BROOKINGS DOHA CENTER
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DEMOCRACY PROMOTION AND AMERICA'S KEY ARAB ALLIES:

LIMITS AND PROSPECTS

Doha, Qatar

Tuesday, July 28, 2009

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Welcome and Moderator:

HADY AMR, Director, Brookings Doha Center;
Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy
The Brookings Institution

Featured Panelists:

ANOUAR BOUKHARS, Visiting Fellow, Brookings Doha Center

ROULA T. ATTAR. Resident Country Director – Jordan, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. AMR: Anyway. Thank you all for coming. This is a much bigger group than we anticipated. But we're glad you're here, and we hope you're comfortable, and do you think we should close the door or?

SPEAKER: That's (inaudible).

MR. AMR: Cool. Okay. Anyway, thank you all. Welcome, ladies and gentlemen. Good afternoon. My name is Hady Amr. I'm the Director of the Brookings Doha Center and a Fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy in Washington.

Thank you for coming today for our first ever July event. We had anticipated a much smaller event than this, but we're glad you've all come. And it's going to be a little cozier in the room than it normally is. But thank you for coming.

Just a reminder. Our event today is on the record, and so welcome to the viewers from Al Jazeera Mubashar . And just another reminder which is like Brookings Washington, Brookings Doha is open to a broad range of views. Our scholars present views on their own behalf, and Brookings does not endorse any specific political perspective.

Our event today is entitled "Democracy Promotion and America's Key Arab Allies: Limits and Prospects."

And today we have two distinguished speakers which I'm glad to know and are also personal friends.

Dr. Anouar Boukhars is a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Doha Center and for the summer and when he's not with us, he is an Assistant Professor of Political Science and Director of the Center for Defense and Security Policy at Wilberforce University

in the U.S. He has a forthcoming book on the Monarchy and Authoritarianism in Morocco by Rutledge.

This summer in here in Doha and also in his travels around the region, he has been researching America's democracy promotion efforts and also the efforts of regimes to retain their certain structures.

And he has a master's from Morocco, his native country, and a Ph.D. in International Studies from Old Dominion University in the U.S.

To my left, to your right, is an old friend who I have known for quite a bit -- 10 years -- 10 years. I think it's 10 years -- 10, 11 years.

Roula Attar is the Country Director for the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, a Washington-based democracy promotion institution. She is the Resident Country Director of their program in Jordan, and has been based there for five years now.

She has tremendous, tremendous experience in democracy promotion in Jordan, as well as very significant experience in her country of birth, Lebanon, as well as Egypt, and has organized and supervised election monitoring efforts throughout the

region as well as ongoing civil society and democracy programs.

The way we thought we'd structure today's discussion is much similar to our discussions that we normally do in the main hall, which is that Dr. Boukhars will give his presentation initially on his research, and then Roula will respond a bit to that and also provide some practical experience from what she's seen on the ground throughout these democracy programs.

And again, apologies to folks in the back. We didn't expect the event to be so large from the (inaudible).

And we’re going to try to conclude in under 90 minutes. We hope you'll stay for refreshments in the other room afterwards. And a reminder to all of you please turn off your cell phones. I'm going to turn mine off right now, so we won't have annoying rings during the event.

This event will be in English, and apologies to the audience that we don't have a translation this time in Arabic. We normally have Arabic translations,

but due to some unexpected difficulties, we do not have it at this time.

So without further ado, I'll pass the (inaudible) to Anwar, and I'll move the microphone over to him as well. There we go.

MR. BOUKHARS: All right. Well, I would like to thank the audience, and I would like to thank the Director, Hady Amr, without whose leadership and guidance has been extremely helpful. Without his support, I wouldn't be here today. So thank you.

And I would also like to thank the staff of Brookings that have been very, very helpful, and, of course, Roula for being here with us today.

The research goal basically is to contribute to the debate raging in Washington today about the most effective way to redefine and reformulate the contours of America's democracy promotion in the Middle East.

President Obama and his new team face significant pressures to go beyond disassociating the United States from the legacy that was left from his predecessor to actually pulling back on the promotion of democracy generally.

And this pressure takes multiple sources, of course, and I will focus on just two.

Many observers in the United States strangely enough I think believe that the Bush Administration has pushed hard for democratization in the Middle East, and in the process has endangered America's core interests in the region.

The President, I mean President Bush and his intellectual backers are depicted today as having been naïve in believing that democracy can ever be reached in the Middle East.

As such, President Obama today is urged by again many policy analysts in the United States, by many observers, to revert back to the old line of backing unconditionally friendly Arab autocrats in the Middle East. That's one.

Second, there is a notion in Washington, D.C. that the United States and President Bush has been pushing hard elections, especially in fragile states, and, therefore, the new administration should back away on supports -- on electoral supports and concentrate instead on the foundational elements. What I mean by the foundational elements is the

promotion of the rule of law is the focus on building an effective state.

My research demonstrates that these are all misconceptions, if not myths, for several reasons.

First, the idea that the Obama administration (inaudible) urged today should stay clear of efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East arises from a reductionist verdict that U.S. policy analysts and policymakers render on his record on democracy promotion in the Middle East.

This is how the argument goes: Bush wanted Arab democracy promotion and look at what he got. Look at Lebanon. Look at Palestine. Look at Iraq. The argument is that political radicals has been empowered everywhere. Therefore, the United States, the argument follows, should better off staying away from stirring that pot again.

There R. many problems with this characterization. First, it’s not the Bush administration that pressed for elections in these troublesome areas. When (inaudible) regimes weaken or collapse, as in the case of Iraq, citizens usually

press for the chance to have a political say, and that usually comes about in terms of election.

In Iraq, for example, as we all remember, the United States at first actually discouraged local actors from moving quickly on the election path. It's not until Ayatollah Sistani pressed for it that the administration switched gears.

Second, Bush pushed for elections. President Bush push for elections did not necessarily lead to the triumph of radical Islamist movements, as is depicted again and many policy analyses in the United States and in many media commentaries.

The gains that Islamanationalists scored in Palestine, Lebanon, and Iraq were not replicated in other parts of the Arab world. Those were special cases that were conducted under special conditions.

And in this case, occupation on one hand, and war on the other. Islamist movement participation, however, if you look at it in Morocco, Algeria, Jordan, Kuwait, Yemen, (inaudible) did not overwhelm the political systems. Quite the contrary, it led to a certain moderation of this movement (inaudible) look at all these countries.

So that’s one.

Second, Bush democracy promotion in the Middle East did not differ significantly from all of his predecessors, regardless of the talk, regardless of all its talk about the benefits of democracy promotion in the Middle East, the Bush team was guided by a pre-9/11 mindset. As long as democratization did not guarantee the emergence of liberal and secular forces that are in line with America's strategic interests, then Bush’s -- President Bush freedom agenda did not apply.

I mean the record is clear. Short-term interests trumped ideals and the rule of law.

So (inaudible) unlike what's written about, unlike what President Bush and his backers state benefited strongly during the last eight years from his support, from his tacit support.

Countries that have long (inaudible) toed the line of America’s -- or aligned themselves with America's interests in the Middle East got a free pass for their human rights abuses. Jordan is a case in point. Egypt is another. Morocco, a shining example, is another example.

So rather than promoting democracy, President Bush actually ended up enhancing authoritarianism in the region.

Third, it’s not the administration's freedom agenda that actually led -- that actually enflamed the flames of political radicalism and recklessly endangered America’s interests in the Middle East. It’s quite the contrary.

It’s the association of the President’s freedom agenda with the war in Iraq, with the war in Afghanistan, and with regime change, forcible regime change in America’s adversaries that ended up delegitimizing the whole democracy promotion enterprise.

We all know that after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, President Bush rightly identified authoritarianism as the main breeder of violent extremism. Unfortunately, the way he approached it was flawed and some say disastrous.

Bush believed that if America's adversaries are toppled, and America’s allies are prodded to democratize, the Middle East new leaders would be more accommodating of America’s interests, more accepted of

President Bush's vision, and grateful Arab youths, liberated Arab youths, they would be more appreciated of their freedom and hence less prone to challenge the new Middle Eastern order that he envisioned, the new and old orders.

Supporters of this vision, as we all remember, openly bragged about how their adopted theory of creative destruction -- that's what it was called -- creative destruction would unleash creative chaos -- again, creative chaos -- in the insubordinate parts of the Middle East.

Unfortunately, out of the mayhem and the bloodshed, a new Middle Eastern did not emerge, a better Middle East.

Unfortunately, destruction did not produce creation. It produced again, as was widely expected and predicted, civil strife and more turmoil.

President Bush underestimated the ferocity of the resistance that he would face in the region that has suffered enormously from internal tyranny and external occupation.

So in the midst of these ongoing confrontations, ongoing contestations, the Bush

administration grappled with the second agenda it set for its allies in the Middle East.

Unlike the destructive plan it reserved for its contestations in Iraq, Iran, Lebanon, Palestine, and pretty much any power that challenge the status quo, the President believed -- the administration gently prodded its allies to reform their regime.

To this end, the administration followed the multi -- the Bush administration -- followed the multi-pronged strategy that consisted of the classic traditional public diplomacy buttressed by special program initiatives that targeted economic, educational, and women rights issues, but barely political issues. The focus was on these three -- again, economic, educational, and women's rights issues.

The thinking in Washington was that social, cultural, and economic liberalization would lay the groundwork ultimately for democratization. In this context, the Bush administration, as we all know, launched the Middle East Partnership Initiative in 2002, and followed by the broader Middle East and

North Africa Partnership in 2004, as we all remember the G8 Summit in 2004 -- Georgia.

The Bush administration believe that these programs, coupled with mild international pressure, would encourage liberal forces, secular forces, to challenge or to increase their (inaudible) pressure on the regime.

It's in this context that the administration used the mobilization of the Kefayad movement in Egypt or Daiwat Party again in Egypt to -- as examples of the success of this strategy. Even the Western media and the United States were fascinated I mean by Keyfayad, despite the fact that this was a tiny movement.

The administration did not have a grasp of events in the ground. Civil society is weak. The political opposition is weak. Worse, the civil society, the business community, and the political opposition these are -- they formed the pillars of the regime. I mean no studies have actually studied how civil society actors and others they are (inaudible) carrying themselves.

So that’s one. Again, lack of understanding of events in the ground.

But to the consternation of Washington, neither the massive uprising in Lebanon or the tiny movement in Egypt succeeded in producing this robust protest movement that is guided by again secular and liberal forces.

The administration also followed the second path that targeted economics. It's believed that by signing free-trade agreements with liberalizing regimes, allied, like Morocco, like Bahrain, and Jordan before it’s believed -- the assumption was that political liberty is the natural byproduct of economic openness. In other words, the expansion of trade, the expansion of international commerce would produce economic growth, which would, in turn, contribute to political and civil freedoms through the creation of a new middle class, a middle class and a professional middle class that is independent and politically aware.

A new middle class did emerge, but this new middle class is neither independent nor politically aware unfortunately.

So, in theory, this assumption makes sense, of course. But how can such a goal be attained in the presence of patronage practices, which we still see throughout America's Arab allies, the selected enforcement of the law, and state accountability is unclear. It's very difficult to see how that can happen.

The rulers of Morocco, Jordan, Bahrain, and Egypt, of course, still view democratization as a threat to their power. They still view democratization as an obstacle to economic improvement.

So the signed free-trade agreements with Morocco, Bahrain, Aman, and UAE and even Jordan have not increased prosperity, as they were told; has not increased economic freedom, and has certainly not led to political freedoms, to civil political freedoms.

It is, of course, (inaudible) possible that these selective liberalizing reforms that we have witnessed in Morocco, Jordan, Bahrain, and Egypt to some extent might produce -- it might -- produce an unstoppable momentum towards change. It might produce an unstoppable momentum towards the creation of a

pluralistic system that would lead to more power diffusion.

No authoritarian regime is impervious to democratic change. Just look at the example of Iran, not today, but the Shah. I mean the Shah's modernization process brought him down. Look at Algeria as another example.

In 1991, 1992, political reforms in that case almost, almost led to a -- first time in the Arab world -- to a democratic peaceful transition -- first-time -- democratic peaceful transition.

So the trick today for authoritarian modernizers is how to introduce reforms without losing control of their base and which we have seen that they have been good at it. All the reforms have been selective. They have been ad hoc, but they have not touched at the core of the political matter, which is a reconfiguration of political power.

So all in all, aside from incessantly President Bush during his eight years extolling the virtues of democracy rightly in quelling democracy would quell the tide of radicalism and, hence, ironically, it would enhance America's security. The

record shows that the Bush administration never pursued democracy promotion, at least not seriously.

Even the programs that -- the development aid initiatives and ambitious policies. He did announce ambitious policies. Unfortunately these policies they didn't have an enforcement mechanism. They were ambitious, but no enforcement mechanism.

Worse, they tended to follow the rulers' top-down reforms. All or most of these aid followed what these administrations in Egypt and Jordan has designed as their priority.

And in the rare instances that President Bush pressured for election or for relaxation of repressive policies, such pressure unfortunately, as we have witnessed in Egypt, was inconsistent and short-lived.

So to end on a positive note -- and we can talk about later how to move forward -- I'm a little bit concerned about the time -- we can talk about it -- is that with that being said, Bush's -- President Bush democracy rhetoric and the programs that he had announced I mean invigorated reform debate within several Arab states.

But that reform debate has already started. It's not the Bush Administration that pushed for it. It just invigorated it. But unfortunately because of the President’s extremely high unpopularity in the Arab world Bush’s message unfortunately suffered from serious credibility problem. Nobody took him seriously when he said I'm going to Iraq to liberate Iraqis. I’m going to promote democracy, which it’s hard I guess to believe that.

Fortunately, the new American administration is not handicapped, at least not yet by these issues of trust and is not yet tarnished by charges of democracy. President Obama’s personal history, his personal characteristics, his temperament, which he believes in a non-confrontational bipartisan approach and his likability if he manages to build on these programs that President Bush initiated but unfortunately did not execute, then there are better chances for democracy to come to the Arab world. And thank you very much.

MR. AMR: Thanks, Anwar. Actually, before we turn to Roula, I want to ask you a quick question.

MR. BOUKHARS: Sure.

MR. AMR: I mean if you had -- talking about U.S. democracy promotion and, you know, and America's key allies in these countries. If you had two minutes with the President of the United States, what would you ask them to do?

MR. BOUKHARS: Well, first a very good question.

MR. AMR: The three or four -- you know, say, Mr. President, I think you should do one, two, three -- you know, three or four things. What would you say?

MR. BOUKHARS: Good. First is just I mean please stop exaggerated praise of superficial democracy reforms. This is not the (inaudible). Whenever a reform is made, there is significant -- like Morocco did with the Mudowena, for example, women's rights. Wherever credit is deserved, then you mention, but just stop exaggerated superficial reform.

That has done nothing to advance the cause of reform. In fact, it has encouraged the regime in Morocco, Jordan Bahrain is just to abide by strictly minimalist version. That's first one.

Second, the Islamists. You remove the stigma associated with engaging Islamist movements. I mean, look, there are still prevailing worries. There are still legitimate doubts about whether these movements are truly committed to democracy or whether they are not, but we truly won't no unless they are tested.

In Washington, in the last few years, we have witnessed an emerging debate that at least acknowledges that the United States should develop rational, coherent strategy towards dealing with Islamist movements that, of course, abide by democracy, and, of course, that are nonviolent.

Unfortunately, this has not gone anywhere. I mean I understand -- you know, there have been ad hoc contact with Islamists and the Roula might -- she can speak authoritatively about that more than I do. Certainly in Morocco -- but these contacts they have been low-key. They are important, but unless they're upgraded, they're not going to lead anywhere.

So I'll tell the President the issue have today is not whether you engage or your isolate the Islamist. That's a non-starter; right? There is just

two things on the table. Both of them are risky. One is less than the other. Engage moderate Islamist movements, right, with the knowledge that that engagement might turn out to be risky; right? Or keep isolating these movements knowing full well that marginalization leads to radicalization or re-radicalization and hence more turmoil in the Middle East.

These are the two things you have to deal with. Again, we have witnessed an emerging debate which is -- you know, which is promising. It still needs to be done.

Second, promotes civil and political freedoms. It (inaudible) by all then -- I mean democracy would never take root unless you promote basic civil and political freedoms. And this comes with not -- I mean it's really astonishing to see the administration or American administrations and we never speak up when the regimes have political prisoners.

The case is okay, well, this might affect our security and economic needs. Care enough. Right? But look at China, for example. I mean every

administration has at least criticized -- I mean just publicly criticized -- you know, the arrests, for example, of political prisoners, and, as again, in the case of China, I mean that has not endangered America's interests, and at certain times it has been successful.

The second one -- the fourth point is we enhance democratic substance in aid programs. It's very, very critical. I mean in most of the aid programs, which is -- most of the programs are worthy of support, but unfortunately they don't target the political side of economic aid.

I mean women's empowerment is critical; right? But that's not political aid -- sub (inaudible) and the development aid. Don't call it political aid. So that's number one.

Second, I understand there are assistance in Morocco, and, again, Roula will be able to speak better than I do. There is assistance, you know, to parliamentarians. Like in Morocco, there are several support programs, you know, that they -- the upgrade of computers, that you train them in how to do their basic research, how to be good, you know, in finance.

This is all good, but unfortunately is not important. Why? Because look at the level of absenteeism in Parliament. I mean in Morocco the level of absenteeism is in (inaudible) -- just look at the TV Tuesdays and Wednesdays. I mean both chambers are pretty much empty. I mean it's not a joke, but these programs helping parliamentarians and the job is good -- not enough. It does nothing to address the democracy, you know, projects. And there are other elements. I'm sorry you said two, three.

MR. AMR: Two minutes.

MR. BOUKHARS: I apologize.

MR. AMR: So on behalf of the program, I'll cut you off.

Thank you, Anwar, and let me pass the (inaudible) physically and literally to Roula.

MS. ATTAR: Thank you.

MR. AMR: And, Roula, you can feel free to offer your perspectives, which may differ on certain points with those of Anwar, if you will --

MS. ATTAR: They will.

MR. AMR: -- that will provide us with --

MS. ATTAR: I will warn you: it will.

MR. AMR: -- no that's good. That will provide us with a good discussion.

MS. ATTAR: Great.

MR. AMR: So you're welcome now.

MS. ATTAR: Welcome, everyone. I want to first thank Brookings Doha for having me here and, of course, Anwar's research and everybody -- all the staff that's involved, and you, of course, for making the time to come on this hot Doha evening to actually hear about this particular topic.

I think I'd like to start by clarifying I think what I think is three misconceptions of U.S. democracy assistance in general how it's viewed, but also the concept of democracy.

And I think one of the biggest misconceptions that we hear is that democracy is this Western concept. It's something that doesn't originate from the Arab world, that it's something that the West has been trying to push on developing countries. When, in fact, democracy is a way of life, and it's a universal concept. And I, you know, there's very few people around the world who wouldn't want democracy.

I think the issue is do they understand what democracy means for them. We can't just say democracy, you know. From my experience in Jordan, when you talk about democracy to people, they go blank. They're thinking about feeding their children, building schools, getting health insurance.

What they really don't know, and what the politicians haven't made very well is making the links for them about what their priority needs are and how democracy can deliver on those needs.

So democracy that delivers is something that I think all people want, and I think it's something that needs to be thought of as democracy not as a Western concept, but as something that even Arabs, you know, in the early days wanted and continue to want. That's kind of like the first misconception that I feel exists.

The second misconception is this notion of -- that democracy assistance programs has been a Bush administration initiative. It's something that has become so associated with the Bush administration that you would think there was no democracy assistance programs before the Bush administration.

Organizations like NDI have been working on this still since the early ‘80s, before the Bush administration, and I think it is a mistake to say that it started with them.

I would disagree with Anwar on one thing is that I think that one of the things that the Bush administration did is further democracy rhetoric at least or the democracy lingo upfront, make more visible, and also allocated significantly more resources to democracy and governance and in the Middle East but also in other areas around the world. And I think that's important to acknowledge.

The example of Jordan as NDI we had been working in Jordan since 1993 without a field presence until 2004 when the Middle East Partnership Initiative was created and there was finally enough resources, financial and otherwise, to create a field presence.

And as a Democratic associated organization, we did benefit from the resources that a Republican administration kind of set aside for democracy and governance. So that’s another misconception that I think should be fixed.

And the third misconception, which is something that we always hear that the Arab (inaudible) when they talk about political reform, when they talk about political development, they are responding to a demand by the West or by the United States, and that, you know, that should be made more so.

And I think it's one of those things where if you really look at the Arab leaders, you know, they cannot get -- international stature is very important to them. And even though -- I don't think that what they do is in response to pressure. They want to look good. They want to feel like they are part of the international, you know -- King Abdullah in Jordan and I think others want to be able to go to the U.S. Congress and talk about what his country is doing and how modern they are and promote this progressive image of an Arab country as the model.

And I think they are responding to that -- a specific desire for their country and for themselves to show that they are up there. They can play with the big boys.

And I think what has been missing is when you talk about the U.S. pushing them or pressuring them that hasn't -- I agree with Anwar -- that hasn't been happening, and it's a big misconception that people think that it is happening to the extent that it is.

In the end, because of the importance of countries like Jordan in the region, there's very little pressure or very little that the U.S. can really do to get the new Jordanian leadership to modernize.

From my experience, it is a process that has been self initiated by Jordan and by the Hashemite leadership. And I think King Abdullah should get credit for that, because he did understand that the times are changing and that there needs to be kind of, you know, a substantive effort by Arab countries to play on the international arena because of different foreign policy and different developmental, you know, kind of priorities.

So I wanted to clear up those misconceptions before we kind of get into the nitty-gritty of things, because they're important things to keep in mind.

When you also talk about democracy assistance, very few people really know what that means, when you talk about democracy promotion. How do you promote democracy? How do you really promote democracy, and I have, you know, trouble explaining that to my own mom. She still doesn't know what I do for a living. She thinks I'm just traveling the world.

So trying to explain that to, you know, the average citizen, trying to explain that to anyone democracy assistance what does it mean and what does the U.S. democracy assistance do?

The U.S. democracy assistance programs -- and, again, I'm using my experience in Jordan as an example -- they can only do so much in the extent that, you know, we can offer technical assistance. We can offer consultation. We can offer tools and experiences to help the Jordanian institutions and people create the changes or improve the things that they need to improve.

We cannot make them want those changes. We cannot make the Jordanian government want those

changes. All that we can do is we can respond to the demand.

As international organizations, we could not exist in Jordan if we didn't feel that there was a local demand and there was an actual invitation from Jordanian institutions to come and assist them.

So from my experience in the Jordanian case, it has been an organic drive to really reform things internally. How real or unreal it is, how successful or unsuccessful is something to be evaluated separately. But what we can safely say is that the Jordanian institutions want to improve. They want to be, you know, more representative of their constituents, that the local parties want to be (inaudible) in elections better. Parliament wants to be more effective with legislation.

Young people want to have more of a voice. Women want to be represented at the table. People want their public opinion to be heard and to be considered when decisions and policies are put in place.

That is a given. So organizations like NDI and democracy assistance programs in general and the

focus on anything from (inaudible) and then to media development is things that you probably, you know, the details are foreign to most people unless you are in the development field, and they are items that simply provide tools and assistance. They do not create political will, and they do not create, you know, we can only give them the tools, and then it is up to them to use the tools or not.

So that's something I think that is very important to keep in mind when it comes to democracy assistance and what it means and, you know, when it comes to what organizations, what U.S. programs can do. They can allocate resources.

Today, I think, you know, I would agree with Anwar that the Obama administration has some decisions to make. It is -- you know, there is a Bush administration that has put a lot of (inaudible) in democracy and governance, but then, again, that has not been these quick results.

And that's one point of contention I think because political reform or democracy is a long-term process. I approach this from a developmental

perspective. You cannot expect this things to change overnight.

You are investing in a long-term process. I think one of the faults of some of the U.S. democracy assistance programs is that they wanted quick results; that there was these 12-months or 18-month programs that were supposed to change an entire society, to make it, you know, want the things that, you know, it hadn't even thought about or it didn't even understand.

So I think sometimes they have been too ambitious, and so expectations have to be reasonable I think on so many levels -- on the U.S. level, on the congressional level, but also on the people's level and on the leaderships' level.

And managing expectations can be tricky. I think one of the things that has created a lot of the debates about, you know, how Arab regimes should function or develop or not has been really fed by their rhetoric. So much has been done. Let's be very honest. When an Arab leader goes internationally and talks about my country is going to do this and this

and this, the expectations of their own people but also of the international community are raised.

And I think people -- when expectations are raised and they're not met, they're disappointed.

And so I find that the Arab leaders want both. They want the credit for (inaudible) to reform. They really in the end, like Anwar said, they feel like it's a threat to open up their systems to all of that. And so it's one of the things where they (inaudible) themselves have to decide, because people -- you know, first year or two they starting to say we'll give them the benefit of the doubt. This may take time, but now really they are evaluating them.

If you're talking about this as if you're actually going to do it, so where's the action? Where's the, you know, if you are going to talk this up, you need to be walking the walk, and I think that's one of the things that's also important.

And the Obama administration needs to understand, I think. I think there is good people out there who will probably know that it's a long process and it needs some more investment. I don't think that Arab societies, including Jordan, are anywhere near

being a representative or competitive or what we would call an open political system.

Jordan I think has more space than other countries so that's something that's missed. I think a lot of countries tend to focus on how much space does not exist in Arab societies. And I think there are places, like Jordan, where there's space to function. Political parties can receive training. The media can write about issues, you know, if they don't self-censor per se. There is some progressive legislation. There's a women's (inaudible) in Parliament and at the administrative level.

Young people can go out and join, you know, political institutions.

So we also need to give some credit where credit is due of the space that is already there. It's not all negative. It's not all positive, but there is, you know, something there that needs to be taken into consideration.

The other thing that I think is important is this idea of drastic change or quick change we need to take it out of our entire vocabulary. Reasonable

change and incremental change is the way that these things come through.

It could take four years for political parties to emerge in a place like Jordan, and we need to understand that. And it's not because, you know, the system or the process isn't there. It's just sometimes you need to reeducate an entire generation on political life and the way to do political work. And that takes time.

A lot of the young people in Jordan, for example, there's a lot of political empathy. They don't join. They don't, you know, they don't participate as much. So you're almost -- we are working on that generation now, and it will take years from now to reach leadership positions and be represented and make the policies (inaudible) we need to have then.

So we also need to understand that.

I also want to mention something is -- on the issue of how Arab regimes view democratization as a threat. Well, is it really?

And I think one of the things that always strikes me is when I travel to Arab countries, you

really feel the civil unrest and the civil tensions, and I think Egypt is an example of that. When you land in Egypt, you feel something is happening.

People are not happy, and I think the civil unrest and the civil dissatisfaction at one point is really going to come to bear to these Arab regimes, and I think it is in their best interests to be opening up rather than clamping down on these people, because marginalizing these (inaudible) people could really be the opposite, you know, thing.

And I think the Islamists are an example of that. You know a lot of legislation and systems were put in place to marginalize and exclude the Islamists, which I've only made them stronger, but have weakened everyone else.

It has really given a chance to others to blossom, because the same that it was applying to the Islamists was applying to them, and I think the political parties law in Jordan up until recently made it very difficult for political parties anywhere to organize with the purpose of maybe weakening the Islamists. But in the end, all the parties suffered from that. It wasn’t just targeted at that.

So we need to keep in mind that, you know, maybe we are focusing too much on the Islamists and excluding, you know, other actors that are, you know, what we would call the third option or the alternative or the moderate middle that have so far not emerged in the Arab societies as you would have, I think, everyone would have liked to see.

So in conclusion, I think we should all be looking at the Obama administration to see what's going to happen. In the example of Jordan, there has recently passed some international aid to Jordan. There was $150 million in supplemental assistance that wasn't even requested by the Jordanian government that Congress passed.

One thing that I will be watching is how much of that will go to democracy and governance and how much of that will not. And I think even though there has been resources dedicated to democracy and governance, they’re still very limited in the bigger context of things.

I mean Egypt and Jordan are, you know, at the top of the list in terms of receiving U.S. aid and U.S. aid assistance, and, yet, they are the ones where

people look at as examples of well how democratic or open they are, how are they doing on the indicators of civil rights, or how would they doing on the indicators of the freedom of the past, for example, or human rights.

And I think that's something to be said about that. If I was to, you know, speak to President Obama I would say when -- if you are going to say that you're going to link international aid to conditions and to scorecards for these regimes and for these governments, then do it.

But you can't say we are going to link it if you don't do well, we're not going to give you this assistance, but then ignored the scorecard because they're a strategic ally in the Arab region.

I think that's a big problem is that sometimes the U.S. government is also not backing, you know, the talk with (inaudible) the actions. So my advice would be if you are going to do something, do it.

If you say you're going to do it, do it. If you're not going to do it, just don't say it, because then you're raising expectations, and you're

disappointing people and then it's -- that's when you have a problem.

So.

MR. AMR: Thanks, Roula. Thank. Roula, if you were talking to the President -- I mean I think you gave some general guidelines.

MS. ATTAR: Mm-hmm.

MR. AMR: I don't know I want to throw out if you have anything more specific that the President and that the U.S. administration could do. And I also want to ask you about two things that I've seen recently or hearing people talk about.

One is, you know, do the demographics of the region with a large proportion of youth create an opportunity that one could take advantage of? So does the demographics and the fact that, you know, 50 percent of country X is under the age of whatever -- 15, 20, 25, depending on the country. Is that an opportunity.

And the second question I have is I've noticed an interest recently in the State Department in harnessing technology, you know, helping, you know,

use technology, you know, bringing technology and democracy experts from the U.S. into the Arab world.

And one of our mutual friends, David Messar was recently on a trip to Iraq as a, you know, as somebody who works in a technology and democracy private sector operation.

Do you think those ini -- does it make sense to focus on either of those things or it does not?

MS. ATTAR: Yeah.

MR. AMR: And then do you have anything else specific that you could -- you would urge the administration to do?

MS. ATTAR: I think one of the things that (inaudible) in Washington it was just something specific, and I think it's going on as we speak is that the Obama administration has begun kind of a conference of evaluation of all aid programs around the world and specifically in the Middle East.

So I think that's a fabulous test, because I think any program that add evaluation and the impacts of it, you know, you really need to know what kind of impacts was there, and I think you'll find some

surprising results that it’s not all bad, as people may think.

I think sometimes, you know, you start with the hypotheses, and the findings are relatively and, you know, surprisingly and (inaudible) they’re different than what you have (inaudible). So I think those kinds of evaluations are important.

And I think it's also important to keep on the spirit of the partnership with these Arab countries. You know, strategic or not, no one should be forcing a government to do something that it doesn't want to do. No one should be pushing, you know, a country -- the sovereign country to implement things that it doesn't want to implement.

And I think all that we can do is play in an advisory role of why these things are in the long run in their best interest and try to convince them of that; make them see, you know, how it has worked for the U.S. and these other countries, but not approach it from a perspective of you have to listen -- you know, you have to listen, but trying to actually let them see the benefits of it.

And I think that hasn’t happened yet. It hasn't been presented in the language that (inaudible) go, oh, yes, you know, I see that.

So I think it's important to actually start that. And I also think that sometimes, you know, we limit our conversations. We're talking to the same people.

We're talking to the top echelon of the leadership, when, you know, we should really be talking to the people, to really find out what's going on in the country.

You don’t get the full story when you're just sitting with the president or the king of the country. Actually, you don't even get a quarter of the story.

So I think it’s important to broaden, and I think the State Department and USAID has an obligation to get out there more and try to understand the countries that they’re working in more, because when you have information and you understand -- I mean I know from my experience, I was working on the Jordan program for three years from Washington and thought I knew the country. I knew what the society.

And then the first days that I moved there up until now, and I'm -- it has been this continual learning process that has discredited everything I thought I knew from my little desk in Washington.

So it's very important to get out there and to get the information and to understand the priorities. In the end, aid programs are meant to -- the beneficiaries are the people of the country, not the head of the country.

And I think when we're evaluating programs, we need to -- developing programs -- (inaudible) political assistance programs are developmental programs -- we need to see the beneficiaries -- what has happened in a real way.

I mean I like (inaudible) the youth issue because it reminded me of Anwar's comment about how the women's programs are soft programs, and I disagree with that, and mainly, but that's from my experience.

I think regimes see women's issues as soft issues. They're like, oh, they want to change how (inaudible). Let them go ahead, and they'll do it.

What I have found surprisingly is once we do that, it is those women that open up the doors for us

-- for example, in (inaudible), in media outlets. They are the ones that become agents of change, and that the males also want to get assistance and improve their work. They challenge.

So I look at women as agents of change, and while they may be perceived as soft programs, they're, in fact, some of the most important and critical programs because those agents of change in their societies are doing a lot more than you say. And I think, thank God, because they're not really visible than they have been in the past, a lot is happening under.

There's a kind of a social change taking place in Jordan, for example, about the woman's role, economically and politically. And it's that social change that I think is going to be preceding a major political change that we see that is really going to be to the benefit of opening up Jordan democratically.

Young people in Jordan -- 70 percent of the population is under the age of 30. It is very important to engage with those people. They are a very important voting bloc, and they don't vote as

well as they should. They don't go out to vote. They are marginalized.

And I think it's one of those things that they may be marginalized because nobody's talking to them. Nobody has a message targeted to them.

So the King, you know, I think has done a great job of -- they're called the knights of change and I think a lot of programs targeted to them economically and, you know, and educationally, but their energy has not been harnessed well politically by the political parties and the political institutions.

And I think it's very important to focus on that. And it's one of those things where you really need to be talking to them in the way that they, you know, we trained the local parties in Jordan and every training they say, we need to attract more young people.

And when you look around the room and everybody is a male over the age of 55. And then you go, how are you going to attract young people? Are you going to go personally talk to them, because you're not a good messenger? These -- you know, you -

- they think of you as a father figure. And most young people get their information now from their friends or from Facebook and social media.

To bring me back to that point, it's very important. It has done tremendous things, the use, and I think (inaudible) is harnessing that very well (inaudible) although (inaudible) educational and other causes, and trying to engage the young people in that.

So I think the media has an important role to play, the interactive and social media, in harnessing the positive energy of young people, and that all the Arab countries should be thinking about, but specifically Jordan, because they're such an important electoral bloc, but also such an important I think pillar of continuing, you know, the society and the state.

MR. AMR: Wonderful. Thank you, Roula. What I'd like to do now is to open the floor for questions.

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

/s/Carleton J. Anderson, III

Notary Public in and for the Commonwealth of Virginia

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