

DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE ARAB WORLD: Revival Or Reformation?

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Abstract

Voices of dissent against the political status quo and the urge for transformation and democratization of Arab World have been visible on the scene since long. The desire for socio-political change was based on the well-founded perception of the masses that root cause of their miseries and humiliation lies in continuation of autocratic rulers and invasion of Western culture. West, sensing fear of coming these forces of dissent into power might deny the Western World a free access to their oil and other natural resources, prompted the West to intervene in Middle East to protect the rule of suppressive regimes and preserve their interests. This re-alignment made the local conflict between the masses and the rulers, three-dimensional. However, 9/11 came to change their perception that peace and stability in the region and avoidance of more 9/11 rests in addressing the sense of deprivation amongst the people. The recipe US invented to pacify the resentment of the Arab masses was through exporting democracy in a way that doesn't disturb the existing regimes of their choice. To achieve this the West is conspiring with the help of enormous funds and huge financial inputs to produce a secularized, modernistic, docile, spineless variety of Islam unable to challenge, pose any danger to, or be able to question any country, government, culture or civilization. The West ignores to believe that, if democratization is to succeed in the Arab Region, it will have to be planted in fertile soil, i.e. in line with the politico- economic, and socio- cultural model of Arabs' own Islamic ethos. Therefore, Western agenda of democratization through reformation has failed miserably and the masses are poised for revival of their Islamic ethico-spiritual & political values and culture, which is evident in most of the elections held during the last few years. The ideas of self-governance and personal involvement in the political process must be presented in a respectful and culturally sensitive manner if they are to ever gain respect with the masses.

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Introduction

The 9/11, 7/7 and subsequent suicide attacks at Casablanca, Riyadh, Istanbul, Madrid, and Iraq shattered the longstanding Western myth that the socio-political stability in Middle East is anchored in the authoritarian regimes. The new scenario led to the opposite conclusion, that reformation of Middle East is requisite for durable stability and regional security and elimination of extremism and fundamentalism has become renewed American national interest¹. Resultantly, democracy promotion in the Middle East apparently acquired greater urgency as priority agenda and the “democracy deficit” Middle East is witnessing, selective political dynamism. Emphasis on stability (even at the expense of liberty) was once deemed the hallmark of US Middle East policy; democracy and freedom (even at the expense of life & survival) have become the so-called new priority. Whereas realization of Washington’s interests, notably, protecting the free flow of oil, ensuring Israel’s security, confronting potential threats, battling terrorism in the region and creating a sense of frustration in the Muslim World, demands maintenance of political status quo and not rival change that is most likely if democratization process is allowed to grow.

Foregoing in view, this paper aims at exploring sincerity of US efforts of exporting democracy to Middle East, with main emphasis on causes, motives and their ultimate effects. The paper also endeavors to ascertain, whether the real solution to the Middle East lies in exporting Western style democracy or in the transformation of true democratic society through revival and reformation of socio- political values in accordance with the ambit of Islamic norms. However, the main focus of the paper is to highlight the role played by the US in Middle East on the

agenda of democracy promotion and how did US brought its agenda to its logical end or otherwise.

U.S. Role in The Middle East

The term Middle East refers to Arab world, which also includes three non-Arab members of United Nations, that is, Turkey, Iran and Israel. American naval strategist Alfred Thayer Mahan toward the end of the nineteenth century coined the term.² Some commentators also include Pakistan and Afghanistan in their geographical definition of Middle East because these countries are also dominated by Islamic culture.³ But this is not a popular inclusion. For the purpose of this study the term refers collectively to the Asian countries of Bahrain, Cyprus, Iran, Iraq, Israel (and the Gaza Strip and West Bank), Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, Yemen and the African country of Egypt. Middle East is housing mostly Muslim states except Israel, and they are deemed deficit in conventional democracy as these are governed by authoritarian rule. Middle Eastern states, especially Arab states, share a common feature of being deficit in conventional democracy and crawling under authoritarian rule. Another common feature is that the whole region suffers from constant crisis & turmoil. The Arabian Peninsula is in a state of war, frequented by peace efforts, largely for reasons embedded in history—spanning over a century in some cases and decades in others. The Arab-Israel conflict over Palestine, the Kurdish issue, the Iran-Iraq war over Shat al Arab, Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, American occupation of Iraq, Israeli interventions and brutal violations of human rights and crimes against humanity in Lebanon, Ghaza, West Bank, and so on are some of the few instances of geopolitical fissures.

Owing to the importance of its vast petroleum reserves, its strategic location (connecting East and the West), vital sea route linking Mediterranean with Red Sea, and ever increasing hatred of Western culture, the region remained as the foremost concern for United States foreign policy decisions. Between two wars, Middle East remained challenging for the West. After World War I, the Ottoman Empire formally came to an end. The whole area was scraped by different tribal chiefs. Once the Second World War ended, the Oil factor made the problem even more complex. The Arab land once important for its strategic location, now converted into an energy supply line that could pump life into war devastated West and keep the pace of future development and technology upward. Britain having legal authority to decide for Middle East because of a Mandate, also got confused for a while. Despite all wartime alliances with World Zionist Congress, and having Balfour Declaration to the effect, tried hard to mold the Middle East postwar policy in a fashion that must not offend Arabs and Bevin's hardcore and pro-Arab stance was mere reflection of these new concerns. But the political realities of postwar Europe under the supreme command of US succeeded in planting a foreign body in the Middle East with a view to continue disturbing the homogeneous structure of the Arab World.

After World War II, in response to the famous "Iron Curtain" speech of Churchill, the United States defined itself as the leader of the democratic free world against communism and its consistent policies in Asia and Africa at least in the early beginning justified her as faithful successor of colonial West. However, Middle East was a different land to deal with where policies of protection and promotion of Zionism meant defying Arabs legitimate rights over Palestine. Disillusionment of

Muslim masses in Arabian Peninsula would have been a heavy cost for America to bear with, as it would have deprived her from the Oil and energy resources- considered to be the life line for world economy. Continued U.S. policy to support Israel might have offended the Arab nationalist/ democratic forces, who might have come to power and deny the Western World a free access to their oil and other natural resources. This apprehension prompted the West to put their full weight in preservation of their loyal regimes and warlords to control the masses and retard the acceleration of nationalist/ independent movements. Thus the policy devised was aimed at meeting the two conflicting ends i.e. to support non-democratic/authoritarian regimes in the region; while keeping Israel stronger (financially and militarily) than the collective power of the entire region. This US policy for Middle East, standing on two legs of Oil and Israel, proved fruitful in serving the US and Western interests nearly for four decades except for a short period of oil blockade after the 1973 Arab Israel war. The overriding national purpose of the United States was to contain and confront communism, which once extended itself to Middle East, polarized the region further. Truman's doctrine, Eisenhower Doctrine, 1956 Suez War, Baghdad Pact, US aid to Greece & Turkey, etc were few moves aimed at fragmenting the bond of unity, creating dissention and polarization amongst the ranks and files of the Arab nation. The initial pawns of this game were Israel, Shah of Iran, Kings of Jordan and Saudi Arabia, who were laterally joined by the Egyptian regimes of Anwar Sadat and Hossni Mubarak, and Iraqi regimes. The US and its allies continued their games of exploitation & plundering of Arab world's natural resources unabated. They strengthened Israel's military and political might on the one hand, while keeping the Arab nation socially underdeveloped, politically suppressed

and destabilized through internal divides on ethnic, religious, sectarian and linguistic bases. For decades the United States remained intoxicated with the fiction that unabated, repressive and authoritarian rule in the Middle East was the best way to prevent empowerment of masses, identification of national dignity and revivalism of socio-political values as enshrined in Islamic teachings, which are regarded fatal to the US and Western allies. The major casualties of such repression were the essentials of democracy. As a result of these repressive measures, neither tolerance, pluralism or free speech, nor independent judiciary or political parties could survive or thrive.

The game was first checkmated by the Iranian revolution and overthrow of America's main lieutenant Shah of Iran. Being fearful that this spirit may prove contagious U.S. along with its cronies in the region conspired Iran-Iraq war for eight years, which cost heavily in men and material. Subsequently during the gulf war of (1990-91), on the pretext of security of oil traffics USA inducted its forces in the region and got them stationed in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain. The Muslims were especially critical of US forces in Saudi Arabia as they deemed it a threat to their Holy Sites. The resentment was further aggravated by the US support to Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1992 and atrocities unleashed on the Palestinian Intafada in Ghaza and the West bank. The protests against the US were propagated as radicalizing Islam and revolt against the popular governments of the region. In the name of confronting radical Islam⁴, anti-democratic measures were employed and brutal forces were unleashed to suppress Islamic movements that were getting greater audience. Basic rights and freedoms were virtually denied in Algeria and Tunisia and severely curtailed in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and other parts of the Gulf by the authoritarian rulers with the

connivance of the USA- leader of the free world and the so-called champion of freedom & democracy. On the other hand, American governments continued harboring intimate relationship and strong ties with the Middle Eastern tyrannical regimes that opted to be instrumental in protecting American interests, ignoring their records on human rights, accountability and democracy. Once finding the non-violent, democratic process for change of state power-blocked, violence was left as the only alternative or the last resort to bring change or modernity to the state. Polarization flourished in closed political climate, prompting human rights violations and breeding new kind of resistance. Regimes opting to stay on the other side of the fence are subjected to threats of regime change in the name of forwarding democracy and freedom. Hence, US along with its armada of dictators went on supporting oppressive regimes and nurturing anti-democratic culture in the Muslim world in general and the Arab World in particular so long as they were promoting American imperialism. However, after 9/11 the U.S. felt obliged to revive this policy—repression is now replaced by pre-emption. Ultimate objective is still the same, that is, socio-political subjugation & economic exploitation of the Muslim world.

The 9/11 attacks and subsequent suicide operations at Casablanca, Riyadh, Istanbul, Madrid, shattered the conventional wisdom that the region's stability is anchored in the authoritarian regimes. According to the *Newsweek*, "The long twilight struggle we face, like that against communism, is both military and political . . . *Our task now is to make sure that radical Islam is not seen as an attractive option around the Muslim world. We can do this in different ways but most significantly by supporting Muslim moderates and secularists.*"⁵ Opposite to Fukuyama, Richard Clarke (the former counter terrorism

czar for both Bill Clinton and George W. Bush and nation's crisis manager on 9/11) in his post 9/11 memories "*Against All Enemies*" reveals how Washington's military and intelligence sachems consistently underestimated the threat that a growing global network of Islamic extremists posed to America's interests and security. It is in many ways a tougher opponent than the original threat we faced before September 11. America succeeded in defeating communism because it was an economic order and not a religious force. Bush by attacking Iraq has caused emergence of new generation after generations of Islamic fundamentalist, aiming to end our economic and political supremacy.⁶

"Ideological infiltrations by al Qaeda] would not inflame Islamic opinion and further radicalize Muslim youth into heightened hatred of America in the way invading Iraq has done. We and our values needed to be more appealing to Muslims than al Qaeda is. Far from addressing the popular appeal of the enemy that attacked us, Bush handed that enemy precisely what it wanted and needed, proof that America was at war with Islam, that we were the new Crusaders come to occupy Muslim land".⁷

Given linkage between reforms in the Middle East and stability, the United States and its Western allies have beefed up their efforts to divide the region according to their imperialist designs—that, is, by imposing the American brand of democratization and modernizations, of course, thro' bombs & bullets. Condemning Islam as a cause of socio- political backwardness and opposed to democratic norms i.e. tolerance, freedom of speech, accountability and women empowerment. This new scenario led to the opposite conclusions as follows:

- Political stagnation or status quo breeds disaffection-catalyzing ideologies of extremism and fundamentalism.
- Long term stability and security of the region depends upon the democratization & reformation of Middle East.
- American national interest⁸ urgently needs reformation of the Middle East to produce secularized modernistic societies under their self styled governments.

[It may be emphasized that these diplomatic expressions are meant to camouflage their ulterior motives—their motives are to weaken the Muslim world & exploit their natural resources, such as, oil & other minerals.]

Democratization Moves and Efforts

When Bush & Blair failed to produce any WMD or any evidence of active contacts between Iraq & al-Qaeda, they immediately declared that their real objective of invading Iraq was to remove Saddam & his tyranny & introduce instead Western style “freedom & democracy”. Their real aim, they declared, was to transform Iraq into a Model State for the entire Middle East. It may, however, be emphasized that this make-shift manifesto was as fake, false & fabricated as the original pretext for invading Iraq. All along their objective was to occupy Iraq & exploit its oil resources; divide the country on ethnic & sectarian grounds (that is, the Shiites, the Sunnis & the Kurds) so that Iraq may never pose any threat to Israel in future. President George W. Bush repeatedly pledged to support democratic movements in the Middle East. One of such occasion was his second inaugural speech and State of the Union address. He admonished the Western governments and their policies of

backing undemocratic, corrupt leaders in the Middle East and complemented steps taken towards democracy of some of his Arab allies governments. The only way to drain the swamp that produces terrorists is to promote democracy and reform the Middle East. Since September 11, the goal of democratizing the Arab Middle East has been elevated by the American government from a verbal ideal to national security imperative. Speaking before the UN General Assembly a day after the first anniversary of 9/11, Bush looked forward to the day when the people of Iraq will "join a democratic Afghanistan and a democratic Palestine, inspiring reforms throughout the Muslim world."⁹ The validity of the agenda was confirmed in July 2002 with the issue of 'the First Arab Human Development Report' (AHDR)¹⁰, depicting a very grim picture of the Arab world and calling for the political, economic and social reforms in the region. The report finds that the Arab world's ailments are rooted in the absence of freedom, women's empowerment and inappropriate system of education. It further asserts that lacking in these three areas impede the Arab world from reaching its true potential, and isolates it from the rest of the world. The administration made democracy a key component of the new National Security Strategy¹¹ of September 2002. In December 2002, the "US Middle East Partnership Initiative" was unveiled, standing on three pillars:¹²

- Engaging public and private sectors in providing jobs and employment opportunities with economic reform, business investment and private sector development;
- Partnering community leaders to initiate projects for strengthening civil society, expanding political participation and giving voice to women folk;

- Working with parents and educators in bridging the knowledge gap with better schools and more opportunities for higher education.

In February 2003, Bush declared that the "dramatic and inspiring example" of a liberated Iraq will "show the power of freedom to transform that vital region, by bringing hope and progress into the lives of millions."¹³ Following the 'the Middle East Partnership Initiative' in November 2004, came 'the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative'¹⁴ to realize new American and G-8 agenda in the Middle East. The AHDR played a key role in triggering the ongoing reformation debate, providing an important ground for the Western policy makers to gloss over their own reform proposals with an Arab "voice". For example, then-Secretary of State Colin Powell in his speech announcing 'the Middle East Partnership Initiative' quoted from the report, emphasizing that the words "[are] not my words . . . they have come from Arab experts who have looked deeply into these issues."

Bush Administration, while outlining the overall plan of defending the United States and its interest declared: "America must stand firmly for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity and the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property."¹⁵ "We will actively work to bring the hope of democracy, development, free markets, and free trade to every corner of the world"¹⁶ he claimed. In short the White House decided to change the socio-cultural and socio-political environment of the Arab World in line with the Western society, according to their own imperialist designs.¹⁷

Unfolding the Experience

At the confluence of internal pressures for change and US support for reform has, in fact, led to some cosmetic changes and liberalization in the Arab World. For instance:

- Bahrain convened its parliament for the first time in December 2002 since 1975. Her new constitution provides for a variety of individual rights, regularly scheduled elections, and the independence of the judiciary.¹⁸
- Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika reelected in April 2004 through balloting that met the European Union's standards.¹⁹
- Qatar promulgated a constitution in September 2004 guaranteeing some political rights and establishment of 45-seat Consultative Assembly mostly through direct election.
- Palestinian and Iraqi people freely elected their leaders in January 2005.
- 1st half of 2005 witnessed first-ever nationwide municipal elections in Saudi Arabia.
- 2005 saw an end to Syria's military occupation of Lebanon but July 2006 Israeli offensive in Lebanon and US apathy
- In May 2005, Kuwait's parliament approved the right of women to vote.
- Recent Egypt's political reform program intended to modernize and alter Egypt's electoral and political parties' laws, in order

to inject a greater measure of pluralism into the political system and permitting multiparty presidential elections.

- In January 2006 election Palestinian challenged the Western democratic values and exposed their desire of seeing democratic Middle East by feathering Hamas to head their government.²⁰

Though political transformation in countries as different as Lebanon and Palestine, Egypt, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia is colored through holding of parliamentary and municipal elections, promulgation of new constitutions and introduction of successive concessions by the ruling elites, yet risks of authoritarian backlashes, supported by the hidden and visible hands of long tested guardians at Washington have never diminished. A number of experts, favoring the maintenance of the status quo, the authoritarian regimes, in the Middle East, are challenging the ongoing democracy promotion agenda. Anthony Cordesman of Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington, says: “The notion that Iraq will suddenly emerge as a stable democracy and will change the rest of the Arab world to cross the line between neo-conservative and neo-crazy.”²¹ The main objection was voiced on October 2002 by four democracy specialists at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (CEIP) that “the Middle East today lacks the domestic conditions that set the stage for democratic change elsewhere.”²² However, Colin L. Powell rejected the condescending notion that freedom will not grow in the Middle East or that there is any region of the world that cannot support democracy.²³

Chas. W. Freeman, Jr. President, Middle East Policy Council echoed similar fears while speaking²⁴ in 34th Capitol Hill Conference Series on

“U.S. Middle East Policy Imperial Dreams: Can the Middle East Be Transformed?”

“...Democratization may well produce de-secularization, a turn toward religious, faith-based politics in Iraq and anti-American policies that would undermine the ability of rulers elsewhere in the region to continue to cooperate with the United States. And finally, some argue that Iraq is becoming not the death ground of terrorism but a magnet for terrorists, a training ground for jihadis and a place for target practice on Americans”.

Arab’s Perception of Western Motives

It is indeed very important to have a look on the way Arab masses view all these “Democratization” efforts. West’s constant and consistent manipulation in the Middle Eastern affairs; perpetuating injustice, protecting and promoting authoritarian regimes, depriving people from their inherent socio- political rights, foreign control of their resources has kept Middle East in turmoil since long. *This new experiment is seen as cultural invasion in the name of enlightenment and modernization, propagating secularizations in the name of modernity.* Once the people witnessed that their Islamic values are being trampled, disgraced, caricatured, distorted, misrepresented, corrupted in the name of progress and enlightenment, un-Islamic concepts, unethical practices are being forcibly thrust upon them in the name of ground realities²⁵, they stood up to resist the West and their local agents. Resurgence of Islamic revivalist movements in the area is a logical consequence of prolonged period of injustice, disdain to naked aggressions and flouting of their national sovereignty, resistance to further exploitation of their resources and their righteous desire to cherish self-rule. They have realized that

existing rampant unemployment, political and socio-economic turmoil and an overarching sense of despair is due to evil spirits of oppression, despotism, tyranny resulted by the un-holy alliance of corrupt rulers of the land and their western masters. The AHDR report as per the perception of Arab masses is just a propaganda tool used for cultural crusade. The report largely evades a key issue, the role of Islam in Arab politics and society and offers an implicit criticism of the role of Islamists through its references to an intolerant social environment. Taking cover of this report the, United States is attempting to impose reform on the region from the outside, reforms that are totally alien to the socio-cultural environment of the Arab society and tailored to suit its own national interests. At the same time Western observers have made much of the waning of the Islamic liberals' fortunes in the face of the rising revivalist or "fundamentalist" Islam. This has been cited as an evidence of Islam's anti- democratic nature, ambivalent to modernization and reformation.

Democracy promotion in Arab world was not invented by the Bush administration. It was enunciated under the Clinton's doctrine of "democratic enlargement", that is, hinged on the export of "market capitalism" and American "values". In the case of the Arab world, it was never really about democracy but to train a few judges here and there, "build the capacity" of Arab parliaments (which at maximum means nothing but buying them nice and latest computers, help Arab women come to Washington and be free. George W. Bush's Arab world policy picked up where Clinton left, and linked promotion of freedom and democracy to the active use of American military might without realizing that democratic values cannot be imposed by force. Owen Harries in his article, "The failure of the Bush Doctrine" observes that Bush Doctrine

was the product of three interacting conditions: “American hegemony, American exceptionalism, and American outrage. The first encouraged the belief that anything the United States willed was achievable. The second insisted that what should be willed was the remaking of the world in America’s own image. The third created an enormously powerful pressure for immediate and drastic action”.²⁶ He further quotes Robert Osgood (late): “Military force is not only ineffective as an instrument for achieving transcendent moral ends: it is morally dangerous as well ... the use of force with a view to such grandiose ends tends to become an end in itself, no longer subject to either moral or practical restrictions, but merely to the intoxication with abstract ideals.”²⁷ Troops, bombs and tanks in Iraq along with massive asset theft and non-transparent privatization supplemented with quieter methods of cultural transformation in Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia and Egypt, considered necessary for transforming those arrogant and angry Arabs into submissive American friendly, market-oriented, and politically insensitive consumers of American products.

The Latest Situation of the Democratization Process

The analysis of ongoing responses and reaction predicts that the political rise of Islamists, the chaos in Iraq with the newfound Shiite power & growing Iranian influence there, and the sense among some rulers that the Bush administration has covertly put the brakes on democratization. It conforms to our thesis that these governments do not want reform and cannot reforms even if they so desire. The reason is they know that real reform will lead to their own removal from power. Once they allow freedom of expression and freedom of assembly, they will start losing control. The slowdown came at a critical time for the Bush

administration. His arrogance suffered a serious set-back in Iraq. Colin Powel rightly advised him that probably it would be easy to invade & occupy Iraq; but very difficult to govern this country and that too in the heart of Muslim world. But Bush was not willing to entertain a sane advice. Many Arab leaders are convinced that the American public is losing its appetite for major interventions, so they no longer feel the U.S. pressure for reforms. In fact, the death & destruction that they have witnessed in Iraq have disillusioned them from both democracy & reform.

Therefore, it is felt like everything is going back to the old track, and everyone seems convinced that there was no possibility of change in the governments. It was just a reaction to pressure of the international media and the politically motivated marketing stunt of the U.S:

- In Egypt, the government of President Hosni Mubarak, which allowed a limited space to the opposition in the first contested presidential elections last year, has delayed municipal elections by two years. The delay is to be seen in the backdrop of the Muslim Brotherhood's respectable gains in parliamentary elections of 2005, despite the government's violent efforts to stop the group's supporters. The delay is a conscious move to retain the monopoly on power and an effort to halt the Brotherhood's promotion of an independent candidate for president in 2011.
- Bush, who proclaimed democracy and free elections as his primary solution to Middle East's ills, instead of praising the rise of democracy, refused to accept the outcome of Palestinian elections. Because landslide winning of Hamas in Palestinian elections were not inimical to the interests of US and Israel.

Bush praised 'power of democracy' but did not seem to fully accept the outcome of elections, saying that US would not deal with political party that advocates destruction of Israel. The same case is with Hizb Ullah, that is a favorite for the Lebanon's voters but not acceptable to the US.

- The government continues to restrict the creation of opposition parties, and judges who questioned the integrity of the recent parliamentary elections have become the focus of criminal investigations.
- In Jordan, where King Abdullah II has made political change and democratization mandates, proponents see their hand weakened, with a document advocating that change may be put on the back burner. The king, having the jurisdiction to appoint the prime minister, went through three governments last year.
- Parliamentary elections in Qatar were postponed again, to 2007, while advocacy groups say that laws regulating the emergence of nongovernmental organizations have stymied their development.
- In Saudi Arabia, King Abdullah has refused calls that the country's consultative council be elected, while the arrest of Muhsin al-Awaji, a government critic, has raised questions about how far the country's newfound openness would go.
- In Syria, promises for reforms have been followed by a harsh crackdown on the opposition.
- In Yemen, the government has cracked down on the news media ahead of presidential elections this year, intimidating journalists who had been considered overcritical of the government.

- In Bahrain, where sectarian tensions between the majority Shiite population and the Sunni-dominated government prevail, a flurry of official maneuvers apparently intended to reduce the Shiite vote.

The failure of the US to export democracy is very much clear by all available sources of information and sociopolitical indicators. The policies of Western governments and international institutions regarding democratization in the Arab world have ranged from what one might term "utter neglect" to deliberate efforts to strengthen authoritarian regimes against the forces of democratic change. The experiment not only failed to produce any sustainable or sizable impact but also have no credibility within US and Middle East. Increase in retaliation against Western and US forces and products, ever growing sympathy with "Islamic Fundamentalism", and outright rejection of American values. Promotion of democracy and development of democratic institutions in the Arab world is likely to increase the risk of revolutionary upheaval and emergence of regimes openly hostile to the United States. Therefore, encouraging democracy in the Middle East cannot be considered in the best interests of the United States and all efforts will be made to protect puppet authoritarian regimes in the region. However, democracy promotion is likely to be harnessed for blackmailing existing rulers or masterminding regime changes in countries like Syria, Iran, and others trying to defy American Imperialism.

Why America failed in his democracy promotion agenda and setting pace for genuine and viable democracy in the Arab world? The reason rests in the reliability of American foreign policy, which is laden with hypocrisy. America, on one side uses its military might even with inhuman arrogance to remove Saddam and Taliban from Iraq and

Afghanistan for the promotion of peace and democracy in the world. But refused to welcome the legitimate and popular election of Hamas and Hizbullah, in a region riddled with monarchies and dictatorships. The same attitude persists when it comes to the dictatorship of Musharraf and Hosni Mubarak in Pakistan and Egypt. Democracy is well and good when the right side wins. Iraq may be allowed to be exceptional because the US has no choice there, but neither Ahmadinejad in Iran nor Hizbullah in Lebanon or Hamas in Palestine are on the right side as far as the US is concerned. For ordinary Arabs Mr. Bush is simply a hypocrite and for the politically savvy his mission of "freedom" is a disguise of his corporate drive and lust for power. However, One needs no poll, scientific or otherwise, to conclude that the majority of Arabs are in desperate need of democratic measures. They need democracy for their own sake, not for the sake of legitimizing an illegal occupation or to tout the virtues of a superpower.

Conclusion

The summing up of the central dilemma of democratic reforms in Arab countries is very simple: Power of the presidents and kings continues to untrammelled by the limits imposed by effective parliaments and independent judiciaries. It does not mean that there is no desire for democracy amongst the Arabs, what is lacking is the absence of broad-based political parties, political organizations and social movements pushing for democracy. American and Western response to the winners of the elections held so far also reveals their hypocritical attitude based on double standard.

Foregoing debate in view, majority of the Arab Muslims are of the opinion that real solution to their miseries rests on the deportation of

Western values and immediate revival and reformation of true Islamic values. Emergence of such perception has made all political conflicts of the region three dimensional, involving revivalist movements, oppressive regimes, and the US protecting the oppressive rulers. West is prompted by the sense of fear that revivalists anxious to reassert themselves might come to power and deny the Western World a free access to their oil and other natural resources. This fear has prompted the West to intervene in Middle East for preservation of their interest. The West is conspiring with the “help of enormous funds and huge financial inputs to produce a secularized, modernistic, docile, spineless variety of Islam unable to challenge, pose any danger to, and be able to see eye to eye with any country, government, culture or civilization”.²⁸

End Notes

¹. A national interest is a public good of concern to all or most Americans; a vital national interest is one that they are willing to expend blood and treasure to defend. National interests usually combine security and material concerns, on the one hand, and moral and ethical concerns, on the other. See, Samuel P. Huntington, 'The Erosion of American National Interests,' *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 5 (September-October 1997)

². Middle East, Microsoft® Encarta® Encyclopedia 2003

³. Jonathan R. White, *Terrorism: An Introduction*, 3rd ed. (Wadsworth Pub, 2002). Available at http://www.wadsworth.com/criminaljustice_d/special_features/ext/terrorism_site090802/content/articles.html

⁴. Whereas, at the end of Cold War main stream of US and Western scholarship didn't not find Islam or Radical Islam as serious threat for Western dominance. In '*The End of History*,' Francis Fukuyama considered the threat of "radical Islam" as manageable. Unlike Communism, he pointed out; it has no ideological appeal beyond the borders of the Muslim world. "Radical Islam," in other words, posed no threat to the West.

⁵. *Newsweek*, September 24, 2001

⁶. Clarke Richard A., *Against All Enemies: Inside America's war on terror*, 2004, Free Press, New York.

⁷. *ibid.* P.245-246

⁸. A national interest is a public good of concern to all or most Americans; a vital national interest is one, which they are willing to expend blood and treasure to defend. National interests usually combine security and material concerns, on the one hand, and moral and ethical concerns, on the other. See, Samuel P.

Huntington, 'The Erosion of American National Interests,' *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 76, no. 5 (September-October 1997)

9. George W. Bush, Address to the United Nations General Assembly, 12 September 2002. (<http://usinfo.state.gov/topical/pol/usandun/bushun912.htm>)

¹⁰. Arab Human Development Report, 2002.
<http://www.undp.org/rbas/ahdr/english2002.html> (26th September 2005)

11. President Bush, National Security Strategy of the United States of America, 20 September 2002 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html>)

¹². Colin L. Powell, *The US-Middle East Partnership Initiative: Building Hope for the Years Ahead*, Heritage Lecture #772, 12 December 2002. (<http://www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/hl772.cfm>)

¹³. *President Discusses the Future of Iraq*, 26 February 2003.
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/02/20030226-11.html>

¹⁴. The US State Department <http://www.state.gov/e/eb/rls/fs/33380.htm>

¹⁵. President Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*, 20 September 2002 (<http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nssall.html>)

¹⁶. P. J. Dobriansky [US Under Secretary of State for Global Affairs], "Promoting democracy in the 21st century: an essential tool against terrorism", Remarks to the Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs, February 9, 2004, (www.state.gov.)

17. T. [Cofman] Wittes, "Arab democracy, American ambivalence. Will Bush's rhetoric about transforming the Middle East be matched by American deeds?", *The Weekly Standard*, February 23, 2004.

¹⁸. Rob Sobhani wrote in the *Washington Times* on November 25, 2002, that "the United States has a vested interest in the success of King Hamad's reform movement because tiny Bahrain can be a model for the rest of the Arab world, especially in neighboring Saudi Arabia

¹⁹ Annual Business Economic and Political Review: Algeria
Volume 1, Issue: Emerging Algeria 2006 (January 2006), <http://www.atypon-link.com/OXF/doi/abs/10.5555/eal06.2006.1.2006.13>

²⁰ Now Bush and European Union are not accepting the election result in Palestine. It has exposed the shallowness of President Bush words which he

made before the United Nations General Assembly, on 12th September 2002. “ I look forward to the day when the people of Iraq will join a democratic Afghanistan and a democratic Palestine, inspiring reforms throughout the Muslim world.”

²¹. *USA Today*, 11 November 2002.

²². Marina Ottaway, Thomas, Amy Hawthorne, Daniel "Democratic Mirage in the Middle East," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Policy Brief 20, October 2002, p. 3. <http://www.ceip.org/files/pdf/policybrief20.pdf>

²³. Colin L. Powell, *Heritage Lecture #772*, 12 December 2002. <http://www.heritage.org/Research/MiddleEast/hl772.cfm>

²⁴. http://www.mepc.org/public_asp/forums_chcs/34.html

²⁵. Dr. Fazlur Rehman, *Leading Light for the Ummah*, Dawn, February 9, 2006. Also available at: <http://www.dawn.com/2006/02/09/op.htm>

²⁶. Owen Harries, “The failure of the Bush Doctrine”, *The Age*, October 28, 2005. Available at: <http://www.theage.com.au/news/opinion/the-failure-of-the-bush-doctrine/2005/10/27/1130400307818.html>

²⁷. *ibid*

²⁸. *ibid*

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