

A “DEMOCRATIC REALIST” FOREIGN POLICY: U.S. DEMOCRACY
PROMOTION IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE CASE OF EGYPT

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Thesis Abstract

İsmail Yaylacı, “A “Democratic Realist” Foreign Policy: U.S. Democracy Promotion in the Middle East and the Case of Egypt”

This thesis analyzes the vision that governs U.S. democracy promotion policy in the Middle East that has been put into practice after September 11 in the particular case of Egypt. The thesis argues that U.S. democracy promotion policy has been theorized and implemented through a neoconservative ‘democratic realist’ foreign policy approach which aims at consolidating authoritarian cooperative regimes through empowering the already excessively powerful executives while opening a limited space for political opposition. In other words the thesis argues that the neoconservative ‘democratic realist’ frameworks for U.S. foreign policy envision a ‘liberal autocratic’ model in their democracy promotion policies in the Middle East whereby the existing authoritarian allies manage, rather than negate, pluralism through institutional and legal engineering and coercion which aims at consolidating authoritarianisms instead of democratization of the Middle East polities. The thesis investigates the IR theoretical repercussions of this neoconservative ‘democratic realist’ foreign policy approach. It argues that constructivist reading provide us with substantial analytical tools in order to go beyond the orthodox theoretical dichotomy of realism and liberalism to see how neoconservative thinkers create a blend of realist and liberal frameworks in their approach to U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East. The thesis also analyzes the criticisms of radical/critical IR theories about the nature of democracy that is on the democracy promotion agenda.

Tez Özeti

İsmail Yaylacı, “ “Demokratik Realist” Bir Dış Politika: ABD’nin Ortadoğu’da Demokrasi Destekleme Siyaseti ve Mısır Örneği”

Bu tez 11 Eylül’den sonra ABD’nin Ortadoğu’ya yönelik başlattığı demokrasileri destekleme siyasetini yöneten tasavvuru Mısır örneğinde incelemektedir. Tez ABD’nin demokrasi destekleme siyasetinin, otoriter fakat işbirliğine açık olan rejimleri, siyasal muhalefete dar bir kapı açmak, fakat yürütme organlarının yetkilerini ve etkinliklerini artırmak suretiyle daha da güçlendirmeyi amaçlayan yeni-muhafazakar ‘demokratik realist’ bir çerçevede kurgulandığını ve uygulandığını savunmaktadır. Diğer bir ifadeyle bu tez, yeni-muhafazakar ‘demokratik realist’ çerçevelerin ABD’nin Ortadoğu’ya yönelik demokrasi destekleme siyasetinde mevcut otoriter müttefiklerin siyasal çoğulculuğu reddetmek yerine kurumsal ve yasal mühendislik yoluyla, ve gerektiğinde zor kullanarak yönetmesini, dolayısıyla siyasal sistemin demokratikleşmesini değil, otoriter rejimin daha da güçlenmesini öngören ‘liberal otokratik’ bir model benimsemesi gerektiğini savunduklarını göstermektedir. Bu bağlamda tez, bu yeni-muhafazakar ‘demokratik realist’ çerçevenin uluslararası ilişkiler teorisi içindeki yansımalarını tartışarak konstrüktivist [sosyal kurgucu] okumanın realizm ve liberalizm şeklindeki ortodoks çatallanmanın ötesine geçerek, yeni-muhafazakar düşünürlerin ABD’nin demokrasi destekleme siyasetiyle ilgili olarak realist ve liberal düşünceleri nasıl harmanladıklarını göstermektedir. Tez ayrıca radikal/eleştirel uluslararası ilişkiler teorilerinin özellikle ABD’nin demokrasi destekleme gündeminde yer alan demokrasi modelinin mahiyetine yönelik eleştirilerini değerlendirmektedir.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I aim at exploring and analyzing the vision that governs U.S. democracy promotion policy toward the Middle East in the particular case of Egypt. More specifically, I provide an International Relations (IR) theoretical analysis and critique of the neoconservative conception of democracy promotion toward the Middle East through the empirical study of U.S. democracy promotion policy toward Egypt after September 11. Thus, the thesis first presents an evaluation of U.S. foreign policy's attitude toward democratization in the Middle East by analyzing its broader repercussions for IR theory, and then more specifically examines the content and impact of U.S. democracy engagement toward Egypt.

My argument has two layers. First, I aim at demonstrating that there is a convergence between neoconservative thinking on democracy promotion toward the Middle East and the U.S. policy toward Egypt. Secondly, I suggest that constructivist and radical/critical IR theories provide us substantial analytical tools that enable us to go beyond orthodox theories of realism and liberalism in understanding, and critically engaging with, the linkage between neoconservative thinking and U.S. foreign policy.

As for the first part of my argument, the thesis holds that despite the fact that the U.S. has declared a 'tectonic change' in its Middle East policy after September 11 from providing support to authoritarian but cooperative regimes towards promoting democratization in the region, the Egyptian case shows that this is not the case in reality. I maintain that this cleavage between the official rhetoric and reality is an outcome of the nature of the

neoconservative “democratic realist” vision for the Middle East which is widely adopted by the Bush administration. In other words, the potentially progressive role of democracy promotion in U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East is adulterated and crippled by a “democratic realist” foreign policy approach that is developed by the neoconservative circles in the U.S.

“Democratic realism” is a term coined by Charles Krauthammer in order to propose a foreign policy perspective for the U.S. toward the Middle East, yet I employ “democratic realism” as an umbrella concept in order to refer to the neoconservative thinking on U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East after September 11. The democratic realists argue that the U.S. should begin promoting democracy in the Middle East in order to eliminate the root causes of terror, or the “Arab-Islamic existential enemy” as Krauthammer defines it, however, since anti-American social forces are prevalent in the Middle East public, the U.S. should adopt a selective and limited approach that would support limited pluralization of the political systems to the extent that the authoritarian regimes would not lose their control over society.

In other words, the discursive shift towards supporting democratization in the Middle East has not been accompanied by a substantive change in policy that would push for political reform in the region. In addition, despite the lipservice paid for democracy by the U.S. officials, the U.S. government provided even more support to authoritarian regimes in the Middle East. This double dealing in U.S. policy, that is a discursive support for democratization and material support for authoritarian regimes, is theorized and justified by the neoconservative thinkers. The U.S. attitude toward the region fits best to the neoconservative schemes such as the ‘democratic

realism’ of Charles Krauthammer, the ‘realistic Wilsonianism’ of Francis Fukuyama, the ‘liberal autocratism’ of Ray Takeyh and Nikolas Gvosdev, the ‘adaptive democracy’ of Liotta and Miskel and the ‘Wolfish Wilsonianism’ of Anatol Lieven, all of which maintain that even if the U.S. adopts a democracy promotion perspective, it should not put real pressure on the authoritarian regimes for more political opening, since a democratic process would bring the anti-American groups such as Islamists, Arab nationalists, and socialists to power. In other words, while providing a conditioned support for democracy promotion policies in the post-September 11 period, the neoconservatives maintain that the U.S. should assume a limited, targeted, selective and realist policy in supporting democratization in the Middle East as its imperial interests are in clear contradiction with the democratic demands of the peoples of the region. In this democratic realist frame promoted by the neoconservative writers, the political field is domineered by an authoritarian ruler who allows for a limited space for opposition, to the extent that the executive does not lose its control over society so that the country continues to follow policies in line with U.S. interests.

I submit that the Egyptian case fits well to the democratic realist design. As the neoconservative writers stipulate, the reform measures initiated by the Egyptian regime do not meet the ideal democratic criteria, and even worse, paradoxically strengthen the authoritarian rule. However, the neoconservative thinkers normatively stand for such a “liberalized autocracy” model. This political position is adopted by the U.S. government in its policy toward Egypt. In Chapter 5, I elaborate on the specific unfoldings of democratic realism in more detail.

This being said, I should also clarify that the thesis does not put the burden and responsibility of political reform in the Middle East on the shoulders of external actors, i.e. the U.S. Nor does the thesis aim at blaming external actors for the apparent lack of democracy in these countries, despite the historical fact that external interventions in the Middle East have nearly always occurred to the detriment of democratization either in the form of downgrading or overthrowing a democratically elected leader, as in the case of the Musaddeq of Iran in 1953, or in the form of backing up friendly authoritarian regimes as in the cases of Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia or Kuwait. Rather, the thesis draws on a diagnosis and maintains that the rhetoric of democracy promotion in the Middle East employed by the U.S. after September 11 does not match the ongoing reality. What is going on in the field is that the Egyptian regime is successfully adjusting itself to the pressures of the international community, especially of the U.S., for democratization by arranging cosmetic reforms and through institutional engineering. The Egyptian regime's policy falls short of the prospect of a transition to a genuine democratic opening, but even worse, it consolidates authoritarian rule and steals the wind of reformist activism. This kind of a democratization trajectory, the thesis argues, is in line with the neoconservative democratic realist framework.

As for the second part of my argument, after analyzing presenting the perspectives of realist and liberal IR theories, I maintain that nonorthodox approaches such as constructivism and radical/critical theories help us in understanding the democratic realist designs of neoconservative writers. By going beyond the simple *realpolitik* of realism that nullifies the question of

democracy and democracy promotion in international politics because of its exclusive focus on material power struggles, and of liberal internationalism that centralizes the creation of community of democracies for the establishment of a 'perpetual peace', constructivism helps us in discerning two points: First, the material power struggle and idealistic appeals to democratic norms are not mutually exclusive. By positing that states define their interests depending on their socially constructed norms, the constructivist analysis help us see how the neoconservative democratic realist thinkers functionally instrumentalize a discourse of American identity based upon being bearer of values, norms and promoter of democracy for the pursuit of solid material interests. Second, it provides the theoretical framework to notice the impact of neoconservative democratic realist thinking on the actual conduct of U.S. foreign policy.

The radical/critical scholars come up with a substantive critique of U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East by basically questioning the nature of democracy that is being promoted. They argue that the U.S. stands for a proceduralist understanding of polyarchy, instead of a participatory democracy, that reproduces the existing inequalities and hierarchies both within and between nations. This kind of a conception of polyarchy that reduces democracy to free and fair elections also tailors democracy so as to serve to the interest of global capital. I elucidate the constructivist analysis and radical critique of U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East in Chapter 4.

Although the international context does have a significant influence on domestic processes of democratization as will be seen in the literature on the international dimensions of democratization, its impact is by all means limited, since democratization is ultimately an internally generated process. In

that sense, in order to show how domestic dynamics interact with international dynamics, more specifically with U.S. foreign policy, the thesis will provide an account of the internal political structures, institutions, processes and agents that further or fetter democratization in Egypt.

As for the method of the thesis, I first situate post-September 11 U.S. democracy initiatives towards the Middle East in the general historical and theoretical context of U.S. foreign policy, and then show the particularities and differences of the neoconservative “democratic realist” approach together with its impact at the policy level. In that context I discuss the substance and aim of the U.S. initiatives (MEPI and BMENA) which provide the broadest framework of democracy promotion programs for the region, through the analysis of the basic texts, speeches or reports released by U.S officials, academics, or think-tanks, and the declarations or statements of different summits or conferences that were organized under the umbrella of these initiatives. In the case analysis, I firstly answer the question of why the Egyptian regime should take U.S. pressure seriously. Why, and to what extent, can the U.S. government exercise power over the Egyptian government? In order to show that, I provide a brief analysis of the political economy of American-Egyptian relations. Then for the purpose of grasping the particular dynamics and practical modalities of the Egyptian regime’s adjustment to internal and external democratization pressures, I concentrate on two sites of reform. Firstly, I analyze Egypt’s reforms in the electoral system for the elections of the president and the parliament, and secondly, I dissect its constitutional amendments about the state of emergency, judicial supervision of elections, secularism and identity politics, and the role of the parliament in

order to see how the Egyptian government responds to the democratization calls of the international democracy promoters, and basically of the U.S. I look at what kinds of changes are made or not made by the Egyptian regime, and what kind of a stance the U.S. takes in reaction to these reforms in order to respond to the question of whether the U.S. substantively pushes for democracy in Egypt.

By analyzing the measures taken in these two fields, I show how they fail to match the rhetoric of democratization used by the U.S. government as well as the Egyptian regime. I push my argument so as to claim that the reform efforts paradoxically help the authoritarian regime to preserve the status quo. This happens in two ways. The first is about the political economy of the endurance of authoritarianism. The U.S. foreign economic, military and political aid to Egypt, including democracy assistance, subsidizes the patronage networks of the Mubarak government. In other words, the \$2 billion annual aid to the Egyptian government serves the function of a rich resource to secure the distribution of patronage benefits through clientalistic networks. The second way of consolidating the status quo is about creating legitimacy. The Egyptian regime performs quite poorly in terms of legitimating itself in the eyes of its citizens, especially after the 1979 Camp David Accords by which the Egyptian government officially recognized the state of Israel. These reform measures provide some degree of legitimacy in domestic politics since the regime gives the impression that it is cognizant of, and sensitive to, societal demands. Introducing *façade* reforms also serves as an instrument of attaining recognition from the international community through image management.

In that context, for several reasons, Egypt is a fairly good case for seeing the dynamics and paradoxes of U.S. democracy promotion policy in the Middle East. Egypt is the country which made the earliest steps towards democratization in the Arab world. In addition, as El-Ghobashy states, apart from being the most populous and politically central Arab state, Egypt also has a “richly textured history of political opposition, one of the longest in the region.”¹ Egypt is the leader of Arab countries in terms of economic growth, population, industrialization, political clout, military capability, and cultural productivity. This leadership manifested itself in the Arab wars against Israel in which Egypt led the Arab alliance. Hence, in terms of democracy promotion in the Arab Middle East, Egypt is deemed as a key country that might be a role model for other Arab countries. This avantgarde role for Egypt is also voiced by President Bush: “Egypt, which showed the way towards peace in the Middle East, can now show the way to democracy in the Middle East.”²

The existing literature mostly handles the issue of democratization in the Middle East through comparative politics literature which relies mostly on the analysis of internal social, political and economic structures, and does not pay enough attention to its external dynamics. On the other hand, the IR scholarship has been “slow to tackle the conceptual, theoretical (normative and explanatory) and practical problems raised by the internationalization of democratization” with some exceptions like the democratic peace theory.³

This thesis will look at the issue from an IR theoretical perspective, and will

¹ Mona El-Ghobashy, “Unsettling the Authorities: Constitutional Reform in Egypt”, *Middle East Report* 226, (Spring 2003). p.28.

² The White House, George W. Bush, The State of the Union, Washington DC, 2/2/2005, available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050202-II.html> ,

³ Hazel Smith, “Why is There no International Democratic Theory?”, ed. *Democracy and International Relations: Critical Theories/Problematic Practices*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2000), pp.1-2.

focus on neoconservative U.S. foreign policy attitude towards Egypt's democratization, with an eye to the international forces and world-ordering dynamics that condition, restrain or empower the internal processes and agents in the region.

As I mentioned above, we cannot put the burden of instituting democracy in a polity on the shoulders of an outside actor, for it is impossible, and not right, to do so. Such a 'mission' is quite conducive to the kind of policies the colonial powers justified through a discourse of 'civilizing mission'. The case of Iraq is a clear and distressing demonstration of this fact. Yet, what makes the criticism of U.S. policy towards Egypt's democratization process legitimate is that the U.S. adopted an official policy of democracy promotion in Egypt, and in the Middle East in general. In other words, the U.S. government admitted, and somehow apologized for, its role in the survival of authoritarian regimes in the past, and after 9/11 decided to leave off that policy and devise a new one that relied on supporting democratization. However, the issue that the thesis problematizes is that the Egyptian case shows us that the U.S. does not push for democracy and that there is a substantial gap between the rhetoric and reality of U.S. democracy promotion towards the Middle East. I argue that this kind of a gap between rhetoric and reality is well justified and theorized by the neoconservative authors who have a significant clout over the Bush administration, and the constructivist and critical IR theories provide us with significant conceptual frameworks to comprehend the linkage between the neoconservative democratic realist outlook and U.S. foreign policy in the Middle East.

CHAPTER 2: THEORIZING AND HISTORICIZING DEMOCRACY

PROMOTION IN INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

“Man’s capacity for justice makes democracy possible; but man’s inclination to
injustice makes democracy necessary”
Reinhold Niebuhr, *Children of Light and Children of Darkness*.

In this chapter, I will provide a theoretical and historical account of democracy promotion in international relations, and more specifically in American foreign policy tradition. I divide the chapter into two. In the first part, I discuss how orthodox IR theories and American foreign policy traditions, namely realism and liberalism, conceive and interpret democracy promotion in international relations and in American foreign policy. Then, in the second part I provide a general historical sketch of democracy promotion in U.S. foreign policy as perceived and formulated through the orthodoxies of international politics. Since all human actions rely on some sort of a rationale, I will first try to unpack the theoretical baggage that lies beneath the democracy promotion policies.

Yet, before moving to the IR theoretical discussion, I should define what I mean by democracy promotion. Being one of the contested issues of international relations and foreign policy, there is hardly any agreement among IR scholars on the meaning of democracy promotion. Sheila Carapico states that:⁴

(...) while some analysts view it [American democracy promotion] as an unnecessary intrusion into the otherwise normal conduct of diplomatic relations—a position still championed by Henry Kissinger—others regard it as part of a practical strategy designed to advance American national interests. More cynical observers see it as a mere façade

⁴ Sheila Carapico, “Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World”, *Middle East Journal* 56 no.3 (Summer 2002), p. 379.

designed to mask the hard edge of American hegemony; quite a few, however dismiss it almost completely as being of very minor importance in understanding the deeper sources of American conduct in world affairs. There is even a strand of thinking which seems to feel that the promotion of democracy is a form of Western arrogance, stemming from the quite false assumption that a concept of human rights born under one set of conditions has universal meaning and could and should be applied to other, very different, cultures.

In a broader sense, democracy promotion projects are initiatives “designed to enhance legislative, judicial and civic responsibility”.⁵ Thomas Carothers argues that the “standard template” for worldwide democracy assistance projects assumes a “natural sequence whereby a loosening of authoritarian controls is followed by breakthrough elections and transfer of power to liberal-democratic forces”.⁶ The premise that underlies under these democracy promotion initiatives is that politically active agents (parliamentary candidates, judges, women, journalists, intellectuals, non-governmental organizations) would lobby governments and stir up public support for a liberal reform agenda. For instance in the case of some Arab countries in the mid-1990s, the “breakthrough” elections were monitored and then further projects were initiated in order to “stimulate demand for democracy” within civil society “by explaining democratic rights and responsibilities to potential opinion-leaders”.⁷

U.S. democracy promotion strategy is run by various governmental, quasi-governmental and non-governmental agencies. The most fundamental governmental agencies involved in democracy promotion are the Agency for International Development (AID), the U.S. Information Agency (USIA), the

⁵ Loc.cit.

⁶ Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, (Washington, D.C., The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999).

⁷ Carapico, art.cit., p. 380.

Department of State, the Department of Justice and the Department of Defense.

The quasi-governmental agencies engaged in democracy promotion are the

National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and Asia Foundation.⁸ These

organizations nearly exclusively depend on government funding and their

programs mostly focus on “the rule of law, the administration of justice, human

rights, political processes including elections, civil society, government

institutions, and civil-military relations.⁹

⁸ After September 11, various democracy promotion programs were initiated by the U.S., the E.U. (and various European countries like Germany, Sweden, France), and Japan, and by the United Nations and the World Bank.

The foremost democracy brokers that operate in the Arab World are:

1. US State: MEPI, BMENAI
2. National Endowment for Democracy
3. USAID
4. National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) (Democrat Party’s affiliate)
5. International Republican Institute (IRI) (Republican Party’s affiliate)
6. International Center for Human Rights and Democratic Development (ICHRDD) (NED of Canada)
7. Westminster Foundation for Democracy (established by British Parliament)
8. French Socialist Party’s Foundation Jean Jaures, Jaures
9. Swedish Labor Party’s Olaf Palme International Centre
10. Austria’s Bruno Kreisky Forum
11. Ford Foundation
12. European Commission (Euro-Med, Barcelona Process)
13. World Bank
14. The Konrad Adenauer Foundation
15. Friedrich Ebert Foundation
16. Friedrich Naumann Foundation
17. Reporters sans Frontieres
18. Austrian Study Centre for Peace
19. Institut International des Droits de l’Homme
20. International Institute for Democracy in Strasbourg (Netherlands)
21. Italian NGOs for International Development Cooperative (NOVIB)
22. The Greek Committee for International Democratic Solidarity
23. Canadian Auto Workers’ Social Justice Fund
24. Thompson Foundation (London-based)
25. Penal Reform International (London-based)
26. International Federation of Journalists
27. The Interparliamentary Union
28. International Commission of Jurists

Those who have reportorial as opposed to interventionist activity in the Arab World are; Amnesty International, Freedom House, and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. See, Sheila Carapico, “Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World”, *Middle East Journal* .56 no.3 (Summer 2002), p. 380,. The entire list of democracy promoters in the Arab world can be reached at http://www.wmd.org/asstfound/asst_profiles.html

⁹ Despite the fact that these governmental bodies mostly target institutions abroad, USIA also has a ‘public diplomacy’ mission -which is regarded as part of U.S. democracy assistance- that targets individuals abroad “regarding U.S. policy and U.S. values, including democratic

Orthodox Theories

Realism

In order to understand the realist approach to democracy promotion, we should first state that the realists are by no means impressed with the liberal democratic triumphalism that emerged with the end of the Cold War. While explaining why *No One Loves a Political Realist*, Robert Gilpin, a structural realist, stresses the same point: “We think bad thoughts, such as refusing to believe that, with the defeat of the Soviet Union and the end of the cold war, the liberal millenium of democracy, unfettered markets, and peace is upon us”.

10

In general, the realist understanding of international politics is dominated by the view that politics, both domestic and international, is a “competitive struggle for power conducted among those at the top who care little for ideals, and even less for the comfort of their fellow citizens.”¹¹ Hence, placing the state, rather than the people, at the centre of the analysis, and regarding state interest, defined through the possession of power, as an end in itself and as the single morality politics can/should appeal to, realism keeps ideals, norms and ethical judgements out of the field of legitimate motives for international politics. This kind of “brutal realism” does not open an autonomous space for ideas and ideals to become effective elements in foreign policy making. Democratic ideals are no exception. Indeed, since realist

principles”. Elizabeth Cohn, U.S. Democratization Assistance, Foreign Policy in Focus, Interhemispheric Resource Center and Institute for Policy Studies 4, no.20, 1999, p. 1.

¹⁰ Robert G. Gilpin, “No One Loves a Political Realist”, *Security Studies* 5, no.3 (Spring 1996), p.3.

¹¹ M.Cox, G.J.Ikenberry and T.Inoguchi, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.1.

thinking was mostly employed by, and identified with, the ruling elites, most of whom were of aristocratic origin in eighteenth century Europe, originally it had an apparent antagonistic position to the nationalist democratic movements.¹²

Nonetheless, apart from the historical confrontation between realist policymaking and thinking and democratic aspirations and politics, the antagonism between the two goes deeper. Since Thucydides, who is viewed to be the first one that developed the core insights of classical realism, no moral values and norms that transcend the boundaries of states are seen as capable of having a regular effect on the behaviors of state elites. States, for realists, act in a world of anarchy whereby militarized conflict always remains as a possibility because of the lack of a government of governments. According to the later realists, and for Thucydides as well, this logic of international anarchy inhibited any idea of eternal escape from conflicts and wars. Yet, despite the existence of a common ground shared by nearly all realist international theorists, we cannot reduce the internal variance within realist thinking which also reflects itself to the analysis of democracy promotion.

Broadly speaking, if we are to follow the threefold classification of realist thinking as classical, neoclassical and neo-realism (or structural realism), we can argue that classical and neorealism mostly dismiss the idea of democracy promotion as a reflection of their disbelief in the potential of democracy as a pacifying force in international politics. For classical realists, this is because of the nature of human beings, and for neorealists, because of

¹² Democracy as a “progressive” political aspiration was discarded and resisted by the “conservative” ruling classes who were by and large acting in a realist frame. Realism, in that sense, can easily be identified with conservative political ideology. Edward Hallet Carr makes a parallel argument in his analysis whereby he juxtaposes the “utopian” and “realist” approaches and says that utopian thinking is mostly associated with the liberal and socialist theory, and realism is close to conservative ideology. See, Edward Hallet Carr. *The Twenty Years' Crisis: 1919-1939*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1939).

the anarchical character of the international system. As for the neo-classical realists, the conclusion is mixed. Without giving up their basic idea that nothing, including the democratization of states all over the world, can eradicate the possibility of violent conflict among states, they attach value and a role to democracy in world politics to the extent that it can foster transparency about the motivations of states.

The classical and neoclassical realists see the root causes of international disputes in human nature. For realist scholars such as Thucydides, Machiavelli, Hobbes, E.H.Carr, H.Morgenthau, and contemporary scholars like R. Schweller, human conduct is a function of basic instincts like fear, quest for survival, glory and wealth, hence, it is motivated by the search for security. These quests, they argue, are by nature competitive and conflictual since they view it in a zero-sum logic whereby the existence of a winner necessitates a loser. In that sense, politics is conflictual and war is a continuation of politics with other means, as Clausewitz stated in his famous dictum.

For classical scholars regime type does not alter this fundamental attribute of human beings, and hence, of politics. For instance in his magnum opus, *The Peloponnesian War*, Thucydides argues that Athens, whose regime was democratic, behaved offensively since it fell relatively weak vis-à-vis its rival, Sparta, which was getting stronger. In other words, the fact that Athens was ruled by a democratic regime did not change the imperatives of the security dilemma.

Apart from the theoreticians who see the egotistical interests of a particular body-politic as the final end in itself, the ethical view of realist international theory is that moral good can best be served when it is not

instrumentalized within politics. According to the realist scholars, since morality always serves the interests of the status-quo power¹³, politicians and academicians should give up referring to moral ideals and goals in international politics. Such moralistic zeal is built around misconceptions as to how international politics really operates and thus creates crusades to remake the world.¹⁴ From such a realist angle, democracy promotion with reference to universal democratic ideals is backfiring, if not absurd. For instance, an influential diplomat and commentator of the Cold War era, George Kennan, discards the idea of democracy promotion as “mere moralism”, and maintains that “in the real world such high minded idealism was not only of little practical utility but likely to lead the United States into dangerous crusades”.¹⁵

Classical and neo-classical realists contend that it would be an empty endeavor for a state to orient its foreign policy towards regime change in another state since what counts is not the type of regime itself but the desire to maximize interests “defined in terms of power”¹⁶. Moreover, from that perspective, America’s preoccupation with democracy promotion around the

¹³ Edward Hallet Carr, *The Twenty Years’ Crisis: 1919-1939*, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1939).

¹⁴ The most prominent theoretician and practician of such an idealist/liberal foreign policy was Woodrow Wilson, who was criticized by the realist thinkers for getting the country into serious trouble because of the cosmopolitan/democratic impulse in his foreign policy after 1919. Wilson thought that foreign policy must not be defined in terms of material interest, and should be more concerned with human rights than with property rights.

¹⁵ George Kennan, *American Diplomacy, 1900-1950*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958). Quoted in M.Cox, G.J.Ikenberry and T.Inoguchi, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.6.

¹⁶ This is a classical and neo-realist view that domestic politics, especially the type of regime, is not a meaningful category in the study of international relations, since the desire for power and interest are universal, and either embedded within human nature (as the classical realists, like Hans Morgenthau argues) or definitive of the modus operandi of the international system (as the neorealists like Kenneth Waltz maintains). See Hans Morgenthau, *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1967), and Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, (New York: McGraw Hill, 1979). In addition, some conservative and realist critics of democracy promotion policies maintains that these policies do not support US military and political interests, and may harm them by diverting attention and resources. In this paper, I challenge this argument and argue that democracy promotion serves both ideational and material interests of the US.

world was seen as an “essentially idealist impulse rooted in the moralism and exceptionalism of the American political tradition”¹⁷ which is often at the expense of American national interests.¹⁸ This was why prominent realist scholars like Hans Morgenthau and Walter Lippmann discouraged the U.S. policymaking circles against asserting democratization at a global scale as a foreign policy goal.¹⁹ Henry Kissinger is also quite skeptical about the pacifying impact of democracies. While commenting on U.S.’s relations with Russia and more specifically on U.S.’s democracy agenda towards Russia, he argued that “As in 1930s Germany, it is quite possible that an elected Russian leader might pursue a most unsettling foreign policy” and that “what passes for Russian democracy too often encourages an expansionist foreign policy.”²⁰ He stated that the Clinton administration’s policy of democratic enlargement was misguided and suggested, in a way that clearly illustrates the realist position, that the U.S. should not deal with Russia’s domestic regime and should confine itself to Russia’s foreign policy behaviors.

While the classical and neoclassical realist scholars explain international relations through certain axioms on human nature, the neorealists emphasize the determining centrality of the logic of anarchy embedded in the international system. This is why they are also called structural realists. One common theme among the realist scholars is that states are functionally similar

¹⁷ G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Liberal Grand Strategy: Democracy and National Security in the Post-war Era”, p.103, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁸ Here, I define idealism as the subordination of material interests and goals to superior ethical standards and the exaltation of moral and spiritual purposes.

¹⁹ Steven W. Hook, “Inconsistent U.S. Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad.” *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, ed. by Peter J. Schraeder, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p.111

²⁰ Henry Kissinger, “Moscow and Beijing: A Declaration of Independence”, *The Washington Post*, May 14, 1996, quoted in Strobe Talbott, “Democracy and the National Interest”, *Foreign Affairs* 75, (November/December 1996), p.15.

units and that regimes of states and forms of governments are not determining factors in international politics. This notion is most powerfully stated in Kenneth Waltz's *Theory of International Politics*. By drawing on the game-theoretical foundations of liberal microeconomics, Waltz argues that states are functionally the same units in the international arena as firms are in the market. Therefore, what is substantial is not the specific attributes of these actors since they are all functionally the same, but the power capabilities of each actor and the structure of the system within which they act and which patterns, if not determines, the behavior of the actors regardless of their particularistic attributes. In other words, from a realist point of view, the anarchical international system imposes its logic on each and every state regardless of their intentions, aims and motivations. Waltz labels classical realism as a reductionist approach since it overemphasizes the role of individual agents such as leaders. For him, the quest for power defined in terms of military capability and security, instead of the attributes of regimes and leaders, determines state policies in the anarchic system.

Looking from a Waltzian structural realist point of view, the democratic peace theory which purports that democracies do not go to war with each other, is just another form or manifestation of reductionism in that it does not provide a systemic approach and underemphasizes the logic of anarchy that creates security dilemma. The democratic peace argument, which is the theoretical source of democracy promotion policies, is viewed as "little more than a misleading artefact" by leading Waltzian structural realists like Christopher Layne and John Mearsheimer.²¹ They view democracy promotion

²¹ See, John J. Mearsheimer, "Back to the Future: Instability in Europe After the Cold War" in Michael Brown et al. (eds), *The Peril of Anarchy: Contemporary Realism and International*

as relying on a “misleading statistical artifact” and openly denounce a U.S. foreign policy based on democracy promotion by arguing that such a policy orientation might lead to a “dangerous complacency about future great power challengers, ‘disastrous military interventions abroad, strategic overextension, and the relative decline of American power’”.²²

As opposed to the classical/neoclassical and structuralist realists, the motivational realists, who represent a branch of neoclassical realism, see some merit in democracy promotion. This realist school’s fundamental emphasis is on the intentions and goals of the states. In other words, the motivational realists define the international system in terms of ‘old style power politics’ whereby competition and conflict among sovereign states are the binding forces and where the basic motivation is not only to defend itself but to augment its power and advance its national interests. By doing so the motivational realists oppose the structural realist assumption that states are basically security seekers in the anarchic world of international relations.

A rigorous critique of post-September 11 American foreign policy in the Middle East has been developed by F. Gregory Gause III. Looking through realist lenses, Gause III argues that promoting democracy in the Middle East presents a paradox for the U.S. as greater political freedom threatens well-entrenched U.S. interests, which are enumerated as “oil, Israel’s security and peace process, debt rescheduling, sanctions against rogue states” by Sheila

Security, (Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1995). In the same edition, also see Christopher Layne, “Kant or Cant: The Myth of the Democratic Peace”.

²² Randall L. Schweller, “US Democracy Promotion: Realist Reflections” in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.41

Carapico.²³ For her, these realist concerns rank higher in the foreign policy agenda of the US.

Gause III argues that the George W. Bush administration is “sincerely” interested in democracy promotion because of its belief that bad governance-not individual personalities or U.S. policies- causes terrorism. In other words, according to this view, if the Middle East was to be governed better, terrorism would abate, and so would threats to the U.S. Yet Gause challenges this idea by depending on the following arguments:²⁴ First, he maintains that there is no evidence that democratic governments produce fewer terrorists. Second, he argues that there is no relationship between regime type and terrorism. Third, he contends that American enemies in the Middle East detest democracy, so there is simply no reason to believe terrorists will welcome it by ceasing their attacks.

For G. Gause III, the possible consequences of U.S. democracy promotion policy in the Middle East would be stark. It would mean success for Islamists since it is “incontrovertible” that they fare well in open political systems. If Islamists gain power, Gause opines, they would moderate their policies yet they would still undermine “the two major pillars of U.S. Mideast policy: The first of these is support for a two-state solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.” The Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan already oppose their countries’ peace treaties with Israel arguing that the Israeli state is an “unacceptable imposition” on Arab territory. The second fundamental U.S. interest in the Middle East is to maintain its strategic position in the Persian

²³ Sheila Carapico, Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World, *Middle East Journal* 56, no.3, (Summer 2002), p. 380.

²⁴ Michael Kugelman, *Democratizing the Middle East? Lighting the Path to Understanding*. The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Occasional Paper No.2, (Tufts University, 2006), p.40.

Gulf. He argues that “Islamists would reject all manifestations of this position- US military bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Qatar; access agreements in Oman and Saudi Arabia; and military cooperation with Egypt and Jordan that grants both American warships access through the Suez Canal and U.S. aircraft permission to use these countries’ airspace.”²⁵

Herein lies the paradox that Gause falls into and which the U.S. government is more akin to: Since democracy promotion endangers long-held U.S. interests, for Gause, one way “to square this circle” is if the Bush administration “emulates Ronald Reagan’s human rights promotion strategy of the 1980s which targeted the poor human rights records of U.S. foes but not U.S. allies. For Gause it seems that this is the way the Bush administration is now moving: it is focusing the regime change/democratization agenda on Iran and Syria, but “treated lightly” with Mideast allies such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia.²⁶

We should also think of the very high level of anti-Americanism embedded within the Arab people. Shibley Telhami argues that “vast majority” of the Arabs think that they were better off prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq.²⁷ When asked to identify the world’s two most threatening countries, 70 percent of Arabs cite the United States as one of the top two. Surveys reveal that when asked to state United States’ true intentions in the Middle East, most of them cite a U.S. desire to protect oil and assist Israel. Most of the respondents believe that spreading democracy is not a U.S. objective. How then, asks Telhami, can the U.S. go about promoting democracy in a region

²⁵ Ibid, p. 41.

²⁶ Loc.cit.

²⁷ Ibid, p.42.

that regards Washington as one of its biggest threats and that is highly skeptical of American pledges to spread democracy?

In sum, neo-classical realists see democracy promotion as an “unnecessary intrusion into the otherwise normal conduct of diplomatic relations”²⁸ and structural realists view democracy promotion as a theoretically dubious and politically dangerous attempt. On the other hand, motivational realists accept that states which have transparent and open regimes would behave differently from those who have inaccountable and close ones. Motivational realists contend that democracy cannot create a perpetual peace or permanent democratic peace, yet it might ameliorate, if not eliminate, some causes of war such as diffidence, competition and glory, as stated by Hobbes.²⁹

Liberalism

If we are to associate the policy of democracy promotion with a theoretical tradition, it is the liberal tradition of international relations and foreign policy, and especially its democratic peace proposition. Charles Krauthammer asserts that liberal internationalism has become the “religion of the foreign policy elite in the 1990s”.³⁰ An analysis of the discourse employed by the official documents of democracy assistance programs and of the speeches of the officials reveals that there is an explicit reference to the basic axioms, and even to the name, of democratic peace theory.

²⁸ Henry Kissinger, “Reality and Illusion about the Chinese”, *Independent*, 18 October 1999.

²⁹ Randall L. Schweller, “US Democracy Promotion: Realist Reflections” in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp.41-62.

³⁰ Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, (Washington, D.C: The American Enterprise Institute, 2000), pp.3-4

When we are to think of the repercussions of liberalism in IR theory, we should first keep in mind that liberalism is a body of premises, ideas and institutions that originally and primarily pertains to domestic politics. In other words, historically speaking, liberalism emerged as an ideology that basically set the frame of national politics by prioritizing private property, individual rights and limited representative government. Liberalism, and its fervent critique-realism, have been the two fundamental modes of thinking and acting in international relations. Immanuel Kant is regarded as the philosophical source of liberal international theory, yet some assert that the liberal/idealist approach first made its solid appearance in the Hague Conferences in 1899 and 1907 in which world leaders attempted to settle international disputes through diplomatic dialogue although failing in limiting armaments and preventing World War I.³¹

The “internationalization” of liberal theory has created a complex picture, since different liberal thinkers embraced different postures when it came to international relations. In that sense, equating liberal international thinking with the “natural harmony of interests in world politics” thesis would be an oversimplification. For instance, as Doyle points out, some strands of liberal thinking represented by Bentham, Cobden or Schumpeter assumed a pacific stance, yet another liberal philosopher, John Stuart Mill, “justified imperialism under some circumstances and intervention under others”.³² Thus, we should first state that there is no unitary and homogeneous bloc of liberal international thought, yet there are certain axioms shared by all thinkers.

³¹ Elizabeth Cohn, “Idealpolitik in US Foreign Policy: The Reagan Administration and the US Promotion of Democracy”, (Ph.D. diss., American University, 1995), p. 21.

³² Michael Doyle, “Peace, Liberty, and Democracy: Realists and Liberals Contest a Legacy”, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.27.

If we are to mention them in brief, the first is the primacy of the individual over the state, and individual rights and goods over state interests. The international system is not defined as a realm of continuous state of war, it is at least a “heterogenous state of peace and war, and might become a state of global peace in which the expectation of war disappears”³³ Deeply embedded within modernity’s optimistic idea of progress, liberal thinkers opined that a “perpetual peace” might come about if human beings adopt the liberal premises, values and institutions like rationality, free trade and republicanism, now interpreted as democracy.

As for the nature of the state, the liberals also develop a distinctive understanding of the aims of the state. The realist orthodoxy maintains and the realist orthodoxy reinforces that in the lack of an international sovereign, the imperatives for the state elites are to act in a logic of survival, as the anarchical system also brings self-help measures in a world of continuous ‘state of war’. The liberals draw parallelisms between the behaviors of individuals and states by maintaining that state behavior, like the behaviors of individuals, is not confined to the motives of security, interest and honor, the motives that are placed at the core of political behavior by the classical and neoclassical realist thinkers. This conception of the aims of the state makes it possible to think of another conception of anarchy which is not driven by zero-sum logic of the security dilemma. In other words, the international system does not homogenize state behaviors through socialization or elimination. This kind of understanding of international politics appreciates coordination and

³³ Loc.cit.

cooperation and maintains that cooperation delivers more compared to what competition delivers.³⁴

Another main argument of liberal international thinking is that relations among liberal states are essentially different from the relations among illiberal states in the way that they cease to be monopolized by the security logic imposed by the anarchical system in that they become open to the influence of other factors, such as free trade, which mitigates the influence of security dilemma. This line of argument follows from the great Enlightenment philosopher Immanuel Kant. In his classical work on international politics where he opined on the philosophical and material preconditions of a “perpetual peace”, Kant maintained that the first, may be the most important, precondition for an eternal peace³⁵ is that every state must be republican, now read as democratic.

The legacy of Kant has been reformulated by the democratic peace theorists such as M.Doyle and B.Russett. What is essential here is that all liberal international theorists put a strict emphasis on the character of the state. Contrary to the realist claim that all states are functionally the same units, liberalism asserts that states are different actors and that they differ from each other according to their respect for individual rights and liberties. The liberal theory maintains that different behaviors in international politics are reflections of different domestic configurations and manifestations of ideas, interests, and

³⁴ See Robert O. Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1984).

³⁵ For Kant peace does not mean mere lack of wars but means making war impossible. In other words, peace is not an interval between wars, but a “total nullification of war”. See, *Perpetual Peace, and Other Essays on Politics, History, and Morals*, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1983).

institutions,³⁶ hence, it makes a substantial difference in policy outcomes as to whether a state is liberal or illiberal, democratic or authoritarian, capitalist or socialist. In other words, the form of government in national politics has a substantial impact on the international relations of that polity. Thus, for liberals, regime type matters. They argue that liberal states are “inherently respectful of international law” and peaceful.³⁷

In a nutshell, the main thesis of the democratic peace theory is that the existence of democratic states in the international system reduces threats and strengthens security by pacifying the liberal states towards each other and by forging alliances amongst democratic states against non-democracies. Tony Smith argues that this does not mean democracies do not wage wars.³⁸ On the reverse, the “monadic thesis” argues that democracies do go to war and they are no less warrior than non-democracies, and sometimes they are more prone to resort to military violence than non-democracies especially if they are in the process of transition.³⁹

Dean Babst states that between 1789 and 1941, no war has occurred between elected governments. Doyle argues that there is a clear empirical law that democratic dyads do not fight with each other. Doyle defines democracy as a political regime that is based on “public welfare, redistributive justice, popular sovereignty, individual liberty and political participation”. He then counts three reasons for that. The first is that the domestic political cultures of democracies are based on peaceful conflict resolution (inspired by Kant’s

³⁶ Doyle, art.cit., p.28.

³⁷ Loc.cit.

³⁸ Tony Smith, “National Security Liberalism and American Foreign Policy”, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.85.

³⁹ See, Jack Snyder. *From Voting to Violence: Democratization and Nationalist Conflict* (Norton Books 2000); *Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and International Ambition* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991).

“constitutional restraints”); the second is that democracies share common moral values (inspired by Kant’s “pacific union”); and the third is that economic cooperation and interdependence makes war more difficult (inspired by Kant’s “spirit of commerce”).

Bruce Russett, a foremost theorist of democratic peace, questions the reasons and constitutive elements of democratic peace. Which factors cannot account for the lack of war among democracies?⁴⁰ What is the role of ideological similarity? Russett enumerates transnational and international institutions, geographical distance, political and military alliances, economic wealth, ideological similarity and political stability as arguments that are put forward as a challenge towards democratic peace theory’s claim that democracy is what makes peace. He handles all these arguments one by one and comes to the conclusion that although the abovementioned factors might contribute to inter-democratic peace, it is democracy itself, not any another factor, that lies beneath the lack of war among democracies. Drawing on that conclusion, Russett makes a claim that echoes Fukuyama: “If history is the history of wars and conquests, then democracy is the end of history”.⁴¹

Realist scholars such as K. Thompson and Stephen Krasner oppose the liberal democratic peace proposition by arguing that economic interdependence is a phenomenon of at least 200 years, but it could not prevent wars. One basic reason for that differentiation in judgement is differing approaches to international trade. The liberals, following the Ricardian logic of comparative

⁴⁰ Russett defines war as a “large scale, institutionally organized violence” whose casualty must be at least 1000. This kind of a definition do not include the colonial wars and civil wars in the analysis.

⁴¹ Bruce Russett. *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.138. We should also note his another remark in the context of the current U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East: : “To be safe democracy must kill its enemy when it can and where it can”. Ibid, p.94.

advantage, maintain that what matters in the last analysis is the absolute advantage of the states. The realists, on the other hand, argue that since politics is always competitive and egotistical, states aim at attaining the upper hand, hence focus on the relative, instead of absolute, gains.⁴²

Despite the universalist and pacifist language adopted by the liberal internationalists, they were neither totally universalist nor totally pacifist. Woodrow Wilson, the champion of liberalism in international politics, and the foremost practitioner of moral crusaders, resorted to military force at least seven times between 1914 and 1918,⁴³ adding that his endeavors for the creation of a community of democratic states was not motivated only by ideals, but by interests as well:⁴⁴

(...) liberal democracy was the best antidote to Bolshevism and reaction in a world turned upside down by global war. Even his [Wilson's] support for self-determination was as much a strategic ploy as a moral demand. As the record reveals, the ultimate purpose of the slogan was not to free all nations, but rather to undermine the remaining empires on the European continent and win America friends in eastern and central Europe. Wilson understood, even if his later realist critics did not, the power of values and norms in international relations.

After all, if democracies do not go to war against each other, as the democratic peace theory asserts, then it would be in the interest of the U.S. to “make the world safe for democracy”. And if the democracy that is being promoted is in a symbiotic relationship with the globalized market economy,

⁴² For further discussion of the topic see, Joseph M. Grieco. 1988. “Anarchy and the Limits of Cooperation: A Realist Critique of the Newest Liberal Institutionalism”, *International Organization* 42, no.3, pp. 485-507

⁴³ Frederick Calhoun, *Power and Principle: Armed Intervention in Wilsonian Foreign Policy*, 1986, quoted in *Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.6.

⁴⁴ Ibid, p.7. Lawrence E. Gelfand provides an excellent discussion of the issue, ‘Where Ideals Confront Self-Interest: Wilsonian Foreign Policy’, *Diplomatic History* 18, no.1, (Winter 1994), pp.125-134.

promoting democracy is indeed promoting ‘free markets’ all over the world, then it would make perfect sense for the U.S. to support it as the U.S. is the supreme beneficiary of the global economy.⁴⁵

I argue that, in its shift towards democracy promotion, the U.S. followed a foreign policy in which a rhetoric of liberal ideals was instrumentalized neither for the sole purpose of actualizing liberal/cosmopolitan ideals nor for the mere egotistical calculation of interests and power. Instead, by adopting a constructivist frame of analysis, I will argue that what U.S. foreign policy makers do is that they pragmatically define their particular security, economic and political interests through, and depending on, the kind of liberal social/political identity that has been in construction at least at the discursive level throughout the country’s political tradition and within American society. As G. John Ikenberry rightly claims, in America’s “liberal grand strategy”, the domestic regimes of other states are “hugely important for the attainment of American security and material interests.(...) The United States is better able to pursue its interests, reduce security threats in its environment, and foster a stable political order when other states (...) are democracies rather than non-democracies”. Hence, this is not “an idealist preoccupation but a distinctively national security orientation”.⁴⁶

Then, the question to be posed is whether the language of democratization in American foreign policy represents a genuine shift in its tradition, or it “simply disguises the realist underpinnings by adopting a

⁴⁵ This point converges with the radical critique of democracy promotion. Tony Smith, Barry Gills, William I. Robinson use similar arguments in order to criticize democracy assistance programs. I discuss it in the next chapter.

⁴⁶ G. John Ikenberry, “America’s Liberal Grand Strategy: Democracy and National Security in the Post-war Era”, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford University Press, 2000), p.103-104.

normative posture of support for social and economic development, human rights, and democracy while pursuing a grand strategy of control and economic advantage”⁴⁷. In responding to that question, there are some intermediary positions that might be relevant, and I think that constructivism provides that middle ground, as I try to show in Chapter 4. But before that, we should look at the historical record of U.S. democracy promotion policies since its first manifestation during Woodrow Wilson’s presidency.

Oscillation Between Realism and Liberalism: U.S. Democracy Promotion in Historical Perspective

“No country has had a greater impact on global democratization, for better and for worse, than the United States during the twentieth century. No country has possessed its vast political, cultural, economic, and military resources-and its predisposition to use them toward recreating other states in its own image. Thus it should come as no surprise that the U.S. government’s involvement in democracy promotion has received such great attention, along with a considerable degree of skepticism and suspicion.”

Steven W. Hook, “Inconsistent U.S. Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad”, 2002.

The history of democracy promotion as a dominant theme in foreign policymaking dates back to the presidency of Woodrow Wilson. Influenced by Kant’s Perpetual Peace, Wilson carried democratic discourse to the forefront of U.S. foreign policy agenda and began to “champion the promotion of

⁴⁷ Richard Falk, “What is the Greater Middle East Initiative Really About: Dreams and Nightmares”, paper presented at the Symposium on The Greater Middle East and North Africa Project, November 8-10, 2004, Istanbul, p.4.

democratic governments abroad”.⁴⁸ Hence, contemporary democracy promotion projects can be regarded as the “continuation, by other means, of a virtually continuous ‘democratist crusade’ that has been underway throughout the nation’s history”.⁴⁹ Drawing on Kantian universal ethics, Wilson colored U.S. foreign policy with moralism. On April 2, 1917, President Wilson addressed the Congress in an extraordinary session and stated that U.S. involvement in World War I would serve to the purpose of “making the world safe for democracy”.⁵⁰ While commenting on the role of his country in World War I, Wilson resorted to a zealous language by saying that his country’s mission was “for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own government, for the rights and liberties of small nations... and to make the world itself free.”⁵¹ Franklin Roosevelt also used a similar rhetoric of moralism in depicting the role of the U.S. in the post-War era as not only the protector of U.S. national interests inside and outside of the U.S., but also as a more general defense of democratic values and institutions worldwide, which was in clear contradiction with his realist vision of a world order “policed by the great powers” and with his “accommodation of Soviet postwar hegemony in Eastern Europe” and his “embrace of Joseph Stalin.”⁵²

In the post-World War II period, the realist Cold War mentality nullified the question of democracy in the Middle East and in other parts of the

⁴⁸ Tony Smith, *America’s Mission: The United States and the World-Wide Struggle for Democracy in the Twentieth Century*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.85.

⁴⁹ Steven W. Hook, “Inconsistent U.S. Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad”, in *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, ed.by Peter J. Schraeder, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p.111

⁵⁰ Quoted in Peter J.Schraeder, *Making the World Safe for Democracy?*, in *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, ed.by Peter J. Schraeder, (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p.217

⁵¹ Hook, art.cit., p.110.

⁵² *Ibid*, p. 111.

world. Despite the “embedded liberalism” of the post-war political and economic order⁵³, the Cold War *realpolitik* subordinated the politics of democracy promotion to the ‘high-politics’ of security concerns, hence did not open adequate space for supporting democracy on a global scale. John F. Kennedy’s remarks on the assassination of Rafael Trujillo, the Dominican Republic’s dictatorial leader, in 1961, clearly manifested that:⁵⁴

There are three possibilities in descending order of preference: a decent democratic regime, a continuation of the the Trujillo regime (a dictatorship), or a Castro regime (a communist government). We ought to aim at the first, but we really can’t denounce the second until we are sure that we can avoid the third.

Post-World War II U.S. foreign policy was dominated by a realist understanding of international relations that focused on military/nuclear and political/economical rivalry through “straight power concepts”. George Kennan, the founding father of the containment policy and director of the Policy Planning Staff of the U.S. State Department, stated that in his February 1948 speech:⁵⁵

We [Americans] have 50% of the world’s wealth but only 6.3% of the population. In this situation, we cannot fail to be the object of envy and resentment. Our real task in the coming period is to devise a pattern of relationships that will permit us to maintain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and daydreaming. We should cease to talk about vague and unreal objectives, such as human rights, the raising of living standards, and democratization. The day is not far off when we are going to

⁵³ John Gerard Ruggie, “Embedded Liberalism and the Post-War Economic Regimes”, in *Constructing the World Polity: Essays on International Institutionalization*, (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 62-85.

⁵⁴ Hook, art.cit., p.112.

⁵⁵ Originally, it was an internal memo labelled “top secret” at the time, later de-classified. Quoted in Richard Falk, art.cit., p.5.

have to deal in straight power concepts. The less we are hampered by idealistic slogans, the better.

During the Cold War democracy was still in the foreign policy discourse of the U.S., but it did not have a substance. Democracy promotion was not a goal of the U.S. foreign policy during the Cold War.⁵⁶ The principal goal of American foreign policy was not to promote democracy but to contain the Soviet Union, hence friends and foes were determined depending on their proximity to the anti-communist struggle rather than the liberal and democratic performance of the states. Many policymakers like Dean Acheson and Henry Kissinger prioritized “order to freedom, stability to choice”.⁵⁷ During Nixon’s presidency, Henry Kissinger argued that by basing its foreign policy on solid national interests, “the government could at least avoid the charge of hypocrisy.”⁵⁸ For the sake of these concrete national interests, the Nixon administration established a *détente*, a modus vivendi with People’s Republic of China and the Soviet Union, continued the war in Vietnam, supported the pro-apartheid forces in South Africa, and provided extensive military assistance to the authoritarian regimes of Ferdinand Marcos of the Philippines, Mohammed ul-Haq Zia of Pakistan, and Achmed Sukarno of Indonesia.⁵⁹ As Kissinger overtly manifested, these were the basic moments during the Nixon administration in which the pursuit of realpolitik overwhelmed and

⁵⁶ Elizabeth Cohn argues that “during the cold war, government democracy assistance programs were largely housed within the CIA and run covertly”. See, Elizabeth Cohn, “U.S. Democratization Assistance”, *Foreign Policy in Focus*, Interhemispheric Resource Center and Institute for Policy Studies 4, no.20, 1999, p. 1.

⁵⁷ Cox, Ikenberry and Inoguchi quote from Acheson’s book, *Present At The Creation: My Years at the State Department*, 1969, that after meeting the Portugese dictator Salazar in the beginning of the 1950s, Acheson said that “while a convinced libertarian-particularly a foreign one- could understandably disapprove of Salazar, he did not; and he doubted whether Plato would have done so either!”. M.Cox, G.J.Ikenberry and T.Inoguchi, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.4.

⁵⁸ Quoted in Hook, art.cit., p.112.

⁵⁹ Loc.cit.

subordinated the moralistic approach of U.S. foreign policy. Thus, this is in clear contradiction with the U.S.'s self-ascribed mission of "championing freedom and democracy in the world".

However, some liberal scholars maintain that despite its powerful realist rhetoric and practice, there was always a significant liberal color in U.S. foreign policy, especially in the post war settlement; hence Pax Americana was indeed a period of liberal hegemony. This outlook to international politics relied on some basic features like multilateralism and international institutions, but one of its quintessential characteristics was its attribution of great importance to the domestic regimes of other states.

One of the significant figures in the history of democracy promotion in American foreign policy was Jimmy Carter who rejected the 'amoral' aspects of foreign policy under détente and gave a central role to the policy of promoting human rights as part and parcel of promoting democracy. He declared his position in a December 1978 speech: "We are free of the inordinate fear of communism which once led us to embrace any dictator who joined us in that fear."⁶⁰ Yet Carter also had to reconcile his vision with the entrenched U.S. security and economic interests as he overlooked the repressions of authoritarian regimes in various countries, most prominently in Shah's Iran. The implementation of Carter's vision in Nicaragua complicated the picture even more. The Carter administration ceased to support the Somoza regime in Nicaragua which was a repressive authoritarian rule, nonetheless, the outcome of the withdrawal of support was more problematic for the U.S. since a pro-Soviet regime was established there which not only provided support to

⁶⁰ Jimmy Carter, Department of State Bulletin 79, (January) 2, 1979.

the revolutionary movements in Central America but also denied many political rights.⁶¹

Then it was the administration of Ronald Reagan, who endorsed democracy promotion under the rubric of civil society assistance as a foreign policy priority with a bipartisan support.⁶² Ronald Reagan was a turning point in formulating the Cold War rivalry within the context of global democratization. In 1983 he established the National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a government-funded organization to support democratic reforms across the world, as part of his “Campaign for Democracy”. NED was quite instrumental and effective in Chile, the Philippines, South Korea, and Eastern Europe (after the collapse of the Berlin Wall) in “mobilizing different interest groups and administering elections.”⁶³ However, the reinstrumentalization of democratization as a foreign policy goal of the U.S. did not prevent the Reagan administration from providing support to autocratic rulers and resisting the antiapartheid forces in South Africa.

George Bush drew on democracy promotion and identified global democratization as the defining element of the “new world order”, and democracy promotion as one of the central goals of U.S. foreign policy. Among various actions of the U.S. under the banner of supporting global democratization were a military threat to the Philippines to prevent “antidemocratic groups” from seizing power, the invasion of Panama in 1989 “justified as a mission to liberate the country from its autocratic leader, Manuel Noriega”, the signing of the 1991 Santiago Agreement which regarded threats

⁶¹ Hook, art.cit., p.112.

⁶² “Republicans and Democrats alike were attracted to a framework developed by the Reagan administration: the U.S. promotion of democracy”, Elizabeth Cohn, art.cit. p.1.

⁶³ Hook, art.cit., p.113.

to democratic reforms as challenges to regional stability, the support for sanctions against Haiti in 1991 because of a military coup, against the autocratic Daniel Arap Moi regime in Kenya in 1991 and against Peru when President Alberto Fujimori abolished parliament and suspended the constitution in 1992.⁶⁴

Since the Berlin Wall had collapsed in less than a year after he took office, the main purpose of the Bush administration has been achieving the former Soviet countries' transition to market democracies. For that purpose, the Bush administration initiated a Support for East European Democracy (SEED) program to which it donated \$360 million each year between 1989 and 1994.⁶⁵ Therefore, the centers of gravity of these democracy promotion programs have been Central and Eastern European countries and Russia in the immediate aftermath of the Cold War.

The end of the Cold war marked a significant turning point whereby world politics ceased to be characterized by the antagonism between the two ideologically and materially competing super-powers, but became defined by unipolarity under the ascendancy of the U.S. That material triumphalism in military, economic and political terms was also reflected unto the ideological sphere through discourses like the "end of history" claiming that human search for a better political system, and hence history, ended with the victory of liberal democracy. There has been a substantial increase in the influence of democracy as a form of governance in international politics.

Coupled with the victorious discourse of liberal democracy, the end of the cold war also marked a paradigmatic shift in the orientation of U.S.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.114.

⁶⁵ Loc.cit.

foreign policy from providing support to authoritarian but friendly regimes in the Third World to promoting democracy, as was explicitly stated in the 1987 State Department's policy document: "Support for democracy is becoming the new organizing principle for American foreign-policy"⁶⁶. The shift becomes clear and more striking when we listen to Henry Kissinger, then the Secretary of State, commenting on Allende's election in Chile in June 1970 : "I don't see why we need to stand by and watch a country go communist because of the irresponsibility of its own people"⁶⁷ As Carothers rightly argues, this shift in U.S. foreign policy towards supporting democratic movements in the former Soviet countries and Central and Eastern European countries has been possible due to the apparent fact that the ruling elites of these countries had a pro-Soviet posture but the masses were more prone to the American model. In other words the U.S. policy makers believed that democratic processes and elections would bring pro-American groups to power.⁶⁸ Yet the situation was exactly the opposite in the Middle East. The autocracts of the Middle East were in power to a considerable degree because of the support they received from the U.S. while anti-Americanism was quite powerful among the public.

By the late twentieth century, democracy has become a "political gold standard".⁶⁹ Parallel to the rise of democracy all over the world⁷⁰, democracy

⁶⁶ Department of State, "Democracy in Latin America and the Caribbean: The Promise and the Challenge", Bureau of Public Affairs, Special Report no.158, Washington, D.C., March 1987, p.13. quoted in William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention and Hegemony*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

⁶⁷ Quoted in Steve Smith, "US Democracy Promotion: Critical Questions", in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.66.

⁶⁸ Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottoway, "The New Democracy Imperative" in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. T.Carothers and M. Ottoway, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), p.7.

⁶⁹ M.Cox, G.J.Ikenberry and T.Inoguchi, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford University Press, 2000), p.3.

promotion has become a much more powerful rhetoric and driving force in world politics.⁷¹ The rise and rise of democracy also generated a vast literature on the nature of democracy, democratic transitions, and waves of democratization. In their research on the political science articles published between 1974-1994, J.J. van Wyk and Mary C. Custy demonstrate that “democracy as a form of government has clearly dominated the political science literature since the mid-1970s”.⁷²

The Clinton administration transcended the Reagan and Bush administrations in granting democracy a central place in that it announced in 1993 that U.S. foreign policy would be based on the doctrine of “enlargement”, which was then named as the “Clinton Doctrine” by Douglas Brinkley⁷³, aimed at expanding the community of “market democracies”. This post-containment U.S. doctrine was officially articulated by Clinton’s National Security Adviser Anthony Lake:⁷⁴

The successor to a doctrine of containment must be a strategy of enlargement-enlargement of world’s free community... We must counter the aggression- and support the liberalization- of states hostile to democracy... The United States will seek to isolate [non-democratic states] diplomatically, militarily, economically and technologically.

⁷⁰ Larry Diamond and Mark F. Plattner, *The Global Resurgence of Democracy*, (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996).

⁷¹ Democracy promotion is not monopolized by the U.S. Various countries and international organizations have their own democracy promotion agenda. Among the most assertive of them are the European Union, World Bank and United Nations. Canada, France, Germany, Japan, Sweden, Netherlands, Austria also have their own governmental democracy assistance agencies. Apart from these governmental bodies, there are also some non-governmental organizations which are heavily involved in promoting democracy. Among them the most influential ones are American think-tanks and German *Stiftungen*.

⁷² J.J. van Wyk and Mary C. Custy, “Contemporary Democracy: A Bibliography of Periodical Literature, 1974-1994”, (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1999), quoted in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.4.

⁷³ Douglas Brinkley, “Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine”, *Foreign Policy* 106 (Spring 1997), pp.111-127.

⁷⁴ Anthony Lake, “From Containment to Enlargement”, Department of State Dispatch (September 27): 658-664, quoted in Steven W. Hook, art.cit., p.115.

In March 1994 USAID published a report entitled *Strategies for Sustainable Development* that outlined the main elements of the Clinton administration's enlargement doctrine under five headings: environmental protection, population control, broad-based economic growth, humanitarian assistance, and lastly, building democracy. The report argued that:

Faltering democracies and persistent oppression pose serious threats to the security of the United States. Because democratic regimes contribute to peace and security in the world and because democracy and respect for human rights coincide with fundamental American values, the Clinton administration has identified the promotion of democracy as a primary objective of U.S. foreign policy.

The "Building Democracy" policy had four components. First, helping the aid recipients establish free and fair, competitive, multiparty elections open to external observers; second, promoting the rule of law in recipient countries, understood as drafting constitutions, the establishment of independent courts and training police forces; third, transparency in domestic decision-making processes and prohibition of corruption; and finally, promoting civil society through financing professional associations, labor unions, independent news media to facilitate accountability and participation.

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The Clinton administration created the Center for Democracy and Governance at the Agency for International Development (AID) and the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor at the State Department. Nevertheless, Clinton's attempt to establish an Assistant Secretary of Defense for Democracy and Peacekeeping at the Department of Defense was rejected by the Congress, yet a special Assistant for Democracy was appointed to the

⁷⁵ Ibid, p.116.

National Security Council.⁷⁶ In his 1994 State of the Union address, Clinton voiced the core argument of the Democratic Peace Theory by saying that “Democracies don’t attack each other”, and maintained that “the best strategy to insure our [American] security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere”.⁷⁷ Yet, if we look at the State Department’s figures about the budget of democracy promotion as \$580 million in 1998, \$623 million in 1999 and \$703 million in 2000, and compare these with the \$276.7 billion for the Department of Defense, and \$21.6 billion for International Affairs, it is more than obvious that “these levels of democracy assistance does not reflect the Clinton administration’s grand commitment to a policy of enlargement.”⁷⁸

One explanation for why the Clinton administration placed democracy promotion at the centre of its foreign policy is that promoting democracy abroad has filled the “missionary gap left behind the collapse of international communism”. According to that argument, all great powers need a big ideal to pursue and democratic enlargement serves the function of that big ideal for the U.S. after the Cold War.

Bill Clinton marked a further jump when he declared the “enlargement of democracy” as the official foreign policy objective and one of the three main pillars of his government.⁷⁹ However, despite the overt

⁷⁶ Cohn, art.cit., p.1.

⁷⁷ Bill Clinton’s State of the Union Address, 1994. Available online at: <http://stateoftheunion.onetwothree.net/texts/19940125.html>

⁷⁸ Cohn, art.cit., p.1.

⁷⁹ The two others are enhancing US security and promoting prosperity at home. For the sake of the “enlargement of democracy”, Clinton’s government supported a variety of Democracy Assistance Programs, carried out a military intervention in Haiti to restore its elected president to power and pressed for expansion of NATO for democracy consolidation in Eastern Europe. For a further discussion of the issue, see Gideon Rose, “Democracy Promotion and American Foreign Policy: A Review Essay”, *International Security* 25, no.3. (Winter, 2000-2001), pp.186-203.

discursive shift in U.S. foreign policy towards democracy promotion after the Cold War, the Middle East was still kept as an exception to the rule and outside of the wave of democratization. The basic rationale for this deliberate negligence was the idea that American-backed autocratic and authoritarian regimes could serve as a bulwark against anti-American social forces in the region, especially Islamists.

In this chapter, I reviewed the theoretical and historical background of U.S. democracy promotion beginning with Woodrow Wilson, until now. The track record of U.S. democracy promotion policy reveals that it oscillates between realism and liberalism. During Wilson's presidency, the U.S. adopted a liberal international posture that deemed democratization necessary for the establishment of a Kantian world that would both serve their interests and the cause of peace. During the Cold War, the question of democracy promotion nearly disappeared at the policy level with the exceptions of Jimmy Carter's Helsinki Process and Ronald Reagan's "Campaign for Democracy". After the Cold War, democracy entered the agenda of U.S. foreign policy towards Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, yet, it is only in the aftermath of September 11 that the U.S. government adopted a policy of democracy promotion in the Middle East. In the next chapter, I bring out a general overview of U.S. democracy promotion efforts in the Middle East that began after September 11, and I discuss the neoconservative "democratic realist" frame that U.S. foreign policy adopted in its democracy engagement with the Middle East.

CHAPTER 3: DEMOCRATIC REALISM: PROMOTING DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST AFTER SEPTEMBER 11

Neoconservative political persuasion has played a prominent and also controversial role in the making of American foreign policy since the 1970s.⁸⁰ Neoconservative ideology has a powerful impact on the George W. Bush administration as vanguard neoconservative figures such as Dick Cheney, Donald Rumsfeld, Richard Perle, Paul Wolfowitz, Zalmay Khalilzad, and Francis Fukuyama held key decision-making positions, just to name a few of them.⁸¹ The September 11 terrorist attacks not only brought about a change in the structure of the international system but also created a new line of thinking within neoconservatism which was most evidently seen in the change in the Bush administration's attitude of promoting democracy in the Middle East. Then, what kind of a shift did September 11 bring in U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East?

⁸⁰ The roots of neoconservative political ideology can be traced back to the mid-1930s and early 1940s, to the City College of New York, where a group of largely Jewish intellectuals including Irving Kristol, Daniel Bell, Nathan Glazer, Irving Howe and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, gathered around the ideas of "idealistic belief in social progress and the universality of rights, coupled with intense anti-Communism." For a more detailed analysis of the roots of neo-conservatism, see Michael C. Williams, "What is the National Interest? The Neoconservative Challenge in IR Theory", *European Journal of International Relations* 11(3), 2005, p. 307. Fukuyama argues that after the end of the Cold War, four common principles unite neoconservative thinking on international relations and American foreign policy. The first is the concern with internal politics of states, that is the status of democracy and human rights in other countries, the second is the belief that "American power can be used for moral purposes", the third is the skepticism about the capability of international law and institutions to solve high politics issues, and the fourth is the view that "ambitious social engineering often leads to unexpected consequences and thereby undermines its own ends." See, Francis Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism", *The New York Times*, February 19, 2006.

⁸¹ Francis Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism", *The New York Times*, February 19, 2006.

Democracy Promotion in the Middle East after September 11:

MEPI and BMENA

The September 11 terrorist attacks shattered the basis that the U.S. foreign policy towards the region was based upon and paved the way to a radical rupture, at least at the discursive level.⁸² Prior to the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon, the newly elected Bush administration was not interested in transnational concerns that the former Clinton administration was interested in. Democracy promotion was one of these transnational issues that the new administration did not pay serious attention to, but rather chose to dwell on a foreign policy agenda based more upon U.S. national interests.⁸³ Prior to the September 11 events, George W. Bush did not have sympathy for Clinton's internationalist policy of "democratic enlargement" and instead put forth a policy that tended to pay less attention to transnational issues and to stick strictly to national interests. A few months after coming to power, the Bush administration experienced the horror of September 11, and declared a change in policy. This was a re-appropriation of the Reaganite policy of democracy promotion abroad in order to pursue U.S. interests, and was a neoconservative moment for promoting regime change in the Middle East and North Africa. In other words, the September 11 attacks converted the Bush administration from a "relative isolationist" to a "democratizing crusader"

⁸² Most critiques point out the exact opposite view that the problem with democracy promotion is that it is not radical in any sense and whatsoever. I will discuss it later in this section.

⁸³ Hook, art.cit., p.117.

position.⁸⁴ After organizing a military attack to Afghanistan and instituting a pro-American president there, the U.S. then called for, and carried out, an occupation of Iraq under the banner of changing the totalitarian regime and bringing democracy to Iraq, and to the region. Both wars were justified in the name of democracy.⁸⁵

The September 11 attacks profoundly affected the foreign policy making circles, most prominently the National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice, the Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, and the Secretary of State Colin Powell which led to a substantial discursive change in U.S. foreign policy towards the Middle East. The perpetrators of these attacks were declared to be the peoples of Middle Eastern origin who were “born and radicalized there”.⁸⁶ Although the Middle East has been a region of utmost geopolitical significance for the U.S. since the end of World War II⁸⁷, the unprecedented security crisis that the U.S. faced with the September 11 attacks gave way to a re-comprehension and re-evaluation of the region’s significance, hence, of the necessity of dealing with the challenge it poses.

⁸⁴ Piki Ish-Shalom, “Theory as a Hermeneutical Mechanism: The Democratic-Peace Thesis and the Politics of Democratization”, *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no.4, 2006, p.584

⁸⁵ This is the reason why democracy promotion in the Middle East has become a radically polarizing issue. The U.S. simply failed to rally the support of the international community and of the U.N. Security Council to launch an attack on Iraq, and hence, used democracy promotion as a legitimating and mobilizing discourse for the war campaign. Indeed, most of what is written on democracy promotion toward the Middle East deals with that problem of exploiting democracy promotion as a pretext for imperial wars. Although I agree with this kind of an argument, what I will try to do in this thesis is to go beyond the allegations about sincerity and judgements over intentions on the part of the U.S.. Instead, I will try to understand the theoretical framework that justifies the apparent gap between the rhetoric of democracy promotion and the practice of relying more on authoritarian regimes, and to explore and unfold the institutional modalities and mechanisms that create and sustain this gap.

⁸⁶ Colin L. Powell, “The US-Middle East Partnership Initiative: Building Hope for the Years Ahead”, December 12, 2002, The Heritage Foundation, Heritage Lecture no:772.

⁸⁷ This point was expressed by the former Secretary of State, Colin Powell: “Ladies and gentlemen, the Middle East is a vast region of vast importance to the American people.” U.S. Department of State, “The Middle East Partnership Initiative: Building Hope for the Years Ahead”, December 12, 2002.

The attacks stirred up an immense debate within academia and policy-making circles on the political, economical and cultural root causes of anti-American sentiments that became nearly an integral part of the popular culture in the region and that expressed itself in the form of terrorist attacks. As an outcome of these debates, and as a justification of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Bush administration has defined the promotion of democracy in the Middle East as a national security priority, claiming that “greater political freedom can undercut the forces of Islamic radicalism and indoctrination”.⁸⁸ The National Security Strategy of 2002 (NSS 2002) is premised on the necessity of democracy promotion in all countries in order to secure United States’ interests best.⁸⁹

This resulted in a new orientation in U.S. policy circles that prioritized democracy promotion in the Middle East as a vital security imperative. Drawing on the NSS 2002 and the UNDP’s Arab Human Development Report of 2002 (AHDR), the Secretary of State Colin L. Powell announced in his speech at the Heritage Foundation, on December 17, 2002, that the United States was launching a new and rigorous initiative toward the Middle East region with the name of “Greater Middle East Partnership Initiative” (MEPI). With some modifications, this unilateral U.S. initiative was officially adopted by the G-8 countries upon the proposal of the Bush administration at the June 2004 Summit, at Sea Island, U.S. Its name was changed as “Partnership for Progress and Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa” (BMENA), hence its scope

⁸⁸ Jeremy M. Sharp, “U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma”, *CRS Report for Congress*, Order Code RL 33486 Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress (June 15, 2006), p.1.

⁸⁹ P.H. Liotta and James F. Miskel, “Dangerous Democracy? American Internatinalism and the Greater Near East”, *Orbis* 48, no.3 (Summer 2004). p. 437

expanded so as to cover all countries which are predominantly populated by Muslims.⁹⁰ BMENA was put forward as the concrete and official policy response of the United States in order to tackle with the ‘threat’ that the region posed against itself and against the ‘Western world’ or “Western civilization” in general.⁹¹

The change in U.S. policy was first, and most explicitly, stated by President George W. Bush, in his November 2003 “Forward Strategy of Freedom in the Middle East” speech at the National Endowment for Democracy.⁹²

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. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export. And with the spread of weapons that can bring catastrophic harm to our country and to our friends, it would be reckless to accept the status quo.

More recently, democracy promotion has become the catchword of the day as the Bush administration declared that it placed democracy promotion at the centre of its foreign policy towards the Middle East and used

⁹⁰ The MEPI initiative consisted of 22 Arab states plus Turkey and Iran, yet the BMENA incorporated Indonesia, Bangladesh, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kirgizistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan into the initiative. The principle purpose of the initiative was declared as achieving economic, political and social modernization within the Muslim world. The initiative was presented as a grand and long-term modernization project that was designed to meet the demands of AHDR 2002, which was written by “leading and respected” Arab scholars. This report was addressing basically to the huge gap between the advanced industrialized countries and the Arab world in economic development and in implementation and protection of human rights. The 2002 AHDR gathered these deficits under three headings, namely the deficits of 1) freedom, 2) knowledge, and 3) women’s empowerment. Hence BMENA posited itself as a ‘human rights initiative’ aiming at bridging the gaps mentioned in the U.N Arab Human Development Reports via an all-encompassing social, political and economical transformation in the region.

⁹¹ Charles Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World”, *The American Enterprise Institute*, (Washington, D.C., 2004), p.18.

⁹² George W. Bush, “Forward Strategy of Freedom”, at National Endowment for Democracy, 2003. Available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/11/20031106-2.html>

it as a legitimating discourse for the Iraqi War.⁹³ After September 11, the U.S. officials and policy experts have increasingly come to believe that the absence of democracy has radicalized Islamist movements by denying them peaceful channels of opposition and that the heavy economic costs that are attendant to authoritarian governance have strengthened their position. Moreover, it was revealed that some Arab governments like Syria and Saudi Arabia were easily penetrated by the enemies of the U.S., and that other governments of the Arab world were quite vulnerable to such an influence. This is why the U.S. administration declared in the National Security Strategy of September 2002 that democracy promotion in the Arab world would be at the heart of its Middle East policy and that democracy would be “right and true for every person in every society”.

Despite the fact that there are severe problems with, and suspicions over, the U.S. democracy promotion efforts in the Middle East both within and outside the U.S. and in the Arab world, there is a common recognition that during the Bush administration, supporting political, social and economic reform in the region has become a high profile issue and has received more funds and resources for implementation.⁹⁴ The Bush administration saw democracy as a way to drain the swamp that meant insecurity for the U.S. The democratic peace theory posited an interdemocracy lack of war, but the post-September 11 U.S. democracy promotion policy aimed at an intrademocracy

⁹³ Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway maintain that the exploitation of the notion of democracy promotion in the Iraqi War resulted in the “harsh politicization of the overall subject” that any talk on democratization in the Middle East even more problematic. See, Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway, “The New Democracy Imperative” in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, T. Carothers and M. Ottaway, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), p.9.

⁹⁴ Jeremy M. Sharp, “U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma”, CRS Report for Congress, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, Order Code RL 33486. (Washington D.C.; June 15, 2006), p.7.

lack of terror.⁹⁵ The whole US initiative to democratize the greater Middle East was to serve the purpose of “long term solution to the terrorist problem”.⁹⁶

On December 12, 2002, Secretary of State Colin Powell announced the creation of the MEPI which would promote entrepreneurship in Arab countries, encourage free trade in the region, fund the education of Muslim girls and support citizens who were “claiming their political voices”.⁹⁷ For the Secretary of State, the initiative was a “continuation, and a deepening, of our longstanding commitment to working with all peoples of the Middle East to improve their daily lives and to help them face the future with hope.”⁹⁸ Amidst the War on Iraq that lacked international democratic legitimacy and at the beginning of the Manichean war on terror that divided the world into two on whether they sided with it or not, the MEPI was designed as a key component of U.S. foreign policy to reflect its softer elements such as democratization, foreign aid, trade, and education. Its basic point of departure is declared to be the Arab Human Development Report (AHDR) of 2002. According to the AHDR statistics, the sum total of all Arab countries’ non-oil exports corresponds to only 1% of the world’s total non-oil exports and 14 million Arab adults lack the job skills to provide enough income for basic needs. It also points out that because of the huge increase in their population; there will be some 50 million more Arab workers in the job market in the next eight years.⁹⁹

⁹⁵ F. Gregory Gause III, “Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2005. p.62.

⁹⁶ Francis Fukuyama, “After Neoconservatism”, *The New York Times*, February 19, 2006.

⁹⁷ Colin L. Powell, The US-Middle East Partnership Initiative: Building Hope for the Years Ahead, December 12, 2002, The Heritage Foundation, Heritage Lecture no:772.

⁹⁸ U.S. Department of State, “The Middle East Partnership Initiative: Building Hope for the Years Ahead”, (Washington, D.C.; U.S. Department of State, December 12, 2002).

⁹⁹ United Nations Development Program, *Arab Human Development Report 2002*, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, 2002.

The G-8 Summit came up with a handful of specific measures including a “Broader Middle East and North Africa Forum for the Future” at which governments, as well as business and civil society leaders could meet to discuss reform goals and programs. Among other measures are the new “Broader Middle East and North Africa Foundation for Democracy” to which Europeans as well as Americans would contribute, a “Broader Middle East and North Africa Democracy Assistance Group” for coordinating, and sharing information about, the programs of the U.S., Europe and other foundations – like election aid, transparency and furtherance of civil society-, a “Broader Middle East and North Africa Literacy Corps” and a microfinance pilot project to fund new small businesses in the region in order to expand the middle class for a consolidated democracy.¹⁰⁰

The working paper of BMENA was leaked to a London-based Arab journal, *Al-Hayat*, in February 13, 2004 in order to open it up to public discussion. According to the leaked verbatim text,¹⁰¹ the U.S. administration had in mind a relatively small program built around three deficits, that are freedom, knowledge, and women’s empowerment, which had been identified in the United Nations Arab Human Development Reports of 2002 and 2003. The U.S. proposed that the G-8 agree on common reform priorities under three headings: promoting democracy and good governance, building a knowledge

¹⁰⁰ “The microfinance initiative is to help over two million entrepreneurs escape poverty through microfinance loans over the next 5 years. Jordan will host a Microfinance Best Practices Training Center and Yemen will host the first microfinance pilot project.(...) Business and Entrepreneurship Training initiative is to help as many as 250.000 young entrepreneurs, especially women, expand their employment opportunities. Bahrain and Morocco will co-sponsor this initiative. (...) Private Enterprise Development Facility at the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to invest \$100 million to finance small and medium-sized enterprises.” Fact Sheet on G-8 Summit, June 9, 2004. Available at <http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/Archive/2004/Jun/09-319840.html> .

¹⁰¹ The working paper was published in a London-based English language Arab newspaper *Al-Hayat* on February 13, 2004. It might be reached online at <http://www.meib.org/documentfile/040213.htm> .

society and expanding economic opportunities.¹⁰² The working paper of the initiative and other texts like Arab NGOs Beirut Summit Letter (March 19-22, 2004), the Doha Declaration for Democracy and Reform (June 3-4, 2004), the Alexandria Charter (March 12-14, 2004), The Sana'a Declaration (January 10-12, 2004), The Arab Business Council Declaration, (January 2004) and Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Reform Initiative (March 13, 2004) relied on the findings of U.N Arab Human Rights Reports. The working paper argues that the three deficits of freedom, knowledge and women's empowerment have reached a point that threatens the national interests of all G-8 members.¹⁰³ The region has become a pool of "extremism, terrorism, international crime and illegal migration". The argument stated in the initiative is backed by the statistical data provided by the Report that refers to the 'backwardness' of the region. According to the Report, the combined GDP of the 22 Arab League countries is less than that of Spain. 40% of the adult population in Arab countries-which amounts to 65 million people- is illiterate, most of whom are women (about two thirds). With 38% of its population under the age of fourteen, the region's demographic pressures will intensify in the future and because of the incapacity of the Arab economies in creating jobs, most of the

¹⁰² Originally, MEPI was an exclusively US government program but then was transformed into BMENA and became expanded unto G-8 countries through the G-8 Summit in Sea Island, in June 8-10, 2004. Despite the fierce criticisms the original version of the project received, it expanded unto the EU through the Annual US-EU Summit in Dublin, 26 June¹⁰², and lastly unto the NATO countries through the NATO Summit in Istanbul, 27-29 June. The Arab League Summit scheduled for March 2004 was postponed because of the ongoing differences over developing a position towards the BMENA. Two months later the summit was held at Tunis and the Arab leaders agreed on intensifying political, economic, social and educational reform but "this would be subject to national and cultural requirements, religious values and their own possibilities. International Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Briefing, "The Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative: Imperilled at Birth", p.8, Brussels/Amman, 7 June 2004. In the June 9, 2004 Fact Sheet on G-8 Summit, it is claimed that Arab leaders declared their determination to "firmly establish the basis for democracy", at <http://usinfo.state.gov/ei/Archive/2004/Jun/09-319840.html> .

¹⁰³ G-8 Greater Middle East Partnership Working Paper, *Al-Hayat*, February 13, 2004.

adult population will emigrate to other developed countries of the North. The report found that 51% of older Arab youth expressed a desire to immigrate to European countries, which will pose a “direct threat to the stability of the region and to the common interests of the G-8 members”.

As a solution to these pressing problems, BMENA proposed promoting democracy and good governance, building a knowledge society and expanding economic opportunities. Under each heading, a number of sub-initiatives and programs were developed. In order to promote democracy in the region, the G-8 countries would carry out “Free Elections Initiative” which would provide technical assistance to the BMENA states that would hold elections, “Parliamentary Exchange and Training Programs” that would sponsor the exchange of parliamentarians to strengthen the role of parliaments, “Women’s Leadership Academies” that would sponsor women’s training and foster women’s political participation, “Grassroots Legal Aid Program” that would give judicial training at the grassroots level, “Independent Media Initiative” that would sponsor exchanges for print and broadcast journalists and sponsor training programs for independent journalists, “Transparency and Anti/Corruption Efforts” that would promote the adoption of G-8 transparency and accountability principles, and “Civil Society Initiative” that would fund democracy, human rights, media, women’s and other NGOs in the region.

To bridge the knowledge gap, BMENA aims to “help students acquire the skills needed to succeed in today’s global marketplace” with the “Basic Education Initiative” aims to cut illiteracy and create a literacy corps that would train female school teachers, the “Textbooks Program” to fund translating Western ‘classics’ into Arabic, with the “Business Education

Initiative” to establish partnerships between G-8-based business schools and educational institutions in the region, with the “Discovery Schools Initiative” to teach new technology, and with the “Education Reform Program” to bring together the reform-minded public, the private sector and community leaders from the region with their counterparts from the United States and the EU.

To expand economic opportunities, BMENA sought to develop a “Finance for Growth Initiative” for increasing the efficiency of economic growth and job creation that would consist of the components of Microfinance, Greater Middle East Finance Corporation, Greater Middle East Development Bank, Partnership for Financial Excellence that would better integrate the Broader Middle East and North Africa into the global financial system through liberalization, “Trade Initiative” that would promote intra-regional trade, ‘Broader Middle East Economic Opportunity Forums’ that would encourage enhanced regional cooperation. At its summit meeting, the G-8 adopted further initiatives like “Democracy Assistance Dialogue” that would strengthen democratic institutions, coordinate and share information on democracy programs and sponsor exchange programs with the G-8 countries.

Through time, the Arab states took some steps in line with the initiative.¹⁰⁴ However, the most detailed and the boldest reform proposals emerged from NGOs. There has emerged numerous platforms which varied in

¹⁰⁴ After its announcement, the U.S. initiative occupied the agenda of the international community on the issues of its form, substance, method and timing. Many Arab states, including Egypt, Syria, Saudi Arabia and Sudan rejected the initiative by defying it as an imposition from the outside. European countries provided a skeptical support to the U.S with significant reservations. The German Foreign Minister called for a “genuine cooperation and work together with the states and societies of the region” instead of the imposition of some reforms in a “paternalistic attitude”. Likewise, the French Foreign Minister declared that they had opposed strategies formulated by a “worried West to impose ready-made solutions from outside”. Nevertheless, in time, opposing Arab regimes and skeptical European countries became more affiliated with the U.S-led initiative.

degree of specificity, scope, seriousness and independence.¹⁰⁵ In the Arab NGOs Beirut Summit which is also known as Civil Forum that fifty-two Arab NGOs from thirteen countries attended, the importance of political and constitutional reform was underscored and several demands for political reform like repealing emergency laws, abolishing exceptional courts, releasing political prisoners, ending torture, lifting restrictions on forming NGOs and ensuring basic freedoms were listed. The Doha Declaration for Democracy and Reform (June 3-4, 2004) offered a less detailed and bold formula for reforming the Arab world. The declaration began by stating that “democratic change has become a non-negotiable choice which cannot be postponed”. It called for constitutional reforms to transform absolute monarchies into constitutional monarchies and stood for free and fair elections, the abolition of emergency laws, extrajudicial procedures; guarantees for freedom of expression and association and independent judiciary. The Alexandria Charter (March 12-14, 2004) was the most publicized BMENA meeting. Apart from the similar focuses of the transfer of power, free elections, abolitions of emergency laws, the Charter endorsed the freedom to form political parties and also the need for a free press. The most significant aspect of the Sana’a Declaration (January 10-12) was its emphasis on the need to strengthen the partnership between government and civil society. The Arab Business Council focused primarily on global competitiveness issues, seeking to make the Arab private sector competitive in the global markets. It also calls for respect for the rule of law and enhancing transparency and accountability.

¹⁰⁵ Mona Yacoubian, “Promoting Middle East Democracy: Arab Initiatives”, Special Report 136 for United States Institute of Peace, (Washington, D.C.: 2005), p.5.

The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's most powerful opposition force, developed its own Reform Initiative (March 13, 2004) which addresses fairly detailed reforms in political, electoral, judicial, economic, social, educational and religious issues. The document states that the Muslim Brotherhood adheres to a "democratic and constitutional parliamentary republic within the realm of Islamic principles"¹⁰⁶

Despite this apparent clout the neoconservative writers and officials have over U.S. foreign policy, the place of neoconservatism in IR theory is undertheorized. The impact of neoconservative thinking on U.S. foreign policy making with respect to democracy promotion is also understudied. This gap in the literature is pointed out by Michael Williams:¹⁰⁷

Despite the breadth and heat of these debates, analyses of neoconservatism as a theory of IR and of its relationship to contemporary IR theory are remarkably absent. (...) While this lack of engagement between IR theory and neoconservatism may be fairly easily explained, it is nonetheless unfortunate. From its very origins, neoconservatism has been a highly (and highly self-consciously) intellectual movement; indeed one would be hard pressed to find a contemporary position more committed to the proposition that ideas matter in politics and that theoretical commitments and debates have practical consequences. This belief in the importance of ideas and in the relationship between theory and practice makes it imperative that IR grapple with the theoretical foundations of neoconservatism, both in terms of understanding its claims and providing critical perspectives upon them.

In this section, I reviewed the orthodox approaches to U.S. democracy promotion in IR theory and American foreign policy traditions, and provided a brief historical sketch of U.S. democracy promotion since Woodrow Wilson. I argue that post-September 11 U.S. democracy promotion policy towards the

¹⁰⁶ Yacoubian, art.cit., p.10.

¹⁰⁷ Michael Williams, "What is the National Interest? The Neoconservative Challenge in IR Theory", *European Journal of International Relations* 11 (3) (2005), p.308.

Middle East is directed by a neoconservative “democratic realist” approach. Then, what is democratic realism? Given that the Bush administration adopted a neoconservative foreign policy perspective and initiated a democracy promotion policy towards the Middle East, then it becomes crucial to know what promoting democratization means in neoconservatism and how neoconservative intellectuals view America’s “democracy-centric foreign policy”.¹⁰⁸ Should America support democratic norms and procedures in the Middle East? If yes, what kind of a democracy should the U.S. stand for? Do national interests and universal ideals clash or reinforce each other? What kind of an IR theoretical stance does the neoconservative democracy agenda include and imply? Is it a branch of classical international theories, or a re-reading and re-working of them?

The Neoconservative Moment: Blending Realism, Liberalism and Democracy Promotion

These questions, I submit, find their most lucid answers in Charles Krauthammer’s writings. In support of my conviction that Krauthammer epitomizes the neoconservative position as far as the post-September 11 U.S. Middle East policy is concerned, Fukuyama argues that Krauthammer’s writings and strategic thinking has become “emblematic of a school of thought”, that is neoconservatism.¹⁰⁹ In his two quite influential writings,

¹⁰⁸ David W. Yang, “In Search of an Effective Democratic Realism”, *SAIS Review* 15, no.1, (Winter-Spring 2005), p. 199.

¹⁰⁹ Francis Fukuyama, “The Neoconservative Moment”, *The National Interest* 76, (Summer 2004), p.58.

Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World,¹¹⁰ and *In Defense of Democratic Realism*,¹¹¹ Krauthammer deals with the question of what kind of a policy response the U.S. should generate towards the Middle East in so far as to eliminate the root causes of what he calls “the existential enemy”, that is “Arab/Islamic radicalism”. In order to clarify the democratic realist foreign policy attitude, Krauthammer first takes issue with alternative traditions and schools of thought and with their prescriptions for American foreign policy. In this context he discusses isolationism, liberal internationalism, realism, and democratic globalism, and finally elaborates on his democratic realist vision.

Isolationism, for Krauthammer, is the oldest and most venerable answer to the question of what is a unipolar power to do, which propounds hoarding power inside by retreating from world affairs. Isolationism has the oldest pedigree among other foreign policy schools in America which, for Krauthammer, originally flourished from the conviction that America is spiritually superior to the Old World so that it should not be ‘corrupted’ with the “low intrigues” and “cynical alliances” of Europe. Although it relies on a “venerable” background, Krauthammer maintains that isolationism is far from being appropriate for today’s world of “export-driven economies, of massive population flows, and of 9/11, the definitive demonstration that the combination of modern technology and transnational primitivism has erased

¹¹⁰ This paper that outlined the theory of democratic realist foreign policy was initially delivered as the Irving Kristol Lecture to the American Enterprise Institute, on February 10, 2004 and then published by American Enterprise Institute Press.

¹¹¹ Published in the Fall 2004 issue of the neoconservative journal, *The National Interest*. This article is prepared as a response to Fukuyama’s critique of Krauthammer’s democratic realist neoconservatism in his article entitled, “The Neoconservative Moment”, published in the Summer 2004 issue of *The National Interest*.

the barrier between ‘over there’ and over here.”¹¹² Isolationism develops an extremely narrow definition of national interest for America and “essentially wants to pull up the drawbridge to Fortress America.”¹¹³ But in today’s world, Krauthammer argues, the drawbridge cannot be drawn up, as was seen on September 11. In that sense, classical isolationism is “a theory of nostalgia and reaction”, and is “moribund”, “marginalized”, “intellectually obsolete” and “reductionist”, for it is an ideology of fear-fear of trade, of immigrants, of the other.

The second foreign policy tradition that Krauthammer takes issue with is liberal internationalism, which was the “religion of the foreign policy elite” in the 1990s. For him, by following the path of Wilson’s utopianism, Truman’s anticommunism, and Kennedy’s militant universalism, liberal internationalism relies on three pillars. The first is legalism, that is “the construction of a web of treaties and agreements that will bind the international community in a normative web”, the second is multilateralism, that is “acting in concert with other countries in pursuit of ‘international legitimacy’”, and the third is humanitarianism, that is “a deep suspicion of national interest as a justification for projecting power.”¹¹⁴ Although isolationism came up with a narrow definition of national interest, the liberal internationalists, for Krauthammer, take it as a “form of communal selfishness”, thus antithetical to their fundamental goal of constructing a new international system that “mimics domestic society, based on laws, treaties, covenants, understandings and norms

¹¹² Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, The American Enterprise Institute, (Washington, D.C.:AEI, 2004), pp.3-4.

¹¹³ Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.15.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid*, p.16.

that will ultimately abolish power politics.”¹¹⁵ Being a proponent of U.S. unilateralism, Krauthammer criticizes liberal internationalism for being prepared to yield America’s unique unipolar power piece by piece by subsuming it into the new global architecture in which America becomes “not the arbiter of international events but a good and tame international citizen.”¹¹⁶

For Krauthammer, multilateralism, one of the defining characteristics of liberal internationalism, is indeed a “mania for treaties” which basically aims at the “moral suasion of the entire international community”.¹¹⁷ Yet the quest for moral suasion through “obsession with conventions, protocols, legalisms” is, for him, a “farce” since its net effect is “to temper American power”.¹¹⁸ In other words, the whole point of multilateralism is to “reduce American freedom of action by making it subservient to, dependent on, constricted by the will-and interests- of other nations. To tie down Gulliver with a thousand strings. To domesticate the most undomesticated, most outsized, national interest on the planet-ours.”¹¹⁹“The slavish pursuit of international legitimacy”, for Krauthammer, works totally as a bulwark against the unilateral exercise of U.S.’ unique unipolar power in the interest of the American people. It creates a “Gulliver effect” that brings inaction. Multilateralism is a way for great powers, like France, to restrain the unipolar power, and a way for weaker states to multiply their power by creating alliances with stronger actors.

¹¹⁵ Loc. cit.

¹¹⁶ Loc. cit.

¹¹⁷ Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, The American Enterprise Institute, (Washington, D.C.: AEI, 2004), pp.5-6.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p.6.

¹¹⁹ Loc.cit.

The third school of foreign policy that Krauthammer takes issue with is realism. He describes realism as a school of thought that emphasizes the primacy of power in international relations which views the liberal project as a great illusion in an international system whereby the Hobbesian logic of the state of nature prevails. For realists, since creating an international system in the image of domestic society- based on shared values and a common enforcer of norms- requires a revolution in human nature, it is simply utopian. In other words, transforming the Hobbesian jungle into a Lockean world cannot come about through creating effective international institutions. This “hopeless” vision shared by realist thinkers make them believe in the definition of peace offered by Ambrose Bierce in his *The Devil’s Dictionary*: “Peace: *noun*, in international affairs, a period of cheating between two periods of fighting.”¹²⁰ Hence, what is labeled as ‘international community’ is indeed a “cacophony” which emerges out of the conflicting ambitions, interests, values and power of different states. What secures the anarchical international system from falling into total chaos is not treaties and the goodwill shared by states across the world, but the “overwhelming power and deterrent threat of the United States”: “If someone invades your house, you call the cops. Who do you call if someone invades your country? You dial Washington. In the unipolar world, the closest thing to a centralized authority, to an enforcer of norms, is America- American values”¹²¹

He portrays the United States as “the landmine between barbarism and civilization” which legitimates all preemptive and unilateral actions and strikes by the U.S. in the name of protecting the civilized world from the

¹²⁰ Quoted in Krauthammer, “Democratic Realism: An American...” p.10.

¹²¹ Ibid, p.10.

barbarian attacks. Krauthammer hails realism for “choosing not to be Gulliver”, and for its disbelief in international norms, which is simply a fiction, and in multilateralism, which means to be “held hostage to the will of others”.¹²² He argues that in an international system where there is “no sovereign, no police, no protection” and where “power is the ultimate arbiter and history has bequeathed [us] unprecedented power” the U.S. must be “vigilant” in preserving that power as well as “the freedom of action to use it”.¹²³

Nonetheless, Krauthammer explores and points out the limits of realism while embracing many of its core insights. Realism is a “valuable antidote” to the “woolly internationalism of the 1990s”, yet it does not bring us so far. Realism, for Krauthammer, rightly emphasizes the centrality of power and national interest and provides a sober and right description of the anarchical international system and of its imperatives, but a foreign policy perspective cannot rely solely on power. Pure realism, he argues, is doomed to failure in the American context for it does not provide a vision that transcends the simple logic of the pursuit of power. “It is all means and no ends.”¹²⁴ Hans Morgenthau’s famous dictum that lays ‘interest defined in terms of power’ as the ultimate imperative of states might be a good description of what motivates states, but not a good prescription for America. Krauthammer asserts that American foreign policy cannot and will not live by *realpolitik* alone and that it must transcend beyond straight power considerations and appeal to some ideals. Otherwise, he cautions, the realists will lose the debate they had entered

¹²² *ibid*, p.12.

¹²³ *ibid*, p.13.

¹²⁴ Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.16.

with liberal internationalists. He argues that this is exactly why there has emerged an idealist school of foreign policy within American conservative circles that views America's national interest as an expression of values. This is the fourth school that Krauthammer deals with: democratic globalism.

Democratic globalism, for Krauthammer, often incorrectly and invidiously called neoconservatism. He defines democratic globalism as a way of foreign policy making that "defines the national interest not as power but as values", that is the supreme value of what John Kennedy called "the success of liberty" as both the means and ends of American foreign policy.¹²⁵

Krauthammer sees George W. Bush and Tony Blair as the most public spokesmen of democratic realism. President Bush put this notion in his speech at Whitehall in 2003 November: "The United States and Great Britain share a mission in the world beyond the balance of power or the simple pursuit of interest. We seek the advance of freedom and the peace that freedom brings."¹²⁶ Krauthammer argues that these two leaders "rallied America and the world to a struggle over values" and engaged in a "War on Terror whose essential element is the global spread of democracy".¹²⁷

Democratic globalism is moralistic because it sees the engine of history not in a realist 'will to power', but in a 'will to freedom'. Krauthammer argues that the idealistic inspiration of democratic globalists comes from the Truman Doctrine of 1947, the Kennedy inaugural of 1961, and Reagan's "evil empire" speech of 1983 all of which were aiming at "recasting a struggle for power between two geopolitical titans into a struggle between freedom and

¹²⁵ Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, The American Enterprise Institute, (Washington, D.C.: AEI, 2004), p.14.

¹²⁶ *Ibid*, p.14.

¹²⁷ *Loc.cit.*

unfreedom, and yes, good and evil”.¹²⁸ This is why, he argues, Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan harshly criticized Truman, and all foreign policy establishment “vilified” Reagan for “ideologizing the Cold War by injecting a moral overlay”. The credo of democratic globalism that goes beyond Morgenthau’s “interest defined in terms of power” also explains its political appeal. Krauthammer maintains that democratic globalist persuasion fits quite well American exceptionalism that sees America as a “nation uniquely built not on blood, race or consanguinity, but on a proposition-to which its sacred honor has been pledged for two centuries.”¹²⁹ This is why, Krauthammer argues, non-Americans find it difficult to believe in such a “value-driven” foreign policy, and why Europeans find it “hopelessly and irritatingly moralistic”.¹³⁰

Despite the fact that democratic globalism shifts the focus from a realist will-to-power to a conservative conception of ‘will-to-freedom’, Krauthammer welcomes democratic globalism as an improvement on realism. It is an improvement because it “understands the utility of democracy as a means for achieving global safety and security”.¹³¹ Realism undervalues the internal structures of states since they see the international system as an arena of ‘colliding billiard balls’. Hence it does not make a substantial difference whether a state has a democratic or authoritarian regime. Yet, democratic globalists grasp the “rule” that “fellow democracies provide the most secure

¹²⁸ Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.14.

¹²⁹ Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, The American Enterprise Institute, (Washington, D.C., 2004), p.14.

¹³⁰ Loc.cit.

¹³¹ Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.16.

alliances and most stable relationships.”¹³² The realist way of pursuing and protecting national interests, that is “going around the world and bashing bad guys over the head”, has its limits. “At some point”, he argues, “you have to implant something, something organic and self-developing. And that something is democracy.”¹³³ In that sense, Krauthammer argues that for democratic globalists, the worldwide expansion of democracy¹³⁴ has not only a moral but also a geopolitical value. For him, the reason is simple: democracies are inherently friendlier to the U.S., less belligerent to their neighbors and more inclined to peace.

Although these arguments are borrowed from democratic peace theorists of the liberal tradition, Krauthammer clearly differentiates democratic peace from democratic globalism. He argues that contrary to the democratic peace theory, democratic globalism is not Wilsonian.¹³⁵ Wilson’s vision was to create international institutions in order to create a democratic community of nations, but democratic globalism shares realism’s core insight about the centrality of power and “contempt for the fictional legalisms of liberal internationalism”.¹³⁶ In other words democratic globalism, as represented by George Bush and Tony Blair’s political leadership, does not stand for the multilateralist pillar of liberal internationalism.

The problem with democratic globalism, Krauthammer argues, is that it is “too ambitious and too idealistic” as stated in Tony Blair’s speech: “[the]

¹³² Loc.cit.

¹³³ Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, The American Enterprise Institute, (Washington, D.C., 2004), p.15.

¹³⁴ This conception of democracy includes not only regular elections but also “limited government protection of minorities, individual rights, the rule of law and open economies”. See Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.16.

¹³⁵ Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, The American Enterprise Institute, (Washington, D.C., 2004), p.15.

¹³⁶ Loc.cit.

spread of freedom is our last line defense and our first line of attack”¹³⁷

Pushing democracy promotion too far as a worldwide crusade would, for Krauthammer, overstretch the material resources and exhaust the morale of the U.S. The danger of democratic globalism is its universalism, “its open-ended commitment to human freedom, its temptation to plant the flag of democracy everywhere. It must learn to say no”¹³⁸ However, Krauthammer acknowledges the obvious fact that the U.S. says no to the democratic demands in some countries (i.e. Burma, Congo, Liberia) and countenances alliances with the authoritarian regimes in some others (i.e. Egypt, Pakistan, Russia). This kind of a gap between the democratic rhetoric and the authoritarian-friendly policies of the U.S. gives way to criticisms of hypocrisy. This is why, Krauthammer argues, the U.S. has to develop the criteria for saying yes or no to democracy promotion. The answer lies in the fifth alternative school of foreign policy that Krauthammer himself tries to establish: democratic realism.

The axiom of democratic realism is as follows: “We will support democracy everywhere, but we will commit blood and treasure only in places where there is a strategic necessity-meaning, places central to the larger war against the existential enemy, the enemy that poses a global mortal threat to freedom.”¹³⁹ He comes up with a concise and single answer to the question of what should be the criteria for where to bring democracy. Liberal internationalism assumes an idealist, even utopian posture for universalizing the effort of democracy promotion as a panacea to the burning security challenges, and realism nearly totally neglects democracy as it pertains to

¹³⁷ Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.16.

¹³⁸ Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, The American Enterprise Institute, (Washington, D.C., 2004), p.16.

¹³⁹ Loc.cit.

domestic politics which would have only a marginal effect on foreign policy making. Democratic globalism draws on realism but still follows the universalism of liberal internationalism in a naïve way. Democratic realism, on the other hand, proposes a pragmatic criterion: the U.S. should promote democracy “where it counts”.¹⁴⁰ It should push for democracy in those regions where the “defense or advancement of freedom is critical to success in the larger war against the existential enemy.”

The notion of ‘existential enemy’ plays a constitutive role in democratic realism. After World War II, promoting and instituting democracy in Germany and Japan ‘counted’ as these states have turned into bulwarks against the ‘existential enemy’ of the Cold War, Soviet communism. Now, Krauthammer argues, the existential enemy is “Arab/Islamic radicalism”¹⁴¹, or “Arab/Islamic totalitarianism that has threatened us [U.S.] in both its secular and religious forms for the quarter-century since the Khomeini revolution of 1979.”¹⁴² Democratization is viewed as the “single, remotely plausible” strategy for “attacking the monster behind 9/11”. He sees the root causes of security threats coming from the Middle East as the “cauldron of political oppression, religious intolerance, and social ruin in the Arab-Islamic world”.

¹⁴⁰ Loc.cit.

¹⁴¹ Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.17.

¹⁴² Krauthammer’s depiction of the new ‘existential enemy’ is imbued with orientalist, essentialist, totalizing, homogenizing, stigmatizing and even Islamophobic reading of Islam and the, Muslim world: “Islam is not just as fanatical and unappeasable in its anti-Americanism, anti-Westernism, and anti-modernism as anything we have ever known. It has the distinct advantage of being grounded in a venerable religion of over one billion adherents that not only provides a ready supply of recruits-trained and readied in mosques and madrassas far more effective, autonomous and ubiquitous than any Hitler Youth or Komsomol camp- but is able to draw on a long and deep tradition of zeal, messianic expectation and a cult of martyrdom. Hitler and Stalin had to invent these out of whole cloth. Mussolini’s version was a parody. Islamic radicalism flies under a flag with far more historical depth and enduring appeal than the ersatz religions of the swastika and hammer-and-sickle that proved so historically thin and insubstantial.” See, Charles Krauthammer, *Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World*, (Washington, D.C., The American Enterprise Institute 2004), p.17.

¹⁴³ Oppression of the Middle Eastern people by regimes with no legitimacy buttresses anti-Americanism.

When compared to democratic globalism, democratic realism is more “targeted, focused and limited”¹⁴⁴ and does not have a universalistic vision of countenancing democracy all over the world. In that sense, democratic realism tempers the universalistic aspirations of democratic globalism. This “limitedness” in pursuing democracy promotion policies is exactly what I think is operative in the field as far as the Middle East is concerned. The universalistic “excesses” of democratic globalism in the form of a project of the global spread of democracy as a national security strategy, is moulded, modified, mitigated, and ‘*limited*’ through different institutional engineerings in the Middle East.

I argue that the logic of democratic realism is operative in the U.S.’s relations with Egypt. I maintain that democratic realism, most lucidly and vibrantly expressed by Krauthammer and elaborated by other neoconservative thinkers, provides the best analytical framework to understand the current Bush administration’s policies in the name of democracy promotion and to explore the modalities of how such a foreign policy vision is put into practice. It also provides the broader ideological, if not philosophical, background and justification of the U.S. policy of accommodating the authoritarian Mubarak regime while keeping the discourse of democracy promotion, despite the apparent weakening of the emphasis. In the context of Egypt, the ‘limitedness’ and ‘targetedness’ in democracy promotion means U.S. support of authoritarian rule, since there is no doubt that a democratic Egypt would not be

¹⁴³ Loc. cit.

¹⁴⁴ Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.17.

as favorable as an authoritarian ruler given the high anti-American sentiments in the region. In other words, as argued by Steven Hook, “contrary to its principled rhetorical tone, the actual conduct of U.S. foreign policy reflects a consequentialist ethic” in the case of Egypt.¹⁴⁵ Then, what will be the modality of achieving the following two things simultaneously: accommodating the authoritarian regime and initiating a policy of democratization.

One answer is provided by P.H. Liotta and James F. Miskel. Building on the assertions of Robert D. Kaplan and the State Failure Task Force that democratization and liberalization do not always lead to positive outcomes,¹⁴⁶ they argue that the Middle East, or the Greater Near East as they call it, is an “unpropitious location” for democracy to take root.¹⁴⁷ Hence, they question the wisdom of the Bush administration’s policy of democracy promotion in the Middle East as they see it in conflict with U.S. interests. The fundamental problem in promoting democracy in the region is what is widely referred to as the “democracy dilemma”, or what Avi Shalim calls “Condi’s conundrum”,¹⁴⁸ which can be summarized as the fact that the U.S. relies upon the cooperation of the friendly but authoritarian regimes in “assuring access to oil supplies, suppressing terrorism, and building international support for the containment of states such as the Islamic Republic of Iran.”¹⁴⁹ Even more critical is the high

¹⁴⁵ Steven W. Hook, “Inconsistent U.S. Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad”, in *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, ed. by Peter J. Schraeder. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002. p.110

¹⁴⁶ Robert D. Kaplan, “A Sense of Tragic: Developmental Dangers in the Twenty-first Century”. Available at www.nwc.navy.mil.

¹⁴⁷ P.H. Liotta and James F. Miskel, “Dangerous Democracy? American Internationalism and the Greater Near East”, *Orbis*, (Summer 2004), p. 438.

¹⁴⁸ He argues that if Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is sincere about her call for democracy in the Arab world, then “she must accept the outcome of free elections which generally would produce Islamists, anti-US governments.” See, Avi Shlaim, “Withdrawal is a Prelude to Annexation,” *The Guardian*, 22 June 2005. Quoted in Glenn E. Perry, “Imperial Democratization: Rhetoric and Reality”, *Arab Studies Quarterly* 28, no.3&4, (Summer/Fall 2006).

¹⁴⁹ Liotta and Miskel, art.cit., p.439.

anti-American sentiments that predominate Arab publics. For instance the 2002 global attitude survey carried out by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press indicated that more than two-thirds of the public in ‘moderate’ Arab countries such as Egypt, Jordan and Lebanon are anti-American.¹⁵⁰

Relying on the observation that the Arab public is predominantly anti-American and the autocratic rulers are predominantly cooperative, Liotta and Miskel argue that an assertive and internationalist democracy promotion policy would produce “dangerous democracy” which would not cooperate with the U.S. in issues of great economic and strategic importance. They recognize that democracy could produce more security for the United States as it would produce more friendly rulers and regimes, yet they ‘caution’ that the “actual promotion of democracy in the near term might actually increase the immediate risk of instability.”¹⁵¹ This is exactly the same argument that Krauthammer puts forward while criticizing democratic globalism. The universalistic implementation of democracy promotion policies might empower certain social forces in the Middle East, Islamic groups being the foremost of them, that ardently oppose U.S. policies in the region. This was the trap that democratic globalism was running the risk of falling into. This is why Krauthammer maintained that the “central” principle of the “global war” of democracy promotion was whether a change in the political direction of a state or territory would have an important, perhaps decisive, effect in defeating Arab/Islamic radicalism.”¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, p.440.

¹⁵¹ Ibid, p.445.

¹⁵² Charles Krauthammer, “In Defense of Democratic Realism”, *The National Interest* 77, (Fall 2004), p.21.

In lieu of “dangerous democracy” (read democratic globalism), Liotta and Miskel call for a long term strategy and policy of “adaptive democracy”. Their adaptive democratic model is best represented by the Hashemite dynasty of Jordan where “both King Abdullah and King Hussein have been wise enough to tolerate an opposition and real parliament yet tough enough to use coercion periodically to reset the rules of the game when things get out of hand.”¹⁵³ Liotta and Miskel admit that their model is not “entirely a clean compromise”, but it is one that could work, or to put it in Krauthammer’s words, one that “counts”.

The question of how the democratization rhetoric employed by the U.S. goes hand in hand with increasing U.S. reliance on authoritarian regimes finds an answer in Liotta and Miskel’s article:¹⁵⁴

[w]hile we applaud the Bush administration’s emphasis on promoting democracy as one of the pillars of its National Security Strategy, we also note that the administration has not voiced substantial objection to antidemocratic practices in regimes whose assistance with more “pressing” national interests is required. Whether dealing with Uzbekistan, Pakistan, or the People’s Republic of China, the administration has backed away from emphasis on democracy at the expense of other issues such as the war on terrorism. People around the world, especially in the greater Near East, see this dichotomy and recognize that, to date, the United States continues in an imperfect balancing of its own interests.”

A closer analysis of Egyptian politics and especially of the recent democratization and opening up reforms (which I will elaborate in the next chapter) reveals that the scheme of “adaptive democracy” is quite instrumental in understanding the content and context of Egyptian politics. As in the

¹⁵³ Robert Kaplan, “Eastward to Tartary: Travels in the Balkans, the Middle East, and the Caucasus”, p. 173. Quoted in P.H. Liotta and James F. Miskel, “Dangerous Democracy? American Internationalism and the Greater Near East”, *Orbis*, (Summer 2004), p. 446.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p.447.

authors' paradigmatic example of Jordan, the political field is governed and domineered by an autocratic ruler who is "wise enough to tolerate opposition" to the extent that it does not shift the structure of power distribution, and if the opposition develops a prospect of a substantial change in the system, the Mubarak regime proves that it is "tough enough to use coercion periodically to reset the rules of the game when things get out of hand." I discuss the specific modalities of how this control mechanism operates in Chapter 5.

It is quite apparent that Liotta and Miskel's frame of "adaptive democracy" builds on the "democratic realist" perspective of Krauthammer in that it is not universal, and it is limited and targeted. Since a robust democratization policy would bring the "Arab/Islamic radicals" to power, which would undermine U.S. interests, Liotta and Miskel propose a long term, low profile and low intensity democratization policy which would both provide security by socializing the peoples and elites into U.S. values in the long term, and would secure cooperation of the Arab regimes in critical strategic and economic issues in the short term.

One further and quite interesting example of a parallel "democratic realist" position is provided by an ex-neoconservative ideologue, Francis Fukuyama. In his *New York Times* article where he announced his divorce from neoconservatism, he developed a critique of the Bush team's foreign policy. Fukuyama's embrace of a democratic realist logic is quite interesting since in his 2004 *National Interest* article, *The Neoconservative Moment*, he openly opposed Krauthammer's call for democratic realism by sidelining with the democratic globalist vision. His critical stance towards the ultra-neoconservative U.S. foreign policy perspective makes sense when we think of

Fukuyama's liberal stress on multilateralism, the importance of international institutions and of international legitimacy. On these issues he can rightly be regarded as a democratic globalist.¹⁵⁵ But as far as U.S. democracy promotion toward the Middle East is concerned, I argue, Fukuyama is starkly 'democratic realist'. How?

Krauthammer's democratic realism is transformed into "realistic Wilsonianism" in Fukuyama's scheme which is described by him as a way that "better matches means to ends".¹⁵⁶ Despite the fact that Fukuyama is in a battle against Krauthammer over democratic realism, the argument he uses to criticize the Bush administration about promoting democracy in the Middle East is quite 'democratic realist' in the sense that just like Krauthammer, he also criticizes the "overoptimism" and universalism of democracy initiatives which are a kind of "social engineering" as stated by William Kristol and Robert Kagan: "To many the idea of America using its power to promote changes of regime in nations ruled by dictators rings of utopianism. But in fact, it is eminently realistic. There is something perverse in declaring the impossibility of promoting democratic change abroad in light of the record of the past three decades."¹⁵⁷

He even argues that his influential book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, was misunderstood as if it stood for a universal hunger for liberal democracy. Nonetheless, he points out that what is central in his thesis is not a

¹⁵⁵ It should be reiterated that democratic globalism is not cosmopolitanism or idealism. It is a kind of realism which prioritizes power as well as ideas, and recognizes the importance of democracy as a pacifying and Americanizing process. Fukuyama concedes that multilateralism is not an end in itself and the U.S. should resort to it when necessary. His criticism is not pertinent to the core of Bush foreign policy, but to the way it is implemented. For instance the way the Iraqi War was, and is, fought as it peeks anti-American sentiments in the Middle East which, at the end, undermines U.S. interests. Francis Fukuyama, "The Neoconservative Moment", *The National Interest*, (Summer 2004).

¹⁵⁶ Francis Fukuyama, "After Neoconservatism", *The New York Times*, February 19, 2006.

¹⁵⁷ Loc.cit.

desire for liberal democracy but for living in a modern society understood as “technologically advanced and prosperous”. The drive for democratic political participation is something that would emerge out of this modernization process and become a universal desire only through the course of time. In that sense he defines his argument as a kind of Marxism for its stress on a historical process of social evolution “but one that terminates in liberal democracy rather than communism”, and defines neoconservative democracy promotion as a kind of Leninism since the neoconservatives such as Krauthammer, Kristol and Kagan believe that “history can be pushed along with the right application of power and will”.¹⁵⁸

Then what does that imply? What does Fukuyama call for? He refashions Krauthammer’s proposal that the U.S. should promote democracy where it counts, and it does not count in the Middle East right now. For him, a Wilsonian policy that pays attention to how rulers treat their citizens is therefore right, but “it needs to be informed by a certain realism that was missing from the thinking of the Bush administration in its first term and of its neoconservative allies”¹⁵⁹ Hence, Fukuyama criticizes the Bush administration’s push for democratization in the Middle East, claiming that, in the last analysis, it would not serve U.S. interests given that U.S. is increasingly attracting hatred in the region because of its “overly militarized” democratization program, and that ‘radical Islamism’ is the strongest political force in the field:

We need in the first instance to understand that promoting democracy and modernization in the Middle East is not a

¹⁵⁸ Fukuyama claims that Leninism was a “tragedy” in its Bolshevik version, but it has turned into a “farce” when it came into practice in the U.S. See, “After Neoconservatism”, *The New York Times*, February 19, 2006.

¹⁵⁹ Loc.cit.

solution to the problem of jihadist terrorism; in all likelihood it will make the short-term problem worse, as we have seen in the case of the Palestinian election bringing HAMAS to power. Radical Islamism is a byproduct of modernization itself, arising from the loss of identity that accompanies the transition to a modern, pluralist society. (...) More democracy will mean more alienation, radicalization and-yes, unfortunately-terrorism.

This line of thinking rejects the notion that democratization will bring an end to terrorist activities, which is an idea shared by various authors, Gregory Gause III being one of the vanguards among them. The real question for Fukuyama is “to appropriately balance American ideals and interests in the coming years” In his second Inaugural Address, President Bush said that “America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one”, yet, Fukuyama stands for a different position. Fukuyama criticizes the neoconservative thinkers and policymakers for ‘idealistically’ using American power to promote democracy and human rights abroad.¹⁶⁰ This idealism both includes a moralistic universalism as to how, and around which principles, the domestic politics of a country ‘should’ be organized, and a blind commitment to democratic mechanisms-such as electoral politics- whereby the preconditions of democracy are far from being mature.

At this point, there is a clear parallelism between Fukuyama and Krauthammer. Despite their different approaches to neoconservative policymaking, they both criticize Bush administration’s strict emphasis on democracy promotion. Both Fukuyama and Krauthammer criticize the Bush administration for lacking the realist insight in translating the ideal of

¹⁶⁰ Fukuyama argues that he was long associated with the neoconservative thinking and he says that he held many posts with them and became the student or colleague of many of them. But he announces that he should no longer be named as a neoconservative. Democracy promotion is one of his powerful reasons for dropping the neoconservative legacy. For him, the kind of “social engineering” that the Bush administration’s foreign policy aims at contradicts with the core insights of neoconservative thinking.

democracy promotion into a foreign policy strategy. Fukuyama maintains that U.S. support for democratization in some Arab countries brought Islamic movements to power, which undermined vital American interests in the region. They both argue that U.S. democracy promotion has gone too far during the Bush administration. For Fukuyama, the reason why American democracy promotion has been excessive and untimely can be witnessed in the rise of the Islamist groups either to government or to a more powerful position in the political battlefield. The Islamist Muslim Brotherhood of Egypt “made a strong showing in parliamentary elections in November and December 2005”, the holding of elections in Iraq in December 2005 “led to the ascendance of a Shiite bloc with close ties to Iran”, and HAMAS, which represents “a movement overtly dedicated to the destruction of Israel” victoriously came to power in the January 2006 elections.

For Fukuyama, the problem with the neoconservative democracy promotion is twofold: First, it is overly militarized. Second, it is pushed too far. The first criticism is clear since the missionary discourse of democracy promotion has been extensively employed by the U.S. government to legitimize the military action in Iraq. Yet, the second criticism is more problematic, and constitutes the core question of this thesis as well: Did the U.S. really push too far for democratization in the Middle East during the Bush administration. If so, to what extent? If not, how?

As for the first criticism, Fukuyama states that the ends of the agenda of neoconservatism is “as American as apple pie”, yet the problem is with its excessive resort to military action in trying to accomplish them. On the other hand, neoconservatives like Krauthammer, Kristol and Kagan see no problem

in resorting to military action for 'regime change'. Indeed, Fukuyama by no means suggests a nullification of war within U.S. foreign policy and sometimes even exalts conflict, even in its violent form as in the American Civil War, for bringing forth the good.¹⁶¹ Nevertheless, he opines that the use of military force accompanied by the failure to come up with a substantive democratic transition created a backlash both domestically and internationally. Internationally it rendered the cause of democracy questionable; and domestically, it provided a very favorable condition for the realist tradition of foreign policy making, identified with Kissinger, to launch a powerful attack on democracy promotion.

I argue that Krauthammer's call for a democratic realist foreign policy finds its most vigorous, systematic and supportive echo in Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev's analysis. They claim that after September 11, the U.S. faces a "new mid-east conundrum" whereby it should choose between "democratic impulses" and "imperial interests": "The partisans of the 'democratic thesis' must realize that the United States has a stark choice in the Middle East: it can either project its Wilsonian values or protect its strategic interests-it cannot simultaneously do both."¹⁶² For them the Bush administration endorsed the 'democratic thesis' that contends that if the dictators of the region who misgovern their polities can be removed, the populace would elect rulers who would pursue policies harmonious with American interests, which are, for them, cooperation in the war on terror,

¹⁶¹ In Fukuyama's panel presentation at the National Endowment for Democracy, co-organized by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Journal of Democracy, titled "How Democracies Emerge: The 'Sequencing' Fallacy", January 30, 2007. The panel can be watched at <http://www.carnegieendowment.org/events/index.cfm?fa=eventDetail&id=953&&prog=zgp&proj=zdr1>

¹⁶² Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev, "Democratic Impulses versus Imperial Interests: America's New Mid-East Conundrum", *Orbis* (Summer 2003), p.415.

normalization of relations with Israel¹⁶³ and acquiescence to regime change in Iraq. The adoption of the democratic thesis is proclaimed in the National Security Strategy of 2002: “We will defend peace by fighting terrorists and tyrants. We will extend the peace by encouraging free and open societies on every continent.”¹⁶⁴

For Takeyh and Gvosdev, the problem lies in the fact that anti-Americanism is the sole point that unites nearly all ideologies existent in the political landscape of the Middle East, which are Islamism, nationalism, liberalism and socialism. In other words, there is an inherent tension between democracy and American imperium in the sense that nearly all political forces in the Middle East adopt the same position when it comes to resisting *Pax-Americana*: “The problem for the American imperium is not the rise of fundamentalism, but the fact that nearly every political tendency in the Middle East is averse to the region’s absorption into the *Pax Americana*.”¹⁶⁵

The democracy promotion orientation of the U.S. empire is “both paradoxical and potentially self-defeating” as an empire “can only accommodate democracy among its clients when a clear convergence of

¹⁶³ Takeyh and Gvosdev quote from Marc Grossman, then the Under-Secretary of State for Political Affairs, when asked whether one of the first acts of a postwar Iraqi democracy should be to recognize Israel, he responded “I certainly hope it’s among the very first things that they do.” Washington Foreign Press Center Briefing, March 19, 2003.

¹⁶⁴ White House, National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002. The same point is also elaborated by the State Department’s Policy Planning Director, Richard Haas: “The growing gap between many Muslim regimes and their citizens potentially compromises the ability of these governments to cooperate on issues of importance to United States. The domestic pressures will increasingly limit the heads of many regimes in the Muslim world to provide assistance, or even to acquiesce to America’s efforts to combat terrorism or address the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.” Richard Haas, “Toward Greater Democracy in the Muslim World”, *Council on Foreign Relations*, December 12, 2002.

¹⁶⁵ According to Takeyh and Gvosdev, the defining characteristic of an imperial state is “its desire to concentrate power in its own hands, ensuring that other actors conform to its leadership and allow it to set the agenda”. For them, since the U.S. seeks to determine the international orientation and the policies of the sovereign Middle Eastern states as exemplified in the doctrines of preemptive war and regime change, it “cannot but be classified as an imperial power”. See Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K. Gvosdev, “Democratic Impulses versus Imperial Interests: America’s New Mid-East Conundrum”, *Orbis* (Summer 2003), p.417-419.

interests exists”,¹⁶⁶ and such a convergence of interests does not exist right now in the Middle East. As an imperial state that acts according to the imperatives of “maintaining stability, containing its rivals, and displacing its nemesis”, the U.S. needs “garrisons, naval installations, and the cooperation of the local intelligence services” in the region.¹⁶⁷ Nonetheless, Takeyh and Gvosdev argue that despite these realist imperial imperatives, Washington is steeped in a “Wilsonian hubris” which makes them fail to see that the Middle East could embrace the values of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment, yet “with equal vigor reject the cumbersome and intrusive American presence” and the “likely to aggressively resist the absorption of their region into the American imperium”. This is why they claim that the Middle Eastern democracies are likely to have more in common with Nehru than Adenauer.¹⁶⁸ They argue that as a result of a “nationalistic defiance of a global power’s priorities”, a democratic Arab country would seek what it perceives to be “equitable and fair” relations with the U.S, hence would reject or object to the “cumbersome American imperial demands, especially regarding Israel”.¹⁶⁹

This is why William A Rugh, a senior diplomat, argues that while President George W. Bush officially regards it as a high priority, U.S. diplomats, the Bush administration and even Bush himself “do not demonstrate a full-fledged commitment to carrying out a policy of democracy

¹⁶⁶ Loc.cit.

¹⁶⁷ Loc.cit.

¹⁶⁸ According to Takeyh and Gvosdev the assumption that lies beneath the democracy promotion policies of the U.S. is that the countries of the Middle East could be “Finlandized” in the sense that they would carry out domestic policies with full freedom while coordinating their foreign policies to conform to U.S. interests. Ibid, p.418-419.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., p.421.

promotion”.¹⁷⁰ Democracy is not a high-priority in the U.S. diplomacy agenda. Rugh maintains that the U.S. officials inform him that democracy is often absent from the classified talking points conveyed by the U.S. State Department in Washington to foreign service officers overseas. And even when present, it is accorded lower priority than items such as the Arab-Israeli peace process and the war in Iraq. Bush probably does not berate heads of state in the Middle East over democracy; more likely, leaders such as Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Abdullah preempt any diplomatic debate on democracy, stating simply that their nations are moving toward freedom.”¹⁷¹“Policymakers and officials do use economic pressure to promote democracy but only selectively. In the case of crucial allies such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia –where much is at stake for American political and strategic interests- Rugh argues that there is much less pressure. This selective use of pressuring Arab autocracies is well captured by Avi Shlaim: “America insists on democracy only for its Arab opponents, not for its friends.”¹⁷²

However, Takeyh and Gvosdev also recognize the fact that the “imperial structure in the Middle East is seemingly contingent and unresponsive dynasties and lifetime presidents who use petrodollars and great-power patronage to shield themselves from their restive constituents, provoking their own insurgents, rebels, and terrorists.” At this critical juncture, the U.S. is at a crossroads: it will either “accept the risk of democratization”, or “dispense

¹⁷⁰ Michael Kugelman, *Democratizing the Middle East? Lighting the Path to Understanding*, The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Occasional Paper No.2, (Tufts University, 2006), p.43.

¹⁷¹ Loc. cit.

¹⁷² Quoted in, Glenn E. Perry, “Imperial Democratization: Rhetoric and Reality”, *Arab Studies Quarterly* 28, no.3&4 (Summer/Fall 2006), p.66.

with its Wilsonian pieties and craft a durable empire”.¹⁷³ And then, they come up with a third option in order to “craft a durable empire” in the Middle East, that is the model of “liberal autocracy”.

Since the U.S. cannot run the risk of democratization and since September 11 made it clear that the status quo is simply untenable in the region, Takeyh and Gvosdev propose the model of ‘liberal autocracy’ as an imperial craft of new governing arrangement in the Middle East. They present it as a “middle course” between blindly “propping up” authoritarian rulers and “gambling on democracy” that aims at creating regimes “capable of *managing rather than suppressing pluralism*”(my emphasis):

In a liberal autocratic order, democratic institutions and procedures such as parliaments, a liberal press, and the rule of law would exist but be circumscribed by executive power. Such an order permits the forces of opposition a limited voice in national affairs, including a degree of independent political space in the public square, in return for abiding by the rules set down by the regime. In contrast to the totalitarian model, this system of governance recognizes the need for a degree of public participation as a means of injecting a measure of accountability in the system.

This model foresees a strong executive who firmly controls the legislature and the foreign policy orientation of the country. A liberal autocratic regime would provide ample individual rights and liberties, but would place strict control on the organizational and collective rights and liberties. This model, they argue, is not fictional or hypothetical, on the reverse, the region’s “most stable and pro-American regimes” are already moving toward this type of governance such as the ‘modernizing monarchies’ of Morocco, Jordan and Kuwait; the liberalizing one-party state of Tunisia, and the “circumscribed

¹⁷³ Ray Takeyh and Nikolas K.Gvosdev, “Democratic Impulses versus Imperial Interests: America’s New Mid-East Conundrum”, *Orbis* (Summer 2003), p.427.

democracy” of Turkey, all of which, for them, represent different variations in this “indigenous trend”. They argue that this is already an internally generated process in these Arab countries, and what the U.S. should do is to consolidate this trend of liberal autocratic regimes where they exist, and promote them where they do not exist. Moreover, Takeyh and Gvosdev maintain that the U.S. should offer this model to the “stagnant regimes from Cairo to Riyadh”.¹⁷⁴ My argument here is good news for Takeyh and Gvosdev: The U.S. is already implementing the exact liberal autocratic strategy in Egypt.¹⁷⁵

Quite parallel to what Takeyh and Gvosdev suggest, William Rugh argues that the “Washington-based policymakers and U.S. diplomats both appear to minimize democracy promotion on an operational level.” This declining emphasis on democratization in the Middle East is accompanied by a growing conviction that the U.S. should, and would, ally itself with the authoritarian regimes in the region: “(...) while Washington Beltway insiders may simply conclude that the United Arab Emirates’ political system is undemocratic, Abu Dhabi-based U.S. diplomats would recognize that the country’s benevolent dictatorship has produced enough stability and prosperity to dampen citizens’ enthusiasm for democratic reform.”¹⁷⁶

Takeyh and Gvosdev’s proposal of ‘liberal autocracy’ as a model for U.S. to consolidate and promote in the Middle East is in total harmony with Krauthammer’s model of “democratic realism”, Fukuyama’s model of

¹⁷⁴ Ibid, p.428.

¹⁷⁵ Indeed, Egypt has long been described as such in terms of its system’s degree of openness and accountability. Egypt combines elements of both authoritarianism and democracy. Daniel Brumberg places Egypt in the category of “liberalized autocracies”, and Marina Ottaway defines Egypt’s political regime as “semi-authoritarian”, since it involves a “trademark mixture of guided pluralism, controlled elections, and selective repression.” See, Daniel Brumberg, “The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy”, *Journal of Democracy* 13 (Fall 2002), p.56.

¹⁷⁶ William A. Rugh, quoted in Michael Kugelman, *Democratizing the Middle East? Lighting the Path to Understanding*, The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Occasional Paper No.2, (Tufts University, 2006), p.44.

“realistic Wilsonianism”. Takeyh and Gvosdev’s critique of the “democracy thesis” is a political conviction which Krauthammer refers to as “democratic globalism”, Fukuyama as “naïve Wilsonianism”, and Liotta and Miskel as “dangerous democracy”. All these thinkers come to the same conclusion that there is no way out for the U.S. empire to promote democracy in the Middle East as the existing regimes are unrepresentative and their oppressive character creates a fertile ground for extremist ideologies which pose a vital challenge to U.S. security. However, they also observe the fact that a rapid opening up of the system would create a political situation in the Middle East which Takeyh and Gvosdev refers to as “premature liberalization” that would “redound to the benefit of well-organized fundamentalist movements, who would install a fundamentalist regime implacably opposed to American interests”.¹⁷⁷ Hence, they agree with supporting democracy in the Middle East but only “**up to a point**” [boldface in the original] since this “newfound enthusiasm for change competes with other priorities”.¹⁷⁸ They propose principles and models that the U.S. should adopt in its democracy promotion policies towards the Middle East.

The aforementioned models do not exhaust the proposals engineered along the lines of ‘democratic realist’ thinking. Just to mention a few of them, we can take Jeremy M. Sharp’s proposal of “consequentialism” or “pragmatism” in his Congressional Research Service Report for the U.S. Congress in order to overcome what he calls the “Islamist dilemma”. He argues that the U.S. should promote reform “*where it is possible* [read, where it

¹⁷⁷ Takeyh and Gvosdev, art.cit., p.416. On the same issue, also see Amy Hawthorne, “The ‘Democracy Dilemma’ in the Arab World: How do you promote reform without undermining key United States Interests?” Foreign Service Journal, February 2001.

¹⁷⁸ Perry, art.cit., p. 66.

counts] without disrupting relations with other key Arab partners”.¹⁷⁹ He admits that his approach “would leave the U.S. government open to accusations of promoting reform inconsistently”, yet he contends that this is what best serves U.S. interests.¹⁸⁰ While analyzing the place of democracy promotion in U.S. foreign policy, Steven Hook argues that “contrary to its principled rhetorical tone, the actual conduct of U.S. foreign policy reflected a consequentialist ethic (...).”¹⁸¹ As moments of manifestations of this consequentialism, he provides the examples of the U.S. government’s embrace of Iran’s Shah Rıza Pahlavi and Cuba’s Fulgencio Batista, and its support for the 1954 coup against the Arbenz government in Guatemala which held a democratic legitimacy. The authoritarian regimes of the Third World were supported by dismissing the aspirations of the peoples of these countries in order to contain the Soviet threat which was regarded as “a product of the Devil”, as the Secretary of State John Foster Dulles noted.

In this thesis, by analyzing the place of democracy promotion in the U.S.’s foreign policy in Egypt, I argue that the Bush administration’s policy fits quite well to the ‘democratic realist’, ‘realistic Wilsonian’ and ‘liberal autocratic’ models. Florian Kohstall wisely captures the logic of the

¹⁷⁹ Jeremy M. Sharp, “U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma”, *CRS Report for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, Order Code RL 33486. June 15, 2006, p.7.

¹⁸⁰ This ‘consequentialist’ approach in U.S. policy of democracy promotion also includes a flexibility which takes the peculiarities of each country into account and hence, devises a policy of ‘selective engagement’ with different Islamist groups on a case-by-case basis. *Ibid*, p.7.

¹⁸¹ Steven W. Hook, “Inconsistent U.S. Efforts to Promote Democracy Abroad”, in *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality*, ed. by Peter J. Schraeder. London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002. p.110

‘democratic realist’ model operative in U.S. foreign policy in Egypt and clarifies its *modus operandi*.¹⁸²

The Egyptian regime is currently adjusting to international reform pressures, without releasing its grip on society. The rhetoric of democratization is omnipresent in the regime’s reform vocabulary, without generating tangible results. In order to understand this paradox, it is important to address the dynamics between foreign democracy promoters and national policy-makers. In a “friendly state” like Egypt, democracy is far from being imposed. The promotion of democratic principles is rather similar to a negotiation process between donor and client. Within the framework of close cooperation, *democratic principles are watered down to promote the interests of both parties*. This way of promoting democracy has unintended and even counterproductive consequences. It contributes to a cycle of reform and a permanent adjustment of the rules of the game, resulting in uncertainty for the challengers of regime incumbents. (my emphasis)

It goes without saying that I do not propose a causal link between these neoconservative models and the foreign policy behaviors of the U.S. What I do propose is a suggestive link that shows the parallelism between neoconservative thinking and the Bush administration’s policy outcomes on the issue of democracy promotion in the Middle East after September 11. And I submit that this suggestive link between neoconservative thinking and the Bush administration’s democracy promotion policy in the Middle East can be explained and understood through a constructivist and radical/critical analysis that I elaborate in the next chapter.

¹⁸² Florian Kohstall, “Reform Pirouettes: Foreign Democracy Promotion and the Politics of Adjustment in Egypt” *IPG* 3/2006, p.34.

CHAPTER 4: RETHINKING NEOCONSERVATIVE DEMOCRACY
PROMOTION THROUGH NON-ORTHODOX IR THEORIES

Constructivism: Making Sense of Identities and Interests

The relation between the ideological frame developed by neoconservative thinkers and the U.S.'s policy in the Middle East can be understood through a constructivist approach. Then, what does constructivism propose?

Constructivist theory comprehends international politics as a socially constructed artifact, rather than as an exogenously given structure. In contradistinction to different variants of realist thinking and its neo-liberal institutionalist counterpart, constructivism stands for the significance of ideational factors in the making of the 'social', hence in the making of foreign policy, by relying on the Weberian maxim that "material and ideal interests, rather than ideas, directly govern men's conduct".¹⁸³ Since intersubjectively produced meanings define social reality, constructivism takes "identities, norms, aspirations, ideologies and ideas" seriously in the construction of international politics.¹⁸⁴ To put it differently, ideational factors are operative in the making of the material sphere, hence, normative considerations and identities are formative in the definition of state interests. Wendt clearly puts it as "identities are the basis of interests".¹⁸⁵ Domestic self-images matter in foreign policy as much as national interests, therefore, self-images affect

¹⁸³ Emanuel Adler, "Seizing the Middle Ground: Constructivism in World Politics", *European Journal of International Relations* 3, no.3, (September 1997), p.322.

¹⁸⁴ John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge", *International Organization* 52, no.4, (Autumn 1998), p.855.

¹⁸⁵ Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power Politics", *International Organization* 46, no.2, (Spring 1992), p.398.

foreign policies.¹⁸⁶ Hence, while integrating both material and discursive power into the understanding of world politics¹⁸⁷, constructivism offers an account of politics of identity at the international level.¹⁸⁸ Constructivism focuses on state identities that are continuously reproduced, negotiated and transformed through foreign policy choices.¹⁸⁹ While recognizing the role of ideas and ideals, constructivism does not adopt the epistemological and ontological postures of interpretivism and idealism. Walker's comment on the topic is insightful:¹⁹⁰

(...) to suggest that culture and ideology are crucial for the analysis of world politics is not necessarily to take an idealist position. On the contrary, it is important to recognize that ideas, consciousness, culture and ideology are bound up with immediately visible kinds of political, military and economic power.

Within the context of this thesis, constructivism helps us to understand U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East after September 11 in two dimensions. First, it shows us the impact of neoconservative political imagination on U.S. foreign policy by providing an analytical framework

¹⁸⁶ Henry Nau, "America's Identity, Democracy Promotion and National Interests: Beyond Realism, Beyond Idealism", in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 129-131.

¹⁸⁷ Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", *International Security* 23, no.1, (Summer 1998), p.177.

¹⁸⁸ Constructivism has an important divergent characteristic from the realist, liberal, neo-Marxian or neo-Gramscian schools. Since social constructivist theories are only 'approaches' rather than theories, they have no necessary philosophical/theoretical attachment, hence, they have to choose a theory in analysis like liberal institutionalism (as Ruggie does), or poststructuralism (as Ashley and Campbell do) or English School (as Bull does) or neo-realism (as Wendt does). For a relevant discussion see Hazel Smith, "Why is There no International Democratic Theory?", in *Democracy and International Relations: Critical Theories/Problematic Practices*, Hazel Smith (eds), (Basingstoke: Macmillan 2000), , pp.1-31; Ted Hopf, "The Promise of Constructivism in International Relations Theory", *International Security* 23, no.1, (Summer 1998), p.177, and John Gerard Ruggie, "What Makes the World Hang Together? Neo-utilitarianism and the Social Constructivist Challenge", *International Organization* 52, no.4, (Autumn 1998), p.855.

¹⁸⁹ David Campbell, *Writing Security: United States Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press/Manchester University Press, 1998), p.10.

¹⁹⁰ R.B.J. Walker, "East Wind, West Wind: Civilization, Hegemonies and World Orders", in Walker (ed.) *Culture, Ideology and World Order*, (Boulder, Colo: Westview Press, 1984).

whereby ideas, norms, ideologies and identities play an important role in the conduct of international politics. Second, it helps us to see the interaction between an American domestic identity constructed as “democracy promoter” and a “Middle Eastern” identity constructed as security threat or “existential enemy”; and solid material interests that this kind of an identity construction paves the way for.

The first constructivist argument has already been discussed in the first part of this chapter. The neoconservative ideas and strategies on how the U.S. should behave towards the Middle East countries in so far as promoting democratization is concerned that are debated in the neoconservative journals such as *The National Interest*, *Orbis*, *Weekly Standard*, *Washington Institute Near East Policy Bulletin*, *American Enterprise Institute Publications* are put into practice by the Bush administration. In that sense, we can draw a strong suggestive link, if not a powerful causality, between the ideas developed by the neoconservative writers and Bush administration’s policy outcomes. Prominent neoconservative writers like Charles Krauthammer, Francis Fukuyama, Roy Takeyh, Nikolas Gvosdev, P.H.Liotta, James F. Miskel, Robert Kaplan, William Kristol, Gregory F. Gause III, Anatol Lieven all unite at a point that the U.S. should adopt a limited, targeted, selective and realistic stance in promoting democracy in the Middle East primarily because of the fact that anti-American Islamism, the “existential enemy” as Krauthammer labels it, is the most powerful socio-political force in the region. In other words, in the neoconservative account, the universalistic aspirations that democracy promotion policies appeal to simply disappear from the discourse. The universalism embedded in the spirit of democracy promotion is tamed by

neoconservatism's realist particularism that puts the main emphasis on U.S. national interests and tries to control the democratization processes of other polities in order to make them parallel with U.S. interests. As Lieven points out, "the merger of the selective use of 'democratization' with strategies based on ruthless 'realism' has been central to the neoconservatives' approach since the inception of this political will during the first decades of the Cold War."¹⁹¹ This control, limitedness or selectiveness on paper means support for authoritarian allies in practice, and this is exactly what the Bush administration has done in the Middle East after September 11. In chapter 4, I show the modalities of how the Bush administration continues to provide support to the authoritarian regime while initiating democracy promotion projects and employing a democratization rhetoric in the particular context of Egypt.

Secondly, constructivist theory helps us to grasp the interaction between ideas and interests by focusing on how a foreign policy identity established around democracy promotion both constructs, and becomes constructed by, material interests. When we are to analyze the U.S. foreign policy in general, and American democracy promotion in particular, through the analytical frame provided by constructivist approach, what we see is that from the very beginning, the U.S. has developed a foreign policy identity that portrayed itself as the exemplary form of government and a model for others¹⁹², regarded its values as universal and assumed a missionary zeal in championing them. This "messianic internationalism" which is deeply rooted

¹⁹¹ Anatol Lieven, "Wolfish Wilsonians: Existential Dilemmas of the Liberal Internationalists", *Orbis*, (Spring 2006), p.246.

¹⁹² Richard Falk, "What is the Greater Middle East Initiative Really About: Dreams and Nightmares", paper presented to the Symposium on The Greater Middle East and North Africa Project, p.3, November 8-10, 2004, Istanbul. About this universalist identity, the quotation that Richard Gephardt takes from Abraham Lincoln is also revealing: "Our defense is in the preservation of the spirit which prizes liberty as a heritage of all men, in all lands, everywhere".

in the civic nationalist tradition argues that “American values which represent salvation for all mankind, in its religious form, is as old as the first White settlement of New England.”¹⁹³ The Americans referred to their society as ‘a light unto nations’, ‘the new Jerusalem’ and ‘the city on the hill’. Later on, that perception of American state/society and the identity based upon notions like ‘manifest destiny’ paved the way for a more interventionist diplomacy as was first seen in the Monroe Doctrine, which then became the instrument of imposing the American will on its neighbors. Woodrow Wilson himself believed that American interventions in Mexico and the Caribbean were progressive because they opened the door for a democratic form of governance. Wilson declared in January 1917 that “These are American principles, American policies, and they are also the principles and policies forward-looking men and women everywhere, of every modern nation, of every enlightened community. They are the principles of mankind and must prevail.”¹⁹⁴ During the Cold War, the U.S. constructed a foreign policy identity which defined itself as the “global champion of freedom and democracy”, the “guarantor of freedom” and the “leader of the free world”¹⁹⁵ or as J.F. Kennedy put it, the “moral leader of the planet”.

Democracy promotion is a product of the post-Cold War U.S. foreign policy identity constructed and negotiated as “promoter of democracy” with a

¹⁹³ Lieven, art.cit., p.249.

¹⁹⁴ Quoted in Lieven, art.cit., p.250.

¹⁹⁵ Jutta Weldes, “The Cultural Production of Crises: U.S. Identity and Missiles in Cuba”, p.42, (eds) *Cultures of Insecurity*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999). The leadership role was forcefully asserted in the quotation that Weldes takes from 1950 National Security Council Policy Planning Document: “The absence of order among nations is becoming less and less tolerable and this fact imposes upon us [US] *in our own interest* (stress is mine, I.Y) the responsibility of world leadership.” From his speech at New York Democracy Forum co-organized by Foreign Policy Association and National Endowment for Democracy, on March 22, 2005.

universalistic claim to truth and a missionary zeal to expand it.¹⁹⁶ In his speech at the announcement of the launching of the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative, Colin L. Powell, then the Secretary of State, said: “Through the US-Middle East Partnership Initiative, we are adding hope to the US-Middle East agenda. We are pledging our energy, our abilities, and our idealism to bring hope to all of God’s children who call the Middle East home”.¹⁹⁷ This liberal universalist identity was reiterated by the then Secretary of State Warren Christopher at the 1993 World Conference on Human Rights: “America’s identity as a nation derives from our dedication to the proposition ‘that all men are created equal and endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights’”.¹⁹⁸ The same point was explicitly stated by James Baker, former Secretary of State: “Post-cold war mission of the U.S. is promotion and consolidation of democracy”.¹⁹⁹

Similarly, The National Security Strategy of 2002 held that the values of “freedom, democracy, and free enterprise are right and true for every person, in every society-and the duty of protecting these values against their enemies is the common-calling of freedom-loving people across the globe and across the ages.”²⁰⁰ President Bush presents America as the “agent of a historical

¹⁹⁶ Samuel Huntington holds that the US has always been a “missionary nation”, in *Clash of Civilizations: The Making of New World Order*, (New York: Touchstone Books, 1997), p.184.

¹⁹⁷ Colin L. Powell, *The US-Middle East Partnership Initiative: Building Hope for the Years Ahead*, December 12, 2002, The Heritage Foundation, Heritage Lecture no:772. It is more explicitly stated in the speech delivered by Richard Gephardt, a former Democratic Leader and now member of US House of Representatives, whose title is self-explanatory: “Promoting Democracy: A Modern Mission for American Citizens.” There, he argued that Americans have always believed that democracy is a “moral imperative of universal application and validity to all human communities”.

¹⁹⁸ Warren Christopher, ‘Democracy and Human Rights: Where America Stands’, address at the *World Conference on Human Rights*, Vienna, 14 June 1993.

¹⁹⁹ Quoted in Steve Smith, “US Democracy Promotion: Critical Questions”, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.68.

²⁰⁰ The White House, *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America* (Washington, D.C.; The White House, 2002).

teleology” when he says “our nation is on the right side of history”.²⁰¹

Likewise, in his ‘Forward Strategy of Freedom’ speech at the National Endowment for Democracy in 2003, President Bush portrayed a particular picture of U.S. foreign policy identity:²⁰²

As we provided security for whole nations, we also provided inspiration for oppressed peoples. In prison camps, in banned union meetings, in clandestine churches, men and women knew that the whole world was not sharing their own nightmare. They knew of at least one place—a bright and hopeful land—where freedom was valued and secure. And they prayed that America would not forget them, or forget the mission to promote liberty around the world(...) In the trenches of World War I, through a two-front war in the 1940s, the difficult battles of Korea and Vietnam, and in missions of rescue and libertine on nearly every continent, Americans have amply displayed our willingness to sacrifice for liberty. (...) The advance of freedom is the calling of our time; it is the calling of our country. (...) America has put our power at the service of principle. (...) Working for the spread of freedom can be hard. Yet, America has accomplished hard tasks before. Our nation is strong; we are strong of heart.

Taking these into account, we can argue that the U.S. constructs its identity as a “civilizational empire” and that this creed has deeply shaped the conduct of American foreign policy.²⁰³ Yet, as constructivists remind us, interests and identities are mutually constitutive of each other. As H. Nau points out, the “self-image of a nation affects its foreign policy.”²⁰⁴ Hence, American foreign policy identity which is a reflection of the domestically constructed and internationally negotiated national identity is not detached

²⁰¹ George W. Bush speech, “A Distinctly American Internationalism”, delivered at the Reagan Presidential Library, Nov.19, 1999. This kind of a vision resembles the Soviet cliché, “the winds of history are in our sails”.

²⁰² George W. Bush, “Forward Strategy of Freedom”, at National Endowment for Democracy, 2003. In his second Inaugural Address, President Bush said that “America’s vital interests and our deepest beliefs are now one.”

²⁰³ Anatol Lieven, “Wolfish Wilsonians: Existential Dilemmas of the Liberal Internationalists”, *Orbis*, (Spring 2006), p.251.

²⁰⁴ Henry R. Nau, “America’s Identity, Democracy Promotion and National Interests: Beyond Realism, Beyond Idealism” in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.131.

from material interests. It is constituted by, and constitutive of, solid material interests. Being a clear unfolding of an identity constructed upon democracy promotion, MEPI and BMENA are both a reflection of an ideological and normative choice and commitment, and also a means for pursuing concrete interests. As Hazel Smith notes, the realist understanding of interest as defined in terms of power may still be a motivating force of policy-makers, but “that national interest is, in the post-Cold War era, also defined by a commitment to the export of democratization.”²⁰⁵ MEPI and BMENA are embodiments of American liberal and democratic social identity and an expression of the U.S. democracy promotion orientation in the Middle East, but at the same time they are an effective foreign policy tool to pursue a politics of hegemony for security, economic and political interests. As Carl Gershman, the founder and head of the National Endowment for Democracy put it “(...) Only by promoting democratic political development on a long-term basis can the United States hope to avoid the hard choices between sending troops and accepting a regime that overtly opposes its interests. Promoting democracy, in other words, is ... a matter of national security.”²⁰⁶ Likewise, on President Clinton’s trip to Africa with the agenda of promoting trade, human rights and democracy on March 23, 1998, the Secretary of State Madeleine Albright commented on democracy promotion: “It is not only the right thing to do, it is the smart thing to do”²⁰⁷ Clinton’s ‘democratic enlargement’ doctrine paid

²⁰⁵ Hazel Smith, “Why is There no International Democratic Theory?”, in *Democracy and International Relations: Critical Theories/Problematic Practices*, Hazel Smith (eds), (Basingstoke: Macmillan 2000), p.10.

²⁰⁶ Carl Gershman, “The United States and the World Democratic Revolution.” *Washington Quarterly*, (Winter 1989), p.127-139.

²⁰⁷ Quoted in Tony Smith, “National Security Liberalism and American Foreign Policy”, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.85. Howard Wierda points out the interaction of the identities and interests on the issue of

materially. Promoting democratization was a policy that went hand in hand with the goal of promoting economic growth and competitiveness.²⁰⁸

All in all, I argue that constructivism provides us the explanatory frame and analytical instruments to understand the impact of the neoconservative blend of realist and liberal thinking on U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East, and to understand the interaction between the kind of American identity constructed upon being a promoter of democracy and the material and ideational interests pursued by the U.S. The democratic realist neoconservative approach incorporates democracy into its discourse, yet does not push it so far as to strengthen indigeneous social movements for coming to power if they are not willing to follow cooperative policies with the U.S. In the case of Egypt, this means that the U.S. relies on the status quo and provides support to the authoritarian regime while employing a democratic discourse. Then, how can this be possible? How does the U.S. supports authoritarian regimes while promoting democratization? The specific modality of covert, and sometimes overt, support for authoritarian regimes in the Middle East is discussed in the particular case of Egypt in chapter 5, but I maintain that

democracy promotion in a powerful way: “A US stance in favor of democracy helps get the Congress, the bureaucracy, the media, the public, and elite opinion to back US policy. It helps ameliorate the domestic debate, disarms critics (who could be against democracy?), provides a basis for reconciliation between “realists” and “idealists”...The democracy agenda enables us, additionally, to merge and fudge over some issues that would otherwise be troublesome. It helps bridge the gap between ur fundamental geopolitical and strategic interests...and our need to clothe those security concerns in moralistic language...The democracy agenda, in short, is a kind of legitimacy cover for our more basic strategic objectives”, quoted in William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention, and Hegemony*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.73.

²⁰⁸ One big trap which some commentators cannot avoid falling into in analyzing the democracy promotion orientation of U.S. foreign policy is economism/epiphenomenalism that reduces a multi-faceted and extremely complex set of policies and ideas to mere pursuit of economic interest. Democracy promotion in general and the U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East after 9/11 in particular, are quite complex phenomena which cannot be boiled down to a one-sided crass economic interest analysis. In order to see how this kind of a progressive identity construction serves the cause of concrete material interests in the form of hegemonial politics, we have to look at what kind of a democracy is being promoted and whether it is really promoted at all.

radical/critical international theory provides a significant frame in answering these questions.

Radical/Critical International Theory: Hegemony Construction and Democracy Promotion

One of the main points of criticism that radical scholars pose about U.S. democracy promotion policy is the nature of the democratic model that takes place in the U.S. agenda. For instance, by providing a Neo-Gramscian and Neo-Marxist analysis of democracy promotion, William I. Robinson argues that the kind of regime that the U.S. promotes is not democracy but polyarchy, which has a clear system-maintenance bias. In his analysis of the cases of the Philippines, Chile, Haiti and Nicaragua, Robinson points out that under the banner of democracy promotion, the U.S. foreign policy aims at retaining the elite-based and undemocratic status-quo in the Third World countries instead of encouraging mass aspirations for democratization. He argues that the U.S. policy becomes much more appealing and unchallengeable when it employs the benign rhetoric of democracy promotion, however, U.S. foreign policy does nothing to reverse the global growth of inequality and the undemocratic nature of national (and also international) decision making processes.²⁰⁹

Robinson points out that what U.S. policymakers mean by “democracy promotion” is indeed the promotion of polyarchy, which refers to a “system in which a small group actually rules and mass participation in

²⁰⁹ A similar point might be made for the BMENA which aims at economic growth in the Middle East, but does not aim at reducing inequality within society and within the global community.

decision-making is confined to leadership choice in elections carefully managed by competing elites”²¹⁰. The pluralist assumption of polyarchy is that “elites will respond to the general interests of majorities, through polyarchy’s twin dimensions of political contestation and political inclusiveness, as a result of the need of those who govern to win a majority of votes.”²¹¹ Because of their Parsonian structural functionalism, democracy promotion policies have a system-maintenance bias, rather than bringing about substantive social transformation. Relying on the Marxist tradition, Robinson criticizes U.S. democracy promotion for developing a Huntingtonian, purely institutionalist (read proceduralist) account of democracy which limits democracy to the political sphere, and to the processes, procedures and methods in the selection of the ‘leaders’. Robinson goes on to argue that such a ‘democratic’ method is best suited to defend the ruling class and preserve the social order which is pro-U.S. In other words, “in its Parsonian-Schumpeterian version, the polyarchic definition of democracy is equated with the stability of the capitalist social order”²¹² After pointing out to the “capitalist polyarchy”, which refers to the symbiotic nature of promoting polyarchy and promoting neo-liberal economic ideology under the forces of globalization, Robinson brings the Gramscian notion of transnational hegemony into the discussion.²¹³

In the Egyptian context, we can argue that even polyarchy, let alone participatory democracy, is far from being put into practice. Robinson argues that the mere proceduralist polyarchic conception of democracy relegates

²¹⁰ William I. Robinson, *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention, and Hegemony*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.49.

²¹¹ Loc.cit.

²¹² “At best, polyarchic conception leaves open the possibility as to whether “political democracy may or may not facilitate social and economic democracy. In contrast, I am arguing that polyarchy as a distinct form of elite rule performs the function of legitimating existing inequalities, and does so more effectively than authoritarianism”, Ibid, p.50-51.

²¹³ Ibid, p.56.

democracy to open and free elections. However, in the case of Egypt, even such a restricted definition of democracy is nearly nonexistent. Elections are hardly open and free and political liberties are seriously cut in the country which renders elections obsolete and meaningless. I discuss the details and modalities of how electoral democracy is being curtailed so as to countenance the authoritarian regime in the next chapter.

The Neo-Gramscian international relations theory is a complex negotiation and reworking of different theoretical traditions, especially of Marxist-Leninism and idealist philosophy, and more specifically of Italian idealism. Neo-Gramscian international relations theory focuses on practices and values fostered by transnational institutions, which are in turn based upon the “progressive transnationalization of dominant social forces”²¹⁴ By mostly dwelling on the international political economy literature, Gramscian international theory provides substantial insights for comprehending the social basis of hegemony and its construction as a social artifact. Norberto Bobbio argues that “Gramsci completed the inversion of the Marxist understanding of base-superstructure metaphor, by prioritizing civil society as the realm in which identities were shaped and the dominance of social elites secured under capitalism”.²¹⁵ Gramsci-inspired theories of international relations conceive world politics as embodying “social forces of ideas (including ideologies, ethics, intersubjective meanings), institutions (such as state, market and

²¹⁴ Randall D. Germain and Michael Kenny, “Engaging Gramsci: International Relations Theory and the New Gramscians”, *Review of International Studies* 24, no.1, 1998, p.7. Thanks to that focus on transnational social forces, Neo-Gramscian theory provides a way to conceptualize world order free of the constraints of state-centric approach, yet, in turn, sometimes falls into the trap of underestimating the capacities of national states because of the same focus on the transnational.

²¹⁵ Quoted in Germain and Kenny, art.cit., p.9.

international organizations) as well as material aspects of social life (production broadly defined, including means of destruction)²¹⁶

Central to this neo-Gramscian framework is the analysis of hegemony. Since hegemony necessarily includes both coercion and consent, for Gramsci, as for Machiavelli, it reflects the nature of power, and power is a centaur; part man, part beast. The hegemonic order operates mainly through consent in accordance with universalist principles and “rests upon a certain structure of power and serves to maintain that structure”²¹⁷ Hegemony is a social, economic and political structure, and Cox argues that it must include all of these three spheres.²¹⁸ Hegemony is a “fit between power, ideas and institutions”²¹⁹ What differentiates the hegemonic orders from non-hegemonic ones is the presence or lack of consensus.

Gramsci argues that the link between hegemony and consent is established within the terrain of civil society. The neo-Gramscian conception of civil society is an innovative reading of Gramsci’s conception of civil society which carries it to the international/global level. Global civil society is the principle battle ground over which the struggle for hegemony occurs.²²⁰ Cox argues that hegemony can be established only if the leadership can be expressed in terms of universal or general interests, rather than being presented

²¹⁶ Stephen Gill, “Theorizing the Interrugnum: The Double Movement and Global Politics in the 1990s”, in B. Hettne (ed) *International Political Economy: Understanding Global Disorder*, (London: Zed Books, 1995), p.67.

²¹⁷ Robert W. Cox, “Gramsci, Hegemony and International Relations: An Essay in Method.” In *Approaches to World Order*, edited by Robert Cox and Timothy J. Sinclair (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p.146.

²¹⁸ Robert W. Cox, “Social forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory”, *Millenium* 10, no.2, 1981, p. 24.

²¹⁹ Ibid, p.25.

²²⁰ In that sense it diverges from the realist theory of international relations which takes hegemony as the “dominance of one state over the other”, in Duncan Snidal, “The Limits of Hegemonic Stability Theory”, *International Organization* 39, no.4, (Autumn 1985), p.591.

as the pursuit of particular interests.²²¹ From such a perspective, the U.S. democracy promotion can be viewed as an attempt to construct hegemony in the Middle East.

For Robinson, hegemony is a form of domination exercised through civil society. By shifting towards reconstituting democracy in the Middle East, the U.S. also aims at shifting the terrain of social control from political to civil society. Since the old authoritarian governments are no longer guarantors of social control and stability, democracy becomes the most effective means of assuring stability provided that hegemony is constructed within civil society, and more importantly among the ruling elites²²². For Robinson, promoting polyarchy is an “attempt to develop a transnational Gramscian hegemony in emergent global society”²²³ The U.S. promotes its Schumpeterian elitist polyarchy which assumes political equality within a context of social/economic inequality²²⁴. For him, by penetrating the civil society and through the transnational local elites who are more powerful in organizing within politics because of their links with transnational capital, the U.S. prevents political power from passing to the popular classes. “Elections serve a legitimacy function, provide an immanent advantage to those who command superior resources”²²⁵ Hence, when controlled properly through the local transnational elites who have the upper hand in civil society because of their ‘command of

²²¹ Robert W. Cox, “Social forces, States, and World Orders: Beyond International Relations Theory”, *Millenium* 10, no.2, 1981, p. 24.

²²² Stephen Gill argues that “Reconstituted democracy corresponds to the concept of civil society, and indicates its centrality in the making of state policy”, in *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.163.

²²³ Robinson, opt.cit., p.72.

²²⁴ In 1985, Dahl himself acknowledged the fact that economic inequalities undermine political equality in his book *A Preface to Economic Democracy*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 55. Quoted in Steve Smith, “US Democracy Promotion: Critical Questions”, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.71.

²²⁵ Robinson, opt. cit., p.65.

superior resources', electoral processes can contribute to the construction of U.S. hegemony. This theoretical framework may well be suited to the case of American democracy promotion policy in the Middle East, yet, it should be pointed out that the framework itself has some problems to overcome.²²⁶

For Robinson, the shift from a covert support for authoritarian but friendly regimes to the overt call for democratization in U.S. foreign policy is totally in line with the U.S.'s interests. He argues that this is primarily because of the type of democracy the U.S. is aiming to promote.²²⁷ Apart from Robinson's claim that U.S. hegemony is operative in civil society so as to control electoral processes in a direction that is suitable for U.S. interests, or from Smith's and Gill&Rocamora's point that democracy is tailored so as to serve the cause of global capital, some scholars hold that U.S. would never bring democracy to the region whatsoever²²⁸. For instance, Rashid Khalidi maintains that "if carried out fully and consistently, a policy encouraging progress in the direction of democracy and respect for human rights would, in fact, be in stark contrast with American Middle East involvement in recent

²²⁶ For instance the definition and exact character of the transnational classes seems flawed. Moreover, since Robinson employs a theoretical framework that is a combination of Neo-Gramscian international theory and Neo-Marxist World Systems Theory, sometimes his analysis becomes too reduced to an economic logic which is a general problem of all structural Marxist theories as well as of the World Systems Theory.

²²⁷ Parallel to Steve Smith, Robinson maintains that what US foreign policy promotes is not popular democracy, but Dahlian polyarchy which aims at transnational hegemony.

²²⁸ For instance see Fikret Başkaya, "Emperyalizm, 'Uygarlaştırıcı Misyon' ve BOP", 26.3.2006, http://www.sendika.org/yazi.php?yazi_no=5551. Through a revolutionary Marxist jargon, he maintains that: "Başta İngilizler ve Amerikalılar olmak üzere, emperyalistler hiçbir zaman güçlü, demokratik, gelişmiş, kendi ayakları üzerinde durabilen bir Arap dünyası istemediler ve istemezlerdi. Bu yüzden bölgeye demokrasi götürmek bir yana, BOP'a dahil ülkelerin demokratikleşmesi emperyalistlerin korkulu rüyasıdır. Zira, demokratik bir Müslüman-Arap dünyası demek, bölge devletlerinin zenginliklerini kendi halklarının refahı için kullanmaları, emperyalistlerin de pııyı-pıntıyı toplayıp bölgeyi terketmeleri demektir (...) ABD Siyonist İsrail'i koşulsuz destekleyerek on yıllarca Arap dünyasında demokratikleşmenin, aydınlanmanın önünü kesti (...) Şimdilerde gerici rejimler emperyalizmin ihtiyacına cevap veremez duruma geldikleri için değiştirilmeleri gerekiyor. ABD'nin yeni dönem ihtiyaçlarını karşılayacak, Siyonist rejimle iyi geçinecek, ılımlı İslamcı rejimlerle mevcut otokrasiler ve monarşiler ikame edilecek."

decades.”²²⁹ This is why Gary Campbell holds that the recent U.S. democracy promotion project in the Middle East is not different from other democracy promotion initiatives which have neither rewards nor punishments for pushing towards democracy²³⁰. Most of the Arab states first opposed the BMENA, but after realizing that non-compliance meets no serious sanctions, they became involved in it for two purposes: first, in order not to have a disreputation and to gain international legitimacy within the international society and second, to preempt and control the transformation or “bleeding off the accumulating pressure for real political change”²³¹ through cosmetic reforms. Indeed, it had some positive repercussions such as the lifting of the state of emergency in Egypt that had been in rule since 1981, yet they unfortunately remained superficial changes.

One central issue that not only the Marxian and Gramscian inspired scholars but all critical thinkers point out is the nature of the democracy that is placed in the democracy promotion agenda. Basically, BMENA stands for a proceduralist understanding of liberal democracy whereby democracy is reduced to its sine-qua-non, that is free and fair elections. It is a democracy of “free elections contested by freely organized parties under universal suffrage for control of the effective centers of governmental power”²³² Francis Fukuyama, one of the forerunners of democracy assistance policies, points out that “Democracy is the right held universally by all citizens to have a share of

²²⁹ Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*, (London: I.B. Tauris, 2004), p.40.

²³⁰ Gary C. Campbell, “Explaining the Arab Democracy Deficit, Part II: American Policy”, *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* 5, no:8-9, (August-September 2003).

²³¹ Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, “The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 29 March, 2004.

²³² This is Tony Smith's definition of the kind of democracy that is being promoted by US foreign policy, quoted in Steve Smith, “US Democracy Promotion: Critical Questions”, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.68.

political power, that is, the right of all citizens to vote and participate in politics. A country is democratic if it grants its people the right to choose their own government through periodic, secret-ballot, multi-party elections, on the basis of universal and equal adult suffrage”²³³

As put forward by David Held, there are several distinct models of democracy, and liberal democracy is only one of them. BMENA adopts a narrowed-down and overly-proceduralized version of liberal democracy which has serious shortcomings with regard to participation.²³⁴ It focuses on ballot boxes, yet fails to address participation in a powerful and determined manner. While commenting on the strategy of democracy promotion, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said:²³⁵

Elections are the beginning of every democracy, but of course they are not the end. Effective institutions are essential to the success of all liberal democracies. And by institutions I mean pluralistic parties, transparent and accountable legislatures, independent judiciaries, free press, active civil

²³³ Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History”, pp. 3-18, *The National Interest* 16,(Summer 1989).

²³⁴ Steve Smith argues that since democracy is equated with capitalism, the forms of democracy “pushed by the West in the Third World are specifically tailored to serve the interests of global capital in these countries”. After analyzing the role of U.S. in four countries, Gills and Rocamora conclude that what U.S. promoted in these countries was a “low-intensity democracy” which was a specific form of democracy that served as a “means of justifying intervention by the US in the affairs of these countries” It also enabled the U.S. to preempt any radical social/political change that would be unsuitable for its interests through ‘democratic’ means that would legitimize the status quo. Quite similar to Smith’s and Robinson’s analysis, Gills and Rocamora also argue that low-intensity democracy is a form of democracy whereby the sole focus is on ‘formal electoral rights’ which do not pay any attention to the socio-economic power structure. Steve Smith, “US Democracy Promotion: Critical Questions”, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed.by Michael Cox, G.John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p.73. A similar point is held by Noam Chomsky that the kind of democracy the US is promoting is a particular form so as to maintain the status quo and manipulate democracy within the US to limit its effectiveness. B. Gills and J. Rocamora, “Low Intensity Democracy”, *Third World Quarterly* 13, no. 3 (April 1992), p.502-503. Here, they offer “progressive democracy” as an ideal and alternative to the low-intensity democracy.

²³⁵ U.S. Department of State, “Secretary Rice’s Remarks on Democracy at BBC Today-Chatham House Lecture,” March 31, 2006, quoted in Jeremy M. Sharp, “U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma”, *CRS Report for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress. Order Code RL 33486. June 15, 2006

society, market economies and, of course, a monopoly for the state on the means of violence.

The skeptical gesture towards participation in BMENA was quite apparent in the Workshop on Political Pluralism and Electoral Processes, in Venice, 21-23 July 2005, which was carried out under the umbrella of BMENA. In that workshop, it was argued that in order to start a real democratization process in the Middle East, a balance between institutionalization processes and participation had to be found. “Participation prior to institutionalization may not lead to democracy, as the outcome could be illiberal democracy, elections could be halted and liberties could be put at risk”.²³⁶ As was explicitly stated by Bill Clinton, “ballot boxes alone do not solve every world problem”.²³⁷ However, democracy is exclusively conceptualized in electoral terms within BMENA. For instance, in the Venice Workshop, the discussion revolved around the electoral systems and rules, passive and active electorate, electoral monitoring, access to the media for political parties and civil society organizations, and the standard, status and role of political parties.²³⁸ Then, the Final Statement of the International Colloquium on Political Pluralism and Electoral Processes that was held in

²³⁶ Report on the Initiatives Undertaken in the Framework of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue 2005, Presented to the Second Meeting of the Forum for the Future Baharain, November 11-12.

²³⁷ Bill Clinton, “Democracy in America”, Milwaukee, October 1, 1992, quoted in *Democracy in the Middle East: Defining the Challenge*, Yehudah Mirsky and Matt Ahrens (eds), The Washington Institute for Near Eastern Policy, 1993.

²³⁸ Being part of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue consultation process, Venice Workshop ended with recommendations to the governments of the region, to the international community, to political parties, media and civil society in the region for a democratic rule on standards, status and role of political parties, electoral systems and rules, passive and active electorate and electoral monitoring. These recommendations included a call for allowing international monitors to operate without undue restrictions and to facilitate local monitors to operate as part of the political process, allowing free access to the media and ensuring that there is sufficient time in advance of elections for public opinion to be formed, guaranteeing and encouraging the participation of women, youth and people from rural areas...etc.

Rabat, on October 1-3, 2005,²³⁹ also reiterated the same procedural view of democracy. In an official BMENA Outreach Publication in 2005, the U.S. government lists its “success stories” in democratization as increasing the transparency of Lebanon’s historic elections in 2005 through targeted technical and material support to domestic monitoring organizations, voter education, journalists and candidates; providing support to over 2000 domestic election monitors for Egypt’s first multi-candidate election; supporting the only live satellite broadcast of Arab parliamentary sessions; supporting national and local political party organizations and their members in countries who will have new rounds of municipal and parliamentary elections in 2005-2007;²⁴⁰ training party members from 11 political parties on constituency building and media outreach in Morocco; training journalists and new media outlets on journalistic standards and techniques for covering elections in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia; working with parliamentarians and their staff to strengthen skills in representing constituencies in Algeria, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman and Yemen.²⁴¹ Throughout the official documents of the BMENA, there is a substantial lip service paid for political participation, yet, the initiative fails to address it seriously.²⁴² It does not propose significant

²³⁹ It was organized by Morocco and Italy, in partnership with No Peace Without Justice and Maroc 2020 which falls within the framework of the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) sponsored by Italy, Turkey and Yemen, the leading partners of BMENA.

²⁴⁰ Success Stories, <http://mepi.state.gov/c16050.htm>

²⁴¹ Middle East Partnership Initiative Funds 225 Reform Initiatives, US Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs, June 28, 2005. <http://www.useu.be/Article.asp?ID=C869DC2E-E21C-4F40-9488-854720426DDA>

²⁴² For instance, under the subheading of “Deepening Democracy and Broadening Participation in Political and Public Life”, the G-8 Plan of Support for Reform for the BMENAI refers to “reform and modernization for democratic practice by achieving participation in political and public life” in the Arab League Summit Tunis Declaration of May 2004 (<http://www.arabsummit.tn/en/tunis-declaration.htm>), and to “representing the citizens and ensuring their full participation” in the Sana’a Declaration of January 10-12, 2004 (<http://www.caabu.org/press/documents/sanaa-declaration-html.htm>), and to “activating the role of women and youth in society” in Arab Business Council Declaration of January 2004 (http://www.weforum.org/pdf/ABC/ABC_R1.pdfclr)

policy prescriptions for political participation.²⁴³ This point is addressed by

Thomas Carothers:

they [US officials] will extol an election with little attention to the more complex realities of actual political participation. They will herald a new parliament while knowing little of the actual relations between the parliament and the citizenry. Supporting democracy too often resembles the application of a preprinted checklist in which the institutional forms of U.S.-style democracy are financed and praised while the more complex and more important realities of political life are ignored

More radical critiques come from the ones who stand for a more participatory democracy by arguing that the U.S. indeed promotes a kind of Schumpeterian elite democracy found in the US.²⁴⁴ In that sense, under the banner of democracy promotion, the U.S. represents one of the particular forms of democracy as if it was universal, and by universalizing a particularity, Americanizes the whole of democratic politics. This is one of the crucial points that I see as an overt manifestation of aiming at constructing hegemony. In that sense, Bhikhu Parekh's critique that Western understanding of democracy failed to recognize the "cultural particularity of what is really an explicitly liberal understanding of democracy" is quite relevant.²⁴⁵ The U.S.-style democracy is a specific form of democracy that relies on liberal pluralism, that is, on interest group politics and a formal right to vote. Yet, it is presented as

²⁴³ Thomas Carothers, "Democracy Promotion under Clinton", *The Washington Quarterly* 18, no.4, (Autumn 1995), p.23,

²⁴⁴ He even problematizes whether the US has been a genuine democracy from its very founding. For further discussion, see Steve Smith, "US Democracy Promotion: Critical Questions", p.67-72, in *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts*, ed. by Michael Cox, G. John Ikenberry and Takashi Inoguchi, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000. On the same issue, William Robinson reminds Schumpeter's definition of democracy: "Democracy means only that the people have the opportunity of accepting or refusing the men who are to rule them", in *Promoting Polyarchy: Globalization, US Intervention, and Hegemony*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.49.

²⁴⁵ Bhikhu Parekh, "The Cultural Particularity of Liberal Democracy", in David Held (ed.), *Prospects for Democracy: North, South, East, West*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p.156-175.

truth, not as a political/normative choice, and as if it was the sole meaning and practice of democracy.²⁴⁶ It simply disregards the contested nature of democracy and identifies it with “a voting franchise for a substantial fraction of citizens, a government brought to power in contested elections, and an executive either popularly elected or responsible to an elected legislature, often also with requirements for civil liberties such as free speech”²⁴⁷

Apart from problematizing the kind of democracy that is being promoted in the reform agenda of the U.S., students of the Middle East address different problems of U.S. policy toward the region. For instance, Tamara C. Wittes criticizes U.S. democracy promotion for failing to realize its stated aims. She argues that since the aids and donations are given at an intergovernmental basis, these fundings “can have the effect of subsidizing an Arab government’s attempt to build a kinder, gentler autocracy”²⁴⁸ Another significant shortcoming of U.S. democracy promotion policy toward the region mentioned by various commentators is that there was not enough discussion, communication and negotiation between the U.S. policymakers and the Arab world. The Middle Eastern countries were not consulted in the making of the initiative. This democratic deficit in U.S.’s attitude caused a backlash among the Arab world and stole the wind of transformation. Moreover, the lack of any

²⁴⁶ Ibid, p.69.

²⁴⁷ Bruce Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), p.14. In addition, BMENAI is presented as a project which will re-validate the Democratic Peace Theory which mainly asserts that democracies do not go to war with each other because of democratic institutions and values. Since democracies do not fight with each other, then, the democratization of the Middle Eastern countries would well serve to the cause of peace and stability. That argument is constantly reiterated through the official documents and speeches.

²⁴⁸ Tamara Cofman Wittes, “The Middle East Partnership Initiative: Progress, Problems and Prospects”, *Saban Center Middle East Memo*, no:5, November 29, 2004, Saban Center for Middle East Policy. According to the statistics, Arab governments take 70.8%, Arab civil society takes 18.1% , Arab private sector takes 5.0% and exchange programs take 5.7% of the total fundings for BMENAI.

serious and balanced approach towards the Israeli-Palestine question constitutes one of the weakest aspects of the U.S.'s democracy promotion.²⁴⁹ Some Arab leaders and thinkers expressed their opposition to it because of the deliberate negligence over the Palestinian issue.²⁵⁰ Another problem associated with the initiative is that it does not aim at the Arab world but at the Muslim world, which causes another backlash. In an international milieu where “clash of civilizations” seems to be insisting to become a self-fulfilling prophecy, an initiative that aims at the whole Muslim world both furthers the inherent tensions and weakens the pressure over the Arab states to democratize their politics.²⁵¹

In this chapter I elaborated on the constructivist and radical/critical analysis of U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East that operates through

²⁴⁹ “Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative: Imperilled at Birth”, *International Crisis Group Middle East and North Africa Briefing*, Brussels/Amman, 7 June 2004.

²⁵⁰ For instance as reported by Agence France-Presse, on February 19, 2004, Hesham Yussef, the Director of the Secretary's Office of the Arab League said: “It is unacceptable to speak of any initiative or vision which ignores or relegates the Palestinian cause...and to discuss security questions without speaking of Israeli weapons of mass destruction”, quoted in Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, “The Greater Middle East Initiative: Off to a False Start”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 29 March, 2004.

²⁵¹ Obviously, the Iraqi War turned out to be the most significant hindrance against the success of US's plan for Middle Eastern democratization. It worsened the overall American record in the area of democracy promotion and human rights in the Middle East. In that context, Fuat Keyman argues that the BMENAI was a search for compensation for the lack of democratic legitimacy of the Iraqi war “BOP [Büyük Ortadoğu Projesi] adı altındaki demokratikleşme söylemlerinin küresel ve bölgesel hiçbir inandırıcılığı yok. Irak Savaşı, demokratik meşruiyet ilkesi üzerine kurulmayan girişimlerin, söylemleri demokratik olsa bile, somut ve uygulama düzeyinde çok ciddi bir inandırıcılık ve güvenilirlik krizi yaşayacağını gösterdi.”, Fuat Keyman, *Değişen Dünya, Dönüşen Türkiye*, İstanbul: İstanbul Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2005. p.98. The continuity of the colonial discourse of ‘white man's burden’ and ‘civilizing mission’ was very keenly demonstrated in two books written within a post-colonial perspective: Mark B. Salter, *Barbarians and Civilization in International Relations*, Pluto Press, 2002 and Rashid Khalidi, *Resurrecting Empire: Western Footprints and America's Perilous Path in the Middle East*, I.B. Tauris, 2004. Khalidi makes his argument by making three quotations; first, from Napoleon Bonaparte, at Alexandria, on July 2, 1798: “They may say to you that I have not made an expedition hither for any other object than that of abolishing your religion... but tell the slanderers that I have not come to you except for the purpose of restoring your rights from the hands of the oppressors”, second; from General F.S. Maude, Commander of British Forces, at Baghdad, on March 19, 1917 :” Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators...It is the hope and desire of the British people and the nations in alliance with them that the Arab race may rise once more to greatness and renown among the peoples of the earth”, third; from Donald Rumsfeld, US Secretary of Defense, at Baghdad, on April 29, 2003: “Unlike many armies in the world, you came not to conquer, not to occupy, but to liberate, and the Iraqi people know this.”

a “democratic realist” framework. How, then, do these “democratic realist” models reflect onto reality? How do they unfold themselves in the face of Middle East countries? In the next chapter, I discuss the particular modalities of how a “democratic realist” understanding is put into practice in U.S. foreign policy by taking Egypt as my case.

CHAPTER 5: THE CASE: THE CONTOURS OF U.S. DEMOCRACY
ENGAGEMENT AND THE MODALITIES OF EGYPT'S ADAPTATION

Just before the recent Egyptian elections, when rumors increased about the possibility of President Husnu Mubarak's leave from power, a journalist asked him about the issue: "Mr. President, wouldn't you say good bye to the people this time?" The President replied calmly: "Good bye to the people? But why? Where are they going?" Obviously this is a joke, but indeed it does address a significant feature and problem of politics in the vast region of the Middle East and North Africa. Democracy, even in its most narrow definition, is simply lacking in the political landscape of the entire region. The Middle East is the region that has been largely insulated from the "global spread of democracy".²⁵² According to the 2003 annual report of the Freedom House, of 121 nations characterized as electoral democracies, not even one is Arab. During the last quarter century, none of the heads of the states in the Arab world have been removed from office through the ballot box.²⁵³ Although there is a growing scholarly literature on the problems and prospects of democratization in the Middle East, this democratic deficit of the region did not attract the attention of the policy makers in the U.S. until the September 11 terrorist attacks.

In the immediate aftermath of September 11, the U.S. declared that it has ceased its policy of backing up authoritarian but cooperative regimes and

²⁵² Peter J. Schraeder, "Promoting an International Community of Democracies", ed. *Exporting Democracy: Rhetoric vs. Reality* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p.5.

²⁵³ Gary C. Gambill, "Explaining the Arab Democracy Deficit: Part I", *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin* 5, no.2. (February-March 2003), p.5. The report also maintains that the Arab countries are not only less free than other countries in the world, but are also less so today than they were a quarter century ago.

would promote democracy in the Middle East and North Africa as a way to eliminate the ‘root causes’ of anti-American extremism in the region. Within that context, the State Department initiated two democracy promotion projects, namely the “Greater Middle East and North Africa Initiative” (MEPI) and “Partnership for Progress and Common Future with the Region of the Broader Middle East and North Africa” (BMENA).

In this thesis, I argue that the U.S. has adopted a ‘democratic realist’ posture in its democracy promotion strategy in Egypt in particular, and toward the Middle East in general. In this chapter, I will discuss how democratic realism unfolds itself in the form of a support for ‘liberal autocracy’ in the case of Egypt. Adopting a ‘democratic realist’, or ‘liberal autocratic’ model for democracy promotion toward Egypt means supporting an excessively strong executive which manages, rather than suppresses pluralism. In that scheme, the executive opens up the system so as to allow elections and parliament, yet heavily controls it through institutional engineering, and if deemed necessary, dissolves the parliament or creates moments of exception for the survival of the regime. In the second part of this chapter I will try to show how the U.S. administration’s accommodation and even exaltation of the authoritarian regime’s cosmetic reforms falls parallel to the liberal autocratic model put forth by Takeyh and Gvosdev. In the second part of this chapter, I argue that the Egyptian government continues to introduce façade reforms until the U.S. expresses its satisfaction. In other words, I argue that the scale of reform measures goes in line with U.S. pressure.

This obviously does not mean attributing a metaphysical omnipotent power to the U.S., as if it was ‘determining’ all the political or social outcomes

in a certain polity. Rather, in order to evaluate the abovementioned assertion, we have to uncover the mode of relations between the U.S. and Egypt, and see how much autonomy the Egyptian regime enjoys from the U.S. government and, how much power the U.S. can exercise over Egypt. For that reason, I explore the political economy of U.S.-Egyptian relations in the first part of this chapter.

Why Should The Egyptian Government Care About U.S. Engagement?

The Political Economy of Dependency

Historically, the U.S. is a late comer to Middle East politics. Direct contact of the U.S. with the Arab Middle East began during World War I, yet, it was only after World War II that the U.S. actively became engaged in the politics of the region by filling the vacuum created by the departure of the colonial empires of Britain and France. Until the end of the World War II the image of the U.S. in the Arab world was quite positive, for it was viewed as a non-colonial liberal power. U.S.'s opposition to British, French and Israeli aggression against Egypt in 1956 made the U.S. more popular among the Arab public, but then, Arab-American relations became complicated and "poisoned" by the U.S. policy towards the region that manifested itself in the Arab-Israeli conflict²⁵⁴,

²⁵⁴ The single most important factor that deteriorated the relations between the U.S. and the Arab world is the former's unconditional support for Israel. The U.S. administrations provided extensive economic, political and military assistance to Israel especially after the 1967 War. Annually the amount of U.S. economic assistance to Israel is about \$3 billion which sums up to \$100 billion since the foundation of Israel in 1948. Hudson argues that the "support for Israel was too massive to allow for healthy relationships with most Arab countries, let alone with Arab public opinion". See, Michael Hudson, "Policy critique: A Response to Navigating Through Turbulence: America and the Middle East in a New Century", *Report of the Presidential Study Group. Middle East Policy Council*, p. 287. Also see, Abdel Mahdi Alsoudi,

the Cold War, the Iran-Iraq War, the first Gulf War, U.S. military presence in several countries like Saudi Arabia, and finally in the War on Iraq.

Since the principle purpose of U.S. policy in the Cold War was to defeat communism, the U.S. aid programs for Arab countries were designed “to create stability and reduce the attraction to communist ideology and to block Soviet diplomatic links and military advances”.²⁵⁵ Democratization and political reform were hardly an issue in the U.S. foreign policy agenda towards the region, as key U.S. strategic interests, including safe access to oil reserves, military cooperation and the security of Israel would suffer from the outcomes of a participatory democracy, as was the case in Iran during the Musaddeq period. Even when supporting reform in the region entered the agenda of the U.S., the focus was largely on economic reforms such as trade liberalization, rendering the agenda of democratization and human rights marginal.²⁵⁶ Until the 1970s, the main concern of the U.S. was twofold; first, safe access to petroleum, which necessitated a stable political scene, and second, achieving Arab states’ recognition of, and peaceful relations with, Israel.²⁵⁷

The most dramatic turn in the history of the relations between Egypt and the U.S. occurred as a result of the 1967 “catastrophy”. In the 1967 War against Israel, Egypt lost Sinai in which there were lucrative oil fields and

The Impact of US Aid Policy on Democracy and Political Reform in the Arab World, *Central European University Center for Policy Studies*, 2006, p. 7.

²⁵⁵ Tarnoff, T. and Larry Nowels, ‘Foreign Aid: An Introductory Overview of U.S. Programs and Policy’, *CRS Report for Congress*, April 15, 2004.

²⁵⁶ Jeremy M. Sharp, “U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma”, *CRS Report for Congress*, Congressional Research Service, The Library of Congress, p.3. Order Code RL 33486. June 15, 2006

²⁵⁷ Michele Dunne, “Integrating Democracy into the U.S. Policy Agenda.”, in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*. ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005, p.210.

transit fees from the Suez Canal.²⁵⁸ Its army fell into total decay and disarray, its tourism revenues and investments declined sharply and its defense expenditures increased drastically. A sense of insecurity was prevalent in large segments of the society which was leading to a crisis of legitimacy and confidence.²⁵⁹ Right after the 1967 War, the Egyptian rulers entered a process of re-defining Egypt's vital national interests which culminated in the adoption of the "Open Door Policy" (*siyasat al-infithah*) in 1974 under Sadat, symbolizing the fundamental change that was taking place in the Egyptian polity. The Sadat regime was torn by the wars with Israel and was unable to carry the burden of a state-run economy, hence, it decided to open up the economy, which was part and parcel of the worldwide trend towards "greater liberalisation, privatisation of public sector enterprise and what was often referred to as state 'shrinkage', that is, a deliberate attempt to reduce the proportion of national resources controlled by the state."²⁶⁰

In 1975, the US started its USAID aid program to Egypt as part of the strategy of pulling Egypt along its own lines in the Cold War polarization.²⁶¹ In 1975, the U.S. aid to Egypt constituted 2.77 % of Egypt's GDP.²⁶² USAID assistance "took off" when Egypt decided to sign a peace treaty with Israel at Camp David. With the Camp David Accord in 1979, Egypt

²⁵⁸ Yoram Meital, "Domestic Challenges and Egypt's U.S. Policy", *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 2, no.4 (December 1998), p.1.

²⁵⁹ Loc.cit.

²⁶⁰ Roger Owen, *State, Power and Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East*, (London: Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, 2000), p.125.

²⁶¹ It is interesting to note that on June 9, 1967, when the harsh results of the war became known, Egypt declared a complete cut of diplomatic relations with the United States till February 1974. See, Yoram Meital, "Domestic Challenges and Egypt's U.S. Policy", *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 2, no.4 (December 1998), p.2

²⁶² Today it accounts for approximately 0.25%. "U.S. Assistance in Egypt", Written Testimony of James R. Kunder, Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East, Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations Sub-Committees on Middle East and Central Asia, May 17, 2006.

began to receive approximately \$2 billion annual U.S. aid, which was the second highest amount of allocation after Israel.²⁶³ In its early phase, U.S. aid focused more on reopening the Suez Canal, expanding and rehabilitating electric power and telecommunications, improving water and wastewater management and improving grain storage and port facilities.²⁶⁴ The declared goals of the U.S. foreign aid to Egypt were “reforming and stimulating the economy, building and improving schools, providing medicine, supplies and training to clinics and hospitals, supporting democracy, helping farmers grow better crops for domestic and international markets”.²⁶⁵

In fact, Momani refers to some development experts who claim that if Egypt’s economic assistance had been allocated on economic need rather than on political objectives, Egypt must have received \$100-\$200 million in U.S. assistance.²⁶⁶ This comment makes it quite clear that U.S. aid was granted more for strategic, diplomatic and political purposes than economic ones. It was calculated that a pacified and neutral Egypt would preclude future wars with Israel, as Egypt led the Arab armies in the wars against Israel.

Sadat and Mubarak, on the other hand, instrumentalized Egypt’s leader position in inter-Arab politics as the key to extracting resources from the

²⁶³ Besma Momani, “Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt: From U.S. Foreign Aid to Trade and Investment”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 7, no.3 (September 2003), p.88.

²⁶⁴ “U.S. Assistance in Egypt”, Written Testimony of James R. Kunder, Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East, Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations Sub-Committees on Middle East and Central Asia, May 17, 2006.

²⁶⁵ Available at: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/features/egypt/

²⁶⁶ U.S. Government Accounting Office (GAO), “The U.S. Economic Assistance Program for Egypt Poses a Management Challenge for AID”, July 31, 1985, GAO/NSIAD-85-109, (Washington, DC: GPO, 1985), p.7. Quoted in Besma Momani, “Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt: From U.S. Foreign Aid to Trade and Investment”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 7, no.3 (September 2003), p.88.

international system that was needed for the survival of the regime inside.²⁶⁷

Playing an intermediary role between external powers and the region gave Egypt the “potential to extract geopolitical ‘rent’ while protecting its autonomy and security”.²⁶⁸ Sadat and Mubarak played the game of realpolitik and bartered Egypt’s political and strategic position in the Arab world with economic rents. Sadat presented his policies as being “realistic, pragmatic, unemotional” and guided solely by the concerns of national interest as he expressed in his speech in the spring of 1974: “What is decisive is one word: Egypt, and the benefit for Egypt... What suits Egypt’s interests, we accept; and what does not suit Egypt’s interests, we reject.”²⁶⁹

Despite the intense anti-imperialist sentiments in the public that emerged out of a long history of subordination and resistance to foreign rulers, and especially to European imperialism, Egypt is a country that suffers from poverty, permanent structural imbalance between the ever increasing population and inadequate resources, especially land. Egypt suffers from a balance-of-payments deficit on a systematic basis. In the 1960s Egypt was a monocrop country that relied on cotton and cotton products which constituted 60% of its total exports. After the mid-1970s, oil production diversified Egypt’s exports to a limited extent, yet it did not change the ‘geo-economic

²⁶⁷ Raymond Hinnebusch, “The Foreign Policy of Egypt.” *The Foreign Policies of the Middle East States*, ed. by Raymond Hinnebusch and Anoushiravan Ehteshami (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2002), p. 93.

²⁶⁸ Egypt is located in a strategic position as a landbridge between two continents, Asia and Africa, and a link between two major waterways, the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean. It is also “the most cohesive and weighty” Arab state which naturally seeks regional leadership. Ibid, p.96.

²⁶⁹ In his speech on 11 April 1975, he said: “Stop speaking of human drives and feelings; let the masses applaud realities, not intentions... The time has come for us to speak objectively to the man in the Arab street, rather than bringing on sentimental arousal or use emotion-laden slogans. Exciting the feelings of the Arab street through empty slogans no longer has the heady appeal it once had.” *Akhbar al-Yawm*, April 12, 1975, quoted in Yoram Meital, “Domestic Challenges and Egypt’s U.S. Policy”, *Middle East Review of International Affairs* 2, no.4 (December 1998), p.1.

constant': Egypt is a country that is heavily dependent on external markets and resources. Egypt lost the capacity to feed itself and depended on U.S. food aid after the 1960s.²⁷⁰ Ali ad-Din Hillal Dessouki estimates that Egypt spent \$25 billion from 1967 to 1975 for arms in order to overcome the effects of the 1967 defeat.²⁷¹ The defeat cost Egypt \$350 million annually from Suez Canal income, oil, and tourism, while the Arab oil states' subsidies and remittances of the Egyptian workers in these countries made up only \$250 million.²⁷²

Most of the U.S. foreign assistance to Egypt has been allocated as military aid. In the 1980s the stress moved towards military and strategic cooperation for securing access to oil supplies and providing "staging areas for U.S. military operations in Asia and Africa".²⁷³ U.S. military cooperation has helped Egypt to modernize its armed forces. Under Foreign Military Financing (FMF) programs, the U.S. has provided F-4 jet aircraft, F-16 jet fighters, M-60A3 and M1A1 tanks, armored personnel carriers, Apache helicopters, anti-aircraft missile batteries, aerial surveillance aircraft, and other equipment to Egypt.²⁷⁴ The U.S. and Egypt regularly hold a joint military exercise called Bright Star, a multilateral military exercise with the U.S., and the largest military exercise in the region. Units of the U.S. 6th Fleet are regular visitors to

²⁷⁰ Hinnebusch, opt.ct. p. 95.

²⁷¹ Ali ad-Din Dessouki, "The Primacy of Economics: The Foreign Policy of Egypt.", eds., *The Foreign Policies of Arab States*, Ali ad-Din Hillal Dessouki and Bahgat Korany, (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1991), pp.163-178. Quoted in Hinnebusch, opt.ct.p. 96.

²⁷² Michael Brecher, *The Foreign Policy System of Israel*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), p.115. Quoted in Hinnebusch, opt.ct.p.96.

²⁷³ Michele Durocher Dunne, "Integrating Democracy Promotion into U.S. Middle East Policy", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Democracy and Rule of Law Project*, no:50, October 2004, p.12.

²⁷⁴ <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/5309.htm#political>

Egyptian ports.²⁷⁵ In exchange for foreign aid, U.S. forces access to and “were granted the ability to deploy equipment at strategic military posts in Egypt”.²⁷⁶

Since its initiation, the US support for Egypt in dollar amounts has totaled 28 billion, which by far constitutes the largest amount of development aid given to a country in the world by the U.S.²⁷⁷ Out of this amount, \$1 billion has been allocated as ‘democracy and governance’ aid.²⁷⁸ The 2007 USAID data sheet, the content, amount and objective of USAID democratization assistance projects for Egypt are summarized as follows:

1. Establish and Ensure Media Freedom and Freedom of Information (\$6,000,000 ESF). USAID is helping the Egyptian media sector become more professional, economically viable, and independent through capacity building of Egyptian institutions that train journalists, improving the management of media, and development of local media. USAID is also helping the Government of Egypt (GOE) implement a media reform program.
2. Promote and Support Anti-Corruption Reforms (\$4,600,000 ESF). USAID is assisting the GOE and empowering civil society to assist in the reform of transparency laws; establish independent entities within the judicial and legislative branches to investigate

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Besma Momani, Promoting Economic Liberalization in Egypt: From U.S. Foreign Aid to Trade and Investment, p.89, Middle East Review of International Affairs, vol.7, no.3 (September 2003).

²⁷⁷ http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/features/egypt/

²⁷⁸ The other areas that received assistance and the dollar amounts are as follows:

USAID BY THE NUMBERS		
	1975-2006	2006 Budget
Helping the economy	\$14.4 billion	\$344 million
Education	\$911 million	\$73 million
Health, family planning	\$872 million	\$25 million
Infrastructure	\$5.6 billion	
Democracy, governance	\$1 billion	\$48 million

Source: http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/features/egypt/

- corruption; and develop a national plan to raise awareness about, and combat, public sector corruption.
3. Promote and Support Credible Elections Processes (\$5,700,000 ESF). USAID is assisting the GOE and empowering civil society to make elections more accountable, competitive, and transparent. Assistance includes public information campaigns to educate voters, train domestic monitors, support international observation teams, maintain dialogue on electoral reform, and develop an independent political think-tank. Principal Implementers: National Democratic Institute (NDI) and International Republican Institute (IRI).
 4. Protect Human Rights (\$4,600,000 ESF). USAID is increasing the ability of civil society and government to address human rights violations and respond to violence against women and children. Assistance includes increasing public awareness, promoting advocacy, providing legal assistance, improving investigation capacity, and developing human rights curricula.
 5. Strengthen Civil Society (\$6,600,000 ESF). USAID is strengthening Egyptian civil society organizations (CSOs) and enhancing their participation in the political process and their ability to promote and monitor human rights through a grants program. Concurrently, a training and technical assistance contract is strengthening the management and reporting capacity of Egyptian grantees.
 6. Strengthen Democratic Political Parties (\$2,000,000 ESF). USAID is strengthening the capacity of political party leaders to wage effective campaigns, develop more democratic and representative internal structures and clearer platforms, monitor the integrity of the electoral process, and develop dialogue with civic leaders to build momentum for political reform. USAID works only with parties committed to democratic principles and non-violence. Principal Implementers: NDI and IRI.
 7. Strengthen the Justice Sector (\$12,100,000 ESF; \$3,500,000 ESF Prior Year Unobligated). USAID is assisting with reform of the justice sector by improving the efficiency and effectiveness of civil courts, integrating women into the judiciary, and promoting judicial independence. USAID is streamlining administrative procedures, automating and training judicial and court personnel at two major courts, planning for nationwide replication of the program, and improving access to justice for families. Principal Implementers: America-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Management Sciences for Development Inc.
 8. Support Democratic Local Government and Decentralization (\$6,400,000 ESF). USAID is building the capacity of local governments to respond to citizen

priorities by increasing revenue, establishing participatory mechanisms to manage resources, and strengthening management. Support focuses on governorates where USAID has already invested in education, health, environment, and microenterprise. Policy dialogue at the national level is helping to decentralize key authorities and responsibilities to the local level.

The aims, content, and the dollar amount of USAID assistance to be provided to Egypt in the financial year of 2007 is declared as follows:

1. Establish and Ensure Media Freedom and Freedom of Information (\$3,740,000 ESF). USAID will continue to train journalists and media managers to work in the restructured media sector.
2. Promote And Support Anti-Corruption Reforms (\$3,000,000 ESF). USAID will support civil society and GOE efforts to identify and combat public corruption.
3. Promote and Support Credible Elections Processes (\$4,000,000 ESF). In addition to continuing to work with civil society and the GOE to support political and electoral reforms, including the cleaning of voter lists, USAID will strengthen political parties to respond to constituent concerns, expand membership, and participate effectively in elections. Principal Implementers: NDI, IRI, and others.
4. Protect Human Rights (\$3,000,000 ESF). USAID will increase the ability of civil society and government to address human rights violations and respond to violence against women and children.
5. Strengthen Civil Society (\$13,950,000 ESF). USAID will fund more CSO initiatives in the areas of human rights, democratic reform, and governance through a grants program. Also, a training and technical assistance contract will strengthen the management and reporting capacity of Egyptian grantees.
6. Strengthen the Justice Sector (\$12,700,000 ESF). USAID will continue to train judges and mediators, develop human rights curricula, and automate the civil courts and the Office of the Prosecutor General.
7. Support Democratic Local Government and Decentralization (\$5,000,000 ESF). USAID will continue to provide policy and technical assistance to give local governments the authority and capacity to levy and retain local taxes and make transparent decisions in response to citizen priorities.

As a result, since the government of Egypt is highly dependent on U.S. aid and military and political backing, the Mubarak regime had no choice but to adapt its domestic and foreign policy to U.S. demands. With the initiation of MEPI and BMENA the U.S. administration declared that it would promote democracy in the Middle East and that it would use both carrots and sticks for the regional countries to pursue democratization policies. Hence, the Mubarak regime devised new reform projects that promised a greater opening up of the system for political opposition. The first part of this chapter showed that because of the political economical dependency of the Egyptian state on the U.S., it could not remain indifferent to its demands. Yet, in the second part of this chapter, I discuss the details of how the Mubarak regime engineered a reform agenda that would not democratize the political system and even worse, that would actually consolidate the authoritarian status quo. Relying on that, I argue that such kind of a management, if not the suppression suppression, of the pluralist system in favor of the authoritarian regime, is totally in line with the logic of the “liberalized autocracies” proposed by Takeyh and Gvosdev as a reworking of the “democratic realism” of Krauthammer, “realistic Wilsonianism” of Fukuyama, “adaptive democracy” of Liotta and Miskel, and “wolfish Wilsonianism” of Lieven.

The Topography of Political Reform in Egypt

“If we accept Samuel P. Huntington’s designation of the period starting in 1974 as the “Third Wave” of democratization, the Arab world has found itself high and dry. Few if any other parts of the globe have remained so far above the rising waters”

Glenn E. Perry, “The Arab Democracy Deficit: The Case of Egypt”

After reviewing the modes of U.S. democracy assistance to Egypt, I will now look at the internal dynamics of Egypt more closely and try to assess the impact of U.S. democracy promotion policies on Egyptian politics in terms of democratization. Measuring the ‘impact’ of a democracy assistance program is difficult, as it is hard to identify the real source of change. Therefore, in order to see the interaction between U.S. foreign policy and Egyptian political reforms, I will look at the political reforms in two fields that were introduced after the initiation of U.S. democracy promotion programs. The first site I will analyze is the change in the electoral system, and the second is the constitutional amendments. These are two fields where we can most lucidly delineate the *modus operandi* of the Mubarak regime’s politics of adjustment and the dynamics and modalities of managing the change, and of U.S. administration’s acquiescence of the Mubarak regime’s cosmetic reforms in line with the neoconservative democratic realist framework.

The U.S. administration’s adoption of a democratic realist posture can be deduced from the fact that it does not criticize/oppose the regime’s authoritarian measures and does not pressure for real democratic steps. On the reverse the U.S. expresses its satisfaction with the limited steps by applauding the regime’s façade reforms which are harshly criticized by the reformists inside Egypt, and continues to cooperate with, and rely on, the existing authoritarian regime.

Electoral System

In order to assess the impact of U.S. democracy promotion policy on Egypt's political system, I will first look at how the electoral system has changed in Egypt and what that change brought about. Did it really open up the system for oppositional political groups? And, what kind of a stance did the U.S. take regarding the change in the electoral system?

On February 26, 2005, President Mubarak announced his decision to make an ammendment to the Article 76 of the Egyptian Constitution, which regulates and defines the procedures of the election of the president.²⁷⁹ Until then, the National Democratic Party (NDP) of Mubarak used to appoint the president for five years, then it used to be voted in referendum, or in “plebiscite” as it is officially called.²⁸⁰ On September 6, the people elected a president out of ten candidates. Among these ten candidates, President Mubarak won 88 % of the vote and his most prominent challenger Ayman Nour from the the Al-Ghad (Tomorrow) Party got 7.6 %, and the leader of the Neo-Wafd Party, Noman Gomaa, got 3 % of the votes. The official results of the presidential elections of September 6, 2006 are as follows:

Candidates	Party	Valid Votes	% [of Valid Votes]
Mohamed Hosni	National Democratic Party	6,316,784	88.57%

²⁷⁹ He made that announcement during a speech at the University of Menoufiyah, the governerate in the Nile delta which includes the President's home town of Kafr al-Muselha. See, Florian Kohstall, “Reform Pirouettes: Foreign Democracy Promotion and the Politics of Adjustment in Egypt”, IPG 3/2006. p.34.

²⁸⁰ Under article 76 prior to its amendment, the People's Assembly (the lower house) voted to nominate a single presidential candidate, whose name was then submitted to the national electorate for ratification by referendum. A two-thirds majority is required for the nomination in the People's Assembly, while offering the people no choice beyond voting “yes” or “no” to the sole name on the ballot. For more detailed discussion, see “Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy”, International Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report, No:46.

Candidates	Party	Valid Votes	% [of Valid Votes]
MUBARAK			
Ayman Abdel Aziz NOUR	Tomorrow (Al Ghad) Party	540,405	7.58%
Noman Khalil GOMAA	Al Wafd Party	208,891	2.93%
Osama Abdel Shafi SHALTOUT	The Solidarity (Al Takaful) Party	29,857	0.42%
Wahid Fakhry AL UKSORY	The Egyptian Socialist Arab (Misr Al Arabi Al Ishtraki) Party	11,881	0.17%
Ibrahim Mohamed Abdel Monem TORK	The Democratic Union (Al Itihad Al Demoqrati) Party	5,831	0.08%
Mamdouh Mohamed Ahmed QENAWY	The Social Constitutional (Al Dustour Al Igtima'i) Party	5,481	0.08%
Ahmed Al Sabahi AWADALLAH	The Nation (Al Ummah) Party	4,393	0.06%
Fawzi Khalil GHAZAL	Egypt 2000 (Misr 2000) Party	4,222	0.06%
Al Said Refaat Mohamed AL AGROUDY	The National Conciliation (Al Wifaq Al Qawmy) Party	4,106	0.06%

Source: <http://www.electionguide.org/results.php?ID=80>

In the last analysis, this announcement of change in the procedures of the presidential elections did not bring about a substantial change in the configuration of power distribution as the NDP demonstrated its domination and determination to allow no serious opposition within the system. The public did not even believe that the government would allow free and fair elections and that the presidential elections would change the status quo as the low 22.9 % voter turnout rate shows.²⁸¹ Yet, as Mohamed Sid Ahmed rightly argues, it

²⁸¹ Bahey El-Din Hassan, Director of the Cairo Institute for Human Rights Studies (CIHRS) makes the same point in his interview with the Crisis Group. After Mubarak's announcement of the change in Article 76, an informal poll was conducted at the American University in Cairo with a sample of more than 100 respondents whereby 70 percent of the sample said that "they believed there would not be free and fair elections in fall 2005." "Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy", *International Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report* no. 46, 4 October 2006, p.i-1.

did inject energy into the society at large, as can be seen from the substantial increase in the number and volume of political activism.

Nonetheless, only three months after the 26 February speech of President Mubarak, the general mode of Egyptian politics again turned from optimism to stark pessimism. The amendment to Article 76 and the draft presidential election law began to be discussed in the parliament and in the Constitutional Court, and then the reforms passed to the NDP leaders in the People's Assembly and the Shura Council. The result of that process was to "drain the proposed amendment of most of its positive potential, by imposing conditions on the eligibility of presidential candidates that effectively restored the NDP's control over the election process".²⁸² This consolidated control over elections was made possible through a process whereby the NDP initiated reforms in the presidential election law on the one hand, yet on the other, simultaneously initiated new revisions for the laws on political rights, political parties, the People's Assembly, the Shura Council, and the press. These second strand of revisions were all flawed as they reflected the partisan self-interest of the NDP to the detriment of the opposition. This is why the revisions on the laws that regulate political rights/parties, assemblies and the press were passed only with the support of the ruling NDP MPs and despite the opposition of the opposition MPs. Thus, nearly all legal reforms and the entire reform agenda were passed without the consent of the opposition groups, or of any groups outside the ruling party.

The fact that groups outside of the government did not give consent to the recent reforms is a very clear indication of the fact that the recent

²⁸² Ibid, p. 4.

democratization measures taken by the Mubarak government are not internally-driven steps but externally-pushed manoeuvres. In other words, the change in the electoral system as well as in the laws regulating the political field, hardly came about as a result of domestic dynamics. It was rather undertaken to water down the demands of external actors that stressed for democratization.²⁸³

At first sight, this itself seems as a positive development on the part of the democracy promoters, yet, a closer look at the issue suggests that the positive role of the democracy promoters is seriously undermined by the adaptation of the regime to the ‘rules of the game’ and by the manipulation of the democracy game in a way that both waters down the external pressures for democratic reforms, and does not lose its hold on the system. In other words, the regime has a double benefit from the process as it alleviates the internal and external demands for reform by introducing cosmetic measures that do not substantively change the distribution of power, while serving as a source of legitimacy in the eyes of the Egyptian citizens and the international community because of the discourse of democracy and of ‘implementing’ democratic reforms. I submit that this double dealing of the ruling NDP in the field of reforms has been the defining characteristic of the status quo and the modality through which the authoritarian regime gained a ground for survival, and I argue that this is perfectly in line with the neoconservative, ‘democratic realist’ models of promoting ‘liberal autocracies’ in the Middle East.

The amendment to Article 76 of the constitution was voted in the People’s Assembly on May 10, and ratified by the referendum on May 25. Despite this political pluralization and democratization on the surface, the

²⁸³ Loc.cit.

amendment also bears rigid restrictions in its implementation. In other words, the conditions introduced by the amendment for presidential candidate nominations are so difficult to meet so as to render elections null and void. For instance, the amendment requires all presidential candidate nominations to be supported by at least 250 members of the representative bodies. That number of 250 must include 65 members of the People's Assembly (out of 454), 25 members of the Shura Council (out of 264) , ten members of local councils in fourteen governorates (out of 26 governorates), and the remaining twenty supporters of the candidate must be found from the above mentioned categories. It also brings further criteria for candidacy. The amendment states that in all future presidential elections (after 2005) only the parties which are at least five years old, which have won at least 5 % of the seats in the People's Assembly and 5% of the seats in the Shura Council, and which are active, meaning which are not 'frozen' by the Political Parties Committee, can nominate candidates. Furthermore, it states that the candidates must have held a senior position in the party leadership for at least a year. All of these requirements are also valid for all independent non-party candidates.²⁸⁴

Such requirements for candidacy successfully prevented critical figures like the liberal academic Saad Eddine Ibrahim, and the feminist writer Nawal Al-Saadawi from being candidates for the presidential elections. Since the NDP has a massive control over both houses of parliament (People's Assembly and Shura Council), and over the local councils, the Mubarak government also succeeded in preventing the Muslim Brotherhood from

²⁸⁴ Amr Hamzawy and Nathan Brown, "Can Egypt's Troubled Elections Produce a More Democratic Feature?", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Democracy and Rule of Law Policy Outlook*, December 2005,p.4.

fielding an independent candidate.²⁸⁵ These are hindrances put forward by the new constitutional amendment before the non-party candidates, but it also makes it of the utmost difficulty for legally recognized political parties to nominate candidates in the forthcoming presidential elections, for none of them has a 5% of the seats in either of the two houses of parliament.²⁸⁶

One of the most crucial aspects of the amendment to Article 76 is the extremely restrictive and stringent criteria for eligibility. The controversial composition and prerogatives of the presidential election commission were also included in the revised version of the constitutional article, which made any change in them immensely difficult.

The amendment to Article 76 also created an “Independent Commission for the Supervision of the Presidential Elections” which is composed of ten members and is presided over by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Constitutional Court. Four members are from senior judges, five members are chosen from among the “independent and neutral public figures” by the People’s Assembly and the Shura Council, which are effectively dominated by the ruling NDP.

One further revision the amendment brought is that it stipulates that the presidential elections must be completed in a single day, which makes the effective judicial supervision of the electoral process across the country nearly impossible.²⁸⁷ In addition, the Presidential Election Law enacted by the People’s Assembly on 16 June 2005 restricted the election campaign process to

²⁸⁵ “Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy”, *International Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report* no. 46, 4 October 2006, p.4

²⁸⁶ According to the 2000 elections, the distribution of the 454 seats in the People’s Assembly is as follows: NDP:417 (91.85 %), Al-Wafd: 6 (1.32 %), Tagammu’: 5 (1.10%), Al-Ahrar: 1 (0.22%), Nasserists: 1 (0.22%), Independents (Muslim Brotherhood): 14 (3.08%) and ten members appointed by the President Mubarak

²⁸⁷ “Reforming Egypt: In Search...”, p.14.

21 days. Critics not only argue that this change in the electoral system is not enough, some even argue that the former system of presidential elections were much more open than the newly introduced one. For instance Dr. Rifaat Said, the leader of the left-wing Tagammu Party, expressed his disappointment with the amendment and argued that the old referendum system was better since “the new system would lead to more fraud in parliamentary elections”²⁸⁸

Likewise, the Muslim Brotherhood also took a rejectionist stand towards the amendment as declared by the General Guide of the organization, Mohamed Mahdi Akef on May 9, 2005. Dr. Ibrahim Darwish, a professor of Constitutional Law at Cairo University, maintained that the “amendment was the worst thing that could have happened to the reform process as it blocked other possible reforms and replaced the referendum system with a worse one.”²⁸⁹

As a result of all these conditions, the oppositional groups showed great dislike for the constitutional amendment for presidential elections. This fact has been seen quite apparently in the People’s Assembly, when only one MP from the opposition parties, Heidar Al Baghdadi of the Nasserist Party, voted in favor of the amendment.²⁹⁰

Apart from the presidential election law, in June and July 2005, the Egyptian parliament enacted a series of laws regulating the political field concerning the People’s Assembly, the Shura Council, political rights and political parties. As in the change in the presidential election system, these changes in laws “unquestionably disadvantaged the opposition parties and reflected both the NDP’s determination to preserve its overall control of the

²⁸⁸ Al-Masry Al-Youm, 7 May 2005, quoted in “Reforming Egypt: In Search...” , p.6.

²⁸⁹ Loc.cit.

²⁹⁰ Later he was expelled from his party for his vote. See Al-Ahram, May 11, 2005.

political system and its illiberal outlook.”²⁹¹ The revised version of the Political Parties Law, enacted on July 4, maintained that the new parties would be automatically legalized if the Political Parties Committee did not refuse to license them within the first 90 days of the notification of formation.²⁹² This new law is, in many respects, more illiberal than its previous version. For instance, the previous law required the new political parties to be supported by 50 signatures for authorization, but the new law changed it to 1000 signatures, collected from at least ten of the 26 governorates. It also brought a new requirement that the new parties had to submit detailed documents of their source of funding, and prohibited parties from publishing more than two newspapers and from receiving foreign funding.²⁹³

In terms of the workings of the pluralist system, the Political Parties Committee (PPC) plays a crucial role as it is authorized to allow or prohibit new political parties, or to ‘freeze’ the license of the existing parties.²⁹⁴ The new Political Parties Law introduced a change in the composition of the PPC. The body is still chaired by the President of the Shura Council and includes two ministers (of the interior for People’s Assembly affairs) and three former judges. The change is that the justice minister was dropped from the committee and instead three “independent public figures” were added, hence the number of the members increased from seven to nine. Despite the fact that the NDP is a

²⁹¹ “Reforming Egypt: In Search of...”, p.7.

²⁹² This law is the revised version of the Law 40 of 1956.

²⁹³ The ICG reporters point out a slight, but I think significant, difference between the old and new versions of the law. The previous law required that the platform of the new party should be “distinct” from the existing parties, yet the new law says that the new party must represent a “new addition” to political life. This change in wording is itself more restrictive. See, “Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy”, *International Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report* no. 46, 4 October 2006, p.7.

²⁹⁴ The legal (licensed) parties in Egypt are: the Wafd Party (centrist), the Tagammu Party (leftist), and the Nasserist Party. The unlicensed movements and parties are: the Muslim Brotherhood (Islamist), the Wasat Party (Islamist), Karama Party (neo-Nasserist), Democratic Front (liberal).

concise control over the PPC, the bigger problem is that instead of decreasing the control of the PPC over political parties it actually increased it by empowering the PPC. According to the new law, the PPC is empowered to freeze a party's activities if the party, or one of its leading members, begins to espouse principles differing from the original party line, or if freezing the party in question is "in the national interest". Hence, through these vague and open-ended statements the PPC is granted immense power over the parties and can easily curtail the freedom of the parties. The committee is also empowered to check whether the parties are pursuing "democratic practices" and "the national interest". If the committee decides that a party is breaching democratic practices, or not serving the national interest, then it is authorized to refer to the Prosecutor-General, who may bring the case before the Parties Court, a body which is an affiliate of the Supreme Administrative Court.

There is no doubt that the new change in the laws institutes a more illiberal and undemocratic system, for it increases the power of an already excessively-powerful institutional body [which is part of the executive branch] over the ideology, content, organization, funding, activities and even the intentions of the political parties. One quite powerful indicator of the fact that new constitutional and legal changes in the Egyptian political system have not brought any substantial positive change, if not reactionary steps, towards democratization and pluralization is that the current head of the PPC, Safwat Sherif, is the Secretary General of the NDP, and one of the prominent members of the PPC, Minister of People's Assembly Affairs Kamal Shazli, is also a leading member of the NDP. In other words, the PPC, an independent constitutional state body that overlooks the ideologies and activities of the

political parties and that allows, bans or freezes the workings of the political parties, is dominated by the politicians who are among the leaders of one of the parties, NDP, which is the party of the current President Mubarak. Hence, the revised composition and increased powers of the PPC reproduces and reinforces the NDP control over the whole party-politics. This constitutes a great obstacle on the way to pluralist politics.

Furthermore, the revised Law on Political Rights²⁹⁵ brought new penalties for journalists and newspapers that are “convicted of publishing false information with intent to affect election results”. This law also introduced extra penalties for the candidates who accept foreign funding.²⁹⁶ One more crucial reform that the Law on Political Rights has introduced is the creation of a commission to oversee elections in the name of the People’s Assembly and the Shura Council. Just like the PPC, this commission is also dominated and controlled by the NDP, hence the electoral process is also controlled by the NDP.²⁹⁷ The People’s Assembly Law and the Shura Council Law also prohibit the political parties from using public spaces like mosques or universities in their election campaigns.

When we look at all these reforms enacted in 2005, what we see is that they made no substantive and qualitative change in the political system. Introducing presidential elections remained as an abstract concession given by the regime to the opposition, but mainly to the external actors, which created no effect in choosing the president. What is striking is the fact that the regime

²⁹⁵ This is Law 73 of 1956.

²⁹⁶ The exact penalty for a candidate guilty of receiving foreign fund is between 50.000 and 100.000 Egyptian pounds, equivalent to 7.234 and 14.468 Euros. The candidate also loses his/her political rights permanently. See, “Reforming Egypt: In Search ...”, p.8.

²⁹⁷ The commission is made up of 11 members: the minister of justice (chair), a representative of the interior ministry, three senior judges and six independent members chosen by the People’s Assembly and the Shura Council. See, “Reforming Egypt: In Search ...”, p.7.

has “balanced if not outweighed [the concessions] by measures designed to tighten things up.”²⁹⁸ The revised legal framework for elections and political rights confirmed and reinforced the domination of the party-politics and electoral processes and procedures by the ruling NDP. These reforms contributed more to the (con)fusion of the state and the NDP. In that sense, the regime conceded reforms formally in a way that emptied their substantive content and conserved the status quo.

In any case, it is hard to designate the real source and motives of such reforms, but I argue that these reforms were more of a response to the increasing pressure of the U.S. One evidence that would support this conviction is that literally all opposition parties within and outside the parliament have rejected the reform measures. There is no single opposition party that has viewed the recent changes positively. The only actor in Egyptian politics who is satisfied with the depth of Egyptian reforms is the U.S. I think the U.S. is an important actor in Egyptian politics as it is the external source of the survival of the regime in terms of military and economic assistance, strategic cooperation and trade. Thus, the Egyptian regime cannot risk alienating it.²⁹⁹ Despite the fact that the political reforms in general, and the electoral processes and procedures in particular, are quite restrictive and undemocratic, the U.S. provided support to these measures. In other words, despite its covert engagement in arranging a transparent presidential and parliamentary election in Egypt, the U.S. did not pay attention to the legal and human rights violations during the electoral process and instead put the

²⁹⁸Ibid, p.8.

²⁹⁹ We should also mention the significance of the economic assistance of the European Union. See, Michele Dunne, “Evaluating Egyptian Reform”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Papers, Democracy and Rule of Law Project*, no.66, January 2006, p.14

emphasis on reform efforts. The U.S. State Department declared that the presidential election was a “historic departure” and a “step towards democratization”³⁰⁰, and that it would “enrich the Egyptian political dialogue, certainly for years to come.”³⁰¹ The State Department also pointed out that “the Egyptian Government and the Egyptian people can build upon this positive first step in holding this multi-candidate presidential election and build on the positive experiences, the positive actions in this election, as they look towards parliamentary elections.”³⁰² The U.S. did not pay attention to the boycott of the elections by various parties, including Kifaya, Tagammu and Nasserist parties, the low voter turnout, and more importantly the eligibility restrictions on candidacy in the presidential elections, and the licensing restrictions for parties in the parliamentary elections. In other words, the U.S. did not pay attention to the politics of authoritarian adjustment successfully employed by the Egyptian regime. The U.S. was satisfied with the holding of a multicandidate election despite the grave restrictions and violations of political rights that rendered the elections totally obsolete. The only positive step that the U.S. took during the presidential elections was Condoleezza Rice’s cancellation of her visit to Cairo on February 26, 2005 as a protest against the arrest of Ayman Nour, who had been accused of forging membership cards to get his new party, Al-Ghad, legalized.³⁰³ Apart from that, the U.S. applauded Mubarak’s “meaningless

³⁰⁰ The White House, George W. Bush, The State of the Union, Washington DC, 2/2/2005, available at: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2005/02/20050202-II.html>, last access: June 21, 2007.

³⁰¹ Florian Kohstall, “Reform Pirouettes: Foreign Democracy Promotion and the Politics of Adjustment in Egypt” *IPG* 3/2006, p.37.

³⁰² US State Department, Daily Press Briefing by Sean McCormack, Washington DC, 8/9/2005, available at: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/pr/dpb/2005/52801.htm>, last access: 03/05/2007.

³⁰³ Kohstall, *art.cit.*, p. 36.

electoral reform”³⁰⁴ as “a very wise and bold step”, as First Lady Laura Bush described it, which in turn “frustrated the democrats and delighted the autocrats”, as Sa’d al-Din Ibrahim put it.³⁰⁵ Similarly, Marina Ottoway notes that the U.S. government shows an “excessive praise for slight changes” made by the authoritarian regime.³⁰⁶ This is, for Glenn Perry, “an evidence that the U.S. is not serious about promoting democracy.”³⁰⁷

The U.S. seems committed to maintaining authoritarian client regimes such as the Mubarak regime, although it employs a rhetoric of democratization in the Middle East and initiates democracy promotion programs like MEPI and BMENA. Glenn E. Perry very rightly argues that the U.S. officials’ and writers’ remarks about the authoritarian governments in the Middle East serves the function of “whitewashing Western client regimes” which obscures the distinction between democratization on the one hand, and “slight degrees of democratization or liberalization that leave the authoritarian structure intact, and even augment it”, on the other hand.³⁰⁸ These observations seem quite cogent when we think of what James R. Kunder, the Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East at USAID, said about Egypt’s reforms:³⁰⁹

³⁰⁴ Glenn E. Perry, “Imperial Democratization: Rhetoric and Reality”, *Arab Studies Quarterly* 28, no.3&4 (Summer/Fall 2006), p.66.

³⁰⁵ Chris Toensing, “US stays with Egyptian Dictator,” The Middle East Research and Information Project website, (http://www.merip.org/newspaper_opeds/oped060305.html), quoted in Perry, *loc. cit.*

³⁰⁶ Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottoway, “The New Democracy Imperative” in *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, T. Carothers and M. Ottoway, (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), p.9.

³⁰⁷ Perry, *art. cit.*, p.68.

³⁰⁸ Some scholars, like May Kassem and Eberhard Kienly, even defy the general description of the Egyptian political system as if it was “gradually returning to a liberal tradition”, or as if it was experiencing a transition to democracy, since the “mixed picture” of the 1980s has been followed by a “deliberalization since 1990s”. Glenn E. Perry, “The Arab Democracy Deficit: The Case of Egypt”, *Arab Studies Quarterly*, Spring 2004; 26, 2. p.92.

³⁰⁹ “U.S. Assistance in Egypt”, Written Testimony of James R. Kunder, Assistant Administrator for Asia and the Near East, Before the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on International Relations Sub-Committees on Middle East and Central Asia, May 17, 2006.

Despite the patterns of gains-and-setbacks, the political atmosphere in Egypt has changed. The Egyptian people are increasingly demanding a say in their own governance, and the Government of Egypt has responded, albeit in a limited fashion. Last year Egypt held its first multi-candidate presidential elections, citizens demonstrated and criticized the government, at times more freely than at any time since independence, more opposition members sit in parliament than ever before, and several new independent newspapers have ferreted out corruption and publicized the initiatives of political reformers. Despite this progress, much remains to be done, and we will intensify our efforts to promote democracy and political reform in Egypt.

As for the parliamentary elections which took place in three different stages, the U.S. has criticized three points. Firstly, the supporters of the NDP candidate attacked the supporters of the Muslim Brotherhood in the second and third stages of the elections. The security forces first remained silent on this attack, and then prevented the Muslim Brotherhood's supporters from entering the polling stations. Secondly, the security interference and violence against elections monitors, and thirdly, the detention of Ayman Nour. However, the violations during the voting process and the problems the reformist judges faced while investigating these violations were so salient that the U.S. Congress even demanded to cut the aid flows to Egypt, yet the U.S. administration refused to do so in order not to lose a strategic ally in the Middle East.³¹⁰ It still prefers cooperation with the ever strengthening authoritarian regime.

Nonetheless, since the executive is the sole locus of power in the Egyptian political system, which is a central tenet of Takeyh and Gvosdev's "liberalized autocracy" model, the Mubarak regime restricted and controlled

³¹⁰ Kohstall, *art.cit.*, p.36.

the presidential elections more strictly when compared to the parliamentary elections. Kohstall captures this point:

The Egyptian government is carefully adapting to some of the principles promoted by the US without giving up control over the electoral process. It has carefully crafted reform measures for the domestic institutional setting. By erecting high obstacles against political candidacy, *the NDP still controls pluralism* and competition in presidential elections. The liberalization of parliamentary elections does not constitute an immediate threat, given that the power of the legislature is very limited in a system where *the president controls politics and policies*. (...) The differences between the parliamentary and presidential elections illustrate how the *Egyptian government has manipulated the principle of 'free elections'*. (my emphasis)

Introducing presidential elections and keeping parliamentary elections are in fact important steps for democratization, however, they are necessary but not sufficient steps. The problem in Egyptian electoral reforms and electoral system is that it negates all democratic principles and procedures by manipulating the electoral process through institutional and legal engineering. This is why Glenn E. Perry defines Egyptian elections as “fake contestation”.³¹¹ By drawing on Dahl’s model, he argues that Dahl has pointed out two basic dimensions of polyarchy, first, ‘inclusiveness’, and second, ‘contestation’. Yet he adds a third dimension to the polyarchic model which measures “the extent to which those who are chosen in inclusive, contested elections are the real rulers”.³¹² In other words, it measures the real effective power. “In Egypt”, he argues, “the existing levels of inclusiveness and contestation for parliamentary seats are negated by the concentration of real power in the hands of a president who recurrently gets nearly unanimous

³¹¹ Perry, art.cit., p.94.

³¹² Ibid., p. 93.

approval in uncontested plebiscites, that is, the absence of the Third Dimension.”³¹³

Constitutional Reforms

Together with the presidential and parliamentary elections, may be an even more important and comprehensive reform agenda was outlined by President Mubarak in his speech at Al-Masa’i al-Mashkoura School in Shibeen el Komi on July 28, 2005. This new agenda of legislative and constitutional reforms were to:

- 1) “entail further checks on the powers of the president”
- 2) “reinforce the cabinet’s role, widen its mandate and further the scope of government participation with the president in the duties of the executive authority”
- 3) “reshape the relationship between the legislative and executive authorities in a way that creates a greater balance between them and strengthens the parliament’s role in ensuring oversight and accountability”
- 4) “provide the best electoral system which guarantees an increased chance for party representation in our representative councils, and will consolidate the presence and representation of women in parliament”
- 5) “bring about a new and enhanced concept for local administration, strengthening its powers and furthering decentralization”
- 6) “provide a legislative substitute to combat terrorism and replace the current Emergency Law”³¹⁴

The intention to introduce reforms in these six fields expressed by President Mubarak represented a remarkable hope as these were the top reform priorities demanded by the opposition since the promulgation of the 1971 Constitution that concentrated excessive authority in the hands of the executive and that fared poorly in terms of human rights protections and democratic

³¹³ *Loc. cit.*

³¹⁴ “Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy”, *International Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report* no. 46, 4 October 2006, p.23.

substance.³¹⁵ The points mentioned by Mubarak addressed the complaints of the Kifaya, Tagammu, Wafd, and al-Ghad parties and to the Muslim Brotherhood about the excessive concentration of political power in the presidency by promising to bring constitutional checks on the presidents actions and to redistribute the power of presidency to the executive branch (president, prime minister and cabinet) and to parliament. Whereas, there was a significant absence in the reform agenda, that is to restore and to secure judicial independence which was pointed out by some critics at that time.³¹⁶ Despite this crucial omission in the reform agenda, the proposals for constitutional amendments injected hope into the Egyptian polity. Yet, further developments disappointed the reformist activists again, as stated by Ibrahim Eissa: “Anyone who believes that U.S. President George Bush is succeeding in Iraq can believe that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is undertaking reform in Egypt; neither is happening in reality”.³¹⁷

The reform measures mentioned in Mubarak’s speech did not turn into solid proposals till December 2006. On March 19, 2007, the People’s Assembly approved the amendments to thirty four articles of the Constitution, and on March 26, accepted them in the public referendum. Although the

³¹⁵ In 1980, a year before his assassination, Anwar Sadat amended new clauses to the Constitution that further strengthened the president’s position in the political system. This is why Sadat once said to Ahmad Baha’al-Din, a journalist who was his close colleague, and his onetime speech writer: “Oh Ahmad, Nasser and I, we are the last pharaohs! You think Nasser needed texts to govern, or that I do? The powers you’re talking about I put there for those who would come after us, ordinary presidents, Muhammad, Ali, Umar. They’ll need these clauses to get by.” In Ahmad Baha’al-Din, *My Dialogues with Sadat*, p.64, Cairo:Dar al-Hilal, 1987; quoted in Mona El-Ghobashy, “Unsettling the Authorities: Constitutional Reform in Egypt”, *Middle East Report* 226, (Spring 2003), p.31. Also see, Nathan J.Brown and Michelle Dunne, “Egypt’s Controversial Constitutional Amendments: A Textual Analysis”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 23, 2007, p.5.

http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/egypt_constitution_webcommentary01.pdf . Accessed on May 8, 2007.

³¹⁶“Reforming Egypt: In Search . . .”, p. 23.

³¹⁷ Ibrahim Eissa, “Egypt: Point/Counterpoint on the Constitutional Amendments”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Arab Reform Bulletin* 5, no.3 (April 2007).

Mubarak regime heralded the amendments as great steps towards democratization and strengthening of the parliament, the opposition and civil society activists claim that the amendments fail to secure protection of human rights and close the door for peaceful political activism. As the more detailed discussion below indicates, when taken together, the amendments and the process of political reform is an effort of the Egyptian government to give the appearance that the country is undertaking steps toward pluralization and democratization, while in fact restricting political competition and keeping power in the hands of the executive branch, especially of the president.

i. State of Emergency.

During the 2005 Presidential Elections Campaign, President Mubarak promised to lift the state of emergency through which he had ruled the country since the beginning of his presidency in 1981, and to instead bring forth a more concise and specific antiterrorism law. The emergency law provides the regime excessive rights and powers “to detain the suspects without charge for lengthy times, try civilians in military courts, prevent public gatherings, and monitor private communications.”³¹⁸ Despite his promise, President Mubarak managed to get approval from the parliament for the renewal of the state of emergency for the following two years.

The amended version of Article 179 states that “The state shall be responsible for protecting security and public order from the dangers of

³¹⁸ Nathan J. Brown and Michelle Dunne, “Egypt’s Controversial Constitutional Amendments: A Textual Analysis”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 23, 2007, p.2.

terrorism.(...) The president has the right to refer any crime of terrorism to any judicial authority under the Constitution or the law.”³¹⁹ As the article shows, the amendment is designed in a way so that the president is still authorized to order civilians to be trialed in the military courts, which is one of the most criticized practices of the Egyptian regime. The amended Article 179 even facilitated the trial of civilians in military courts by stipulating that “it is permissible, in prosecuting offenses related to terrorism, to bypass protections against arbitrary arrest, search without warrant, and violation of privacy contained in Articles 41, 44 and 45 of the Constitution.”³²⁰ This change in the constitution further weakened the constitutional ground of human rights protections, which has significant negative ramifications for democratic political rights. In the past, some political activists who were the victims of Egyptian security forces won victories in the court by claiming their constitutional protections. The amended article makes it even more difficult for the victims or human rights organizations to accuse or sue the Egyptian security forces for ignoring or violating constitutional rights and protections. As Brown and Dunne report, some Egyptians had complained about the constitutional amendment by saying that it would turn a technically temporary (if ongoing) state of emergency into a “permanent part of Egypt’s political structure and wall of security practices from constitutional oversight.”³²¹

ii. Judicial Supervision of Elections

³¹⁹ “Egyptian Constitutional Amendments Passed on March 19, 2007: Translated Excerpts”, compiled and translated by Dina Bishara. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

³²⁰ Brown and Dunne, art.cit., p.2.

³²¹ Loc.cit.

Article 88 of the Egyptian Constitution regulates the supervision of elections. According to the former version of the article, parliamentary elections and referenda were to be under judicial supervision without specifying the kind of judicial body and the kind of supervision. By arguing that there were not enough judges to oversee every polling station, the judges were only allowed to observe the counting process of the votes in the centres instead of the process of polling. In 2000, the Supreme Constitutional Court decided that this was not adequate to meet the requirement of the Constitution, hence the Mubarak government extended the polling process over several days to make the judicial supervision of the balloting process possible. For that reason, a new legislation was made to render all judicial and quasi-judicial personnel, including prosecutors and members of the State Cases Organization, responsible for supervision.³²² This manoeuvre of the government also faced fierce criticism because it did not meet Article 88's requirement that only an independent "judicial body" was authorized to supervise elections.

The revised Article 88 solved the problem by totally eliminating the judicial supervision of parliamentary elections and transferring the responsibility of electoral supervision to an electoral commission:

“(..). Voting will take place on a single day and will be supervised by a supreme electoral commission that enjoys independence and neutrality, in a way to be specified by law. The law shall specify the committee's mandate, the manner of its formation, and the guarantees for its members, provided that current and former members of judicial bodies are among its members. The electoral commission will form the general committees that will monitor elections on the level of electoral districts and the committees that will oversee voting and counting procedures. (...) Counting will take place under

³²² Ibid, p.3.

the supervision of the general committees, according to rules and procedures specified by law.”³²³

On paper, this seems to be non-problematic, as the international practice is also close to the model of supervision by electoral commissions instead of judges. Nonetheless, as in the Political Parties Committee, the composition and operation of this body is determined by the Parliament, which is dominated by NDP, the party of Hosni Mubarak. In other words, the members of the commission who will observe whether the ruling NDP government resorts to electoral fraud or other illegal acts in the elections will be appointed by the NDP dominated parliament.

Moreover, the newly introduced electoral commission is authorized to have oversight over balloting, but it remains silent over the other monitoring functions of similar commissions elsewhere, like access to media and campaign funding.³²⁴ Finally, by taking the experience of the “independent electoral commission” of the 2005 presidential elections into account, the reformists see no point in believing that the Mubarak regime really intends to erect an independent body to oversee the parliamentary elections.

iii. Secularism and Identity Politics

Thus far, the Muslim Brotherhood constitutes the most powerful opposition movement in Egypt. In the 2005 parliamentary elections the Muslim Brotherhood made a remarkable showing by sending 88 independent MPs to the parliament despite the fact that it is a banned organization that cannot form

³²³ “Egyptian Constitutional Amendments Passed on March 19, 2007: Translated Excerpts”, compiled and translated by Dina Bishara. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

³²⁴ Brown and Dunne, art.cit., p.3.

a political party and despite the claims of electoral fraud by the opposition. The Muslim Brotherhood constituted 20 % of the parliament by taking 88 of the 454 seats. This electoral success of the Brotherhood led the Mubarak government to take more restrictive steps to prevent the increasing clout of the organization. The revision in Article 5 of the Constitution negated any possibility of the formation of a political party by the Muslim Brotherhood. In the current Egyptian system, the formation of a political party “on the basis of religion” is already precluded, yet, the new constitutional amendment forbids not only the formation of a political party but also “any political activity”, and not only on the basis of religion, but also “within any religious frame of reference.”: “Citizens have the right to form political parties in accordance with law. It is not permitted to pursue any political activity or establish any political parties within any religious frame of reference (*marja’iyya*) or on any religious basis or on the basis of gender or origin.”

The wording of the revised Article 5 is also quite telling in that the Arabic term *marja’iyya* is a term that is frequently employed by the Muslim Brotherhood and by some mainstream Islamist parties like the Justice and Development Party in Morocco.³²⁵ In Egypt, the Wasat Party that is influenced by an Islamic frame of reference also becomes threatened by the vague language of the constitution. Saad Eddin Ibrahim argues that “mainstream Islamists with broad support, developed civic dispositions and services to provide are the most likely actors in building a new Middle East... whether we

³²⁵ Ibid, p. 4.

like it or not, these are the facts”.³²⁶ Mainstream Islamists, including the Brotherhood itself, are moving-albeit slowly- toward accepting democracy.

Shibley Telhami states that there is no “third way” beyond the existing authoritarian regimes and Islamist forces as the religious parties, not the secular ones, are the actors that are able to control power at the grassroots level, and in the foreseeable future these religious parties will always triumph in free elections. As for Washington’s options, he argues that the United States can “apply the brake” and promote results short of regime change (such as economic reforms and human rights) or it can push ahead with democratization and either reject or engage the Islamists. Telhami warns, however, that rejection may trigger a “clash of civilizations”, while the U.S. lacks a plan for the engagement option.³²⁷ Larry Diamond also maintains that for a better democratization policy, the U.S. government should engage with moderate Islamist thinkers. He argues that many of these Islamists support the “application of religious law in a way consistent with democracy.”³²⁸ After stating that he is against such illiberal systems, Diamond argues that there is

“(…) nothing intrinsically undemocratic with a government that comes to power via democratic means and that applies Shari’a, so long as it respects the rule of law and minority rights, and is willing to be voted out of office if the people turn against it.(…) It is the party that manipulates Muslim citizens’ emotions exactly as the religious movement does and plays on Coptic Christians’ fears to win their support.”³²⁹

³²⁶ Rashid Khalidi, “Historical Precedents for Middle East Democracy”, in *Democratizing the Middle East? Lighting the Path to Understanding*, Michael Kugelman, The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Occasional Paper No.2, (Tufts University,2006) , p.12

³²⁷ Michael Kugelman,2006. *Democratizing the Middle East? Lighting the Path to Understanding*, The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Occasional Paper No.2, p.49, Tufts University, 2006.

³²⁸ William A. Rugh, quoted in Michael Kugelman. *Michael Kugelman, The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Occasional Paper No.2, (Tufts University,2006) , p.49.*

³²⁹ *ibid*, p.48-49.

Although the amendment openly targets terminating any prospect of the Muslim Brotherhood's entrance into the legitimate political field, it is also remarkable that the final part of the revised article also prohibits all kinds of feminist and ethnicist politics. It is a perplexing irony that the constitutional amendments which are heralded as great steps towards democratization by President Mubarak prevent the participation of all kinds Islamist, feminist and ethnic politics in the political process. Interestingly enough, the Muslim Brotherhood and the secular opposition complain that the NDP does not obey that clause and uses religious symbols quite frequently. A secular reform activist, Ibrahim Eissa, maintains that NDP is in fact "the most backward and religiously inflexible of Egypt's parties, as demonstrated by its recent vicious campaign against Minister of Culture Farouk Hosni-himself a minister in the NDP government- because he expressed a negative view of women who wear the veil."³³⁰ The apparent contradiction between the constitutional clause and the deeds of the NDP makes it clear that the intention of the Mubarak government is not to prevent religion from dominating politics but to prevent the existence of a strong opposition movement.

One further bulwark against the increasing tide of the Muslim Brotherhood is put in Article 62 of the Constitution, which envisions a change towards a mixed system of party lists and individual districts: "(...) It is permitted for the law to adopt a system that combines the individual district and party list systems in any ratio that it specifies."³³¹ Since the change in the parliamentary elections in 1990, Egypt's parliamentary election system is an

³³⁰ Ibrahim Eissa, "Egypt: Point/Counterpoint on the Constitutional Amendments", *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Arab Reform Bulletin* 5, no.3 (April 2007).

³³¹ "Egyptian Constitutional Amendments Passed on March 19, 2007: Translated Excerpts", compiled and translated by Dina Bishara. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

individual district system. The Muslim Brotherhood has participated in the elections through independent candidates and has shown remarkable success. The return to the mixed system of party list and individual districts will curtail the number of the individual districts and the power of the Muslim Brotherhood.

iv. Role of the Parliament

One of the most important issues in Egypt's reform agenda is reinstating the powers of the parliament in order to balance the power of the government and president. In general, the constitutional amendments mostly envision strengthening the parliament. For instance, the revised Article 115 gives the parliament more powers over the budgetary process.³³² Article 127 entitles the parliament to give or withdraw support to the president who is appointed by the president without the need to submit the decision to a referendum.³³³ Yet, despite these positive steps, the reforms also facilitate the dissolution of the parliament by the president. According to Article 136, the president has a right to dissolve the parliament "in case of necessity" without a public referendum. Such a huge right was not granted to the president in the former version of the constitution. In other words, while introducing some timid and fragile democratic reforms, the Mubarak regime guarantees that if politics becomes

³³² The revised Article 115: "The draft general budget must be submitted to the People's Assembly at least three months before the beginning of the fiscal year and is not considered to be in effect without the assembly's approval. Voting on the draft budget will be article by article. The People's Assembly may amend the expenses listed in the budget except those used to repay a specific obligation on the part of the state."

³³³ The revised Article 127: "The People's Assembly shall decide, based on the request of one tenth of its members, the responsibility of the prime minister. Its decision shall be by a majority of the Assembly members. This decision may not be made until after an interpellation has been directed at the government and at least three days have passed since the initial request."

more competitive and contentious and the regime cannot control the electoral and legislative processes, it can dissolve the parliament, which is a way resorted to frequently by other Arab regimes.

Thus, the amendments to 34 constitutional articles reflect an authoritarian content which further discourages the hopes for meaningful political reform in Egypt.³³⁴ The process itself was quite undemocratic as the Mubarak government did not enter into any substantive negotiations with the opposition movements and parties and civil society.

The Egyptian regime is “adjusting to reform pressures, without releasing its grip on society”.³³⁵ Democratization, as a discourse, is omnipresent in the vocabulary of the regime, yet is far from creating effective and tangible results. As Kohstall points out, in order to understand this paradox, it is important to address the dynamics between foreign democracy promoters and national policy-makers, which shows that in a ‘friendly country’ like Egypt, “democracy is far from being imposed”.³³⁶ This is because of the very nature of the relationship between the democracy promoters of the international community, basically the U.S., and the Egyptian government, which is similar to a negotiation process between donor and client. As for that relationship, Kohstall maintains that “within the framework of close cooperation, democratic principles are watered down to promote the interests of both parties”.³³⁷

³³⁴ Apart from the above-mentioned fields, the 34 amendments also include social and economic transformation in Egypt. Amendments to Articles 4, 12, 24, 30, 33 and 56 eliminate the content inherited from the Nasserite period like references to socialism, the alliance of the working forces, the leading role of the public sector in development. See; Amr Hamzawy, “Political Motivations and Implications”, *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, March 23, 2007, p.6

³³⁵ Kohstall, art.cit., p.34.

³³⁶ Loc.cit.

³³⁷ Loc.cit.

All in all, the analysis of the Egyptian case reveals that the U.S.'s democracy promotion policy in Egypt is governed by a 'democratic realist' logic which aims at the pluralization of the political system while further strengthening the existing regime. By introducing flawed reforms, the Egyptian regime aims at diverting the criticisms inside and gaining legitimacy in the eyes of its citizens and of the international community. However, these reforms in the presidential and parliamentary electoral system, political rights, the role of the president and parliament, constitutional amendments, the state of emergency, and the regulation of the role of religion over politics does not open up the floor for opposition movements. This is not to argue that the new reforms do not meet the ideal criteria, it is to argue that it is a backward movement. It is a regression from the already undemocratic and illiberal political system. I argue that this kind of a transformation in Egyptian polity is very much in line with the democratic realist and liberal autocratic models, which advise the U.S. to selectively and limitedly push for reforms in the region to an extent that will not weaken the existing authoritarian partners in the region.

CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION: POLITICS OF IDENTITY MEETS

HEGEMONIAL POLITICS AT DEMOCRATIC REALISM

“I am not suggesting that there should be outside coercion to promote freedom in Egypt or any other country, for that would be crude, arrogant, and counterproductive. Those who talk about such an agenda—as in the case of the neoconservatives in the Bush administration—demonstrate utter hypocrisy mixed with confusion. I am simply describing the reality of outside intervention to bolster authoritarianism.”

Glenn E. Perry, “The Arab Democracy Deficit: The Case of Egypt”, 2004.

The end of the Cold-War stimulated a shift in U.S. foreign policy towards the post-Soviet regimes of Central and Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean from providing support to authoritarian but friendly regimes to an open call for regime change towards democratization. Nonetheless, in the same period, the dictatorships and autocracies of the Middle East continued to receive full backing from the U.S. Democracy has been viewed as a dangerous game in the Middle East since it was in direct conflict with U.S. interests, given the high anti-American sentiments amongst the Arab public that would destabilize Israel’s security and endanger free access to oil reserves. This ‘Middle East exceptionalism’ continued without interruption until the September 11 terrorist attacks. After September 11, American policy circles came to the conclusion that the reason why the terrorist actions were carried out by the people of Middle Eastern origin was the apparent lack of democracy in the region. Hence a year after September 11, the Bush administration announced the launching of democracy promotion programs for the Middle East, namely the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), and then, the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMENA) in order to increase U.S. internal and external security.

An analysis of U.S. democracy promotion policy in the Egyptian case reveals that despite the official rhetoric that pays high profile lipservice to the universality of democratic ideals and to the American support for democracy in the Middle East, the U.S. did not really stand for democracy. This is because of the dilemma that the U.S. government faces. On the one hand the Bush administration came to believe that instituting democracy in the Arab world would terminate the root causes of terror towards the U.S., and hence, would contribute greatly to U.S. security both at home and in U.S. military bases overseas. On the other hand, it is more than apparent that any opening of political regimes in the region towards democratization empowers anti-American social forces, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and even brings them to power, as in the case of HAMAS in Palestine and Hizballah in Lebanon.

In such a context, can the United States promote change at the risk of instability in the region while it remains dependent on the petroleum from Arab countries? Can it pursue Arab-Israeli peace and democratization at the same time? Can the United States still secure needed military and counterterrorism cooperation if it antagonizes friendly regimes by promoting democratization? Is it feasible for the United States to promote democratization effectively amid widespread grievances against the war in Iraq and serious questions about U.S. human rights practices there and in Afghanistan? These are all questions posed by Michele Dunne that capture the core of the story of U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East. The answer to all of these questions, according to Dunne, is affirmative. For her, the United States could and should simultaneously seek peace, reform, and security for the region, while

continuing to buy Arab oil.³³⁸ I argue that neoconservative thinkers and policymakers answered these questions in a peculiar way which I cluster under the umbrella term of “democratic realism”, first coined by Charles Krauthammer. Neoconservative scholars argue that the Bush administration had to abstain from universalistic aspirations of democracy promotion policies which they refer to as “democratic globalism”, “dangerous democracy”, “Wilsonian hubris”, and “naïve Wilsonianism”; and that instead of a universalistic vision and strategy, the administration had to adopt a selective, limited, targeted and realistic support for democracy in the Middle East that would not risk losing the cooperative authoritarian governments. Such a limited support for democratization would open a restricted space for political freedoms which would help legitimate the system in the eyes of the public, yet would not lose the hold of the regime over society, and would keep the executive omnipotent. I maintain that this neoconservative vision of consequentialist, selective, and relativist foreign policy attitude with regard to supporting democracy has been put into practice in Egypt by the policy makers in the Bush administration.

However, assessing the impact of an outside actor on the process of political reform and democratization is not easy, for it is difficult to quantify democracy and to identify the real source and motive of change. However, in this case, the best way to see whether these reform measures were initiated as a response to the external pressures or as an outcome of domestic political struggles is to analyze the maneuvers of the actors, i.e. the Mubarak regime, the opposition movements and parties (the Wafd, Tagammu’, Al-Ghad and

³³⁸ Michele Dunne, “Integrating Democracy into the U.S. Policy Agenda”, *Uncharted Journey: Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, ed. Thomas Carothers and Marina Ottaway, (Washington, D.C.,: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), p. 209.

Muslim Brotherhood) and the U.S. government. For instance, as I have tried to show above, in Egypt, the electoral and constitutional reforms put forth by the Mubarak government faced fierce criticism from the Egyptian opposition movements and parties who claimed that the political system was even more open and 'democratic' before the initiation of reforms. Despite this huge domestic unease with the reforms, the U.S. government expressed its gratitude and satisfaction. And the fact that the Mubarak government did not go parallel with the demands of the opposition movements and parties but rather saw the satisfaction of the U.S. administration as necessary and sufficient for determining the content and limit of the reforms confirms my contention that the recent Egyptian pseudo-reforms were, by and large, responses to the U.S. pressures for 'democratic realist' pluralization rather than to the domestic demands of democratization.

This policy orientation has a theoretical context and repercussion. American democracy promotion policy should be taken neither as merely an expression of Wilsonian idealism/moralism, nor as merely a rhetorical/moralistic cover for pursuing vested geopolitical and economic interests in the region. Analyzing U.S. democracy promotion through the lenses of the realist, liberal, constructivist and radical international relations theories, I submit that every theoretical perspective has strong and weak points in explaining and understanding democracy promotion in general, and U.S. democracy promotion in the Middle East in particular.

The realist paradigm views democracy promotion as an unnecessary intrusion into the universe of international politics since regime type does not alter the anarchical logic of the game, hence the behaviors of the actors, in

international politics. Liberalism invests a huge meaning and function in democracy as they see it as a transparent regime shaped and directed by the collective rationality of the people. Liberal democracies, they argue, do not go to war with each other primarily because of the domestic attributes of democratic regimes. Hence, for liberals, democracy promotion is a policy that is both normatively superior and appealing, and pragmatically beneficial, as it serves the security needs of the U.S.

Nonetheless, I argue that despite the fact that the orthodox theories of realism and liberalism do have some explanatory power, they both fail to capture the totality of the issue. In other words, the neoconservative “democratic realist” foreign policy approach to the Middle East goes beyond the simple dichotomy of realist *realpolitik* and liberal idealism as it creates a unique blend, or even merge of them both. Realism presents us a cynical view by arguing that democracy promotion is simply a façade which serves as a cover to disguise U.S. interests (as in the case of the Helsinki Process), if it is not a total farce (as in the case of the War on Iraq). Liberalism provides us the necessary vision for appreciating the relevance and significance of domestic roots and dimensions in international politics. By opening a space for progress and change in international relations, and also by stressing the pacifying dynamic of democratic regimes at least among themselves, it also provides the broadest frame of democracy promotion policies. However, both of these theoretical frames fall short of enclosing the kind of synthesis that neoconservative writers developed in the case of U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East. They all fall short of showing how realist, strategic, national-

interest-centered, power-deifying, imperial goals merge with the democratic and idealist discourse of liberalism.

In order to develop a cohesive outlook on the issue, I submit that constructivist and radical/critical international theories provide us with significant analytical tools. The constructivist framework helps us to see two points. First, by appreciating the impact of ideas, ideologies, identities, norms and values on the conduct of foreign policy, constructivism enables us to see the impact of neoconservative thinking on the actual conduct of U.S. democracy promotion. Secondly, by revealing the mutually constitutive relationship between identities and interests in foreign policy making, the constructivist approach unravels how the socially/domestically constructed ‘messianic internationalist’ U.S. identity epitomized in the notions of ‘a light unto nations’, ‘manifest destiny’, or ‘moral leader of the world’ provides the basis for imperial politics of political, economic and security interests.

On the other hand, by questioning the kind of democracy that is on the democracy promotion agenda, that is polyarchy, and exploring the social, political, and economic bases of U.S. democracy promotion, the radical/critical thinkers provide the conceptual lenses with which to see how the U.S. aims at producing and reproducing stability and status quo in the Middle East. In other words, the critical writers argue that through the kind of Schumpeterian, elite-based, procedural, liberal democracy it promotes and through its attempt to create a civil society that is socialized into U.S. hegemony, the U.S. aims at maintaining the existing inequalities and hierarchies both within the region and between the U.S. and the region. This radical critique catches the basic strategy of the neoconservative thinkers as unfolded by their aforementioned prominent

names. The neoconservative thinkers, who extensively used the discourse of democracy promotion so as to support a war on Iraq for ‘bringing democracy’ and ‘freedom’, now openly support bringing ‘liberal autocracies’ primarily because of the fact that the Arab Middle East does not bandwagon, and socialize into, U.S. hegemony. The peoples of the Middle East seem dedicated to pursuing policies which would be in serious conflict with U.S. strategy if they assumed power. To put it differently, imperial interests clash with democratic demands. This fundamental antagonism between imperial politics and democracy promotion is resolved to the detriment of democratization by the neoconservative thinkers who argue that pushing too far in promoting democracy would bring groups who do not bandwagon U.S. hegemony and do not follow policies in line with the U.S. attitude in a region where it has vital security (‘terror’), economic (oil) and political (Israel) interests.

This kind of an outlook has deeper philosophical repercussions. The neoconservative writers theorize on how to develop a double dealing with the Middle East in a way that supports democratization “where it counts” and materially delivers, and that complicates or even hinders where the outcomes of democratization would clash with U.S. interests. I think that this is a segregationist apartheid logic that arbitrarily entitles or disenfranchises certain groups to certain rights. This, I think, is also reminiscent of the nineteenth century policies followed by colonial powers towards the non-European people. The 19th century colonial empires adopted universalistic principles of the Westphalian order, such as equal sovereignty, non-intervention, and territorial integrity, which were only valid among the European states. When it came to the non-European and colonized people, they were submitted to a

different logic which legitimized and reinforced European domination over the colonized people. This was a clear violation, instrumentalization, and adulteration of Enlightenment's humanist universalism. Now, it is interesting to see the degree to which the U.S. empire's neoconservative policy in the Middle East resembles the nineteenth century colonial powers' policies in their colonies. European empires instrumentalized a universalist discourse of the 'civilizing mission', or '*mission civilisatrice*' to legitimize colonialism, while the U.S. adopted a discourse of 'bringing democracy and freedom' to pursue particularistic interests, and even to wage a war, which itself denied and refuted the basic political principle of humanistic universalism, that is universal rights and liberties.

The post-September 11 period has been a warning example whereby the nature of the enforcement of democracy turned out to be totally authoritarian, even brutal, as we have witnessed in the case of Iraq, although there is nearly a consensus over that democracy was simply exploited as a rhetoric in the War on Iraq. The imposition of democracy, which is itself a contradiction in terms, "largely snuffed out liberal reform in the Middle East—an outcome attributable to foreign powers' preference for weak, illiberal, and highly dependent client regimes that best served the intervening powers' interests."³³⁹ This is why some grassroots activists in the Middle East have a distaste for the way the American administration supports democratization. In March 2006, while discussing the reform measures undertaken by the Moroccan monarchy, Driss Benzekri, a democracy activist in Morocco, maintained that "this work has to be done from the inside. We do not follow

³³⁹ Rashid Khalidi, "Historical Precedents for Middle East Democracy", in *Democratizing the Middle East? Lighting the Path to Understanding*, Michael Kugelman, The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Occasional Paper No.2, p.7, Tufts University, 2006.

the Bush model.” In a similar fashion, Emad Baghi of Iran contended that “the best thing the Americans can do for democracy in Iran is not to support it”.³⁴⁰ In that sense, it is important to pay attention to Larry Diamond, who was the Senior Advisor to the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq, that the U.S. is “radioactive in the world”, and has lost its soft power and credibility to be able to pursue a democracy promotion program on its own.³⁴¹

This is the study of the politics of the content and context of democracy promotion in Egypt. But what is the politics of my study? What does studying Egypt’s struggle for democratization with an eye to U.S. policy mean? I think we can draw significant points out of that. Studying U.S. policy in the region is not like studying any other international actor given the U.S. dominance in world politics and its power to put its aspirations and designs into practice. A British journalist phrases this reality in a striking manner: “People in Liverpool and Leipzig should be allowed to vote in American presidential elections, even the would-be voters of downtown Baghdad might like a say. Otherwise, the world is disenfranchised.”³⁴² In this world of U.S. preeminence and influence, studying U.S. policy acquires even more significance. The United States, and any of the outside actors as well, cannot have an influence so as to determine the outcomes of the national politics of Egypt, yet, when evaluated with the fact that Egypt is considerably dependent upon the economic, military and political support and aid from the U.S., the U.S. becomes a critical factor in the outcome regarding democratization, as

³⁴⁰ Michael Kugelman, 2006. *Democratizing the Middle East? Lighting the Path to Understanding*, The Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, Occasional Paper No.2, p.7, Tufts University, 2006.

³⁴¹ He thus suggests a transatlantic partnership for democracy promotion whereby the U.S. would collaborate with European allies to foster better governance, development and democracy. Larry Diamond, quoted in Kugelman, *opt.cit.*, p.48.

³⁴² Jonathan Freedland, “Still No Votes in Leipzig”, *The Guardian*, 22 September 2004.

stated by M.Dunne: “While it behooves the United States to be modest and realistic about the extent of its influence in Egypt, it should also realize that in 2004 and 2005, pressure from the United States and other donors was a significant complement to internal calls for change”³⁴³

In that context, I agree with Gills and Rocamora when they caution that democracy is in a danger of “becoming a term of political mystification or obfuscation, serving as a euphemism for sophisticated modern forms of neo-authoritarianism”. When we think that the War on Iraq was carried out in the name of democracy, it becomes difficult not to agree with Robinson that “democracy is the most prostituted word of our age, and anyone who employs it in reference to any modern state should be suspect of either ignorance or bad motives”. Nevertheless, such a Thrasymachean and cynical view on democracy promotion does not necessarily follow. There is a substantial lack of, and need for, democratic governance in the Middle East which must be seriously addressed and supported by the international society and by the US, who is its most prominent member. However, the problem with the U.S. democracy promotion is that the U.S. does not really pressure for democratization in the region, but still subsidizes the friendly authoritarian regimes through economic and military aid, and when it pushes for democracy, it is a limited, procedural, low-intensity democracy, which falls short of ensuring substantive political participation and democratic transformation.

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