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Panel 1: U.S. Democracy Promotion Policies and Practices

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DR. ANDERSON: Please take your seats. I'm Dr. James Anderson, the Vice President for Academic Affairs at Marine Corps University, and it is my privilege to moderate our first panel this morning on U.S. Democracy Promotion Policies and Practices.

I think we'll have plenty to talk about this morning. The keynote speaker earlier raised a whole constellation of questions that are germane to this topic.

What is the relative desirability of prioritizing democracy as opposed to other foreign policy objectives? . Here I imagine we will be talking about causation-correlation dynamics, and issues of continuity and discontinuity between administrations, among other things.

Our keynote this morning also raised the "fiendishly difficult" question of implementing democratization approaches. We are fortunate this morning to have three expert speakers to help us get at these large strategic questions.

You have their bios, but I will say a couple words about each of them to highlight some of their germane experience and expertise.

Seated directly adjacent to me is Dr. Dan Brumberg, who is currently the Special Adviser to the United States Institute of Peace, and co-director of democracy in Government Studies at Georgetown University.

He has, among other things, published quite widely. He has written a couple of books on Iran. He has one coming out in the spring of 2016, if I'm not mistaken. He has also lived abroad in Egypt and France, and conducted research in a variety of places to include Algeria, and Egypt, Tunisia, and Indonesia.

Seated in the middle is Ms. Lisa Curtis, who is currently a Senior Research Fellow at the Heritage Foundation, a major think tank in Washington D.C. She has testified multiple times for Congress on important issues.

She has also published widely in a variety of newspapers and journals. And prior to coming to Heritage, she also worked on Capitol Hill on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee as a professional staffer.

And she has also worked at the State Department and the Central Intelligence Agency as an analyst. We welcome you as well.

And at the far end of the table, you have Mr. Grant Kippen, who has extensive, on-the-ground experience working in numerous countries, all the way from Afghanistan to Yemen and with many countries in between. He has over 30 years of activities and expertise on the ground in terms of promoting democracy and with regards to electoral politics.

Among other things, he has been the Chairman of the Electoral Complaints Commission in Afghanistan. I imagine there probably was a complaint or two that he faced while serving in that position.

He has also served as an adviser to Federal Cabinet Minister in Ottawa. He has written a number of articles about electoral disputes, E-Democracy and related topics.

So we are delighted to have the three of them here. I've asked each of them to limit their remarks to about 20 to 25 minutes. This will allow us ample time for questions.

As moderator, I will give at least initial preference to MCWAR students when it comes to Q & A since this is part of their curriculum.

But with that, we turn the floor over to our panelists. We'll just work down the row here. Dan, if you would start us off and offer your remarks please.

DR. BRUMBERG: Thanks very much. I'm delighted to be here this morning. It was quite an auspicious timing to walk in and hear Jon and my colleague from more than 20 years mention my late father.

He actually was a refugee and escapee from Nazi-occupied Poland, who came within about two feet of a Nazi bullet. Talk about contingencies of history, and made it with his family at the age of 14 or 15 to the United States, and then served in the last few months of the second World War.

He always said that he could take the gun apart, but he couldn't put it back together. And that latter part was critical to getting him on the battle field. So they put him in front of a typewriter, and he spent the next few decades typing and writing. I think he served the national interest best by doing that rather than being on the front lines. I'm quite convinced of that.

But it was interesting to hear him mentioned, because I've been thinking -- as you can imagine, given my environment, surrounded by Soviet experts from the age of four or five, and thinking about these issues and focusing on them in the Middle East.

I've been around and thinking about these issues for a good long time. And I'm just going to share with you a few ideas this morning. Mark Twain once said, "An expert is somebody from out of town."

And -- and I think he's quite correct about that. And I've tried to sort of pursue my career with a certain degree of humbleness, because we're dealing with very complex issues.

And I really do think that very much, the challenges are framed by the Middle East context and often the kinds of broad comparisons we try to engage in are less, rather than more useful when we go beyond that context. Even though I'm all for comparative analysis. I am, after all, a comparativist.

But I do think it's -- we're dealing with a particular set of legacies and an institutional dynamic that has entrenched the power and logic of authoritarian governments in the region in ways that make efforts to promote democratic change extremely difficult. And often, they come back to haunt us, as we know, in very complex ways.

And we only learned this not so much by academic analysis, but by experience. I was one of a number of academics, I can't recall if Jon was among them, who went to the White House for a series of meetings when the Arab Spring or Arab Political Rebellions emerged.

And we were consulted, and Mike McFaul, who then became our ambassador to Russia, got out the famous transitions book from Guillermo O'Donnell and Philip Schmitter.

And we sort of talked about transitions paradigms And a part of the wondrous effort of trying to talk about paradigms in the White House, or in any fast changing policy environment, was the fact that you would not be surprised the White House's response, as it had to be, was completely improvisation (ph).

I mean, nobody expected this event, and until then, I think it's fair to say that the Obama administration -- and I think Jon's remarks echo this -- was not keen on taking a very prominent position and promoting democratization in the Arab world.

In large reaction to what were perceived as the negative consequences of the previous government, previous White House, in terms of our interest and in terms of the security dynamics in the region, as well.

And so, there wasn't a case of improvisation which has lasted until this day.

I want to make a few remarks, first about distinctions, because I do think that we're -- we've use the word democratization without being very precise about what we mean.

And while I don't want to be too much of the professor, I think these distinctions have very important policy implications from when we talk about democratization.

And what I'm -- what I'm talking about here is the distinction among several things. First of all, human rights. Promoting human rights does not mean promoting democracy. This was -- a gentleman asked this question this morning.

The United States, to take one example, was horrified by the human rights record of Tunisia for many years. And Balinese (ph) government was taken to task, and made significant improvements in many respects and certain aspects of its human rights policy while not in fact ceding any power at all.

So you can push back on human rights and -- and this is a reminder that often what we think about as democratization is not so much democratization or democracy promotion, but it's an effort to curb the abuses and growing power of authoritarian regimes.

Those are not the same things, right? They are not the same things. So human rights is an effort to get governments of one kind or other to protect and respect basic international standards of human rights. And you can do this as an authoritarian regime if you -- if you want to, it's not as easy, perhaps, it's better to be a democracy but in fact, human rights is not correlated always with being a democracy. Democracies can abuse human rights, as well.

Political liberalization. Political liberalization is an opening of the political sphere economically and politically. And it is not to be confused with democratization, nor does it necessarily lead to democratization.

In fact, quite the contrary, as I've written about extensively in my own work and what I call liberalized authoritarianism in the Middle East. Liberalized authoritarian regimes are constantly opening up in different arenas, with the purpose of curbing, and diffusing and fragmenting oppositions to prevent democratization.

We tend to think about pluralism and we tend to think about liberalization as the obvious handmaiden of democratization. But the kind of warped state managed forms of political liberalization we have seen in -- for many decades, in Egypt, for example, and in Morocco, and less so in Tunisia, in Kuwait, in Jordan, was a form of political openness designed to allow a certain degree of political freedom of expression.

At the same time, to make sure that that process never crosses the threshold into democratization.

And this was a regime policy in the Middle East that was pursued often with the active complicity of opposition groups, many of whom felt that they could make certain points, get certain critiques across, get certain patrons and governments to listen to them more effectively by engaging in the game of liberalized authoritarianism, than by trying to push for democratization, per se.

And so it was a two-way game. It was not simply a regime strategy. And it really was the sort of modal form of authoritarianism in so much of the Middle East. We had -- we had the liberalized authoritarian regimes, and then we had the revolutionary totalitarian regimes. Particularly Syria, Iraq, and to some extent, Iran out there.

But liberalized authoritarianism was the sort of game plan, and it had its limits, and I can talk about that in the question and answer as well. And this -- and this, of course, leads to the question of U.S. policy in terms of democracy promotion, so-called democracy promotion.

Our approach for many years -- and this was true to some extent under the Bush administration, under the Freedom Agenda as well -- was to support political liberalization, was to push for political liberalization, and not necessarily for democratization because democratization involves a regime change.

Democratization involves changing fundamental power structures in ways that can be profoundly disruptive and, in many respects, under certain conditions, quite counter-productive.

And so the U.S. policy, in terms of democracy promotion, was to talk about democracy promotion, but really to talk about political liberalization. And this allowed us to have our cake and eat it, too, in many respects. Because we could still maintain close relations with, for example, the Mubarak government.

And maintain our security relationships, and not disrupt our important relationship with Egyptian military. At the same time, we could encourage processes of political opening that created a certain amount of space, and perhaps down the road, might lead to something else.

And this was very much a demand side approach. That is, we supported civil society groups, NGOs, with the expectation that they could push for democracy, but we wouldn't -- we wouldn't worry too much about the supply side.

We wouldn't worry too much about taking governments with which we had close relationships: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Egypt, for sure Morocco, to some extent, Tunisia. Although there, the government relationship with Ben Ali in France is much more important.

That we can have those relationships and at the same time, spend every year in our budgets X millions of dollars on promoting the Freedom Agenda, as it were. And the Freedom Agenda -- what's interesting about the Freedom Agenda under Bush was two things.

First of all, on some level, it diverted -- it diverged fundamentally from the model I just described, because the Freedom Agenda spoke about actual democratization. Actual regime change. The speeches that Jon cited this morning were indicative of that.

And that was -- that was new. I mean, the issue of democratization is a high part of -- high U.S. foreign policy began with George W. Bush -- in the Middle East, of course. I'm not talking about the rest of the world.

And that was extraordinary. And that, of course, raised the stakes for leaders. At the same time, there was tremendous ambivalence from the Bush administration about pushing this agenda in ways that fundamentally disrupted our security relations. And therefore there was a tendency to fall back on political liberalization, demand side as opposed to supply side democracy promotion policies as a way, again, of having our security cake and our democracy and eating both, as it were.

And so these are important distinctions, because they play out in policy ways that are -- that have long-term consequences. I

would say that the Obama administration certainly began -- my former student, Tamara Wittes , who became Director of POMED.

And I think that she would acknowledge that when she started her work in the administration, the Obama administration was very much relying back on the old liberalization strategy. And moved -- backed off very much from a regime change democratization strategy, as Jon said, and I think that is the case until today.

We support NGO's, we support -- we do support elections but as we saw with the Bush administration in Palestine and in Egypt, when elections bring Islamists into power we get really nervous.

There was an exception in Iraq, in a certain way, but in those two cases there was a real backing away of support because of concern -- security concern implications.

And so, it's -- we have to distinguish between democratization, and political liberalization, and human rights, and the different ways that administrations have engaged these issues and pushed for these different outcomes.

Democratization is a long-term process or a short-term process, but the point about democratization is it fundamentally changes the political, elite structure, and introduces the kinds of revolutionary changes which -- which -- with which the entire region has a great deal of difficulty. I'm going to talk about why in a moment.

So, those are a few introductory points. Then I would say that the interesting question is, why is democratization itself such a difficult process to promote, and why have so many administrations struggled with it? And I can assume that the struggle will continue for a long time.

And I think there's one important reason why is that state and security structure -- an elite political structure are fused in the Middle East in ways that are kind of unparalleled.

And for those -- from the point of view of those who are in power, they have economic interests, they have security interests, they have the security apparatus. And they tend to also have a relationship with certain constituencies, which I have termed, taking a note out of "The Godfather," a protection racket kind of strategy.

Don Corleone's approach in which, essentially, authoritarian regimes, and again this goes back to what Jon said this morning, authoritarian regimes live not simply by pure brutality but by protecting certain kinds of constituencies from the threat of Democracy.

From the prospect of Democracy. What we have in many countries in the Middle East is a process by which authoritarian regimes offer groups that might otherwise -- whose interest might not otherwise prevail, provide them protection. Provide them with support, provide them patronage in return for their political loyalty or their political classes (ph).

And this is a relationship that is secured by institutional means, by economic means, and by the important role of the security apparatus, as well. All this means that when the authoritarian regimes are threatened, it's not simply the guys who are sitting in office who are threatened, but their -- but important groups who see these regimes as protecting them.

And let me give you a concrete example of how this works out, paradoxically. Consider the State of Morocco. Morocco is, despite the protestations of its leaders, I would say Morocco is a very well-practiced liberalized authoritarian regime that has practiced the art of liberalized autocracy for an awful long time.

And if you look at the role of women's groups in Morocco, and their attitude to the present king and his father, you will see that women's groups are not necessarily convinced that their interest can be protected by elections or by a transition to Democracy, because they fear the outcome would be the rise of Islamist groups, which would take away their rights.

Jon was talking about the rights of minorities. And the same is true to the Berber minority in Morocco as well. So, what successive of liberal -- liberal oriented of women's groups have done is essentially cut deals with existing monarchs. By which it's understood that a certain degree of political liberalization will be offered, that allows them to push for their agendas without the potential threat of having their rights removed as a consequence of an election.

Now, if you're an American government looking at that sort of situation, how can we possibly be convinced that the alternative, which -- an actual transition to Democracy, would necessarily be a better alternative?

It's not obviously the case at all. Particularly since you have certain kinds of groups. In some cases, the groups might be threatened by a transition to democracy, and aren't necessarily in love with their protectors but again, because this protection racket is based on fear and the generation of fear, the creation of fear, it isn't necessarily the case that they would support the transition.

It might even reluctantly -- I think this is true of the Alawites, if you look at the Alawites in Syria. You know, there's a notion that they've just benefited economically. I think that plenty of Alawites detest Assad. I have no doubt about it.

But the question is, who do they detest more? The protection offered by Assad's regime, or the prospect of a government in which they are ruled by an Islamist majority? That's their perception.

And under those conditions, the notion that there's an obvious or easy solution to this tragedy in Syria, I think, is illusory.

So we face quandaries in the region that are a consequence of the kinds of policy and institutional choices made over time. It's a very -- as we say in political science, a very path dependent region. And U.S. policy has been sort of organized around kind of, sort of manage these processes.

Now these contradictions, now in the context of an unprecedented challenge to the region which wasn't really mentioned this morning, and that is the challenge to the very existence of sovereign states.

We haven't talked about this at all. But the rise of ISIS or Daesh, or whatever -- ISIL, whatever you wish to call it, is the rise of a new -- of a kind of totalitarian Pan-Islamist movement, which doesn't recognize borders.

Which rejects the notion of the sovereignty of modern states and certainly nation states, and which is ready and willing to do everything they can to undermine that process.

And I can talk about -- I can talk about sort of the roots of this phenomenon, and there are experts that know it far better than I -- but if you don't have a state and you don't have security, and you don't have a state with a monopoly over the means of coercion, which is the class of the very (ph) definition of a state, you don't have any prospects for Democracy.

So the constraints and contradictions and dilemmas facing U.S. democracy promotion policy have been -- have been accentuated by the rise of ISIL. And it's not clear, by the way, that reliance on political liberalization strategies minus Democracy are necessarily going to, in any way, address this problem.

I'm not praising this approach as -- as a panacea. It's a survival strategy for all concerned. But the problem with liberalized authoritarianism is that it doesn't really create the preconditions for any kind of transition to reasonable governance.

And that's why, by the way, this notion -- Kirkpatrick's (ph) notion -- with all due respect to Gene (ph), who was my colleague for several years, the article that appeared in commentary was more, to my mind, an apology for U.S. support of military regimes in Latin America. From they (ph) say so than anything else.

Authoritarian regimes are extremely adept at preventing democratization. But we are living in the context in which, increasingly, we find ourselves hooked up and linked to authoritarian regimes that are not only positing (ph) themselves as an alternative to ISIL, and you know, we live in a world of bad alternatives, right?

But are also increasingly authoritarian. We've seen in the wake of the Arab political rebellions of 2011 and beyond, is not Democracy, with the particular case of Tunisia, which I can talk about it.

I have studied and been there extensively. But with the exception of Tunisia, we have seen in the region, not only the persistence of authoritarianism, but the emergence of a new model of authoritarianism.

Increasingly close, dispensing with the old liberalization that I talked about. Sisi regime is unparalleled with the level of oppression it's using. Jon may be correct in saying that it has a base of support.

But it clearly doesn't feel that it would survive easily in a free and open election, therefore, it's extremely repressive. So it has support and it's repressive at the same time. How do we explain that, right?

This is a regime who's level of authoritarian closure far exceeds anything we ever saw under Mubarak (ph). This is -- this is unprecedented for -- and I would say even Nasser.

And so we're dealing with a new phenomenon. But the -- it's not exceptional, because what we see are indicators of increased authoritarian closure throughout the region.

And the distinction between full authoritarian regimes and liberalized autocracies, to some extent, is becoming narrowed by the use of greater forms of authoritarian governance.

Even in regimes that once championed a certain degree of political liberalization. So it's not a good situation. but we have to compare it to the alternative, which is the march of a movement, which is absolutely dedicated to bringing down states and borders, and creating a new kind of Islamist entity, the nature of which, in fact, the Islamic world never knew.

So I'll leave it at that. Thank you very much.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Dan.

Lisa, the floor is yours.

MS. CURTIS:
Thank you very much. I want to thank the Marine Corps University, and specifically Dr. Amin Tarzi for inviting me here today. It's a pleasure and an honor to be here.

Most of my career has focused on South Asia: India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, having served as a diplomat in both India and Pakistan. But last year, I spearheaded a project at the Heritage Foundation on how the rise of Islamist politics would impact the U.S. ability to promote Democracy in the broader Middle East region.

And we had the pleasure of engaging with Marine Corps University analysts on that project before it was published, and we very much appreciated that opportunity. And I am happy to be here to expand on these issues today.

So, I come at this issue with the opinion that promoting Democracy is a public good. - But this view must also rest on the idea that elections don't equal Democracy.

That genuine Democracy involves protection of religious minorities, checks and balances on power, respect for human rights, all of these other qualities. So in this light I think we can definitely say the political upheavals that we've seen over the last four years throughout the region, while they may have been inspired by -- largely inspired by people's democratic aspirations, paradoxically they have certainly made the U.S. job of promoting Democracy in the region much more complicated and difficult.

The Internet has definitely raised people's expectations, what they expect from their governments, how they want to live their lives. Social media has made it easier for people to organize and form protest demonstrations. But these same civil societies have shown themselves to be ill-equipped to make that transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic regimes.

And amidst this chaos, we see the rise of political Islamists, the rise of ISIS, as Dan Brumberg just pointed out. And this has further complicated our efforts to try to promote Democracy.

With that said, the U.S. cannot stand by idly. We have to find ways to navigate this increasingly fraught terrain. And I think we can do this by both developing a set of principles that we would try to follow as we promote Democracy, and I'll talk a little bit more about those later.

We also need to consider creative ideas for promoting democracy at the grass roots level.

So let me talk a little bit about the evolution of U.S. democracy promotion, and I'll try not to repeat too much of what Jon Alterman said at the beginning.

I'll sort of expound on what he said about the Bush administration in its initial years. Right after 9/11certainly the Bush administration did affirm support for promoting democracy as a way to counter Islamist extremist ideologies, and thus counter terrorism trends.

And with that we saw the establishment of the Middle East Partnership Initiative, the MEPI, in 2002, which aimed at providing grants and funding to civil society organizations, businesses, local governments, and chambers of commerce, in order to promote democracy at the grass roots level.

And I think the establishment of MEPI was really a strategic and important move, and the fact that it is still fairly robustly funded by the Obama administration, I think, shows how important this effort was.

The impact of our assistance and reconstruction efforts in war-torn Afghanistan and Iraq, obviously, is a lot more questionable. In Afghanistan, yes, we see quality of life indicators have increased over the last 10 years. More children are going to school, the society is freer, you have regular elections.

But at the same time, we also keep hearing about investigations into the corruption surrounding our aid programs, whether it's corrupt Afghan officials siphoning off the money, or wastage by large U.S. Defense and USAID contractors.

The Bush administration's major flaw was in underestimating the significance of the sectarian divide in Iraq, and underestimating the enormity of the task of rebuilding that country after the U.S. invasion.

So let's fast forward to the Obama administration. So initially, you see a lot of reticence about talking about democracy promotion. And this is mainly due to the fact that President Obama wanted to separate himself from what was perceived as the Bush policy toward democracy promotion in the Middle East.

Democracy promotion was used by President Bush as one of the justifications for the Iraq invasion. So, President Obama very much wanted to separate himself from any of those connections. Then we saw from the Obama administration the lack of support for the Iranian democracy activists in 2009, which furthered this perception that the Obama administration was going to be less committed to promoting democracy in this part of the world.

However, I would say by mid-2010, we started to see a slight shift in the tone. And this can be seen in the National Security Strategy, which was released in May, 2010 which stated: "The United States supports the expansion of democracy and human rights abroad, because governments that respect these values are more just, peaceful, and legitimate."

And then President Obama, during his address to the U.N. General Assembly that same year, said, "Experience shows us that history is on the side of liberty. The strongest foundation for human progress lies in open economies, open societies, and open governments."

He went on, "America will always extend our engagement abroad with citizens beyond the halls of government. And it is time to embrace and effectively monitor norms that advance the rights of civil society, and guarantee its expansion within and across borders."

But despite this reticence to talk about democracy in its initial year, the Obama administration did show a consistency in how it funded democracy and governance programs.

And if we look today, fiscal year 2016, at the State Department budget request, they have requested about 442 million for promoting democracy and governance in the broader Middle East.

This is a slight increase from last year, but a decrease from fiscal year 2010.

But by and large, there has been consistency, I think, within the Obama administration for the amount of funding and resources that are put toward these efforts.

I would say the biggest mistake of the Obama administration has been President Obama's desire to establish himself as the president that has ended two wars. To accomplish this, he has withdrawn too quickly U.S. forces from both Iraq and Afghanistan.

This desire to establish this legacy, I think, led the White House to fail to come to an agreement with the Iraqi government for keeping residual troops there in 2011, and has also led the White House to focus too much attention on the goal of getting to zero troops in Afghanistan by the end of 2016.

The more beneficial approach would be to talk about leaving residual forces in these countries, particularly in Afghanistan, to backstop the Afghan forces until they're ready to address security threats on their own.

So the task of promoting democracy, as I stated at the outset, has been severely complicated by the revolutions in the Middle East over the last four years and by the need to counter ISIS. These developments have forced the U.S. to focus more on immediate security concerns, especially regarding the rise of ISIS, and to focus on partnering with governments that may be authoritarian in order to do this.

And this has been recognized in the region. A Zogby Poll from 2014 stated that there's been a sharp decline in confidence that the U.S. is committed to democracy in the Middle East. This is not surprising.

So let me talk about the other complicating factor, which is the rise of Islamist parties over the last few years. So on the one hand, the U.S. feels compelled, and should counter the illiberal agendas of these parties.

This agenda includes persecution of religious minorities, repression of women, and supporting legal systems that rely on one religious authority.

But on the other hand, I think we have to acknowledge that the majority of the Muslim polities in these nations do support Islam playing some role in their governing and political systems.

And indeed, most of these countries do have legal systems that rely on a mix of both sharia and secular civil codes. And given this interest in having political systems that reflect both democratic concepts and Islamic values, I think we have to assume that as they transition into democracies, there won't be the same emphasis on the separation of religion and state that, of course, we've seen in the West.

They may not want a theocracy, but they also don't want a secular democracy. They're looking for something in between, a third option.

And I think the second point I'd like to make with regard to the Islamists is, there is still this fundamental question about whether their participation in electoral politics is leading them to democratize and to accept more readily the concepts that go with democracy: constitutionalism, equality, pluralism.

Or whether the Islamists are impacting how democratization is going. I think it's a little bit of both -- it's a two-way street .

Now many see Islamism as a threat to democracy, equating it with totalitarianism. And I think what we saw -- how we saw the Muslim Brotherhood deal with its rise to power in 2012, could certainly confirm those views.

And still others note that Islamists will be compelled to take advantage of democratic openings, which again confirms this idea that the democratization process will impact the Islamists as much as the Islamists are impacting the democratization process.

So, how does the U.S. move forward in this very fraught, complicated region? Certainly, there's no one size fits all. I think that's obvious. But there are a set of principles that the U.S. can follow as it continues to seek to support democracy in the region, both at the grass roots and at the level of the political elite.

So, the first is principle is to support civil society. And I think the case of Tunisia bears this out. It was because of the vibrancy of the civil society and the fact that that the civil society was active in the constitutional development process that has made the Tunisian transition to democracy relatively successful.

So I think it should be a given that we continue to support the civil society of these nations. Particularly through the MEPI, Middle East Partnership Initiative.

The second is the importance of not only working with electoral commissions and organizing elections, but also assisting countries as they navigate the stage of developing a constitution. And again, I point to Tunisia, where the debates in developing a consensus on the constitution were so important.

Now certainly, the U.S. cannot define these debates. But we can play a role in facilitating their resolution, encouraging the debates themselves.

The third is the idea that political parties must shun all violence. We must have a very firm position on this. We've seen that these Islamist parties can be close to terrorist organizations, and this is certainly very problematic, and something I think the U.S. needs to remain very firm on.

Fifth, the importance of promoting the rights and economic opportunities of women. What we've seen is that as education levels of women have risen in the region, perhaps their quality of life indicators have also improved, but we have not seen the increase in their participation in the economic and political lives of the countries. So this is something that we need to continue to focus on.

One exception here, I'll mention, is Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, we've seen the participation of women in the labor force has very much contributed to the economic and social advancement of that country. So hopefully we can see other countries begin to emulate that example.

Sixth, is discouraging countries from completely shutting out the Islamists. Here we are looking at what's happening in Egypt, and Bangladesh to some degree. In Bangladesh, the Sheikh Hasina government is putting increasing pressure on the Jamaat-e-Islami and sentencing those leaders to death for their involvement in war crimes during the 1971 Independence Movement.

The U.S. needs to encourage governments like those in Egypt and Bangladesh while carrying out the law and punishing people who break the law and who support violence, but at the same time giving the Islamists a way to participate in the political process. This is extremely important and something the U.S. needs to continue to pursue.

The idea that religious freedom is central to promoting democracy is well documented. The religious persecution of the minority communities in many of these Muslim majority countries is well known. So this has to be a central plank for the U.S.

We must remember that our rhetoric is important. There was a Chatham House study that came out a year or two ago, which found that U.S. rhetoric and continuing to support democracy with high level statements was even more important than some of the grass roots efforts that we're doing with the civil societies. So, rhetoric is important.

And lastly, it is important to remember that promoting democracy is a long-term project. It takes our long-term engagement. There's no quick way to transition from authoritarian regimes to democratic regimes. And I think this is something we need to keep in mind.

So just to conclude, I think it's now more important than ever that the U.S. promote democracy despite all the complications that I've just spelled out. And I want to just end with a quote by a conservative commentator, Robert Kagan, who, I think, said it very well about the importance of promoting democracy.

He said, "Today, as always, democracy is a fragile flower. It requires constant support, constant tending and the plucking of weeds, and fencing off of the jungle that threaten it. Both from within and without. In the absence of such efforts, the jungle and the weeds may sooner or later come back to reclaim the land."

Thank you for your attention.

DR. ANDERSON: Lisa, thank you for your insights.

And we turn, finally, to Grant. The floor is yours.

MR. KIPPEN: All right. Thank you very much. I'd like to begin by expressing my gratitude for the invitation to participate here today. It's a great privilege to participate in this seminar.

I think it's a critically important issue, not just now, but in the future. In the aftermath of 9/11, Western countries have devoted considerable time and resources attempting to transition failed -- failing or failed states or countries towards becoming modern, democratic states.

These transitions have not always been smooth, or as timely or timely as originally envisioned. And most have met, with varying degrees, of success or failure, depending on one's perspective.

I was asked to discuss the merits and flaws of Western democratization policies of -- I think that's quite a rich task for a 20-minute discussion; and I think at the -- my two colleagues on the panel, as well as our key note speaker this morning, talked much more eloquently in a very strategic sense of this area.

So I'm going to focus my remarks to something that's a little closer to home and more familiar to me, and that is the area of elections, which is often seen as a key marker for the democratization process.

And I'm going to focus my remarks on two countries in particular, that I've had particular experience in. One is Afghanistan where I was for over four years. And just recently finished up over three years in Yemen.

And so, you know, I'd like to say that Lisa kind of already used one of the expressions I was going to make, and I think it's very applicable -- in that one or two elections does not make a democracy. And I think we have to be very cognizant of that.

The other point that she made that I think that I'm going to reinforce, is that this is not a short-term process. This is a longer-term process that requires a great deal of commitment.

And so, the democratic transition in Afghanistan is now in its 14th year. It continues to struggle and the country, unfortunately, it remains mired in political, economic, social, and security challenges.

Elections in Afghanistan have been exceedingly controversial. And certainly, the last two presidential elections in '14 and before in '09, along with the 2010 Wolesi Jirga elections, have created or sparked a crisis of political legitimacy.

Following the Arab Spring that enveloped other countries in the Middle East, Yemen was hoping to use the 2011 GCC Agreement and the accompanying implementing mechanism as a roadmap to a more democratic state after 33 years of rule under former President Ali Abdullah Saleh.

The early presidential election in February, 2012, was meant to legitimize that transfer of power to the former V.P. and current President, Hadi. But the aggressive two year time line, time table, the numerous milestones that were laid out in that agreement quickly became mired politically.

That transition has now halted as the country's in the midst of a protractive (ph) five month arm conflict that has taken a horrendous toll on its population.

Strengthening democracy, promoting democracy in conflict-prone transitioning countries like, Afghanistan and Yemen, are exceedingly complex, often disruptive, as well as an enormously ambitious undertaking.

While there are often short-term considerations that spark these initiatives, such an effort requires a holistic approach as well as a long-term commitment by all the stake holders.

Not just the international, but domestic as well, in terms of both resources and time if there is to be any chance of success. Related to the notion of needing to take a more holistic approach, it is often one of the -- I think the flaws or failings of electoral support is often the cyclical levels of funding that are attached to this process.

Often, it's ramped up just before the election happens and then gets cut off afterwards. As a concrete example in Afghanistan for both the 2005 and 2009 elections, the lack of donor funds had a direct impact on the ability to establish the electoral complaints commission in sufficient time prior to the election campaign.

This impeded the ability of the organization to hire, train, and deploy Afghan personnel around the country, which in turn impacted the ability of the GCC (ph) to discharge its mandate in the broadest terms possible.

Elections in transitioning countries have often been seen as a critical indicator of the success of the democratic transition process. However, in both Yemen and Afghanistan, the electoral process has failed to live up to the expectations of both domestic and international stake holders, and has continued to contribute to the ongoing political and governance challenges.

While elections are important, they are but one of many constituent components of the democratization process that needs to be nurtured. Whether in Afghanistan or Yemen, the various components are interconnected, and failure to invest the necessary effort and resources in any one of these components will effect the success of the overall electoral process.

By constituent parts, I specifically refer to having in place an independent judiciary, a robust legislative framework, constitution, accompanying laws, professional and neutral electoral management bodies, professional government ministries, as well as state security institutions, such as the military and the police.

And as well as having -- and it was mentioned earlier, well-resourced civil society organizations, the media, and political parties. At times, the goals of Western democracy promotion often appear to be at odds with one another.

For example, how can one have a successful election, when there are important elements of the equation missing? Security, rule of law, impartiality of government institutions limits on the use of government resources that might favor incumbency.

If sufficient attention of resources are not being invested in these other components, then how can we realistically expect successful, credible, and legitimate elections?

I think another challenge, if you want to call it a flaw, to the process overall in both Yemen and Afghanistan, has been the rush to hold elections before all the constituent parts of the process are ready.

In Yemen, this was evident following the signing of the GCC Agreement, when early presidential elections were held in February, 2012. In fact, elections, if you look at that agreement in the accompanying implementing mechanism, are important bookends to denote that successful transition process.

While the early presidential election was seen as initial success, ultimately very little attention and political commitment was made thereafter to ensure that future electoral events -- I'm talking constitutional referendum, elections for president and parliament -- were sufficiently covered off.

The ground work that needed to happen -- preparation of a new voters' list, restructuring of the security services, drafting a new constitution, implementing new electoral laws, and covering important issues such as political financing, electoral dispute resolution -- faced almost insurmountable odds in order to be completed within the envisioned two-year time period.

And I think it's also important to put in context the shear magnitude of the events these milestones that were being -- that were set out in the implementing mechanism.

It -- I think any country, the U.S., Canada, you know, England, France -- these milestones would have been almost impossible to make for an advanced democracy, let alone the poorest country in the region.

That said, another contributing factor was the lack of trust in the process and in the institutions. In particular, by the political parties. Whether it was the work of the election commission, the security institutions or government ministries.

Indeed, as this conflict is unfolding now in Yemen and discussions are happening elsewhere about some sort of negotiated settlement, there are rumors now that -- that elections are going to, yet again, play an important role in any future negotiated settlement.

But one has to ask how credible will that process be given the massive requirement for humanitarian assistance and reconstruction to the tens of millions of Yemenis that find themselves in dire need at this particular point in time?

In the short-term, what the 80 or the $100 million that would need to be funded -- that would be needed to fund elections -- could not be put to better use to ease the suffering of the population.

And can the security situation even be normalized to the point where it permitted elections to take place? Perhaps it was a symbol of things to come, but when the GCC Agreement and the implementing mechanism were actually being drafted, there was absolutely no consultation undertaken with the Supreme Commission for Elections and Referendum as to whether the electoral milestone set out in the agreement were actually realistic or not.

In Afghanistan, the first presidential election held in 2004 took place under a new electoral law, with an unfamiliar voting electoral system: single, non-transferable vote. That election and the ones followed required a voter registration process that is still in place and which has caused immeasurable problems.

The total cost, at this point in time, is over $400 million dollars. And they've issued upwards of 20 million voter registration cards for a voting population that's estimated at around 13 million people.

Perhaps the biggest challenge has been the failure to make the necessary investments in the people behind the process. I think the -- I agree with the comments of my colleagues here and the remarks earlier by our key note this morning, about the -- perhaps the need to focus on the political elite and what's required there.

My observation is that there's a -- there's a desperate need to inculcate a culture, a shared sense of values and principles so that everyone, regardless of their political affiliation, is working towards the same goals and objectives.

And I think in terms of, you know, what's been an investment from a human resource perspective of, I think, Nader Nadery here can speak to that in terms of the types of investments that have been made over the years by the international community in fee for one of domestic observation organizations.

But what has been done to build up the knowledge, shared values, and principles amongst many of the other key stake holders? The security forces, public officials at the national, provincial, district and local elections? What about the political actors themselves?

In past elections in Yemen, security forces have played a negative role in the process. In Afghanistan, it was the role of government personnel and agencies that was a source of considerable electoral fraud.

But these aren't the only areas that were problematic. Its candidates (ph) under the SNTV (ph) system quickly adopted various strategies to encourage participation, if I could use that phrase.

Perhaps the most striking example to me of this disconnect between values and principles was during the Wolesi Jirga election in 2005, when one of the candidates paid two election workers $2,000 dollars each to fix the results so that he would win a seat.

After the officials fled across the border into Pakistan with the money, and the candidate failing to win a seat, he immediately filed a complaint with the electoral complaints commission.

He admitted that he had paid these individuals, but in -- in true transactional fashion, he didn't feel that he had done anything wrong. He was simply trying to ensure that he won a seat.

And in that -- I guess if you've ever seen Buzkashi, the only rule is that there are no rules.

So in both Yemen and Afghanistan, part of the challenge to the debt transition and the democratization process overall, is that various government ministries and institutions have been captured for political or personal interest.

Corruption and nepotism have been allowed to take hold, and instead of the state working for the citizens, their elected representatives are working for themselves. To me this is where the West, in general, has short-changed itself in terms of guaranteeing the success of the entire democratization effort over the long-term.

While there's been substantial funding support for all types of procurement as well as certain types of technical assistance, there has really not been a significant long-term investment made within the people that are responsible for these processes at all different levels to inculcate the values, norms, and principles that are necessary to sustain modern democratic state.

In his book, "The Future of Freedom", Fareed Zakaria speaks to this issue. And I quote, "Perhaps the most difficult of all, it requires that those with the immense power in our societies embrace the responsibilities, lead, and set standards that are not only legal but moral."

How do you inculcate that necessary set of values and principles within a population as a whole and particular subsets; whether they be public officials, security force personnel, senior politicians, and candidates?

In thinking about this, I thought about, you know, where are we today? And I -- struck me that one could look to the example that's being set by Marine Corps University, by the U.S. Armed Services as a whole. As an example.

A former colleague of mine, a retired U.S. Army colonel, once described the U.S. military as the largest educational organization in the world.

He told me recently that across all the services, there's an annual intake rate of approximately 100,000 people, not to mention the ongoing training and educational requirements for all the services.

It's clear that there's a significant investment, significant amount of time and resources in ensuring that it's members hold to a high professional standard. There are models in place, lessons that have been learned, that I think those of us who work in the -- certainly in the election space -- should be exploring to see if they can be adapted to meet the need that, I believe, exists out in the field.

Trying to leave on a -- summarize on a positive note, the good news is that there has been substantial investment in the democratization process to date. Yemen has a history of elections since the early '80s.

Certainly Afghanistan since 2004. The people are familiar with the process. There are frameworks and processes in place, some of which may have to be improved but nothing's perfect.

The challenge now, in front of us, is how to take these lessons that have been learned from the past and protect the investment that has been made to date. Perhaps the next phase of the democratization process and in elections per se, in particular, is to focus on implicating (ph) that common set of values and principles amongst all the stake holder groups.

But what is critically important is that such an investment continues to be made for some years to come. There is no shortcut, and democratization isn't simply a process that can be gifted to another country.

In the case of elections, this investment needs to be made throughout the entire cycle in the lead, up to, during, and also in the post-election period.

Thank you.

DR. ANDERSON: Grant, thank you for those remarks.

I will exercise the moderator's prerogative and ask the first question before I turning it over to the audience.

This question may be of interest to most of our audience here, which consists mainly, if not exclusively, of uniformed officers. The United States has a wide range of security cooperation activities ranging from selling weapons, providing training, and providing education to foreign militaries.

These activities are often, and rightly, framed and justified in terms of security rationales. We have treaty obligations, we have partners, we have friends, we want to support them, promote interoperability, and strengthen them so they can defend themselves.

But there is also often -- and this goes across administrations -- a secondary benefit or rational that is advanced. Namely, that these points of contact, which are extensive with our uniformed officers operating abroad in situations short of actual combat, provide a model of civil and military relations.

The argument is that this model can be helpful whether we're talking about democracy promotion or something a little bit less ambitious in terms of liberalizing political system. The argument is that this model over time, can help promote a very positive outcome.

There are critics, though, who would say that regarding these types of engagements the benefits are overstated and there may not be that positive benefit.

So I'm curious as to your thoughts on this issue. Does this notion of U.S. military serving as a model institution regarding civilian-military relations help to inspire others countries to follow suit?.

Dan, we'll start with you.

DR. BRUMBERG: Yeah, I've been working -- I mean this issue of military civil relations is something I've been sort of pushed into working on for the last two years with USIP, so I have extensive experience, particularly with police as opposed to military.

But I have to say that, we have to be very careful about generalizing about these matters in ways that suggest that these sorts of relations that we have with our military and other militaries have positive or negative consequences.

It all depends -- it's really not so much on our side of the equation. The fact that we demonstrate a positive civil military relationship, the United States, doesn't translate into the same

outcome in these countries. It all depends on the nature of the civil military relationship we're dealing with in different countries.

How it's been institutionalized, and whether we have the capacity in any way to fundamentally change that. Giving models of a better alternative doesn't change reality.

Because there are institutions, and there's economics, and there's business matters and other interest at stake. And I'll give you a concrete example of what I mean.

In the case of Egypt, where we have $1.3 billion dollars that supports the military. This is a military that fundamentally, after the '73 war with Israel, disengaged with the region on the military front, and became a business enterprise. Largely.

I mean, it played a role in pushing Saddam Hussein's troops out of -- out of Kuwait. It has a military role. There is a strategical relationship, but it's in the military that's profoundly invested in the economy side.

And it has interests, which mean that ultimately we are not probably going to toy with that basic relationship. We may pull out of it, but we're not fundamentally going to change the critical role that the military plays as a political institution in Egypt.

And if you want to trace the rise and fall of the transition to democracy in Egypt, start with the military and end with the military. Because the military manipulated all the key players and engaged in, from the point of view from the opponents of the Islamists in the nefarious (ph) game of implicit alliance making with the Islamists, to essentially isolate the secular groups and then, of course, turned against the Islamists themselves.

One can say the Islamists and Muslim Brethren facilitated this policy itself. Naively so. But the fact of the matter is that at the end of the game, to have a transition to democracy you really need the following basic formula.

Those who are in power must be guaranteed to some extent that the transition will not end their basic interest. And in some way, there has to be guarantees negotiated that provide enough assurances such that those who oppose democracy will see their basic fundamental interests will not be jeopardized

And that requires a negotiating process between key players. In the case of Egypt, the key player that really imposed its view as opposed to negotiated its views, was the military.

In the case of Tunisia, the military was not engaged in politics, had very few economic interests, had no relationship with the security apparatus, which was very different from Egypt. And they fundamentally did not get in the way of the political process, and therefore all the groups that had negotiated a political pact, a political bargain, had a choice.

They either talked or they fought among themselves. The military did not try to arbitrate their problem. And that was a positive thing.

Now, in both cases, the U.S. had important relationships, particularly with Egypt. But the long-term effects of a depoliticized military and a professional military in Tunisia was that in the end, it supported democracy. Whereas politicizing military where the most critical obstacle is democracy in Egypt and, of course, to the extent that we lived with that or facilitated that relationship, we have a certain -- certain accounting, I have to say, in terms of the effect of that relationship on the difficulties of democratization in Egypt.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Dan.

Lisa, do you have comments on this question?

MS. CURTIS: Yeah, I'm glad you raised this. I think it is very important in terms of the modeling and the training that these foreign military officers get by being involved with their U.S. counterparts.

That said, I would agree with Dan, we can't overestimate our ability to really influence what these foreign military officers calculate is in their own business interest or geostrategic interest, for that matter.

So -- and here, I'm thinking about Pakistan, which is a country I spent a lot of time in. And we often talk about the lost decade of when we were not engaging in IMET programs and military exchanges with Pakistan for about a decade in the '90s, and how that was detrimental to U.S. interests that we didn't have that interaction.

So, I think it is important, you know, but again coming back to Pakistan. Still, the military there is very powerful. Yes, they've taken a slight step back from the democratic process.

We have a democratically elected government in place. But there's still sort of a Damocles sword hanging over that government, still controlling the national security policies toward India, Afghanistan, nuclear weapons, the things that are of most importance obviously to the U.S.

So, yeah, I don't want to overestimate our ability to be able to change the internal dynamic, civil military dynamics of these countries. But at the same time, I do think it is important -- the modeling is important, and over time I think it does have an impact even if it's marginally at the edges.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Lisa.

Grant, do you agree with your fellow panelists?

MR. KIPPEN: Yeah, I do. I mean, I guess I look at it at a more granular level -- from an operational perspective in terms of conducting elections and knowing that in a number of countries where, you know -- in all countries, I mean, certainly security forces have an important role to play. It's what kind of role do they play in that -- in that environment that is, that's the issue.

And you know if I could use an example, a recent one from Yemen. What we tried to do is work with the security forces there in putting together a training program, that clearly delineated the roles and responsibilities to support an electoral process.

So, we're not asking for mammoth change, we're just saying, "here are the do's and the don'ts," and what we tried to do was -- up to that point in time there was no training whatsoever for security forces prior to an electoral event.

They simply got told to show up at this -- at this time or this location and do this activity. So, we tried to take a more comprehensive role in putting together a training program for them.

And really tried to -- we were careful in not directing but getting sort of the security forces themselves to come up with the methodology and the issues that they wanted to -- they wanted to address in the training.

And interestingly enough, I think there is some -- under USAID funding. You're not allowed to -- implementing partners aren't allowed to work with security forces with U.S. government funding.

We received money under the British, under DFID to actually do that with security forces. But I think it's not the panacea, it's a step.

But to me, it was trying to help and improve -- help the process, but also improve the image of the security forces in the process as seen as being more supportive, as opposed to somewhat antagonistic.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Grant.

At this point, let's open it up to the audience. I would ask that the questioners state their name and their affiliation, and whether their question is directed to all three panelists, or two, or any one in particular.

I'm looking at MCWAR students here, since this panel is part of your curriculum. Yes, sir.

QUESTION: My name is Chris Holzer (ph), I'm a Coast Guard Officer and American work (ph).

Specifically to Dr. Brumberg and also Ms. Curtis.

Ms. Curtis, in your remarks, you talked a little bit about Tunisia and some of the improvements that have been made in their constitution, specifically in 2011 and '12.

And Dr. Brumberg, in your essay, you actually pointed to Tunisia when you were talking about Tunisia and Egypt about, you know, some of the improvements in the, you know, the judiciary, and the separation of the military in an a-political organization.

You know, one of the beautiful things about being in MCWAR is, I'll read something and I'll just inherently say, "Oh, that makes sense. Oh, that's good." And then I'll have like Kronolly (ph) or, you know, one of the other foreign students say, "no, no, no, that's not right."

Because I've had these inherent things that I, you know, hold to be right, such as a separation of power, you know, things like that.

Can you point to examples, maybe in Tunisia, where this democratization or this movement there, in 2012 with their constitution, has actually born fruit now? So actual improvements that have been made in the last two or three -- or since these articles have been written, Dr.?

And then also, maybe loosely related: how does American foreign policy change when we're dealing with a fully -- like a full autocracy, versus a liberalized autocracy or regime? Because it would seem to me that, you know, Ms. Curtis brought up some points where it's much easier for us to deal with people when they're on their way forward -- as, I think, was your words.

When they're supporting civil society, when they're, you know, respecting the rights of women, not shutting out Islamists, respecting religious freedom. A full autocracy that would do those things would be easy to deal with, even though they're not a democracy. So, I kind of jumbled the question in there, but if you could comment on that please?

Thank you.

DR. BRUMBERG: Well, you have the makings of a conference in that question.

(LAUGHTER)

There very, very good questions. I'm not going to do justice to the question. A couple of quick responses.

The paradox in Tunisia was that it was a much fuller, complete authoritarian regime than Egypt. Yet, Tunisia has made a transition and Egypt has not.

I think the kind of liberal like, authoritarian game practice in Egypt created a density of relations that vastly complicated the transition, and that was -- the multiplier effect of that was the military.

Whereas the -- a much more streamlined authoritarian regime in Tunisia and a depolarized military. The role of military wasn't improved. It was already -- it was a fact of life that made the negotiation of a political pact possible.

OK? Because again, in Tunisia, various groups that negotiate the rules of the game can't solve their problem by going to the military. They either talk or they fight.

And that was what led to the constitution. Now in the case of Tunisia, that wasn't sufficient. The negotiations and the constituent assembly broke down, and they created what was called the quartet and a national dialog. And that national dialog was a series of organizations led by the trade union which it existed under the previous regime, and pushed all of the players to negotiate the terms of a constitution.

And that process was critically supported by the intervention of the United States, and France, and Morocco, and Algeria, and all the players and all the regional players that said to the Tunisian leaders, "If you don't get your act together, your country is going to fall apart."

So there, this is a wonderful and rare case of regional and global intervention that made a positive difference in my point of view. Because I used to think that often, efforts to promote

democracy from above through regional global intervention or invasion is the worst way possible to promote that.

But your point is, of course, now, they took the step of negotiating a constitution. They had very far to go to implement that constitution and turn it into a reality. They've had presidential and parliamentary elections but in effect, the constitution is not yet relevant to the practice of democracy in Tunisia.

And there are many reasons why. And the second point is this. The security apparatus remains totally unreformed. I'm not talking about the military, I'm talking about the internal police and security apparatus.

It's the same guys who protected the Ben Ali regime and all the efforts we've done and (inaudible) others to engage, have been fruitless. The latest report on the security apparatus demonstrates that it's reasserting its power, and that reassertion of power creates the possibility of tremendous back sliding in Tunisia.

So, Tunisia is far from a secured democracy. The consolidation process is not, by any sense, guaranteed. And the article to which you refer, I believe in the Journal of Democracy, talks about the need for political pact making of negotiations as a necessary but far from insufficient condition. They've made it past that far, but the patient may not yet survive. I'm not sure of it.

Particularly under the present security situation in which of course the security apparatus says, "Well, we have to fight Daesh and these local terrorists and the regional terrorists, and therefore we don't have time for reform of how we practice what we do."

But the problem is, unless they reform, they actually can't do their job in terms of defending against terrorism. They can't. And we've seen that already. The capacity -- the institutional capacity is constrained, if not compromised, by the fact that the organization of the security apparatus has not changed in any fundamental way.

So that, in itself, could be a ticking time bomb in the transition process in Tunisia.

MS. CURTIS: Yeah. I think Dr. Brumberg knows much more about Tunisia, the details, than I do. And I think, I was basing my comments on the fact that they passed a constitution.

I think that, in and of itself, is somewhat of a success. But I agree, you know, there's many other steps that need to be taken. There's the possibility of back sliding.

But so far, I think if you compare what's happened in Tunisia to some of the other countries in the region, it has been more successful in terms of consolidating the democratic process.

But one specific example -- my understanding is that the debate that surrounded the development of the constitution involved the Islamists backing down on the Taqseer issue. This idea of excommunicating -- if one person decides that somebody's not practicing the right Islam, they can be excommunicated.

And so on this issue, by the process of debating and working through this very controversial issue, the constitution came to a place that resolved the issue and resolved it peacefully.

So, I think that is just one example that I would point to. And I would defer to others if there are other examples.

DR. ANDERSON: Grant, do you have anything to add?

OK. Next question please? Yes, sir?

QUESTION: Hello, I'm Bruce Leville (ph). I'm a Department of Defense civilian and a MCWAR student right now.

If we were playing the game show Jeopardy, I would submit that the answer for being provided is democratization in -- in MENA.

And I'm sitting here wondering what the question is. So I'd like to hear from each of you. What is the question that results in the answer of democratization from a U.S. interests perspective? And please leave out any assumptions?

DR. ANDERSON: Dan, you want to start with that?

DR. BRUMBERG: You know, there's a reason why I never went on Jeopardy.

(LAUGHTER)

My son's teacher went on Jeopardy last year and I was in awe of this. I'm very bad at sort of reversing this order.

But my quick answer would be that, what are processes that support both terrorism and undermine terrorism? Democratization. What are processes that both increase the conflict, and at the same time have the potential to mediate conflict? Democratization. And it depends on the conditions you do.

DR. ANDERSON: Lisa?

MS. CURTIS: Does democracy promotion contribute to enhancing U.S. national security?

DR. ANDERSON: Grant?

MR. KIPPEN: I agree with Dan, I'm terrible with Jeopardy.

(LAUGHTER)

I would say that it's, you know, what's the process by which people feel that their governments respond to their needs in terms of economic livelihood, in terms of security, and in terms of access to basic levels of social services, whether health care or education?

DR. ANDERSON: Do you have any follow up questions. You're fine with those?

DR. BRUMBERG: For $50 dollars.

(LAUGHTER)

(CROSSTALK)

DR. ANDERSON: Yes, sir, right here.

QUESTION: Hi. I'm Harry Sullivan (ph), a Foreign Service Officer, a MCWAR (ph) student this year. So I would submit the question we should be asking is not does democracy enhance our -- does democratic promotion in the Middle East enhance our national security, but what in the Middle East would enhance our national security the most?

And can the United States affect that?

And I would submit that, as we've seen in China, we've had a lot of economic development, but not a whole lot of democratization. And in the Middle East, perhaps, employment creation would be more effective than democratization, which hasn't really worked.

But whether you agree with that, I'd like to know whether or not you agree with that. And if you don't agree with it, what would you think would be the most significant thing that the United States government can do to promote, or to inhibit young Arab people from joining extremist groups? And can we affect that change?

Thanks.

DR. ANDERSON: Grant, why don't we start with you and work our way back this way?

MR. KIPPEN: Sure. I agree with your premise. I mean, I think that's at the nub of the issue, not just in the Middle East but in other -- other countries.

The people, you know, a lot of these countries, the majority of the population is below the age of 30 or 35, and what they're looking for is economic livelihood. You know, an opportunity to earn income, support their families.

As I said, there's some degree of security that, you know, that they're not going to be, you know, assaulted or arrested as they walk down the street. They want their government to work for them. So, I think -- I think that's part and parcel of this democratization process.

But whether the West is able to deliver on that is another question entirely. And you raise China. I think the Chinese, as we've seen around the world, have been making substantial investments in countries, not just in the Middle East but in Africa and elsewhere.

You know, aside from the recent -- or the economic slide in the Chinese economy of, you know, to what degree can we engage with these countries and help in the development of their economies?

And I think that's that's the question that we really don't have an answer to at this particular point in time.

DR. ANDERSON: Lisa?

MS. CURTIS: Yeah, I think I disagree. I think it's very tempting to sort of say, the economy's stupid and we should be more focused on employment generation. But I honestly believe that genuine democracy, as I talked about earlier, which is not just holding an election, but is inculcating these ideas of tolerance, protection of the religious minorities, respect for human rights, checks and balances in power.

You know, if you get to that ultimate, genuine type of democracy, this does lead countries to be more peaceful, prosperous, tolerant and therefore, you know, we will have better relationships. You won't see the youth gravitating towards extremist movements.

And I think that, you know, obviously if you look at what's happening on the ground right now, you could argue against that, certainly. But I think as sort of a formulating policy -- or part of a foreign policy, I think that, you know, we need to continue to support these ideals and just recognize that it takes time, and there's one step forward, two steps back, which often happens.

But I think that, for me, I just can't accept that, you know, we would sort of give up on promoting democratic ideals. And you know, I think you can -- you can do both in tandem. You know, promoting economic opportunity, and I think the two go hand-in-hand, frankly.

I think freedom of the economy, you know, market driven economic policies go hand-in-hand with political freedoms. I don't have a lot of literature on that, but you know, I think that this is something that obviously should be explored more closely.

And you know, the China example, you know, I think that's a good point. There's not democracy, but I mean, there's not a flocking toward extremist movements, you know, inter-ethnic violence, which you see in the Middle East.

So I think it gets into a very philosophical debate, but I will just simply say that I think genuine democracy in countries does help to guarantee better relationship with the U.S., and to help guarantee that the youth don't gravitate toward extremist movements.

DR. ANDERSON: Dan, what say you?

DR. BRUMBERG: Well I think that if you look empirically at why youth are joining extremist groups, that the answers differ. And therefore there's no clear set of causes that one could, therefore, prescribe a particular policy.

When I was in Wales with my wife two summers ago, there were three young boys from Cardiff -- it was a big story, had joined Daesh. But Cardiff, you know, Wales is not an authoritarian state. Nor is Scotland, even Scotland isn't.

That was meant to be funny.

(LAUGHTER)

But if you're following events in England. But you know, these are from middle class families of parents who have come from Yemen. They were successful, their kids were educated and totally alienated them from their environment.

And this is a particular dynamic, and we see it in France and Belgium. They get caught up in the Internet, in this -- the selling of this Utopian notion of a different world.

And their whole lives are invested, and the parents are not sort of -- you know, back in the day, back in the old days, we'd smoke pot and be in our basement and you know, watch television.

Now these guys are sort of taking drugs and -- not me of course, I didn't do anything like that.

(LAUGHTER)

But these kids are taking drugs and they're involved in nefarious activities and they're on the Internet 20 hours a day looking at that world. Yet they're educated. So, how does one explain this outcome?

Look at Tunisia. Tunisia had -- one of the things that the Tunisian regime under Ben Ali produced was a fairly robust middle class. And that was an educated middle class, and that was a very positive outcome that created a -- a diversity of parties.

When the constituent assembly had an election in Tunisia, one reason why they could have a negotiated outcome, was the Islamist did not get a majority of the votes.

They had to create a coalition. And that itself was the product of a form of development promoted by Bourguiba in the '60s, and continued by Ben Ali to simplify a very complicated story, in which a middle class actually emerged and became advocates, ultimately, of a different kind of system.

This happened in tandem with a whole generation of young people who are not part of that reality. Who lived in poor villages in the south and in the rural areas.

And who were -- and Tunisia, it turns out, is one of the main suppliers of this radical Islamists in Syria and Iraq. So both outcomes are present in one case. So there's no silver bullet here.

DR. ANDERSON: Other questions? Yes, in the far back. Microphone, please.

QUESTION: Hey, good morning. I'm John O'Neil (ph) from headquarters in Marine Corps, where I work in the Strategic Initiatives Group.

I was struck by Dr. Alterman's points earlier, as well as yours, here on the panel, of the dichotomy between our long-term, kind of ideological objective of spreading democracy, and the short-term, kind of realist policies for implementation and the disconnect between those at times.

The difficulties in understanding the individual environments aside, it seems that the constantly shifting policies or implementation in these mechanisms with those policies, oftentimes derail potential transitions.

In your opinion or your view, is there a mechanism to add continuity to the policy process that will provide the continuity over time to better enable that transition? And that's for anybody, or any one of you three.

DR. BRUMBERG: I defer to my colleagues. I've been semi-government for about eight years now with USIP.

But from my perspective, as somebody who worked for the U.S. government for many years, I have very little faith that there's any kind of mechanism that will create the kind of consistency you're looking for, to be honest.

MS. CURTIS: Yeah, I would have to agree with that. I mean, there are certain mechanisms in place. I was thinking about this earlier, when we were talking about the military exchanges and such. There's the Leahy Amendment, which limits military assistance to countries who's militaries are abusing human rights.

So you know, we have ways to sort of live up to our ideals, so to speak. But if you're going to say, you know, can we be consistent down the line? No. That -- that would not be, I think, a realistic foreign policy for us to pursue.

I would just simply say that, I think, you know, again I see democracy promotion as a public good. And something that we should continually integrate into our foreign policies.

But with the recognition that sometimes our policies are going to be contradictory. And I think there's just no way to get around that. But I also don't think we should give up on promoting democracy because of all the challenges that doing so have been presented over the last few years.

I think that we're going through a particularly tumultuous period, but that doesn't mean we sort of give up on, you know, the form of government that has certainly served our country well and many other countries.

So, I would just leave it at that.

DR. ANDERSON: Grant, do you have any thoughts on this issue of continuity in policy mechanisms?

MR. KIPPEN: Well, I mean, I have no experience within government circles, here. Though, I mean I think the -- at a more operational level, I think there's often a mechanism by which the international community comes together to ensure that funding needs for -- whether it's elections or other types of democracy strengthening activities -- is coordinated, et cetera. So there's not duplication of efforts.

I think that -- there's something on the ground there. You know, sometimes it works well, sometimes it doesn't. But there's a recognition that there has to be better coordination.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you. Yes, sir. Right here.

QUESTION: Oh. Lieutenant Carl Todd Robbins (ph), United States Air Force.

My question is along the same lines, but not over time, but geographic continuity. Everyone will agree that each country we talk about in this region, in any region is nuanced. And so most people would say that that would require a nuanced approach and a different approach for each country.

The question is with, as Dr. Alterman said, the countries learning from what's going on in the country next to them, how do we avoid the risk of looking hypocritical by working very closely with an authoritarian government in this country here, and undermining one here? And so on, and so forth.

And if we can't avoid that, which is more important? To have a coherent approach to the region? I.E., democracy is good for everyone? Or to favor the nuanced approach for whatever that political context of that country is?

I'll start with Dr. Brumberg.

DR. BRUMBERG: I mean, I just don't think it's possible to talk about a coherent policy, because that search for coherence becomes incoherence. It doesn't lead to something that's effective.

So I think we have to live with these contradictions. Because as what was said a moment ago, we have multiple interests. And security, democracy, human rights, and depending on the context in which we're dealing with, on a national regional level, we may or may not be able to make potential tension between those goals mitigated or resolved.

So I think it's -- I don't think that U.S. policy towards Egypt now, which I have some misgivings, because I think we're handing them a blank check essentially, literally, and figuratively -- is really affecting the calculations of the Tunisian government right now.

I do think that regional learning is interesting and in that sense, the disaster in Egypt in the summer of 2013, the Tunisians looked at that and said, "Oh no. We are not going down that path."

And the negative effect of the state of the military coup which it was essentially a coup, right? Popularly supported, but still a coup.

Tunisia looked at it and said, "Oh, there' a real incentive to get our act together." And so regional effects are very interesting in that regard. And there's positive and good learning and there's bad learning. That's an interesting case of good learning.

But I don't think we can escape the incoherence, because there has to be flexibility. We're dealing with different conditions, and there is no ideal out there that we can best serve by a so-called coherent policy.

MS. CURTIS: Yeah, I think we're going to be called hypocritical no matter what. So -- and I think the argument for tailoring our approach to different countries is not just about us having multiple

interests, it's also about finding the best way to promote democracy in these countries, which actors to work with.

You know, where are we likely to have the most impact? Where is there a need for capacity building? Where is there a need for political will to change? And these questions are answered differently in a different countries. So you know, I think we absolutely need tailored approaches to the different countries. And this is just a fact.

And you know, talking about the learning the countries are doing from one another, you know, I'm worried about some of the lessons that, say, Bangladesh is learning from watching Egypt. And the repression of the Muslim Brotherhood and how, you know, that's informing Sheikh Hassina and how she's dealing with Jamaat-e-Islami. Sort of a faction of the Muslim Brotherhood in the South Asian context.

So, you know, there's both positive and negative learning and, you know, it's different in different cases. And it's something that we should be cognizant of, but at the same time, I think we have to look at what we're trying to achieve in each individual country. And then relying on our experts who know about this country, to drive the policies, rather than having, you know, one size fits all and trying to fit that into the mold of each individual country.

DR. ANDERSON: Grant, do you have anything to add?

MR. KIPPEN: Yeah, again, in the context of elections, national and on downward for democracy, the NED as well as USAID, do have regional programming in place to encourage, you know, sort of the communication with, you know, like-minded organizations.

I know that the U.N. does this as well with electoral management bodies in the region, but certainly for civil society, media, et cetera. So there's that -- amongst some of the stake holder communities, there's definitely some efforts underway to coordinate, and share and try to promote common interests, et cetera.

I don't know -- you know, I haven't seen anything in terms of how successful they feel they've been through this, but I do know the effort's underway.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you. Next question. Yes, sir, in here.

QUESTION: I'm Lieutenant Colonel Sean Bud (ph) from MCWAR. So this is for the entire panel.

Is U.S. foreign policy too weak and slow to act? And the reason I ask that, as the leader of the free world, should we act unilaterally to stop human rights violations when our legitimacy frequently comes from partner in government participation?

And I say that, should we care that we come off imperialistic? Are we too slow to act as death tolls rise? As displaced persons rise? Or will this completely undermine our democratization process?

DR. ANDERSON: So, multiple questions packaged into one. Time honored tradition -- take your pick.

Dan, you want to start us off there?

DR. BRUMBERG: No, but...

(LAUGHTER)

Honest answer. You know, I can detect a certain amount of subtext in your question.

(LAUGHTER)

I -- are we talking about Syria here? You know, what context are we talking about?

I do think overall, and I was alluding to this before, when it comes to fundamental human rights -- first of all, we have an international community that agrees on certain precepts, and we have institutions to defend them. And we have to act not only unilaterally, but internationally to demand governments of all kinds to respect basic human rights.

Now we may not get the response we want. From the Saudis, for example, who are masters of execution in the last year. Or from the Egyptians, who are under Sisi, a policy which is profoundly abhorrent.

But we should -- and so, I don't think we can necessarily produce the answers we want, but we have to ask the right questions and stand up -- and on human rights, that's a basic sort of proposition I think we can -- now can we act?

Well then we get into the question of, what's the proper foundation of -- of military intervention or political intervention that's going produce the positive outcome?

In the case of Libya, when Gaddafi, of course, threatened the opposition with annihilation, we got, for the first time in the history of the U.N. Resolution -- Security Counsel Resolution in 1973, which for the first time in the U.N.'s history made implicit reference to R2P, the responsibility to protect.

And you can say ideologically and philosophically that was a smart thing to do, but then the resolution was used, basically, as a mechanism to bring down the apparatus that had protected Gaddafi, and that created the unintended consequences of civil war.

So, sometimes the road to hell is paved with good intentions, right? The Syrian -- the Syrian situation, I'm sure, we can have a very useful and difficult conversation about that. I think one can make an argument that this has not been handled with the diplomatic dexterity that it should have by the Obama administration.

I mean, you don't proclaim that Assad is finished when he's not. I mean, I may be frank, this is a bad idea. At the same time, if the opposition is going to have some hope of negotiating an outcome, it has to have support to compel Assad to negotiate.

And so, I think there have been a series of miscalculations, and we have this extraordinary humanitarian human rights disaster. Which has, of course, fed the rise of ISIS on our hands.

And I think that a more agile policy at that point would have been -- would have been -- would have been important, and there's been a lot of bad water under the bridge, that -- so much so that I can't imagine exactly how we correct this situation now.

MS. CURTIS: Yeah, I would also emphasize. I've been looking a lot at the foreign fighter problem that we've been talking about. And of course, you know, the major inspiration is the horrible treatment of the Syrian civilians by the Assad regime.

So, you know, these problems get created, you know, could you argue the U.S. should have done something different a few years ago? You remember when Obama wanted to act in Syria, and there was just simply no domestic support for any kind of U.S. unilateral action?

But you know, could there have been more effort in getting together some kind of international coalition to do something? I think we need to look at that and even if its focus, you know, primarily on the humanitarian issues, you know, I think that that's something that needs to be looked at.

But in terms of unilateral action, I just don't think there is the support here in the U.S. for any kind of really robust U.S. unilateral action. However, could there be an international coalition built with a -- primarily focused on the humanitarian issue? Yeah, I think that's possible. That's something that needs to be looked at. But that's all assuming that we're talking about Syria.

DR. ANDERSON: Grant, you've had a lot of experience on the ground in terms of the mechanics of conducting elections and so forth. Maybe you could address the unilateral and multilateral question in that regard?

Presumably you'd agree that having several actors is better than having one actor pushing solo. But at the same time, is there also the opposite problems where you have have so many chefs in the kitchen that it becomes overly complicated?

–Presumably the answer it will depend from country to country, but in your experience is there sort of a target window in terms of a number of external actors helping with the mechanics of elections?

MR. KIPPEN: Yeah, I mean there are a variety of organizations that play different roles in terms of providing technical assistance or procurement assistance into the electoral process.

I mentioned earlier, you know, usually there's some sort of coordinating mechanism. I think it would be fair to say that the U.S. government is usually the largest single donor to what any of these efforts internationally.

So, with that comes a certain leverage in being able to direct how things are being done. Or at least, being able to sit at the table and provide that input.

But sometimes it is -- it's a challenge to get people lined up. Part of the point that I wanted to make earlier in my remarks was that, you know, starting as far in advance of a process as possible is also, you know, very, very important where the problems really run off the rails, or when there's problems, it's when things are -- when you're trying to do things at the very last moment.

And if you're looking at sort of value for money of donor funding, you know, often there are many, many examples of where, you know, particular procurements have been made and, you know, that were unnecessary or because of the short time lines, you know, paid a huge premium for a particular procurement item.

So, you know, as far in advance as possible is always better and insuring that there's proper coordination amongst the different actors is key. But I think another really important element is to make sure that the domestic entities that are responsible, the electoral management bodies and others, have a stake in all of this as well.

It's not -- at the end of the day, the international community walks away from all of this. It's the domestic stake holders that are responsible for keeping things together.

So it's really critical that they have a role and a seat at the table, and they're solicited in terms of what they believe their needs and requirements are going forward. And that is not always done.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Grant. I think we have time for one more question. We have one down in front. Yes, ma'am. Wait for the microphone. Thank you.

QUESTION: Lieutenant Colonel Amy Evats (ph), MCWAR. We talked a little bit about this, but we've dealt diplomatically through every element of time with countries like China, in particular, have been brought up.

Countries that are not democracies. We have partnerships, we have training coalitions, we have humanitarian missions with several countries that are not democracies.

We haven't pushed the democracy agenda in these countries, and we, instead, have pushed human rights issues in many of these countries. Similar to what we did with Russia during the Cold War.

Why do we have this policy in the Middle East, in particular, of pushing democracy vice (ph) human rights? What is the benefit to that when we're dealing with an area that has largely accepted totalitarian rule for many years, thousands of years? Possibly, that totalitarian rule could be what keeps down that some of these extremist groups that, in my opinion, that could be argued.

If our policy is to promote liberty and what we view as human rights, what, specifically, is the correlation to democracy in the security of the United States? If we're pushing democracy in these regions, what's the direct correlation? Would it possibly be better to tell them what they should do vice (ph) how they should do it?

DR. ANDERSON: OK. We are back to the causation-correlation question in the key notes. Final comments, Dan?

BRUMBERG: Well I don't, as I said before, I don't think it's accurate to call these regimes totalitarian. I lived in Egypt for 3 years. I know a totalitarian regime when I see it. That was not totalitarian.

What's interesting about authoritarianism in the Middle East is the fact that it's not totalitarian. These regimes mix elements of democracy participation (inaudible).

In ways that for many years were fairly effective in maintaining a degree of political stability. The question became whether we needed to -- or should move beyond that to push for democratization?

What would be the consequences? And my answer is that in many cases, the effort to push to democratization from above, particularly through invasion. I think Iraq was the biggest foreign policy mistake of any administration in decades.

You know, the invasion of Iraq. You know, if that's democratization, we're in trouble.

And so, you know, I think it requires a much more set of supple policy, and forms of promotion of political change that deal with the realities on the ground as they are.

Because if we don't take into account those realities and deal with them, what we get is precisely the opposite of what (inaudible).

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you.

Lisa?

MS. CURTIS: Yeah, I think there's a big difference between promoting democracy and promoting regime change. I mean, you know, we talked about MEPI and promoting democracy at the grass roots level.

You know, I've stated how important I think that is to continue those efforts, so perhaps that's kind of the difference. And I see that democracy includes respecting human rights. You know, I don't think you can have human rights without you know, having some kind of democratic process.

And again, it may not look exactly like what we have in the U.S. or in the European countries, but if you -- you start to have a sort of consensus building participatory form of government in politics.

I think this is still an important pursuit of the U.S., and I think it's directly linked with promoting human rights and even in China, which you know, obviously is not a democracy, but we still raise human rights issues. You know, there's still those democratic ideals that we incorporate into the way we deal with the regime.

DR. ANDERSON: Thank you, Lisa.

Grant, you have the final word.

MR. KIPPEN: I don't have anything to add. I think it's well covered by my colleagues.

DR. ANDERSON: OK. Well, with that, I want to thank the panelists on behalf of Marine Corps University, Middle East Studies, and also the Marine Corps University Foundation, for their rich insights and their remarks.

I will give them momentarily, as a token of our appreciation, is a fine Marine Corps University binder to help them keep organized and up to date on...

DR. BRUMBERG: Nothing will help me keep organized.

(LAUGHTER)

DR. ANDERSON: At least -- a big round of applause.

(APPLAUSE)

As a reminder, please be back at 1300 sharp, and you -- yes?

(UNKNOWN): (OFF-MIKE).

END