

steps include the completion of an international agreement to halt the production of fissile material for weapons use and—even harder—a new bargain to prevent construction of enrichment and reprocessing plants in nonnuclear states where they do not now exist. This will entail finding a way to provide an ironclad guarantee of what are called nuclear fuel services—the provision of fresh reactor fuel and handling of the radioactive wastes—to all nonnuclear NPT member states in good standing, at some significant discount from the market price.

All of this is an enormous diplomatic challenge. Beyond it lies an even greater one. Forty years ago, when the five original weapons states signed the NPT, they affirmed that nuclear disarmament is desirable. The question that has never been asked, though, is whether it is feasible. With its thousands of government engineers and analysts, the United States has not a single individual whose job is to analyze any of the dozens of highly technical and politically complex issues that underlie an answer. When its human resources, and those of the other nuclear states, are deployed to this momentous research agenda, the international community may finally be in a position to start to complete the extraordinary task it set itself to in 1968. ▀

## Pursue a New Freedom Agenda

*Larry Diamond*

**T**he fundamental challenge that will confront the United States after a troop drawdown in Iraq will be the same one that prompted many to clamor for the invasion in the first place: defusing the threat of radical Islamist terrorism and the unjust, undemocratic governance in the region that feeds it. The Arab and Islamic worlds—with their great heritage of civilizations—are falling further behind the rest of the world, a fact increasingly apparent in an era of globalization. Genuine development that lifts these countries fully into prosperity, dignity, and the modern world will require far-reaching reform of governance, restraint of power, rule of law, and inclusive political participation. If the result will not always be democracy as we know it in the West, it will need to approach it and amount to something more than the cynical, tactical game of liberalization that Arab states like Egypt and Jordan have been cycling through for two generations.

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Promoting serious governance reform, and ultimately democracy, after the debacle in Iraq will be exceedingly difficult. A tragic irony of the Bush democratization doctrine is that the climate for Arab civil society groups campaigning for democratic reforms, and for international efforts assisting them, is now even more unfavorable after the American intervention in Iraq. Long-serving autocrats like Hosni Mubarak in Egypt and Ali Abdullah Saleh in Yemen have been able to say to their societies: “You want democracy? Look at Iraq. You want that chaos?” Wedged precariously between deepening chaos in the Palestinian territories and civil war in Iraq, Jordan has clamped a firm lid on political liberalization. Moreover, as some regimes in the region did open up and elections got fairer, Islamists made deep electoral gains, winning control of government in the Palestinian territories, a majority of parliamentary seats in Iraq in 2005 and in Bahrain in 2006, and winning an unprecedented number of seats in the first round of Egypt’s late 2005 parliamentary elections, before Mubarak cracked down. In the short run, Islamists will make stunning electoral gains throughout the Arab world if there are meaningful, free, and fair elections, though some of these winning candidates will be more moderate—and more logical interlocutors for the United States—than others.

This is as painful a dilemma internationally as any the United States faces in the coming decade. If we press real democratization, we face the prospect of Islamist victories. If we retreat from our commitment to freedom and embrace Arab dictators in the “Global War on Terrorism,” we will be bitterly condemned for hypocrisy and betrayal and feed the terrorism that we are fighting. America after Iraq must figure out how to regenerate the quest for more democratic governance in the Arab world without creating new debacles. We need, in short, a new freedom agenda.

Of course, it’s simplistic to say that all Islamist parties and movements are the same and that they inevitably threaten the United States (and our ally, Israel). A number of Islamist political parties, movements, and leaders in the Arab world have been evolving toward greater pragmatism and acceptance of nonviolence, pluralism, and constitutionalism. For the first time, it is possible to envision Arab Muslim democratic parties, built on something like the model of the Christian Democratic parties of Europe, inspired by religious faith and values but not seeking to impose religious law or doctrine on their society. In the Middle East, the ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP) in Turkey has been the harbinger of this transformation.

The challenge now, politically and intellectually, is to test the more moderate Islamist political formations and to press them—as Carnegie Endowment for International Peace scholars Amr Hamzawy, Marina Ottaway, and Nathan Brown

have urged—to clarify where they stand on ambiguous issues like the weight and imperative of *sharia* (Islamic law), peace with Israel, tolerance for non-Islamist policies and parties, and the rights of women and religious minorities. This can only be done through serious and sustained dialogue: between Islamists and the state, Islamists and other nonstate political groups, and—yes—Islamists and the United States. In that dialogue, Islamists must, in the words of Hamzawy, Ottaway, and Brown, accept “the civil nature of the political system,” that it “will work through rather than around constitutional and democratic procedures.” Islamists must separate their political parties from religious authorities and more fully commit to pluralistic principles of tolerance for dissent (including within their own parties) and equal rights for women and Christians. In return, the West must make clear that it will acknowledge the legitimacy of governments led by Islamist parties if those parties respect democratic procedures, social and political pluralism, regional peace, and the rule of law. If they do not commit to democratic rules, then they should not expect Western support for their inclusion or a benign Western attitude toward their rule.

We also must rethink the possible parameters of political transition. Opening up power does not necessarily require giving up all power. Creative strategies of transition are needed. In Turkey, the military and the constitutional court have retained power to restrain what the Islamists can do to reverse the country’s historic secularism. In Thailand, the monarchy has had significant informal power as a check on elected governments. Both of these checks diminish democracy—and at times have been utilized to topple democracy—but this type of constraint can be a useful crutch, enabling politically crippled Arab establishments to hobble out of the current stalemate. Initially, this would be less than full democracy, but it could build up the mutual trust and restraint that would enable democracy eventually to take hold in the Arab world.

With the proper constitutional constraints and institutional (and international) incentives, moderate Islamists in power could be compelled to honor and extend their moderation as they face the vexing practical problems of governance, coalition formation, and economic development. The institutional incentive for doing so would be the ability to sustain a government and have it govern effectively. The international incentive would be to obtain the expanded foreign investment, trade, and (in some cases) aid necessary for raising incomes and reducing unemployment. And once their current cozy cooptation into the authoritarian power game is history, secular parties and social forces can also be expected to find the tools, platforms, and candidates to compete more effectively with the Islamists.

To make this happen, the United States needs a multi-dimensional strategy for diminishing the risks and creating a more favorable regional context for

reform. First, we need to move toward resolving ongoing violence and threats to regional peace, particularly in Iraq and in the Palestinian territories. Second, we must keep and intensify the focus on longer-term efforts to promote economic reform, the growth and opening of markets, and a more pluralistic, autonomous civil society in the Arab world. Here the work of the National Endowment for Democracy and its core institutes is crucial. Because these are nongovernmental organizations, they do not carry the same suspicion and the same constraints that U.S. governmental efforts often do. It would help if we could get our European allies as well to intensify their efforts to support political pluralism, civil society, and open markets in the Arab world.

Third, we need to use economic incentives to get the region to embark on serious, lasting reforms. It is vital that these regimes generate foundations for vigorous economic growth by opening markets and facilitating and empowering their private sectors. This requires far-reaching economic reforms that reduce state control and generate a more vigorous private sector. Economic reforms will be conducive to political reforms, but they can only proceed so far without political reforms, which need their

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own incentives. Economic (and even military) assistance and trade concessions should therefore be tied to political reforms. In some cases, such as besieged Jordan, real pressure may have to wait until we get past the current strategic crisis stemming from Iraq, but we at least need to signal that we are moving in this direction for the long run. In the meantime, we must stand more firmly with the victims of state repression. There is no legitimate security justification for the Egyptian state detaining former opposition presidential candidate Ayman Nour and many other nonviolent activists. The Mubarak regime has to know that American military as well as economic assistance will be reduced to the extent that it continues to repress peaceful challenges.

Finally, fostering democratic change in the region is a challenge for more than just the Arab world. One of the biggest threats to peace and stability in Iraq is the Islamic Republic of Iran. Fortunately, it is a regime whose incompetence, intransigence, corruption, and failed ideology are steadily eroding its remaining legitimacy. But the Islamic Republic will only be changed or toppled by the actions of the Iranian people; the more we try to sabotage or subvert it with high-profile assistance programs or poorly concealed covert action, the more we give the regime a lifeline to rally nationalist support and demonize democratic forces. A

better strategy would be to offer broad reconciliation—lifting economic sanctions, beginning negotiations for entry into the World Trade Organization, and restoring diplomatic relations—in exchange for more responsible regime behavior on nuclear enrichment, Iraq, terrorism, and domestic human rights. An American embassy in Tehran and a growing array of exchange programs with Iranian society would offer much better conditions for the United States to encourage and support the ongoing struggle of the Iranian people for freedom and democracy.

Throughout the Middle East, there is a growing recognition that authoritarianism has failed and that freedom is a necessary ultimate condition for peace and progress. Political freedom will not be achieved quickly—and certainly not by American imposition. But as we disengage from Iraq, we must find ways—less pretentious, unilateral, and impulsive—to renew the freedom agenda if we are going to serve our long-term security interests in the region. ▀

## Strengthen Regional Cooperation

*Charles Kupchan*

**T**he U.S. invasion of Iraq has stirred up sectarian tensions well beyond Iraq's borders and destroyed the regional balance of power that had existed between a theocratic, Shia-led Iran and the secular, Sunni-led regime of Saddam Hussein. As the United States extracts itself from a mess of its own making, the key challenge facing Washington is to stand up regional sources of stability as U.S. forces stand down. To attain this objective, the United States must devolve more strategic responsibility to local actors while it simultaneously seeks to catalyze regional integration as a foundation for stability. Ideally, regional integration and cooperation, not the balance of power or democratization, should become the focus of American strategy. Assuming that Iraq's internal troubles will for the foreseeable future prevent Baghdad's return to adventurism, Iranian ambition will remain the primary impediment to such pan-regional cooperation. Washington should therefore put a premium on engaging Tehran, seeking to transform it from a regional threat into a net contributor to security. As in Europe, South America, Southeast Asia, and elsewhere, rapprochement between traditional rivals, regional integration, and the development of a cooperative security architecture offer the best hope for a lasting stability in the Persian Gulf.

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