

welcome. Likewise, there is a need for trained instructors at all levels as well as for curricula and systems that produce technically qualified, mid-level workers. Proposals should focus on development of educational programs and institutions that teach how to be a skilled teacher, how to apply modern technology, how to implement and teach environmentally and scientifically sound water management and agricultural practices, how to design and plan road safety measures, etc. Finally, the development of ethics and civic responsibility through education is an important step in creating a more civil and democratic society. Middle Eastern groups are particularly interested in learning how American school systems have incorporated in their curricula community service, leadership development, volunteerism and environmental campaigns, and other activities that involve students in the larger society.

Note: This competition is NOT designed for youth exchanges. Only adult professionals or grassroots practitioners may be selected to travel internationally for exchange activities under this competition. Individual university students may take part in pilot sessions and in-country educational activities.

2. The expansion of citizen participation and advocacy, the development of good governance, and the strengthening of non-governmental institutions are essential to democratic society:

Proposed exchanges should contribute to transparency and the development of (mechanisms of) public oversight and control to counteract the possibility of corruption and abuse in governmental institutions, should strengthen the role of citizen initiative, participation and advocacy through non-governmental organizations, or should reinforce the concept of the rule of law, the rational administration of the judicial system, and citizens' right to equal justice. A populace experiencing abuses of power and corruption loses confidence in its civil institutions. The American NGO might work with indigenous NGOs, citizens' rights groups, journalists, and government officials to determine how best to expose and combat corruption and promote accountability and transparency. The Bureau welcomes proposals that promote an understanding of the proper role of NGOs in a democratic society. Social and political activism, encouraged, focused, and channeled through non-governmental organizations, is a basic underpinning of democratic society. Strengthening NGO advocacy skills,

management, recruitment and mobilization, media relations, and networking will strengthen democratic/civil society trends. A well-trained, independent judiciary is fundamental to a democratic political and social system. Proposals might introduce judges/prosecutors/lawyers to the functioning of the legal system in the U.S.

3. National and regional stability, based on tolerance and cooperation, is an essential underpinning for the region's continued growth and cooperation:

Proposals should focus on issues of conflict resolution and promotion of tolerance and cooperation among diverse ethnic communities. A community that expends its time, its energy, and its material resources on offensive or defensive combat is unable to develop or maintain a civil basis for democratic institutions. Communal and ethnic tolerance is difficult to achieve, and the problem has worsened with the rise of community-based political groups, particularly those centered on religion. There are numerous community groups working to bring about resolution to the challenge posed by ethnic nationalism, and the American experience of absorbing, integrating, and accommodating diverse communities from various parts of the world into a civil, as opposed to an ethnically defined, polity would be useful to these groups. Of particular relevance would be the experience of programs that teach tolerance in either a formal setting or in novel arts/media-based contexts.

4. Economic growth, improved living standards, and participation in the global economy are linked to and dependent on environmental protection, sound natural resources management, and promoting public health:

Proposals should focus on conditions that allow for and promote economic growth and increased participation in the global economy. These conditions include, in addition to a balanced, transparent and predictable system of civil dispute resolution, sound environmental protection and natural resources management and a rational approach to issues of public health. Economic growth, including participation in the broader global economy, is dependent on environmental protection and natural resources management and is directly correlated to the physical well being of the population. Exchange projects might enhance public awareness of the threat posed by environmental deterioration and facilitate efforts at multiple levels to combat the threat or might focus on natural resources management. Central

to any discussion of natural resources management in the Middle East is the question of water: water conservation, quality, availability, and distribution. Finally, environmental stewardship and natural resource management are closely linked to issues of public health. Public health may be addressed either from the perspective of prevention or from the perspective of developing resources to respond to what is currently an overwhelming need for public health information and services.

5. An informed public is the basis of democratic institution building. Journalism that contributes to public understanding and sound decision making is an essential building block for civil society:

Proposals should focus on the role and responsibility of a free press in a democratic society and should include journalism training and/or professional skills development. If the fourth estate is to fulfill its role as sine qua non of democratic society, journalists must be well trained, and they must have an appreciation for the importance of objective reporting, the ethics of presenting a true and balanced account, and the skills required for subject specialization, rational media management, and dealing with laws that constrain press freedom.

Western Hemisphere Affairs (WHA)

The Bureau of Western Hemisphere Affairs includes the countries of Canada, Mexico, Central and South America, and the Caribbean.

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1. Increase adherence to democratic practices and their respect for human rights:

Proposals should focus on developing a better understanding of the role of NGOs in influencing political processes, lobbying, and networking with other organizations. Proposals may address any of the following program concepts designed to enhance democracy within WHA countries: Transparency and Anti-corruption, Administration of Justice (also Comparative Legal Systems), Civilian-Military Relations, Civil Society Participation in Government, Leadership for Democracy, and Alternative Dispute Resolution as a Solution to Inter-ethnic conflict. Proposals are also welcome that help support non-governmental organizations to build public awareness of narcotics and human trafficking as violations of human rights that can have a pernicious influence on democratic systems would also be welcomed. (Any such proposals