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First, let us say a few words about "democracy", a word so overused today that it is threatened by a loss of meaning.

To simplify:

1 ° / Democracy does not exist as "spontaneous generation". Its existence does not rely on a snap of fingers or a glance of a leader. Democracy is a culture in the long term. It progressively takes root in society. The time factor is absolutely essential.

2 / How unacceptable, futile and humiliating is "airborne democracy" in the holds of bombers in Iraq for example. It is unrealistic and absurd to export a ready-made democratic political system in total disregard of the situation and the social and political conditions of the "host" country. In this simplistic concept of exporting a "ready-to-wear democracy", democracy is seen as a universal good transcending civilizations, cultures and differences of all kinds between people. In such a philosophy, what is good for a democratic Western country is equally good for any country, whatever its characteristics.

3 ° / Democracy is expressed in particular in universal suffrage. It is legitimacy through the ballot boxes and it is there that it becomes a culture and that it needs time. Indeed, elections are only meaningful if the citizen is fully aware of the scope of his act when he puts his ballot into the ballot box. In particular, an illiterate citizen cannot make a valid choice. The basic condition for a valid choice is the ability of judgment. This is lacking in a society with a deficit in education. Education and knowledge are categorical imperatives for a proper exercise of democracy. And it is here that the "time factor" becomes involved. Multiply schools and democracy will inevitably appear. Westerners that question underdeveloped countries, particularly those with educational deficits, do not realize the tremendous difficulties and frustrations encountered in organizing in these countries a vote that is meant to be irrevocable.

A former President of the World Bank, the Australian-American Wolfensohn announced in major newspapers around the world when he took office, that he wanted to cover all Third World countries with schools. He made it a condition for the success of his mission. It was certainly not trivial that a leading banker would try to cover the whole world with schools and regard that project as essential for his success! In truth he was missing neither insight, nor judgment.

4 / The question of the spread of democracy is often asked too simplistically. We must certainly take advantage of the vogue of the concept, now fortunately in fashion. Everybody consider themselves to be democratic. Nobody is advocating dictatorship. And so much the better because, in particular, people lacking democracy have then the opportunity to take advantage of this tremendous global appetite for democracy.

We must therefore help people to give birth to democracy. In this maieutics, democracy must first become their own concern. And the best foreign aid is to do everything possible to reduce under-development and push forward education. These are essential prerequisites of democracy.

5 / With regard to good governance, it must be regarded as the legitimate work of democracy. Good governance requires first a good use of democracy and, if it can bring to power honest and competent leaders, it would only have to create transparency in the actions of these leaders. Competence and transparency are the two fruitful fruits of good governance.