

## Remarks of Kenneth Wollack

### National Democratic Institute 2011 Democracy Dinner

Washington, DC, November 7, 2011

Good evening. I am Ken Wollack, president of NDI. I want to welcome you to our celebration of the 2011 W. Averell Harriman Democracy Award and the Madeleine K. Albright Grant. Tonight we honor with the Harriman Award three individuals who passed away in the last year – Geraldine Ferraro, Richard Holbrooke and Charles Manatt. Each of them was essential to our existence and to our work. Each of them added their commitment at a time when democracy building was no sure thing.

Since 1984, NDI has worked in more than 100 countries with, at last count, fourteen hundred civic groups; 720 political parties; 10,000 parliamentarians; and thirteen hundred women's rights organizations. NDI has brought people together with diverse experiences and expertise.

The people-to-people nature of our work has been expanded in recent years to include online tools to impart knowledge, share ideas, and connect people and groups. This diversity of democratic experience is more than a symbol. It has a practical value.

We know that there is no one model for democracy but rather many models and many experiences. We know, too, that as the community of democracies has grown, democratic practice has become inseparable from democratic cooperation and solidarity.

But the recipients of tonight's Harriman Award are a reminder that this cooperation and solidarity not only reach across borders, regions and continents, they also cross generations. With these three leaders in mind, it is significant that tonight we bestow the Madeleine K. Albright Grant on the Egyptian women's organization – ACT. With the Arab Spring, we see ACT as a vindication of all the work that has gone before. Even more, because it focuses on the empowerment of women and their inclusion in a new Egypt. For Gerry, Chuck and Richard, ACT is a legacy of their hope.

There are a number of individuals and groups whom I want to acknowledge tonight: I want to particularly recognize our board of directors whose leadership, commitment and generosity are central to the Institute's efforts. I would like to recognize those who are here tonight and ask them to stand as their names are called: Bernie Aronson, Hattie Babbitt, Elizabeth Bagley, Joan Calambokidis, Robin Carnahan, Howard Dean, Gene Eidenberg, Pat Griffin, Rachelle Horowitz, Peter Kovler, Rob Liberatore, Ken Melley, Molly Raiser, Nancy Rubin, Elaine Shocas, Mike Steed, Maurice Tempelman, Lynda Thomas and Rich Verma.

Madeleine Albright was the Institute's founding vice-chair 27 years ago. She left briefly for a couple of obscure government posts, and returned as chairman in 2001. Her leadership has expanded the reach and enhanced the standing of NDI in so many ways.

With us tonight are board members and staff of the National Endowment for Democracy and our three affiliated institutes – IRI, the Solidarity Center and CIPE.

We are honored by the presence of members and staff of the Senate and House. The Congress has always been and remains an inspiration for democratic activists around the world. I want to particularly thank senators Mikulski, Landrieu and Gillibrand, and representatives Engel and Maloney for joining us. And I would like to also recognize Governor O'Malley from Maryland. NDI has benefitted from the support of five administrations. And we are heartened by the Obama Administration's dedicated commitment to a more democratic world.

We are pleased that officials from the White House, State Department, USAID and the Millennium Challenge Corporation are with us. They represent our support network and our allies in the field.

And we are deeply honored that the secretary of state will be delivering tonight's keynote address.

At its heart, NDI is a public-private partnership. So I especially want to single out those who made this event possible: the corporations, trade unions, foundations and individual donors. Each of them is listed in the program and on the screens, and gratefully acknowledged.

I want to welcome the diplomatic corps and political leaders from abroad. And I would like to express our gratitude to those in this room and hundreds of others around the globe who volunteer their time to assist NDI's efforts.

Above all, I want to recognize Vice President Shari Bryan and NDI's talented staff – 88 nationalities in all. Working in environments that are challenging, remote and sometimes dangerous, they are the heart of NDI. In their dedication, they are our face to the world.

NDI is not alone in carrying out its democratic development mission. We are part of a growing global community that includes governments, intergovernmental bodies, and other nongovernmental groups both here and abroad. Each of us benefit from our mutual support. This democracy support community is united in its belief of a common humanity. That in this growing interdependent world, we are truly responsible for one another.