

Democracy Promotion ('Bad Allies') Controversy Paper
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February 2007¹

I. Introduction

The war in Iraq has occupied much of the nation's interest over the past few years and it has complicated any larger discussion of foreign policy. Doctrines and principles are often difficult to maintain in light of the largest American military operation in decades. The controversy over the way in which the war is being waged has also overshadowed US foreign policy principles in other regions.

Selecting a foreign policy topic that would provide a valuable year of intercollegiate competition and education requires identifying major trends in US foreign policy and offering a comprehensive means of assessing those policies. It is for this reason that democracy promotion or the broader effort to promote individual liberty in other nations may prove to be a fruitful subject of debate.

Democracy promotion and the larger doctrine of promotion human rights above national sovereignty has very controversial even before the war in Iraq. The Bush administration's decision to include democracy promotion as among the justifications for the war in Iraq has only added contempt to this line of policy inquiry. At the same time, international norms continue to reflect a growing acceptance of many of the tenets of democratic governance. Both domestically and internationally, the effort to promote democracy or human rights is likely to remain very contentious for the foreseeable future. It is within this tension that a very interesting opportunity for debate exists. The terms, conditions, and specific measures related to democracy receive attention and discussion. It is this analysis, once applied to the specific countries that may provide a sufficient depth to withstand a season of inter-collegiate debate.

In 2005 when I first considered the area of democracy promotion as a topic option, there was a great deal of controversy about the future direction of US foreign policy. In the spring of 2007 it appears settled that the Bush administration has scaled back its insistence on widespread democratic reform, especially in those nations who enjoy political, economic and strategic ties with the US. The essence of the controversy in modern terms is when does geopolitical concerns trump democratic development? This is not a new question for American policy and it has been one that Presidents since Wilson have debated. For this series of reasons I am recommending that a topic that considers the further promotion of democracy (or human rights) among one or more of a select list of states working with the US as a topic option. It is premature to select the exact wording (a task better reserved for the topic selection committee in consultation with the community), but as a working outline to guide the opening ballot this topic could resemble the following stem:

Resolved: The United States Federal Government should [substantially] promote/enhance/increase [its] democracy promotion/human rights [policies/programs] in one or more of the following countries [*that are allies with the US*]

¹ An earlier version of this essay was developed as an area paper for the 2005 CEDA topic cycle. That paper broadly discussed the merits of democracy promotion and preceded the administration's retreat on democracy promotion. This paper developed out of an exploration to look beyond the challenges of the South Asian balance and into larger US foreign policy and doctrine.

The brackets refer to specific wording options and the remaining of the paper will explore specific countries, but this should allow readers to better appreciate what this topic might offer. The italicized reference to allied nations will be explored later, but at this stage primarily serves as a limit to some of the nations that do not possess strong ties with the United States. It should be read as the beginning of criteria, not as part of the final proposed wording.

II. Democracy Promotion: The Current Controversy

After the terrorist attacks of 9/11 the Bush administration made the promotion of global democracy one of its foreign policy priorities. Turning traditional policy alliances upside down, this conservative administration invoked a strand of traditional Wilsonian liberalism that favored the rights of individuals over national sovereignty. President Bush has championed the spread of democracy as a national priority in the war against terrorism, including in his 2005 State of Union address

In the long-term, the peace we seek will only be achieved by eliminating the conditions that feed radicalism and ideologies of murder. If whole regions of the world remain in despair and grow in hatred, they will be the recruiting grounds for terror, and that terror will stalk America and other free nations for decades. The only force powerful enough to stop the rise of tyranny and terror, and replace hatred with hope, is the force of human freedom. (Applause.) Our enemies know this, and that is why the terrorist Zarqawi recently declared war on what he called the "evil principle" of democracy. And we've declared our own intention: America will stand with the allies of freedom to support democratic movements in the Middle East and beyond, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world (Bush 2005).

It is this basic argument, that democratic reform will allow nations to more closely reflect their needs of their populations, that the Bush administration advances as a means of reducing the base of support for terrorist organizations like al-Qaeda. Jonathan Menton (2005, a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Government at Georgetown University, explains how the Bush emphasis on democracy is consistent with, and central to, the nation's larger foreign policy foundations.

Although a radical departure in many other respects, the current U.S. grand strategy's privileging of liberalism and democracy falls squarely within the mainstream of American diplomatic traditions. For reasons unique to the American political experience, U.S. nationalism -- that is, the factors that define and differentiate the United States as a self-contained political community -- has historically been defined in terms of both adherence to a set of liberal, universal political ideals and a perceived obligation to spread those norms internationally. The concept of the United States as agent of historical transformation and liberal change in the international system therefore informs almost the entire history of U.S. foreign policy. As Jeanne Kirkpatrick has observed, no modern idea "holds greater sway in the minds of educated Americans than the belief that it is possible to democratize governments anytime, anywhere, and under any circumstances." n5 Or as Thomas Paine wrote to George Washington in the dedication of *The Rights of Man*, the United States was founded to see "the New World regenerate the Old." n6 Democracy promotion is not just another foreign policy instrument or idealist diversion; it is central to U.S. political identity and sense of national purpose.

The centrality of democracy as a means of reducing the basis of support for anti-American organizations has moved the democracy promotion debate past the traditional debate between realist and idealist perspectives. Leslie H. Gelb and Justine A. Rosenthal (2003) may have identified the perspective of those who find this area to be redundant with previous topics when they explain how

For the longest time, Americans engaged in a sterile debate over human rights. It was a debate between those who believed the United States had to fight the bad guys no matter what the security tradeoffs, and those who believed the United States had no business interfering with the internal affairs of other states.

They continue explaining how global perspectives on democratic reform have fundamentally shifted in recent years

Something quite important has happened in American foreign policymaking with little notice or digestion of its meaning. Morality, values, ethics, universal principles -- the whole panoply of ideals in international affairs that were once almost the exclusive domain of preachers and scholars -- have taken root in the hearts, or at least the minds, of the American foreign policy community. A new vocabulary has emerged in the rhetoric of senior government officials, Republicans and Democrats alike. It is laced with concepts dismissed for almost 100 years as "Wilsonian." The rhetoric comes in many forms, used to advocate regime change or humanitarian intervention or promote democracy and human rights, but almost always the ethical agenda has at its core the rights of the individual.

This development of morality cannot be seen simply as a postmodern version of the "white man's burden," although it has that tenor in some hands. These values are now widely shared around the world by different religions and cultures. Movements for democracy or justice for war crimes are no longer merely American or Western idiosyncrasies. And although some in America's foreign-policy community may still be using moral language to cloak a traditional national security agenda, one gets the sense that the trend is more than that. In the past, tyrants supported by Washington did not have to worry a lot about interference in their domestic affairs. Now, even if Washington needs their help, some price has to be exacted, if only sharp public criticism. Moral matters are now part of American politics and the politics of many other nations. They are rarely, even in this new age, the driving forces behind foreign policy, but they are now a constant force that cannot be overlooked when it comes to policy effectiveness abroad or political support at home (2003).

The war in Iraq has strained this doctrine and America's respect in the world. It would be over-reaching to conclude, however, that the opposition to the war in Iraq is a sign of the repudiation of democratic governance and democracy promotion as a policy instrument. Michael McFaul (2004-05, p. 147-148), The Helen and Peter Bing Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution and associate professor of political science at Stanford University, explains why the rise of anti-Americanism isn't synonymous with a rejection of democracy.

Since the September 11 attacks, President George W. Bush has rhetorically pledged to make the promotion of democracy abroad a primary objective of U.S. foreign policy, emphasizing the moral and strategic imperatives for advancing freedom around the world. At the same time, the United States has become both less liked and less admired by governments and societies around the world. Although its roots are deep, this latest spike in anti-Americanism comes largely as the result of Bush's most significant foreign policy initiative, the invasion of Iraq, which has been extremely unpopular both in democratic and nondemocratic states. In its history, the United States has probably never before suffered such a low international standing.

The correlation between Bush's rhetoric about democracy promotion and the U.S. fall from favor within the international community has created the false impression that other governments and peoples do not support democratic ideals or the foreign policies that seek to advance them. Europe's foreign policy elites consider Bush's presidential statements about democracy and human rights proof of a new virulent form of U.S. imperialism. Iranian officials argue that Bush's rhetoric about democracy camouflages an ulterior U.S. motive of seizing Iraqi oil. China's government

leaders cite U.S. unilateralism and inattention to world public opinion as evidence of a lack of a real U.S. commitment to the advancement of democratic practices.¹

Animated by this link between democracy promotion rhetoric and growing U.S. unpopularity, many U.S. commentators have reached a similar conclusion about the perils of democracy promotion for the United States and the world. These critics argue that the United States must abandon the ideological mission of democracy promotion, both in Iraq and throughout the world, and instead follow a more pragmatic, realist foreign policy if it is to regain its respect abroad and more effectively defend U.S. national interests. As the president of the Nixon Center, Dimitri Simes has argued, "Pursuit of a universal utopia is damaging American interests."²

Yet, this interpretation of the relationship between U.S. foreign policy and American popularity on the one hand and the status of democratic values in the international community on the other is misleading. First, **democracy as an international norm is stronger today than ever, and democracy itself is widely regarded as an ideal system of government. Democracy also has near-universal appeal among people of every ethnic group, every religion, and every region of the world.**

Second, democracy promotion as a foreign policy goal has become increasingly acceptable throughout most of the international community. Norms protecting the sovereignty of states still trump norms protecting the rights of individuals, but the balance is shifting. The United States, especially in the last century, has played a pivotal role in making the advancement of democratic values a legitimate foreign policy objective. Today, however, the United States no longer holds a monopoly on the business of democracy promotion. That development is a sign that such policy is not just a U.S. national interest (or camouflage for other U.S. national interests), but an international norm embraced by other states, transnational organizations, and international networks.

Even though there is still broad support for democracy, the specific practice of American democracy promotion is very controversial. Some scholars, like Thomas Carothers (2006), founder and director of the Democracy and Rule of Law Project and a visiting professor at the Central European University in Budapest, describe a global backlash against the Bush administration's heavy handed policies toward global democracy.

The way that President George W. Bush is making democracy promotion a central theme of his foreign policy has clearly contributed to the unease such efforts (and the idea of democracy promotion itself) are creating around the world. Some autocratic governments have won substantial public sympathy by arguing that opposition to Western democracy promotion is resistance not to democracy itself, but to American interventionism. Moreover, the damage that the Bush administration has done to the global image of the United States as a symbol of democracy and human rights by repeatedly violating the rule of law at home and abroad has further weakened the legitimacy of the democracy-promotion cause.

Just as the sources of the backlash have been multilayered, so too must be the response. To remain as effective in the next decade as they have been in the last, groups that promote democracy must come to grips with how the international context for their work has changed. This will mean rethinking some of their methods. The Bush administration, meanwhile, must also face some unpleasant realities, specifically about how the president's "freedom agenda" is perceived around the world, and must engage seriously an effort to build credibility for its democracy endeavor.

This backlash has not gone unnoticed. With the war in Iraq straining the administration's policies it is not surprising that much of the earlier emphasis on democratic reform has been abandoned. This re-adjustment is most noticeable when other nations possess geopolitical value to the war on terror. Peter Baker of The Washington Post (2006) explains the evolution.

At the United Nations lectern this week, President Bush hailed the spread of democracy. "From Beirut to Baghdad," he said, "people are making the choice for freedom." Yet even as he spoke, tanks were rolling through the streets of Bangkok as a military coup toppled the elected leader of Thailand, who at that moment was in New York for the U.N. session.

Bush made no mention of the dramatic events on Tuesday and left New York yesterday without ever seeing the deposed prime minister, much less offering any public support for a onetime strong ally of the United States. The president's spokesman later provided a strikingly mild response only after being asked by a reporter, pronouncing the White House "disappointed" by the coup.

The timing of Bush's address on democracy to the U.N. General Assembly and the overthrow of a democratically elected government underlined the complexities and contradictions in his "freedom agenda." With the president's attention focused on the Middle East, the state of democracy elsewhere in the world does not rate as high on his priority list. In the case of Thailand, the situation is complicated by growing U.S. unease with the ousted prime minister, Thaksin Shinawatra. "The president's freedom agenda is inherently selective," said Thomas Carothers, head of the democracy project at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. "We care very much about democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq, but . . . Thailand's just not part of the story, so this falls off the map a bit."

Thailand is hardly the only example. Bush strongly supports Gen. Pervez Musharraf, the Pakistani president who took power in a military coup, and plans to meet with him at the White House twice in the next week. Bush will also host Kazakhstan's president, Nursultan Nazarbayev, at the end of next week despite the suppression of opposition parties, newspapers and human rights groups in the oil-rich Central Asian republic.

The administration has likewise embraced autocratic leaders in such disparate places as Azerbaijan and Ethiopia while generally tempering criticism of anti-democratic policies in Russia and China. Even in the Middle East, Bush has treaded lightly in nudging allies such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia to reform.

On the other hand, the White House ratcheted up its pressure this month on the repressive government in Burma. After meeting with a dissident, Bush personally lobbied to get the U.N. Security Council to put Burma on the agenda last week for possible sanctions. And first lady Laura Bush hosted a roundtable at the United Nations on democracy in that country.

When the president talks about promoting democracy, as he did in New York on Tuesday, he focuses mainly on Iraq and Afghanistan. Some other countries that he once highlighted as success stories have been dropped from his speeches, most notably Ukraine and Kyrgyzstan.

Targets of current American military operations, like Iraq and Afghanistan, are now included within the rubric of democratic reform, but other nations where political and economic ties are primary no longer receive the same attention. Mark Mackinnon (2006) of *The Toronto Globe and Mail* explains that in the Middle East, US policy has returned to traditional approaches of ignoring reformism.

A year ago, Condoleezza Rice arrived in Cairo preaching about the importance of spreading democracy in the Middle East, even if that meant risking other short-term goals.

"The U.S. pursuit of stability in the Middle East at the expense of democracy has achieved neither," the U.S. Secretary of State told an audience at the American University in Cairo. No one needed to be told that she was referring to the long-held U.S. practice of propping up unloved autocrats like Egypt's Hosni Mubarak or Saudi Arabia's Royal Family. "Now we are taking a different course," she promised. "We are supporting the democratic aspirations of all people."

Ms. Rice arrives in Cairo today to give a very different message at a mini-summit with the foreign ministers of Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia, as well as the Persian Gulf kingdoms of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the United Arab Emirates.

All eight countries are U.S. allies in the war on terrorism, but none have democratically elected leaders. But her primary message will not be about the need for reforms, but a request for help in isolating two groups that draw at least some of their authority from the ballot box: the Hamas-run Palestinian Authority, and Lebanon's Hezbollah movement.

The electoral advance of the Islamists has forced the Bush administration to return to the same old prayer book that it made a show of throwing out a year ago: embracing repressive monarchs and dictators as "moderates" and friends in Washington's battle against Islamic extremism. The summer war between Israel and Hezbollah, Ms. Rice suggested yesterday, forced the strategic rethink.

Amr Hamzawy & Michael McFaul (2006) explain how Egypt provides a good case study for the administration's reverse with regard to democracy promotion.

Has U.S. President George W. Bush given up on his liberty doctrine? From Libya to Iran to Azerbaijan, the Bush administration appears to have downgraded the importance of democracy promotion in the last several months. Nowhere, however, has a new indifference to democracy been more striking than in Egypt.

The apparent reversal on Egypt is so profound and surprising because it might be the one country in the world where the Bush administration was the boldest in pressuring an autocratic regime to change its ways.

In January 2005, Bush devoted nearly his entire second inaugural address to his liberty doctrine. He boldly and rightly declared that "the survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for freedom in our world is the expansion of freedom in all of the world." Egypt soon became a test case for these prosaic words, and initially Bush and his administration seemed serious.

A month into her new job as secretary of state, Condoleezza Rice cancelled a trip to Cairo in protest at the jailing of Ayman Nour, head of the liberal opposition party, Al Ghad, on trumped-up charges. Rice was practising what she had recently dubbed "transformational diplomacy" - leveraging state-to-state relations to push for democratic change.

Having provided Egypt with roughly \$2 billion annually in aid for more than 30 years, the United States could wield leverage. President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt seemed to respond. He amended Article 76 of the constitution to open the door for Egypt's first multicandidate presidential election, accepted an expanded margin of freedom in the press and partially eased his government's intimidation of opposition forces.

A trajectory toward greater political pluralism seemed to be gaining momentum. Bush's liberty doctrine seemed to be producing results.

In fact, however, Mubarak did the minimum to appease Washington while his regime was under greatest scrutiny during presidential and parliamentary elections. Once these elections were over, Mubarak rolled back his incremental reforms.

Over the last six months, he has extended the emergency law until 2008 and postponed municipal elections, originally scheduled to take place this year. His government stepped up its intimidation of opposition politicians and of judges rallying for greater independence of the judiciary.

The Bush response? Hardly noticeable. Apart from freezing negotiations for a free-trade agreement, the administration has kept a low profile on Egypt's disturbing political developments. Most strikingly, without any objection from the Bush administration, Congress recently approved yet again a multibillion-dollar economic and military aid package for Egypt, without asking anything in return from the Mubarak regime regarding political reform.

The situation in Egypt, where the presence of American assistance and diplomatic ties could be used as leverage, is not uncommon. What makes this subject so compelling is that despite concerns with the ways in which democracy has been promoted, there remains a need for better governance and enhanced democratic norms. Fareed Zakaria (2007) explains the trend away from effective democratic governance.

No president has attached his name more completely to the promotion of democracy than George W. Bush. He speaks of it with genuine passion and devoted virtually his entire second

Inaugural to the subject. His administration talks constantly about its "freedom agenda" and interprets global events largely in such terms. Last summer, for example, as missiles, car bombs and IEDs exploded across Lebanon, Gaza and Iraq, Condoleezza Rice described the violence as the "birth pangs" of a new, democratic Middle East. So it is striking to read this year's annual survey of "freedom in the world," released last week by Freedom House, a nonprofit that is engaged in promoting democracy around the globe. The report points out that 2006 was a bad year for liberty, under attack from creeping authoritarianism in Venezuela and Russia, a coup in Thailand, massive corruption in Africa and a host of more subtle reversals.

"The percentage of countries designated as free has failed to increase for nearly a decade and suggests that these trends may be contributing to a developing freedom stagnation," writes Freedom House director of research Arch Puddington in an essay released with the rankings. Puddington also calls attention to the "pushback" against democracy. Regimes across the world are closing down nongovernmental organizations, newspapers and other groups that advocate for human rights. And, I would add, what is most striking is that these efforts are not being met with enormous criticism. Democracy proponents are on the defensive in many places.

What explains this paradox—of freedom's retreat, even with a U.S. administration vociferous in promoting democracy? Some part of the explanation lies in the global antipathy to the U.S. president. "We have all been hurt by the association with the Bush administration," Saad Eddin Ibrahim, the Egyptian activist, told me last month. "Bush's arrogance has turned people off the idea of democracy," says Larry Diamond, co-editor of the Journal of Democracy.

But he goes on: "There's a lot more to it than that. We need to face up to the fact that in many developing countries democracy is not working very well." Diamond points to several countries where elections have been followed by governmental paralysis, corruption and ethnic warfare. The poster child for this decline has to be Nigeria, a country often lauded for its democracy. In fact, the place is in free fall—an oil-rich country with per capita GDP down to \$390 (from \$1,000 20 years ago), a ranking below Bangladesh on the United Nations Human Development Index, and with a third of the country having placed itself under Sharia. The new Freedom House survey rates Haiti higher now because it held elections last year. But does anyone believe that those polls will change the essential reality in Haiti—that it is a failed state?

The basic problem confronting the developing world today is not an absence of democracy but an absence of governance. From Iraq to the Palestinian territories to Nigeria to Haiti, this is the cancer that is eating away at the lives of people across the globe, plunging countries into chaos, putting citizens' lives and livelihoods at risk. It is what American foreign policy should be focused on. But the president's freedom agenda sees the entire complex process of political and economic development through one simple lens, which produces bad analysis and bad outcomes.

In almost every one of the potential countries included in such a topic, the goal of promoting greater respect for individual liberty and transparency norms of self-governance provide a series of tangible goals of enhanced democracy promotion programs.

III. The Category of Policies: Democracy Promotion, Promoting Democracy or Human Rights

The selection of an intercollegiate topic poses some unique challenges for policy literature. It is generally regarded as a strength to have some balance of policy mechanisms, but also an ability to have some predictability with regard to the types of potential policy advocacies. Although the descriptions of policies that enhance individual rights or democracy, there are some categorical assessments of available policy mechanisms. Thomas Carothers (1999, p. 6), in a full-length treatment of US democracy promotion efforts, describes the types of available policy tools, which including an array of diplomatic, economic and even military programs.

When policy makers decide they are going to try to promote democracy in another country, they typically reach for various tools. The officials may use diplomatic measures, as either carrots or sticks: criticizing a government that is backtracking from democracy, praising a prodemocracy leader, granting or withdrawing high-level diplomatic contacts in response to positive or negative developments, and so on. Or they may apply economic tools, again as carrots or sticks: economic pressure, such as sanctions, on governments that crush democracy movements; or economic rewards, such as trade benefits or balance-of-payments support for governments taking steps toward democracy. In extreme circumstances, the United States may even employ military means to promote democracy, intervening to overthrow a dictatorship and install or re-install an elected government—although U.S. military interventions that politicians justify on democratic grounds are usually motivated by other interests as well.

The most common and often most significant tool for promoting democracy is democracy aid: aid specifically designed to foster a democratic opening in a nondemocratic country or to further a democratic transition in a country that has experienced a democratic opening. Donors typically direct such aid at one or more institutions or political processes from what has become a relatively set list: elections, political parties, constitutions, judiciaries, police, legislatures, local government, militaries, nongovernmental civic advocacy groups, civic education organizations, trade unions, media organizations. Unlike the other tools of the trade, democracy assistance is neither a carrot nor a stick. It is not awarded for particular political behavior, nor is it meted out as punishment for democratic slippage (though people in recipient countries may sometimes view it as such).

This list provides ample ground for potential specific approaches and if selected this area might be further refined to specifically include certain affirmative flexibility (perhaps to include carrots and sticks) to exclude certain options (like military operations). This analysis also contains the possibility of both rewards and disincentives for specific reforms. Paula Dobriansky, the Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs, (2005) reinforces that this wide array of policy tools remain options for the current administration.

These tenets of democracy serve as the goalposts of what we are seeking to create, cultivate or strengthen. We assess each element in different countries to determine the best path to democracy. We view governments of concern on a spectrum ranging from those making gains toward democracy, but in need of help in consolidating those gains; to those backsliding from stable democracy; to those that are outposts of tyranny. Examples of the latter are North Korea, Burma, Zimbabwe and Cuba. In such situations, we reach out to opposition actors and reformers.

What are our tools? Too often, critics will look first and only at the dollar figure we are spending in a country. The tools we have are far more diverse than just programmatic assistance, although that is an essential component. We must also look at each capability and how it can be calibrated to address country-specific needs.

First, we engage in bilateral diplomacy, which involves raising our concerns at very high levels of foreign governments. From our interactions with governments at staff levels, all the way up through the Secretary and the President, we press others on the need to establish or support democracy, and we raise human rights issues with ally and adversary alike.

Examples include President Bush encouraging the Chinese to engage in substantive dialogue with representatives of the Dalai Lama; Secretary Rice sending a clear signal to leaders and officials in the Middle East about the imperative to advance democracy and respect human rights; and my visit to Yemen, where with President Saleh and other high-level officials, I cited progress, but also urged them to continue their political liberalization. Bilateral pressure on undemocratic states to reform and on emerging democracies to support actively their form of government is a key element of our diplomacy.

We also conduct bilateral diplomacy with third countries as partners—governments that can influence a non-democracy or a country teetering between authoritarianism and movement toward democracy.

Recently, we have taken this approach with African democracies, urging them to be more active in confronting threats to stability and accountable government. We have seen these governments rally to address democratic backsliding in Togo. During last year's election crisis in Ukraine, we worked with the European Union to bring international pressure to bear against those seeking to undermine democracy. More recently, our combining efforts with the E.U. against the Syrian occupation of Lebanon also engendered results.

Multilateral fora offer an important vehicle for advancing our democracy efforts as well. Often, they have more influence than a single nation acting alone. Also, depending on the organization, membership or the denial of membership sends an important signal of the member countries' acceptance or condemnation of a government's activities.

We have sought the inclusion of issues related to the advancement of democracy in fora like the OAS and G8. Our Broader Middle East and North Africa initiative launched in the G-8 has made democratic reform a central pillar of our and others' engagement in this pivotal region. We are consulting with our allies in ASEAN to discourage them from rewarding the Burmese military rulers with a leadership position in the Association. Through the Community of Democracies, we have joined with others in supporting the creation of the International Center for Democratic Transition, to be located in Budapest. At the UN, President Bush has called for the establishment of a Democracy Fund.

The State Department issues several reports each year that press for human rights and democracy, including the Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, the Trafficking in Persons Report, and the Report on International Religious Freedom. These have a real impact, and some also carry sanctions for the worst violators. Although they may complain, many governments will act—some quite rapidly—when confronted by the threat of sanctions.

Economic, financial and technical assistance to foreign governments and non-governmental organizations is crucial to support democracy. This can range from funds to hold elections, to foreign aid conditioned on good governance to the denial of financial assistance to those unwilling to reform. Likewise, it is not just our democracy assistance that is supporting this goal. For example, the Millennium Challenge Account, a poverty reduction tool, is an example of how assistance tied to good governance can reinforce the values and objectives of our democracy promotion strategy. The Middle Eastern Partnership Initiative, which was founded to support economic, political, and educational reform efforts in the Middle East, is making significant progress in furthering democracy.

This explanation of the continuum of democratic transitions helps to clarify that with sufficient latitude from the mechanisms it would be possible to an array of nations in the topic. It also identifies that the topic may include multilateral assistance, membership or programs as an important category of incentives.

In addition to the commonly understood economic and technical aid many of these definitions include diplomatic measures. Dobriansky cites the many annual reports issues by the State Department as one source of leverage. David Adesnik and Michael McFaul (2006) further describe the importance of efforts made by American diplomats.

The democracy-promotion toolbox has been filled for more than two decades with various standard assistance programs, including technical support for reforming government agencies; training for lawyers, journalists, political party leaders, and trade unionists; direct financial aid for civil society organizations; and exchanges and scholarships for students. Today, the U.S. government, particularly the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and an army of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) often funded by USAID, the National Endowment of Democracy, or the Asia and Eurasia Foundations, continue to use such nonmilitary methods to promote democracy in dozens of countries around the world.

In rare cases, democracy promotion has been the by-product of military intervention. The American public will support the decision to go to war only when persuaded that a direct threat to U.S. national security exists. Yet, once the opposing dictatorship has fallen, Washington is confronted with a moral obligation to replace it with a democratic government, as it did in Germany and Japan after World War II, attempted to do after interventions in the Dominican Republic and South Vietnam in the 1960s, and is presently trying to accomplish in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Yet, a third method for promoting democratic regime change receives little attention, if any, from the media or from scholars: diplomacy. Although NGOs and foundations are usually the primary actors engaged in democracy promotion in countries that have recently experienced the collapse of an autocratic regime, U.S. diplomats have a special role to play in countries still ruled by dictatorships. Democratization involves not only building up the democratic opposition -- a key ingredient for successful democratic breakthrough -- but also weakening or dividing the autocrats in power.ⁿ¹ NGOs, whose focus in these cases is usually and rightly to strengthen the opposition, lack the ability to confront the regime directly. In contrast, the U.S. government has the power and resources to challenge autocratic regimes, through what Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice has called "transformational diplomacy."ⁿ²

Admittedly, there are valid reasons why the role of the diplomat does not figure prominently in the current analysis of U.S. democracy-promotion efforts. The vast majority of diplomats from the secretary of state to a consular officer working abroad spend little if any of their time promoting democracy. Indeed, throughout most of U.S. history, diplomats have not defined democratization as part of their job description. In the rare moments when they do engage in promoting democracy, diplomats often do so quietly behind the scenes, making it difficult for outside observers to study or analyze them. Yet, understanding the conditions under which diplomacy can be effective represents a critical step toward improving all U.S. efforts to promote democracy abroad. At key moments, U.S. diplomatic leverage has played a positive role in nudging a regime change in a democratic direction. Learning the lessons of how and why diplomats were able to make a difference in earlier, successful transitions to democracy can help guide today's foreign policy makers seeking to influence the course of political liberalization in autocratic regimes.

As this broad latitude of policy mechanisms and definitions details, there is no single agency or department that handles all such democracy promotion. Thomas O. Melia (2005, p. 2) details that even though there are a number of governmental and non-governmental agencies involved with the process of democracy promotion this is not synonymous with a streamlined operation.

There is, however, no "command and control center" of the democracy promotion community, no single place where overarching strategy is developed or coordinated, even within the sub-community that is the United States Government. This may be due to the nature of the subject, or a reflection of the character of the actors. Perhaps the unique operating environments that arise in each case mean that a new configuration of players must be assembled. Though efforts are currently underway to bring greater strategic coherence to the effort, and the bureaucratic nomenclature has been modified to underscore the intention to do so, it may well be that

political development cannot be controlled or directed in the way that military or diplomatic undertakings often can be.

This lack of a single agency should not be interpreted as a lack of specific policy areas. This placement within the structure of the federal government helps to make the topic area easier to identify and perhaps more predictable. Some of the prominent mechanisms include:

- The State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL). The State Department explains their charge,

The Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor (DRL) is committed to supporting and promoting democracy programs throughout the world. As the nation's primary democracy advocate, DRL is responsible for overseeing the Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF), which was established in 1998 to address human rights and democratization emergencies. DRL uses resources from the HRDF, as well as those allocated to Regional Democracy Funds, to support democratization programs such as election monitoring and parliamentary development (Bureau of Public Affairs, no date-A).

- The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA)

A Bush initiative launched in 2002 that provides up to \$5 billion in annual funding. This funding is available for nations based on a series of performance indicators (The White House, no date).

- The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI).

Another Bush initiative, this 2003 program provides grant funding in the areas of economic, politics, education and women's initiatives. Almost \$300 million has been awarded over four fiscal years. The FY 2004 request was \$145 million (Bureau of Public Affairs, no date-C). These series of projects has been identified as representative of the administration's passive approach to reform (Ottaway, 2003).

- US Agency for International Development

The USAID provides both direct funding and also through nongovernmental clearinghouses such as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the US Institute for Peace (USIP) (Robinson, 2004).

- The Community of Democracies (CD)

This network of 130 nations is a means of organizing and coordinating efforts designed to support democratic institution. A 2002 meeting produced the Seoul Plan of Action which is a series of guidelines for specific efforts to be taken among the group of nations (Dobriansky, 2004).

The foundation of these polices provides important predictive approaches to policy, especially if it were deemed necessary to further limit the type of degree of democratic reform in the resolution. The decision to move to more specific categories of democratic reform, such as human rights, would also be an option. The decision to utilize a specific category of reform should come from a general recognition of the type of program that affirmative teams should advocate.

IV. Potential Affirmative Ground

Selecting a topic that would promote democracy promotion alone wouldn't ensure a cohesive set of debate arguments unless the countries that were included shared some common traits. I have informally referred to the essence of this controversy as one about 'bad allies.' This inexact shorthand is a way of considering that most of the most pressing disputes about democracy promotion are with those nations that provide some advantage to US national interests, but who also maintain repressive social systems for their own populations. In this way argument patterns for both sides could include a greater recognition of the types of issues faced by each country.

This paper won't issue a final recommendation for the inclusion of specific countries, but instead begin developing criteria and include some of the most logical choices for these nations. They need not share a geographic region, but instead by possessing some of the same traits they would provide the type of predictability that a geographic association might contain. The community may feel a need to preserve more flexibility with the stem of democracy promotion if fewer nations are included and vice versa if the type of democracy promotion is narrowly tailored.

A caveat to this recommendation is that this topic would make less cohesive sense if it included nations that do not enjoy good relations with the US (i.e., Iran, North Korea, Venezuela or Syria) or so significant in world affairs as to be unlike other potential countries (i.e., China or Russia). Leaving these nations off of potential lists will allow the final selections to possess a greater coherence.

The remaining nations would have reasonable economic and political ties to the US and thus the debate about potential affirmative leverage may be similar enough to guide research and argumentative development. As McFaul explains (2004-05, p. 157), this doesn't reduce the topic to the same redundant debate. Even in cases where there is support for enhancing democracy, nations and international organizations may dramatically differ on the question

Although increasing numbers of governments and people around the world now endorse the norm of democracy promotion, even democratic states disagree about how to do it. Few believe, for example, that military force is justified to advance democratization. The slogan "you cannot force them to be free" still resonates with many champions of democracy. Military intervention's mixed record of success in promoting democracy only strengthens the moral argument against the use of force. Democratic states have also disagreed about the morality and utility of using economic sanctions as a method for promoting democratic regime change. Proponents cite South Africa as the great success story; opponents cite Cuba as the great failure. More specific disagreements about how to promote democracy also exist. Should external actors press first for elections or for the adoption of a constitution? Should they push for presidential or parliamentary systems, federal or unitary states, proportional representation in parliament or majoritarian electoral systems? Should outsiders work with the state or society to press for change? No blueprint is universally recognized as the most effective way to promote democracy, and in fact, many even reject the idea that there can be a blueprint.

Any of the affirmatives in these lists would access both broad ground of democratic promotion and the specific context of the nation involved. This next section previews some of the possible range of harms arguments, details some of the more prominent countries, and follows up with prominent types of solvency arguments.

A) Generic Harms Areas

Policies designed to promote democracy can access a broad range of advantages. The most traditional of these areas is **the democratic peace theory** that argues for democratic means of governance in order to reduce the likelihood of international and internal violence. R.J. Rummel's work is widely available on this question and specifically supports the claim that, "the degree to which a regime is democratic is inversely correlated with the severity of its wars" (1995). This theoretical work has been extended in the work of, among others, Robert Dahl (1998) who argues that democracies provide the basic tenets of personal freedom, thus ensuing for self-determination and the protection of fundamental rights.

The democracy thesis also has been extended to economic growth in such work as Morton Halperin's and Joseph T. Siegle's (2004) *The Democracy Advantage: How Democracies Promote Prosperity and Peace*. This work is specifically relevant for its efforts to assess these trends toward emerging democratic norms in Russia and China. An important component of these arguments in the current context is in the spreading power of international norms. As McFaul (2004-05) notes, "The promotion of democracy, even when embraced and, according to many, tainted by the most powerful country in the international system, has also become an international norm" (p. 148). Larry Diamond (2003) similarly explores the implications for the further democratic expansion in his consideration of "democracy as a universal value." If the current moment is truly in the midst of democratic change then the possibility of normative development may provide benefits to further democratic expansion. In every individual country this argument can be tailored toward their specific geopolitical situation.

In the context of the Middle East, The Report of an Independent Task Force of The Council on Foreign Relations (2005, p. 43), explains how the democratic peace theory may dramatically reduce the risks of extremism and violence in this very turbulent region.

The United States's long history of working with nondemocratic leaders in the Middle East has damaged U.S. credibility in the region. Although a policy predicated on political, economic, and social change in the Arab world may present some short-term risks to Washington's interests, these risks are worth taking. The long-run benefits of a more democratic and economically developed Middle East outweigh the potential challenges Washington might confront in the foreseeable future.

More open Middle Eastern polities and economies will likely have four positive interrelated effects. First, although extremism will certainly continue to exist in the region, forces of moderation and tolerance will have greater opportunity to frame the terms of debate in a more open political environment. Second, political, economic, and social reform will likely, over time, reduce the reservoir of recruits to extremist organizations such as al-Qaeda and others that target the United States and Americans. In addition, there is substantial evidence to support the "democratic peace theory," which posits that democracies do not fight each other. Although it is true that countries in transition may be more belligerent, the emergence of democracy in the Middle East would, over the long run, reduce the likelihood of interstate conflict in the region.

Democracy promotion need not only work by working at the government to government level. In the context of the backlash against western efforts, democracy promotion can provide needed linkages and enhance current efforts by currently vulnerable NGOs. Carl Gershman and Michael Allen explain (2006)

Beyond tactical efforts to evade or neutralize restrictions on democracy promotion, democratic governments, and multilateral bodies can exert political pressure on governments that block democracy assistance and persecute local NGOs and democratic activists. This is the second-or political-level of response to the backlash against democracy assistance. As has already been

noted, some offending governments will be easier to influence than others. That said, it should be possible to develop a coherent, coordinated, and comprehensive policy to defend democracy assistance and NGO activists.

The key political response is linkage. It proved highly effective in advancing human rights under repressive regimes during the late twentieth century, and it may do so again in order to defend democracy assistance in the early twenty-first century. The idea is to link a state's treatment of democracy activists and independent civil society organizations to the political and economic dimensions of interstate relations. A modest version of such a policy was followed last December when the U.S. and several European governments pressured Russia to modify aspects of its new NGO law, especially pertaining to the work in Russia of foreign foundations, research centers, and democracy organizations. The law, as adopted in January 2006, is still a threat to NGOs, but thanks to international pressure it is markedly better than the more draconian original draft.

The **war on terrorism** animated this recent wave of democratization and therefore is central to further democratic promotion. President Bush's argument about the relationship of repressive political systems to the promotion of terrorism is supported by a number of scholars. Jennifer Windsor (2003) draws the connection in the context of the Middle East,

The closed nature of Middle Eastern societies contributes both to the declining legitimacy of the regimes and to the proliferation of inaccurate, polemical information manipulated for the regimes' own benefit. With populations discouraged by their lack of political and economic opportunities and hungry for a cause with which to identify and for someone to blame, as well as a media that is virulently anti-American, the Middle East is especially fertile ground for the terrorist message.

Thomas Carothers (2003) explains how the future of democratic reform is central to the war on terror.

Although the war on terrorism has greatly raised the profile of democracy as a policy matter, it has hardly clarified the issue. The United States faces two contradictory imperatives: on the one hand, the fight against al Qaeda tempts Washington to put aside its democratic scruples and seek closer ties with autocracies throughout the Middle East and Asia. On the other hand, U.S. officials and policy experts have increasingly come to believe that it is precisely the lack of democracy in many of these countries that helps breed Islamic extremism.

Resolving this tension will be no easy task. So far, Bush and his foreign policy team have shown an incipient, albeit unsurprising, case of split personality: "Bush the realist" actively cultivates warm relations with "friendly tyrants" in many parts of the world, while "Bush the neo-Reaganite" makes ringing calls for a vigorous new democracy campaign in the Middle East. How the administration resolves this uncomfortable dualism is central not only to the future of the war on terrorism but also to the shape and character of Bush's foreign policy as a whole.

A number of college teams have already identified the significance of the war on terror in their affirmatives during the past two topics. Articles like Walter Laqueur's (2004) *The Terrorism to Come* are some of the many perspectives that warn how the continued growth of terrorism could allow groups to possess and use non-conventional weapons. A number of democracy promotion affirmatives could make specific arguments about how they remove key bastions of support for terrorist organizations.

Affirmatives can also access claims about **credibility of American leadership**. The perceived double standard of the administration's statements and policies has left many nations wondering what

the United States really values. Siegle and Halperin (2005) argue that the administration has worsened the possibility of democratic reform by raising expectations and then failing to deliver.

... hollow oratory only corrodes perceptions of U.S. credibility in pursuit of its principles. The effect is to weaken the United States' ability to lead in its strategic aim of shaping global norms of democracy, the rule of law, tolerance, non-proliferation of illicit weaponry and the illegitimacy of terrorism.

Promoting democracy means more than basking in the glow of American idealism. It requires consistently backing, in word and deed, those who are fighting to see it realized.

Better not to say anything than to make idealistic pronouncements that have no bearing on U.S. actions. Otherwise, democracy promotion will come to be understood as American opportunism rather than a genuine desire to see more of the world's citizens gain control over their destiny.

America's credibility is a precious commodity. Americans wear it out at their own peril.

Affirmatives could therefore claim to broadly boost the credibility of American leadership in international affairs with all of the attendant benefits. Affirmative teams could also choose to claim rebuilding global credibility in terms of democratic transitions. Despite the problems with Iraq, the US can rebuild its credibility with regard to democracy promotion efforts, Carothers (2006) explains,

President Bush can, however, win back some credibility by showing that he is serious about democracy promotion as a matter of principle, not just as an expedient way to justify military action or the use of other tactics of regime change against unfriendly governments. Pursuing democracy as a matter of principle does not mean focusing only on lofty ideals and ignoring hard interests. But it does mean acting with at least a modicum of consistency. In his second inaugural address, Bush seemed to acknowledge this point when he promised to abandon Washington's unfortunate history of supporting autocratic regimes that served U.S. economic and security interests. Arguing that repressive societies breed extremism that can evolve into anti-Western terrorism, he pledged to stand up for freedom everywhere. So far, however, he has yet to put his money where his mouth is. In regard to the most significant cases -- Russia, China, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia -- the Bush administration has spoken mildly, at best, about the need for political reform. Meanwhile, it has carried on business as usual with these countries. The same goes for U.S. relations with Egypt, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan. Last autumn, the pro-U.S. autocrats in all three of these countries faced national elections. Commendably, the Bush administration let all three know that it wanted them to hold free and fair elections. But all three leaders played the classic game of friendly tyrants facing a bit of U.S. pro-democratic pique: they made some modest improvements early on in the electoral process; then, in the crucial late stage of the elections, they cracked down hard on opposition groups, tampered with the votes, and took other measures to ensure they would win lopsided victories. Faced with these tactics, the Bush administration also reverted to the old script, making too much of minor achievements and too little of major failures. Since then, U.S. officials have said little in public about the events. It seems that all three of these strongmen will pay no significant price for their antidemocratic defiance.

All of these previously mentioned areas provide the broad background to the general appeal of promoting democracy. These advantages would obviously be merged with the compelling reasons to promote democracy within each of the target countries. The next section will explore some of the most prominent countries.

B) Potential Countries

Ultimately the value of a democracy promotion topic may be evaluated by the choice of nations as the targets of democratic reform. There is no shortage of nations whom the United States refuses to further encourage their democratic tendencies. Many of the nations whom the US prioritizes good relations over democracy are exactly those who possess certain geopolitical or strategies advantages. As described, using a lens of relatively stable nations who are currently allied to the U.S. would provide a means of narrowing down the range of countries.

At this stage in the process it be would difficult to fully explore each of the potential options. I will instead highlight some of the most logical and prominent options. No topic can or should attempt to cover all of these nations. The community may, however, choose to debate a specific region, a specific number of nations, or some other means of organizing research efforts. If selected, this topic area should further explore the specific contingencies of each target nation.

The discussion should start with the Middle East because much of the impetus for democracy promotion stems from the repression in the region. Amy Hawthorne (2003) explains how such an approach would work with closely allied nations in the Middle East, such as **Egypt** and **Jordan**.

Nevertheless, since most friendly Arab governments do care what America thinks, the United States must take into account Arab governments' treatment of their citizens when determining the closeness of its ties.

To this end, the United States should issue a high-level policy directive that makes engagement on human rights, political reform, and democracy top priorities. This would empower officials at all levels of the bureaucracy to raise these issues without worrying that they will be left isolated by Washington. In countries where it provides significant economic aid, such as Egypt and Jordan, the United States should explore the feasibility of linking aid to political reforms. But it should introduce these conditions slowly and deliberately, through discussions with each government, rather than impose them abruptly. The United States must also carefully craft the language it uses to talk to and about Arab governments. It should compliment those Arab governments that are taking positive steps, but resist the tendency to overpraise them, as it has in the past. It should speak out, consistently, when governments—even close friends—violate human rights or pursue undemocratic policies. These moves will not change any Arab regime overnight; indeed, they will antagonize some and create a degree of discomfort for the United States. But they would add a new calculation to Arab governments' decision making: the reaction of the United States.

Each of these countries could be approached through a number of specific programs used for democracy promotion. Currently these programs tend to emphasize the funding of non-governmental organizations in the development of civil society initiatives. A prominent type of affirmative case could be to move away from these programs and instead increase economic pressure for further change. Ray Takeyh (2004-05) argues in a recent issue of *The National Interest*,

If Washington is serious about democratization in the Middle East, as opposed to liberalization, it has to change strategies. Rhetorical commitments to democracy are no substitute for a checklist of steps that can be taken by regimes in the region. The reality remains that Western governments have been complicit in creating and sustaining the current autocratic order. Moreover, the masters from Cairo to Algiers have remained confident of America's forbearance, as competing geopolitical factors have ensured that U.S. assistance and loans continue even in the absence of any meaningful change.

A viable democratization strategy would employ the considerable economic leverage that the United States and Europe possess to pressure these states toward viable reforms. Preferential trade agreements, foreign assistance and access to U.S. markets should be contingent on the

level of progress that regimes make toward democracy. The U.S. experience vis-à-vis Latin America, especially Mexico during the 1980s and 1990s, and that of the EU towards its eastern periphery make it clear that when political reform is linked to economic benefits, regimes can be induced to introduce changes that lay the basis for a democratic transformation. The West should link aid to reforms designed to reduce state controls over both political life and the economy.

After reviewing the recent hostility toward democracy promotion in light of problems faced by affirmative teams under this past topic it is reasonable to ask if there are sufficient advocates of such proposals. Although both sides have bodies of literature to draw upon, affirmatives will find advocacy literature both at from the policy instrument and the specific country. The Report of an Independent Task Force of The Council on Foreign Relations (2005, p. 10-11) offers one collection of advocacy recommendations.

The Independent Task Force on U.S. Policy toward Reform in the Arab World addressed two fundamental questions. First, does a policy of promoting democracy in the Middle East serve U.S. interests and foreign policy goals? Second, if so, how should the United States implement such a policy, taking into account the full range of U.S. interests?

The Task Force's answer to the first question is "yes." Consider the list of challenges facing the Arab world today, from terrorism and regional strife to poverty and violations of human rights; for each, democracy is a necessary component to progress. Adopting a policy that supports democratic reform entails risk in the Middle East. But the dangers of prolonging an unsatisfactory status quo are greater—for people of the region, the United States, and the world. It is also important to underscore that democracy promotion is consistent with American ideals.

Steven Cook (2006) also reviews the recent violence in the Middle East as a justification for an additional democracy push in the Middle East.

If, as the administration's critics prefer, the United States returns to a policy of support for authoritarian stability in the Middle East, conflicts like the ones we are seeing unfold in Lebanon and Gaza are likely to continue. After all, only authoritarian leaders can inflict damage on their societies with confidence that they will not be held accountable. Neither Hezbollah nor Hamas is democratic, and both rely on non-democratic governments in Damascus and Tehran to pursue objectives that majorities of the Palestinian and Lebanese populations do not necessarily support. If Lebanon, Syria, Palestine and Iran were truly democratic, it is unlikely that Hezbollah and Hamas could engage in irresponsible policies that bring only pain to their people. To be sure, Washington needs to contend with the problem of what to do when people who do not share its interests are elected in the Middle East. But the current round of violence between Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah does not offer much insight, because the violence is not a result of the Bush administration's push for a more open and democratic Arab world; it is a result of not pushing enough.

Current US economic assistance programs could also be expanded to include other nations in the region. Making nations eligible for Millennium Challenge Account funding could enhance democratic transitions. The Report of an Independent Task Force of The Council on Foreign Relations (2005, p.8) explains

The United States currently provides approximately \$5.5 billion annually in economic and military assistance to the Arab world, excluding reconstruction assistance for Iraq. As a general principle, the United States should use the promise of additional financial support as an incentive for reform. Although it has yet to dispense aid, the United States already has a

program that would condition aid in this way to developing countries—mostly in Africa and Asia— called the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA). The funds will be distributed to those countries that have income per capita below a certain level (in 2005 below \$1,465) and are best able to use them based on sixteen specific reform-related criteria, including accountability, rule of law, education reform, and economic freedom. Currently, only four Arab countries—Egypt, Iraq, Yemen, and Morocco—qualify for participation in the MCA based on income. Of these, only Morocco is currently eligible to apply for MCA funds based on its good indicators. (If the income cap is raised in 2006, as has been foreseen, Jordan could also qualify.) The United States must work with other Arab countries to undertake the reforms necessary that would make them eligible for MCA funds. In addition, notwithstanding chronic budget deficits, Washington should devote additional resources for democracy initiatives in the Arab world.

As a country with strong ties to the United States, there is a wealth of policy literature regarding **Egypt**. Michelle Durocher Dunne, for example, sketches the possible outline of a democratic reform plan for Egypt in an October 2004 Carnegie Endowment Paper titled, "*Integrating Democracy Promotion into U.S. Middle East Policy*." The retreat from the Bush democracy initiative is very clear when looking at the administration's evolving policy toward Egypt. Max Boot is a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations (2006) also points toward the type of potential actions.

IF YOU WANT TO chart the downsizing of President Bush's democracy-promotion agenda, look at the difference in his handling of Egypt between his first and second terms. Back in 2002, when Saad Eddin Ibrahim, a leading liberal dissident, was rotting in an Egyptian prison, the White House reacted with outrage. After the U.S. threatened to withhold \$130 million in aid, Ibrahim was freed by an Egyptian court. This year, "president-for-life" Hosni Mubarak has imprisoned another liberal dissident, Ayman Nour, who had the temerity to challenge Mubarak in last year's semi-free presidential election. Many other pro-democracy demonstrators also have been locked up or roughed up. The State Department has reacted with ritual expressions of "concern" and "deep disappointment." But actions speak louder than words, and even as Mubarak's goons have been bashing heads in Cairo, his son, Gamal, was in May granted a coveted White House meeting with President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and other senior officials. This was quite an honor for someone who occupies no government post -- but who is widely considered to be his father's handpicked successor. Even worse, the administration has blocked any attempt to tie U.S. aid to improvements in Egypt's dismal human rights record. When Rep. David R. Obey (D-Wis.) tried earlier this year to withhold \$200 million of Egypt's \$1.8-billion aid package, Assistant Secretary of State David Welch went to Capitol Hill to lobby against the measure. "Our strategic partnership with Egypt is in many ways a cornerstone of our foreign policy in the Middle East," Welch asserted. "The United States and Egypt share a common vision of a Middle East that is at peace and free of the scourge of terror."

This sort of claptrap has been emanating from Foggy Bottom Arabists for decades. Bush seemingly repudiated this policy of uncritical support in a 2003 speech to the National Endowment for Democracy in which he called on Egypt to "show the way toward democracy in the Middle East." After making a few genuflections in that direction, Mubarak is now back to his wicked old ways. And yet he suffers no consequences -- none! -- for defying the wishes of the United States and, more important, of his own people. No doubt State Department realpolitikers have convinced themselves that it's better not to rock the boat. After all, Mubarak delivers "stability," and he might be succeeded by an anti-American regime dominated by the Muslim Brotherhood. Thus we fall once again into Mubarak's trap. He extends greater tolerance to Islamist extremists than to liberal critics such as Nour and Ibrahim because the radicals are a handy cudgel with which he can beat back Western demands for democracy.

A similar scope of arguments is available for **Saudi Arabia**. The number of 9/11 hijackers from Saudi Arabia highlighted the uneasy relationship between the House of Saud of its dissidents. Saudi Arabia is engaged in a process of reform, but the pace of such efforts is contentious and subject to conflicting reports. F. Gregory Gause (2004), III, an Associate Professor of Political Science at the University Of Vermont, describes how public commentary, the Saudi kingdom is hesitant to actually to adopt political reform.

But where is the follow-up on all of this talk of reform? The government in October 2003 announced a very limited electoral initiative, for half of the members of municipal councils to be chosen by popular election. But there has been, as yet, no public indication of preparation for elections. One of Abdallah's sons actually told a local Saudi columnist that his father's initiative was being undercut by a lack of follow-through by the bureaucracy. More liberal Saudis opined to me that the country does not need "dialogue" on controversial issues like women's driving. No amount of dialogue is going to reconcile the positions. What it needed is for the government to make decisions and stand firm in implementing them. This can be done. Saudi liberals point to the way that the government recently altered the textbooks for religious education classes in primary and secondary schools, excising many elements that outsiders and some Saudis had identified as encouraging extremist views, despite the opposition that this engendered in Islamist circles. Abdallah's commitment to reform is not questioned, but just how far he and the rest of the family are willing to go remains in doubt.

At the same time that Saudi Arabia is cautiously pursuing its reform agenda there are active discussions about where and when to increase democracy promotion efforts. These solvency advocates engage the question of pace and scale of reforms, such as Bradley Bowman's (2005-06, p. 103-4) recommendations for Saudi reform.

Many observers correctly suggest that national elections in countries such as Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Egypt—in the near term—would likely bring anti-American Islamic radicals to power who could endanger US interests in the region. However, the United States can avoid this potential catastrophe, protect its realist interests, and promote its idealist principles by encouraging other liberal democratic reforms before insisting on national elections. If the United States is seen as the booster of genuine liberal reform in the Middle East, popular Middle Eastern perceptions of the United States will improve, and the United States will be able to safely encourage national elections throughout the Middle East at some point in the future.⁴⁰ Adopting this strategy will ensure that US policy in the Middle East is consistent with American interests and principles.

Conclusion

US policy in Saudi Arabia and the wider Middle East should be based on a healthy respect for the wisdom of both idealism and realism and a nuanced understanding of their relationship. America does not have to choose between its conscience and its economic and political needs; a prudent US foreign policy of practical idealism can satisfy both. US decisionmakers should reject an emotional or dogmatic allegiance to either realism or idealism. If the United States continues to preach freedom and democracy while supporting Middle East dictators, then oppressed and frustrated citizens in the region will grow increasingly radicalized and hostile to the United States. However, as the United States begins to hold its Middle Eastern allies to higher standards of political and economic freedom, US leaders should not underestimate the importance of traditional realist interests in the region.

For almost 50 years, US decisionmakers worked assiduously to keep Soviet influence out of Saudi Arabia in order to ensure US access to Saudi oil. Now that the United States is even more dependent on Saudi oil, and as Sunni extremists within Saudi Arabia seek to destabilize the Saudi regime, the United States should not neglect the importance of reliable US

access to Saudi oil. In the long term, President Bush is correct: America's interests and values are one. However, in the short term, the United States must recognize its realist interests and vulnerabilities in the Middle East, while working patiently and consistently toward a more democratic and free Middle East.

The centerpiece of Bush's democracy promotion agenda has been **Iraq** because of the American military operation. Including Iraq in the topic would dramatically increase the scale and complexity of the resolution. It has some parallels to other nations that have governments strongly tied to the US, even if their populations may have other interests, but its domestic instability creates a far more intricate series of challenges. Peter Baker (April 5, 2006) details once such topical avenue in the inclusion of civil society based programs.

While President Bush vows to transform Iraq into a beacon of democracy in the Middle East, his administration has been scaling back funding for the main organizations trying to carry out his vision by building democratic institutions such as political parties and civil society groups. The administration has included limited new money for traditional democracy promotion in budget requests to Congress. Some organizations face funding cutoffs this month, while others struggle to stretch resources through the summer. The shortfall threatens projects that teach Iraqis how to create and sustain political parties, think tanks, human rights groups, independent media outlets, trade unions and other elements of democratic society.

The shift in funding priorities comes as security costs are eating up an enormous share of U.S. funds for Iraq and the administration has already ratcheted back ambitions for reconstructing the country's battered infrastructure. While acknowledging that they are investing less in party-building and other such activities, administration officials argue that bringing more order and helping Iraqis run effective ministries contribute to democracy as well.

Jennifer Windsor, executive director of Freedom House, an advocacy group that hosted a Bush speech last week, called the situation "a travesty" and said she is "appalled" that more is not being done. "This is the time to show that democracy promotion is more than holding an election. If the U.S. can't see fit to fund follow-up democracy promotion at this time," then it is making a mistake, she said.

Similar concerns have been made about the failure to promote democracy through civil society programs in **Afghanistan**. Windsor (2003) explains how this weakened the reconstruction of Afghanistan's political system.

In the case of Afghanistan, the United States badly stumbled in meeting its postwar assistance pledges. The administration's FY 2003 budget proposal contained no request for funds for Afghanistan (on the hopes that a supplemental bill would make additional funds available). When monies began to flow, democratization programs lost priority to a road project and other humanitarian and agricultural programs. An official strategy for democratization was not approved until December 2002. Meanwhile, the United States has funded a number of activities that may complicate the eventual development of democratic institutions and processes in that country, particularly if the U.S.-funded constitutional reform effort has been hijacked, as many fear, by the head of Afghanistan's Supreme Court, who is a well-known Islamist.

A caution can be found in both Iraq and Afghanistan because the current level of instability might potentially make democracy promotion strategies expansive. Ian Bremer (2007) notes that stability is a prerequisite democracy to develop,

Afghans have again put their trust in warlords-and in some cases the Taliban-because they recognize that authoritarians can more quickly and easily restore stability than the elected (but

crippled) central government can. In Iraq, sectarian violence has become a horrifying part of daily life in many areas. When a people faces the daily uncertainties of life in a dangerously unstable country, it values stability above all else. Freedom from fear and insecurity trumps the freedom to vote or to open a newspaper. Until Iraq's Shi'a, Sunnis and Kurds finally win freedom from fear of sectarian attack and economic exclusion, they will demand stability. In both cases, the United States can continue to try to safeguard Afghanistan's and Iraq's security until its political leaders forge the compromises needed to begin the long-term process of democratization. But American and allied troops will not remain in both countries indefinitely, because their taxpayers won't allow it. With each passing week, replacing the unrealistic (democratization) with the possible (support for a regime that can restore stability) begins to look like the Bush Administration's best remaining option for both Iraq and Afghanistan-especially in order to prevent either country from becoming a training ground for Al-Qaeda or, in the case of Iraq, an Iranian satellite. In the end, this option might not be as unsavory as it sounds. Before Iraq or Afghanistan can become a democracy, it must become a country safe enough for open political debate.

Because there are regular debates about the tensions between stability and democracy in these nations, they are both tempting targets for inclusion and also unique challenges.

Pakistan has also been a central location in the war on terror, even though American forces have not openly intervened against the will of the host government. In its ongoing diplomatic efforts, the Bush administration has alternated attempting to push Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and then supporting his regime. Musharraf's status as both the head of state and the military creates a visible opportunity for the tensions in American policy. Lionel Beehner (2006) explains the limitations of this current policy.

Yet U.S. policy toward Pakistan has created an anti-U.S. backlash of sorts, among both Taliban sympathizers as well as pro-democracy types. "Given [Bush's] promotion of freedom and democracy across the Muslim world, some Pakistanis have asked why their country, which has no history of bringing Islamists to power through genuine elections, should be the glaring exception to U.S. policy," writes Mahnaz Ispahani, former CFR adjunct senior fellow for South and West Asia, in a Wall Street Journal op-ed. On an April 2006 visit to Pakistan, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Richard Boucher said the United States supports civilian rule in Pakistan as well as civilian control of the country's military but dodged the issue of whether Washington would recognize Musharraf if he refused to doff his military uniform after next year's elections.

Thomas Carothers (2003) offers a comprehensive discussion of global democracy, using logic that incorporates a number of the specific target countries, including encouraging greater reform in Pakistan.

There is no magic solution to this division, which is rooted in a decades-old struggle for the foreign policy soul of the Republican Party and will undoubtedly persist in various forms throughout this administration and beyond. For an effective democracy-promotion strategy, however, the Bush team must labor harder to limit the tradeoffs caused by the new security imperatives and also not go overboard with the grandiose idea of trying to unleash a democratic tsunami in the Middle East. This means, for example, engaging more deeply in Pakistan to urge military leaders and civilian politicians to work toward a common vision of democratic renovation....

Although many of the above-mentioned countries have either appeared in topics or been the central subject of debates, there are several countries in Central Asia that may provide new terrain for intercollegiate debates. Much like Egypt's slow transition to free and open elections, Thomas Carothers (2005) has argued that parallel events are taking place, "A convergence in recent months of political events in three countries -- Azerbaijan, Egypt and Kazakhstan -- has presented the administration with a crucial triple test." In **Kazakhstan**, recent cooperation between their President Nursultan Nazarbayev and President Bush has highlighted the lengths to which energy needs may be dictating the importance of democratic reform. Peter Baker (August 29, 2006) explains,

President Bush launched an initiative this month to combat international kleptocracy, the sort of high-level corruption by foreign officials that he called "a grave and corrosive abuse of power" that "threatens our national interest and violates our values." The plan, he said, would be "a critical component of our freedom agenda."

Three weeks later, the White House is making arrangements to host the leader of Kazakhstan, an autocrat who runs a nation that is anything but free and who has been accused by U.S. prosecutors of pocketing the bulk of \$78 million in bribes from an American businessman. Not only will President Nursultan Nazarbayev visit the White House, people involved say, but he also will travel to the Bush family compound in Maine.

Nazarbayev's upcoming visit, according to analysts and officials, offers a case study in the competing priorities of the Bush administration at a time when the president has vowed to fight for democracy and against corruption around the globe. Nazarbayev has banned opposition parties, intimidated the press and profited from his post, according to the U.S. government. But he also sits atop massive oil reserves that have helped open doors in Washington.

Ongoing political reform in **Uzbekistan** also has tremendous significance for American policy. Fiona Hill and Kevin Jones (2006, p. 122-123) explain the importance of emphasizing democracy.

The only option for a U.S. government and international community that wants to continue to engage with Uzbekistan is to keep pushing the government to open up lines of communication in the hope of identifying elites interested in a gradual opening. Any strategy for engagement at this juncture will also have to put its stress on evolution, not revolution, underscoring the fact that the United States simply wants to see Uzbekistan reform for the benefit of its people. As a recent International Crisis Group report states, "The emphasis rather should be on longer term measures, amounting essentially to a lifeboat strategy to maintain political activity, civil society and educational opportunities in the expectation of future change to a more reasonable government." 21 As the history of U.S. engagement with authoritarian governments in Chile, the Philippines, and South Korea at earlier critical junctures has demonstrated, it is important to maintain long-term support for local civil society while at the same time delivering a clear, consistent message to the regime to encourage democratic reform.²² In this context, the United States and the international community will have to work with Russia and China, the two regional states with the most leverage, in emphasizing the importance of gradual change in Uzbekistan. Although neither of these countries will push Uzbekistan on human rights or political reform issues, it is not in their self-interest to see more political instability or economic collapse in the most populous and strategically significant state in Central Asia.

Even when elections take place in several of these Central Asian nations, the results may be subject to dispute and incapable of promoting further social legitimacy. George Soros (2005), for example, explains how outside actors must increase pressure on **Azerbaijan** to actually implement transparent elections.

But the government should take steps now—and after the elections—to make sure this happens. Azerbaijan's civil society clearly faces many obstacles. To progress, it must heal bitter internal divisions. With parliament potentially the keystone of democratic reform, civil society should work on voter education and encourage turn-out. The current controversy over exit polls in Azerbaijan underscores how crucial they are in delivering an -accurate result. Civil society must not be crippled by its own rancor. In tiny Azerbaijan, more than a dozen civil society coalitions vie for funds to work on the elections. My foundation has worked to bring together nongovernmental groups to coordinate election activities through a special website. Outside actors—the U.S. and the European Union—must deliver a tough message that Azerbaijan cannot get away with stealing the vote. Many believe the country was given a pass on the dirty 2003 poll because of its abundant oil reserves. The Council of Europe, which admitted Azerbaijan despite the blatant fraud of the 2000 elections, has failed to press for democratic reform. Azerbaijan has won kudos for pledging to uphold government transparency with its oil funds, but it means nothing if the elections are a sham.

Despite political crackdowns, including the jailing of high-profile political opponents, the Bush administration continues to work closely with Azerbaijan. Jackson Diehl (2006) explains how the jailing of dissident Farhad Aliyev was such a recent example.

Despite this provocation, the Bush administration offered its full cooperation for the visit of Aliyev's wife, a member of parliament who is building her own political career. The trip has received saturation coverage by Azerbaijan's remaining, state-controlled media, which portray it as proof of the close ties between Aliyev and Bush. And no wonder: The day after that gala dinner, Mehriban Aliyeva was received at the White House by First Lady Laura Bush. Did the subject of political prisoners such as Farhad Aliyev come up? Sadly, less than two years after the freedom agenda was born, the very idea of such principled pressure from the Bush White House has become ludicrous.

The final strong candidate for inclusion is Indonesia. Frida Berrigan (2004) offers a detailed review of the tension between the congressional preference for human rights concerns and the Bush priority for security cooperation.

The Bush administration heralds Indonesia as the world's largest Muslim democracy and a crucial ally in the war on terrorism. Since 9-11 it has pushed Congress to allow it to bolster the Indonesian military with weapons and military training. For many years, the United States was Indonesia's largest weapons source, equipping the country with everything from F-16 fighter planes to M-16 combat rifles. But during the 90s the spectacle of how Indonesia was using these gifts--to repress and brutalize its own people--provoked an international outcry. The U.S. Congress responded by cutting most military ties with the Indonesia.

In recent years, pressure from human rights activists has kept members of Congress wary of the Bush administration's efforts to restore military aid and training assistance. In October 2004, 45 members of the House of Representatives wrote Secretary of State Colin Powell to oppose restoration of foreign military aid to Indonesia, citing "grave concerns over the prospects of real military reforms" in a "massively corrupt" institution riddled with "impunity." They call the administration's efforts "premature, unwarranted, and unwise." The repression continued, and so did the efforts of the White House and the Pentagon to restore full military relations.

These efforts illustrate the tension between security and democracy in the "war" on terrorism. Washington needs Jakarta as a Muslim ally in this "war" and a source of intelligence on Islamic extremism, which means strengthening its military infrastructure. On the other hand, to uphold its image as a beacon of democracy and freedom, the U.S. must act to loosen the stranglehold of the Indonesian military over politics, justice, and culture. Washington cannot

erect a security state and foster democracy at the same time. Rhetorically supporting and encouraging democracy in Indonesia while actually strengthening the anti-democratic tendencies within its military is a dangerous contradiction that is likely to create more of the very problems it seeks to solve.

Members of Congress who actively oppose resumption of military aid to Indonesia understand that security flows from vibrant democracy. Nations are more secure when human and civil rights are protected, laws are enforced equally for everyone (even those wearing uniforms), the political process is transparent, and military power is curtailed.

The administration behaves as if it does not understand this. In return for Jakarta's vowed cooperation in the war on terrorism, Washington is turning a blind eye to the Indonesian military's long track record of human rights abuses, brutal repression of independence movements, involvement in sectarian violence, and relationships with terrorist networks.

Thus, aid to Indonesia is on the upswing. For fiscal year 2005, President Bush is requesting \$600,000 in military training, up from the \$459,000 that was frozen in 2004. Even if Congress does not release these training funds, Indonesia is slated to receive \$70 million in Economic Support Funds. This benign-sounding program is supposed to "promote economic and political stability" for infrastructure and development projects. While it is not intended for military expenditure, many recipient governments use it as a backdoor method of freeing up their own money for military programs.

An embargo on commercial sales of "non-lethal" weaponry has been lifted and contact between the two militaries is on the rise. Indonesia's military will participate as an observer in military exercises scheduled for this Fall, even though Congress had banned Indonesia from receiving U.S. military training.

Indonesia presents an interesting way to organize a collection of geography diverse nations in a democracy promotion topic. Because so many of these countries have strategic importance, especially as states with substantial Muslim populations, teams researching the topic can investigate the role of democracy with American relationships with the Islamic world. Debates about American credibility, the war on terror, and the best pace of democratic reform may provide the type of common themes that are assumed to only take place in a geographic region.

This brief survey is does not engage many of the potential nations that could be included. There are both nations that could be significant to the patterns of global democracy (Cambodia or Columbia) that may not possess all of the same linkages of the above countries. Hopefully this essay has identified that the basic topic stem would be compatible with a number of countries and if the countries are selected carefully they would also offer thematic coherence.

V. Potential Negative Ground

One of the greatest strengths of this topic area is the active debate between the desired act of democracy promotion and its effects on the target nation. In each of the above areas a case can be made that further pushing reform would not produce the results of greater democratic institutions or cooperation with the war on terror. In other words, this is not a topic where either side can claim a unique moral high ground without competing concerns. In every case and every country there is the possibility that pushing democracy could weaken the regimes that currently assist the U.S. in a variety of ways.

Amy Hawthorne's (2003) work in *Current History* outlines the specific reasons why the benefits of democracy promotion may be limited including, a limited ability of the US to produce internal political change, the possibility of unintended consequences when political reformers are

identified as pro-Western and the economic limitations of these nations (p. 24). Gelb and Rosenthal (2003) further identify how the process of supporting reform can actually hinder the reform process and rob the US of needed allies,

... this democratic ideal contains so much power that some prudence about rushing its implementation seems wise. Even if done cautiously, however, implementing democratic ideals carries its own contradictions. The Clinton and Bush administrations have promoted democracy around the world yet said little or nothing about the need for it in places such as China, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

The counterterrorism agenda only heightens these inconsistencies. It further divides Americans and Muslims around the world, many of whom see terrorists as freedom fighters. And many now in the Bush administration condemned President Clinton's decision not to make major issues of Russia's treatment of the Chechens or China's treatment of Muslim Uighurs, but have more or less abandoned that brief in the name of a common front against al Qaeda and like organizations.

Negative teams can also draw upon the literature like a July 2004 report of the International Crisis Group who believes further reform possible, but US pressure can be counterproductive by overwhelming the capacity of nations like Egypt to take the necessary institutional steps.

This situation provides negatives with a tenable defense of the current system as taking modest steps toward democracy, but unwilling to engage potentially risky steps. A debate in Foreign Affairs (2003) between Thomas Carothers and Paula Dobriansky provided a clear example of the administration's defense of its efforts. Dobriansky argued,

Ironically, many of the world's countries, including some of our allies, often chide us not for failing to do enough in the democracy arena, but for trying to do too much, for elevating democratic imperatives above those of trade and diplomatic politesse. Yet we remain committed to doing what is right. President George W. Bush observed in his June 1, 2002, West Point speech, "Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right or wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities." When appropriate, we go beyond words and subject persistent human rights violators to economic sanctions and other forms of pressure. I cannot think of any other country that has been as willing as the United States has to use both soft and hard power to promote democracy.

To be sure, some have argued that we should do even more, and specifically that we should withhold military and intelligence cooperation from certain of our allies whose human rights records leave much to be desired. As they see it, we improperly allow realpolitik considerations to trump the human rights imperatives. But this argument is myopic. No responsible U.S. decision-maker can allow our foreign policy to be driven by a single imperative, no matter how important. Thus, our policy toward a given country or region is shaped by a variety of considerations, including security concerns, economic issues, and human rights imperatives.

The most difficult task of our statecraft is to strike the right balance among these imperatives and arrive at the policy mix that best advances an entire set of our values and interests. Invariably, it is a nuanced and balanced approach that produces the best results. And invariably, this administration has struck the right balance. For example, in the post-September 11 environment, as we began to engage a number of Central Asian governments whose help we needed to prosecute the war against al Qaeda and the Taliban, we simultaneously intensified our efforts to improve the human rights situation in these countries. By cooperating on intelligence and security issues, we have actually enhanced our leverage on democracy-related matters. Although a great deal more needs to be done, we believe that this integrated approach is working.

Any effort to juxtapose or contrast our efforts to win the war against terrorism and our democracy-promotion strategy is conceptually flawed. Pan-national terrorist groups (such as al Qaeda) and rogue regimes (such as that of the Taliban or of Saddam Hussein) pose grave threats to democratic systems, as do the xenophobic, intolerant ideologies that they espouse. Accordingly, fighting against these forces is both in our national security interest and a key ingredient of democracy promotion. And democracy promotion is the best antidote to terrorism. Significantly, the Seoul Plan of Action, adopted at the 2002 CD meeting, contains a series of actions that democracies can take to counter emerging threats through the promotion of democracy.

Negatives thus have the option to defend the current policy as modest efforts or dismiss all such efforts as doomed to fail. James Page (2004) argues that democracy promotion, or other soft power based initiatives, require a level of credibility that the US cannot offer,

US and other western leaders frequently emphasise the primacy of values and ideals in their foreign policy - Bush constantly refers to "freedom", "liberty" and "democracy", for example. Yet such words ring hollow, for it is impossible to ignore the mighty iron fist inside the velvet glove.

In the wake of the chaos in Iraq many, like Katerina Dalacoura (2005, p. 972), argue that the U.S. has radicalized the potential supporters of democracy, rendering such approaches incredibly difficult.

Although one may possibly accept the Bush administration's argument that, in the long term, democratization will help undercut Islamist terrorism, it has been obvious since 2001 that, at least in the short term, the war on terror has caused restrictions on civil liberties and a limitation of democratic freedoms, particularly in the case of Islamist opposition movements. In the name of fighting terrorism, many Arab governments—like many western governments—have increased anti-democratic practices, and the US government has been quick to accept their justification for doing so. The war on terror therefore can be seen to be pushing both the Bush administration and the Arab region in the opposite direction from democracy promotion. This is all the more so because the war on terror has made Arabs, and other Muslims, defensive about identity and has further radicalized Islamist movements.³³ Ultimately, the war on terror, far from promoting democracy in the Middle East, may be pushing the Arab world since 2001 towards more, not less, authoritarianism.

This might further the debate about if the affirmative can remedy such a deficit and highlight this topic's possibility to encourage both sides to consider what steps, if any, could ameliorate seemingly chronic problems of US credibility, local support, economic utility, etc.

Outside the traditional concern for uniqueness this topic area also contains a large body of what might be described as 'critical' assessments of democracy promotion. For those critical approaches that utilize topic research there are many choices. William Robinson's (2004) criticism of democracy promotion follows a Chomsky-esque description of all such efforts as motivated by, and producing the means of, imperialism by destabilizing and removing regimes that the US no longer desires. The war in Iraq has done little to weaken this body of literature. Barbara Ann J. Rieffer and Kristan Mercer (2005, p. 397-398) also note how the questionable actions of agencies involved in democracy promotion have furthered criticisms of the fundamental ethics of such approaches.

As was true under Clinton, and equally true under Reagan and George H.W. Bush for that matter, various forms of US democracy promotion have not escaped criticism at home and abroad as unacceptable interference in a country's domestic affairs. Several of the American

actors under NED (the National Democratic Institute and International Republican Institute) provided “soft money” campaign contributions to political parties in other countries in an attempt to sway elections. In Slovakia, NED funding attempted to defeat the democratically elected Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar. More recently, NED has financially assisted groups in Venezuela in their attempts to overthrow President Hugo Chavez. Several hundreds of thousands of dollars were distributed to anti-Chavez groups.⁵⁴ IRI president George Folson praised the coup that briefly ousted Chavez.⁵⁵ Support for such extra-legal rebellions and coups d’etat is highly controversial, and probably inconsistent with the goal of promoting indigenous democracy.⁵⁶

The focus on structural reforms also provides many other areas of criticism, including western norms of power and authority. In another test of its relevance, this topic area can also boast specific (and recent Zizek) evidence. For Zizek (2005), the urge to promote democracy displays a great deal about what it means to be American,

With the global American ideological offensive, the fundamental insight of Graham Greene's *The Quiet American* is more relevant than ever: We witness the resurgence of the figure of the "quiet American," a naive, benevolent agent who sincerely wants to bring democracy and Western freedom. It is just that his intentions totally misfire, or, as Greene put it: "I never knew a man who had better motives for all the trouble he caused." The underlying presupposition is that under our skin, if we scratch the surface, we are all Americans. That is our true desire -- all that is needed is just to give people a chance, liberate them from their imposed constraints and they will join us in our ideological dream.

Regardless of what foundation teams choose to utilize, the concern about the imperialistic tendencies of any such action provides fertile ground for dispute. Hill & Jones (2006, p. 121-122) note that even from those who suggest further democracy promotion

Unfortunately for Western governments, democracy promotion, as leading expert on democracy Thomas Carothers has written, “has come to be seen overseas ... as a code word for ‘regime change.’”²⁰ Karimov believes the United States and other Western governments, along with international NGOs, are plotting his demise. In the wake of the Colored Revolutions, democracy promotion is now linked in the region with U.S. intervention. The Bush administration’s new “freedom agenda” and after-the-fact emphasis on elections and nation building in Afghanistan and Iraq have also been major factors in shaping interpretations of the U.S. approach to democratization in the Middle East and elsewhere. Democracy promotion is seen as a tool for nefarious goals such as ousting leaders who are out of favor with the West and not as an altruistic end that will bring benefit to individual countries.

Carothers (2006) is far from the only scholar advocating that the U.S. handle its own democracy deficits instead of trying to force it on others.

The Bush administration could also burnish its democracy credentials by getting its own house in order. In this area, too, the damage is not going to be remedied anytime soon; actions such as the torture of Iraqi detainees by U.S. soldiers are now indelibly etched on the minds of foreign observers. But the administration can and must do better. The necessary remedial steps are hardly mysterious. They range from rectifying once and for all U.S. mistreatment of prisoners and detainees abroad to coming clean on secret prisons, renditions, unlawful abductions, and unauthorized domestic eavesdropping. Every country facing a terrorist threat struggles to find the right balance between security and respect for civil liberties. But unless the Bush administration resolves the staggering contradiction between its unapologetic proclivity to violate individual rights in the name of fighting terrorism and its preaching to others that liberty

is an antidote for terrorism, its democracy-promotion agenda will continue to rest on a shaky foundation. Meanwhile, the democracy backlash will continue to grow.

Unlike some bodies of policy literature, democracy promotion and human rights are not the sole province of one political perspective. It would not be surprising for some to argue that such an area would be too negatively biased, but this is because there is ample negative literature. As the conclusion will discuss, this is a very rich body of literature for all sides. The challenge would remain in how much latitude to provide either side.

VI. Conclusions & Recommendation

When I wrote the first version of this paper several years ago I was very concerned that the recommendation to increase democracy promotion would be difficult to accept as distinct from current policy. In the last two years the Bush administration's retreat from this doctrine has rendered this concern moot and opened a fascinating new window into American foreign policy. The unique educational opportunities and the complexity of the literature lead me to recommend it as an option for the 2007-2008 intercollegiate season.

Since the end of the Cold War it has been difficult to craft inter-collegiate topics that could embrace the major challenges in American foreign policy. The traditional preference for regional topics has produced some excellent discussions, such as the Middle East security assistance topic, when the area and the mechanism match well. In other topics, such as the South-East Asian security assistance topic or China trade topic, the gap between the central challenges faced by that region and those included in the resolution weakened the fundamental emphasis of debates.

When nostalgia for topics like the rogue nations exists it can often be traced to the presence of a unifying theme. Rogue nations offered a means of exploring a non-geographic collection of nations that resisted easy resolution from traditional American policy. In the post 9/11 world, democracy and human rights have challenged traditional partisan assessments of how foreign policy should be developed. As politicized as promoting democracy may appear at the current moment it is not hard to imagine a democratic administration in 2009 announcing a more transparent and even-handed approach to democratic reform in an effort to reduce global anti-Americanism.

A democracy or human rights topic therefore gives a unique opportunity to explore if the U.S. be primarily concerned with this closest global heads of state (Musharraf, Mubarak, Nazarbayev, Talabani, etc.) or with those pushing for democratic reform within those states? Debating democracy promotion's role within American foreign policy would offer a unique opportunity to engage this question as well as America's relationship with the larger, particularly Islamic world.

The particulars of how much latitude to provide affirmatives should be balanced against the desired number of nations included in the topic. This question is not one to be resolved at this stage of the process, except to state that when a literature base provides ample direct clash for both sides we may need to carefully consider what balance of argumentative practices are desirable. There are valid arguments for and against democracy promotion, and this controversy, in the current moment. If, however, it is deemed 'impossible' for either side to debate this matter based on available literature it may reveal more about current practices than it does about this controversy.

Thanks for reading and I look forward to your feedback.

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