



REFORM IN THE MUSLIM WORLD: THE ROLE OF ISLAMISTS AND OUTSIDE POWERS

CONVENER:

Shibley Telhami

WITH CONTRIBUTIONS BY:

Abd El Monem Abou El Fotouh
Muhammad Abu Rumman
Jason Brownlee
Saad Eddin Ibrahim
Rami G. Khouri

Stephen Krasner
Marc Lynch
Diaa Rashwan
Tamara Cofman Wittes

2008 U.S.-ISLAMIC
WORLD FORUM

Governance, Religion, and Politics
Task Force



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A SABAN CENTER AT THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION REPORT

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THE DOHA DISCUSSION PAPERS provide testament to the opportunity for renewed dialogue between the United States and the Muslim world. Written specifically for the U.S.-Islamic World Forum's three task forces, they have been edited and compiled into separate volumes on Governance, Human Development and Social Change, and Security. The Doha Discussion Papers bring together the major papers and responses that frame each of the task force discussions. They include as well a summary of the off-record discussions at each of the task force sessions held at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum.

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NOTE FROM THE CONVENERS

The annual **U.S.-ISLAMIC WORLD FORUM** held in Doha, Qatar, brings together key leaders in the fields of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society from across the Muslim world and the United States. The Forum seeks to address the critical issues dividing the United States and the Muslim world by providing a unique platform for frank dialogue, learning, and the development of positive partnerships between key leaders and opinion shapers from both sides. It includes plenary sessions, smaller task force discussions focused on key thematic issues like governance, human development, and security, and initiative workshops that bring practitioners from similar fields together to identify concrete actions they might jointly undertake.

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The theme of this year's Forum was "New Directions," as 2008 presents, for both the United States and the Muslim world, an opportunity to chart a new path in their relationship. Opened by H.E. Hamad bin Jassim bin Jabr Al-Thani, Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar, the Forum featured keynote addresses by Afghan President Hamid Karzai, former Secretary of State Madeleine K. Albright, Turkish Foreign Minister Ali Babacan, and U.N. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad. Plenary sessions focusing on various aspects of the future of U.S.-Muslim world relations included such luminaries as former CENTCOM commander Admiral William J. Fallon, Chairperson of the African Union Commission Alpha Oumar Konaré, Palestinian chief negotiator Saeb Erakat, Egyptian televangelist Amr Khaled, Muhammadiyah chairman M. Din Syamsuddin, *Time* columnist Joe Klein, former Palestinian Foreign Minister Ziad Abu Amr, Senator Evan Bayh (D-Indiana), former National Security Advisor Sandy Berger, former Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice, Council on Foreign Relations President Richard Haass, and former Assistant Secretary of Defense Peter Rodman.

At this year's Forum, we detected a marked change in tone from previous years—a sense that with the upcoming change in U.S. administrations and new political developments on a number of fronts, there was an opportunity for both the United States and the Muslim world to turn the page and write a new chapter in our mutual relations.

On behalf of the entire Saban Center at Brookings, we would like to express our deep appreciation to H.R.H. Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, for making it possible to convene this assemblage of leaders from across the Muslim world and the United States. We are also appreciative of the support and participation of H.E. Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr Al-Thani. Thanks goes as well to H.E. Mohammed Abdullah Mutib Al-Rumaihi, Foreign Minister's Assistant for Follow Up Affairs; Abdulla Rahman Fakroo, Executive Director of the Permanent Committee for Organizing Conferences; Malik Esufji, Director of Protocol, and the entire Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff for their roles in ensuring the successful planning and operation of the meeting. Finally, we would like to thank Hady Amr, Peter W. Singer and Shibley Telhami for convening the Task Forces, as well as Aysha Chowdhry for her hard work in editing these volumes.

Sincerely,

Ambassador Martin Indyk
Director
Saban Center at Brookings

Dr. Stephen R. Grand
Fellow and Director
Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World

INTRODUCTION

THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION'S focus on spreading democracy in the Middle East has been much discussed over the past several years, not only in the United States and Arab and Muslim countries but also around the world. In truth, neither the regional discourse about the need for political and economic reform nor the American talk of spreading democracy is new. Over the past two decades, particularly beginning with the end of the Cold War, intellectuals and governments in the Middle East have spoken about reform. The American policy prior to the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990 also aimed to spread democracy in the Arab world. But in that case, the first Gulf War and the need to forge alliances with autocratic regimes were one reason talk of democracy declined. The other reason was the discovery that political reform provided openings to Islamist political groups that seemed very much at odd with American objectives. The fear that Islamist groups supported democracy only based on the principle of "one man, one vote, one time," as former Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian once put it, led the United States to backtrack. Even early in the Clinton Administration, Secretary of State Warren Christopher initially focused on democracy in his Middle East policy but quickly sidelined the issue as the administration moved to broker Palestinian-Israeli negotiation in the shadow of militant Islamist groups, especially Hamas.

To the extent that there was something new in the American policy after 9/11, it was that the issue of democracy was elevated in foreign policy priorities in large part because it was no longer seen merely as an American value worth spreading, but also as serving the national interest. There was a prevalent sense, based more on a leap of faith than on social science, that the kind of terrorism that posed grave threats to American national security had its roots in the absence of democracy in the Middle East. This formulation had the added value of attracting both liberals and conservatives behind a policy that seemed to combine both American values and American strategic interests. And even in the Middle East, some among

the liberal elites, hungry for political change—otherwise suspicious of American foreign policy—were prepared to jump on the American bandwagon.

Yet, the vast majority of the Arab public never bought this scheme. Every public opinion poll that I have conducted in the past six years has shown that the vast majority of Arabs never believed that democracy was a real American objective, seeing democracy advocacy merely as a cover for advancing American strategic interests (which they identified as controlling oil, helping Israel, and weakening the Muslim world). Every year, polls indicate that the vast majority of Arabs (in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, Lebanon, and the United Arab Emirates) believe that the Middle East had in fact become less democratic than it was before the Iraq war. By the time we held the U.S.-Islamic World Forum in Doha, Qatar, in February 2008, many Arabs and Muslims who had supported the American policy of spreading democracy were disillusioned, feeling that the effort, and the results, may have made their own pursuit of reform within their own countries more challenging. The very autocratic governments that were the targets of reform became more confident and happily pointed to Iraq, Lebanon, and the Palestinian territories as models to avoid.

Although President George W. Bush had pointedly stated that this time around, the United States would not stop its democracy campaign if Islamist parties did well in free elections, that appeared to be exactly what transpired after Hamas won the Palestinian Parliamentary elections in 2006 and the Muslim Brotherhood won more seats in the Egyptian Parliamentary elections than had been anticipated. History, it seemed, was repeating itself.

Was American policy doomed from the outset, or was it merely the way it was implemented that was to blame? Can America nation-build? Is the fear of the role of Islamist parties in democratic elections justified? What do Islamist parties seek? To answer these questions critically,

we organized the Governance task force in 2008 around solicited discussion papers by accomplished scholars. The aim was not so much to ask what went right or wrong in the past few years but to address the broader themes of the role of outside powers in driving reform efforts and of the objectives of Islamist political parties.

The first paper is by Stephen Krasner who, besides being a prominent political scientist in his own right, also served as the Director of Policy Planning at the U.S. Department of State from 2004-2006. Krasner argues that states have long attempted to influence the domestic structures of other states, but that the results have been mixed. Jason Brownlee, who has published works on this issue, including a review article in *World Politics* entitled “Can America Nation Build?” prepared an engaging response in which he argued that, while the record of spreading democracy is mixed, the preponderance of evidence shows the failure of attempts to spread democracy through military campaigns. Tamara Cofman Wittes of the Saban Center at Brookings, who has recently published a book entitled *Freedom’s Unsteady March: America’s Role in Building Arab Democracy* (Brookings Institution Press, 2008), acknowledges that spreading democracy through war is problematic, but that states, particularly powerful ones, have an array of other instruments of influence to encourage reform in other countries. Saad Eddin Ibrahim, one of the leading intellectuals and democracy advocates in the Arab world, presented a critique of Krasner’s paper focusing on the role of non-state actors and noting some modest democratic successes in the “periphery” of the Middle East.

Marc Lynch, an increasingly influential scholar of Middle East politics, wrote a paper analyzing the objectives

of Islamist parties. Abd El Monem Abou El Fotouh articulated an Islamist view of democracy as well as of reform in papers he submitted, but he was ultimately unable to join us in Doha. Diaa Rashwan, a prominent expert on Islamist groups at the Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo, wrote a comment in which he articulated the meaning of *islah*, “reform,” as understood by Islamist movements and how this plays in their political strategies. Muhammad Abu Rumman, Director of Studies at Jordan’s *Al-Ghad* newspaper, also submitted a paper commenting on Lynch’s paper in which he discussed American policies, the credibility of the Islamist acceptance of democracy, and the strategic alternatives to dealing with Islamist movements.

We had also hoped to have a paper and the active participation of His Excellency Sadig al-Mahdi, former Prime Minister of Sudan, who in previous years had played an important role in our dialogue, but who sadly lost his wife shortly before the conference.

There were many contributions in the discussions that followed as the papers were merely a starting point for a lively conversation that included all the participants. The discussions and comments have been summarized in this collection. The list of names of those who took part in this discussion is provided in this collection, although the summary of the discussion makes no specific references to those contributing as the event was not-for-attribution to encourage maximal openness.

—Shibley Telhami
Anwar Sadat Chair for
Peace and Development,
University of Maryland

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Sovereignty and Democracy Promotion

STEPHEN D. KRASNER

STEPHEN D. KRASNER is the Graham H. Stuart Professor of International Relations at Stanford University, a Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute, and a Senior Fellow by courtesy at the Hoover Institution. From February 2005 to April 2007, he was Director of the Policy Planning Staff at the Department of State where he worked on a number of issues including foreign assistance reform and energy policy. In 2002, he served as Director for Governance and Development at the National Security Council where he helped spearhead the development of the Millennium Challenge Account. In 2003 and 2004, he was a member of the Board of Directors of the United States Institute of Peace. His writings have dealt primarily with the political determinants of international economic relations, American foreign policy, and sovereignty. Krasner was a fellow at the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences and at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. He is a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a member of the Council on Foreign Relations. Krasner received his B.A. from Cornell, M.A. from Columbia, and Ph.D. from Harvard.

THE PERMEABILITY OF SOVEREIGNTY

Conventional wisdom holds that states are autonomous, and independent from any external authority. Efforts at democracy promotion, or for that matter any other kind of attempt by one state to influence domestic authority structures in another, can be seen as anomalous, and inconsistent with the way in which the international system is supposed to—and usually does—function. One state is not supposed to intervene in the internal affairs of other states.

In theory and practice, the situation with regard to external efforts to influence domestic authority structures in other states is much more complicated than the rule of non-intervention suggests. The idea of state autonomy is often traced back to the Peace of Westphalia of 1648, which is cited as a transition point or beginning for the modern state system.¹ The idea of non-intervention was not explicitly articulated until more than 100 years later by Emmerich de Vattel, a French international jurist.² The United States did not formally accept the principle of non-intervention until the 1930s. Every major international treaty from Westphalia to the Dayton Accords has had provisions that violated notions of non-intervention.

More important, in practice, efforts by one state to influence domestic authority structures in another have been pervasive. In some cases, such efforts have taken place through imposition—situations in which one state moves to impose its preferences for domestic authority on others with force. In a paper published in 2002, John Owen identified 198 cases of forcible efforts by one country to change domestic institutions in another between 1555 and 2000.³ These efforts have usually taken place after major power conflicts like the Napoleonic Wars and the Second World War. Such periods have been

characterized by high levels of ideological conflicts. Powerful states have tried to create regime types in weaker states that mirror their own institutional structures. The Holy Alliance sought to suppress the spread of liberal regimes after the Napoleonic wars because such regimes were seen as a threat to the conservative monarchical order that Prussia, Russia, and Austria had sought to preserve in fighting against revolutionary and Napoleonic France. The Austro-Hungarian Empire made a series of demands on Serbia for domestic regime change after the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in 1914 because it saw Serbian nationalism as an existential threat to the Empire's security. When Serbia refused to accept all of these demands, the Empire invaded. After the Second World War, the allies were not about to allow a Nazi regime to continue to exist in Germany. The Soviet Union was committed to the persistence of communist regimes once they were established, hence the invasions of Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Afghanistan, because the collapse of a communist regime would bring into question the Marxist proposition that communism would ultimately triumph as the only final and rational way to organize human society. All of the forcible interventions undertaken by the United States during the Cold War, both overt and covert, were designed to thwart the spread of communism. The United States overthrew the Taliban regime in Afghanistan because it harbored a terrorist organization that had perpetrated 9/11.

In other cases, efforts by one state to influence domestic authority structures in another have taken place through contracting—where the target state voluntarily accepts intrusions into its own domestic affairs. In recent times, the most striking example of this phenomenon is the expansion of the European Union into central Europe. Membership in the European Union involves substantial concessions of

¹ See, for instance, Leo Gross, "The Peace of Westphalia, 1648-1948," *American Journal of International Law* 42 (1948).

² Vattel, Emmerich de. (1852), *The Law of Nations; or, Principles of the Law of Nature, applied to the Conduct and Affairs of Nations and Sovereigns*. From the New edition (translated by) J. Chitty (Philadelphia: T. & J. W. Johnson, Law Booksellers).

³ John Owen, "The Foreign Imposition of Domestic Institutions," *International Organization* 56 (2002).

domestic autonomy. New member states have had to accept the European Court of Justice, whose decisions have supremacy and direct effect in the national court system of all of the member states. They were obligated to join the European Monetary System, although not necessarily immediately. They also had to accept qualified majority voting for some issues that are part of the competence of the European Union itself, such as trade and competition rules.

The Helsinki Accords, signed by 35 countries in 1975, also involved a bargain or contract between the Soviet bloc on the one hand, and Europe, the United States and Canada on the other. The Accords, formally the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, provided for, among other things, the recognition of existing borders in Europe and the acceptance of human rights principles. The leaders of the Soviet Union expected the human rights provisions of the Final Act to be inconsequential. In fact, they provided a focal point for organized opposition to the Soviet control of central Europe and contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Empire.⁴

In 2003, the government of the Solomon Islands, confronted with the possibility of state failure, invited neighboring countries led by Australia to assume executive responsibility for major areas of governance including some aspects of policing, the judicial system, and finance. The Regional Assistance Mission for the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) must be, at the insistence of Australia and other participating countries, authorized every year by the government of the Solomon Islands. In 2003, the government of Liberia signed a contract with the International Contact Group of Liberia, whose members included the EU, AU, ECOWAS, the UN, the United States, and the World Bank, to create the Governance and Economic Management

Assistance Program (GEMAP). GEMAP provided, among other things, that an outside expert had co-signing authority for actions taken by the Central Bank. Outside contractors were to bid for the management of five state-owned enterprises, revenue from state-owned enterprises was to be deposited into an escrow account, the customs service was to be managed by an external contractor, bidding for public contracts was to take place on-line, and a corruption commission was to be created.⁵

The bargaining power of the signatories to a contract that alters the domestic authority structure of a state may not always be symmetrical. For instance, as a condition of international recognition by the major European powers, all of the successor states of the Ottoman Empire, beginning with Greece in 1832 and ending with Albania in 1913, or even Turkey in 1923, accepted provision for minority rights in their own domestic laws. At the end of the First World War, more than 30 countries accepted such provisions as a condition of recognition or membership in the League of Nations. Some of the countries that were signatories to these agreements, such as Czechoslovakia and Hungary, embraced them; others, such as Poland, did not. Similar demands were made on the successor states of Yugoslavia by the European Union in the early 1990s. For the targets of minority rights treaties over the last 170 years, the choice essentially has been non-recognition, which would have been fatal for the prospects of the targeted states, or recognition and a loss of autonomy. They chose the latter.

Efforts by external actors to promote democracy or freedom more broadly can also be a form of contracting, albeit sometimes implicit, if it involves the flow of resources from external actors to entities or individuals within the targeted states. Targeted states could block such flows. External support for

⁴ Daniel Thomas, *The Helsinki Effect: International Norms, Human Rights, and the Demise of Communism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁵ Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program at http://www.gemapliberia.org/files/GEMAP_Final_and_signed_by_NTGL.pdf?PHPSESSID=20d3fd83338e93c722e64d7dc8529a accessed December 13, 2007.

party development, a free media, the rule of law, civil society groups, legislative effectiveness, election monitoring, property rights, human rights, and economic openness could be severely impeded or halted altogether if the targeted state chose to do so. The initiating state may want to engage in activities that it thinks will expand democracy or freedom but would not be able to do so without the explicit or implicit approval of the government of the targeted state.

Finally, there are some kinds of support for democracy (or freedom more generally) which are hortatory. These do not involve either imposition or symmetrical or asymmetrical contracting. States in one country may express their disaffection for political developments in another. They may, for instance, condemn elections as being rigged. They may praise particular reforms. They may condemn declarations of emergency. For instance, in June of 2005, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said in her speech at Cairo University that:

“The Egyptian Government must fulfill the promise it has made to its people—and to the entire world—by giving its citizens the freedom to choose. Egypt’s elections, including the Parliamentary elections, must meet objective standards that define every free election.

Opposition groups must be free to assemble, and to participate, and to speak to the media. Voting should occur without violence or intimidation. And international election monitors and observers must have unrestricted access to do their jobs.

Those who would participate in elections, both supporters and opponents of the gov-

ernment, also have responsibilities. They must accept the rule of law, they must reject violence, they must respect the standards of free elections, and they must peacefully accept the results.”⁶

That external actors have tried to influence the domestic authority structures of other states through imposition, contracting, and exhortation ought not be surprising. The international system is in anarchy. There are disagreements among states about appropriate norms and principles. Indeed major documents embrace contradictory principles. The UN Charter, for instance, endorses both human rights and non-intervention. When such disagreements occur, there is no accepted authority that can resolve them. Each state, in the final analysis, makes its own decisions. When different states have different views about which principles ought to define behavior, the stronger will prevail. Norms and principles are not irrelevant for international politics. In fact, they may be the driving force behind the foreign policies of states. But when there is disagreement, Thucydides’ observation in the Melian dialogue still holds: “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must.”⁷

States may attempt to influence the domestic authority structures of other states for many different reasons. One state may only be able to enhance its own security by changing the regime in another. At the end of the Napoleonic Wars, the victors sent Napoleon to Saint Helena and restored a Bourbon monarch to the throne. At the end of the First World War, the victors abolished the monarchy in Germany, and broke up the Austro-Hungarian Empire. At the end of the Second World War, the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States ended Nazi rule in Germany. After 9/11, the United States and its allies displaced the Taliban regime in Afghanistan.

⁶ Secretary Condoleezza Rice, Remarks at the American University in Cairo, June 20, 2005 at <http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/48328.htm>.

⁷ Thucydides, *History of the Peloponnesian War*, Ch XVII.

Some states may encourage or coerce others to adopt regime types like their own because they believe that their system has universal validity that would improve the lives of individuals everywhere and promote international stability. The United States has a long history of pressuring and cajoling other states to accept democracy. The major states of Western Europe were committed to promoting democracy in central Europe after the collapse of the Soviet empire. The Soviet Union pushed for the adoption of communist regimes around the world.

States may also press for authority structure changes in other states because it would further other material interests. The United States, for instance, supported the independence of Panama from Colombia because it wanted to build a canal that would link the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. In the Ottoman Empire, Greece, and elsewhere major European lenders established, with the agreement of borrowing countries, independent tax authorities such as the Ottoman Council of the Debt, which collected specific taxes to repay foreign loans.

In sum, the almost-taken-for-granted notion that states are independent, autonomous, and free from external authority, is fallacious. Throughout the history of the modern state system, stronger states have tried to change the domestic authority structures of weaker ones. To accomplish this objective, they have engaged in imposition, contracting, and exhortation.

WHAT WORKS?

The fact that some states have intervened in the internal affairs of others says nothing about how successful they have been. There is little systematic evidence available on this score; no study that looks at all of the available examples of intervention, both forcible and otherwise, and assesses their effectiveness. The record is clearly mixed.

The efforts in the Peace of Westphalia and other major treaties in the 17th and 18th century to limit religious conflict by guaranteeing some degree of religious toleration were successful. This was not because the leaders of Europe were committed to religious toleration, but rather, because they had come to recognize that it was impossible to manage the intrusion of religion into politics. The religious wars in France at the end of the 16th century and the Thirty Years War and English Civil War in the middle of the 17th century had all been devastating with regard to loss of life and political disorder.

In contrast, the Holy Alliance formed after the Napoleonic Wars was not successful in stopping the spread of liberal regimes. The minority rights treaties, which the successor states of the Ottoman Empire felt compelled to accept, did not lead to peaceful multiethnic societies in the Balkans. The minority rights treaties after the First World War also had limited impact. Indeed, rather than a continent of toleration, Europe got Hitler's Germany.

Intrusions after the Second World War were more successful. The efforts of the United States and its allies to create democratic regimes in Germany and Japan succeeded. The Soviet Union was also able to impose, for more than forty years, communist systems in Central and Eastern Europe. And after the fall of the Soviet Union these same states successfully transitioned into democratic regimes under the tutelage of the European Union.

There are very few generalizations that can be made about what works and what does not. Incentives work. In the contemporary era, the most successful effort at democracy promotion has been the expansion of the European Union. The new member states of the Union essentially transformed their domestic authority structures by implementing thousands of laws and regulations that were a condition of membership. Even the Baltic states, which had been part of the Soviet Union for fifty years, were transformed in little more than a decade. There was no coercion

involved in the expansion of the EU. The new member states were anxious to join. The Union offered economic support, access to its markets, and a firm identity with the West rather than the East. And all of the new member states also became members of NATO, providing them with assurance against any future Russian efforts at expansion.

Efforts to create religious toleration in Europe also worked because the treaties in which these provisions were embedded were in self-enforcing equilibria. The signatory states signed these contracts and honored them because they had no better option. The political leaders of Europe realized that the suppression of religious freedom, at least between Catholics and Protestants, would be politically destabilizing and would leave them worse, rather than better off. In contrast, the efforts to trade recognition for the establishment of minority rights in the Balkans and elsewhere did not work. These were not self-enforcing deals. Once recognition was offered, it could not be withdrawn. Countries that had accepted minority rights provisions in their legal systems only because they wanted recognition stopped providing these rights at some point after recognition was granted.

Imposition has also sometimes worked. The victors in the Second World War did put Japan and Germany on the path to liberal democracy. The underlying socio-economic conditions in both these countries were more conducive to democracy than elsewhere because of their level of development. More generally, in military interventions where the United States explicitly supported democracy, it was often successful.⁸

There have been a few recent studies that look directly at assistance and the development of democracy. Some studies have found no relationship between aid and democracy.⁹ Some have expressed skepticism about whether true liberal democracy would ever be the objective of assistance given the uncertainty that democracy presents for the interests of donor countries.¹⁰ One recent study, the most detailed to date of American assistance specifically targeted at promoting democracy, does find a positive relationship between funding and democratic development.¹¹

FOREIGN AID AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

A comparison between efforts to change authority structures in other states (of which democracy promotion is now the most prominent example), and efforts to promote economic development through foreign assistance is instructive and sobering. Development assistance only began after the Second World War. Before then, richer states might make loans to poorer ones, but only in exchange for direct commercial or strategic benefits. After the war, there was a commitment first toward Europe, and then to poorer countries more generally, to provide assistance to promote economic growth.¹² More than two trillion dollars has been provided as foreign assistance. Thousands of studies have been conducted. Many Ph.D. economists at the World Bank, the IMF, other IFIs (International Financial Institutions), universities, and think tanks have committed their careers to this problem.

⁸ Peceny, Mark, *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets*, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999).

⁹ Knack, Stephen, "Does Foreign Aid Promote Democracy?" *International Studies Quarterly* 48 (2004).

¹⁰ Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George Downs, "Intervention and Democracy," *International Organization* Summer 2006.

¹¹ Finkel, Steven E., Perez-Linan, Anibal, and Seligson, Mitchell A., "The Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building, 1990-2003," *World Politics* 59 (April 2007).

¹² David H. Lumsdaine, *Moral Vision in International Politics: The Foreign Aid Regime, 1949-1989* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

The results with respect to both outcomes and understanding are sparse. Some have argued that development assistance has actually been counter-productive because it makes recipient country governments dependent on satisfying external donors, rather than eliciting trust and taxes from their own citizens.¹³ Some studies have actually found a negative relationship between growth and development assistance.¹⁴ Still others have found a modest, but hardly dramatic, positive relationship.¹⁵

Dani Rodrik, an economist at Harvard, elegantly framed the problem of how challenging it is to get policies right. In his book, *One Economics, Many Recipes: Globalization, Institutions, and Economic Growth*, Rodrik argues that general economic principles can provide some guidance for policy, but that outcomes are highly dependent on often-unique local conditions.¹⁶ There are general principles, including reasonable levels of macroeconomic stability, acceptable levels of protection for property rights, reliance on economic incentives (to some extent), integration into the global economy, acceptable levels of social coherence, and economic diversification. These principles are, however, very general. They can be accomplished in many different ways. Whose property rights, for instance, should be protected? To what extent? What do property rights entail with regard to use, purchase, and sale?¹⁷ The way in which these issues can be successfully resolved can vary dramatically from one country to another. For instance, China has had spectacular economic growth with weak rule of law. Initially, property rights were invested in township and village enterprises (TVEs). Local officials protected the TVEs. These local officials had an interest in TVEs because they were an im-

portant source of revenue. They also had power, more power and authority than the courts. Property rights could be protected in China, but the nature of these property rights, township and village enterprises, not conventional private corporations or partnerships, and the way in which local political actors—not courts—protected them, was very different from standard practices.¹⁸

Rodrik argues that the “Washington” consensus, a list of conventional wisdom with regard to economic policy that reflected the views of development experts, IFIs, and other donors in the 1990s, does not explain the variation in economic growth across countries. The Washington consensus stipulated that to achieve sustained economic growth, countries needed to have: tax reform, fiscal discipline, interest rate liberalization, uniform and competitive exchange rates, trade liberalization, direct foreign investment, privatization, deregulation, and secure property rights. However, the biggest success stories had only some of these attributes. China had perhaps five out of ten. Korea, which also had five out of ten in its period of rapid economic growth, restricted direct foreign investment and heavily regulated industry. In contrast, the countries of Latin America enacted most elements of the Washington consensus, but they experienced not only slower growth than some East Asian countries in the 1980s and 1990s, but also slower growth than in Latin America itself before 1980.¹⁹

Rodrik’s message is not that we know nothing about how to promote economic development, but rather, that there is no easy and direct translation from general principles to specific policies in specific countries. In specific situations, Rodrik advocates

¹³ Rajan, Raghuram; Subramanian, Arvind, “Does Aid Effect Governance?” *American Economic Review* 97, (May 2007).

¹⁴ William Easterly, *The Elusive Quest for Growth: Economists Adventures and Misadventures in the Tropics* (Cambridge: MIT press, 2001), Chapter 2.

¹⁵ Paul Collier, for instance, finds that aid contributed 1 percent to economic growth. See Paul Collier, *The Bottom Billion*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Chapter 7.

¹⁶ Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

¹⁷ Rodrik, p. 87.

¹⁸ Rodrik, p. 92.

¹⁹ Rodrik, pp 17-28.

what he calls diagnostics, a close examination of the specific factors that are inhibiting growth in a particular country, and the implementation of policies that are likely to have the largest impact.²⁰

The present state of knowledge about how to promote economic growth is humbling. Economists have identified general principles, but applying them in specific circumstances has been challenging. They have established the fact that it is not that difficult for a country to initiate a growth spurt—sometimes only modest policy changes are needed—but it is much harder to sustain one. Many development economists are now engaged in experimental design, trying to identify specific factors that have improved conditions in specific places by differentiating initiatives in similar situated environments. For instance, using different approaches to increasing water cleanliness in a set of Kenyan villages and then seeing which is most effective in decreasing diarrhea, a major health threat to children.²¹ These efforts are a far cry from the optimism of the 1950s and 1960s, when policy makers and academics alike assumed that economic growth would almost automatically flow from closing the financing gap.

DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Since the 1970s, there has been a general movement toward more democratic governance at a global level. According to Freedom House numbers, the percentage of free countries in the world increased from 27 percent in 1977 to 47 percent in 2007. The percentage of not free countries fell from 43 percent to 23 percent. This overall trend was a reflection of developments in most parts of the world. The percentage of free countries in the Americas increased from 38

to 69 percent and the percent of not free fell from 17 to 6 percent from 1976 to 2006. In Africa, the percentage of free countries increased from 7 percent in 1977 to 23 percent in 2007 and the percent not free fell from 57 to 31.²²

The Middle East and North Africa has been the exception to this trend. In this area, there has been no movement towards greater democracy. In 1976, Freedom House data did not identify any country as free. In 2006, there were still no countries that were free. In 1976, 12 countries were classified as not free out of 17; the figure was the same in 2006. The other four countries were classified as being partially free. Between 2001 and 2006, there was some improvement in Freedom House scores for 6 out of the 17 countries, but in no case were these changes large enough to have a country classified as free.²³ Regardless of the reason, the democracy deficit in the Middle East is long standing, and there is little indication that it is changing.

Why is the Middle East different? Socio-economic arguments, which contend that democracy is most likely to flourish in countries where the underlying conditions are propitious, provide some insight. In his seminal 1959 article, Lipset argued that industrialization, urbanization, wealth, and education were all strongly associated with democracy. With greater wealth, the stakes of politics are lower and the acceptance of differing views greater. Intermediate organizations, (“civil society” in today’s parlance), are easier to organize when individuals have more resources. Education, Lipset argued, was a necessary if not sufficient condition for democracy because it discouraged extremism, encouraged tolerance, and made it easier to make rational electoral choices. Lipset noted

²⁰ Rodrik Chapter 3. This approach is very similar to one advocated by Paul Collier in *The Bottom Billion*. Collier identifies what he calls key poverty traps such as poor governance, resource dependence, and land-locked and suggests specific policy initiatives appropriate for each trap.

²¹ Edward Miquel, Michael Kremer, Jessica Leino, and Alix Zwane, “Spring Cleaning: Rural Water Impacts, Valuation, and Institutions,” unpub. paper, Dept of Economics, University of California, Berkeley, 2007.

²² Freedom House, *Freedom in Sub-Saharan Africa 2007: A Survey of Political Rights and Civil Liberties* (Washington, 2007), p. 1.

²³ All figures derived from Freedom House, *Comparative Scores for All Countries from 1973 to 2006* at <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=15>.

that the socio-economic factors that he had examined were so strongly associated with each other as “to form one common factor.”²⁴

In a recent study, perhaps the closest that we have for a matching bookend to Lipset, Przeworski and his colleagues systematically examine the evidence related to democracy and development. They find that there is no significant relationship between the initiation of a democracy regime and a country’s level of per capita income, but a very strong relationship between the longevity of a democratic regime and levels of wealth. Perhaps most striking, they find that no country with a per capita income above \$6055 in 1975 dollars that has become democratic has ever reverted to dictatorship.²⁵

Measures of socio-economic development for the Middle East are mixed. Literacy rates in the Arab world in 2003 were 64 percent compared with 90 percent for Latin America and for East Asia and the Pacific, 59 percent for South Asia, and 61 percent for sub-Saharan Africa.²⁶ Per capita gross national income for the entire region was \$2481 in 2006, but this masks very large variations from Kuwait with more than \$30,000 and Yemen with less than \$1,000.²⁷ The wealth of the high-income countries in the region, however, comes from oil which multiple studies have shown is negatively correlated with democracy.²⁸

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Given this set of circumstances, it ought not to be surprising that efforts to promote democratic devel-

opment in the Middle East and North Africa have been something of a grab bag (I ignore here for the moment Iraq). The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) has been the signature program for the United States; BMENA for the G-8. Both MEPI and BMENA are examples of targeted democracy assistance. Aid is directed to agents in recipient countries that are in one way or another committed to greater openness or democratization. Aid is designed to strengthen or alter the incentives for specific actors in the target country, rather than to change underlying structural conditions.

MEPI has provided more than \$400 million in funding in the area of politics, economics, education, and women’s empowerment. Specific projects have provided funding for political parties, parliamentarians, the media, rule of law, small and medium enterprises, micro-finance, entrepreneurship, primary education, and economic opportunities for women.²⁹ The Foundation for the Future, an outgrowth of the BMENA process, has provided funding, albeit at far lower levels, for similar kinds of projects. The Forum for the Future, also an outgrowth of BMENA, has supported Democracy Assistance Dialogues. Turkey, Yemen and Italy initially took the lead in this effort.

Aggregate measures of democracy do not show that any of these efforts have had much impact on overall developments to date. The time frame may be too short. Larger events like the rise in oil prices, negative attitudes toward the United States, and regional conflicts may overwhelm specific democratic promotion programs. These projects ought to be thought of not as conventional investments with an expected rate of return, but rather as venture capital

²⁴ Lipset, Seymour Martin, “Some Social Requisites of Democracy,” *American Political Science Review* 53 (1959): 79-84.

²⁵ Adam Przeworski, Michael E. Alvarez, Jose Antonio Cheibub, Fernando Limongi, *Democracy and Development: Political Institutions and Well-Being in the World, 1950-1990* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 98.

²⁶ Arab Development Report, 2004, p. 296.

²⁷ Per capita income figure from World Bank, Data at <http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/DATASTATISTICS/0,contentMDK:20535285~menuPK:1192694~pagePK:64133150~piPK:64133175~theSitePK:239419,00.html>.

²⁸ See, for instance, Ross, Michael Lewin, “Does Oil Hinder Democracy?” *World Politics* 53 (April 2001), and Collier, *Bottom Billion*, Chapter 3.

²⁹ <http://mepi.state.gov/>.

in which a relatively small percentage might succeed, but many will fail.

CONCLUSION

Efforts by some states to influence domestic authority structures in others is a long standing, but not well-recognized phenomenon in the international system. Such efforts have taken place in a number of different ways including coercion, contracting, and exhortation. The most dramatic example of success in democracy building in recent years is the European Union. Aspiring member states had high incentives to join, both material and ideational, and once they had joined, no incentive to defect. Incentives and self-enforcing bargains are the most obvious paths to success.

The European Union experience will not be replicated in other parts of the world. Autocratic

leaders in targeted states do not usually have a reason to embrace democratic changes that could remove them from office. If change does occur, it is most likely to be the result of longer term structural developments within a country that alter the incentives of individual citizens, such as the growth of a large, well-educated middle class. Targeted democracy assistance, which empowers specific actors within a polity, such as civil society organizations, judges, parliamentarians, or educators, may also promote change, but the conditions under which this might take place are not well understood and almost certainly depend on the haphazard convergence of a number of different developments—luck, rather than planning. Given oil wealth and the lack of democratic experience, greater openness in the Middle East is more challenging than in any other region in the world.



Remarks on Stephen D. Krasner's *Sovereignty and Democracy Promotion*

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IN 2002 the National Security Strategy of the United States pointed to a vision for fixing failed states and installing democracies, through military intervention if necessary. In essence, it sought to apply a theoretical argument most recently articulated in Robert Jackson's work on "quasi-states," and later popularized by scholars such as Francis Fukuyama and Niall Ferguson. The idea was that if despotic and failing states would not correct themselves, they would have to be corrected by external forces. In the five years since that National Security Strategy was released, policy makers, academics, and the public have debated the consequences of such an approach. Professor Krasner's paper provides a wide-ranging survey of this topic. Rather than responding to all of the paper, I will use my time today to focus on one particular issue for our discussion: the question of whether interventions and alternative sovereignty arrangements advance the spread of democracy.

This is the subject of an ongoing debate, one side of which argues that the United States can promote democracy by militarily occupying the target society and then implanting institutions. For example, a widely circulated policy paper from last year argued, "Progressives and conservatives should unite in a hardheaded, pragmatic approach to nationbuilding. If history is any guide, the United States will continue to commit military and civilian resources to nationbuilding missions." The authors concluded by saying: "Whichever party occupies the White House or controls Congress, both progressives and conservatives should seize this opportunity and find common, credible approaches to nationbuilding. Together, we need to demonstrate success in order to convince skeptics that the United States is not forever condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past."¹ Their point is that the United States, no matter how Iraq and Afghanistan ultimately turn out, is in the nationbuilding business and should prepare the domestic political coalitions for more interventions in the future.

I fully agree with Professor Krasner that such advocacy of intervention is not especially new or novel. The National Security Strategy of 2002, and subsequent speeches by President George W. Bush, simply stated more clearly—and sought to implement more forcefully—what many political scientists had advocated for decades and, indeed, what numerous American administrations had practiced before. So I think a lot of scholars would accept Professor Krasner's contention that interventions have a long history, one in which the United States has played a prominent part. I would just add that practices which seemed suitable in an earlier period may be ineffective and inappropriate today. One would want to be cautious about taking cues on democracy promotion from the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, a period in which America's democracy had not cleared some of its most daunting hurdles, including the full enfranchisement of its adult population. It is also a period in which what may retrospectively be deemed "democracy promotion" actually involved quite a bit of violence and economic exploitation, means that would be anathema to today's human rights defenders. I would want to check on just what practices and goals we could be emulating when we hark back to prior eras.

From here I will comment on two aspects of the paper. First, what have we learned about the efficacy and implementation of intervention by the United States? I will review the latest findings and suggest, based on recent gains in knowledge, that we are able to reach more definitive conclusions than the paper currently provides. Second, I would like to highlight a tension I see in the paper's theoretical approach. The tension is between an emphasis on hierarchies between the powerful and less powerful, on one hand, and an interest in promoting democracy, on the other hand. I begin with the question of implementation and feasibility.

¹ Erdmann, Andrew and Nossel, Suzanne, "Are We All Nation-Builders Now?" *Bridging the Policy Divide*, The Stanley Foundation, June 2007, pp. 1, 17.

THE RECORD OF INTERVENTITION

The invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan have rekindled the scholarly debate over intervention and democracy promotion. There are several solid studies published in top journals that look systematically at the question of “What Works?” (the subhead on page 8 in the paper). The record of success is mixed, but there are also very clear patterns, and they have been discerned by a growing number of scholars holding different perspectives and applying different methods. The take-home point from these works is that Germany and Japan are such striking outliers in the record of intervention and democracy promotion that they point away from the replicability of America’s success in those places. Overall, the United States has shown a very limited capacity to substantially improve upon local institutions, much less inaugurate representative government, even when it invested considerable human and material resources and undertook a prolonged occupation.

The work of Minxin Pei and Sara Kasper at the Carnegie Endowment demonstrated this in a survey that covers incidents of American intervention across the twentieth century. In only four out of fifteen cases was democracy in place ten years after American occupation ended (27%, including Germany and Japan).² In January of last year Christopher Coyne and Steve Davies published an even more detailed and comprehensive study. They report that in only seven of twenty-three cases of U.S. intervention was democracy in place ten years after the intervention. In that 30% success rate, half of the democracy cases come from the defeated Axis powers: West Germany, Austria, Italy, Japan.³ A third study done by Jeffrey Pickering and Mark Peceny uses a complex quantitative approach, with

a dozen control variables, to assess the effect of military interventions on liberalization and democratization. They report the following: “Despite the liberal grand strategy that has supposedly guided U.S. foreign policy over the past half-century, U.S. intervention and its associated decay variable fall completely out of Model 3 because they predict failure perfectly. *Not a single country that experienced a supportive U.S. military intervention became a democracy within 5 years of the intervention*” [emphasis mine]. They also test for the impact of a UN rather than U.S. approach and they find a modest (4.5%) improvement in the likelihood of democratization the first year after the intervention.⁴

Finally, I recently wrote an article that critiqued the RAND Corporation’s book on nation-building and a number of other high profile books in this area. I surveyed the history of American military interventions and democracy promotion dating back to the American Civil War. Looking at the same evidence of the aforementioned studies, but from a different approach, I took the lesson that the United States has done best where it did less, reinforcing and reactivating existing institutions, like the Japanese parliament and German bureaucracy, rather than implanting new ones.⁵

In sum, I take Professor Krasner’s point that the evidence is mixed, or at least that there is variance in the outcome. But the spread of outcomes is not random and it sends a clear message: Most of the time democracy promotion through military intervention fails; when it occasionally seems more successful, it is by virtue of propitious local conditions. Although the United States succeeded in imposing democracy in the defeated imperial powers of World War II, it has not subsequently been able to replicate that experience in failed and despotic states.

² Pei, Minxin and Kasper, Sara, “Lessons from the Past: The American Record on Nation Building,” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Policy Brief*, May 2003, p. 4.

³ Coyne, Christopher and Davies, Steve, “Empire: Public Goods and Bads,” *Econ Journal Watch* 4 (January 2007), p. 34.

⁴ Pickering, Jeffrey and Peceny, Mark, “Forging Democracy at Gunpoint,” *International Studies Quarterly* 50 (2006), p. 552.

⁵ Brownlee, Jason, “Can America Nation-Build?” *World Politics* 59 (January 2007), p. 315.

When we look at the Middle East, neither earlier direct U.S. interventions, nor the current mission in Iraq, has delivered on the promise of establishing self-sustaining democratic governments.

SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST... OR DEMOCRACY

The last point I want to raise relates to a conceptual tension in the paper. On one hand, Professor Krasner emphasizes the continuing salience of hierarchies between the powerful and less powerful. On the other hand, his paper speaks to the issue of promoting democracy. In most cases these are contradictory logics and the fact that they are in contradiction may help us understand why the correlation between foreign intervention and democratic outcomes is so low. The lesson from the Thucydides's Melian dialogue is to validate and exacerbate power asymmetries. A commitment to democracy is the opposite; it's about binding strong and weak parties equally through a set of common rules. The idea that "the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must" may be the historic pattern in international politics, but it is a poor—indeed self-defeating—basis for democracy promotion.

Robert Mugabe, Muammar Qadhafi, the Burmese generals, and Hosni Mubarak probably share Thucydides's sentiment. They are the strong; they do as they like; their opponents are left to get by on whatever political space and material resources are allowed them. Any plan for restraining such rulers and empowering their critics must rest on a very

different logic, the replacement of hierarchies sustained by force with systems of pluralism and equality sustained through constitutions and due process. If interventions—even by those vowing to promote democracy—are premised on the Athenians' rationale for invading Meles (and ultimately cleansing the island of its population), they will predictably yield undemocratic outcomes, namely the incorporation of the subject society into the invader's political regime. Moreover, they will implicitly reinforce the arguments of the Mugabes and Mubaraks of the world: that the only option for those at the bottom of the hierarchy is to fight their way to the top.

In closing, I think we have substantial reason to doubt that intervention by powerful international actors will yield democratic gains for those on either end of the project. The record of nationbuilding shows a very low probability that military occupations substantially improve local institutions. Moreover, so long as democracy promotion functions as an appendage of international hierarchy, the means will implicitly undermine the declared goals. When states are seen through a Spencerian lens in which the failing and unfit become the legitimate prey of the stronger, democracy promotion validates the argument of dictatorship and makes the regime just one more actor doing what it can to survive. A more pragmatic and more idealistic alternative may rest with calling for the same measures advocated by Mugabe and Mubarak's critics: restraints upon those holding the most power, coupled with opportunities for their peers to participate fully in political life and decision-making at all levels.



Remarks on Stephen D. Krasner's *Sovereignty and Democracy Promotion*

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THE PROMOTION OF DEMOCRACY is several centuries old, but its pursuit has taken big leaps since 1945. The first leap occurred during the Cold War when the West scrambled to combat the Soviet-led Eastern Bloc by presenting democracy and capitalism as a counter-ideology to communism. In contrast, the Eastern Bloc pushed socialism as an equitable socio-economic way of life. More of the newly independent countries at the time were attracted to one version or another of the socialist model. In the 1970's some of those modified or abandoned that model through trial and error.

The second leap in the policy of democracy promotion occurred after 9/11. To be sure, the previous thirty years had seen a steady global trend of democratization which began in 1974 in Portugal, followed by similar developments in Spain, Greece, and Latin America. There was a similar sweep in East and South Asia before the big bang of East and Central Europe. These democratic transitions prompted Samuel Huntington in 1994 to describe this as the "Third Wave of Democracy," a wave which came full-circle to Europe with the Solidarity movement in Poland, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia, and ultimately the fall of the Berlin Wall in Germany. This transition towards democracy, however, was not the second leap of democracy promotion. The second leap was, rather, the change in the United States' foreign policy that focused on fostering democracy in the Middle East.

This is the subject of Professor Krasner's elegantly compact paper. The following remarks are meant to offer a complementary perspective. To begin with, there was nothing in the paper I could disagree with as it offered a classic international relations perspective that is almost completely free of regional or cultural references. Only marginally and occasionally did the paper touch on the Middle East, except in the title and the last section. There were several omissions, however, that need to be addressed.

Remarkably absent from the paper was a discussion or even mention of non-state actors in the region, when much of U.S. diplomatic and military efforts have been targeting them either as combatants (e.g., Al-Qaeda, Hamas, Hezbollah) or as hopeful allies (e.g., secular civil society organizations, CSO's, Kefauver, Shayfinko and thousands of bloggers). Islamic movements, militant as well as non-militant, have played a prominent role in the discourse and practice of democracy at least for the last two decades. They have to be factored into any meaningful discussion of the success or failure of an externally-based democracy promotion policy. Many of them are transnational, do not recognize borders, and have their own definition of "The Sovereign"—God.

To be fair to Professor Krasner, this is a structural failing of the entire discipline of international relations whose basic paradigm is "state-centered." The international public space is now populated by a multitude of other actors such as multinational corporations and organized criminal networks as well as supranational entities. Some of these are stronger, wealthier, and more influential than many nation-states, yet their structures, dynamics, and languages need to be fully or even partially incorporated into international relations' academic models.

Equally absent from the paper are the democratic advances made in the periphery of the Middle East, specifically Turkey, Bahrain, Qatar, Morocco and Mauritania, all of whom have begun to drive regional political dynamics. For example, in the spring of 2006 protesting crowds gathered in the streets of Cairo, chanting "Mauritania, Mauritania ...we are observing you, second-by-second." But more significant has been the power of the demonstration effect, thanks to Al-Jazeera and other TV satellite networks watched in Cairo, but possibly not yet in Palo Alto.

In addition, the paper did not make any reference to previous liberal experiences in a number of Arab countries in the first half of the twentieth century.

ry—namely Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Libya, and Morocco. To be sure, these were not Westminster-level democracies. They all came to a halt in the late 1940s and 50s of the last century when successive military coup d'états swept the region. This led to a fifty-year era of military autocracies, coated in populist rhetoric, that consolidated their power, monopolized public space, and stunted potential forces of civil society.

This populist, repressive, regional scene has left mainly religiously-based movements to appropriate dissent against their repressive regimes. The Arab states, however, could not repress these with the same efficiency. First, these Islamic movements used the mosque as an alternative public space to reach out to their followers and potential recruits. Second, these movements also became active in the provision of social services which, increasingly, failed populist states had not been willing or able to deliver.

The year 2005 was a crucial regional test for all concerned. As the Bush Administration pressed its democracy promotion policy, it appeared to make some inroads in several Arab countries. In his State of the Union in January, President Bush eloquently reiterated his commitment to the support of those who will stand up for freedom and democracy against tyranny and repression. He even went an extra verbal mile in criticizing past policies of favoring stability with friendly dictators over the risks of democracy with change. In the twelve months that followed, an unprecedented number of elections and referenda took place, namely in Iraq, Palestine, Egypt, Lebanon, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and even Saudi Arabia. These included granting Kuwaiti women their right to vote and run for office, and policies enacted in Bahrain and Qatar that would transition the countries into constitutional monarchies. In Palestine, despite calls for boycotting the elections, threats of violence, and Israeli occupation road blocks, over two-thirds of the eligible electorates defied the obstacles and voted the Fatah party out of office. It seemed as though there was

a hunger in the Middle East for democracy and participation.

Even Islamists, despite their long standing belief that democracy is a repugnant Western importation, changed their mind and joined the bandwagon. Given widespread misgivings toward the ruling regimes, their record of service provision and organizational skills, the Islamists did better than expected in Palestine, Egypt, Morocco, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt. Instead of welcoming this participatory trend and the democratic process, the Bush Administration and the neoconservatives swiftly retreated from their democracy promotion policy. A new discourse quickly emerged to the effect that democracy should not be equated with elections. Countries, it was argued, should go through a “liberal phase” which may take a generation. In other words, by 2008, George Bush had backslided to exactly the position he had warned against and vowed never to do in January 2005.

This has given detractors of the West in general, and of the United States in particular, renewed ammunition to substantiate the cynicism and claims of double-standards. Low to begin with, approval ratings of the United States have dipped even lower in the past four years since the policy was first put into effect (Middle East Partnership Initiative, MEPI). Thus, of all the actors involved, it was the initiators of the policy who failed the first litmus test.

Finally, one would have expected from a renowned author like Professor Krasner, that in a paper for a Forum on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World, he would touch on the rest of the Muslim World, outside of the Middle East, where there are democratic transition success stories—for example, Indonesia or Malaysia. Likewise, a brief discussion of a policy of conditionality by the United States and the Community of Democracies, à la the Helsinki Accords, would help inform the debate raging over the subject here in the region. I hope he can still take up these issues, either here in Doha, or in a revised version of this paper.



Remarks on Stephen D. Krasner's *Sovereignty and Democracy Promotion*

RAMI G. KHOURI

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PROFESSOR KRASNER'S paper offers a splendid snapshot historical overview of how powerful states have routinely interfered in the domestic affairs of smaller or weaker countries in order to bring about a desired change in ideology, or in state governance and authority structures. His analysis of the erratic efficacy of the different means for achieving this—imposition, coercion, contracting, incentives, and exhortation—is very useful, and provides a pertinent backdrop to the discussion on the United States' attempts to promote democracy in the Middle East. His conclusion that "incentives and self-enforcing bargains are the most obvious paths to success" is substantiated by the evidence to date throughout the world.

However, the paper's analysis of political conditions in the Middle East and of Washington's democracy-promotion activities there is deeply flawed and only mildly useful, due to three main reasons: 1) apparent ideological preconceptions that are not necessarily valid, partly because they tackle democracy in isolation of wider events and perceptions in the region; 2) a debilitating lack of assessment of the United States' motives and legitimacy, in favor of exploring only Middle Eastern reasons for democracy's slow advance there; and 3) an almost absolute absence of indigenous Middle Eastern perspectives on the desirability of democracy and how democracy fits into a wider gamut of priorities for the people of the region. If Professor Krasner's paper were revised to account for these omissions and weaknesses, it would offer a valuable analytical tool for all those in the West and the Middle East who dearly and sincerely wish to see democracy expand throughout our region.

The paper seems to assume—or at least does not explicitly question—that it is reasonable for the United States to try to promote democracy in the Middle East, because stronger powers historically have always tried to impose their own ideologies and governance systems on weaker states. One reason why Washington's democracy promotion efforts (and Europe's Barcelona Process, as well) have broadly failed is simply that many regimes and peoples in the Middle East

today reject the idea of the strong dictating to the weak; in fact, many in our region actively resist this phenomenon, in a manner that weaker parties could not or did not do in the past. The new dynamic we witness is Western states promoting democracy and many Middle Eastern societies resisting this.

The Arab-Iranian-Turkish Middle East today is broadly defined by historic self-assertion that often spills over into political defiance and even active resistance. Especially since the end of the Cold War around 1990 and the American-led attack to drive Iraq out of Kuwait in 1991, many political forces and a few governments in the region have explicitly explained their policies as aiming to thwart American ideological designs on the Middle East, or the American-Israeli "Project for a New Middle East." Resistance to American dictates is now widespread in the Middle East, which tends to undercut any legitimacy or efficacy that may have been there to begin with in Washington's democracy-promotion policy.

This is linked to a wider issue—and a debilitating flaw in Professor Krasner's paper, which explicitly ignores Iraq and its consequences. This is the juxtaposition of the rhetorical policy of promoting democracy against the actual consequences on the ground when that policy was pushed forcefully, including through military means. Four specific cases where the United States has used military force—directly or indirectly through proxies and surrogates—to promote democracy since 1991 all suffer varying degrees of warfare, insecurity and instability; namely Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon and Palestine. If these are examples of what to expect when the United States engages in serious democracy promotion, the majority of people and regimes in the Middle East will take a pass on this offer, and some will actively resist the process. The United States' use of military and political force to promote democracy is widely seen in the region as predatory, aggressive, destabilizing and destructive, and a means of promoting the interests of the United States and Israel more than responding to the needs of the indigenous populations.

This links with my second criticism of Professor Krasner's paper, which is the almost total absence of any discussion of American motives and legitimacy in trying to determine why democracy has been so slow to take root in the Middle East. The United States is a deeply flawed, if not totally discredited, agent of democracy promotion for many people in the region, for many reasons: an inconsistent policy across the Middle East, pushing hard in some countries and not in others; a lack of international legitimacy, since the United States was not formally, legally, politically or morally mandated by anyone to unleash its armed forces in the pursuit of democracy in the Middle East; serious doubts about Washington's sincerity in seeking Middle Eastern democracy, given its proven and continuing willingness to support deep autocracies and authoritarian regimes; doubts about Washington's real motives, which are widely seen as seeking post-9/11 security rather than democracy per se; and, a sense that Washington remains more committed to pro-Israeli policies than to promoting democracy, in view of its boycott of the democratically victorious Hamas party in Palestine.

Any dispassionate analysis of this issue that aims for accuracy, integrity and credibility should acknowledge that democracy has not taken root in most of the Middle East for four main reasons: 1) the lack of explicit democracy drivers or demand from below, in a region whose people have been more concerned in the last half century with state-building, meeting basic needs, or repelling foreign threats; 2) the enduring strength of monarchies and security-minded authoritarian regimes that prevent democratization from above, usually with Western and other foreign support; 3) the disruptive impact of foreign armies and wars, including the Arab-Israeli conflict and American-, British- and French-led armed interventions over the last two centuries; and, 4) the politically numbing impact of oil and gas wealth that permeates the region and continues to fuel development and commercial activities at the expense of political evolution towards more democratic governance.

It is neither realistic nor fair to assess the America's weak democratization drive in the Middle East by looking only at Middle Eastern factors for this, and ignoring totally the impact of foreign actors, especially the United States, Israel and Europe, and the Soviet Union during the Cold War. The idea that American efforts to fund democracy-promotion projects should be seen more as venture capital than conventional investments seems attractive, but in fact it merely aggravates Professor Krasner's basic analytical structural flaw. It paints democracy as an alien concept that is implanted and nurtured by foreigners, and is a hit-and-miss proposition. The Middle East's chronic democratic deficit is not purely an indigenous phenomenon; rather, it reflects the collective culpability of both indigenous and foreign actors, whose policies together have shaped the contemporary Middle East.

My third main criticism of the paper is that it treats democracy promotion largely as an abstract phenomenon, rather detached from any meaningful historical or political moorings in the region. Specifically, it ignores how democracy promotion fits into the much wider agenda of priorities of the people of the region itself. This is because the paper also totally ignores the people of the region – with the exception of one phrase, within one sentence, in the very last paragraph. The assessment and promotion of democracy are treated primarily through a Western or global lens. We encounter the perspectives of Freedom House and Seymour Martin Lipset, the World Bank and MEPI, and other serious scholars, but the people of the Middle East—the presumed object and beneficiaries of the democratization process—are invisible people in this exercise.

This is a serious weakness in the paper, and also a tremendous irony, because the vast majority of people in the Middle East want democratic governance, and have been calling for it more explicitly in recent decades. They clearly aspire to democracy's basic principles—accountability, participation, the rule of law, equality, pluralism, freedom of expression and association, and political representation and

participation—but they express this desire in several different vocabularies: ending corruption, enhancing political freedoms, expanding civil society, seeking equality, calling for Islamic *shari'a* law, greater respect for human rights, and, above all, the demand for human dignity in one's own society. Yet democracy as such—especially Western-style elections, parliaments, political parties, and civil society institutions—is perceived by ordinary Arabs and other Middle Easterners as one of many other, usually more pressing, priorities in their lives. If democracy promotion is to succeed, as Professor Krasner correctly says, by longer term structural developments that alter the incentives of individual citizens, it would make sense to move towards democracy in a democratic manner, (i.e., by taking into account the concerns and desires of citizens, rather than imposing on them realities that may reflect other people's priorities.)

In that spirit, I would suggest a series of issues that are as urgent, and probably more urgent, than democracy for ordinary citizens in the Middle East. These are:

1. Stable, sensible statehood, i.e., countries that are configured and defined by their own citizens, in a self-validating, self-determinant process that has rarely occurred in the Middle East, especially in the Arab world.
2. Basic security at the personal, communal and national levels, which is absent in many parts of the region, including security from foreign military occupations that plague Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Iraq.
3. An ability to express one's identity freely, in the social, political, religious, individual, communal, national and transnational realms.
4. The legitimacy of the state and its political leadership or regime, in the eyes of the citizenry.
5. Genuine sovereignty, as opposed to the sense of many Arabs today that their national assets—including some foreign policy decisions—are not totally under their own control, but rather reflect foreign priorities.
6. Basic human needs, which has become a more pressing issue in recent years as population growth outstrips economic expansion and average living standards and real purchasing power for most people in the Middle East have been stagnant or declining in real terms in recent years.
7. Ending corruption, favoritism and abuse of power, and giving ordinary citizens a sense that they have an equal chance to improve their and their families' well-being through education and hard work.
8. Citizenship rights, a concept that is not clearly defined, as the rights and responsibilities of the individual, and the power of the state, are both fluid concepts in most Middle Eastern societies, subject to the assertion of power rather than law-driven dictates.

It could be argued that all these demands reflect the absence of democratic governance, whose implementation would lead to more stable, accountable, prosperous and equitable societies. I share this view, but would caution against treating democracy promotion in the Middle East in a historical and perceptual vacuum that ignores the views of the citizens of the region. Democracy is a system of governance that Middle Easterners aspire to enjoy; but their pressing priorities transcend democracy, to include much bigger issues that relate to the very nature of their states, and their sense of sovereignty, identity and legitimacy. If the United States or any other foreign power wishes to see democracy thrive in this region, a more viable strategy to pursue than the current one would be to engage the people of the region in identifying and seriously addressing the full range of grievances that plague the region—and not mainly the issues that irritate or frighten Americans.

Democracy promotion should be the common value that unites Arabs and Americans, but to do so it requires an intellectually, politically and morally coherent context that sees the needs of Arab, Iranian, Turkish and other Middle East-Islamic societies as clearly as it sees American, European and Israeli requirements.



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I'D LIKE TO FOCUS in this response on non-military, non-coercive means of intervention—that is to say, means of *influence*. Steve Krasner's paper provides a good foundation for discussion by emphasizing that the history of intervention by states in other states' domestic affairs is a phenomenon almost as old as international relations itself, and that many non-military forms of intervention are a regular and accepted part of international relations. In point of fact, forcible intervention *in order to impose democracy* has never been implemented by the United States—where the United States has forcibly intervened, it has been for other reasons at heart and democracy promotion has essentially been along for the ride, and sometimes merely as an afterthought. Democracy promotion is often invoked by American leaders as part of their justification for embarking on major engagements overseas, but that does not mean that the engagements are for the sake of democracy.

This was true even in Iraq. The military overthrow of Saddam Hussein may have been intended by some American officials to set a precedent for coercive intervention, and so strengthen American deterrence against revisionist or “rogue” autocratic regimes—but in fact democracy promotion was a distant third among the rationales laid out by the Bush Administration for the war. In any event, the fallout from the Iraq war both in the Middle East and in Washington virtually assures that Saddam's overthrow will be *sui generis*, and that military intervention is unlikely to be a significant part of American democracy promotion strategy in the Middle East (or anywhere else) in the near term.

With Krasner's paper as background, then, perhaps I can lay out some ideas for a more concrete discussion of what the United States, or other outside actors, can usefully do to improve the conditions for democratic development in the Muslim world.

As discussions at the U.S.-Islamic World Forum have for years emphasized, the countries of the Muslim world vary greatly with respect to democratic

development and the foundations for democratic progress. This means that, as a first and rather obvious guideline, there is no one-size-fits-all strategy, either for these countries to follow in their political development, or for the United States to follow in dealing with them on that subject.

In addition, as polling data collected by Gallup and others have consistently shown, democratic growth is a goal widely held among the citizens of Muslim countries. Western assistance to democratic movements and forces in these countries—as long as that assistance is, as noted above, non-coercive—is therefore appropriately conceived of as support for indigenous efforts. A second guideline, then, equally uncontroversial, is that there is no mechanism available in a non-coercive framework by which Western states can “impose” democracy on unwilling Muslim populations.

Krasner's paper notes that, historically, incentives and contracts appear to be the most effective tools that outside actors can use to influence the domestic structures of other states. Let us therefore examine a few potential models of incentives and contracts, how they might be or might already have been applied in the context of the Arab and/or Muslim states, and how influential they might be in this context.

Providing incentives means giving autocratic or semi-autocratic governments reasons to take steps toward democracy, or giving newly democratic governments reasons to continue down the path of democratic development and consolidation. Those reasons might be positive (expectation of reward) or negative (expectation of punishments for failure to progress). The largest, most effective example of an incentives approach is the extension of membership in the European Union—beginning with its absorption of Spain, Portugal and Greece in the 1970s, and extending through its recent major expansion into Central and Eastern Europe to a total membership of twenty-two states. The material advantages of joining the European community helped to consoli-

date transitions to democracy in Spain and Greece, and the financial assistance and financial stability lent by EC membership helped sustain those countries' democratic governments in times of challenge. More recently, the success of the European Community was a tremendous influence on the publics of the failing Communist bloc states in 1989, and the prospect of EU membership was a tremendous magnet for newly democratizing states after the Berlin Wall fell. The requirements imposed by the EU with regard to civilian control of the military, domestic human rights protections, rule of law, market orientation, and so on deeply and profoundly shaped the post-Cold War structure of Central and Eastern European states. The ability to live and work in Western Europe and to have the monetary and trade benefits of Union membership were tremendous advantages to the former Communist states as they made their painful transition to market economies.

The European Union is currently bitterly divided over the prospect of one day offering membership to Turkey. For better or worse, some in Europe feel that majority-Muslim countries are by definition outside the boundaries of "their" Europe. So the question is, if the big, luscious, attractive magnet of European Union membership is not going to be on offer for other Muslim states, is there any other positive incentive, any other "carrot" that can prove as powerful an incentive for change?

Another, less powerful form of incentive is financial assistance, and more narrowly, that type of aid called "democracy assistance." A good example here is the Freedom Support Act—U.S. government assistance allocated to support democratic transition in the post-Soviet states. This money went to local civil society groups and grants to U.S. NGOs to conduct training and provide technical assistance to government and non-government clients. Many of the American NGOs that are today active in democracy promotion activities in the Muslim world developed their expertise in Eastern Europe, and many U.S. officials who worked on democracy pro-

motion in the Middle East, like former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Scott Carpenter, cut their teeth in Eastern Europe.

There are key differences between the former Soviet bloc and the Muslim states when considering a model like the Freedom Support Act. The Freedom Support Act was designed to help *complete* a democratic transition in countries where the previous, communist regime had already collapsed and the decision in favor of democracy was clear. Obviously this is a very different situation from that which prevails in the autocratic states of the Arab world today—but it is more relevant to newer democracies like Indonesia and perhaps to countries poised on the brink of transition, as might one day soon be true of Pakistan.

The size of the investment represented by the Freedom Support Act is also a relevant consideration. In the first five years following the end of the Cold War and the establishment of the Freedom Support Act (1992-6), the United States spent \$4.264 billion on democracy promotion in the former Soviet states, or \$14.6 per capita. That is over eighteen times the amount spent per capita on democracy promotion in the Middle East in the first five years following September 11, 2001. Middle East democracy assistance spending during the period 2001-2006 was around \$0.80 per capita. Since then the per capita figure has increased, but it is still miniscule compared to the post-Soviet effort and also compared to official military and development aid given by the U.S. government to the governments of the Arab states.

An obvious conclusion is that, unless the United States is willing to devote significantly more resources to democracy promotion in the Middle East, it is not reasonable to expect that regional governments will respond with a new commitment to democratic reform. The Millennium Challenge Account offers greater incentives to state governments to improve their domestic governance, but only poorer countries qualify.

Now let us consider contracts as a tool for influence. Contracts are mutual agreements between states, by which governments bind themselves in ways that represent an imposition or constraint on their freedom of action in internal affairs. The European Union is one example, one that enables intensive and intrusive interventions by EU bodies into member states' internal affairs. But in recent years, democracy promoters have been raising another case study: the Helsinki Accords signed by the Soviet bloc and the Western allies in 1979. In these agreements, each side in the Cold War agreed not to use force to overthrow the other's regime, and each side also committed to a series of cultural exchanges and to respect for international human rights norms. The Helsinki Accords are given credit for enabling the emergence of active dissidence within the Soviet bloc countries, because the accords gave dissidents the right to organize "Helsinki committees" to monitor their government's compliance with human rights norms and to publicly discuss, for the first time, their regimes' human rights violations. These committees were legally protected through the constraints on regime action imposed by the Accords—and they served as a cover for dissidents to engage in opposition activity and to liaise with Western supporters.

The aspect of the Helsinki Accords that made them effective as a democracy promotion tool was precisely their contractual nature—they imposed obligations on all parties, or more concretely on both sides in a conflict. The United States agreed to accept the political status quo in Europe and not to use force to overthrow the Soviet-imposed communist governments of Eastern Europe. In exchange the Soviet Union agreed to allow greater space for civil society and to set up this mechanism for human rights dialogue—which ultimately led to their peaceful overthrow.

What does the Helsinki experience teach regarding peaceful means of democracy promotion? First, the norm of peaceful intervention was at the heart of the Helsinki bargain—taking unilateral military inter-

vention off the table was necessary in order to legitimate other forms of intervention. The United States constrained its freedom of action and got something in return in the form of an entrée into societies that were otherwise closed to U.S. influence. Without giving up the option of coercion, the United States would not have gained this ability to influence.

But the second thing to learn from Helsinki is what worked ultimately to produce democratic transitions in the communist countries. What worked was an improvement in basic human rights, which became tools for democracy activists to make use of and act on: free speech, free association, and free assembly are internationally recognized rights and were so recognized in 1979 by the Soviet bloc and the Atlantic alliance. The dissidents were not able to exercise these rights without paying a high price, to be sure—but Helsinki allowed them greater space to do so than they otherwise had, and raised the price to their governments for silencing them. Helsinki's contract, then, constrained the communist governments somewhat, legitimated public dissent and criticism, and once governments were pushed a little bit back, civil society was able to develop ideas and programs that caught the public's attention, created greater demands, and forced further government concessions, eventually leading to those governments' peaceful collapse.

To conclude, then, this review of incentives and contracts suggests that the most important things the United States can do to support and advance democratic growth in the Muslim world are a) to be willing to make the necessary investment to influence domestic development in these states (and to make the case to the American public and the Congress for that investment); b) to use its relationships with governments in the Muslim world to persuade, cajole, pressure or bribe them to reduce their own scope for action; and c) to seek ways to help local democratic activists acquire greater space in which to exercise their political rights and thereby to press their governments for meaningful change.



Islamist Views of Reform

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INTRODUCTION

Arab Islamist attitudes towards American reform initiatives have been trapped between a genuine desire for fundamental change and a deep distrust of American intentions. Cooperation, even on issues of shared concern, is blocked by hostility to American foreign policy and opposition to many of the cultural and political dimensions of a globalization often conflated with Americanization. American reform promotion, on the other hand, has often been overtly cast as a tool for combating Islamist movements, intentionally or unintentionally, fueling Islamist suspicions. It is striking, therefore, to note how much overlap there really is in the ideas about reform—especially political reform—articulated by moderate Islamist movements and Americans. Both advocate democracy and greater political freedoms, with Islamists of late defending a surprisingly liberal conception of the meaning of democracy. Both oppose radical Islamist groups and terrorism (even if for different reasons). Vast gulfs over cultural and social issues, deep disagreements on core foreign policy issues, intense mutual suspicions, and the fear on each side of the domestic political fallout of open dialogues have generally blocked any serious explorations of such common ground.

This essay attempts to lay out Islamist conceptions of reform in order to identify both the opportunities for, and obstacles to, finding common ground. It seeks a middle ground between skeptics and advocates of moderate Islamism: not placing too much emphasis on the differences, since this renders dialogue impossible (which for many on both sides is the point), but also not papering over the very real points of disagreement. Efforts at dialogue which sidestep core doubts and conflicts are as unlikely to produce meaningful results as are efforts which

begin from the presumption of a mutual existential conflict.¹

I begin from the assumption that serious reform which does not take into account the demonstrated political and social power of moderate Islamist movements, will likely fail. While many in the West would prefer to nurture the growth of Arab and Muslim liberals or secularists, they generally have very limited political weight. For the foreseeable future, any serious reform projects must take into account the realities of Islamist electoral prowess and presence in today's Arab political sphere. This year's electoral failures of the Jordanian IAF and the Moroccan PJD, along with the disastrous performance of the Hamas government in Palestine, triggered a bout of speculation on the decline of Islamism. These setbacks arguably say more about renewed regime domination of the political process than about Islamists. The one notable exception to the trend conspicuously comes from non-Arab Turkey, where the mildly Islamist AKP won a renewed electoral mandate without triggering American hostility, an outcome which has intrigued Arab Islamists. Tunisian Islamist Rachid Ghanouchi argues in opposition to the "Islamist decline" thesis that everywhere you look, Islamic identification is growing and the Islamist project is succeeding, regardless of what the polls might say.² For better or for worse, Islamist movements remain the most potent force in Arab politics today. As Jordanian journalist Yassir Abu Hilala puts it, despite all their setbacks and struggles, "it is not possible for political reform to advance one step without the support of the Islamist movements."³

Grappling with Islamist views of reform requires understanding the complexity and diversity of Islamist politics today. Moderate Islamists face challenges

¹ For examples of attempts at such a dialogue, see Marc Lynch, "Brothers in Arms: How to Talk to America," *Foreign Policy* (September/October 2007), pp.70-74; Robert Leiken and Steven Brooke, "The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood," *Foreign Affairs*; Mona Yaquoubian, "Engaging Islamists and Promoting Democracy," *USIP Special Report 190* (August 2007).

² Ghannouchi, Rachid, "Is Islamism in Decline?" al-Jazeera, December 11, 2007 <http://www.aljazeera.net/NR/exeres/053ED511-2207-40E9-A414-E1D31CA3BF32.htm>; for the Islamist decline thesis, see Khalil el-Anani, "The Autumn of the Arab Islamists," *Daily Star*, December 4, 2007.

from multiple directions. Liberal and nationalist activists compete and in some cases form coalitions. Moderate Islamists face a radical critique articulated by al-Qaeda and other “salafi-jihadists,” who accuse them of selling out their convictions for little practical gain and legitimizing un-Islamic governments. They struggle to capture the mantle of reform from Arab governments, which, with varying degrees of success, present themselves to Western audiences as reformers. And they are generally themselves internally divided over strategy and priorities.

I argue that moderate Islamists have demonstrated a commitment to the democratic process far more convincingly than is usually recognized. Whether facing a welcoming environment or a hostile one, Islamist movements have participated in elections to the fullest of their ability. A lengthy succession of policy documents, platforms, and reform documents testify to a well-articulated embrace of most of the key concepts of political democracy. What is more, Islamist movements have remained committed to electoral participation even where they have incurred heavy costs by doing so. At the level of both discourse and practice, it is difficult to imagine what more Islamist movements could do to affirm their democratic commitments.

At the same time, two serious challenges stand in the way of Americans and Islamists finding common ground on reform.

First, despite their democratic commitments, Islamists advance a deeply conservative view of social and cultural issues which is anathema to many (but certainly not all) in the West. Many Islamists define “reform” as a response to a comprehensive corruption of individuals, society, and the state. Democracy is the appropriate cure for the corruption of a political system which has lost accountability, in which the people have no voice or genuine rights. However, this does not translate into support for a Western-style

limited state: in the economic realm, corruption is carried by neo-liberal reforms which leave the national economy defenseless before the global economy and neo-imperialist designs, and which corrupt society by fueling conspicuous consumption, a growing gap between rich and poor, and a culture of materialism. Finally, reform in the social and cultural must be defended against the claimed corrosive and corrupting effects of Westernization.

This common thread helps explain why these Islamists see no real contradiction between their support for political democracy, and their culturally conservative mission. But for Western critics, this is indeed a contradiction. Few Islamists have sworn the use of state power to advance their vision of Islamic morality—whether in the schools, the media, or public life. While Muslim Brotherhood leaders regularly invoke their commitment to the non-coercive approach of former Supreme Guide Hassan Hudaybi’s *Preachers Not Judges*, in practice the Brotherhood has rarely stood up in public against more radical Islamists practicing *takfir* (declaring a Muslim to be an apostate) or filing ‘*hisba*’ cases in the courts.⁴ Islamist enthusiasm for censorship and taste for “culture wars” also frighten many non-Islamist Arabs and Muslims.

Second, Islamist fears of American hegemonic aspirations and American suspicions of even moderate Islamists have thus far overwhelmed any potential for achieving common ground. Most Islamist movements share a deep belief in the hostility of an American foreign policy deemed to be overly supportive of Israel, and committed to dividing and weakening the Muslim world. From this vantage point, Islamists tend to be deeply suspicious of any American initiative, attributing malevolent intentions at every step. Despite all American protestations to the contrary, most see America’s war on terror as a comprehensive assault on Islam, from its charities and its schools to its political movements

⁴For a recent discussion of *Preachers Not Judges*, see Barbara Zollner, “Prison Talk,” *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 2007.

and its faith. Reform is therefore cast as something against the United States, not in cooperation with it towards shared goals. These views are widespread and deeply held—not only by Islamists—and every American policy proposal is filtered through this prism. For instance, in a 2007 survey by the University of Maryland’s Project on International Policy Attitudes, 92% of Egyptians thought that the United States probably or definitely had the goal of weakening and dividing the Muslim world, while 91% agreed with the goal of keeping Western values out of Muslim countries.⁵

Despite these obstacles, the potential common ground between American reform initiatives and Islamist preferences is significant. Both Islamists and the United States have consistently pushed for democracy, defined not only by free and fair elections, but also by greater public freedoms and respect for human rights and the rule of law. In most cases, moderate Islamists share with the United States an interest in combating extremist forms of Islamism—both because of doctrinal differences, and out of an organizational self-interest in preventing either overly intense regime response to terrorism, or a loss of members and potential recruits to more radical competitors.

INTRA-MUSLIM BATTLES OVER REFORM

Muslim Brotherhood ideas on reform must be understood in the context of the wider field of political contention, including the wider context of the “war on terror” and the radical Islamist challenge. Islamists competed on multiple fronts as they articulated reform agendas: against regimes (most of which today portray themselves as champions of

reform), against secular reform movements, and against a radical Islamist trend. Their reform discourse was shaped by a general Arab public consensus in favor of reform, which they helped to shape but could not completely control. Al-Jazeera and the rapidly transforming Arab media helped to shape and to empower these public frustrations, shaping the political environment within which Islamists operated.⁶ American pressures for reform also helped, whether Islamists admitted it or not, by forcing Arab regimes to at least temporarily refrain from overtly massive repression, and to acknowledge rhetorically the importance of reforms. The sensitivity of Brotherhood reformists to this point may be exacerbated by the fact that they faced intense criticisms from more conservative members of their own organization, who accused them of ‘liberalism’ and of prioritizing pleasing the West over Islam.

Al-Qaeda and its intellectual supporters in the salafi-jihadist milieu offer their own vision of reform, one which is consistently articulated and advanced by both political leaders and intellectual supporters. For this salafi-jihadist position, “reform” occupies as central a position as it does for the Muslim Brotherhood or Western NGOs—but has an entirely different genealogy and meaning. “Reform” as understood here is stripped of all the institutional connections to democracy, civil society, and so forth which the Muslim Brotherhood adopts wholesale. These are dismissed as idolatry, the worshipping of gods other than God, and as part of the Western cultural invasion aimed at abolishing the true understanding of Islam. Instead, reform derives exclusively from an austere reading of *shari’a*, meant to bring society and politics back from the realm of *jahiliya* and into that of *hakimiya*.⁷

⁵ PIPA, “Muslims believe U.S. wants to undermine Islam,” April 24, 2007.

⁶ For discussion of al-Jazeera’s coverage of American reform proposals, see Marc Lynch, “Anti-Americanisms in the Arab World,” in Peter Katzenstein and Robert Keohane, eds., *Anti-Americanisms in World Politics* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press 2006). Mohammed Abu Rumman argues that the MB followed the popular trend towards demanding reform rather than leading it, in *al-Ghad*, December 31, 2007.

⁷ Zawahiri, al-Jazeera, June 17, 2005.

From this standpoint, al-Qaeda consistently attacked the Muslim Brotherhood for its willingness to take part in the political process. In line with his long-standing critique of the Brotherhood, Ayman al-Zawahiri bitinglly criticized the Brotherhood movements, from Egypt to Palestine, for participating in elections—what did they have to show for it, he demanded?⁸ How could such participation be reconciled with jihad? The road to reform must begin by striking the “Crusaders and Zionists” and their client regimes—the far enemy and the near enemy—since they are the real obstacles to reform.⁹ According to Zawahiri, peaceful protest and political action—no matter how well intentioned—can only lead to failure. Reformists erred by relying on Western concepts of reform, instead of relying on the true concepts of Islam.¹⁰ Reform for Zawahiri rested on the *hakimiya* of *shari’a*, on the freedom of Muslim lands from foreign domination, and the freedom of Muslims to choose their leaders. Their sharply contrasting visions of an ideal Islamic state is one vitally important reason why it is wrong to argue that radical and moderate Islamists are simply pursuing different approaches to the same ultimate goal.

Al-Qaeda’s critique challenged the Brotherhood and other moderate Islamists at two levels. The polemical arguments represented one of the most active and intense “wars of ideas” actually going on in the region. The challenge forced the Brotherhood to articulate and defend its conception of reform against a hostile Islamist skepticism—which it did across a wide range of media, in the press and on television and the internet, as well as in all sorts of face-to-face settings. But this was not just about ideas—it was (and continues to be) about battles over recruits, members and overall power within

the Islamist milieu. As the Brotherhood found its democratic participation facing fierce regime repressions, it became harder for it to convince its own members—especially impatient youth—of the value of its own strategy. For the Brotherhood to play the role of “firewall” against radicalization, it needs to be able to demonstrate the viability of its moderate approach – a vital point which American policy should not forget.

MODERATE ISLAMIST VIEWS ON REFORM

“Everywhere you turn your face in any country in the lands of Islam, you find people talking about reform. Newspapers talk about reform, the radio and television and media talk about reform, the *ulema* and the intellectuals talk about reform... parties are established under the name Reform, conferences and dialogues and seminars all on behalf of reform... Even Americans who rule over the world call on us to reform... We must then know the definition of this reform to which we are called by forces inside and outside. Is there such a thing as reform, and is there a need for reform?”

“Changing something corrupt into something healthy, changing a corrupt person into a healthy person, or a corrupt society into a healthy society...this is reform.”

—Yusuf al-Qaradawi,
“Reform”, January 17, 2004.¹¹

The concept of “reform” has dominated moderate Islamist political discourse and mainstream public discourse over the last few years as much as it has

⁸ Zawahiri’s book, *Bitter Harvest*, is something of the ur-text of contemporary radical Islamist critiques of the Brotherhood.

⁹ Zawahiri, June 4, 2007.

¹⁰ Zawahiri, July 3, 2007.

¹¹ al-Qaradawi, “Reform,” January 17, 2004 http://www.qaradawi.net/site/topics/article.asp?cu_no=2&item_no=3249&version=1&template_id=104&parent_id=15.

Western visions for the Middle East. But as the influential Islamist al-Qaradawi noted sardonically in his 2004 address on reform, the concept of “reform” is not always clearly defined.¹² In his view, which reflects the mainstream of the Muslim Brotherhood’s approach, reform’s primary goal is to restore the integrity and health of the *umma*, which can only be achieved through comprehensive reform based on the principles of Islam. Reform, for al-Qaradawi, must come from within, beginning from changing the individual’s ideas, conscience, faith, and beliefs. Without faith, there can be no rule of law, no ethics, and no real reform. Reform must come through democratic participation and a bottom-up approach to reform, since even a well-intentioned coup leader will inevitably turn to dictatorship and attempt to impose his will on society. While comprehensive reform must take place everywhere, from education to daily life, al-Qaradawi identifies political freedom as the first necessary step – because only then can people freely choose honest representatives and leaders. But political reforms can not be separated from economic and social reforms: all must go together in a comprehensive set of reforms.

Muslim Brotherhood literature devotes great attention to the concept of reform, rooting it in a reading of Hassan al-Banna’s teachings.¹³ Reform has in particular been a top priority of Mohammed Mehdi Akef since he became Supreme Guide in early 2004. Like al-Qaradawi, Akef explains that comprehensive reform across all levels of politics and society is vital for the renaissance of Islam envisioned by the Brotherhood.¹⁴ Reform must begin with individual bodies and souls, bringing culture to minds and integrity to doctrines. Such faithful

Muslims would then be in a position to guide society (*irshad*). But perfecting the individual is not enough, because the faithful individual requires an appropriate society and regime: “reforming the regime (*nizam*) is an indivisible part of general reform.” The reform which the Brotherhood calls for, then, is necessarily an individual return to God and an opening of the political system alike.¹⁵ But political reform comes first, including free elections and an end to emergency rule.

Even as political reform has become a top priority over the last few years, the Muslim Brotherhood consistently and “completely rejects any foreign pressure or interference.”¹⁶ Akef argues that genuine reform must always come from within, from a people with an interest in change – which is why the educational and *da’wa* (outreach) mission was so essential, to guide people to understand their interests in this way. Al-Qaradawi similarly argues that reform must come from within: Americans cannot reform us, nor can any external power, since only a people can reform itself, based on its own principles and convictions. Even though he had just issued a path-breaking “reform document” in March of 2004, Akef rejected using that summer’s Greater Middle East Initiative and all other American and European reform projects to pressure regimes in that direction. In his view, the West did not desire genuine reform, and such support would only come at the price of concessions on the core issues of the Islamic *umma* (Palestine, Iraq, et. al.).¹⁷ Brotherhood writers state bluntly that Western concepts of reform want only to increase the corruption and sickness, not heal it.¹⁸ The influential independent Islamist judge Tareq el-Bishri shared

¹² Abdullah Ali al-Alyan, “Why did talk of reform stop?” *Al-Khaleej*, December 25, 2007.

¹³ For an interesting recent investigation of the roots of MB thinking, see Tareq al-Bishri, “Reading the writings of Hassan al-Banna, founder of the modern Islamist movement,” *al-Quds al-Arabi*, October 26-29, 2007. Mohiya Hamed, “Reform jihad and sacrifice,” Ikhwan Online, May 30, 2006.

¹⁴ Weekly Message from the Supreme Guide, “Working in the path of reform,” Ikhwan Online, April 28, 2005.

¹⁵ “Akef: the MB’s reform is a return to God,” Ikhwan Online, September 25, 2004.

¹⁶ Essam el-Erian, “The Muslim Brotherhood and Reform in Egypt,” *al-Ahram*, March 17, 2004, accessed on Ikhwan Online, April 8, 2004.

¹⁷ Weekly message from the Supreme Guide, Ikhwan Online, June 17, 2004.

¹⁸ For example, Tawfiq al-Wa’ai, “Counterfeit reform,” Ikhwan Online, June 29, 2004.

this view: reform must be a local product.¹⁹ In a widely discussed al-Jazeera talk show, the moderate Islamist Fahmy Howeydi also took this position: where Saad Eddin Ibrahim urged Arabs to take help where they could get it, even from Washington, Howeydi warned that the United States would always let Arabs down because their interests fundamentally diverged.²⁰ When Americans explicitly justified their reform strategies in terms of combating Islamism, it is difficult to see why they would have thought otherwise.

The Islamist response to educational reform proposals is particularly instructive here. Many in the West see this as an important but essentially apolitical form of assistance, improving education and better preparing Arabs and Muslims for a globalized world—along with, in some cases, offering an alternative to ‘radical *madrasas*’ (even though failing, overcrowded public schools are by far the larger problem in many Arab countries). To Islamists, however, this educational reform represents a direct attack on Muslim identity and faith, and is the farthest thing from being apolitical. A deep concern with education as the foundational point for individual development is one reason that the Muslim Brotherhood has long sought control over Education Ministries.²¹ Indeed, one of Hassan al-Banna’s very first pamphlets in 1929 focused on education.²² Modernized instruction curricula are frequently seen as an attempt to impose Westernization and obliterate the Arabic language and the Islamic faith—even as the Brotherhood calls for deep reforms of the educational system which in practice might look little different from American ideas.²³

POLITICS AND THE DA’WA: WHAT IS THE OBJECT OF REFORM?

The Muslim Brotherhood and like-minded moderate Islamist movements have demonstrated a commitment to the political process which clearly goes beyond tactical concerns. They have contested elections across the region not only in the face of both strong external pressure to desist, but also despite a potent internal Islamist critique of their participation. For instance, over the last several years influential Islamists such as Abdullah al-Nefissi and Mohammed Selim al-Awa have urged the Brotherhood to pull back from the political game, where the costs are too high and too little can be gained in the face of a hostile and repressive regime.²⁴ Such arguments would have easily provided intellectual and political cover for the Brotherhood to retrench. But as of now, it remains determined to contest the political realm—suggesting a strategic, rather than tactical, commitment.

Muslim Brotherhood leaders explain that they see political participation as an indivisible part of the *da’wa*.²⁵ The ultimate objective of politics is to advance the project of deepening the faith of the believers, and create an authentically Muslim life and society. Abd al-Monem Said (a member of the NDP Policy Bureau) states that this religious objective renders them inherently unable to be true democrats: moderate rhetoric masks “an intention to implement religious tyranny.”²⁶ He argues that their focus on creating “faithful men” requires a totalitarian control of all means of socialization (from schools to the media). Their participation in poli-

¹⁹ Tareq el-Bishri, “Reform is a local product,” *al-Araby* 960, May 22, 2005.

²⁰ Open Dialogue.

²¹ Gregory Starrett, *Putting Islam to Work: Education, Politics and Religious Transformation in Egypt* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1998).

²² Johannes J. G. Jansen, “Hasan al-Banna’s Earliest Pamphlet” *Die Welt des Islams*, 32, 2 (1992), pp. 254-258.

²³ Ebtisam Al Kitbi, “Gulf States: Educational Reform’s Real Goals” *Arab Reform Bulletin* 4, no.4 (May 2006).

²⁴ Al-Awa, www.islamonline.net, on May 27, 2007. Also see Rafik Habib, “Islamists and Politics: Marriage or Divorce,” *Al-Mesryoon*, August 7, 2007; see response by Essam Abd al-Aziz, *Al-Mesryoon*, August 11, 2007.

²⁵ Essam el-Erian, “Political Action is our Path to Reform,” *Islam Online*, June 10, 2007. Personal interview with Mohamed Habib, October 5, 2007.

²⁶ Abdel Monem Said Aly, “Understanding the Muslim Brothers in Egypt,” *Crown Center Middle East Brief* (December 2007).

tics thus takes on a sinister hue, since what other than this fascist impulse could explain their hopeless efforts to intrude on the electoral arena? While this identifies a real tension in Islamist political and social thought, it seems to overstate the case rather dramatically. The depiction of this conception of politics as *da'wa* as something sinister make little sense: parties and candidates around the world have always pursued seemingly hopeless electoral campaigns for precisely those reasons.

That said, the relationship between politics and *da'wa* has emerged as a central point of contention inside the Brotherhood itself.²⁷ The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood today seems internally divided, with sharp conflicts between reformers and traditionalists increasingly fought in public, rather than behind closed doors.²⁸ The current, dominant vision links the two by arguing that desired reforms are best pursued with parliamentary representation. Even without winning elections, the campaigns themselves provide an opportunity to get their message out to the people, and to make their ideas and their members known in society. But other, more traditional activists have argued that the political approach distracts from the mission of *da'wa*—an argument which has gained traction as the regime has cracked down hard against the Brotherhood's political mobilization.²⁹

Arab Islamist movements have generally focused on participation rather than winning, as a way of reassuring both regimes and the West.³⁰ But this has created a form of moral hazard in their political thought and practice, leaving them free to take

positions without thought as to implementation. It has also left them, according to many critics, without serious ideas about how to govern should they actually win, a charge leveled after the Hamas victory (somewhat unfairly, given the conditions of boycott and internal strife which followed).³¹ The Muslim Brotherhood has issued a series of reform documents and electoral platforms to respond to such criticisms, almost always under the banner of 'reform,' to which I now turn.

PARTY PLATFORMS AND REFORM DOCUMENTS

The proliferation over the last few years of official documents explaining the Islamist stance on reform is a remarkable development, the novelty of which is often overlooked. In March 2004, Akef authorized the release of a path-breaking reform document (which the Brotherhood considered profoundly liberal, and its critics denounced as a platform for an Islamic fascist state). In 2005, the Brotherhood's Parliamentary election platform and campaign outlined a systematic view of reform. In 2007, it released an updated electoral platform for Senate elections. Later in 2007, it released a preliminary draft of a Political Party Platform.³² Jordan's Islamic Action Front also released a series of reform documents and electoral platforms focused on reform. What do these documents say about the current Islamist conception of reform?

As the most recent and most comprehensive in a long line of Muslim Brotherhood statements on

²⁷ Muhammad Abu Rumman, "Islamists and the Value of the Political Game," *Islam Today*, August 20, 2007; Hossam Tamam, "Transformations of the Muslim Brotherhood," available at www.islamismscope.com/index.php?art?id:250

²⁸ Marc Lynch, "Young Brothers in Cyberspace," *Middle East Report* 245 (2007); Khalil al-Anani, "Four Generations of Muslim Brothers," *al-Hayat*, December 8, 2007.

²⁹ For examples of this vast literature: Amru Shoukbi, "Da'wa group and political organization," *Al-Masry al-Yaum*, October 25, 2007.

³⁰ Mohamed Abu Rumman, *al-Ghad*, October 8, 2007.

³¹ Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Do Islamists Fail in Power?" *Al-Masry al-Yaum*, October 2007.

³² All references to the platform here are to the "First Read" text, given to me by Deputy Supreme Guide Mohammed Habib in Cairo, October 5, 2007. The discussion is informed by my interviews with most of the Brotherhood's leadership and a number of activists and independent analysts in early October 2007.

reform, the draft political party platform of 2007 deserves close attention.³³ To this point, most attention has focused on a few controversial portions of the platform while neglecting the 128 other pages: its rejection of the idea of a non-Muslim or woman serving as head of state, and—especially—on its proposal of a Council of Ulema with a legislative role. Critics of the Ikhwan seized upon these points to paint a portrait of an organization revealing its true, non-democratic face, with Abd el-Monem Said charging it with being a blueprint for an Iranian-style theocratic state. Even important Brotherhood members such as Abd El Monem Abou El Fotouh, Gamal Hishmet, and Essam el-Erian criticized some of the ideas. Defenders of the Platform were at pains to point out that the proposed Committee would have only an advisory role, and that the Platform clearly and strongly affirmed that legislation must emanate from a freely and honestly elected Parliament. An internal review of it is ongoing, and it is not yet clear whether they will remain in the final draft.

What is clear, however, is that those points have overshadowed the platform's systematic and coherent argument for a relatively liberal set of political freedoms and democratic institutions. The overwhelming content of the parts devoted to political reform lay out a sustained argument for political freedoms and democratic integrity which differ little from a Western, democratic vision. The Platform endorses in no uncertain terms virtually every aspect of Western-style democracy: citizenship (2.1.a), separation of powers (2.2.2), a civil and technocratic state (2.1.e), political pluralism (2.2.5), civil society (2.2.1.c), human rights, constitutionalism (2.1.b), rule of law (2.1. d), mass political participation (2.2.1.a), transparency and freedom of information (2.2.3), and free and fair elections (2.2.7). Even the con-

troversial Higher Ulema Council was placed in an advisory role to a democratically elected and sovereign parliament.

The Platform emphasizes “reform” at every juncture. Part one's opening section, which lays out the core concepts of the platform to follow, begins by emphasizing that *shari'a* must be the main source of legislation (not “the only source,” as advocated by harder-line Islamists) and that *shura* (consultation) is the essence of democracy. The third article (1.1.3) then describes “comprehensive reform” as the demand of every Egyptian, Arab and Muslim. Political and constitutional reforms are presented as the starting point for achieving all other areas of reform. It rejects the conception of reform as initiated by the government, instead claiming the mantle of reform for all people and movements. The concept of reform which follows (1.1.6) clearly harkens back to the core teachings of Hassan al-Banna: the goal of development has to be the individual citizen, who in turn becomes the core agent of reform. Justice, equality and freedom are the primary aspirations throughout.

The second article, “Goals,” offers a telling juxtaposition of the liberalism and conservatism of the Platform. The first paragraph (1.2.1) lays out a deeply liberal vision of political reform: unleashing public freedoms, especially the right to form political parties and civil society institutions, the principle of rotation of power, freedom and transparency, the right of people to choose their leaders. But the next paragraph (1.2.2) points in the opposite direction: spreading and deepening morals and ethics and true understanding of Islam. The tension between the political liberalism and social conservatism of these two adjoining paragraphs captures much of what Western observers find troubling about the Brotherhood. The concept of “guidance” runs through

³³ Mona al-Ghobashy, “The Metamorphosis of the Egyptian Muslim Brothers,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 37 (2005), 373-395; “Reforming Egypt,” *International Crisis Group Report* No. 46, 4 October 2005; Amr Hamzawy, “Egypt: Regression in the Muslim Brotherhood's Party Platform?” *Arab Reform Bulletin*, October 2007.

the document, a conception of those with the truth guiding the rest which sits uneasily alongside the celebration of dialogue and pluralism.

The economic platform leans towards economic nationalism and protectionism, interlacing a domestic critique of the Mubarak regime's crony capitalism with an international critique of American-style neo-liberalism (see section 4). On cultural (section 6) and social (section 5) issues, the Platform is predictably the most conservative and the most Islamic. Where the political chapter calls for a liberal, pluralist state, the cultural and social chapters propose a much more interventionist state with a clear goal of promoting Islamic morality in terms defined by the Brotherhood. Reform here primarily refers to overcoming what the Platform considers to be a pervasive corruption of public life and deterioration of ethical standards. The Platform sees the media as a malevolent force corrupting society, and endorses an interventionist state to guide the media and filter out immoral messages and images—again, in sharp contrast with its political liberalism.

The section on education is similarly oriented towards moral guidance, although it also includes a range of very practical criticisms of Egypt's creaking educational system (see section 3.1). It makes clear from the preamble of section 3 that the purpose of educational reform is "to deepen Arab and Islamic identity and strengthen *intima* (belonging)." It simultaneously urges greater technical and scientific education as crucial to development, placing it far from any endorsement of "madrasas" focusing on Qur'anic education. The platform offers a lengthy, highly detailed and well-thought out set of principles for educational reform, suggesting the importance of the topic to the Brotherhood.

At the same time, an intense suspicion of and hostility towards American foreign policy runs through the document (see section 2.3). The opening preamble begins with an expression of resistance to American-Zionist hegemony, and the reform agenda is explicitly presented in opposition to—not in support of—American reform proposals. The Platform begins from the presumption of American bad faith, pointedly noting that American support for Mubarak and other Arab dictators is inconsistent with a genuine imperative to reform. Repeatedly throughout the chapters, one finds negative references to American concepts of reform, juxtaposed to the presumably superior Islamist alternative.

The same tension between political liberalism and social/cultural conservatism can be found in the reform documents and electoral platforms produced by Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood and Islamic Action Front.³⁴ It has long been more divided over core political issues than has the Egyptian MB, with the Palestinian issue and the tortuous question of Jordanian-Palestinian relations at the heart of the conflict (along with the continuing repercussions of Abu Musab al-Zarqawi's November 2005 terrorist attack in Amman and the ambiguous response of some Jordanian Islamists). As Nathan Brown points out, where the Jordanian Muslim Brotherhood in the 1990s set the pace for Islamist movements in terms of political participation, it has stagnated and even regressed in recent years.³⁵ Jordanian liberals were particularly horrified in 2006 by the Islamist support for controversial changes to the media law—a conservative stance which seemed to starkly contradict its own platform.

The IAF's 2003 electoral platform begins with the blunt assertion that it considers a presence in the parliament to be one of the political means to achieve the goal of "Islam is the Solution."³⁶ It

³⁴ See Jillian Schwedler, *Faith in Movement* (Cambridge University Press 2006).

³⁵ Brown, Nathan, "Jordan and its Islamic Movement: The Limits of Inclusion," Carnegie, January 2006.

³⁶ Available at <http://jabha.net/body9.asp?field=LIB&id=5>. This was the most recent document available online.

calls for “freedom and *shura* and democracy,” and for reform to stop the deterioration in the realm of public freedoms and *shura*, to limit administrative and financial and moral corruption. The first section demands specific political reforms: canceling changes to the constitution and revitalizing it as a guide to politics; issuing a new electoral law; issuing new laws governing municipalities to guarantee popular participation; objecting to the Palace’s use of temporary laws when parliament is not in session; preventing security forces from repressing citizens; and so on. The second section focuses on public freedoms and human rights. While it casts these as emanating from Islam, the specifics are again fairly standard: against torture, defending public freedoms for all citizens without exception, and supporting freedom of opinion and press.

While the first two sections could be adapted to almost any political party (as could the long section on the economy), Islamist or not, the same could not be said of the following sections, which contain a long series of recommendations on education, cultural and media policies, religious guidance, social policy, and women and youth. There, a much more conservative vision emerges in which morality and religious imperatives take precedence over liberal freedoms. Finally, the section on foreign policy begins with Palestine and presents a hard line against the “Zionist enemy.” Israel looms far larger than does the United States in this section, in comparison to the Egyptian documents. But it concludes with a statement of resistance to “American-Zionist hegemony over the world,” and a call for Arab and Islamic unity.

While each Islamist movement has adapted to its particular domestic political context, the general

patterns seen in the Egyptian and Jordanian cases seems to hold across the Arab world. Moderate Islamist parties have contested elections successfully wherever allowed, and have used their Parliamentary position to push their views of reform. Generally, they tend to be relatively liberal on political issues—demanding greater accountability and transparency, free elections and greater public freedoms, and respect for human rights—and quite conservative on social and cultural issues.³⁷

While this is beyond the scope of this essay, it is worth noting that the electoral success of Turkey’s AKP, and the West’s toleration for an Islamist government in that key ally, has both baffled and intrigued Arab Islamists. Many non-Islamist analysts in the Arab media were quick to reject any analogy between the Turkish and Arab experiences—probably because the prospect of a peaceful, elected, mass-based Islamist movement coming to power through elections is in many ways more threatening to the current Arab elite than is the radical terrorist challenge. Arab Islamists, for their part, have clearly been fascinated by the Turkish experience. How did the AKP win? Why did the West accept the victory? The prominent Brotherhood reformist Essam el-Erian argued that the first lesson was that Islamist movements could be integrated into political life without fear or doubts.³⁸ The AKP proved an able steward of the economy, did not impose Islamic doctrine on unwilling Turks, and has offered a powerful vision of a moderate, democratic Islamic movement. The differences, he argued, had to do with the regimes in question—no Arab country offered the free elections and political opportunities available in Turkey—and an American reception which differed so dramatically from its attitude towards Arab Islamists.

³⁷ Brown, Nathan, “Pushing Toward Party Politics? Kuwait’s Islamic Constitutional Party.” *Carnegie Papers* No. 79, January 2007; Jane Kinninmont, “Bahrain: Assessing al-Wefaq’s Parliamentary Experiment,” *Arab Reform Bulletin*, October 2007.

³⁸ Essam el-Erian, “The Turkish AKP in Brotherhood Eyes,” *Al-Hayat*, Oct 25, 2007; also see Erian’s “Is it possible that what happened in Turkey could happen in the Arab world,” *Al-Mesryoon*, July 30, 2007.

CONCLUSIONS

This overview of current Islamist thinking about reform leads to some important, if tentative, conclusions.

First, support for generic political freedoms is widespread and seemingly deeply held within MB movements. The documents discussed above share a consistent set of political commitments which have been matched both by political practice and by the rhetoric espoused by many MB leaders and intellectuals across multiple arenas. Reformists such as Abou El Fotouh write frequently and in detail about the importance of democracy to the Islamist project.³⁹ Others suggest that while the Islamist commitment to democracy may be genuine, it also depends on the MB's current reading of its interests and could easily change with conditions.⁴⁰ But this remains as conjectural as does the alternative view. For now, the evidence strongly supports the claim that the Brotherhood has embraced the language and practice of political democracy. Islamists have done as much as can be reasonably expected to prove their democratic credentials—certainly compared to manifestly authoritarian Arab regimes.

Second, the consensus in favor of political freedoms rarely extends to a deeper support for liberal social or even political stances. From a Western perspective, there is a deep tension between the Islamist desire to purify and police the public realm and its support for political freedoms. Islamists themselves generally do not see this tension, however, and see the political liberalism and the social conservatism as appropriate responses to a common challenge. According to a recent essay on the official MB website, Banna's vision of reform was "comprehensive...working on the path of guiding the people to a social system which deals

with all aspects of life under the name of Islam."⁴¹ The manifest willingness of even moderate Islamists to use both state and social power to "guide" others to the true faith complicates their liberal political message. Americans prepared to engage with moderate Islamists must think through the implications of this duality.

Third, Islamists see a deep connection between internal reform and foreign policy. Their view of American proposals on reform is almost always deeply shaped by their views on American support for Israel, the "war on Islam," Iraq, and so forth. This essay began by pointing to the near-universal Islamist belief in American ill-will. Most Islamists—and, indeed, most Arabs—believe that the United States does not genuinely want to bring democratic reforms to the Arab world. "America has primary responsibility for the fires burning through the region," began one recent weekly letter from Mohammed Mehdi Akef.⁴² Perhaps America would like to see its client regimes and friendly dictators gain a more solid popular foundation, or a more palatable sheen of democratic trappings. But, from this perspective, the United States consistently prefers pro-American dictators to democracy and the status quo to genuine reform. The American response to the Hamas electoral victory, and to a lesser extent American silence in the face of the Egyptian crackdown following the Muslim Brotherhood's Parliamentary electoral successes, stands as the final bill of indictment.

One final note, consider this recent, hotly controversial speech: "Freedom requires religion just as religion requires freedom. Freedom opens the windows of the soul so that man can discover his most profound beliefs and commune with God. Freedom and religion endure together, or perish alone." Were such words delivered by Mohammed Mehdi


³⁹ For example, Abd El Monem Abou El Fotouh, "Islam and the Democratic System," Islam Online, December 27, 2007, and Saad al-Din al-'Othamni (Secretary-General of Morocco's Party for Justice and Development), "Religion and Politics: Distinction, not Separation," Islam Online, January 8, 2007.

⁴⁰ <http://www.alghad.jo/?article=7669>, December 3, 2007.

Akef, Supreme Guide of the Muslim Brotherhood, they would likely be taken as a clear signal of the impossibility of a genuine Islamist participation in democracy. But they were, of course, uttered by Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney in a highly publicized speech entitled “Faith in America.”⁴³ Too often, Islamist views of religion and politics are contrasted with an idealized liberal America, one which has not been wracked by decades of culture wars over

abortion, gay marriage, or the meaning of “right to life.” But of course America itself has deep, unresolved questions about the proper role of religion in public life. Rather than simply pose the social conservatism of the Islamists as a toxin which necessarily renders their political liberalism irrelevant, Americans might think more carefully about precisely which parts of the socially conservative agenda are incompatible with democratic participation.

⁴³ Delivered December 6, 2007. Available at http://www.mittromney.com/News/Speeches/Faith_In_America.



Remarks on Marc Lynch's *Islamist Views of Reform*

MUHAMMAD ABU RUMMAN

The original document was provided in Arabic and has been translated

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MARC LYNCH delivers his contribution, “Islamist Views of Reform,” from the position of the American elite, which believes in dialogue between the United States and the Islamic movements (which declare their acceptance of democracy, political pluralism and transfer of power). This position goes beyond the views of a powerful current among American leaders who see no possibility for dialogue between the United States and the Islamists, and who treat all the Islamic movements as one and which only differ in the methods they would use to establish an “Islamic State.”

In my view, the position of Dr. Lynch is closer to reason than these canned ideological opinions, and takes into account the full spectrum of political views on this subject. His position runs contrary to the prevailing view which insists upon support for current Arab regimes—that are neither democratic nor transparent nor have a clear path for political reform—in order to protect Western interests that would be damaged in the event of an Islamist rise to power.

I completely agree with Dr. Lynch in the need to eradicate the “phobia of the Islamist Alternative,” and not to surrender to the propaganda of the Arab governments against the Islamists, which cripples political reform and deepens the structural crises enmeshing Arab societies. These crises were some of the main factors contributing to the growth and social incorporation of fundamentalist Islamist movements into the Arab scene over the last few years.

However, I disagree with Dr. Lynch in his diagnoses of the main obstacles which prevent the United States and the Islamists from finding common ground with one another (in demanding democracy in the Arab world). Dr. Lynch posits that the anti-U.S. sentiment that is widespread in the Arab world prevents us from seeing the common ground shared by the two parties. He also cites the conservative social views that characterize the positions of the Islamist movements and thus places them in opposition

to the liberal social values common in the West in general, and in the United States specifically.

In my opinion, the biggest obstacle preventing a sound relationship between the United States and the Islamist movements is the lack of democratic standards in U.S. foreign policy and the absence of democratic values in the rhetoric and practices of Islamist movements. Thus, the common ground that Dr. Lynch describes is not solid, but rather unstable and unsettled.

So, with regard to Dr. Lynch’s theories, I will discuss three matters: American foreign policies toward Arab countries and their interests, the “credibility” of the Islamist movements in accepting the role of democracy, and the strategic alternatives to dealing with Islamist movements, positive and negative.

THE UNITED STATES AND POLITICAL REFORM IN THE ARAB WORLD

From the Cold War to the events of 9/11, the United States pursued a “realist” foreign policy that focused on strategic interests rather than human rights, freedom, and promoting democracy. As a result, the United States viewed Islamist movements with distrust, believing their ideology to be a threat to U.S. interests and contradictory to the values and cultures of the Western world. The assassination of President Sadat in 1981 by the Muslim Brotherhood and the Iranian revolution in 1979 reinforced this view in Washington.¹ From the viewpoint of strategic analyst Robert Satloff, the United States’ policy towards Islamist movements relied upon Arab regimes to determine the most appropriate strategy to deal with the Islamists.² However, these ideological and political approaches invariably reinforced hostility towards the Islamist movements and abetted the potential confrontation between the West and the Muslim world.

¹ Fawaz Girgis, *America and Political Islam: Clash of Civilizations or a Conflict of Interest*, Dar Al-Nahar, Ghassan Ghosn interpretation, 1998, pp: 30-38.

² Robert Satloff, “U.S. Policy toward Islamism: A Theoretical and Operational Overview,” Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 2000.

The second half of the 1990s witnessed the rise of Al-Qaeda, which produced a number of military and security controversies between the two, most notably the 9/11 attacks on New York and Washington, D.C. As a result of these attacks, America adopted a different strategy with regards to Islamist movements. This strategy affirmed that Al-Qaeda was the product of internal Arab crises, and that Al-Qaeda was like “a burning ball” cast by Arab governments in the face of the United States. The most effective weapon against terrorism, therefore, was to throw the ball again into the Arab court and put pressure on those regimes to change the situation by calling for radical political, economic and cultural reform. From here emerged the ideas of the “Middle East Partnership Initiative” and the “Greater Middle East” and then the “expanded” Middle East.

This policy shift has been difficult for Arab regimes, as American foreign policy went from maintaining the status quo to promoting change. Arab regimes do not have legitimate governments from the Western perspective, have no internal achievements, and have seen the accompanying rise of active and stubborn Arab opposition movements. All these indicators and conditions created the right environment for bringing about reform.

As for the dilemma of the “Islamist alternative,” which the Arab regimes always made a pretext for not undertaking structural political reforms, a number of American politicians and diplomats thought that American foreign policy had gotten over it, and that it had no objection to the arrival of Islamists to power.³

This shift in policy was an historic moment and an exceptional bright spot in the history of the region. Despite all the hope held out, however, it was short-

lived. The situation in Iraq started to deteriorate and became a real dilemma for the American administration. In parallel, the Iranian nuclear crisis emerged. The overwhelming victory of Hamas in the Palestinian legislative elections prompted the American administration to stop its discussion of the “next democratic Arab spring” and restore its previous alliances with Arab countries. Democracy and human rights once more took a backseat to concerns about strategic interests and security.

The American call for reform has ended in theory and in practice, and multiple approaches emerged in the United States and the West that re-focused on “realist” theories. These approaches attempted to reconcile security considerations and strategic interests on the one hand, with democracy and human rights on the other. However, they gave priority and importance to realist considerations, what Zbigniew Brzezinski has termed the return of “progressive realism.” With the emergence of Iran as a regional power, the new regional conflict and polarization brought back conditions similar to the Cold War and the renewal of the historic deal between the United States and Arab governments.⁴ And it saw the return of political approaches based on the idea that Arab societies are not prepared for the democratic course that has characterized the United States and the West, favoring instead the long road to reform.

The end of the American emphasis on reform does not mean that the relationship between the United States and the Islamist movements has come to a dead end. But the main standard defining the nature of this relationship is not democracy, but rather how much these movements serve American interests or conflict with them, as the American expert Robert Satloff states in his important study, “U.S. Policy Toward Islamism.”⁵

³ Muhammad Abu Rumman, “Will the American Administration Surpass the Dilemma of the Islamist alternative,” www.alasr.ws.

⁴ See Satloff, The Priority of Washington in Forming a Solid Alliance Against the Islamists, *Al-Ghad Newspaper*, 15-1-2005.

⁵ See Robert Satloff, “U.S. Policy toward Islamism: A Theoretical and Operational Overview,” Council on Foreign Relations, New York, 2000.

In my opinion, the key to understanding American behavior toward Arab governments and Islamists is to look at these groups through the lens of American interests and security, rather than political reform and democracy. The American stance on Islamist movements varies with the country. The relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia (of a conservative religious orientation), the Turkish Justice and Development party (representing liberal Islam) and the Islamist Shiite parties in Iraq (representing electoral Islam) are close relationships. On the other hand, the United States is hostile towards Hamas and Hezbollah due to their stances toward Israel, and its relationships with the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan and Syria are heavily dependent upon its relationships with the regimes under which these groups live.

THE ISLAMISTS AND DEMOCRACY

Arab governments prevent Islamist movements from gaining traction in their respective political systems on the pretext that these movements are incompatible with democracy. The governments maintain that that these movements seek power through a “democratic hierarchy” and then abandon democracy in order to establish an “Islamist” state, preventing political and intellectual pluralism and the rotation of power.

Despite this claim, several Islamist movements issued documents and initiatives for reform stressing the acceptance of democracy and its values, including political and intellectual pluralism and the rotation of power. To what extent can Islamist movements be trusted to accept the democratic process? The salient features of Islamist movements’ intellectual development emerged clearly in recent years, especially among the Muslim Brotherhood groups in Syria, Egypt and Jordan. Within these countries, there were several coinciding “Ikhwan” initiatives that raise two important questions: one on historic conditions and intended political messages, and the

other on the content of new developments in the Islamist discourse.

In all three countries, the Muslim Brotherhood developed a subsequent initiative, a declaration that accepted the values of democracy and the concept of “the civil state.” This historic Ikhwani initiative was a message to the West, answering the question that was often put forth by the West, “Can the Islamists accept democracy?” Many Western scholars and ruling Arab regimes state that Islamist movements do not believe in the values of democracy as absolute values governing political life. They want to use democracy to achieve their political objectives of establishing “a fundamentalist state,” and then dispense with democracy and elections, which means a “one-time election.”

2004 and 2005 saw the emergence of a positive and optimistic atmosphere and new prospects for change in the Middle East. Numerous Western articles promised an upcoming Arab “democratic spring.” Most experts on elections and political transformations predicted that the Islamist movement was a better alternative to the “current situation” whether because of the disintegration of states or the weakness of political authorities (as in the case of Iraq and Palestine) or because of parliamentary or municipal elections (Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait). The Brotherhood wanted to use this atmosphere and provide assurances about the values governing their exercise of political rights.

The Ikhwan reform initiatives and their acceptance of the values of democracy and pluralism and the rotation of power, represented a new ideological and intellectual stage in the dialogue of these movements that had remained hesitant in previous decades to accept or reject democracy and who compared and contrasted it to the concept of *shura*.

The Muslim Brotherhood’s acceptance of democracy, however, does not end the debate. Faith in democracy and values is not ordinarily the result of a

“political” decision as much as it is a sophisticated historical process leading to a change in culture after crises and conflicts or intellectual and cultural travails. Here it raises the question: have the Muslim extremists been through the historical and intellectual struggles that would lead them to this point, or is their acceptance of democracy just a pragmatic attempt to take advantage of a historical moment?

In this case, sermons from prominent brotherhood members cast doubt on their credibility. Many indications from the latest instances of Islamist actually ruling do not indicate that their acceptance of democracy is a tacit acceptance of democratic values. In Iraq, for example, Islamist movements, which in the past declared their commitment to democracy and modern rule, exacerbate rivalries within Islam and do not respect different religions or faiths or political approaches. The same situation applies to Hamas. Aside from the pressures of occupation that the party faces, its treatment of political opponents and journalists after taking over Gaza did plant the seeds of doubt and throw into question its faith in democracy. Human rights reports indicate how far Hamas has taken its power in the wrong direction.

On the other hand, Islamist parties decry interference with democracy in elections in many countries, especially in Jordan. The same, it should be said, is true of many non-Islamist parties as well. There is a willingness to have elections and rotate leadership inside these parties, but it is a limited political and cultural ideology and does not necessarily include the Islamist parties since they are put in an unclear “grey area.” Are Islamists, if they gain legislative authority, going to accept decisions for the Shi’ia faith and liberals? Are they willing to accept personal privacy and freedoms which contradict “religion?” Or are they going to apply the *shari’a* even in instances it opposes freedom?

Although the Muslim Brotherhood is trying to show their use of modern intellectual and cultural

approaches to solve political issues, there are many “grey areas” being avoided in their written platforms, and they have been ambiguous, causing many arguments and conflicts about the political heart of “Muslim Brotherhood.” These issues include the political rights of minorities. Their platforms do not show that they believe these minorities have the right to hold a high legislative position in the government or to make political decisions. The same is true regarding their view of women. In Jordan, women are more likely to hold the title of prime minister than in other Arab countries because it is a kingdom and political authority does not change.

The grey areas have been brought to the fore regarding “democratic Islam” in Egypt since the announcement of the creation of “The Brotherhood Party,” which the extremists insisted on having. Their views caused much protesting. The refusal to permit women and minorities (especially Coptic Orthodox Christians) to rule Egypt caused a lot of heated arguments between intellectuals and politicians regarding the Islamist party’s political points of view.

The past issue of creating a league of Muslim scholars that would study how adequate the laws of Islam are also caused many heated arguments. It met with both a lot of opposition and approval. Abed Al Majeed Thenibat wrote an article in the Jordanian daily newspaper, *Al-Ghad*, regarding this issue and indicated his acceptance of the idea of women or Christians serving as the president of Egypt, without the necessity for a “league of scholars” to decide the rules of modern governing.

There are three important points to note in answering questions regarding the Islamists’ adoption of democracy:

First, the matter is still confused in the absence of the basics of democracy. How can we judge the Islamist movement in a non-democratic political context? There are no certain conclusions if democracy is never implemented in Arab political environments.

Second, when it comes to Islamists accepting democracy, one cannot stop simply at what these parties say in their speeches and sermons, or their conduct. It goes deeper, to conflicts over combining or separating the religious and political fields in the Arab world. These conflicts are still a matter of political and social discussion and therefore unsolved. The situation is different from the European Christian experiment that followed the democratic course in a liberal shape.

It seems that “blending democracy and religion” is a more complex process than Islamist parties are willing to admit. For example, the Islamist movements believe that Islam is both a religion and a nation. This means that it controls all aspects of life: the political, the social, and the cultural. Thus, the conflict arises between modern, individual, democratic liberalism and Islamist concepts of applying the rules of Islam, human rights, and personal freedom of choice. There are two approaches that seem to come closer to reaching “democratic Islam.” The first is embracing the religious concepts and values in a way that goes along with Christian democratic liberalism. The second is accepting the Islamist conception of “modern privacy” as the basis for building democracy. This is what is holding the Islamist movements together currently. The Iranian slogan “democracy is a nation of religion” is an example.

Third, there are different levels of acceptance of democracy among Islamists. The Turkish Justice and Development Party moved directly to becoming a conservative political party. They revived the relationship between religion and politics, but adopted the European way. The Moroccan parties stopped midway in adopting the choice of democracy in its modern Christian aspect. The eastern Islamist parties, specifically the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan, Egypt and Hamas, seem to see a huge conflict between accepting the method of pragmatic reform and following the conservative current of holding on to the values of the older generations of these parties.

That being said, we should not prejudge these Islamist “democratic movements,” but explore the idea of Islamist democratic movements deeply.

THE STRATEGY OF DEALING WITH ISLAMIST MOVEMENTS

Arab politics deals in double standards when it comes to conflicts between governments and Islamist parties. The ruling political parties are weak and unable to stand their ground in the face of the Islamist parties. The governments take advantage of such conflicts to intervene to stop Islamist parties from ruling. Foreign interference becomes evident on the side of the Arab governments.

To eliminate this, there are choices to consider when dealing with Islamist parties. First, one could completely ban them from politics. Second, one could engage them with no strings attached. Third, one could allow them to participate with clear regulations and restrictions, preventing the destruction of democracy itself.

1. The breaking and weakening strategy involves prohibiting any Islamist political movements by means of tight national security, as well as prohibiting Muslim activists from engaging people in their parties. This strategy weakens Islamist parties and takes away their authority in society, which allows governments to establish their own chosen authority.

This allows Islamist parties to play a limited role, unable to make decisions and always kept under secure monitoring. Governments interfere at certain times to stop or weaken these parties, as Egypt did directly, and as Jordan has tried to do in the past couple of years. We should also note the “strategic countering” between governing and Islamist parties.

Using such national security measures, even if it has fast and direct results, can make the situation even

more complex to resolve. For example, after the tyrannical and dictatorial authorities fell in Iraq, the Islamist movements emerged as strong actors, and had authority over the society and now control the political scene.

Such harsh tactics did not solve political problems in Egypt either. The Islamist parties still control the streets. The same situation can be expected as more countries adopt this strategy. It is a short-term strategy, and does not pave the way to a more cohesive society. Closing all the channels for Islamist movements to legally express their views can cause political suppression and push them underground.

In current political circumstances, Islamist parties seem to have a very strong presence and authority. Eliminating them completely from the political game means demolishing plans for reform.

2. The unconditional participation strategy is premised on the belief that democracy is for all and should not be withheld from any political or social movement. It also holds that Islamist intentions should not be prejudged and that parties should be given the opportunity to practice politics freely and completely.

Some intellectuals and American researchers adopted this strategy especially after 9/11 and the ensuing “Islamophobia.” This strategy, which has become less popular recently, fears playing the Islamist terror card because it will slow the progress of political reform. The solution is to allow the Islamist parties to attain authority. Forced to choose, they will either practice common sense and rationality and cease trying to revamp politics, or they will fail to capture an audience because of their incapability to achieve their slogans.


The downsides to this strategy are significant. The risk is great since it opens up all kinds of possible

scenarios for these movements, and only their behavior will determine whether they really believe in democracy or whether they will turn the policies to their extremes, threatening political stability.

3. The restricted and regulated participation strategy, undertaken with a strong military and security presence, guarantees that Islamist parties play a role in constitutional and political governing without threatening human rights, privacy, freedom and political life. This may allow them to participate in building democratic countries.

There are many positive aspects to this strategy:

1. It prevents social suffocation, letting the public express their opinions, which eventually helps clear the political environment and improves political life.
2. It strengthens the movements and allows them to eliminate extremists from their leadership and pushes them to make realistic choices and act rationally when faced with the realities of political life.
3. Islamist movements always benefit from governments suppressing them because they gain sympathy from the public, turning them into *de facto* opposition parties. This strategy will remove the historic concept of the “oppressed and not guilty,” and test their ability to make the right choices when facing political conflicts, and reveal the strengths and weaknesses of their platforms in full view of the public.
4. This strategy will put an end to “Islamophobia” and will establish a path for governments to revitalize politics.



Remarks on Marc Lynch's *Islamist Views of Reform*

ABD EL MONEM ABOU EL FOTOUH

The original document was provided in Arabic and has been translated

ABD EL MONEM ABOU EL FOTOUH is Secretary General of the Arab Medical Union and a senior member of the Muslim Brotherhood's Executive Council in Egypt. A renowned political and democratic activist and founding member of the opposition Kifaya movement, Abou El Fotouh also serves as the general manager of hospitals owned by the Islamic Medial Society, a charity founded by a number of Islamist doctors. He remains an active board member of Egypt's Physicians' Syndicate, where he served as secretary-general from 1988-92. Abou El Fotouh holds an M.A. in Hospital Management and Health Planning and an L.L.M. from Cairo University's Faculty of Law.

UNDERSTANDING REFORM BASED ON ISLAMIC PRINCIPLES

The understanding of comprehensive reform that the Islamic movement seeks, and that is at the heart of the Muslim Brotherhood, revolves around the notion of sustainable development that encompasses the person, the state, and society and spreads throughout all aspects of political, economic, cultural, and societal life, putting people at the center of the circle. This is intertwined with many circles, the most important being freedom. Its absence results in great disaster for mankind and materializes in life as the highest form of corruption on Earth. God (praise Him) created man and granted him free will. When this great human value is taken, the meaning of human existence is uprooted. That is a very heinous crime committed on the face of the Earth. With respect to the messages of the messengers and the prophets, freedom applies in principle to humanity's freedom from worship of the Creator (praise Him). Islam has settled the question that the human being carries free will. "Then whosoever will, let him believe, and whosoever will, let him disbelieve." —The Holy Qur'an 18:29.

Umar Ibn Al Khattab (PBUH) said: "why did you enslave people when their mothers gave birth to them as free?"

SOME TRUTHS ABOUT FREEDOM

1. There is no freedom without the ability to say one is free, and possesses the fundamental rights of refusal and acceptance.
2. There is no such thing as absolute freedom. Freedom is inevitably limited by societal values and customs.
3. Freedom is a right accorded to the one who works, produces, and participates with others in life.

4. Equality between people in practicing their rights and freedoms is a fundamental principle of Islam.

All forms of comprehensive reform will emanate from this free and mature individual.

EDUCATION REFORM

Establish a way that links education and learning with current and future needs. Instruction is not connected to the needs of society. Education should include the entire *umma*, male and female, and should also become a daily and life-long occupation so that our youth may discover their aptitudes and potential abilities. We should also supply them with tools to give them the ability to make decisions, promote the value of dialogue, and strengthen their understanding of diversity and the various truths of life. We should teach them how to say yes and how to say no with pride and honor, and help them make a habit of original, productive thinking that rejects copying and opportunism, with knowledge of personal responsibility, giving, participation, and cooperation while feeling dignified as the Almighty intended them to feel.

ECONOMIC REFORM

Proceed in the direction of a complete change in the distribution of wealth and income, with adherence to sound global policies for building comprehensive advancement, including policies to support the development of human and technical capacities, a climate of total employment, increased opportunities for new jobs, and effective social security networks. Many recent attempts at economic reform, especially in Asia, have focused on small and minor projects rather than on more comprehensive methods to increase job opportunities.

All of this requires supporting a new social spirit of cooperation with an active government and the effective capacities of the public and private sectors, which relish the spirit and feeling of social responsibility. Strong civic establishments represent different groups of people in parliament, unions, media, national associations, and supervisory bodies.

Complete reform includes the modernization and development of the administrative apparatus and raising the standards of effective administrative functions. It is believed that our communities possess the strength and capacity in knowledge management to completely achieve this.

POLITICAL REFORM

I would like to point out, in this respect, that there is no desire in the Islamic movement (and in its heart the Muslim Brotherhood) for implementing political reform besides the ballot box. There is no other means to achieve the desired reform except by implementing the human democracy that I have discussed previously.

This confirms what we have repeatedly said:

1. Citizenship in the ideal civil state is the basis of existence in society within the democratic framework, and all who accept this framework are equal to the others with their ideological, political, and republican inclinations. The decision is made through free and fair elections and with the assurance of setting up guarantees to protect impartiality and fairness, until the honor of the electoral voice becomes an integral part to the honor of each individual.
2. Democratic majorities and organizations like the parliament and political parties should be more active in the protection of freedom, maintaining social strength and preventing

the monopolization of authority, which is a human disgrace. Therefore, it is necessary to set up laws, constitutions, and oversight measures that can get rid of the ugly remnants of this disgrace for the nation and its citizens.

3. Raise the importance of the *umma* with respect to the state. The state is a leviathan, as described by Thomas Hobbes, and has become the most shameful disgrace in human civilization in the 21st century. This matter requires strengthening parties, unions, and NGOs, as well as everything that makes the role of the *umma* more vigorous and dynamic limiting the savageness of the state.
4. Complete political and legal equality among all societal groups and factions is needed, with guaranteed protection of this equality from any political or sectarian conflict.

WOMEN AND COMPREHENSIVE REFORM

1. The principle of *taklif* in Islam comes from generalization, so there is not one Islam for men and one for women.
2. A truly equal society allows the pure and spontaneous action of its individuals without restraint, difficulty, or tension when interacting with one another.
3. The woman is rational, spiritual, mental, and physical. Islam encourages her to advance herself in society with her reason, mind, and spirit, with all of her capacities and abilities. As for her body, society should not have a say in that issue and her appearance should not be a criteria to judge her as a human being.
4. Islam is the first religion that presented the woman with individuality, benefits, and rights that preserve her full dignity.

5. The Muslim woman's hijab is, in essence, a symbol of identity and belonging. It a matter of physical cover and we must mention that this is also the purpose of the Indian sari.

Finally, I would like to present a number of different viewpoints that are extremely important:

1. The Islamic reformist message is a human message, not a holy one; it is only a human endeavor in understanding the texts of Islam. Consequently, those who dispute us are disputing our understanding, and not the religion itself. It is hoped that this point is fully clear to all.
2. Armed operations in the history of the Muslim Brotherhood are associated with the presence of foreign occupiers and are a historical matter not found under any circumstance in the phase of the national state, no matter the scale of dispute.
3. The field of "creating the individual" and shaping him according to the truthful divine will is the most important aspect in our movement towards reform.
4. The goal of governing in the spirit of the Islamic movement is to attain the happiness of the governed, achieve internal peace and stability, and gain respect from abroad. The government is a public agent and not a master; it is both a sovereign and a servant.
5. Human civilization in the Islamic spirit has a duty to protect two fundamental matters: sound politics and good morals. Sound politics values freedom, justice, and equality among people. As said by the prophet Mohammed (PBUH): "We are all from Adam and Adam is from dirt." Good morals recognize human needs as a secure foundation,

create a culture of its choices and desires, and encourage a lack of emphasis on overwhelming advertising and the tyranny of the price of possession and consumption without boundary. It rejects indifference toward the consequences of its actions.

Finally, to call attention to these important points:

1. The American problem, for Muslims, is their unlimited support of Israel in Palestine to such a degree that it has interfered with the picture of the United States and Israel in the eyes of Arabs and Muslims. The oppressive occupation of Iraq violates all international laws and customs. Without forgetting all the talk that revolved around religious wars void of any civilized understanding of respect for what has been fixed in the histories of human advancement in establishing a flourishing human civilization with giving, love, and cooperation.
2. The so-called "terrorism" in the American lexicon does not accurately represent the meaning of terrorism, but it is unfortunately a political line conflicting with American and Israeli politics. This is a political problem with U.S. policies more than an act of violence against Americans as people and individuals.
3. Being a friend of Islam and Muslims is welcome. However, it is necessary for that to be expressed in real life because Islam represents Muslims and their affairs, economics, politics, and security. It is very unfortunate that the United States has violated this for a long time.



Further Remarks on Marc Lynch's *Islamist Views of Reform*

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ISLAM & DEMOCRACY

Democracy is a Western system that arose with the birth of modern European countries and in the context of the economic and social progress that took place. The outbreak of the industrial revolution, and the changes that followed, affected the structure of society and the state and how they related to one another. With the spread of Enlightenment thought, democracy presented itself as a general mechanism of government, a mechanism that regulates authority, one that is capable of providing the optimum when it comes to establishing justice among people by defining their rights and duties. Freedom is spread and promoted, transcending the abstract linguistic realm to reach the reality of practical application.

The West realized that democracy could be a regulating solution to many of the issues it encountered along the path of development and advancement, adopting its fundamentals in the spheres of politics, economy and social organization.

Does this represent an obstacle that can hinder Muslims' adoption of the system Winston Churchill, the former British prime minister, once described as the lesser evil? Fundamentally, Islam has never distanced itself from such human achievement that contributes positively to life. God's Prophet (PBUH) said: "Wisdom is the believer's goal and should be sought wherever it may be found," which clearly indicates that the Muslim is but a being in continuous quest for truth, and truth is but the fruit of serious human endeavors in this life, regardless of whether these endeavors follow an Islamic method or otherwise. It's our belief that the Islamic principles for seeking truth are capable of leading us to such a goal more comprehensively, using a shorter, more direct route. In this context, the democratic system is a human achievement and, as such, Islam calls for serious adoption of all its pillars and individual components, given that these principles are firmly rooted in Islam itself, which promotes the concept of *shura*, or "government by counsel."

Shura is one of the fundamental principles of Islam. It was twice mentioned in the Holy Qur'an: "...and their affairs are (decided) by counsel among themselves" and "counsel with them." The strength and firmness of the divine order revealed in these two Qur'anic excerpts is evident from the use of the "notification" form that, oratory experts tell us, is the most affirmative and unequivocal of linguistic forms. Thus, there is no room for choice in this order, meaning the ruler is obliged to "consult." In the Medina period of Islamic history, when the land of Islam was limited to only one city and the act of counsel and consultation could be carried out in a day and a night, no complicated mechanisms were necessary for the practice of *shura*. That was hardly the situation when Islamic society spread far and wide. With the vast expansion of Islam, the execution of *shura* became more complicated, and a precise system or mechanism had to be developed.

In essence, such a system would not have been totally unlike what is known today as democracy. I cannot imagine there is any difference at all, because how can *shura* be possible without a physical council or house where such *shura* can be practiced? How do you form such a council when the people you seek to consult are many millions strong? The one possible answer is voting and that leads us to the conclusion that the principle of *shura* is embedded in democracy. *Shura* is a religious duty incumbent upon us. If Muslims had abided by it and had applied it to their life throughout history, a *shura* system would have developed, along with specific mechanisms to widen its scope, and Muslims would have been able to discover democracy before the West, and they would have endowed it with Islamic values to maintain and protect it from any manipulation.

The subject of democracy invites us to comment on the presidential system, which is merely a form of government and does not imply any specific philosophical theory or any particular vision of the world, life or mankind. It is the child of political

thought and has been adopted by many countries that preceded us in the quest for methods of effective government to run society in the best way possible. The presidential system is only a framework that does not derive from the ideas on which the system is built. It is only natural that we make use of these models that flourished throughout the history of mankind, and that were handed down to us in their current form. Islam urges us to make use of history. If there were a specific system of government in Islam, it would have been documented in the principal sources of Islamic legislation—the Qur'an and the Sunna. These blessed sources demand a Muslim government that applies *shari'a* but do not discuss the form such a system should take. Therefore, early Muslims were free to adopt structures developed by other civilizations that had established political entities before the advent of Islam. By the same token, we find it necessary to make use of the presidential system of government that emerged from the experiences of nations that preceded us in the field of thought and political organization. We should gain from their experiences in this field, and even seek to advance the presidential system of government and to add new elements to it, as did others before us. When Muslims seek to establish an Islamic regime, what they are looking for is a practical and effective formula for operating this system, for if what they seek is to invent a new system, they would fall into trial and error instead of building on the experiences of others.

In the era of good governance (the time of the rightly-guided caliphs), the foundations for an Islamic path toward government and authority were laid. The object of such a path was the establishment of a system to deliver justice and freedoms within an Islam that accommodates human choices, an Islam that does not recognize ruling by “divine right,” an Islam that promotes the right of people to make their own choices and decisions, binding to rulers and ruled alike. I believe that had the period of good governance been given a chance to survive, humanity would have discovered democracy long

before the European Renaissance, as I said earlier, and the charter of human rights—of which the West is proud—would have been established centuries earlier. Unfortunately, tyranny denied Muslims the opportunity of pioneering the field of human rights and democracy through the fundamentals and principles of Islamic *shari'a* and the Qur'an.

Islam is really the antithesis of tyranny. It is the greatest gateway for the liberation of mankind. When people started following the Prophet (PBUH), they did so because he was a liberator. In fact, people were critical of Muhammad (PBUH) because his followers were largely made up of the lowly and downtrodden. He promised them the freedom they had been deprived of and, hence, they were the first to realize how central the issue of liberation is to this faith. How then can this liberation be taken away by tyrannical governments set up in the name of Islam itself? How can governments take away freedom in the name of Islam? The position of Islam on tyranny is not any different from its position on heresy or on straying away from the path of God. Hence, there is a need for liberating the concept of “authority” in Islam and to transform it into an authority that allows Muslims to employ their faculties and talents to reach the goals God has set forth for the human race.

Islam guarantees freedom of choice for its followers, for everything in Islam, be it duties, commands, prohibitions or general ethics, and provides the greatest safeguards for freedom of choice. Islam itself cannot be passed on as a tradition but is chosen freely, for freedom comes before Islam and, with it, we choose Islam. It is for this reason that Islam offers the greatest guarantees for freedom, and there is nothing in our religion that contradicts the principle of freedom. Yet, absolute freedom does not exist, and we should differentiate between controls or checks on freedom from within (or regulation) and controls and checks imposed on it from outside (or tyranny). Every system has its own mechanisms for regulating freedom. Islam regulates freedom from

within its boundaries. For example, Islam controls the freedom of its followers to gamble or drink alcohol and it prohibits and administers punishment in the process, but does that constitute restriction on human freedom? On the contrary, this is protection of human freedom, for whoever chooses freely to adopt Islam is obliged to uphold its commands. Breaking Islam's commands violates the very act of embracing this faith because the prohibitions Islam imposes on its followers' freedoms are but a control set forth to regulate such freedom from within its boundaries. This point cannot be overemphasized, for, in this sense Islam, with all its commands is but a guarantee for human freedom. Islam requires Muslims to choose the system that is most capable of administering justice among individuals. The Muslim society is free to choose the system it believes can offer it the highest level of justice. Justice is the ultimate goal of a political system. The achievement of this goal requires the adoption of historically tested formulas. People are free to choose whichever system they wish as long as their choice is not detrimental to their Islamic faith.

We need Islam now more than ever, but the most important aspect of Islam we need is *shura* or "democracy." Today, the Islamic movements that confront tyrannical regimes are focusing on one main aspect of Islam, namely that of freedom and ending the monopoly of power. Seeking the application of divine law is very important and would move us out of our current stage of backwardness, but this is not enough. In itself, the Islamic system does not guarantee development, prosperity or victory. For in order for a system to achieve these goals, it should be Islamic and, moreover, it should recognize popular legitimacy. Any process of change that delivers us from this system that brought us so much backwardness should be based on the concept that authority must be manufactured or chosen by the people. Moreover, there should be democratic processes for alternation of authority because it would be meaningless to speak of an Islamic system of government without real guarantees of freedom. Thus, an Islamic move-

ment cannot be regarded as "an element of salvation" just because it promises to apply *shari'a*. Alone, the application of *shari'a* is no guarantee from going astray. Any tyrant can claim he is applying *shari'a* according to his own interpretation.

How then can we fend off tyranny? The only guarantee against tyranny is to give people the power to choose their government. There is no legitimacy to any regime in the absence of guarantees for the alternation of power and against concentrating and monopolizing power. Thus, it is not right to advocate democracy just because it provides you with a means to reach power, but rather, should be advocated as a basic and fundamental principle regardless of whether it provides the opportunity to seize power or not. Today whoever accepts democracy in order to increase his representation in parliament as a step to his accession to power, and says tomorrow another sun will shine, is committing a breach of trust, which is a major crime in Islam.

The principle of democracy is central in our thought and in our program. We firmly believe that power should be subject to alternation, not to stagnation and monopoly. An important fact should be pointed out here: in Islam, power or authority is not sacred; it is an earthly matter to be decided and freely changed by the people. Hence, the legitimacy of any regime is conditional on the choice of the people and not on its religious ideology. If the people choose a regime, this regime is legitimate regardless of possible Islamic deficiencies, while a tyrannical regime that does not owe its power to the people is not legitimate, even if it rules in the name of Islam.

History attests that the happiest minorities were those who lived within the Islamic civilization. That is because *shari'a* promotes and safeguards coexistence. This aspect of protecting the rights of individuals and groups is intrinsic to Islam, as clearly evidenced by the plurality that exists in these societies. Much work has yet to be done to ensure we take

full advantage of the Islamic commands in this field, so rich in examples of tolerance that are hard to find anywhere else. The deeper we dig into our Islamic tradition, the more we discover that the Islamic environment is the most apt for coexistence and for minorities to play an active role in the very structure of Islamic society. There is plenty of room in Islam for such participation, which is not limited to the free practice of their religious rituals, and which may include participation in government as well.

In this context, we are also required to envision the place of opposition within an Islamic system, if such a system were to be chosen by the people and thus become legitimate. Different currents within the Islamic society have a right to oppose authority and are entitled to their own ideas of change, their own understanding of Islam, or even their own ideas of how to establish a secular system. All this is not subject to the aforementioned checks or regulations on liberty. They are freedoms that ought to be kindled and protected. There is no fear in these freedoms, for Islam is based on discussion and persuasion. Islam does not force its ideology onto people but seeks to have them embrace it after they are persuaded by proof.

Yet Islam cannot permit a party that preaches atheism. This does not contradict the supposed freedom that states that “society’s choice of a regime or system is but the fruit of the freedom of this society.” Thus, it is the right of this society to immunize this choice by placing safeguards to protect this freedom. Any movement can have ideas that contradict the Islamic system or government we seek, but when a group comes and preaches the exact opposite of the society’s faith, it becomes the society’s right to stop this movement from attacking its freedom and its faith. In this sense, in Islam, there are no limits to freedom other than those checking whatever contradicts and interferes with the principles and requirements of freedom itself. The limits Islam places on freedom are derived from freedom to protect freedom. Setting up a party promoting atheism in an

Islamic society is a matter that cannot be classified as freedom because the society is free to organize its legislative and political structures according to its faith, and therefore it cannot give sanction to those who attack this legitimate structure. In other words, freedom is absolute unless the activity in question affects the product of such freedom. Human beings are free to become believers or atheists. Islam does not take away the right of a person to be an atheist. Islamic law seeks to punish only those who profess atheism openly or promote it because such actions constitute an aggression towards society. To punish a person just for being an atheist is not right.

It is worth making reference to democracy and its application in our current times, in which economy and politics have become so intertwined, and to the development of large multinational companies whose capital exceeds the entire budget of some sovereign countries. Every once in a while, we hear news of rampant financial and political scandals in Western democracies, which makes us wonder about their causes and how the lack of moral values affects the democratic process.

In the frequently cited social contract of Rousseau, direct popular representation in the ruling institution as an expression of the will of the people was associated with a call for what was defined as the education of the individual, for which he gave a complete account in his writings. Yet all this was set aside following the West’s total and fierce embrace of the materialistic secular system. We all know that, as an expression of popular will, elections represent the most important procedural aspect of the democratic process. Alone, an unaffiliated individual cannot bear the very high costs of electoral campaigns, especially with the spread of the media and the strong influence it exercises on the minds of laymen who lack any objective basis for comparison. Even political parties face difficulties financing such campaigns. Party subscriptions and contributions are not enough to finance the campaign, even for one candidate. In this setting,


the generous sums contributed by these enterprises with their ever-increasing financial interests and great wealth play a crucial role. These enterprises use their contributions to influence the decision of the freely elected authority! The different forms of financial corruption and the risk they pose to the democratic process and how the parties are being financed has become very worrying of late. What is revealed in the media in this regard is far less than what is actually taking place. The reason for this restraint is that corruption is associated with higher political and economic circles. The same can be said of the lower circles, down to the smallest municipality and town hall. A transformation has befallen the political parties in the West, bastion of the most ideal form of application of democracy, for instead of representing the will of the people, they now represent interests of huge corporations that have become even more powerful with the advent of globalization. Corporations are now more able to apply pressure on governments, political parties and even ordinary people to the point of “openly threatening to move production out of their home countries to other countries where fiscal policies are more favorable!”

The phenomenon of financial corruption and how it gnaws away at democracy (to the point that corporations and economic interests seem to rule over the people, and not the people over themselves)

in the West has become one of the most worrying shortcomings of democracy. By spending big money, financial interests take the upper hand over the interests of the society, and the power of laws and legislation dwindles. Through their influence on political parties and their big donations, these mega-enterprises contribute to enacting and amending laws tailored to fit their interests.

Any system or mechanism is subject to misuse. This is human nature. The problem with democracy does not lie in these shortcomings, but rather on the lack of checks and controls to guarantee its proper application. We make a clear distinction between reacting positively to calls for democracy and shunning Western values that are largely governed by materialistic philosophies and interests and which have become a grave and continuous threat to democracy itself.

The application of democratic procedures, such as elections, plurality, separation of powers, the independence of judges and the rule of law, is fundamentally worthless if not covered by a ceiling of high morals and values like those that emanate from man’s self-conscience. This is the most sublime virtue, which is the offspring of an interaction between faith in God and the human spirit; and the ensuing state of permanent awareness of conscience that, in Islam, we call *taqwa* – piety.



Remarks on Marc Lynch's *Islamist Views of Reform*

DIAA RASHWAN

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THE MEANING OF SALAH AND ISLAH

It seems necessary at the outset to define the term “reform” (*islah*) as it is understood by the moderate Islamist movements discussed by Dr. Marc Lynch. Reform is linked to two closely related concepts in the Islamic view: *islah* and *salah*. Despite the prevalence of the term “reform” in the moderate Islamist discourse in recent years, it only appears once as a definite noun in the Qur’an, in Surat Hud, verse 88: “He said: O my people! Have you considered if I have a clear proof from my Lord and He has given me a goodly sustenance from Himself, and I do not desire that in opposition to you I should betake myself to that which I forbid you: I desire nothing but reform so far as I am able, and with none but Allah is the direction of my affair to a right issue; on Him do I rely and to Him do I turn” (Shakir translation). It appears six more times in the Qur’an in indefinite form, twice in Surat al-Baqara, twice in Surat al-Nisa, and twice in Surat al-Araf. The verb *saluha* appears in various forms 34 times in the Qur’an, while *muslihun* appears five times in various verses.

In three of the verses in which *islah* appears, it refers to a general reform of society, with religious, economic, or social connotations. It is twice used in the context of family reconciliation, particularly between husband and wife; once to refer to reconciliation between adversaries; and once to refer to the proper conduct of believers. The term *muslihun* is used three times as the opposite of *mufsidun* or *fasad* (the “depraved” or “corrupting,” and “iniquity”) in a religious or ethical sense. It is used once to refer to religious righteousness, and once as the opposite of tyrant in the story of Moses killing an Egyptian. The verb *saluha* in its various forms and tenses can refer to any of the concepts noted above depending on the context.

In the Qur’an, *islah*, *muslihun*, and *saluha* refer to two primary concepts: righteousness or probity (*salah*) and making something right or good (*islah*). The first term, *salah*, is more frequently used in the Qur’an and generally refers to a pious, faithful in-

dividual of proper conduct more than it refers to groups, societies, or states. The second term, *islah*, refers in most cases to collective human entities—whether a group, a community, or a state—to mean that they are possessed of well-established rules for conduct and human transactions derived from ethical and religious values that represent the antithesis of social, religious, or economic iniquity. Despite the distinction between individual righteousness or goodness (*salah*) and collective reform (*islah*) in the Qur’an and Islamic thought, the relation between them is clear, and this helps explain why the two concepts are often connected in discussions of reform by moderate, socio-political Islamist movements. The connection is reflected in one point made by Dr. Lynch in his analysis of Islamist views of reform: that individual righteousness or probity is an inseparable part of the reform of society and state. They are two sides of the same coin, and, according to the Qur’an, the second task cannot be completed without the success of the first, which will produce good, righteous individuals capable of reforming society and state.

REFORM BETWEEN POLITICS, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE

Most serious studies of reform in modern Islamic thought note that it began with Sheikh Rifa’a al-Tahtawi in Egypt following his return from a state-sponsored mission to France in the 1830s. It was later elaborated on by Gamal al-Din al-Afghani and his disciple Sheikh Mohammed Abdu, also in Egypt, starting in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The idea of reform has since been adopted, refined, and further developed by many Islamic thinkers and movements through to the present day, but it is notable that they have all continued to preserve the dialectic between the two concepts discussed above—individual probity and collective reform—though the importance of each has varied according to the historical and objective context. It is also noteworthy that this complex understanding of reform has been used to address very different

situations in Muslim countries and societies. This understanding has been posited as the best way for Muslims to confront the internal political tyranny of their rulers or governments; to overcome military, scientific, and economic decline in Muslim countries; or to catch up with advanced societies (particularly the West) in the context of a broader vision that assumes a political, civilizational conflict between Muslims and the West.

In their discussion of reform, Islamic thinkers tended to emphasize collective reform rather than individual reform. Individual adherence to the major tenets of Islam and its teachings in his or her private and public life remained unchanged, while the meaning and content of collective reform evolved across various Muslim communities and countries. Political reform came to dominate discussions of collective reform as a result of the long state of political stagnation in Muslim societies, as well as the hegemony of authoritarian systems (family-based or modern) that prevailed in the region from the nineteenth century until after national independence in the 1950s. In this context, political reform within Islam became a means of confronting the tyranny of these corrupt systems. In addition, most Islamist thinkers and movements linked individual righteousness with collective social reform, and it is clear from their intellectual production and their collective actions that they saw the second as a natural product of the first. In turn, some aspects of collective reform have remained as stable as the concept of individual righteousness. Social and cultural aspects of collective reform, for example, have undergone little development. In the same context, the West, particularly Europe in the colonial period, had an impact on Islamist thinkers' views of the separation between political reform on one hand and cultural and social reform on the other. Many Islamic thinkers believed they could benefit from Western models and views of political reform and saw them as an effective means of confronting tyranny. At the same time, they rejected Western social and cultural reforms. First of all, they believed that Muslim societies did not need these reforms given that they

had their own models for individual probity derived from the teachings of Islam. Secondly, they saw a fundamental contradiction between Western social and cultural models and the Islamic model of individual probity, and believed that adopting Western models would undermine the teachings of Islam and ultimately destroy Islam itself.

At the heart of the major issues discussed by Dr. Lynch is the seeming contradiction between the relatively liberal, modern views of political reform held by many moderate Islamist movements, among them the Muslim Brothers, and their traditional, conservative views of social and cultural reform. Various wings within these movements disagree about the necessary degree of political reform in an Islamic context. To leaders and members of these movements, individual and collective religious probity—a relatively fixed view based on the teachings of Islam—is paramount. This view has caused these movements to become inflexible with regard to political reform, which they believe undermines the piety, obedience, and good faith of Muslims. Partisans of this line of thought reject equal political rights for Muslims and non-Muslims or men and women, viewing the issue through the prism of individual righteousness, whose elements are based on less flexible interpretations. Although the more moderate wing also does not draw a distinction between collective and individual righteousness and political reform, it does not adopt the same rigid interpretations as the more conservative wing does, instead placing the issue in the broader context of the intent of Islamic law rather than in literal legal judgments issued by jurists of former ages. The intent of Islamic law can be expanded to include more than the five traditional necessities without which worldly and religious life cannot exist: the preservation of religion, life, intellect, lineage, and wealth. This camp adds other elements to the traditional necessities, such as public liberties, equality, human rights, and other modern concepts they believe are indispensable to human life. In addition, they believe that achieving political reform in accordance with this broad understanding of the intent of Islamic law will inevi-

tably preserve all the human necessities—first and foremost Islam itself. That is, individual and collective righteousness can be a product of the appropriate environment provided by political reform.

This can also further our understanding of the seemingly separate nature of politics and the outreach mission (*da'wa*) within moderate Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood. The connection between political and collective righteousness and political reform are two sides of the same coin whose objective is to achieve the most ideal existence for Muslim society. Thus, the vast majority of these movements use outreach and political activism in keeping with their ideology of righteousness and reform. The so-called “liberal” or political wings within these movements give more importance to political reform on the basis of their belief that it will lead to the establishment of strong Islamic countries that can protect individual and collective religious, cultural, and social probity from the strong influences of Western societies. The contradiction between politics and outreach has emerged because a second internal trend prioritizes social and individual righteousness in the religious, social, and cultural sense, seeing this as the beginning and end of all efforts that will necessarily lead to the desired political reform, rather than vice versa. Unlike the first camp, this camp believes that protecting individual and collective religious, cultural, and social righteousness from Western influences can only be achieved by further entrenching the roots of such conduct in society, not through political reform.

WHY DOES RELIGION DOMINATE THE MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD PLATFORM?

I agree with Dr. Lynch's remarks about the plurality of visions expressed in the MB platform in Egypt. Generally speaking, we are faced with a document written by both the MB's outreach leadership and its more politically-minded leaders, although I believe that on the most decisive issues, it is the outreach leadership, not the political leadership, that is more

prominent, which may contradict Dr. Lynch's views. Explaining this is necessary because the overlap between these two viewpoints and the dominance of the *da'wa* pervades most sections of the platform, particularly the first two sections, “Party Principles and Outlook” and “The State and the Political System.” In short, the dominant outreach perspective is based on an assumption that the problem of Egyptian society is a lack of faith, rather than stagnant or corrupt politics. It is also evidence of a lack of trust in the general populace, as well as their awareness of and their faithfulness to Islamic rulings. In the first two sections, the document sets up a Council of Ulema that would be responsible for overseeing the proper application of what the platform believes to be Islamic law by freely elected parliamentarians and the president. In the same two sections, the document then deprives more than 60% of Egyptians—women and Copts—of the right to stand as a presidential candidate, limiting this right to the remaining minority of Egyptians.

The fact that the platform was issued in this form is attributable to three main factors. First of all, there are the conditions under which the Egyptian MB decided to declare the establishment of a political party. There are several indications from inside the MB that the group was not prepared to take the step of establishing a party and, indeed, would not have done so at this time were it not for new developments in late 2006, when it became clear that the objective of the constitutional amendments introduced by the regime in March 2007 was to set out new rules for the political system and politics in the future, namely the elimination of the Muslim Brothers—not only from legal party activity but also from any political participation on the grounds that their activities would involve religion. Article 5 of the amended constitution laid the groundwork for the legal and practical elimination of the MB, while other articles opened the door to marginalize them from any future participation in general elections in Egypt. Faced with this change in the state's traditional strategy, the MB decided

to change course as well—hence the group’s first attempt since its dissolution in 1954 to turn its de facto, accepted existence into a legal existence in the form of a political party. It is most likely that the MB’s demands for a political party grew out of their sense that the entirely new political system brought into being by the constitutional amendments required the formation of a party; otherwise, the group would have been marginalized or even eliminated from society and politics.

The contradictions between some sections of the platform are also attributable to a dilemma the Brothers have faced since their inception: their diverse field of action, which includes religious outreach, social work, educational and business activities, and politics. At no point have these activities ever been separated, for the MB and many other Islamist movements base their thought on the very idea of the comprehensive nature of Islam. In fact, the main error here is not with the idea of Islam’s comprehensiveness—the idea that Islam encompasses all levels of state and society, with its religious, social, and political dimensions—but rather the idea that the comprehensiveness of Islam can only be achieved by focusing on all these levels simultaneously rather than individually.

The comprehensiveness of Islam does not mean that every individual, group, institution, or even state should engage in every function and sphere of life. Even in the age of the Prophet Muhammad and the rightly-guided caliphs, the concept of Islam’s all-encompassing nature was not made a duty, and not every Muslim or group or institution engaged in every function or sphere. There were hadith scholars, exegetes, jurists, judges, men of government and politics, merchants, and soldiers. Although in the early years of Islam some individuals may have combined these roles given the small number of believers and the limited nature of the state (essentially Medina), institutionally, after the spread of Islam and the increase in Muslims, functions and roles became more distinct, even as together they were the embodiment of the

comprehensive nature of Islam. The specialization began in earnest under the second caliph, Omar Ibn al-Khattab, who, inspired by the Romans and the Persians, established the caliph offices, which later expanded and grew more specialized to cover virtually all spheres of life. In contrast, the MB, or at least some segment of the organization, believes that its role as a group is to achieve the same level of comprehensiveness, combining all spheres without neglecting one, for that would mean renouncing Islam’s all-encompassing nature. This belief is clearly reflected in the MB platform and other previous documents on political reform, and it has imbued the platform with the religious overtones that sparked the criticisms of it.

The third factor to consider when reading the document is the social and generational composition of the MB and the various divergent views this entails between what are conventionally called the “conservative” and “liberal” tendencies. The MB is a large organization that spans Egyptian society, with more than 100,000 active members, in addition to supporters, sympathizers, candidates for membership, and those involved in its various activities. Given its size and diversity, it is natural that the group would contain a variety of opinions on political, social, and religious issues, ranging from the strongly conservative to the broadly liberal. Geography and the social differences it entails foster differences in outlook. The group has members and supporters in rural, populist areas with a strong traditional, conservative bent, as well as in wealthier, urban areas that are socially and culturally more cosmopolitan. The MB’s diverse activities have also given rise to a plethora of outlooks. The group is involved in religious, educational, social, political, and economic activities; some of these activities foster a more conservative outlook in their practitioners than others, and vice versa. Finally, the MB’s status as an illegal organization that is always subject to harassment by security authorities cannot be overlooked. This has undoubtedly affected all leaders and members of the group, making them generally more conservative than are other groups with legal status active in Egyptian society.



Governance, Religion and Politics Task Force Summary of Discussions

The Influence of External Actors on Political Reform

Can outside actors play a role in helping drive political reform in the Muslim world?
If so, under what circumstances?

Discussion centered on democratization in the Muslim world, and the future of U.S. democracy promotion in the region. It was clear that there was widespread skepticism on whether democracy promotion is still a genuine goal of American policy, or whether it has simply become a short-term strategic interest.

Yet one participant argued that despite the strong and true traditions of state sovereignty and respect of nations, “intervention in the international system is inevitable.” Another participant agreed with this assessment, asserting that while themes of respect and dignity are important, they often serve to complicate a larger and more tactical strategy for political reform. “There is an inherent contradiction,” she said, “between behaving with dignity and not legitimizing bad governments, and dealing with governments using incentives and contracts. How do we bridge this contradiction?”

It was stated that going forward, the United States should focus less on democracy, and instead adopt a broader view of freedom and opportunity that includes such issues as economics, human rights, and rule of law. Such a framework, it was argued, would offer a path to resolving the perceived paradox between democracy promotion and preserving U.S. strategic interests.

Many participants also advocated a return to the use of so-called “soft power” and a system of incentives as a means of promoting reform. “You can’t force democracy down the throats of the people,” it was declared. Instead, soft power and the use of incentives should be implemented in order to harness the will of indigenous democrats in the region.

One participant noted Turkey’s experience as a successful example. “Turkey did not truly begin to implement democratic reform,” he argued, “until Europe offered the prospect of joining the European Union.”

Nevertheless, there was skepticism among several members of the task force as to the effectiveness of such a strategy. One participant, echoing the critique of renowned political theorist E.H. Carr, argued that much of the debate on good governance and democratization has become a tired cliché, devoid of any real meaning and intended only to preserve the status quo. Words like religious freedom, democratization and human rights “have completely been hollowed out,” he argued, “and become a disguise for American empire.”

This distrust is evident even among Muslim democrats in the region, several participants observed. “People do not believe anything will change” in the Muslim world, one said, “and they do not believe that America will tolerate change.”

“People do not believe anything will change, and they do not believe that America will tolerate change.”

One reason for this fundamental distrust is the United States’ reputation for supporting authoritarian regimes, and providing them with money, military assistance, and humanitarian aid, often with the intention of gently encouraging reform from the top-down. There were few voices in the room in support of such a policy. “The reality of the situation,” one participant argued, “is no government that I know has returned a check back to the United States government and said ‘no thanks.’” Yet others sharply disagreed with that conclusion, noting that few governments and organizations would refuse aid freely given by the United States. “Money is not the measure of dignity and legitimacy,” one remarked.

Another participant agreed, declaring that U.S. policy of “propping up” autocratic regimes such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia is the biggest obstacle to the promotion of democracy in the Middle East. “One simple way to support democracy is to stop supporting tyranny,” he argued.

Others argued that such a policy is inherently impractical. “The only places where reform has succeeded,” one observed, “has been in the security services, or by businessmen who are linked to the elite. The idea of giving regimes more space to liberalize is a mistake – it has to be a grassroots process.”

Approaching this issue from a regional perspective, several members of the task force took issue with the common approach by many Arab rulers, as highlighted in Muhammad Abu Rumman’s paper, of so-called “conditional inclusion”. One participant argued that when Arab rulers claim to allow opposition parties to participate with clear regula-

“Mubarak’s government is not waiting for Islamist parties to commit themselves to liberal democracy—he is waiting for them to give up and acquiesce completely.”

tions and restrictions, they engage in a kind of sophistry. “Mubarak’s government is not waiting for Islamist parties to commit themselves to liberal democracy,” he asserted, “he’s waiting for them to give up and acquiesce completely.”

There was widespread agreement with this assessment, with one participant arguing that both Egypt and the Mubarak regime would be much better off today if the Muslim Brotherhood had achieved a blocking minority in their recent parliamentary elections.

Yet several members disagreed with the notion that the United States can afford to ignore authoritarian governments in the Middle East and the wider Muslim world. “Are we just going to dump the Saudi royal family, or the Egyptian government?” one

asked. “We have to deal with the fact that we have to deal with them.”

The debate over democracy promotion in the Muslim world revealed a general consensus that the ideal approach to promoting good governance and influencing change in the international system is one that focuses on a spirit of cooperation and honesty, coupled with a commitment to “soft power” and a system of incentives.

The discussion also revealed a general feeling that the standard view of democratization, specifically with regard to the Muslim world, is incomplete. There was widespread agreement that all too often, undue emphasis is placed on the countries of the Middle East, and not enough on outer lying Muslim nations such as Mauritania and Indonesia. “Egypt and Syria were always the pace-setters in the [Muslim] world for the last 200 years,” one participant said, “but they are no longer. Now, we see real democratic change coming from the periphery.”

However, one participant noted an important caveat: while a system of incentives and bargaining can and do work, there nevertheless remain certain issues—for example, nuclear proliferation—that cannot be solved without certain coercive measures. “If powerful countries see their security threatened,” he argued, “and they believe that they can reduce that threat by intervening in another country, they will do so.”

Reform within Political Islam

What are the different strategies that Islamist actors pursue in response to reform efforts?
What are the likely outcomes?

This discussion centered on the views of Islamist actors on political reform, and U.S. policy toward political Islam. In addition, the debate also gave space for a broader examination of the intersection between faith and politics, both within the Muslim world and the United States.

The discussion began with one participant arguing that contemporary Islamism was inspired by domestic inequities linked to the sharp rise in oil prices of the 1970s, the assertion of the Arab security state, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and economic disparity. “My sense,” he argued, “was that Islamists organized largely as a means of restoring a sense of dignity to their own societies.” Given that these inequities still exist, he wondered how these Islamist groups would continue to evolve in terms of representing the real grievances of both Muslims and non-Muslims in the region.

Following this line of thinking, a participant highlighted the failures of so-called “modernists”, arguing that because they failed to bring the Muslim world democracy, development and human rights, many Muslims turned to the mosque for political reform.

“It may be time now to reform the ‘reformists’”

“We usually think that Islamists should be reformed,” he noted, “but we seldom speak about the modernists. It may be time now to reform the ‘reformists’.”

Referencing a recent survey on Palestinian Islamists, one participant argued that Palestinian Islamists movements such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad “are likely to play a limited role in political reform.” He noted the disconnect between ideology and behavior within such parties, arguing that “at the conceptual level they are still pretty much opposed to reform, but at a practical level they tend to be pragmatic and more reform-minded.” He also cited data that suggests a growing fissure within Palestinian Islamist movements between the rank-and-file, who embrace reform and democratic values, and the elites who oppose them. Additionally, he argued that the older generation of Islamists tends to be more politically pragmatic than the younger generation, and that current U.S. policy has contributed greatly to this trend.

Several discussants voiced skepticism over what they felt was an apparent contradiction between what many Islamists say, versus their actual behavior. One discussant cited Abd El Monem Abou El Fotouh’s assertion that freedom is the central value of Islam, comparing his sentiment as similar to English philosopher John Stuart Mill, and questioned whether this belief was genuine. “Now which generation does he represent?” he asked, “does he represent the younger, more urban and liberal generation, or is he just giving us what we want to hear?”

Another participant agreed with the Mill analogy, but did not find this to be contradictory. “Figures such as John Stuart Mill and Thomas Jefferson never saw liberalism as ‘anti-religious’,” he asserted. Instead, he argued, it seems that many democrats appear to have moved away from such doctrines, and come to equate “liberalism” with “anti-religiosity”.

Others disagreed with the perceived contradiction between rhetoric versus behavior, arguing that “ideas are an important part of what motivates individuals.” Often, such contradictions are a result of the inherent difficulties of translating thought into action in particular political, cultural and institutional realities.

Many participants felt that too many people focus on democracy as a unitary, Western-centric concept. However, the rise of Islam in Muslim politics does not fit into this paradigm, and stymies any clear examination of democracy in the Muslim world. “Clearly the Iranian people view their society as a democracy,” one discussant remarked, “is the concept that there should be some kind of *shura* incompatible with concepts of democracy?”

The politics of terminology and rhetoric was also debated in this discussion. One participant decried the use of such terms as “moderate” and “conservative” Muslims, arguing that many Muslims find it

inaccurate and condescending. Comparing his own experience as an American Christian, he joked that he “found [himself] stuck in the radical middle between the ‘leftover Left’ and the ‘self-righteous Right’.” Those who take their faith seriously, he argued, by nature find themselves in the political center. “If you called me a moderate Christian,” he continued, “I would take that as an insult.”

Another participant agreed, saying that such terms are inaccurate. He suggested using the term “socio-political Islamist groups” to refer to such parties as Hamas and Hezbollah, who are interested in using Islam as an applicable program to reorganize societies. On the other hand, he identified “religious groups” as those organizations dedicated to correcting what they see as wayward belief, and seek to “re-Islamicize” society.

Echoing an earlier complaint, several participants observed a “narrowing of the canon of heroes” when discussing political Islam. All too often, they argued, debates over political Islam focus on select countries such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and particular Islamist figures as Rashid Rida and Hassan al-Banna, without giving due weight to the vast size and diversity of the Islamist experience. “It is as if,” he remarked, “if one wants to be an Islamist, one must be a Salafi or a Wahabbi, and the other options are nonexistent.” He concluded by arguing that a serious examination of these other Islamist groups will go far to address and bridge the perceived contradiction between so-called “conservative Muslims” and “liberal democrats”.

One participant argued that U.S. policy toward the electoral victories of Hamas and Hezbollah have

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undermined the idea that the United States is a sincere advocate of democracy. “It boomerangs on the United States,” he asserted, “when we reject the results of these elections

and engage in policies that effectively punish the Palestinian and Lebanese people for exercising their democratic rights.”

One participant took this argument further and postulated that the only movements that meet the criteria of being successful, mainstream pro-democratic movements are Islamist in nature. As such, given current U.S. policy toward groups like the Muslim Brotherhood and Hamas, he argued that “it seems unlikely that the only mainstream democratic forces in the Muslim world are going to receive the support they need.”

The role of religion in the United States and the Muslim world was also a major topic of discussion amongst participants. “Religion consistently is the fault line in so much of what goes on in the Muslim world,” one participant declared. He argued that the West suffers from a fundamental misunderstanding of the role of religion in the public life of other societies. However another participant argued that certain Western concepts, such as the protection of minority faiths, are integral to the success of any democracy. Citing early American history, he argued that colonial charters “clearly link religious freedom with the social stability of the state, because when minorities are not protected they will agitate and overthrow the state.”

Several members of the task force agreed that the United States does not portray itself honestly when discussing the role of religion in politics, and ignores the fact that this debate occurs frequently between Americans. “When we deal with our brothers and sisters in Islam,” he argued, “we tend to present ourselves as a very perfect system and we choose not to engage in these dialogues.” This “monochromatic” approach, he went on to suggest, creates an oppressive environment that prevents any meaningful discussion on such an important issue.

One participant agreed, lamenting that religious leaders do not know how to talk about politics, while politicians do not know how to talk about

religion. “We have to crack that nut,” he argued. Another participant agreed with this assessment, saying that there exists the misconception on both sides of the United States as being a “Christian nation,” which is passed onto the dialogue with Islamists. “Perception is a reality,” he argued.

The discussion ended on a cautiously optimistic note. Both the United States and the Muslim world can learn from one another when it comes to examining the role of religion in the public sphere,

one participant argued. “The contributions that America can make,” he concluded, are in “presenting the diversity and contentiousness of our own debates on religion and politics, rather than trying to lecture about the superiority of liberal ways of life.”

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PROJECT ON U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE ISLAMIC WORLD

THE PROJECT ON U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE ISLAMIC WORLD is a major research program housed within the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. The project conducts high-quality public policy research, and convenes policy makers and opinion leaders on the major issues surrounding the relationship between the United States and the Muslim world. The Project seeks to engage and inform policymakers, practitioners, and the broader public on developments in Muslim countries and communities, and the nature of their relationship with the United States. Together with the affiliated Brookings Doha Center in Qatar, it sponsors a range of events, initiatives, research projects, and publications designed to educate, encourage frank dialogue, and build positive partnerships between the United States and the Muslim world. The Project has several interlocking components:

- The U.S.-Islamic World Forum, which brings together key leaders in the fields of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society from across the Muslim world and the United States, for much needed discussion and dialogue;
- A Visiting Fellows program, for scholars and journalists from the Muslim world to spend time researching and writing at Brookings in order to inform U.S. policy makers on key issues facing Muslim states and communities;
- A series of Brookings Analysis Papers and Monographs that provide needed analysis of the vital issues of joint concern between the United States and the Muslim world;

- An Arts and Culture Initiative, which seeks to develop a better understanding of how arts and cultural leaders and organizations can increase understanding between the United States and the global Muslim community;
- A Science and Technology Initiative, which examines the role cooperative science and technology programs involving the United States and the Muslim world can play in responding to regional development and education needs, as well as fostering positive relations;
- A “Bridging the Divide” Initiative which explores the role of Muslim communities in the West;
- A Brookings Institution Press Book Series, which aims to synthesize the project’s findings for public dissemination.

The underlying goal of the Project is to continue the Brookings Institution’s original mandate to serve as a bridge between scholarship and public policy. It seeks to bring new knowledge to the attention of decision-makers and opinion-leaders, as well as afford scholars, analysts, and the public a better insight into policy issues. The Project is supported through the generosity of a range of sponsors including the Government of the State of Qatar, The Ford Foundation, The Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories, and the Institute for Social Policy Understanding. Partners include American University, the USC Center for Public Diplomacy, Unity Productions Foundation, Americans for Informed Democracy, America Abroad Media, and The Gallup Organization.

THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY

THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY was established on May 13, 2002 with an inaugural address by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. The creation of the Saban Center reflects the Brookings Institution's commitment to expand dramatically its research and analysis of Middle East policy issues at a time when the region has come to dominate the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

The Saban Center provides Washington policymakers with balanced, objective, in-depth and timely research and policy analysis from experienced and knowledgeable scholars who can bring fresh perspectives to bear on the critical problems of the Middle East. The center upholds the Brookings tradition of being open to a broad range of views. The Saban Center's central objective is to advance understanding of developments in the Middle East through policy-relevant scholarship and debate.

The center's foundation was made possible by a generous grant from Haim and Cheryl Saban of Los Angeles. Ambassador Martin S. Indyk, Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies, is the Director of the Saban Center. Kenneth M. Pollack is the center's Director of Research. Joining them is a core group of Middle East experts who conduct original research and develop innovative programs to promote a better understanding of the policy choices facing American decision makers in the Middle East. They include Tamara Cofman Wittes, a spe-

cialist on political reform in the Arab world who directs the Project on Middle East Democracy and Development; Bruce Riedel, who served as a senior advisor to three Presidents on the Middle East and South Asia at the National Security Council during a twenty-nine year career in the CIA, a specialist on counterterrorism; Suzanne Maloney, a former senior State Department official who focuses on Iran and economic development; Stephen R. Grand, Fellow and Director of the Project on U.S. Relations with the Islamic World; Hady Amr, Fellow and Director of the Brookings Doha Center; Shibley Telhami, who holds the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland; and Daniel Byman, a Middle East terrorism expert from Georgetown University. The center is located in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at Brookings, led by Brookings Vice President Carlos Pascual.

The Saban Center is undertaking path breaking research in five areas: the implications of regime change in Iraq, including post-war nation-building and Persian Gulf security; the dynamics of Iranian domestic politics and the threat of nuclear proliferation; mechanisms and requirements for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; policy for the war against terrorism, including the continuing challenge of state-sponsorship of terrorism; and political and economic change in the Arab world, and the methods required to promote democratization.

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