



# Democracy & Society

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# Defeating the Demagogue

BY MICHAEL SIGNER

## Return of the Demagogue



Democracy's ancient archenemy, the demagogue, is alive and well. In February 2007, Hugo Chávez, President of Venezuela, pushed a bill through Venezuela's General Assembly that gave him the right to rule by decree, creating in essence a fresh new tyranny in the Western Hemisphere. In recent years in Russia, President (and now Prime Minister)

Vladimir Putin has consolidated his power and established a quasi-authoritarian state, while enormous majorities of Russians have cheered the new autocrat. In Iran, President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad attacks Israel's right to exist and threatens to create a nuclear arsenal, while strengthening the authoritarian rule of the country's governing clerical elite. In Zimbabwe in 2008, President Robert Mugabe refused to allow a democratically elected opposition leader, Morgan Tsvangirai, to take office, employing violence to turn back his supporters. In Bolivia in 2005, President Evo Morales led violent riots in the streets before winning election as that country's first indigenous president. In Gaza, the terrorist group Hamas [Continued, Page 20]

## Promoting Democracy in Egypt

BY DINA GUIRGUIS

Even though President Obama's historic speech in Cairo last June was widely perceived as a "home run," the sections of the speech on democracy were riddled with ambiguity and ambivalence. It left many people wondering what, practically speaking, the fate of democracy promotion under the current administration would be, particularly in Egypt. Until the speech, little more than silence had come publicly from the Obama administration on the issue of democracy promotion in the Middle East, which led many to believe that the failures of the Bush administration in this regard had definitively closed that door for a while. In fact, the few early signs that came from the administration indicated a

conspicuous attempt to undo Bush's democracy promotion efforts and to re-establish strong diplomatic ties with U.S. "allies" in the region around the 3 D's: development, defense, and diplomacy. This new policy of "pragmatism" was underscored when Obama contacted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on the first day of his presidency to consult on the Arab-Israeli conflict, as well as by Secretary of State Clinton's remarks during a March visit to Egypt mentioning her friendship with the Mubaraks and downplaying the country's serious human rights violations. Despite this seeming retreat, some activists continued to hope, counting on President Obama's personal experience as a community [Continued, Page 16]



From the Director  
BARAK HOFFMAN

## Foreign Policy in the Obama Administration

The Obama administration inherited a number of foreign policy crises. In the near term, the administration must address the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, Iran's determination to develop nuclear power, and a global recession. Beyond these exigent concerns, the administration faces a diverse range of foreign policy challenges, such as climate change, terrorism, and settling the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. All of this is taking place in a context where U.S. power is in relative decline and other powers, primarily China, are rising. While the administration may have been looking forward to developing a new foreign policy vision, the urgent issues the administration must address are likely to constrain these ambitions.

We have thus devoted this issue of *Democracy and Society* to foreign policy in the Obama administration. We have two thematic articles advocating that the Obama administration redesign democracy assistance strategies and two papers that urge changes to the U.S.'s bilateral relationship with Egypt and Mexico. We also review six new books on foreign policy suggestions for the Obama administration. The range of the policies they advocate reflects the number of challenges the administration faces, their diversity, and disagreements over the sources of the problem and solutions to them.

Our two papers on democracy assistance strategies encourage the Obama administration to redesign these programs. Each paper starts with the same premise, that the Bush administration's militarization of democracy assistance programs was counterproductive, but they reach different conclusions. Michael Signer of the New America Foundation argues that the U.S. must ground democracy assistance programs with the idea that the people are the guardians of democracy. Signer maintains that programs focus too much on building

institutions and too little on cultivating democratic values. Jack Santucci, alum of the MA in Democracy and Governance Program and currently at the International Foundation for Electoral Systems, believes the problem lies elsewhere and thus derives a different conclusion. Santucci argues that current democracy assistance programs developed during the peak of U.S. power and programs reflect that assumption. Santucci argues that U.S. strategies need to adapt to a world where the U.S. will face challenges to its global dominance and where political instability is likely to rise, in part, because of it. Santucci argues that the U.S. must change its democracy assistance policies to reflect its diminished capacity as a global power and greater need for allies.

The two country analyses focus on how the Obama administration can improve its bilateral relationship with two strategically important countries, Egypt and Mexico. Dina Guirguis, Executive Director of Voices for a Democratic Egypt, is dismayed that the Obama administration has decided to listen to the Government of Egypt, and not the people. She argues this is a short-sighted strategy because while the Egyptian Government may have succeeded in stamping out democratic opposition, support for democracy in Egypt is strong, but currently silent. Guirguis worries that if the Obama administration sides with the Government of Egypt, not the people, it risks alienating the Egyptian people from the U.S. and squandering an opportunity to catalyze democratic reform in the Middle East. Brandon Valeriano of the University of Illinois at Chicago urges the Obama administration to reengage with Mexico. Despite sharing a long border and being the U.S.'s second largest trading partner, the Bush administration neglected the country's importance to the U.S. Since Mexico and the U.S. currently have similar positions on a number of issues of mutual importance, primarily drugs, immigration, and terrorism, Valeriano argues now is an opportune time for the Obama administration to solidify its policies with Mexico on these vital issues.

Broadly speaking, five of the six books we review argue that the Obama administration ought to change the direction of U.S. foreign policy, but differ, to varying degrees, on the nature of the problem as well as the solution. The varied responses reflect the complex world the administration faces. Andrew Bacevich, David Calleo, and Paul Musgrave argue that the U.S. global military presence is unsustainable. Bacevich suggests the nature of the problem lies in demands for high levels of economic consumption. Calleo identifies the U.S. desire to be a global super-[*Continued, Page 22*]

# The United States and Mexico: Prospects for Convergence on Critical Issues During the Obama Administration

BY BRANDON VALERIANO

## *A Moment of Opportunity*

Since the 9/11 attacks, the foreign policy focus of the United States has been directed away from regional concerns towards problems outside the Western Hemisphere. Latin America has been virtually ignored by recent presidential administrations, and the problem is becoming chronic. While Columbia gets some attention, relations with our neighbor and number two trading partner to the south wither. What of U.S. – Mexican relations? What hope is there for progress on critical issues of concern, and what can be achieved by President Obama?

This article, based on recent research by Valeriano and Powers (2010) on American and Mexican public perceptions, explains why now is the time to deal with the significant and pressing problems that occupy U.S. foreign relations with Mexico. Because public views in both countries are converging in the realms of terrorism, drug trafficking, and immigration, the moment is ripe to deal with these issues. The shift towards democracy, openness, and public consultation on pressing issues within Mexico suggests a moment of opportunity for the Obama administration to engage it. Since this convergence may only be temporary, failure to engage Mexico immediately will prevent the resolution of these pressing issues while engendering anger and continued frustration because the United States continues to ignore the maintenance of an important international relationship. This article concludes by suggesting some of the policy options open to the Obama administration.

## *The State of Public Perceptions*

Despite disagreements over a few major issues like NAFTA and Iraq that have soured bilateral relations, there is significant agreement between the publics of Mexico and the United States over several other important areas. Public views in both countries converge around the issues of immigration, terrorism, and drug trafficking. In fact the public and elites in Mexico are more concerned with terrorism and drug trafficking than are the public and elites in the United States. People in both the United States and Mexico are optimistic that the issues of immigration, terrorism, and drug trafficking can be solved if proper attention is focused on solutions and international coordination. Recognizing the linkages among these issues and mobilizing this mutual

support will be critical to resolving these outstanding foreign policy problems.

Perhaps the most important issue is terrorism. Obviously, for the United States terrorism has been a critical problem since 9/11. The major focus of U.S. foreign policy has been to tackle this problem in the Middle East, yet it should equally look in its own backyard for solutions to security problems. If the United States is going to achieve domestic security, it must first achieve secure borders. Achieving secure borders does not mean simply building walls to keep out Hispanic immigrants. It means strengthening screening processes at both borders, fixing port security, and remaining vigilant to the threat that comes through air traffic. While no terrorists have yet crossed through the southern border, it is still critical to ensure security at all points of entry.

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*Latin America has been virtually ignored by recent presidential administrations, and the problem is becoming chronic.*

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The Mexican and American publics hold similar and stable views regarding terrorism. Both groups view terrorism as a critical threat at levels of 70 to 80 percent. The high level of concern among the Mexican public might be surprising, but one must consider they are neighbors to the biggest terrorist target in the world and have experienced their own incidents of domestic terrorism. Since both publics view the issue as critical, it seems prudent that both states work together towards intelligence sharing and stable borders.

This takes us to our next issue: immigration. U.S. perceptions focus on immigration as a critical internal problem, but it is also a major concern for Mexico. A slight majority of Mexicans believe that the problem of immigration into the United States is a predicament that the Mexican state must deal with, not the United States. Mexicans only account for approximately 30 percent of incoming immigrants; a substantial number of those who come through the U.S.'s southern border crossed through Mexico from other nations. Consequently, Mexico has many of the same immigration problems as the United States. Instead of playing the blame game, public convergence on this issue indicates the two

countries should work together to ameliorate this mutually pressing concern.

The final issue on which both Americans and Mexicans agree is that drug trafficking, which is related to immigration by the mutual practice of border smuggling, is a major problem for their respective countries. As much as 89 percent of the Mexican public views drug trafficking as a critical threat, while 63 percent of the American public views the issue as an ‘important’ threat. The ills associated with the practice are just as evident in Mexico as in the United States, since Mexico is a major point of transit for illegal drug smuggling operations. Negative societal effects include rising violence, corruption, and criminality.

### Future Paths and Recommendations

There is an unprecedented opportunity for the reconsideration of strategy in bilateral relations between the United States and Mexico. Change in both countries allows for the pursuit of new avenues of cooperation. The shift in foreign policy goals by Obama is evidenced by increasing consultation, engagement of international institutions, and international negotiation. The reinvigorated desire by the Felipe Calderon administration to solve pressing domestic issues such as drug trafficking and corruption also creates the opportunity for change in bilateral relations. Yet, it seems that pathways to progress are being ignored in favor of focusing on other foreign policy problems. Is there willingness on the American side to engage and deal with pressing mutual concerns? Our neighbor to the south is a critical ally in the ‘war’ on drugs, immigration, and terrorism, yet little has been done to press the advantage of public support revealed by recent opinion polls.

The time is ripe for action. Improvement in bilateral relations is not a hope but a critical need in line with both states’ national interests. The issues of terrorism, immigration, and drug trafficking remain critical problems on both sides of the border. A large proportion of Mexicans are even willing to give the United States some role in border security in exchange for protection against outside threats.

What specific options can be pursued? Probably the most pressing and effective option would be to establish a coordinated regional regime to stop or limit drug trafficking in North America. While the United States has extended much effort to tackle the problem in Columbia and other states such as Panama, it has done little to deal with the issue in Mexico. The United States cannot even seem to coordinate policy with Canada and Mexico on legal drugs, let alone illegal ones. The time has come to deal effectively with the problem on both sides of the border, and a regional security regime would be an effective measure to deal with coordination and consultation dilemmas.

In combination with a regional regime to tackle the issue of drug trafficking, the United States, along with Mexico, should seek to deal more effectively with port, air, and land border security. The focus should not be on economic migrants, who do not pose a security threat, but on criminal enterprises that seek to infiltrate various holes in the border. The main threat that comes from the south is organized terrorist and drug collectives, not families seeking economic opportunity. Drugs or terrorists are not going to walk across the border; they are going to come through organized transportation networks.

A final suggestion is to increase the number of legal immigrants allowed into the United States from all southern countries, to expedite the process of acceptance, and to decrease costs for these migrants. Eliminating the legal immigration backlog will remove much of the burden migration places on Mexican society. Allowing more Mexicans and other Latin Americans into the United States through legal means would decrease the profitability of illegal underground operations by removing the need for their existence. Increasing the flow of migrants through legal methods will mean fewer people will be stuck in limbo in Mexico and push them to remain in their home countries during the application process. Increasing the number of legal immigrants will also allow for these new actors to participate legally in American society and decrease the perception that they are criminals.

A majority of the Mexican public has a positive view of the United States. The same cannot be said of the American public’s and elite’s view of Mexico. Pundits rant night after night on TV of the ills funneled into the United States from Mexico. The reality is that the problems are the responsibility of both sides and can only be solved through mutual cooperation and burden sharing. The politics of blame are stifling the course of bilateral relations between the United States and Mexico. If the convergence of views on important policy issues is to be taken advantage of, we must take action now.

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# What is the Future for Democracy Promotion?

BY JACK SANTUCCI

## Introduction

There are hints of pessimism in the democracy business. Despite its ostensible centrality to U.S. foreign policy since 2001, democracy promotion has not created very many free countries since then. According to Freedom House, the global share of electoral democracies stopped growing in 2005. Practitioners report increasing hostility to their work, and some missions have had to shut down. Finally, under President Obama, many see ‘stability promotion’ winning a quiet war over democracy assistance.

What explains the apparent impotence of this industry? One common answer is that the bravado and hypocrisy of George W. Bush ruined its credibility with the developing world. By equating democratization with war in Iraq, Bush made a benign project militant. The secret prisons and torture of a Global War on Terror, moreover, made our motives suspect.<sup>1</sup>

I suspect democracy promotion’s observed infirmity results more from its misapplication. In the very period that U.S. influence on other states was declining, we increasingly worked in more difficult cases. The problem with this becomes stark if we consider the world for which democracy promotion was designed. We still need democracy promotion, but we need to accept its limits.

## The nature and origins of democracy promotion

All governance reform programs ultimately require willful rotation of government through free elections. While this is obviously true of democracy promotion, the same applies to contemporary foreign aid. Both types of programs assume that governments will tolerate the opposition those programs engender. This is because those programs were conceived during the United States’ unipolar moment.

## Policy instruments

The instruments of development aid are all designed to foster limited government and electoral accountability. These include party-building programs traditionally associated with groups like the National Democratic and International Republican Institutes. The dual purpose of a political party is to be loyal opposition and government-in-waiting. In

a legislature, a strong party is a check on the power of an incumbent government. During an election, it offers voters an alternative if they choose to “throw the bums out.”

Civil society programs have similar ends. Some are designed to build explicitly political organizations. These NGOs are meant to identify misconduct in the behavior of governments and parties. Apolitical groups also have ultimately political roles as barometers for the effects of public policies.

Programs designed to strengthen legislatures are also inherently oppositional. In presidential systems, the point is to animate systems of checks-and-balances. In parliamentary ones, effective support staffs and procedures help loyal oppositions do their work.

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As technical and apolitical as they would like to be, governance reform practitioners are essentially in the same business as democracy promoters. Bad governance has political roots. Poor economic management, patronage in the civil service, and corrupt public goods provision all can shore up the political machines of elected officials. This is why we make reform a prerequisite for foreign aid disbursements. For governance programs to work, elected officials often have to behave in ways that hurt their re-election prospects.

## Ambitions and origins

These policy instruments grew out of—and therefore very much reflect—America’s unipolar moment. From about 1989 until recently, the United States could influence the behavior of other governments, their relationships with other states, and how they treated the populations they governed. Aid conditionality and democracy assistance were products of this period.

Before the fall of the Soviet Union, foreign aid was essentially a tool of containment. As the superpowers competed for client states, transfers of wealth shared the same toolbox as raw coercion, covert operations, and military assistance. The United States did not really care about democracy or even

healthy economies. The goal was having a stronger network of allies than the Soviet Union.

With the end of superpower rivalry, the United States realized it could invest less in foreign countries and attach that investment to high moral ends. Governments in poor countries no longer could turn to the Soviets for subsidies. The Castro government in Cuba, for example, decided that the end of the Comecon necessitated a “special period” of national austerity. If a leader wanted foreign cash, he now had to govern the American way.

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*American capacity to promote democratic governance...is waning. At the same time, U.S. need to secure peace and economic well-being is rising.*

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Democracy promotion as we know it grew out of the unipolar moment. Sensing the untenable contradictions in state socialism, U.S. decision-makers set up the National Endowment for Democracy and its ancillary party institutes. Francis Fukuyama declared “the end of history,” arguing the process of dialectical materialism had culminated in liberal democracy. With social evolution having selected out all other regime types, all that remained was to kill off the laggards. This was democracy promotion’s theoretical mooring.

Just as the end of the Comecon strained the Castro regime, leaders in less tightly controlled societies variously opened up to democracy programs in return for development aid. NDI could help Otpor antagonize the ex-communist regime in Serbia because Slobodan Milosevic’s security apparatus saw its future in the graces of Western Europe. Egypt grudgingly welcomed foreign reformers. Gone were the days of Soviet-funded Aswan Dams. In return for American military assistance, Hosni Mubarak would have to entertain American democracy agitators.

Speaking at the National Endowment for Democracy in 2003, George W. Bush captured the spirit of this moment. “It is no accident that the rise of so many democracies took place in a time when the world’s most influential nation was itself a democracy.”

#### *U.S. leverage declines*

Earlier that year, China launched its first manned space mission, and a heat wave in Europe killed 21,000. On one hand, emergent sources of wealth and influence enable autocrats to snub conditioned U.S. assistance. On the other,

environmental change portends global instability that the world’s policeman may not be able to manage. Factors like these diminish U.S. control of world events.

Poor countries whose leaders do not want to reform can rely on other powers for economic support. Crackdowns are one possible outcome of transitional moments, but one must pay the troops if they are to crack down. A decade ago, Slobodan Milosevic’s army abandoned him because its well-being lay with a new regime. In the present, Robert Mugabe has been able to use Chinese assistance to maintain the allegiance of his security apparatus. More recently, Chinese aid flows have allowed Fijian military dictator Voreque Bainimarama to refuse to hold democratic elections, making costless his country’s expulsion from the Pacific Islands Forum.<sup>2</sup>

Possibly aware of this limitation, the U.S. government has slashed aid to Egypt by 60 percent. While military support remains stable, most of the decrease has been in governance assistance. The goal here is to keep an ally regardless of its democratic credentials. This shift of priorities recalls our Cold War footing: unconcerned about the content of governance so long as it favors U.S. strategic interests. In Egypt, in other words, the U.S. has backed away from its unipolar outlook.

While the availability to dictators of relativist patron states is diminishing American leverage, factors exogenous to the system of states may do the same. Here I am thinking of climate change, dwindling fossil fuel reserves, and a global population boom.

Over the course of the next decade, several changes in humanity’s material condition are likely. According to the National Intelligence Council,<sup>3</sup> dry areas will become drier, temperate zones warmer and wetter, sea levels higher, and fossil fuel reserves smaller. All this will occur as some countries industrialize, others de-industrialize, populations grow, and technologies evolve. There will be price shocks to oil markets as advanced countries replace fossil fuels. Governments in oil-exporting countries will experience sharp revenue declines. There will be natural disasters in coastal cities, and atolls will go under water. Increasing numbers will seek decreasing supplies of drinking water. Looking to governments to replace what had been plenty, even people in old democracies like Australia will flee to overcrowding cities.

In short, many countries will become difficult to govern if not wholly ungovernable. It is difficult enough to have corrupt leaders accept electoral defeat. Crises of governance brought on by environmental disaster will only enhance their incentives for predation and violence.

Going forward

Perhaps the question should not be how to adapt democracy assistance but how to promote stability. In a recent article,<sup>4</sup> Charles Kupchan and Adam Mount imply that shifts in the international system mean the United States should replace the “freedom agenda” with an “autonomy rule” that appeases states with good-enough records on human rights and development. When we set aside the question of how to adjudicate ‘good enough,’ we can extract their core point: needing the good will of rising powers, the United States should stop harassing autocrats and abandon democracy promotion for its own good.

Their hyperbole undercuts insight. American capacity to promote democratic governance on the frontiers of freedom, like so many other desirable behaviors by foreign governments, is waning. At the same time, U.S. need to secure peace and economic well-being, is rising.

Contrary to Kupchan and Mount, however, there is no need to abandon democracy promotion or governance reform. Many leaders in many countries do want to go down the liberal democratic path.<sup>5</sup> Because of that, political parties, civil societies, watchdog groups, free media, and independent businesses are evolving in those states. To the extent that these conditions improve, liberal democracies become more robust.

These are the countries where the unipolarity-inspired instruments of governance reform and democracy assistance—not democracy promotion—can have an impact. By doing the same work they have for the last two decades, NDI and the World Bank can catalyze ongoing democratization processes. What these organizations have to offer is technical know-how, which is a resource where there are governments willing to cooperate.

Controversy over elections in Honduras show that there is a role for this work. Here is a country whose leaders complied with its institutions, whose people saw their value, and whose democracy was therefore consolidating. Due to the absence of clear presidential impeachment provisions, however, Honduras and its neighbors disagreed on the legitimacy of elections and, more fundamentally, how to restore constitutional governance. In this country, attentive technical assistance might have precluded this impasse.

There is no way, however, for the conventional instruments to adapt to the challenges of hard cases. They were born of a world where the preponderance of influence rested with one state. That world is gone. The United States simply does not have the leverage—military, economic, or otherwise—to pry open regimes.

What is the strategy, then, for advancing democracy in closed societies?

The nature of the intervention should depend on the obstacle. In states that are failed or failing, the obvious aim is establishing government. Because stateness is logically prior to democracy, it does not make sense to work in these places.

In other places, government is bad, but socioeconomic conditions are worse. Russia and Turkmenistan are two countries where wealth and its sources are too concentrated for any meaningful liberal order to emerge. Here, donors can support democracy movements by fostering independent centers of wealth and power in each society.

In a final set of states, the socioeconomic conditions for liberal democracy are right or close to being so, but government refuses to liberalize. In these cases, covert activities may be necessary to link reformers and soft-liners.

Conclusion

Every people must fight its own revolution. Practitioners have long subscribed to the mantra that “democracy cannot be transplanted,” but reversals of late have made it palpable. This does not mean the democracy project is bankrupt. Democracy assistance has always been valuable, but assistance is not the same thing as democracy promotion. While we may fail to promote political change in the hard cases, we know we can support it in others.

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## ENDNOTES

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**America and the World** by Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft

■ *Review by Paula Louise Olearnik*

**Follies of Power: America's Unipolar Fantasy** by David P. Calleo

■ *Review by Ally Adams-Alwine*

**Great Powers: America and the World After Bush** by Thomas P.M. Barnett

■ *Review by Paul Musgrave*

**The Limits of Power** by Andrew Bacevich

■ *Review by Fouad Pervez*

**After Bush: The Case for Continuity in American Foreign Policy** by Timothy J. Lynch and Robert S. Singh

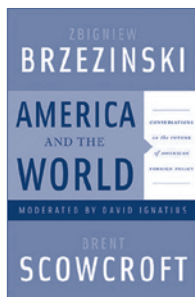
■ *Review by Jean Schindler*

**The End of Alliances** by Rajan Menon

■ *Review by Nicholas Morin*

**America and the World** by Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft

REVIEW BY PAULA LOUISE OLEARNIK



*America and the World* is a formidable book. It threads together a discussion of the future of U.S. foreign policy with anecdotes from a lifetime of travel and political experience. The reader is a privileged participant in an unscripted conversation between two former National Security Advisors, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft. Masterfully directed by *Washington Post*

columnist David Ignatius, the book is organized by regional discussions bookended by an evaluation of how we got to our present situation as well as policy prescriptions for the incoming president.

Brzezinski and Scowcroft bring a lifetime of foreign policy experience to bear on the question of the future of America's foreign policy. However, at times it seems the real hero of the book is David Ignatius. His wonderfully provocative questions do not allow either of his interlocutors to get

away with pious truisms. Brzezinski and Scowcroft can only be commended for their measured, optimistic and largely bi-partisan stance, but at times their gentle optimism is too much motivated by a desire to avoid difficult questions. Ignatius pushes them out of their role as distinguished statesmen and forces the pair to squarely face the threats to American hegemony. For example, he confronts their optimistic view of U.S.-China relations, reminding them that raw materials are in finite supply and that the Chinese have proven themselves to be ruthless in their trade dealings with Iran and other countries contrary to the wishes of the U.S. He compels them to provide evidence that China is not on a collision course with the U.S. Brzezinski fires back that the U.S. is also ruthless and self-interested. He, like Scowcroft, does not indulge in a romanticised vision of the U.S. in the world, but argues that ruthless competition does not necessarily lead to imperial ambitions. On the contrary, both men make the claim that a realistic understanding of our ever globalizing world leads us to understand that rampant imperialism is not compatible with stable economic growth.

The truth revealed in *America and the World* is that both Scowcroft and Brzezinski eschew characterization under one of the 'isms' and if they can be called realists, then they are certainly not of the structural kind. They take very seriously



the cultural contexts of the regions in question and realize that blanket solutions are impossible to implement.

This is not to say that both men are in complete agreement all of the time. This is most evident in their discussions of Iraq, Afghanistan and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. They are most sharply divided over how best to carry out America's War on Terror. Brzezinski is convinced that the American military presence is only perpetuating instability and that the troops should be withdrawn as soon as is safely possible. Scowcroft, keeping to the Republican position, argues that a premature withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan would only precipitate a bloody grasping for power between national groups after America's departure from the region.

Looking beyond challenges for American policy at the regional level, the two men recognize a need to adapt to the post-Cold War era. They discuss a new 'culture of fear' and a tendency to towards isolationism, which, they warn, will not serve America well. The paradox of American society is that it is the most globally engaged but also one of the most parochial. Thus, one of the important roles of the next president, according to Brzezinski, will be to educate the American public about new global realities.

In a variety of different contexts Scowcroft and Brzezinski distance themselves from the hawkish neo-con method of conducting foreign policy. They are convinced that America should not be in the business of imposing its values and standards on the rest of the world; whether in the form of democracy or more nebulous concepts such as freedom and dignity. However, one question to which Ignatius only alludes, but which requires further examination is whether authoritarianism can provide peace and prosperity just as well as democracy. Both men realise that the imposition of democracy and liberal Western values is not only culturally insensitive, but in many cases it may even be impossible since the nation in question's history, culture and religion may be completely antithetical to that required by liberal democracies. However the discussion never attempts to reach a deeper understanding of the limits of democracy. It does not ask what America might be able to learn from the rest of the world.

These shortcomings hint at the books biggest weaknesses, which are apparent in the discussion of the "politics of cultural dignity" in chapter seven. The chapter's departure from the previous regional discussions is a welcome attempt to engage questions of political theory and the ethical norms underlying international relations. Its shortcoming, however, is it lacks the level of sophistication found in the discussions of international politics. Sounding quasi-Hegelian, Brzezinski argues that you have to have a sense that what you are doing is somehow in tune with the mysterious unravelling of history. Both he and Scowcroft only begin to scratch the

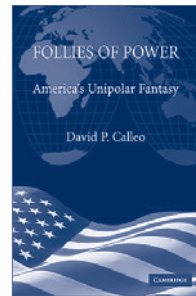
surface of an interesting debate about the human condition, sustainability and a more universal form of solidarity.

Moreover given the discussion of cultural dignity, two noticeable absences from the discussion are Africa and Latin America. It is somewhat disconcerting that in a volume entitled *America and the World* there is a complete failure to discuss two of its most populous continents. More worrying is the suspicion that this omission was not due to lack of space, but lack of concern for these two areas of the world.

### **Follies of Power: America's Unipolar Fantasy** by

David P. Calleo

REVIEW BY ALLY ADAMS-ALWINE



In *Follies of Power*, author David Calleo asserts that senior officials guiding U.S. foreign policy are enamored of a dangerous unipolar fantasy. In this fantasy, America is the world's preeminent superpower, whose strength and sovereignty are needed to bring stability to the international arena. Noting shifts in the global distribution of power such as the rise of China and the enlarge-

ment of the European Union (EU), Calleo argues that this world view is misguided and increasingly dysfunctional in a plural world order. Continuing to pursue a unipolar vision, he warns, is weakening our ability to respond appropriately to new threats and emerging challenges, and risks alienating friends and enemies alike.

The majority of the text is devoted to a systematic deconstruction of America's unipolar fantasy, in an effort to prove that such a worldview is deeply flawed. Calleo begins by rejecting the assumption of many U.S. officials that the end of the bipolar Cold War system inevitably meant that a unipolar world led by America would follow. That such a conclusion was drawn is seen as evidence of an unwavering belief that American power is limitless and good. Identifying this belief as a source of the hegemonic ambitions and unipolar tendencies in U.S. foreign policy, Calleo analyzes the nature and extent of American power—hard, soft, economic, and moral. Highlighting numerous examples that fiscal mismanagement and unsustainable policies have shaped the perceived sources of U.S. strength, such as our legendary military and a once robust capitalist economy, he finds this power to be falsely inflated along every dimension.

Calleo goes on to explain that America's unipolar fantasy is now actively detrimental to our interests because many countries, especially our allies in Europe, now favor a multilateral approach to international actions. In a masterful

overview of Western political thought, Calleo outlines the origins of this divergence. Domestically, most advanced states adopted by the start of the 20<sup>th</sup> century constitutional models balancing liberal rights with reasonable security and improved standards of living due to capitalism-fueled growth. However, limiting instability within these systems also required protectionism and neomercantilist policies, producing a “Hobbesian” view of international relations as every country fended for itself. Calleo asserts that in forming the European Union (EU), Europe has bridged this gap between the principles governing states internally and those that govern the state system. In contrast, the U.S. continues to pursue unilateral policies that are incompatible with international stability because it has not moved on from this Hobbesian focus. Maintaining this world view weakens the U.S., because other countries view it as illegitimate, and because it overstretches our resources. According to Calleo, efforts to expand American power globally through unilateral policies have also led to an extreme concentration of power in the federal government at the expense of the states. While this is not discussed in great detail, the implication is that, in addition to undermining our interests abroad, our unipolar fantasy also threatens our domestic balance of power.

Calleo concludes that a multilateral system is needed to manage the challenges of a plural world and suggests an outline of what the ideal system might look like. He compares the merits of “Old America” and “New Europe” as potential models, and posits that the EU offers more useful lessons because it brings to an interstate system the same constitutionalist theories that have traditionally been used to manage conflict within states. This creates a regional superstructure that reduces conflict by maintaining a collaborative balance of power. Transposing this to a global system, he envisions a framework that blocks hegemony by any one state, with strong institutions that encourage cooperation and mutual appeasement by providing a forum for states to constantly negotiate their roles and responsibilities within the larger system.

Despite designating the EU as the more successful of the world’s two great interstate experiments, Calleo warns that Europe and the U.S. both face challenges which can only be overcome through cooperation. Specifically, he sees each as a critical force balancing the power of the other both internally and externally, providing a structure which is currently lacking in the global system. Because they are allies who share strong constitutionalist traditions, the U.S. and Europe together can achieve an effective balance through a cooperative relationship. In the past, America stabilized Europe during the postwar era, providing the security needed to cooperate and achieve internal unity. Today, Calleo sees an equally vital role for Europe in balancing the extreme power of the U.S. federal government to create a stable global system. To accomplish this, both sides of the West are advised to look

beyond their postwar experiences to embrace a revitalized transatlantic relationship.

While Calleo does a fine job of pinpointing specific flaws in America’s unipolar fantasy, his suggestions on how to overcome this problematic world view lack similar detail and clarity. For example, if Europe and the U.S. have worldviews as divergent as Calleo seems to suggest, it is unclear what would motivate either side to “retune their political imaginations” as they are called upon to do. As Calleo himself points out, America’s past mistakes have not cured us of our unipolar fantasy. The only suggestion offered for why the present may be different is a vague hope that the new administration may create a window of opportunity for a more multilateral world view. Calleo is similarly elusive in explaining his idea that the EU can balance the internal political system in the U.S., leaving the reader wishing for more concrete details on how this could occur.

*Follies of Power* provides an informative and timely analysis of the forces driving American policies in the international arena. The idea that the world has changed and that the U.S. is long overdue for policy reform is not a new one, and countless other books touch on the forces Calleo discusses here. What sets *Follies of Power* apart is Calleo’s rare ability to combine both breadth and depth of knowledge. While the book itself provides few concrete recommendations, it does provide readers with a uniquely holistic understanding of the international arena, and delineates an invaluable list of lessons to inform future policies.

### Great Powers: America and the World After Bush

by Thomas P.M. Barnett

REVIEW BY PAUL MUSGRAVE



Thomas P.M. Barnett’s 2004 bestseller *The Pentagon’s New Map* was a useful and entertaining guide to thinking about geopolitics. Linking the metaphors of the Information Age to the political conflicts of the twenty-first century, *PNM* offered a set of metaphors that he hoped would turn Americans away from a view of international relations that focused on war and tests

of strength toward seeing how a broadly liberal and trade-oriented policy could supply the security Americans craved after September 11, 2001.

Although comfortable with the broad outlines of George W. Bush’s transformation strategy, Barnett promised a future that did not rely on Hail Mary passes, such as the invasion of Iraq, to finally make the world safe for democracy. Instead, he was honest about what he saw as the long, hard,

and intrinsically difficult task of bringing less-developed and unstable countries (the “Gap,” in Barnett-speak) into the global economic and political system maintained by the United States and other wealthy countries (the “Core”).

Since *PNM*'s publication, he has continued to write in this vein. The most recent book-length product of this effort is *Great Powers: America and the World After Bush*. For readers of *PNM*, there are no profoundly new arguments to be found. Barnett still presents a theory of international relations in which economics matters more than military force; in which the United States is a pivotal state, able to choose its foreign policy more or less unilaterally; and in which U.S. leadership is crucial for achieving a desirable policy outcome. Barnett intends to apply these axioms to the problems of American grand strategy in the post-Bush era.

His views on the Bush administration are unapologetic. Where others have seen disaster, Barnett sees good intentions and poor execution. He still lauds the Bush administration's “real strategic imagination regarding development issues,” such as its scuttling of the Kyoto Treaty; equally, he lauds Bush for his “display of audacity and hope” in launching the Iraq war to topple Saddam Hussein, spark a democratic revolution in the Middle East, and draw terrorists into a conflict away from the American homeland.<sup>1</sup> But he recognizes that the administration created an “untenable long-term burden,” largely by never seeking to share the benefits of hegemony with the rest of the world.

Accordingly, Barnett's prescription for the Obama administration and its successors is, largely, do what the Bush administration tried to do, but be smarter about it. In a twenty-first century twist on Norman Angell's 1911 bestseller *The Great Illusion*, which argued that war had become unprofitable and thus impossible, Barnett argues that war has become so economically disastrous that we must make it impossible. Achieving security for the United States and the rest of the world requires using principally economic measures, since armed force is too blunt to be of use against the complex societal factors that nurture destructive nationalism and foster the development of terrorist networks.

Doing so, Barnett explains, requires American policymakers to draw on the lessons of American history. He contends that the economic infrastructure that developed after the signing of the U.S. constitution created not just wealth, but security for the United States. Thus, the United States should now work to deepen economic linkages around the world while also supporting the long-term movements toward freedom, development, and the rule of law. As Barnett puts it, “We are modern globalization's source code—its DNA. As the world's oldest and most successful multinational economic and political union, we remain the planet's most communicable ideology—its most potent insurgency.”<sup>2</sup>

Achieving that goal will require, among other things, increased defense spending and a willingness to intervene in other countries, which is par for the course for right-of-center foreign-policy writing. But Barnett also urges American policymakers to realize that they have to compete for influence in the world in a game they may lose—even though they will write the game's rules. If the rest of the world perceives the rules to be fixed in America's favor, then a backlash is inevitable. That reaction, Bennett warns, could prove far more costly than sustaining a rules-based framework that might result in the United States letting others take first place from time to time.

Barnett's book, however, is both more interesting and more frustrating than such straightforward summaries make it seem. It is at times an unstructured ramble through American history and foreign policy thinking, blending equal parts original insight, informed speculation, and responses to other bestselling authors, such as Fareed Zakaria and Doris Kearns Goodwin. One wishes that the references of *Team of Rivals* had been trimmed either to make room for more original analysis or simply to save trees' lives.

Its greatest failings, however, are stylistic. Unlike *PNM*, which presented and justified a new analytic framework for understanding world affairs, *Great Powers* takes for granted that its audience is well-versed in Barnett's lexicon. Consequently, the reader who has not mastered the Barnett *oeuvre* at times feels adrift. Too many sentences in the book read like this one (an actual quotation, from page 349): “America needs to create a SysAdmin-industrial complex that's just as hungry for preconflict/postdisaster opportunities as our long-standing military-industrial complex is for big war.”

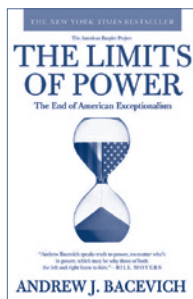
The analogies and metaphors that illuminated in *PNM* obscure Barnett's argument in *Great Powers*. In part, this may be because Barnett has become a one-man think tank since *PNM* appeared. His web site, [www.thomaspmbarnett.com](http://www.thomaspmbarnett.com), overflows with his thoughts (the truly initiated not only read his blog but listen to a 9-hour interview between Barnett and conservative talk-show host Hugh Hewitt, for instance). It is more likely that Barnett's writing has become turgid with jargon because Barnett's way of thinking about strategy is more novel than his recommendations about strategy. It is surely sensible to urge Washington to engage China, deter Russian adventurism, and work to develop poor countries. But it is hardly a revelation.

1 And all of this in the space of two pages, pp. 10-11.

2 p. 2.

**The Limits of Power** by Andrew Bacevich

REVIEW BY FOUAD PERVEZ



Andrew Bacevich's latest book, *The Limits of Power*, provides a novel critique of post-World War II American foreign policy. Bacevich argues that three crises, all of our own making, have combined to create the difficulties America faces today. Instead of adopting a realist viewpoint, Bacevich states that we have instead opted for hubris, and this threatens our national security.

First, the economic crises of the 1970s left America with a choice: curb our consumption or deploy power to force others to oblige our appetites. President Carter failed to convince Americans to scale back consumption, and Reagan ushered in an even more decadent era of “more” when he won the presidency. American consumption required deployment of power, either through coercive diplomacy or a heightened military presence, to ensure access to resources, particularly oil. This sent both government spending and the U.S. deficit skyrocketing. Over time, consumption required increased American troop levels in the Middle East to ensure oil security, which ultimately played a part in that region's increased instability.

Most striking to Bacevich is the notion that the U.S. government has urged its citizenry to consume without any sacrifice. In order to sustain its consumption, America must use military power, yet we are often asked to do nothing in return— in fact, the Global War on Terror (GWOT), a major military escalation, occurred concomitantly with tax cuts. Bacevich sees this pursuit of both guns *and* butter as indefensible.

The second major crisis is political. Instead of national security based on checks and balances, power post-World War II became increasingly consolidated in what Bacevich dubs the “imperial presidency.” The national security apparatus has become an oligarchy run by political elites who maintain the status-quo of American global primacy. Those who criticize this vision are attacked.

Despite America's superpower status, Bacevich shows that post-WWII foreign policy was centered on paranoia. Paul Nitze was one architect of this fear, which he carried forward in National Security Council Report #68 (NSC 68). This report, which Nitze heavily influenced, shaped U.S. foreign policy throughout the Cold War and is still influential today. NSC 68 exaggerates the Soviet threat, and Nitze, master of fear, used it to permanently militarize U.S. foreign policy.

Bacevich sees Paul Wolfowitz as Nitze's heir. Wolfowitz militarized the Pax Americana and used the 9/11 attacks to unleash the U.S. military. The 2003 invasion of Iraq can be seen as the culmination of these efforts, as it illustrates America's going to war with almost no restrictions.

Given the abysmal results of the militarization of foreign policy, its historic lack of opposition troubles Bacevich. The national security power elite consistently misinterprets reality, inflates threats, and tries to evade public scrutiny. As Allison's (1971) organizational culture model would predict, the national security apparatus advances its own interests, whether or not those interests are best for America. Bacevich supports this with the example of the Bay of Pigs. The Joint Chiefs of Staff endorsed the operation primarily because they counted on its failing and hoped it would lead to the conventional invasion of Cuba, which was their preferred strategy. They thought the failure would force President Kennedy to back the invasion he strongly opposed. Similarly, the Bush administration stacked the apparatus with mediocre but pliant individuals to create minimal internal opposition and conflict. This ensured the apparatus was completely on board with the administration, rather than being an independent institution. Those who were critical, like General Shinseki, were dismissed.

Finally, Bacevich notes the military crisis. Over time, U.S. military strategy has increasingly focused on complete dominance in order to satisfy national over-consumption. Bacevich finds this military overstretch to be seriously flawed. For one, armed force does not solve all problems, as the GWOT has illustrated. With expanded goals and stagnant numbers, a soldier is asked to be both “cop and social worker” (135). In addition, Bacevich sees a problem with professional soldiers. Americans may be willing to support aggressive foreign policy, but very few actually enlist in the military. This has resulted in the rise of private military contractors, which has heightened the disconnect between the citizenry and the military, and negatively impacts Americans' notion of civic duty. It also partly explains the lack of opposition to the new vision of U.S. foreign policy.

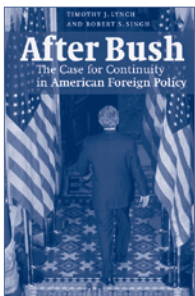
Like the political leaders who were not punished for their over-reaching, militarized solutions, military leaders make mistakes for which they are rarely held accountable. Bacevich highlights major errors made in the Persian Gulf War, the fighting in Somalia, and the conflict in Kosovo. Despite America's focus on military solutions, there is often no real strategy. Generals in Iraq, particularly Gen. Tommy Franks, failed to incorporate political context, regional power dynamics, or regional history into their plans. Yet major internal critiques did not address these issues. This is something both the political and military crises have in common: when major mistakes are made, only minor modifications are proposed. Reform always enhances the national security apparatus, never scales it back

In this book, Bacevich connects multiple issues to American aggression abroad. He directly or indirectly addresses several well-researched topics, including the security dilemma, military overstretch, organizational culture, domestic coalitions, and imperialism. He incorporates these in a strong argument that warns about the nature of U.S. foreign policy. As a historian, he does well not to make this a polemic against the Bush administration, but instead rightfully notes the historical roots of these problems. This is sobering account should be read carefully by those who believe President Obama can transform U.S. foreign policy. A transformation requires addressing all three crises Bacevich points out, and it is unclear whether this is something Obama can, or even wants, to do.

As a result of the three crises he enumerates, Bacevich sees America moving on a dangerous path by pursuing a heavily militarized foreign policy, while not addressing our three self-made crises that threaten the long-term security of our nation. For Bacevich, the key is to live within our means. If we do not do that, we will necessarily go abroad looking for monsters to destroy.

### **After Bush: The Case for Continuity in American Foreign Policy** by Timothy J. Lynch and Robert S. Singh

REVIEWED BY JEAN SCHINDLER



Discussion of Bush-era foreign policy is still controversial and sometimes emotional. Like parents looking askance at an unloved child, neither realists nor liberal internationalists want to recognize their contribution to “neoconservative” thinking. The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq became deeply associated with an unpopular President, but the issues that drew the U.S. into them, as well as

the questions surrounding the legitimacy of democracy promotion, have not gone away with his exit.

Perhaps not surprisingly, then, an energetic defense of the Bush Administration’s foreign policy has come from academics outside of the U.S. With *After Bush: The Case for Continuity in American Foreign Policy* (written before the 2008 election), British political scientists Timothy Lynch and Robert Singh argue that Bush’s foreign policy was itself compatible with longstanding American foreign policy, and that future administrations should continue it. The main reason for this continuity is that the American promotion of “fundamental freedoms” is an extension of American national identity and the “ideological premise of the United States itself.” This can be seen in the War of Independence, the Civil War, WWII or the Cold War. On the other hand,

“amoral” policies such as détente have had a “short shelf life” and little success.

Accordingly, they argue, while the Bush foreign policy is adaptable, it should remain largely unchanged because the tradition of confronting challenges to American values is necessary now that the U.S. is engaged in a “Second Cold War,” a generational struggle with jihadist Islam in many ways similar to the West’s struggle with the communist bloc.

The authors look at major influences on American foreign policy attitudes, including geography, commerce, and “moralism-legalism.” They also delve effectively into the various ideas that have combined to form U.S. foreign policy, including isolationism, liberal internationalism, and realism. They show convincingly that it is not unusual for the U.S. to act unilaterally when policymakers are confronted with questions of vital national security. Many of their arguments are oft-made neoconservative points explained in a compelling way. For example, they stress that regime change is a regular occurrence in U.S. foreign policy, exemplified by state overhauls in the Southern Confederacy, Japan, and Germany.

The authors also resurrect memories of the debates that raged in the 1990s over American foreign policy. The 1999 bombing of Serbia was just as “unmoored” from international law as the 2003 Iraq invasion, and yet is remembered as a successful U.S. action. Lynch and Singh argue that American foreign policy has long been made up of “à la carte multilateralism and flexible friendship” rather than an unswerving commitment to international organizations and law, making Bush unremarkable in this regard. Lynch and Singh do good work in articulating the ideas that made neoconservative policy prescriptions initially so attractive to many. Critics too often caricature neoconservative policy as the attitude of “invade now, ask questions later,” when in fact it has academic and conceptual underpinnings that need to be addressed seriously.

At the same time, however, this leads to one of the book’s two main weaknesses. While their bibliography is impressive, there are a great many points and issues that Lynch and Singh explore only minimally. This book could easily have been a thousand pages long, but even given space constraints they could have provided more depth on some issues.

Related to this is the book’s other weakness. Not only does the text leave some issues underexplored, but the authors make broad generalizations and points with little context, which undermines the strength of their arguments. While this is often a problem with any “big idea” book on foreign affairs, *After Bush* has more of this than should be expected in such a broad work. While it is a strong entry in the debate amongst public intellectuals, the book falls short of its potential as an academic work.

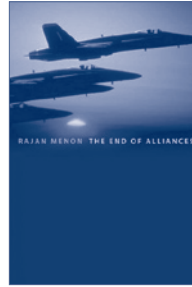
For example, in building their argument that the U.S. should, as a rule, act in concert with an English-speaking alliance, they contrast Spanish and Australian reactions to terrorist attacks to illustrate a values divide. But they do not provide sufficient context. The 2004 Madrid bombing occurred days before national elections, and the government compounded the bombing's political effect by falsely blaming Basque terrorists. While opinion polls do find stronger anti-American sentiment in Spain than in Australia, the contrast the authors should draw may not be so much based on culture as on political skill and luck.

Broad generalizations also make their analysis appear simplistic at times. Their table on page 21 showing an ebb and flow of isolationism in U.S. foreign policy lists 1918-1940 as a period of national introversion. However, the consensus among historians of that period is that the U.S. government was fairly active in global affairs throughout the first decade after WWI and did not really withdraw until the very end of the 1920s. Other periods the authors list as introverted are likewise the subject of contention among political historians. This may simply be the result of neither author being a historian; they approvingly quote Frederick Jackson Turner, whose 1893 work on U.S. expansion has been superseded. While these weaknesses do not discredit their "Case for Continuity," it does distract from it.

It is still too early in the Obama administration to offer more than a tentative assessment of its policies in light of this book's arguments. The administration seems to have dropped human rights as a pressure point in U.S. relations with China, indicating a shift towards "realism" and away from the promotion of freedom. But no matter how the current administration's policies develop, *After Bush: The Case for Continuity in American Foreign Policy* is worth reading. Lynch and Singh make a vigorous case for promoting stable regimes that are not only friendly to the U.S., but friendly to U.S. political values. The national debate on the nature of U.S. involvement in the world is far from over, and while the neoconservative view is out of style now, it may not be out forever.

## The End of Alliances by Rajan Menon

REVIEW BY NICHOLAS MORIN



Among the many books published in recent years evaluating U.S. grand strategy, it is refreshing to find one that asks readers to do more than imagine a world with new and evolving challenges. *The End of Alliances* reassesses the value of one of our most successful foreign policy tools: our vast network of permanent alliances. Rajan Menon argues that the conditions that gave rise

to these alliances, namely the security challenges associated with the Cold War, have since changed and our alliances are becoming increasingly obsolete. While Menon's call for the creation of a new grand strategy absent formal military commitments is likely to create more problems than it solves, his analysis highlights how vulnerable the U.S.'s most important alliances are in a constantly changing world.

Menon begins his book with a familiar warning that the current landscape of power and a capabilities necessitates a new U.S. grand strategy. Containment, although historically successful, is unlikely to help future administrations deal with the problems facing the U.S. in a post-Cold War world. Unfortunately for Menon, other authors (Charles Kupchan, Kenneth Waltz, Stephen Walt, John Ikenberry to name only a few) have better articulated the need for reappraising our role in the world by elucidating the emergence of new threats and, equally important, the disappearance of old ones.

Menon stands out however, by utilizing these changes to call for an assessment of the durability and relevance of U.S. alliances. He notes that for 169 years—the time between the Declaration of Independence and the end of World War II—the U.S. avoided long-term alliances in favor of flexible military alignments, restraint, and adept diplomacy. Only with the onset of the Cold War did the U.S. embark on a new strategy of "permanent peacetime alliances, an international circuit of military bases, the deployment of tens of thousands of American troops abroad, and guarantees to defend an array of countries across Eurasia" (p.45-46). In order to assess the continued utility of alliances, which Menon argues are both costly and obsolete, he examines three of our most important: the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Japan and South Korea.

The three chapters follow similar formats, allowing readers to see themes common among the alliances: their origins, successes, difficulties and most problematically, Menon's view of their dispensability. His chapter on NATO is his strongest. After detailing its origins, Menon examines the growing fault lines within the alliance, pointing particularly

to disagreements over U.S. involvement in Iraq. In providing evidence on growing transatlantic tensions and emerging differences, Menon is correct in his underlying observation, that “America’s power stands unrivaled, but in the absence of the Soviet Union, Europe is freer than ever before to defy the United States, and will remain so” (p. 67). Menon’s weakness, however, is that he looks past evidence of the continued value of NATO in favor of evidence of its disunity. Afghanistan is a notable example of this, and one that he cites as indicative of NATO’s weakness. But while levels of assistance by member nations is varied and NATO’s performance has been less than stellar, non-U.S. NATO forces still account for roughly one-third of all troops in Afghanistan. This is not an insignificant number.

Menon’s analysis is decidedly realist, but admirably, he shows a willingness to reach outside its traditional confines in order to capture alternative factors that affect alliances. For instance, he points to societal changes in Japan and South Korea — namely generational shifts that have led to a growing assertiveness and a willingness to use force in Japan and the growing perception that American security policies and military presence are counterproductive in Korea — that are likely to increase calls for political autonomy and decrease U.S. influence. Menon sees this less as a tragedy than as an opportunity to reassess, and ultimately withdraw from alliances that no longer serve U.S. interests and allies that are increasingly capable of providing for their own security.

If the success of *The End of Alliances* is Menon’s analysis of the role of alliances and his warnings of their future frailty, its greatest liability is his vision of a grand strategy purposefully absent these alliances. Menon argues that the U.S. must eschew military commitments and rediscover flexible ways to engage the world in a restrained manner. Nevertheless, abandoning alliances for alignment is more likely to antagonize our allies and incite worries that America is an unrestrained, hegemonic threat. For although Menon calls for flexible, creative diplomatic solutions, other countries are likely to view that flexibility as discarding multilateralism for unilateralism, shared values for self-interest, and restraint for assertiveness. At a time when American power and policies engender resentment and resistance, the U.S. should be wary of discarding institutions that have preserved order for so long, and fear a world where powerful countries align with new, and perhaps unwanted alternatives.

Moreover, while Menon is correct to conclude that an asymmetry of costs exists within our alliances, he repeatedly underestimates their value. He writes that alliances are “the codification of an anachronistic and iniquitous allocation of burdens, benefits, and hazards” (p. 131). But hegemonic powers have long utilized their capacity to shoulder costs in order to extract values necessary both in maintaining supremacy and in fostering order. NATO, for example, serves as a powerful forum for discussing military matters and in

exchanging strategic information between member-states. Instead, the reader is constantly left asking why, if the conditions have so dramatically changed, these alliances persist in spite of their irrelevance? Menon, despite clear and well reasoned analysis, never provides a detailed picture of the causal mechanisms involved in explaining how alliances actually end.

Ultimately *The End of Alliances* succeeds in examining the circumstances that led to the creation of our alliances and the problems they are likely to encounter in a world with changing capabilities, interests and threats. It stumbles, however, in the development of a pragmatic and nuanced post-containment grand strategy.

COMING SOON

Democracy & Society

Volume 7 • Issue 2

IN OUR NEXT ISSUE:

**Democrats, Dictators,  
and Demonstrators:  
Sharing Strategies on  
Repression and Reform**

*See the Call for Submissions  
on page 23*

organizer and his campaign's rhetorical commitment to human rights and dignity.

### The Present

Despite the Obama administration's relative quiet regarding democracy assistance, it has mostly continued Bush-era programs. In its 2010 budget request, the administration asked for a 10 percent increase in its Middle East democracy and governance programs. But Egypt is the exception to this trend. During the congressional appropriations process in March and the president's subsequent budget request, democracy-related funding for Egypt was cut by an unprecedented 60 percent.

Some analysts believe that the Obama administration is headed toward eliminating democracy assistance to Egypt in favor of efforts to aid development. A few prominent Middle East scholars have come out publicly in favor of this trend, arguing that democracy assistance to Egypt has failed, and that U.S. aid should be funneled solely into economic development efforts. They argue that the exclusive focus on development will lead to concrete advancements in the social, economic, and educational spheres, creating an informed and engaged citizenry that could more effectively drive democratic reform. But while it is true many of the democracy support programs under Bush were naïve and poorly designed, that is a weak argument for abandoning them completely. On the contrary, the failures in advancing democratic reform under the Bush administration warrant greater engagement now on political reform, especially since Egypt is a remarkably influential country in the region.

### Looking Ahead

Egypt, with its population of 80 million, is the trendsetting heart of the Arab and Muslim worlds. As home to Jews, Baha'is, Shi'ites, and the largest Christian population in the Middle East, Egypt was until the early to mid 20th century a symbol of vibrant (albeit imperfect) pluralism.

But now it is a breeding ground for religious intolerance. Egyptian society, fueled by a government complicit in increased sectarianism, has adopted a worldview that is increasingly centered on religion. Under the Mubarak regime, sectarianism has witnessed unprecedented growth, culminating in acts of violence against religious minorities and marked by government unwillingness to address inequalities substantively or extend the equal protection of the law to all religious minorities.

And since the assassination of President Sadat 28 years ago, Egypt has been ruled by emergency laws which suspend the

basic rights of the people. Torture, arbitrary detentions, and unwarranted military tribunals of civilians all combine to fuel extremist sentiment and popular sympathy for it.

Meanwhile, the Mubarak regime derives its international legitimacy from a false political dualism that offers the international community only two choices for Egyptian governance: the current regime, or Islamic extremists. This dichotomy does not represent Egyptians' real political beliefs; more than 77 percent of Egyptians refused to vote in the last parliamentary election because they were not offered a middle way. The regime has destroyed all secular, liberal political parties that might present a stronger appeal to the population. This crisis of political leadership is exacerbated by the fact that there is no official plan for presidential succession in Egypt and Gamal Mubarak, the president's heir apparent, is not popular. This uncertain future, combined with serious economic instability, minimal state legitimacy, and rising social discontent due to chronic mismanagement across the government, refutes the argument that the Mubarak regime is the only stable option.

At the same time, U.S.-backed autocrats like Mubarak continue to feed the ideology of extremists not just in Egypt, but across the region. Rhetoric decrying Arab autocrats' mistreatment of their peoples is a permanent feature of the speeches of figures like Osama Bin Laden and Hassan Nasrallah, because they know it resonates powerfully with the peoples of the region.

Internationally, Egypt has become active in a growing network of alliances among dictators, acting to block efforts to ensure international human rights enforcement in entities like the United Nations (UN). Recently, Egypt banded with other autocracies to reject the Democracy Coalition Project's application to gain consultative status at the Economic and Social Council of the UN.

While the U.S.-Egyptian alliance is important and often mutually beneficial, Mubarak has delivered little in terms of substantive advancement on regional peace with Israel. Mubarak has also failed to deliver on internal development, as Egypt has witnessed regression on numerous development indicators under Mubarak's 28-year tenure.

If the West wants—as do many Egyptians—a credible alternative to the religiously inspired political movements in Egypt, a true commitment to decreasing sectarian tensions, and a stable partner in promoting regional interests and peace, it must support democratic forces in their efforts to organize and carve out an inclusive and participatory political space. Not only is support for the legitimate democratic aspirations of the Egyptian people in the strategic interest of the United States, but backtracking now on democracy promotion simply rewards the regime for its brutal crackdown against secular democracy activists and sends demoralizing



signals to those sacrificing on the ground to bring about change. It also hampers the efforts of the U.S. to regain its credibility among the people of the region. There is no reason why pursuing strategic interests should come at the expense of sound and effective democracy promotion policies; in fact, seeking both simultaneously will be mutually reinforcing.

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*...the Mubarak regime derives its international legitimacy from a false political dualism that offers the international community only two choices for Egyptian governance: the current regime, or the Islamic extremists.*

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#### *How to Move Forward*

As critical as development assistance is, the truth is that development aid has allowed an autocratic and corrupt regime to prevent the formation of an open society that would foster homegrown economic development, foreign investment, and democratic citizen engagement. Meanwhile, effective support for political reform in 2004 and 2005 had the concrete effect of assisting the formation of precisely the robust constituency for change and growth that would successfully drive positive reform if sustained.

While change comes from within, it can be supported from the outside, and giving up on democracy promotion programs and policy in favor of “technical assistance” would simply consolidate the extremely unpopular status quo. As Egyptians continue to sacrifice for a freer society, if the U.S. and the community of democracies remain neutral on issues of democracy in Egypt, this will amount to a de facto endorsement of the repressive and ultimately unstable status quo.

The early success, and ultimate failure, of U.S. pressures on Egypt in 2005 proved one very important fact: strong verbal support for political reform and for the efforts of activists, coupled with consistent (non-military) action, is an effective tool for democracy promotion. This type of democracy promotion is compatible with other U.S. interests; at no point during this brief opening did Egyptian cooperation on vital U.S. regional interests stop.

In order to avoid charges of interventionism, the U.S. and the West should not take the side of particular political actors, but instead support reforms that enjoy wide support among the population. These include reforms that Mubarak

himself pledged to undertake in his last presidential campaign, like repealing the emergency law and other restrictive legislation; upholding the rule of law and an independent judiciary; lifting the restrictions on political parties and civil society; supporting a free media; and increasing governmental accountability. While programs that aid impoverished farmers are essential and should continue, no less critical are governance programs aimed at promoting basic rights and a peaceful transition to democracy. Democracy versus development assistance should not be viewed as a zero sum game.

Other ways of moving forward include helping to effect a more genuine political process that entails a leveling of the playing field to eliminate the current dichotomy of autocrats versus theocrats and encourages a more accurate representation of the Egyptian political landscape. This will require applying pressure to eliminate laws and practices that restrict the registration and operation of civil society organizations, political parties, and other political forces. This may include Islamists, provided that they are committed to the democratic process beyond mere rhetoric and demonstrate respect for the rule of law, human rights, and equality of all citizens before the law. The process of expanding Egypt’s political space should ultimately contribute to the participation of diverse candidates in the upcoming parliamentary elections in 2010, as well as the presidential election of 2011. Western powers should push for transparency along with local and international monitoring in both elections.

The U.S. administration should also establish a regular forum within the new U.S.-Egyptian strategic dialogue that is dedicated to addressing issues of political reform. This forum should monitor and engage regularly with the Egyptian government beyond the normal scope of work of the State Department and its embassies. In addition to working on broad reforms and tracking progress, this forum should defend human rights activists both publicly and privately when they are persecuted. It should also include regular consultations with independent civil society actors.

Efforts to promote political reform are most successful when pursued in a multilateral framework. The relationship Egypt enjoys with Europe avoids some of the pitfalls associated with an exclusive U.S.-Egypt relationship, and Europe has had past success in supporting Egyptian civil society. Europe and the U.S. should join forces to create positive incentives for reform. This multilateral framework for human rights protection should include international organizations and non-governmental actors. Joint action should be directed at pressuring Egypt to abide by its existing treaty and convention commitments, with positive incentives built in for adherence to those commitments. Undoubtedly, this entails the U.S. and participating governments setting an example themselves. For instance, Obama’s renewal of the U.S. policy of no tolerance for torture helps restore U.S. credibility and

moral standing and allows the application of this kind of pressure.

Because the Egyptian government has been successful in stalling on reform in the past, the U.S. government should consider offering new financial incentives such as trade advantages in exchange for advances in political reform. Well-crafted but tough incentives along the lines of the Helsinki Accords, which led to the fall of dictators in Eastern Europe, should also be considered as a model. Benchmarks for advancements should be based on those of international rights organizations or be intelligently negotiated, and should be tied to an established time table. Progress on those benchmarks should be closely monitored and gauged by the proposed political reform forum within the strategic dialogue. Egypt's inclusion in the global market and its status as a key diplomatic player on the world stage should be tied to its commitment to democracy and human rights.

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### Conclusion

Advocating on behalf of democracy and human rights activists in Egypt should be an essential element of a comprehensive U.S.-Egyptian relationship, not simply an abstract rhetorical device that is meant for public relations. A pluralistic and democratic Egypt will result in a strong and reliable partner in promoting regional peace and stability. Supporting the aspirations of Egyptians for a democratic nation that respects human rights and is guided by the rule of law would have swift, positive, and enduring ramifications for the entire Middle East.

The “results vs. rhetoric” approach the Obama administration seems to have espoused has yet to deliver on concrete results. The administration should consider the strengths of public diplomacy when necessary, and should also make a strong effort to convey **its backroom diplomatic efforts on these issues** to activists. The conveyance of positive signals from the administration on these issues to the Egyptian people and to the Egyptian regime is not to be underestimated at a time when activists are in dire need of support, both moral and financial, and when events significant to U.S. interests, such as upcoming elections, are quickly arriving.

The challenge with Egypt is real, and will require serious, ongoing commitment, including financial support. With an upcoming presidential succession in Egypt, now is the time to transfer Obama's words into real action, and demonstrate support for the legitimate aspirations of Egyptians for freedom. This will have important ramifications not just for Egyptian society, but for broader regional and global security goals.

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gained power in 2006, lifting up minor demagogues such as Khaled Mashal, the group's political leader. Around the world, from Belarus to Uzbekistan, authoritarian leaders are on the rise and freedom is retreating.

In most of these cases, the leaders threatening to convert democracy into tyranny are demagogues: political figures who fashioned themselves as leaders of the masses and who would go to almost any extreme to hold and expand their power. And in most cases, they are capitalizing on a powerful sentiment that surged through the world during the Bush presidency, gathering nations and groups together against America and Americans, often with a militaristic bent.

### Democracy Fatigue

At the same time the demagogue has returned, the resolve to foster democracy abroad is weakening in America. A number of prominent recent books have questioned America's standing in a post-Bush world, from Fareed Zakaria's *The Post-American World* to Parag Khanna's *The Second World*. Such works envision a world where America has dramatically lost its influence, and where we must accede to the loss of both practical and moral authority as a result of the Bush years. Equally as troubling, public opinion polls show the American public becoming increasingly skeptical of the value of promoting democracy abroad.

We must challenge this new phenomenon of "democracy fatigue." Too much is at stake. Democracy is a driving factor in humanity's efforts to escape the tragedies of our shared past. The story of demagogues opens the door to a broader underlying story about the possibility of progress for humanity. Demagogues, like the proverbial canary in a coal mine, alert us to a deeper paradox that has plagued human society since classical times: as democracy expands, it increases the potential for its own destruction. In other words, demagogues are a symptom rather than a cause. When they emerge, it is because the people, rather than using their freedom, their wits, and their self-restraint to select leaders who would ensure liberty for the ages, willingly hand over their power to a leader who enslaves them. Democracy self-destructs, and the most hopeful and optimistic of dreams—a system based on pure freedom, and on possibility itself—becomes the most monstrous of nightmares.

To counter the threat of demagogues, we need to reclaim democracy as a primary goal of our foreign policy, but with a new heart—constitutionalism. As Alexis de Tocqueville described most powerfully in his study of American democracy, constitutionalism is a living culture of political values among ordinary people that (1) promotes the individual's private sense of self-worth and responsibility for democ-

racy's success and (2) publicly operates as a countervailing political force on those who would gather power and break rules in doing so.<sup>7</sup> In other words, the people themselves hold the ultimate answer to democracy's paradox. If the people dedicate themselves to the rule of law, they will defy the demagogue. If, on the other hand, the people are more interested in the roller-coaster of the demagogue's ambitions than their own small part in maintaining the rule of law in their own nation, democracy can disintegrate into authoritarianism, corruption, and murder.

### Constitutionalism

Before we get to policies that can foster a constitutional conscience, we first need to flag the danger of a quest for a silver bullet. The history of democracy promotion is riddled with policymakers' infatuations with particular ideas that will make democracy take hold immediately. These fads have included elections, civil society, rule of law, decentralization, and anticorruption. Democracy promotion organizations proceeded, willy-nilly, to build and fund thousands of these programs in developing nations around the world—sometimes without regard for whether they actually created the constitutional culture that was really needed. All such approaches suffer from the same flaw, that democratization is amenable to magic bullets. If we convert our desire to make democracy work into a spiritual, even religious, quest, we will neglect the very ordinariness of successful constitutionalism. And the demagogue who understands the advantage the ordinary has over the extraordinary will always be able to find the seams in democracy and rip it apart.

With this cautionary note firmly in mind, we move to the question of how to increase constitutionalism around the world through our foreign policy. We should take action in the following ways.

- *Civic education.* With little or no training in basic constitutional values, children will more likely be educated in the values of authoritarianism and anti-Americanism. We should increase educational programs through a sweeping effort to train students across the world in constitutional values and inculcate these values at an ethical level.
- *Market economics.* Acting as a consumer cultivates the practice and expectation of exercising sovereignty, as citizens think of themselves as individuals in control of their own choices. Market practices also help citizens take on the habits and values of trust and compromise.
- *Sharing the vision.* America should commit to spreading the vision of constitutionalism. Our leaders should make a distinct effort to share our foundational ideals of the active pursuit of political freedom, the free exchange of ideas between citizens, and the tolerance of dissent in their interactions with the people of the world. These actions

will reveal the confidence of the constitutional experiment and how citizens take part in it, without fear of reprisal, and with the self-reliance of a citizen who fully shoulders the burden of a constitutional society.

- *Election training.* People need training in actual elections because elections can be intimidating to new voters and, as in any new activity, information and practice can make a great difference. The administrators of the election process itself need support and training, as well—in conducting impartial elections, helping less-skilled citizens make their choices, preventing pressure tactics, and generally cultivating public confidence in the elections.
- *Respect.* We can expand constitutional democracy by sharing our own tolerance and the broader message that constitutional democracy succeeds when the citizens embrace and respect debate, rather than reject it. One concrete policy is to allow the Voice of America, the United States' international broadcast agency, to include opposing viewpoints.
- *Direct engagement.* The United States needs to broadly engage directly with the peoples of the world, enlisting them in the constitutional enterprise and helping them to bypass, where possible, prudent, and desirable, the elites and structures that otherwise would block them from sharing these values.
- *Tailor constitutionalism.* Constitutionalism is an artifact of culture and belief. We therefore need to begin where the people are and accept that constitutionalism will naturally differ from place to place. Historically, political scientists have determined that norms for civil liberties can vary dramatically from country to country and that political culture mediates how people understand democracy.
- *A world of individuals.* The deeper underlying value of a diverse constitutionalism is a recognition—and embrace—of the pluralism of the world. A pro-constitutionalism foreign policy will view other nations and groups not primarily as calcified categories that operate in an unchanging, preset manner, but more fundamentally as groups of individuals, each of whom possesses the same characteristics that we do.
- *Increased civilian capacity.* We should create a substantial new corps of civilian professionals who can help cultivate constitutionalism around the world. Expert professionals would deploy to weak and failing states. They would promote democracy and address humanitarian issues by working directly with civilian populations. They would be the advance guard of a United States that's newly committed to cultivating a constitutional culture among the peoples of the world.

- *Lead by example.* Finally, we should take the simple but profound step of denying demagogues what they seek the most—an easily hated enemy to agitate the masses against. Any garden-variety demagogue can exploit another nation's belligerence, and it takes only arrogance or stupidity—or both—to play into their hands. It's a deceptively obvious point. If we want the world's nations—and the people who live in them—to desire democracy, these people must themselves not resent, fulminate against, and attack history's greatest democracy. This means American power, both in theory and in application, must become an authority that works with the peoples of the world, rather than threatening and demanding things from them.

#### Now Is the Time to Act

Understanding how to stop the demagogue is especially pressing today. Other countries are losing faith in America's ability to do good through democracy, and the American people themselves today are flirting with isolationism, turning away from the engagement that marked America's greatest foreign policy successes during the previous century. Yet, democracy's demagogue problem matters for America's national security interest. We are today still generally considered the most powerful nation in the world. Most Americans agree we should do what we can to remain in that position. The question—with a new president, a new century, and a new horizon—is what we use this power for. To regain our stature and become a source of admiration and leadership for the world—the “city on a hill” that John Winthrop first invoked aboard the ship *Arbella* in the seventeenth century—we need to fully comprehend both the majesty and complexity of our accomplishment. Sharing the success of the American democratic experiment demands restraint and self-discipline instead of braggadocio and belligerence. In our promotion of democracy, from the rhetoric of our leaders to the substance of our governmental programs to the actual efforts undertaken, we need to stop grasping for a metaphysical democracy that magically solves its own problems and instead begin cultivating constitutionalism.

An exemplarist foreign policy of democracy promotion through constitutionalism would view the peoples of the world as members of a great partnership with us. In helping guide them toward the constitutional values that we know work well from our own experience, we should understand that we are in a direct relationship with them, both through the policy of our government as well as through the basic humanity we all share. When we look at other nations that we hope will seek freedom, we should therefore also see millions of people like us—working, thinking, talking, acting, with governments responding to them (or not), as they demand it. These people in this global mirror will look back at us with eyes as intelligent, as discerning, and as open as ours. Like us, they will try to resolve the basic paradox of the human condition that generates demagogues: that democracy, left

to its own devices, can produce not constitutionalism but tyranny. And like us, they will choose freedom, if they have the education, the understanding, and the constitutional values they need.

But they will turn on freedom—and on us—if they are not enabled to defend themselves and a demagogue arises to take advantage. Given a momentary opportunity, he will take hold and invade the body politic. The demagogue will never let go and will never disappear. Only vigilance among the people will keep him at bay and expand the reign of liberty. America can help save democracy in its eternal struggle with the demagogue. We can help slow, if not stop altogether, the cycle of regimes. And we can add to the victories of humanity's better angels over our own worst demons. Our unique position in the community of nations, and our extraordinary history, demands, once again, that we strike out on the path to true freedom.

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HOFFMAN, *Continued from Page 2*

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power as the source of the problem and Musgrave argues it derives from the increasing cost of war. All three believe the U.S. can no longer sustain its aspirations for global military dominance. Rajan Menon contends that U.S. military alliances, such as NATO, are obsolete relics of the Cold War, and maintains the U.S. should pursue flexible alliances derived from the nature of the problem it is trying to solve. Finally, *America and the World* is a set of discussions between two former National Security Advisors, Zbigniew Brzezinski and Brent Scowcroft, moderated by the Washington Post's David Ignatius. Although Brzezinski and Scowcroft disagree on much, they agree on the importance of bi-partisanship in U.S. foreign policy, that too many policy makers still see the world through a Cold War mentality, and that the U.S. has become excessively frightened by terrorism.

Timothy Lynch and Robert Singh are contrarians to the above analyses. They see far more continuity than change in George W. Bush's foreign policy, arguing that unilateral military action, regime change, and inconsistent commitment to multi-lateralism has been typical U.S. foreign policy for decades.

I want to thank my able editors, John Morrill and Lindsay Robinson. John and Lindsay will be graduating the MA program at the end of the spring semester. I wish them the best of luck and am certain they will have promising careers.

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ISSUE THEME

## **Democrats, Dictators, and Demonstrators: Sharing Strategies on Repression and Reform**

### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

**W**e are seeking well-written, interesting submissions of 800-2000 words on the themes below, including summaries and/or excerpts of recently completed research, new publications, and works in progress. **Submissions for the issue are due Friday, February 26, 2010.**

Democracy assistance practitioners and scholars focus attention on linkages primarily between international donors and recipients in government or civil society. These relationships are important foci for understanding the process of “political learning,” but many other mechanisms are less understood. Strategies for repression and reform are being shared across borders, and a broader framework is required to capture these linkages.

Two potential mechanisms for international cooperation on democratic reform appear understudied. First, advances in technology and communications reduce barriers to cooperation between civil society actors and allow them to share best practices on reform. So called “twitter revolutions” in Iran and Xinjiang earlier this year for example demonstrate the ability of new technologies to connect demonstrators to the global community. The existence of these interactions is acknowledged, but systematic understanding of how this cooperation

occurs and its potential to influence reform is not yet developed. Second, regional organizations are increasingly involved in promoting international standards of behavior, including democracy. The African Union spoke out strongly against the military coup leaders in Guinea, while the Organization of American States condemned the coup in Honduras. More broadly, democratic values are embodied in the charters of multilateral organizations as varied as the EU and ASEAN. However, the role of these organizations in furthering reform, and their relationship with domestic actors, both governments and civil society, warrants additional study.

Democrats and demonstrators are not the only ones learning. Democrats must contend with cooperation between their authoritarian adversaries. Authoritarians are learning to manage access to technology, cooperating in regional organizations, and providing alternatives to democratic governance models. Cooperation between authoritarian governments is assumed, but the mechanisms through which it occurs remain largely unknown.

This issue of Democracy and Society looks to broaden our understanding of cooperation among both reformers and authoritarians at the levels of high and low politics. We welcome all submissions that illuminate these interactions, their impact on democratization, and the implications they carry for democracy assistance strategies. Please email submissions (MS Word preferred) to [editor@democracyandsociety.com](mailto:editor@democracyandsociety.com). Endnotes preferred. Please include your name, department or organization, title, and contact information.

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