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FOSTERING DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: DEFEATING TERRORISM WITH BALLOTS

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

OF THE

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED NINTH CONGRESS

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FOSTERING DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: DEFEATING TERRORISM WITH BALLOTS

WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2005

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES,
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS, AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS,
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM,
Washington, DC.

The subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:10 a.m., in room 2154, Rayburn House Office Building, Hon. Christopher Shays (chairman of the subcommittee) presiding.

Present: Representatives Shays, Dent, Kucinich, Maloney, Van Hollen, Ruppersberger, and Higgins.

Staff present: Lawrence Halloran, staff director and counsel; R. Nicholas Palarino, Ph.D., senior policy advisor; Robert A. Briggs, clerk; Andrew Su, minority professional staff member; Earley Green, minority chief clerk; and Jean Gosa, minority assistant clerk.

Mr. SHAYS. We will call this hearing of the Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations to order. And we welcome our witnesses, our distinguished witnesses from both panels and those in attendance.

Standing in a school courtyard in Irbil, Iraq last January, some of us were fortunate enough to be able to witness that nation's historic steps toward democracy in more than half a century. The election was a decisive moment for the people of Iraq, and its reverberations are still being felt throughout the Middle East. In Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, people saw that Iraqis asserted their inalienable right to a freer, more secure future, and asked, why not here?

The question challenges us. What does prevent the development of a democratic institution and free economies in the region? Reasons often cited to explain the political and economic stagnation in the Middle East include the corrupting dominance of oil wealth, the distorting legacy of western colonialism, the military exigencies of Arab-Israeli conflict, and the alleged inherent incompatibility between Islam and democracy. But the rise of Islamist terrorism as a global strategic threat brought to our shores with galvanizing horror on September 11, 2001 buried those excuses and breathed new life into the call for democratic reforms in the Arab and Muslim world.

The September 2002 National Security Strategy made the promotion of democracy a primary tool in the war against terrorism. In his second inaugural address, the President succinctly set out this element of what is called the "Bush Doctrine" when he declared "it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements in institutions in every nation and culture with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

It was not always so. For many, we come late to the dialog advocating democracy in the Middle East. Having long subrogated overt support for reformists to our Faustian cold war bargains with repressive, oil-rich regimes, ours is not always a trusted voice in the discussion. Others discount our good intentions in the mistaken belief support for Israel and support for Palestinian rights and aspirations are incompatible.

So we meet this morning to examine the scope and impact of U.S. efforts to foster the rule of law, self-government, civil society, and market economies in a part of the world thought by some to be geographically or culturally immune to modern forces. In advocating the universal values of human dignity, political self-determination, and economic opportunity, we advance our national interest in helping those who would drain the repressive swamps where terrorism breeds.

It is not easy work. Exercise of the misnamed soft power of ideas requires subtlety, humility, and perseverance, traits not always synonymous with U.S. trade policy. As the birth of our own democracy proved, emerging from oppression to self-sufficiency is the work of decades, not days. But liberty must be pursued with a determination and vision that allows indigenous movements to grow naturally and enthusiastically at a pace of their choosing.

The oppressor will always caution patience, endless patience. We can no longer succumb to the despot's alluring promise of near-term stability purchased at the expense of attempting to delay the inevitable explosion of human freedom. Nor can we indulge hubris. As then-Governor George W. Bush said in 1999, "America cherishes freedom, but we do not own it. We value the elegant structures of our own democracy but realize that, in other societies, the architecture will vary. We propose our principles; we must not impose our culture. Yet the basic principles of human freedom and dignity are universal. People should be able to say what they think, and elect those who govern them. These ideals have proven their power on every continent."

The witnesses on our first panel today understand the power and the cost of the pursuit of liberty. Natan Sharansky is a leading voice for democracy as a force for change in the Middle East. A former Israeli government minister and influential author, he offers the world a sobering look at the choice between free societies and what he calls fear societies.

Mithal Al-Alusi is an Iraqi patriot whose dedication and personal sacrifice to the cause of freedom give his views a unique moral authority. And I might say parenthetically, when I was growing up, I always thought, wouldn't it be wonderful to have met the people who formed our country, the people who risked their lives and the lives of their family. And I am in the presence of such a man in Mr. Al-Alusi.

All our witnesses bring invaluable experience and unquestioned expertise to this important discussion, and we welcome their testimony. I want to say I am so excited about this hearing today.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Christopher Shays follows:]

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AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
Christopher Shays, Connecticut
Chairman
Room B-372 Rayburn Building
Washington, D.C. 20515
Tel: 202 225-2548
Fax: 202 225-2382

Statement of Rep. Christopher Shays
May 17, 2005

Standing in a school courtyard in Irbil, Iraq last January, some of us were fortunate to be able to witness that nation's first, heroic steps toward democracy in more than half a century. The election was a decisive moment for the people of Iraq, and its reverberations are still being felt throughout the Middle East. In Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iran, people saw the Iraqis assert their inalienable right to a freer, more secure future and asked, "Why not here?"

The question challenges us. What does prevent the development of democratic institutions and free economies in the region? Reasons often cited to explain political and economic stagnation in the Middle East include the corrupting dominance of oil wealth, the distorting legacy of Western colonialism, the military exigencies of the Arab-Israeli conflict, and the alleged inherent incompatibility between Islam and democracy.

But the rise of Islamist terrorism as a global strategic threat, brought to our shores with galvanizing horror on September 11th 2001, buried those excuses and breathed new life into the call for democratic reforms in the Arab and Muslim world. The September 2002 National Security Strategy made the promotion of democracy a primary tool in the war against terrorism. In his Second Inaugural Address, the President succinctly set out this element of what is called "The Bush Doctrine," when he declared, "It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

It was not always so. For many, we come late to the dialogue advocating democracy in the Middle East. Having long subrogated overt support for reformers to our Faustian Cold War bargains with repressive, oil-rich regimes, ours is not always a trusted voice in the discussion. Others discount our good intentions in the mistaken belief support for Israel and support for Palestinian rights and aspirations are incompatible.

So we meet this morning to examine the scope and impact of U.S. efforts to foster the rule of law, self-government, civil society and market economies in a part of the world thought by some to be geographically or culturally immune to modern forces. In advocating the universal values of human dignity, political self-determination and economic opportunity, we advance our national interest in helping those who would drain the repressive swamps where terrorism breeds.

It is not easy work. Exercise of the misnamed "soft power" of ideas requires subtlety, humility and perseverance, traits not always synonymous with U.S. security policy. As the birth of our own democracy proved, emerging from oppression to self-sufficiency is the work of decades, not days. But liberty must be pursued with a determination and vision that allows indigenous movements to grow naturally and enthusiastically, at a pace of their choosing. The oppressor will always caution patience. Endless patience. We can no longer succumb to the despot's alluring promise of near-term stability purchased at the expense of attempting to delay the inevitable explosion of human freedom.

Nor can we indulge hubris. As then Governor George W. Bush said in 1999, "America cherishes … freedom, but we do not own it. We value the elegant structures of our own democracy, but realize that, in other societies, the architecture will vary. We propose our principles; we must not impose our culture. Yet the basic principles of human freedom and dignity are universal. People should be able to say what they think. Elect those who govern them. These ideals have proven their power on every continent…."

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All our witnesses bring invaluable experience and unquestioned expertise to this important discussion and we welcome their testimony.

Mr. SHAYS. A quorum being present, the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations hearing entitled, "Fostering Democracy in the Middle East, Defeating Terrorism with Ballots," is called to order. And I recognize the ranking member of this subcommittee, Mr. Kucinich.

Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And I want to welcome our distinguished panelists, former Israeli Minister Sharansky and Mr. Al-Alusi. Welcome. I want to thank the chairman for his continued dedication to working to find out what's going on in the Middle East and what the relationship is with the policy of this administration and the outcome.

We have much to learn from the experts who are here with us, and we must listen and use this knowledge to correct the disastrous foreign policy road that America has embarked upon. Congress can help save many lives by changing the direction of policies, but to do that we need facts. As a journalist, Thomas Friedman wrote recently: "You can't build a decent society on the graves of suicide bombers and their victims."

Our policy has been greatly misguided. During the President's 2005 State of the Union address, there were Iraqis in the audience who held up their thumbs in a symbol intended to convey that democracy had finally reached Iraq thanks to the United States. Their hope was to send a message that, even though WMDs were never found, the victory of bringing democracy to Iraq was worth the cost in blood and treasure. I have to say that we are in solidarity to all of those who inspire to democracy all over the world.

We take the intention of the people of Iraq who strive for freedom seriously. But before we congratulate ourselves, I think that we have to—I have to admit at least, that I am skeptical of the administration's policy of promoting democracy. The United States does not have a history of bringing democracy to nations out of pure altruism; rather, there is usually something we have to gain by overthrowing a Nation, and the promotion of democracy is the excuse we use to use it. Or, in the case of Iraq, was our fallback excuse.

Perhaps the greatest argument against this vision of true altruism is that, when it is in our interest to leave undemocratic governments alone, we do. Examples of this argument are in the central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kurjistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Those countries have well-known human rights records and serious impediments to democracy. According to the State Department's 2004 report on human rights practices, they catalog very intensely the failings of these particular governments that we have more or less found fit to work with.

The United States does not take firm steps to encourage reforms. There have been provisions to condition aid based on progress in democratization, respect for human rights. However, the State Department decided to cut aid in this case to Uzbekistan for failure to meet these conditions; but when the State Department decided to do it, the Joints Chiefs of Staff announced that Uzbekistan would receive more, $21 million, of military aid. And the aid condition in Kazakhstan, where they had human rights violations, was allowed a Presidential waiver.

So, soft line approach. And it's probably, in large part, due to the strategic location of these states. The central Asian states offered overflight and other support when the United States went into Afghanistan. Kurjistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan have hosted coalition troops, provided access to air bases.

Mr. Chairman, I could go on and on, but I want to include the rest of this statement in the record.

Mr. SHAYS. Without objection.

Mr. KUCINICH. But I hope as I conclude that this hearing will go beyond self-congratulation and beyond merely illuminating the desire for democracy by people in the Middle East. Rather, I hope that this hearing will illuminate how our missteps are hindering democracy so that we can correct a failed policy. I want to welcome the witnesses, and I hope that we can learn from their experiences and knowledge. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Hon. Dennis J. Kucinich follows:]

Statement of Rep. Dennis Kucinich
Ranking Minority Member
House Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations
Committee on Government Reform
U.S. House of Representatives

Hearing on "Fostering Democracy in the Middle East: Defeating Terrorism with Ballots"

May 17, 2005

Good morning, Mr. Chairman, and good morning to the distinguished witnesses that are here today for this important hearing. We have much to learn from the experts who are here with us, and we must listen and use this knowledge to correct the disastrous foreign policy road that this Administration has embarked upon – a policy which has already taken the lives of over 1,600 U.S. soldiers and wounded thousands more. Congress can help save many more lives by changing these failed policies immediately. As the journalist Thomas Friedman wrote recently, "you can't build a decent society on the graves of suicide bombers and their victims."

Our policy is greatly misguided and also misrepresented. During the President's 2005 State of the Union address there were Iraqis in the audience who held up ink-stained thumbs in a symbol intending to convey that democracy had reached finally reached Iraq—thanks to the U.S. Their hope was to send the message that even though WMDs were never found, the victory of bringing democracy to Iraq was worth the cost in blood and treasure.

But before we congratulate ourselves, I must admit that I am skeptical of the Administration's policy of promoting democracy. The United States does not have a history of bringing democracy to nations out of pure altruism. Rather there is usually something we have to gain by overthrowing a nation and the promotion of democracy is the excuse we use to do it. Or in the case of Iraq, it was our fall-back excuse. The war to eradicate WMDs quickly transformed into the war to bring democracy to Iraqis – once the world discovered that WMDs did not in fact exist in Iraq.

Perhaps the greatest argument against this vision of pure altruism is that when it is in our interest to leave undemocratic governments alone, we do.

Examples of this argument are the Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. These countries have well-known horrendous human rights records and have serious impediments to democracy. According to the State Departments 2004 Report on Human Rights Practices,

"Uzbekistan is an authoritarian state with limited civil rights....the December 26 elections fell significantly short of international standards for democratic elections...the executive branch heavily influenced the courts and did not ensure due process...Government's human rights record remained very poor...police and National Security Service forces tortured, beat, and harassed persons...the Government restricted freedom of religion and movement...the Government severely restricted fundamental worker rights."

These conditions are more or less present throughout the other Central Asian states. Yet the U.S. has not taken firm steps to encourage reforms. There have been provisions to condition aid based on progress in democratization and respect for human rights, however when the State Department decided to cut aid to Uzbekistan for failure to meet these conditions (equal to $18 million), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff announced that Uzbekistan would receive an increase of $21 million in military aid. Furthermore, the aid condition in Kazakhstan is allowed a presidential waiver.

This "soft-line" approach is probably in large part to the strategic location of these states. The Central Asian states offered overflight and other support when the U.S. went into Afghanistan. Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have hosted coalition troops and provided access to airbases. In 2003, Uzbekistan endorsed coalition military action in Iraq and Kazakhstan provided about two-dozen troops for rebuilding.

Our policy is convenient, not consistent. We talk about building democracy in the Middle East out of one side of our mouth, while we keep authoritarian regimes in power on the other side.

The world is watching closely what the U.S. does in Iraq, and we are hopeful that a legitimate democracy will flourish there and throughout the region. I am hopeful other Arab nations will eventually hold elections. But it must be on their timetable, not ours.

Our presence in Iraq is only slowing any hope for genuine democratization. Violence against Iraqis is only increasing as time goes by. The country is becoming even more destabilized. But this Administration has not yet presented an exit strategy or any kind of timetable of bringing our troops home. Instead, we are pouring billions of dollars into the probable construction of long-term military facilities in Iraq so that we can have a permanent presence there, as well as in the surrounding countries, none of which could be called democratic.

So, Mr. Chairman, I hope that this hearing will go beyond self-congratulation and beyond merely illuminating the desire for democracy by people in the Middle East. Rather I hope that this hearing will illuminate how our missteps are hindering democracy, so that we can correct a failed policy.

So again, I want to welcome all our witnesses here today, and hope we can learn from their experiences and knowledge. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank the gentleman. His entire statement will be in the record. And with this, we would first recognize our two witnesses on our first panel, former Israeli minister Natan Sharansky, author of "The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror," and Mr. Mithal Al-Alusi, Democratic Party of the Iraqi Nation.

As you know, we swear in all our witnesses, and I would at this time ask you to stand. We are an investigative committee. I would ask you to stand and be sworn in.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. We will note for the record our witnesses have responded in the affirmative.

Let me just also do unanimous consent. I ask unanimous consent that all members of the subcommittee could place an opening statement in the record, and the record will remain open for 3 days for that purpose. And, without objection, so ordered. I ask further unanimous consent that all witnesses be permitted to include their written statements in the record. And, without objection, so ordered.

Mr. Sharansky, we are going to have you open up. Your mic needs to be on, and you should see a green light when you hit that.

Mr. SHARANSKY. Yes.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. And what we do is we will have a 5-minute count and then we roll over another 5 minutes. But we would like your statement to be concluded within 10 minutes.

Mr. SHARANSKY. Within 5 minutes.

Mr. SHAYS. Well, we are going to let you roll over. You have 5 minutes, and you can roll over into the next 5 minutes, given that we have a smaller group here.

STATEMENTS OF NATAN SHARANSKY, FORMER ISRAELI MINISTER, AUTHOR OF "THE CASE FOR DEMOCRACY: THE POWER OF FREEDOM TO OVERCOME TYRANNY AND TERROR"; AND MITHAL AL-ALUSI, DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF THE IRAQI NATION

STATEMENT OF NATAN SHARANSKY

Mr. SHARANSKY. OK. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Definitely, I didn't come here for self-congratulations, but I think it is an extremely important issue, linkage between—a connection between freedom and security in the world, and I am very glad that today this linkage is recognized much better than some years ago.

In the book which I recently wrote, "The Case for Democracy," and which is based also on my experience as a dissident, human rights activist, humanitarian, and prisoner of conscience for 9 years of the Soviet Union, and also my experience of being 9 years in Israel development and being involved in the policy discussions in the Middle East, and it addresses the serious sources of skepticisms which people had and still many of them have about this connection.

First, do all the people of the world really want to live in freedom? Second, is freedom good for our security? Is freedom a thousand miles from here good for our security here, or it is only a cre-

ation of altruism? And does the free world have a role to play in it? If so, what kind of role the free world can play in all this?

The first question which, in fact, was the principle question, which we as the human rights activists were facing for many years in the Soviet Union. And sometimes we heard that freedom is not for the people in the Soviet Union, freedom is not for Russia, freedom is not for Eastern Europe. That type of skepticism which we heard from our friends from the West is once more and more often asked of the last years about Muslim countries, about Arab countries, about countries of the Middle East, about Palestinians, and more and more we heard about there is not one Muslim country in the world which is democratic; maybe it is simply not appropriate, it is simply a different civilization.

I hear that today it is easier to answer to skeptics than 3 or 4 months ago with what happened in Iraq during elections, what happened in Lebanon with 1 million people demonstrating, what happened in these weeks in Cairo when so many dissidents are ready to raise their voices shows that this questions is—I hope, is at least partially answered.

But the second question is no less important. The current debate today is one focused on whether there is a real critical connection between democracy somewhere and security here. And more and more, the question of elections is used as a source of skepticism. Just now leaving Israel, a couple of articles that you see that the elections are bringing the extremists to power. This is the way how terrorist groups can come to power. And maybe democracy can be even dangerous for security. And so that is why in my book, I propose this town square test and why I believe that American administrations use this test.

An election, not by itself, is democracy. Free elections and free society, that's what has to be the aim. And free society is a society which passes the town square test. That a peasant can go to the center of the town square, express his or her views, and not to be punished for this.

So if you look at every place where extremists are coming into power as a result of elections, it is always that society is still a fear society. There are still a lot of restrictions. You have elections in a society where democratic institutions are built of standards and developed around the process of developing, it is mainly because a big influence of the results; because when given the real choice, free choice to choose between living in freedom or living in fear, people choose to live in freedom. And that's why, if you have the opportunity to choose between elections or building a free society and elections in then the process, we always have to understand that the most important thing is to build the free society, to help to build the free institutions of the society.

And here is the question, the linkage. What is the role of the free world? First of all, to bring moral clarity, to understand that for the free world, the real partners are not the dictators but the people, the dissidents who are speaking the truth, who express the desire of their people to live in freedom.

What has been done in the last few months by the President of the United States of America cannot be underestimated. The very fact that the leader of the free world speaks clearly appeals to the

dissidents, to the democrats of the world has tremendous influence. I remember the days when I was in a Soviet prison and when President Reagan was speaking about the evil empire, how much hope it gave to all of us, how much strength it gave to us. I remember the stories of my friends in solidarity when John Paul II was speaking to them.

That is the power of the free world speaking with moral clarity, supporting the dissidents. And, with all this, with all this position taken by the United States of America, you cannot understand the changes which are happening in the last month as to whether in Ukraine, whether in Lebanon, whether in Egypt, and then speaking about Iraq.

The second level of linkage are programs supporting democracy. And here we see some progress and here we see a lot of efforts and institutions which start dealing with education for democracy, which start dealing with the support of different efforts to build a civil society. Still, it's not enough. When even today, today I hear from the dissidents in Iran the complaint that they have problems in finding support to find broadcasting, like we dissidents enjoyed in the Soviet Union the broadcasting of the free world over the Radio Freedom.

And if today the price of this support is less than the price of one airplane, and to see the influence of this support when Iran—letters are written—I heard from many people, Iran more and more reminds me today of the Soviet Union in the last months of its existence, when almost everybody was double thinker, when almost everybody had balance about this imaging. And there's the time to support—to encourage and support building the civil society. And also the most important level is direct linkage, direct linkage which then was a critical issue of the relations between the East and West after the Helsinki agreement when directly the question of human rights was connected to all the projects of economical, culture, political relations with these countries. Everybody who knows the story of Saad Eddin Ibrahim, the dissident also from Egypt, who was released after 3 years because of direct linkage of the United States of America made between the relations between Egypt and the fate of the dissident is a very important example of this narrow but very powerful usage of this linkage.

The fact that where in the towns of the Soviet Union the fate of the dissidents practically never come to a reasonable conclusion in the Soviet Union was in the minds and the decisions and the resolutions of this House and administration, and today most of the dissidents of the Middle East, their names are not even known, that shows that a lot can be done in this direction.

And just now we are dealing with the very important issue of [Unintelligible.]. As you probably know, he resigned from the government, but it doesn't matter whether you are for the way how it was implemented or not. I think we all agree that the most important thing is that, one, that what will emerge either will be a democratic society and not a terrorist society. And the most important question for all of us must be whether education of incitement in schools in Gaza will continue after we leave it; whether Palestinians will continue living in awful conditions in refugee camps, or whether this will liberate them. But that free economy will be built

there, or, as in the times unfortunately of Yasser Arafat, there will be a free hand to destroy, or we will be given a free government civil society. And, of course, whether terrorist organizations acting there today will be dismantled or they will become even stronger.

These are the most important questions. And the course of the free world of the United States of America, the course of Europe, has to be whether you are helping the Palestinian society—whether you are helping to defeat people in the Palestinian Authority to live more free lives or less. And the more free lives they have, the more security we will have in Israel and you in the United States of America.

These are my initial remarks. And I will be glad to answer your questions after this.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Mr. Sharansky. I would like to point out that you were arrested and in Soviet prison, sentenced to 13 years in jail. You spent how many years, sir, in jail?

Mr. SHARANSKY. Only 9, because of the pressure of the United States of America.

Mr. SHAYS. Well, you are a true hero, and it is a privilege to have you here.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Sharansky follows:]

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Profile

Natan Sharansky

Israeli Minister of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs

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Institutional Affiliations

- **Zionist Forum:** former president
- **Yisrael B'aliyah Party:** founder and chairman
- **Peace Watch:** board member
- **Jerusalem Report:** former contributing editor
- **One Jerusalem:** cofounder and chairman

Government Service

- **Minister of Industry and Trade:** June 1996-1999
- **Minister of Internal Affairs:** July 1999-July 2000
- **Minister of Housing and Construction:** appointed March 2001
- **Deputy Prime Minister:** appointed March 2001
- **Minister of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs:** current
- **Israel Citizens Information Council:** director
- **Coordination Forum for Countering Anti-Semitism:** chairman (18)

Education

- **Institute of Physics, Moscow**

Publications

- **Fear No Evil (1998)**
- **The Case for Democracy (2004)**

Highlights & Quotes

The State of the Union Address and Bush's second Inaugural Address focused U.S. and international attention on Natan Sharansky, author of *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny & Terror.* Pundits and reporters noted that the president's lofty rhetoric about "ending tyranny in our world" and guaranteeing "freedom from fear" echoed Sharansky's language.

In his book Sharansky makes the case that U.S. foreign policy should be guided at least as much by ideals as national interests. Part of that idealism should be a mission to export freedom to countries and societies living in fear, focusing primarily on the Arab world.(1) According to Sharansky, the United States should not only prevent terrorists and terrorist states from obtaining weapons of mass destruction, but should also "understand how powerful weapons of mass construction can be in the hands of the free world."

No doubt that Bush and Sharansky, a Soviet émigré who is a top political official in Israel, share a similar perspective about international affairs, especially in the Middle East. Following his Inaugural Address, the president told the *New York Times* that Sharansky's book confirmed what he already believed and that the Israeli author's thinking was "part of my presidential DNA."(2)

From "Prisoner of Zion" to Israel's Minister of Diaspora Affairs

Right Web Connections

Individuals

- Elliott Abrams
- Richard Cheney
- Douglas Feith
- William Kristol
- Richard Perle
- Paul Wolfowitz
- Meyrav Wurmser

Organizations

- American Enterprise Institute (AEI)
- American Israeli Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC)
- Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs
- Middle East Forum

According to Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the 1970s Sharansky engaged "in underground Zionist activities" until his 1977 arrest by Soviet authorities on charges of treason and espionage. Although the U.S. government denied any connection between Sharansky and the CIA, he was sentenced in 1978 to 13 years imprisonment. An international campaign, supported by Presidents Carter and Reagan, led to Sharansky's release on February 11, 1986 as part of an East-West spy exchange. That same night the self-described "Prisoner of Zion" arrived in Israel, where he quickly became the leading voice for the cause of Soviet Jewry.

In 1988 Sharansky founded and became the first president of the Zionist Forum. In 1995 Sharansky formed a political party to represent new Jewish immigrants to Israel. Always closely allied with Likud, particularly its most extreme factions, the Yisrael B'Aliya party no longer maintains its own independence and has effectively merged with Likud.

A longtime member of the Knesset, Sharansky has held a wide range of cabinet posts including Interior Minister, Housing and Construction Minister, and Industry and Trade Minister. Sharansky served as Deputy Prime Minister from March 2001 to February 2003, when he broke with Sharon over plans to withdraw Israeli settlers from the occupied Gaza Strip. Sharansky, who continues to oppose any concessions to the Palestinians, insists there should be "no territory for terror." (3)

Upon resigning as deputy prime minister, Sharansky was appointed Minister for Jerusalem Affairs and the Diaspora as part of a deal in which his Yisrael B'Aliya became a branch of the ruling Likud party. (4)

Sharansky is founding member and current chairman of One Jerusalem, which has one objective: "Saving a united Jerusalem as the united capital of Israel." Among other activities, One Jerusalem provides "essential information about the destruction of Jewish artifacts in sacred places like Temple Mount." Other prominent U.S. cofounders of One Jerusalem include outgoing Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith and David Steinmann, who is chairman of the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs and a board member of the Center for Security Policy.(5)

Dore Gold, also a cofounder of One Jerusalem, is top Likud deputy and former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations. Referring to Sharansky's influential role in shaping U.S. policy, Gold said: "Sharansky has a very powerful moral voice because he was a prisoner of Zion." (6)

Sharansky shares the Israeli government's conviction

that the entire city of Jerusalem is the country's capital. Israel annexed East Jerusalem after the 1967 war, and have since steadfastly refused to release it to the Palestinians, despite repeated UN resolutions declaring Israel in violation of international law. The Palestinian Authority claim East Jerusalem and would like to make it the capital of the proposed Palestinian state.

For Sharansky, the accusation that the views of some pro-Israel policy advocates are clouded by their dual loyalty to both Israel and the United States misses the fundamental truth about the Jewish diaspora. "I see the Jewish world as one," said Sharansky, "those who are living and those who are not yet living in Israel. It is part of the same body of people who left Egypt 3000 years ago, and they are on their way to the land of Israel." For this reason, Sharansky says that the Israeli government must be closely involved in the problems of the Jews in the diaspora. "In fact," he said, "on my initiative was created a special government committee on relations with the diaspora, and I'm chairman all these years." (7)

In his role as Diaspora Minister, Sharansky travels throughout the United States and authorizes government funding to establish pro-Israel groups on U.S. campuses. "Israel has few strategic assets as critical as American Jewry," according to the Israeli minister. "The fact that the world's leading superpower is a steadfast ally of Israel is due in large measure to this proud and activist community."

Sharansky charges that Middle East studies departments at U.S. universities have adopted a vehemently anti-Israel posture due to "years of massive investments of money and effort by Arab states and the Palestinians." As the product of "generous Saudi funding," university departments have "been set up.to establish pseudo-scientific theories, presenting Israel as the last colonial state, whose very existence is immoral regardless of borders."

To counter this Arab conspiracy, Sharansky intends to "recapture the campus" with "a concentrated effort" and change in direction in "Israel's informational efforts."(8) Sharansky has also established, by way of the government's Israel Citizens Information Council, the Hasbara Program, which sponsors an information program for Jews living outside Israel. As part of the Hasbara campaign, "We are trying to be sure that on every campus there will be a critical mass that will be able to stand up and be counted to defend Israel." Sharansky helped establish the World Congress of Jewish Activists, which sponsors training programs in Jerusalem for students around the world, including U.S. high school students. The trainees are taught "how to defend Israel."(9)

The Israeli minister says that his work on U.S.

campuses counts on the strong backing of Prime Minister Sharon. But the Israeli government is not alone in this effort. "I'm working with the AIPAC [American-Israeli Political Affairs Committee], Hillel of course, and Caravan for Democracy, Friends of Likud as well as supporters of the Likud Movement," explained Sharansky.

As Minister of Jerusalem and Diaspora Affairs, Sharansky advocates the "ingathering of Jews" in Israel. In a letter published by the Israel Citizens Information Council, a project of his ministry, Sharansky wrote: "In Israel there is no such thing as an "ordinary citizen." This country consists largely of immigrants, but immigrants only in the sense that they were born someplace else, just to return home, to Israel, later. The community we have created-a diverse, vibrant and growing democracy-is best represented by its citizens."(10) Sharansky describes himself as "the representative of the government and people of Israel to the Jewish world."(11)

Sharansky is also the chairman of The Coordination Forum for Countering Anti-Semitism, a government forum that brings together various government ministries, including its foreign ministry and information center, together with various Jewish organizations including the World Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL). The government-sponsored forum commits "Israel as the Jewish state" to protect "the security of Jewish communities around the world" and to "eradicate all anti-Jewish activity."

Speaking in the capacity of chairman of the anti-Semitism forum, Sharansky warned that under the veil of "political criticism of Israel" lurks discrimination against the State of Israel to which a double standard is applied, and doubts are cast regarding its very right to exist."

Sharansky frequently generalizes about the character and mission of Jews, whether living in Israel or members of the diaspora. Sharansky, for example, stated: "We Jews are strong on history and being logical and believing in moral principles, so it's very important every Jew should choose himself or herself as an ambassador of his people and of his country." (12)

When the U.S. media reported that in August 2004 that the FBI had been investigating clandestine information-sharing meetings involving a Pentagon official working for Douglas Feith, Israeli intelligence officials, and representatives of the American-Israeli Political Affairs Committee (AIPAC), Sharansky was the Israeli government official who publicly denied the allegations of spying. Sharansky suggested the criminal investigation was the result of a U.S. government interagency "rivalry," singling out "the Pentagon and

the CIA."

The Neoconservative Connection

President Bush is not the first president to give Sharansky a personal audience. After he was released from prison in the Soviet Union, Sharansky met with President Ronald Reagan-one the three men that Sharansky credits for ending the "evil empire." Sharansky told the *Weekly Standard* that in addition to President Reagan the other two men who form his trinity of heroes are Soviet dissident Andrei Sakharov (for whom Sharansky served as a translator) and Henry "Scoop" Jackson. Senator Jackson led the Cold Warrior wing of the Democratic Party, and he also was the leading congressional supporter of Israel. Many of today's most prominent neocons, including Richard Perle of the American Enterprise Institute and Deputy National Security Adviser Elliott Abrams, worked on Jackson's staff.(13)

For his part, Perle, a leading neoconservative who has advised the Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the Likud party, boasts that "Scoop Jackson" and Natan Sharansky are his two personal heroes. (14)

In his book Sharansky describes U.S. policy as a continuum involving many of his closest friends and collaborators in the United States, including Abrams, Perle, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz, outgoing Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Douglas Feith, and Cheney's chief of staff "Scooter" Libby. "If you check their background, most of them were connected either to Senator Jackson or to the Reagan administration, or both," wrote Sharansky.

In the United States, Sharansky is a frequent guest at neoconservative institutions, especially the American Enterprise Institute. Although he resists any political labeling aside from "Zionist," his writing and speeches are laden with the political terminology and frameworks of the neocons, including such terms as "moral clarity," "appeasement," and "totalitarianism." In his writings in *Commentary* and other neoconservative publications, Sharansky rejects the attempts to establish a "moral equivalence" (another stock neocon term) between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

Referring to the Palestinian Authority and Israel, Sharansky in a speech to an April 2002 pro-Israel rally in Washington said: "Equating good and evil is an evil itself..We cannot accept moral equivalence between those who see human bodies as a shield for terrorists, and those for whom human rights are the highest value."(15) Paralleling Bush's own description of international affairs as a divide between good and evil, and those who are fighting terrorism and those who are supporting it, Sharansky writes in his book that the

world is "divided between those who are prepared to confront evil and those who are willing to appease it."

In a December 2004 review of Sharansky's new book in the *Weekly Standard*, Meyrav Wurmser expressed her delight that "one of the great champions of freedom is now influencing the thinking of the most powerful man in the world." Wurmser, the Israeli-born director of the Center for Middle East Policy at the neoconservative Hudson Institute, concludes her homage to Sharansky warning: "Dictators everywhere, take note." (16)

Both the United States and Israel have much in common, according to Sharansky. One of the links, he said in a speech at a forum sponsored by the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), which was the basis for an article in *Commentary*, the journal of the American Jewish Committee, is the spreading scourge of anti-Semitism. "Anti-Americanism in the Islamic world and anti-Americanism in Europe are in fact linked," argued Sharansky, because "both bear an uncanny resemblance to anti-Semitism." In this essay entitled "On Hating Jews," Sharansky wrote: "America embodies a different-a nonconforming-idea of the good, and refuses to abandon its moral clarity about the objective worth of that idea."

Moreover, Minister of Diaspora Affairs Sharansky believes that "Israel and the Jewish people share something essential with the United States." According to Sharansky, The Jews have long held that they were chosen to play a special role in history, to be what their prophets called 'a light unto nations'..It is similar with the United States-a nation that has long regarded itself as entrusted with a mission to be what John Winthrop in the 17th century called "a city on a hill" and Ronald Reagan in the 20th century parsed as a "shining city on a hill." (17)

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(11) "Message from Natan Sharansky," Israel Citizens Information Council
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Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Al-Alusi.

STATEMENT OF MITHAL AL-ALUSI

Mr. AL-ALUSI. OK.

Mr. SHAYS. Welcome, my friend.

Mr. AL-ALUSI. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, this is really a great honor for me to be a witness before this subcommittee. Thank you so much for this opportunity. I do agree with many of the things Mr. Sharansky has said. But as an Iraqi politician, I have that reality. We do now have a free Iraq. We have problems, this is true. We have a huge problem. You have to understand, after Saddam Hussein, this kind of regime, dictatorship, killer of the innocent, killer machines, we have a problem. We have problems, but we also have the new Iraq. No discussion about it. The election day was the Iraqi great day, the Iraqi happy day.

But I agree with you, sir, when you say that the extremists, that they are using the democracy. They are smart and they are trying to use it as the tool to have a control of our society. I agree with you because the terrorists, the old way of the terrorism really has been changed. They are well organized, they have government beside them, interior agencies, and they are trying to use our democracy now to get control and to come back again.

I have started in Iraq to work as the Director General by the Iraq education. And from this experience, I know very well how the Ba'athists, they are trying to get the power in Baghdad again. Always we have heard many things about the deratification, but always I can say from my experience, from my knowledge, from the information that we got, from the facts, the news is totally different and far away from the reality. This is a fact.

I would like also to say it is impossible to split between democratic peace and human rights. Some people, they believe they are democrat but they don't need to look for peace or they don't need to look for humanity rights. This is really a problem in the Middle East. But we need time and we need the real support, moral, political, and financial support for the liberals in the Middle East. And this is something really difficult now.

I mean, it is very painful when we see how the extremist parties which power, which mechanisms they have. As an example, they have TV channels, radio channels, many newspapers in Baghdad today. They go and the Islamic extremist party and the other extremist parties, the Ba'ath party. They have more than 100 newspapers. Maximum, the liberals newspaper in Baghdad, five: 1 to 20. They have many TV channels, many radio stations. No liberalist party in Iraq or in the Middle East have a TV channel or free radio. This is the fact. And Iran is our neighbor and Baghdad is the Iraqi neighbors.

But Iran is not a democratic country. Even if they have a parliament there. The problem, I do believe that we need time to feel this welcome, but also we need to work very hard to make it work. There is a very important point. Again, we cannot split between democratic, human rights, and peace. But somebody must try to teach us that we don't need peace in the Middle East or we cannot start to build the peace between Iraq and Israel because of somebody. He has to start first; after that, we can think about it.

This kind of message, the strategy, or Palestine organization strategy, it is against the Iraqi strategy. We were more than 50 or 60 years a hostage of every strategy in the area. The area, we in Iraq and you see in Israel, all of us we need a clear signal that we are for peace in the area, and we can start between Iraq and Israel. And this will help the Palestine people to be more realistic, to understand the real politics of the problem, the pragmatic way in the politics.

I believe the era of terrorism and the reforms has just started in the Middle East. The terrorists, they are an alliance, Syria, Iran, Hezbollah, Jihad, Hamas, Ba'ath party, al Qaeda, they are an alliance. They have the same political goals, they have the same mechanism. It is now that our time to stop to think about it. We need alliance between the democratic countries where they have suffered very or they have paid a huge price I believe is the right way to have the strategical relationship between the United States of America and Iraq in the alliance against the terrorism, the terror between Iraq, Israel, United States, Turkey, maybe Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirate.

Whatever the people can say, we know the news, always pushing some kind of news coming from Baghdad. It might be truth, it could be truth, but there is also another side. The Iraqi people, they are free now. This is the main point. Let me say it also here, Mr. Chairman, thank you, America. Thank you so much for everything.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you, Mr. Al-Alusi.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Al-Alusi follows:]

Testimony of Mithal Al-Alusi
Founder of the Democratic Party of the Iraqi Nation

May 17, 2005

Committee on Government Reform

Subcommittee on National Security Emerging Threats
and International Relations

The Bush doctrine is a revolutionary way of thinking both according to previous American foreign policy as well as international foreign policy. This type of change needs a huge investment of time and resources. But for me as an Iraqi politician, I have the new reality that Saddam Hussein and his terrorist Ba`ath regime no longer rule in Iraq.

Over the last few months I as an Iraqi liberal have witnessed the departure of the Syrians from Lebanon and many changes have started to begin in the Middle East, including in Saudi Arabia and Egypt. I believe that these changes did not happen by themselves; they happened as a result of the pressure that the United States has put on the regimes in the Middle East. If the Administration continues these efforts we will have reform and a real chance for democracy and peace.

The success of reform movements in the Middle East can only be achieved through the leadership of the United States, the liberal democrats in Middle Eastern countries, and the determination of the people to follow them. The effect of the Bush Doctrine is immeasurable because after the liberation of Iraq the people of the Middle East who live under dictatorial regimes became hopeful that their countries would follow the same path.

There is not one city in the Middle East where an individual is able to speak truthfully and honestly about his or her political views without fearing for his life. There are two exceptions - Iraq and Israel. However, as a result of Iraqis having lived under the brutal regime of Saddam Hussein, they are still afraid to speak out publicly. And I see a parallel in Israel where the people's experience of history keeps them from imagining reform or change in their neighbors.

The people of the Middle East are prepared to live like normal human beings and are willing to have democratic reform. They are still suffering greatly because of others who are abusing their religion and the main problem now is

that the extremists understand that they can use the mechanism of democracy for their own goals.

In Iraq, the Islamist parties - Sunni or Shi`i - are totalitarian parties. Totalitarian ideology is the main danger. I believe that there is no difference between ideology that controls the people in the name of God or other nationalist ideologies that do the same in the name of the nation. People are prepared for democracy as long as it is true democracy that gives them human rights and peace.

I believe that Islam is compatible with democracy. But the understanding of the "new Islam" - radical Islam - is completely at odds with the main message of all religions, including mainstream Islam. In the Quran it states that if you kill one being it is as if you have killed the entire world. But now we have people who act in the name of Islam throughout the Middle East who are killing people in the name of Islam. That is why it is very important to have the separation of religion and state.

More than men, women in the Middle East have suffered through dictatorships. They have been the targets of terrorists and a poor economic situation. This situation has had and continues to make an impact on their entire families. The systematic discrimination against women in some Middle Eastern countries will make it more difficult for those countries to become democratic. Since women represent at least half the population of the Middle East, the fact that their voices are not heard means that civil society is in danger.

The fact that the Middle East has always been under the rule of dictatorships means that there is a huge vacuum in understanding how people should behave in a democratic system. That is why it is very important to continue to push for reforms and to stop terrorism; otherwise all of our society will be held hostage and no one will be in a position to learn or be able to think freely.

The Bush Doctrine is an important message that has already been received by the people of the Middle East. At the same time, the dictatorial regimes have understood that message and are adapting their tactics to avoid true reform. In order for the Doctrine to work, there needs to be more understanding of how the dictatorial regimes are playing for time with the hope that the policy of the United States will change. Because they have been receiving support from international bodies such as European countries and their longtime partner, Russia, those regimes are trying to attack reforms and the liberation of Iraq by using the UN Security Council for their interests. I believe that the way to make the Bush Doctrine more effective must come through the development of free market economies and through reforms in the UN system.

Regarding Iraq, we need a clear message from the United States that will promote a strategic relationship between Iraq and the United States. The liberals in Iraq and throughout the Middle East cannot do it alone. They need to receive real moral, political and financial support. It is painful to see that the extremist parties have their own television and radio stations and the number of their newspapers far outnumbers those of the liberals by 20 to 1. Today in Iraq the extremists own over 100 newspapers and the liberals have only five. The extremists are funded with massive support by Iran, Saudi Arabia and Syria.

This strategic relationship is needed because the era of terrorism and reform has just started. That is why we are in real need of an international alliance that will include all of the democratic countries that have suffered from terrorism, such as the United States, Iraq, Israel and Turkey, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates. This should be the answer to those terror organizations and regimes that are allied against the United States and against peace and democracy in the Middle East.

Iraq acted for a very long time as a hostage to the interests of other countries and organizations represented by the ideologies of Jamal Abdul Nasser and the Palestinians. Now Iraq and its democratic process is in danger of becoming a hostage to the interests of Iran.

As a next step, the Bush Doctrine must make it clear to the countries in the region that making peace can and must start without waiting for the Palestinian leadership to grasp realpolitik. This will help the Palestinians to become more pragmatic and it ensure the continuation of reforms. The current state of war between Iraq and its neighbors, and Israel, means that all of the reforms will not be able to proceed while the state of war continues.

Mr. SHAYS. We have behind you, Mr. Sharansky, Mr. Dermer. And he is co-author of "The Case for Democracy." And if he would like, the subcommittee would welcome him to join this panel. And we would swear you in, if you wanted to participate in the questioning. Would you like to participate? If you don't mind standing, welcome. Just raise your right hand, please.

[Witness sworn.]

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. Welcome.

We are going to start out, I just would also recognize that Mrs. Maloney has joined us as well. I recognize Mr. Kucinich.

Mr. KUCINICH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman. And again I want to welcome the witnesses. And Minister Sharansky's presence here is important because we recognize the contributions that you have made as a dissident, someone who is willing to put himself on the line to help achieve a statement of moral clarity. And I think that everyone in this Congress, whatever their particular view of the situation in Iraq, respects that greatly, because it is individuals such as yourself who have had a very powerful statement of moral clarity which helps to bring about political change.

I think that when we are speaking about Iraq, though, and the particular problems that we have here in the Congress is with respect to the role of military intervention in bringing about "democracy." now, the United States did not intervene militarily against Russia to help encourage the kind of changes that was created or that were created. How do you see the difference between what the U.S.' policy was with respect to the Soviet Union and what the U.S. policy—where they'd they did not use military intervention, and the U.S.' policies in Iraq where we have used military intervention? Do you make any distinction there at all?

Mr. SHARANSKY. Well, thank you for your question, Congressman. Of course I make a distinction. As in our book, anyway, we believe that all the totalitarian regimes are very weak from inside because they have to spend all their power on controlling their own people, the minds of their own people to keep them on the course of control. But it is a lot of power energy. In fact, and if they don't support it by the external sources of power, they will become weaker and weaker. And that is why it gives a great challenge to democracy simply by putting in place effective forms of linkage between economical, political, social, cultural, financial relations with these countries and the question of human rights. And these countries can become strong enough to stand in the free world only if they have peace for a long period with the free world.

Yes, the regime of Saddam Hussein became very dangerous, but we should not forget that in the 1980's, many countries in the free world believed that it is in the interest of these countries that these regimes exist, and you supported this regime.

Mr. KUCINICH. But may I ask, Mr. Sharansky, what about the regime of, say, of Kruschev or Brezhnev? I mean, we did not intervene militarily against Russia.

Mr. SHARANSKY. I have to say that this regime became so strong because there was a policy of appeasement toward this regime beginning from the 1930's and 1940's. And no doubt there were periods of that regime, Soviet regime, when the world had no other way but to cooperate. Like in 1943, Churchill and Roosevelt could

not stop cooperating with the regime, starting at the times of war against Hitler. But in 1953 and 1963 and 1973, the free world continued cooperating and in fact helping this regime to survive.

Now, the moment this regime was becoming so dangerous and so aggressive that sometimes the free world had to respond. And I don't have to remind you what happened in Cuba, the times when they sold missiles over and then the Soviet Army sent the troops—not their troops, Cuban troops to Africa. At the same time, the very dangerous situation and they were sending troops to Prague, Berlin, Hungary, and they take special recruit. And of course it was dangerous moments, but there was no direct threat to the United States. And they believe that as long as there is no direct threat to the free world, the free world has to use the policy of linkage and to undermine and to weaken these regimes. And it can be very successful as it was in the case of the Soviet Union.

What happened with Iraq—well, who I am to speak in the presence of the hero of this nation here of Iraq, Mr. Al-Alusi. But my personal opinion is that if the freedom of the United States of America were challenged by the world terror and the President of the United States accepted this challenge—he didn't say that we are now fighting this one or another terrorist group; he said we are fighting against the world network of terror.

Sooner or later, America would have to deal with the regime of Iraq because Saddam Hussein—and here I am speaking from my own experience in the Middle East. The regime of Saddam Hussein gave a lot of legitimacy, a lot of power to all the terrorists in the Middle East. The very fact his regime was opening the way to the free world, has been doing it for tens of years. Here was a regime which was openly supporting every family of suicide bombers. There was a big opportunity, President Saddam Hussein is giving $10,000 to every family of a suicide bomber. It's not the problem of the money; it's the problem of encouraging them, of telling them that they knew that they have their motherland, their country, their regime, which is behind them. So if you are really having a—you are challenged with this world war of terror and you want to respond, you have to deal with this regime.

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Sharansky, first of all, you demonstrated personally in Russia through the power of your courage that one person could take a stand. And, again, I want to state that every one of us appreciates the courage that you showed. And I think that was one of the things that helped to lead to change in the Soviet Union, that caused the Soviet Union to collapse: Eventually, it could not keep people like yourself from stating through their own sacrifice the truth of the conditions. And what I'm simply stating here is that how much more does that power of moral force of an individual trump the power of military intervention? It's something that I think is worth—from our standpoint, is worth looking at.

So thank you for your testimony. And, Mr. Chairman, I again want to thank you for making possible for the witnesses to be here.

Mr. SHAYS. I thank the gentleman.

I see a significant difference between Iraq and almost any other country, because basically having gone into Kuwait, having an agreement but not a peace agreement with the forces that got Saddam out of Kuwait, given his absolute insistence in a sense that

he wanted us to think that he had weapons of mass destruction. But the challenge we have in this country, obviously, is there were no weapons of mass destruction by that period, and we have to accept the fact that the Duelfer Report says that, means that you have a country that is—and some debate in here with the fact that we then sent our troops to Iraq.

I wish we had done it not under the strong belief that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction, just that we needed to close the chapter of 12 years of fly zones and the ambiguity of not having a finality to our getting Saddam out of Kuwait. But, the reality is we are there. And I would like to ask these questions. And I would love—Mr. Dermer, I also would know that you would be speaking as an individual, and we got you by surprise and you didn't get to check with other higher authorities about. So we know that you will choose your words carefully. But it is an honor to have you here as well.

I would like each of you to tell me, how should the United States promote democracy in the Middle East? What's appropriate? What's not appropriate? How do we promote democracy? What's required for us?

Mr. AL-ALUSI. Well, this is really a good question. I mean, in Iraq, we don't have Saddam and the Ba'ath regime. And we have started the election. Can we change everything in 1 day, in 1 year, in 2 years? Many people they have a huge critic in Iraq politic, in your politic or in ours. I mean, the Iraqi politician. But they forget how many years Germany and France—they are now in the very, very good position as democratic countries. They have forgotten, they took more than 40 years to establish the first step what we have done it in 6 months. We have done this very fast. But we need also to understand that the terrorists in Iraq, they are a part of the terrorists in the Middle East. They have their own agenda to stop any kind of change in the area. I mean, positive change, reforms and democracy.

Here's the difference: Cannot—if the liberals, they will not have the help, the real help, moral, politic, and finance, they will have the problem in the area. If we don't make it really clear that we are not willing to deal with terrorists, it is not enough just to change the system. The terrorists in Iraq are really afraid, really afraid that 1 day we will see or we will say the United States of America, they have made the change; Saddam and the Ba'ath regime is not there. But the one now is Iran, because Iran they have very well understood, they can have this game, to win this game for a few million dollars, and they are pushing interior agency and many millions to win the game.

The most important point, it is not only your responsibilities, it is our responsibility in Iraq, but it always better to make it clear: Iraq is a free country. And the Iraqi civility need to go through a dialog and agreement between Iraq and the United States of America.

Mr. SHAYS. Do the Iraqis believe—and I will get to the other two witnesses. Do the Iraqis believe that we are being impatient with Iraq? Is there a feeling that we are asking too much?

Mr. AL-ALUSI. Not at all. No. We were glad to start. I mean, the United States of America, the forces are there. Let me ask us any

Iraqi, what will happen if the American forces are not more in Iraq? The answer would be very soon from any Iraqi—any normal Iraqi: Iran will occupy it.

Mr. SHAYS. I'm going to have a lot of questions here because I'm going to want to ask some other questions as well. So I want to get to the other witnesses. But I am told by observers, American observers, that Iraq has taken—the people of Iraq have taken naturally to the dialog of interaction. They like the political process, they like the debate, they like the negotiations. That this is something that in a sense isn't foreign to Iraqis. Is that something you would agree with or disagree with?

Mr. AL-ALUSI. No. I agree that we are very happy, more than happy to have this situation.

Mr. SHAYS. I'm not even talking about happiness. I'm talking about that there is just this natural inclination, that this is not—even though democracy is something new and taking initiative is not something you did in Saddam's world, unless you wanted your head lopped off. But now, given this opportunity, there is this genuine excitement, but, more than that, a liking to the negotiations, the idea of trying to find a solution. That Iraqis are taking to it. That it's not something that is impossible for them to grasp. And I'm asking if you agree with that.

Mr. AL-ALUSI. Yes, I agree.

Mr. SHAYS. OK. Mr. Sharansky, Mr. Dermer, could you just respond to what you would like to see the United States be doing to promote democracy in the Middle East? Not just in Iraq.

Mr. SHARANSKY. Well, there are so many aspects, let me touch one of them. It will take. The big mistake of the Osla—the Osla process was, the main effort was mainly how to have a stable regime. And if it means that we must strengthen dictatorship, we will strengthen dictatorship. And, in fact, the efforts of Israel, of the United States of America, of Europe, to for the very beginning of the process how to make, to stop a dictatorship which will bring us stability. I hope that this difficult lesson was learned, and now more and more people understand that we have to go forward supporting free society and then we get stability.

But if we go in the opposite order, we will get only more terror. What it means today in——

Mr. SHAYS. Can I just—so I'm following you. What I'm hearing you say is that we may have to tolerate instability ultimately to get to stability through a democratic——

Mr. SHARANSKY. Yes. This fear that the democracy of one freedom brings more than stability in the world, if you look a little bit longer and you see how this so-called stability brought by strong dictator is turned into more terrorist attacks, more hatred and more world war. And it's clear, why? Because dictators inevitably need external enemies for their own stability.

And then we can extend something also process, which in advance was planned in a way that we decided—the free world decided that if Yassar Arafat needs to impose the restrictions of freedom, let him do it. But I'm saying that definitely with new leadership, we have better chance; but it will succeed with better chance only if our enemy again will not support this leadership by all

means, and that is would not put restrictions—will not demand on the democratic process.

Today, when the big efforts are taken, very positive efforts to give economical assistance to something, it is very important that the result of these efforts will be more free economical life for something, and not more control over the economy in terms of authority by their leaders. The same has to be said, also, for terrorist organizations. This readiness to tolerate the coexistence with terrorist organizations is a very—we can see how the terrorist organization are making some efforts to strengthen themselves again.

From the very beginning of the process, the demand must be very clear, the linkage must be very clear, not cease-fire with the terrorist organizations, but the struggle against terrorist organizations.

Mr. SHAYS. My time has run out, but if Mrs. Maloney will just allow me to ask Mr. Dermer to respond to this as well.

The first time we met, you were working with Mr. Netanyahu, I believe. And I would say to you that he was the first one who articulated in a way that I paid attention to the fact that you have—you can't have peace without democracy, ultimately. So he was kind of the individual that was saying this in a way that at least caught my attention. I know others were saying it before. But what would be your response about the role of the United States in promoting democracy in the Middle East?

Mr. DERMER. Well, the first thing I would say—and I thank you for allowing me to testify, even if it was very unexpected.

The first thing I would say is I understand exactly what the problem is. And one of the disadvantages that I have had in trying to understand what Natan Sharansky was saying to many people for many years is that I was raised in a free society. So to live under a regime where you are constantly afraid to say what you want is something that was totally foreign to me. And to understand the mechanics of how such a society works is very hard for me to understand. So Natan was saying for years and years and years, and it took me a long time to understand the concept of what he was saying or thinking behind it. When you see a suicide bombing attack and then you would see thousands of people in the street celebrating it, you wonder if we're talking about democracy; these people can be democratic?

And what I understood when I listened to him in trying to understand the problem is that you have to understand what type of society a fear society is. When you have a regime that totally determines what people do, whether they have a real component to go into Israel, whether they're going to receive aid from international donors, whether or not they're going to be able to participate in business in any way because there is a monopoly over all basic industries, you see; but in order to survive in that type of society you have to demonstrate loyalty to their elite. It doesn't mean that the images that you're seeing on television is what is really going on within those societies.

So I think the most critical thing that I learned and that I think would help, moving forward, is to focus as much as possible on increasing the degree of freedom within that society, to decreasing the dependence that people within the society have on the regime.

It doesn't matter if they're dependent on a social network of a terrorism group or whether they're dependent on a regime; the most important thing is to make them independent and to build civil society.

I think if we recognize that's what the focus has to be, to make the town square as free as possible, to build those institutions as much as possible, constant focus on asking ourselves a simple question: Is there more freedom within Palestinian society today than there was yesterday, or is there more freedom in Iraq than there was yesterday, or any country that you look at? Just ask yourself that question. Not whether we're closer to elections, not whether or not this particular policy has been advanced or not. Is there more freedom for the individual in this society than yesterday? If you do that, then I think that you're going to be moving in the right direction.

As to specifically what the United States can do, I think that Natan has been arguing that for many years, and he wrote in the book, is to the greatest degree possible to link the relations that you have to these countries to how they treat their own people. This is really the revolution, if I recall the Sharansky document. It is very different than the conventional approach to foreign policy. The conventional approach says we should treat country A based on how country A is treating country B.

And here is what Natan has been saying for many years and what the dissidents in the Soviet Union have been saying for many years is that we need to treat a country based on how that country is treating its own people. That is the lesson that I think if we keep in mind all the time and pressure the regimes to give more human rights and more freedom to their people and use all the tools you have—political, moral, financial, whatever you have in order to push in that direction—then I think that things will be moving in the right direction in terms of democracy.

Mr. SHAYS. I am loving this panel. Thank you very much.

Mrs. Maloney.

Mrs. MALONEY. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I'm delighted to welcome the distinguished panelists.

Mr. Al-Alusi, you have lost two of your children and your body guard, and there have been nine assassination attempts against your life. We appreciate your great courage, and we thank you for being here. I regret that the violence seems to be increasing in Iraq, at least as it's reported in our papers.

And, Mr. Sharansky, it is rare to see or meet a living legend. I recall when I was on the city council in New York, a group of us named a street after you while you were still in prison. And I remember how effective and forceful your wife was as an advocate for democracy and for you. And it was thrilling when you were released and came to city hall and to the mayor's home. It was a great event.

And I followed the wonderful contributions you've made to Israel. And I admire the way women are treated in Israel.

And my first question really to Mr. Al-Alusi—and welcome, Mr. Dermer.

And I want to know how important do you think is the role of women in the road toward democracy? I was very heartened to

read in the paper that Kuwait just passed a law to allow women the right to stand for office and to become elected to office. Qatar recently passed such a provision.

Many Iraqi women have come to this country, they are remarkable. We have visited with them in your country. Some of them I have corresponded with and some of them have been murdered. I have stopped writing them because it breaks my heart when one of them is murdered. And some of them have expressed to me their tremendous deep concern that the Sharia may be returned to the domestic law of Iraq. And I'd like your comments—and all of the panelists'—on the role of women in this fight for democracy. It is something I believe in very deeply for American women, and really for all women in the world. And I feel it is a very positive force, but I'd like to your thoughts on it.

And it seems to me that women are targeted. There are so many of them that are murdered of your leaders. And if you could give us a review of where it stands. Is it a threat that Sharia will be returned? What are your comments?

Mr. AL-ALUSI. Thank you for your questions. Iraqi women, like most of the women in the Middle East, they are killed more than the men. In the Middle East, very high price because of the economy, because of dictatorship, because of some of—they call them new Islam, I would like to call them new Islam. That means the people, the extremists, very strong—the terrorists. But let me talk about Iraq.

I was on election day on the street. Many Iraqi politicians also. The first hours, we didn't see that movement on the street. But after that, we saw something which is only in Europe. The Iraqi women started to move over the street. The first really movement to go to the election or to enjoy the election, that was the Iraqi woman. And the Iraqi woman made the real change in the next hours. If there is any kind of statistic, we would find the Iraqi women, they have enjoyed the election the first 8, 9, 10 hours. At 10 o'clock, after dark, they came. So they have played a very important role.

The problem is that more than 50 percent from our society, of course, are women. And in Iraq they are about 55 percent. Those people, those kind of parties, they are against any kind of human rights in Iraq. And they are a part of a new strategy. They well understand to keep from the Iraqi society, to make a huge difference in this society in Iraq, that is the girl can go for in Iraq. That is why, and they are paying a very high price.

But now look in the government, they are very happy, very happy and proud to have 50 percent. I am proud to have Iraqi women. You have to like the Iraqi women, otherwise you will be not in the party, otherwise they will punish you. This kind of message is not officially, but anyway, the Iraqi woman are willing to be free, and they have a very important role, and you have seen it in the election. We just need to push more in this direction.

And education is important. They are trying to keep the Iraqi women far away from education and from the male role as employed in the government; and we need also to help in this direction. I mean, everything is new in Iraq. We just starting today, and we just starting to feel democratic. This is the fact.

Mr. Chairman was talking about weapons of mass destruction. It is truth to know you didn't find it, or nobody has found it. But also truth, we are not talking about an atom bomb, we are talking about chemical weapons. To make chemical weapons, you don't need huge industry, you need a small level, you need the know-how and the willing to use it. Did Saddam have the know-how? Yes. Did he get the power to use it? Yes. He has done it more than 80 times. And many Iraqi women, because of this chemical weapon, they have paid a very high price. More than 80 times he has used it.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me do this. I'm going to encourage the panelists to give a little shorter answers because we want to cover a lot of territory, and you will be here late at night, and we do have a second panel. And you have so much to say, and it is all so important, but we want to make sure we get these questions in.

Do you have other questions?

Mrs. MALONEY. I would just like to ask Mr. Sharansky, do you believe that ultimately reform will come from the top from the government, or from government reform initiatives, or by popular demand by the grass-roots level? And I would ask Mr. Dermer also to comment.

And what incentives, punishment, does the United States have to influence other nations toward freedom and for democracy for their people?

Mr. SHARANSKY. Well, thank you, Congresswoman, for your remarks and for your question.

No. Change is always coming when there is words of dissidents, those who are ready to speak open and loudly, where there is determination of the free world to support these dissidents, and where there is practical policy over linkage in their relations with the free world with the leaders of the country for which dissidents are speaking.

Now, no doubt for the main reason for changing that is the desire for the overwhelming majority of people to live without fear. To get rid of this awful double-think where you have to say one thing and think another thing, and this desire to live without fear, that is what brings the change.

But no doubt, it could be more painful or less painful, it depends on the leadership; and it depends to what extent the free world is ready to keep the leadership responsible.

So if today we are optimistic, we are cautiously optimistic about possibilities in the Middle East in connection with Palestine, it is because they have new leadership, but also because the free world, and of course the United States of America, demonstrates determination to connect their policy with the creation of democratic reforms.

If I am very cautious of this optimism, still we can see how this desire to connect the policy in relation with this leadership with the creation of democratic reforms is not otherwise long the voice among many others who want to go back to the policy of appeasement.

Mr. DERMER. As to your first question about the rights of women, I think that would be——

Mr. SHAYS. That says we have a vote in 15 minutes.

Mr. DERMER. I see. I haven't been cutoff, right? The sandman isn't coming from somewhere around here.

Mr. SHAYS. It means we have one vote.

Mr. DERMER. As for the rights of women, I think that's an excellent barometer for the degree of freedom in a society. And we chose in the book "The Town Square Test," could you walk into the town square without fear of arrest, imprisonment or physical harm? But I think probably something that would come in a close second is how women are treated in society to really let you know the precise degree of freedom; I mean, even in societies that allow women to participate in elections, that's going to be much freer than a society that doesn't, and the individual rights that they have as well.

As to the second question, what needs to be done? I want to get back to something I said earlier about what I call the "Sharansky Doctrine," and that is, I know everyone is usually focused on the question whether or not you engage or you confront a given regime, and I think less focus is paid to what you are engaging them on or about and what you're confronting them about. And what Natan has been trying to argue for years is that when you engage them on the issue of how they treat their own people. And if that becomes all of a sudden the policy of the United States and other democratic nations, that whether we're going to engage or confront you is going to depend on one answer, is how are you treating your own people. And you will get more aid from us and you will get more political support and diplomatic support, financial support, whatever, if you give your people more rights, and you will get less if you don't.

And so to get beyond the engage confrontation, I suppose, dynamic and more focused on what exactly you're engaging them about or confronting them about. And if we start to focus on how they're treating their own people and use all the tools at their disposal to encourage a democratic change, I think that would be the most effective; and I think it will most likely come from the ground up only because the top, at least the current top in this region are not people who have a great faith in democratic ideas or reforms. So I think it will probably come from the bottom up.

Mr. SHAYS. Let me acknowledge that we have Mr. Higgins who is here, as well as Mr. Van Hollen, and also Mr. Dent, and they're free to jump in at any time. They told me they don't have specific questions. And we may try to finish up so you don't have to wait after voting and you can go on your way here.

But I would like to have each of you respond to this question. What would you say to the skeptics who basically say that the Islamic faith and democracy are not compatible? That's a key question that we need to resolve. Is the Islamic faith and democracy compatible? Are the skeptics wrong? Do they have some truth to what they say? Mr. Dermer or Mr. Sharansky or Mr. Al-Alusi.

Mr. AL-ALUSI. I believe that Islam is compatible with democracy. But an understanding of the new Islam, radical Islam is completely out of with the main message of all religion, including variant Islam. In the Quran it states that if you kill one being, it is as if you have killed the world. But now we have people who act in the name of Islam throughout the Middle East who are killing people in the name of Islam. That's why I do believe we have to split be-

tween religion and state. And those people that are not Islamic and the formation that they got is the not the real Islam because there is no difference. I mean, just read it. And as we say it in Iraq, Solat, Ingil and Quran, it is very difficult to find the difference between them. No one from these three religion will have allowed anyone to kill somebody. How they can say in the name of God——

Mr. SHAYS. Let's get beyond the killing issue, though. There aren't a lot of Islamic regions that are democratic, there hasn't been a real history of democracy in the Islamic world. And is that an indication that they aren't compatible, or is it just an indication that there hasn't been any movement for democracy? And we're going to know this answer pretty soon, but let me ask you, Mr. Sharansky.

Mr. SHARANSKY. Well, when I was recent to Russia, I discovered that Russian people for several years lived in tyranny, and that is part of their mentality, part of their culture, they don't want to live in freedom. And you can read the addresses to President Truman that Japan for 7 years never had a democracy, and it is against their culture to live in freedom.

And I heard the last year many times responding to my arguments that Islam—people of Islam live in different religion and different mentality, and it is against their culture to be free. I think all these remarks are racist remarks. I believe that all people who want to live in accordance with their faith, in accordance with their tradition, in accordance with their mentality and history and so on, they all, when given the choice to live under constant fear, to be punished by a totalitarian regime, or to live without this fear, will choose to live without this fear.

That's why all these statements of some American journalists who are saying that people in Iraq love Saddam Hussein and this regime, when Saddam Hussein killed 1 million of his own citizens and he was torturing people, remind me of some of the statements of the so-called liberal guests who would come to the Soviet Union at the top of the repressions as are saying look how Soviet people love Stalin and his regime. We have to believe, I think it is very important for humanity to believe that all the people were born to be free and deserve to live free.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

Mr. Dermer. I'll tell you, one of the contributions of Mr. Dermer is that he got me to recognize that how I was pronouncing your first name was not correct, it is Natan, not Natan.

Mr. SHARANSKY. It's OK.

Mr. SHAYS. It may be OK with you, but not me. Mr. Dermer.

Mr. DERMER. I would say that if we were having this conversation 300 or 400 years ago, people would say that Christianity is incompatible with democracy; and we know that's not the case. I think what—not to mention about Japan is an excellent example, because no one gave much of a chance for the Japanese to have a democratic society. Their culture was much more inimical to Western ideas than Arab culture, Islamic culture that is. And there were many reasons I think that they had to—when they first came up with the idea of democracy, it took a letter of around four Japanese characters together to make sense of it because they had no concept of what democracy was.

But at the end of the day, what Sharansky is arguing is that when people are faced with this choice between fear and freedom, they're going to choose freedom. It's not because they're Jeffersonian democrats, it's because they don't want to live their lives in fear. And when we say is Islam compatible with democracy, I think the majority of people everywhere don't want to be afraid. Whether or not you force people to make a choice—let's put it this way: If you force people to make a choice, choose Islam or choose democracy—which I think is a false choice—well, they will probably choose Islam. But in the history, as I understand it, of Christianity's move toward democracy, they actually found the seeds of democracy in their own faith. John Locke did this, and many other great Christian thinkers at the time of the development of democracy. They weren't anticlerical, they actually found the seeds of democracy in their own faith.

And I think that the process will probably start happening within Islam. And the ascending force in Islam today, which is this militant Islamic force that is very hostile to the democratic way of life, can be replaced in a rather short amount of time by a different force within Islam where Muslims start seeing within their own faith the seeds of democratic change. And I think that process is happening because of what's going on in the region now.

Mr. SHAYS. We have about 4 minutes to vote.

Mr. Ruppersberger, do you intend to come back and ask questions? Because I may keep this panel if you decide to come back after the vote.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. I think so. It depends.

Mr. SHAYS. Well, let me do this, if you don't mind. We are just going to ask you to stay. And there just may be one or two other questions. Is that a problem for any of you? We're going to adjourn and we will be back. We are recessed, not adjourned. Good grief.

[Recess.]

Mr. SHAYS. This hearing is called to order.

When power was transferred to the Iraqis in June of last year, I went in August to visit, and then I came back to the United States and met with Condoleeza Rice and about four other Members of Congress. And she was talking about being patient with Iraq, that this was a new democracy. And she reminded us of our Declaration of Independence in 1776, our Articles of Confederation in which we fought to sustain the 13 colonies in a Federation, and then in the Constitution of the United States we created a Nation. And I'm thinking, I get it Condi; 13 years, I understand. And then she looked at us and she paused and then she said, in that Constitution I was three-fifths a person and a slave. And I thought, wow, what an incredible message to Americans not to be arrogant with the struggle that exists for any new democracy.

It took us, as you know, a Civil War to sort out a failure in our Constitution, and we're still resolving some of those issues. So patience, obviously, is necessary.

But in the Arab Human Development Report of 2004, there is on page 71—they talk about democracy and the Arab region. And then they have the photograph of the one election, and it's the concept of Hitler gaining power in a democracy and then taking over the

Nation and the concern that there could be one election in which democracy would basically become the victim.

So what needs to happen, in your judgment, in Iraq? Does it have to be a strong statement in the Constitution? What ensures that there won't be a takeover by extremists that will ultimately mean that democracy dies in Iraq? Everybody keeps looking at you, Mr. Al-Alusi, and you can go first. But if you want time to think about your answer, I can have Mr. Dermer go first.

Mr. Dermer, you're going to go first.

Mr. DERMER. You put me on the spot twice in one session.

I think the German example is a very good example. In fact, we addressed it in the book. And the question I think we have to ask ourselves is what was the problem with that election in Germany? Was the problem the very fact that the Nazis were elected in a free election—that was actually was about as free an election as you're going to have in one of these—and this society was problematic at the time for other reasons, but it was a free election. Was the problem that the Nazis were elected, or was the problem that after they were elected and then they decided to suspend and destroy democracy within Germany, that the world did nothing about it?

I think most people would understand that it's the latter and not the former. And I would say that is a model for how you can avoid the problem of one man, one vote, one time, that you're talking about; and that is, if the world takes a very clear stand in the free world, led by the United States, that you will not tolerate any type of society that is not willing to tolerate dissent, and you make it clear in the quest for international legitimacy that any new government will have—will be dependent on that government giving their people basic rights, well then you are unlikely to face this problem that you faced in Nazi Germany.

And what Natan was arguing for many years is that the chances of something like that happening, one man, one vote, one time, will be minimal if the focus is on building a free society and not on rushing to elections; that if you get conditions of the town square in place, that the chances of a regime that is hostile to democracy getting elected are very small. And if it would happen on that—it does happen occasionally, maybe once every 20 or 30 years—if the world takes a very clear stand and says we're not going to allow you to crush dissent within your country, you may rule it according to how you see fit, but as long as you preserve a basic right of dissent and to change government in the future, if the world takes that stand, then I think that the threats that a regime like Hitler's pose or other regimes in the region that would seek power through democratic means in order to subvert democracy I think would be taken off the agenda entirely.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Natan Sharansky.

Mr. SHARANSKY. Well, if the role of Mr. Dermer, when we were writing this book, was to explain my thoughts, I think he already explained it, with a little to add. He is doing, of course, much better than I can do. But I will only add to this in my country, when there is a big discussion of what will happen after the elections in July, there is a lot of fear that Hamas will become very strong. I have to say there is little surprise why Hamas can become very strong when the whole organization, which is really dealing with

welfare for the people, this terrorist organization Hamas, and when the Palestinian Authority, its realizations with people, with citizens, is characterized first of all by its corruption. So there is little to expect from these elections.

But if democracy is to come, building democratic institutions which guarantee freedoms of the individuals which decrease their fear, which improve their standards and their life, and at the same time is effective with fighting with terrorist organizations, then I think the chances for extremists to succeed in elections would become smaller and smaller and smaller. That's why it is very important to see elections as—free elections as the end of a process of a building a free society.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. Mr. Al-Alusi.

Mr. AL-ALUSI. Yes. We are afraid from the Iranian influence in Iraq, not because the Shi'ite or the Sunni, they are a part of Iran, no, they are a part Iraqi. The problem is for more than 55 years, we didn't have any kind of political activity in Iraq. Most of the people there—all of them, they were outside of Iraq, otherwise they would be killed.

So the Iraqi—very important part of the Iraqi opposition grew up in Syria and in Iran. They are cleric, they are Iraqi politician for sure; but at the same time, the Iranian and the Syrian intelligence agency, they were always trying to buy and to push them on people in our political parties.

I am very afraid, not because we have now a little of this party, a part of the Iranian strategy, no; I'm afraid because they are thinking totalitarian, and I'm afraid from the second level in those parties. Nobody knows, even the leader of those parties, nobody knows how many people we do have from the Iranian intelligence agency in these parties. That's why I'm afraid that we got people who are a part of Iranian strategy playing game, using our mechanism in the democracy and take over in the power.

Now we have the case in the security. Every Iraqi will agree to clean the system from the Ba'athist. They are very dangerous, they have done very, very bad things. But how to do it very quickly and radically in 2 or 3 months? We will have a vacuum. Who is coming to fill this vacuum? This is the main question. That is why we agree that none Iraqi people in the name of the Iraqi opposition, in the name of the Shi'ite or Sunni trying to take over, are using the democratic as Hitler has done it in Germany.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you. What I would like is for each of you to tell me what you would have liked to put—what question you would have liked us to ask—let me put it this way: Answer the question you would have liked us to ask, and put anything else on the record that you think needs to be put on the record, and then we're going to get to our second panel.

Mr. DERMER. I guess I'll start this one off.

I actually return to something you said earlier about the link between democracy and peace. And you mentioned that—and it's something that Netanyahu has also talked about for many years, and the question that has been very interesting to me over the last few years is what is the link between terrorism and democracy, and is democracy the antidote to terrorism? And we don't really focus directly on this in our book, but it is something that Ben-

jamin Netanyahu has talked about for quite some time. And I think it is a very interesting question, because if the root cause of terrorism is not—let's say the root cause of terrorism—which many people believe is poverty or the root cause is desperation or the root cause is some deprivation of rights, political rights, national rights, social rights, then going and embarking on a process where you're trying to promote democracy in the region is not going to win the war on terrorism.

But I don't think that the root cause of terrorism is poverty. If it were, then Haiti would be the center of international terrorism, and it's not. And I don't think the root cause of terrorism is a deprivation of rights. If it were, then Gandhi would have been a terrorist, and he wasn't; and Martin Luther King would have been a terrorist, and he wasn't. And there were many, many conflicts that you've had in history where there has been deprivation of rights and people have responded to them without resorting to terrorism. The French Resistance didn't use terrorism and didn't kill the wives and children of their German officers, and the Jewish underground movement to win the State of Israel, Jews were not blowing up buses in London to do so.

So if it's not the product of desperation or the deprivation of rights, the question is what it is. And I think the root cause of terrorism, as Netanyahu has said, is a totalitarian mindset. And that mindset is brought under conditions of tyranny, where you can take a closed society and you can indoctrinate people and just pummel them constantly through state-controlled media and to indoctrinate them into some culture or some belief that puts some goal that is so all-encompassing. That justifies anything, and there is no moral constraints.

And once I think we understand—and I believe that this is the case—that the root cause of terrorism is this totalitarian mindset, the way that you actually defeat terrorism is by promoting freedom; because in a free society you simply will not have terrorism on a mass scale because people have a pluralistic viewpoint, they can hear other ideas, and they're not put in these pressure cookers. And that's why I think that this is important not only on tyranny, but also to win the war on terror, is the key critical thing here is I think to promote freedom, and in the end I think that will drain the swamps of terrorism in the whole region.

Mr. SHARANSKY. I will use this last-minute opportunity to speak on behalf of Palestinian dissidents, because it so happens so that they're not on our panel. But I had to say that we're writing a little bit about it in the book, that while meeting some of those Palestinians, who are very strong fighters for civil society, who have very different visions than I have maybe about what kind of a future we want to have, but both of us agree that the main thing is to make sure that all of us live in democratic societies, a Palestinian democratic society and Israel.

And when I was talking to them in the times of Yassar Arafat, I could always feel that they are the same dissidents as I am, with one difference, that—I resided in the Soviet Union, but with one difference: We in the Soviet Union knew that we could go to prison but the free world would be on our side. Here, we are facing a situation when these people can go to prison, but the message of the

free world is to them, the only hope for peace is Yassar Arafat, and that's why I don't try to weaken Yassar Arafat. And that's why many of the doors of the free world were closed for them.

Today when we have new hopes and new chances, let's not forget that it's not Palestinian leadership, it's democratic dissidents, those Palestinians who really believe and want to have civil society, they are our real allies. And that's why no concern about stability of the regime shouldn't undermine your readiness to support them and to stand for them. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much.

And Mr. Al-Alusi.

Mr. AL-ALUSI. I think we have seen many changes in the area that is the regime in the Middle East that is going to show us some kind of reforms or the willing of reforms. I do believe it can be only happen because there is a pressure from Washington and the United States in this direction. There are bad regimes, and they are just waiting with the hope that the policy in Washington will be changed.

So please continue in this direction. The only way to have human rights in Middle East, pushing in the right reforms democratic. Without this we will never have peace there. And to make a decree of those terrorists, all of them they are aliens. And they are already aliens. Usually, just 50 years ago, we got organization as a terrorist, we have organization and aliens with regimes in the area. We are warned, we have to be very sure that they don't get a chance to win again and to have control of those areas. If America was in Iraq, we Iraqis would not have only one Iraq, we would have maybe five, maybe, Iraqs. And if Iran get control of Iraq, there is no peace in Middle East. And Middle East is not that far away from Europe and the rest of the world. Thank you so much.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you so much. If you don't mind, Mr. Ruppersberger would just like to ask a question of you all before we get to——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. I'm sorry I wasn't here, we have other hearings that I had to attend.

First thing, we want to eventually try to direct families, younger generations. And my question really to you, Mr. Al-Alusi, with respect to Iraq and how we can influence people in Iraq to look at democracy from a positive way.

My first question, based on your conversations, do you feel that the average person in Iraq feels that we are trying to force them into a situation instead of helping them get to where they need to be?

Mr. AL-ALUSI. No, not at all. We are thinking—many people in Iraq, they cannot understand the message of what we have seen sometimes in the newspaper, as an example of de-Ba'athification. The main problem with the de-Ba'athification are not the Ba'athists themselves, we can have control of them through time, but the education in Iraq should be changed. The way of thinking and the education should be changed. And to hear this kind of signal that the Secretary, Condoleeza Rice, she was asking to stop the de-Ba'athification, I cannot believe it at all; that is the wrong signal. I mean, the media they're playing now some kind of information which make the Iraqi not that sure. To help them in the demo-

cratic process, we have to find the change in the way of the Iraqi thinking to let them be free. Let me tell you, there is people that are very afraid from the Ba'ath and the terrorists.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. And they still are, which means our first priority, which is what we're doing, is to provide security. My point is that for us to be able to influence the Iraqi people to understand what a way of life would be like, we have to improve their quality of life, we have to take care of their infrastructure, make sure they have water that is not contaminated, make sure that we can provide their education. And then if they see that their life is better, it seems to me that is where we're going. I know that is our goal.

My question to you, though, is where are we at this point? I know where your philosophy is. It's not about philosophy, it's about results. And what we need to do is to make sure we are also in the phase—and I've been to Iraq on numerous occasions and I understand—in fact, the last time I had a conversation with Ambassador Negroponte—he is no longer the Ambassador—about reaching the hearts and minds of the people, and it seems to me that's what we have to do. Because you have a different culture, you have different religions. I mean, there are a lot of issues there. But if you deal with the average person, it's like in politics, people vote based on how they feel that their families will be protected, their communities, their security, their education systems, that type of thing.

Where do you think we are right now in Iraq as it relates to what I just said as far as building infrastructure, winning the hearts and minds of the people to understand that democracy will work in the end? And then we will get to the elections, which you already had, and we've done a good job. I think there is a lot going on. And the insurgents are attempting to disrupt all the more where national pride comes in to stand up and take on the insurgents.

Mr. AL-ALUSI. We are on the right track but we have to continue. It is really a huge vacuum. We are talking about a huge vacuum that you have in Iraq. We are in the right way, but we have to continue and we are going very fast.

It is very important, as you say, sir, about the economy, the infrastructure. We have to find quick as possible that our people, the Iraqi people, they can see and they can feel the change in their daily life. This is very important——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. And my question to you is, do you think at this point that the average Iraqi person feels that way? Are we making headway, are we making progress as it relates to the hearts and minds? We know what we're doing as far as taking on the insurgents and trying to train Iraqis to take care of their own security, but where are we at this point? And if we're not where we need to be, what do we need to do?

Mr. AL-ALUSI. If we have to deal with it, we have to work it together; that means a clear strategical relationship. This is the problem. Now the American side is working on one side and the Iraqi is working on the other side. You have to find a mechanism how to work it together. But we are on the right way, and Iraq, they are accepting more from the United States of America.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Does anybody else on the panel have a—that's fine.

Mr. DERMER. We haven't been to Iraq, so——

Mr. SHARANSKY. Not yet.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Not yet? Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. Gentlemen, thank you very much. This has been very helpful, very educational. And your contribution to peace and democracy is extraordinary. Thank you.

We will now go to our second and final panel. And I appreciate the patience of our second panel: Ms. Elizabeth Dugan, vice president, International Republican Institute; Mr. Leslie Campbell, director for Middle East Programs, National Democratic Institute for International Affairs; Professor Febe Armanios, professor for Middle Eastern Studies, Middlebury College; Mr. Khaled Saffuri, chairman of the Board, Islamic Free Market Institute; and, finally, Ms. Mona Yacoubian, special adviser, Muslim World Initiative, U.S. Institute for Peace.

You know what I'm going to do—I'm sorry, I had you sit down, and I do need to swear you in, so if you would stand and we will swear you in.

[Witnesses sworn]

Mr. SHAYS. Note for the record our five witnesses have responded in the affirmative.

Given that we have five witnesses, I would prefer that you stay close to the 5 minutes, but if you run over the 5 minutes, that's OK.

We welcome all of you, and I want to just say how impressed I was with the work of the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs in its work in Iraq in the last election.

I met some very impressive people who were helping the Iraqis with this election, very impressed that 165,000 Iraqis were involved in this election process. And they take great pride, and deservedly so, in having an election that frankly had more people participate than participate in the United States. And the process was fair and almost flawless. It was very impressive for me to watch.

We will start with you, Ms. Dugan, and then Mr. Campbell, and go down the line.

STATEMENTS OF ELIZABETH DUGAN, VICE PRESIDENT, INTERNATIONAL REPUBLICAN INSTITUTE; LESLIE CAMPBELL, DIRECTOR, MIDDLE EAST PROGRAMS, NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS; FEBE ARMANIOS, PROFESSOR, MIDDLE EASTERN STUDIES, MIDDLEBURY COLLEGE; KHALED SAFFURI, CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, ISLAMIC FREE MARKET INSTITUTE; AND MONA YACOUBIAN, SPECIAL ADVISER MUSLIM WORLD INITIATIVE, U.S. INSTITUTE FOR PEACE

STATEMENT OF ELIZABETH DUGAN

Ms. DUGAN. Mr. Chairman, Mr. Ruppersberger, I want to thank you for this opportunity to testify. And in the interest of brevity, I will ask that my full testimony be——

Mr. SHAYS. All your testimonies will be in the record.

Ms. DUGAN. I thank you, sir.

Since September 11, 2001, the United States has given the topic of Middle Eastern democracy a new level of sustained attention, and has buttressed that attention with additional resources.

The questions you have posed to us as witnesses today allow us to examine how effectively that attention and those resources are being used. But before we look ahead, it may be important to look back and to embrace at least two lessons learned.

The first lesson is about democracy and security. President Bush articulated a shift in the U.S. Government's thinking about democracy and human rights in a very powerful speech at the Commemoration of the 20th anniversary at the National Endowment for Democracy when he said, "60 years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe, because in the long run stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty."

With these words he underscored that our commitment to freedom and reform in the region was serious, and that commitment is reinforced nearly daily, not only through his vision but through the strategic programs that define the policy, such as the U.S. Middle East Partnership Initiative and through organizations like IRI that mold the policy into action.

The second lesson, which has been discussed at length here, is about democracy in Islam. But I hope you will allow me to give my perspective.

In the early 1980's, skeptics said democracy was not possible in Latin America because of an ingrained sense of servitude in the minds of Latins. In the late 1980's in east Asia, similar expert theories were readily being tossed about Washington. And even back in the 1920's when Catholic democracy collapsed in southern Europe and Latin America, political scientists began to theorize that only Protestant northern European countries were capable of democracy. Now today, no one would put forward such a notion, and yet skepticism about the basic compatibility between democracy and Islam can still be heard in the corridors of Washington.

For IRI, the question is settled. Islam, the faith of one-fifth of the world's population, is consistent with democratic rule. From our years of work in predominantly Muslim countries like Indonesia and Bangladesh and Turkey, we have seen this; and I fully expect that we will look back on the issue of democracy in Islam in the years to come and see that many of the questions being raised about the two are as wrong-minded as those theories dating back to the European, Latin American, and east Asian examples.

Our work in Iraq further confirms this belief. In Iraq, the skeptics said Iraqis would never participate in an election organized by the U.S. military. The skeptics said the security situation was too dangerous for people to leave their homes. And the skeptics said that insurgents would have a field day attacking polling stations and voters. But the world watched in January as some 8 million Iraqi voters turned out to participate in the country's first democratic election in more than 30 years. And while a great deal of hard work still remains, Iraqis are firmly committed to the transition from an authoritarian regime to a democratic government.

How do we know this? In a recent poll, a national poll conducted by IRI, 90 percent of Iraqis said they believed that it is very important, or important, that their new constitution allow for the ability to select and change their government through peaceable and fair elections. Ninety percent. Similarly, 87.2 percent of those polled advocate keeping some type of quota for women's representation in the new national assembly as a means for securing roles for women in the new government.

These numbers perhaps surprised some observers, but to those on IRI's staff working daily in the region, they demonstrate that not only is democracy compatible with Islam, democracy is the aspiration of the people. It's not just what we think, it's what they think and it's what they want. And it is reverberating across the region and imbuing local reformers with hope and courage in places like Lebanon, where the opposition has been emboldened by recent events in both Iraq and Ukraine; and in Egypt, where opposition has been more vocal in its demands for reform than any point during the last decade; in places like the West Bank in Gaza, where the Middle East witnessed the most free and competitive leadership election ever held in the region in January; and in places like Qatar and Morocco and Jordan, and the list goes on.

It is not to say that significant challenges to advancing democracy don't remain in the Middle East, but the prospect of democratic governance in Islamic countries is really no longer an abstract debate; democratic advances are occurring. Muslims in the Middle East are participating in democratic processes. President Bush has removed the taboo of talking about and pressing for democratic reforms in the Middle East, and this increased attention to democracy and human rights, in words and in deeds, does help reformers in the Middle East committed to democratic change, and it gives organizations like IRI more muscle and more momentum to support them.

Political reform is going to be difficult, and when we're talking about innovative initiatives like MEPI or the Broader Middle East Initiative, and looking for success stories and impact, we must be wary of demanding immediate results. We need to remember Serbia, we need to remember Ukraine, countries where IRI, among many others, engaged in democracy-strengthening programs for a decade before the so-called overnight victories of the people against corrupt government.

Democracy support is a long-term investment which, almost without exception, requires a sustained diplomatic commitment. But thanks to initiatives like MEPI, IRI is able to provide that democratic support in a region in ways that simply were unavailable to us in the 1990's.

At the most basic level, MEPI directly and positively benefits IRI's democracy support mission by allowing us to think much more strategically about where and how we want to support democratic reform in the region.

I have some examples, they're part of my testimony. Let me—I'll cut to my conclusion.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

Ms. DUGAN. I want to suggest the following: The President's vision and commitment to democracy and human rights promotion in

the region is well conceived and forcefully articulated, but there is a cautionary note. If democracy promotion is undertaken without the support of our embassies, the tasks before groups like IRI, especially in authoritarian countries, are rendered infinitely more difficult.

All elements of our foreign policy apparatus, including our embassies and USAID missions overseas, need to become constructively and consistently engaged to ensure that democracy promotion remains a priority and that both governments and citizens in the Middle East receive a uniform message about the need to implement reforms.

And from the standpoint of IRI's work in the region, I can tell you it is crucial for democracy's expansion that Congress continues to focus its attention on this issue, and it's one of the reasons I'm so grateful for the hearing today.

U.S. policymakers, including Members of Congress, must take the lead in giving praise where praise is due for those in the Middle East moving forward on democracy, and they must continue to condemn bad practices and to press for greater political space in which IRI and other NGO's can operate with indigenous reformers. And I thank you for your kind attention.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much. What a thoughtful statement; very helpful. How many years have you now worked for the Institute?

Ms. DUGAN. I started about 10 years ago, sir.

Mr. SHAYS. You have been there during a very momentous time, haven't you?

Ms. DUGAN. Indeed. We have seen quite a bit of remarkable things happen in the world.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dugan follows:]

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL SECURITY, EMERGING THREATS
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

Elizabeth Dugan
Vice President
International Republican Institute
Washington, D.C.

Tuesday, May 17, 2005

Introduction

Mr. Chairman, members of the Committee, I want to begin my statement today by thanking you for the opportunity to testify and commending you for convening this subcommittee hearing. From the standpoint of the International Republican Institute's work in the region, I can tell you that it is crucial for democracy's expansion that Congress continues to focus its attention on this issue.

Like many other organizations, IRI has been giving more and more attention to the issue of democracy in the Middle East since the events of September 11, 2001. This effort amplifies programs undertaken for the last dozen years; indeed, IRI's first involvement in the region began in Kuwait, immediately after the first Gulf War. Throughout the 1990s, IRI also undertook democracy work in Oman, Morocco and the West Bank.

But since 9/11, the United States has given the topic of Middle Eastern democracy a new level of sustained attention and has buttressed that attention with additional resources. The questions you have posed to us as

witnesses today allow us to examine how effectively that attention and those resources are being used.

Lessons Learned

But before we look ahead it may be important to look back and embrace at least two lessons learned.

The first lesson is about democracy and security. The U.S. Government's thinking on democracy and human rights turned an important corner after 9/11, and President Bush articulated the shift in his powerful speech at the commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy when he said, "Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe – because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty." With these words, he underscored that our commitment to freedom and reform in the region was serious. And that commitment is reinforced nearly daily, not only through his vision, but through the strategic programs, such as the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), that define the policy, and through organizations like IRI that mold the policy into action. We will not retreat from this action, and in fact are reinvigorated to pursue it by reminders, like that of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice last month, that our past support for non-democratic leaders led not to stability, but to malignancy … malignancy that led young men to fly planes into the Pentagon and the World Trade Center.

The second lesson is about democracy and Islam. In the early 1980s in Latin America, as the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) family was being established, skeptics said democracy was not possible in Central and South America because of an ingrained sense of servitude in the minds of Latins. In the late 1980s in East Asia, similar "expert theories" were readily being tossed about Washington. Back in the 1920s, when Catholic democracy collapsed in southern Europe and Latin America, political scientists began to theorize that only Protestant northern European countries were capable of democracy. Today, no one would put forward such a notion, yet skepticism about the basic compatibility between democracy and Islam can still be heard in the corridors of Washington.

For IRI, the question is settled: Islam, the faith of one fifth of the world's population, is consistent with democratic rule. From our years of work in predominantly Muslim countries like Indonesia and Bangladesh and Turkey, we have seen this, and I fully expect that we will look back on the issue of democracy and Islam in the years to come and see that many of the questions being raised about the two are as wrong-minded as those theories dating back to the European, Latin American and East Asian examples.

Our work in Iraq further confirms this belief. Against a background of persistent violence orchestrated by a relatively tiny minority of extremists, the vast majority of Iraqis steadfastly support the electoral processes and the establishment of a constitutionally-based, elected government.

In Iraq, the skeptics said Iraqis would never participate in an election organized by the U.S. military. The skeptics said the security situation was

too dangerous for people to leave their homes. And the skeptics said that insurgents would have a field day attacking polling stations and voters. But the world watched in January as some eight million Iraqi voters turned out to participate in the country's first democratic election in more than 30 years. While a great deal of hard work still remains, including drafting a new constitution and forming a permanent government, Iraqis are firmly committed to the transition from an authoritarian regime to democratic government.

How do we know this? In a recent national public opinion poll conducted by IRI, 90 percent of Iraqis said they believe that it is "very important" or "important" that their new constitution allow for the ability to select and change their government through peaceful and fair elections. Similarly, 87.2 percent of those polled advocate keeping some type of quota for women's representation in the new National Assembly as a means of securing roles for women in the new government.

Evidence of Change

These numbers may surprise some observers, but to those on IRI's staff working daily in the region, they demonstrate that not only is democracy compatible with Islam, democracy is the aspiration of the people. That's not just what we think. It's what *they* think. And it's what they want.

Images of Iraqis walking to the polls were visible on satellite television from Morocco to Malaysia. And though the election was not without its flaws, the impact of this historic event seems to be reverberating

across the region and imbuing local reformers with hope and courage … in places like Lebanon, where the opposition has been emboldened by recent events in both Iraq and Ukraine … and in Egypt, where opposition rallying around the banner of *Kafiya* – or "enough" – has been more vocal in its demands for reform than at any point during the last decade, and where President Mubarak's recent announcement to allow for competitive presidential elections serves as an initial but important step in the right direction.

In early January this year, the Middle East witnessed the most free and competitive leadership election ever held in the region to elect new Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas. Voters turned out in respectable numbers, despite the many challenges posed to the movement by Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. After its passage of a constitution in 2003, Qatar is expected to hold elections for a National Assembly by universal suffrage. Morocco is considering a new political party law that is being widely and openly debated and enjoys input from the political parties. Jordan is enacting changes to the way municipal government works to make local councils fully elected bodies.

And the list goes on.

This isn't to say that significant challenges to advancing democracy don't remain in the Middle East or to suggest that recent accomplishments would not have happened were it not for U.S. involvement. But the prospect of democratic governance in Islamic countries is really no longer an abstract

debate: Democratic advances are occurring. Muslims in the Middle East are participating in democratic processes. And it's all happening swiftly.

Implementing Reforms

With respect to supporting political, economic and social reform in the Middle East, the Bush Administration has selected the proper course. President Bush has removed the taboo of talking about and pressing for democratic reform in the Middle East. This increased attention to reform, democracy and human rights – in words and deeds – does help reformers in the Middle East committed to democratic change. And it gives organizations like IRI more muscle and more momentum to support them.

Even with the support, the course for democracy in the Middle East will remain difficult for the foreseeable future. Yet while it may be too early to describe recent regional reforms as an "Arab Spring," one cannot help but be optimistic about the continued changes in Qatar, Bahrain and Morocco; the changes under way in Lebanon, Iraq and Algeria; and the first movements forward in Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

On some tracks, we must be prepared for some reforms to move forward quickly. In the economic sphere, for example, Bahrain and Morocco each are signing bilateral free trade agreements with the United States. In the social sphere, Qatar has overhauled its education curriculum. Decision makers in the region are accepting failures of the past and demonstrating a willingness to enact change quickly. They discovered that

such changes are not difficult to implement and can produce immediate material benefits.

Political reform is more difficult. Political reform advocates in the region must battle against decades of undemocratic practices and deeply entrenched personalities and interests for whom reforms are anathema. While conditions potentially could change overnight, the more likely scenario is that governing systems will change over time – if there is a commitment by the U.S. Government to continue to actively engage governments in the region on democracy and human rights.

Strategic Advantages

When talking about innovative initiatives like MEPI or the Broader Middle East Initiative and looking for "success stories" and impact, we must be wary of demanding immediate results. Everyone here needs to recall Serbia or Ukraine, countries where IRI, among others, engaged in democracy-strengthening programs for a decade before the "overnight" victories of the people against corrupt government. Democracy support is a long-term investment which, almost without exception, requires a sustained diplomatic commitment.

Thanks to initiatives like MEPI, IRI is able to provide that democratic support in the region in ways that were unavailable to us in the 1990s. MEPI has allowed us, on a daily basis and in ways diplomats cannot, to essentially implement the President's policy of backing democrats in the Middle East. The additional funding provided through MEPI enables IRI to

conduct country-specific programming in Morocco, Tunisia, Jordan and Qatar, as well as a women's regional program. IRI appreciates that MEPI funding far exceeds that which can be provided by our traditional core source of support, the National Endowment for Democracy. At the most basic level, though, MEPI directly and positively benefits IRI's democracy support mission by allowing us to think much more strategically about where and how we want to support democratic reform in the Middle East.

For example, systematic discrimination against women in some Middle East countries does make democratization difficult, but with MEPI funds, IRI and the National Democratic Institute have organized the Partners in Participation program to equip established and emerging women leaders with the skills they need for increased political participation.

Additionally, IRI's program in Jordan directly benefits from the MEPI initiative, where in the past, our resources and programs were largely driven by a specific event like an election. As a result, the Institute was hobbled in our efforts to plan and implement a comprehensive strategy toward democratic change. But with MEPI funds, we have opened an office in Amman, enabling us to engage political activists and elected officials at the local and national levels on a daily basis. In reaching out to reformers and supporting their endeavors in a comprehensive, meaningful way, we are helping to translate democracy policy and rhetoric into practice.

IRI's work in Morocco, Jordan, Oman, Qatar and elsewhere in the region goes to the heart of MEPI's importance because the "battle for hearts and minds" in the Middle East is also about changing public attitudes about

America, and demonstrating at all levels that we do, in fact, care about people in the region, about the way their governments treat them, about whether their economies are growing at a pace fast enough to generate sufficient jobs, and about whether such opportunities are available to all members of society. This is why MEPI must continue to be a U.S. government program, and not, as some have suggested, an effort outside the government. Democrats in the Middle East who for many years felt ignored by the U.S. Government need to understand that we are willing to put our money where our mouth is by coming to their aid.

Conclusion

Mr. Chairman, the President's vision and commitment to democracy and human rights promotion in the region is well conceived and forcefully articulated. But the bureaucracies within the State Department and the U.S. Agency for International Development lag behind the Administration's direction in implementing this policy shift. All elements of our foreign policy apparatus, including our Embassies and USAID missions overseas and within the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, need to become constructively and consistently engaged to ensure that democracy promotion remains a priority and that both governments and citizens in the Middle East receive a uniform message about the need to implement reforms. In closed societies such as Saudi Arabia and Syria, involvement at a diplomatic level is critical. If democracy promotion is undertaken without the support of our embassies, the tasks before groups like IRI in an authoritarian country are rendered infinitely more difficult.

U.S. policymakers, including Members of Congress who travel to the region, must take the lead in giving praise where praise is due for those in the Middle East moving forward on democracy, to continue to condemn bad practices as warranted, and to press for the greater political space in which IRI and other NGOs can operate with indigenous reformers.

Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Campbell.

STATEMENT OF LESLIE CAMPBELL

Mr. CAMPBELL. Thank you, Chairman Shays, Mr. Ruppersberger. I will echo my colleague, Liz, and thank you for the opportunity to appear.

And just to refer to some of the nice words you said about the work of NDI and IRI in Iraq, we very much appreciate that and heard much about your visit. And I think it bears saying—and we were very proud to work, of course, with the Iraqis, thousands of them who really risked their lives. In fact 10,000 Iraqis acted as domestic election monitors, receiving nothing in return, but just engaging in the process, going out to actually watch people vote. It was an incredible day. I was there. I was one of the few international observers out on the streets. And I think, you know, without hesitation it was one of the most emotional, but also fulfilling days of my life.

But coming back—and at the end of that day we did celebrate, both the international staff, with our Iraqi compatriots. We also realized that probably the harder work was about to begin; in fact, we said about midnight that night that the nice part about working on the Iraqi election was two things: One is that Iraqis, we knew that the demand was there, we knew that when given the chance they were going to show what they wanted. The second part is that we all knew what an election looked like. In a sense there was a linear path to an election, we knew what had to happen.

Unfortunately, I don't think any of us quite know what happens next. We don't know exactly what the institutions of democracy in Iraq should or will look like. We don't know what exactly the constitution-building process in Iraq should or will be. And I think we knew then, and we found out in the week since that time, as we have seen with the struggles in the government, that the next steps are in some ways more important and also in some ways more difficult.

So going back to the previous panel, I also would counsel a lot of patience and have everyone understand, as you have said several times in this hearing, that this is going to be a long complicated process.

On the more general topic today of Middle East democracy and the Bush doctrine, I tried to address some of the questions that were posed for the panelists, and the first question was: Is the Bush doctrine working? Well, my answer would be yes and no. I have been involved in democracy promotion in the Middle East for just under 12 years, I have been with NDI for 12 years, and much of that time has been a struggle.

I have to say that it was difficult to get the attention of policymakers in Washington only a few years ago. And I often joke that in 1999, if we were trying to get attention, for example, out in the country of Yemen on the topic of democracy, that was not a popular topic. It was difficult to get people to listen. That has changed.

This paragraph in late 2000, in summing up NDI's work in the region, said "that the existence of courageous, democratic activists points to the growing consciousness of the Middle Eastern third way: The ground between the unresponsive authoritarianism of ex-

isting regimes and the rhetoric of religious extremism. The vanguard of this new third way are cautiously chipping away at the ruling elite's assumption that they can rule without the allegiance of the masses."

So we found over the years that there was a courageous third way, the type of people that are on this panel today. But they didn't get a lot of support. In fact, much of the aid and diplomatic efforts of the United States and others in the international community in the nineties appeared to be designed largely to show tangible results from the pursuit of regional peace. And this type of democratic aid contained few programs that challenged entrenched political authorities or that encouraged a more vigorous legislative branch. Not only that, the aid was channeled through official conduits, using formal and informal bilateral agreements.

For example, U.S. aid to democracy in places like Egypt and Jordan and Morocco was negotiated with the government. And this is not a judgment on those governments, but their interest was not always in changing the structures that they themselves controlled. So that type of aid was not the most effective. And there was clearly a reluctance on the United States and the international community to push political reform in countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan.

So President Bush, though, has done something extremely important. He has reinforced what is widely understood and frequently demonstrated in the Middle East, and that is that democracy is about universal values.

There was an article last year in Foreign Policy entitled, "The True Clash of Civilization," where two professors pointed out through surveys done in more than 70 countries, that more than 80 percent of people in the Muslim and Islamic world support democracy.

So what President Bush has done—and he has done it very, very dramatically—is he has given voice to that huge majority in the Arab and Islamic world, No. 1; and he has empowered and emboldened these reformers who have existed, actually, for a number of years.

The second thing that President Bush has done is through his very frequent and powerful and forceful repetitions of this doctrine, of this idea that all people, given the choice, will choose freedom and want to control the decisions that affect their lives, is that he has slowly but surely turned U.S. policy around so that programs like the Middle East Partnership Initiative, which Liz mentioned, USAID programs, the programs of the National Endowment for Democracy, are now much more in the mainstream, and organizations like NDI and IRI are much, much more effectively able to push these democracy issues in the countries that we work in.

To conclude, I would say that the challenge before us is to ensure that this new focus on actually pushing democracy that President Bush has articulated very well, that this new focus has continued; that the resources continue to be made available, and that U.S. policy doesn't do what would be the easy thing, which is to sort of drift and to not continue to push in these countries that resist this new democratic change. Thank you.

Mr. SHAYS. I need to, for my own self sense of worth here, acknowledge the fact that in my youth I had, if not led the charge, been a vocal proponent of eliminating funding for the National Endowment for Democracy. And that absurd position, in light of what's happened in the last 15 years, humbles me. I am so grateful that I wasn't as persuasive as I thought I was.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Campbell follows:]

Statement by
Leslie L. Campbell, Senior Associate and Director of Middle East Programs
National Democratic Institute

Before the Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats and International Relations of the House Committee on Government Reform

May 17, 2005

The National Democratic Institute (NDI) appreciates this opportunity to present its views on fostering democracy in the Middle East. NDI's work in the region has been the natural outgrowth of 21 years of experience of working around the world with the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and its other core institutes --the International Republican Institute (IRI), the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) and the Solidarity Center.

The appropriate role of these organizations is to provide support for those forces in non-democratic societies that are seeking to promote peaceful political change, often against seemingly insurmountable odds, or at great personal risk to themselves. In new democracies, we offer assistance to governments, political parties and civil society who are finding ways to work cooperatively to construct and consolidate their nascent democratic institutions.

NDI now has 10 offices in the Middle East that are working with a large network of committed Arab democrats and reformers to promote political party development, parliamentary strengthening, and open and fair election processes.

Based on our experience in the region, NDI's democracy programs are predicated on four general beliefs and principles, all of which are germane to the topic before this subcommittee today. I will mention these principles briefly here and elaborate on them in the course of my testimony.

1) The desire for democracy is universal, but the features of democratic systems vary from country to country. No one size fits all.

2) There is no incompatibility between democracy and Islam -- quite the opposite is true. Public opinion surveys have consistently shown that citizens of the Arab and Islamic world respect the political values associated with democracy more highly in many cases than their western counterparts.

3) Democracy cannot and should not be imposed from the outside. NDI Chairman Madeleine Albright remarked last March at the meeting of the Congress of Democrats from the Islamic World in Istanbul: "It is not true that we intend or desire to impose anything upon anybody. Even if we did, we could not succeed. Because democracy is defined by the right of people to express freely their own views about who should lead their own societies. The truth is that, in any place at any time, it is dictatorship that is an imposition; democracy is a choice. At the core of democracy is the premise that governments have an obligation to respect the rights and dignity of their citizens."

4) The development of democracy is a long term challenge that will succeed or fail based on developing the institutions of democracy and on developing democratic behavior and thinking among citizens and voters. The field of democracy assistance, and the work of NDI, is not about regime change or about overthrowing dictators, but is about the long term support of indigenous democrats who desire to change their lives and those of their fellow citizens for the better. U.S. interests are best served when we are seen to be standing behind people, not in front of them; when we follow, not lead; and when there are self-motivated and dedicated people on the ground pursuing homegrown initiatives for democratic reform or consolidation.

Democracy Promotion in the Greater Middle East

In December 2000, NDI wrote the following paragraphs in an introduction to a Middle East democracy strategy paper,

> "*Close examination of the Arab world reveals a grassroots political and civic dynamism that is often obscured by the intrigues and imperatives of high politics. An explosion in international communications and cultural influences through satellite television, the Internet and an increasingly free print media, together with an increase in the activity of reasonably independent non-governmental actors are changing the way Arab populations view their leaders and their political systems. A growing force of the unemployed and underemployed educated young, displaced by reduced trade barriers and the globalization of capital and services, are demanding jobs and influence. Traditional methods–patronage, petitions, tribal and family loyalty, bloated bureaucracy and political repression–can no longer satisfy the demands of an increasingly restless populace. Parties and parliaments, long engaged in an exclusive dialogue with the elite, are trying to address their inability to listen and respond to constituents and voters.*
>
> *The existence of courageous democratic activists points to the growing consciousness of a Middle Eastern "third way," the ground between the unresponsive authoritarianism of existing regimes and the rhetoric of religious extremism. The vanguard of this new third way are cautiously chipping away at the ruling elites' assumption that they can rule without the allegiance of the masses.*"

For most of the decade of the nineties, this courageous vanguard of Arab activists struggled with few resources and little official support from the international community. Diplomatic efforts and foreign aid in the Middle East, while sometimes having a component described as "democracy and governance," appeared to be designed largely to show tangible results from the pursuit of regional peace, and contained few programs that challenged entrenched political authorities or that encouraged a more vigorous legislative branch.

Much of the aid for political and democratic reform was channeled through official conduits, using formal and informal bilateral agreements. This reliance on official sanction for democracy aid programs virtually guaranteed that political reform efforts would fail to achieve the desired result – genuine, albeit gradual, change. International aid donors seemed to operate under an unwritten pact not to "make waves" by supporting political and democratic reform in the Arab and Muslim world.

A seeming international reluctance to push political reform in countries like Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan helped lead to a perception that international donors only demanded reform of their adversaries or of the powerless.

However, the events of September 11 and the Iraq war brought with them an entirely new set of political and policy dynamics. There is an emerging consensus that repression and lack of political freedom in much of the Middle East and larger Islamic world helped breed a group of violent malcontents willing to abuse religion to help export their version of a new political order. Radical political Islam is seen as an avenue of political participation open to the disenchanted and disaffected. Responding to these changes, there has been a discernible shift in U.S. policy, with a ramping up of initiatives designed to support citizen demand for democracy.

For those of us working in the Middle East for the last decade or more, it was not surprising or unexpected that democracy would come to be seen as a cornerstone of U.S. foreign policy in the region. In fact, President Bush's speech in 2003 at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy, where he articulated a clear vision of the universality of democracy and the imperative of promoting a democratic Middle East, reverberated throughout the world, precisely because his words voiced what many had been working quietly toward for many years. President Bush said: *"Our commitment to democracy is ... tested in the Middle East, ..., and must be a focus of American policy for decades to come. In many nations of the Middle East—countries of great strategic importance—democracy has not yet taken root. And the questions arise: Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Are millions of men and women and children condemned by history or culture to live in despotism? Are they alone never to know freedom, and never even to have a choice in the matter? I, for one, do not believe it. I believe every person has the ability and the right to be free."*

President Bush reinforced what is widely understood and so frequently demonstrated -- -- democracy is about universal values. I often quote an article by Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris that appeared last year in *Foreign Policy*, entitled "The True Clash of Civilization." Basing their work on surveys and samples that encompass 80 percent of the world's population in more than 70 countries, Inglehart and Norris conclude that at this point in history, societies throughout the world -- Muslim and Judeo-Christian alike -- see democracy as the best form of government. They argue that the real fault line between the West and Islam concerns certain cultural issues such as gender equality and social liberalization, but not attitudes towards democracy.

Survey after survey shows that people in the Islamic world want to choose the people who make the decisions that affect their lives and they have accepted the types of institutions that one might have to have in a democracy. Arabs and Muslims accept the idea that there has to be some type of body that is elected and that provides accountability and oversight over the people who are chosen to lead. People in the West and Islamic countries agree in terms of having open choice, in having political competition, in having parties that provide a choice when people go to the ballot box.

I would argue that this last point is the jumping-off point for democratic development programs. Democracy as a system of government is endorsed by 80 percent of the people around the world, with almost no difference among cultures or civilizations. But what are the institutions? How are they built? Will the entrenched authoritarian leaders allow people the freedom to build

them? Can there be true freedom of expression in the Middle East? This is exactly where the field known as democratic development or democracy promotion comes in, to support those political processes that embody the aspirations of the people, are guaranteed by their country's constitutions, are consistent with the charters and by-laws of a number of international organizations, as well as international declarations and standards.

Recent Democratic Developments in the Region

Two watershed electoral exercises earlier this year in Iraq and the Palestinian territories have inspired democrats across the region and beyond. The upcoming Palestinian legislative elections, Lebanese polls scheduled for late May and the Egyptian presidential contest in October, could prove to be a testing ground for the future of political contestation in the region, and will have an impact on democratic reform and elections throughout the region.

The frequent justifications for the slow pace of reform in the Arab world -- the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, poverty and/or the existence of internal Islamic terrorist groups -- won't stand up to the demonstration effect of millions of Iraq's embattled citizens going to the polls to cast a free vote. In dictatorships like Syria, and in unreformed hereditary monarchies like Saudi Arabia, citizens are likely to ask "if them, why not us?", even though further movement towards democracy may well be blocked. The effect will also be felt by political and economic liberalizers like Jordan, Qatar and Bahrain, by semi-authoritarian Egypt, and by countries like Morocco and Yemen that have already embarked on a political reform path.

Arab activists are in a demanding mood, taking advantage of every opportunity to push for more freedom and more accountability from their leaders. Democrats are active in newly elected legislatures, within reform-oriented political parties, in women's organizations and among a plethora of non-governmental organizations.

These indigenous democratizers have long ago declared dead declared the debate about the compatibility of democracy and Islam, and welcome practical assistance from the United States and other countries. While the men and women who form this nascent indigenous democracy network may have serious misgivings about certain U.S. policies in the region, they are committed to the struggle for democracy in the Middle East and they welcome and deserve outside validation of their quest.

The current state of political affairs in the Arab world is a result of the mutually reinforcing nature of authoritarian rulers on the one hand and religious extremists on the other, rather than any religious or cultural bias against democracy. Drawing strength and legitimacy from each other, these two extremes are in a destabilizing slow dance that has been destroying the fabric of many Arab and Muslim nations. Moderate elements, whose liberalizing messages are often feared by repressive regimes, find themselves squeezed between the State and the religious extremists; both sides fearing that their power base is threatened by a more open political system.

This destructive circle can only be broken by the emergence of a democratic or middle alternative, which will disrupt the political monopoly of the extremes, in much the same way as the emergence of a democratic middle led to a renewal of democratic politics in the Philippines, Chile and much of Latin America in the late 1980s. The democratic middle exists within the non-

governmental organizations that agitate for better policy, better governance and more respect for human rights. Democrats are found within the ranks of political parties, even in certain Islamist groupings, where many share fundamental democratic values and desire that elections be held under transparent and consistent rules. The democratic middle is also present within officialdom, where many toil anonymously to improve the state of public affairs.

U.S.-sponsored programs to assist democracy in the Middle East, including MEPI, have been working to straddle the various impractical, and ultimately destructive, policy debates by putting forward a support mechanism for indigenous, as opposed to the perception of imposed, democracy in the Arab and Islamic world.

A Strategy for Democracy in the Greater Middle East

To the extent that indigenous and independent democratic forces do exist throughout the Middle East, and that, over time, extremism cannot prosper in an environment of greater freedom where political speech is encouraged and rulers are held accountable, a democratization strategy for the region emerges.

Such a strategy is based on identifying and strengthening the moderate middle—professionals, academics, women, students, shopkeepers, who, if given a chance, could play a central role in a democratic system. Working with these and other indigenous democrats, including civil society leaders, human rights activists, reform-minded politicians and modernists within the Islamic movement, the international community can help provide the skills and linkages they need to counter the entrenched extremes.

It should be recognized that democratic institutions in the Middle East may not fully resemble their western counterparts. Traditional tribal and consultative mechanisms, for example, may exist alongside formal parliaments in certain countries, and political parties may cultivate a more narrow geographical or ethnic base. A comprehensive strategy should also incorporate a realistic time frame for the development of true democracy -- years in many cases, although progress will vary.

Following are some key principles and programs that could form part of a strategy to promote indigenous democracy in the Arab and Islamic worlds:

Assess the countries where the openings are the greatest and where democracy is most likely to take hold.

When considering democratic development, there are three broad groupings of countries in the Middle East. The first group could be considered "breakthrough countries" where circumstances, including a weak state and/or military occupation, have created a climate where elections and democracy are seen as an attractive option for creating new institutions and joining the mainstream international community. Countries/territories in this category include Iraq, Lebanon, and the West Bank and Gaza (Palestine).

The second group, sometimes called "liberalizers" and "reformers", can also be considered "emerging democracies" by virtue of having both a governmental commitment to reform and

significant citizen demand for change. Following a "managed" process of change, these countries seek to allow political openings, and are generally hospitable to outside support and engagement. Algeria, Bahrain, Jordan, Morocco, Kuwait, Qatar and Yemen all fall into this category.

The third group of countries, some authoritarian, some "semi" authoritarian, actively resist change or seek to manage any process of change to the advantage of the existing leadership. These countries, which tend to be the most critical of outside democracy efforts, insist that change must be completely locally driven but then actively close political space, and hinder political debate and participation. Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Tunisia are in this category.

Design democracy assistance programs to capitalize on the openings available.

Within the group of liberalizers where assistance is more welcomed, training and support can be provided in a cooperative manner to government, opposition and civil society. Political parties and parliamentarians can be exposed to successful models, and non-governmental organizations, often the vanguard of the democratic middle, seek support on advocacy techniques. Focus groups and scientific opinion research can be used to help politicians understand the demands of voters.

In countries like Egypt, programs should be designed to reinforce constructive and existing citizen demand for change. Programs could include training for women and young people trying to break the monopoly on political power, training on professional standards for journalists, development of democracy web sites, the inclusion of country activists in regional networking, and training of domestic election monitors.

Use the opportunities created by elections, political leadership changes and other discontinuities to promote contestation of political power.

Ultimately democracy will only take hold in semi-authoritarian states when a political event occurs that creates an opportunity for an alternation of power. In the meantime, democracy promotion efforts should be aimed at increasing the competitiveness of elections through political party training programs, international and domestic election monitoring efforts and through conflict resolution and coalition building advice to parties and political leaders.

Support women's political empowerment.

Women, by virtue of being largely excluded from power, have a vested interest in the dispersion of power, one of the fundamental principles of democracy. Women's leadership training, political party internal democracy, and material support and training for female political candidacies can help women break political barriers.

Build democratic networks.

There are surprisingly few links among democrats in the Arab and Islamic world. For example, there are few regional Arab voices to speak out against human rights violations or other abuses of freedom and there is no equivalent of the Organization for Security and

Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or Organization of American States (OAS) to develop region-wide elections and political standards. Support for networks of democrats of the Islamic world should be actively encouraged; this would help counter, or balance, the devastating use that extremists make of international networks.

Challenges Ahead

President Bush's policy statements on democracy have helped stimulate debate in the Middle East, and provided a measure of political space for reformers, who have used his pronouncements to push more actively for change. And some regimes have appeared more reluctant to crack down on such reformers. At the same time, a number of challenges remain and certain questions arise:

- The first is whether, on a sustained basis, U.S. policy will place democracy higher on the bi-lateral agenda, particularly in places where other shorter term political and security issues may take precedence.

- Second, will sufficient resources over the long term be made available to sustain U.S. commitments on democracy assistance?

- And third, will the U.S. continue to dedicate those resources to the type of programs that support genuine political reform?

In the end, while the U.S. government can set the tone, and foreign aid can provide needed resources for democratic development, much of the work on the ground must be done by non-governmental organizations. This is particularly true in the Middle East. Groups such as NDI are capable of assuming responsibility, yet are not constrained by the stringent rules of formal diplomacy. NGOs can readily share information, knowledge and experiences with groups and individuals who are pursuing or consolidating democracy, sometimes without the cooperation or sanction of their government.

Perhaps most important, in countries where one of the primary issues being addressed is the paucity of autonomous civic and political institutions, the fundamental idea that government ought not to control all aspects of society can be undermined by a too-visible donor government hand in the development and implementation of democracy programs.

NGO initiatives must grow out of the needs of democrats in the host country. The work should always be in the open and should be conducted with partners committed to pluralism and nonviolence. At the same time, consultation is necessary with the Congress, USAID missions and embassies. When public funds are used, transparency and accountability should always prevail.

Mr. SHAYS. Professor.

STATEMENT OF FEBE ARMANIOS

Professor ARMANIOS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, distinguished subcommittee members, I am honored to be here today and pleased to share with you my views on this subject. My comments today are also part of a summary of a longer submitted testimony.

Recent events in the Middle East, including the Lebanese demonstrations for and subsequent withdrawal of Syrian troops, the Iraqi elections in January, and the announcement of forthcoming multiparty elections in Egypt, have been viewed as a success for the Bush doctrine on democracy promotion in the Middle East. But the ways in which the administration's policies have been received by various groups in the region might be indicative of the challenges facing U.S.-sponsored programs. Some regional observers and politicians argue that the Middle East had been moving toward democracy long before the administration's calls for reform. Many also argue that there is no causal link between U.S. policies and trends toward reform.

While this is an inexact assessment, we cannot separate recent developments from their local context. For example, the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon is also strongly linked to the recent assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. Moreover, we cannot neglect that there is growing suspicion in the region toward the U.S.' motivation for reform, even from local advocates who otherwise might be natural allies to U.S. proposals.

Mr. Chairman, critics of the administration's policies and some Arab leaders caution that promoting democracy in the region is incompatible with U.S. national security objectives. They argue that there is high level of support for Islamist leaders among voting populations in the Middle East, and that in most countries of the region, transparent democratic elections held today would almost certainly produce radical Islamic regimes that would then seek to undermine U.S. interests.

In dealing with this assessment, we should first note that genuine democratic change in the region would likely bring to the foremultiple voices, including those of radicals and militants. But it may also create an opening for moderate Islamists. Moderate Islamists who reject violence and are willing to participate in a democratic framework will be crucial in sustaining stable democratic governments in the coming years. The risks involved in a democratic process that would allow these groups to become legitimate political actors might be worth taking.

Second, there is a sense that open elections could bring radical Islamist groups into power and they might then transform the regimes that made elections possible into theocracies. This might indeed be the case. But in Turkey, we see that religiously motivated groups can participate under a democratic structure where they bargain with other political actors and become full-fledged members of a politically pluralistic society. If moderate Islamists are invested in a democratic system and realize that only within this system could they express and achieve their goals, they could become agents for, rather than obstacles to, positive change.

Third, a push for democracy in the Middle East might create regimes that are partially or completely governed by Islamic law. We should take into consideration that an Islamic democracy might not completely conform to a Western-style interpretation. And in helping establish democratic structures in the region, U.S. policies must also strive for the inclusion of women, nonMuslims, nonIslamists, and secularist groups.

Ultimately the United States can support democratic reform by focusing on the following points: First, the United States should encourage diversity in the political landscape of the Middle East. While the United States may disagree with their views, Islamists are part of the political reality of the region. Here, the United States should learn more about different Islamist groups, about their agendas, goals, and popular appeal, and should determine their capacity for participating in governance alongside secular or nonIslamist groups. The exclusion of these groups as a totality without making any distinctions among them might reinforce an existing notion in the region that the United States rhetoric and policies on democracy promotion are disingenuous.

Second, the United States should be cautious in the extent in which it recognizes existing sectarian, religious, and patriarchal divisions. In looking for natural allies in Iraq, the United States has worked with religious and tribal leaders to form a new government. This approach might substitute one set of traditional power holders with another. The United States should work with NGO's, grassroots organizations, and civil society in soliciting ways to include women and nontraditional power holders in governance.

Third, the U.S. Congress should work to strengthen existing democracy promotion programs. Congressional oversight can monitor programs such as MEPI by ensuring that they are signaling the U.S.'s commitment to democratic reforms that are sensitive to local political conditions and to indigenous interpretations of democracy. Most importantly, perhaps, provisions in these initiatives must take into account unique conditions within each country in the region.

Finally, the State Department should intensify its public diplomacy efforts and press for improvements in human rights, political participation, strengthening the rule of law, and promoting freedom of religion, speech, and press in the Middle East. The United States will gain greater credibility in the region if it prioritizes democratic reform alongside its short-term economic and strategic interests. The United States should maintain bilateral dialogs, bilateral dialogs with regional governments, and should advocate reform especially from its closest allies. This dialog should be bolstered by a willingness to exert diplomatic and economic pressure to express the seriousness of U.S. policies.

Thank you very much.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Professor Armanios follows:]

Statement of Febe Armanios, Assistant Professor, Middle East & Islamic History, Middlebury College

Thank you Mr. Chairman and distinguished members of the Committee, for inviting me to testify today. I commend you on convening this hearing on the important issue of fostering democracy in the Middle East and on the effects of the Bush Doctrine in the region. I am honored to be here and to share with you my views on this topic. I teach Middle East and Islamic history at Middlebury College. Prior to teaching, I worked as a Middle East Analyst at the Congressional Research Service. I was born in Egypt, have lived in the region, and have traveled extensively in the area.

In his February State of the Union address, President Bush reiterated the administration's commitment to promoting democracy in the Middle East. He noted that "because democracies respect their own people and their neighbors, the advance of freedom will lead to peace." Most observers, both within and outside the region, agree that there is a serious democracy deficit in the Middle East. Some laud the U.S. commitment since the September 11, 2001 attacks to promote democratic reform in the region, citing that reforms will reduce those political and societal restrictions that have led to the rise in violence, extremism, and terrorism. However, the ways in which the administration's declarations and policies have been received by various governments, groups, and individuals within the Middle East might be indicative of the challenges facing U.S.-sponsored programs. Regional politicians and intellectuals alike argue that the region had been moving towards democratic reform long before the administration's pronouncements. Others question the United States' motivation for reform and caution that U.S. national policy interests may not coincide with internal conditions in the Middle East. But few dispute that the U.S. wields unquestionable power in the region and that it can exert its influence in promoting more tolerant and just societies – a goal ultimately shared by millions of people in the region.

With your permission, I will discuss the key issues on the perception of the Bush Doctrine on democracy in the Middle East. I would also like to outline some of the challenges facing the United States in encouraging democratic reforms in the Middle East.

Recent Signs of Democratic Change in the Middle East

In the past few months, there has been a growing excitement in the Middle East with regard to the progress of democratic reforms. The Iraqi elections in January, dubbed the "Purple Revolution," were seen by many as testament to the Bush administration's commitment to installing a democracy in that country. The popular protests in Beirut, dubbed the "Cedar Revolution," and the consequent withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon have also been viewed, by some observers, as a success for the administration's push for democracy. In February, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak ordered an amendment to the constitution's Article 76, giving way to the first multiparty presidential election, which is scheduled to be held this fall. Some argue that Egypt's move towards electoral reform may not have taken place without pressure from President Bush, who singled out Egypt in his State of the Union address as leading the way towards democracy. Elections in the Palestinian territories have also been hailed as a

triumph for the Bush administration's policies, as have the recent municipal elections in Saudi Arabia.

No one disputes change is taking place in the Middle East as a result of these events. There are doubts, however, that a causal link exists between U.S. policies and regional trends towards democratic reform, and many have questioned the effectiveness of those reforms that have been achieved. A concern raised persistently by critics of the administration is that an election is a means rather than an end to a true democracy. Moreover, many Middle Easterners who are themselves working toward democratic reform are distancing themselves from U.S. policies, citing that any change imposed by external actors contradicts the notion that democracy is a grassroots process. Others note that the U.S. lacks credibility– due to its historic support of authoritarian regimes in the region – and are skeptical of U.S. government commitment for long-term change.

It is difficult to separate recent events from local political developments in the Middle East. For example, the Lebanese protest movements and the Syrian withdrawal were strongly linked to the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and the Palestinian elections conducted after the death of Yasser Arafat. Both the Egyptian and U.S. governments are cautious in discussing the roots of electoral changes in Egypt; the Egyptian government maintains that reform is a consequence of its mounting efforts over the past several years at political and legal changes. Finally, any links between U.S. policies and municipal elections in Saudi Arabia are paradoxical, as election results confirmed the widespread support of conservative Muslim clerics in Saudi society, many of whom are fiercely critical of U.S. intervention in the region.

Islam and the Democratization of the Middle East

The outcome of the Saudi municipal elections has brought to the fore, once again, arguments concerning the relationship between democratic reform in the Middle East and the rising power of Islamic-oriented groups. There are doubts that promoting democratic principles in the region, as advocated by the Bush Doctrine, would curb the rise of terrorism by allowing long disenfranchised groups, including extremists, a vehicle for meaningful political expression. By singling out political repression as the root of militancy, this argument overlooks some of the other causes of Islamic radicalism, which are complex and multifaceted, but include educational, socio-economic, and personal factors. Moreover, some observers have cautioned that promoting democracy in this region is incompatible with U.S. national security objectives. They argue that there is a high level of support for Islamist leaders among voting populations in the Middle East, and, in most countries of the region, transparent democratic elections held today would almost certainly produce radical fundamentalist regimes that would then seek to undermine U.S. regional interests. This is an argument echoed by a number of political leaders in the Middle East, who warn that rapid political change would create disorder and chaos, a situation that is at odds with historical and current U.S. goals in that area of the world.

At the heart of many of these discussions is an important question: are Islam and democracy compatible? The relationship between Islam and democracy is a complex question that would be difficult to address in this brief statement. But I would like to summarize to the Committee some considerations that I believe are relevant to this question.

First, in Islam, as with other religions, there are those who interpret a belief system as just, tolerant, and democratic and there are those who utilize religion to justify oppression, violence, and intolerance. Many Muslims resent the insinuation that Islam and democracy are intrinsically incompatible, arguing that basic Islamic teachings are well-suited to ideas of justice, equality, freedom, and tolerance. Democracy, in this context, does not necessarily imply a Western-style interpretation; many believe that it is possible to build democratic societies without neglecting indigenous religious voices. Islamic religious sources do not clearly elucidate principles for good governance, which leaves its texts and tenets open to interpretations that can establish a just and egalitarian society for men and women, Muslims and non-Muslims.

Second, as many have noted, genuine democratic change in the Middle East would likely bring to the fore multiple voices – including those of radicals and militants. But it may also create an opening for what some call "moderate Islamists." Historically there is a tradition dating back to the nineteenth century of Muslim intellectuals and scholars debating ways in which Islam can engage with democratic reforms. I believe that today moderate voices do exist throughout the region, although it is difficult to assess the status and popularity of these groups, particularly in the Arab world. Moderate Islamists, who reject violence and are willing to participate in a democratic framework, will be crucial in sustaining stable democratic governments in the coming years. Millions of people in the region are eager to have a voice in the political process and many support Islamist opposition groups. At the same time, we must be aware of the limitations inherent in relying on and supporting even moderate religious groups exclusively, as this support might come at the expense of neglecting other voices that do not privilege religious discourses. In supporting reform, the United States should be willing to formulate adaptable policies that accommodate an array of indigenous viewpoints and that facilitate the formation of political alliances committed to a democratic framework.

Third, and related to the second point, a question arises as to whether promoting democracy in some Middle Eastern countries, where Islamic opposition groups are major political and social actors, will result in the immediate replacement of secular regimes with Islamic governments. Open elections could bring Islamist groups into power and such groups might then transform the regimes that made elections possible into theocracies. But in citing the example of the ruling, Islamist-leaning Justice and Development Party in secular Turkey, we can see that it is possible to include moderate Islamist voices in governance without compromising the nature of a secular regime. Religiously motivated groups can participate under a secular governance structure, where they bargain with other political actors and become full-fledged members of democratic societies.

Some caution that if allowed to run for and hold political office, Islamist groups in some Arab nations, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, might institute Islamic-style governments (possibly but not assuredly democracies). In this context, the application of Islamic law (*sharia*), even if interpreted by moderate Islamists, might pose limitations on personal freedoms that are deemed contrary to Islamic tenets. Often envisioned in these discussions is the emergence of hard-line regimes similar to the Islamic Republic of Iran. But the Iranian regime came to power through a violent revolution that was led by groups and interests – including religious clerics – who cited grievances that included political exclusion from participatory governance.

These debates have focused, then, on the issue of *how* moderate Islamists can become engaged in the political arena within different nations. Turkey is cited as a case where Islamists were forced to temper their political views after years of struggling to be included in governance and to gain legitimacy from the voting populace. This involved gradual democratization of their discourses and ideologies, as well as a realization on their part that they must peacefully engage a sizable portion of the population that is not necessarily supportive of Islamic politics. In the case of Iran, however, the change was rapid, radical, and did not entail any bargaining or negotiation on the part of the religious groups with the broader population. The contrast between Turkey and Iran suggests that if Islamist groups are invested in a democratic system and realize that only within this system could they express and achieve their political goals, they could become agents for rather than obstacles to positive change.

Women, Non-Muslims, and Non-Traditional Power Holders

It is important to note that authoritarian regimes in the region limit the political rights of all their citizens—men and women, Muslim and non-Muslim. But there are significant considerations, which are often omitted when discussing the future of promoting democracy in the Middle East, particularly in relation to the role of women and of non-Muslims. Historically, these two groups have frequently held greater rights under secular albeit authoritarian regimes. Because the current push for democratic reform in the region might allow Islamist (and male-led) groups into major political roles, U.S. policies must also strive for the inclusion of women, non-Muslims, non-Islamists, and secularist groups.

First, many have argued that promoting women's rights in the Middle East will automatically lead to greater democratization there, but that is not necessarily the case. In the current secular but authoritarian Syrian order, family and personal status laws provide more protection and freedom for women compared to their regional counterparts. As a consequence, many U.S. and regional observers maintain that while democratic reform must include the political empowerment of women, establishing women's rights does not in itself stimulate democratic change.

In most Middle Eastern countries, women are sparsely represented in government, although in recent years progress has been made in Jordan, Morocco, and Egypt to increase women's rights and participation. The debate over women's rights in a majority of these countries cannot be divorced from either religious values or non-religious patriarchal influences such as familial, tribal, and customary traditions. In Iraq, for example, women have expressed fear that the current process of democratization, which is bringing traditional tribal leaders as well as conservative religious politicians into positions of power, is curtailing rights and freedoms previously enjoyed by women under the non-democratic secular Baathist regime. But some women's organizations welcome the possibility of including Islam in politics, arguing that it is possible to use the Qur'an and Islamic traditions to petition for greater rights. Other groups maintain, however, that even the most moderate religious interpretations of Islam will still favor males and, consequently, preclude legal equality between men and women. We should be more aware of the diversity in interpreting the role of Islam among women's rights advocates and of the ways in which these grassroot voices can be included in democracy promotion.

Second, there are questions regarding the future position of non-Muslims within Middle Eastern countries where majority Muslim populations are increasingly defining their political identities through religious discourses. The issue of non-Muslims is a sensitive one, since these groups are often seen as pawns of Western powers. In recent decades, non-Muslims have been caught between authoritarian governments and Islamist politics. For the most part, non-Muslim communities find that their personal and political rights would be best supported under a secular democratic order and worry about their prospects under an Islamic regime. Assurances are made by some moderate Muslims, who argue for Islamic governance, citing the tolerance traditionally extended to the "People of the Book," i.e. Jews and Christians, throughout Islamic history. But "tolerance" does not translate into legal equality under a democratic government. In the same vein, if Islamic laws are enacted, this tolerance may not be extended to religious groups other than Jews and Christians. Ultimately, there might be considerable limitations on the extent that non-Muslims could become full political participants in majority Muslim societies, where only Muslim leaders are likely to be accepted.

U.S. Policies

Perhaps the most important question that has emerged from debates taking place in U.S. policy circles and among political and intellectual actors in the Middle East is whether change should come from within or from outside. Mr. Chairman, I do not believe that reform must be constructed in these mutually exclusive categories. There is popular dissatisfaction in the Middle East with repressive governments and with the inabilities of those governments to deal effectively with demographic pressures and deteriorating socio-economic conditions. Transformations that begin to remedy major political and economic deficits will be welcomed by many in the region, regardless of whether these changes stem from internal or external actors. Most peoples in the region would embrace change and would support democratic reform; there is an eagerness for increased personal liberties, for justice, and for greater political participation. This does not deny, however, that the U.S. has been long perceived as supporting many of those repressive regimes that have curtailed democratic developments and that reform linked to American financial or political sources is deemed suspect by many. Moreover, to some critics in the region, Washington should first focus on stabilizing Iraq and on facilitating a just resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict before turning its attention to broad regional initiatives.

Despite these obstacles, the United States has an important role to play. There are risks and limitations to U.S. policies, but more importantly, there is a need for long-term programmatic commitments by the U.S. government to ensure the viability of these changes. By calling for democratic change in the Middle East, the U.S. has aligned itself with many regional groups who find the status quo unworkable. At the same time, the task of democracy promotion in the region must have a clear understanding of political realities. Nations in the Middle East have their own distinct histories, demographics, geo-political landscapes, and economic capacities. Understanding these variations will be instrumental in gauging the successes of policy initiatives. The United States can support democratic reform by focusing on the following points:

- The U.S. should encourage diversity in the political landscape of the Middle East. Islamists are part of the political reality of the region. The U.S. should learn more about different Islamist

groups, about their agendas, goals, and popular appeal and should discern their capacity for participating in governance alongside secular or non-Islamist opposition groups, as well as their commitment to non-violence and to dialogue. The exclusion of moderate groups in the long-term might reinforce an existing notion in the region that the United States' rhetoric and policies on democracy promotion are disingenuous.

- The U.S. should be cautious in the extent to which it recognizes sectarian, religious, and patriarchal divisions in the region. In looking for natural allies in Iraq, the U.S. has worked with religious and tribal leaders in forming a new government. This approach brings about political transformations but it might also substitute one set of traditional power holders with another. At the same time, these leaders are usually Muslim males. In this way, both women and non-Muslims might feel excluded from the political process. Democratic reform throughout the region should ensure the widespread participation of all citizens. The U.S. should work with non-governmental groups, grassroot organizations, and civil society in soliciting ways to include women and non-traditional power holders.

- The U.S. Congress should work to strengthen existing democracy promotion programs. Congressional oversight can monitor programs, such as the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), by ensuring that they are signaling the United States' commitment to democratic reforms that are sensitive to local political conditions and to indigenous interpretations of democracy. Our democracy programs can support alternative political voices and encourage increased participation in local governance throughout the region. Provisions in these initiatives must also take into account unique conditions within each nation placed under the collective heading of "Middle East."

- The U.S. State Department should step up its public diplomacy efforts and press for improvements in human rights, political participation, strengthening the rule of law, and promoting freedom of religion, speech, and press in the Middle East. The U.S. will gain greater credibility in the region if prioritizes democratic reform alongside its short-term economic and strategic interests. The U.S. should maintain bilateral dialogues with regional governments, and should advocate reform, especially from its closest allies in the region. But dialogue should be bolstered by a willingness to exert diplomatic and economic pressure to express the seriousness of U.S. policies.

Democratic reform in the Middle East is a long-term process, both for indigenous advocates and the U.S. government. The United States must express a strong and consistent diplomatic and economic commitment to this project, on the one hand, and a willingness to be open to local and unforeseen interpretations of democracy, on the other. Striking this delicate balance will be of great benefit both to Americans and to citizens of the Middle East.

Thank you Mr. Chairman and Committee Members.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Saffuri.

STATEMENT OF KHALED SAFFURI

Mr. SAFFURI. Thank you. Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, I would like to thank you, especially Chairman Shays, for inviting me to testify this morning. I have a written statement which I ask to be included on the record.

Mr. SHAYS. It will be included.

Mr. SAFFURI. Thank you. Thank you very much for holding this hearing on such an important matter involving democracy, civil rights, and foreign policy matters. The issue of democracy in the Middle East has been of critical importance to the Islamic Free Market Institute Foundation, which I am a cochairman, a cofounder and chairman since its founding in 1998. We hosted the first conference of free market and democracy in Doha, Qatar in the year 2000, and our fifth conference was held just a few months ago.

Following the tragic attacks of September 11th, the larger issue of democracy and freedom in the Muslim world has been taking a profound importance. I welcome this opportunity to provide this subcommittee and Members of Congress our opinion on the impact of U.S. policy and U.S. statements on the Middle East and in the Muslim world.

First, I would like to begin by talking about the problem that is a credibility problem which hurts our effort in spreading democracy in the Middle East. No matter how passionately President Bush states or makes his notions of spreading freedom, there is a growing perception that America continues to deny justice to Islam and Muslims. Specifically, the Muslim world is convinced that our government violates civil rights and due process of Muslims right here in the United States. This results in a perceived double standard which runs the risk of preventing any meaningful dialog with the Muslim street.

A few months ago Mr. Osama Siblani, the editor of the largest Arab American paper in Detroit wrote: "How can we believe that America's engaged in spreading democracy in the Arab and Muslim world while we as Arab Americans have less democracy here in the U.S.?"

Many people are aware of the prosecution of Muslims in this country, and Arabs. There is an article that I can make available here, written in the American Conservative magazine by James Bovard called "Undue Process." These kinds of incidents are translated in the Middle East into Arab and Muslim press, and they cause this credibility problem to spread more. This also runs the risk of rendering unmeaningful the hundreds of millions of dollars we continue to spend in public diplomacy, democracy initiatives, and the media. Anyone that looks at the polling in the Middle East, you see that in general America's stand in the Arab and Muslim street actually is declining, not improving.

Islam provides not only religious guidance but represents the philosophy, culture, and sociopolitical foundation of most Muslim societies today. It is important that we recognize, first and foremost, that allowing Islam or its belief to be attacked hinders our effort at building bridges and understanding with the Muslim

world. So as we consider programs and campaigns to foster freedom in the Muslim and Arab world, we must realize that these societies will reject any approach which marginalizes Islamic thought.

Yet there is much for us in the United States to teach in emerging democracies. We can demonstrate the importance of civic institutions which would be compatible to Islam to serve as barriers to social injustice and authoritarian regimes.

In a nutshell, only—it is not only that Islamis compatible with democracy, it is required as a foundation in any Muslim country.

The issue of the state-run media—and this is something I would like to address here regarding the programs of Radio Sawa and Al Hurra—I would like to address the hurdles in presenting U.S. viewpoints through media efforts such as Al Hurra satellite channel and Radio Sawa. One thing that can be said of Arabs is total distrust of state-run media. For generations, governments in the Middle East were feeding information to their public that people have total mistrust, it's a government propaganda. The government point of view was always presented without any challenge. Al Hurra is U.S. Government-funded and perceived as strictly controlled by the U.S. Government. This might not be true, but this is how the street looks at Al Hurra. And this is the reason why Al Jazeera has been very successful. And every time Al Jazeera is attacked in America, the more popular it becomes in the Middle East.

Furthermore, the constant broadcasting on stations in the Muslim world such as the Armed Forces Radio of perceived anti-Islamic commentary by the likes of Rush Limbaugh. I have a personal experience. I was in Bahrain 2 years ago, and a high-ranking official of the Foreign Ministry said we are strong allies of the United States but we are constantly embarrassed. He said, we have the naval base in Bahrain, and we allow the radio station, military radio station here, but we get complaints and people are angry on the street because there is this program of a guy—he couldn't spell his name, he said Limbo. I said, Rush Limbaugh. He said, "Yes. He is constantly insulting Islam, and there's nothing we can do." So I said I will go back to the States.

Mr. SHAYS. I have something in common with that as well. I get the same insults.

Mr. SAFFURI. We raised the issue with two Pentagon officials and a letter was sent immediately. We didn't get an answer. Then I raised an issue with Mr. Wilcox, assistant in the Secretary of Defense, and he said this will be considered censorship. He said Rush Limbaugh's program is the most popular in the military radio, so they could not censor it, they could not remove it.

But this really undermines the work, the great work that has been done by IRI and NDI, and also the other stations that we support, like Al Hurra and Radio Sawa.

I would like to conclude, I think I can talk more about these issues later.

Mr. SHAYS. If you could bring your comments to a close.

Mr. SAFFURI. OK. I will close here and I will leave it for answering. Thank you again.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you so much. I complimented our first speaker on her thoughtful comments, but I congratulate all of you and thank all of you.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Saffuri follows:]

Testimony of Khaled Saffuri
Chairman, Islamic Free Market Institute

Before the House Government Reform Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations

"Fostering Democracy in the Middle East: Defeating Terrorism with Ballots"

May 17, 2005

Mr. Chairman and Distinguished Members of the Subcommittee.

Thank you for holding this important hearing on one of the most pressing issues impacting both our nation's policies on foreign affairs and domestic civil rights. I would especially like to thank Chairman Shays for inviting me to appear here.

The topics I would like to address include the need to improve our credibility among the Arab world through fairer treatment of Muslims, Arabs and institutions in the U.S. I will also address the need to frame the challenges of building democratic institutions in the Middle East using history as our parameters. To that end, I offer a brief history of the compatibility of Islam and democratic principles. I will close with suggestions that we at the Islamic Free Market Institute and like-minded individuals in the US government and around the Muslim and Arab world feel would foster the success of democracy.

Introduction

Ever since President Bush declared the War on Terror following the tragic attacks of September 11, the image and perception of US policy among those in the Islamic world has unfortunately moved inversely proportional to what the Administration states. The bold pronouncements on freedom and democracy made by the President in his Second Inaugural Address and recent European trip are appealing to a majority of Muslims and Americans, and I applaud the President and the Administration for making them. But before discussing those statements and the prospects for success of the Bush Doctrine in the Middle East and Muslim world, these new statements must be seen in the broader context of earlier statements by the Administration after 9-11 and the contradictory policies which continue to shadow any new initiatives. In other words, the United States has a credibility problem and no matter how grand the vision expressed, the Arab world will continue to view the U.S. with cynicism.

Statements Since 9/11

Official statements made since the travesty of September 11 have acted as obstacles to winning the support among Muslims worldwide. For instance, President Bush less than artfully referred to the war on Al-Qaeda and the Taliban as a *crusade*. In

another example, the U.S. military dubbed its campaign "Operation Eternal Freedom." In both cases, Administration misstatements unnecessarily riled Arab and Muslim communities with no corresponding benefit to U.S. military operations.

These are not isolated examples. Time and again, U.S. policy makers have demonstrated a callous disregard for both cultural and semantic differences. For examples statements made by General William G. "Jerry" Boykin who was not removed from his critical position in intelligence-gathering for the DoD

In another curious example, the U.S Armed Forces Radio broadcasts content, such as The Rush Limbaugh Show, whose incendiary viewpoints are perceived by listeners in the Muslim and Arab world, as a direct affront to Islam. Subsequent and fewer broadcasts of the more even-handed programs on Radio Sawa and Al Hurra TV do not mitigate the damage already done by these other broadcasts.

These examples evidence this fact: the age of information can be used for us or against us–and when it is used against us, it is often to a disastrous degree. The most recent case of deadly riots in Afghanistan followed uncorroborated and likely exaggerated stories of guards at Guantanamo Bay flushing copies of the Holy Qur'an. This shows how even rumors can have a profound impact on life in the Muslim street. In a nutshell, the early statements made by U.S. policy makers have cost us dearly and undermined the laudable campaign to winning hearts and minds of everyday Muslims and Arabs.

My goal here today is not to simply restate anecdotal instances or perceptions of anti-Muslim or anti-Arab biases by US policy makers or media personalities. I mention these and other statements with the hope that the members of this Subcommittee and indeed the larger audience will recognize that words carry profound impact on any people- Muslims and Arabs are no different. It is like like hammering a nail into a fence; you can always remove the nail, but the memory and damage remain.

Contradictions in Policy and Perception

More detrimental than the actual statements are impressions in the Arab world that US policies are aimed against Muslims, not only around the world, but in the US as well. Contradictions abound: This Administration nominated an outspoken opponent of

the Mideast Roadmap to Peace, Daniel Pipes, to the US Institute of Peace. The nomination garnered few headlines in the US. but was received harshly even among the intelligentsia in the Muslim and Arab world. This type of appointment portrays an Administration that rewarded a very extreme and intolerant opponent of Islam..

The most glaring examples of a contradiction of speaking of democracy in lofty terms, and the treatment given Muslims is the perception by Muslims that the US government seeks to erode the building blocks of democracy: our civil institutions. Since September 11, Muslims all over the world have seen the closure of four of the largest and most successful Muslim-American charities in the US, most of them under what the 9-11 Commission itself referred to as encroaching on Muslim civil liberties.[1]

In an excellent article published late last year in the American Conservative magazine, the author highlighted numerous completely preventable scenarios where innocent American-Muslims have been accused of terror-related crimes.[2] This assessment of the impact of over-zealous post-9/11 law enforcement on the rights of Muslims right here in America must be on-going. Members of Congress should ask this year when certain provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act are due to expire, whether the security those provisions offer outweighs the impact on civil liberties. It is those liberties which make our democracy the greatest the world has known. How this question is addressed will have lasting repercussions on the perception and image of American democracy in the Muslim and Arab world.

Islam and Democracy

Before offering an assessment of the Bush Doctrine on the Middle East and the Muslim World, a brief look at the history and demographics of Islam and democracy is in order.

The tactical underpinnings of democracy include representation, flow of information, consultation and accountability. Islamic law, *sharia'*, is based upon the word of God as revealed to the Prophet Muhammad, the saying of the Prophet Muhammad and the interpretations and legal reasoning in modern society based upon

[1] Staff Monograph, Commission of the September 11 Attacks Upon the United States, Case Study Chapter 6 (August 2004).
[2] Undue Process, James Brovard, October 11, 2004, American Conservative.

those two sources. The Prophet's own rite of succession is a perfect example of a democratic system. While some feel his son-in-law should automatically have become the caliph upon the Prophet's death, it was in fact his companion and best friend, Abu Bakr, who was given support, *baya*, of the Companions to become the leader. Other examples include the Prophet's command to his Companions on administrative and other affairs to "consult amongst yourselves" before making any decisions. Finally, the Qur'an and other statements of Prophet's speak of the great responsibility a ruler or leader has on the well-being of the people.

Modern Nations

Modern democratic institutions have been alive and well in over half the world's Muslim population for the latter half of the 20th Century. A common misunderstanding among the American public is that the majority of Muslims are Arab. In fact, less than 20% of the world Muslim population is Arab. The countries with the largest Muslim populations, namely Indonesia, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh have, to a large degree enjoyed the benefits of democratically elected leaders. Today, this adds up to over 500 million Muslims living under some form of democratic government. The so-called failed states with rouge regimes that some in the Administration argue should be replaced represent no more than 1% of the world's Muslim population.

Imposing an Athenian Democracy?

One perception problem with the US government's new found desire to promote democracy is the appearance of imposing our Greek-style version and the subsequent implication there is either this type of democracy or tyranny. But the world is a complex place and there are more than just those two choices.

Why, one might ask, have we not seen Velvet or Rose Revolutions in Arab or Muslim countries as we have observed in some Eastern European and former Soviet bloc nations after the fall of the Soviet Union? When occupation ended in Czechoslovakia, Georgia, and the Baltic States, enlightened leaders channeled the will of the masses towards a non-violent change.

To explain this requires knowing the differences of that region and the Arab world. There is nothing innate in Arab history or culture to oppose democracy. But there is a unique situation of Arabs in the 20th Century emerging from Ottoman then British and French imperialism. While Eastern European countries under the Soviet bloc were led in name by one of their own, the occupation and support for the Iron Curtain-era dictators came from an outside nation- the Soviet Union. On the contrary, Arabs who find themselves under an authoritarian regime today are nevertheless ruled by one of their own, not an imperial puppet. But one cannot blame occupation alone as an excuse for democracy. Consider that the only Arabs who are occupied by another people, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, nevertheless had an election of their own. So Arabs and Muslims are very much capable and desirous of building democratic institutions, but in a means, method and timing based on their internal affairs and not based on the rise and fall of outside empires.

Arab Democratic Leaders?

So where are the Havels and Walesas of the Arab world? Those who have a limited understanding of the Muslim religion and the Arab world have gone so far to say that left to their own devices, Muslim opposition leaders would choose one-man, one-vote, one-time and impose a draconian religious rule of law on an unsuspecting people. This is far from the truth. If anything, Islam has been a source of social justice and a barrier to corruption and decadence. Indeed there are a variety of alternative leaders and would-be elected officials throughout all Arab countries. Some may be tolerated at home, others may be restrained or exiled. But the Arab world has learned from Eastern Europe and areas like Bosnia that change itself can be dangerous, and it may just be better to deal with a force you know than another you do not. In the nuanced world of geo-political realities, what the US must consider is that the only way to foster such groups while faced with unmanageable change is dialogue.

Dialogue and Institution-Building

The Institute is committed to the view that only through active participation by public, private and non-governmental organizations can democratically-inspired

institutions thrive. These are the foundational elements on which to build what will be in the best mutual interests of the US and the Arab and Muslim world. We must commit ourselves to letting those who want to live in freedom be made aware of the challenges that inhere in the process. While our statements and policies at home have affected our credibility and perception in the international arena, we must not be deterred from offering Yankee ingenuity to address the needs for a free society elsewhere. Rather than imposing our will and changing regimes or funding groups which will be forcefully targeted or co-opted by those very regimes, we should invest resources in fostering and encouraging the development of democratic institutions in the Arab world.

In his first term, President Bush announced the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to fund numerous programs on building democratic institutions. While hailed at the time as new thinking, these programs have been subject to budgetary restraints and resistance from the very countries where the programs were to be administered. While the answer is not to simply add more money, that is certainly a start: the US had an initial budget of less than $100 million per year for MEPI. We spend almost a billion dollars per year in public diplomacy and hundreds of billions of dollars in military aid and operations.

Even though parity in funding is certainly an issue, it will not make the programs succeed overnight. The Institute is pleased that MEPI continues to be funded and pursued by the Bush Administration. The programs must be targeted, adaptive and focused on long-term needs to get illiterate, economically stagnated populations into the business of managing their own civic institutions.

Challenges to Development

To develop homegrown democratic institutions in the Arab world, it is not just a matter of buying results through programs. As stated earlier in my testimony, we have already hurt ourselves through policy and perception problems following 9-11. We must consider how current pro-American and pro-democratic trends in Muslim world have been fostered through past American programs (Peace Corps and Fulbright scholarships) and bilateral trade and travel among the Arab world and the US. The problem is not just whether a program succeeds but whether there is a genuine dialogue among the people of

the Arab world and Americans. For example, the vast decline of foreign students from the Arab world due to post-9/11 hysteria, visa delays and other matters will have severe consequences towards not just bilateral relations, but also democracy-building in the Arab world.

Conclusion

What makes President Bush's new initiative so bold and desirable is how desperately so many in the world would like it to succeed. But we must not allow ourselves to be deluded to believe that we can just follow a concrete path to achieve abstract notions of freedom. Taking control of one's national destiny is a challenge that requires technical expertise, management of people and resources, and adherence to the rule of law.

President Bush must be commended for opening the door to what really is the only way to global progress: a frank dialogue among all stakeholders who seek laws molded around the values of representation, accountability and freedom.

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October 11, 2004 issue

Undue Process

Innocents have been entangled in the Justice Department's anti-terr dragnet.

By James Bovard

The train wrecks of the Justice Department's domestic War on Ter continue to pile up. Despite the perennial victory claims by Attorne General John Ashcroft and other high officials, three recent cases v how federal prosecutors and FBI agents continue tripping over the evidence—or worse.

On May 7, the FBI arrested Brandon Mayfield, an Oregon lawyer, alleged involvement in the Madrid train bombings of March 11 tha 191 and left 2,000 wounded. A U.S. counterterrorism official (almo certainly an FBI or Justice Department official) told Newsweek tha Mayfield's fingerprint was an "absolutely incontrovertible match" of the fingerprint found on a bag of bomb detonators near the scene Madrid attack. News of Mayfield's arrest provided alarming evide Americans were involved in international conspiracies to slaughter around the globe, and he was informed that he could face the death for his crimes.

Employing Patriot Act powers, the feds, prior to the arrest, conduct searches of Mayfield's home and tapped his phone and e-mail. Aft arrest, they froze his bank accounts. The FBI's arrest affidavit reve its agents had "observed Mayfield drive to the Bilal Mosque locate 160th Ave., Beaverton, Oregon, on several different occasions." A incriminating detail in the arrest warrant: Mayfield advertised his l service in the Muslim Yellow Pages. (Mayfield, a former Army lie converted to Islam and has an Egyptian wife.) In early April, the S police described Mayfield "as a U.S. military veteran who was alre

under investigation by U.S. authorities for alleged ties to Islamic terrorism," according to the *Los Angeles Times*.

Yet the key to the case—the fingerprint—was shakier than a Georg Bush press conference. The FBI quickly claimed to have achieved on the partial print, but, on April 13, Spanish government officials the FBI that their experts were "conclusively negative" that Mayfic print matched the print on the bomb detonator bag. The FBI respon flying one of its fingerprint analysts to Madrid to explain to the Sp why they were wrong. But during the Madrid visit, the FBI expert requested to see the bag or to get a better copy of the print. The arr warrant in early May wrongly informed a federal judge that the Sp were "satisfied" with the FBI's match.

Mayfield was arrested as a "material witness," thereby permitting t to hold him as long as they pleased without charging him with a sp crime. The Justice Department refuses to disclose how many peopl been or are being held as "material witnesses" in prisons around th country.

After Mayfield was arrested, FBI agents raided his home and offic carted off boxes of his papers and his family's belongings. Among items seized were "miscellaneous Spanish documents," according t statement to the federal court. These supposedly incriminating pap turned out to be the Spanish homework of Mayfield's son. Perhaps FBI investigators suspected that "Hola, Paco. Como Estas?" was a code.

Though the FBI never possessed anything on Mayfield aside from misidentified fingerprint, it did not hesitate to cast him in sinister c The FBI informed a federal judge: "It is believed that Mayfield ma traveled under a false or fictitious name." But Mayfield, whose pas expired the previous year, insisted he had not left the country. The apparently never bothered to check whether Mayfield had been abs the U.S. before making one of the most high-profile terrorism arres year.

On May 20, after Spanish authorities announced that they had foun match with the fingerprint, the Justice Department acquiesced to M release. A few weeks later, Attorney General Ashcroft informed th Judiciary Committee that his case vindicated the American system justice: "As a matter of fact, the pride of our system is that people innocent because we adjudicate these things." But there was effecti adjudication in this case because Mayfield was classified as a "mat witness"— which meant that the feds could hold him as long as the or at least until his detention became too embarrassing. Ashcroft al testified, "When we learned that the reservations of the Spanish we substantial, we went to the court, asked for the release of Mr. Mayf reality, the Justice Department did not acquiesce until the Spanish government announced that they had arrested the Algerian whose fingerprint matched that on the bag.

FBI director Robert Mueller visited Portland a month after Mayfiel release and announced that FBI agents had acted appropriately. Ye *Portland Oregonian* editorial noted, "If not for the Spanish authori doing their own investigation, Mayfield likely would still be in jail And sadly, the unfortunate Mr. Mayfield is not an isolated case.

On Aug. 5, federal agents carried out middle-of-the-night raids to n pizzeria owner and an ambulette driver. Deputy Attorney General J Comey announced at a Washington news conference: "Anyone eng terrorist planning would be very wise to consider whether their acc is not really one of our guys. We are working very, very hard to inf the enemy."

Yassin Aref and Mohammed Hossain were arrested for allegedly ta part in a plot to launder money from a government informant who to be involved with a plan to use a shoulder-fired missile to kill a P diplomat in New York. The feds used the Patriot Act to sweep up phone calls and e-mail messages. Perhaps the most decisive item th unveiled at the initial court hearing was the fact that Aref's name w discovered in a notebook at an alleged terrorist camp in Iraq (after attack in which U.S. soldiers killed 80 of 82 people at the camp). F prosecutors brandished the fact that he was identified as "the Comr and declared that the obliterated group was part of Ansar al-Islam, Qaeda affiliate. The feds' charges persuaded a federal court to lock defendants without bail.

A few weeks later, however, at another court hearing, the Justice Department admitted that the key word was mistranslated. Instead Arabic, the writing was actually Kurdish; instead of "commander," merely said "brother." Aref, a Kurdish refugee who was the leader Albany storefront mosque, had relatives back in the homeland. Eve the feds had been in possession of the notebook for more than a ye had not bothered to verify the Defense Department's translation be creating an elaborate sting.

The Justice Department also misrepresented where the notebook w discovered. The Defense Department did not identify the targeted g terrorist-connected. Instead, at the time of the attack, Lt. Gen. Davi McKiernan declared, "I will simply tell you that it was a camp area was confirmed with bad guys." According to Federal Magistrate D Homer, "There is no evidence ... to support the claim that Mr. Aref contact with any terrorist organization."

Federal prosecutors responded quickly to the translation debacle, s invoke the Classified Information Procedures Act. A statement fro Justice Department's Counterterrorism Section warned, "The Unite believes that disclosure of this material would raise issues of natior security ..."

It was curious how a case about a phony plot, an inoperable missile the informant purportedly showed the defendants), and phony clain

government suddenly raised national security concerns. The Justice Department unsuccessfully sought to avoid turning over the transcr discussions between the defendants and its agent provocateur. Afte of the information was released, "transcripts of the undercover tape how much prodding by the informant was needed to lure Hossain i fictitious terrorist plot," the *Albany Times-Union* noted.

The defendants were released on $250,000 bail each, after spendin days in custody. Another court hearing is scheduled in Albany for on whether the Justice Department will be permitted to use the Cla Information Procedures Act to shield its case.

DOJ could use a win, for earlier this month, federal prosecutors we to admit that their biggest victory over a terrorist cell was in fact a week after the 9/11 attacks, federal agents nabbed three Arabs livin apartment in Detroit. (A fourth suspect was snared in North Carolin Federal prosecutors described the men—arrested during a raid in w FBI was looking for another Arab on a terrorist watch list—as a "sl operational combat cell." Two of the alleged cell members were co in June 2003 on charges of providing material aid and support to te A third was convicted on fraud, and a fourth was acquitted. Ashcro the verdict: "Today's convictions send a clear message: The Depar Justice will work diligently to detect, disrupt and dismantle the acti terrorist cells in the United States and abroad."

The Detroit bust was the only case in which the feds appeared to h nailed a group that may have actually been planning attacks. But af courtroom victory, the case began to crumble. Federal Judge Geral ordered the Justice Department to investigate possible misconduct prosecutor Assistant U.S. Attorney Richard Convertino and others case. The controversy mushroomed when Convertino sued Ashcro charging him with "gross mismanagement" in the War on Terror.

Perhaps the most decisive physical evidence in the trial was a day with a couple of pages of sketches. Federal prosecutors assured the one drawing was an aircraft hanger at a U.S. military base in Turke another represented a military hospital in Jordan.

Justice Department prosecutors knew that government experts did with those claims. Instead, most who analyzed one of the simple sk concluded that it was a rough outline map of the Middle East, not a base target in Turkey. At the trial, defense lawyers requested photo of the alleged Jordanian hospital. Prosecutors falsely denied posses such photos. The Justice Department's formal investigation, releas early September, concluded, "It is difficult, if not impossible, to co the day planner sketches with the photos and see a correlation,"

The most important witness to testify against the alleged terrorist c Youssef Hmimssa, who co-operated in part because he faced credit and other fraud charges. The *Detroit News* noted that Hmimssa wa described scam artist and crook." Yet, on the day after Hmimssa fi

testifying, Ashcroft publicly declared his co-operation had been "a tool" in fighting terrorism and that "his testimony has been of valu substantial value."

A Justice Department inquiry found that prosecutors failed to turn more than 100 documents to defense attorneys during the trial, incl letter written by a convict who served time with Hmimissa that stat the star witness had bragged about "how he lied to the FBI" on the cell case.

Moreover, Convertino ordered FBI agents who interviewed Hmim more than 20 hours to take no notes during the interview. Instead, h briefed the agents after the sessions with Hmimssa and made his ov which he repeatedly altered. The Justice Department report observe there were "discrepancies between these [Convertino's notes] versi supporting defense counsel's claims that Hmimssa's testimony evo over time." The report noted that "Convertino's approach caused si controversy" and that one FBI agent was "adamantly opposed" to s method.

Judge Rosen overturned the convictions declaring, "the prosecutio materially misled the court, the jury and the defense as to the natur character and complexion of critical evidence that provided import foundations for the prosecution's case."

These three instances may be only the tip of the iceberg as the gov can usually rely on acquiescent federal judges or coerced plea barg keep most of its dirty laundry out of view. The public soundbites s reassure us that the Justice Department's domestic War on Terror i well by invoking largely meaningless numbers. In a July report on Patriot Act, DOJ bragged, "the Department has charged 310 defen with criminal offenses as a result of terrorism investigations since t attacks of September 11, 2001, and 179 of those defendants have a been convicted." But the vast majority of the convictions have had to do with terrorism. Instead, they are a litany of credit-card fraud, violations, and other offenses whose prosecution does nothing to p America against deadly foreign threats—while the pursuit of PR vi over bogus plots diverts resources from real terrorist dangers.

As the election draws closer, the Bush administration may unveil n arrests on terrorism charges. If so, it would be wise to wait until lo the triumphant press conferences to gauge whether the government finally got the goods—or whether the busts are simply another effo simultaneously to frighten and comfort voters. ■

James Bovard is the author of the just-published The Bush Betraya *(Palgrave Macmillan) and seven other books.*

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Mr. SHAYS. Ms. Yacoubian.

STATEMENT OF MONA YACOUBIAN

Ms. YACOUBIAN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and members of the subcommittee for inviting me to speak today. I am truly honored to be among such distinguished company. The powerful title of this morning's hearing, "Fostering Democracy in the Middle East: Defeating Terrorism with Ballots," underscores the critical role that freedom and democracy can play in countering extremism in this troubled region.

Indeed, in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks, the world turned its attention to the Middle East's longstanding democracy deficit. With the Pentagon in flames and the Twin Towers collapsing, the horror of that day initiated deeper reflection both here and in the Arab world about the roots of such a horrendous act.

Recently, global and regional interest has focused intensely on the Middle East's need for reform. The region's stagnation dates back decades. Yet until the 2001 attacks, these ills received scant attention from governments in the region or their global counterparts. The September 11th attacks shattered the conventional wisdom that the region's stability, anchored by its authoritarian governments, could endure indefinitely and would come at little cost to U.S. interests. Precisely the opposite conclusion has become apparent. Middle East reform is critical for long-term regional stability and broader international security. Absent change, the status quo will only breed greater popular disaffection and provide fertile ground for the continued growth of extremism.

In advance of today's hearings, you provided a number of complex questions focused on two key issues: first, the region's ripeness for reform; and, second, the Bush administration's policies on Middle East reform. I will devote the majority of my testimony to the first question. I want to add that the views I express are my own and not necessarily those of the U.S. Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policy positions.

The absence of freedom in the Middle East is well documented. Freedom House, in its most recent survey, notes that the region is distinguished from the rest of the world by its distinct lack of political rights and civil liberties. At times, regimes in the region have resorted to wide-ranging repressive practices in the name of fighting the global war on terror. Such policies often result in an increase in human rights violations and the overall suppression of dissent, even when peaceful.

An Arab awakening to the need for reform has taken place as well. In July 2002, less than a year after September 11th, a U.N-commissioned panel of 30 Arab experts issued the first Arab Human Development Report. In blunt language, the AHDR issues a probing self-critical analysis of the region's shortfalls. Specifically, the paper outlines three key deficits: freedom, women's empowerment, and knowledge that impede the Arab world from achieving its true potential.

The report concludes with a clarion call for reform. While the Arab world's lack of political freedom is well documented, the region's democracy deficit should not be misinterpreted as a lack of

desire or capacity for democratic reform on the part of its citizens. Numerous polls and surveys verify the Arab public's hunger for freedom and democracy. The most compelling data originates from the 2001 World Value Survey which reveals that Arab countries had the highest percentage of publics, 61 percent, who agreed strongly that, "democracy may have many problems, but it's better than any other form of government."

Beyond the polling results, other data coupled with key concepts in Islam suggests that there is not necessarily an inherent contradiction between Islam and democracy. First, there are many examples of countries with significant Muslim populations that are considered electoral democracies. Second, notable principals within Islam such as shura or consultative decisionmaking and ijtihad, or interpretation, can propel a democratic ethos.

The absence of freedom in the Middle East does not appear to have precluded many of its people from embracing the hope for democratic reforms. Indeed, intense international interest directed at the need for Middle East reform has helped to initiate an unprecedented dialog over reform in the region.

The boldest and most detailed proposals originating in the Arab world have emerged from nongovernment organizations. Beginning in January 2004, a diverse array of groups ranging from the Arab Business Council to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood have published a wide variety of reform initiatives. Most significantly, many of these initiatives have advocated forcefully for political reform. I would be happy to discuss the specifics of these initiatives during the question and answer.

In contrast, government proposals for reform may provide entry points for pressing for more substantial democratic change, but they fall short of meaningful, deeply rooted, and sustained reform. Instead, government measures typically appear designed to relieve popular pressure at home and assuage critics abroad while leaving the power equation unaltered. To be successful, any reform effort must be inclusive, reaching out to all elements of society, including modern Islamists who likely constitute the region's most potent opposition force. Yet, with few exceptions, joint reform efforts that bring together secular and Islamist reformers are rare. Calls for the creation of national pacts could bridge secular and Islamist demands for reform and possibly galvanize the reform movement.

In closing, it is useful to consider the implications for U.S. policy. To date, the Bush administration's focus on Middle East reform at a minimum has energized discussion of the issue in the region. For all of its controversy, the U.S. invasion of Iraq may have contributed indirectly to numerous positive developments in the region. Still, several significant challenges remain. First, bolstering U.S. credibility in the region stands as a key priority for policymakers. Second, the administration must determine how to reconcile the well-documented need for change in the region with longstanding desires for stability. Third, U.S. engagement with moderate Islamist reformers is essential. Finally, U.S. policymakers need to harmonize U.S. policies in support of the global war on terror with the desire to promote reform.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing today on such an important issue. The movement toward political reform in this

critical region of the world will not be easy, quick, or without difficulties, but it is necessary and must be sustained. The long-term stability of the region, which is in everyone's interest, is at stake. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Yacoubian follows:]

Committee on Government Reform
Subcommittee on National Security, Emerging Threats, and International Relations

"Fostering Democracy in the Middle East: Defeating Terrorism with Ballots"
May 17, 2005

Testimony of Mona Yacoubian
Special Advisor, Muslim World Initiative, U.S. Institute of Peace

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of the Subcommittee for inviting me to speak this morning. I am truly honored to be among such distinguished company. The powerful title of this morning's hearing, "Fostering Democracy in the Middle East: Defeating Terrorism with Ballots," underscores the critical role that freedom and democracy can play in countering terrorism and extremism in this troubled region. Indeed, in the aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks on the United States, the world turned its attention to the Middle East's longstanding democracy deficit. With the Pentagon in flames and the Twin Towers collapsing, the horror of that day initiated deeper reflection—both here in the United States, and eventually in the Arab world, about the roots of such a horrendous act.

Over the past few years, international and regional interest has focused intensely on the Middle East's urgent need for reform. The region's stagnation dates back decades, yet, until the 2001 attacks, these longstanding ills received scant attention from governments in the region or their global counterparts. The 9/11 attacks and subsequent terrorist operations (Madrid, Istanbul, Casablanca, Riyadh) shattered the conventional wisdom that the region's stability—anchored by its authoritarian governments—could endure indefinitely and would come at little cost to U.S. interests. Precisely the opposite conclusion has become apparent: Middle East reform is critical for long-term regional stability and broader international security. Absent change, the status quo will only breed greater popular disaffection and provide fertile ground for the continued growth of extremism.

In advance of today's hearing, you provided a number of probing and complex questions focused on two key issues: first, the region's ripeness for reform, and second, the Bush Administration's role (past, present, and future) in responding to the critical need for Middle East reform. I will devote the majority of my testimony to the first question, an area that I have studied over time, first as an analyst with the State Department and subsequently as an independent consultant. In particular, I will draw from a recent Special Report I wrote for the U.S. Institute of Peace that explores the multitude of reform initiatives emanating from the Arab world. I want to add that the views I express are my own and not necessarily those of the Institute of Peace, which does not advocate specific policy positions.

The Region's Democracy Deficit

The absence of freedom in the Middle East is well-documented. Freedom House, in its most recent survey, notes that the region is distinguished from the rest of the world by its distinct

lack of political rights and civil liberties. Only six percent of the states in the Middle East and North Africa are classified as "Free," in contrast to the fifty percent of Free states in the rest of the world. Over the past thirty years, the Middle East and North Africa have registered no significant progress toward democratic opening. The report notes that "downward trends have outpaced gains post 9/11," with notable setbacks in 2004 in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and the United Arab Emirates. In some instances, regimes in the region have resorted to wide-ranging repressive practices in the name of fighting the Global War on Terror. Such policies often result in an increase in human rights violations and the overall suppression of dissent, even when peaceful.

An Arab "awakening" to the need for reform has taken place as well. In July, 2002, less than a year after the September 11th attacks, a UN-commissioned panel of thirty Arab experts from a variety of disciplines issued the first Arab Human Development Report. The report, which was commissioned *before* the attacks, presents a sobering picture of the Arab world. In blunt language, the AHDR issues a probing, self-critical analysis of the region's shortfalls; it offers an instance of deeper introspection that many outside the region complained had been missing just after the attacks. Specifically, the paper outlines three key deficits—freedom, women's empowerment, and knowledge—that impede the Arab world from achieving its true potential, effectively isolating it from the rest of the world. The report concludes with a clarion call for reform, depicting the Arab world at a "crossroads" and casting the region's choices in stark terms: its governments can either continue with the status quo, perpetuating repressive practices and ineffective policies that do not meet the region's daunting challenges, or they can strive for an "Arab renaissance, anchored in human development."

Last month, the UN published the third Arab Human Development Report devoted entirely to the question of freedom and good governance in the Arab world. The report offers a detailed analysis of the region's gaps in political freedoms and concludes with a series of recommendations for political and legal reforms. It directly addresses complex issues such as the role of religion and culture, calling unambiguously for the application of universal democratic principles while respecting the unique role these forces play in the region.

An Arab Thirst for Freedom

While the Arab world's lack of political freedom and democracy is well-documented and acknowledged by Westerners and Arabs alike, the region's democracy deficit should not be misinterpreted as a lack of desire or capacity for greater opening and reform on the part of its citizens. Numerous polls and surveys verify the Arab public's hunger for freedom and democracy. A 2002 poll conducted by U.S. pollster James Zogby, head of the Arab American Institute, surveyed 3,200 people in eight Arab countries. Between 90 and 96 percent of the respondents rated "civil and personal rights" as their highest priority among a list of potential concerns that included personal economic conditions, health care, and moral standards. Perhaps even more compelling, analysis of data from the 2001 World Values Survey (WVS) reveals that of the nine cultural zones surveyed (including Europe and the United States), Arab countries had the *highest* percentage of publics (61 percent) who

agreed strongly that "Democracy may have many problems, but it's better than any other form of government."

Indeed, the WVS underscores that openness to values that place an emphasis on the secular and rational, as opposed to traditional and survival values, appears to correlate more closely with a country's level of economic development and historical experience, rather than religion. WVS data finds that Saudi Arabia, governed by an absolute monarchy whose authority is anchored in one of the most conservative strains of Islam, does not have the most traditional value system of any Islamic country. Instead, the Saudi public places greater value on self-expression values than any other Islamic public.

Beyond the polling results, other data coupled with certain key concepts in Islam suggest that there is not necessarily an inherent contradiction between Islam and democracy. First, there are examples of countries with significant Muslim populations that are considered electoral democracies. These include Turkey, Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Mali and Senegal. In fact, approximately half of the world's 1.2 billion Muslims live in electoral democracies. Indeed, according to Freedom House, 73 percent of Muslims living outside the Middle East and North Africa live in Free or Partly Free countries, as compared to 12 percent of Muslims from the region.

Second, notable principles within Islam can propel a democratic ethos. Specifically, the concept of *shura* or consultative decision-making could serve as an important cornerstone for the inception of democratic processes. If revived, the Islamic practice of *ijtihad*, or interpretation and reasoning based on the sacred texts, could inject greater vitality into the religion and allow for modern interpretations of issues related to democracy and governance.

The absence of freedom in the Middle East does not appear to have precluded many of its people from embracing the hope for democratic reforms. Indeed, intense international interest directed at the need for Middle East reform has helped to initiate an unprecedented dialogue over reform in the region. From Morocco to Saudi Arabia and beyond, governments, non-government groups (both secular and Islamist), the media and others have joined an often freewheeling discussion about the need for change. Further, the debate has penetrated popular discourse from television call-in shows to Internet chat rooms and weblogs, injecting a populist element into the dialogue.

Arab Reform Initiatives

The boldest and most detailed reform proposals originating in the Arab world have emerged from non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Beginning in January 2004, a diverse array of groups ranging from the Arab Business Council to the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood has published a variety of reform initiatives. The platforms vary, at times significantly, in degree of specificity, scope, seriousness, and independence. Most significantly, many of these reform initiatives have advocated forcefully for political reform.

The reform initiatives share key common demands. These include calls for free and fair elections; constitutional reforms that feature a diminishing of executive power and commensurate increase in legislative and judicial powers; the repeal of emergency laws and the abolishment of exceptional courts; an end to the practice of torture; and the lifting of restrictions on civil society, NGOs, and the media.

In contrast, government and multilateral reform proposals may provide entry points for pressing for more substantial democratic change, but fall short of meaningful, deeply-rooted and sustained reform. Instead, government measures typically appear designed to relieve popular pressure at home or assuage critics abroad, while leaving the power equation unaltered. As a result, political openings resulting from government reform efforts remain tenuous and fragile, subject to the whims of those in power. Indeed, most government-sponsored initiatives appear motivated by self-preservation and a desire to maintain the status quo rather than any intention to implement genuine change.

To be successful, any reform effort must be inclusive, reaching out to all elements of society, including moderate Islamists who likely constitute the region's most potent opposition force. Yet with few exceptions, joint reform efforts that bring together secular and Islamist reformers, are rare. In this regard, two NGO-sponsored initiatives stand out: the June 2004 Doha Declaration and the March 2004 Beirut Civil Forum. The Doha Declaration calls for the creation of "national pacts" that could bridge secular and Islamist demands for reform and possibly galvanize the reform movement. The "national pact" concept is important for two key reasons: first, by uniting secular and Islamist reformers, demands for reform could gain critical mass, accelerating the momentum for change. Second, if constructed in good faith, these pacts could go a long way toward clarifying worrisome ambiguities that often divide those calling for reform and that put governments on the defensive.

The Beirut Civil Forum highlights the importance of initiating a religious dialogue within the Muslim Arab community. The document calls on governments to review both religious and nonreligious educational curricula in order to inject more innovative thinking. By the same token, it appeals to Islamic scholars (*ulama*) and thinkers to debate the theological underpinnings of terrorism, extremism, and violence. The document also urges those in academe and the media to examine and open forums for discussion of the work of religious innovators (*mujaddadun diniyun*) in Arab society.

The Civil Forum is important because it directly addresses the role of Islam within the region and offers constructive suggestions for promoting dialogue on this critical matter. The initiative appears to make important distinctions between radicals and moderates. Its recommendations look to marginalize violent extremist elements, while allowing for the participation of peaceful moderates. The forum seeks to embark on a dialogue to renew (reform) Islam with the full participation of all its adherents: clerics, scholars, imams, Muslim thinkers, journalists and academics. It highlights the important role debate and dialogue will play in addressing critical issues related to violence, extremism, and terrorism.

Implications for U.S. Policy.

In closing, it is useful to consider the implications for U.S. policy. To date, the Bush administration's focus on Middle East reform at a minimum has energized discussion of the issue in the region. For all of its controversy, the U.S. invasion of Iraq may have contributed indirectly to numerous developments in the region, from the "Cedar Revolution" in the streets of Beirut to Cairo's regular *Kifaya* (Enough) demonstrations, to the first nationwide elections in Saudi Arabia in decades.

Still, several significant challenges remain:

- **Bolstering U.S. credibility in the region stands as a key priority for policy makers.** U.S. favorability ratings in the region continue to hover near all-time lows, impinging on the United States' influence and its ability to effect change in the Middle East. Restoring and strengthening U.S. credibility in the region should be *the* primary objective for U.S. policy makers.
- **The administration must determine how to reconcile the well-documented need for change in the region with longstanding desires for stability.** U.S. policy makers should raise the urgent need for reform at the bilateral level. Consistent yet quiet diplomatic pressure, coupled with a variety of enticements (e.g., increased aid, enhanced market access) for positive movement on reform offers the greatest chance of success. Both Washington and diplomats in the field must signal that reform is a key U.S. interest by repeatedly pressing for the release of imprisoned reformers, an end to press censorship, and the cessation of repressive emergency laws.
- **Engagement with moderate Islamist reformers is essential.** Given the Islamists' strong popular appeal, the United States can no longer afford to call for democratic change in the region while ignoring one of its most powerful political forces. The United States should underscore the commonalities among the demands of secular and Islamist reformers, leveraging the overlap between them to inject greater momentum toward broad reform in the region.
- **U.S. policy makers need to harmonize U.S. policies in support of the Global War on Terror with the desire to promote reform.** In the past, regional regimes were sent mixed messages. U.S. officials applauded security and intelligence cooperation from Arab governments. Yet, crackdowns on suspected terrorists often result in human rights violations and an increase in repression. A successful policy promoting reform must answer the vexing question of how to nurture civil society while guarding against extremism.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for calling this hearing today on such an important issue. The movement toward political reform in this critical region of the world will not be easy, quick, or without difficulties. But, it is necessary and must be sustained. The long-term stability of the region, which is in everyone's interests, is at stake. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

The views above reflect the testimony at the hearing; they do not represent formal positions taken by the Institute, which does not advocate specific policies.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you very much. It's been a wonderful panel to hear from. And we will start with Mr. Ruppersberger for questions.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And I do think it's an excellent panel.

I think we all agree that we would love to see the goal of democracy in countries throughout the world. But then there's the challenge of implementation, and that's a part of what we are trying to talk about today. I think the areas that I would like to focus on in my questions—and I will probably go to you first Mr. Saffuri—are these.

First, how do we deal with radical Islam? Because I see radical Islam, probably as one of our biggest problems as it relates to world peace, as it relates to what's going on in Iraq. And I'm concerned about the education of children with respect to radical Islam. And how do we deal with that issue?

The second issue. I have been to numerous countries throughout the Islamic world, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Libya, over in Asia, different countries. And one of the things that I think has to be done and has to be worked through is the discrimination against women. If we are going to have a true democracy, we have to deal with that issue. Saudi Arabia, considered to be progressive, a woman cannot drive a car. They have police running around trying to catch them showing a little skin or whatever their issues are. And yet, you know, if we don't have women involved—and I think there's a good role model with Karzai in Afghanistan who worked hard to get women involved. I think that's a very important and relevant issue.

The next issue is education. And that is so important. And I talked in the previous panel, infrastructure and quality of life. But that goes in together.

And the fourth is that how do we mitigate, how do we mediate between the different religions? Iraq, as an example, where you have Sunni, you have Shia, you have different religions and have different points of view and they're fighting with each other. How do we pull them together as it relates to democracy? If you can address those four issues, I would—and if we have time, I will go to the rest of the panel.

Mr. SAFFURI. Thank you. I think this is a very difficult subject to tackle.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. That is why I asked the questions. And one point I want to say about Rush Limbaugh. Rush Limbaugh has personally said over and over he is an entertainer. So even though a lot of people like to hear what he has to say in the United States, if he says himself that he is an entertainer, I would send that message out to the rest of the Islamic world when he does—you feel like he is attacking you, that he says he is an entertainer and not a part of the media. Maybe that might help the situation.

Mr. SAFFURI. Well, the problem, these statements come very frequently. And the incident with the desecration of the Quran in Guantanamo, even though Newsweek denied the story, but still the result of that story, as you saw, caused the death of 17 people.

The issue of radical Islam, I really think one of the most important issues is to engage Islamic parties and Islamic activities in dialog. And if you look at the Islamic movement in the Muslim world,

it varies from one country to another. The Islamic bloc in the Kuwait Parliament, they have been participating in elections since 1963, they have 11 people out of 15 in Parliament and they represent—even though they work frequently as the Cabinet members. They are engaged in dialog with the U.S. Embassy in Kuwait. They come frequently to Washington. There was one of the leaders here just 2 weeks ago speaking at the National Defense University. So it's from country to another. The more pressure there is on people, the more radical the reaction comes in the street.

This is my personal belief. You have countries that are allies of the United States receive great aid from taxpayers' money, and these countries imprison people for simply running for Parliament. So when people have no hope in their societies, they become radicalized gradually. So I think the most important thing that the United States needs to do, we need to start with our allies before—I think pressuring Syria is very important, but before we pressure Syria we have to set an example with our closest allies in the area. These countries that get foreign aid, you can use for it as leverage with these countries, whether you want to hold part of foreign aid, whether you want to engage these countries, hold part of the foreign aid until they start conducting political reforms in these countries. And I think having these billions of dollars pumped into these economies should be used to pressure these countries to make change. That is extremely important.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Let me stop you there, because I want to get an issue out. And I know I've had numerous conversations, just this last Sunday night with Muslim Americans about what we can do and what the Muslim community can do to help world peace, to help democracy. And one of the issues that I think is extremely important is controlling the message, something that maybe Rush Limbaugh tries to do. And controlling the message that we need the help of Islamic Americans and other Muslims throughout the world to let the people in other countries know that Islam is not about killing yourself because that's what God wants you to do. And I think you have to start with the younger generation and have to educate. But I am calling out and challenge the American Muslim community, and then Muslims throughout the world who are leaders, to help control that message and to get the message out that Islam is a peaceful religion. And to have people professing that they are killing for God, that's not what it's about. And I would think that any Muslim throughout the world would hold anybody and radical Islam accountable for preaching and for promoting that.

And I think that we can't do it alone, the United States or other countries. We can help you with security, we can help you with infrastructure and money, but we need to have the Muslims throughout the world, the leadership. And I know there's some that are doing it, but it's not enough. And I'm encouraging you to reconsider your goals throughout the world to help us control that message about Islam.

Mr. SAFFURI. Absolutely. I think the Muslim community have a duty to help the United States, but also the U.S. Government has a responsibility on asking the help of the Muslim community. Frequently the State Department implores people that all the relation-

ship with Islam is a few classes at Georgetown University, or being born and coming to the United States at the age of 2 and having very little knowledge of the Islamic world. That is a fact——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. My time is almost up. Mr. Chairman, are you going to let us go a little longer?

Mr. SHAYS. Yes.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. OK.

Mr. SAFFURI. On the woman issue, the other——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Let's get to the women issue about discrimination and how—you know, how can we have democracy and freedom if we don't deal with the issue of women and discrimination? And I know it's a different culture.

I will give you an example. I was at a function, an Islamic function, and talking to the men and women that were mixed together. And then it was time for me to have a speech, and in the room the Muslim women were on one side and the men were on the other. And during the speech I made a comment that I don't really understand, but I understand it's your culture. Boy, after I gave my speech I really got criticized by the women, that this is what we want to do, that's our religion. And that's where we have to understand and educate each other. So I think this discrimination against women has to be dealt with.

Mr. SAFFURI. Yes, I agree——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. It doesn't mean that I am saying to change your culture.

Mr. SAFFURI. Frequently——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. But educating women.

Mr. SAFFURI. Frequently Islam is used to justify the discrimination against women. In reality, it is absolutely not true. I was in Kuwait during the debate over women being allowed to vote in the year 2000. Kuwait issued a decree allowing women to vote; Parliament overruled it. And we were then with the congressional delegation meeting with some members of the Islamic bloc, and they used Islam as a justification. And I challenged them to prove it, and then they backed down. They said actually Islam have nothing to do with it; the whole issue is tribal and culture issue. And this is why—the vote took place 2 weeks ago in Kuwait, and the Islamic parties did not vote, actually did not vote against it because they know that there is nothing in Islam against it.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. It's a good step. But it's also—you need to deal with the issue of education, too.

Mr. SAFFURI. So going back to the issue. I think we need to engage Islamic parties and Islamic activists in dialog whether by inviting them here. The State Department have speakers program where they bring people around the country. I think they should include a large number of Islamic activities. I know the work of NDI and IRI, they do lots of work in the Gulf of Yemen and North Africa. They need to talk to those people. Some countries they probably cannot meet with them probably because, for example, in Tunis, Islamic activism is barred by the government. They put all of them in prison a long time ago.

But you need to engage them, and I think through engagement and dialog you can—I think they will eventually have to admit that lots of stuff was influenced in the last 30 years by Wahhabi ideas

that have nothing to do with Islam; it's more of the ideology, in my opinion. I can debate this——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. But, you know, the influence of children with Wahhabism and the schools that are developing, that's a very serious issue, because the children are very impressionable. And these are some of the people that are recruited to put bombs on their bodies to kill themselves. So I mean, I think—I would like to hear you suggest in dealing with radical Wahhabism, how you as a Muslim and how leadership in the Muslim community can deal with those messages.

Mr. SAFFURI. I think Saudi Arabia is a very close ally of the United States, and I think that's another leverage we should use. We have a close relationship, and these issues should be constantly with——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. But how do we implement dealing with that issue? How do we implement dealing with Saudi Arabia? I was in Saudi Arabia and had conversations about this issue, and they said, well, we have—how can you promote Wahhabism and some of the radical teachings? And yet those are the same people that are attempting to kill your leadership. How would you recommend that we deal with that? If we don't deal with radical Wahhabism and the training of young people, we are going to have serious problems throughout this world for a long time.

Mr. SAFFURI. I do agree with that——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. So how would you recommend that we deal with it?

Mr. SAFFURI. You know, I think the Saudis are trying to make some changes. They have great resistance inside the country. But I think that doesn't mean we should stop pressuring them. I think the pressure should continue. I think more visits from Members of Congress to engage the Saudi leadership, this kind of dialog of making the changes. And also with the leadership. I think the last elections of Riyadh, the Islamic candidates won the entire, the elections for the city of Riyadh. So I think those guys should either invite them to the United States, engage them in dialog. You have to reach some kind of agreement.

I also think another way of supporting more Muslim, moderate Muslim leaders who do not subscribe to the Wahhabi ideas, I think there is plenty of them. I think in the last 30, 40 years, the oil money caused explosion with this Wahhabi ideas all over the world, especially in Muslim communities within the Muslim world or in the West. Because of the access to the large amount of money, these ideas were turned into books and these books were made available where many Muslims who tried to learn about Islam understood the Wahhabi ideas to be the legitimate ideas for Muslim.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Do you think the leaders of the different governments should attempt to have influence on the Wahhabi teachings?

Mr. SAFFURI. I think if they feel the pressure from the outside, they will go hide in a corner and continue their activities. I think it should be an open dialog. And they should be challenged on facts from the history of Islam. Women and Islam participated with men in the battlefield, participated—the prophet's wife was a trader, she was a businesswoman. So now to say women could not drive

a car or women could not mix with men, it is really in total contradiction with Islamic teaching. So you have to challenge it. You have to allow the more open-minded Muslim leaders to challenge it under an open dialog.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Anyone else have comments on what we discussed?

Mr. CAMPBELL. If I could jump in.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Mr. Campbell.

Mr. CAMPBELL. If I could jump in, maybe——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. We learn more this way. Thank you.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Maybe, with respect to my friend—and we have talked a lot, I think, all of us, so you know we see ourselves as colleagues basically. And I didn't hear anything I disagreed with totally, but I think I would challenge the thesis a bit about how to tackle Islam. And I would say that the challenge before us—and I am thinking about NDI and IRI and others that are on the ground doing these programs—it's not so much to democratize Islam. I don't disagree with any of the concerns that you brought up. I think these are real concerns. But I think if we tackle this problem by thinking that we have to go in, in a sense, as outsiders and try to democratize Islam, I think we will get bogged down and not get very——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. I agree. It has to come from within. And success breeds upon success.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Well——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. That's very important.

Mr. CAMPBELL. It does breed success. The other thing is that if we champion freedom—and I don't always like to sound like I'm parroting President Bush's words because I come from a different political vantage point.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. This shouldn't be——

Mr. CAMPBELL. But—but if we champion——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Partisan anyway.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Then what happens is you can build a middle. I think the problem that we run into in Saudi Arabia, even in Kuwait, certainly in Egypt, is that there are two extremes. You are on the government's side where they say, oh, we can't open up because we have the specter of the radicals on that side. If you are on the radical side, they say there is no other choice; the only way we can organize and speak is in the mosque. And I think that the challenge that we have is, in thinking about democracy promotion, is how do you open up that middle? So not so much to democratize Islam, but to provide the political space where other voices can be heard, including——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. So be more specific. How would you implement that?

Mr. CAMPBELL. Well, one thing, pressure to have elections. I agree that elections are not the only answer, but successive iterations——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. But before you can have elections, you must have security. You must train countries to also provide their own security, which is the only way in the end we are going to get out of Iraq. And we have a long way to go there.

Mr. CAMPBELL. That's true. Although—and, again, this is a chicken and egg problem. If you have security but no freedom, then we end up with this problem of developing a malignancy. You know——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. No question.

Mr. CAMPBELL. People have said that we thought we were getting stability in the Middle East; what we were getting was malignancy, and eventually it erupts and it hurts us all. So it's a very difficult balance. You can't have—I'm not suggesting you forget about security and go into democracy in elections, but you pursue these things simultaneously because people are demanding a chance to have a voice. If they don't have a voice, then the radicals dominate the agenda, and I think that's what we have seen.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. And if that is the case, then you must win the hearts and minds of the people, because no government—no one is going to be able to force somebody. They are going to know what their quality of life is.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. If you want to jump in, Ms. Dugan, please feel free.

Ms. DUGAN. Not to put too fine a point on it, but just to perhaps jump off from where Les left off here and talk a little bit about the women's aspect of this. I think it would be a different matter if NDI and IRI found themselves on the ground in a place like Iraq or a place like Afghanistan, saying to people women must be more involved here, so you'll have to go out and try to find them and then we will do what we can to find them.

In fact it's quite the opposite that has occurred. There are women who have come to us from the very beginning and said we need your help, we need an understanding, we need tools to allow us to have our voices be more strongly heard. And as you yourself have pointed out, the women's participation in the political process in Afghanistan has been enshrined to some degree in the constitution of Afghanistan. This is——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. And that started with the leadership of Karzai, too.

Ms. DUGAN. Exactly correct. Exactly correct. So these are the sort of signals that we can take to begin to expand our programs.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. In order to do that, do you feel that education is one of the strongest elements to help this issue of discrimination against women?

Ms. DUGAN. It's a very important element. And the women themselves, I think, are prepared to step up to that plate.

Mr. SHAYS. Did either one of you want to respond to Mr. Ruppersberger's questions?

Ms. YACOUBIAN. Maybe just very, very briefly. One is to actually build on the point that was made here. And that is the whole issue of family code revisions, that—these are laws that dictate women and their status that are often discriminatory. And so certainly one way to begin to get at this problem is to advocate for revision of these family code laws.

I would raise the example of Morocco in which its family code law was revised, I believe it was last year, and it now has one of the most liberal status codes with respect to women in the Arab world. Of course, the trick is that once those revisions are made,

ensuring that in fact those statutes are implemented and so forth. But I think that's a very important means of getting at some of the discrimination issues. And the only other point I'd like to make is that——

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. But where does that have to come from? Does that have to come from the religious leaders? How can you change a code?

Ms. YACOUBIAN. That has to come from government, governments in power and parliaments. And obviously in the Arab world, typically governments are the ones that control these kinds of issues; parliaments often have their hands tied. And I think in this regard the United States can play an important role, quietly to push for and advocate for revisions of family code.

I believe there are discussions now in Algeria—is that correct, Les—about the family law. So this would be an important place again to quietly perhaps lobby and push for revision of a code in such a way that it's more liberal and freer with regard to the way women are treated.

Professor ARMANIOS. I would like to just add that we have to be willing to be open to different voices within even the women's movement itself. For the example of Iraq, we see that there is a spectrum of women's groups, some of which are actually advocating for a greater implementation of Islam. They see that through Islam they would have greater rights. And this is kind of building on your point. It takes a more moderate interpretation in that sense of the religion. But they are still working within those parameters rather than abandoning cultural and traditional values, and that's something that I think we need to be sensitive to on the ground.

Mr. RUPPERSBERGER. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. SHAYS. This is fascinating stuff. I was just thinking as you were talking, I was an administrative aide to a mayor, and I got a call from a constituent who was very unhappy that the legislature was abolishing a law that said women couldn't work past 12 at night. And she was a supervisor and didn't want to work past 12 at night, and so she wanted that law. And I think of that in light of the distortions sometimes that we get in public policy. You know, if she didn't want to work past 12 at night, she needed to work that out with her boss, but she didn't need a law that prevented every woman from working past 12 at night.

I want to just, I have been in awe, I was in awe of the experience I had in Iraq during the election, and I interacted in Irbio with both the International Republican Institute and the National Democratic Institute. In Irbio, one was involved with the monitoring and another was involved with getting out the vote. Do you remember which organization, what your organizations did in that area in Irbio? Do you remember?

Mr. CAMPBELL. Well, the organization that NDI was associated with was called the Election Information Network, which was more a monitoring organization. And IRI was dealing with an organization which was much more about actively encouraging people to vote. I don't remember the name of the organization.

Mr. SHAYS. And you had incredible systems set up around the country. And they were Iraqis. But what was fascinating to me was with the—I think it was the International Republican Institute.

There was a woman who was—appeared to be fairly young. I thought she was still in her twenties. And I was thinking she was devoting morning, noon, and night to this effort. And she was from former Yugoslavia. And I said, why are you here? And she said in so many words: Because your country helped bring democracy. And I don't even know if she said "your country." She said you helped bring democracy to my country, and I wanted to share what I learned with someone else.

I thought the power of that was just extraordinary. Do you remember this young woman? I mean, is she—I mean, just, it was just mind-boggling.

Ms. DUGAN. Mr. Chairman, her name is Olga. She is star on our team in Iraq, which is no small effort, as you know well. And I too am grateful for your praise of our programs there. You can know that it is a very challenging environment but one that the entire staff of IRI is completely dedicated to.

Mr. SHAYS. Was she Muslim herself? I mean, was she a Christian? Muslim? Do you know?

Ms. DUGAN. No. But it's an interesting point that you bring up because it's one of the things that we have tried to do, not only in Iraq, but in many programs that we have around the world. And that is to build off the experiences of those in countries which are—which have come more recently to democracy, who have a more recent experience with how these systems are in fact not only built but rooted deeply. And so here's a young woman who has sort of lived it in her lifetime, who can bring her own sense of how you apply these things in a different environment. And as I think you know well, this is not a cookie-cutter approach that we can take. We understand this from our work. You can't just pick it up, move it over, and put it down. But you can begin to apply a lot of the same concepts and modify them appropriately.

Mr. SHAYS. Well, it spoke to my Peace Corps heart, because I was thinking this wasn't an American telling Iraqis or helping, showing Iraqis. Not that there weren't Americans there, but it was someone closer to their experience. It was just downright extraordinary, it was impressive, and I think of her and the organization and what you all accomplished in that effort.

Last August, I led a CODEL, a number of Members of Congress, not many, but a number, went to Iraq, spoke to the leaders there, the leaders in Jordan, the leaders in Israel, the leaders in the Palestinian community, the leaders in Lebanon. That was really fascinating, how they have been able to kind of cultivate a democracy. And then we went into Syria. And that was extraordinary, too.

What I had learned of Lebanon made me feel that it was so fragile. I mean, there are different leaders, different faiths, allocations of who got to be in what position. And so when there was this effort to get after—the assassination to get Syria to leave, take its troops out of Lebanon, I thought this isn't going to happen. And I was wrong. And it made me think of how surprised I was that Syria did take its troops out. I was surprised that there was a strong movement to make that demand. But then there was the counterforce, Hezbollah and others, the political wing of Hezbollah was out in force.

And so the question I want to ask each of you, because the surprise to me was that Syria took its troops out. I want to ask each of you, what is the biggest surprise that's happened in the Middle East since the fall of Saddam? It can be a positive surprise, it can be a negative. If you have more than one but they are clustered together, you can do that. But tell me the thing that honestly surprised you, your expectation was different. And I'm not going to go in order because you may want to think about this. But is anyone ready to say what surprised them?

Mr. CAMPBELL. I'll jump in.

Mr. SHAYS. OK.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Sure. I think we don't know how it will turn out yet, but what has surprised me are the potential changes in Egypt and the fact that there are people on the street in Cairo and in other places of Egypt. In the years that I've been doing this, I think my greatest frustration has been the inability to find partners in Egypt. NDI now has 10 offices across the region, but one of those offices does not include Egypt. And we have found demand for democracy in almost every other country. If the Syrian government would allow, we could easily work with Syrian reformists more. But Egypt has been difficult. And now there are people on the street. These are not large numbers, it's a couple hundred people in a country of 55 or more million. But the fact that people have the nerve to go on the street, the guts, the steel to go on the street and face arrest and ask for change has really surprised me. I don't know how it will turn out, but that I did not expect.

Mr. SHAYS. Tell me another surprise. Anyone? There has to have been—everything has gone just the way you anticipated it? I mean, there had to have been things that surprised you.

Mr. SAFFURI. I think I have two surprises. One of them that I am still astonished, that the Wahhabi establishment in Saudi Arabia still have so much power and the government claim they cannot do anything about it. That is a huge surprise, because I think the government have lots of power and they can marginalize them.

The other surprise is I think the Arab dictatorships are the only ones in the world besides North Korea that these revolutionary republics are giving the children the Presidency. The President dies now, it's becoming monarchy republics. And it happens in Syria and it looks like it might happen in other places there, too.

Mr. SHAYS. And it's a surprise that could happen.

Mr. SAFFURI. That could happen. Yes.

Mr. SHAYS. In this day and age.

Mr. SAFFURI. Absolutely. Yes.

Ms. YACOUBIAN. I'm actually going to volunteer three surprises. But I think if I sat here and thought more, I could probably give you more. But the first that comes to mind is the holding of municipal elections in Saudi Arabia, which, again, to my mind, represents a very important forward step. While they were limited in many ways, for a country that had not had nationwide elections in decades, to me it showed the power of over time the realization of what happened post-September 11th and the need to change.

I have not had the privilege of going to Iraq, and I have to say that I was very surprised at the way those elections took place, and

very, very wowed by the courage of the Iraqi people to go to the polls.

And, finally, I too was surprised by the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon. And the power of the Lebanese people, again, to go out into the street and demand some control over their destiny, to me very, very powerful, and a reminder of the forces at play at the region and how unpredictable they often are.

Ms. DUGAN. We are a little stymied by the question because I think actually there have been a lot of things in the region that have stunned us, because 5 years ago we couldn't have really considered them.

Maybe the one thing that I will mention is this. For so long the Middle East was the democratic exception, the only place in the world where you just couldn't really have these conversations. Clearly, that's not the case any longer. Now what we find, though, is people in these countries as a result of what happened in Iraq, presumably, saying, you know, if they could have it there, why can't we have it, too? This has been—I think this sort of vocalization of we want it, too, is perhaps, you know, something that's clearly noteworthy.

Professor ARMANIOS. Without being redundant, I would cite both Egypt and the Lebanese case as the most surprising. But overall—I guess I'm—having grown up in the region, I'm surprised by a sense of optimism that exists there now that perhaps had not existed earlier as a result of all of these changes. I'm approaching it with cautiousness, but I'm sharing the optimism as well, that reform will come soon.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Can I cheat, because I have a surprise that someone else told me the other day, which I thought was interesting. And that is that the—his name is Mosin, and I'm sorry I forget his second name. An Iranian student activist who eventually became the architect of the repressive part of the Iranian establishment that enforced certain types of behavior on the street is now a fellow at the Washington Institute, as everyone will know, what's regarded as a pro-Israel think-tank here in Washington. And he is unapologetically there to talk about the possibilities of democracy in Iran and the Middle East. And an Iranian activist said yesterday: Why is this not front-page news in the New York Times and Washington Post? This is amazing.

So I will cheat and add someone else's surprise to that.

Mr. SHAYS. Any others? It's kind of fun to think about. Isn't it?

This is not intended—this question is not intended to justify our presence in Iraq or not. I mean, I voted to go there and so on. But I have to believe that some of these surprises are related to a presence in Iraq. Obviously, the elections in Iraq itself. Obviously the—frankly, the timely death of Arafat, frankly. And I want to know if you think these things would have happened had there not been this stirring up. I'm not saying—it happened now. Maybe they would have happened, but it happened now.

Maybe I will put you on the spot a little, Mr. Saffuri. I mean, not justifying our presence there. But has that been a catalyst for some of these changes?

Mr. SAFFURI. Probably in Egypt, yes. I'm not sure Lebanon. I think the situation in Lebanon's been deteriorating for the last few

years. Lebanon also have a history of democracy. They hold elections, they held elections during 29 years of Syrian presence in Lebanon. I think the biggest factor in Lebanon was really the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri. But I think Egypt probably is a factor. I think another is Kuwait. That debate over women's right to vote and participate in the democratic process in Kuwait, there has been lots of resistance and the government was not willing to confront the tribal section in Parliament or sector and Islamic parties. But because of how they would be viewed by the United States, I think that's how many of them backed down. And I believe in that. I was in Kuwait 2 weeks ago during this debate.

Mr. SHAYS. I don't know what final status is though.

Mr. SAFFURI. Yesterday the decision was made, there was another vote taken that women will be allowed to participate in elections.

Mr. SHAYS. OK.

Mr. SAFFURI. So I think these are major changes, and I think these are taking place because of the United States and because of us being in Iraq.

Mr. SHAYS. I participated in the World Economic Forum, and frankly, in Jordan, and it is one of the most engaging 3 days I have had in the world community. And I see this unbelievable desire on the part of individuals from so many different towns in the Middle East, from wanting to interact and wanting to reverse this report that basically points out that of the 21 Arab states, their gross domestic product is smaller than Spain's, in spite of oil wealth. And it's a powerful feeling that it is, you know, taking place in this forum, and yet there is absolute—there is very strong anger with the arrogance of the United States at the same time. And yet in a way I feel like maybe it should have happened differently. And clearly we shouldn't be so arrogant, but I feel it's happening in part because of what we're seeing happen there.

What the thing that you would fear the most that the United States could do to overplay its cards, to force a response that would be contrary to what the United States would do? In other words, if I asked someone in Iraq their biggest concern, they would say that the United States will leave, after doing all this, after getting us, you know, to a point where we're willing to, you know, come out of the cave in a sense and step forward and risk our lives. Now that's one fear that Iraqis tell me. But what are other fears that you may have that the United States could do that you think would be a mistake? If you could tell the President of the United States or me or someone else, what would you not want to see the United States do?

Mr. SAFFURI. My biggest fear is Iraq turning into a theocratic democracy, and this is a truth here. And the end part is run in the elections, run in the Kurdish umbrella or the Shi'ite umbrella. And I think the majority of parliament now is held by the Shi'ite groups, and my fear is that Iraq will turn into Iran because you have religious and ethnic in the civil war.

Mr. SHAYS. Why don't we take the question that you answered, which isn't the question I asked; what is the biggest fear that you have in the Middle East? Forget the United States for a second. I

should have asked it first. And you gave a very important answer, what is the biggest fear that you have that might occur in the Middle East that we need to be alert to? I'm asking anyone.

Mr. SAFFURI. I think a coup in Egypt or Saudi Arabia would be my biggest fear. I think that would change the two countries and would change the entire region.

Mr. SHAYS. Other comments?

Professor ARMANIOS. I think my biggest fear that the change that the United States is advocating from the ground will appear to be coming only from the United States and not from indigenous sources. It needs legitimacy. The kind of forces we're advocating, it needs legitimacy, and my fear is not being able to engage with wider groups in making significant change.

Mr. CAMPBELL. I'm not sure if I fear that because in our work in the Middle East, we have never seen or felt the demand that we see now. In other words, there is no amount, it seems, of time or staff or money that can satisfy the demand that we're finding from indigenous reformers. I find that there could be more, and they are committed and they are emboldened and empowered by the rhetoric of President Bush and others. Other countries are also stepping forward, Lebanon is becoming very much a European project. Palestine is becoming more and more a European project. So I feel optimistic about the region.

My fear here in the United States is that the constituency, the policy constituency I think and the political constituency, for the realist point of view, for the point of view that says that we have to approach the rest of the world with our interests in mind, and you know, Henry Kissinger had an op ed piece in the newspaper yesterday articulating this very well. The people that believe, that are still there, they're around, they're still in the State Department, they're in academia.

Mr. SHAYS. They believe what, specifically?

Mr. CAMPBELL. They believe that stability is—certainly stability would be paramount and would take precedence over democracy, because there is something inherently destabilizing about democracy. They believe that the United States should approach international relations with its own interests in mind——

Mr. SHAYS. But the interesting thing is—excuse me for interrupting, so keep your thought. If I attributed that policy to any one government official, it would have been Henry Kissinger. That's the irony.

Mr. CAMPBELL. And he is articulating it again——

Mr. SHAYS. But promoting it?

Mr. CAMPBELL. I think he is promoting the idea of stability and——

Mr. SHAYS. Well, that would be consistent with his message.

Mr. CAMPBELL. That is what he is promoting, but he is simply voicing what others still feel—I can't put my fingers on it, but in attending many, many meetings at the State Department talking about Middle East democracy, there is still a large reservoir of doubt and cynicism and skepticism. It is out there. And a lot of people are laying in wait for this whole experiment to fail, and it will become a self-fulfilling prophesy.

And again, I have to preface these things because I don't speak as a political supporter, in fact, I'm a stealth Canadian from a left wing party in Canada. So if I had to express my personal views, but in this business the United States has unleashed, and I think tremendously positively unleashed, something that existed below the surface. I don't think going to war was the right idea, but there is no denying that it has set in motion something unbelievably important. President Bush's rhetoric gives voice to this, and it has energized the demand. The fear is that there are many, many people laying in wait. Europeans that are waiting for President Bush to fail, there are some saying this is a cockamamie idea that is going south, and it's going south in Iraq first.

So my fear is that people, through just kind of being half-hearted, lay back and allow these things to fail. So I think my final comment would be, that those of us who play a lesser role need to redouble our efforts if we're serious about this, and if we honestly believe that they deserve freedom as much as anyone else, that has to be an absolute change in our thinking, it cannot be reversed by the political ups and downs, or even the ups and downs in Iraq. And I think a lot of people are waiting for the political wings to change.

Mr. SHAYS. Any other comments? I'd just like to say I would like to invite you all to my house for dinner, the only problem is I wouldn't want to go to bed. You just make me want to ask more questions. Your expertise is terrific, and you are giving so much thought to these issues. It is really an enjoyable opportunity to have with all of you. Thank you.

Mr. Higgins.

Mr. HIGGINS. Just briefly, Mr. Chairman.

I am relatively new here. And first of all, I'm very impressed with your thoughtful analysis and presentation of a very complex subject matter that is critically important to our national security, but also to the security of our Nation and all free nations throughout the world.

I'm a history teacher, and my focus of attention was Anglo Irish history. But in the study of history and in the presentation of it to students, you find that history lessons inherent in history are timeless and universal, and they belong to no one culture or no one people. And I was struck by not only this panel, but the one that preceded it as well. And we're talking about what is that tipping point, who are the courageous leaders who sometimes are known, but today they may be unknown. And I think of communist Poland in the earlier part of the 20th century, and also the Islamic extremists within the early part of the 21st century, when you look at both of those tyrannical governments, what they seem to do is keep people afraid, keep them isolated. They seek to own everything physical and control everything intellectual.

And I am also struck, the recent passing of Pope John Paul II, forget about religion for a moment, what he did for the Polish people, he taught them to be unafraid, to challenge their government. And when he went to Poland after becoming Pope, he not only talked about God, he talked about history and culture. And his warmth through millions of people into the street, which he gave

them, instilled in them the strength to challenge the old way of government.

And I'm reminded of Machiavelli, who had said that the reformer has enemies, and all those profit by the older order and only lukewarm defenders who would profit by the new order. And what he was saying was reform is very, very difficult. A lot of people want it, but they don't quite know how to get there. And the last panel, Mr. Al-Alusi, I think, demonstrated the kind of emerging courageous leaders that will fundamentally transform the direction of the Middle East to a more free and democratic place. So thank you very much, it has been helpful to me.

Mr. SHAYS. This is a comment only intended to say having been to Iraq seven times, I would have been surprised if the elections hadn't succeeded because I saw in Iraqis tremendous pride, a lot of desire to succeed, and embarrassment in the way that the United States had to come to rid them of Saddam, that this is something they would have wanted to do on their own. And absolute extraordinary astonishment and disappointment that we basically wiped out their police, their army, their border patrol, and started fresh because they had a lot of capable people they felt, their brothers, their uncles and so on, fathers who worked there.

So mistakes, I think, we made. But just an extraordinary—when I meet with some of these Iraqi leaders, and I don't know if you all have encountered this, but I feel like I'm meeting with people who want to be the Jeffersons, the Madisons, the Hamiltons. They feel like they have been given historic opportunity. And obviously not every one, but there wasn't everyone like that in our own beginnings. But they do realize that they have this extraordinary opportunity. And Mr. Al-Alusi is an example of one. I mean, I literally, when I met with him in my office, said you can't go back to Iraq, you are not safe, you are a target, your family is a target; I will do everything I can to enable you to stay in the United States. And he looked at me with some astonishment that I would say that and said, no, I can't desert my party and desert my country, they need me, or it needs me. It was just like this moment of saying whoa, I'm seeing something extraordinary.

So I would like to just end by your all saying what you think a question we should have asked that we didn't, something you want on the record that you think needs to be on the record, and just hear you close up this panel.

Maybe we could start with you, Ms. Dugan.

Ms. DUGAN. Well, we had a bit of a curtain raiser within the first panel, so I have been giving it some thought.

It really speaks to resources. And when I say resources, I mean, quite distinctly, not just money. The fact of the matter is that we are well funded. We will always be looking for more money, but it really has to do with more, it has to do with all the other tools that are available in our tool box, not only from the perspective of an institute like IRI or NDI, but also when it comes to kind of harnessing the energies of the U.S. Government, of the U.S. Congress, of partners abroad, not only at the government level, but also our counterparts at the NGO level and identifying those voices on the ground and giving to them as much oxygen as we possibly can provide.

And I just want to make sure that everyone has a chance to reflect on that, because at the end of the day, that is what will win the day. I thank you, sir.

Mr. CAMPBELL. Again, referring to some of the questions that were provided to us to help prepare our testimony, one of the questions was how should the Bush doctrine be changed or modified to encourage reform in countries. And what struck me in thinking about that is it is very easy to think about the experience in Iraq and some of the things that have happened lately, Lebanon as we discussed and Saudi Arabia and so on, and to assume that we should all be looking for dramatic changes.

It has struck me in my travels back and forth from Iraq and watching Iraq that the experience of Iraq may, in the end, be more instructive and more helpful in helping about the countries that are called liberalized countries in the Middle East, for example, Qatar and Yemen, countries that have gone a certain distance, but who try to manage the process of political change, who attempt to free up, to some extent, are meant to control the rest. And my dealings in Iraq, as I watched 300 parties emerge on the scene, hundreds of civil society organizations and seen Iraqis celebrate the idea that they could go out and cast a vote, it has struck me that Iraq ultimately may cause the greatest change in those countries that are trying to control this process of liberalization. And it seems to me that the greatest challenge exists, and U.S. policy changes challenges exist in pushing—continuing to push in these liberalizing countries, in other words, not just concentrating on the big breakthroughs, the Syrians and so on, but to say you have gone this far, but you have to go further. You are our friend, we respect you, we want to work with you, but this is not yet democracy. So not stopping now and pushing even with your friends. So I think that is a great challenge.

Professor ARMANIOS. I think one of the challenges in front of us today is the extent to which the United States is willing to take risks in the region to promote democracy. Some of the things that might happen are exactly what Mr. Saffuri was implying, the rise of theocracies or the rise of governments that do not necessarily adhere to our own interpretations of democracy.

And I'm just curious to what extent the United States will be willing to go that extra step to engage those groups that frankly have been long disenfranchised and ignored by our policies, but it might be time to really consider how they're going to become included in the future.

Mr. SHAYS. I want to be clear, they being?

Professor ARMANIOS. They being moderates on all sides, those who call themselves moderate, Islamists, those who will be willing to work in a pluralistic society without promoting violence. Nonviolent groups——

Mr. SHAYS. You don't feel that they're being engaged by the United States?

Professor ARMANIOS. I don't feel that they're being engaged enough. And "engaged" here is a problematic word. I don't know how exactly we should go about engaging them, that is a problematic question. I do feel that we should learn more about them, we should find out more about them, who are they.

Mr. SHAYS. And this is more grassroots folks that you're thinking of?

Professor ARMANIOS. Yes, grassroots groups that have been long repressed. I'm not suggesting that we talk to the Muslim brotherhood in Egypt, but we should find out more about their appeal, find out who their message appeals to and why, and talk to those communities.

Mr. SHAYS. Thank you.

Mr. SAFFURI. I think the U.S. Government is talking to the brotherhood in many countries.

There is several points I would like to bring up. First, the issue of Islam and democracy, they are compatible. I would like to stress a point that Islam, the leader or the ruler does not get his legitimacy without the sharia and the baya. When the profit died, he did not appoint anyone, the elderlies, the heads of the tribes had to meet, nominate during the sharia and naya to get the baya. So to argue all the time that Islam is not compatible with democracy is fault. As a matter of fact, the leader is not legitimate as long as he does not go through that process.

The other point is the media. The U.S. Government, according to some reports, have spent over $1.7 billion to spread democracy in the Middle East, and I think some of that money has been well spent and there is lots of—has been put to a great use, but one of the areas that has to be taken a look at, and this is Congress, because Congress appropriated that money, is the media project. I think the viewers show horrors between 2 and 5 percent.

For the amount of money that is being spent, I think about $170 billion a year, that is very little, they have to little of another way of how to turn a horror into a real form that people can watch something, not to compete with Jazeera, but something similar to what Jazeera provides.

There is a real hunger in the Arab street for free dialog and free debate. What Jazeera provided people in the Arab street is something they never seen before, they saw it on CNN, but they never saw it from their press. And for that reason everyone watches Jazeera, regardless, they think some programs are very civil programs, some programs are serious. And Jazeera have been a cause of problem for the government of Qatar. And I think several countries pulled their Ambassadors because of Jazeera, many Arab countries. At one point four north African countries pulled their Ambassadors.

The PLO closed their office one time also. And there was an attack. So they must be doing something right, and I think we teach the whole world, you know, with the influence of Hollywood—Time magazine is everywhere you go. In the airport, there is more Time magazine on the display than there is economists.

So we have this tremendous influence that American media plays on the whole world; on the other hand, we cannot pay any influence as an American media in the Arab street. And this is an area that really needs to be addressed.

Last point. I also have been thinking about this question, and to my mind, the word that immediately came to mind was courage. And I think first it was heartening to have such courageous gentle-

men to sit at the table, and it has been a theme, the courage of those in the region pushing and voting for reform.

I think that here in the United States we need to match that courage with our own, both with respect to what my colleagues suggest with regard to the need to engage Islamist—moderate Islamists and others whom there is a bit of knee-jerk response against. And also I think courage to push for governments in the region who are our friends, who take some of the difficult and necessary steps for opening that in the long term will lead to a more stable free and prosperous Middle East.

Mr. SHAYS. I want to thank each and every one of you. You have been a wonderful panel. You have given us lots to think about. And whether it was intended or not, you leave me with a lot of hope, a lot of hope. And I appreciate the competence of all five of you. It's nice to know that you're doing the work you're doing. Thank you so much.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 1:40 p.m., the subcommittee was adjourned.]