# Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?

F. Gregory Gause III

WHAT FREEDOM BRINGS

THE UNITED STATES is engaged in what President George W. Bush has called a "generational challenge" to instill democracy in the Arab world. The Bush administration and its defenders contend that this push for Arab democracy will not only spread American values but also improve U.S. security. As democracy grows in the Arab world, the thinking goes, the region will stop generating anti-American terrorism. Promoting democracy in the Middle East is therefore not merely consistent with U.S. security goals; it is necessary to achieve them.

But this begs a fundamental question: Is it true that the more democratic a country becomes, the less likely it is to produce terrorists and terrorist groups? In other words, is the security rationale for promoting democracy in the Arab world based on a sound premise? Unfortunately, the answer appears to be no. Although what is known about terrorism is admittedly incomplete, the data available do not show a strong relationship between democracy and an absence of or a reduction in terrorism. Terrorism appears to stem from factors much more specific than regime type. Nor is it likely that democratization would end the current campaign against the United States. Al Qaeda and like-minded groups are not fighting for democracy in the Muslim world; they are fighting to impose their vision of an Islamic state. Nor is there any evidence that democracy in the Arab world would "drain the swamp," eliminating soft support

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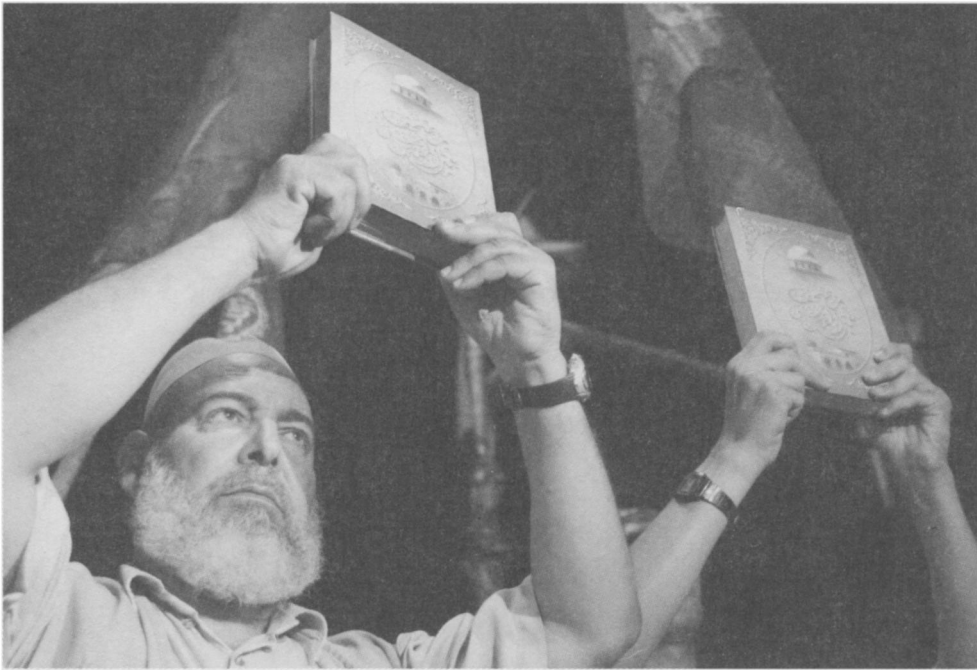
The future of Arab democracy? Hamas election rally, Gaza City, June 8, 2005

for terrorist organizations among the Arab public and reducing the number of potential recruits for them.

Even if democracy were achieved in the Middle East, what kind of governments would it produce? Would they cooperate with the United States on important policy objectives besides curbing terrorism, such as advancing the Arab-Israeli peace process, maintaining security in the Persian Gulf, and ensuring steady supplies of oil? No one can predict the course a new democracy will take, but based on public opinion surveys and recent elections in the Arab world, the advent of democracy there seems likely to produce new Islamist governments that would be much less willing to cooperate with the United States than are the current authoritarian rulers.

The answers to these questions should give Washington pause. The Bush administration's democracy initiative can be defended as an effort to spread American democratic values at any cost, or as a long-term gamble that even if Islamists do come to power, the realities of governance will moderate them or the public will grow disillusioned with them. The emphasis on electoral democracy will not, however, serve immediate U.S. interests either in the war on terrorism or in other important Middle East policies.

It is thus time to rethink the U.S. emphasis on democracy promotion in the Arab world. Rather than push for quick elections, the United States should instead focus its energy on encouraging the development of secular, nationalist, and liberal political organizations that could compete on an equal footing with Islamist parties. Only by doing so can Washington help ensure that when elections finally do occur, the results are more in line with U.S. interests.

THE MISSING LINK

PRESIDENT BUSH has been clear about why he thinks promoting democracy in the Arab world is central to U.S. interests. "Our strategy to keep the peace in the longer term," Bush said in a speech in March 2005,

> is to help change the conditions that give rise to extremism and terror, especially in the broader Middle East. Parts of that region have been caught for generations in a cycle of tyranny and despair and radicalism. When a dictatorship controls the political life of a country, responsible opposition cannot develop, and dissent is driven underground and toward the extreme. And to draw attention away from their social and economic failures, dictators place blame on other countries and other races, and stir the hatred that leads to violence. This status quo of despotism and anger cannot be ignored or appeased, kept in a box or bought off.

Bush's belief in the link between terrorism and a lack of democracy is not limited to his administration. During the 2004 presidential campaign, Senator John Kerry (D-Mass.) emphasized the need for greater political reform in the Middle East as an integral part of the war on terrorism. Martin Indyk, a senior Middle East policymaker in the Clinton administration, has written that it was a mistake for Clinton to focus on Arab-Israeli peace while downplaying Middle East democracy, and he has urged Washington to concentrate on political reform. In a recent book he co-authored, Morton Halperin, the director of policy planning in Clinton's State Department, argues that the roots of al Qaeda lie in the poverty and educational deficiencies of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Pakistan, and that these deficiencies were

caused by the authoritarian nature of those states and can be combated only through democratization. The *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman has done more to sell this logic to the public than anyone else.

Despite the wide acceptance of this connection, the academic literature on the relationship between terrorism and other sociopolitical indicators, such as democracy, is surprisingly scant. There are good case studies and general surveys of terrorists and terrorist organizations, but few that try to determine whether more democracy leads to less terrorism. Part of the problem is the quality of the data available. The Western press tends to report terrorist incidents with a cross-border element more completely than homegrown terrorist attacks. Moreover, most of the statistics identify the location of an incident, but not the identity of the perpetrators—and much less whether they came from nondemocratic countries.

Given such incomplete information, only preliminary conclusions from the academic literature are possible. However, even these seem to discredit the supposedly close link between terrorism and authoritarianism that underlies the Bush administration's logic. In a widely cited study of terrorist events in the 1980s, the political scientists William Eubank and Leonard Weinberg demonstrate that most terrorist incidents occur in democracies and that generally both the victims and the perpetrators are citizens of democracies. Examining incidents from 1975 to 1997, Pennsylvania State University's Quan Li has found that although terrorist attacks are

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less frequent when democratic political participation is high, the kind of checks that liberal democracy typically places on executive power seems to encourage terrorist actions. In his recent book, *Dying to Win: The Strategic Logic of Suicide Terrorism*, Robert Pape finds that the targets of suicide bombers are almost always democracies, but that the motivation of the groups behind those bombings is to fight against military occupation and for self-determination. Terrorists are not driven by a desire for democracy but by their opposition to what they see as foreign domination.

The numbers published by the U.S. government do not bear out claims of a close link between terrorism and authoritarianism either. Between 2000 and 2003, according to the State Department's annual "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report, 269 major terrorist incidents around the world occurred in countries classified as "free" by Freedom House, 119 occurred in "partly free" countries, and 138 occurred in "not free" countries. (This count excludes both terrorist attacks by Palestinians on Israel, which would increase the number of attacks in democracies even more, and the September 11, 2001, attacks on the United States, which originated in other countries.) This is not to argue that free countries are more likely to produce terrorists than other countries. Rather, these numbers simply indicate that there is no relationship between the incidence of terrorism in a given country and the degree of freedom enjoyed by its citizens. They certainly do not indicate that democracies are substantially less susceptible to terrorism than are other forms of government.

Terrorism, of course, is not distributed randomly. According to official U.S. government data, the vast majority of terrorist incidents occurred in only a few countries. Indeed, half of all the terrorist incidents in "not free" countries in 2003 took place in just two countries: Iraq and Afghanistan. It seems that democratization did little to discourage terrorists from operating there—and may even have encouraged terrorism.

As for the "free" countries, terrorist incidents in India accounted for fully 75 percent of the total. It is fair to assume that groups based in Pakistan carried out a number of those attacks, particularly in Kashmir, but clearly not all the perpetrators were foreigners. A significant number of terrorist events in India took place far from Kashmir, reflecting other local grievances against the central government. And as strong and vibrant as Indian democracy is, both a sitting prime minister and a former prime minister have been assassinated— Indira Gandhi and her son, Rajiv Gandhi, respectively. If democracy reduced the prospects for terrorism, India's numbers would not be so high.

Comparing India, the world's most populous democracy, and China, the world's most populous authoritarian state, highlights the difficulty of assuming that democracy can solve the terrorism problem. For 2000–2003, the "Patterns of Global Terrorism" report indicates

203 international terrorist attacks in India and none in China. A list of terrorist incidents between 1976 and 2004, compiled by the National Memorial Institute for the Prevention of Terrorism, shows more than 400 in India and only 18 in China. Even if China under-reports such incidents by a factor of ten, it still endures substantially fewer terrorist attacks than India. If the relationship between authoritarianism and terrorism were as strong as the Bush administration implies, the discrepancy between the number of terrorist incidents in China and the number in India would run the other way.

More anecdotal evidence also calls into question a necessary relationship between regime type and terrorism. In the 1970s and 1980s, a number of brutal terrorist organizations arose in democratic countries: the Red Brigades in Italy, the Provisional Irish Republican Army in Ireland and the United Kingdom, the Japanese Red Army in Japan, and the Red Army Faction (or Baader-Meinhof Gang) in West Germany. The transition to democracy in Spain did not eliminate Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) Basque separatist terrorism. Turkish democracy suffered through a decade of mounting political violence that lasted until the late 1970s. The strong and admirable democratic system in Israel has produced its own terrorists, including the assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. It appears that at least three of the suicide bombers in the London attacks of July were born and raised in the democratic United Kingdom. Nearly every day brings a painful reminder that real democratization in Iraq has been accompanied by serious terrorism. And a memorial in Oklahoma City testifies to the fact that even U.S. democracy has not been free of terrorism of domestic origins.

There is, in other words, no solid empirical evidence for a strong link between democracy, or any other regime type, and terrorism, in either a positive or a negative direction. In her highly praised post–September 11 study of religious militants, *Terror in the Name of God*, Jessica Stern argues that "democratization is not necessarily the best way to fight Islamic extremism," because the transition to democracy "has been found to be an especially vulnerable period for states across the board." Terrorism springs from sources other than the form of government of a state. There is no reason to believe that a more democratic Arab world will, simply by virtue of being more democratic, generate fewer terrorists.

FLAWED

THERE ARE also logical problems with the argument supporting the U.S. push for democracy as part of the war on terrorism. Underlying the assertion that democracy will reduce terrorism is the belief that, able to participate openly in competitive politics and have their voices heard in the public square, potential terrorists and terrorist sympathizers would not need to resort to violence to achieve their goals. Even if they lost in one round of elections, the confidence that they could win in the future would inhibit the temptation to resort to extra-democratic means. The habits of democracy would ameliorate extremism and focus the anger of the Arab publics at their own governments, not at the United States.

Well, maybe. But it is just as logical to assume that terrorists, who rarely represent political agendas that could mobilize electoral majorities, would reject the very principles of majority rule and minority rights on which liberal democracy is based. If they could not achieve their goals through democratic politics, why would they privilege the democratic process over those goals? It seems more likely that, having been mobilized to participate in the democratic process by a burning desire to achieve particular goals—a desire so strong that they were willing to commit acts of violence against defenseless civilians to realize it—terrorists and potential terrorists would attack democracy if it did not produce their desired results. Respect for the nascent Iraqi democracy, despite a very successful election in January 2005, has not stopped Iraqi and foreign terrorists from their campaign against the new political order.

Terrorist organizations are not mass-based organizations. They are small and secretive. They are not organized or based on democratic principles. They revolve around strong leaders and a cluster of committed followers who are willing to take actions from which the vast majority of people, even those who might support their political agenda, would rightly shrink. It seems unlikely that simply being out-voted would deflect them from their path.

The United States' major foe in the war on terrorism, al Qaeda, certainly would not close up shop if every Muslim country in the world were to become a democracy. Osama bin Laden has been very clear about democracy: he does not like it. His political model is the

early Muslim caliphate. In his view, the Taliban regime in Afghanistan came the closest in modern times to that model. In an October 2003 "message to Iraqis," bin Laden castigated those in the Arab world who are "calling for a peaceful democratic solution in dealing with apostate governments or with Jewish and crusader invaders instead of fighting in the name of God." He referred to democracy as "this deviant and misleading practice" and "the faith of the ignorant." Bin Laden's ally in Iraq, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, reacted to the January 2005 Iraqi election even more directly: "The legislator who must be obeyed in a democracy is man, and not God. ... That is the very essence of heresy and polytheism and error, as it contradicts the bases of the faith and monotheism, and because it makes the weak, ignorant man God's partner in His most central divine prerogative—namely, ruling and legislating."

Al Qaeda's leaders distrust democracy, and not just on ideological grounds: they know they could not come to power through free elections. There is no reason to believe that a move toward more democracy in Arab states would deflect them from their course. And there is no reason to believe that they could not recruit followers in more democratic Arab states—especially if those states continued to have good relations with the United States, made peace with Israel, and generally behaved in ways acceptable to Washington. Al Qaeda objects to the U.S. agenda in the Middle East as much as, if not more than, democracy. If, as Washington hopes, a democratic Middle East continued to accept a major U.S. role in the region and cooperate with U.S. goals, it is foolish to think that democracy would end Arab anti-Americanism and dry up passive support, funding sources, and recruiting channels for al Qaeda.

When it works, liberal democracy is the best form of government. But there is no evidence that it reduces or prevents terrorism. The fundamental assumption of the Bush administration's push for democracy in the Arab world is seriously flawed.

ANGRY VOICES

IT IS HIGHLY unlikely that democratically elected Arab governments would be as cooperative with the United States as the current authoritarian regimes. To the extent that public opinion can be measured in these countries, research shows that Arabs strongly support democracy.

When they have a chance to vote in real elections, they generally turn out in percentages far greater than Americans do in their elections. But many Arabs hold negative views of the United States. If Arab governments were democratically elected and more representative of public opinion, they would thus be more anti-American. Further democratization in the Middle East would, for the foreseeable future, most likely generate Islamist governments less inclined to cooperate with the United States on important U.S. policy goals, including military basing rights in the region, peace with Israel, and the war on terrorism.

Arabs in general do not have a problem with democracy, although some Islamist ideologues do. The 2003 Pew Global Attitudes Project asked people in a number of Arab countries whether "democracy is a Western way of doing things that would not work here." Strong majorities of those surveyed in Kuwait (83 percent), Jordan (68 percent), and the Palestinian territories (53 percent) said democracy would work where they lived. Small minorities (16 percent of Kuwaitis, 25 percent of Jordanians, and 38 percent of Palestinians) thought it would not. According to a 2002 poll conducted by Zogby International, most of the people surveyed in Egypt, Kuwait, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) held a favorable attitude toward U.S. freedom and democracy, even while viewing U.S. policy in the Arab world very unfavorably. According to the same poll, respondents in seven Arab countries ranked "civil/personal rights" as the most important political issue, before health care, the Palestinian issue, and economic questions.

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These pro-democracy views are borne out by behavior on the ground. Voter turnout in Arab states for legitimate elections is regularly very high. Some 53 percent of registered Iraqis voted in the January 2005 parliamentary election, despite threats of violence and the boycott by most Sunni Arabs, who make up about 20 percent of the population. Algerians turned out at a rate of 58 percent for their presidential election in April 2004. Official figures put Palestinian turnout for the January 2005 presidential election at 73 percent, despite Hamas' refusal to

participate. Turnout in Kuwaiti parliamentary elections is regularly more than 70 percent. And 76 percent of eligible Yemeni voters cast their ballots in the 2003 legislative election. Although there certainly are antidemocratic forces in the Arab world, and some Arab elections have been characterized by low turnout or low voter registration, Arabs are generally enthusiastic about voting and elections. Arguments that Arab "culture" bars democracy simply do not stand up to scrutiny.

The problem with promoting democracy in the Arab world is not that Arabs do not like democracy; it is that Washington probably would not like the governments Arab democracy would produce. Assuming that democratic Arab governments would better represent the opinions of their people than do the current Arab regimes, democratization of the Arab world should produce more anti-U.S. foreign policies. In a February–March 2003 poll conducted in six Arab countries by Zogby International and the Anwar Sadat Chair for Peace and Development at the University of Maryland, overwhelming majorities of those surveyed held either a very unfavorable or a somewhat unfavorable attitude toward the United States. The Lebanese viewed the United States most favorably, with 32 percent of respondents holding a very favorable or a somewhat favorable view of the United States. Only 4 percent of Saudi respondents said the same.

The war in Iraq—which was imminent or ongoing as the poll was conducted—surely affected these numbers. But these statistics are not that different from those gathered by less comprehensive polls conducted both before and after the war. In a Gallup poll in early 2002, strong majorities of those surveyed in Jordan (62 percent) and Saudi Arabia (64 percent) rated the United States unfavorably. Only in Lebanon did positive views of the United States roughly balance negative views. In a Zogby International poll conducted in seven Arab countries at about the same time, unfavorable ratings of the United States ranged from 48 percent in Kuwait to 61 percent in Jordan, 76 percent in Egypt, and 87 percent in Saudi Arabia and the UAE. One year after the war began, a Pew Global Attitudes poll showed that 93 percent of Jordanians and 68 percent of Moroccans had a negative attitude toward the United States.

Although it is not possible to pinpoint from poll data the precise reasons for anti-Americanism in the Arab world, there are indications that

it is U.S. policy in the region, not a rejection of American ideals, that drives the sentiment. In the Zogby International–Sadat Chair poll of February–March 2003, respondents in five of six Arab countries said that their attitudes toward the United States were based more on U.S. policy than on U.S. values. Forty-six percent of Egyptians polled identified U.S. policy as the source of their feelings, compared with 43 percent who stressed American values. No fewer than 58 percent of respondents in Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia also emphasized their opposition to U.S. policy.

In 2004, Arab publics were particularly cynical about Washington's policy of democracy promotion in the Middle East. In a May 2004 Zogby International–Sadat Chair poll, only in Lebanon did a substantial segment of the population surveyed (44 percent) believe that promoting democracy was an important motive for the Iraq war— compared with 25 percent of Jordanians and less than 10 percent of those in Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and the UAE. The majority of people polled in most of the countries thought the war was motivated by Washington's desire to control oil, protect Israel, and weaken the Muslim world. And in a less extensive Pew Global Attitudes survey, also conducted in 2004, only 17 percent of Moroccans and 11 percent of Jordanians thought that the U.S. war on terrorism was a sincere effort, rather than a cover for other goals. And no poll is needed to show that U.S. policy on Arab-Israeli questions is very unpopular in the Arab world.

There is no doubt that public opinion can be a fickle thing. Anti-U.S. feelings in the Arab world could change markedly with events. But although it is possible that Arab anti-Americanism would decline if Washington no longer supported authoritarian Arab governments, there is little data to test the assertion, and anecdotal evidence suggests otherwise. Syrians, for example, do not hold strongly positive views of the United States, even though the Bush administration opposes the government in Damascus. Apparently, the United States is unpopular in the Arab world because of the full range of its policies, not simply because it supports authoritarian governments.

Even if democratization could reduce anti-Americanism, there is no guarantee that such a reduction would yield pro-American governments. Anecdotal evidence certainly seems to indicate, for example,

that the public in non-Arab Iran has a better impression of the United States than does the Iranian government. The Iranian public's more pro-American stance did not, however, translate into votes for the candidate favoring rapprochement with the United States in the second round of the recent presidential election.

History also indicates that legitimate democratic elections in Arab states would most likely benefit Islamists. In all recent Arab elections, they have emerged as the government's leading political opposition, and in many of them they have done very well.

In Morocco, the new Justice and Development Party, an overtly Islamist party, took 42 of the 325 seats in the parliamentary elections of 2002, its first contest. (Only two long-established parties, the Socialist Union of Popular Forces and the Independence Party, won more seats: 50 and 48, respectively.) The same year, in Bahrain, Islamist candidates took between 19 and 21 of the 40 seats in parliament (depending on how observers classified some independent candidates). This success came even though the major Shia political group boycotted the elections, protesting changes in the constitution.

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In the 2003 parliamentary election in Yemen, the Yemeni Reform Group (Islah), a combination of Islamist and tribal elements, won 46 of the 301 seats and now forms the opposition. That year, Islamists combined to win 17 of the 50 seats in the Kuwaiti parliament, where they form the dominant ideological bloc. In the 2003 parliamentary election in Jordan, held after three postponements and a change in the electoral laws to benefit independent candidates, the Muslim Brotherhood's political party won 17 of 110 seats and independent Islamists took another 3 seats, forming the major opposition bloc.

So far this year, the pattern has repeated itself. In the Saudi municipal elections, informal Islamist tickets won 6 of the 7 seats in Riyadh and swept the elections in Jidda and Mecca. Candidates backed by Sunni Islamists also won control of the municipal councils in a number of towns in the Eastern Province. In the Iraqi parliamentary elections, the list backed by Shia Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani won 140 of the 275 seats, compared with 45 seats for the two more-secular Arab lists, headed by

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then Prime Minister Ayad Allawi and then President Ghazi al-Yawar, and 75 seats for the unified Kurdish list, which is not particularly Islamist.

In the Palestinian territories, Mahmoud Abbas, of the nationalist Fatah Party, won a convincing victory in the 2005 presidential elections, but that is partly because Hamas did not field a candidate. Hamas has, however, performed strongly in recent municipal elections: in the West Bank in December 2004, it took control of 7 town councils compared with Fatah's 12, and earlier this year in Gaza, Hamas captured control of 7 of the 10 town councils, as well as two-thirds of the seats. Some observers predict that Hamas will outpoll Fatah in the upcoming Palestinian parliamentary elections, which could be one reason that Abbas has postponed them.

The trend is clear: Islamists of various hues score well in free elections. In countries where a governing party dominates or where the king opposes political Islam, Islamists run second and form the opposition. Only in Morocco, where more secular, leftist parties have a long history and an established presence, and in Lebanon, where the Christian-Muslim dynamic determines electoral politics, did organized non-Islamist political blocs, independent of the government, compete with Islamist forces. The pattern does not look like it is about to change. According to the 2004 Zogby International–Sadat Chair poll, pluralities of those surveyed in Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE said the clergy should play a greater role in their political systems. Fifty percent of Egyptians polled said the clerics should not dictate the political system, but as many as 47 percent supported a greater role for them. Only in Morocco and Lebanon did anticlerical sentiment dominate pro-clerical feelings—51 percent to 33 percent in Morocco and 50 percent to 28 percent in Lebanon. The more democratic the Arab world gets, the more likely it is that Islamists will come to power. Even if those Islamists come to accept the rules of democracy and reject political violence, they are unlikely to support U.S. foreign policy goals in the region.

THE LONG HAUL

THE BUSH administration's push for democracy in the Arab world is unlikely to have much effect on anti-American terrorism emanating from there; it could in fact help bring to power governments much

less cooperative on a whole range of issues—including the war on terrorism—than the current regimes. Unfortunately, there is no good alternative at this point to working with the authoritarian Arab governments that are willing to work with the United States.

If Washington insists on promoting democracy in the Arab world, it should learn from the various electoral experiences in the region. Where there are strongly rooted non-Islamist parties, as in Morocco, the Islamists have a harder time dominating the field. The same is true in non-Arab Turkey, where the Islamist political party has moderated its message over time to contend with the power of the secular army and with well-established, more secular parties. Likewise, the diverse confessional mix of voters in Lebanon will probably prevent Hezbollah and other Islamists from dominating elections there. Conversely, where non-Islamist political forces have been suppressed, as in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, Islamist parties and candidates can command the political field. Washington should take no comfort from the success of ruling parties in Algeria, Egypt, and Yemen over Islamist challengers: once stripped of their patronage and security apparatus, ruling parties do not fare very well in democratic transitional elections.

The United States must focus on pushing Arab governments to make political space for liberal, secular, leftist, nationalist, and other non-Islamist parties to set down roots and mobilize voters. Washington should support those groups that are more likely to accept U.S. foreign policy and emulate U.S. political values. The most effective way to demonstrate that support is to openly pressure Arab regimes when they obstruct the political activity of more liberal groups—as the administration did with Egypt after the jailing of the liberal reformers Saad Eddin Ibrahim and Ayman Nour, and as it should do with Saudi Arabia regarding the May sentencing of peaceful political activists to long prison terms. But Washington will also need to drop its focus on prompt elections in Arab countries where no strong, organized alternative to Islamist parties exists—even at the risk of disappointing Arab liberals by being more cautious about their electoral prospects than they are.

Administration officials, including President Bush, have often stated that the transition to democracy in the Arab world will be difficult and that Americans should not expect quick results. Yet whenever the

Bush administration publicly defends democratization, it cites a familiar litany of Muslim-world elections—those in Afghanistan, Iraq, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, and Saudi Arabia—as evidence that the policy is working. It will take years, however, for non-Islamist political forces to be ready to compete for power in these elections, and it is doubtful that this or any other U.S. administration will have the patience to see the process through. If it cannot show that patience, Washington must realize that its democratization policy will lead to Islamist domination of Arab politics.

It is not only the focus on elections that is troubling in the administration's democracy initiative in the Arab world. Also problematic is the unjustified confidence that Washington has in its ability to predict, and even direct, the course of politics in other countries. No administration official would sign on, at least not in public, to the naive view that Arab democracy will produce governments that will always cooperate with the United States. Yet Washington's democracy advocates seem to assume that Arab democratic transitions, like the recent democratic transitions in eastern Europe, Latin America, and East Asia, will lead to regimes that support, or at least do not impede, the broad range of U.S. foreign policy interests. They do not appreciate that in those regimes, liberalism prevailed because its great ideological competitor, communism, was thoroughly discredited, whereas the Arab world offers a real ideological alternative to liberal democracy: the movement that claims as its motto "Islam is the solution." Washington's hubris should have been crushed in Iraq, where even the presence of 140,000 American troops has not allowed politics to proceed according to the U.S. plan. Yet the Bush administration displays little of the humility or the patience that such a daunting task demands. If the United States really does see the democracy-promotion initiative in the Arab world as a "generational challenge," the entire nation will have to learn these traits.☯