED were also tied to the United States and its perceived place in wider international relations. Fundamentally, these organisations shared an assumption that the United States had enough international authority to make their work worthwhile, be that through lobbying for changes in US policy or directly seeking to promote “US values” abroad. None of these organisations questioned the right of the United States to be involved in promoting democracy and human rights abroad, even if they did disagree about the level of direct involvement necessary. The APF’s project report stated that democratic aid was a “fixed element of American values”, indicating that it saw the work of the NED, not only as a manifestation of American values in its

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own right, but also a method of promoting those values abroad.<sup>142</sup> In the preamble to its 1985 Annual Report, Gershman wrote that the NED served a “vital symbolic function” in showing that the United States “cares deeply about the success of democracy in the world”<sup>143</sup>; indeed, the idea that the NED symbolised the commitment of the United States to the “democratic cause throughout the world” was stressed in the preamble to several of the NED’s Annual Reports. Unlike Freedom House which saw its own legitimacy and value as deriving from the moral, economic and military strength of the United States, the NED perceived itself as an ambassador promoting US values and power abroad, thereby raising the standing of the United States in the world. By contrast, WOLA, as was perhaps more typical of traditional human rights groups, appeared to see itself as acting as a check on the actions of government.<sup>144</sup> Instead of promoting US values abroad, through providing information to the Washington foreign policy community, WOLA hoped to change how the United States interacted with Latin America. Unlike many human rights advocacy organisations which took a broad approach to their work, lobbying within inter-governmental organisations and publishing reports widely with the intention of changing public opinion, during this time WOLA focused primarily on lobbying the US government and changing US policy towards Latin America.

Having explored these organisations’ perception of themselves and their roles, it is worth examining their perceptions of each other and how they were understood by others, as the two were often dichotomous. Between 1988 and 1990, WOLA decided to undertake an examination of the NED in order to prepare a memo for Congress and a

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<sup>142</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 25, *The Commitment to Democracy: A Bipartisan Approach (an interim report of the Democracy Program)* (18th April 1983).

<sup>143</sup> LoC, National Endowment for Democracy, *Annual Report 1985*, JC421.N37a (1985) p. 5.

<sup>144</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, South America Team Planning Document: Ford Proposal (1988).



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report for the media and other non-state actors on the activities of the NED.<sup>145</sup> WOLA determined that the NED had a tendency towards politically biased funding and that its core grantees tended to seek out organisations similar to them with little thought for the pluralism the NED claimed it sought to create.<sup>146</sup> In a conference organised by WOLA on the NED and USAID's work in Chile, Nicaragua and Panama, Thomas Carothers suggested that the NED was part of US attempts to influence Latin American election outcomes. Moreover, on a practical level, questions were raised about NED autonomy; it was suggested that the NED was an unwieldy organisation, over-burdened with institutions.<sup>147</sup> These perceptions of the NED were not uncommon. George Agree, one of the key members of the research project that resulted in the creation of the NED, was unhappy with final form it took and considered its board as little more than a rubber-stamp committee, since members of all four core grantees sat on the board and tended to approve each other's proposals.<sup>148</sup>

Contrastingly, Freedom House was largely well disposed towards the NED and had played a small role in its founding. In 1980, it had written a letter to President Carter suggesting he create a "Foundation for Freedom" to assist non-state actors and the US government in promoting "freedom" abroad.<sup>149</sup> Moreover, when the NED was created Freedom House wrote a declaration in support of it.<sup>150</sup> Freedom House believed that the NED played a central role in the international movement toward democracy and claimed that, unlike USAID, the NED was not controlled by Congress.<sup>151</sup> As can be

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<sup>145</sup> WOLA Records, Box 240, The National Endowment for Democracy in Latin America: What is it financing? A Proposal for Investigation and Dissemination submitted to the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program by WOLA (21<sup>st</sup> November 1988).

<sup>146</sup> WOLA Records, Box 25, US Electoral Assistance and Democratic Development: Chile, Nicaragua and Panama, a conference report (1990).

<sup>147</sup> Ibid.

<sup>148</sup> WOLA Records, Box 240, Internal Memo (25<sup>th</sup> August 1989).

<sup>149</sup> FH Records, Box 7, Folder 2, Draft Letter to Carter (28<sup>th</sup> January 1980).

<sup>150</sup> FH Records, Box 74, Folder 2, Draft Declaration in Support of the National Endowment for Democracy.

<sup>151</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Minutes of Freedom House Board of Trustees (17<sup>th</sup> June 1991).

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seen, WOLA and Freedom House had conflicting views of the NED which, for the most part, reflected their respective attitudes to foreign policy. WOLA saw the NED as an overly biased direct attempt to influence domestic politics abroad. It and other opponents also raised questions about the NED's internal organisation and claimed that the umbrella nature of the organisation made it less than fit for purpose. Freedom House saw the NED as an autonomous organisation necessary for the promotion of democracy, and had closely involved itself both with the NED's founding and as a grantee once it was established.

There are no records within the NED archive or publications that mention WOLA, suggesting that the NED had no real interest in WOLA or its work. By contrast, Freedom House, perhaps because it was a direct competitor of WOLA, did take an interest and wrote a number of negative statements and claims about the organisation. Freedom House stated that it established its own Centre for Caribbean and Central American Studies because there was a "dearth of objective political and economic analysis" of the region.<sup>152</sup> In its proposal for the Center it claimed that most of the hemispheric organisations, like WOLA, were "outgrowths of the New Left" and provided a Marxist analysis of the region's problems.<sup>153</sup> It characterised WOLA as a supporter of the radical left because of the latter's condemnation of military assistance to El Salvador and Honduras and labelled it an "adversarial organisation".<sup>154</sup> This was not an uncommon view of WOLA, particularly from the right-wing of the US non-state community, although it was perhaps most vehemently expressed by Freedom House and the Heritage Foundation Institution, which wrote a report entitled *The Left's Latin American Lobby* that focused particularly on WOLA. This report stated that WOLA

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<sup>152</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 1, Proposal for the creation of a Center for Caribbean and Central American Studies at Freedom House (undated).

<sup>153</sup> Ibid.

<sup>154</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 1, Letter from Bruce McColm (undated).

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used “the language of human rights and social justice to delegitimize our imperfect efforts to nurture democratic, anti-communist regimes”.<sup>155</sup> It also accused WOLA of working with “openly radical leftist groups” (such as the Institute for Policy Studies) and ignoring abuses in socialist countries while attacking those in US-backed countries.<sup>156</sup> This is characteristic of the kind of, frequently full-frontal, attack campaigns many liberal human rights organisations faced during the 1980s as the new neo-conservative human rights movement sought to discredit the language of the 1970s and replace it with its own.

There is little in WOLA’s archive to suggest how it perceived Freedom House; in a letter McColm suggested that WOLA labelled it as “rightist and conservative” because it did not seem to understand the root of the problems in the developing world.<sup>157</sup> Given WOLA’s attitude to the NED, it is not implausible that it would have cast Freedom House in the same light. By contrast, the NED viewed Freedom House as a constructive organisation and held it in high regard.<sup>158</sup> However, it became concerned by the active role Freedom House began to play in the US foreign policy debate concerning Central America after they agreed to take over the work of PRODEMCA in 1988.<sup>159</sup> Since PRODEMCA had previously been funded by the NED itself, this sudden expression of worry about Freedom House’s perceived growing political involvement seems disingenuous. Despite this concern, the NED spoke highly of Freedom House and continued its long-standing relationship with it. Outside the NED, belief in the competence of Freedom House appears to have been weaker.

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<sup>155</sup> WOLA Records, Box 25, Heritage Foundation Institution Analysis: *The Left’s Latin American Lobby* (11<sup>th</sup> October 1984).

<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 1, Letter from Bruce McColm (undated).

<sup>158</sup> FH Records, Box 51, Folder 2, Letter from Leonard Sussman to Carl Gershman, (5<sup>th</sup> September 1984).

<sup>159</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 9, Folder 3, Letter from Carl Gershman to Bruce McColm (20<sup>th</sup> December 1988).

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In 1987, after a period of rapid expansion, Freedom House began to consider its image. In a series of memoranda between leading members of Freedom House concerning its public image, it was concluded that Freedom House was generally seen as a resource-poor and ineffectual organisation.<sup>160</sup> In January 1987 Bruce McColm stated that Freedom House was perceived as an institution vulnerable to political take-over and manipulation from the foundations that funded it.<sup>161</sup> Moreover, this memorandum stated that Freedom House was believed by most to be “government funded” and reflecting the views of any current administration.<sup>162</sup> This suggests that quite aside from the centrist, independent image Freedom House had of itself and wished to project, the impression its work gave others was of a deeply partisan, institutionalised organisation completely dependent on the government or foundations which funded it.

The way these organisations perceived themselves and the image that they sought to project rarely matched up to the way they were actually perceived by their peers. The NED and Freedom House both sought to project images of bipartisanship and independence and neither successfully achieved this. Questions concerning the NED’s independence and structure were raised, not only by its natural critics such as WOLA, but also by a member of the team which initially proposed its creation. Similarly Freedom House, despite genuinely being legally independent from any state failed to project this image outside those organisations it already worked with closely. Despite Freedom House’s desire to establish itself as a strong centrist organisation, it was perceived instead as unprincipled and easily manipulated. Likewise WOLA, which believed itself to be bipartisan in its work, was viewed by many as openly, even

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<sup>160</sup> FH Records, Box 161, Memorandum from Bruce McColm to Leonard Sussman, (2<sup>nd</sup> January 1987).

<sup>161</sup> Ibid.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

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aggressively, left-wing. It must be said that this issue of perceptions never really filtered into public opinion because, outside of published articles in the US media on the part of WOLA and Freedom House, none of the three organisations had a particularly public face. As will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters, this tension between how they sought to portray themselves and how they were actually perceived had the potential to cause difficulties for these organisations in the pursuit of their work.

### Conclusions

These three organisations represent two distinct human rights movements; the first, containing the NED and Freedom House, using the new and evolving language of human rights and the second espousing the more traditional human rights narrative which came to prominence during the 1970s. The new language combined democracy promotion and human rights to create an inherently politicised conception of human rights. Unlike the human rights language of the 1970s which became institutionalised over the course of the decade through the work of non-state and state groups, this new conception of human rights was institutionalised from the start.<sup>163</sup> It arose partially as part of the new Reagan administration in the early 1980s; as described by Keys, Elliot Abrams was in part responsible for the redefinition of human rights as democracy promotion as a part of the right-wing push to reject the post-Vietnam guilt which, she believes, drove the rise of human rights in the 1970s.<sup>164</sup> This language was rapidly picked up by Freedom House and the founding of the NED in 1983 constituted the administration's attempt to legitimise and cement this new definition of human rights within the non-governmental sector. The backgrounds of the staff of the NED and

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<sup>163</sup> See Moyn, S., *The Last Utopia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2010) and Keys, B., *Reclaiming American Virtue* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014).

<sup>164</sup> Keys, *Reclaiming American Virtue*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2014) p. 273 and p. 104.

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Freedom House also suggest the institutionalised nature of the new human rights movement. The key staff of the NED and Freedom House were deeply entrenched in the Washington policy-making community, be it through involvement with the SDUSA, political campaigning, or through work as ambassadors, State Department employees or in influential private organisations and trade unions. By contrast, the traditional human rights movement tended to come from the grassroots, deliberately choosing to be outside the workings of the state, and WOLA was no exception. Its original staff of missionaries and academics were far removed from the policy circles of Washington and, even after its professionalisation, its staff, while experienced in working within Washington, were still from the “third sector”. While such conscious detachment was key to the perceived independence and legitimacy of WOLA, it meant that its ability to access Washington’s policy circles was heavily reliant on individual relationships and reputation. As a result, during the early 1980s when many of the personnel with whom WOLA had developed relationships during the Carter administration were replaced by new, often more conservative and hawkish individuals, WOLA struggled to make headway with its work outside Congress.

Although these organisations were part of two very distinct human rights movements, there were some similarities between them. All three organisations were home-grown in the United States; their personnel were, predominantly, of a generation that had grown up at the height of US power and influence following the Second World War and this informed not only the definitions and principles they chose to promote, but also the way they conceived of their work. All three organisations took for granted that US policy in some form, whether direct and aggressive or “soft” and involving international influence and pressure, was powerful and relevant enough to be worth either bolstering or seeking to alter as a means of achieving their broader aims. They were all, albeit to varying extents, proponents of US exceptionalism and entrenched in

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the belief that the United States not only had the right to interfere abroad in the name of morality and “freedom”, but also the duty. The NED and Freedom House (despite its liberal internationalist roots) were both advocates of a largely unilateral approach to involvement abroad, although Freedom House was willing to engage with organisations such as the OAS, while WOLA represented the more internationalist stance, being a strongly transnational organisation itself and often pushing for the United States to work with other states and intergovernmental organisations to promote and uphold democracy and human rights.

According to Keys, by the 1980s human rights was indistinguishable from anti-Communism.<sup>165</sup> While Cold War anti-Communism certainly informed the redefining of the human rights movement by neo-conservatives and its stated values were the same, the two were not identical nor had they merged; rather one was a carefully constructed method of implementing the ideology of the other. Both the NED and Freedom House availed themselves of some of the language of human rights, particularly focusing on those civil liberties and political rights commonly associated with liberal democracy. That said, these rights were not the priority; through redefining the relationship between democracy and human rights to make them symbiotic, the new human rights movement successfully tied the two concepts together and, simultaneously, de-emphasised the importance of social rights. In conjunction with this, both Freedom House and the NED had a very narrow conception of democracy. A strong focus on democratic procedures and institutions allowed these organisations to pick and choose which countries they deemed democratic and which required US involvement to promote or consolidate democracy. This combination of a rejection of social rights and the narrow, US-centric definition of democracy was what made this new human rights language a powerful

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<sup>165</sup> Ibid, p. 273.

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weapon in the hands of the anti-Communists; it gave them a new moral high ground from which fight the ideological Cold War.

The rise of this new human rights movement did not mean the end of the liberal one. While WOLA continued to work with the more traditional human rights language for much of the 1980s, working on social rights and the rights of minorities alongside pushing for policies which upheld international human rights law, as will become clear, it struggled to achieve much meaningful change in the context of the new human rights dialogue. As a result, towards the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s WOLA's own focus began to shift away from these more traditional interests of the human rights movement towards issues of socioeconomic rights, social justice and development. This shift would suggest that WOLA realised that the universalist human rights language was no longer relevant to the debate in the United States and, as a result, alongside a move to formalise and professionalise its organisation, it began to seek a new niche that would enable it to continue promoting rights-based issues within the context of the new language which now dominated the debate in the United States. This is not to say that WOLA and the traditional human rights movement were not interested in democracy either before or during the 1980s; indeed, the fall of a democracy had been the spark that brought about its founding. However, its interest in democracy tended to stop at the enforcement of basic civil liberties – rights to “take part in the government” for example – as they appeared within the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Like much of the traditional leftist human rights movement, the form democracy took was not important to WOLA provided it was free, fair and obeyed the laws of the country and this can be seen in the election monitoring work WOLA undertook throughout Latin America in this period.



In their book *Doing the Rights Thing* Maxine Molyneux and Sian Lazar argue that it was not until the end of the cold war that development agencies, social movements and non-state actors began to integrate democratic principles into their work.<sup>166</sup> This investigation of the principles of the three organisations in question proves that this is far from the case. The rise of democratic principles as part of and indeed in replace of the language of the human rights movement began as early as 1981 and being physically embodied by the founding of the NED in 1983. Even organisations like WOLA that were part of the traditional human rights movement began to engage more with issues of democracy and political rights in their work from the mid-1980s. Perhaps as a result of the top-down nature of the new human rights language, the acceptance of it and its normalisation as the primary dialogue was remarkably fast. The influence held by Freedom House and the NED combined with the ideologically-driven mind-set of the Reagan administration meant that the more traditional human rights groups such as WOLA were almost completely closed out of the executive branch until they began to adapt their language. Even then, WOLA never really regained the level of access it had had during the Carter years until Bush took office in 1989, by which time Latin America was ceasing to be a high priority. In a matter of only a few years, the traditional language of human rights had been overturned and replaced by the US-centric blend of democracy and rights-based rhetoric espoused by the NED, Freedom House and the Reagan administration.

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<sup>166</sup> Molyneux, Maxine and Lazar, Sian, *Doing the Rights Thing: Rights Based Development and Latin America* (London: ITDG Publishing, 2003) pp. 5-6.

Chapter 2 - “If you have your hand in another man’s pocket, you must move when he moves”<sup>167</sup>: Funding and Organisational Structures

Vital to an understanding of these three organisations and their place in the narrative of human rights and broader inter-American relations is comprehension of them as non-state actors and their operation in this capacity. According to much of the theoretical literature, the question of “legitimacy” is crucial to the work of all non-state actors. Although there is minimal consensus on what exactly gives non-state actors “legitimacy”, and often the answer is highly context dependent, there are two key factors which seem to impact on “legitimacy”: non-state actor independence (or perceived independence) and the degree to which an organisation is “professionalised”. Both of these characteristics are linked to the issue of funding – where non-state actors receive capital from and the form it takes – and questions of internal structures and attitudes. Current thinking concerning the funding and structuring of non-state actors has emphasised an increase in “official donor” (bilateral and multilateral organisations and states) funding and the limitations this presents.<sup>168</sup> It has been suggested that increased reliance on “official donor” funding severely reduces the legitimacy of non-state actors.<sup>169</sup> However, as Carrie Meyer suggests, it is not only “official” donors that can cause problems for such organisations but any kind of organisational funding. Meyer argues that, since donors are effectively purchasing the “goods” non-state actors provide they are able to set the priorities, thus making non-state actors effectively implementers of donor agendas.<sup>170</sup> Similarly, donors can influence the internal workings and the hiring practices of non-state organisations. According to Wright, donors place

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<sup>167</sup> African proverb found in Edwards and Hulme, “Too close for comfort? The impact of official aid on nongovernmental organisations” in *World Development*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (1996) p. 967.

<sup>168</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 962.

<sup>169</sup> Wright, Glenn W., “NGOs and Western Hegemony: Causes for Concern and Ideas for Change” in *Development in Practice*, 22:1 (2012) pp. 125-126.

<sup>170</sup> Meyer, *The Economics and Politics of NGOs in Latin America* (Westport: Praeger, 2000) p. 51.

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an emphasis on technical aspects of management and operation, leading to the professionalisation and bureaucratisation of non-state actors.<sup>171</sup> This, he claims, has resulted in an increase in elite professionals, who lack an understanding of the lives and problems faced by their beneficiaries, running non-state organisations like businesses and costing them the legitimacy brought by the grassroots, beneficiary focused operating style.<sup>172</sup>

The organisations under examination here did not really fit into the theories in the literature of non-state actor legitimacy. This is partially due to the fact that most of the literature concerning non-state actors is focused on those groups more classically understood as NGOs, such as humanitarian, development and advocacy groups. None of the organisations in question here fits the standard NGO-style model. First, these organisations were not specifically service providing – that is to say their projects did not deliver services on the ground in Latin America. While the NED provided grants, these were given to other US organisations for use in Latin America and none of the projects provided or took over essential services from local governments. Moreover, aside from Freedom House, these were not organisations which accepted fee-paying, lay-members, being composed instead of volunteers and paid members of staff. Consequently none of these organisations could rely on membership fees to make up part of their budgets, instead relying entirely on organisational funding from the state or foundations.

Before embarking on an in-depth discussion of the funding of these three organisations, it is important to understand the requirements and uses for funding by non-state actors. In his 2006 article, Fernand Vincent divides the financial requirements

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<sup>171</sup> Wright, “NGOs and Western Hegemony” in *Development in Practice*, 22:1, (2012) p. 127.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 127 – 128.

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of non-state actors into two categories, “political” costs and “project” costs.<sup>173</sup>

“Political” costs are those costs relating to the operation of the organisation– these may include salaries, travel expenses, fundraising and member communication costs.

“Project” costs are those which relate to the activities and projects carried out by the organisation (be they personnel costs or advertising and lobbying or travel costs).<sup>174</sup>

However, this distinction between “political” and “project” costs is difficult to quantify in the case of these three groups. Although all three institutions clearly had organisational costs that did not apply directly to individual projects, because their work, with the exception of the NED, was not really project-based, it is difficult to determine what costs were organisational and what costs applied to specific projects or campaigns. For example, several of the salaries of WOLA staff members were paid by religious institutions. However, given that almost all WOLA staff contributed research and other substantive, project-related work to the organisation should these salaries be classed as “political” or project-based costs?<sup>175</sup> Similarly, Freedom House received a grant for the Freedom Survey; since many of the individuals working on the Freedom Survey were also full time operational Freedom House staff, how exactly should this cost be classified?<sup>176</sup> As will be demonstrated later in the chapter, part of the problem in dividing these costs into categories of any kind is that often the organisations themselves do not make a meaningful distinction between those funds which went towards organisational costs and those which went specifically towards projects. This, combined with the fact that none of these organisations kept particularly detailed records concerning their funding, suggests that they were not particularly concerned

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<sup>173</sup> Vincent, Fernand, “NGOs, Social Movements, External Funding and Dependency” in *Development* Vol. 49, No. 2 (June 2006) p. 22.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 22-23.

<sup>175</sup> WOLA Records, Box 19, A number of records showing grants from religious institutions for specific staff salaries.

<sup>176</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Freedom House Foundation Support for the 1991 Fiscal Year Beginning June 31 1990.

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with issues of transparency, another factor often connected to the “legitimacy” of non-state actors.

As has been mentioned, Freedom House was the only one of the three organisations to have any kind of lay-membership, but the majority of its funding came from grants made by various private foundations, companies and individuals. Although it investigated the possibility in the early 1980s, Freedom House never sought to attract a mass membership and never saw membership dues as a major part of their funding strategy. As a result, the amount received from this source was so negligible as to be irrelevant to the discussion at hand.<sup>177</sup> While membership dues did not make up part of WOLA’s funding strategy, its funding sources changed greatly throughout the 1980-93 period. In 1980, the vast majority of WOLA’s funding came from religious organisations but by 1987 this had decreased to 25% with the majority of its funding coming from private foundations.<sup>178</sup> By contrast, the NED’s financial structure was not only very different to those of Freedom House and WOLA, but also much more complex due to its grant-making nature. With the exception of a few special appropriations from USAID, the NED received all of its funding via a block grant, determined by Congress, from the US Information Agency (USIA). Out of this money, the NED gave grants, primarily, to four core grantees the Centre for International Private Enterprise (CIPE, a branch of the Chamber of Commerce), the Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI, part of the AFL-CIO), the National Republican Institute for International Affairs (NRI) and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI); while the NED also gave grants to other organisations, these four received the majority of its budget. While specific grants made by the NED will not be

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<sup>177</sup> FH Records, Box 18, Folder 5, Report: The Membership Development Program (1982).

<sup>178</sup> WOLA Records, Box 17, Memo fromCarolynn Winter-Hazelton to WOLA Religious Advisory Committee (undated).

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discussed in this chapter (see Chapters 5 and 6) it is worth noting that one of the key criticisms of the NED was that its complicated funding and grant structure made it difficult to trace where NED funds went and how they were used which had a negative effect on its perceived legitimacy in certain circles.<sup>179</sup>

#### Donors: Influence, impact and limitations

Between 1980 and 1993, Freedom House received grants from a variety of different private and corporate trusts and foundations. In 1982, grants from the Scaife Foundation, the Smith-Richardson Foundation, the Pew Freedom Trust and the Lilly Endowment accounted for around 70% of Freedom House's income.<sup>180</sup> These grants ranged between \$23,000 and \$125,000 and were topped up by smaller grants from foundations such as the Commonwealth Fund, the Ford Foundation and the Heritage Foundation, all of which contributed grants of between \$10,000 and \$24,000.<sup>181</sup> Freedom House received grants from these foundations fairly regularly throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s. Many of these foundations and trusts formed part of a network of what Justin Vaïsse calls the "conservative counterestablishment", a proliferation of conservative think tanks and foundations which occurred in the 1970s.<sup>182</sup>

The four main donors to Freedom House were all philanthropic trusts established or run by right-wing businessmen. The Scaife Foundation was founded with the money of Richard Mellon Scaife (owner of the *Pittsburgh Tribune-Review*) by his mother Sarah Scaife in the 1960s. Until the 1970s it was relatively apolitical, but in

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<sup>179</sup> WOLA Records, Box 240, The National Endowment for Democracy in Latin America: What is it financing? – A Proposal for Investigation and Dissemination submitted to the North Shore Unitarian Universalist Veatch Program by WOLA, (21<sup>st</sup> November 1988).

<sup>180</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 4, Memorandum from Leonard Sussman, (4<sup>th</sup> June 1982).

<sup>181</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 4, Letter about Finance (198?).

<sup>182</sup> Vaïsse, *Neoliberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2011) p. 40.

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1973 the Foundation was taken over by Richard Mellon-Scaife and after this it adopted a more conservative agenda.<sup>183</sup> Scaife was known as a man who “reinvigorated conservative politics in America” and his tenure as chairman of the Scaife Foundation was influenced by his conservative views.<sup>184</sup> The Smith-Richardson Foundation was established in 1935 by H. Smith Richardson, son of Lunsford Richardson, the inventor of Vick VapoRub. Like the Scaife Foundation, Smith-Richardson was known for giving grants to right-of-centre organisations including providing seed money for PRODEMCA.<sup>185</sup> The Pew Freedom Trust was founded in 1957 by J. Howard Pew, who instructed that the trust be used to educate the American people about the “evils of bureaucracy” and the “values of a free market”.<sup>186</sup> Although by 1988 the Trust focused more on funding research, it did not abandon its conservative priorities, nor did it cease to fund Freedom House, choosing instead to specify that its grant would go towards the Freedom Survey.<sup>187</sup> Freedom House’s smaller donors also tended to have a conservative outlook. For example, the Heritage Foundation, of whose board Richard Scaife was a member,<sup>188</sup> had been established in 1973 by Paul Weyrich and Ed Feulner (both of whom worked for Republican members of Congress) because the two men believed conservative ideas were absent from legislative politics.<sup>189</sup> The Heritage Foundation also received funding from both the Scaife and Smith-Richardson Foundations.

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<sup>183</sup> The Bridge Project, *Conservative Transparency: A Look at the Organized Right in 2014*, <<http://www.bridgeproject.com/wp/assets/Conservative-Transparency-Report-Final.pdf>> (March 2014) p. 58.

<sup>184</sup> The Tribune-Review, “Richard Scaife, conservative champion, newsman & philanthropist, dies”, *The Pittsburgh Tribune-Review* (4<sup>th</sup> July 2014) <<http://triblive.com/news/adminpage/6338603-74/scaife-pittsburgh-dick#axzz36VdpxhZI>> (accessed 08/07/2014).

<sup>185</sup> Sidney Blumenthal, "Grantee of U.S. Endowment Funds Sandinista Opponents; Group's Advertisements Urge Aid for Rebels," *The Washington Post*, (19<sup>th</sup> March, 1986) p. A1.

<sup>186</sup> Martin Morse Wooster, “Too Good to be True”, *Wall Street Journal* (Eastern Edition), (1<sup>st</sup> April 2005) p. W.13.

<sup>187</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Freedom House Foundation Support for the 1991 Fiscal Year, (1990).

<sup>188</sup> Heritage Foundation, “Board of Trustees” <<http://www.heritage.org/about/board-of-trustees>> (accessed 09/07/2014).

<sup>189</sup> Rich, Andrew, *Think Tanks, Public Policy and the Politics of Expertise* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004) p. 54.

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Freedom House and the foundations and trusts that funded it were connected in a conservative network comprised of donors, think tanks and non-state actors. This network was close-knit, with many of the large donor foundations funding smaller foundations and organisations, which, in turn, funded each other. In addition to the money it received from foundations and trusts, Freedom House also received grants from trade unions, corporations, and wealthy or affiliated individuals. Between 1980 and 1993, Freedom House received grants from Exxon, Chase Bank, IBM, Caterpillar, Chubb and the Getty Oil Company.<sup>190</sup> Moreover, the AFL-CIO, United Steelworkers of America and a number of other unions made small grants (\$4000 or less) to Freedom House during this time.<sup>191</sup> In many cases, the Freedom House board were asked to assist with fundraising and many secured donations from their own unions, foundations or companies.<sup>192</sup> For example, one of the largest consistent corporate grants came from Unilever through Ned Bandler, former director of the company; Freedom House received around \$3000 from Unilever every year Bandler served on the board.<sup>193</sup> The grants from companies and unions tended to be small but they rarely came with attached requirements and formed part of the general operating costs of the organisation. It should be mentioned here that, although Freedom House had some of the most complete records regarding the grants it received, its archive contained little material that shed light on what grants were actually spent on. However, it was recorded that occasionally Freedom House received one-off or shorter-term grants for specific projects. For example, in 1986 Freedom House administered a grant from the NED for Libro Libre (a publishing project run in Costa Rica); Freedom House also acted as a fundraiser for the project, securing one-off grants from the Olin, Smith-Richardson and Lynde and Harry

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<sup>190</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 4, Letter about Finance, (198?).

<sup>191</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Freedom House Foundation Support for the 1991 Fiscal Year (1990).

<sup>192</sup> FH Records, Box 11, Folder 8, Records of Board Assistance in Fund Raising (1983).

<sup>193</sup> FH Records, Box 11, Folder 8, Letter from Leonard Sussman to Ned Bandler (23<sup>rd</sup> December 1986).



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Bradley Foundations.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, in the same year, Freedom House received an NED grant to establish a network of democratic opinion leaders and create a “two-way flow of ideas which would end the isolation of democratic-minded intellectuals and journalists in the third world”.<sup>195</sup> Despite Freedom House’s insistence that it did not take US government money, in 1990 it received a \$160,000 grant from USAID for use on its work in El Salvador.<sup>196</sup> This was the first funding Freedom House had received directly from a state organisation in this period and, at least up until 1993, it did not take another US government grant.

Much of the literature concerning NGO legitimacy focuses on the issues inherent in accepting government money; while accepting money from foundations and trusts sometimes brought project limitations as Meyer suggested, it rarely had the same impact on the way organisations were perceived outside of their peer group. Although Leonard Sussman stated in an internal memorandum that Freedom House did not accept funding which imposed projects on it, in order to court foundation funds Freedom House, like all foundation funded actors, had to tailor its grant applications to reflect the interests of donors.<sup>197</sup> Moreover, the records suggest that regular donors had the potential to influence not only the type of projects Freedom House undertook but also to which other organisations they applied for funding. For example, in 1984 the boards of both Smith-Richardson and the Olin Foundation pushed the Freedom House board to apply for funding from the NED.<sup>198</sup> The boards of these two foundations felt that NED

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<sup>194</sup> FH Records, Box 49, Folder 3, Memorandum from Leonard Sussman to the Executive Committee (9<sup>th</sup> May 1986), Letter from Sussman to the Lynde and Harry Bradley Foundation (9<sup>th</sup> June 1986), Letter from Sussman to the Smith-Richardson Foundation (16<sup>th</sup> June 1986), Letter from the Olin Foundation to Bruce McColm (1<sup>st</sup> August 1986).

<sup>195</sup> FH Records, Box 51, Folder 2, National Endowment for Democracy Grant #84-AA-10.1 Financial Report (28<sup>th</sup> February 1986).

<sup>196</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Freedom House Foundation Support for the 1991 Fiscal Year (1990).

<sup>197</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 3, Memorandum from Sussman to the Executive Committee (20<sup>th</sup> April 1982).

<sup>198</sup> FH Records, Box 51, Folder 1, Memorandum from Bruce McColm to Sussman (6<sup>th</sup> April 1984).

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grants were “tailor-made for Freedom House” and were angry that it had misgivings about applying for NED funds.<sup>199</sup> Internally, the Freedom House board was worried about whether taking NED funds would stop it being able to claim “none of [its] support [came] from governments”; but it was equally fearful that rejecting NED funds would turn large donor foundations against it.<sup>200</sup> It is clear that the pressure put on Freedom House by these foundations contributed to its eventual decision to apply for NED funds and, by becoming involved with the NED, Freedom House also lost the ability to claim that it never had projects imposed on or suggested to it since, in the years that followed, the NED often did both. In 1985, the NED asked Freedom House to take over administration of the Libro Libre project from the American Institute of Free Labor Development (AIFLD) and the NED sent Freedom House proposals it received from other organisations and asked if it would consider acting as an administrator for them.<sup>201</sup> After Freedom House accepted the Libro Libre project, it took on an increased number of NED projects and became more inclined to apply to the NED for project funding requiring it to tailor more of its proposals to suit NED priorities.

In 1985, Freedom House’s relationship with the Olin Foundation became increasingly difficult because Olin, which had funded Freedom House’s Central America Centre, had reservations about the positions Freedom House was taking concerning issues in Central America.<sup>202</sup> In a memorandum, Sussman accused Olin of curtailing Freedom House’s ability to design its own projects as it insisted on only giving grants for specific project support rather than for general use.<sup>203</sup> The Lynde and

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<sup>199</sup> Ibid.

<sup>200</sup> FH Records, Box 51, Folder 2, Memorandum from Leonard Sussman to the Executive Committee (12<sup>th</sup> June 1984).

<sup>201</sup> FH Records, Box 49, Folder 1, Visit to Costa Rica and Panama RE: Libro Libre 25<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> March 1986 (1986).

<sup>202</sup> FH Records, Box 15, Folder 10, Memorandum from Leonard Sussman to Max Kampelman and John Riehm, (18<sup>th</sup> January 1985).

<sup>203</sup> Ibid.

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Harry Bradley Foundation and Pew Charitable Trusts also provided unsolicited grants for specific projects rather than for general purposes. The Bradley Foundation gave two grants for a political study of the Chilean election and a documentary on Nicaragua while Pew specified that all of its grants were to go to the Freedom Survey.<sup>204</sup> Such limitations on grants took away some of Freedom House's control over its programme design, thereby compromising its independence. However, the loss of independence in decision-making suffered by Freedom House did not have the negative effect so often described in the theory concerning non-state actor funding. Unlike those non-state actors whose primary donors were the state or state-affiliated organisations, through taking foundation funding Freedom House did not lose its political independence or, for the most part, its ability to choose its methods. Since the majority of the foundations which funded Freedom House formed part of a conservative network of donors and non-state actors, their funding was more likely to reinforce Freedom House's political attitudes and methodology decisions than undermine them; particularly given that several of the foundations and individuals sought out Freedom House rather than the other way around. The exception to this was the Olin Foundation's questions about Freedom House's engagement in Central America. That said, Olin's objections did not stop Freedom House from taking political positions with regards to Central America, nor did the disagreement prevent Olin from funding the Libro Libre project the following year. This suggests that the relationship between non-state actors and foundation donors was more complicated than the relationship between non-state actors and government donors described in the existent literature. Although these donors did have a level of control over the types of projects that organisations ran, they did not appear to have the ability to change the principles or overall political leanings. Instead private foundations and donors tended only to fund those organisations which, in some

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<sup>204</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Freedom House Foundation Support for the 1991 Fiscal Year, (1990).

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way, matched their politics. Even Freedom House's largely symbiotic relationship with the NED and its acceptance of funds from USAID in the early 1990s represented less the political co-option of Freedom House and more an invitation to Freedom House to enter the conservative power structure within Washington at the time.

Freedom House did not appear to suffer a loss of legitimacy as a result of its donors or its political alignment with the US government. Indeed, within the United States and among other donor foundations, even its involvement with the NED did not appear to cost it too much. Those organisations which took great exception to the activities of the NED, such as the Council on Hemispheric Affairs, tended to direct their criticisms at the NED directly or the programmes themselves instead of the intermediary organisations.<sup>205</sup> Within Latin America, Freedom House suffered very little loss of legitimacy or authority as a result of its donor foundations. The Freedom Survey was cited in Latin American newspapers, as were statements by Freedom House employees and resident scholars and it did not struggle to find individuals and organisations to work with in the region.<sup>206</sup> Although Leonard Sussman did receive some harassment on trips to Latin America, most notably when the Paraguayan government ruled that no-one could attend a conference at which he was speaking in 1987, the harassment was not noticeably worse than that received by other non-state actors and their employees in countries under authoritarian rule.<sup>207</sup> This is not to say Freedom House was immune from criticism from its left-wing counterparts. Indeed the Council on Hemispheric Affairs referred to it as a "bastion of neo-conservative

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<sup>205</sup> Council on Hemispheric Affairs and Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, *National Endowment for Democracy (NED): A Foreign Policy Branch Gone Awry* (Washington DC: Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, 1990) pp. 63-64.

<sup>206</sup> FH Records, Box 149, Folder of newspaper clippings from US and Latin American newspapers – contained a collection of clippings referring to or citing Freedom House or its literature.

<sup>207</sup> FH Records, Box 164, *Freedom Monitor: Freedom House Director Harassed in Paraguay* (December 1987).

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thought”.<sup>208</sup> While it was attacked for its political opinions and for attempting to promote its politics abroad, the criticisms levelled at it rarely discussed its donors or their political motivations.

Unlike Freedom House, which had a consistent funding base throughout this time, WOLA’s major funding sources changed a great deal mostly as a result of changes in its internal structuring and financial strategy. In the early years, almost all of WOLA’s funding came from religious organisations and this was still the case in 1980 when 75% of WOLA’s total revenue came from religious organisations.<sup>209</sup> By 1983 this proportion had dropped to 36% as more of WOLA’s funding derived from private foundations.<sup>210</sup> From 1986 onwards WOLA’s single largest donor was the Ford Foundation which provided around a quarter of WOLA’s operational budget that year and into the 1990s.<sup>211</sup> Between 1980 and 1986 WOLA had received a number of project grants from Ford for its seminar series on relations with Nicaragua and its human rights activities.<sup>212</sup> The 1986 grant differed from those that had come before not only in size, but also because it was a general purpose grant which formed part of a larger drive on the part of WOLA to professionalise as an organisation.

At this time Ford was one of the largest philanthropic foundations in the world. Originally established in 1936 to “advance human welfare”, by the 1980s it funded democratisation, development and cultural exchange projects throughout the world but

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<sup>208</sup> Council on Hemispheric Affairs and Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, *The NED: A Foreign Policy Branch Gone Awry* (Washington, DC: Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, 1990) p. 63.

<sup>209</sup> WOLA Records, Box 17, Memorandum from Carolynn Winters-Hazelton to the WOLA Religious Advisory Committee (undated).

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) p. 57.

<sup>212</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Letters from Ford Foundation to Joe Eldridge (2<sup>nd</sup> October 1980 and 2 February 1981).

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particularly in Latin America.<sup>213</sup> By the 1980s Ford was a well-known name in the human rights industry, having become one of the largest funders of human rights activities in the United States.<sup>214</sup> Throughout its history Ford courted criticism from all sides: from the right for being too liberal (particularly with regard to its domestic work) and from the left for being elitist and too closely tied to the US government.<sup>215</sup> Through an examination of a list of Ford grantees alone it is possible to find evidence to support both of these opinions as Ford grants were numerous and their recipients varied. WOLA was a good fit for the work Ford supported in the field human rights, economic fairness and democratic, accountable governance abroad.<sup>216</sup> Although WOLA did not receive criticism or any backlash as a result of its grants from Ford, WOLA staffers were, initially, worried that the grants would force a level of institutionalisation on the organisation that would prevent them assisting those Latin Americans who sought their help.<sup>217</sup> Although Ford did insist on a level of bureaucratisation from WOLA it was not as extreme as WOLA staff feared, as will be discussed later in the chapter.

While the Ford grants are well documented in WOLA's archive, when it came to other funding WOLA's records are less comprehensive. WOLA received donations from a number of private foundations in the 1980s and 1990s including the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation, the Needmor Fund and the Stern Family Fund, with the majority of secular foundation funding coming after 1984. The MacArthur Foundation was known for its support for liberal causes such as the Death Penalty Information Centre in Washington and the Justice Centre at Northwestern School of Law. The

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<sup>213</sup> Bell, Peter D., "The Ford Foundation as a Transnational Actor" in *International Organisation* Vol. 25, No. 3 (1971) p. 467.

<sup>214</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) pp. 98-101.

<sup>215</sup> Roelofs, Joan, *Foundations and Public Policy: the Mask of Pluralism* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003) p. 165.

<sup>216</sup> Ford Foundation "Issues" <<http://www.fordfoundation.org/issues>> (accessed 23/07/2014).

<sup>217</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y Justicia Social* (Washington: WOLA 2006) pp. 57-58.

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majority of recorded grants from the MacArthur Foundation were general purpose grants to WOLA, some of which were spent on in-country implementation of projects, such as its analysis of the Administration of Justice programme (a USAID programme which aimed to help improve the efficiency, accessibility and fairness of Latin American justice systems).<sup>218</sup> The Needmor and Stern Funds more commonly gave grants for specific projects or with conditions attached. For example, Needmor funded WOLA's networking and outreach project in Guatemala in 1983 and the Stern Fund provided a challenge grant for WOLA's efforts to oppose the deployment of the National Guard to train police forces in Central America wherein they matched WOLA's other fundraising efforts. Both Needmor and Stern were, like the MacArthur Foundation, notoriously liberal in nature, with Needmor stating its mission as seeking to bring about social justice and Stern directing its grants towards projects which sought to re-distribute political and economic power and to reform systems to tackle the causes of societal problems. In addition to these (and other) liberal private foundations, WOLA regularly applied for and received grants from Oxfam during this time. Between 1984 and 1992, WOLA received several grants from variously Oxfam USA, UK and Mexico. Although the exact quantity of each grant and the specifics of what the money was spent on were not always recorded by WOLA, grants were usually given for individual projects proposed by the organisation. In 1990 Oxfam provided funds for WOLA's Central America programme, enabling WOLA's staffers to take a fact-finding trip to Nicaragua. From their findings, they briefed House and Senate Western Hemisphere Subcommittee aides on the impact of delayed development assistance and provided policymakers with testimony and seminars by participants in the El Salvador peace process and other key members of Central American political parties and human rights

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<sup>218</sup> WOLA Records, Box 3, Final Report to the J. Roderick MacArthur Foundation: Democracy Human Rights and US Political Aid in Latin America: The Administration of Justice Program March 1989 – July 1990 (1990).

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groups.<sup>219</sup> Prior to this Oxfam had also given WOLA funds to provide a salary for a full time position concerning Central America.<sup>220</sup>

As in the case of Freedom House, WOLA generally received very few accusations of co-option or loss of legitimacy as a result of its private foundation donors. Again, those foundations which funded WOLA tended to do so *because* it shared their political outlook and matched their overall goals and, as a result, they had little interest in altering WOLA's political aims. With the exception of the Ford Foundation, which did demand a level of professionalisation from WOLA in exchange for continued funding, WOLA's foundation donors seemed to be largely undemanding either in terms of the programmes it ran or its internal operations. It is possible that the reason for this was that the majority of the grants WOLA received had been applied for specifically to fund certain projects and, as a result, most of the accountability and reporting procedures were decided and accepted in advance of money changing hands. Unlike Freedom House, of course, WOLA's own politics kept it firmly out of the running for funding from US government agencies during this time. As a result, WOLA avoided accusations of co-option by the state, instead receiving criticism from the Reagan administration for its supposedly biased, left-wing outlook.<sup>221</sup>

The most controversial elements of WOLA's donor base were the religious organisations. Although WOLA's financial relationship with religious organisations and orders fluctuated during the late 1980s and early 1990s, it still received sizeable donations from various religious orders including the Society of Jesus, the Maryknoll Fathers and Brothers, the National Council of the Churches of Christ and the Veatch

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<sup>219</sup> WOLA Records, Box 2, Report to OXFAM de Mexico A.C. July 1 1990 – June 30 1991 (1991).

<sup>220</sup> WOLA Records, Box 2, A Decisive Moment for Central America: A Proposal to Oxfam (23<sup>rd</sup> April 1990).

<sup>221</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: WOLA, 2006) p. 53.



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Program, the financial foundation of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation at Shelter Rock. The majority of the funds from religious organisations appear to have been general purpose grants, which WOLA put to a variety of uses including organising seminars and meetings in Washington and paying the salaries of some of WOLA's full-time staff.<sup>222</sup> For the most part, these religious grants, while not particularly controversial in themselves, did confirm WOLA in the eyes of the public as a primarily religious organisation. The most contentious of WOLA's regular grants came from the United Methodist Church General Board of Global Ministries (GBGM), which paid Joe Eldridge's salary for his time as director and provided a number of smaller grants for specific projects as well.<sup>223</sup> The GBGM proved divisive among the ecumenical community due to the often political nature of its grants and work which focused heavily on social justice issues. Organisations on the opposite side of the political spectrum to WOLA, such as the Heritage Foundation, highlighted the acceptance of GBGM funds as a symptom of WOLA's subservience to left-wing, anti-US organisations. In its analysis of the "left's Latin American lobby" (a pamphlet containing analysis of WOLA, the North American Congress on Latin America, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs and three other leftist organisations) the Heritage Foundation stated that they saw WOLA's propensity to concentrate on human rights violations in US-backed countries while ignoring those in left-leaning nations as "[revealing] the political bias of the United Methodist Board of Global Ministries".<sup>224</sup> The Heritage Foundation's criticism of WOLA as heavily influenced by the GBGM was not without justification because a number of WOLA's board members were also

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<sup>222</sup> WOLA Records, Box 13, Washington Office on Latin America Final Grant Report to the Veatch Program (August 1990).

<sup>223</sup> WOLA Records, Box 21, Various papers and letters concerning donations made by religious organisations

<sup>224</sup> The Heritage Foundation, *The Left's Latin American Lobby*, (Washington D.C.: The Heritage Foundation, 11<sup>th</sup> October 1984) p. 5.

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members of the GBGM and the National Council of Churches. There is nothing to suggest that the GBGM or any of the other religious organisations which donated to WOLA during this period directly influenced or altered WOLA programming as a condition of their grants. Both WOLA's foundation and religious donors were comparatively uninvolved in its project design. Since the majority of WOLA's foundation grants appear to have been applied and given for specific projects, while WOLA may have tailored the proposal to the aims of the foundation it was applying to, the projects were usually designed entirely by WOLA internally. The key exception to this was the large grant received yearly from the Ford Foundation, which was a general purpose grant and did initially come with a number of demands for professionalisation. While Ford requested some increased bureaucratisation (which will be discussed in more detail later), it did not appear to involve itself with WOLA's programming or project design. Despite Ford's attempts to alter WOLA's internal structures the foundation grants WOLA received, like those received by Freedom House, did not appear to have an impact on its legitimacy either in the United States or in Latin America.

It is plausible that one of the reasons foundation grants attract less criticism and fewer accusations of co-option than state grants is that foundations tend to fund those organisations which match their own political leanings. As Keck and Sikkink suggest, foundations are autonomous in most respects, in that they are accountable only to their own boards of trustees and, although they may have their own ideas or political beliefs, they are incapable of implementing them themselves and must seek out those organisations which can.<sup>225</sup> They are, unlike governments, a part of the network of non-state actors and, as a result, there is less scope for visible co-option or political

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<sup>225</sup>Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) p. 98.

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manipulation in foundation grants. It is also possible that this type of grant provokes less of a reaction simply because, as foundations are private organisations, their financial dealings, arrangements and political leanings are simply less well known to the general public. What is typically general knowledge is that foundations work outside the state and, as a result, their grants do not produce the appearance of a foreign state seeking to interfere in the domestic situations of other nations, thus making foundation funding appear less controversial. Although WOLA did receive some criticism for its close relationship to religious organisations, much of this came from right-wing organisations seeking to discredit it. While it must be said that WOLA did have a strong relationship with various religious orders and, due to the circumstances of its founding and the composition of its board, it was influenced by the beliefs and priorities of such organisations, it did not hide its links to these organisations. WOLA had never claimed to be independent from religious circles; indeed it defined itself as a religious organisation. As a result, outside of those organisations which opposed it, WOLA's religious contributions also received very little attention.

Of the three organisations discussed here, the NED had the most controversial funding structure. Unlike WOLA and Freedom House, both of which received funding from a variety of different private foundations, individuals and groups, the NED's whole budget came from one source. The Act which founded the NED stipulated that its budget would be a block grant given from the budget of the USIA.<sup>226</sup> The USIA had been established in 1953 by President Eisenhower to “inform and influence foreign publics in promotion of the national interest” and “broaden the dialogue between...U.S.

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<sup>226</sup> Library of Congress, US Congress, House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Authorising appropriations for fiscal years 1984 and 1985 for the Department of State, the USIA, the Board for International Broadcasting, the Inter-American Foundation, and the Asia Foundation, to establish the National Endowment for Democracy and for other purposes* (16<sup>th</sup> May 1983) Bill (98) H.R. 2915, p. 74.

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institutions and their counterparts abroad”.<sup>227</sup> USIA often performed the job of a propaganda agency, creating newsreels and other programmes to be broadcast abroad to promote US values and preserve a positive image of the United States. Throughout the first Reagan administration, under the directorship of Charles Wick, USIA worked to confront Soviet reporting and propaganda directly by contesting Soviet statistics and running satellite TV specials such as “Let Poland be Poland” (1982), which used celebrity performances and appeals to protest the declaration of martial law in Poland.<sup>228</sup> By the 1980s, USIA had gathered controversy around it, not because of the materials it created but instead in its capacity as a censorship board and rating agency for material imported into the United States.<sup>229</sup> Despite the controversy that surrounded USIA, critics of the NED rarely discussed its link to USIA, preferring instead to attack the NED as a recipient of US government funds. While it was important that the NED was receiving US government funding, albeit through a mediator, the fact that the intermediary organisation chosen was USIA is telling. Despite stating its remit to be assisting in the practicalities of democratic development (voting procedure, equipment, consultants etc.), in some respects the NED and USIA performed very similar functions, particularly when it came to cultural exchanges and the provision of training programmes in democracy and democratic values. Putting the NED under the auspices of USIA suggests that it was seen by the administration as, not only a provider of practical assistance for democratic movements abroad, but also as an aspect of the broader propagation of US values and positive US image abroad. The non-state image of the NED allowed it greater access to the domestic operations of other nations than

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<sup>227</sup> USIA, “USIA: An Overview” <<http://dosfan.lib.uic.edu/usia/usiahome/oldoview.htm#overview>> (1998) (accessed 01/08/2014).

<sup>228</sup> Cull, Nicholas, J., “Charles Z. Wick: USIA director whose task was to ‘tell America’s story to the world’” <<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/charles-z-wick-usia-director-whose-task-was-to-tell-americas-story-to-the-world-877819.html>> (26<sup>th</sup> July 2008) (accessed 05/08/2014).

<sup>229</sup> Lyons, Charles, *The New Censors: Movies and the Culture Wars*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1997) p. 198.

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was afforded to government institutions under international law and opinion. Indeed, David Lowe, NED vice-president from 1989, suggested in 2008 that the NED was able to penetrate abroad more effectively as it had “flexibility and relative autonomy not available to established government entities such as USAID, the State Department and the US Information Agency”.<sup>230</sup> Moreover, although USIA was a state organisation, using it as an intermediary for funding provided the NED with a greater appearance of independence than it would have had had it received funds from the US government directly without an intermediary organisation.

The standard grant the NED received via USIA was (for the most part) an open grant to be spent as the NED’s board deemed fit. In the early years of the organisation, Congress did dictate that \$16,300,000 of the original \$31,300,000 budget for the NED had to be split between the FTUI and CIPE. Although this restriction did not specify what projects the NED should fund within the two institutions and was eventually lifted, it does suggest that, in the early years at least, the NED’s programme creation was heavily influenced by Congress despite the money actually coming through another organisation. According to the NED’s founding act, USIA itself did not have the ability to limit or alter the terms of the grant it gave to the NED; any alterations and limitations could only be set by Congress. In addition to funding from USIA, from 1988 onwards, Congress set aside a number of special appropriations for the NED via USAID. These appropriations proved highly controversial. In contrast to the yearly USIA grant, the appropriations from USAID were limited, usually to be spent on one country specified by Congress. The first of these large appropriations, for example, was targeted to assist the No Campaign in Chile’s 1988 plebiscite while the second was earmarked for

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<sup>230</sup> Sussman, Gerald, *Branding Democracy: US Regime Change in Post-Soviet Eastern Europe* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing Inc, 2010) p. 45.

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Nicaragua's 1990 election.<sup>231</sup> Although Congress never specified exactly which projects or groups should be funded within these countries, it did, particularly in the case of Nicaragua, mandate which side of the debate the NED could fund. In Chile, the appropriation was earmarked for organisations and projects in favour of the No Campaign and in Nicaragua it was allocated to assist the electoral opposition and their affiliated organisations.<sup>232</sup> Again, the level of control Congress maintained over the NED's programming with these appropriations suggests that the independence of the NED board was questionable.<sup>233</sup>

These USAID appropriations brought a great deal of controversy, not only from those organisations which opposed or were critical of the NED but also from within the NED itself.<sup>234</sup> Internally the NED feared that the appropriations would set a precedent for the earmarking of its core USIA budget and, by extension, undermine its independence.<sup>235</sup> Yet, even prior to the appropriations, the NED was subject to the interests of and trends within Congress. The NED's four core grantees were established and linked to it by Congress and the special relationships it enjoyed with the FTUI and CIPE initially were also mandated by Congress. This would suggest that, even though funds the NED received were channelled through secondary, government-affiliated organisations, in reality, the body with the most influence over NED programming remained Congress. In this regard, it would difficult for the NED to operate a programme that was not aligned with US government interests. Despite the fact that the

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<sup>231</sup> LoC, NED, *Annual Report 1988*, JC421.N37a (1988).

<sup>232</sup> US Congress Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, *Special Alert: Funds for the Nicaraguan Opposition* <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/nsa/documents/NI/03199/all.pdf>> (1989).

<sup>233</sup> Between 1980 and 1990 the NED was also granted appropriations for Poland and South Africa, the total value of USAID appropriations to the NED in this time was around \$14 million. See Council on Hemispheric Affairs and The Inter-Hemispheric Education Resource Center, *The NED: A Foreign Policy Branch Gone Awry* (Albuquerque: Inter-Hemispheric Resource Center, 1990) p. 26.

<sup>234</sup> The controversies created by these appropriations in their beneficiary nations will be discussed in greater detail in chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>235</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 4, Memorandum from Carl Gershman to the NED Board of Directors concerning the NED/USAID relationship (29<sup>th</sup> May 1990).

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uses to which the USIA grants were put were, from the mid-1980s at least, largely decided by the NED board, special appropriations and consistent Congressional oversight meant that if projects were really distasteful to Congress, it could vote either to restrict the appropriation or to cut or abolish the NED budget altogether.<sup>236</sup> Despite the use of intermediaries which somewhat concealed the funding link between the NED and the US government, opponents of the NED used its financial connections to the state as a means to question its legitimacy and its ability to help its beneficiaries.

In fact, the NED's funding structure accounted for a large proportion of the accusations and criticisms made against it. For example, the Council on Hemispheric Affairs suggested that the funding structure of the NED was designed to avoid oversight and accountability. NED denials lacked credibility since the channelling of government funds to the NED via third parties (even if they were also state-run) came across to many of its critics as suspicious and a means for the US government to fund organisations and carry out projects which would be unfavourable in the international community.<sup>237</sup> Despite these accusations from NED critics, there is no evidence that the NED's basic funding structure of grants via USIA caused concern among its beneficiaries. However, the USAID appropriations did create some disquiet among NED beneficiaries in Latin America and among its core grantees that saw the appropriations as calling the independence of the NED into question.<sup>238</sup>

Overall, the NED's financial relationships with the US government, USIA and USAID placed it in a difficult position. On the one hand, it did not have to seek out funding and enter into the competitive process of applying for foundation funds. Unlike

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<sup>236</sup> There were several such votes, often put forward by left-leaning Congressmen. See Library of Congress, NED Records, Series 3.1 Box 13, Folder 21.

<sup>237</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 11, Press Release from the NED: Setting the Record Straight (7<sup>th</sup> May 1985).

<sup>238</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 7, Folder 27, Letter from Edward Donley (Chairman of CIPE) to William Brock III, (29<sup>th</sup> April 1988).

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Freedom House, which suffered from foundation attempts to alter its programmes and WOLA which, throughout much of the 1980s, struggled from perpetual underfunding, the NED was, as long as Congress could be kept on side, financially secure. On the other hand, its financial relationships kept it firmly under the influence of both the White House and Congress. While its budget was, in theory, the board's to spend as it saw fit, in practice, at least in the early years, Congress took control of this too through dictating what proportion of the budget should go to the FTUI and CIPE. Similarly, its critics in Congress had the ability to force votes to end its funding or significantly reduce it; even though only one such vote (out of four) was successful and was almost immediately overturned, this did put the NED's financial stability at risk and made it more inclined to run projects favourable to the majority of Congress.<sup>239</sup> Moreover, the NED's funding structure opened it up to accusations of being a front for US interference in domestic affairs abroad. The special USAID appropriations particularly illustrated to critics and beneficiaries that the NED could be used by Congress to further specific aims of US foreign policy. The case of the NED indicates that government funding was, even for democracy-promoting organisations, as problematic as much of the literature suggests. Being a purely government-funded institution did attract accusations of co-optation and cultural imperialism as well as speculations about the NED's legitimacy as an independent organisation.

In his article, Vincent suggests that non-state actors should keep funding from "external sources" to less than 50% of their total budget to avoid the dependence factor.<sup>240</sup> While none of these three organisations fit this model, it would be difficult to claim that Freedom House and WOLA were not predominantly free in their actions.

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<sup>239</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 13, Folder 21, Collected list of votes concerning NED funding.

<sup>240</sup> Vincent, "NGOs, Social Movements, External Funding and Dependency" in *Development*, Vol. 49, No. 2, (2006) p. 23.



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While WOLA was under some pressure from its major donor to professionalise its internal processes, with the exception of Freedom House's disagreement with Olin, neither organisation was under a great deal of pressure from donors to change its programme design or the way projects were implemented. Unfortunately, it is impossible to tell from the sources whether or not these organisations tailored their programmes to the foundations they were applying to, although it is likely they did to some extent. Both Freedom House and WOLA received most of their large foundation grants in the form of general grants with minimal limitations; as a result, even though they may have tailored proposals for specific foundations, the majority of their funding was not project specific and, therefore, even in this context it would seem that neither organisation was strongly influenced by its donors. Where these organisations could be said to be under the influence of their foundation donors was in their own internal structures and operations which will be discussed in more detail later.

Vincent's criticisms of the operation of NGO funding apply more to the NED. Although it did not have to enter into the funding market and compete for funds from foundations and individuals, its funding relationship with USIA and USAID meant that its programming decisions had the potential to be influenced, if not controlled, by the White House and Congress. Despite the supposed autonomy of the NED board, when it came to programme decisions, the fact that the NED's budget was granted and approved by Congress meant that it was always at risk from having its budget revoked if its behaviour or projects did not satisfy members of Congress. Moreover, the use of special appropriations from USAID meant that Congress did have the ability to dictate the countries in which the NED worked if not the actual projects it worked on. This suggests that, in its programme design at least, the NED was, in fact, heavily influenced by the wishes of its primary donor, the US government. This close financial relationship cost the NED some of its legitimacy both abroad and in the United States. Despite

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establishment of its financial structure in its founding documentation, accusations of co-optation were common from NED opponents within the United States and some opponents suggested that the NED was nothing more than a means for the US government to channel money to organisations it did not feel it could fund directly. In contrast, within Latin America, the basic funding structure of the NED did not cause too many problems. What worried NED beneficiaries were the special appropriations, which showcased Congress' ability to direct and control NED programming.

Unlike the NED, neither Freedom House nor WOLA suffered much of a loss of legitimacy as a result of their foundation donors. While both received criticism from their opponents in the United States for taking grants only from sources with similar political views, their funding sources do not appear to have been questioned much within Latin America. In the case of these three organisations, it would appear that what caused a loss of independence and legitimacy was not the question of external versus internal funding, but rather the issue of state versus private funding. While the state funding of the NED raised significant questions among its critics, the private foundation funding received by Freedom House and WOLA garnered almost no interest at all. The foundations which funded Freedom House and WOLA appeared to be less prescriptive in their relationships with these organisations. Perhaps because the beliefs and politics of these foundations were less well known and they did not appear to represent foreign interference, foundation funding did not result in a loss of legitimacy among beneficiaries and colleagues in the way that government funding did.

#### Internal structures: Freedom, compromise and professionalisation

How organisations handle their internal affairs can impact profoundly on how they are perceived by their beneficiaries and colleagues. According to much of the theory

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concerning non-state organisations, the reporting, accounting, appraisal and evaluation procedures, which are often associated with taking funding from official state or foundation sources can divert an NGO's attention away from its beneficiaries, thus giving the appearance of its no longer being accountable to its beneficiaries but rather to its donors. As Michael Edwards and David Hulme suggest, this growth in bureaucracy often stems from the general growth and professionalisation of the organisation.<sup>241</sup> Between 1980 and 1993, all three of the organisations under consideration here underwent a great deal of growth as a result of a rise in international interest in issues of democracy and human rights. Both WOLA and Freedom House expanded their programmes geographically and in scope – using new methods of promoting democracy and human rights and beginning new, larger projects. With this expansion came a need for increased funding, new funding sources and an increased level of professionalisation. In the case of both WOLA and Freedom House this meant seeking and taking on more foundation funding and refining or creating new systems for accounting and reporting. Unlike Freedom House, WOLA was a much closer fit to Wright's theory of how non-state actors lose legitimacy through bureaucratisation.<sup>242</sup> It underwent an active professionalisation in the early 1980s which formalised its power structures and decision and policy making mechanisms and, by the late 1980s, it had begun to take on professionals such as Alex Wilde to run the organisation.<sup>243</sup> As will be seen, this did not cost it legitimacy in the eyes of its peers or its beneficiaries as Wright predicts. While the NED also grew a great deal in this time, the fact that its structure and many of its internal processes and accountability mechanisms had been established by Congress at the time of its founding meant that procedurally it was barely affected by

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<sup>241</sup> Edwards and Hulme, "Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organisations" in *World Development*, Vol. 24, No. 6 (1996) p. 964.

<sup>242</sup> Wright, Glenn W., "NGOs and Western Hegemony: Causes for Concern and Ideas for Change" in *Development in Practice*, 22:1 (2012) pp. 125 – 126.

<sup>243</sup> WOLA Records, Box 28, Some suggestions for WOLA's Reorganisation, (1982).

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this growth. The NED was a “professionalised” institution from the outset since Congress had devised its internal structure and it was answerable to Congressional committees; it was already highly bureaucratised and did not undergo the internal changes the other two organisations did in the 1980s.

All three of these organisations operated under a largely top-down structure when it came to decision making. In all three cases the basic method of programme-creation involved the presentation of project ideas to a board which determined the projects the organisations would undertake. Freedom House had two committees which were involved in its policymaking: the Board of Directors and an Executive Committee. Freedom House’s Board of Directors was responsible for deciding which projects Freedom House undertook and for managing its budget and applying for funding.<sup>244</sup> The Executive Committee appears to have generally overseen Freedom House’s activities and, while it did make suggestions to the Board, it did not appear to exert any real control over the Board’s decisions. It should be mentioned that the Freedom House records do not give a clear indication of what the role of the Executive Committee actually was. What is clear is that its relationship with the Board was not always smooth; in 1982 for example, the Executive Committee suggested that it felt some of the projects Freedom House undertook were “ad hoc” and that it felt the Board had lost control of Freedom House’s funding.<sup>245</sup> WOLA’s Board of Directors also held the power to vote on projects presented to it by WOLA staff, the Executive Director and organisations on the ground in Latin America.<sup>246</sup> Unlike Freedom House, WOLA’s Board of Directors was not subject to another committee’s oversight but to that of the Executive Director who also sat on the board. In the case of the NED, while the institute

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<sup>244</sup> See FH Records, Box 148 for a selection of minutes from Board meetings.

<sup>245</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 3, Memorandum from Sussman to the Executive Committee, (20<sup>th</sup> April 1982).

<sup>246</sup> WOLA Records, Box 38, Part I: The Organisation.

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staff prepared and planned project proposals, the board exercised the final decision on which projects received NED grants.<sup>247</sup> Although organisation staff drew up proposals and projects, in the cases of Freedom House and the NED, these staff were almost exclusively based in the United States and, while they made fact-finding and research trips (rarely of more than a month at a time), the extent of the staff's understanding of the situation on the ground is unknown. Certainly, as will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters, outside of such fact-finding missions, neither organisation had particularly extensive connections within Latin American society, which calls into question the extent to which these organisations could ever be said to be accountable to local actors in the first place. While WOLA's projects were primarily proposed by its own staff, it did regularly accept proposals from organisations on the ground as well. The fact that it was open to proposals from local actors, combined with the extensive network of contacts it had within the region, suggests that it did see itself as in some way accountable to its contacts in the region.

At this point, it must be made clear that, although Freedom House's records are fairly comprehensive, they are lacking in documentation about exactly how Freedom House made its programming decisions or in correspondence between Freedom House and those foundations which funded it. However, it is still possible to draw some conclusions from the records available about the influence its donors exerted over its internal workings and to draw some conclusions about the effect this had on its organisational legitimacy. From as early as 1983, internal memoranda from Freedom House board members suggest that they were aware that the organisation had grown beyond its means. Initially the board responded to this problem by attempting to solidify

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<sup>247</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 7, Folder 1, National Endowment for Democracy Grants Policy (7<sup>th</sup> March 1986).

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its funding base and institutionalise the expansion which had already occurred.<sup>248</sup> By 1986, the board felt it was necessary to reorganise the Board of Trustees, consolidate and redesign its programmes and re-examine the central purpose of the organisation.<sup>249</sup> Unfortunately, there is little evidence to suggest exactly what changes to the internal structure of the organisation were actually introduced at this time. It is clear that after 1986, Freedom House shifted its funding focus away from seeking smaller, project-specific donations and towards securing regular five figure individual donors and growing its endowment in order to “free [itself] from the politics of foundations”.<sup>250</sup> There is minimal evidence that the organisation succeeded in this aim, as its list of foundation donors and the amount of funding they provided does not appear to have decreased after this strategy-shift. Moreover, at this time Freedom House sought to hire a liaison between itself, the foundations and the NED, who could follow up on the details of grants and donations relieving the Board of Trustees of the need to do so itself.<sup>251</sup> Despite recognising the need for a level of reorganisation, these changes and some changes in the management personnel appear to be the only serious structural changes which Freedom House undertook at this time.

It would seem that the impetus for internal change in Freedom House did not derive from its donors but rather from a realisation that its infrastructure could not cope with the expansion that had occurred. For the most part, the foundations from which Freedom House received grants do not appear to have imposed that many bureaucratic constraints on the organisation. Indeed, for the most part these were foundations that

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<sup>248</sup> FH Records, Box 44, Folder 5, Memorandum from Bruce McColm to Leonard Sussman (1983).

<sup>249</sup> FH Records, Box 164, Memorandum from Leonard Sussman to Ned Bandler, Max Kampelman, Bayard Rustin, Leo Cherne, John Riehm and Philip van Slyck (29<sup>th</sup> December 1986).

<sup>250</sup> It is worth noting, that this policy was reversed in 1992 when Freedom House underwent another redesign which made individual project managers responsible for procuring funds for their own programmes – see FH Records, Box 68, Folder 5, Memorandum from Bruce McColm to Kaplan, Thorne, Sussman, Payne, Calzon and Kemble (4<sup>th</sup> May 1992).

<sup>251</sup> FH Records, Box 161, Memorandum from Bruce McColm to Leonard Sussman (2<sup>nd</sup> January 1987)

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had been funding Freedom House for many years prior to the structural changes. Aside from basic reporting and, in some cases, grant proposals, Freedom House's foundation grants do not appear to have had a great deal of associated bureaucracy. The exception to this was the NED grants, which demanded a stricter reporting process due to its answerability to Congress. However, even in this case, the reporting requirements do not appear onerous. There is little evidence within the records of Freedom House to suggest that the organisation found the bureaucratic requirements of its donors affected its ability to perform its function and meet its aims. While it did re-invent itself at this time, most of the changes were to its ideology rather than its operational structure.<sup>252</sup> In the case of Freedom House at least, the common model described by many observers does not seem to apply. While Freedom House did professionalise during this time, the process did not have had a noticeable impact on its work or where it felt its accountability lay. This could be ascribed to Freedom House's own understanding of its work. Unlike WOLA (or many more traditional transnational development and humanitarian organisations) it saw itself less as serving beneficiary nations, communities or individuals, than as working to promote a certain, US-centric set of values which it saw as universal. Given this, even in its more traditional projects like those it administered for the NED, Freedom House could not really be said to have "beneficiaries" in the way much of the theory conceptualises the term. It saw itself as accountable to the United States and to its own principles, which created a level of detachment from local actors from the start. Similarly, due to the nature of its projects, which were primarily concerned with information dissemination and lobbying, Freedom House did not require the level of institutional flexibility so often associated with non-state actors. This could explain why the professionalisation which occurred in the 1980s

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<sup>252</sup> FH Records, Box 164, Memorandum from Sussman to Bandler Kampelman, Rustin, Cherne, Riehm and van Slyck (29<sup>th</sup> December 1986).

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was comparatively minimal and did not particularly affect Freedom House's ability to perform the function it set out for itself.

For WOLA the 1980s brought much internal restructuring and redefinition of strategy. WOLA had begun as an organisation more like those under consideration by scholars such as Meyer and Wright, with little formalised structure and a very small staff supplemented mostly by volunteers, who, in WOLA's case, were primarily missionaries on the ground in Latin America. These volunteers (and few paid staff) were largely left to their own devices to create and manage networks and bases.<sup>253</sup> As a result, it was internally very flexible and often operated on a case-by-case basis without much centralised control or decision making. In the 1980s this began to change as, using a grant from the Ford Foundation, the organisation grew and began to need a more efficient infrastructure to respond to the reporting requirements of its new foundation grants. In 1982 WOLA began to reorganise internally, starting with the formalisation of its decision and policy making mechanisms.<sup>254</sup> It began to replace the volunteer missionaries with paid consultants and to distance itself from its religious roots.<sup>255</sup> While it retained a close relationship with the churches through its board and day-to-day activities, it stopped requiring any kind of church affiliation for the employment of staff.<sup>256</sup> Moreover, this re-organisation formalised the roles of the Board of Directors and the directors themselves, as well as dividing the responsibilities of the organisation between three teams. The management coordinated and directed the planning and implementation of projects, the regional teams were responsible for gathering and sharing information and intervening in foreign policy formulation as well

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<sup>253</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) p. 23.

<sup>254</sup> WOLA Records, Box 28, Some Suggestions for WOLA's Reorganisation (1982).

<sup>255</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) p. 59.

<sup>256</sup> WOLA Records, Box 2, Some Suggestions for WOLA's Reorganisation (1982).



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as organising the publications and education activities and, finally, WOLA established an administrative team to run the office.<sup>257</sup> Although this was the largest reorganisation WOLA undertook in the 1980 – 93 period, the Ford Foundation did request some further alterations to its structure in 1990. At this time, Ford requested that WOLA should be more pro-active in choosing well defined projects and in evaluating its “impact” as an organisation.<sup>258</sup> Around this time, Ford also suggested that WOLA focus more on projects based on “issue” rather than their previous approach which was fairly evenly divided between “country” and “issue” based projects.<sup>259</sup> “Issue” based projects tended to apply either to multiple countries or to the region as a whole, for example a study WOLA conducted concerning the Administration of Justice Program (a USAID funded project to provide assistance to Latin American judiciaries) and its impact within the region.

WOLA’s internal procedures changed noticeably as a result of the pressure brought to bear by the Ford Foundation. While, several of the Ford grants were specifically given to help WOLA professionalise and formalise their procedures, they nevertheless did reduce the flexibility of WOLA as an organisation.<sup>260</sup> Indeed, many of WOLA’s staff and volunteers feared that this loss of flexibility would prevent them from helping those Latin Americans who came to WOLA seeking assistance.<sup>261</sup> In fact, although this professionalisation did force WOLA to give up some of its flexibility, it did not appear significantly to hinder WOLA’s work in the way the theory suggests a loss of flexibility should. In a study into WOLA conducted by Carlos Chipoco and Lars

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<sup>257</sup> WOLA Records, Box 38, Part 1: The Organisation.

<sup>258</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Memorandum from Alex Wilde to WOLA Staff: Meeting with Ford Foundation, New Proposal Process (9<sup>th</sup> May 1990).

<sup>259</sup> Ibid.

<sup>260</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934-3, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1990 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 1991.

<sup>261</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) p. 57.

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Schoultz in the 1990s, which interviewed a number of organisations and individuals in Latin America who worked with WOLA, the majority of respondents suggested that they thought WOLA was an organisation they could turn to with confidence.<sup>262</sup> Indeed, for the most part, their major criticisms of WOLA were related to issues of underfunding rather than its work or processes.<sup>263</sup>

The changes WOLA made internally during this time do seem to follow the models laid down by much of the literature on NGO professionalisation although the end result did not match the theories. Where WOLA differed was in its hiring for top positions. According to Wright, as non-state actors bureaucratise they tend to draft in professionals and “elites” at the top who run the organisation as a business and, due to the difference in backgrounds between themselves and their beneficiaries, have little understanding of the needs of beneficiaries.<sup>264</sup> In the case of WOLA, for the most part, its top positions before and after its professionalisation were filled by ex-missionaries, activists and academics rather than corporate elites. Even Alex Wilde, WOLA’s director from 1987, while perhaps more institutionalised than his predecessor, came from a background primarily of research and activism rather than business or senior management (although he did previously hold academic management positions at the Helen Kellogg Institute and the Woodrow Wilson Centre in the early 1980s). Indeed, even though Wilde chose to realign WOLA more behind Washington in the early 1990s and added a number of interested parties from Washington to WOLA’s staff, he continued to prioritise WOLA’s original aims of denouncing of human rights violations and providing a rights-led critique of US policy towards Latin America.<sup>265</sup> It is plausible

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<sup>262</sup> WOLA Records, Box 15, Program Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America: Prepared for the Ford Foundation by Carlos Chipoco and Lars Schoultz (199?).

<sup>263</sup> Ibid.

<sup>264</sup> Wright, “NGOs and Western Hegemony: causes for concern and ideas for change” in *Development in Practice*, 22:1 (2012) p. 128.

<sup>265</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) pp. 64-65.

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that, because WOLA's professionalisation did not include a change in hiring practices at the top, it avoided the corporatisation that, according to Wright, many non-state actors undergo as they professionalise, and successfully retained its legitimacy. The commitment of the organisation and the staff was still primarily to their cause and, although internal procedures were formalised, WOLA's internal bureaucracy did not increase sufficiently to prevent it from achieving its aims. Like Freedom House, its primary function was not beneficiary-based project or service delivery but rather information dissemination and lobbying, meaning that WOLA did not require the high level of flexibility demanded of those organisations which were delivering services on the ground. Overall, despite the involvement of the Ford Foundation in WOLA's internal process and the growth and professionalisation it underwent during the 1980s and 1990s, WOLA's work and programmes did not appear to become any less effective. If anything it became a more successful lobbyist and gained the ability to run larger projects (and in greater numbers) as a result of the increased funding. While it did lose some flexibility on the ground as a result of the formalisation of its workforce in Latin America, it clearly remained flexible enough to gather information and respond to those individuals and groups that came to it seeking help. So, while a trade-off was made, it did not appear to have the strongly negative impact suggested in many of the models laid down by scholars like Wright, Hulme and Edwards.

It is plausible that the main reason both WOLA and Freedom House did not fit these models of legitimacy loss lay in the inherent nature of both organisations. As previously mentioned, neither of these organisations fit the beneficiary-led service-providing mould usually under investigation in the literature concerning non-state actors. The fact that Freedom House considered its main "beneficiary" to be the United States and the standing of its values in the wider world and since serving this aim required none of the traits described in the literature (such as flexibility and

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accountability to beneficiaries), changes to Freedom House's internal structure had little to no impact on its ability to do its work. Similarly, although WOLA did see itself as accountable to its Latin American network and the concerns of Latin American nations, it, too, lacked specific "beneficiaries" in the sense discussed by most non-state organisations which, to some extent, prevented bureaucracy and other internal changes from hindering its work. While clearly WOLA valued and needed to maintain a certain level of flexibility within Latin America, the level required for information gathering on the ground was much lower than that required by, for example, a disaster relief effort. In the case of Freedom House, information gathering was achieved in a much more systematic and, indeed, bureaucratic way than would be possible for a development project. Similarly, the level of added bureaucracy required in order to hinder either organisation in its lobbying and information dissemination efforts at home would be significantly higher than that required to disrupt humanitarian, development or service-providing work.

Due to the fact that most of its internal structures and funding were dictated by its founding congressional act, the NED's internal processes did not change during this time except in minor ways. Moreover, Congress dictated its budget and therefore size and ability to execute projects, it did not undergo the same level of growth that either Freedom House or WOLA did during the 1980s. Most of the NED's internal bureaucracy derived from its annual reporting requirement to Congress. One of the conditions of its founding act was that it must provide Congress with detailed reports of its activities, operations, finances and accomplishments.<sup>266</sup> While these reporting requirements were stringent, they did not appear to over-burden the NED or have any

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<sup>266</sup> Library of Congress, US Congress House Committee on Foreign Affairs, *Authorizing appropriations for fiscal years 1984 and 1985 for the Department of State, USIA, the Board for International Broadcasting, the Inter-American Foundation and the Asia Foundation, to establish the National Endowment for Democracy, and for other purposes* (16<sup>th</sup> May 1983) Bill (98) H.R. 2915 p. 88.

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real impact on its ability to achieve its aims since it had been designed to handle this level of bureaucracy from the start. What did cause bureaucratic problems for the NED were the appropriations from USAID. In a memo to the NED Board of Directors in 1990 Gershman discussed the organisation's growing relationship with USAID, stating that the AID grants were burdening NED staff with excess paperwork.<sup>267</sup> Yet despite this objection, the extra bureaucracy created by the AID appropriations did not appear to hinder the NED in distributing these funds. Given that later in this memo Gershman states his willingness to continue serving as the coordination point with AID for those initiatives involving its core grantees and that the NED continued to receive AID appropriations after 1990, it would appear that the additional paperwork created by AID grants was more of a nuisance than an active hindrance to its work. From its inception the NED had been a profoundly bureaucratic organisation and, as a result, while additional bureaucracy did burden its staff and increase their individual workloads, it does not appear to have had much of an impact on the organisation as a whole.

Like Freedom House, the NED was a strongly top-down organisation with no grassroots strategy; politicians, union bosses and corporate leaders filled the majority of its board seats and it had a largely professional staff and a formalised internal process. As a result, it never underwent the process of professionalisation that WOLA or Freedom House (to a lesser extent) had to experience. Since it began in the position Wright describes as the end-point of NGO bureaucratisation, the NED did not suffer from a loss of legitimacy as a result of its internal bureaucracy. Moreover, while the NED did have beneficiaries in the service-providing sense, it had never really considered itself as accountable to beneficiaries abroad. Due to an extensive reporting requirement to Congress and the use of intermediaries in grant provision to Latin

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<sup>267</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 4, Memorandum from Carl Gershman to the NED Board of Directors Concerning the NED/AID Relationship (29<sup>th</sup> May 1990).

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America, it had always been more accountable to officials and grantees in the United States than to its ultimate beneficiaries in Latin America. The detachment of the NED from its beneficiaries on the ground was built into the very design of the organisation. While this did call into question its ability to fully understand situations on the ground and to implement projects which answered to the needs of the local population, it was principally organisations in the US which levelled such criticism, which were opposed to the NED due to its proximity to the US government. While Latin Americans did accuse the NED of co-option and cultural imperialism, most notably the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, such criticism did not stop local organisations from accepting NED grants and the NED rarely struggled to find willing beneficiaries.

### Conclusions

It is clear that none of these three organisations really fit the models laid out by the current secondary literature in terms of their funding, structures and associated issues of legitimacy. While all three organisations took the vast majority of their funding from “official” (state or foundation) sources, only the NED really suffered any repercussions as a result. The fact that the NED’s largest source of funding was the US government did prompt some organisations within Latin America to shy away from accepting funds from it. Moreover, the fact that its budget came from USIA rather than directly from the US government provoked accusations that the NED was another vehicle for US covert involvement in domestic affairs abroad. Despite these criticisms, the NED did not have too many problems finding organisations in Latin America willing to receive its funding until the appropriations from USAID. The USAID appropriations highlighted the influence Congress could exert over the NED’s programme design and this made many organisations, including some of those the NED already worked with and at least one of its core grantees, nervous. With beneficiaries courting accusations of co-option and

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third party grantees worried about the reluctance on the part of beneficiaries to accept funds, the USAID appropriations proved very costly for NED legitimacy in the late 1980s. Given the outcry concerning government involvement in the NED via the USAID appropriations, it is interesting to note that, in contrast, the basic USIA grants was rarely questioned despite also deriving from the US government. One possible explanation for this is that the third party funding system disguised the level of influence the US government could actually have over NED programmes. As the funding came through USIA, it is possible that the NED's beneficiaries did not know that Congress had the ability to put the NED budget to the vote and therefore reduce or increase its budget as it saw fit, thus giving Congress a level of influence over the manner in which the NED decided to conduct its affairs.

By contrast, Freedom House and WOLA, which took much of their funding from foundation sources, suffered almost no crisis of legitimacy as a result of the origins of their funding. While Freedom House did have an altercation with the Olin Foundation concerning its Central American policy, for the most part the foundations which funded it largely kept out of policymaking. Although, since many Freedom House grants were project specific, it is reasonable to assume that it tailored its proposals to fit the interests of the foundations it was applying to, this was (and remains) common practice for organisations seeking funding and represents a conscious decision on the part of non-state organisations. There is evidence of some pressure exerted by foundations on Freedom House, since it initially applied for grants from the NED in an attempt to please the Smith-Richardson and Olin Foundations. Like WOLA and, indeed, most foundation-funded, non-state organisations, Freedom House tended to receive its funding from foundations with a similar mind-set and political allegiance to the majority of its board and staff. Overall, neither its beneficiaries nor many of Freedom House's US-based colleagues seem to have had many criticisms, nor indeed

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did they ask any questions concerning the sources of Freedom House's funding. Indeed, even its relationship with the NED received very little criticism even though the NED was very active in suggesting and pressuring Freedom House to undertake NED-designed projects. This kind of demonstrable influence and loss of independence is what many scholars claim causes a loss of legitimacy in humanitarian and development organisations, yet in this case it did not appear to have any serious negative impact on the standing of Freedom House. In the case of WOLA, while neither critics nor beneficiaries discussed its foundation funding, its religious funding was a source of some criticism and did come under scrutiny from its critics. Although WOLA had never concealed its religious connections, it was accused of seeking only to further the agendas of the religious organisations which funded it. These criticisms aside, WOLA, like Freedom House was subjected to very little scrutiny over its funding sources.

These three cases indicate that, contrary to what much of the secondary literature suggests, foundation funding did not produce the same issues of legitimacy that other "official" funding often created and that even government funding did not always bring with it a legitimacy crisis. While state funding did occasion some problems for the NED, the major criticisms of it did not result from its taking funds from the US government, but from its acceptance of the conditioned appropriations from USAID. This suggests that a loss of legitimacy was less the result of accepting government money and more the visible involvement of the government in programme design and decision-making. Although there were always organisations wary of working with the NED as a result of its relationship with the US government, the serious problems did not emerge until Congress granted the 1988 USAID appropriation and mandated it be used to promote democracy within Chile. As long as the NED budget was given without limitations and the veneer of independence maintained, many organisations in beneficiary nations had few exceptions to accepting grants from it. With regards to



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foundation funding, the fact that foundations were largely considered, if not politically unbiased, than at least impartial and independent meant that funding taken from them did not produce the same legitimacy crisis as funds taken from state or pseudo-state organisations. Foundations formed a key part of the broader domestic and international political networks, which worked to push human rights and democratic transition to the fore of the international consciousness. Indeed, foundations could bring non-state actors into a broader network of political and state actors engaged with the same issues. In the case of Freedom House, the foundations which funded it cemented its place in the wider neo-conservative network which, in the 1980s, wielded a great deal of power within the White House and the State Department. The Ford Foundation in particular, provided WOLA with an air of professionalism and mainstream legitimacy that it lacked prior to the 1982 grant and, simultaneously, drew it further into the broader international human rights network that had come to the fore in the 1970s.

In terms of the question of professionalisation and the effect of increased bureaucratisation on non-state organisations, these three organisations once again fell outside of the generally accepted norms. First, only WOLA actually underwent the professionalisation process often described by scholars; both Freedom House and the NED began life in a state similar to the end result of this process. From the outset Freedom House enjoyed a more formalised structure, relationships with foundations and a concrete internal bureaucracy and while they did seek to change their financial strategy during this time, it was predominantly an attempt to strengthen and grow those grants already in place and in practice changed very little about the organisation. Similarly, the NED, having been founded much later and by congressional act, had its structure and reporting procedures predetermined by Congress. Moreover, the boards of both organisations were largely made up of “professionals”, often even professional managers, resulting in both being run with a business-like attitude from the start. As a

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result, neither Freedom House nor the NED had to contend with a sudden increase in bureaucracy or a change in the type of individual making policy decisions which, the literature suggests, triggers crises of accountability and work management. Although WOLA did undergo the more typical professionalisation process, it too did not suffer from a crisis of accountability. Through a combination of a well-managed expansion of the internal bureaucracy and a largely unchanged commitment to its beneficiaries, WOLA successfully navigated professionalisation without too much change to its priorities or its ability to achieve its aims.

Since, for the most part, the work of these organisations was not of the service-providing kind common to humanitarian and development organisations, they simply did not have “beneficiaries” to whom they should have been accountable. Similarly, due to the more broad nature of their aims, they did not gravitate towards easily quantifiable and more extensively documented and reported projects in the manner of many humanitarian and development organisations. Although WOLA came under some pressure to assess its own “impact”, that was the extent of the pressure to quantify its work and there is little evidence to suggest that this was supposed to be an ongoing process. While information gathering did require a strong network of volunteers and informants on the ground and in Washington, most of the work carried out by WOLA and Freedom House did not require the level of on-the-ground fieldwork or flexibility as that of service providing actors. As a result, these organisations could afford to lose some flexibility and manpower to increased bureaucracy without a significant impairment of their work. As a grant-giving organisation, while the NED could have been said to have beneficiaries in the form of its grantees, it was by no means accountable to them – rather, they were accountable to it. Moreover, since its direct grantees were not, in fact, groups on the ground in Latin America but rather third party organisations within the United States, it saw itself as accountable, mainly, to US

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organisations. Freedom House, also believed itself to be primarily accountable to the United States and the democratic centrist values for which it stood. These organisations were able to hold a half-way position between those on the ground in Latin America, those making policy in Washington and those foundations with an interest in the region without being subject to questions about the impact on their accountability or their legitimacy. None of this is to say that these organisations did not have their own issues concerning legitimacy and accountability (which will be discussed in later chapters), just that it is difficult to measure them by the standards of and models based on service-providing non-state actors. Instead they, particularly Freedom House and the NED, represented a new type of non-state actor that was neither service-providing NGO nor think tank nor foundation, but a blend of all three.

### Chapter 3 - Political Networks: NED, Freedom House, WOLA and the US Government

Through the work of William Schmidli, we have seen how human rights organisations developed strong relationships within Congress in the 1970s and, with the election of Jimmy Carter in 1976, became closer to the executive branch as well.<sup>268</sup> As yet there is very little work on the relationships between non-state actors and the Reagan administration. While WOLA had been brought into an advisory role in the 1970s, the Reagan administration had a deep distrust of traditional human rights groups which damaged WOLA's relationship with the Washington foreign policy community.<sup>269</sup> Moreover, what of the new human rights movement with its more political, Reaganite outlook? What relationships did organisations such as the NED and Freedom House have with the US government during this period? This chapter will examine the relationships between the NED, Freedom House, WOLA and three key parts of the US government: the White House, the State Department and Congress.

As Keck and Sikkink suggest, the relationships between non-state actors and governments, particularly Western governments, were “simultaneously the most powerful and the least dependable” part of the working networks these actors built.<sup>270</sup> These organisations needed some kind of relationship with the state in order to carry out their work but, at the same time, too strong a relationship with state bodies could be detrimental to their legitimacy both at home and abroad. In the United States much of the early impetus for human rights policies came from Congress. In the early 1970s individual members of Congress worked with human rights groups to try and promote a human rights policy based on their opposition to the Nixon/ Kissinger policy of tacit

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<sup>268</sup> Schmidli, William, M., “Institutionalizing Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: U.S.-Argentine Relations 1976-1980” in *Diplomatic History*, Vol 35, Issue 2 (2011) pp. 363 – 369.

<sup>269</sup> Sikkink, *Mixed Signals* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) p. 177.

<sup>270</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) p. 103.

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support for the Argentine and Chilean military dictatorships.<sup>271</sup> This interest in a coherent human rights policy was picked up by the Carter administration and, later, by the Reagan administration as a means to criticise the Soviet Union.<sup>272</sup> Under the Reagan administration the new democracy-focused human rights policy, publicly at least, appeared to be primarily the reserve of the executive branch, while Congress was still more interested in the promotion of the utopian human rights of the 1970s. This is not to say that some members of Congress were not in favour of democracy promotion or did not push for human rights policies which encompassed the promotion of democracy abroad alongside more traditional human rights (indeed, the impetus for the NED came mostly from members of Congress), but rather that the majority of interest in democracy promotion policies seemed to stem from the executive branch with Congress's approval coming later. Throughout this period, the NED had fairly close and involved relationships with both the Reagan and Bush administrations as well as the State Department; but its relationship with Congress was more fraught, with several members of Congress protesting its creation and repeated attempts by members of Congress to defund it during this time. Perhaps the most consistent relationships were had by Freedom House, which was relatively well accepted by all three key branches of the US government. Members of Freedom House testified fairly regularly before Congressional committees and their reports were often used by both Congress and the State Department.<sup>273</sup> Moreover, members of Freedom House were periodically employed or headhunted to take on posts within the broader foreign policy apparatus and the organisation was called to testify before the Kissinger Commission in 1983.<sup>274</sup> In

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<sup>271</sup> Sikkink, K., *Mixed Signals: US Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004) p. 107.

<sup>272</sup> Bon Tempo, Carl, "Human Rights and the US Republican Party in the Late 1970s" in Eckel and Moyn, *The Breakthrough*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) pp. 160-161.

<sup>273</sup> For information on Freedom House members testifying before Congress see FH Records, Box 127 Folder 9 and 10 and Box 128, Folder 1, for various issues of *Freedom Monitor* from 1984-1992.

<sup>274</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 7, *Memo: To Members* (November 1983).

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contrast, WOLA had a small network of close relationships with individual members of Congress as well as a small group of members of Congress who were strongly opposed to its inclusion in policy matters. Under the Reagan administration, its relationships with both the White House and the State Department were strained and it was often shut out of the foreign policy debate on account of its left-wing attitude. Whereas, under the Bush administration, WOLA's relationship with the White House and the State Department improved dramatically and it was again accepted by the executive branch of policy-making. The White House correspondence discussed in this chapter was found predominantly in the archives of the non-state organisations themselves or in archives of Reagan and Bush's public papers.

### The White House

While the Reagan administration for the most part isolated itself from human rights groups and other non-state actors, it did engage to an extent with the new human rights movement. Both Freedom House and the NED were, at various points, seen as helpful by the White House, with their work being used or lauded and, in the case of Freedom House, its staff used to brief personnel on Latin American issues. Reagan personally appeared to see the NED as an important part of his ideological legacy. He incorporated it into his "soft power" rhetoric and often defended it from criticism both internationally and in Congress. By contrast, WOLA spent much of the 1980s completely unable to gain access to White House staff. Like many of the traditional human rights groups, it was regarded by Reagan with great suspicion and was often accused of having strong left-wing bias as it regularly found itself in direct conflict with the administration. However, it was WOLA that gained the most from the election of George Bush. While the Bush White House was generally more distanced from non-state actors than either

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the Carter or the Reagan administrations, it did re-open a dialogue with WOLA and engaged with it (although minimally) in much better faith than before.

The NED was connected to the Reagan White House from its inception. As mentioned previously (see pp. 38-39), the APF study which led to its creation had been proposed to and approved by Reagan himself in a letter written by the leaders of the DNC, RNC and the United States Trade Representative.<sup>275</sup> A copy of the report and its recommendation to create the NED were sent directly to Reagan himself.<sup>276</sup> In 1983 Reagan held a ceremony at the White House to inaugurate the NED after its founding at which he stated that the NED went “right to the heart of America’s faith in democratic ideals and institutions”.<sup>277</sup> Moreover, the National Endowment for Democracy Act established a basic bureaucratic relationship between the White House and the NED wherein copies of the General Accounting Office’s audits of the organisation were sent to the President and all NED annual reports were received by the White House before being transmitted to Congress.<sup>278</sup> Aside from letters or words of support from the White House, however, the NED rarely appears to have interacted with White House staff or Reagan directly. Although both Reagan and Bush did occasionally intervene or speak on behalf of the NED internationally and in Congress, there does not appear to be any evidence of personal relationships between NED staff and, Reagan, Bush or other White House staffers during this time.

Despite the seeming lack of relations between the NED and the White House, it is clear that Reagan believed in the importance of the NED and supported it when necessary. In its early days, Reagan sent a personal letter of support to the organisation

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<sup>275</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 15, Press Release by the APF – “New Bipartisan Democracy Initiative Launched” (10<sup>th</sup> November 1982).

<sup>276</sup> William Brock III, Letter to Reagan with the Democracy Program Report <<http://www.ned.org/docs/democracyProgram.pdf>> (27<sup>th</sup> July 1983).

<sup>277</sup> Ronald Reagan, Remarks at a White House Ceremony Inaugurating the National Endowment for Democracy, <<http://www.ned.org/ronald-reagan/remarks-at-a-white-house-ceremony-inaugurating-the-national-endowment-for-democracy>> (16<sup>th</sup> December 1983).

<sup>278</sup> National Endowment for Democracy Act, Public Law 98 – 164 § 502, Stat 1039 (1983).

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and, in 1984 wrote a letter to the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Mark Hatfield, appealing against an amendment to reduce the NED budget.<sup>279</sup> In this letter, Reagan called the NED the “cornerstone of our efforts to promote the growth of democratic institutions throughout the world” and lauded it as an alternative to using the military to defend democracy abroad.<sup>280</sup> This was a sentiment that Reagan repeated regularly; in a note attached to the NED annual report in 1986, he informed Congress that the NED was a “key instrument in our ability to support what we believe in” and stated that “this Administration strongly [backed the NED] and [would] work...with Congress to ensure [its] continued growth and expansion”.<sup>281</sup> In the late 1980s, the NED cultivated a relationship with Colin Powell (then National Security Advisor) who sought to increase the foreign affairs budget and NED funding for 1990 and set his staff to work with Gershman to “achieve everything we can for NED”.<sup>282</sup> Throughout his term in office, Reagan often praised the NED in speeches concerning democracy promotion and the furthering of the democratic cause within Eastern Europe and Latin America. For example, at a White House event marking the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising, Reagan made a speech in which he cited the NED as evidence for the United States, in the words of Jeane Kirkpatrick, taking off its “Kick Me” sign when it came to advocating for the US way of life.<sup>283</sup> He made similar claims before the Council of the Americas in 1984, a special session of the European Parliament in 1985 and the

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<sup>279</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 18, Letter from President Reagan to the NED (1983); NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 6, Letter from Reagan to Mark Hatfield, (12<sup>th</sup> June 1984).

<sup>280</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 6, Letter from Reagan to Mark Hatfield (12<sup>th</sup> June 1984).

<sup>281</sup> Ronald Reagan, Message to the Congress Transmitting the Annual Report of the NED <[http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getdoc&DocId=6051&Index=\\*efd0fee5343905cffa0f0158ab4a751e&HitCount=23&hits=b+c+d+e+19+1a+1b+1c+3b+3c+3d+3e+62+63+64+65+77+7e+b2+e2+e3+e4+e5+&SearchForm=F%3a\Reagan\\_Public\\_Web\search\speeches\speech\\_srch\\_form.html](http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getdoc&DocId=6051&Index=*efd0fee5343905cffa0f0158ab4a751e&HitCount=23&hits=b+c+d+e+19+1a+1b+1c+3b+3c+3d+3e+62+63+64+65+77+7e+b2+e2+e3+e4+e5+&SearchForm=F%3a\Reagan_Public_Web\search\speeches\speech_srch_form.html)> (19<sup>th</sup> February 1986).

<sup>282</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 3, Letter from Colin Powell to William Brock, (7<sup>th</sup> November 1988).

<sup>283</sup> Ronald Reagan, Remarks at a White House Luncheon Marking the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising <[http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getdoc&DocId=4229&Index=\\*efd0fee5343905cffa0f0158ab4a751e&HitCount=8&hits=1e1+41f+671+6cf+6d0+6d1+6d2+892+&SearchForm=F%3a\Reagan\\_Public\\_Web\search\speeches\speech\\_srch\\_form.html](http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getdoc&DocId=4229&Index=*efd0fee5343905cffa0f0158ab4a751e&HitCount=8&hits=1e1+41f+671+6cf+6d0+6d1+6d2+892+&SearchForm=F%3a\Reagan_Public_Web\search\speeches\speech_srch_form.html)> (17<sup>th</sup> August, 1984).



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Congress on America's Agenda for the Future in 1986. Furthermore, Reagan added a mention of the NED to a joint communiqué following negotiations with President José Napoleón Duarte of El Salvador concerning the Central American peace process. In this communiqué, Reagan and Duarte called for greater support for Central American democratic organisations from Western public and private sources such as the NED.<sup>284</sup> Reagan evidently supported the NED and its work and saw it as key to creating positive perceptions of the United States within the world.

It was not only Reagan who made statements in support of the NED during his administration: in his role as Vice-President, Bush also lent his support to the NED. When the NED risked being defunded again in 1985, Vice-President Bush wrote letters to a number of senators urging them to vote in support of the continued funding of the NED.<sup>285</sup> Following Bush's inauguration as President, direct communication between the NED and the President's office and between Bush and other institutions on behalf of the NED appears to have fallen off. This is perhaps not surprising as, by 1990, the NED was fairly well established and more secure in its work and position than it had been in the 1980s, as evidenced by the fact that between 1984 and 1988 there were five attempts to cut or abolish NED funding in Congress whereas between 1990 and 1993 there were only two, both of which were attempts to reduce the budget rather than abolish it completely.<sup>286</sup> As the NED gained recognition, grew in size and became more institutionalised, there was less need for the White House to defend it against attack. It is plausible that, in addition to the NED's increased ability to fight its own battles without external assistance, Bush was simply less willing to vocalise his support for the

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<sup>284</sup> Ronald Reagan, Joint Communiqué Following Discussions with José Napoleón Duarte of El Salvador <[http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getdoc&DocId=3995&Index=\\*efd0fee5343905cfa0f0158ab4a751e&HitCount=4&hits=202+203+204+205+&SearchForm=F%3a\Reagan\\_Public\\_Web\search\speeches\speech\\_srch\\_form.html](http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/dtSearch/dtisapi6.dll?cmd=getdoc&DocId=3995&Index=*efd0fee5343905cfa0f0158ab4a751e&HitCount=4&hits=202+203+204+205+&SearchForm=F%3a\Reagan_Public_Web\search\speeches\speech_srch_form.html)> (21<sup>st</sup> May 1984).

<sup>285</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 15, Letter from Gershman to Vice-President Bush, (30<sup>th</sup> September 1985).

<sup>286</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 13, Folder 21, Collection of papers detailing Congressional acts to cut or abolish NED funding (various).

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organisation during his presidency. Promoting democracy had been Reagan's campaign and, although there is little evidence to suggest Bush disagreed with or actively opposed the NED, it is plausible that he was less enthusiastic about it than Reagan had been.

Despite the seeming lack of direct communication, the NED did have a working relationship with the Bush White House. For example, when the NED hosted Violeta Chamorro in 1989, they arranged for her to have a meeting with Bush to discuss the situation of press freedom under the Sandinistas.<sup>287</sup> When Chamorro was honoured at an NED sponsored awards banquet in 1991, Vice-President Quayle was in attendance.<sup>288</sup> In 1989, when Congress granted a special appropriation to the NED Marlin Fitzwater (Bush's Press Secretary) gave a statement in support of the appropriation praising the NED's previous work in Chile, the Philippines, Poland and Paraguay.<sup>289</sup> Although this would suggest that the White House maintained its support for the NED, albeit in a less public capacity, Bush himself was significantly less forthcoming with vocal support than Reagan had been.

Given the level of personal interest Reagan had taken in the NED and its work, it is perhaps surprising that it was Freedom House that appeared to have the strongest working relationship with the office of the President. Although the most consistent period of communication between Freedom House and the White House coincided with the start of the APF's Democracy Program, in 1980 Freedom House had actually written to Carter urging the creation of a "Foundation for Freedom" to assist US NGOs in their work abroad.<sup>290</sup> Following Reagan's speech to Parliament in 1982, John

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<sup>287</sup> White House Statement on the President's Meeting with Violeta Chamorro of Nicaragua <[http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public\\_papers.php?id=391](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=391)> (5<sup>th</sup> May 1989).

<sup>288</sup> Wiedemann, Kent to Ambassador Lilley, "Official Informal No. 68" <[http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/9-30-FY2013/F-2010-04390/DOC\\_0C05274722/C05274722.pdf](http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/9-30-FY2013/F-2010-04390/DOC_0C05274722/C05274722.pdf)> (17<sup>th</sup> March 1991).

<sup>289</sup> Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the President's signing of the Bill Providing Assistance for Free and Fair Elections in Nicaragua, <[http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public\\_papers.php?id=1073](http://bushlibrary.tamu.edu/research/public_papers.php?id=1073)> (21<sup>st</sup> October 1989).

<sup>290</sup> FH Records, Box 7, Folder 2, Draft Letter to Jimmy Carter (28<sup>th</sup> January 1980).

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Richardson wrote a letter to Reagan congratulating him on his call to “advance human freedoms” and offering Freedom House’s willingness to help organise an international conference on democracy.<sup>291</sup> This letter received a response from Lawrence Eagleburger thanking Freedom House for its support of the London speech and stating that he hoped Freedom House would contribute to the APF study (which it later did).<sup>292</sup> Similarly, in 1985 Reagan wrote a personal letter to Leonard Sussman thanking him for the time he had dedicated to USIA.<sup>293</sup> Reagan and the White House offices also regularly used Freedom House reports and statistics in speeches and White House documentation. In a 1982 speech to the OAS about the creation of a new programme for the Caribbean Basin, Reagan cited a number of Freedom House reports on Central America, and John Richardson was invited as a guest of the White House for the address.<sup>294</sup> Reagan also cited the Freedom Survey in speeches to illustrate that more of the world lived in relative freedom in the 1980s than in the 1970s.<sup>295</sup> Moreover, in his remarks at the signing of the Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day and Human Rights Week Proclamation Reagan included Freedom House in a list of organisations that he claimed made up the community of “heroes” advocating for human rights.<sup>296</sup>

While Freedom House did not elicit the level of public support from Reagan or Bush that the NED did, its work was regularly used by the White House and individuals within the organisation had long-standing relationships with the White House and White House staff. Moreover, Freedom House was often vocally supportive of the Reagan administrations’ foreign policy throughout the 1980s. For example, in 1980, two

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<sup>291</sup> FH Records, Folder 10, Box 50, Letter from John Richardson to Ronald Reagan (17<sup>th</sup> June 1982).

<sup>292</sup> FH Records, Folder 3, Box 8, Letter from Lawrence Eagleburger to John Richardson (1982).

<sup>293</sup> FH Records, Folder 8, Box 59, Letter from Reagan to Sussman (13<sup>th</sup> September 1985).

<sup>294</sup> FH Records, Folder 7, Box 127, Memo: To Members (January/February 1982).

<sup>295</sup> Ronald Reagan, Remarks and a Question-and-answer Session at the University of Virginia Charlottesville <<http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1988/121688b.htm>> (16<sup>th</sup> December 1988).

<sup>296</sup> Reagan, Remarks on Signing the Human Rights Day, Bill of Rights Day and Human Rights Week Proclamation < <http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1988/120888b.htm>> (8<sup>th</sup> December 1988).

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Freedom House scholars published an article in the *New York Times* entitled “Reagan’s Bipartisanship – a Promising Start” in which they praised Reagan’s stated commitment to bipartisanship when it came to foreign policy.<sup>297</sup> Similarly, in 1982, Raymond Gastil responded to an interview with Pat Derian in *The Interdependent* with a letter stating that Freedom House believed Reagan was moving towards a “consistent and reliable bipartisan human rights policy”.<sup>298</sup> During the late 1980s, Freedom House published a policy statement on Panama in which it stated its support for the Reagan administration and Congress’ policy of supporting the Panamanian people in removing Manuel Noriega (Panama’s military dictator) through political and economic means.<sup>299</sup>

Although vocal support from the White House for Freedom House was rare, the White House did often show that it had great faith in Freedom House staff. In 1983, Bruce McCollm was nominated by the White House for membership to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, a position he was elected to by a large majority.<sup>300</sup>

Freedom House staff were also called upon, on occasion, to brief White House staff on events in Latin America. In 1984 the Freedom House delegation to the March election in El Salvador was invited to brief Reagan and key cabinet members on the situation on the ground.<sup>301</sup> Later that year some Freedom House staff members were called upon to brief the White House Outreach Program on the strategy of the Sandinistas and the Salvadoran guerrillas.<sup>302</sup> Although these calls to brief the White House were less common than calls for Freedom House to brief or testify before Congress, the fact that they were invited to do so when most human rights organisations were unwelcome

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<sup>297</sup> Jackson, Karl, D. and Seabury, Paul, “Reagan’s Bipartisanship – a Promising Start” in *New York Times* (7<sup>th</sup> November 1980) p. 27.

<sup>298</sup> FH Records, Folder 7, Box 45, Letter from Raymond Gastil to the Interdependent concerning a published interview with Pat Derian (17<sup>th</sup> May 1982).

<sup>299</sup> FH Records, Folder 2, Box 23, Freedom House Policy Statement on Panama, (1988).

<sup>300</sup> FH Records, Folder 11, Box 8, Memorandum from Sussman to the Executive Committee (21<sup>st</sup> November 1983).

<sup>301</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor*, (May 1984).

<sup>302</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor* (September 1984).

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suggests that the White House saw Freedom House as a trustworthy organisation and a key link in the Washington information network.

Despite the trusted position Freedom House held within the Reagan administration, the relationship between it and the White House did have points of tension in the 1980s. Freedom House occasionally criticised, albeit mildly, the Reagan administration's policies and, particularly, its inability to reach policy agreements with Congress. In a policy statement released in 1988, Freedom House criticised both Reagan and Congress for failing to reach an agreement on how to respond to Esquipulas II which, it claimed, gave credibility to those who wished to see the plan fail.<sup>303</sup> Furthermore, although not publicly, Sussman expressed displeasure at the way in which Reagan portrayed US policy towards El Salvador. In a letter to Leslie Lenkowsky of the Smith-Richardson Foundation he stated that, the "US position on El Salvador [was] far sounder and broader based than the Reagan Administration stated".<sup>304</sup> Perhaps the most significant falling out between Freedom House and the Reagan White House, occurred in 1987 when Freedom House attempted to bring the ex-Sandinista and then leader of the Contra organisation, Alianza Revolucionaria Democrática (ARDE), Edén Pastora Gómez, to the Freedom House offices.<sup>305</sup> Although Pastora and his movement were part of the Reagan administration-backed Contra forces, he was personally disliked by the CIA and many Reagan administration insiders (including Oliver North) because of his unwillingness to subordinate his organisation to the CIA-controlled Fuerza Democrática Nicaragüense. According to Sussman, the White House was "furious" and demanded to know "who put [Freedom House] up to it".<sup>306</sup> Unfortunately, there does not appear to be

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<sup>303</sup> FH Records, Folder 2, Box 40, *Peace Through Democracy: A Bipartisan Initiative for the Central American Crisis proposed by the Freedom House Working Group on Central America* (October 1988).

<sup>304</sup> FH Records, Folder 5, Box 42, Letter from Sussman to Leslie Lenkowsky (Director of Research at the Smith-Richardson Foundation), (7<sup>th</sup> July, 1981).

<sup>305</sup> FH Records, Folder 7, Box 72, Memorandum from McColm to Sussman, (15<sup>th</sup> July 1987).

<sup>306</sup> Ibid.

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a record of the discussion between the White House and Freedom House on this issue, but it seems that Pastora's visit was cancelled as a result of this incident.

As was the case with the NED, after the 1988 elections and Bush's inauguration Freedom House's working relationship with the White House suffered. During the election, Freedom House wrote letters to both Bush and Michael Dukakis urging discussion of the Central American peace process and civil wars and a bipartisan programme for foreign policy suggested by Freedom House.<sup>307</sup> There is no evidence of any response to this letter and, when it came to dealing with Central America in the early 1990s, Bush decided to give his backing to the Esquipulas peace accords in 1989 instead of implementing the Freedom House programme. Although Freedom House suggested the US work with the creators of the Esquipulas plan and assist them in policing each other's adherence to it, the organisation's bipartisan programme also suggested the continuation of a number of US policies which had the potential to undermine Esquipulas. Aside from this letter, there is little evidence that Freedom House sought to have much of an institutional relationship with the Bush White House. There is no record of further correspondence with Bush or his staff and Freedom House focused its efforts on Congress and the State Department during the 1990s. Given that neither the NED nor Freedom House were able to sustain the strength of their relationship with the White House through the Bush years, it would appear that either the Bush White House was simply less interested in the types of issues Freedom House and the NED were working on, or, perhaps, was less convinced of the utility of the neo-conservative human rights movement as a whole.

While neither the NED nor Freedom House could be said to have had a great deal of direct contact with the White House, WOLA was almost completely cut off from

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<sup>307</sup> FH Records, Folder 12, Box 61, Peace Through Democracy: A Bipartisan Initiative for the Central America Crisis, (October 1988).

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it, particularly during the first Reagan administration.<sup>308</sup> WOLA's relationship with the White House was strained throughout the 1980s, although there was some improvement during the second Reagan administration and into the Bush years. Throughout much of the Reagan era, WOLA found itself in conflict with the administration, often rebuking Reagan directly as well as questioning State Department policy. For example, in 1983 WOLA prepared a statement for Congress concerning the administration's human rights policy in which it criticised the Reagan administration for not discharging its human rights obligations adequately.<sup>309</sup> Similarly, in 1986 WOLA criticised the Reagan administration for continuing to approve loans to Chile, stating that loans were illegal and against the will of Congress.<sup>310</sup> WOLA also accused the Reagan administration of failing to meet the consultation requirements of the International Financial Institutions Act (1986) with regards to Chile. Under the provisions of this act, the Secretary of the Treasury was supposed to consult relevant Congressional subcommittees and committees regularly. WOLA claimed that, when it came to approving multinational loans to Chile, committees had often failed to receive notice of policy changes and, in one case, were only informed of a key policy shift after the fact.<sup>311</sup> In 1987, WOLA commissioned a study into how the US public viewed Reagan's policy on Central America, which suggested that Reagan personally had failed to convince the public that the regime in El Salvador was worth defending or funding.<sup>312</sup> The impact of this pamphlet is difficult to assess, but it does provide a clear example of the nature of WOLA's consistent low-level conflict with the Reagan administration. Moreover this

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<sup>308</sup> WOLA Records, Box 15, Program Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America: Prepared for the Ford Foundation by Carlos Chipoco and Lars Schoultz (undated).

<sup>309</sup> WOLA Records, Box 288, Review of Human Rights Policy Towards Latin America: Statement Prepared for Testimony before the US House of Representatives Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organisations (2th June 1983).

<sup>310</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Conference Report: Chile on a Path to Change (1986).

<sup>311</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Chile, the Multilateral Development Banks and US Human Rights Law: a Delegation Report (1986).

<sup>312</sup> WOLA, *Central America and the Polls: A Study of US Public Opinion Polls on US Foreign Policy toward El Salvador and Nicaragua under the Reagan Administration* (Washington: WOLA, 1987) p. 23.

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antagonism was not one-sided. During the 1980s, Reagan (as well as members of the State Department and some centre and centre-right NGOs) accused WOLA of heavy bias, ignoring human rights abuses inflicted by leftist states and exaggerating the abuses of governments it found disagreeable.<sup>313</sup> Although WOLA still found itself regularly at odds with the Reagan White House, during the second administration it was able to find some common ground and collaborate, albeit in minor ways, with the Reagan administration to push for democratic transition in Chile and Paraguay.

While WOLA's relationship with the Bush White House was less contentious, it still occasionally found itself opposing the White House on a policy issues, most notably the Central American peace negotiations and the invasion of Panama. During the early 1990s, WOLA sought to push the administration for full disclosure concerning the human and financial cost of the 1989 invasion.<sup>314</sup> To this end, in January 1990 WOLA circulated a memorandum to members of Congress containing the report of a WOLA delegation which was sent to Panama in the aftermath of the invasion. This memo requested that interested members ask questions about the number of casualties and the state of judicial processes in Panama as a result of the invasion.<sup>315</sup> In 1991, Alexander Wilde testified twice before Congress, stating WOLA's opposition to the Bush administration's policy concerning military aid to El Salvador and its concerns about the administration's drugs policy. Bush had been pushing Congress to allow a package of military aid for El Salvador and Wilde urged members of Congress to demand the aid package be made conditional on the progress of reconciliation.<sup>316</sup> A

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<sup>313</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) p. 53.

<sup>314</sup> WOLA Records, Box 2, A Decisive Moment for Central America: A Proposal to OXFAM (23<sup>rd</sup> April 1990).

<sup>315</sup> WOLA Records, Box 37, Memorandum from WOLA "to those interested in Panama" in Congress (17<sup>th</sup> January 1990).

<sup>316</sup> WOLA Records, Box 24, Prepared Statement of Alexander Wilde before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs, Committee on Foreign Relations, US House of Representatives (6<sup>th</sup> November 1991).



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similar disagreement had occurred the previous year when, urged by a number of NGOs including WOLA, Congress had voted to withhold military aid; but the Bush administration released the aid anyway, leading to WOLA accusing the administration of undermining Congressional intent.<sup>317</sup> Similarly, in 1992, WOLA created two issue briefs concerning US policy toward Nicaragua. The second of these briefs criticised the Bush administration's handling of a conflict over property rights in Nicaragua. It claimed that administration policy was based on "misleading information" about the property rights issue and admonished the administration for suspending \$100 million of aid destined for Nicaragua.<sup>318</sup> Perhaps what is most striking about the disputes between WOLA and the administrations after 1984 is that, unlike during the first Reagan administration, the White House, for the most part, did not respond to these criticisms at all. Instead of answering opposition from WOLA by painting their motives as suspicious or somehow traitorous or unnecessarily combative towards the state, there is no evidence to suggest that the White House engaged directly with WOLA in anyway after 1985.

As can be seen, in the cases of these three organisations, direct engagement with the White House was at best intermittent and, at worst, hostile. It would appear that, during the 1980s and early 1990s neither Reagan, Bush nor their respective White House staff, had much one-to-one contact with non-state actors. While Reagan publicly took up the cause of the NED and whole-heartedly supported its founding, his contact with it was mostly limited to the occasional public statement of support or congratulations. These statements, if taken alone, give the impression that Reagan was more involved with the work of the NED than the almost complete lack of correspondence between the two would suggest. Indeed, for all his vocal support for the

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<sup>317</sup> Ibid.

<sup>318</sup> WOLA Records, Box 245, Nicaragua Issue Brief #2: US Policy and Property Rights in Nicaragua: Undermining the Search for Consensus (December 1992).

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NED, of the three organisations discussed here it was Freedom House which appeared to have the confidence of the White House. While the mentions Reagan made of the NED's work were vague, only occasionally citing country specific work and almost never specific NED funded projects, he discussed and used specific Freedom House reports, projects and the Freedom Survey in a number of speeches. Even though the relationship between Freedom House and the Reagan White House was not always free of tension, it appears that Freedom House staff were trusted by the White House in a way that was not true of either the NED or WOLA. The lockdown WOLA faced when trying to engage the Reagan White House stemmed almost entirely from political animosity. Its left-wing stance and willingness to criticise US allies in the hemisphere created an atmosphere of hostility between the two institutions, particularly in the early part of the 1980s, before the administration sought to distance itself from authoritarian governments, particularly in Chile and Paraguay.

Despite the Bush administration's more conciliatory attitude towards non-state actors of any political leaning, under his leadership there was very little contact between the White House and any of these organisations when it came to Latin American issues. Although Bush had, as Vice-President, voiced his support for the founding of the NED, during his presidency there is little evidence to suggest the White House engaged directly with the NED on any issue. Similarly Freedom House had no real involvement with the Bush White House at all. Even in their work one can see very little direct praise or criticism for US policy towards Latin America between 1989 and 1993, unlike during the Reagan era when Freedom House policy briefs and statements often praised US foreign policy. This shift in Freedom House reporting was not necessarily as a result of relations with the White House or any change in attitudes towards US policy, but rather that, as an organisation, Freedom House's focus after the end of the Cold War moved away from Latin America toward the ex-Soviet bloc and, later, the first Gulf War.

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Although WOLA continued to challenge US policy under the Bush administration, the reaction they received from the White House was significantly less hostile than under Reagan. While the Bush White House does not appear to have actively engaged with WOLA, this lack of hostility allowed WOLA to regain some access to the higher echelons of the US government since, as will be shown, a less hostile White House brought with it a less hostile State Department as well.

Although the White House had never constituted a key part of the relationship non-state actors had with the US government, since foreign policy is primarily the reserve of Congress and the State Department, under the Carter administration the White House had been more open to information and dialogue with these groups. It is clear is that the arrival of the Reagan administration damaged the relationship between liberal non-state human rights organisations and the White House. The access liberal human rights groups had had to the White House under Carter rapidly vanished under Reagan and even the pro-Reaganite Freedom House was rarely granted access to the White House itself. Since the Reagan administration was prone to taking charge of foreign policy, particularly in relation to Latin America, and the State Department tended to follow the lead of the White House this lockdown on access created problems for WOLA during this period. Moreover, the public support of the NED and the occasional use of Freedom House's work within the White House clearly went some way to establishing the neo-conservative human rights movement within the Washington hierarchy even though they were never as accepted as the liberal human rights groups had been during the Carter era.

### The State Department

For the most part, State Department interactions with these organisations broadly followed those of the White House. Since its remit was foreign policy all three

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organisations made a greater effort to engage with the State Department than they did with the White House itself, but for the most part, it was the NED and Freedom House that established working relationships while WOLA was often left out in the cold. The NED had a strong relationship with the State Department under both Reagan and Bush and maintained extensive relations with State Department and embassy personnel. Immediately after the founding of the NED, the State Department requested that its embassies in Latin America send demographic and political information about their respective countries to build up the NED database.<sup>319</sup> Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the State Department regularly assisted NED staff on trips to Latin America and asked embassies to schedule appointments and arrange cars for Gershman when he travelled around Latin America.<sup>320</sup> In 1985, in a report concerning a visit to the region Gershman stated that he sought to foster a cooperative relationship between the NED and embassy staff and encourage them to assist in identifying potential grantees.<sup>321</sup> For the most part, the NED did maintain good relations with the majority of Latin American embassy staff, but there were moments of tension in these relationships. For example, in 1985, the Ambassador to El Salvador, Thomas Pickering, wrote a letter to Gershman expressing his annoyance at the NED's lack of funding for Salvadoran projects.<sup>322</sup> Although there is no response to this letter in the NED's archive, by 1987 the NED had begun to run more projects in El Salvador and the budget for the country was increased suggesting that the NED did take on board suggestions made by embassies.<sup>323</sup> These kinds of complaints from embassies appear to have been few and far between and

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<sup>319</sup> San Salvador Embassy, "Re: Database for National Endowment for Democracy" <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5Celsalvad%5C4e12.PDF>> (15<sup>th</sup> March 1984).

<sup>320</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 33, Cables from the State Department to Embassies in Chile, Paraguay and Brazil.

<sup>321</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 10, Memorandum from Gershman to the Board of Directors: Report on Visit to Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil, (22<sup>nd</sup> February 1985).

<sup>322</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 31, Letter from Thomas Pickering to Gershman (15<sup>th</sup> April 1985).

<sup>323</sup> NED, *Annual Report 1987*, JC421.N37a (1987).

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mostly embassy staff saw the NED as an “asset for greater outreach” and as increasing their ability to work with groups that otherwise had minimal contact with the United States.<sup>324</sup>

The NED also had close relations with the Washington offices of the State Department and the country desks based in the United States. It had a particularly extensive relationship with Gerald Helman, the Deputy to the Undersecretary for Political Affairs. Throughout the 1980s, the NED sent project proposals to Helman for review and comments before putting them before the board for a final decision.<sup>325</sup>

While, this review process was a mandated procedure required by the NED Act in 1986 Helman testified before Congress stating that the State Department had strong support for the NED’s activities and that there was a growing dialogue between the NED, the State Department and US embassies abroad.<sup>326</sup> In this statement Helman also said that the State Department actively encouraged this dialogue and was providing assistance to the NED and its affiliated institutions so that its activities could proceed more smoothly.<sup>327</sup> In 1984, in a document written by Peter Rodman the Director of State Department Policy Planning Staff, outlining State Department policy towards Chile, the NED was stated to be integral to the State Department’s long-term policy of strengthening the democratic centre and centre-right in Chile.<sup>328</sup> Indeed, when Charles Gillespie took over from Harry Barnes as ambassador to Chile in 1988, he was sent a letter by George Shultz (the then Secretary of State) stating that he should carefully

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<sup>324</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 10, Memorandum from Gershman to the Board of Directors: Report on Visit to Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil, (22<sup>nd</sup> February 1985).

<sup>325</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 31, Series of letters between NED board members and Gerald Helman, (1987).

<sup>326</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 31, Prepared Statement by Gerald B Helman, Deputy to the Under Secretary for Political Affairs before the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on International Operations (14<sup>th</sup> May 1986).

<sup>327</sup> Ibid.

<sup>328</sup> Rodman, Peter W. to the Deputy Secretary of State, “U.S. Policy Toward Chile”, <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C000063DE.pdf>> (29<sup>th</sup> November 1984).

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monitor those programmes run by the NED in Chile, “lend them any support they... require and suggest modifications or new directions”.<sup>329</sup> Throughout the Reagan era, the NED received regular cables from the State Department containing information from embassies across Latin America concerning events and local feeling about the NED and its projects. For example, in 1985 it received a collection of cables detailing criticisms from organisations within Nicaragua and suggesting that the NED’s funding of PRODEMCA was creating a great deal of displeasure within the country.<sup>330</sup> Moreover, State Department country desks assisted the NED in arranging meetings with visiting politicians and officials to help it keep in touch with the situation on the ground in Latin America.<sup>331</sup> In 1988, the NED requested that a Foreign Service officer be assigned to liaise with it and the State Department granted this request; but there is little evidence of direct contact with the individual appointed to oversee NED activities.<sup>332</sup> This person had no power over the NED or their decision making processes, but the fact that the Foreign Service agreed to set aside a position specifically to liaise with the NED gives an indication of how strong the relationship between the State Department and the NED was during the Reagan era. Yet despite this, there is little evidence that the NED had much contact with Elliot Abrams, Richard Schifter or any other staff at the Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs.

After Bush took office, the NED had less contact with the State Department than it had under Reagan. Although the mandatory communication concerning NED projects continued, there is little evidence of communication concerning Latin America outside of this. In 1990 the “El Salvador amendment” put forward a supplemental authorisation

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<sup>329</sup> Shultz, George to Gillespie, Charles, “Letter of Instruction for Ambassador Gillespie” <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5Cfoiadocs%5C4f28.PDF>> (12<sup>th</sup> May 1988).

<sup>330</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 36, State Department Cables (1985).

<sup>331</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 34, Letter from Edward Vazquez (State Department Country Officer for Peru) to Gershman (12<sup>th</sup> May 1988).

<sup>332</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 34, Letter from George Vest (Director General of the Foreign Service) to Gershman, (27<sup>th</sup> April 1988).

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for emerging democracies – this amendment cut military aid to El Salvador and granted \$10 million for a democracy-building programme to be carried out “by the Secretary of State through an agreement with the NED”. However, the memorandum concerning this appropriation does not make clear exactly what this money was for and there is no mention of an extended relationship between the NED and the Secretary of State during the Bush administration.<sup>333</sup> In 1992 a state dinner was held to honour Patricio Aylwin, the recently elected President of Chile and long-time US ally, and the State Department included Gershman on the list of suggested guests.<sup>334</sup> Aside from this event, what non-mandatory communication there was between the NED and the State Department between 1989 and 1993 was primarily concerned, again, with the ex-Soviet bloc.

Like the NED, Freedom House had an amicable and productive relationship with the Reagan State Department. Throughout the 1980s the State Department regularly used Freedom House reports to inform its human rights reports and certification statements. Between 1982 and 1986 the State Department human rights reports for much of Latin America included some reference to the Freedom Survey’s ratings of countries.<sup>335</sup> Unlike the NED, Freedom House did work with the Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs and it appeared to have a good working relationship with Abrams, although there is little evidence of a similar relationship with Schifter. In a memorandum written to Thomas Enders, the then Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs, Abrams referred to Freedom House as a “responsible

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<sup>333</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box4, Folder 23, Memorandum concerning the El Salvador Amendment (17<sup>th</sup> May 1990).

<sup>334</sup> Pearson, W. R., “Suggested Guest List for State Dinner and Reception in Honor of Chilean President Patricio Aylwin Azocar” <[http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2011-05510SES/DOC\\_0C05122471/C05122471.pdf](http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/3-FY2014/F-2011-05510SES/DOC_0C05122471/C05122471.pdf)> (3<sup>rd</sup> April 1992).

<sup>335</sup> Digitised copies of the human rights reports can be found through the State Department FOIA Virtual Reading Room <<http://foia.state.gov/Search/results.aspx?searchText=%22Freedom+House%22&beginDate=19800101&endDate=19931231&publishedBeginDate=&publishedEndDate=&caseNumber=>>>.

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group” and cited its reports on Chile’s deteriorating human rights situation.<sup>336</sup> Sussman was regularly invited to attend meetings at the State Department; in 1982 he attended a meeting with those members of staff of the Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs charged with working with NGOs to clarify the administration’s position on human rights.<sup>337</sup> Until 1985 Sussman was sometimes also invited for personal meetings with Abrams to discuss the human rights situations in specific countries, for example in 1983 the two men met to discuss the situation in Uruguay.<sup>338</sup> The State Department valued Freedom House’s election monitoring reports and expressed its disappointment that Freedom House would not be present for the 1984 election in El Salvador, stating that it was the “only one to write useful reports”.<sup>339</sup> It even went so far as to offer transportation and security for one member of Freedom House staff to go to El Salvador for the election, an offer which Freedom House accepted.<sup>340</sup> Freedom House reports were regularly used as reference points for State Department documents in the later 1980s, particularly those concerning Chile and El Salvador. In 1987, Bruce McCole’s *El Salvador: Peaceful Revolution or Armed Struggle?* was used as the main source concerning the formation of the FMLN in a State Department report entitled *Financing Terrorism in El Salvador: The Secret Support Network for the FMLN*.<sup>341</sup> Although Freedom House regularly claimed that it would not take on case work, in 1983 it wrote to the State Department concerning the case of a Guatemalan man whose wife and children had been disappeared in 1982. Although there is no evidence of a resolution coming from the State Department regarding this case, the fact that Freedom House felt

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<sup>336</sup> Abrams, Elliott to Enders, Thomas, “Your Discussions of Certification with the GoC” <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C00005F4F.pdf>> (13<sup>th</sup> March 1982).

<sup>337</sup> FH Records, Folder 8, Box 37, Letter from Elliott Abrams to Sussman, (14<sup>th</sup> October 1982).

<sup>338</sup> FH Records, Folder 9, Box 37, Activity Report, (1983).

<sup>339</sup> FH Records, Folder 6, Box 23, Memorandum from Sussman to the Executive Committee, (20<sup>th</sup> March 1984).

<sup>340</sup> Ibid.

<sup>341</sup> Waller, Michael, *Financing Terrorism in El Salvador: The Secret Support Network for the FMLN*, <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5Celsalvad%5C5f70.PDF>> (4<sup>th</sup> June 1987).



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it could write to the Department regarding the individual cases of non-US citizens suggests that it believed its relationship with the Department was strong enough to lend weight to its appeal.

Under the Bush administration, direct contact between Freedom House and State Department staff, again, appears to have waned. Since the focus of the State Department under Bush shifted away from Latin America towards Eastern Europe and the Middle East, relations between the State Department and Freedom House, on issues relating to Latin America at least, became largely formulaic. What little contact did occur between the two concerning Latin America, centred on the civil war in El Salvador and, to a lesser extent, Cuba (due to the particular interests of Frank Calzon who ran Freedom House's Washington Office). Freedom House continued to provide relevant State Department personnel with its reports on the region throughout the early 1990s.<sup>342</sup> In late 1989, the State Department sought to engage Freedom House in the task of formulating reports concerning the situation in El Salvador.<sup>343</sup> It used the reports of Freedom House delegates concerning the 1991 municipal elections in El Salvador to calm the worries expressed by members of Congress about the human rights situation in the country.<sup>344</sup> Moreover, Freedom House's Washington Office continued to supply the State Department with information and invitations to meet individuals it brought to the United States. In 1991, for example, Calzon brought one of the individuals involved in smuggling tapes to Radio Martí (a US-sponsored independent Cuban radio station). Although the name of this individual is redacted in the State Department's reports, the documents make it clear that he was granted asylum in the United States and that in 1991 the State Department was considering allowing asylum for his wife and children

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<sup>342</sup> FH Records, Folder 15, Box 59, Freedom House Activities 1990 – 1991 (1991).

<sup>343</sup> San Salvador Embassy, "Telegram to USIA"

<<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5Celsalvad%5C5d76.PDF>> (7<sup>th</sup> December 1989).

<sup>344</sup> Mullins, Janet, Reply to a letter from Senator William Cohen

<<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5Celsalvad%5C4728.PDF>> (31<sup>st</sup> May 1991).

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as well.<sup>345</sup> As can be seen, although the Bush State Department was less involved with Latin American issues, Department personnel still saw Freedom House as a valuable asset. Its reports and contacts remained useful to the Department and, while the relationship became more one-sided in the 1990s, Freedom House was also able to make use of its State Department contacts to gather information and further its work.

While the NED and Freedom House enjoyed a great deal of contact with and respect from the Reagan State Department, but saw a reduction in Departmental engagement under Bush, for WOLA, the trend was reversed. WOLA's relationship with the State Department under Reagan was just as strained as its relationship with the Reagan White House. During the first Reagan administration WOLA sent regular reports and appeals to the State Department, both on its own and as part of coalitions. However, these were often met either with hostility or little response at all. In 1980, WOLA wrote to the State Department expressing concerns over US relations with Argentina, particularly its fear that Reagan would reverse the policy of pressuring the Argentine government about human rights abuses.<sup>346</sup> In the same year WOLA also wrote to the State Department in coalition with four other human rights groups and legal associations voicing concerns about the human rights situation in Chile.<sup>347</sup> Both of these appeals appear to have been ignored by the Department. There is no evidence that the State Department responded to either letter and there is no suggestion that it changed its policy regarding either country as a result. Despite the lack of interest in policy requests or discussion, the State Department did take some interest in WOLA's human rights reports, and did include information from WOLA investigation in its 1982 country

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<sup>345</sup> State Department, "Official Informal No. 54" <[http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/1-FY2012/F-2004-04716/DOC\\_0C18119019/C18119019.pdf](http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/1-FY2012/F-2004-04716/DOC_0C18119019/C18119019.pdf)> (13<sup>th</sup> July 1991).

<sup>346</sup> Sikkink, Kathryn, Letter to Warren Christopher, Deputy Secretary of State, <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CArgentina%5C0000AEC7.pdf>> (12<sup>th</sup> May 1980).

<sup>347</sup> Joint Statement concerning Chile <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C00005E30.pdf>> (11<sup>th</sup> September 1980).

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report on Chile.<sup>348</sup> In the same year, the Department also utilised a WOLA report concerning the treatment of prisoners in its human rights report for Uruguay.<sup>349</sup> What is interesting to note is the different reactions of the two embassies to the State Department's use of WOLA's work in country reports. While there was no reaction to the inclusion of the WOLA report from the embassy in Montevideo (which was under the control of an interim diplomat at this time), the Santiago embassy under James Theberge responded angrily, stating that it believed the inclusion of such reports to be "ill-advised and harmful".<sup>350</sup> The Santiago embassy felt that including private reports which contradicted its own reporting would undermine its work and "legitimize and strengthen those human rights organisations[...]who are better known for their consistent opposition to US foreign policy than for their determination to arrive at fair and balanced human rights judgements".<sup>351</sup> It is clear that some members of the Foreign Service took the view of Reagan and the White House, that WOLA was not a reliable source of information and that it was more concerned with undermining the US government than the proper execution of its work.

By the start of the second Reagan administration some of the hostility WOLA experienced from members of the State Department had eased. In 1985 a number of State Department staff agreed to speak at a three-day conference WOLA organised to discuss the human rights situation in Chile alongside staff of the Vicaría de Solidaridad and over 50 missionaries who had recently returned from the country.<sup>352</sup> Also around this time, the State Department began to acknowledge and respond to queries and issues

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<sup>348</sup> State Department, "1982 Human Rights Report: Chile" <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C0000618D.pdf>> (23<sup>rd</sup> December 1982).

<sup>349</sup> State Department, "1982 Human Rights Report" <[http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/1-FY2013/O-2011-03444ER2/DOC\\_0C17641961/C17641961.pdf](http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS/1-FY2013/O-2011-03444ER2/DOC_0C17641961/C17641961.pdf)> (27<sup>th</sup> December 1982).

<sup>350</sup> Santiago Embassy, "Annual Human Rights Report Inclusion of Judgements by Private Organisations" <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C0000619A.pdf>> (30<sup>th</sup> December 1982).

<sup>351</sup> Ibid.

<sup>352</sup> WOLA Records, Box 29, *Washington Office on Latin America: 1985 Annual Report* (1986).

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raised by WOLA. For example, in 1986 WOLA contacted the Department concerning the arrest and torture of a number of students in Chile and, in response, the Department cabled the embassy requesting any information they had concerning this incident.<sup>353</sup>

Although this suggests that the State Department was still unwilling to trust WOLA's information completely, it also indicates that it was taking information received from WOLA and other sources like it more seriously than it had during the early part of the 1980s. In 1986 WOLA organised and sponsored a delegation to Chile for Rep. Bruce Morrison which was planned with sizable input from the State Department. WOLA requested the embassy's assistance while the delegation was in Chile and the Department instructed the embassy to "provide all appropriate assistance".<sup>354</sup> However, the State Department's assistance was not provided without strings attached. It urged WOLA to include a meeting with the CDT on the schedule and "expressed hope" that meetings with party leaders would "include full spectrum of political views, such as conservative parties".<sup>355</sup> The Santiago embassy assisted WOLA again in 1988 when WOLA and the Catholic Institute for International Relations (CI-IR) took a delegation to Chile. Harry Barnes met the delegation personally and they were briefed by embassy staff upon arrival.<sup>356</sup> It is clear that WOLA's relationship with the Santiago embassy improved dramatically following the departure of Theberge. Under Barnes, WOLA developed a relationship with the Santiago embassy that was better and more productive than that it had cultivated with the US-based branch of the State Department. It would appear that under Reagan WOLA had more success in its dealings with embassy staff, particularly in the Santiago embassy, than with the State Department offices in

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<sup>353</sup> State Department, "Human Rights Inquiry Reported Arrest of 22 Students"  
<<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C000069D9.pdf>> (31<sup>st</sup> January 1986).

<sup>354</sup> State Department, "Travel to Chile of Representative Bruce Morrison"  
<<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C00006B61.pdf>> (21<sup>st</sup> March 1986).

<sup>355</sup> Ibid.

<sup>356</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Conditions for Chile's Plebiscite on Pinochet: A report based on a joint WOLA-CIIR delegation to Chile (September 1988).

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Washington. WOLA also had little or no contact with the Bureau for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. This represents a complete break from the high level of access WOLA had had to the Bureau when it was under the control of Patricia Derian.

Under Bush, WOLA regained its very productive working relationship with the State Department. In the early 1990s it regularly sent reports to the Department and Department staff often attended the seminars and discussions WOLA held in Washington.<sup>357</sup> WOLA's 1990 report entitled *El Salvador: Is Peace Possible?*, was widely distributed by the State Department to its staff in the San Salvador embassy and, in 1991, WOLA sent its *International Drug Policy Briefing Papers*, a periodic series of research and analysis concerning US drug policy, to a large proportion of State Department and congressional staff.<sup>358</sup> Moreover, during the 1990s, WOLA began to receive requests from the State Department (and other branches of the executive) to brief teams and staff concerning Latin American issues. For example, in 1991, it was called upon to work with the House Government Operations Committee to design studies on the impact of US military aid to Peru, Columbia and Bolivia.<sup>359</sup> WOLA briefed the three teams from the office of the Chief Administrative Officer and the State Department, who had carried out three studies previously, and provided them with contacts to individuals and organisations which could provide alternative views. In 1992, WOLA was called to give human rights training seminars in relation to Latin America. These were provided to a number of branches of government, including staff from the State Department, the Department of Defence and the School of the Americas.<sup>360</sup> This would suggest that WOLA had not only regained some of the ground

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<sup>357</sup> WOLA Records, Box 8, Meeting the Changing Challenges of Latin America Human Rights: A Report to the Scherman Foundation (1991-1992).

<sup>358</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934-3 (1991).

<sup>359</sup> Ibid.

<sup>360</sup> WOLA Records, Box 407, Human Rights Education and Training in US Policy Toward Latin America (16<sup>th</sup> June 1992).

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it lost under Reagan, but had also begun to take on something of an advisor status on certain issues as well. Furthermore, this improvement in feeling seems to have been mutual. During the Reagan years WOLA had often been critical of the State Department, particularly of its country and human rights reporting, but by 1991 it was praising the State Department for its reports concerning the human rights situation in Guatemala.<sup>361</sup> It would appear that the Bush administration's more conciliatory attitude and WOLA's decision to align itself more behind Washington policy led to a very fast improvement in relations between the two institutions.<sup>362</sup>

As can be seen, the State Department did have some kind of working relationship with all three organisations, although with WOLA this did not begin until 1985. Under Reagan, it worked closely with both the NED and Freedom House, exchanging information with the latter and taking an active interest in the programmes and decision-making processes of the former. While the State Department's interest in the NED was in part mandated by Congress, the relationship that developed between the two went beyond formality. Embassy staff throughout Latin America provided the NED with information and assistance and, in the United States, State Department officials such as Helman not only monitored NED project proposals, but also engaged with them, providing suggestions and advice to the NED Board. However, the NED relationship with the State Department was rather one-sided. The Department provided information and assistance to the NED, but the NED does not appear to have provided a great deal in return. By contrast, the relationship between Freedom House and the State Department formed around a reciprocal exchange of information. Throughout the 1980s, Freedom House delivered reports and, occasionally, briefings to the State Department while the

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<sup>361</sup> Guatemala Embassy, "Thirty Months in the Human Rights Trenches" <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5Cfoiadocs%5C5c5b.PDF>> (17<sup>th</sup> March 1992).

<sup>362</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política por los Derechos Humanos, la Democracia y la Justicia Social* (Washington: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006) pp. 64 – 65.

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Department provided them with assistance on the ground in Latin America. Freedom House was held in high regard by the State Department which sought out its election monitoring services and human rights reports, deeming them more reliable than those coming from WOLA or Amnesty International, with which the Department had more strained relations. Under Reagan, WOLA's interactions with the State Department often ended in hostilities, particularly concerning the human rights situation and US relations with Chile. Although the State Department did make use of some of WOLA's work in its human rights reports, the reaction from elements of the Foreign Service was hostile and led to the Department ceasing to include their work in such reports. The most productive relationship WOLA developed within the Reagan State Department was with Harry Barnes, who regularly assisted them in their work in Chile and, seemingly, was sympathetic to their cause. Perhaps one of the most interesting changes between the 1970s and the 1980s was the attitude of the Bureau of Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs to liberal human rights groups. In contrast to the Derian Bureau which had had an inclusive policy towards non-state actors, including WOLA and Freedom House, the Abrams Bureau almost completely cut WOLA off from policy-making, choosing instead to take Freedom House as its primary non-state source of information.

Under the Bush administration, the State Department generally appears to have stepped back from involvement with the NED. It is possible that, because the NED now had its own member of staff in the State Department, much of the communication between the two ceased to be written and, as a result, is simply inaccessible; but there is little evidence to suggest this was the case. Although relations between the NED and the State Department never turned hostile, with changes in the State Department's staff they do appear to have become more formulaic and closer to the type of relationship Congress envisioned when they laid down guidelines for the Department's monitoring of the NED. While the State Department maintained a strong relationship of information

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exchange with Freedom House under Bush, it became more one-sided with regards to Latin America. Freedom House received a great deal less from the State Department than they had in previous years while maintaining the quantity of information they passed the other way. That said, Freedom House maintained a good base of contacts and supporters within the Department, which aided them in their work in the early 1990s. Despite the State Department's increasing focus on the former Soviet Union, it was WOLA that really developed its relationship with the State Department under Bush, with a regular flow of information between the two becoming the norm. WOLA's slight political re-alignment under Wilde and the more conciliatory attitude of the new administration created the conditions for WOLA to become a respected and valued institution within the State Department.

### Congress

During the 1980s and 1990s, members of Congress on both sides of the political spectrum took a keen interest in human rights and democracy abroad. As it was a key part of the US foreign policy decision-making process, it was vital for non-state actors such as the three in question here to build relationships within Congress. Throughout this period, all three of the organisations in question here cultivated connections with individual members of Congress. Some members of Congress sat on the boards of the NED and Freedom House and WOLA assisted many members of Congress in travelling to Latin America on fact-finding missions. At the time of its founding, the NED had genuine bipartisan support within Congress, albeit from individuals with similar hawkish foreign policy outlooks. The NED's founding documents demanded that Congress take on oversight of the NED and, throughout the 1980s and 1990s required that the NED make annual reports to Congress.<sup>363</sup> In the early days of proposals for the

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<sup>363</sup> National Endowment for Democracy Act, Public Law 98 – 164 § 502, Stat 1039 (1983).



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NED's founding, it was suggested that its board should be appointed by the President with the approval of the Senate and should contain members of Congress. While the suggestion for the Board to be appointed by the President was not put into practice, between 1983 and 1993 there were always at least two members of Congress on the NED Board, one from each political party.<sup>364</sup> From 1983 Senator Chris Dodd (D-CT) and Congressman Dante Fascell (D-FL) sat on the board and they were replaced by Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN) and Congressman Stephen Solarz (D-NY) in 1992. Despite congressional representation on the NED board, it still proved contentious within Congress. The initial debates concerning the NED's founding were fraught with questions concerning the involvement of the NDI and NRI as core grantees.<sup>365</sup> Some members of the House were concerned that making these organisations core grantees of the NED came perilously close to the US government funding political parties and, as a result, Rep. Hank Brown (R-CO) put forward an amendment to the funding act to remove funding for these institutions.<sup>366</sup> This amendment narrowly passed and was disputed by the Senate, but it appears to have stood since the NED cited this as a restriction on its ability to assist in democratic processes abroad in its 1985 annual report.<sup>367</sup> There were several other attempts to defund the NED or to cut its budget during this period one of which succeeded but was rapidly repealed. Of the four attempts made to alter NED funding between 1985 and 1993, two were brought by Rep. John Conyers (D-MI) who sought to delete NED funding completely and two by Rep. Paul Kanjorski (D-PA) both of which sought to significantly reduce its funds.<sup>368</sup>

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<sup>364</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 24, The National Endowment for Democracy: Revised Model (18<sup>th</sup> March 1983).

<sup>365</sup> *US House Journal*, 98<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> session, 3<sup>rd</sup> January 1983, p. 651.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>367</sup> National Endowment for Democracy, *Annual Report 1985*, Library of Congress JC421.N37a (1985).

<sup>368</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 13, Folder 21, List of Congressional votes on NED funding.

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These attempts to abolish NED funding brought out a number of members of Congress in support of the NED. In 1984 Reps. Fascell and Solarz, in conjunction with Representatives Benjamin Gilman (R-NY), William Broomfield (R-MI) Michael Barnes (D-MD) and Dan Mica (D-FL) wrote to their fellow Congressmen attempting to “correct misrepresentations about the NED”. They directly addressed the question of party funding, stating that the NED was “forbidden from supplying funds to candidates for public office” and explaining why the NED would not be subject to Freedom of Information requests.<sup>369</sup> Moreover, Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D-NY) issued a statement in 1985 in support of the NED receiving its full funding. However, the NED had its vocal critics too; after his initial concern about the NED’s funding of party affiliated institutions, Rep. Brown continued to question NED policy and affairs throughout this period. In 1986 he wrote a letter to Gershman informing him of concern in Congress over the fact that many NED Board members were also affiliated with its core grantees.<sup>370</sup> This complaint resulted in a bill being put to the House to stop the NED from funding any organisation which had had an employee on the NED Board in the previous two years.<sup>371</sup> Although this particular bill never passed, it gives an indication of the sort of concerns members of Congress had about NED operating procedure. In 1984, the NED was involved in a scandal concerning its alleged funding of a military backed candidate. In reaction to this scandal some members of Congress issued a statement claiming that the NED was a “disruptive new force that would complicate relations with foreign countries.”<sup>372</sup>

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<sup>369</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 6, Letter from Reps. Fascell, Solarz, Gilman, Broomfield, Barnes and Mica to the House of Representatives (7<sup>th</sup> August 1984).

<sup>370</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 20, Letter from Hank Brown to Gershman (5<sup>th</sup> February 1986).

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

<sup>372</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 10, Memorandum from Gershman to the Board of Directors (22<sup>nd</sup> February 1985).

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While battles over funding made up a large part of the congressional debate concerning the NED, there were reciprocal working relationships to be found as well. During this time, the NED informed members of Congress about its project decisions, often sending members reports and asking for assistance with lobbying in Congress. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the NED had extensive relationships with Senators Bill Bradley and John McCain, both of whom defended the NED within Congress on a number of occasions. In 1989 McCain and Sen. Bob Graham wrote to Secretary of State James Baker voicing support for additional funding for the NED.<sup>373</sup> Members of Congress also sent the NED proposals for projects that had been sent to them by organisations on the ground or other US non-state actors. In 1985 Rep. John LaFalce sent the NED a joint proposal from SUNY and the Universidad de los Andes for a research project entitled “Democracy in Latin America: The Colombian Case”.<sup>374</sup> The NED also received a letter of support for this project from Senator Alfonse D’Amato.<sup>375</sup> As a result of these recommendations, the NED chose to fund the project suggesting that either it valued the suggestions of these members of Congress, or that it was keen to keep on good terms with them. The NED maintained this kind of reciprocal relationship with several members of Congress. In 1987, members of Congress wrote to the NED concerning the harassment of Paraguay’s Radio Nanduti. The NED responded to this with a letter stating that it had approved a grant to assist the station.<sup>376</sup> Throughout this period, members of Congress wrote to the NED’s Board asking for special considerations for specific projects requesting NED funding, many of which the NED

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<sup>373</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 26, Letter from John McCain and Bob Graham to James Baker, (6<sup>th</sup> July 1989).

<sup>374</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 13, Letter from John LaFalce to Gershman, (22<sup>nd</sup> July 1985).

<sup>375</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 14, Letter from Alfonse D’Amato to Gershman (8<sup>th</sup> August 1985).

<sup>376</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 4, Folder 6, Letters from Gershman to various members of Congress, (10<sup>th</sup> February 1987).

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eventually gave grants to.<sup>377</sup> Perhaps the most obvious illustration of Congressional trust in the NED's abilities was the special appropriations for Chile and Nicaragua which gave the NED money from the USAID budgets for democracy promotion in these countries. However, within the NED there was contention concerning this display of Congressional confidence as the board found USAID bureaucracy burdensome and struggled to deal with the backlash against appropriation funding in on the ground.<sup>378</sup>

Freedom House had a strong relationship of information exchange with Congress during this period. In a memorandum to Kampelman and Riehm, Sussman stated that the purpose of the Central America Centre would be to "put ideas into the marketplace that [could] be taken up by Congress or the Administration".<sup>379</sup> How much importance Freedom House attached to its relationship with Congress is evident in its creation of a Washington office in 1987 in order to "monitor congressional activity" and identify congressional staffers who were interested in its work.<sup>380</sup> Although Congress does appear to have valued Freedom House's work, their relationship was often fraught with tensions. In 1983 Freedom House defended the Democracy Project against Rep. Joel Pritchard's (R-WA) claim that the idea made him nervous, stating that the United States had to have a role in democracy promotion in the world.<sup>381</sup> In an interesting insight into its attitude about the relationship between US governmental branches, Freedom House criticised Congress for not cooperating with the Executive branch enough, particularly in relation to Central America.<sup>382</sup> In some cases these clashes were very public. For example, in 1983, McColm went on the radio to debate the issue of

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<sup>377</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 7, Letters between Gershman and members of Congress (various).

<sup>378</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 4, Memorandum from Gershman to the Board of Directors concerning NED/AID Relationship (29<sup>th</sup> May 1990).

<sup>379</sup> FH Records, Box 15, Folder 10, Memorandum from Sussman to Kampelman and Riehm, (18<sup>th</sup> January 1985).

<sup>380</sup> FH Records, Box 3, Folder 18, Memorandum to John Riehm, (9<sup>th</sup> June 1987).

<sup>381</sup> FH Records, Box 51, Folder 1, Letter from Gastil to Rep. Joel Pritchard, (25<sup>th</sup> February 1983).

<sup>382</sup> FH Records, Box 7, Folder 3, Open Letter from Freedom House to 1980 Presidential Candidates (1980).

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continued aid to El Salvador with Rep. Solarz. McColm stated that he wanted aid to be conditional on improvements in human rights and that the certification process had been trivialised by the human rights lobby and Congress.<sup>383</sup> In 1984, Freedom House produced a document of recommendations for El Salvador in which it encouraged Congress to provide funding for El Salvador's land reform policies or, at least, issue a statement acknowledging the legitimacy of the reforms.<sup>384</sup> Freedom House also clashed with Congress concerning congressional attempts to cut funding for the NED. It drafted a declaration of support for the NED, urging Congress not only to keep the NED budget as it stood, but to increase it to \$35 million.<sup>385</sup> This request was not acknowledged by Congress and the NED's budget did not change a great deal during the 1980s.

Although Freedom House did clash with Congress on some occasions, it maintained very close relationships with many individual members of Congress and its work was well respected by Congress as a whole. Senator Paul Douglas (D-IL) gifted Freedom House a \$500 donation in his will in 1983, suggesting that he was supportive of the work Freedom House was doing and, potentially, indicated a strong relationship between the two prior to his death.<sup>386</sup> Freedom House staff were regularly called to testify before Congress, particularly before Senate committees. In 1982, McColm was called to testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee concerning the mistreatment of Miskito Indians in Nicaragua. Moreover, he was also invited to meetings with Senators Jesse Helms (R-NC), Paul Tsongas (D-MA), Claiborne Pell (D-RI) and Richard Lugar (R-IN) to explain the situation.<sup>387</sup> Freedom House testified before Congress repeatedly concerning the situation in El Salvador. As a result of this

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<sup>383</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 7, *Memo: To Members* (March 1983).

<sup>384</sup> FH Records, Box 23, Folder 6, Freedom House Observations and Recommendations for El Salvador (1984).

<sup>385</sup> FH Records, Box 74, Folder 2, Draft Declaration in Support of the National Endowment for Democracy (198?).

<sup>386</sup> FH Records, Box 11, Folder 8, Letter from Ned Bandler to Sussman, (30<sup>th</sup> December 1983).

<sup>387</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 7, *Memo: To Members* (January/February 1982).

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testimony and its work with the media, it claimed that it “played a significant role in shaping the discussion on El Salvador”.<sup>388</sup> Given the regularity with which Freedom House was called in to Congress in an advisory role, it certainly seems to have been a highly respected and well used source of information concerning the country. Later in the decade, Freedom House staff even took on advisory roles with Senator Dodd asking McColm to sit on the Senate monitoring committee for the Guatemalan peace process.<sup>389</sup> Freedom House’s inclusion on committees as a consultant suggests that members of Congress held the organisation in high regard. Moreover, Freedom House organised meetings and receptions for congressional staff and members of Congress to enable them to meet visitors from Latin America and hear their viewpoints.<sup>390</sup> By the 1990s, Freedom House had built up strong relationships of information exchange within both the House and Senate. According to its activity reports, it routinely distributed literature and reports to over 75 congressional offices and held regular briefing meetings with Senators Bob Dole (R-KS), Ted Stevens (R-AK), George Mitchell (D-ME), Connie Mack (R-FL), Graham and Pell and around thirteen Representatives through the Freedom House Washington Office.<sup>391</sup> However, it must be said that the majority of the events organised for Congress by the Washington office of Freedom House centred on Cuba due to the personal interests of Frank Calzon who led the Washington office.

Like Freedom House, WOLA had strong relationships with members of Congress. However, unlike the NED and Freedom House, WOLA’s congressional relationships were its most consistent and, in many ways, vital to its work and its ability to achieve its aims.<sup>392</sup> WOLA saw Congress as one of its three “major audiences”, had a

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<sup>388</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 1, Proposal for the Creation of a Centre for Caribbean and Central American Studies at Freedom House (198?).

<sup>389</sup> FH Records, Box 18, Folder 3, Memorandum from Sussman to Riehm, (15<sup>th</sup> September 1987).

<sup>390</sup> FH Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Letter to Freedom House Board Members from McColm (6<sup>th</sup> January 1988).

<sup>391</sup> FH Records, Box 59, Folder 15, Freedom House Activities 1990-1991 (1991).

<sup>392</sup> WOLA Records, Box 15, Program Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America: Prepared for the Ford Foundation by Carlos Chipoco and Lars Schoultz (undated).

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strong core following within Congress throughout the period and, by the 1990s, Congress more generally had developed a level of respect for its work.<sup>393</sup> Many of those who supported WOLA in Congress during this period had been doing so since its founding in the 1970s. In the 1970s much of WOLA's work had concerned Chile and it had developed its network of support partially through assisting members of Congress and their staff to travel to Chile to assess the human rights situation for themselves. In 1976, WOLA took Rep. Tom Harkin to Chile which began a long-running relationship between the two.<sup>394</sup> When WOLA published its report on El Salvador in 1990, it passed the report to (then) Sen. Harkin who distributed it to his colleagues in the House and Senate.<sup>395</sup> In 1983, Sen. Ted Kennedy (D-MA) praised WOLA in a speech as an excellent source of information and assistance in the cause of returning democracy to Chile. He stated that WOLA played an "indispensable role...in educating Congress and the country to the ongoing crisis in human rights".<sup>396</sup> Moreover, WOLA provided Sens. Kennedy, Ted Weiss (D-NY) and David Bonior (D-MI) with information throughout their attempts to pass a congressional resolution denying aid to Chile until it had improved its human rights record. WOLA also developed a strong relationship with Rep. Bruce Morrison (D-CT) after assisting him with a trip to Chile. When WOLA took a delegation to Chile in 1988 it included a member of Rep. Tom Lantos' (D-CA) staff.<sup>397</sup> WOLA also entreated members of Congress to write letters to the Pinochet government concerning specific human rights cases, such as its attempt to fight the barring of Judge René García Villegas from the bar.<sup>398</sup>

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<sup>393</sup> Ibid.

<sup>394</sup> WOLA Records, Conference Report: Chile on a Path to Change (1986).

<sup>395</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934-3, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1990 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 1991 (1991).

<sup>396</sup> WOLA Records, Box 1, Chile: Ten Years and Beyond – the Proceedings of a Conference Co-sponsored by the Washington Office on Latin America and the Letelier-Moffitt Memorial Fund for Human Rights (15<sup>th</sup> September 1983).

<sup>397</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Conditions for Chile's Plebiscite: A Report Based on a Joint WOLA-CIIR Delegation to Chile (1988).

<sup>398</sup> WOLA Records, Box 67, Assorted memorandums to members of Congress (undated).

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Unlike Freedom House and the NED, WOLA's relationship with Congress was largely reciprocal. While it passed information to Congress concerning the situation on the ground in Latin America, members of Congress (particularly Ted Weiss) in turn passed information about what was being discussed in Congress for WOLA to distribute to its beneficiaries in Latin America.<sup>399</sup> WOLA regularly organised meetings and seminars with Latin American politicians, dissidents, victims of abuse and members of civil society organisations which were attended mostly by members of Congress and their staff. In 1984 it organised a delegation to Nicaragua containing members of Congress from both parties, which resulted in a series of seminars on US military involvement in Nicaragua. These seminars were attended by around 100 individuals over half of which were Congressional staff.<sup>400</sup> WOLA ran a similar series of seminars again in 1990, sponsoring visits from Nicaraguan politicians from across the political spectrum. Moreover, at this time, WOLA successfully lobbied Congress for statements of concern to be made concerning Nicaragua's human rights situation and the need for greater civilian control of the security forces.<sup>401</sup> During the 1980s and 1990s WOLA's work was regularly used in congressional reports and WOLA staff often testified in congressional hearings, particularly during the Bush era. In 1989, Wilde testified before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs pushing for an end to US Contra aid and requesting a normalisation of diplomatic relations with Nicaragua.<sup>402</sup> Between 1983 and 1993, WOLA was called to testify before Congressional hearings on at least eight occasions concerning issues as diverse as the Administration of Justice Program and US drugs policy. While it would appear that WOLA had a very strong relationship with

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<sup>399</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Assorted memorandums and letters from members of Congress to WOLA (various).

<sup>400</sup> WOLA Records, Box 12, Letter from Eldridge to the Bydale Foundation, (27<sup>th</sup> November 1984).

<sup>401</sup> WOLA Records, Box 8, Meeting the Changing Challenges of Latin America Human Rights: A Report to the Scherman Foundation, (1991).

<sup>402</sup> WOLA Records, Box 25, Prepared Testimony of Alexander Wilde to the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs of the House Committee on Foreign Affairs, (9<sup>th</sup> March 1989).



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Congress between 1980 and 1993, it must be noted that, with one stated exception, all the members of Congress who worked closely with WOLA were Democrats. The Republicans within Congress were, apparently, either indifferent to WOLA or accepting of the information it provided but did not support its work enough to want to offer assistance. Some were even outwardly hostile towards WOLA. For example, in a letter to Rep. Morrison, Rep. Robert Dornan (R-CA) wrote about his displeasure at WOLA's involvement with a conference held by the Third World Debt Caucus. In this letter he referred to WOLA as part of the "pro-Castro lobby" and accused them of being biased and an unreliable source of information.<sup>403</sup> This was not an uncommon attitude among Republicans within Congress, particularly those who counted themselves as supporters of Freedom House or the NED.

As can be seen all three of these groups had both supporters and detractors within Congress. While the NED and WOLA had very vocal antagonists in Congress, Freedom House was the least divisive of the three and, overall, WOLA's relationship with Congress was one of its most productive. Although Freedom House had disagreements with Congress and with specific members of Congress, it never experienced the level of hostility from individual members of Congress that WOLA and the NED faced. It is clear that the NED had majority support in Congress in the early 1980s, since its founding Act passed with a sizable majority; however, even the original establishment of the organisation faced opposition from traditionalists such as Rep. Brown who feared the precedent that might be set by the Congressional funding of party affiliated organisations. The majority of the opposition the NED encountered from the US government during this time came from Congress, most of it in the form of attempts to reduce or delete NED funding.

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<sup>403</sup> WOLA Records, Box 40, Letter from Robert Dornan to Bruce Morrison (15<sup>th</sup> June 1988).

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By contrast, both WOLA and Freedom House had much more equal relationships with Congress and, in both cases, these relationships were mostly based around information exchange. Both Freedom House and WOLA provided members of Congress with reports concerning human rights abuses and political issues within Latin America and sought to keep Congress informed about those issues they deemed important. Staff from these organisations were regularly called to testify before Congressional committees and provided individuals from Latin America to brief members or, in the case of WOLA to testify in hearings. Although, unlike WOLA, Freedom House did not appear to provoke any real direct hostility, it also was not interested in and did not develop the kind of reciprocal information exchange WOLA achieved. Members of Congress do not appear to have supplied Freedom House with information concerning congressional affairs or, particularly, seek to help it in its work. In this, WOLA cultivated a small, but tight-knit, group of Democratic supporters within Congress who shared information fairly freely for WOLA to pass on to contacts in Latin America and helped it lobby within Congress and table issues it saw as important. While it is possible that Freedom House did not seek such a relationship as it did not see itself as being part of a wider network of information exchange with organisations in Latin America, it would be safe to assume that its inability to develop relationships as close as those developed by WOLA would have hindered its ability to act as effectively in its lobbying attempts. As a result of WOLA's loss of access to other branches of the US government, its relationship with Congress during this period became even more important as one of its only sources of information concerning the US policy-making process.

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### Conclusions

With the arrival of the Reagan administration, the executive branch's willingness to work and engage with non-state actors changed significantly. Those human rights groups of the 1970s that had gained influence during the Carter years were suddenly largely shut off from the executive and their work was replaced by that of the neo-conservative human rights movement. Under both Reagan and Bush the White House did not really involve itself with non-state actors. Although Reagan provided some personal support to the NED and both administrations made some use of the work of Freedom House, neither White House really engaged these organisations in a relationship either of information exchange or practical assistance. This could have been because the administrations wished to be free to pursue their own agendas without interference from non-state actors or because such organisations simply felt the White House was not the branch of government best placed to provide them with assistance. Despite Reagan's vocal support for the NED and the fact that he clearly saw it as an important part of his foreign policy legacy, actual contact between it and the Reagan White House was comparatively rare. Although their relationship was changeable, Freedom House appeared to have a closer relationship with the White House than the NED had. By contrast, WOLA's left-leaning views and regular criticism of the Reagan White House for undermining Congress meant that it was, for the most part, either excluded from the White House network completely or met with great hostility for much of the 1980s. With the election of Bush contact between the White House and the all three organisations regarding Latin American issues became rare. Between 1989 and 1993, the White House had almost no contact with either the NED or Freedom House concerning Latin American issues. Although it continued to oversee the NED through its annual reporting, for the most part this was the extent of the contact between the two institutions. While WOLA continued to be critical of Bush administration policy in the

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region, its own realignment under Wilde and the more conciliatory nature of the Bush administration more generally meant that it was no longer met with active hostility.

Although it too did not have much engagement with the Bush White House, it was no longer persona non grata. The lack of communication between the White House and these three organisations is not, perhaps, surprising. Although the White House was an important part of the foreign policy-making process, for organisations seeking to influence government policy and organise projects abroad good relationships with the State Department and Congress were far more important. Carter may have opened the White House up to more contact with non-state actors concerning human rights, but even in the 1970s, direct communication with the President's offices was limited.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s the NED and Freedom House developed strong reciprocal relationships of information exchange and practical assistance with the State Department. Although the NED had the terms of part of its relationship with the Department dictated by Congress, in the 1980s at least, it went beyond this, developing a strong relationship with Gerald Helman which continued until he left his position in 1991. After the departure of Helman, the NED's relationship with the State Department appears to have become more formulaic. WOLA struggled in its dealings with the State Department during the first Reagan administration but, during the second Reagan administration, it began to cultivate more productive working relationships with State Department staff within the United States and, by the Bush administration, were seen as a reliable source of information by the State Department. Only Freedom House had a consistently stable relationship with the State Department. Possibly because it had been developing this relationship since the 1940s it was already well respected within the Department by the 1980s and, since it was politically in favour during the Reagan and Bush administrations, remained so throughout both the period.

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When it came to Congress, despite a great deal of initial support, the NED struggled to maintain a working relationship throughout the period. Although it clearly had a strong base of support within Congress, the majority of the attacks on it also emanated from Congress. Regular, almost yearly, attempts to defund the NED came not only from members ideologically opposed to it, but also constitutional traditionalists and members with practical worries about the proportion of the budget being sent abroad. In fact, the power Congress held over the NED, made this relationship a very challenging one. The NED needed Congress in order to continue performing its function, but it was also consistently forced to fight against attacks from those members who were less than favourable towards its practices. In some ways, this compromised the NED's position as an independent actor as it was unable to negotiate with Congress or engage in programmes with members of Congress on an equal footing. By contrast, both Freedom House and WOLA cultivated and maintained strong relationships with members of Congress. Both organisations established themselves as reliable sources of information for members seeking to understand or put forward bills concerning Latin American issues. Both were successful in developing groups of supporters within Congress which they could count on to put forward policy they suggested or draw attention to their reports and briefs in debates. However, it must be said that only Freedom House really successfully gained support from members of Congress from both parties which gave it a powerful advantage when it came to putting forward its policy suggestions. While WOLA's supporters within Congress were very dedicated and often vocal, they were almost all Democrats which, particularly in the Senate, meant that WOLA struggled to get its policy suggestions and information to a wide audience until the 1990s. That said, during this period Congress was WOLA's main access route to the Washington foreign policy community and the fact that it had such a

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strong support network within Congress was vital to its survival particularly during the Reagan years.

According to Keck and Sikkink, in order for relationships between non-state and state actors to be effective they had to be reciprocal. While the NED was given a great deal of assistance by the State Department, it gave very little back, perhaps due to its privileged position as a Congressional creation. By contrast, Freedom House and WOLA had to work for the assistance they received from the State Department. Reports, information and contacts were all passed from these organisations to the State Department and, in exchange, the Department assisted them in practical matters, such as arranging trips and delegations to Latin America, and with information about US policy issues. Similarly within Congress, possibly because of the balance of power involved in the relationship, the NED relied on Congress to provide its budget and support it while providing almost nothing in return. In the case of Freedom House its relationship with Congress was largely one-sided with it providing members of Congress with information and reports while never really receiving anything in return. By contrast, WOLA had a two-way relationship with its contacts in Congress with information being passed freely between the two. WOLA's reciprocal relationship with Congress made it considerably more effective when working with organisations in Latin America since it was able to help them with knowledge about what was happening in Washington as well as taking their concerns to Congress.

Overall, relations between these organisations and the US government during this period were mixed and often relied heavily on individuals. People such as Gerald Helman and Harry Barnes allowed the formulation of deep relationships between organisations which did not always outlast them when they left their positions. Within Congress all three organisations developed their own groups of supporters (which sometimes overlapped in the case of the NED and Freedom House) on whom they could

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rely for information dissemination and practical assistance. Similarly, within the organisations themselves, the right individuals in the right positions could open doors that were unavailable previously. For example, Bruce McColm's appointment to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights opened up a space for Freedom House within the White House and State Department networks which had previously been closed to them. In the case of WOLA, Alex Wilde's willingness to realign the organisation behind Washington policies allowed WOLA access to higher levels of US government and, as a result, a greater audience for its work. However, as is often the case with non-state actors of this type, relationships with the state could be a double-edged sword. Although they were clearly necessary for these organisations to achieve their aims, there was a fine line between these relations being perceived on the ground in Latin America and among their US colleagues as necessary working relationships and co-option by government forces.

Chapter 4 – Working Networks: NED, Freedom House, WOLA and the Third Sector

In addition to working relationships with the US government, the NED, Freedom House and WOLA also needed to maintain some kind of working relationship with their peers. According to Keck and Sikkink, effective advocacy networks involved international NGOs as well as activists from the target countries.<sup>404</sup> The ability to collaborate with other international non-state actors allowed these organisations to pool their resources and work on larger projects. Moreover, collaborative efforts between non-state actors from both Latin America and the United States had the potential to give these organisations more legitimacy in their relationships with the US government and in the public perception of their work. Strong working relationships with Latin American non-state actors, for example, had the potential to lend credibility to these organisations' claims of understanding and providing accurate information on Latin American issues.<sup>405</sup> These relationships with organisations and individuals on the ground were what enabled human rights movements to be truly transnational. For non-state actors, particularly those engaged with human rights, transnationality was deemed essential for the effective gathering of information and testimony and the provision of assistance. As will be shown, unlike the human rights movement of the 1970s, the new human rights movement was not that transnational in nature. Where WOLA had an extensive network of contacts in Latin America, the NED intentionally kept its Latin American beneficiaries at arm's length and what little contact Freedom House had was primarily with Latin American governments or groups which supported the US world-view. This

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<sup>404</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders: Advocacy Networks in International Politics* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998) p. 28.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid* pp. 12 – 13.



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chapter will explore the relationships between the three organisations in question, their US-based colleagues and their Latin American counterparts.

### Other US Non-State Actors

All three of these organisations exchanged information, collaborated or, in the case of the NED, funded other international non-state actors during this period. However it was the NED which had the most consistent and formalised relationship with other organisations, as laid down by the NED Act. As mentioned in earlier chapters, the NED was required to channel grants to Latin American democratic organisations primarily through its four core grantees and sometimes through other US-based non-state organisations. This system gave the NED a unique relationship with its core grantees which were simultaneously independent organisations and also inextricably linked to the NED.<sup>406</sup> Indeed, these four organisations, the NDI, NRI, FTUI and CIPE, were created specifically to act as middle-men for NED funding. The core grantees would propose on-the-ground projects to the NED board (on which their members often sat) for approval and would then, essentially, act as administrators for NED funding for these projects.

In 1986 the NED undertook a review of its grant-making policy and its grantee relationships. In this review, it was stated that the four core grantees had a mandate to carry out programmes in their respective sectors (labour, business and party politics) and that it was the staff of the core grantees who had responsibility for programme development and the preparation of proposals for consideration by the NED board.<sup>407</sup> Around 75% of the NED's budget was given to its core grantees with the majority of

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<sup>406</sup> LoC, The National Endowment for Democracy and their Core Grantees: Hearing before the Subcommittee on International Operations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs House of Representatives, 101st Congress Second Session, (July 19, 1990) D606105.

<sup>407</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 7, Folder 1, NED Grants Policy, (7<sup>th</sup> March 1986).

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that being granted to the FTUI and CIPE.<sup>408</sup> Although all grantees, both core and otherwise, were required to monitor and administer the programmes for which they received grants, the NED provided additional funding for any significant administrative costs its core grantees incurred in this process.<sup>409</sup> This tied the core grantees very closely to the NED by making it less lucrative for these organisations to seek funding elsewhere to carry out their projects, since providing additional funding to cover costs was not standard procedure for most foundations. In 1990, a time when the independence of the NED board and, indeed of individual board members was coming into question, the Congressional Subcommittee for International Operations held a hearing concerning the relationship between the NED and its core grantees. This hearing focused on how the core grantees carried out their mandate and operated their programmes as well as on their relationship with the NED.<sup>410</sup> Directors of all four core grantees testified before Congress and all of them were overwhelmingly positive about their relationships with the NED, although none of them went into great detail about what exactly these relationships entailed and the Subcommittee does not appear to have pushed this enquiry. This would suggest that, regardless of the actual state of the relationship between the NED and its core grantees, these four organisations felt that it was better to be a core grantee of the NED than to risk Congress dismantling the system that was in place by voicing concerns about how the NED handled its relationships with them.

For the most part, these groups did have amicable working relationships with the NED, but it did face tensions in its relationships with both CIPE and the NDI. In 1988, Edward Donley, the Chairman of CIPE, wrote a letter to William Brock registering his

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<sup>408</sup> House of Representatives, Subcommittee for International Operations of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, *The National Endowment for Democracies and their Core Grantees* Hearing, 19<sup>th</sup> July 1990, Washington, Government Printing Office, (1990) p. 68.

<sup>409</sup> Ibid.

<sup>410</sup> Ibid

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concerns about the NED taking the Congressional appropriation for Chile. In the letter he stated that the appropriation had made CIPE grantees less willing to take CIPE funds because they came from the NED and urged the NED not to accept further appropriations.<sup>411</sup> Given that in 1989, the NED received another appropriation from Congress for work in Nicaragua, it would seem that it did not take this suggestion on board. However, it must also be mentioned that there were also no further complaints from CIPE concerning congressional appropriations or any evidence of further animosity between the two organisations, suggesting that either CIPE came to terms with the NED's policy on appropriations, or it felt that attempting to register the complaint again was pointless. Aside from this complaint, the relationship between the NED and CIPE was mostly amicable. By contrast, the NED's relationship with the NDI was fraught with tensions during the late 1980s. It seems that the NED and the NDI had some irreconcilable differences both of political beliefs and in conception of what the relationship between the two should look like. In September 1988, Brian Atwood, Director of the NDI, wrote a letter to Gershman accusing the NED of not showing confidence in the NDI and of not being concerned about what happened to taxpayers' money once it left NED coffers.<sup>412</sup> This letter was written in response to accusations Gershman made about Atwood and the NDI. He claimed that the NDI had nothing but a "rubber-stamp board" which agreed with whatever Atwood presented to them. Gershman had also accused the NDI of being "excessively political" and not caring enough about development issues.<sup>413</sup> In response to this accusation, Atwood stated that the NDI "[wanted] to represent the Democratic Party overseas, not the NED".<sup>414</sup>

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<sup>411</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 7, Folder 27, Letter from Edward Donley to William Brock, (29<sup>th</sup> April 1988).

<sup>412</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 8, Folder 10, Letter from Brian Atwood to Gershman (8<sup>th</sup> September 1988).

<sup>413</sup> Ibid.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid.

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Although there is no recorded response by Gershman to this letter, the exchange suggests that there was both procedural tensions between the two institutions and political ones. Yet, in the 1990 congressional hearing concerning the NED's relationship with its grantees, Atwood was complimentary of the relationship stating that the NED "[respected their] independence as an organisation and [oversaw] activities appropriately".<sup>415</sup> This implies either that some effort had been made to improve relations, or that the NDI saw their position as an NED grantee as more important than the disagreements they had.

The complaints Gershman made about the NDI had, in fact, been some of the regular accusations made against the NED. Indeed, questions about the composition of the NED board had been common in Congress in the mid-1980s. In 1986, Rep. Hank Brown wrote a letter to Gershman stating that members of Congress had raised concerns about the fact that many of the members of the NED board were affiliated to its core grantees – thus making the NED board itself little more than what it had accused the NDI's board of being.<sup>416</sup> While, in the case of the other three core grantees, relations between them and the NED were cordial, this dispute is indicative of the peculiar circumstances under which the NED and its core grantees operated. The fact that the NED board did have a number of members who were either affiliated with or board members of its core grantees would suggest that the relationship between the NED and its core grantees was symbiotic, with little to suggest that either the grantees were autonomous of the NED or that the NED was entirely autonomous of its core grantees. Moreover, this arrangement was typical of the almost complete lack of transparency with which the NED operated. This relationship became a little less unclear in 1990 as the original NED Board of Directors began to be replaced by new board members. In

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<sup>415</sup> Ibid, p. 52.

<sup>416</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 20, Letter from Rep. Hank Brown to Gershman (5<sup>th</sup> February 1986).

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1992, Congress amended the NED Act to prevent anyone affiliated with an organisation which received more than 5% of the NED program fund from sitting on the NED board; as a result, by 1993 when the turnover in board members was complete, there were no representatives of the NED's core grantees on its board.<sup>417</sup>

In addition to its mandated relationships with its core grantees, the NED also released some grants to other US-based organisations including Freedom House, PRODEMCA, and Delphi International.<sup>418</sup> Of the non-core grantees, Delphi was the largest receiver of grants from the NED and had been a large-scale contractor for both USIA and USAID since the early 1980s.<sup>419</sup> During this period, Delphi administered a large number of NED grants for Latin America. Most notably it took over the grant for *La Prensa* in Nicaragua after PRODEMCA was discredited for its involvement with the Contra movement. It also administered several grants for independent radio stations throughout the region and grants for the Conciencia women's movements in Argentina and Nicaragua.<sup>420</sup> These were groups focused on increasing participation in politics, particularly women's participation. Indeed, Delphi managed most of the Latin American grants relating to communications media, youth and women's groups. For the most part, the NED's relationship with Delphi was little more than a functional working relationship. There is little in the NED's own archive by way of correspondence with Delphi or any suggestion that this relationship was anything other than amicable. Indeed, the fact that Delphi was asked to take over the *La Prensa* grant in the late 1980s, suggests that the NED was confident in Delphi's ability to manage grants effectively and without issue. Despite one of Delphi's programme co-ordinators having

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<sup>417</sup> David Lowe, "Idea to Reality: NED at 50" <<http://www.ned.org/about/history>> (accessed 13/01/2015).

<sup>418</sup> The relationships between the NED, WOLA and Freedom House will be discussed in greater detail later in the chapter (pp. 179-184).

<sup>419</sup> Robinson, William, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention and Hegemony* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p. 187.

<sup>420</sup> See Loc, NED Annual Reports from 1986 to 1992 (LoC, JC421.N37a).

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been involved with the Iran-Contra Scandal, the NED does not appear to have ever received any criticism for its relationship with Delphi. Henry Quintero had previously run the Institute of North-South Issues (INSI) which had been exposed as one of Oliver North's front groups, forming part of the covert network used to channel funds to the Contras.<sup>421</sup> It was discovered that the INSI had been engaged in laundering funds for the Contra forces while it was simultaneously managing a \$493,000 grant from the NED for projects in the Caribbean.<sup>422</sup> Although in 1987, the NED board did vote to remove all unspent funds from the INSI, there is no suggestion that the move of Quintero to a programme management role at Delphi raised any questions about the close relationship between the two organisations.<sup>423</sup> Even the scandal attached to the defunding of the INSI only appears to have been covered by two US newspapers.<sup>424</sup> This is perhaps even more surprising given that this was not the first time the NED had been associated with the Contras and Contra-related scandals.

In 1986, PRODEMCA came under attack for having taken out pro-Contra adverts in a newspaper, urging support for military assistance to the Contra forces.<sup>425</sup> While this incident brought its own share of criticism, in 1987 PRODEMCA came under investigation for having taken funds from the National Endowment for the Preservation of Liberty (NEPL), another organisation accused of being a front in the Iran-Contra scandal, and the reaction to this within Congress brought about the end of

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<sup>421</sup> Robinson, William, *A Faustian Bargain: US Intervention in the Nicaraguan Elections and American Foreign Policy in the Cold War Era*, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press Inc., 1992) p. 51.

<sup>422</sup> Bradlee, Ben, *Guts and Glory: The Rise and Fall of Oliver North* (New York: Donald I. Fine, 1988) pp. 233-236.

<sup>423</sup> Anonymous, "Institute Mentioned in Probe Due to Lose Grant Funding", *The Washington Post* (14<sup>th</sup> March 1987) p. A11.

<sup>424</sup> The story was picked up by *The Washington Post* on the 14<sup>th</sup> March 1987 and *The St Petersburg Times* on the 13<sup>th</sup> March 1987.

<sup>425</sup> National Endowment for Democracy, *NED Proud of its Grants*  
<<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/nsa/documents/NI/02722/all.pdf>> (1986).

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the relationship between the NED and PRODEMCA.<sup>426</sup> Prior to these scandals, the two organisations had a strong working relationship. PRODEMCA handled the NED's grants to *La Prensa* from 1985 until 1988 when, discredited, the organisation was merged with Freedom House.<sup>427</sup> As early as 1985, the NED was criticised in Latin America for its use of PRODEMCA for grant management. A number of State Department cables, which discuss reactions to the NED's work in Nicaragua, state that it was known as the "covert CIA" due to its inability to give grants directly.<sup>428</sup> These cables also state that the use of PRODEMCA (which, even before the scandals was a known pro-Contra organisation) in Nicaragua was "not good".<sup>429</sup> After the PRODEMCA board had been outed as firm Contra supporters through the newspaper advertisements and the investigation into the NEPL, the NED and *La Prensa* collectively decided that it would be best for the grant to be administered by another organisation and PRODEMCA was defunded.<sup>430</sup> Unlike the scandal concerning the INSI, the PRODEMCA scandal was widely reported in the US media and sparked a demand in 1986 from Rep. Daniel Mica (Chairman of the House Foreign Affairs Committee which was responsible for oversight of the NED) for a full report into the activities of PRODEMCA stating that "if they spent one cent of government money [on the pro-Contra advertisements] we'll throw the book at them".<sup>431</sup> Indeed, in the aftermath of the incident, the NED was so concerned about its outward appearance in relation to PRODEMCA that in 1988 Gershman wrote to Bruce McColm of Freedom House voicing the NED's concern about Freedom House's decision to incorporate and

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<sup>426</sup> Pichirallo, J., and Edsall, T.B., "More Contra Funds are Traced; Business Checks Sent to Office of Largest Rebel Force; The Crisis of the Reagan Presidency; The Contra Connection Series", *The Washington Post* (28<sup>th</sup> February 1987) p. a13.

<sup>427</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 12, Letter to Members and Friends of PRODEMCA, (1988).

<sup>428</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 36, State Department Cables (1985).

<sup>429</sup> Ibid.

<sup>430</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 21, Letter from Gershman to Violeta Chamorro (13<sup>th</sup> October 1988).

<sup>431</sup> Blumenthal, "Grantee of US Endowment funds Sandinista Opponents", *The Washington Post* (19<sup>th</sup> March 1986) p. 2.

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merge with PRODEMCA since the NED “[wished] to avoid being drawn into the debate over Contra funding again”.<sup>432</sup> Despite the scandal and the NED’s fear of being associated with issues of Contra funding, key members of the NED board, such as Gershman, maintained strong working relationships with Penn Kemble, the ex-director of PRODEMCA and, as of 1988, a consultant at Freedom House.<sup>433</sup> Given that Gershman and Kemble both came from the background of the SDUSA, this would suggest that the NED, and particularly Gershman himself, were more committed to the neo-conservative agenda espoused by it and, during the 1980s and early 1990s, Freedom House than they were worried by the potential repercussions of associating with a man linked to one of the Reagan administration’s most embarrassing scandals.

It is important to remember that while the NED gave grants, it was itself a grantee of USIA and, on occasion, USAID. While neither of these organisations could be said to be non-state actors or “peers” of the NED, it is important to briefly discuss the NED’s relations with the USIA. There is little evidence in the NED archive of extensive written communication between the NED and USIA, but it is clear that the two organisations maintained a functional and, it would seem, respectful working relationship with Congress as an intermediary. In its 1988 annual report, the NED thanked USIA stating that it had been “greatly assisted by Members of Congress from both parties...the USIA and AID and the State Department” during the year.<sup>434</sup> It is also interesting to note that the NED’s relationship with USIA had symbiotic elements to it as well. Not only was USIA the source of the NED’s budget, but NED grantees also worked on projects directly with USIA at various times. For example, in 1988, CIPE and USIA co-sponsored a series of programmes on trends towards market economics in

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<sup>432</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 9, Folder 3, Letter from Gershman to McColm, (20<sup>th</sup> December 1988).

<sup>433</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 4, Folder 21, Collection of correspondence between NED and Penn Kemble.

<sup>434</sup> NED, *NED Annual Report 1988*, Library of Congress, (1988) p 2.



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Uruguay.<sup>435</sup> Overall, the NED and USIA appeared to have had a cordial, if minimal, financial relationship managed in no small part by Congress. By contrast, the NED's relationship with USAID, while similarly managed by Congress, was more turbulent. USAID had been the original funder of the APF's Democracy Program and, in addition to funding the project, had provided research concerning systems for assessing democratic liberties.<sup>436</sup> After the NED was formally founded, there was no apparent relationship between the two organisations until 1988 when Congress granted the NED the first USAID appropriation. In addition to causing controversy concerning the NED's status as an independent organisation, these appropriations brought with them practical difficulties for the NED.<sup>437</sup> In the late 1980s, USAID established a number of regional offices for "Democratic Initiatives" which caused the NED to voice its concern that USAID was being set up as a governmental alternative to it.<sup>438</sup> Despite its internal reservations about the position USAID was potentially being given, the NED decided that it should work with USAID staff to clarify the types of programmes and groups suited to NED involvement rather than direct USAID funding and, essentially, to divide the workload of democracy-promotion. Moreover, the NED declared that it was happy to continue to act as a coordination point and grantee for USAID for significant democratic initiatives involving its core grantees.<sup>439</sup> Although controversial, the NED's financial relationship with USAID proved to be lucrative for it throughout the late 1980s and early 1990s with large appropriations being given between 1988 and 1993 for Poland, Chile, Nicaragua and Eastern European transition.

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<sup>435</sup> Ibid, p. 45.

<sup>436</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 7, *The Democracy Program: Interim Report*, (1983) p. 3.

<sup>437</sup> For more on the appropriations see chapters 3, 5 and 6.

<sup>438</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 4, Memorandum from Gershman to NED Board of Directors concerning NED/Aid Relationship (29<sup>th</sup> May 1990).

<sup>439</sup> Ibid.

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Due to the nature of the NED, its relationships with US-based organisations were primarily financial rather than collaborative, with the NED in a position of financial power over other organisations. The majority of its budget was given to its four core grantees which existed in something of a complicated position, rather like the NED itself. While the NED walked a fine line between complete non-state autonomy and looking like a branch of the US government, its core grantees held a similarly precarious position between independence and being extensions of the NED itself. While for the NRI, CIPE and FTUI, all of which were perhaps closer in ideology to the NED itself, this relationship worked with few problems, the NDI clashed with the NED concerning ideological and practical differences. Despite occasional tensions, it is clear that these organisations gained a great deal from the initial lack of transparency in their relationship with the NED. Between 1980 and 1993, the relationship between these five organisations was fluid, with the core grantees holding some power within the NED itself through their members' positions on the NED board. However, after 1990 Congress began a process of formalising these relationships and creating some distance between the NED and its core grantees, forcing the NED into a position of accountability and transparency more akin to those expected of non-state actors like Freedom House and WOLA which had no formal attachment to the US government.

When it came to other grantees, the NED maintained a few, long running relationships for its Latin America projects, the largest receiver of funds being Delphi International. It maintained close relationships with those organisations through which it channelled funds to Latin America. This caused some problems for it during the Iran-Contra Scandal. It is noteworthy that, despite its very clear connections to organisations indicted in the scandal, the NED itself does not appear to have fallen under suspicion as a front organisation and appears to have incurred little criticism for its relationships with such controversial groups. While the PRODEMCA scandal raised some questions from

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Congress concerning PRODEMCA's use of NED funds, the NED itself did not feature in the Congressional inquest.

Unlike the NED, neither Freedom House nor WOLA had financial relationships with other US non-state groups. During the 1980s and 1990s, Freedom House as an institution does not appear to have engaged in a great deal of collaboration with other US organisations. Given Freedom House's remit as a clearing-house of information, this lack of collaborative engagement with its peers appears peculiar; but Freedom House did maintain some relationships with other non-state actors and its staff had personal relationships with individuals at other US-based institutions. For example, Bruce McColm had personal relationships with individuals at the Inter-American Center for Electoral Promotion and Assistance (CAPEL) and the Inter-American Institute for Human Rights.<sup>440</sup> However, these relationships tended to be one-sided with Freedom House using other organisations for information gathering while rarely giving anything in return. During this time, Freedom House focused a great deal of attention on the plight of journalists abroad and, as a result, it cultivated good working relations with the Centre for Foreign Journalists (CFJ) and the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). Freedom House and the CFJ were in regular correspondence and often gave each other suggestions about where their respective work should be heading.<sup>441</sup> The relationship between Freedom House and the CPJ was perhaps the most long-standing and fruitful collaborative relationship Freedom House had during this period. In the early 1990s the two organisations regularly shared information about country-specific problems. In 1992, Freedom House sent the CPJ a collection of information concerning violations of journalists' rights in Colombia and Peru.<sup>442</sup> Sussman met with the Director of the CPJ in 1993 and he stated that the organisation welcomed queries from Freedom House

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<sup>440</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 12, Collection of communication between McColm and CAPEL.

<sup>441</sup> FH Records, Box 153, Letter from Sussman to CFJ (18<sup>th</sup> July 1986).

<sup>442</sup> FH Records, Box 153, Fax from Jessie Miller of Freedom House to the CPJ, (1992).

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concerning press freedoms.<sup>443</sup> This relationship with the CPJ also gave Freedom House access to a network of journalists world-wide which could be called upon for information.<sup>444</sup> This network was one of Freedom House's only truly transnational connections, as will be seen later in the chapter. The other major collaborative project Freedom House undertook was the Central American Peace and Democracy Watch in 1987. This was a collaboration between Freedom House, the Puebla Institute, PRODEMCA, the Policy Project and the AFL-CIO. The project aimed to monitor the Central American peace process and provide information on the process to the Washington foreign policy Community.<sup>445</sup> Peace and Democracy Watch collaborated to publish a regular bulletin with information and analysis on the progress of the peace process as well as organising delegations and fact-finding missions to Central America and trying to set and enforce minimum criteria and calendar deadlines by which the terms of the Arias plan should be met.<sup>446</sup> In 1988, Freedom House took this project over completely, having merged with both PRODEMCA and the Puebla Institute, although its collaboration with the Policy Project and AFL-CIO continued.

In the late 1980s, Freedom House merged with PRODEMCA and the Puebla Institute. As mentioned previously, the merger with PRODEMCA was somewhat controversial and was primarily a way for PRODEMCA to distance itself from the Contra scandal while still continuing its work. This was not a formal merger, PRODEMCA was dissolved as a legal and financial entity and Penn Kemble, its president, became a senior associate at Freedom House. Publicly, the merger was portrayed as a sensible consolidation of similar organisations. In an open letter to PRODEMCA members, Freedom House stated that the two organisations “worked

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<sup>443</sup> FH Records, Box 153, Memorandum from Sussman to Staff (11<sup>th</sup> June 1993).

<sup>444</sup> Ibid.

<sup>445</sup> FH Records, Box 18, Folder 3, A proposal for a Peace and Democracy Watch: an ad hoc committee for the full implementation of the Central American peace plan (198?).

<sup>446</sup> Ibid.

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closely on Latin American issues” and that the merger would avoid “wasteful organisational duplication”.<sup>447</sup> In reality PRODEMCA’s association with the Contra scandal meant that it would have been almost impossible for it to continue as an independent entity, especially after the loss of NED funding. This merger with Freedom House allowed Kemble to keep his place in the neo-conservative democracy-promotion network while simultaneously allowing PRODEMCA and the rest of its board to save face as the organisation was dissolved. Unlike the PRODEMCA merger, Freedom House’s merger with the Puebla Institute was not the result of scandal. The reasons for this merger appeared to be much closer to those publicly given for the merger with PRODEMCA. In the late 1980s, Nina Shea (founder of the Puebla Institute) and Penn Kemble wrote a memorandum to McColm stating that the two institutions should establish a “close programmatic and administrative relationship”. At this point, according to Shea, the two organisations shared common values and, since they had significant overlap in personnel and funding sources it was suggested that the two should establish a joint management committee.<sup>448</sup> This memorandum laid the ground work for the merger between the two organisations, although Puebla at this point remained an independent corporation. The new management committee oversaw a new collaborative office which eventually became Freedom House’s Centre for Religious Freedom.<sup>449</sup> Before this memorandum, there is little to suggest that Freedom House and the Puebla Institute had much of a relationship at all. The Institute had been founded in the mid-1980s by Shea and the Nicaraguan Catholic leader Humberto Belli as a human rights organisation promoting religious freedom. However, there is no recorded contact

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<sup>447</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 12, Letter to Members and Friends of PRODEMCA (1988).

<sup>448</sup> FH Records, Box 71, Folder 3, Memorandum from Nina Shea and Penn Kemble to McColm (198?).

<sup>449</sup> Ibid.

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between the two organisations before the late 1980s when, due to organisational difficulties in the Puebla Institute, this merger was proposed.<sup>450</sup>

Aside from its few collaborative projects and the two mergers which Freedom House undertook during this period, much of its involvement with other US non-state organisations was confrontational. In 1982, McColm wrote a letter to Thomas Hammarberg, Amnesty International's Secretary General, after Hammarberg had accused him of misrepresenting Amnesty International's work in Central America.<sup>451</sup> McColm had accused Amnesty International of being "soft" on Salvadoran guerrillas and not identifying groups as guerrilla fronts when there were "no authoritative sources on Salvadoran politics – left, right or center – who would not".<sup>452</sup> It would appear that McColm refused to correct or retract these accusations and this became a point of contention between the two organisations. However, by the late 1980s it seems that the two organisations were able to put aside this disagreement since, in 1988, they collaborated to secure the release of Andrés Solares, a Cuban dissident.<sup>453</sup> The tension in Freedom House's institutional relationship with Amnesty International does not appear to have stopped it from making use of Amnesty International's reports and information in its own work.<sup>454</sup> In 1986 Freedom House clashed with the Institute for Contemporary Studies (ICS) over the NED grant Freedom House managed for *Libro Libre*. The *Libro Libre* project was a book publishing programme based in Costa Rica which aimed to make the classics of Western democratic thought available in Latin America in affordable paperbacks. In 1986, this project began to be undercut by the US

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<sup>450</sup> Hertzke, Allen, D., *Freeing God's Children: The Unlikely Alliance for Global Human Rights*, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers Inc., 2006) p. 122.

<sup>451</sup> FH Records, Box 39, Folder 2, Letter from McColm to Thomas Hammarberg, (2<sup>nd</sup> August 1982).

<sup>452</sup> Ibid.

<sup>453</sup> FH Records, Box 128, Folder 11, *Washington Office: A Report* (1988).

<sup>454</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 16, *Approaching the October 5<sup>th</sup> Plebiscite in Chile: A Freedom House Briefing* (1988).

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Embassy in San José.<sup>455</sup> Although it is unclear exactly what occurred, it appears that the ICS was attempting to begin a programme through the US Embassy which would compete directly with *Libro Libre*.<sup>456</sup> Freedom House brought this issue to the attention of the US Embassy and eventually reached an arrangement to provide *Libro Libre* with access to a portion of publishing rights in the US Embassy's name. ICS disavowed any intention of attempting to duplicate the programme and ceased its Central American programming completely.<sup>457</sup> What is particularly strange about this incident is the fact that the Executive Director of ICS sat on Freedom House's board throughout the mid-1980s, suggesting that this was a calculated act designed to compromise the *Libro Libre* project.<sup>458</sup> Otherwise, there is little to suggest that the relationship between Freedom House and ICS was particularly combative. The Executive Director of ICS did not lose his seat on the Freedom House board and was, in fact, given a place on the Freedom House advisory board as well. Indeed, aside from this clash and the overlap in personnel there is little to suggest that the two organisations had much of an institutional relationship at all.

For the most part during this period, Freedom House was not particularly engaged in collaboration with other US non-state actors. Although it clearly recognised the utility of collaboration under certain circumstances, as evidenced by its relationship with the CPJ, its instance of collaboration with Amnesty International and its regular use of academics in research projects, it does not appear to have embraced collaboration as one of its main methods of operation, choosing instead to use the work of other groups without passing anything back the other way. This was particularly true of its relationship with those organisations which fell outside its own political ideology or the

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<sup>455</sup> FH Records, Box 45, Folder 10, Memorandum from Sussman to the Executive Committee, (5<sup>th</sup> November 1986).

<sup>456</sup> Ibid.

<sup>457</sup> Ibid.

<sup>458</sup> Ibid.

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personal networks of its staff. The mergers Freedom House undertook during this period were with organisations with which Freedom House or its staff already had some connection. Penn Kemble had come to his involvement in PRODEMCA from a background in the SDUSA where he met a number of individuals who held senior positions in Freedom House such as Bayard Rustin. As a result, by the time of the merger he was already well integrated into the Freedom House staff as well as the neo-conservative network in which Freedom House was operating at the time. The exception to this was the Puebla Institute. Indeed, the only truly collaborative project Freedom House undertook was the Peace and Democracy Watch project and at least one of the other organisations involved in this was already a subsidiary organisation of Freedom House anyway. This lack of peer collaboration seems counter-productive for a non-state actor which primarily concerned itself with information dissemination. It is clear that Freedom House did not think of itself as part of a greater “NGO community”.<sup>459</sup> That said, Freedom House was part in a small network of neo-conservative organisations, such as PRODEMCA and the NED, which constituted the “new” human rights movement of the 1980s. The, largely non-collaborative nature of this network is perhaps one of the defining features of the new human rights movement which distinguished it from the human rights advocacy networks of the 1970s described by Keck and Sikkink.<sup>460</sup>

Unlike Freedom House, WOLA engaged regularly in collaborative efforts with other US-based and international, non-state actors. The most extensive relationships WOLA maintained throughout this period was its relationships with various religious organisations, the financial side of which has already been discussed.<sup>461</sup> WOLA also maintained collaborative relations with a number of religious human rights

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<sup>459</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 1998) p. 10.

<sup>460</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 79-120.

<sup>461</sup> See chapter 2 pp. 84-89.



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organisations in the United States as well as foundations and orders, particularly when it came to its work in Chile. In 1988 WOLA published a report with the CI-IR on the Chilean plebiscite concerning the role of municipal and military authorities in the election process, fair campaigning and opportunities for electoral fraud.<sup>462</sup> In addition to organisations such as the CI-IR, WOLA had long-standing collaborative relationships with Amnesty International, Human Rights and Americas Watch. Between 1980 and 1993, WOLA regularly organised seminars in conjunction with Amnesty International and used its staff as experts and panellists for conferences.<sup>463</sup> WOLA maintained a similar relationship with Human Rights Watch which, along with representatives of Amnesty International and Americas Watch, was involved in WOLA's 1992 project delivering human rights training and education to various branches of the US government.<sup>464</sup> In addition to the collaborative work Human Rights Watch undertook with WOLA, it clearly had a great deal of respect for WOLA as an institution and spoke very highly of it. In the early 1990s when the Ford Foundation employed Carlos Chipoco and Lars Schoultz to undertake a program evaluation of WOLA, they interviewed Holy Burkhalter of Human Rights Watch who said that WOLA was the "glue of the Washington human rights community".<sup>465</sup> WOLA maintained a similarly close relationship with Americas Watch with a member of Americas Watch sitting on WOLA's board in the 1990s.<sup>466</sup> As with Human Rights Watch, WOLA organised a number of seminars with Americas Watch and regularly invited their staff to be panellists and speakers. Moreover, during the 1980s WOLA worked closely with

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<sup>462</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Conditions for Chile's Plebiscite on Pinochet: a Report Based on a Joint WOLA-CIIR Delegation to Chile, (1988).

<sup>463</sup> WOLA Records, Box 4, Human Rights and Latin America: A Final Report to the Ford Foundation from the Washington Office on Latin America, (30<sup>th</sup> June 1988).

<sup>464</sup> WOLA Records, Box 407, Human Rights Education and Training in US Policy Toward Latin America, (16<sup>th</sup> June 1992),

<sup>465</sup> WOLA Records, Box 15, Program Evaluation of the Washington Office on Latin America: Prepared for the Ford Foundation by Carlos Chipoco and Lars Schoultz (199?).

<sup>466</sup> WOLA Records, Box 11, History of Grants to the Washington Office on Latin America from the ARCA Foundation (1990).

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Americas Watch and Amnesty International gathering and disseminating information concerning political prisoners in Chile.<sup>467</sup> Further evidence of WOLA's key role within Washington's liberal human rights network comes in its involvement in the Central America Working Group (CAWG), which, in the 1990s, became the Latin American Working Group. These groups were coalitions of religious, humanitarian and peace and justice organisations which lobbied to change US policy towards the region. WOLA played a key role in both of these organisations, working with congressional offices to redesign US aid packages to the region and attempts to relax the trade embargo on Cuba, amongst other projects.<sup>468</sup>

In addition to these relationships with other non-state human rights organisations, WOLA also maintained strong relationships with a number of think tanks, professional organisations and academic institutions, the most long-standing of which appears to have been with the Institute of Policy Studies (IPS). The IPS assisted WOLA with its work on Chilean political prisoners in the 1980s and collaborated with it to create the Drugs Policy Forum, a seminar series on drugs policy with US and Andean experts.<sup>469</sup> While the relationship WOLA cultivated with the IPS gained it access to a great deal of information and a means to disseminate its own research, the relationship was used against it by those organisations which disagreed with WOLA politically. For example, in the Heritage Foundation's pamphlet *The Left's Latin American Lobby* it accuses WOLA of coordinating efforts with "openly radical leftist groups" and cites the IPS as an example of such a group.<sup>470</sup> Since this particular pamphlet was directed at organisations and individuals which would not have approved

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<sup>467</sup> WOLA Records, Box 67, Collection of correspondence (198?).

<sup>468</sup> Youngers, *30 Años de Incidencia Política...* (Washington: WOLA, 2006) pp. 68 – 72.

<sup>469</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934-3 July 1 1990 – June 30 1991, (1991).

<sup>470</sup> WOLA Records, Box 25, *The Heritage Foundation Institutional Analysis: The Left's Latin American Lobby* (11<sup>th</sup> October 1984).

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of WOLA's political leanings and affiliations to begin with, these accusations did little to damage WOLA's reputation among its US non-state colleagues. WOLA's work with various legal organisations was less controversial. In the early 1980s WOLA regularly engaged with the International Human Rights Law Group (IHLRG). In 1983, it assisted the IHLRG and the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights in organising reports for the UN on human rights violations in Peru.<sup>471</sup> WOLA and the IHLRG also collaborated to send a delegation to Nicaragua in 1984 to investigate US military involvement in Central America which resulted in a very well attended seminar in Washington.<sup>472</sup> WOLA also maintained strong links with various academic institutions during this time. Throughout the 1980s, it had two academics sitting on its board, one from the American University and one from George Washington University.<sup>473</sup> It also maintained regular contact with the Central American Historical Institute at Georgetown, particularly concerning Nicaragua and the 1990 Nicaraguan elections.<sup>474</sup> Moreover, as would perhaps be expected, WOLA regularly brought in academics to act as expert panellists and speakers at seminars and conferences; for example in 1988 it held a roundtable with John Booth, an academic at the University of North Texas, concerning the issue of national reconciliation in Nicaragua.<sup>475</sup>

WOLA developed and maintained relationships with a wide variety of different US-based, non-state organisations and actors during this time. This network helped WOLA in its role as a disseminator of information as it could both exchange information with other US organisations and also use the networks of other organisations to disseminate its own research further. WOLA's collaboration with other

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<sup>471</sup> WOLA Records, Box 28, Washington Office on Latin America Annual Report (1983).

<sup>472</sup> WOLA Records, Box 12, Letter from Joe Eldridge to the Bydale Foundation (27<sup>th</sup> November 1984).

<sup>473</sup> WOLA Records, Box 3, Washington Office on Latin America Board of Directors (10<sup>th</sup> May 1985).

<sup>474</sup> WOLA Records, Box 242, Collection of correspondence between WOLA and the Central American Historical Institute.

<sup>475</sup> WOLA Records, Box 303, Flyer for roundtable event (1988).

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organisations, particularly those with a greater global reach and greater global credibility increased their own credibility. These relationships meant that WOLA was able to not only run larger and longer-term projects by combining funding and administration with other organisations, but also increase awareness of its work outside of the Americas. Unlike Freedom House, WOLA very much saw itself as part of a wider community of non-state actors and embraced the opportunities collaboration could offer. Indeed, WOLA was close to the centre of Washington's liberal human rights network; through its willingness to share information and co-ordinate collaboration between numerous organisations WOLA was able to perform its work effectively and maximise the impact of its projects.

Since these were three of the key organisations involved in the inter-American democracy promotion project, it is important to understand how they interacted with each other. Throughout this period the NED maintained a strong working relationship with Freedom House. Prior to the NED's founding, Freedom House had worked with the APF on the Democracy Program, with Raymond Gastil working on the Task Force on Democratic Electoral Processes and writing a number of memos on giving aid for constitution writing.<sup>476</sup> Through this, he worked and developed relationships with a number of people who would later be on the NED board. Once the NED had been formally established Freedom House became a regular grantee, often involved in managing grants for Latin American press outlets and radio stations. In 1986, Freedom House took over the management of the *Libro Libre* project from the AIFLD which had decided that the labour movement was not the best supervisor for the programme.<sup>477</sup> Also at this time, Freedom House took on grant management for the journal

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<sup>476</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 25, Memorandum from William Douglas to Allen Weinstein; Recommendations of the Task Force on Democratic Electoral Processes, (4<sup>th</sup> April 1983).

<sup>477</sup> FH Records, Box 49, Folder 1, Visit to Costa Rica and Panama Re: Libro Libre March 25 – 29 1985 (1985).

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*Pensamiento Centroamericano*, which published original writings by Central American authors and political thinkers, to help it expand distribution within Central America.<sup>478</sup> In the late 1980s, Freedom House also took on NED grants for Chilean publishing house Editorial Andante, Paraguay's Radio Nanduti and the Nicaraguan cultural magazine *El Pez y la Serpiente*.<sup>479</sup> It would appear that the NED and Freedom House had a very close relationship in the 1980s, aside from Freedom House's willingness to administer grants. Indeed, as has been discussed in an early chapter, the two organisations not only shared personnel in the form of John Richardson who resigned from Freedom House in 1984 to join the NED as the chair of the Board, but were also connected through personal relationships between some of their staff.<sup>480</sup> The two organisations also appear to have had a more informal working relationship and asked each other for advice concerning projects. In 1984 the NED sent Freedom House a proposal they had received from the Caribbean Council for a journalist training programme in Grenada requesting Freedom House's thoughts and feedback on the proposal.<sup>481</sup> Moreover, when Sussman asked a third party about what the NED's Program Committee thought of its proposals, he was informed that the NED board held Freedom House in very high regard.<sup>482</sup> Freedom House regularly wrote papers and letters in support of the NED in the late 1980s and, in 1989, stated that it must be careful not to accidentally interfere with the work of the NED and stated that the NED should be strengthened.<sup>483</sup>

While the relationship between Freedom House and the NED was broadly supportive and amicable, towards the end of the 1980s and into the 1990s, a few

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<sup>478</sup> LoC, NED, *NED Annual Report 1986* (1986) JC421.N37a

<sup>479</sup> See NED Annual Reports 1987 and 1988 and LoC, NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 35, Summary of Programs for Nicaragua Funded by the Special Appropriation (1989).

<sup>480</sup> FH Records, Box 3, Folder 16, Minutes: Executive Committee (11<sup>th</sup> April 1984).

<sup>481</sup> FH Records, Box 51, Folder 2, Memorandum from Gershman to Sussman (27<sup>th</sup> August 1984).

<sup>482</sup> FH Records, Box 51, Folder 2, Memorandum from Sussman to Gershman (5<sup>th</sup> September 1984).

<sup>483</sup> FH Records, Box 63, Folder 9, US Foreign Policy and the Democracy Revolution: A Working Paper on Strategy for the Freedom House Board of Directors (19<sup>th</sup> September 1989).

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tensions emerged. In 1988, Gershman wrote to McColm to pass on the NED's concerns about the role Freedom House appeared to be taking in the debate concerning Central America after its merger with PRODEMCA. The letter states that, although the NED had a "broad and cooperative" relationship with Freedom House, it was concerned by Freedom House's decision to take on PRODEMCA's work and take a more active part in the debate on US Central American policy.<sup>484</sup> Moreover, in 1991, Freedom House found itself in the middle of some of the rivalry between the NED and USAID. At the time Freedom House was seeking to open an office in San Salvador using USAID money, but members of the board felt that some powerful Senators were strongly supportive of USAID and saw the NED as an interloper. The Freedom House board believed that its close relationship with the NED may have been hurting its cause with these senators.<sup>485</sup> Although there is nothing to suggest this tension was long-lasting, it clearly caused Freedom House a great deal of concern in the short term. In January 1991, Gershman was invited to speak to the Freedom House Board of Trustees concerning the difficulties the NED was having in Congress. He explained that congressional rivalries between supporters of USAID, USIA and the NED were causing problems for the NED's attempts to create compromise between internationalism and isolationism in democracy promotion policy. In this speech he also stated that he believed Freedom House could continue to contribute greatly to the NED's project.<sup>486</sup> Despite the mild tensions in the relationship towards the end of the period in question, overall, Freedom House and the NED had a strong institutional relationship. Freedom House was a regular and trusted grantee, often lent vocal support to the NED against its critics and members of the two boards had close personal relationships.

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<sup>484</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 9, Folder 3, Letter from Gershman to McColm (20<sup>th</sup> December 1988).

<sup>485</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Minutes of the Meeting of the Board of Trustees of Freedom House (14<sup>th</sup> January 1991).

<sup>486</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Minutes of Freedom House Board of Trustees (17<sup>th</sup> June 1991).

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WOLA's relationship with the NED was almost entirely one sided. While WOLA was a regular critic of the NED, the NED itself does not appear to have responded to WOLA at all during this period. In a 1988 policy document WOLA stated that it believed that the US government was seeking to find new ways to "promote democracy" in Latin America by expanding programmes such as the Administration of Justice (AoJ) and the NED.<sup>487</sup> As a result of this WOLA undertook a project to monitor the progress of US democracy-promoting programmes, especially the NED and AoJ, report its findings to Congress and lobby to stop those programmes it saw as counterproductive.<sup>488</sup> The end result of this project was particularly damning of the NED's work in the 1989 election in Chile and the 1990 election in Nicaragua. In a report concerning Chile's transition to democracy, WOLA stated that aid given by the NED for the 1989 election was more likely to be seen as partisan than the aid the NED gave for the plebiscite the previous year, since the electoral aid could be perceived as partisan, whereas the plebiscite was not a politically partisan event.<sup>489</sup> While for the most part the NED and its affiliated organisations refused to engage with WOLA, Brian Atwood of the NDI did agree to be interviewed by WOLA concerning the NED's activities as part of this project.<sup>490</sup> By the 1990s, WOLA was sending regular memoranda to members of Congress raising questions about the NED, particularly its practices and its administration and distribution of electoral aid.<sup>491</sup> In association with this project, WOLA proposed a conference discussing the electoral programmes of the NED and USAID to Chile, Nicaragua and Panama. In the lead-up to this conference WOLA wrote to the staff of the Foreign Aid Conference Committee questioning the

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<sup>487</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, South America Team Planning Document (1988).

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> WOLA Records, Box 54, Chile's Transition to Democracy (1989).

<sup>490</sup> WOLA Records, Box 240, Memorandum from John Burnstein (WOLA) to the Foreign Aid Conference Committee Staff (19<sup>th</sup> September 1988).

<sup>491</sup> WOLA Records, Box 14, Washington Office on Latin America Report to the Philadelphia Foundation, Grant No. 44790, (1990).

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appropriateness of using the NED to support democracy in Nicaragua, suggesting instead that the aid should be limited to projects consistent with the Central American peace accords.<sup>492</sup> During this conference in 1990 WOLA criticised the NED for tending to fund certain aspects of the political spectrum at the expense of others and accused the NRI and the AIFLD of seeking out organisations with similar political attitudes to themselves for grantees instead of trying to create truly pluralistic systems.<sup>493</sup> Moreover, WOLA questioned the structure of the NED, stating that it was encumbered by too many associated institutions and would have been more successful if it had had a model similar to the Inter-American Foundation, which awarded development grants directly to Latin American organisations.<sup>494</sup> WOLA was particularly critical of the NED's work in Nicaragua, claiming that the NED's prohibition on funding political campaigns was "more theoretical than real" since a great deal of the aid for the 1990 election went directly to the Unión Nacional Opositora (UNO).<sup>495</sup> While the NED, NDI and NRI sent representatives to the 1990 conference, aside from this, there is no evidence that the NED engaged with WOLA at all.<sup>496</sup>

Although WOLA and Freedom House do not appear to have communicated directly or engaged with each other Freedom House was openly critical of WOLA's political leanings and clearly saw it as competition. In the 1980s, McColm referred to WOLA as an "adversarial organisation" in response to WOLA labelling Freedom House as "conservative".<sup>497</sup> Freedom House claimed that it needed to create its Center for Caribbean and Central American Studies because the majority of the active hemispheric organisations, like WOLA, were "outgrowths of the New Left" and, as a result, there

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<sup>492</sup> WOLA Records, Box 240, Memorandum from John Burnstein to the Foreign Aid Conference Committee Staff (19<sup>th</sup> September 1988).

<sup>493</sup> WOLA Records, Box 25, US Electoral Assistance and Democratic Development: Chile, Nicaragua and Panama (1990).

<sup>494</sup> Ibid.

<sup>495</sup> Ibid.

<sup>496</sup> WOLA Records, Box 284, List of delegates to Political Aid Conference, (undated).

<sup>497</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 1, Letter from Bruce McColm (undated).



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was no objective analysis on the region.<sup>498</sup> In the same document, Freedom House claimed that WOLA was a supporter of the radical left, condemned military assistance for El Salvador and Honduras and supported the normalisation of relations with Cuba and Nicaragua.<sup>499</sup> Despite these criticisms, not only did WOLA never respond to these accusations or criticise Freedom House directly, but it actually attempted to engage Freedom House in its work. In 1983, WOLA invited Freedom House to a conference it organised entitled “1982 Salvadoran Elections: A One Year Retrospective” to discuss human rights and the prospect of political solutions to El Salvador’s problems.<sup>500</sup> Freedom House refused to attend this conference and there is no evidence that after this WOLA attempted to engage Freedom House in its work again. However, Freedom House’s criticisms of WOLA and the frosty relationship between the two organisations did not prevent Freedom House from occasionally using WOLA’s reports. In 1991 WOLA published a report concerning the Salvadoran election which was used by Freedom House in its own work.<sup>501</sup> It is worth noting that Freedom House did not acknowledge WOLA’s work as valuable until after Bush’s election, by which time WOLA was no longer a political pariah in Washington. Apart from the letter inviting Freedom House to the 1983 conference, there is no evidence of direct contact between WOLA and Freedom House between 1980 and 1993.

As can be seen, all three organisations interacted with other international non-state actors although in very different ways. The NED’s involvement with other US organisations was enshrined in its founding by-laws, which required it to channel funding through US-based organisations instead of giving grants directly to the

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<sup>498</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 1, Proposal for the Creation of a Center for Caribbean and Central American Studies at Freedom House, (undated).

<sup>499</sup> Ibid.

<sup>500</sup> FH Records, Box 59, Folder 1, Letter from Eldridge to Sussman, (8<sup>th</sup> April 1983).

<sup>501</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report for the Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934-3 July 1 1990 – June 30 1991, (1991).

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beneficiaries, putting it automatically at one remove from its Latin American beneficiaries. Its relationship with its four core grantees was strangely symbiotic and for much of the period very ill-defined. Until 1993, all four core grantees had affiliates or members on the NED board, making the process of grantees proposing projects to the NED largely irrelevant as it was unlikely that board members would refuse to fund projects proposed by their own organisations. This arrangement, combined with the third-party funding system, meant that the NED lacked transparency and its operations were inscrutable to the general public and its peers. Although the NED's relationships with US-based organisations was mandated by its by-laws, these financial relationships were not, in fact, strictly necessary; there is no discernible reason why the NED could not have operated like many other grant-making organisations and made grants directly to their beneficiaries. The NED's middle-man structure put them at a remove from the activities of grant beneficiaries and, as a result, meant that it incurred less risk if Latin American organisations were found to be misusing money. As evidenced by the PRODEMCA scandal, this system did not protect the NED from scandals or investigations involving its US-based grantees. As evidenced by the fact that the other NED grantees tended to fit into the NED's neo-conservative political ideology and fund projects which furthered this political agenda, the NED formed part of a broader neo-conservative human rights network which was in part distinguished from its liberal equivalent by a lack of internal collaboration. This is not to say there was no contact between groups involved in the neo-conservative human rights network, merely that its relationships rarely involved collaborative pooling of resources and staff.

Clear evidence of this non-collaborative network can be seen in Freedom House's minimal collaboration with other US-based organisations. Although it clearly saw the utility in information exchange and collaboration with its colleagues, as evidenced by its work on the Peace and Democracy Watch project, it did not prioritise

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working with its US peers and, when it did form relationships, they were largely one-sided with Freedom House in the position of control. When Freedom House did collaborate it was again with those organisations which shared similar political ideologies or with which its staff had personal connections, such as PRODEMCA. The mergers Freedom House undertook during this time suggest that it was willing to assist other, politically affiliated organisations which were in trouble and that it saw itself as established enough by the 1980s to not suffer from taking on organisations undergoing scandals. As suggested by its clashes with Amnesty International and WOLA, at least until the 1990s, Freedom House was actively hostile towards those organisations it saw as being on the other side of the political divide. This highly politicised attitude towards international advocacy which led to hostility towards liberal human rights groups, but a willingness to defend and assist like-minded groups while simultaneously being leery of entering into direct collaboration with them, was distinct to the neo-conservative human rights movement.

By contrast, WOLA operated in more a traditional collaborative network and viewed itself as very much part of a wider community of organisations working toward similar goals. It regularly collaborated and engaged with other liberal organisations. It is possible that WOLA, which was in an almost constant struggle for funding and legitimacy that the neo-conservative organisations did not face, had a greater need to collaborate with its peers in order to be able to achieve its working aims. Through its collaboration with larger organisations such as Amnesty International, Human Rights and Americas Watch, WOLA gained contacts and international credibility as well as the ability to work on larger and longer-term projects. Although it came under attack from some neo-conservative organisations, including Freedom House and the Heritage Foundation, for the most part, it positioned itself as a centre-point in a network of

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human rights organisations in Washington.<sup>502</sup> Its collaboration with this network put it in an excellent position to achieve information dissemination and, given that WOLA spent much of the 1980s shut off from key governmental channels, helped in its lobbying work as well. A strongly collaborative network, which Keck and Sikkink deemed to be essential for the functionality of human rights organisations, gave WOLA the means and the credibility to operate effectively. It would appear that the new neo-conservative groups found a way to operate without these collaborative relationships. Perhaps because they did not struggle for funding or resources during this period they did not require the two-way relationships that formed the foundation of the liberal human rights movement. More plausibly, the top-down structures of these organisations made them less inclined to work with other organisations to build movements, choosing instead to operate alone using other like-minded organisations for information where necessary.

### Latin American Actors

The other essential part of advocacy networks, according to Keck and Sikkink, is a relationship with activists from target nations.<sup>503</sup> It would be expected that all three organisations would have to work with or at least communicate with their Latin American counterparts in some capacity, whether to achieve their working aims or to lend credibility to their claims of interest in the region. Indeed, from the outside, some kind of relationship with local non-state actors would seem necessary for these organisations to have enough knowledge of the situation on the ground to provide funding or act as experts on the region; but, as will be shown, these organisations were not as transnational as they proclaimed to be. In order to illustrate that the country case

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<sup>502</sup> WOLA Records, Box 25, The Heritage Foundation “The Left’s Latin American Lobby” (11<sup>th</sup> October 1984).

<sup>503</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998) p. 28.

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studies are not anomalies, this section will give a brief overview of the relations these organisations had in various countries throughout the region, excluding Chile and Nicaragua which will be discussed in detail in chapters 5 and 6.

Since the NED was required to channel funds through US-based organisations, its contacts in Latin America were minimal. While the NED's core and other grantees had working relationships with Latin American non-state actors, the NED itself limited its Latin American relationships to like-minded state and political organisations and some personal relationships between NED staff and individuals on the ground. Before the founding of the NED, as part of the Democracy Program, APF members held meetings and consultations with various Latin American political parties concerning the idea of the NED. In 1983 the APF held meetings with a number of El Salvador's right-wing and centre-right parties including Acción Democrática, Partido Auténtico Institucional Salvadoreño and the Christian Democrats, all of which responded favourably to the concept of the NED.<sup>504</sup> Later in the year, Allen Weinstein of the APF, held a consultation with the Organisation of Christian Democrats of the Americas which made a number of suggestions for the NED including the request that political party programmes should be run in conjunction with Latin American party foundations and those parties without foundations should be encouraged to form them.<sup>505</sup> Although the APF only consulted political parties in Latin America during the Democracy Program, the fact that it held consultations with any local groups, suggests that it took an interest in establishing what Latin Americans felt they wanted or needed from an organisation such as the NED. That said, this desire to consult with local organisations does not appear to have carried over into the NED itself.

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<sup>504</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 26, Report on Meetings in El Salvador with Political Party Leaders, (4<sup>th</sup> May 1983).

<sup>505</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 1, Folder 27, Memorandum from Weinstein: Consultations with the Organisation of Christian Democrats of the Americas, (6<sup>th</sup> June 1983).

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From the evidence and correspondence available, it seems that the NED had almost no contact with non-state organisations in Latin America at all. During this period, it received a number of letters from Latin American individuals and organisations, mostly thanking the NED for allowing them to participate in conferences or for grants.<sup>506</sup> However, these letters display no evidence of long-term contact between the NED and any of these beneficiaries, nor does it appear that the NED responded to any of them. Indeed, the only Latin American individual with whom there is evidence of sustained communication is Violeta Chamorro, the leader of Nicaragua's UNO coalition. Aside from this personal relationship between Gershman and the Chamorro family, it would appear that the NED had little to no direct involvement with those organisations which received its grants or any other groups on the ground in Latin America. Given this lack of direct contact with local organisations it is logical to assume that the NED had a minimal knowledge or understanding of the situation on the ground and that this might compromise its ability to make effective grants. Since the NED's priority was US interests rather than those of local actors, its lack of knowledge of the situation on the ground was perhaps not as problematic as it first appears. That said, the lack of interaction with organisations on the ground in Latin America suggests that the NED was not the transnational organisation it claimed to be; rather it was a US organisation with interests in promoting certain ideals abroad.

By contrast, both Freedom House and WOLA had relationships with individuals and both state and non-state organisations within Latin America. As part of their remit, both organisations often brought individuals and representatives from various Latin American organisations to the United States to give seminars and provide testimony before Congress. For example, in 1980 Freedom House sponsored a luncheon with a former Cuban political prisoner, met with the President of the Paraguayan Lawyers'

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<sup>506</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 35, Folder of assorted correspondence (1989).

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Association and delivered a number of speeches concerning the work of Freedom House to an audience of Latin America journalists in Costa Rica.<sup>507</sup> During the 1980s, Freedom House maintained particularly extensive relationships and contacts in Central America, which formed the focus of much of its work, especially in El Salvador and Nicaragua. It organised press conferences for members of the Unión Popular Democrática and worked with the Human Rights Commission of El Salvador as well as other religious and labour leaders from the country.<sup>508</sup> In the early 1980s Freedom House had a good working relationship with José Napoleón Duarte, El Salvador's president, who invited it to observe the 1982 elections describing Freedom House staff as "neutral personalities".<sup>509</sup>

Although Freedom House did not have institutional relationships with most Latin American governments in the 1980s and 1990s, it did appeal to and communicate with a number of heads of state in the region concerning press freedom. In 1980, it cabled Alfredo Stroessner protesting the arrest of a Paraguayan journalist.<sup>510</sup> During the 1980s, Freedom House regularly sent cables to various Latin American governments concerning the arrest or demanding the release of journalists. In 1983 alone, Freedom House sent cables to General Hudson Austin requesting the guaranteed safety of Grenada's journalists and to Pinochet and Stroessner demanding the release of journalist Juan Pablo Cardenas (Chile) and Alcibiades Gonzalez Delvalle (Paraguay).<sup>511</sup> Freedom House also hosted groups of Latin American journalists at their offices for meetings and discussions concerning press freedom and Freedom House policy. In 1984, four journalists from Argentina, Brazil, Costa Rica and Colombia visited Freedom House to discuss the issue of international communications and the work that Sussman had been

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<sup>507</sup> FH Records, Box 7, Folder 2, Freedom House Activities Report 1980 (1980).

<sup>508</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 7, Draft Testimony Regarding El Salvador (undated).

<sup>509</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 3, Memorandum from Sussman to the Board of Trustees (1982).

<sup>510</sup> FH Records, Box 7, Folder 2, Freedom House Activities Report (1980).

<sup>511</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 7, Memo: To Members (November 1983).

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doing on the subject.<sup>512</sup> Similarly, in 1986 a group of Central American journalists came to Freedom House to meet with Sussman and discuss Freedom House's projects.<sup>513</sup> This interest in press freedom was what gave Freedom House the majority of its relationships in Latin America and this remained the case into the 1990s. In 1992, Freedom House sent a letter to Alberto Fujimori protesting against the harassment of Peruvian journalists and demanding he restore full freedoms to Peruvian and foreign journalists within Peru.<sup>514</sup>

During the 1980s and 1990s Freedom House observed many of Latin America's elections, particularly those of countries having their first democratic elections after authoritarian regimes. In 1985, Freedom House sent observer delegations to both Grenada and Nicaragua. In the process of observing the Grenada election McColm and Bayard Rustin met with the Trade Union Committee for Civic Understanding, a number of journalists, pollsters and members of the competing political parties.<sup>515</sup> Some of Freedom House's observer delegations were funded by Latin American organisations, such as McColm's 1990 trip to observe the Guatemalan election which was paid for by the Fundación para el Desarrollo de Guatemala, a non-profit organisation which was founded by Guatemalan entrepreneurs seeking to reduce poverty and develop democracy in the country through a market economy.<sup>516</sup> Through its observation work, Freedom House made connections with many, like-minded, Latin American political parties. During its observation of the 1982 El Salvador elections, Freedom House staff held meetings with party workers and leaders of El Salvador's governing junta.<sup>517</sup> In 1984 Freedom House was visited by members of Uruguay's Blanco Party and the

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<sup>512</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor* (May 1984).

<sup>513</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor*, Vol. 3, No. 5 (September 1986).

<sup>514</sup> FH Records, Box 128, Folder 1, *Freedom Monitor*, Vol. 8, No. 4 (Summer 1992).

<sup>515</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor*, (January 1985).

<sup>516</sup> FH Records, Box 66, Folder 5, Letter from FUNDESA to McColm (11<sup>th</sup> February 1990).

<sup>517</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 3, Report of the Freedom House Mission to Observe the Election in El Salvador (28<sup>th</sup> March 1982).



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treasurer of Guatemala's Partido Renovación Nacional.<sup>518</sup> As might be expected given its political leanings, Freedom House also had strong relations with Christian Democrat parties throughout Latin America, including those of El Salvador, Panama and Chile.<sup>519</sup> Indeed, Freedom House sought out these parties as a matter of policy. In a proposal for a South American visitors' program, Freedom House explicitly stated its desire to "seek centrists, Christian Democrats and moderate Social Democrats" to bring to the United States to help educate the US population.<sup>520</sup>

As can be seen, Freedom House did seek out and engage with Latin American groups and organisations. Unlike the NED, it seemed to see contact with Latin American state and non-state organisations as necessary to its work. It used its relationships with Latin American groups to gather information and improve its standing as a clearing house for information and analysis concerning the progress of democracy and human rights in Latin America. Since, during this time, Freedom House had a minimal staff presence on the ground in Latin America, the ability to gather and amalgamate reports and information compiled by organisations on the ground allowed it to retain its credibility as a reliable source of information for US citizens. Freedom House maintained close relations with like-minded Latin American press institutions which not only made its work on press freedom easier, but also meant that it was able to ensure some good publicity within the region. Moreover, Freedom House's electoral observation work gave it access, however temporary, to a cross-section of Latin American society, including labour and religious groups, non-profits, human rights organisations and political parties. The relationships Freedom House maintained with political parties and powerful political families, made it easier for it to access the upper

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<sup>518</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor* (May 1984).

<sup>519</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor* (July 1985 and December 1985).

<sup>520</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 9, A Freedom House Proposal for a One-Year Southern American Visitors' Program for the North American Public (undated).

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echelons of Latin America's political systems. Often those political parties with which Freedom House had favourable relations came out victorious after democratic transition, giving Freedom House a level of influence within some Latin American countries that it would not have otherwise had. The fact that many of these organisations were either in power or a key part of the local establishment meant that Freedom House missed out on the more grassroots view of events in the region.

Of the three non-state actors, WOLA had the most extensive, and the most reciprocal network of contacts within the region. While most of its relations were with other non-state groups, such as the Chilean human rights organisations, WOLA did develop relations with Latin American political parties, particularly left-wing parties which were, at this time, usually ignored or condemned by the US State Department. For example, WOLA hosted a number of politicians from Latin American countries including the leader of Colombia's Unión Patriótica, a Peruvian senator and Edgar Camacho (Bolivia's former Foreign Minister).<sup>521</sup> Unlike Freedom House and the NED, which engaged almost exclusively with the region's governments, the majority of WOLA's Latin American contacts were non-state actors. Although WOLA brought political party members to the United States as speakers, most of its day-to-day work with Latin American groups was with non-party affiliated organisations and individuals, particularly other human rights organisations. WOLA worked consistently with the Peruvian National Coordinating Committee for Human Rights (a coalition of thirty Peruvian human rights organisations) and, in 1992, WOLA took a delegation to Peru's Huallaga region where it met with Peruvian local government officials, police commanders and human rights groups.<sup>522</sup> An undated document provides a list of some

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<sup>521</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934-3 July 1 1990 – June 30 1991, (1991).

<sup>522</sup> WOLA Records, Box 24, Testimony of Alexander Wilde before the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere affairs, House of Representatives, (11<sup>th</sup> March 1992).

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of the contacts WOLA had maintained within Peru; the list is extensive and includes organisations as diverse as the Andean Commission of Jurists and the Comité de Paz y Esperanza as well as individual politicians such as the Mayor of Cusco and academic institutions.<sup>523</sup> Unfortunately there are no similar lists for other countries within Latin America, but from WOLA's archive it is clear that this list is a good representation of the variety of organisations WOLA engaged with across the region.

As can be seen, WOLA's contacts within Latin America were extensive and mostly reciprocal, although direct collaboration was not as common as it was with US organisations. The majority of WOLA's contact with these groups and individuals appear to have consisted of information exchange. Members of Latin American human rights organisations, political parties and professional groups regularly visited WOLA and provided them with reports, testimony and consultations concerning the political and human rights situation in their respective countries. While it had a broad base of contact with local human rights groups from across the political and social spectrum, its political contacts were primarily with left-wing parties, including a number of organisations that the US government avoided contact with due to ideological clashes. WOLA's most important contribution to the inter-American policy conversation in Washington was to open the debate to voices which would otherwise have not been heard under the Reagan and Bush administrations.

### Conclusions

While all three of these organisations did operate within a more extended network of non-state actors, only WOLA fit the more typical model of human rights networks described by Keck and Sikkink. The NED's relations with other US non-state actors were primarily grant-based relationships and, due to the structure of the NED and the

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<sup>523</sup> WOLA Records, Box 37, Contacts in Peru (undated).

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personal networks of its staff, the relationships between the NED and its grantees were not only often very one-sided, but also almost completely inscrutable. When it came to other US-based non-state actors the NED gave grants only to a small network of like-minded organisations. This network not only included Freedom House, but also had significant overlap with Freedom House's own US-based network. Although the NED does appear to have worked with its grantees on more equal terms than many grant-making organisations, these relationships were not collaborative. The NED used its grantees as middle-men so that it would be able to be at a remove from the risks involved with engaging with beneficiary organisations directly. Indeed, aside from a few personal relationships, the NED completely avoided contact with the Latin American beneficiaries of its grants. This shows that the NED was less a transnational non-state actor and more an organisation with little interest in the needs or desires of local actors. It relied on the knowledge of organisations such as its core grantees and Freedom House for its understanding of the situation on the ground and, since these organisations were politically aligned with the NED, this meant that the information it received was largely just reinforcing its own beliefs anyway.

Freedom House's relationship with other US-based organisations was similarly one-sided. There was minimal collaboration with other organisations with the only large collaborative effort Freedom House engaged with during this time being the Central America Peace and Democracy Watch. Since, mid-way through this enterprise, Freedom House took over PRODEMCA, the key force behind the project, and inherited almost complete control of Peace and Democracy watch by extension, even this was only truly collaborative for a short time. Aside from this, Freedom House's main US relationships were with the CPJ and CFJ and both of these relationships were based primarily around Freedom House using them for information and contacts. Unlike the NED, Freedom House did have a significant network of contacts in both the US and

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Latin America, so while it was unwilling to share its resources or collaborate with other organisations from either continent, as had been the norm for the traditional liberal human rights network, it does appear to have seen the creation of some information gathering network to be essential to its ability to operate projects. Indeed, since Freedom House stated one of its primary aims to be acting as a clearing house for information regarding the region, a strong network of contacts and information exchange within Latin America provided Freedom House's information with a level of legitimacy. As can be seen, this new breed of human rights organisation brought with it a new type of human rights movement. Unlike its liberal counterpart, the neo-conservative human rights movement was characterised by a lack of the collaboration and resources sharing. This new movement also lacked the reciprocal institutional relationships with local actors on the ground, opting instead, in the case of the NED, to keep itself at arms-length from Latin American actors and, in the case of Freedom House, to maintain a series of contacts in the region for the purposes of information gathering but with little of the back-and-forth relationship characteristic of the liberal human rights network.

WOLA formed a key part of Washington's liberal foreign policy network. It regularly undertook projects with other US-based organisations, collaborating often with larger, more resource-rich international organisations such as Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, which allowed it to run larger and longer-term projects and gave it a level of international legitimacy within other Western nations that it might not have otherwise had. While it was often the smaller organisation in its relationships with its peers, these relationships were usually reciprocal with resources and information being shared both ways. In its relationships with Latin American organisations it was similarly forthcoming with assistance and information, passing information concerning events in Washington back to local actors as well as using them

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to gather information about the situation in the region. Unlike Freedom House which tended to seek out like-minded actors in Latin America, WOLA's contacts in Latin America represented a broader cross-section of Latin American politics and society. This not only provided it with a more accurate picture of the situation on the ground but also allowed it to give Washington's foreign policy community access to those voices in the region which were shut out by the Reagan administration.

It is worth noting that both the NED and Freedom House worked fairly exclusively within their own political circles within both the United States and Latin America. Aside from its relationship with the NDI, which was often tense, the NED exclusively used like-minded organisations to administrate its grants. Similarly, those organisations within Latin America that received grants from NED grantees were almost entirely of the right or centre-right as were the individuals with whom NED staff had personal relationships. Freedom House too, tended to work with those organisations of the right within the United States. Its engagement with organisations to the left of the US political spectrum were often hostile until the 1990s when it worked briefly with Amnesty International. Within Latin America, particularly in Central America, Freedom House had very few contacts within the left. The exception to this was its relationship with some of Chile's human rights organisations and, even here where the moderate left could have provided a very useful source and ally for Freedom House, its willingness to engage did not extend to political parties or the labour movement. Although the majority of WOLA's US-based contacts were also part of the liberal human rights network, it did make an effort to engage with those organisations on the other side, including the NED and Freedom House, by inviting them to speak at WOLA events.

All-in-all, these organisations formed two distinct approaches to forming advocacy networks. The NED and Freedom House rarely engaged in any form of collaborative relationships. The NED had little choice about its involvement with its

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four core grantees and, beyond that, it kept engagement with other non-state actors, either as grantees or as information contacts, to a minimum. While Freedom House did build a strong information network around itself, it shied away from resource sharing or full collaboration with its peers. WOLA came closest to fully involving itself in a broader non-state network, sharing resources and information and collaborating with those organisations which shared its values. It would be almost impossible to refer to the NED as a “transnational” organisation since its grant structure actively avoided direct contact with Latin American actors. Even personally, members of staff did not maintain significant relationships with actors on the ground in the region. While Freedom House was more transnational, with a network of contacts across the region, its relationships in Latin America were one-sided and almost entirely with actors and organisations which would reinforce the beliefs the organisation already had. Of the three, WOLA was the most traditionally transnational. It maintained an extensive network of contacts in the region and worked closely both with and on behalf of local actors. This vast transnational network meant that WOLA was, when given access to the US government, a very effective lobbying force. While Freedom House was also a very well used source of information during this time, its lack of willingness to collaborate with its peers compromised its ability to lobby and this flaw began to show more clearly during the Bush administration.

Chapter 5 – Chile: “The Lesser Evil” Democracy Promotion for the Greater Good?<sup>524</sup>

Although it was never a top priority of US foreign policy in the twentieth century, during the late 1980s Chile became the focus of a series of campaigns within the United States calling for an end to its military government led by General Augusto Pinochet. The military junta had ruled Chile since 1973, when they ousted the democratically elected, left-wing government of Salvador Allende. In the years following the coup the Pinochet regime suspended the Constitution and waged a brutal war against domestic “subversives”. Although characterised by wide-spread human rights abuses, mass disappearances and the complete suppression of leftist political groups, Pinochet’s war against Chile’s left was seen by the United States as a necessary part of the fight against Latin American communism. Until the mid-1970s, the US government increased the military and economic aid budgets for Chile regularly and overlooked the abuses of the Pinochet government. After the assassination of Orlando Letelier, the ex-Defence Minister of Chile, by the Chilean secret police in September 1976, the United States formally cut military aid to Chile; but Henry Kissinger continued privately to provide the junta with assurances of support throughout the final months of the Ford administration<sup>525</sup>.

During the Carter administration, the United States ceased to provide public or private support for the Pinochet regime, and, instead, partially as a result of pressure from human rights groups such as WOLA, began to push the regime to improve its

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<sup>524</sup> A quotation from a member of the Christian Democratic Party about NED appropriation funding. Christian, Shirley, “Group is Channelling US Funds to Parties Opposing Pinochet” in *the New York Times* (Jan 15, 1988) p. A1.

<sup>525</sup> Sikkink, *Mixed Signals: US Human Rights Policy and Latin America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) pp. 118 – 119.



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human rights record.<sup>526</sup> Between 1977 and 1981, the United States voted against or abstained on five multilateral development bank loans to Chile and continued the sanctions on military aid put in place by the Ford administration.<sup>527</sup> Assurances of support from top-level US officials stopped and were replaced by public condemnation of human rights practices and pressure from the State Department concerning specific cases of detention and torture. In the aftermath of a 1977 UN resolution to condemn his government for human rights abuses, Pinochet promised a timetable for democratic transition for Chile to begin in 1980.<sup>528</sup> In that year, the regime held and won a plebiscite on its draft constitution, guaranteeing the continuation of the Pinochet presidency until 1989.

After his inauguration in 1981, the Reagan administration sought to improve relations with the Pinochet regime by easing the sanctions imposed by Carter. In the same year Congress passed an amendment requiring the administration to certify that the Pinochet government was improving its human rights record and assisting in bringing those involved in the assassination of Orlando Letelier in Washington in 1976 to justice before any aid could be given.<sup>529</sup> Although a plebiscite in 1980 had secured Pinochet's position at least until the end of the decade, by the mid-1980s the Reagan administration had begun to worry that Pinochet's unwillingness to engage with opposition movements would push Chile's moderates towards more radical, left-wing solutions. The resultant policy towards the country sought to strike a careful balance between developing US relations with the opposition, while attempting to exclude and

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<sup>526</sup> Eckel and Moyn, *The Breakthrough: Human Rights in the 1970s*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014) pp. 101 – 102.

<sup>527</sup> Cohen, Roberta, "Human Rights Diplomacy: The Carter Administration and the Southern Cone" in *Human Rights Quarterly* Vol. 4, No. 2 (1982) pp. 226 – 227.

<sup>528</sup> Sater, William F., *Chile and the United States: Empires in Conflict* (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 1990) pp. 193 – 194.

<sup>529</sup> Mares and Aravena, *The United States and Chile: Coming in from the Cold* (New York: Routledge, 2001) p. 13.

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discredit the more radical leftist parties, and pressuring the Pinochet regime to implement the democratic transition timetable set out in the 1980 Constitution. After 1985, US policy towards the Pinochet regime became more hostile; between 1985 and 1988 the US abstained on several World Bank loans to Chile, turned down visa applications for prominent Pinochet supporters and continued to demand that suspects in the Letelier case be extradited.

In 1988, the Pinochet regime held a second plebiscite to decide whether Pinochet should retain the presidency for a further eight years. It mandated that, if he lost the vote, the military government would continue to hold office for one year, during which Presidential and parliamentary elections would be held for a new government to take power in 1990. In the months preceding the plebiscite, Washington channelled money to Chile's democratic opposition and gave repeated warnings about junta interference in the election process. Despite Pinochet's expectations, his government lost by around 840,000 votes and agreed to hold elections in 1990. The plebiscite garnered a great deal of interest in the international community and financial and technical aid poured into Chile from a number of European political parties and foundations as well as from a variety of US organisations. After the inauguration of Bush in 1989, interest in Latin America moved away from issues of democracy towards the promotion of free trade. Aside from a small spike in interest around Chile's 1989 elections and the inclusion of Chile in Bush's Enterprise for the Americas Initiative, a programme of debt relief, investment incentive and the negotiation of a free trade area, the country's internal affairs were no longer one of Washington's main concerns in the region.

As a result of the extensive human rights abuses of the Pinochet regime, Chile had been of primary interest to the liberal human rights movement throughout the

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1970s. Surprisingly, there is little evidence to suggest that either WOLA or Freedom House commented on or lobbied in Washington about the 1980 constitution until several years after the plebiscite. After 1983, WOLA began to work more consistently in Chile and on Chilean issues, running a conference to mark the tenth anniversary of the coup and beginning a programme for the regularisation and systemisation of Chilean exile policy.<sup>530</sup> Neither Freedom House nor the NED began to take a serious interest in Chile until the mid-1980s when they began to assess the prospects for transition and provide support to opposition parties. For all three organisations, interest in Chile peaked around the 1988 plebiscite and its immediate aftermath before falling off again in the early 1990s. This chapter will examine the networks these organisations had in Chile, the manner in which they applied their own principles to the situation on the ground and the role of each of these institutions in the 1988 plebiscite.

Neither the NED nor Freedom House were particularly well connected in Chile. Indeed, since for the most part the interests of these organisations echoed those of the Reagan administration, in the early part of the 1980s neither organisation took a great deal of interest in Chile. The NED's middle-man funding structure meant that, although it did provide a fair number of grants to the country during this period, it did not make many contacts within its grantee organisations on the ground. What contacts the NED had in Chile were mostly within the US Embassy. While Freedom House did have a larger network within Chile, it consisted mostly of political figures from the right and centre-right parties with almost no representation from the left or from civil society organisations. It is worth noting that, although Freedom House did send telegrams to Pinochet on occasion, none of these three organisations appears to have any contacts within the Pinochet regime itself.

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<sup>530</sup> WOLA Records, Box 9, Final Report on J Roderick MacArthur 1983 Grant to the Washington Office on Latin America (1984).

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During this period, the NED had almost no contact with organisations on the ground in Chile at all. Although it did fund the Central Democrática de Trabajadores (CDT), a trade union affiliated to the Christian Democratic Party, throughout the period, it did not have any recorded contact with anyone in the organisation. Indeed, the only direct contact the NED had on the ground in Chile aside from members of staff from its core grantees was with the US Embassy. In 1985, Gershman visited US embassies in Chile, Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay and Brazil to brief the embassy staff on upcoming NED projects and to review the status of existing projects.<sup>531</sup> Although this is the only recorded visit Gershman made to the country, it suggests that the NED did actively seek to maintain a good relationship with the Embassy in Chile. In his report on the visit, Gershman stated that the programme for his visit was organised by the Embassy in an attempt to foster greater cooperation between the NED and Embassy staff. He also stated that he hoped Embassy staff would begin to identify groups and projects the NED could fund.<sup>532</sup> While Gershman's report does suggest that he met with local organisations that had submitted proposals for funding to explain the NED's aims to them, there is no mention of which local groups he met or the content of these meetings. What is made clear by some cables sent from the State Department to its embassies in Chile, Paraguay and Brazil is that the US embassy in Chile arranged all the meetings Gershman had during his visit to the country.<sup>533</sup> The NED's lack of contacts within Chile calls into question its ability to make informed decisions about which projects it should fund to assist in building democracy in the country. It is clear that the NED's main point of contact within Chile was the US Embassy and, while the Embassy was no doubt very well informed about the situation on the ground in Chile, it approached this

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<sup>531</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 8, Folder 10, Memorandum from Gershman to the Board of Directors: Report on visit to Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Paraguay and Brazil, (22<sup>nd</sup> February 1985).

<sup>532</sup> Ibid.

<sup>533</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 33, Cables from State Department to Embassies in Chile, Paraguay and Brazil, (1985).

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information from a very specific pro-US mind-set. By using the Embassy and its staff as its main (if not only) source of information, the NED could not have received a full, unbiased understanding of the situation on the ground. Although NED core grantees did maintain contact with organisations in Chile and, one assumes, based their decisions about project proposals on first-hand information, once proposals reaching the NED board they were examined and decided on by people who did not necessarily have a full understanding of the situation.

Although Freedom House did not have extensive contact with organisations in Chile, it engaged with local groups significantly more than the NED did during this period. During the Pinochet years, Freedom House did not have a great deal of contact with organisations on the ground. For the most part, its contact with Chilean organisations during the 1980s consisted of visits by representatives of some of Chile's opposition parties. Between 1985 and 1989, Freedom House developed a relationship with the Chilean Christian Democratic Party, a contact which proved productive for it when the party's leader, Patricio Aylwin Azocar, was elected President in 1989. Freedom House was visited by representatives of the party (and its associated youth movement) in both 1985 and 1986 to discuss the process of transition in the lead up to the 1988 plebiscite.<sup>534</sup> Freedom House also brought Aylwin to Washington in 1988 and gave him a platform to discuss his views of Chilean politics with the Washington foreign policy community.<sup>535</sup> When it came to Chile Freedom House engaged with a broader cross-section of the political spectrum than it did in Central America. For example, in the 1980s Freedom House had working relationships with the Chilean Commission on Human Rights. Freedom House translated and republished several of the Commission's reports for circulation both in Washington and to the wider public,

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<sup>534</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitors* (December 1985 and April 1986).

<sup>535</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 12, Letter from Patricio Aylwin to Bruce McColm (18<sup>th</sup> May 1988).

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including its own donors and members.<sup>536</sup> It appeared to have also had a long-standing relationship with the head of the Commission, Jaime Castillo Velasco, appealing to Pinochet to allow Velasco's return from exile in 1981 and publishing a number of the Commission's statements concerning the exiling of several of its members.<sup>537</sup> Indeed, during the 1980s Freedom House engaged quite a bit with the Chilean exile community, receiving much of its information concerning the detention of activists in the early 1980s from Chile Democrático, an organisation of Chilean exiles living in Sweden.<sup>538</sup> Following the election of Aylwin in 1989, Freedom House largely ceased to be interested in Chile and what little contact it had with the country was with the Aylwin government. In 1992 the Aylwin government asked if Freedom House would translate its Human Rights Investigation Report into English and distribute it in the United States.<sup>539</sup> While Freedom House readily agreed to do this, this was pretty much the only engagement the organisation had with Chile between 1990 and 1993.

While Freedom House did not have many contacts in Chile, its Chilean contacts represented a broader political spectrum than those in other countries in the region. During the 1980s, Freedom House developed a largely one-sided relationship with Chile's Vicaría de la Solidaridad which mostly consisted of the Vicaría occasionally providing Freedom House with information. Freedom House also maintained a relationship with the Chilean Human Rights Commission, which, while more centrist than the Vicaría, was a largely apolitical organisation. Freedom House took up the cause of Jaime Castillo Velasco, the head of the Commission by writing to Pinochet in 1981 to demand that he be allowed to return to Chile from exile.<sup>540</sup> While the majority of the

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<sup>536</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 4, Freedom Appeals No 13 (January/February 1982).

<sup>537</sup> FH Records, Box 7, Folder 10, Freedom House Urges Return of Expelled Human Rights Commissioner (12<sup>th</sup> August 1981).

<sup>538</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 4, Freedom Appeals, No. 8 (January – February 1981).

<sup>539</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Freedom House Board of Trustees Meeting (16<sup>th</sup> January 1992).

<sup>540</sup> FH Records, Box 7, Folder 10, Freedom House Urges Return of Expelled Chilean Human Rights Commissioner (1981).

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Freedom House's relationships in Chile were with right and centre-right organisations, it would seem that here Freedom House was more willing to work across the political spectrum. This is reflective of the Reagan administration's response to the situation in Chile in the late 1980s where alliances with the moderate centre left were seen as preferable to the continuation of the Pinochet regime. Although Freedom House's relationships in Chile were spread across a broader political spectrum, this does not appear to have extended to Central America where it focused its attention almost entirely on right and centre-right organisations. This suggests that Freedom House's commitment to the political ideology of its board was stronger than its commitment to providing the most accurate and complete information on the region. It is plausible to suggest Freedom House's relationships in Chile were exceptional and brought about by the difficult relationship both the US government and Freedom House had with Pinochet and many of the pro-Pinochet right-wing organisations in the country.

Although Freedom House had significantly more contacts in Chile than the NED did, the rather paltry network it had during this period seems particularly sparse for an organisation which cited its primary aim as information dissemination. Although Freedom House was more inclined to work with organisations outside its political comfort zone in Chile, it was still receiving only minimal first-hand information concerning the situation on the ground. Aside from the more extensive programme of visits and networking which was put in place surrounding the plebiscite, Freedom House representatives do not appear to have regularly visited the country either. Given that even Freedom House's briefings concerning the plebiscite were based primarily on the findings of a few short delegations, it is plausible to suggest that its interests were less in the accurate dissemination of information and more the reinforcing of Freedom House's pre-existing beliefs concerning the state of democracy and human rights in the country.

Given that it was founded in response to Chile's military coup, it is not surprising that WOLA had an extensive and broad network of contacts on the ground in Chile. For the most part, WOLA's contacts in Chile were civil society and human rights organisations. Throughout the period WOLA regularly met and exchanged information with various Chilean human rights, religious and professional groups. In 1983, it worked on a project with Chilean exiles during which it worked closely with the legal director of the Vicaría and the Chilean Commission on Human Rights.<sup>541</sup> Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, WOLA had extensive contact with the Vicaría. It was regularly visited by Vicaría lawyers and disseminated Vicaría reports while also using them for its own analysis of the human rights situation in Chile.<sup>542</sup> WOLA also worked with other Chilean human rights organisations, particularly the Chilean Commission on Human Rights which it often invited to send members and speakers to WOLA seminars and receptions.<sup>543</sup> It is worth noting that WOLA's relationships with both of these organisations continued into the 1990s and WOLA wrote to the Chile desk at the State Department suggesting that staff meet with these and other human rights organisations directly to hear their views.<sup>544</sup> In addition to its engagement with human rights organisations, it also maintained contact with Chile's labour movement and several professional organisations such as the Chilean Bar Association. In 1988, WOLA hosted a seminar on Chile's labour movement with the president of the National Confederation of Federations and Unions of Seafarers, Longshoremen and Fishermen of Chile.<sup>545</sup> Similarly, members of the Chilean Bar Association often visited WOLA and were regularly speakers at WOLA's conferences and seminars, most notably at a large

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<sup>541</sup> WOLA Records, Box 9, Final Report on J Roderick MacArthur 1983 Grant to the Washington Office on Latin America, (1983).

<sup>542</sup> WOLA Records, Box 29, *Washington Office on Latin America 1984 Annual Report* (1984).

<sup>543</sup> WOLA Records, Box 303, Advert for a reception concerning the legal and electoral situation in Chile (undated).

<sup>544</sup> WOLA Records, Box 65, Letter from Rachel Neild to Curtis Kamman, Chile Desk State Department (21<sup>st</sup> October 1991).

<sup>545</sup> WOLA Records, Box 303 Advert for a seminar on Chile's labour movement (1988).



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conference entitled “The Search for Justice in Chile” in 1987.<sup>546</sup> In addition to human rights groups and the Bar Association, WOLA also had extensive contacts within the Church. These contacts included a large number of US missionaries in Chile as well as the Chilean Church’s other two key human rights centres in Temuco and Copiapó and the Servicio de Paz y Justicia (SERPAJ).<sup>547</sup> Moreover, like Freedom House, WOLA too worked closely with the Chilean exile community particularly in the early 1980s. From 1983 to 1984 WOLA ran a project with a group of Chilean exiles and lawyers seeking to regulate Chile’s exile policy.<sup>548</sup>

While the majority of WOLA’s contacts in Chile were civil society organisations, it did have some (albeit very few) connections within Chile’s political parties. In the course of the 1980s WOLA brought representatives from Chile’s Socialist and Radical Parties to Washington and organised seminars where these politicians could share their view of Chile’s transition with the Washington foreign policy community.<sup>549</sup> Moreover, when WOLA sent a delegation in 1986 to assess whether continued US support for development bank loans for Chile was consistent with US law, it arranged meetings with a number of representatives of the Pinochet regime including the finance minister and the Vice-President of Chile’s central bank.<sup>550</sup> Although it had no relationship with the Pinochet regime and no further contact with any of the government representatives it encountered on this delegation, the fact that it was able to receive a response from the regime when Freedom House was unable to gives an indication of the extent of WOLA’s connections and reputation in the country. While WOLA did have a

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<sup>546</sup> WOLA Records, Box 4, Human Rights and Latin America: A Final Report to the Ford Foundation from the Washington Office on Latin America, (30<sup>th</sup> June 1988).

<sup>547</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, *Conditions for Chile’s Plebiscite on Pinochet: A report based on a joint WOLA-CIIR delegation to Chile* (1988).

<sup>548</sup> WOLA Records, Box 9, Final Report on J. Roderick MacArthur Grant to the Washington Office on Latin America (1983).

<sup>549</sup> WOLA Records, Box 303, Collection of adverts for WOLA seminars, (various).

<sup>550</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, *Chile, the Multilateral Development Banks and US Human Rights Law: A Delegation Report* (1986).

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very wide-reaching network of contacts within Chile, it must be said that it was primarily made up of organisations and individuals of the left and centre-left. There is, for example, little evidence to suggest that WOLA had much engagement with the Christian Democratic Party before or after its election to government. Although WOLA's contacts in the country were primarily within grassroots and civil society organisations, it is clear that it had a detailed, albeit not necessarily first-hand, knowledge of Chile's political parties. For example, in a handwritten note concerning the 1989 election, a member of WOLA's staff analysed the country's reactions to the candidates running stating that Hernán Büchi of the Unión Demócrata Independiente was thought "weird" and "suspicious" by many Chileans due to his "habit of yoghurt eating".<sup>551</sup>

As can be seen, when it came to Chile, only WOLA could be said to have been a truly transnational organisation, incorporating into its work an extensive network of contacts and connections on the ground. Where the NED and Freedom House largely seem to have based their programming decisions and their views of the country's needs on their own second-hand and strongly US-centric information and attitudes, WOLA tried to listen to the desires and needs of organisations on the ground and worked to ensure that these groups were heard within Washington either in person or through the medium of WOLA reports. Despite their lack of contacts on the ground Freedom House and the NED appear to have been significantly more successful in gaining support and putting their work to the Washington foreign policy community. Although WOLA made more headway with its work on Chile than it did with its work in Central America (see Chapter 6), this was largely due to the strong groups of supporters in Congress that it had built around its work in Chile since 1973. Moreover, WOLA's work did not really

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<sup>551</sup> WOLA Records, Box 63, Handwritten note concerning Chilean elections (1989).

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start to reach the Executive branch until after 1986 when the Reagan administration's attitude towards the Pinochet regime had soured. Before that, its focus on Pinochet's human rights abuses had been unpopular with an administration which saw Pinochet as a necessary evil in the fight against communism regardless of how accurate the information it presented. By the time of the plebiscite, the interests of all three organisations and the US government had largely aligned behind ensuring the vote was open and fair and, as a result, WOLA was rehabilitated in the eyes of the US Executive.

### Implementation of Principles

Given the principles these organisations held (see Chapter 1) one would expect that the NED and Freedom House would prioritise democracy issues in their work on the ground while WOLA would focus more on liberal human rights issues; in the case of Chile this largely held true. That said, although the NED very rarely used any human rights rhetoric in its work in Chile, focusing instead on the development and promotion of pro-US democratic groups, Freedom House did engage with the issue of human rights in Chile to an extent, particularly in the earlier 1980s. Moreover, while WOLA's main focus both before and after 1988 was human rights and justice issues, for the duration of the plebiscite campaign it too prioritised issues of political rights and democracy. From 1983, the NED ran a programme in Chile which was heavily focused on shifting the balance of power in the democratic opposition to those organisations which were pro-US. Before 1986 the majority of NED grants to Chile were made through the FTUI to Chile's CDT.<sup>552</sup> This was, initially at least, a relatively small trade union affiliated with the Christian Democratic Party. At first, it seems peculiar that the NED would fund this small union over the much larger and more powerful Comando

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<sup>552</sup> Loc, NED, *Annual Report 1985*, JC421.N37a, p. 14.

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Nacional de Trabajadores (CNT) which had been established in 1983 as part of the renewed call for democracy. However, the CDT's strong anti-communist line made them a very favourable candidate for NED funding. The CDT had grown out of a small group of Christian Democrat union leaders which the AFL-CIO had been funding since 1976.<sup>553</sup> According to the NED annual report of 1984, the CDT (at the time called the Union Democrática de Trabajadores or UDT) was "severely curbed by government restrictions and threatened by communist-subsidised rivals".<sup>554</sup> In reality, the CNT received significantly more state harassment than the CDT, but since it willingly worked with organisations and individuals who identified as communist or socialist, it never received NED grants. When the CNT and other organisations merged into the Central Unitaria de Trabajadores (CUT) in 1989, the NED sought to gain influence in this new organisation through small grants and to mould it into a moderate, pro-US force within the democratic opposition.<sup>555</sup>

In many ways, it would appear that the NED's primary interest in Chile was to ensure that the Chilean opposition was both generally in favour of US goals and also politically and economically aligned with the US government of the time. Despite the NED's repeated claims of political impartiality in funding, in Chile it consistently funded a small number of organisations which were, almost exclusively, centrist or right of centre. The funding of the CDT over the larger and more influential CNT is clear evidence of the favour given to those organisations which fell in line politically and of the manner in which the NED sought to reshape the opposition. Whilst the CDT remained very much a minority organisation between 1983 and 1989 and consistently lost members to the CNT throughout the period, funding from the NED helped it to

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<sup>553</sup> Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalisation, US Intervention and Hegemony*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1996) pp. 189 – 190.

<sup>554</sup> NED Annual Report <<http://www.ned.org/docs/annual/1984Report.pdf>> (1984).

<sup>555</sup> NED Annual Report <<http://www.ned.org/docs/annual/1989%20NED%20Annual%20Report.pdf>> (1989) p. 30.

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develop, to retain a broad infrastructure and to establish bases in the vast majority of urban centres throughout Chile, turning it into a force that had to be acknowledged. Moreover, during this period the NED also consistently provided funding to the Catholic University of Chile, the Christian Democratic Party's Centro de Desarrollo Juvenil and a number of small conservative think tanks such as the Centro de Estudios del Desarrollo. In 1986, Gershman wrote a letter to Henry Kissinger discussing his ideas for programming in Chile. In the letter he stated that the NED should only support those democrats unwilling to enter into coalition with the Chilean Communist Party and that there could be no democracy in Chile without a "centrist coalition that [excluded] Communists".<sup>556</sup> This attitude informed most of the NED's policy making in Chile. Until the formation of the Concertación de Partidos por el NO in 1988, the NED went so far as to be reluctant to work with any leftist organisations in the country. Once the coalition was formed the NED was forced to allow its leftist members to be included in some of the broader education projects it funded, but it continued to provide specific funding only to the Christian Democrats, their affiliated organisations and other conservative private organisations. While the NED clearly sought to shape the Chilean opposition into a movement with which the United States felt it could work, it did justify its programmes in terms of democracy. Many of the programmes it funded sought to help shape Chile's democratic processes and educate the opposition in "democratic values" (as the NED defined them). In 1984 the NED funded a project with the US Overseas Cooperative Development Council to examine how cooperatives could advance Chile's democratic process.<sup>557</sup> Between 1986 and 1988, the NED funded conservative public policy institutes in collecting data about the political behaviour of Chileans, the Centro de Desarrollo Juvenil in running "democratic education

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<sup>556</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 3, Folder 19, Letter from Gershman to Kissinger (January 10<sup>th</sup> 1986).

<sup>557</sup> NED, *Annual Report*, JC421.N37a, (1985).

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programmes” for youth and Freedom House to support Editorial Andante, an independent Chilean publishing house, to produce books promoting the spread of democratic values.<sup>558</sup> As the plebiscite approached, the emphasis on democracy and democratic processes in NED programming grew. In 1986 the NED funded a symposium on the problems of democracy which examined democratic theory and case studies of democratic transitions. Alongside this it also funded seminars for the opposition parties on how best to strengthen democratic processes in the country.<sup>559</sup> The NED also began to fund educational programmes around this time which focused on teaching the “principles of democracy”.<sup>560</sup> In addition to a focus on democratic principles and processes, the NED also sought to promote concepts of liberal economics in Chile. In 1987 the NED funded a series of seminars promoting the importance of private enterprise along with a number of position papers concerning management-labour relations.<sup>561</sup> Unfortunately there is no indication of the detailed contents of these position papers, but it would seem that the NED did emphasise the importance of certain tenets of liberal economics in practice as well as in its Statement of Principles.

With the end of the Cold War and the return of Chilean democracy this interest in the promotion of free market economics combined with an attempt to strengthen democratic infrastructure and legal education in Chile.<sup>562</sup> Despite the fact that Chile was, after 1989, a functional democracy the NED continued to couch its programmes in the language of democracy. The NED’s programme for the 1989 Chilean election centred on providing a forum for political debate between parties about reform and

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<sup>558</sup> NED, *Annual Reports*, JC421.N37a, (1986 and 1986).

<sup>559</sup> NED, *Annual Report 1986*, JC421.N37a, (1986) pp. 31-34.

<sup>560</sup> NED, *Annual Report 1987*, JC421.N37a, (1987) pp. 49-50.

<sup>561</sup> NED, *Annual Report 1987*, JC421.N37a, (1987) p. 48.

<sup>562</sup> NED *Annual Report* <<http://www.ned.org/docs/annual/1990%20NED%20Annual%20Report.pdf>> (1990) p. 38 and NED *Annual Report* <<http://www.ned.org/docs/annual/1991%20NED%20Annual%20Report.pdf>> (1991) pp. 57-58.

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transition<sup>563</sup>. After the election, the NED capitalised on its grantees' existing relations with the Christian Democrats and other centre-right organisations to support the new administration by assisting in local government reform and running training programmes for municipal leaders for the 1992 municipal elections.<sup>564</sup> In 1989, the US embassy in Chile sent a cable to the State Department stating that their continuing policy goal was to “facilitate Chile’s transition to democracy” and that as part of this the NED was working with the embassy on “appropriate” future projects.<sup>565</sup> Also in 1992 it funded a programme of political education for “Chile’s democratic labor [sic] movement” which sought to “consolidate the place of democratic labor [sic]”.<sup>566</sup> During the 1990s the NED also funded a programme seeking to educate students and staff at the Catholic University of Chile in legal and civic issues.<sup>567</sup> Moreover, in 1991 the NED funded an international conference in Santiago for representatives from free-market parties to discuss the “failure of communism and the future of democracy in Latin America”.<sup>568</sup> The NED also continued to provide funding only to those groups which were favourable to the United States. In the post-Cold War world of the early 1990s, the NED remained an overwhelmingly anti-communist organisation operating very much with a Cold War belief in the primacy of US-style democracy and US values. Throughout this period it provided the NRI with funds to organise party-building programmes for the leaders of the “democratic centre and centre-right”.<sup>569</sup> However, no comparable grant was given to the NDI or any other organisation and no programmes

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<sup>563</sup> NED *Annual Report* <http://www.ned.org/docs/annual/1989%20NED%20Annual%20Report.pdf> (1989) pp. 30-31.

<sup>564</sup> NED *Annual Report 1992* JC421.N37a (1992), p. 67.

<sup>565</sup> US Embassy, Chile to State Department, “Goals and Workplans for FY89: Mid-year Review and Update” <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/nsa/documents/CL/02676/all.pdf>> (1989).

<sup>566</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>567</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>568</sup> NED *Annual Report 1991*

<<http://www.ned.org/docs/annual/1991%20NED%20Annual%20Report.pdf>> (1991) p. 58.

<sup>569</sup> NED *Annual Report 1990* <<http://www.ned.org/docs/annual/1990%20NED%20Annual%20Report.pdf>> (1990) p. 38.

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involving moderate leftist or centre-left organisations were run. That said, once Chile had been transferred into the hands of the Christian Democrats and the country's democratic procedures were deemed to be functional again, the NED's interest in the country significantly decreased. By 1992, its programmes for Chile numbered only 3 compared to fifteen listed in the NED's annual report for 1988.<sup>570</sup>

Unlike the NED, which took absolutely no interest in any of Chile's human rights issues, until 1986 Freedom House did engage with liberal human rights issues such as press freedom and political arrests. Much of its involvement until 1985 involved publishing and circulating human rights reports and the Freedom Survey and engaging with Pinochet's press restrictions. In 1981 Freedom House cabled Pinochet concerning the exile of Jaime Castillo Velasco, a member of the Chilean Human Rights Commission, and requesting the release of four human rights activists arrested by the regime.<sup>571</sup> It also sent a message Chile's Minister of the Interior in 1983 requesting information about the whereabouts of the trade unionist Jose Luis Baeza Cruces who had disappeared in 1974.<sup>572</sup> Throughout the 1980s Freedom House took a great deal of interest in issues concerning press freedom across the world and Chile was no exception. During this period Freedom House wrote a number of cables to Pinochet concerning press freedom in Chile. These included requests for the lifting of the ban on Radio Cooperativa, the release of Juan Pablo Cardenas and a protest against Decree 320 which stopped the media from conveying "facts about the private life of any person".<sup>573</sup> Moreover, before 1986 Freedom House translated and reprinted a number of reports by Chilean human rights organisations. While the State Department looked down on the sources used in these reports, Abrams does appear to have believed that the reports

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<sup>570</sup> NED, *Annual Reports*, JC421.N37a, (1988 and 1992).

<sup>571</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 7, Memo: To Members (1981).

<sup>572</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 7, Memo: To Members (January 1983).

<sup>573</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor*, (July 1984).



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themselves had a strong influence on Congress and the press.<sup>574</sup> Freedom House's involvement with the Vicaría and the Chilean Human Rights Commission suggests that it took some interest in more traditional liberal human rights issues although this contact was minimal. In the early 1980s Freedom House re-published the Vicaría's "Report on the Status of Human Rights in Chile" and it used information and analysis from Vicaría reports throughout the decade.<sup>575</sup> Despite sending several cables to Pinochet protesting the lack of press freedom and the incarceration of political opponents, in 1982 Freedom House had claimed that the human rights situation in Chile had improved because there were no more disappearances.<sup>576</sup> This engagement in human rights was combined with an interest in democratic transition in Chile. In 1981 Freedom House met with the Institute of Contemporary Studies in Chile to discuss how to prepare Chile's youth for post-transition leadership roles.<sup>577</sup>

By 1985 Freedom House's interest in liberal human rights issues had faded as it began to engage with the transition process more deeply. In 1986 it published an advisory, which was circulated to Congress and the State Department, entitled *On Supporting Democracy in Chile with Consistency*. This advisory suggested that Chile was in dire need of democratisation to avoid the kind of violent polarisation characteristic of Central America. It urged the United States to support the National Accord on Transition to Full Democracy and channel its aid to the Chilean unions, professional organisations and church groups that signed the agreement.<sup>578</sup> Although this did focus predominately on the need for democratisation in Chile it also mentioned

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<sup>574</sup> State Department, Memo from Elliot Abrams to Stephen Bosworth: Chile Certification <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C0000600D.pdf>> (26<sup>th</sup> February 1982).

<sup>575</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 4, *Freedom Appeals* No 12 (Nov/Dec 1981).

<sup>576</sup> FH Records, Box 130, Folder 2, *Freedom at Issue*, No. 64, (February 1982).

<sup>577</sup> FH Records, Box 7, Folder 7, Activity Report, (1981).

<sup>578</sup> FH Records, Box 23, Folder 2, *On Supporting Democracy in Chile with Consistency* (18<sup>th</sup> February 1986).

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the threat posed to hemispheric and Chilean stability by human rights abuses in Chile.<sup>579</sup>

Freedom House organised a conference in 1987 entitled *Democratising the Hemisphere* which focused on methods and how best to assist with democratisation in Chile and

Paraguay.<sup>580</sup> Aside from these large projects between 1985 and 1988 Freedom House

expressed minimal interest in the situation in Chile. Although Sussman did visit Chile,

Brazil and Paraguay on a trip in 1987, very little appears to have come from this visit

except a suggestion that Freedom House should develop a version of its Education for

Democracy programme for Latin America.<sup>581</sup> Freedom House's interest in Chile and in

the consolidation of Chile's democracy picked up after the plebiscite and continued into

the 1990s. After 1988 Freedom House began to engage with Civitas, a voter

participation group affiliated to the Chilean Catholic church, this relationship

culminated in Freedom House taking a member of Civitas on a delegation to observe El

Salvador's municipal elections in 1991.<sup>582</sup> In the same year Douglas Payne gave a

statement to the Subcommittees on Western Hemisphere Affairs and Human Rights and

International organisations stating that Chile had better prospects for consolidating its

democracy due to its "historic appreciation for democratic principles".<sup>583</sup> Although

Freedom House did not appear to have much interest in issues of human rights in Chile

after the plebiscite, it did publish the Human Rights Investigation Report in English at

the request of the Aylwin administration.<sup>584</sup> Given the general lack of interest in liberal

human rights issues at this time, this appears to have been more about keeping cordial

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<sup>579</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor* (February 1986).

<sup>580</sup> FH Records, Box 19, Folder 1, *Letter to Members*, (7<sup>th</sup> December 1987).

<sup>581</sup> FH Records, Box 164, Sussman's Report of his Visit to Brazil, Paraguay and Chile (1987).

<sup>582</sup> FH Records, Box 65, Folder 2, Project Purpose (1991).

<sup>583</sup> FH Records, Box 70, Folder 8, Prepared Statement of Douglas Payne to the Subcommittee on Western Hemisphere Affairs and the Subcommittee on Human Rights and International Organisations: Human Rights and Democracy in Latin America (21<sup>st</sup> February 1991).

<sup>584</sup> FH Records, Box 148, Board of Trustees Meeting (16<sup>th</sup> June 1992).

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relations with the Aylwin administration than about the report being reflective of the interests of Freedom House itself.

Until the plebiscite, the majority of WOLA's work in Chile was concerned with human rights issues as it had been since 1973. In 1980, working with several other US based advocacy and religious organisations, WOLA compiled a briefing for the State Department on what it identified as the five key human rights abuses in Chile: religious persecution, prolonged detention without charge, torture, the plebiscite (as mentioned in Chile's 1980 constitution) and the decree law which gave the regime the ability to exile internally.<sup>585</sup> Indeed, WOLA's human rights work in Chile largely focused on these five issues. Following this statement in 1983 WOLA began to formulate a programme to regulate Chilean exile policy.<sup>586</sup> This project involved extensive consultation and meetings with Chilean human rights groups and Chilean exiles and the end result was given to a number of western (primarily European) governments which pressured the Pinochet government to accept the suggested reforms. In 1982 WOLA and a number of other human rights organisations including Amnesty and Americas Watch wrote to the State Department enquiring and raising concerns about the trials of members of Izquierda Cristiana, a leftist political party which had been banned with the coup in 1973; the members arrested included two members of the Chilean Commission on Human Rights.<sup>587</sup> As the 1980s progressed and the plebiscite approached WOLA continued to raise issues of human rights abuses in Chile. In 1986 WOLA contacted the

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<sup>585</sup> State Department, Human Rights in Chile: A Joint Statement by the International League for Human Rights, the Lawyers Committee for International Human Rights, the Inter-American Association for Democracy and Freedom, the Human Rights Office of the National Council of Churches and the Washington Office on Latin America

<<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C00005E30.pdf>> (11<sup>th</sup> September 1980).

<sup>586</sup> WOLA Records, Box 9, Letter from Lance Lindblom (MacArthur Foundation) to Joe Eldridge (23<sup>rd</sup> July 1984).

<sup>587</sup> State Department, Request for Embassy Discussion of Izquierda Cristiana Case with GOC Officials, <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C000060D2.pdf>> (17<sup>th</sup> August 1982).

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State Department requesting information concerning the alleged torture of twenty-two students in a ranch north of Temuco.<sup>588</sup> In the same year WOLA organised a delegation to assess whether Chile's human rights situation was good enough to merit the United States voting for it to receive multinational development bank loans. The delegation's report concluded that the Pinochet regime was responsible for widespread human rights abuses including torture, civil liberty restrictions and threats against the families of detainees.<sup>589</sup>

In the years following the plebiscite WOLA's interest in human rights in Chile continued. It met with the Chile desk to discuss the human rights situation in the country under the Aylwin government and wrote to Aylwin's Minister for Justice to request the release of political prisoners from the Pinochet era.<sup>590</sup> Between 1990 and 1991 WOLA also provided the Aylwin government with information about US policymaking processes, highlighting concerns about cooperation with human rights investigations.<sup>591</sup> It also sought to bring human rights back to the forefront of the State Department's Chile desk through its meetings with staff concerning the situation on the ground and suggesting local human rights groups the Department should contact.<sup>592</sup> Throughout the period, WOLA had worked with the Letelier-Moffitt Memorial Fund and a number of advocacy groups seeking justice for the murders of Orlando Letelier and Ronni Moffitt and, after easing the pressure for this issue during the plebiscite and election years, they continued to work on a resolution into the 1990s, while acknowledging that the Aylwin government was attempting to resolve the murders.

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<sup>588</sup> State Department FOIA Virtual Reading Room, Human Rights Enquiry Reported Arrest of 22 Students <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C000069DF.pdf>> (31<sup>st</sup> January 1986).

<sup>589</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Chile, the Multilateral Development Banks and US Human Rights Law: A Delegation Report (1986).

<sup>590</sup> WOLA Records, Box 67, Letter to Chile's Minister of Justice (21<sup>st</sup> December 1990).

<sup>591</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation Grant No. 830-0934-3 1<sup>st</sup> July 1990 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 1991 (1991).

<sup>592</sup> WOLA Records, Box 65, Letter from Rachel Neild to Curtis Kamman, (21<sup>st</sup> October 1991).

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WOLA also voiced its concern for ensuring justice for Chile's victims of torture, hosting a discussion in Washington entitled *Torture in Chile: Judicial Investigation and Official Impunity* with Judge René García Villegas.<sup>593</sup> Furthermore, at this time, WOLA was particularly concerned with civil-military relations in the country. In 1990, WOLA sent several memos to the offices of members of Congress advising against the repeal of the Kennedy-Harkin Amendment stating that a repeal would undermine Aylwin's attempts to re-establish civilian control over the military.<sup>594</sup> These Congressional memoranda were hugely successful and the amendment to repeal the Kennedy-Harkin Amendment was withdrawn.<sup>595</sup>

Although WOLA's primary interest in its work in Chile was human rights, it did take an interest in the course of transition and the fairness of the democracy created by the transition process. In addition to the work it did concerning the plebiscite, in 1989, WOLA published a report and a series of briefing papers on democratic transition in Chile. The report outlined the various obstacles to complete transition, making specific mention of the inherently anti-democratic institutions enforced by the 1980 constitution and calling for the United States to support the Chilean democrats in their efforts to re-establish and consolidate democracy.<sup>596</sup> Even here, WOLA was still concerned about human rights issues stating that democracy required that the "truth about past human rights abuse be acknowledged" at the very least.<sup>597</sup> The second paper in WOLA's 1989 series of briefings was primarily concerned with the upcoming election, focusing on the candidates, campaigns and regulations involved.<sup>598</sup> WOLA was also concerned with the

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<sup>593</sup> WOLA Records, Box 303, Advert for discussion with René García Villegas, (1989).

<sup>594</sup> WOLA Records, Box 65, Memo from Rachel Neild Regarding Roth Amendment on Chile (20<sup>th</sup> March 1990).

<sup>595</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934-3, 1<sup>st</sup> July 1990 – 30<sup>th</sup> June 1991 (1991).

<sup>596</sup> WOLA Records, Box 64, *Chile's Transition to Democracy*, (1989).

<sup>597</sup> Ibid.

<sup>598</sup> WOLA Records, Box 68, *Chile's Transition to Democracy Briefing Series Plans* (1989).

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role played by international interference in Chilean democracy, particularly that of the NED and USAID. In 1990 WOLA organised a conference examining and critiquing the place of US electoral assistance in Chile, Nicaragua and Panama. This conference and the related report, were the result of a series of investigations carried out by WOLA since 1988 involving interviews with NED and USAID personnel. The conference itself involved participants and delegates from a number of religious and secular NGOs, Congressional staff, NED and USAID personnel and NDI and NRI staff who all assessed the shortcomings of the NED and USAID and their electoral assistance programmes. Aside from some exceptions WOLA took to the basic structure of the NED, it found little fault with the idea of NED electoral assistance to Chile and even went so far as to praise it for its focus on those aspects of the No campaign which had proved vital to its success.<sup>599</sup> However, it did state that this type of assistance was only acceptable in the case of the plebiscite and was far too interventionist for a multi-party election.<sup>600</sup>

In Chile neither the NED nor Freedom House regularly used the rhetoric of human rights. Unlike in Central America the situation in Chile was such that, by 1985, the desire to see democracy restored and Pinochet removed in Chile no longer had much controversy attached to it in the United States and, since the source of the human rights abuses was primarily the Pinochet regime, there was no need for these organisations to nod to more traditional human rights issues in conjunction with calls for democracy. The NED took no interest in Chile's human rights issues, making no effort even to engage with Chile's human rights groups, which many observers saw as integral to the successful consolidation of democracy post-transition. Instead, its programmes were

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<sup>599</sup> WOLA Records, Box 25, *US Electoral Assistance and Democratic Development: Chile, Nicaragua and Panama* (1990).

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*

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designed around ensuring that the pro-US, centre-right organisations held the balance of power in the democratic opposition and, later in the 1980s, helping the opposition to electoral victory. While Freedom House did engage with issues of human rights in the early 1980s, its involvement was minimal, mostly concerned with press freedoms (a consistent priority for Freedom House globally) and combined with an interest in transition. As the decade progressed, Freedom House's engagement with human rights issues in Chile waned and its focus turned entirely towards securing democratic transition in the country.

WOLA too created its programme in Chile very much in line with its internal principles. Although founded in reaction to the removal of Chilean democracy, WOLA's focus rapidly became trying to uphold international human rights law within Chile. This focus continued through the 1980s and, even throughout and after transition, WOLA put liberal human rights issues and reconciliation at the top of its agenda. Unlike Nicaragua which had a highly factionalised internal political situation and had divided opinions in the United States, the nature of the Pinochet dictatorship and Chile's transition process meant that there was space in the Washington debate surrounding Chile for both the liberal human rights focused position and the neo-conservative, democracy focused position. While the NED and Freedom House's work on Chile did, broadly, fall in line with the US government's policy towards the country and, as a result, they both had more success in their work in Chile during this time, post-1985 WOLA's strong human rights stance does not appear to have hindered its work as much as it did in Nicaragua. Even before the Reagan administration's attitude to the Pinochet regime changed, WOLA's human rights stance concerning Chile was well established enough within Congress that it was still able to make some headway in its work on the country.

### The 1988 Plebiscite

Although a defining moment in the country's move to democracy, the Chilean plebiscite was unique among Latin American political transitions. Despite being a referendum on the continuation of Pinochet's government, the plebiscite was not a multi-party election and, as a result electoral aid was less contentious than it was in Nicaragua. The opposition consisted of parties from across the political spectrum along with civil society groups, unions and other professional organisations. The plebiscite received a great deal of international attention both media and political in the form of electoral aid and election monitoring by non-state and inter-governmental organisations. Indeed, the plebiscite garnered more international interest, particularly from the United States and Western European governments, than the actual election did the following year. All three of the organisations in question organised special programmes surrounding the plebiscite. For Freedom House and WOLA these primarily consisted of sending delegations to Chile to assess the situation on the ground, while Congress granted the NED a special appropriation to provide assistance to the No Campaign. For both the NED and Freedom House the plebiscite represented the peak of their involvement and interest in Chile.

All in all, the NED spent around \$1.6 million on its programme for the plebiscite, \$1 million came from the special appropriation and the NED added around \$600,000 from its normal budget. The special appropriation was part of a concentrated effort on the part of the US government to distance itself from the Pinochet regime. Unlike the NED's regular annual budget, the special appropriation came from the budget of the USAID and was the first time Congress had sought to control how the NED spent their budget. Despite the non-partisan nature of the plebiscite, the



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appropriation for electoral assistance caused a great deal of controversy in both the United States and Chile. Like most of the NED's projects in Chile, the grant programme for the plebiscite was clearly designed to promote an outcome favourable to US interests in the country. The appropriation was required to go to organisations affiliated with the No campaign and most of the projects funded involved voter registration and education campaigns, technical assistance and activities to increase turnouts on the day.<sup>601</sup> For example, the NED funded the Centro de Desarrollo Juvenil to provide ID card photos required for voter registration to low income households.<sup>602</sup> It also assisted the independent newspaper *La Epoca* in purchasing printing equipment and supplies and provided technical assistance to the No Campaign in designing effective publicity.<sup>603</sup> The NED provided the NDI with funds to help opposition groups purchase radio spots and newspaper adverts and produce pamphlets, banners and publicity photos.<sup>604</sup> Moreover, the NED funded education projects and seminars discussing the process of democratic transition in Chile.<sup>605</sup> These projects were designed to counteract the restrictions placed on the opposition by the Pinochet government and help opposition organisations to get their message out to a greater proportion of the Chilean population. For the most part, these projects made use of the same local organisations the NED had funded since the early 1980s, democratic education seminars were provided to CDT members in an attempt to strengthen their political power while Editorial Andante was given funding to produce "citizenship manuals" for the population.<sup>606</sup> In addition to the funding that was given directly to those involved in the

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<sup>601</sup> National Endowment for Democracy, (Non-U.S. Classification), Memorandum for Record, Annotated Copy, January 27, 1988, <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/nsa/documents/CL/02587/all.pdf>>

<sup>602</sup> LoC, NED, *Annual Report 1988*, JC421.N37a (1988) p. 34.

<sup>603</sup> National Endowment for Democracy, (Non-U.S. Classification), Memorandum for Record, Annotated Copy, January 27, 1988, <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/nsa/documents/CL/02587/all.pdf>>.

<sup>604</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 2, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs Biannual Report, (19<sup>th</sup> January 1989).

<sup>605</sup> NED, *Annual Report 1988*, JC421.N37a (1988) p. 35.

<sup>606</sup> NED, *Annual Report*, JC421.N37a (1988) p. 33.

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No Campaign, the NED did fund a cross-party delegation of electoral observers who were in Chile on election day, but this was the only genuinely non-partisan project the NED funded in Chile in 1988. Predictably, the NED's programme for the plebiscite brought it into direct conflict with the Pinochet regime.

In June 1988, the pro-Pinochet Chilean newspaper *El Mercurio* published an editorial criticising the NED's democracy promotion programme. This was followed about 10 days later by a letter to the House of Representatives from the Chilean Ambassador Felipe Errázuriz Hernán doing the same. The *El Mercurio* article accused the NED of interfering in Chilean domestic politics by funding the No Campaign, stating that the assistance was "not a neutral and impartial option to promote democracy".<sup>607</sup> Similarly, Hernán's letter questioned why the NED was attempting to promote democratic values in Chile when the plebiscite process was designed to achieve democratic transition.<sup>608</sup> Moreover, the fact that the majority of the funding for the plebiscite programme came from the special appropriation raised questions among regular recipients of NED funding about the independence of the NED as an organisation. The sudden involvement of Congress in NED programming, gave the impression of, if not a loss of independence, than at least a strengthening of the relationship between the NED and the US government. In Chile, this translated into reluctance on the part of beneficiaries to take money from the NED or its core grantees.<sup>609</sup> For example, a member of the Christian Democratic Party suggested that the NED funding contained "moral dilemmas" but was, in the long run, the "lesser evil".<sup>610</sup> As this quotation suggests the image of the NED as a US-government

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<sup>607</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 8, Folder 22, Translation of *El Mercurio* Editorial: NED Assistance (5 June 1988).

<sup>608</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 8, Folder 22, Letter from Hernán to Norman Shumway (15 June 1988).

<sup>609</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 7, Folder 27, Letter from Edward Donley to William Brock III (Apr 29 1988).

<sup>610</sup> Christian, Shirley, "Group is Channelling US Funds to Parties Opposing Pinochet" in *the New York Times* (Jan 15, 1988) p. A1.

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influenced organisation did not stop organisations in the Chilean opposition from accepting NED funds but it did make it more difficult for the NED to find new democratic organisations willing to accept aid and may go some way to account for the reduction in programming from the plebiscite to the 1989 election.<sup>611</sup> Although it raised very few questions in the United States, the one-sided nature of NED programming during the plebiscite sparked a debate in Chile concerning the US's intentions towards Chilean democracy. The funding of the No Campaign not only opened up the NED to accusations of interference in domestic political processes, but also came very close to violating the NED's own regulation regarding the funding of individuals running for office. Although the NED did not fund political parties during the plebiscite and it was not influencing a representative election, the fact that the NED so openly chose sides in the plebiscite let many to question its impartial credentials and set a precedent for the partisan funding which occurred during the Nicaraguan election the following year.

While it is impossible to say whether or not the NED funding had a meaningful effect on the outcome of the plebiscite, it can be said that its funding programme went some way to altering the structures of influence and power within the democratic opposition. Given Chilean public opinion leading up to the plebiscite, it is highly likely the regime would have lost regardless of NED involvement and it is likely the NED were aware of this. As a result, the programmes funded were primarily designed to help the NED's grantees (and by extension the United States) to develop stronger relationships with the moderate centre and centre-right elements of Chile's opposition while helping to tip the balance of the plebiscite in favour of the No Campaign. Within the opposition, the NED used its funding to keep the balance of power in the hands of the moderate Christian Democrats and away from the leftist parties. However, NED aid

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<sup>611</sup> For full lists of organisations funded by the NED year on year see the NED Annual Reports.

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proved to be something of a double-edged sword for the opposition movement as a whole. Although still at a campaigning disadvantage, through NED-funded voter registration campaigns, education programmes and the provision of technical assistance, the No Campaign was able to reach a wider cross-section of Chilean society and to campaign more effectively. Moreover, NED aid strengthened the infrastructure of many of the moderate opposition organisations and parties. Accepting aid from the NED also opened the opposition up to accusations and criticism from the Pinochet government and its supporters who painted them as dependent on foreign aid and co-opted by foreign governments.

Freedom House's programme concerning the plebiscite primarily consisted of providing information concerning the situation on the ground in Chile to the Washington foreign policy community. The only project Freedom House was involved with which attempted to influence the situation in Chile was administering the NED grant to work with Editorial Andante producing a series of pamphlets to assist citizens in understanding their political rights.<sup>612</sup> These pamphlets included a breakdown of the histories and philosophies of the 19 parties involved in the plebiscite and a pamphlet called "Instructions to Poll Watchers", which was used as a training manual by both the Sí and No Campaigns.<sup>613</sup> Aside from this, before and during the plebiscite, Freedom House wrote a collection of briefing reports and organised a delegation of observers to monitor the vote. It compiled a briefing booklet for delegations observing the plebiscite entitled "What to Watch for and What to Ask: Plebiscite in Chile", in which they suggested the biggest threats to the fairness of the plebiscite would be from intimidation both at polling stations and during campaigning.<sup>614</sup> They also suggested that observers

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<sup>612</sup> State Department FOIA Virtual Reading Room, NED Chile Programs, <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C00007A0C.pdf>> (27<sup>th</sup> May 1988).

<sup>613</sup> State Department FOIA Virtual Reading Room, *The Chilean Plebiscite Sitrep 3 Aug 13 – Aug 20*, <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C00007ACD.pdf>> p. 25.

<sup>614</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 12, *What to Watch For and What to Ask: Plebiscite in Chile* (1988).

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check whether press coverage was equal for both sides and whether the voting procedures were made clear to voters in advance. The Freedom House also provided information concerning public opinion in Chile through its exchange programme. It published poll results carried out by the Centre for the Study of Contemporary Reality in Santiago which suggested that the majority of Chileans questions had a “centrist attitude” towards democracy in Chile.<sup>615</sup> A major characteristic of Freedom House’s programme in Chile during the plebiscite was the promotion of the centrist elements of Chilean politics and the idea that only these groups could ensure democracy in Chile.

Although it wrote and released a number of briefing papers in the lead-up to the plebiscite, Freedom House only sent one delegation to Chile. This delegation, which observed the plebiscite itself, spent several days in Chile during which it attended a briefing by the Chilean Teachers’ Association as well as a conference of the families of 11 desaparecidos.<sup>616</sup> Like most of the delegations that observed the plebiscite, Freedom House found the vote to have no serious fraud and only a few isolated irregularities.<sup>617</sup> The briefing Freedom House put forward based on this delegation’s findings ahead of the plebiscite made a point of making it seem that the only viable option for Chile’s future was the centre. It made a direct link between the Communist Party and the Pinochet regime claiming that “both draw strength from mutual antagonism and violence”. Moreover, it claimed that “violent activities of the extreme left” marred peaceful protests in Chile and warned of the dangers of the “radical” influence of Clodomiro Almeyda, the General Secretary of the Socialist Party, on the No Campaign.<sup>618</sup> Alongside attempts to discredit the Chilean left came some reasonable

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<sup>615</sup> FH Records, Box 51, Folder 2, Grant Proposal for Exchange (1988).

<sup>616</sup> FH Records, Box 164, Leonard Sussman report on the Chile Elections (1988).

<sup>617</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 16, Approaching the October 5 Plebiscite in Chile: A Freedom House Briefing (1988).

<sup>618</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 16, *Approaching the October 5 Plebiscite in Chile: A Freedom House Briefing* (1988).

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concerns about Chile's democratic prospects following the plebiscite. For example, Freedom House put forward the idea that the biggest obstacle to Chilean democracy was the 1980 Constitution which it said "[undermined] the concept of representative civilian rule" by allowing the military control of the political environment.<sup>619</sup> The delegation's report on the plebiscite also suggested that Chile needed to reform its campaigning regulations (which restricted the rights and liberties of the opposition) before the election the following year.

Despite Freedom House's lack of institutional contacts on the ground and the fact that its reports were based on one short trip to the country, it would seem that the Freedom House reports and delegation were seen as particularly important by the Santiago embassy. It features frequently in the embassy's reports concerning the plebiscite and was invited to the embassy debriefing after the vote along with other organisations which had sent delegations including the NDI, the AFL-CIO and the Latin American Studies Association (WOLA was not invited to these debriefings). The reports of these organisations were heard by Ambassador Barnes and added to the final briefing sent to the State Department.<sup>620</sup> Freedom House also participated in an NDI press conference in which Governor Bruce Babbitt stated his appreciation for the work Freedom House did during the plebiscite.<sup>621</sup> Overall, it would appear that the Freedom House programme for the plebiscite in Chile was designed to serve two purposes. The first was to assess the fairness of the vote and the prospects for Chile's future democracy and the second to discredit the Chilean left and reinforce the idea, already prevalent in Washington at the time, that the Chilean centre was the only hope for consolidated democracy in the country. It appears to have been successful in both of

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<sup>619</sup> Ibid.

<sup>620</sup> State Department FOIA Virtual Reading Room, The Chilean Plebiscite; Sitrep Eight, <<http://foia.state.gov/searchapp/DOCUMENTS%5CStateChile3%5C00007B83.pdf>> (7<sup>th</sup> October 1988) p. 15.

<sup>621</sup> FH Records, Box 164, Sussman's report on the Chilean Elections (1988).

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these aims; despite its lack of a significant or broad network on the ground and limited local research it did for its briefings, these papers were taken on as one of the major sources of non-state information for the State Department. Moreover, given this level of influence and the fact that the ideas it was stating were shared by the US government at the time, Freedom House's work on the plebiscite provided a clear justification for the continuation of US policy towards Chile.

Like Freedom House, WOLA's work concerning the plebiscite mostly consisted of briefing papers, delegations and seminars concerning the situation on the ground. In September 1988, WOLA and the CI-IR sent a delegation, which included several members of Congress, to Chile to analyse the conditions for the plebiscite. The delegation concluded that the No Campaign was at a significant disadvantage and that harassment of campaigners and voters was rife. Moreover, the report outlined details of the parties involved in the opposition, media access available to both sides and the level of military involvement in the Sí Campaign.<sup>622</sup> The report also contained the results of public opinion polls suggesting that Chileans felt the involvement of the military in the plebiscite was inappropriate and that there was widespread scepticism about whether Pinochet would step down regardless of the result.<sup>623</sup> In conjunction with the delegation report, WOLA organised a number of seminars and lunch discussions for Members of Congress and other Washington personnel. These seminars and discussions included individuals from Chile's political opposition and human rights and legal communities as well as US-based commentators and experts such as Pamela Constable of the Boston Globe and Arturo Valenzuela, a Chilean-American academic.<sup>624</sup> These seminars were in part designed to expose the Washington foreign policy community to Chilean voices

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<sup>622</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, *Conditions for Chile's Plebiscite on Pinochet: A report based on a joint WOLA-CIIR delegation to Chile* (3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> September 1988).

<sup>623</sup> Ibid.

<sup>624</sup> WOLA Records, Box 303, Collection of Flyers for WOLA events in Washington (1988).

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they were unlikely to have heard before because they were not popular with the Reagan administration. For example, Dr Germán Correa Díaz of the Chilean Socialist Party (later Aylwin's Minister for Transport and Telecommunications) was invited to give a seminar entitled "Government and Opposition in Chile: A Transition to Democracy". The Reagan administration was, for the most part, unwilling to engage with Chile's Socialist Party, although it was a key organisation within the No Campaign, as a result, WOLA's seminars were one of the few chances such organisations had to reach the Washington community. WOLA also organised seminars with the Vice-President of the Chilean Radical Party, union representatives and representatives from human rights organisations.<sup>625</sup> These seminars discussed opposition strategies towards the plebiscite, the role of human rights and the position of the labour movement in the plebiscite and the opposition. Moreover, in the run up to the plebiscite WOLA engaged in a campaign of media outreach in which it briefed representatives from NPR, *The Nation*, *the Washington Post* and other newspapers in an attempt to provide a broader picture to the US public.<sup>626</sup>

Aside from the delegation to assess the conditions for the plebiscite, most of WOLA's work surrounding the plebiscite was concerned with opening the Washington conversation on Chile to include issues and organisations which were ignored by the Reagan administration. The delegation report included a discussion of the human rights abuses and intimidation that were ignored by Freedom House's delegation. It pointed out that many teachers were pressured by local authorities and fired for not supporting the regime and that there were 1780 political arrests in the first six months of 1988.<sup>627</sup> While this report was circulated around Washington's foreign policy community, it

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<sup>625</sup> Ibid.

<sup>626</sup> WOLA Records, Box 4, Human Rights and Latin America: A Final Report to the Ford Foundation from the Washington Office on Latin America, (30<sup>th</sup> June 1988).

<sup>627</sup> WOLA Records, Box 66, Conditions for Chile's Plebiscite... (1988).



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received very little attention outside of those circles usually associated with WOLA. Those members of Congress who usually supported WOLA or were involved in the delegation did cite the report in their congressional work; although the delegation had met with Ambassador Barnes for briefings while in Chile, neither the State Department nor the majority of Congress appears to have taken the report particularly seriously. WOLA had more success with its seminars. Although there are not many indicators of how many people attended specific seminars or seminar series, overall WOLA's seminars tended to draw quite large audiences, many of them congressional staff.<sup>628</sup>

For the NED and Freedom House, alongside their interest in ensuring and promoting a No victory in the plebiscite, the priority for their plebiscite programmes was laying the groundwork for a victory for Chile's political centre in the election the following year. While both organisations portrayed their work as attempting to analyse or ensure the fairness of the vote itself, this was in many ways a mask for the promotion of US interests in the country. The NED's funding programme sought to ensure that the centrist organisations within the opposition retained the balance of power and had the resources to fight the election the following year. Similarly, through its reporting Freedom House sought to provide the evidence to reinforce the perceived position of Chile's centre as the only force able to provide stable, long-term democracy to the country. While Freedom House's work was mostly either welcomed or ignored within Chile, the fact that most NED funding came from the special appropriation caused some problems both for the NED as an institution and for the opposition organisations it funded. By contrast, WOLA's programme for the plebiscite sought to open a space in Washington for a broader conversation concerning the plebiscite. Moreover, while it did comment on the fairness and freedom of the electoral process, its primary interest was

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<sup>628</sup> WOLA Records, Box 14, Washington Office on Latin America Report to the Philadelphia Foundation Grant No. 44790 (1990).

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in highlighting political and human rights abuses associated with the plebiscite process. That said, while Freedom House's work on the plebiscite was widely circulated and respected throughout the Washington foreign policy community, WOLA's attempts to expand the debate had mixed results. Despite the fact that, at a basic level, all three of these organisations shared the main aims of the US government, a victory for the No Campaign and a vote that could not be questioned by the Pinochet regime, WOLA was still denied access to key policymaking circles in favour of Freedom House and other organisations which shared Reagan administration views.

Chile makes an interesting case study both for the role these organisations played within inter-American policy and for what they represent within the broader history of human rights and democracy promotion. Unlike in Nicaragua where, throughout the period, the US government was actively seeking regime change, in the early part of the 1980s the Reagan administration was, if not actively friendly with then tacitly supportive of the Pinochet regime. As a result, the rhetoric of human rights was not only unhelpful to the Reagan administration but also counter-productive to its policy. Moreover, the fact that a programme for democratic transition had been laid down and voted for in the 1980 constitution meant that when Pinochet fell out of the administration's favour, the United States was able to call for transition without appearing to have significantly reversed its policy towards the country. Both the NED and Freedom House broadly followed the trends of US policy towards Chile at the time. The NED's programme for the country focused entirely on shaping the democratic opposition into the form most favourable to US interests. It made no use of the rhetoric of human rights, instead focusing on the rhetoric of building and (later in the period) consolidating democracy and providing democratic education in advance of the plebiscite and the election. Although Freedom House did engage with some human rights issues, republishing the Commission's reports and lobbying for press freedom,

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they were, for the most part, those issues which, in its view, had the potential to affect the country's democratic prospects. However, behind this rhetoric of concern for the country's democracy was an intent on the part of both organisations to further US interests in the country. The NED sought to ensure those centre and centre-right organisations the United States felt it could work with gained and held the balance of power within the opposition, while Freedom House worked to provide evidence supporting US positions through its reporting. After Chile's return to democracy, both of these organisations largely lost interest in the country beyond some projects which sought to maintain cordial relations with the new government. By contrast, as it had been since the 1970s, WOLA's primary interest in Chile was in human rights issues which brought them into direct conflict with the Reagan administration particularly in the early 1980s. While this interest in human rights continued through and beyond the plebiscite, WOLA's plebiscite programme also sought to open Washington foreign policy circles to voices which had been largely ignored by the US government in this period.

Despite the convergence of basic interests between these three organisations and the US government surrounding the plebiscite, for much of the 1980s the NED and Freedom House enjoyed extensive influence in and assistance from the US executive concerning Chile, while WOLA was largely closed off from the executive branch. Although neither the NED nor Freedom House had the connections and networks on the ground that Keck and Sikkink claim is essential for the effective functioning of transnational advocacy, they were nevertheless respected and their work used by the Reagan administration. WOLA, on the other hand, was limited to working with the small network of supporters it had within Congress and relying on them to get its work out to a wider Washington audience. This suggests that, even in a country where the evidence for human rights abuses on the part of the government was overwhelming, the

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neo-conservative interest in democracy overshadowed liberal human rights issues.

Moreover, the work of the NED and Freedom House in Chile showcases the way in which this rhetoric of democracy promotion was used to justify the promotion of US interests abroad. Indeed, in the case of the NED, the rhetoric of democracy promotion was used to justify direct intervention in the political landscape of Chile. Even though the NED did not influence the 1989 Chilean election in the way it did in Nicaragua, the fact that it spent most of the 1980s shaping the Chilean political opposition into a pro-US force without criticism gives an indication of the extent to which democracy promotion had been normalised in the 1980s.

## Chapter 6 – Nicaragua: Democracy Promotion as a Form of Aggression?

Nicaragua had long been of interest to US foreign policy-makers. Under the Somoza dynasty Nicaragua was one of the largest recipients of US military aid in Latin America and, by the 1960s, a multi-tiered relationship had developed between the US Department of Defence and the Somoza National Guard.<sup>629</sup> During the 1970s, as the Sandinista movement grew in strength and began a campaign of anti-Somoza kidnappings, the Somoza regime engaged in a brutal clamp-down characterised by widespread human rights violations, extra-judicial killings, intimidation and censorship. This eventually led to the Carter administration withdrawing aid in 1977, followed closely by a revolution which ousted the Somoza family and replaced it with the Sandinista regime in 1979. Although the Carter administration originally sought to work with the Sandinistas, once Reagan took office all willingness to engage vanished. In 1981 he terminated all economic assistance to the country before declaring a full trade embargo in 1985. Reagan's first Secretary of State Alexander Haig developed a theory concerning Soviet, Cuban and Nicaraguan involvement in training and arming El Salvador's guerrilla movements and, as a result, Nicaragua became a key part of the Reagan administration's fight for ideological victory in Central America.<sup>630</sup> This theory was the stated reason for the initial sanctions placed on Nicaragua and continued to be used as a justification for US aggression towards the country until the late 1980s.

The question of Nicaragua was hugely contentious within Washington and US policy towards the country under Reagan became embroiled in scandal. Until 1982, the White House largely led the way in Nicaraguan policy, and the result of which was the

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<sup>629</sup> Morley, Morris H., *Washington, Somoza and the Sandinistas: State and Regime in US Policy Toward Nicaragua 1969 – 1981* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994) pp. 37 – 38.

<sup>630</sup> Hager, Jr., Robert P. 'Soviet Bloc Involvement in the Salvadoran Civil War: The US State Department's 1981 "White Paper" Reconsidered,' *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 28, 4 (1995), pp. 437-470.

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direct funding of the Contra forces in Honduras by the US government. From 1983 a series of amendments were passed in Congress, starting with one attached to the 1983 Defense Appropriations Act, authored by Rep. Edward Boland (MA-D). This amendment sought to limit the Reagan administration's ability to fund the Contra forces by prohibiting the federal government from providing military assistance for the purpose of overthrowing the Nicaraguan government.<sup>631</sup> However, the administration continued funding Contra forces until 1987 using money raised through a secret agreement (which had presidential approval) to sell weaponry to Iran. When the details of this deal were published by a newspaper in 1986, the ensuing scandal (the Iran-Contra scandal) resulted in the indictment of fourteen administration officials including the Secretary of Defense and Elliott Abrams (at the time Assistant Secretary of State for Inter-American Affairs) who pleaded guilty to two counts of misleading Congress.<sup>632</sup> After 1987, with the Contra funding finally stopped, the policy of democracy promotion became the new method by which the Reagan administration sought to remove the Sandinistas from power.

There are differing opinions concerning US policy towards Nicaragua in the 1980s. According to James Scott, the administration was divided on what to do concerning the country which led to an inconsistent policy consisting of three phases: 1981-1982 saw a White House-led policy of Contra aid, 1982-1987 was characterised by an internal struggle between government branches to shape policy and 1987-1989 saw the ascendance of congressional priorities.<sup>633</sup> Whether or not efforts to force the Sandinistas out of office through the policy of democracy promotion could really be seen to represent "congressional priorities" is debatable, but it is clear that US policy

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<sup>631</sup> House of Representatives, 98<sup>th</sup> Congress, "Passed House Amendment Summary H.R. 2968" <<https://www.congress.gov/bill/98th-congress/house-bill/2968/summary/36>> (1983).

<sup>632</sup> Rabe, *The Killing Zone* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012) p. 163.

<sup>633</sup> Scott, *Deciding to Intervene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996) pp. 156 – 157.

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towards the Sandinista government did become significantly less militaristic following the Iran-Contra scandal. By contrast, Laurence Whitehead suggests that, despite the continued aid to the Contra forces, the democratisation of Nicaragua had become an explicit policy tactic by 1984.<sup>634</sup> It is certainly clear that the democratising of Nicaragua had, in rhetoric at least, become an important policy tactic by the mid-1980s. As an examination of the involvement of the NED and Freedom House in the country will suggest, this rhetoric, and the practical work of the NED, was part of the same greater push to reinforce US ideological hegemony in the region. As was the case with its policy towards the USSR, the Reagan administration regularly used the rhetoric of human rights as a means of discrediting the Sandinista government and justifying the push for democratisation. It is worth noting that the Sandinistas had held and won elections in 1984 which had been declared free and fair by many international observers, including WOLA. The Reagan administration had refused to recognise these elections, making it very clear that their priority was less democracy in Nicaragua, and more that the “right” side came out on top.

The importance placed on Nicaragua by the Reagan administration and its status in the 1980s as a functionally democratic country, makes it a rather interesting case for the study of democracy-promoting non-state actors.<sup>635</sup> In theory, these organisations should have had very little to do in Nicaragua by 1984. Despite the ongoing Contra war, the 1984 election had been internationally monitored and declared free and, aside from the State of Emergency which had been declared in 1982 and curtailed some civil liberties (mostly press freedoms), the Sandinista government’s human rights record was not particularly poor. That said, although the Sandinistas were not serious human rights

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<sup>634</sup> Whitehead, Laurence, “The Imposition of Democracy” in Lowenthal, Abraham, *Exporting Democracy: The United States and Latin America* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991) p. 251.

<sup>635</sup> Brown, Doug ‘Sandinismo and the Problem of Democratic Hegemony’, *Latin American Perspectives* 17, 2 (Spring 1990), pp. 39-61.

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abusers, there were extensive human rights abuses being carried out by the Contras as part of the war at this time. While both Freedom House and the NED were heavily involved with Nicaraguan issues in the early 1980s, neither ever made mention of the Contra war or the abuses associated with it. By contrast, although WOLA's interest in Nicaragua was fairly minimal before 1989 its primary concern was more US policy towards the country and the problems and abuses which resulted from it than the affairs of the Sandinista government. As will be shown, Nicaragua proved to be a test for the new human rights rhetoric espoused by the neo-conservative non-state actors. The combining of democratic values with human rights rhetoric could be expected to be less effective when faced with a country that was already internationally recognised as democratic; but, aided by their US-centric definitions and heavy emphasis on procedural democracy, both the NED and Freedom House were fairly successful in using this rhetoric even in Nicaragua. Despite the efforts of organisations like WOLA, which did acknowledge the country as democratic, the NED and Freedom House contributed significantly to the domestic US perception that Nicaragua was undemocratic.

As in Chile, neither the NED nor Freedom House had particularly extensive contacts on the ground in Nicaragua; that said, both organisations had a greater network of relationships in Nicaragua than they did in the Southern Cone. The NED's connections in Nicaragua were as thin as they were in Chile. Unlike in Chile, some of the NED's key personnel had personal connections in Nicaragua. Freedom House had a similar dearth of connections on the ground, relying heavily US journalists and observers for information. The connections these groups did have were primarily with the political opposition to the Sandinistas. This opened them up to criticism and accusations of bias both in and outside Nicaragua. Indeed, both organisations directly antagonised the Sandinista government and suffered harassment and denunciation as a result.



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Perhaps the most difficult of the NED's relationship was Gershman's personal relationship with the Chamorro family. The Chamorros had been a prominent family in Nicaraguan history since the 18th century. By the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, the family had extensive political power and after 1980 members of the family were in control of every independent national Nicaraguan newspaper.<sup>636</sup> Since the early 1980s, Gershman had been in extensive contact with members of the Chamorro family, in particular Violeta Chamorro who became the head of the UNO.<sup>637</sup> The UNO was the coalition of opposition parties which formed to contest the 1990 general election against the Sandinistas. Gershman had a close personal relationship with Violeta Chamorro and a number of other members of the Chamorro family regularly writing letters to Violeta Chamorro explaining the state and nature of the grants being given to Nicaraguan groups and giving updates on grant progress and administration.<sup>638</sup> Gershman was openly supportive of Violeta Chamorro's nomination for the UNO leadership and, as the election approached, he travelled to Nicaragua to meet her and two other members of the family to assess the situation.<sup>639</sup> Although no NED funds went directly to Violeta Chamorro, or any of the Chamorro family, a sizable sum of money was given yearly to *La Prensa* which was firmly in the hands of the Chamorro family. As Violeta Chamorro assumed leadership of the UNO coalition, this relationship had the potential to take on a sinister appearance to outside observers. Regardless of the potential for criticism, this relationship between Gershman and the Chamorros constitutes the NED's only significant connection to Nicaragua. While, as in Chile, the NED's US grantees did have some connections on the ground (for example the CIPE had regular meetings with

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<sup>636</sup> Rockwell, Rick and Janus, Noreene, *Media Power in Central America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2003) p. 75.

<sup>637</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 21, Series of letters from Gershman to members of the Chamorro family (various).

<sup>638</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 21, Letter from Gershman to Violeta Chamorro (13<sup>th</sup> October 1988).

<sup>639</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 2, Folder 21, Letter from Gershman to Violeta Chamorro, (3<sup>rd</sup> April 1989).

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the Nicaraguan business association), the NED never made use of these for information, relying instead on staff trips and State Department cables.<sup>640</sup> When it came to knowing exactly what the situation was on the ground, the NED was therefore at a significant disadvantage; with low levels of information and a high dependence on opposition sources, the allocation of grants was likely to be distorted.

While the NED had a strong relationship with the main opposition leader in Nicaragua, it had a consistently antagonistic one with the Sandinista regime. This came to a head during the 1989 election, but the Sandinistas had long been attacking the NED as an instrument used by the CIA to destabilise the country.<sup>641</sup> The Sandinistas claimed that the NED had been provoking acts of civil disobedience by the opposition in the hope of generating a repressive response that would justify a US invasion of the country.<sup>642</sup> While there is no evidence the NED was doing this, the relationship it had with the upper echelons of the political opposition and the volume of money channelled to pro-opposition organisations made this claim believable. As the 1989 election approached, the NED undertook a vast pro-opposition funding campaign using a special appropriation from USAID, and the Sandinistas' claim that the NED was part of the broader policy of US aggression towards the country seemed ever more plausible.<sup>643</sup> In this respect, the evidence certainly suggests that the NED's work in Nicaragua was a key part of the broader US policy to destabilise the democracy of the Sandinistas and replace it with a version that looked much more like their own. In light of this, the complete lack of contacts on the ground was perhaps less damaging to the organisation than it first appears. Since, as in Chile, its primary aim was not really to promote a

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<sup>640</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box 7, Folder 27, Chronology of Contacts of Nicaraguan Contacts (12<sup>th</sup> May 1988).

<sup>641</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 3, Cables concerning the Sandinista attack on the NED, (198?).

<sup>642</sup> Ibid.

<sup>643</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 35, Summary of programs for Nicaragua funded by the special appropriation (1989).

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functioning democracy, in depth knowledge of the situation on the ground and what Nicaraguan citizens felt they required was less relevant. Provided the NED could assess which organisations were more likely to be favourable to the United States and its ideals extensive intelligence was, while potentially useful, not essential for it to achieve its aims.

Like the NED, Freedom House lacked a network of contacts on the ground in Nicaragua. While the NED could, as a grant-making organisation regardless of its aims, theoretically perform its work effectively without a strong local network, the information-disseminating Freedom House should have struggled without a good network of first-hand informants. Freedom House, lacking relationships with local individuals or organisations on the ground, relied instead primarily on its own delegations and the US embassy for information. In fact, also like the NED, the primary contact Freedom House had in Nicaragua was a personal relationship between Leonard Sussman and the Chamorro family. Sussman maintained regular contact with Violeta Chamorro, particularly towards the end of the 1980s when she often sent him updates on *La Prensa*.<sup>644</sup> Freedom House had been involved with and had appealed on behalf of *La Prensa* on numerous occasions during the 1980s and, through this, Sussman had developed a personal relationship with Violeta Chamorro going so far as to write her a personal congratulations after the election saying “my warmest congratulations to you personally, and to your people for having acted so wisely”.<sup>645</sup> Freedom House also worked closely with Maria Esther Chamorro, who it employed to act as the Panama distributor for publications by the NED-funded *Libro Libre* project. Freedom House also hosted a tour for Jaime Chamorro after the election during which he was taken to meet many US political leaders.<sup>646</sup>

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<sup>644</sup> FH Records, Box 156, Letter from Violeta Chamorro to Sussman, (14<sup>th</sup> November 1988).

<sup>645</sup> FH Records, Box 156, Letter from Sussman to Violeta Chamorro (8<sup>th</sup> March 1990).

<sup>646</sup> FH Records, Box 59, Folder 15, Freedom House Activities 1990 – 1991 (1991).

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Freedom House brought a number of visitors from Nicaragua to the United States to give testimony and speak in Freedom House sponsored seminars. For the most part, they came from the Nicaraguan opposition; during the 1980s Freedom House hosted five UNO leaders and organised a reception for Violeta Chamorro with the mayor of New York.<sup>647</sup> The two exceptions to this programme of opposition leaders came in the form of a reception Freedom House organised for Senator Bill Bradley (D, NJ) to host the head of the Nicaraguan Human Rights Commission and the occasional visit from the leader of MISURA (the organisation of the Miskito Indians).<sup>648</sup> With this primary focus on opposition contacts, the information it was receiving from Nicaragua and channelling to the United States, as in the case of the NED, presented Freedom House with a one-sided view. Indeed, perhaps the only Freedom House contact that would have given a different perspective was Edén Pastora who was, perhaps, even more radically anti-Sandinista than the Reagan administration. A long-time opponent of Somoza, he had originally supported them. However, by 1982 Pastora had become disillusioned with the Sandinistas and had begun to work with the CIA as part of the Contra project. Despite working with the United States, Pastora was reviled by many in the Reagan administration for his unpredictability and his unwillingness to subordinate his forces to the main CIA-backed Contra force.<sup>649</sup> After bringing him to the United States in 1983, Freedom House attempted to bring Pastora to the United States again in 1987 and was prevented from doing so by a furious White House which demanded to know “who put them up to it”.<sup>650</sup>

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<sup>647</sup> FH Records, Box 68, Folder 1, Penn Kemble Activities: September – December 31<sup>st</sup> (1989).

<sup>648</sup> FH Records, Box 1, Folder 1, Letter to Freedom House Board Members from Bruce McColm, (6<sup>th</sup> January 1988).

<sup>649</sup> Clarridge, Duane, R., *A Spy for All Seasons: My Life in the CIA* (New York: Scribner, 1997) pp. 213 – 222.

<sup>650</sup> FH Records, Box 72, Folder 7, Memo from McColm to Sussman, (15<sup>th</sup> July 1987).

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Although Freedom House lacked significant long term contacts in Nicaragua, it did conduct research in the country for its reports. It sent members of its staff on fact-finding missions and sponsored missions and delegations to Nicaragua which included various experts and members of Congress. Between 1987 and 1991, Freedom House sponsored four delegations to Nicaragua, including an election-monitoring delegation, and sent Douglas Payne along with Morton Kondracke on a fact-finding mission for an article concerning the Central American peace process.<sup>651</sup> With the exception of Antonio Ybarra Rojas, a member of the Freedom House election monitoring team, very few Latin American (or indeed non-US) delegates were included in these trips. Although this was not inherently negative, it did have the potential to bias further the information Freedom House received towards the US viewpoint. Perhaps the clearest evidence of this came when Freedom House sent a delegation in 1989 to analyse and “make a contribution to the debate” about Nicaraguan democracy and electoral law ahead of the election; this delegation consisted entirely of experts in US electoral law, five from the Democratic Party and three Republicans.<sup>652</sup> Given that Nicaraguan democracy bore little resemblance to the US system, it seems peculiar to send a delegation composed solely of experts in US electoral law unless the aim was either to ensure Nicaragua’s democracy wouldn’t measure up or to try and persuade the Nicaraguan government to remake its electoral law in the US’ image.

Freedom House, like the NED, also had a difficult relationship with the Sandinista government. Many Freedom House reports and statements were disparaging of the Sandinistas and, in 1986, the organisation issued a statement in support of US military assistance to the Contras.<sup>653</sup> Even after the Sandinista government had begun

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<sup>651</sup> FH Records, Various reports and memos concerning delegations, (1987 – 1991).

<sup>652</sup> FH Records, Box 69, Folder 14, *The Nicaraguan Elections: The Challenge of Democracy – A Preliminary Report of the Nicaraguan Election Project* (20<sup>th</sup> April 1989).

<sup>653</sup> FH Records, Box 23, Folder 4, *Help Nicaraguan Resistance Now* (1986).

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actively participating in the Central American Peace Agreements, Freedom House questioned their commitment and accused them of only agreeing to peace measures because the economic situation in Nicaragua was so bad.<sup>654</sup> In the same document, Freedom House stated that the “Sandinista deception of [*sic*] the 1984 elections” should “raise suspicion of current Sandinista intentions”.<sup>655</sup> Although initially not invited, Douglas Payne had observed the 1984 election in Nicaragua and had concluded “if we mean by a free election one in which people freely express their political will, the Nicaraguan elections were not free”.<sup>656</sup> Given the antagonistic way in which Freedom House portrayed and dealt with the Sandinista government the lack of response from the Sandinistas is notable; the most harassment Freedom House suffered at the hands of the Sandinistas was the expulsion of one of their election monitoring team for visa violations in 1989.<sup>657</sup>

As can be seen, neither of these organisations could be said to be particularly transnational when it came to their involvement with Nicaragua. While better connected than in Chile, neither the NED nor Freedom House maintained a strong network in Nicaragua. Those relationships that did exist were mostly personal relationships between staff and members of the Nicaraguan opposition. While for the NED, which sought throughout the 1980s to ensure the eventual removal of the Sandinista government, this lack of first-hand, unbiased information was not detrimental to its aims, for Freedom House, which portrayed itself as an impartial purveyor of information, this lack of first-hand contacts should have cast doubt on its ability to carry out this function. When it came to Nicaragua, Freedom House had little interest in presenting unbiased information, seeking instead to provide “impartial” support for US

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<sup>654</sup> FH Records, Box 52, Folder 8, *Regarding Freedom House, the US, the Nicaraguan Opposition and the Preliminary Central American Peace Agreement Signed August 7<sup>th</sup>* (Aug 1987).

<sup>655</sup> Ibid.

<sup>656</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder9, *Freedom Monitor* (January 1985).

<sup>657</sup> FH Records, Box 69, Folder 17, Memo from Payne to McColm (6<sup>th</sup> July 1989).

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government policies on the international stage. Even when members of the organisation and sponsored delegations were sent to the country to carry out research, the composition of delegations and the fact that they rarely made much contact with locals while they were there made it almost impossible for Freedom House to receive a clear and even-handed picture of the situation. Furthermore, given the complexity of the civil war that was going on in Nicaragua at the time, a full understanding of the situation would have been impossible without extensive contact with those directly involved.

In contrast to Freedom House and the NED, WOLA did maintain a network of connections to local actors. Although its Nicaragua network was much smaller than the one in Chile, it contained individuals and groups from across Nicaragua's political spectrum. Also unlike the other organisations in question, WOLA's network primarily consisted of other non-state actors, particularly human rights groups and academics. It maintained close relationships with a number of staff from the Central American Historical Institute, Mateo Guerrero (director of the Nicaraguan Association for Human Rights) and various *campesino* leaders and unionists.<sup>658</sup> WOLA also hosted several Nicaraguan lawyers and academics and often sought out individual Nicaraguan citizens to give testimony before Congress or give seminars and meet with members of Congress and tell their stories; for example, WOLA brought Danilo Aguirre of *El Nuevo Diario* to discuss the way the Nicaraguan peace talks were represented in the media.<sup>659</sup> WOLA also brought a family who had been injured by Contra landmines to Congress, along with Richard Boren of Witness for Peace, who had been captured by the Contras and held for 10 days, to the United States to meet with journalists, members of Congress and State Department staff.<sup>660</sup> Almost all of WOLA's reports, while written

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<sup>658</sup> WOLA Records, Box 8, *Meeting the Changing Challenges of Latin American Human Rights: A Report to the Scherman Foundation 1991 – 1992*, (1992).

<sup>659</sup> WOLA Records, Box 14, Washington Office on Latin America Report to the Philadelphia Foundation Grant No. 44790 (1990) and WOLA Records, Box 303, List of seminars held by WOLA, (undated).

<sup>660</sup> Ibid.

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by staffers or US experts who had gone on fact-finding missions, were informed by first-hand testimony, often given under oath. This use of witness and personal testimony given by ordinary citizens, while obviously open to criticism, offered a more informed picture of the situation on the ground than that presented by Freedom House.

Unlike the NED or Freedom House, WOLA also had contacts within the Sandinista government and the UNO coalition. In 1986, WOLA hosted a forum in Washington for Nicaraguan political leaders. This included Sandinistas as well as members of the Independent Liberal Party, the Socialist Party, the Popular Social Christian Party and the Democratic Conservatives.<sup>661</sup> WOLA also hosted Mariano Fiallos, the President of Nicaragua's Supreme Electoral Council, who spoke to members of Congress and State Department staff concerning the role of the Council in the election.<sup>662</sup> Moreover, WOLA maintained regular contact with Victor Hugo Tinoco of the Nicaraguan Foreign Ministry and Carlos Tunnermann, the former Nicaraguan ambassador to the United States.<sup>663</sup> As in its human rights reporting, many of WOLA's briefings and political reports were based on first-hand information from Nicaraguan politicians. In 1989 WOLA sent a delegation to Nicaragua to meet with political actors from across the political spectrum to discuss the upcoming election.<sup>664</sup> This research, based not merely on observation, but testimony and meetings with the actors involved allowed WOLA to present more detailed information to members of Congress and State Department staff. These strong connections gave WOLA's work an authority and a legitimacy which Freedom House retained perhaps only as a result of its long-standing reputation.

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<sup>661</sup> WOLA Records, Box 4, *Human Rights and Latin America: A Final Report to the Ford Foundation from the Washington Office on Latin America* (30<sup>th</sup> June 1988).

<sup>662</sup> WOLA Records, Box 14, Washington Office on Latin America Report to the Philadelphia Foundation Grant No 44790, (1990).

<sup>663</sup> WOLA Records, Box 14, Grant Report to the Philadelphia Foundation Grant No 80889, (1989).

<sup>664</sup> WOLA Records, Box 37, Memorandum from WOLA to Congressional Foreign Affairs Staff, (5<sup>th</sup> April 1989).



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Neither the NED nor Freedom House appears to have suffered in terms of its reputation in the United States or the ability to deliver its programmes as a result of its lack of contacts on the ground. In fact, during the 1980s, Freedom House's work concerning Nicaragua was used not only in the United States by the State Department and in Congress, but also by the international community, with the United Nations, for instance, reviewing its report on the abuse of Nicaragua's Miskito Indians.<sup>665</sup> Similarly, despite its lack of knowledge of Nicaraguan society, highly personal contact with the Nicaraguan opposition and its funding programme for the same, there was no significant challenge to the NED's work in Nicaragua. Indeed, the only major international challenge came about after the 1989 special appropriation had been granted. By contrast, while WOLA maintained an extensive network and formed part of an intricate information network in Nicaragua, for much of the 1980s, its reports were either ignored or reached only those members of Congress who were already part of WOLA's broader network of support in the United States. Even after Bush's election, which loosened the restraints on WOLA's access to the executive, its influence remained limited to altering the language of Congressional acts. The level of its influence is perhaps best illustrated by the fact that a petition it circulated within Congress in 1991 demanding the release of suspended aid to Nicaragua's newly elected government received only 60 signatures.<sup>666</sup> The consistent success of the two neo-conservative organisations suggests that the conversation concerning Nicaragua, at least in the United States, was not concerned with an open and frank discussion of the situation on the ground. Instead the debate had been hijacked and, with the help of organisations like Freedom House, had become an extension of Reagan's Cold War.

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<sup>665</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 9, *Freedom Monitor* (May 1984).

<sup>666</sup> WOLA Records, Box 8, *Meeting the Changing Challenges of Latin American Human Rights: A Report to the Scherman Foundation 1991 – 1992* (1992).

### Implementation of Principles

Having examined the networks (or lack thereof) these three organisations created and maintained within Nicaragua, it is important to understand how these organisations applied their own principles to their work in the country. One would expect that the NED and Freedom House would focus their attention on the issue of democracy within the country while WOLA would prioritise issues of human rights abuses; but as will be shown, this was not always the case. Aside from an APF document in 1982 and a mention in the NED's 1985 annual report, the NED did not put Nicaraguan democracy front-and-centre until 1987. As the election approached, its rhetoric and priorities became more and more focused on issues of democracy; but before that the NED combined the rhetoric of "exposing" the human rights situation in Nicaragua with that of democracy promotion.<sup>667</sup> In its 1985 report the NED claimed that it could help resolve "the absence of a democratic alternative to authoritarianism", citing Nicaragua as an example of a country that needed this help.<sup>668</sup> While democracy and democratic and civil rights were clearly present in the NED's writing and thinking, they are not prominent in the rhetoric. Also in its 1985 annual report, the NED wrote that it was funding Nicaragua's Confederación de Unificación Sindical (CUS), an anti-Sandinista trade union, because it had been experiencing "the suspension of such human rights as freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press and the right to strike".<sup>669</sup> This statement was almost immediately followed by the claim that the CUS were critical to "organising the democratic force committed to peaceful change" in Nicaragua.<sup>670</sup> These kinds of statements are not uncommon within NED reports,

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<sup>667</sup> NED Records, Series 1, Box 2, Folder 40, *Summary of a Proposal for the Designing of a US Political Aid Program for Latin America* (18<sup>th</sup> August 1982).

<sup>668</sup> NED, *Annual Report 1985*, (1985) JC421.N37a, p. 5.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>670</sup> *Ibid.*

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particularly in the early 1980s. The organisations funded were almost always described as “democratic” but the language of rights was a key part of the conversation. In 1986 the NED funded a programme called “Labor Watch” which reported on violations of trade union rights in a number of countries including Nicaragua.<sup>671</sup> By 1987, the language had almost completely moved away from any discussion of rights and, in its 1987 annual report the NED announced its aim in Nicaragua to be assistance for “those groups working for a stable and successful transition to democracy”.<sup>672</sup>

Between 1987 and 1991, the NED focused both its programmes and its rhetoric on the prospect of “democratic transition”. It organised a workshop in 1987 entitled “Democratic Alternatives for Nicaragua” and began to refer to Nicaragua’s opposition as the “democratic opposition”.<sup>673</sup> This was perhaps the most telling shift in language. Prior to 1987 although the epithet “democratic” was often applied to grantees on the ground, they were never discussed in direct opposition to the Sandinista government. While the suggestion was always there that the NED did not perceive the Sandinistas as democratic, it did not openly indicate this until the language changed in 1987. The combination of rhetoric concerning democracy and human rights suggests that the NED was acutely aware of, and actively participating in, the shift from a universalist focus on human rights left over from the 1970s and the more pragmatic and politicised interest in democracy promotion which arose in the 1980s. This use of rhetoric also reflects the shift in US government rhetoric and policy. By the late 1980s, democracy promotion in Nicaragua had become a stated aim of US policy which had, publicly at least, moved away from the aggressive militaristic stance of the early 1980s and as the language of the state changed, so did that of the NED.

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<sup>671</sup> NED Records, Series 3.1, Box7, Folder 32, Memorandum from Eugenia Kemble to Gershman, (9<sup>th</sup> April 1986).

<sup>672</sup> NED, *Annual Report 1987*, (1987) JC421.N37a, p. 45.

<sup>673</sup> *Ibid*, p. 58.

When it came to adopting the rhetoric of the US government, it was Freedom House that really made use of the Reagan administration's language. Like the NED, Freedom House combined the rhetoric of rights and democracy in their work on Nicaragua; but, unlike the NED it did so for the majority of the 1980s. In its response to El Salvador's presidential elections in 1984, Freedom House referred to Nicaragua openly as "undemocratic".<sup>674</sup> This portrayal of the country as undemocratic continued throughout the 1980s; in 1987 Freedom House concluded, in a document concerning the Central American Peace Agreements that it should spotlight the democratisation process in Nicaragua and seek to frame this as the central issue of the agreement.<sup>675</sup> As the 1989 election drew nearer, the issue of democracy became ever more prevalent in Freedom House documents. Although there were still reference to rights issues, particularly press freedom, these were drowned out by discussion of the "democratic environment" (or lack thereof) in the country.<sup>676</sup> Having declared the 1984 election undemocratic, Freedom House reports in the lead-up to the 1990 election were able to be particularly damning of the situation on the ground, regardless of whether or not any progress had actually been made. For example, the report from the delegation of legal experts stated that Nicaragua "[lacked] democratic infrastructure" (which it defines as "institutions and traditions which...assist in the neutral enforcement of election laws") despite this being a highly questionable claim.<sup>677</sup> The fact that Freedom House's key piece of evidence for this lack of infrastructure was the fact that Nicaragua had not held a census since 1971 would suggest that what was really meant by this claim was that Nicaragua lacked democratic infrastructure the delegates *recognised*.

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<sup>674</sup> FH Records, Box 23, Folder 6, Draft Outline for a Response to the Presidential Elections in El Salvador, (1984).

<sup>675</sup> FH Records, Box 52, Folder 6, *Regarding Freedom House...*, (August 1987).

<sup>676</sup> FH Records, Box 69, Folder 14, *The Nicaraguan Elections: The Challenge of Democracy – A Preliminary Report of the Nicaraguan Election Project*, (20<sup>th</sup> April 1989).

<sup>677</sup> *Ibid.*

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Alongside this ongoing discussion about Nicaraguan democracy was some engagement with more traditional liberal human rights issues in the early 1980s. The fact that, in this discussion, Freedom House completely ignored all abuses perpetrated by the Contra forces, suggests that this engagement was less about interest in targeting abuse and more about discrediting the Sandinista regime. Through its relationship with the Nicaraguan Human Rights Commission, particularly in the early 1980s, Freedom House took on a number of human rights issues in Nicaragua, most notably the abuses committed against the Miskito Indians. Between 1982 and 1984, Freedom House wrote a series of reports and lobbied the State Department, the UN and the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights concerning the mistreatment of Miskito people which, it stated, included forced migration and murder.<sup>678</sup> Moreover, in 1984 Freedom House reported on the alleged murder of thirteen dissidents in Nicaragua (although it must be said, nothing came of this report and it is unverified).<sup>679</sup> Aside from these two cases, the majority of Freedom House's concern for human rights focused on political and civil rights, especially press freedom. It took up the cause of *La Prensa* as early as 1981, sending a cable to the Sandinista government concerning its closure after the declaration of the state of emergency.<sup>680</sup> This sort of activity continued throughout the 1980s. Various Freedom House staff members wrote letters to President Daniel Ortega demanding the "freeing" of the newspaper and condemning the harassment of its staff.<sup>681</sup> It is worth noting that although, like the NED, in the early 1980s Freedom House appeared to take an interest in more traditional human rights issues (mistreatment of minorities and dissidents), by 1985 this interest had disappeared and democracy once again took priority. While in the case of the Miskitos, the improved relationship

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<sup>678</sup> FH Records, Box 127, Folder 7, *Memo: To Members*, (Jan/Feb 1982).

<sup>679</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 3, Memorandum from Sussman to the Board of Trustees, (1984).

<sup>680</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 2, Freedom House Activities Report (1981).

<sup>681</sup> FH Records, Box 69, Folder 13, Letter from Freedom House to Daniel Ortega (12<sup>th</sup> August 1987).

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between the Sandinistas and the Miskitos after the regime granted them autonomy in 1987 may have been part of the reason for this, there is no obvious explanation for why Freedom House ceased to be interested in political incarceration. Again, Freedom House's rhetoric and focus on human rights would appear to have been one essentially of convenience. The lack of interest in the abuses of the Contras and the fact that after 1985 liberal human rights issues are almost never discussed would suggest that Freedom House's interest was less in seeing the upholding of international human rights law and more a desire to discredit the Sandinistas. Freedom House used the 1970s language of human rights in conjunction with the new focus on democracy in order to phase this original language out gradually and change the debate concerning Central America.

Where the rhetoric of Freedom House differed most significantly from the NED was in its open and strong adherence to the beliefs and language of the early Reagan State Department. It regularly emphasised the "internationalism" of the situation in Nicaragua and attributed the problems in El Salvador directly to the Sandinista government. In its proposal for the creation of the Centre for Caribbean and Central American Studies it stated that the "internationalisation" of Nicaragua's regional conflict had been driven by "armed radical movements... through aid given by the Eastern Bloc, Cuba and radical Third World countries".<sup>682</sup> In a 1984 document on El Salvador, Freedom House stated that the Frente Farabundo Martí para la Liberación Nacional (FMLN) was a "guerrilla army of trained soldiers and civilian support teams supplied and assisted by Cuba and Nicaragua".<sup>683</sup> Elsewhere, Sussman talked about the urgent need for a public campaign to support El Salvador in resisting "terrorism from

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<sup>682</sup> FH Records, Box 8, Folder 1, Proposal for the Creation of a Center for Caribbean and Central American Studies at Freedom House, (198?).

<sup>683</sup> FH Records, Box 23, Folder 6, *Freedom House Observations and Recommendations on El Salvador* (1984).

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Cuba and Nicaragua”.<sup>684</sup> In 1988 Freedom House went so far as to state that US aid to the Contras was not in violation of the spirit of the Arias Peace Plan because “resistance forces [were] outside of Nicaragua, and [were] not equipped for fighting”.<sup>685</sup> Perhaps the most explicit statement of Freedom House’s real priority in Nicaragua came in a summary of its hemispheric programme in 1988. In this document, Freedom House stated that Cuba and Nicaragua played an “integrated role in the Latin American community in developing policy initiatives that are against US interests”.<sup>686</sup> It also accused the Sandinista government of trying to “wait out” the Reagan administration so that they would “face the prospect of a weaker United States”.<sup>687</sup> In Nicaragua at least, Freedom House went beyond even the NED in tying human rights not only to issues of democracy but also directly to US security interests.

Nicaragua provides perhaps the clearest example of the neo-conservative alternative to traditional human rights rhetoric. At the beginning of the decade, when the rhetoric of universalist human rights was still quite powerful, particularly among the international community, both Freedom House and the NED made use of it in order to portray the Sandinista government as authoritarian or, at the very least, repressive. Both organisations always combined these human rights issues with an emphasis on democracy and democratic rights. The NED particularly focused its human rights interest on civil liberties and both organisations took on the mantle of defender of the US-friendly *La Prensa*. As the decade wore on, the references to human rights (with the exception of *La Prensa*) became fewer and were replaced with a greater focus on issues of democracy. This shift in the rhetoric of these organisations away from universalist

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<sup>684</sup> FH Records, Box 42, Folder 5, Letter from Sussman to Leslie Lenkowsky (Smith-Richardson Foundation) (7<sup>th</sup> July 1981).

<sup>685</sup> FH Records, Box 61, Folder 12, *Peace Through Democracy: A Bipartisan Initiative for the Central American Crisis* (October 1988).

<sup>686</sup> FH Records, Box 71, Folder 1, Hemispheric Program (1988).

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*

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human rights towards democracy (and, by extension, pro-US ideology) both provoked and represented a shift in the broader language of human rights within the United States. While the NED, perhaps due to its legally closer relationship with the US government, never went so far as to state its aims to be the furthering of the cause of US security interests in the region, Freedom House was very open about tying these issues to the preservation of US interests in Central America.

As has been mentioned, WOLA had very little involvement in Nicaragua before the late 1980s. What interest it took was primarily concerned with human rights abuses and violations of the rules of war during the Contra War. WOLA published two reports, one in 1985 written by a US lawyer using sworn testimony from locals and missionaries concerning the contraventions of the rules of war, and one in 1986 concerning the human costs of the war.<sup>688</sup> In 1983, WOLA worked on a number of extensive human rights reports seeking to “sort through the claims and counterclaims about the Sandinista government”.<sup>689</sup> While the majority of its human rights work in Nicaragua was concerned with abuses committed by the Contras, it did include the Sandinista government in its discussion of violations of the rules of war. It did also engage with the Sandinistas on the issue of the government’s treatment of indigenous communities.<sup>690</sup> WOLA’s only substantial work concerning democracy in the country in the early 1980s came during the 1984 election. WOLA sent two delegations to Nicaragua in 1984, one in collaboration with the IHRLG to observe the election itself and one prior to the election to “assess the quality of the democratic experience”.<sup>691</sup> Given that WOLA found the election in 1984 to be free, fair and democratic, it is perhaps unsurprising that they took little interest in the broader issues of democracy in the early and mid-1980s.

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<sup>688</sup> WOLA Records, Box 245, Pamphlets: *Nicaragua: Violations of the Laws of War by Both Sides* (February 1985) and *Nicaragua: The Human Tragedy of the War* (April-June 1986).

<sup>689</sup> WOLA Records, Box 28, Washington Office on Latin America Annual Report (1983).

<sup>690</sup> WOLA Records, Box 29, Washington Office on Latin America Annual Reports (1984).

<sup>691</sup> *Ibid.*



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As the 1990 election drew closer, WOLA returned to the question of democracy, albeit in a less prescriptive form than the other organisations. In 1989 WOLA collaborated with three other non-state actors to compile an information booklet entitled *Nicaragua's Elections: A Step Towards Democracy?* and provided extensive analysis of the political environment in Nicaragua before and during the election.<sup>692</sup> In 1990, WOLA sought to promote the institutionalisation of political pluralism in Nicaragua and ensure the “free practice of civil rights”.<sup>693</sup> After the election, WOLA continued to be concerned with both human rights issues and the democratic situation in Nicaragua, but it also added an economic dimension to its interest in the country. It pressured the US government to work with actors from across the political spectrum to address problems of human and property rights.<sup>694</sup> In addition, it pushed the US government to continue its economic aid package to Nicaragua, claiming that cutting it would “endanger the significant advances in... the institution of democracy in the country”.<sup>695</sup> Indeed, WOLA became focused on the role of the United States in Nicaragua during this time; in 1991 it published a report analysing the post-election dynamic in the country and the US role in supporting reconciliation and reconstruction.<sup>696</sup>

Although WOLA's language and focus in Nicaragua did shift, it did not follow the same trajectory as that of Freedom House or the NED. At first, WOLA continued along much the same path that it had taken in the 1970s, with a strong rhetorical and practical commitment to traditional human rights, using first-hand testimony to produce human rights reports for international and US consumption in the manner of the human

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<sup>692</sup> WOLA Records, Box 241, *Nicaragua's Elections: A Step Towards Democracy?* (1989).

<sup>693</sup> WOLA Records, Box 2, A Decisive Moment for Central America: A Proposal to Oxfam (23<sup>rd</sup> April 1990).

<sup>694</sup> WOLA Records, Box 8, Meeting the Changing Challenges of Latin American Human Rights: A Report to the Scherman Foundation (1992).

<sup>695</sup> WOLA Records, Box 37, Memo from Jared Kotler to House Foreign Operations Subcommittee Aides (10<sup>th</sup> June 1992).

<sup>696</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation: Grant No. 830-0934-3 (1991).

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rights advocacy networks described by Keck and Sikkink.<sup>697</sup> As it became clear that this approach was not producing the results it had during the 1970s, WOLA did begin to mix democracy and civil rights into its ongoing human rights interests. This came to a head during the 1990 election when WOLA spoke almost exclusively of the democratic situation in Nicaragua. Once the election had passed WOLA did appear to lose interest in issues of democracy again, but it did not return to its pre-1990 discussion of human rights either. Instead, it switched its focus to the role the United States played in the country's domestic situation and to problems of economic development and civil rights under the UNO government. This suggests that WOLA was aware that its more traditional language and approach was ceasing to be effective and, as a result, changed to one that, while not reflecting the heavily politicised stance of the NED and Freedom House, was more in line with the language and international interests of the time.

Nicaragua provides a clear picture of exactly how the relationship between democracy and human rights shifted between 1980 and 1993 and also illustrates the tensions between the two within the organisations in question. Unlike in Chile, where neither the NED nor Freedom House expressed particular interest in more traditional liberal human rights issues, in Nicaragua they saw the utility of using human rights as a means to discredit the Sandinistas. In the early part of the 1980s they regularly discussed questions of procedural democracy and Sandinista human rights abuses, although neither organisation acknowledged nor reported the human rights abuses of the Contras. This suggests that their primary interest was not in extending the universalist human rights of the 1970s, but rather in promoting a politicised conception of human rights to attack those on the other side of the Cold War. As the decade progressed, the language of human rights favoured by the US establishment concerning Nicaragua shifted from the liberal human rights of the 1970s to the politically driven language of

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<sup>697</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998) p. 21.

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the late 1980s, with its strong focus on democracy being the precursor to human rights. The prevalence of this new dialogue is shown in the fact that even WOLA was forced to alter its language in order to maintain salience. Although it did not completely buy into the neo-conservative interpretation of human rights, the focus on socio-economic issues after the end of the Cold War suggests that not only had its traditional human rights advocacy lost its effectiveness but also that the whole topic of human rights within the country was of declining interest in Washington. Defending the socio-economic rights of the Nicaraguan population was, it would seem, one of the few ways WOLA felt it could still be an effective advocate for rights in Nicaragua.

#### The 1990 Election

The 1990 election in Nicaragua provides a vivid snapshot of the work of these three organisations in Nicaragua. Like the 1988 plebiscite in Chile, the election garnered a great deal of international attention both from governments and non-state actors. As they had done in 1984, the Sandinistas invited many non-state actors and intergovernmental organisations (including the OAS) to observe the election on the day. A number of non-state actors sent delegations and fact-finding missions to the country earlier in the year as well. As had been the case in Chile, the NED was granted a special USAID appropriation by Congress to support the democratic opposition in Nicaragua; Freedom House and WOLA both ran special programmes and published a number of briefings and reports on the election and the political situation in the country. Given the nature of the work in which these organisations were engaged, it is very difficult to assess the success (or lack thereof) of their programmes. As a result, this investigation will not try to assess the success these organisations had with their projects. Instead it will focus primarily on assessing exactly what these organisations sought to achieve.

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In a reflection of the US government's priorities in the region, the special appropriation granted to the NED for Nicaragua was significantly larger than that given for Chile. After some debate within Congress, the appropriation was eventually set at \$5 million to aid the Nicaraguan opposition. The size of this appropriation in comparison to that granted for Chile (\$1 million) very much reflects the priorities of US foreign policy in the region. Unlike the appropriation for Chile, which was mostly met either with enthusiasm or indifference in Congress and among other non-state actors, the Nicaragua appropriation proved very controversial in Washington. Unlike previous appropriations the request for the 1990 appropriation was put to Congress by the Bush administration and there was extensive debate in both the House and the Senate. Statements in opposition ranged from procedural objections to ideological opposition to the policy of continued intervention in the country.<sup>698</sup> By 1990, following years of civil war and US economic sanctions, the domestic situation in Nicaragua was becoming desperate and it was this fact that formed the backbone of the opposition argument within Congress. Many members of Congress believed that US government had no duty to provide the Nicaraguan opposition with further assistance since its economic and military assault had already destabilised the country enough to ensure an opposition electoral victory.<sup>699</sup> Even the NED had concerns about the appropriation, Gershman wrote a memo to the Board of Directors stating his fear that these appropriations were undermining the NED's independence.<sup>700</sup> The appropriation also brought criticism from other non-state actors, including WOLA which ran a conference analysing USAID and NED electoral assistance programmes.

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<sup>698</sup> Congressional Record, S13553, (17<sup>th</sup> October 1989) (statement of Sen. Mark Hatfield) THOMAS <<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?r101:11:./temp/~r101Y5JyYu:e12647:>> (accessed 30/06/2015).

<sup>699</sup> Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, *Updated Alert: Aid to the Nicaraguan Opposition* <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/nsa/documents/NI/03201/all.pdf>> (Oct 1989) p. 2.

<sup>700</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 1, Folder 4, Memorandum from Gershman to the Board of Directors concerning NED/USAID relationship (29<sup>th</sup> May 1990).

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Despite the criticism, the appropriation went ahead and the NED sent \$8.5 million to Nicaragua to support the opposition.<sup>701</sup> The fact that the NED added \$3.5 million of its standard budget to this project compared to the \$600,000 it added to the Chile appropriation suggests that, like the US government, it too prioritised the problems in Central America over those of the Southern Cone. The majority of this money went directly to the opposition with some going to opposition affiliated and other pro-US organisations. Between 1989 and 1990 the NED funded training and education programmes for opposition parties, covered currency costs for supplies and staff training at *La Prensa* and assisted in improving communication between the parties of the UNO coalition.<sup>702</sup> While many of the organisations funded by the NED were not directly connected to the UNO coalition, a sizable proportion was given, in one form or another, to the UNO. Given that the NED was forbidden from directly funding opposition parties, grants tended to support training or education. Funds were also given for vehicle maintenance, salaries and office equipment. These grants were justified with the claim that they were not funding the UNO's campaign but helping to "build party infrastructure".<sup>703</sup> Understandably, this claim was considered spurious by the appropriation's opponents and by NED critics in Washington and Nicaragua. Indeed, in the House debate on the appropriation Representative Dave Obey (D-WI) stated that it was "money which [was] going to parties" and that a "dollar which goes to a party computer or a dollar which goes to a get-out-the-vote-campaign helps the candidate every bit as much as it helps the party".<sup>704</sup> It is clear that NED funding for

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<sup>701</sup> Congressional Records, S13553, (17<sup>th</sup> October 1989) (statement of Sen. Hatfield) THOMAS <<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/F?r101:11:./temp/~r101Y5JyYu:e12647>> (accessed 30/06/15).

<sup>702</sup> NED Records, Series 2, Box 7, Folder 35, Summary of Programmes for Nicaragua Funded by the Special Appropriation (1989).

<sup>703</sup> Arms Control and Foreign Policy Caucus, *Updated Alert: Aid to the Nicaraguan Opposition* <<http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/nsa/documents/NI/03201/all.pdf>> (October 1989) p. 2.

<sup>704</sup> Congressional Record, H6628, (4<sup>th</sup> October 1989) (statement by Rep. Obey) THOMAS <<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r101:1:./temp/~r101Yovxow:e23678:>> (accessed 1/07/15).

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“free and fair elections” was designed, in the words of Rep. George Crockett (D-MI) to “buy an opposition victory”.<sup>705</sup>

Since neither Freedom House nor WOLA were grant-making organisations, for the most part, neither of their programmes was designed to have a strong impact within Nicaragua. Freedom House’s Nicaraguan Election Task Force monitored the election and provided briefings for Washington and reports for the international community, based on a series of delegations sent to the country in 1989 and 1990. The first of these was the delegation of US legal experts which went seeking to “make a contribution to the debate about democracy in Nicaragua”.<sup>706</sup> The delegation’s report reinforced the need for US electoral assistance and criticised the Sandinistas for failing to meet certain standards. The report laid out four things that it deemed to be requirements of a democratic system: neutral enforcement of electoral law, equal access to resources for all parties, freedom to campaign and, perhaps most cryptically, a “democratic environment”.<sup>707</sup> While some of the report’s findings were fair others were simply not true. The delegation reported that the Sandinistas had an advantage because they had access to foreign funding that opposition parties did not; in truth, as Freedom House was well aware, the NED had been channelling money to the opposition and pro-opposition groups since the mid-1980s.<sup>708</sup> The report concluded that “moral and economic assistance should be provided by friends of democracy abroad”.<sup>709</sup>

Freedom House’s report on the first stage of the election process was similarly supportive of external involvement in the election and sceptical of the reforms the Sandinistas had put in place. It demanded the Sandinistas allow OAS and UN teams to

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<sup>705</sup> Congressional Record, H6629, (4<sup>th</sup> October 1989) (statement by Rep. Crockett) THOMAS <<http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/D?r101:1:./temp/~r101Yovxow:e49125:>> accessed 1/07/15

<sup>706</sup> PU, FH Records, Box 69, Folder 14, *Nicaraguan Elections: the Challenge of Democracy – a preliminary report of the Nicaraguan Election Project* (20<sup>th</sup> April 1989).

<sup>707</sup> Ibid.

<sup>708</sup> Ibid.

<sup>709</sup> Ibid.

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conduct a second vote count at the same time as the Supreme Electoral Council's (CSE) count and stated that international observers should be wary of decisions made by the CSE because its administrative appointments had been made by the Sandinistas.<sup>710</sup> Although it was not unreasonable to draw attention to the question of the CSE's independence, to state publicly that observers should actively distrust Nicaragua's major election authority only served to undermine the electoral process. The report also suggested that polling officials should be trained by an "impartial" international body, such as the Inter-American Institute of Human Rights. As the election drew closer, Freedom House appeared to be more willing to concede that the environment in the country was more democratic; it congratulated the CSE on its voter registration campaign, although criticising the same campaign for being confusing and underestimating the number of registrants (leading to long queues).<sup>711</sup>

As had been the case prior to the election, Freedom House's work in 1989 and 1990 primarily sought to reinforce the ideas and actions of the United States through "accurate" reporting of conditions in Nicaragua. In this it was fairly successful. Freedom House was accepted and respected within the international community and their reports were often used in the UN, the OAS and by the State Department itself. The fact that, particularly in the international community, US involvement in the Nicaraguan election was so readily accepted by many would suggest that Freedom House (and those like it) were successful in promoting the merits of US policy regarding Nicaragua. Similarly, when it came to affecting the mood in Washington Freedom House's reports did appear to persuade many that US policy was justified. What does become clear from this investigation is exactly how carefully tailored, and at times completely inaccurate, these reports were. Reports were careful to acknowledge

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<sup>710</sup> FH Records, Box 69, Folder 14, *Nicaragua: The First Stage of the Electoral Process* (14<sup>th</sup> November 1989).

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*

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changes they supported so as not to risk the validity of a potential UNO victory, while simultaneously continuing to criticise the Sandinistas for incompetence or heavy-handedness and to call into question those institutions involved in the electoral process in order to undermine the Sandinista government in the eyes of the international community.

WOLA's work on the Nicaraguan election mostly took the form of damage control against the work of Freedom House and organisations like it. WOLA provided briefings on US Nicaraguan policy to religious and other grassroots groups that were sending delegations to the elections, and channelled information for use in debates to members of Congress who had been long-standing opponents of Contra aid, as well as the staff of the foreign affairs and appropriations committees.<sup>712</sup> In April 1989, it sent a memo to the staff of the Foreign Affairs committees explaining that Nicaragua's political parties had agreed on democratic rules and had agreed to participate in the 1990 election. This memo also stated that the opposition and the National Reconciliation Committee were very active in the political life of the country.<sup>713</sup> WOLA was also in regular contact with those members of Congress opposed to US electoral aid and wrote a number of memos questioning NED practices and highlighting potential violations of the Central American Peace Accords that could result from US aid to the UNO.<sup>714</sup> One of WOLA's larger projects was a conference on NED and USAID funding practices for electoral aid. Although this conference was not solely concerned with Nicaragua, the Nicaraguan appropriation did make up a sizable part of the discussion in which academics and other non-state actors argued that not only did they believe US electoral aid in Nicaragua represented an effort to influence domestic

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<sup>712</sup> WOLA Records, Box 14, Grant Report to the Philadelphia Foundation Grant No. 80889 (1989).

<sup>713</sup> WOLA Records, Box 37, Memorandum from WOLA to Congressional Foreign Affairs Staff (5<sup>th</sup> April 1989).

<sup>714</sup> Ibid.



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politics, but also that it served to discredit the UNO campaign since it was used as an election issue against them and hindered their ability to raise money domestically.<sup>715</sup>

In addition to its work in Washington, WOLA also sent a delegation to Nicaragua to observe the election. Unlike Freedom House, which held the Nicaraguan government to its own standard of rules, WOLA focused on whether the Sandinistas had complied with their commitments under the Central American Peace Accords. WOLA showed that the Sandinistas had released political prisoners, lifted sanctions on media outlets and liberalised electoral laws after taking the suggestions of opposition parties into account.<sup>716</sup> This report also provided extensive information on the composition of the CSE and the opposition parties, stressing the factionalised nature of political organisations in Nicaragua. The report also provided details of accusations made against the Sandinistas relating to intimidation, land expropriation and media censoring as well as summarising US media and congressional reactions to the election.<sup>717</sup> Unlike the Freedom House reports of the election, which were heavily balanced in favour of the opposition, WOLA tended to offer a straight reporting of the events and reactions with very little editorialising. Following the election, in 1991, WOLA published a report on the post-election dynamic in the country which included analysis of the continued US role in Nicaragua and the socio-economic conditions after a year of UNO rule.<sup>718</sup>

WOLA's goal for its work on the Nicaraguan election was primarily to counter the misinformation disseminated by the Reagan administration and helping those members of Congress who sought to block further US involvement in the country. It is clear that WOLA did not see international interference in the election as productive or

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<sup>715</sup> WOLA Records, Box 25, *US Electoral Assistance and Democratic Development: Chile, Nicaragua and Panama* (1990).

<sup>716</sup> WOLA Records, Box 241, *Nicaraguan Election Monitor No. 1* (4<sup>th</sup> August 1989).

<sup>717</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>718</sup> WOLA Records, Box 5, Grant Report to the Ford Foundation Grant No. 830-0934-3 (1991).

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particularly useful and, as a result, aside from sending its own delegation to monitor the elections, it focused its attention on levelling the playing field in Washington rather than in Nicaragua. Since WOLA had previously declared Nicaragua a democratic country and, while more favourable to their ideology than its neo-conservative counterparts, was not blindly supportive of the Sandinistas, its work concerning the election was minimal and, for the most part, not particularly analytical. WOLA appeared to believe that simple factual narratives, information and data would do more to shift the debate in Washington. However, the large base of support for the US electoral aid packages and the widespread belief within Congress that Nicaragua under the Sandinistas was a dictatorship with no prior democratic infrastructure or experience, suggests that WOLA and its allies lost the war for a reasoned discussion of Nicaragua's political situation in Washington.

Indeed, the case of the Nicaraguan election showcased the powerful hold that neo-conservative human rights groups had gained over the conversation in Washington. Although neither the NED nor Freedom House had the network of local actors supposedly necessary for the pursuit of advocacy and grant-making, both were key players in US policy debates and in the representation of these issues to a national and international audience. Throughout the 1980s Freedom House worked to shape the debate both in the United States and abroad, combining the traditional language of human rights and civil liberties with a new focus on democracy promotion, gradually phasing out the former as the decade wore on. Its work in shaping the dialogue and shifting it away from human rights towards the importance of (US-style) democracy helped to smooth the way for the NED's democracy promoting work within Nicaragua. In the early 1980s, the NED also spoke in the language of human rights as well as democracy promotion and focused most of its work towards the funding of civil society organisations such as *La Prensa* and the CUS. As the dialogue shifted, the NED began

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its more direct funding of Nicaragua's political opposition culminating in the special appropriation which was justified using the language of the importance of "free and fair" democracy. While US interference in Latin America had rarely sparked international or domestic outrage in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the success of Freedom House and others like it is evident in the fact that the NED's blatant attempt to influence the Nicaraguan elections in the name of "democracy promotion" passed through the international community with almost no protest. Although there was always some opposition to the NED within Congress, until the special appropriation there was almost no complaint concerning the NED's programme in Nicaragua. Even when it came to the appropriation, much of the argument was less about the interference in a foreign election (although there was opposition of this kind) and more to do with the amount of money, procedural issues and the belief that the United States had "done enough" in Nicaragua to secure its aims anyway. This strongly suggests that the neo-conservative movement had been successful in redefining human rights and democracy in line with US security interests.

This is not to say that there was no interest in traditional human rights or that that side of the conversation had wholly abandoned; but, as can be seen in the work of WOLA, when it came to Nicaragua the work of the more traditional universalist human rights organisations became closer to damage control than prevention. Moreover, some of them did begin either to adopt this new language of democracy or, as WOLA did, to try and find a new niche for themselves. Indeed, for much of the 1980s WOLA did very little work on Nicaragua aside from producing human rights reports on the Contra war and monitoring the 1984 election. As the 1990 election drew closer and the international interest in Nicaragua grew, WOLA's workload concerning the country did increase, but it mostly consisted of countering the information being produced by organisations such as Freedom House and the US government. However, for all the information it provided

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to the foreign policy community, the international community and other non-state actors, it was not successful at breaking the hold of the new democracy-focused dialogue. As a result, once the election in Nicaragua was over, WOLA sought new rights issues to work on away from the universalist human rights of the 1970s. A focus on economic and social issues allowed it to retain as much of the traditional rights-based language as possible while still allowing it to fit into the new dialogue of the Bush administration.

## Conclusion

The 1980s was the decade in which the convergence of human rights and democracy promotion, which began in the 1970s, developed within the non-state sector and came to prominence in US foreign policy. There has been a trend to cast the policy of democracy promotion as little more than a pretext for US intervention abroad.<sup>719</sup> While the policy certainly has a capacity to fulfil a neo-imperialist function and has been used for that purpose since, this was not its primary aim in the 1980s. Democracy promotion offered, instead, a new form of morality for US foreign policy. Unlike liberal human rights policies, which required both the US's allies as well as its enemies to be rebuked, democracy promotion gave the United States a chance to maintain the moral high ground and advance an anti-Communist agenda while retaining its more authoritarian allies. Furthermore, democracy promotion remained a powerful moral justification for US policy as terrorism replaced Communism as the main perceived existential threat. The Reagan administration made democracy promotion a key priority of its inter-American policy, raising it in tandem with the coming to prominence of the neo-conservative human rights movement in Washington and the international community. While the subsequent Bush administration did begin to bring the liberal human rights network back into a position of influence in the executive branch, the rhetoric and conception of human rights had irrevocably changed, a fact attested by the need of traditionally liberal human rights organisations such as WOLA to materially reshape their rhetoric in order to be taken seriously by the US government.

Although the issue of democratic rights was of interest to both the neo-conservative and liberal human rights movements, the liberal human rights movement

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<sup>719</sup> For example, Lowenthal, Abraham, "The United States and Latin American Democracy: Learning from History" in Lowenthal, A., *Exporting Democracy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991) p. 270.

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had sought to ensure all those political rights written into international law were upheld. These rights, as enshrined in Article 21 of the Universal Declaration, did not lay down a specific vision of democracy or democratic rights; the Universal Declaration merely states that citizens should have the right to take part in the government of their country and the will of the people, expressed through periodic elections, should be the basis of government. By contrast, the neo-conservative human rights movement, typified by the NED and Freedom House, redefined political rights as democratic rights, specifically those democratic rights afforded by a US-style polyarchic democracy, and made them the focus of the human rights movement. This led to the politicisation of human rights, forging a partisan tool from an originally universalist concept. Under the neo-conservative interpretation, political systems such as those introduced by the Sandinistas could never meet these standards since they rejected the representative polyarchic democracy of the United States in favour of participatory democratic experiments. Moreover, this interpretation allowed the United States (and non-state actors) to seek regime change in allied nations with authoritarian regimes without actively withdrawing support from the regime in question (as seen in Chile). WOLA and the liberal human rights movement, although interested in ensuring populations could participate in government on the terms enshrined in the Universal Declaration, were less concerned with the exact form this participation took. As a result, the liberal human rights movement was able and willing to apply the standards enshrined in the Universal Declaration to governments across the world, including those of the United States and its allies.

While the liberal human rights movement had developed from the grass-roots and, in the 1970s, had been adopted and institutionalised by the Carter administration, the neo-conservative conception of human rights was more top-down in its formation. WOLA's founding story, of being an organisation grown from the bottom up and

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outside the social network of the state, was common among liberal human rights groups, (although its religious background was less so). WOLA built up its network of Washington contacts from scratch through the work it undertook throughout the 1970s. Although it was successful in building a group of supporters, once the Reagan administration assumed power and many of those executive staffers who had valued its work in the 1970s were replaced, WOLA found itself isolated from foreign policy circles outside of Congress. By contrast, Freedom House and the NED were embedded within the Reaganite foreign policy network. Both organisations were run and staffed by members of the burgeoning neo-conservative movement, which had grown out of the SDUSA, and both were engaging with human rights, democracy promotion and foreign policy on the Reagan administration's terms. Indeed, the redefinition of human rights to include democracy promotion was the result of the work of both members of the US government, starting with Elliott Abrams and groups such as Freedom House (which moved away from its centrist roots in the 1980s). The outcome was the creation of the NED to be the leading non-state face of the new movement.

The organisations which focused on human rights and democracy promotion did not behave in the manner of other types of non-state actor. Most of the theories and scholarship concerning the "third sector" focus on either NGOs (service-providing organisations including humanitarian and development groups) or CSOs (political agents such as think tanks and private aid agencies). The organisations under investigation here fit neither of these definitions but fall somewhere between the two. Due to their nature as independent political actors, they did not encounter the same problems with legitimacy and independence as NGOs, particularly in respect of funding. Although the NED was entirely government funded, its legitimacy as an independent organisation was only questioned when it accepted conditional appropriations from USAID. Regardless of the level of influence the NED's basic

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funding arrangement actually gave the US government over its programming, its independence was only publicly questioned when Congress visibly dictated where the NED deployed funds. Similarly, foundation funding was seen merely as a necessary part of international human rights work and neither Freedom House nor WOLA felt their legitimacy compromised as a result of their foundation funding, despite the Ford Foundation actually requiring a number of internal changes of WOLA as a condition of its funding. Since foundations were largely perceived as apolitical, questions concerning these financial relationships were rarely asked by the peers or critics of these organisations. That said, as closer examination of the foundations in question suggests, the foundations that funded Freedom House and WOLA were far from apolitical and did, in fact, form a key part of the international political networks in which these organisations were situated.

The question of the professionalisation and bureaucratisation of non-state actors and the problems this can pose for the effectiveness of these organisations is raised regularly by scholars. However, again, these three organisations did not fit existing theoretical models. Neither the NED nor Freedom House needed to undergo a professionalisation process because both organisations began life operating in a rather more business-like manner than traditional NGOs. Both of these organisations were mostly staffed with “professionals” and both were bureaucratic from the start (although in the case of the NED this was a consequence of the reporting requirements placed upon it by the General Accounting Office and Congress). Only WOLA underwent a professionalisation process in the 1980s and, while this visited significant changes upon the organisation’s personnel, operations and funding, it did not create the accountability crisis so often observed in service-providing non-state actors. Indeed, these organisations did not face the same issues of accountability as their service-providing counterparts because they lacked traditional “beneficiaries”. As a grant-making



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organisation, the NED came closest to having “beneficiaries”; but, since the groups and individuals who received NED funding on the ground in Latin America were kept at a remove from the NED itself by the use of intermediary US organisations to channel funding, the NED was never immediately accountable to Latin American groups. Moreover, as information disseminators, neither Freedom House nor WOLA was answerable to groups on the ground. In both cases, their only accountability was to those using the information they provided and even then, this only extended to questions of accuracy and detail. Indeed, of the three only WOLA saw itself as having any kind of accountability to Latin American actors and this relationship was not significantly affected by its professionalisation process since it retained its network of local informants and continued to listen carefully to their interests. Since none of the three organisations provided on the ground services or emergency relief, they did not require the same levels of flexibility and quick decision-making that humanitarian and development organisations needed. As a result, an increase in bureaucracy did very little to influence the effectiveness or efficiency of their work.

What did impact the work of the three organisations was their relationships with the Washington foreign policy community, other international non-state actors and local actors on the ground. The Reagan administration ushered in a new relationship between Washington foreign policy-makers and the third sector. The Reagan administration had a great hostility to the liberal human rights movement, which had been taken into confidence under Carter. Particularly during the early 1980s, WOLA was largely cut off from both the White House and the State Department, which curtailed its ability to reach a key part of the Washington foreign policy-making community. Although it maintained a small but active network of contacts and supporters within Congress, without access to the State Department its ability to influence policy decisions was minimal. Organisations such as WOLA had, traditionally, sought to act as a check on

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the morality of US government policy and under Reagan they continued to do so, often putting themselves at odds with the US government.<sup>720</sup> By contrast, the NED and Freedom House positioned themselves as implementers and justifiers of US government policy in the 1980s. They were well connected and supported within the State Department and Congress during the 1980s and early 1990s and, through their work, sought to provide members of these branches of government with the tools to rationalise Reagan administration policy. While all three organisations struggled to draw much attention to Latin American issues under Bush, during the Reagan administration both the NED and Freedom House enjoyed consistent access to the State Department and, in the case of Freedom House, was regularly consulted about region. Despite its public and vocal support for and involvement in the founding of the NED, the White House took very little meaningful interest in any of the three organisations during this period. Only Freedom House, as the oldest and most established of the three, had any consistently direct contact with the White House during this time and this came in the form of requests for briefings from Freedom House staff. An explanation for the growth in power of the neo-conservative human rights movement can be found in the fact that the NED and Freedom House publicly enjoyed the confidence of the Executive during this time, while WOLA and other liberal human rights groups were dismissed as biased and looked upon with suspicion. The alignment of political views and anti-communist definitions of human rights between the US government and the neo-conservative movement goes some way to explaining its successes despite its lacking the legitimacy traditionally provided by collaboration with other international non-state actors and engagement with local actors in the region.

Lack of collaboration and engagement with local actors did, in fact, seem to characterise the neo-conservative movement. While the liberal human rights movement

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<sup>720</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998) pp. 23-24.

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of the 1970s was built around mass mobilisation through strong transnational networks, requiring extensive pooling of resources through collaboration between international non-state actors and cordial working relationships with local actors, the neo-conservative movement was constructed from the top down. Organisations involved in the neo-conservative movement tended to be more insular and rarely had extensive grassroots networks. This is not to say that such organisations lacked involvement with their peers; as a grant-making organisation, the NED had long-standing working relationships with its grantees, even those not set as core grantees by Congress. Indeed, its relationships with its grantees were often on a more equal basis than those of many grant-making organisations and their grantees, possibly because the NED's grantees were also international Western actors. Similarly, Freedom House did engage periodically with other organisations for information exchange, but only in one or two cases did this extend to longer-term collaborative relationships. Moreover, the relationships it did establish with other international non-state actors were largely one-sided, with information passing to Freedom House but very little going the other way. By contrast, WOLA worked consistently and extensively with other liberal international non-state actors, pooling funding and resources, exchanging information and maintaining reciprocal relationships. This difference in methodology represented a fundamental difference in the attitudes of the two human rights movements. The liberal human rights movement believed that legitimacy derived from mass movements, collaboration and strong reciprocal relationships. Collaboration and reciprocal relationships enabled them to take on bigger and more ambitious projects while simultaneously lending weight and credibility to their work. The neo-conservative movement, on the other hand, believed its credibility and legitimacy was derived from its contacts within formal foreign policy channels. Overall, these organisations were also usually better and more consistently funded than their liberal counterparts and, as a

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result, did not require the same level of resource pooling in order to function on a larger scale.

Similarly, when it came to relations with local actors, the neo-conservative human rights movement was not a truly transnational movement. Neither the NED nor Freedom House made much effort to engage with Latin American actors, and when they did it was usually limited to personal relationships between organisational staff and members of Latin American governments. The ultimate beneficiaries of NED funding in Latin America were, by design, kept at arm's length with very little contact ever occurring between the two groups. Indeed, the NED's primary relationship in Latin America consisted of a personal relationship between Gershman and the Chamorro family, which had a distinctly negative effect on the public perception of the NED. Similarly, Freedom House lacked connections in Latin America, particularly among grassroots organisations. It maintained some contact with organisations such as the Chilean Commission on Human Rights, but they were used primarily as an occasional information resource and very little information or assistance passed the other way. This lack of local contacts calls into question the level of understanding these organisations had about the situation on the ground and their ability to obtain detailed and impartial information or make informed choices about where to send funding. It suggests that, in fact, these organisations were designed not to be transnational advocates and providers of aid, but rather to act as implementers or justifiers of US policy towards the world. By contrast, extensive contact and collaboration with local actors were key aspects of the workings of liberal human rights organisations such as WOLA. Indeed, a great deal of WOLA's legitimacy in both Washington and Latin America derived from the fact that it was seen as well connected in the region and to be acting on the information and interests of these connections.

These differences in working methods are indicative of the differences in approach and in scope of the two human rights movements. The neo-conservative human rights movement was characterised by top-down structures, highly insular working methods and a strong focus on promoting US interests in the region, with little first-hand information concerning the situation on the ground. Its interest in human rights and democracy promotion was primarily political. Amalgamating the internationally powerful idea of human rights with what amounted to a less incendiary form of anti-Communism lent a moral argument, if not a moral imperative, to US anti-Communist policy in the region and the NED and Freedom House were instrumental in the implementation and justification of these policies. This is exemplified by the work of these organisations in Chile and Nicaragua. The interest these two organisations took in the two countries directly correlated to US policy in the region and, in both cases these organisations sought to promote whatever they saw as being in the US' best interests. In Chile, this took the form of reshaping the democratic opposition into a moderate and pro-US force and providing information to discredit the more radical left and create the impression that the centre and centre-right groups were the only hope for Chile's future. In the significantly more contentious case of Nicaragua, the work of these organisations involved promoting and funding the Nicaraguan opposition in preparation for the 1989 election and directing the foreign policy-making community towards the idea that the Sandinista government was inherently undemocratic and US policy was serving as a positive democratising force.

This was a far remove from the liberal human rights movement that built itself around the power of grassroots mass movements and transnational relationships between non-state groups and actors. The liberal human rights movement sought to see that international law was upheld, but also that the interests and needs of local actors were heard and taken into account. Its greatest strength and legitimacy came from its

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extensive relationships with local actors on the ground and the collaborative, reciprocal relationships it developed between international human rights groups. In this WOLA was no exception and, as a result of its devotion to the upholding of international law regardless of nations' political and ideological affiliation, it often found itself at loggerheads with the Reagan administration. In Chile, it essentially continued the Carter-era policy of focusing public and government attention on the human rights abuses perpetrated by the Pinochet regime, an issue that the Reagan administration had played down in its relationship with the junta. Meanwhile, its work in Nicaragua sought to provide an alternative to the Reagan administration's narrative about the Sandinistas' communist sympathies and the country's involvement with the Soviet Union. WOLA highlighted the Sandinistas' abuse of Miskito Indians and the curtailment of civil liberties brought about by the state of emergency. However, its primary aim was to persuade Washington and the US public that, far from the undemocratic, communist police state envisioned by the Reagan administration, Nicaragua was functionally democratic and the majority of its shortcomings in human rights stemmed from destructive US policy towards it.

So why, given the extent of WOLA's on the ground contacts and knowledge in the region, did it (and the broader liberal human rights movement) struggle to influence US policy towards Latin America during this time? On the one hand, the answer is simply that the liberal movement did not have the ear of the US government at the time. The suspicion with which Reagan regarded these organisations limited their access to those branches of government most concerned with foreign policy-making. By contrast, the NED and Freedom House enjoyed unparalleled access to the State Department, Congress and, in the case of Freedom House, even occasionally the White House. However, the answer is more complicated than a mere lack of access, as evidenced by fact that the strong network of supporters WOLA maintained within Congress was still

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unable to influence policy much during this time. Instead, the answer lies in the confluence of a number of factors, including access to the government, the somewhat “imperial” nature of the Reagan presidency and the timely redefinition of human rights.

The inauguration of Reagan brought with it a distinct change in the Bureau of Human Rights as well as the international cause of human rights. Abrams had been a proponent of the concept of democracy as a human right for some time and brought this belief to the role of Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights. This opened the door for organisations such as Freedom House and the NED, with similar conceptions of human rights, to enjoy the level of influence the liberal human rights movement had enjoyed under Carter. Moreover, the strongly anti-Communist policies operated by the Reagan administration clashed with the liberal human rights movement’s commitment to universalism in its work, which led to such organisations regularly criticising the authoritarian regimes with which the Reagan administration aligned in the region. This gradual exclusion of the liberal human rights movement meant that, as the decade progressed, the new definition which included the uniquely US form of democratic rights, gained traction not only in the United States but also internationally. Even once the liberal human rights movement regained some of its lost ground in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the new definition was entrenched as an international norm. Indeed, the United States used elements of this amalgamation of democracy and human rights as part of the justification for both the 1990 Gulf War and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. The prominence of this new conception of human rights did not necessarily force the liberal human rights movement to change its own definitions and, certainly, organisation such as Amnesty International have continued their work largely unchanged. However, in the 1990s some, such as WOLA, did adopt socio-economic and other issues typically outside the remit of traditional human rights work in order to

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try to rehabilitate themselves in the new human rights discourse and to align with Bush's post-Cold War policy interests.

A great deal of the scholarship concerning inter-American relations of the 1980s chooses to focus on the flashpoints of US aggression and the abandonment of containment policies, as noted in the Introduction. However, this approach ignores the key legacy of the Reagan administration in inter-American policy.<sup>721</sup> Democracy promotion continued to shape the manner in which the United States engaged with the region (and indeed the rest of the world) in the aftermath of the Cold War and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Dismissal of the policy of democracy promotion due to its uneven application or the fact that it did little to nurture true democracy is short-sighted.<sup>722</sup> There is little doubt that this policy did not necessarily seek to help local actors in creating home-grown democratic systems, but this was never its intended purpose. Nor was its designed merely to act as a justification for intervention (although it was certainly used this way on occasions). Instead, democracy promotion was designed to provide a new moral policy around which the United States could rally and exert its influence internationally. During the Cold War, it had a secondary aim of shaping Latin American democratic transitions to produce systems which resembled the US. Indeed, the strict adherence of the NED and Freedom House to polyarchic, US-style democracy in their work is indicative of this. Furthermore, the continued influence of democracy promoting organisations into the 1990s, combined with the fact that groups such as WOLA were forced to alter their principles to fit the new international rhetoric, is illustrative of the fact that democracy promotion had become a key part of inter-American policy.

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<sup>721</sup> Scott, *Deciding to Intervene* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996) pp. 2-5 and Lowenthal, "The United States and Latin American Democracy: Learning from History" in *Exporting Democracy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991) pp. 268-270.

<sup>722</sup> Lowenthal, "The United States and Latin American Democracy: Learning from History" in *Exporting Democracy* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1991) p. 270.



This thesis has shown that the rise of democracy promotion policies also brought with it a change in the way non-state actors interacted with traditional foreign policy-making channels. While in the 1970s, non-state actors usually positioned themselves as providing a moral check on the actions of states, the 1980s saw the rise of non-state actors which sought to provide not only justification but also implementation assistance for state foreign policy.<sup>723</sup> Non-state actors did provide support for the Carter administration's human rights policy, but, for the most part the relationship between the administration and non-state actors was one of information exchange. Liberal human rights groups provided information concerning abuses throughout the world along with suggestions for action and the Carter administration made policy decisions with the help of that information; but the administration was not above criticism from human rights groups when it failed to live up to their expectations.<sup>724</sup> By contrast, under Reagan the liberal human rights movement was completely blocked from influencing policy for much of the decade and, instead of providing information and policy suggestions, the neo-conservative movement sought either to assist in the implementation or provide information to justify policies already in place. This is not to say that these organisations completely eschewed policy suggestions: Freedom House did make some suggestions based on its own analysis (and these were often taken seriously), but this was not the norm for the relationship between the Reagan administration and non-state actors.

Moyn has argued that liberal human rights did “far more to transform the terrain of idealism than they [did] the world itself”.<sup>725</sup> This investigation of non-state actors has shown that the re-definition of human rights to include democracy promotion brought about a significant change to both idealism and the world. Instigated by members of the

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<sup>723</sup> Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998) pp. 23-24.

<sup>724</sup> Sikkink, *Mixed Signals* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2004) pp. 122-123.

<sup>725</sup> Moyn, *The Last Utopia* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012) p. 9.

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US government and supported by non-state actors, this new movement took the moral foreign policy of the Carter era and redefined it for use in the war against Communism. As a result of the fact that, initially, third sector actors had acted as moral checks on government policy, there is a widespread public perception that increased numbers of third sector actors ensures greater governmental accountability to citizens and the international community. However, as in the case of the neo-conservative non-state actors discussed here, after the 1980s this did not necessarily hold true. In little more than a decade, not only had the new definition of human rights taken hold as a tenet of US foreign policy, but it had gained a non-state following which had worked to establish it as an international norm and lend the moral legitimacy of the third sector to the policy of democracy promotion abroad. This thesis goes some way to proving and developing the comment made by Moyn in the epilogue to *The Last Utopia* that the Reagan era brought the assimilation of human rights into democracy promotion.<sup>726</sup> However, Moyn places the “human rights community” firmly in opposition to this redefinition of human rights. In reality, as this thesis has shown, the policy of democracy promotion fractured the human rights community, developing a new movement which operated in opposition to the liberal movement and in full support of democracy promotion.

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<sup>726</sup> Ibid, p. 217.

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