*Proceedings of the 2005 Weinberg Founders Conference*

# Debates and Decisions: Key Challenges for America in the Middle East

September 23–25, 2005

THE WASHINGTON INSTITUTE *for Near East Policy*

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The Washington Institute for Near East Policy
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## Editor's Note

These conference proceedings include summaries of presentations and panel discussions. The summaries should not be cited as actual transcripts of speaker remarks. The presentation made by keynote speaker Sallai Meridor is included as an edited transcript and may be cited as such.

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# Preface

One year after President George W. Bush's stirring second inaugural, the United States faces a series of difficult challenges in the Middle East. Some of these concern execution of policy, such as the speed with which trained Iraqi security forces can deploy to the field and the efficiency with which international economic assistance translates into tangible improvements for Palestinians in Gaza. More profound are fundamental questions about the definition of policy itself. These include:

- Deciding whether existing benchmarks for progress in Iraq are appropriate and what, if any, changes are necessary to achieve U.S. strategic objectives there.
- Weighing the proper balance of urgency, effort, and pressure exerted toward the objectives of expanding democracy and ensuring security in key Middle Eastern states such as Egypt.
- Assessing whether and how the United States should engage Islamist political parties, groups, and movements in the context of America's regional pro-democracy efforts.
- Determining how to achieve progress toward a negotiated two-state solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that both affirms the historic importance of Israel's disengagement from Gaza and the northern West Bank, and also recognizes the complex links between security, international commitment, and Israeli and Palestinian domestic politics.
- Defining a response to Iran's nuclear ambitions—and, more broadly, shaping policy toward the Islamic Republic—given that questions surrounding the future of the country's moderate forces have been superseded by the election of a hardline president.

To discuss these topics, The Washington Institute convened its annual Weinberg Founders Conference in September 2005. In plenary sessions, breakout discussions, and hallway conversations, a select group of policymakers, diplomats, journalists, and experts—together with the Institute's

■ *Robert Satloff is executive director of The Washington Institute and author of* The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror: Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East *(2004).*

Board of Trustees—addressed an agenda of issues critical to U.S. Middle East policymaking. Hopefully, these proceedings—which include edited transcripts and summaries of remarks delivered by many of the distinguished participants—will help improve both the quality of debate surrounding these topics and the policies that emerge as a result.

Robert Satloff
*Executive Director*

# The Speakers

**Khairi Abaza** is a visiting fellow at The Washington Institute, focusing on Egyptian politics and democratic reform. Previously, he served as Cultural Committee secretary and Foreign Affairs Committee member for the Egyptian Wafd Party. Mr. Abaza holds a master's degree in Near and Middle Eastern studies from the University of London, where he is currently pursuing a doctorate in politics.

**Nabil Amr**, The Washington Institute's Ira Weiner fellow, is founder and general manager of the Palestinian newspaper *al-Hayat al-Jadida* and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council representing the Hebron district. Previously, he served as minister of parliamentary affairs and minister of information in the cabinet of then–prime minister Mahmoud Abbas.

**Samuel Berger** is chairman of Stonebridge International, LLC, an international strategic advisory firm based in Washington, D.C. Previously, he served as national security advisor and deputy national security advisor in the Clinton administration.

**Robert Blackwill** is president of the international consulting firm Barbour, Griffith, and Rogers. Previously, he served in the George W. Bush administration as deputy national security advisor for strategic planning, presidential envoy to Iraq, and U.S. ambassador to India.

**Soner Cagaptay** is a senior fellow and director of the Turkish Research Program at The Washington Institute and an Ertegun Professor at Princeton. He frequently writes commentary for major domestic and international print media, including the *Los Angeles Times*, *Washington Post*, *Milliyet*, *Guardian*, and *Haaretz*, and often appears on CNN and al-Jazeera.

**Patrick Clawson** is deputy director for research at The Washington Institute and senior editor of *Middle East Quarterly*. An economist who focuses on Iran, he served previously as a senior research professor at

National Defense University's Institute for National Strategic Studies and as a research economist at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank. He is coauthor, with Simon Henderson, of the Washington Institute study *Reducing Vulnerability to Middle East Energy Shocks: A Key Element in Strengthening U.S. Energy Security* (2005).

**Alastair Crooke** is founder and director of Conflicts Forum. Previously, he served as security advisor to Javier Solana, the European Union's high representative for foreign affairs. His worldwide contributions in the realm of conflict resolution include key roles in facilitating the Palestinian ceasefires of 2002 and 2003 and in negotiating an end to the siege of the Church of the Nativity in 2002.

**Thomas Donnelly** is the resident fellow in defense and security policy studies and principal author of the *National Security Outlook* series at the American Enterprise Institute. Previously, he served as a professional staff member for the House Committee on National Security and as an editor for various military newspapers. He is author of *The Military We Need* (2005).

**Michael Herzog**, a brigadier general in the Israel Defense Forces, is a visiting military fellow at The Washington Institute. Previously, he served as the senior military aide and advisor to Israel's defense minister (2001–2004), and as an Israeli representative at peace negotiations with Palestinians, Jordanians, and Syrians at the Wye Plantation, Camp David, and Taba.

**Semih Idiz** is diplomacy editor for CNN-Turk and a columnist for the Turkish newspapers *Milliyet* and *Turkish Daily News*. His commentary has appeared in major international print media, including the *Times* (London), *Financial Times*, and *Foreign Policy*. He also appears regularly on BBC World, CNN, Voice of America, National Public Radio, Deutsche Welle, al-Jazeera, and various Israeli media organizations.

**Ibrahim Karawan** is director of the Middle East Center and a professor of political science at the University of Utah. Previously, he served as a senior fellow, directing staff member, and head of the Middle East Studies Program at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London. He is author of *The Islamist Impasse* (1998).

**Robert Leiken** is director of the Immigration and National Security Program at the Nixon Center and a nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution. His most recent book is *Bearers of Global Jihad: Immigration and National Security after 9-11* (2004).

**Matthew Levitt** is a senior fellow and director of the Terrorism Studies Program at The Washington Institute. Previously, he served as an intel-

ligence analyst with the FBI providing tactical and strategic support for counterterrorism operations. He is author of *Targeting Terror: U.S. Policy toward Middle Eastern State Sponsors and Terrorist Organizations, Post–September 11* (The Washington Institute, 2002) and *Exposing Hamas: Funding Terror under the Cover of Charity* (forthcoming in 2006).

**Robert Malley** is director of the Middle East and North Africa Program at the International Crisis Group. Previously, he served in the Clinton administration as special assistant to the president for Arab-Israeli affairs; as executive assistant to the national security advisor; and as director for democracy, human rights, and humanitarian affairs on the National Security Council staff.

**Sallai Meridor**, a former visiting fellow at The Washington Institute, recently completed his term as chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, a post he had held since 1998. In that position, he spearheaded initiatives in the field of immigration to Israel, especially from Latin America, Ethiopia, France, and North America.

**Jonathan Morrow** is a program officer in the Rule of Law Department at the U.S. Institute of Peace. Previously, he worked for Iraqi participants in the negotiations that produced the country's 2004 Transitional Administrative Law. He also advised the Asia Foundation and the government of Afghanistan on law reform and constitutional implementation.

**Hala Mustafa** is editor-in-chief of *al-Dimuqratiya* (Democracy), an Egyptian political quarterly published by *al-Ahram*. A former visiting fellow at The Washington Institute, she is a frequent commentator on politics and democratic reform in Egypt. She is also a visiting lecturer at the Egyptian Foreign Ministry's Institute of Diplomatic Training and the Nasser Egyptian Military Academy, as well as a professor of economics and political science at Cairo University.

**Jacques Pitteloud** is coordinator of intelligence for the Swiss government. Previously, he served as a reserve lieutenant colonel (General Staff) in the Swiss Armed Forces and commanded a mechanized infantry battalion in the First Tank Brigade. He also worked in the Swiss Strategic Intelligence Service (SND) and as a personal advisor to two defense ministers. Currently, he is overseeing the tactical training of combat brigades at army headquarters.

**William Quandt** is the Edward R. Stettinius chair in the University of Virginia's Department of Politics. Previously, he served as a senior fellow in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at the Brookings Institution. The author of *Peace Process: American Diplomacy and the Arab-Israeli Conflict since 1967*

(2001), he worked in the Carter administration as a staff member on the National Security Council and was actively involved in negotiations that led to the Camp David Accords and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty.

**Dennis Ross** is counselor and Ziegler distinguished fellow at The Washington Institute and author of *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* (2004). Previously, he served as special Middle East coordinator in the Clinton administration, director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff in the George H. W. Bush administration, and director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council in the Reagan administration.

**Gary Samore** is vice president of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Program on Global Security and Sustainability. Previously, he served as director of studies and senior fellow for nonproliferation at the International Institute for Strategic Studies. In the Clinton administration, he served as special assistant to the president and senior director for nonproliferation and export controls at the National Security Council.

**Robert Satloff** is executive director of The Washington Institute. An expert on Arab and Islamic politics and U.S. Middle East policy, he is author of *The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror: Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East* (The Washington Institute, 2004) and *In Search of Righteous Arabs* (forthcoming in 2006).

**Mohsen Sazegara** is a visiting fellow at The Washington Institute, where he focuses on Iranian politics. A founder of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps and managing director of Iranian National Radio under Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, he later emerged as a leader of the movement for secular democracy in Iran. When his candidacy for president was rejected by the Guardian Council in 2001, he initiated a campaign for a popular referendum to replace the Iranian constitution. He was subsequently jailed, went on two hunger strikes, and was released for health reasons. Mr. Sazegara was recently sentenced in absentia to seven more years in Iranian prison.

**Jeffrey White** is the Berrie defense fellow at The Washington Institute, specializing in the military and security affairs of Iraq and the Levant. Prior to joining the Institute, he completed a thirty-four-year career with the Defense Intelligence Agency, serving in a variety of senior analytical and leadership positions, writing extensively for senior defense officials (including the secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff), and participating in operational and policy planning.

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# The 'Freedom Agenda' in the Middle East: Balancing Democracy and Stability

# The 'Freedom Agenda' in the Middle East: Balancing Democracy and Stability

*Robert Blackwill and Samuel Berger*

Summary

## Robert Blackwill

Although the Middle East is more unstable and dangerous than it has been in many years, it is also in the midst of its most promising period in decades. How the region moves forward through the next several years will depend to a certain extent on American diplomacy.

In light of the Middle East's troublesome history—with milestones such as the 1973 war, Iran's Islamic Revolution, and al-Qaeda's growing global assault—the Bush administration came to a strategic view that it was time for fundamental change in the U.S. approach to the region. Accordingly, the administration decided to actively support democratic trends in the Greater Middle East. Critiques of this policy have centered on several different arguments, many of which do not hold up under scrutiny:

- **Arabs do not want democracy and are incapable of exercising it.** This argument contradicts the actual Arab response to elections. For example, although the most recent parliamentary election in Iraq was held at a time when voters could legitimately fear being killed at the ballot box, they nevertheless turned out at a greater rate than voters in recent American elections.
- **The Bush administration is ignoring local history and culture.** If the administration were in fact overlooking local history and culture, that would be a mistake. It is not doing so, however. Rather, the administration is choosing to emphasize the fact that all Iraqis, regardless of their local history and culture, want choice.
- **The administration's policy undermines stability in the Middle East.** This argument ignores the region's longstanding instability. The administration is trying a new policy aimed at changing that bloody history into a better one.
- **The administration's policy will allow hostile regimes to come to power democratically.** Although Washington may not get along well

*Robert Blackwill, president of the international consulting firm Barbour, Griffith, and Rogers, previously served in the George W. Bush administration as deputy national security advisor for strategic planning, presidential envoy to Iraq, and U.S. ambassador to India.*

with every democratic government in the world, the fact remains that those countries posing the greatest problems for the United States have without exception been nondemocratic.

How does one measure the success or failure of President Bush's policy toward the Greater Middle East? One way of doing so is to ask whether various trend lines in the region are moving in a positive or negative direction. Broadly speaking, is the situation in the Middle East better or worse than when George W. Bush took office? In general, the trend lines since the September 11 attacks have been positive. Afghanistan, no longer the epicenter of terrorism, has held two successful elections, and Iraq is in the midst of a constitutional process. Pessimists argued that Iraq could not move toward more democratic institutions, but such voices have been proven wrong time and time again since the Transitional Administrative Law was implemented. Local elections and other positive changes have also emerged in Saudi Arabia, with the kingdom offering increased cooperation in the war against Islamist terrorism. Egyptians and Palestinians have recently held elections as well.

Although these developments are based more on local initiative than American design, the United States is having a major impact. The challenge that has been unleashed by history, by the president's policies, and by local factors will last well beyond the current administration.

■ *Samuel Berger, chairman of Stonebridge International, LLC, previously served as national security advisor and deputy national security advisor in the Clinton administration.*

## Samuel Berger

THE DREAM OF FREEDOM is at the core of American values and is shared by men and women worldwide. When individuals have the ability to control their own lives, communities become stronger, countries become more prosperous, and regions become more peaceful. The absence of freedom has taken a grievous toll on the Middle East. The lack of political breathing space has bred anger and resentment, which groups like al-Qaeda feed on.

Fortunately, polls suggest that high percentages of citizens in Muslim-majority nations value democratic rights and believe that democracy can work in their countries. As Turkey, Indonesia, Senegal, Albania, and other nations have shown, pluralism and reform are the enemies not of Islam, but rather of radicals who prey on public frustration. As long as freedom fails to flourish in the Middle East, the region will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready to be exported.

Although the Bush administration's basic premise is sound, its execution is troubling. In some cases, its policies have fallen short. It is not enough to have moral clarity if moral authority is lacking. The example of U.S. democracy has always been the most important arrow in Washington's quiver when it comes to promoting liberty and human rights. Currently, however, the United States is very unpopular, even toxic, in the Middle East.

This anti-American sentiment is rooted in many factors, some beyond our capacity or willingness to change. Nevertheless, the manner in which

Washington pursues the freedom agenda needs to be adjusted. The Bush administration has applied its rhetoric of freedom far too broadly. This trend began with the Iraq war, which was justified as a preemptive strike against a potentially catastrophic threat: Saddam Hussein's capacity to provide weapons of mass destruction to groups like al-Qaeda. The administration's rationale was revised into a fight for freedom only after the coalition failed to find such weapons. Suggesting that the war was originally launched to bring freedom to the region can only breed cynicism about American rhetoric and intentions.

If freedom becomes merely a slogan for U.S. foreign policy writ large, both the word itself and the ideals it represents will be confused and diminished. In his January 2005 inaugural address, President Bush set out the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in the world. But the reality of foreign policymaking does not always align with ideals. Leaders are constantly obliged to make tough choices, as seen in Pakistan and Russia. Far from generating an international chorus of support, U.S. rhetoric that contradicts U.S. actions will only breed distrust among the people of the world.

Another flaw in the administration's freedom agenda is the bad example set by certain U.S. actions. It is more difficult for a U.S. ambassador in Egypt or Saudi Arabia to deliver a démarche on torture when the world sees pictures of abuse at Abu Ghraib prison, or when our own government approves interrogation methods that America has traditionally denounced as torture. Because the United States is the standard setter, it has a special obligation to practice what it preaches.

The administration's democracy promotion strategy has also suffered from a lack of patience. The tone of the president's inaugural address suggested that regime change is the simplest road to freedom. The better approach would be to emphasize that democracy must be built from the bottom up. Afghanistan could have been a model of freedom in the region, but instead we diverted our attention and resources to Iraq.

Moreover, the administration has not adequately answered the question, "Democracy for whom?" In theory, democracy promotion should extend to everyone who plays by the rules, even if the results are unpleasant. For example, if free elections were held tomorrow in Saudi Arabia, who would win? The royal family has 25,000 members, and the unemployment rate among young Saudi men is 40 percent. That volatile mix could produce electoral results unfavorable to the United States. While Washington need not support the political inclusion of Hamas and other groups that foment violence, democracy promotion should probably extend to most peaceful Islamist parties, even if the United States disagrees with their political views.

How, then, can the United States gain the moral authority that would allow it to advance the ideals of freedom and democracy more effectively? The best place to start is by shrinking the disparity between rhetoric and reality. This means less talk about toppling tyrants and more focus

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on reforms that allow homegrown movements to make progress toward freedom of assembly, freedom of speech, women's rights, and other key elements of democracy. The United States can achieve its goals in the region only if it assists those who are trying to build modern societies that are true to their traditions. The U.S. freedom policy must be embedded within an overall global posture that earns international respect. Rather than isolating itself, the United States must marginalize the extremists and enemies of democracy. Otherwise, when the winds of freedom finally blow through the Middle East, they may carry to power not new friends, but more radical regimes.

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# U.S. Policy toward Islamists: Engagement versus Isolation

# U.S. Policy toward Islamists: Engagement versus Isolation

*Robert Malley and Robert Satloff*

Summary

## Robert Malley

In dealing with political actors in the Middle East, the United States should engage certain types of Islamists but not others. Historically, Washington has followed this policy appropriately by engaging Islamists within the Saudi regime, the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), and the Islamic Dawa Party in Iraq. The United States should continue its policy of not engaging organizations that close allies have banned or that appear on its own terrorism lists, such as Hizballah, Hamas, and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt.

In order to distinguish between types of Islamists, one must first define their views. Islamist movements are those that actively support and promote beliefs, prescriptions, laws, and policies that they deem to be Islamic in character. Islam is a religion of law and public policy—naturally, then, some view it as a set of prescriptions on how the polity should be organized. Arab regimes have often attempted to suppress Islamist movements, but this pressure has only spurred more people to gravitate toward such movements. Islamists now represent the most vibrant form of opposition politics in the Arab world, and it is impossible to discuss democracy without coming to terms with them. Indeed, the most significant debates in the Arab world occur not between jihadi Islamism and secular, pro-Western politics, but rather within the Islamist movements themselves.

One can distinguish among three types of Islamists. Political Islamists—including the current ruling party in Turkey and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, Jordan, and Syria—aim to achieve political power through elections. Missionary Islamists—such as the Salafists—pursue social influence in order to purify the system and Islamicize individuals and social mores. Finally, jihadi Islamists engage directly in violent struggle, whether locally (against impious regimes or foreign occupation) or as part of the global jihad against Western domination.

U.S. policy is currently fixated on political Islam, but the apolitical forms of Islamism are far more dangerous. While missionary Islamists

*Robert Malley, director of the International Crisis Group's Middle East and North Africa Program, previously served in the Clinton administration as special assistant to the president for Arab-Israeli affairs and director for democracy, human rights, and humanitarian affairs on the National Security Council staff.*

and jihadis gravitate toward violence, political Islamists are the most competent in understanding democracy. Indeed, many political Islamists have recently come to respect the concepts of constitutionalism, rule of law, and judicial independence. Although this apparent shift may be tactical—an acknowledgment of the advantages to be gained from forming coalitions with liberals and secularists—political Islamists have nevertheless been brought closer to the values of many international human-rights organizations, which typically do not distinguish between secular and religious political detainees in their advocacy.

U.S. strategy in the Arab and Muslim worlds should not limit itself to supporting a select few secularists and liberals while excluding other figures. Instead, Washington should advocate structural reform (e.g., separation between military and civilian power; independent judiciaries; empowered parliaments) that would benefit all parties, not just one. If the United States attempts to support Arab secularists and liberals alone, its efforts are unlikely to help these groups. Alternatively, Washington could promote the cause of political Islamists within the wider Islamist camp.

Moreover, the United States should not attempt to impede local regimes from legitimizing Islamist movements. With regard to Hamas, Washington must set clear conditions for engagement with the group. Forestalling any possibility of such engagement and actively preventing the group's inclusion would be a mistake. Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas's strategy entails incorporating Hamas in order to sustain the ceasefire, and the United States should not second-guess that policy. Similarly, Washington should not pick and choose human-rights violations with which to take issue. In particular, the United States's habit of advocating on behalf of secularists but not defending religionists against violations undermines American policy in the region. Local perceptions of U.S. policies have a major impact on the ground.

■ *Robert Satloff, executive director of The Washington Institute, is author of* The Battle of Ideas in the War on Terror: Essays on U.S. Public Diplomacy in the Middle East *(The Washington Institute, 2004) and* In Search of Righteous Arabs *(forthcoming in 2006).*

## Robert Satloff

The discussion of U.S. engagement of Islamists must be divided into a theoretical and a policy question. The theoretical question concerns whether Islamist parties are part of the solution to the Middle East's democracy deficit or part of the problem. The policy question concerns what sort of relations Washington should have with these parties.

Regarding the theoretical question, Islamism is the greatest ideological challenge America faces in the world today. Islamism and democracy are, by their very definition, antithetical. Islamists are those who advocate the creation of states based on the imposition of a certain interpretation of Muslim law, *sharia,* in place of manmade law. For some Islamists, gaining power is a step toward two key goals: erasing the boundaries between Muslim states in order to re-create the caliphate, and reversing modern notions of citizenship in order to establish the *umma* as the preeminent actor in international affairs.

To illustrate these points, consider the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. As the group's own website (www.ikhwanonline.com) states, "If democracy means that people decide who leads them, then [we] accept it. If it means that people can change the laws of Allah and follow what they wish to follow, then it is not acceptable."

Recently, much has been made of the differences between violent and nonviolent Islamist groups. The implication is that, by renouncing violence, a group essentially punches its entry ticket into the democratic game. Yet, one must keep in mind three important facts. First, Islamists view violence as a tactic, not a strategy. The Islamist strategy is unchanging: to transform existing regimes into *sharia*-based states. Some groups use revolutionary means (i.e., violence) to achieve this revolutionary end, while others use evolutionary means (i.e., elections). The end is always the same, though—and always antidemocratic.

Second, no Islamist group has ever suspended violence except when pressured by a regime. In Algeria, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, and elsewhere, Islamists eschew violence only when they have exhausted or been denied all alternatives to doing so. They have shown no evidence of a deep and long-lasting commitment to democratic politics.

Third, violence is not the only commonly used test for noninclusion in democratic politics; racism and ethnic incitement are widely used as well. For example, racist parties are banned in many European countries, and the literature and rhetoric of Islamist parties is often no less racist than that of these proscribed groups.

Islamism and democracy are, by their very definition, antithetical.

With regard to the policy question, the United States has no clear approach toward Islamists. Washington does not engage politically with terrorist groups and often recognizes other governments' bans on parties not deemed terrorist (such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt). At the same time, it does engage with Islamists who are legal in certain countries (e.g., the Justice and Development Party in Morocco). Washington has now begun to hint that it will support—or at least acquiesce without protest to—the political participation of Hamas in the upcoming Palestinian elections. White House press secretary Scott McClellan has stated that candidates running under the Hamas banner are "business professionals" concerned with quality-of-life issues and not engaged in terrorism. Although the Hamas platform does indeed call for greater government efficiency, the group has not renounced terrorism or the imposition of an Islamist state and thus cannot contribute to Palestinian democracy.

The United States should first seek to help its friends in the Middle East rather than engage its adversaries. This is particularly true when Washington has a choice. America does not owe Islamist groups the opportunity to achieve political power and demonstrate either their or our democratic credentials. After all, once in power, Islamists tend to moderate only where there is a national arbiter whose presence effectively forces them to do so (e.g., the army in Turkey; the king in Jordan and Morocco).

Instead of moderating the radicals, let us commit ourselves to empowering the moderates.

In essence, then, the U.S. government should promote democrats, not just democracy. Nonviolent Islamist parties, such as they are, have earned about as much claim for attention and affection as neo-Nazi parties in Europe or Jean-Marie Le Pen's National Front in France. We should not encourage political engagement with Islamists. Instead of moderating the radicals, let us commit ourselves to the project of empowering the moderates. We can do that only if we are more discriminating in how we promote democracy in the Middle East.

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# Israeli-Palestinian Security Concerns, Post-Disengagement

# Israeli-Palestinian Security Concerns, Post-Disengagement

*Alastair Crooke, Michael Herzog, and Nabil Amr*

Summary

## Alastair Crooke

Over the past two years, the Gaza Strip has witnessed a rapid decline in law and order as kidnappings, street battles, and crime have become commonplace. Fatah is unable to combat this lawlessness because it lacks legitimacy and credibility in the eyes of the Palestinian people. The Palestinian Authority (PA) cannot even safeguard its own security officers from potential reprisal by neighbors who resent them for following government orders.

This lack of government authority stems from the significant decline in Palestinian popular support for the Oslo Accords and other interim agreements. As a result, President Mahmoud Abbas lacks a clear basis for enforcing political decisions. The PA must secure a new mandate through the upcoming elections (scheduled for January 2006) in order to confer legitimacy on the government and its policies.

Hamas sees the elections as a means of empowerment as well. The election campaigns will provide a mandate for a national agenda, spurring Palestinians to debate the best means of carrying out this agenda and the most appropriate leaders for the task. Although Hamas is confident that the public will support its objectives, it needs the authority granted by elections. Regardless of the outcome, Hamas leaders have agreed that once they are part of the government, they will participate in negotiations with Israel and respect the outcome.

Although some have argued that Hamas should be barred from participating in the elections, it is important that such groups be involved in the electoral process. If Hamas and similar factions are excluded, the elections will not confer legitimacy on the resulting government. Moreover, a government encompassing all political parties is necessary to advance the peace process with Israel. Unilateral measures by either Israel or the Palestinians will not result in lasting solutions. Such measures do not allow for understandings regarding expectations, nor do they provide an avenue for communication when problems inevitably arise. At the same time, productive bilateral negotiations cannot occur until the Palestinians

*Alastair Crooke, founder and director of Conflicts Forum, previously served as security advisor to Javier Solana, the European Union's high representative for foreign affairs.*

unify themselves behind a common, legitimate goal. In order to achieve a lasting peace that will be respected by all Palestinians, all factions must be involved in the process.

■ *Michael Herzog, a brigadier general in the Israel Defense Forces, is a visiting military fellow at The Washington Institute and former senior military aide to Israel's defense minister.*

## Michael Herzog

In carrying out the Gaza disengagement, Israelis underwent a difficult national experience. Accordingly, they believe that the burden is now on the Palestinians to prove they can provide security before Israel is willing to proceed further. As long as Mahmoud Abbas continues to make deals with Hamas that do not result in significant security improvements, the PA will not be able to make progress with Israel. If neither Israel nor the PA is willing or able to move forward, Hamas will be the one to capitalize on disengagement. The group has already convinced a majority of Palestinians that violence produced the disengagement. Should Hamas win a sizeable number of seats in the upcoming elections, its members would not be disarmed; rather, they would increase their terrorist attacks in the West Bank.

Since Hamas will likely come out of the elections empowered, Abbas must build his authority and legitimacy in the intervening months. In addition to using international funds to create a social welfare network, he must undertake the extremely important task of security reform. For one thing, more than 20,000 Palestinian security personnel do not perform their jobs, and these positions could be eliminated. Second, new hires must be vetted so that the security forces do not include terrorists. Third, Abbas must follow through on his promise to consolidate the security services into three branches with a single chain of command. He would be considerably strengthened if he could be certain that, once he issues a command, it will be carried out.

■ *Nabil Amr is founder and general manager of the Palestinian newspaper* al-Hayat al-Jadida *and a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council representing the Hebron district.*

Although Abbas may not be able to disarm every last Palestinian militant at the moment, he can certainly act on the public's mandate to establish law and order inside Gaza. Specifically, he can confront terrorists, bring to trial those who commit attacks, prevent the firing of rockets, and guard the Palestinian-Egyptian border without civil war breaking out. Such measures are urgently needed; unless significant security improvements are made, there can be no fruitful dialogue between Palestinians and Israelis.

## Nabil Amr

Under Yasser Arafat's leadership, the PA witnessed misuse of power for many years. Today, however, Mahmoud Abbas and his government have made progress, maintaining a temporary ceasefire for five months and reducing the number of attacks against Israel. Once a political dialogue is open, Abbas can convince Hamas and Islamic Jihad to participate in Palestinian elections and commit themselves to a permanent ceasefire. Hamas is in a weakened position following a deadly explo-

sion at a recent Gaza rally; therefore, if Abbas calls for an end to violence, he will receive the people's support.

If he is to accomplish these goals, Abbas must be strengthened, not weakened. Israel and the international community must permit him to provide security and a ceasefire on his own terms, without making impossible demands such as disarming Hamas and Islamic Jihad—a measure that would almost certainly spark civil war.

The PA's failure to provide security is not a question of legitimacy—Abbas's election provides a clear mandate for halting violence. The current PA leadership lacks a strong partner for peace, however. Israel must become such a partner for Abbas if it hopes to prevent the empowerment of Hamas. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's decision to redistribute troops in the West Bank as a political move against rival Binyamin Netanyahu only undermines Abbas's authority and strengthens Hamas.

In order to move forward on the Quartet Roadmap to Israeli-Palestinian peace, Abbas must give hope to his people by creating improvements in their daily lives. Measures such as building schools and infrastructure will help, but his most important step would be to move toward permanent-status talks with Israel. For its part, Israel can strengthen Abbas by continuing to withdraw from the West Bank, easing checkpoint restrictions, and releasing prisoners. If the peace process is to succeed, Israel and the Palestinians need each other as partners. If Sharon does not support and empower Abbas, Israel will never find such a partner.

Abbas must give hope to his people by creating improvements in their daily lives.

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# The Islamist Threat in—and from—Europe

# The Islamist Threat in—and from—Europe

*Matthew Levitt, Robert Leiken, and Jacques Pitteloud*

Summary

## Matthew Levitt

Two disturbing trends have emerged within international terrorism in the years since the September 11 attacks and the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada. First, logistical and financial support networks for terrorists have been established on a transnational basis, outside of countries that serve as militant bases of operations. Second, and even more troubling, transnational terrorists now commit acts of violence to promote causes that are not directly related to their countries of origin. Prominent cases include the active role of foreign terrorists in the Afghan war, the Iraqi insurgency, and, increasingly, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. For example, an April 30, 2003, suicide bombing at a bar in Tel Aviv was carried out by two British nationals of Pakistani descent who had no obvious connection to the Palestine issue.

In this new era of terrorism, the international community has not yet developed adequate methods of intelligence sharing. In many cases, little communication passes between local and national authorities in a given country, let alone between countries. If governments do not work together and establish a viable intelligence community, the war on terror cannot be won.

Another important aspect of this war is the ideological conflict between the Western vision of democratization and the Islamic extremist vision of fundamentalism. This battle for hearts and minds has a legal aspect: defining appropriate means of combating terrorism. In many cases, it may be necessary to take action against individuals and groups that do not actually "pull the trigger"—for example, those that provide material support to terrorists. Even in free societies, individuals cannot be permitted to promote specific acts of violence without consequence. Accordingly, societies may need to define what constitutes unacceptable speech in sensitive venues such as community centers, public forums, and even places of worship. At a minimum, representatives of the intelligence community should have some degree of authority to observe what goes on in such places. Even if the silent majority in a given community or

*Matthew Levitt, director of The Washington Institute's Terrorism Studies Program, previously served as an FBI intelligence analyst providing tactical and strategic support for counterterrorism operations.*

religious group does not believe in violence, their leaders may have other inclinations.

## Robert Leiken

■ *Robert Leiken, director of the Nixon Center's Immigration and National Security Program, is author of* Bearers of Global Jihad: Immigration and National Security after 9-11 *(2004).*

A generation of European Muslims has become so disaffected that some among them are willing to commit heinous acts of violence. This disaffected constituency consists of two main elements: "insiders" born to immigrant parents in Europe, and "outsiders" involved in political Islam and, more often than not, responsible for incitement of "insiders." Some European countries have failed to emphasize the value of assimilation, which would allow the Muslim immigrant community to develop a religious identity separate from national identity. Consequently, even second- and third-generation immigrants often feel lost, and those who are upwardly mobile are more likely to strike out against their new home countries. If Europe could enlist the aid of systematically trained local imams versed in the language of their country of residence, it would greatly ameliorate the persistent identity crisis and resultant backlash. Such efforts could be part of a broader move toward cultural understanding.

Among European nations, France has the most exemplary counterterrorism intelligence—a result of government credibility and legitimacy with the populace. French citizens do not view their country's intelligence services as "Big Brother"; they are confident that their civil liberties will be preserved. Yet, France rarely shares intelligence with other European Union member states. For example, Spanish and French authorities have sometimes conducted surveillance on the same individual simultaneously without being aware of each other's efforts. The dearth of transnational communication is a serious problem in the war on terror.

Europe must also guard its borders more closely against illegal immigrants if it hopes to reduce the threat of Islamic extremism. Lack of progress on this front fuels the crisis of unwelcome immigrants and the extremist ideology they sometimes generate. If businesses adopted—and governments enforced—strict rules about employing only legal residents, the temptation for individuals to enter Europe illegally would lose much of its allure.

## Jacques Pitteloud

■ *Jacques Pitteloud, coordinator of intelligence for the Swiss government, previously served in the Swiss Strategic Intelligence Service (SND) and as a personal advisor to two defense ministers.*

The composition of European society has changed radically in recent years, becoming significantly less homogeneous due to the influx of immigrants from the developing world. Europe has bungled efforts to assimilate its foreign minorities. The lack of a comprehensive continental identity, as illustrated by the recent rejection of the proposed European Union constitution, is further exemplified by the fact that many Muslim immigrants feel compelled to turn to Islam as compensation for the absence of national identity. Extremism prevails because radical leaders are seen as the primary voice speaking for Islam.

The failure of European counterterrorism measures to curb extremism has arisen from the inability of police and intelligence forces to adapt to the increasingly multicultural nature of European society. This problem is partly rooted in the pervasive fear that prevents immigrants from turning to unfamiliar authorities. Moreover, authorities in many countries are not permitted to enter mosques, which significantly reduces their ability to establish stronger relations with the Muslim community.

The most important aspect of the war on terror is the battle for hearts and minds. The only sure way to prevent the ghettos of Europe from becoming breeding grounds for terrorists is to contest the indoctrination of Muslims to extremist values. Currently, too much focus is placed on uncovering logistical and financial support networks. Europe has not had much success following the money trail, so additional measures are called for.

Extremism prevails because radical leaders are seen as the primary voice speaking for Islam.

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# Iraq: Insurgency, New Politics, and the U.S. Presence

# Iraq: Insurgency, New Politics, and the U.S. Presence

*Jonathan Morrow, Jeffrey White, and Thomas Donnelly*

Summary

## Jonathan Morrow

The process of negotiating a constitution can have profound implications for a government's stability and legitimacy and can pay dividends in terms of peace. By any measure, the drafting of the Iraqi constitution was unusually quick. Iraq's Transitional Administrative Law allocated seven months to this process, but various delays ensured that only about two months were spent on actual negotiation and drafting. In comparison, East Timor spent nearly seven months negotiating its own constitution in 2001–2002, and even that amount of time was insufficient to produce a truly stable outcome.

The sectarian divisions over the Iraqi constitution can be attributed to its rushed creation. It has failed to garner the depth of support necessary for such an important document. Sunni Arabs largely refused to participate in either the January 2005 elections or the subsequent drafting of the constitution, and they have since withheld support for the document. Muqtada al-Sadr and his Shiite followers rejected it as well, though the extent of his following and his demands are unclear.

Under the constitution, Iraq's central government would be a weak entity at the head of a barely unitary country. Baghdad would have exclusive powers in only a handful of areas: foreign affairs, fiscal/monetary policy, defense, and citizenship. The division between Islamic and secular law, women's rights, and human rights is to be determined wholly by regional provisions; thus, Iraqis' lives will be more affected by local government than by Baghdad. For example, life will be enormously different for a Kurdish woman living in Kurdistan than for a Shiite Arab woman living in Karbala. In any area where the central government shares authority with regional law, the latter would prevail, even with regard to taxation. This is problematic considering that only one regional government (Kurdistan) currently possesses any level of independent infrastructure.

The Sunni Arab negotiators and their constituents are not uncomfortable with the idea or the terms of federalism. Rather, they are ill at ease

*Jonathan Morrow, a program officer in the U.S. Institute of Peace's Rule of Law Department, previously worked for Iraqi participants in the negotiations that produced the country's 2004 Transitional Administrative Law.*

with the possibility of a strong Shiite state emerging in southern Iraq. If authorities had properly explained to them the model of federalism outlined in the constitution (which is similar to the Spanish model), their rapid radicalization could have been avoided.

As it stands now, the constitutional process has become a constitutional crisis. If the document fails to gain broad support, the process should be restarted. Ideally, the focus should be on taking the time to create a constitution that commands acceptance. Henceforth, U.S. strategy should be built around benchmarks, not deadlines.

■ *Jeffrey White is The Washington Institute's Berrie defense fellow and coauthor of* Assessing Iraq's Sunni Arab Insurgency *(2005). Previously, he completed a thirty-four-year career with the Defense Intelligence Agency.*

## Jeffrey White

Iraq is currently enduring the highest sustained level of insurgent activity since the beginning of the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. In the wake of these events, policymakers and analysts must maintain perspective. It is not useful, for example, to compare the situation to the Vietnam War; uncertainty and complexity are facts of life in Iraq. The focus should instead be on the most daunting analytical problem in Iraq: the fact that the insurgency and counterinsurgency are evolving together.

In addition, the United States must come to understand that Iraq's current political crises center not on the wording of the constitution, but rather on the redistribution of power. Sunni Arabs do not want their former enemies to be empowered, and this concern is the driving force behind the insurgency and constitutional opposition.

Whatever their physical targets, insurgent attacks are not random—they are aimed at ending the occupation and halting political transformation. The insurgents' objective is to create political, military, and economic circumstances that facilitate renewed Sunni Arab domination. Toward this end, most of their key attacks have taken one of two forms: counter-"collaboration" and counter-stability. This strategy is not discussed much in the United States, where the media tends to focus on attacks against coalition forces. Only in the western province of Anbar does the majority of insurgent activity actually target U.S. forces. In the provinces with the highest level of insurgent activity, the targets are usually Iraqis who work with the new government (e.g., 43 percent of insurgent attacks in Baghdad are counter-collaboration). This has the effect of intimidating would-be participants in the Iraqi government and limiting the penetration of said government into all areas of Iraqi life.

Considering all of these factors—including the military, psychological, and political evolution of the insurgency—U.S. failure in Iraq remains a possibility.

■ *Thomas Donnelly is the resident fellow in defense and security policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute and author of* The Military We Need *(2005).*

## Thomas Donnelly

The United States entered the war in Iraq convinced that its conventional military might was so supreme and tactically astute that hostilities would be over quickly and a healthy Iraqi state would emerge

soon thereafter. That has hardly been the case, and observers have since attempted to determine why.

Many point to the fact that the Sunni Arab insurgency taps into a larger trend in the Sunni world, maintaining outside support in the form of financing, manpower, and weaponry. The coalition was late in targeting this lifeline and has only recently adopted a strategy for severing it gradually, as seen in the western province of Anbar. This is a good start, hopefully reversing what some see as a lack of long-term U.S. strategy for Iraq and the wider Middle East. In this sense, the counterinsurgency should be regarded as a campaign in a larger war rather than a discretely defined war in and of itself.

Since the invasion, the coalition has essentially dismantled preexisting Iraqi institutions and attempted to rebuild them from scratch. That approach requires U.S. soldiers to perform the bulk of required military duties until Iraqi institutions are restored. The Bush administration has been in denial about the scope of this military task. Although the U.S. forces currently deployed in Iraq are well-trained and well-led, many observers have criticized their relatively low numbers. This is no longer a force-on-force war, but rather a struggle for control over territory, which requires a massive U.S. presence. Defeat is a possibility due to the fact that sustaining such a large force in Iraq will be difficult—not because of recruitment or retention problems, but because of domestic and political concerns in the United States.

This is no longer a force-on-force war, but rather a struggle for control over territory, which requires a massive U.S. presence.

The military consequence of Iraq's current political and constitutional crises is clear: the United States must restructure its forces for what will be a long campaign, not only in Iraq but throughout the entire region. The coalition must be prepared to support positive political transformation in Iraq in the context of a looming civil war. When it comes to counterinsurgencies, there is no such thing as a "rapid decisive operation."

Equally crucial is the task of creating Iraqi security institutions—including police forces—capable of acting in partnership with U.S. forces and, eventually, functioning on their own in a unitary Iraqi state with a weak central government. Iraq cannot survive as a nation if the central government cannot provide security to its people. This will be a protracted process requiring the long-term commitment of a large and repostured U.S. force.

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# Iran: Prospects for Slowing Down Nuclear Progress and Speeding Up Democracy

# Iran: Prospects for Slowing Down Nuclear Progress and Speeding Up Democracy

*Patrick Clawson, Gary Samore, and Mohsen Sazegara*

Summary

## Patrick Clawson

The most recent International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) resolution on Iran's nuclear program states that Tehran's actions constitute noncompliance, which is important from a legal point of view. Noncompliance raises questions about whether peaceful cooperation with Iran (e.g., construction of the nuclear power-generating facility in Bushehr) can continue. According to the resolution, Iran's actions also raise questions that may lie within the jurisdiction of the UN Security Council.

Some Bush administration officials do not believe that addressing the Iran problem requires urgent measures, citing the success of current efforts in slowing the country's nuclear program. They argue that there is time to develop an international consensus regarding Iran's nuclear fuel-cycle program, particularly given Tehran's recent return to overtly hard-line policies. Other analysts, however, worry that Iran is steadily gaining ground by chipping away at agreements meant to limit its nuclear activities. From this perspective, Iran may be on the path to acquiring a robust nuclear capability over time.

■ *Patrick Clawson is deputy director for research at The Washington Institute and senior editor of* Middle East Quarterly.

## Gary Samore

How much time does Iran need before it is capable of developing a nuclear weapon? Answering this key question requires both technical and political analysis.

The accuracy of technical analysis relies on the assumption that Iran has not been able to hide any significant production capability. That has been the case in the past, partly because Iran's society is relatively open compared to police states like North Korea. Drawing on the considerable information found in IAEA reports, then, one can make informed speculation about how long Iran might need to produce enough fissile material for a single nuclear weapon (be it 20–25 kilograms of highly enriched uranium or 6–8 kilograms of separated plutonium).

Even if Tehran threw caution to the wind and made maximal use of its current production capacity—that is, the pilot-scale centrifuge plant

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■ *Mohsen Sazegara, a visiting fellow at The Washington Institute, is one of Iran's foremost democratic activists. An early supporter of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, he grew disillusioned with the regime and left the government in 1989. He was eventually imprisoned for his activism, which included publishing reformist newspapers and campaigning for a national referendum to replace the Iranian constitution.*

now under construction, which holds only 1,000 centrifuges—it would still require about five years to produce enough material for a weapon. This scenario assumes that the Iranians can fix problems at the Isfahan conversion facility in order to produce clean uranium hexaflouride. The hexaflouride they produced last year was so contaminated that it was unusable in the centrifuges. Moreover, while the Iranians have enough centrifuges to complete the pilot-scale plant, their record to date suggests that they will need additional time to test and install these centrifuges. Indeed, most countries tend to experience startup problems with centrifuge technology.

In another scenario, Iran could proceed with long-term plans to build 50,000 centrifuges, eventually installing them in an industrial-scale enrichment plant. Building such a plant would take many years. Once completed, however, it could produce enough uranium for a weapon in a matter of weeks or days if Tehran dedicated its full capacity to producing highly enriched weapons-grade uranium. An industrial-scale plant would also make it much easier for Iran to hide a small high-enrichment program for weapons purposes within larger civilian enrichment activities.

Another problematic scenario involves fissile material from the black market. If Iran were able to obtain highly enriched uranium from a foreign source, its timetable for nuclear weapons production would be pushed forward dramatically.

It is misleading, however, to examine technical factors alone in analyzing Iran's capabilities and timelines. In the past, Iran refrained from launching a program clearly dedicated to nuclear weapons production, and in return it experienced decreased international pressure. Although the EU3 (France, England, and Germany) has successfully used the threat of UN Security Council referral to spur Iran into accepting some limits on its nuclear program, Tehran is unwilling to accept any agreement involving permanent cessation of that program.

Unfortunately, Iran's touch-and-go approach continues to forestall Security Council referral, primarily due to Russian opposition. Moscow has clearly stated that it would vote against any IAEA resolution for referral, implying that it also would veto the matter if it made it to the UN.

## Mohsen Sazegara

The current situation in Iran can best be understood by examining the various implications of the 2005 presidential vote. From the outset, the election was not fair and free if for no other reason than the Guardian Council's tight restrictions on who could run for office. Interestingly, Muhammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei's main candidate, did not win. The military faction supported and pushed for Mahmoud Ahmadinejad at the last moment using electoral fraud, particularly during the second round of voting. The rise of this military faction is an especially worrisome aspect of the new administration. This

group has operated in the shadows for the past eight years, suppressing freedom-seekers, student movements, and demonstrations.

**Domestic political implications.** Ahmadinejad and his party campaigned on a platform that emphasized a return to the policies and ways of the early revolutionary era. His victory has therefore had profound effects on life in Iran, even causing tremors in the Tehran real-estate and stock markets. The new administration worries Khamenei as well; he has replaced more than eleven revolutionary commanders in the past month alone, including two of Ahmadinejad's most powerful supporters. In this context, the 2006 election for the Assembly of Experts, the body of clerics who select the Supreme Leader, is shaping up to be a test of forces. Some members of the militaristic faction and the traditional clergy are attempting to modify the election rules in a manner that would allow the next Assembly to perhaps replace Khamenei with a council of jurists.

**Foreign policy implications.** The true winners of the Iranian presidential election were China and Russia. The Russians have good relationships with Iran's military and intelligence services. In fact, many top Russian officials view Iran as their backyard. They believe that by having Tehran in their pocket, they command a good bargaining tool against the United States. Similarly, China has maintained excellent relations with Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps ever since the Iran-Iraq War, both in military industries and in construction projects. In light of this background, Moscow and Beijing will likely support Ahmadinejad. As for Iran's relations with the United States, some parts of Ahmadinejad's administration believe that Tehran should appeal to American Jewish lobby groups to solve their problems with Washington.

**The role of the opposition.** Currently, Iranian opposition groups are struggling to understand the U.S. and EU approach to the new administration in Tehran. As far as they can tell, the West believes that there is no need to take immediate action on Iran. In contrast, the opposition groups believe that time is a luxury they cannot afford—not because of nuclear issues, but because of the people of Iran. That is, Iranians are currently suffering a kind of political depression due to the policy of fear that Khamenei has enforced over the past eight years. For the first time in recent history, they have come to believe that they need help from the international community.

Accordingly, now is an opportune time for the West to support democracy and human rights in Iran. The best tool for such support is widespread media coverage of events in Iran. Although some twenty-six Persian-language stations already offer continuous broadcasting from Los Angeles, none are as widely viewed as the Voice of America broadcasts, which boast an extensive audience in Iran but offer only an hour

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In the wake of the reform movement's defeat, Iranians need to change the basic governmental structure.

of news programming per day. Tehran can shut down Iranian newspapers and block websites, but satellite television broadcasts cannot be obstructed and are therefore the ideal tool for reaching the people.

No single opposition group has enough power to go it alone. Consequently, various groups are attempting to establish a national parliament composed of individuals inside and outside Iran and covering the entire spectrum of the opposition. In the wake of the reform movement's defeat, Iranians need to change the basic governmental structure, and this clear goal should be presented as a referendum to the people. Nonviolent civil resistance is the most effective means of achieving such change.

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# Promoting Democratic Change in Egypt

# Promoting Democratic Change in Egypt

*Hala Mustafa, Ibrahim Karawan, and Khairi Abaza*

Summary

## Hala Mustafa

The democratic reform agenda adopted by the Bush administration, while controversial in both American and Arab circles, spurred a real push for change in the Middle East, including Egypt. This new U.S. policy gave priority to promoting democratic transformation rather than blindly maintaining the stability of Arab regimes by hesitating to firmly pressure them on reform. As a result, local developments that were unimaginable as recently as a year ago have now become possible.

For example, Egypt recently witnessed several historic political developments. On September 7, the country held its first multicandidate presidential election in fifty years. Other positive developments include the relative openness of the media, improvements in press freedoms, the emergence of new political parties, and the increasingly active role of civil society. Such changes have produced widespread political awareness and debate in Egyptian society, forcing the regime to take the demand for reform seriously.

Despite these developments, major challenges still confront the reform movement and democratization process in Egypt. While a new kind of political experience is emerging, old political agendas continue to cripple liberal and democratic culture. Structural problems include the systematic exclusion of liberals from participation, the political marginalization of women, the excessive role of the internal security apparatus, and the absence of alternative parties to the ruling government. Confronting such challenges requires shifting from old political norms to a more liberal, pluralistic, and secular framework that supports reform.

■ *Hala Mustafa is a professor of economics and political science at Cairo University and editor-in-chief of* al-Dimuqratiya *(Democracy), an Egyptian political quarterly published by* al-Ahram.

## Ibrahim Karawan

Recent statements by Arab democrats have indicated a real desire for reform and expanded freedoms. Many have spoken openly about the lack of democracy in Arab countries, characterizing the situation as a crisis. They have also expressed their personal respect for the

rule of law, women's rights, and minority rights—three of the fundamental components of democracy.

Some Arab governments have expressed an interest in democracy as well. Yet, their efforts to control the political agenda and deflect important issues have prevented the implementation of major political reforms. Although these regimes have not dismissed the need for further democratization outright, they have delayed the undertaking of such efforts by shifting public attention to other regional issues such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Despite these obstacles, Arab citizens—Egyptians included—retain a strong interest in political democratization and liberalization. Egyptians are no longer moved by the policy of selective decompression offered by the regime. Many members of the elite have seen recent Palestinian and Iraqi elections produce believable results under the shadow of occupation, and they have begun to ask why such elections cannot take place in Egypt. The question of who will succeed President Hosni Mubarak has increased Egyptian interest in democratization as well; many citizens believe that they have been tricked into accepting what appears to be hereditary rule. In light of these factors, the Egyptian people are in a state of restlessness, and the U.S. government should support their desire for change.

■ *Ibrahim Karawan is director of the Middle East Center at the University of Utah and author of* The Islamist Impasse *(1998).*

## Khairi Abaza

Arab democrats are genuine heroes of the past century, isolated and unsupported as they were for more than fifty years. Their natural allies, the Western powers, preferred to maintain good relations with authoritarian rulers rather than support reform in Arab society. Due to this long isolation, one must be patient with Arab liberals and democrats; they will need continuous, determined support if they are to become organized and mobilized into an effective force in Arab societies.

The recent multicandidate presidential election in Egypt is a significant development, creating a real window of opportunity for reform. Egyptian political parties gained momentum by participating, and, for the first time, President Mubarak was forced to campaign on an agenda promising further constitutional amendments and political reforms.

Although this is an important step in the right direction, it can be considered historic only if followed by other substantive steps. The impact of free and fair elections should extend beyond election day; the government should create an environment that is conducive to even greater openness in future elections. The Egyptian opposition should be permitted to create political parties, have access to free media outlets, and campaign freely. And, to further facilitate the evolution of the political process, the regime must fulfill its promises of additional constitutional reform—and soon.

■ *Khairi Abaza is a visiting fellow at The Washington Institute. Previously, he served as Cultural Committee secretary and as a Foreign Affairs Committee member for the Egyptian Wafd Party.*

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# The Future of the AKP Government and U.S.-Turkish Relations

# The Future of the AKP Government and U.S.-Turkish Relations

*Semih Idiz and Soner Cagaptay*

Summary

## Semih Idiz

The electoral victory of the Justice and Development Party (AKP) in November 2002 sent shock waves across Turkey and the Western world. After all, this was a party led by a man who had characterized democracy as merely "a train taking us to our destination." There was also fear that an Islamist government would oppose the idea of Turkey becoming a member of the European Union (EU), as the previous Islamist government under former prime minister Necmettin Erbakan had done, driving the country away from the West. Surprisingly, the AKP embraced the idea of joining Europe and, as if to deny its Islamist roots, passionately went forth with the EU's mandated reforms.

Many analysts at the time felt that the AKP viewed these reforms as a means of curbing the power of the secular establishment, and that it would use the EU process to push for change on religious issues important to its constituency, such as headscarves and *imam hatip* (religious vocational high schools). The AKP is far from homogeneous and unified, however. It harbors center-right politicians and nationalist elements as well as ultraconservative and religious members. Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has not been able to satisfy the conservative religious element because he has not been able to deliver on the aforementioned religious issues. At the same time, he has delved into other issues that anger the party's nationalist element, such as Cyprus and the Armenian and Kurdish questions.

Turkish elections are scheduled for 2007, and it is safe to say that the AKP will win another term (even if it does not win 34 percent of the vote, as it did in 2002). What will happen after the elections? Several parties currently waiting in the wings believe they can make a comeback. This will not be possible unless they renew and transform themselves the way the AKP did in order to win over the electorate. New movements in the Turkish political arena will not come from the periphery, which thinks it can make a comeback easily, but from within the AKP, which will beget its own opposition. There are two wings in the AKP already. One wing is led by Abdullah Gul, who was prime minister briefly before Erdogan.


■ *Semih Idiz is diplomacy editor for CNN-Turk and a columnist for the Turkish newspapers* Milliyet *and* Turkish Daily News.

Gul represents a tolerant political style, but with a fundamentalist religious aspect. The more radical element in the AKP wants a more assertive Islamic tone in government, similar to the one Erbakan set.

Turkey is, in a way, condemned to a parliamentary democracy because the republic itself emerged from within parliament in 1923. Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, the republic's founder, received his mandate from parliament, and he had to renew this mandate every six months. No single party can rule for a long time in Turkey because of the country's diversity of opinions and beliefs. This is why it would be impossible to establish an Islamist government based on *sharia* (Islamic law). Any such attempt would meet strong opposition from the Alevis and other groups.

■ *Soner Cagaptay is director of the Turkish Research Program at The Washington Institute and an Ertegun Professor at Princeton.*

## Soner Cagaptay

The initial months of Turkey's EU negotiations will constitute a milestone period in the country's two-century-old quest to become a full-fledged member of the Western world. Turkey's EU journey will be a long one, however.

As the accession talks begin, European opposition to Turkey's membership remains strong. Several EU countries and prominent European leaders are now opposed to granting Turkey membership. The very nature of Turkey's accession talks has led many Turks to conclude that the EU is raising the bar against their country. For example, the EU established benchmarks to close each of Ankara's thirty-five chapters of accession talks—a measure that effectively stipulates thirty-five rounds of talks for Turkey, despite the fact that previous candidate counties went through only one round of talks with thirty-five chapters. Moreover, tough EU demands—including sensitive ones such as recognition of Greek Cyprus—are exacerbating Turkish resentment toward the EU. Many Turks believe that the EU is acting against them in this manner out of condescension. This growing perception could result in a nationalist backlash in Turkey, leading to a rupture in Turkish-EU relations.

The deterioration of Turkish-EU ties would not be so alarming if Ankara's ties with its other Western partner, the United States, were in good shape. Today, most Turks blame Washington for renewed Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) violence emanating from northern Iraq. Despite stabilization in bilateral ties since the fallout of the Iraq war and AKP efforts to mend fences with Washington, various Turkish political forces are coalescing in opposition to U.S. inaction against the PKK. Currently, Turkish casualties from PKK attacks are occurring at a rate similar to that faced by U.S. forces in Iraq. The violence could damage bilateral ties further if the PKK expands its attacks into western Turkey—an area containing all of the country's large cities, almost all its tourism infrastructure, and a major share of its economic assets.

In order to restore Turkish faith in the United States, Washington should focus on confidence-building measures with secular nationalist

Turks, the country's majority constituency. The quickest way for Washington to reach this group is by addressing the issue that they feel most strongly about: the PKK. Short of a full-scale U.S. campaign against the PKK, the best short-term method of fighting the organization is by targeting its leadership in northern Iraq and shutting its financial arms in Europe through cooperation with European agencies.

In addition to action against the PKK, Washington has a less costly option for swaying Turkish public opinion: Cyprus. Prior to the April 2004 UN referendum on the island, Washington and Brussels declared that they would end the isolation of Turkish Cyprus if its residents supported the Annan plan for the island's unification, which they did. Initial efforts to help Turkish Cyprus, including a May 31 visit by U.S. congressmen, have already improved Turkish public opinion toward the United States. Additional helpful measures could include establishing direct flights to and from that part of the island, facilitating trade and cultural ties, and expanding U.S. political contacts with Turkish Cyprus.

The sooner such actions are taken, the better the prospects for preserving the U.S.-Turkish relationship. It would be a great irony if the United States lost Turkey while trying to hold onto Iraq. Dangerously shorn as it is of Middle Eastern allies, Washington cannot afford further deterioration in its relations with a country that has long been one of the Western world's greatest allies in the region.

It would be a great irony if the United States lost Turkey while trying to hold onto Iraq.

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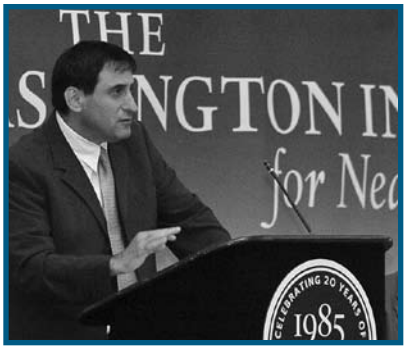



# Israel after Disengagement: Fateful Choices

# Israel after Disengagement: Fateful Choices

*Sallai Meridor*

Edited Transcript

There is a very direct connection between the interest of the Jewish people and the decisions about the future of Israel, because there is nothing that will determine more the fate of the Jewish people than the strength and character of the state of Israel.

The internal discussion in Israel on disengagement was about how to secure the future of Israel as a Jewish state. What were the arguments of most of those who opposed this agreement? Some were religious arguments. Some were nationalist. Some were real, deep concerns as to the future of Israel.

I think that the most pressing of these arguments was not about peace or security, but rather about demography, about the future of Israel as a Jewish, democratic state. Israel was created to be a state of and for the Jewish people. And in order to have a Jewish and democratic state, you have to maintain a large Jewish majority. This is going to continue to be the most important challenge facing Israel from today onward, for many, many years.

And given the difference in terms of internal birthrate between Jews and Arabs in Israel, Israel will have to face the challenge in a multidimensional strategy, from Jewish birthrate, to immigration, to conversion of immigrants, to strict migration policy, and, last but not least, the issue of borders. Because even if we were successful on all other issues, it would not be enough to secure Israel as a Jewish and democratic state, because we simply don't have enough Jews, neither in Israel nor in the world, to maintain a solid, large Jewish majority from the Jordan River to the Mediterranean Sea. This argument regarding the future of Israel as a Jewish democratic state made many people, including me, agree to disengagement despite the painfulness of such a decision.

The mood in Israel is, on the one hand, a sense of relief that blood was not shed. I think that many people are satisfied with international recognition and the continuous improvement of the economic condition in Israel.

At the same time, however, there is very serious concern about Palestinian behavior, from the synagogues to the greenhouses to the Philadelphia

*Sallai Meridor, a former visiting fellow at The Washington Institute, has also served as chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel.*

Corridor. And Israelis see how this is the first thing Palestinians did. People are listening to Mahmoud Zahar, the leader of Hamas, and the inaction of the Palestinian Authority, and people are concerned about terror.

Is there a way to advance peace between Israel and the Palestinians, given the current circumstances? Tough question. An easier question to answer is what is definitely not the way to advance peace. You cannot do it with terror and you cannot do it without a central government. From the experience we gathered over the past twelve years, no process will prevail when there are terrorist acts. No interim phase could prevail if there were a terrorist act and Israel reacted by blocking Palestinian movement, with subsequent Palestinian suffering—it is a vicious circle, and that would be the end of it.

In order to have negotiations, you need a central address that can deliver. In the eyes of Israelis—and I'm afraid not only of Israelis—this is not exactly the situation today in the Palestinian Authority. There is a question as to whether Abu Mazen can deliver. If we want to move forward, he cannot simply "talk the talk," especially now that Israel has already "run the run." He must "walk the walk."

"No less important than reaching an agreement is the sense among the people that the agreement can prevail."

It is my belief that if the Palestinians are genuine about future recognition and acceptance of Israel as a permanent Jewish state in part of the land of Israel, there is a significant chance for reaching an agreement over time.

A fair compromise should address the critical interests of both parties: for the Palestinians, independence and the actual ability to build a state, viable economy, and society; for Israel, security and demography, to ensure the Jewish future of whatever will be the borders of the Jewish state. Both sides must give up on the dream of "Greater Israel," so to speak, or "Greater Palestine." They, and we, will have to agree that the right of return of Jews will be limited only to those areas where there would be a Jewish state, and the right of the Palestinians to return will be only to those boundaries within which there would be a Palestinian state.

The parties will have to agree on borders where I assume Israelis accept that the larger part of the territory will be conceded to the Palestinians, where the smaller part of the territory will be retained by Israel—including, obviously, cities like Jerusalem, settlement blocs, and some security areas.

No less important than reaching an agreement is the sense among the people that the agreement can prevail. For Israel it means security. And for the Palestinians, it's a viable possibility to rapidly develop their state.

For the agreement to work, the world community must be prepared to provide major assistance as soon as possible. I may be dreaming, but perhaps a fund could be created now, with money actually deposited, for two reasons: first, to serve as an incentive; and second, to be implementable immediately when an agreement is signed.

So what are the chances? I think it largely depends on two issues. First, without the American administration, it will not happen. Second, the nature of the relevant leaders is crucial, and the real question is whether

we have politicians or leaders. If we have politicians thinking about the next elections, we are doomed to paralysis for the coming year. But the truth of the matter is that for politicians, elections never end.

The two peoples, in my view, are not driving the leaders toward an agreement. Israelis are concerned about security, about internal issues, much more than they are concerned about making peace with the Palestinians. And the Palestinians, likewise, seem to be concerned more with lifting Israeli restrictions and, obviously, improving their own unemployment, corruption, and law-and-order situations than dancing with Israel in a peace party.

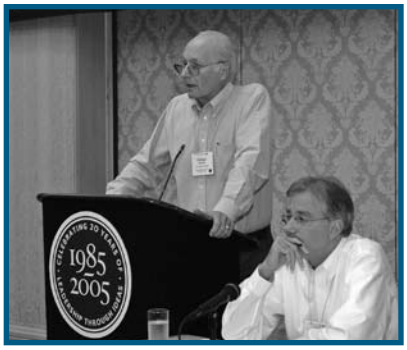
Only leadership can create a new agenda, transform the current reality, and build for another tomorrow. Begin and Sadat were of this kind. Rabin and Hussein were of this kind. Arafat wasn't. And it takes courage: the chance of surviving, if you take only these four leaders, is only 50 percent, since two of these men were assassinated. I get the sense that Sharon is built of these ingredients. As for Mahmoud Abbas, I just don't know.

To close, I think Israel made an unprecedented move by implementing disengagement—unprecedented perhaps in the history of nations, this decision to voluntarily leave a territory, to uproot your own people from that territory, not under the gun and not within the context of an agreement.

We are always grateful to our friends, especially the United States, for their help, and to the Jewish people for their partnership. But we know how much more we could achieve if we didn't have to fight; at heart, Israelis are lovers and seekers of peace. So approaching our New Year, I would like to join Sharon, currently at the UN, in a prayer that this coming year will bring hope, security, and advancement toward peace.

"Only leadership can create a new agenda, transform the current reality, and build for another tomorrow."

2005 Weinberg Founders conference




# U.S. Policy and the Middle East Peace Process, Post-Disengagement

# U.S. Policy and the Middle East Peace Process, Post-Disengagement

*William Quandt and Dennis Ross*

Summary

## William Quandt

Recent developments offer good reason for optimism regarding Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking. First, violence has decreased over the past nine months, and while no one can be sure how long the quiet will last, it is a boon to Palestinians and Israelis alike. Second, Palestinian president Mahmoud Abbas is a far more credible partner than Yasser Arafat was. He has denounced violence and criticized those who resort to it, and he appears eager to return to peace negotiations. Third, Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon is proving that he can both implement difficult decisions and complete his personal transformation from a man of war and occupation to a man of peace and coexistence. Fourth, while the American role has been modest in substance, recent statements and actions in Washington paint an intriguing picture of an administration that favors a two-state solution, supports a return to talks based on the 1949 armistice line, recognizes the need for a contiguous Palestinian state, and understands that Israel will hold on to some of its largest settlements in the West Bank. Finally, most Arab governments appear ready to support any move toward Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Although these shifts bode well for the resumption of negotiations, Sharon, Abbas, and President Bush each face significant domestic issues—the same sorts of issues that have often proven fatal to peacemaking in the Middle East. In Israel, Sharon may lose control of his party and run on a non-Likud ticket in the 2006 elections. Abbas faces longstanding Fatah corruption and growing Hamas popularity in the run-up to Palestinian legislative elections. And President Bush must deal with the fallout from his administration's response to Hurricane Katrina, continuing turmoil in Iraq, and his declining approval ratings. In addition, the wounds and mistrust generated by the intifada remain prevalent among Israelis and Palestinians. The fact that both sides have adopted seemingly inflexible stances—Sharon's hardline views on Jerusalem and settlement construction in the West Bank, and Abbas's probable insistence that any future agreement grant the Palestinians noth-

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ing less than that offered by the so-called "Clinton Parameters"—is not improving the situation.

As Israelis and Palestinians attempt to sort out these domestic leadership issues in the months ahead, they will likely be inattentive to each other's concerns and unable to implement truly productive proposals. Accordingly, Sharon, Abbas, and President Bush should agree to eschew both new public initiatives and provocative actions in the foreseeable future. At the same time, they should commit to discreet, serious discussions of final-status issues. Playing the role of mediator, Washington could steer such talks toward mutual concessions.

The United States should also assume responsibility for both mobilizing international support and proposing a Middle East Marshall Plan to accompany any peace agreement. This would draw all nations in the region into a constructive new dynamic compatible with the Bush administration's goals for democracy and reform in the Arab world. It must be acknowledged, however, that these leaders are unlikely to take real risks for peace at the moment, and that some of the more optimistic ideas about regional progress are premature. For now, the United States must encourage a period of calm and permit each side to settle down and stabilize internally. Washington should also send a representative to communicate directly with Sharon and Abbas, eventually pressing both parties to take a more productive path toward peace.

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## Dennis Ross

Before exploring options for moving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict toward resolution, one must take a step back and fully understand three important developments. First, Yasser Arafat was alive and in power a year ago, meaning neither peace nor Palestinian societal change could move forward. He established a legacy of corruption and cronyism that deflated any optimism Palestinians felt about the future. Following Arafat's death, however, Abbas emerged as a moderate leader for the Palestinian Authority.

This leads to the second major development: the character and progress of Abbas's tenure thus far. Abbas has worked to overcome Arafat's legacy and denounce violence. He has also initiated a strategy of cooptation toward Hamas, believing that inclusion of these militants will force them to abide by the rule of law and abandon violence. At the same time, he assumed that he would be able to reform the defunct security services, rebuild the economy, provide jobs, and obtain greater freedom of movement for Palestinians. He has yet to deliver on these promises of reform, however, and his standing has diminished as a result.

The third development is Sharon's ability to defy critics and pessimists and carry out his historic disengagement plan.

Despite these changes, one must keep in mind that each side is completely self-absorbed at the moment. Abbas is consumed by internal

needs, and finding a way to reach out to Israel is the last thing on his mind. Likewise, Sharon is consumed by the necessity of placating the backbone of his party: the settlers, who were once his greatest supporters. He is not concerned with proposing new concessions or helping to improve Abbas's credibility.

Accordingly, the United States must provide a bridge between the two sides. Although the Bush administration has made some improvements in its approach to the conflict since the beginning of its second term, its efforts have produced little. If the administration had given security envoy Lt. Gen. William Ward a clearer mandate, helped cement the ceasefire earlier in the year, or focused on providing security for Israel and access to the Palestinians, it could have generated greater hope for future agreements, as well as greater stability on the ground.

In order to redress these problems and help increase stability, Washington should implement the following recommendations:

- **Work with the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, and European Union to assist Abbas in rebuilding the economy.** Successful economic and administrative development would in turn empower Palestinian moderates.
- **Spearhead the effort to transform foreign aid pledges into reality.** One of the best ways to accomplish this is by putting Palestinians back to work on construction projects. In particular, Palestinian workers could be paid to build their own homes, providing them with both meaningful employment and the opportunity to move away from the wretched conditions of the refugee camps.
- **Promote a different approach to overhauling and professionalizing the Palestinian security services, establishing higher salaries and more direct communication between Abbas and his commanders.** This would allow him to confront the pressing challenge of bringing law and order to the West Bank and Gaza.
- **Define the third-party role.** In general, this role should include two elements: an enforcement mechanism and an onsite dispute-resolution system.
- **Reinforce the Quartet Roadmap to Israeli-Palestinian peace by formulating a clear vision and common understanding of each of its phases.** This would help both Sharon and Abbas diffuse internal challenges from factions that accuse them of taking steps without any regard for their future impact.

Although these recommendations are not a panacea, they must be implemented with a sense of urgency if the situation is to improve. Otherwise, unilateralism—which produces outcomes, not solutions—may wind up defining the course of events. In such a case, peace would become a distant

Without a sense of urgency, unilateralism—which produces outcomes, not solutions—may define the course of events.

dream, and the current lack of faith that pervades each side would continue to define the region. In order to take advantage of the positive developments of the past year, we must act on these recommendations immediately or face the prospect of a bleak future.

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