

## The US Attempts to Democratize the Middle East: The Effects of Internal-External Connections

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### ABSTRACT

*To eliminate terrorism, the Bush administration was urged to break the shackles of the status quo in the Middle East. The US administration grasps that this region is distinguished less by ethos (Arab) or religious (Islamic) traits than by the absence of democracy; consequently, the US has pursued a freedom agenda with the conviction that a liberal grand strategy will promote her national interests. The Bush administration has prioritized Middle East democracy advancement in its foreign policy since September 11, 2001. Numerous scholarly works have acknowledged the importance of both internal and external factors in the process of democratization. The fact that the United States is by far the most important external actor in the region demands careful consideration. More precisely, the possible consequences of U.S. policies during George W. Bush's administration between 2001 and 2008 deserve particular consideration given the remarkable methods by which his administration attempted to effect these changes and the fact that they transpired during and shortly after the Bush policies were implemented. By using the qualitative method, the study makes the case that the democratization of the Arab world in particular is seen as a vital weapon for fighting against the "war on terror." The US is claiming that by launching multiple projects, it has sparked reform and contributed to the democratization of the Arab Middle East. This paper examines the obstacles the US is encountering in implementing its policies in the Arab countries.*

**Keywords:** Democratization, Middle East, Authoritarianism, Extremism, Reforms

### INTRODUCTION

Democracy is a form of government that ensures the wishes and voice of the populace and provides the basis for the governing authority. The governing authority consists of a body that owes its existence to the people of the given society. In such a polity, people are able to govern themselves through chosen representatives. If people are dissatisfied with the government that they created with their consent, then they reserve the

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right to change that government, thus making it necessary for any government to comply with the mandate that has been accorded to it. The people cherish democracy as it reflects their desires and facilitates the realization of their dreams. It is because of this people-friendly tendency that today 2/3 of the world is democratically governed.

“Our nation is strong. Our greatest strength is that we serve the cause of liberty. We support the advance of freedom in the Middle East, because it is our founding principle, and because it is in our national interest” (Press Release, 2033).

Ever since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, the United States has made combating terrorism its top security priority. But there has been a new facet to the "war on terror." The Bush Administration has been pushing what has come to be known as the "*freedom agenda*" as the most effective strategy for combating terrorism. President George W. Bush therefore proclaimed in an address to the National Endowment for Democracy in November 2003 that America would pursue a forward strategy of liberation in the Middle East. By supporting this approach, the Bush administration was questioning the tenets of more than 50 years of US foreign policy in the area, which had supported the status quo to safeguard other interests like defending Israel's security, preventing "rogue states," and preserving the free flow of oil from the Persian Gulf (Buss, 2005).

The aim of the study is to look into the motive of the United States to bring democracy to the Middle East and her response in the face of the electoral victories of the forces that are antagonistic towards America. This paper is an attempt to increase clarity regarding the Bush Administration's expanding ideological foundations rather than to support or oppose the administration's present democracy promotion policy. The study will also address the following questions:

1. Is democratic reform a realistic objective, or is it an empty gesture in a region of the world resistant to such change?
2. Which factors raise the resentment among Arabs and Muslims in the Middle East towards the United States?
3. What is the attitude of Middle Eastern Muslims towards the United States?
4. What is the challenge to democracy in the region?
5. Will the United States restore peace and combat terrorism through democracy?

## **Democracy and the US**

The value of democratic forms of government got a boost after the US achieved its freedom from the colonial yoke of Great Britain in 1776. The declaration of independence set the trajectory for a free America. It stated, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”

Immediately after independence, the U.S. assumed a low profile in world affairs. The Proclamation of Neutrality in 1793 and Munroe Doctrine of 1823 set a direction of the U.S. foreign policy for almost a century. In that period, the U.S. did not take an interest in what was going on the other side of the Atlantic. However, the advent of twentieth century has witnessed a remarkable change marked by two World Wars. The two World Wars had a profound impact on the dynamics of world politics. The U.S., due to its isolated geographic location, rose unharmed and intact after those two world-shaking World Wars. The result of this advantageous outcome for the U.S. was that it was the only country that was able to fill the power vacuum created by the destruction caused by the World Wars. The U.S. assumed the center stage in world affairs after the end of World War II and the beginning of the Cold War.

After establishing her credentials as a superpower, the U.S. had to defy the Soviet Union in the bipolar world, which resulted in the cold war under the banner of two ideologies, viz., capitalism and communism, led by the U.S. and the Soviet Union, respectively. America argued that capitalism is essential for democracy to take root, while Soviet communism is averse to democracy. Democracy became the focal point of U.S. foreign policy ever since it took on the role of superpower, particularly after World War II. She attempted to put the Soviet Union on defense by calling into question the Soviet Union's raw treatment of democracy and democratic regimes.

The Cold War lasted for half a decade, but the Soviet Union, owing to its political engagements and exhausted economic resources, could not maintain its superpower status and split asunder. The outcome of the Soviet downfall is the global hegemony of America. After the Soviet downfall, the U.S. proclaimed the New World Order, where the dye would be cast by her. In the absence of a power balancer, the U.S. started intervening in states' affairs wherever it would and whenever it wished. This interference is given a moral and human face under the slogans of human rights, promotion of democracy, and security of allies.

### **US Attempts to Bring Democracy in Middle East**

Incorporated by decades of efficacious democratic restructuring in other parts of the world, the US strives to transform the Middle East. The end of autocratic rule in Southern Europe and Latin America, which Samuel Huntington has denoted as the "third wave" of democratization, began in 1974 and was felt around the world (Sehraeder, 2002). After the Soviet Union fell apart in 1989, democracy grew throughout Central and Eastern Europe. To sustain reform in these areas, the United States launched a pugnacious program of democratic aid. At the close of the 1990s, the United States was forking out more than \$700 million a year to support democracies all over the world (Carothers, 2002).

The Middle East became the pivot of a current American policy that promotes freedom. The spread of freedom brings about peace, just as it does in Europe, Asia, and everywhere else in the world. In November 2003, President George W. Bush, at his National Endowment for Democracy speech, unveiled the US's plan for fostering

democracy in the Middle East. His utopian outlook is hardly up to the minute. Whether it was Thomas Jefferson's "empire of democracy," Woodrow Wilson's "world made safe for democracy," or Bill Clinton's "engagement and enlargement" approach, American presidents have deciphered that pluralistic governments improve international peace and security. But when it comes to implementing democratic government, a part of the globe, the Middle East, and particularly Arab states, have trailed behind the entire world. No Middle Eastern nation is regarded as democratic, with the exception of Israel; the majority still adheres to despotic, semi-authoritarian, or monarchical authority (Buss, 2005).

On September 11, the hinterland of America was attacked, and the response to these attacks has changed the world a great deal. First, Afghanistan was invaded to flush out Al-Qaeda, suspected of masterminding the 9/11 attacks, but without hard evidence. Afterwards, Iraq was invaded to find weapons of mass destruction. When the search for WMDs began after toppling Saddam Hussain, there were no such weapons to be found. It was at that moment that the focus shifted to democracy. Subsequently, democracy was stated as the mission for not only Iraq but the whole Middle East. The U.S. claimed that the ultimate objective of staying in the Middle East was to foster democracy in the region. The U.S. claimed that fostering democracy in the region is the ultimate objective to stay in the Middle East, as it serves as a strategy to combat terrorism. The 2002 National Security Strategy vows the value of democracy to U.S. goals by asserting:

“The national security strategy of the United States must start from these core beliefs and look outward for possibilities to expand liberty. We will use our foreign aid to promote freedom and support those who struggle non-violently for it, ensuring that nations moving toward democracy are rewarded for the steps they take” (Bush, 2002).

Following September 11, the Bush government has encouraged democratization as a tactic for combating terrorism. The policy makes the assumption that democratic institutions and processes provide peaceful ways to settle disputes and can aid in addressing the rudimentary issues that stir up the emergence of Islamic radicalism and related extremism. The approach is unrealistic and beset by several difficulties. The Bush administration's forward strategy of freedom is unaffected by the dismal possibilities for democratization in a bellicose Middle East. The United States' counterterrorism strategy should make use of all spheres of national power, including the military, economy, diplomacy, and information. The military should continue to identify and apprehend known and suspected terrorists worldwide, serving as the forefront of our efforts.

But this strategy is compassionate and does not deal with the root causes of international terrorism. A much more comprehensive approach, centered on political reform, is necessary to combat the underlying grounds of terrorism and anti-American extremism. Even though it's obvious that the Bush administration's democratization program is quixotic, it may be the only viable plan to bring about enduring transformation in the Middle East and outweigh the hazards of international radicalism coming from the region. Through political and economic transformation, the United States' democratization

approach aims to eradicate the underlying causes of terrorism. The policy promotes the expansion of democratic institutions and open societies. According to the 2002 National Security Strategy, the United States wants to spread the expectation of democracy and progress to every part of the globe in order to protect the country from its enemies (Bush, 2002). In democracies, the populace can speak out and hold elected officials accountable. They give people the power to speak up and make changes within their own territory. Concentrating on domestic change, the Bush administration believes that Middle Eastern nations will be less inclined to place blame and hostility on any alleged threat posed by the United States.

The foundation of a democratic society encourages obedience to the rule of law and a dedication to tolerable ideals. Although the reform strategy won't totally remove Islamic fanaticism and its extremist outgrowth, it is believed that democracy would lessen the dogma's role as a breeding ground for anti-Americanism and extremism. Democratic states typically wield more power as their populations are not governed by fear and oppression. Fragile and dwindling states are more open to terrorist penetration, as we have seen in Afghanistan, and they directly endanger national security. Democracies promote unfettered information exchange and offer an alternative to the hate-filled agenda of extremists. Human dignity and respect are the cornerstones of democracies. An efficient check on the agenda of Islamic radicals is provided by the growth of liberal and representative democratic systems, more monetary opportunity, and the authorization of core activists.

### **Obama Approach to Middle East**

Obama's triumph inspired optimism in the Middle East and throughout the world that Bush's harmful and destructive policies would be abandoned. People around the world widely celebrated Obama's triumph. Even in the Middle East, many were celebrating. Obama's muddled Muslim heritage also contributed to some of the Muslim world's acceptance of him. The discussion about how the Obama administration handled the democratization of the Middle East was going strong. President Obama framed his management of the Arab Spring as a victory in foreign policy during the final televised election campaign debate. The governor demurred, stating he would have seen the region's "desire for freedom" before it "exploded." The genius of Obama is that he never attempted to overthrow the ruling government. In his 2009 Cairo speech, Obama declared, "One country should not impose its system of government on another country." The President was more in the Martin Luther King, Jr. spirit; George W. Bush was advocating "democracy by any means necessary" in the manner of Malcolm X.

Obama started working to establish the ideal circumstances that would enable him to reach his peak, even though he was aware that he might not succeed in doing so. This levelheadedness is not a sign that America has given up on becoming the world's leader; rather, it is an admission that the USA is not the only one in the driver's seat (Laurence, 2012).

In terms of specific action or warnings to autocrats, he presented soaring ideals on the topics that today dominate their daily lives. Wright continued, "The president also failed to significantly close the gap in U.S. policy—what Washington is saying or doing—on protests over the same issues in Libya, Syria, and particularly Bahrain." Wright pointed out that President Obama made no mention of Saudi Arabia, a coadjutor of the United States whose backing for the status quo governments in the region over democratization movements has drawn criticism (Omestad, 2011).

## **TRUMP AND BIDEN APPROACH TO MIDDLE EAST**

It appears that every US president needs their own foreign policy "doctrine." Truman, Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, Carter, Bush, and Obama, notably, have upheld the tradition established by President James Monroe in 1823. Presidents use these doctrines to communicate a strong sense of national purpose and resolve on a worldwide scale. They typically include a statement of lofty ideals and, intermittently, an inferred threat of hostilities, as needed, to protect American interests. The former president's "Trump Doctrine" can be summarized as "America First" or, as the 2017 National Security Strategy put it more concisely, "principled realism." This was manifested in the Middle East as stable relations with the ruling class, a focus on arms deals and security concerns, a softening of human rights and democracy, the overlooking of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict through the relocation of the US Embassy to Jerusalem, the sanctioning of the Palestinians with aid cuts, and the Abraham Accords, Trump's key foreign policy success (Dunne, 2023).

In his first 30 days in office, Trump pledged to present the American people with a fresh plan for taking down the Islamic State, often identified as ISIS. None have come to light. In lieu, the Trump administration has mostly maintained President Obama's military approach in Iraq and looks prepared to do the same with the preceding government's plot to recapture Raqqa by networking with Syrian Kurds (Fouad, 2017)

There is speculation of a developing "Biden Doctrine" in Washington, D.C., foreign policy circles today. It has been roughly characterized as the requirement for the US to exercise leadership in the competition amid democracy and authoritarianism—a grapple that is predominantly conducted on ideological foundations but sporadically on real arenas, like Ukraine.

The Biden doctrine has different meanings in the Middle East than it does on a global scale. In the Middle East, the Biden Doctrine reinforces the US's traditional focus on security matters, military obligations, and arms deals while mostly disregarding issues like the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the undermining civil war in Syria, and, to a disconcerting degree, violations of human rights. While upright and righteous when functional to the larger international scuffle in opposition to the expansion of autocracy and subjugation, There are many strategies that the Biden administration seems to have borrowed from the "Trump doctrine (Dunne, 2023)."

Although it is still too early to make firm statements after 100 days, President Trump's strategy for the Middle East has five recurring themes. Computation of facts, attacks without a plan of attack, assurance without obligation, a lack of precision, eliminating growth, and negotiation (Benaim, 2017).

In the Middle East, the Biden administration is not likely to confront the issue face-to-face. The foreign policy team of the newly-elected president would probably show support for basic democratic ideals and would be in favor of substantial, though steady, political reform. Biden will perhaps maintain diplomatic distance from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. As his administration evaluates the importance of the bilateral strategic relationship, he will take human rights principles into serious consideration (Dunne, 2020).

The National Security Council coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, Brett McGurk, explained how the "Biden Doctrine...now guides US engagement in the region" in a speech at the Atlantic Council's first-ever Rafik Hariri Awards in February 2023. The president stated its main points during his meeting with the GCC+3 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, in July 2022, and they were subsequently included in the administration's National Security Strategy three months later. The doctrine is based on five "declaratory principles": collaborations, dissuasion, negotiation, incorporation, and principles (Dunne, 2023).

The global authoritarian governments, comprising a number of Middle Eastern governments, were slow to react to the news that former Vice President Joe Biden had won the American presidential election. When it came to greeting President-elect Biden and his associate Kamala Harris, Saudi Arabia and its crown prince, Mohammed bin Salman, took more than 24 hours. However, the Saudi prince found time to extend his felicitations to Tanzania's president on his reelection.

The reluctance of autocratic rulers to accept a Joe Biden presidency has good reason. Fundamental human rights, including the freedoms of expression, assembly, and being free from torture, "will be at the core of U.S. foreign policy," according to the president-elect, who also promised to advance democratic values overseas while defending them at home (Dunne, 2020).

### **Approach of Middle Eastern Muslims towards United States**

Muslims and Arabs in the Middle East tend to have a variety of opinions about the United States. The scope and intensity of anti-American sentiment are difficult to gauge due to the inaccessibility of reliable polling data. Following the September 11 attacks While acknowledging that the majority of Muslims and Arabs were horrified and shocked by the occurrences, it alludes to the fact that "a mood of resentment towards America has become so prevalent in Middle Eastern countries that it was bound to breed hostility and even hatred (Jensen, 2001)."

Aspects of American popular culture is frequently criticized by people who express love for American ideals like freedom and opportunity. Similar to how individuals who laud American democracy may also be critical of American foreign policy towards Israel and Iraq.

Governmental and public perceptions of the US diverge noticeably, and some analysts contend that public perceptions are increasingly having an outsized impact on regional policies. Middle Eastern administrations frequently perceive public opinion as challenging the status quo. A friendly government will go to great lengths to underpin or comply with U.S. policies, even if they are detested at home, like those of Egypt, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia, which are economically or tactically reliant on U.S. ties. Even rarer friendly nations are concerned about popular movements they perceive as challenges to their regimes, as is the case with Syria, which has long fought the fundamentalist Muslim Brotherhood while utilizing or encouraging public opinion to criticize specific U.S. policies. However, it appears that sentiments in society are putting more and more pressure on both friendly and antagonistic administrations. They are straddling the line between trying to co-opt popular attitudes and trying to dominate them to a greater and greater level.

### **Leading Issues and Challenges to Democratize the Region**

The issues listed below are some of the key ones that continue to fuel opposition to American efforts to implement democracy in the Middle East.

#### **a) Religion**

Observers often blame the region's culture and customs, notably Islam, for the resistance to democratization. Some people go a step further and contend that the founding of a liberal democracy is contrary to the core ideals of Islam. Sovereignty, consultative decision-making, and unrestricted freedom are three important concerns that come up in any debate about democracy and Islam. The basic and supreme source of law, according to the Quran, is God. In order to carry out and uphold His laws, His earthly agents have the bare minimum of autonomy. Infinite, transcendental, and universal (i.e., not territorial), these attributes describe his power (*Islam and Democracy, Special Report 93, 2002*). The idea of free elections is therefore alien, according to legal experts. Only inheritance, coups, or religious arbitrariness are used to choose leaders. Reformers contend that the Muslim world urgently needs some form of human sovereignty because autocrats and egotistical monarchs cannot continue to claim that their rule is based on a divine mandate. The tension between democracy and the Islamic shura is the second problem. Public servants are chosen by popular vote in a representative democracy.

Theoretically, representatives consult and develop consensus with their constituents before making decisions or passing laws. According to two opposing interpretations of the Quran, a consultative approach to decision-making may be required by Islamic law or is just encouraged (Khan, 2014). In the Middle East's autocratic regimes, orthodox Islamic scholars and leaders do not support dialogue as a requirement to validate the decisions of



the executive. In contrast to Islam, which is the rule of God, many Muslim activists consider that democracy is the rule of humans (*Islam and Democracy, Special Report 93*, 2002). The issue of personal freedoms can also occasionally run counter to well-known democratic principles. Many Islamists vehemently disagree with the sections of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that deal with freedom to change one's faith or belief and the equality of marriage rights. The problem frequently arises in the larger context of antiquity, politics, modernism, and ethos rather than in the traditions of Islam.

#### **b) A democratic Islamist State**

Fostering democracy in the Middle East carries an unsaid risk of perhaps resulting in the election of a fundamentalist Islamic administration. Currently restrained by monarchies and autocratic governments, extreme forces may be unleashed by democracy. The Western goal of democratic reform to tackle terrorism is not shared by Arab elites, and they are not persuaded that liberalizing Arab political systems will be in the interests of Western or their own security (Carothers, 2004). Some claim that as Arab politics gain popularity, they will become more Islamic and that this will lead to the waning of democracy in the region. Given that democracy is frequently associated with the very Western influences it has been fiercely rejected, it is even less likely to flourish as a result of the Islamic revival (Carothers, 2002). As a result, American efforts to democratize the Middle East could inadvertently lead to the establishment of a theocratic state that is democratically chosen but holds more aggressive anti-American policies. A Western liberal worldview cannot serve as the basis for a democratic system. If the US is actually concerned about a democratic election procedure to choose Middle Eastern leaders, it should be ready to withstand this.

#### **c) Israel-Palestine Conflict**

The Israel-Palestine conflict is the biggest impediment to democracy's future. U.S. policy ignores the Arab-Israeli conflict and the importance of peacemaking, which act as barriers to more comprehensive change and regional security challenges. According to Hesham Yussef, the director of the Arab League Secretary's office:

“It is unacceptable to speak of any initiative or vision which ignores or relegates the Palestinian cause...and to discuss security questions without speaking of Israeli weapons of mass destruction (Ottaway, 2004).”

If the conflict is not first resolved, many Arabs believe that any tangential attempts at regional reform will be undermined and the clash will continue to outstrip foreign policy. Since 1947, every president has had a unique sense of dedication to ensuring the security of Israel, which is unsurpassed by any other regional state. Many Arabs believe that the Zionist lobby controls American media and policymakers. US policy in the region is perceived as biased by endorsing Israeli violence, providing unfaltering financial support for Israeli policies, and generally dehumanizing and overlooking the predicament of the Palestinian people (Haddad, 2003). As a result of the US's mostly lax approach to the Middle East peace process, Israel has been able to continue suppressing Palestinian

defiance. The United States has long refused to give the Palestinian Liberation Organization's program any contemplation, while it supports the Israeli state favorably, which sends a negative message to the neighboring Arab countries.

#### **d) Socio-economic conditions**

Many scholars contend that the absence of the fundamental socioeconomic components of civil society in the Middle East precludes democratic reform. Leaders in the Middle East still enjoy enough political, economic, and cultural acceptability to outweigh any probable plea that emerging civil society organizations may have. The leaders of the region keep the important regional social groups content and dissuade them from subtly damaging their own interests. The incessant priority given to rote learning under-prepares kids for employment in the current economy. The fact that many Middle Eastern regimes do not support contemporary education is not a coincidence because a populace that has access to education and knowledge will be more demanding and critical, which will undermine the viability of authoritarian control.

The rate of illiteracy is surpassing the global norm and considerably above the normal in developing nations. (*Arab Human Development Report 2002 | United Nations Development Programme, 2013*). Between the outturn of Arab educational institutions and the evolving needs of the labor market, there is a substantial mismatch because of issues with quality and pertinence. With unemployment rates ranging from over 30% in Yemen and Syria to as high as 12% in the most prosperous nations, the Arab world has the highest rates in the entire world (Richards, 2013). The region trails the entire globe in its adoption and implementation of a world economy. Inconsistency fosters animosity and a desire to revert to Islamic authoritarianism as the gap broadens, which leads to an increasing resistance to reform. A civil society with a high level of education must emerge and contribute to encouraging the political system at some point during the democratic transition.

#### **e) Western Military Presence**

Many Arabs and other Muslims in the region are incensed by the stationing of American and other western military personnel in the Middle East. Since 1991, when the U.S.-led alliance drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait, the United States has kept about 25,000 military forces in the Persian Gulf region, counting about 5,000 on outlying facilities in Saudi Arabia. Since non-Muslim western forces in the Middle East bring to mind memories of European colonization, many Arabs there dislike their presence. Western military personnel on Saudi terrain are believed to have contaminated the Islamic holy cities of Mecca and Medina, both situated in Saudi Arabia. It is significant that the first complaint cited by Osama bin Laden in his fetwa (Muslim legal opinion) of February 1998 was the presence of American military forces in the Arabian Peninsula, and this grievance appears to have plangency in the area (Loeb & Priest, 2001).

#### **f) US Energy Interests and Moral Posturing**

The US finds itself in a difficult situation regarding its Middle East policy. The US would lose its control in the Middle East, which it has meticulously developed over the course of half a century, if elections occur that are nearly certain to bring anti-US groups to power. The US can obtain smooth and consistent oil energy from the Middle East. For the US, losing such a supply to adversarial forces is a surefire formula for disaster. Due to this conundrum, America's devotion to democracy has been called into question (Richards, 2013). Actually, the US is appealing to both domestic and foreign audiences in both the US and the Middle Eastern countries. The US has come under fire for its apparent double standards when it bemoans China's record on human rights while expediently disregarding far more egregious abuses of those same rights in other nations, most notably the Middle Eastern nations. Such criticism has prompted the US to begin discussing democratizing the Middle East. The US is fully aware, however, that in the event of free elections, forces attempting to lessen US dominance in the Middle East would triumph. There is a direct correlation between declining influence in the region and declining oil supply, with less oil supply or at least less power over setting and fixing the price and production. These worries have made the US reconsider its support for Middle Eastern democratic reforms. Because of this shift in perspective, the US no longer talks as stridently about democratizing the region.

#### **Case study of Hamas**

Hamas' win in Palestine's 2006 elections served as an instance of the failure of the US democracy project to produce the desired results for the US. Even foreign observers said that these elections were free and fair. Despite being despised and condemned by both Israel and the US, Hamas emerged victorious in the elections. 76 out of 130 seats went to Hamas, giving it a resounding victory. For the purpose of assuaging the worries and anxieties of the US and Israel, as well as the rest of the international community, Hamas urged Fatah to join them in forming a national unity government. However, the American government had a problem with Hamas' win from the start. The Hamas government was under attack from every angle. There were tensions between Hamas and Fatah that eventually resulted in President Mahmud Abbas of Fatah ousting the Hamas government in March 2007. Palestine is split into two regions at that point: The West Bank with Fatah and Gaza with Hamas. The victory of Hamas demonstrated to the US that democratic elections would also lead to the triumph of forces that are similar to Hamas in their views of the US and her cohort, Israel. This pushed the US to rethink its steadfast commitment to helping the Middle East foster democracy.

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

More than just the "forward strategy of freedom," the US will need to advance democracy in the Middle East. It is irrational to think that democratic tides are spreading throughout the world and will eventually wash up on the Middle East's shores. The difficulty is encouraging restructuring in a place where authoritarianism predominates. In

order to meet this challenge, we must be more willing to exert pressure on autocratic leaders who may help the United States' economy and security but who may cause problems for it later on. The American government must excavate proposals like the Broader Middle East Initiative in order to advance the strategic goal of bringing democracy and growth to the Middle East. To do this, it must address several challenges. First, the US ought to urge all countries—associates and enemies equally—to make reforms in the fields of human rights and democratic government.

America cannot have more than one baseline if democratization efforts are to be successful. We should hold Saudi Arabia and Egypt to the same standards of democratic reform and human rights as "rogue states" like Iran and Syria. Second, the U.S. needs to advance multilateral collaboration and accept the European Union and Arab countries as cohorts in this undertaking of transformation. Improved governance, stopping the spread of WMD and international terrorism, and bettering economic and social conditions are all shared priorities of the United States, Europe, and the Arab League in the Middle East. As the US develops its regional security plan, it should neither estrange nor distress; rather, the approach should encourage accommodating alteration while showing a great awareness of the concerns of those who are reforming. No single solution can guarantee a transition to democracy. The U.S. government will need to create country-specific policies to foster democracy across the vast and diverse Muslim world (*Islam and Democracy, Special Report 93*, 2002).

It is crucial to reboot the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations. The country must step up its efforts to deliberate a peaceful solution and break the cycle of bloodshed in order to ensure democratic reform in the Middle East. The conflict constrains Arab openness to broader international policy problems. Fourthly, the project must receive adequate funding from the United States. Rhetoric won't affect anything in the region if the U.S. is sincere about making changes. For the program to be successful, substantial economic assistance that is contingent on quantifiable political and economic reform is essential. America needs to be patient, to sum up. Reform will require a "generational commitment," as affirmed by the G-8 Summit. The US and its allies must invest time and resources into a long-term project while accepting that the results are inherently unpredictable.

## CONCLUSION

According to one point of view, the whole concept of the US's attempts to democratize the Middle East is flawed. According to followers of this approach, democracy has to take roots from within; it cannot be brought from outside. As the Carnegie Institute's Thomas Carothers proclaims, "Democratic change must be understood not as the reproduction of institutional endpoints but as the achievement of a set of political processes that help engender a democratic process (Carothers, 2002)." Democracy is a process that is gradual and does not come at once. But on the other hand, there are analysts who believe that democracy cannot be imported from any outside source, but at least outside help can be sought to build infrastructure, which is essential for democracy. The material conditions of people can be improved. Education and literacy can be brought about with outside help.

All this can be done in a more efficient way with outside assistance, and education and material prosperity are the conditions that form the basic building blocks of democracy. The United States may actually help the Middle East move towards democracy by lending support to weak economic institutions, backing private entrepreneurship, and enfranchising an informed, engaged citizenry.

Initiatives like the Broader Middle East Initiative provide a practical plan of methods and means to attain the national security goal of spreading democracy to a land of critical realpolitik. Following it as a component of a larger program of political and economic transformation can alter the conditions that allow terrorism to thrive, thus democratization is crucial. When it is about bringing democracy to the Middle East, the US should go all-out, if it is honest. But these attempts should be made with genuine intent. The US should not be afraid of the outcomes of free and fair elections. Political parties, when they come to power, have to adjust to prevalent ground realities.

It is quite natural and easy to oppose the government's policies while remaining in opposition, but when the same political forces come to power, they tone down their criticism and make policies that they were criticizing before coming to govern the country. US oil interests would remain secure, but oil is the only source for these countries to remain prosperous. The US is the largest consumer of oil, so its influence regarding oil would not disappear as it is perceived by the US. If the US makes genuine efforts to foster democracy in the region, then the general public of the region would be friendly towards the US, which would be the biggest asset in her region. The road ahead for both the US and the region is democracy. Obstacles and apprehensions would be addressed once democracy took root in the region.

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