Middle East and North Africa
Democratization Seminar Fall 2015

2 September 2015
Marine Corps University

Panel 2: Case Studies and Regional Perspectives

SPEAKERS:

MR. MOHAMMED ALBASHA,
NAVANTI GROUP

DR. SHADI HAMID,
BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

MR. AHMAD NADER NADERY,
AFGHANISTAN RESEARCH AND EVALUATION UNIT

DR. AMIN TARZI,
MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY

[*]

DR. TARZI: OK. Good afternoon. Welcome to the second panel. I introduced myself before. I'm Amin Tarzi. I direct the Middle East studies, and I'm honored to chair a panel on specific countries.

We'll discuss now democratization in three countries in the MENA starting with Afghanistan, with Mr. Nader Nadery. You saw his picture there, out of coincidence, from Ambassador Eikenberry and I'm not going to read the bios of our speakers because they're here before you. And we go for 20 to 25 minutes maximum each speaker, and then we go to Dr. Shadi in Egypt, and Mr. Albasha in Yemen.

Again, thank you for accepting our invitation. Please, go ahead.

MR. NADERY:

Thank you, Mr. Tarzi. Thank you for the invitation to speak at this center, the Gray Center. This is my first time here, and I'm impressed -- I must confess, I wished that I was part of the military and to have gotten a fellowship (ph) here to come and spend some time. It's a beautiful place.

The question of democratization, to speak also of what Ambassador Eikenberry spoke in much more detail and a much more comprehensive way in relation to the entire intervention, it certainly made my job difficult. But I will try to bring to you another perspective of all of these issues from the ground especially of the question of democratization.

As Afghans we -- since the intervention [2001]-- have always faced with these questions: Does Afghanistan accept democracy? Are Afghans alien to democracy? They don't accept democracy. This -- this is a tribal society and therefore they may not be very much receptive of democracy.

I'm sure many of you, in -- in -- in the working sessions and the decision-making rooms among the policy makers of our international partners, they have faced the same questions and they -- they

have looked at what was an assumption,: a tribal society where it has limited social development in terms of political structures, they will not accept democratic – a Western style democracy there.

And that assumption basically, we found later on that was based on, first, that it was because there was a thin and a little body of literature about Afghanistan and about its -- its past history, and about its society and how it functions. And -- and therefore, through the Soviets' invasion, most of the focus was on how to support the military side, the Mujahideen, and -- and therefore, there was less of understanding of what the country had in the past.

Briefly on the history part, a functioning Western-type democracy was functional almost of a decade in 1960s, we call it, Afghanistan's decade of democracy in the 1960s, which was based on functional -- functioning political parties, a functional parliament.

There was checks and balance, a -- a constitution monarchy, and there were people's participation. But much more historical and -- and traditionally, Afghans, within their society, have been a very consultative and participatory processes of decision-making at their community level and also at the national level.

You look at the -- most of the past kings and governments that came into being, they were more coming into power through consultative process, through setups like loya jirga, if you -- you may have heard, or -- or sure as the community councils where they made their decisions. So there are roots of those participatory decision-making if we look on one aspect of their -- of their democracy in -- in -- in the country.

Now, the journey -- the recent journey, with the U.S. intervention in 2001 and with the Taliban being ousted, began with setting up some of the first short-term goals that were set and designed by the Bonn agreement.

In -- in November -- late November and early December 2001, the different political factions who were also the coalition of fighting on the ground, supporting the U.S. military intervention on the ground, they gathered in Bonn Germany and -- discussed an agreement to form a new government.

The very core of the problem of making a transition to sole democratic institution, a successful democratization, began with that document—the Bonn Accord-- and with that process. It was achieved under a lot of pressure of time and also the pressure that was coming from military realities on the ground, because Taliban was -- was being collapsed and there -- there was a need for political setup to take – and to fill the -- the vacuum.

And what has come out of that discussion, which I was part of it mostly as an observer participating, representing the -- the younger generation and watching how pressure resulted to a document that was not out of proper thinking for a longer-term, successful transition that was -- that was needed – so it became a two-year transition plan, an ambitious plan for -- in a country that we have seen the images, that was destroyed to this (inaudible). Its government was collapsed. It was nonexistent of -- of state institutions.

And the task was put on the shoulder of the group of people who only knew how to fight and kill, or who even did not run a small -- institution, let alone to serve in public offices, as president Karzai

served for few months as a -- a deputy foreign minister in the ministry at the time of the war in the '90s and he had no experience of state-building or -- or -- or government service or public services.

Now, that two-year plan was asking the country to -- to make a transition to full democratic institutions. It was rushed; it was undermining some of the key elements of building the contextual and groundwork for a successful transition to democratic institution.

Now, what was the result of that -- of -- of -- of this rush? We have had, yes, a successful presidential election in 2004. There was already a national consensus around president Karzai that he would win and, therefore, that the election was giving a successful message, and it was overwhelmingly participated by the -- by the population.

But the second -- the next year, the second election in 2005, brought about a parliament which, in reality, could have been a milestone in bringing things closer for Afghanistan to a full-fledged democracy, as the different state institution branches were -- were being (inaudible).

But the very same institution, because the ground was not paved, there was not functioning and -- functioning and acceptable political parties, what we have got a parliament of the political elites, that each of them were serving their own interests. And it has become an impediment to the democratic growth of the country and to the government's growth.

Instead of bringing accountability and check on the government, they've promoted, most of the time or entirely, lack of accountability, corruption, and bad governance. So that's -- that's just one example. If you rush and if you plan in -- in short time and set very, very ambitious goals, that's -- that will certainly serve against the objectives.

The second issue become, as -- as most of the speakers in the first session of the morning, and also Ambassador Eikenberry, talked about of setting the contradictory objectives. On one hand, we always and consistently been hearing from President Bush administration the rhetoric about democracy or -- and supporting human rights, justice, and accountability, and therefore, there were programs that were running, NDI (ph), that was supporting more legal and political participation and civic engagements . And there were programs supported by USAID on building more democratic inclusive civilian institutions.

But at the same time, the military, for military objectives, were making alliances and were seen regularly in public eyes with some of the very bad and ugly guys at the provincial level and also at the national level.

And some of us who were on one hand hearing the promotion of democracy (inaudible) accountable institution is a priority, on the other hand, seeing secretary of defense comes and go first in Herat and meet the -- the worst of the guys who have just committed serious atrocities, and just because of military objectives, had to meet him and had to align, or a local governor or governor Sharzi in Kandhar (ph).

This was sending contradictory messages, and to an average Afghan they were scratching their head -- their head and saying, "What -- what's going on? Which one is the genuine objective in here -- promoting the bad guys and enabling the them , paying them more, providing them more protection; or providing for the -- the -- the democratic causes, which is not only elections?"

Now, what happened -- most of Afghans' understanding, from U.S.'s support on democratization, has become a support to the exercise of participation through elections, and that's -- that's all it is. And it was only on event basis. Since then we have had five elections, so each year that -- when there is an election, there is support to that election -- there is security support and there is financial support for the election to happen.

And what was lacking was a support to the processes, to make election as a growing part of a process and to demonstrate that this is not a one-shot event, that it's going to happen through continues exercises of participation-- and to show that these are (e.g. political parties) the right elements that need to grow with that, namely political parties.

What also lacked was the very fact that there wasn't (OFF-MIKE) support, at the same time when there was -- the bad guys were receiving support, but there was almost no support to the -- those actors that were clearly supporting democratic processes. So the -- the right actors and the processes were -- were not supported and elections were looked at one short events.

However, as a result of the intervention on the -- the events -- the elections, as an example, what the country got was institutions. As an example, the Independent Election Commission, while, with all the -- the leadership, could be considered as corrupt in how they have facilitated fraud in -- in the 2014 election that I will come to is one example of it.

But the institution itself have generated the kind of resources and capacities that can run a complex election in a very complex situation (inaudible) could be a success story, in terms of institution-building. That massive logistical operation was carried out successfully in the most remote corners of -- of that country by -- by the election commission.

And there are, of course, the other parts of the -- the -- that free media that's booming now in the country. It was not possible if it was not because of the right kind of investment that the U.S. government have made to free media. The civil society, of course, all of the -- our international partners, made the kind of contribution that -- that was -- that was needed.

So that institutional approach that gave the lever (ph), but what was lacking was an approach that was focusing on the -- on the processes rather than on -- on -- on the individual -- rather than on -- on the events.

Now the second issue, if -- and coming to the issue of the question of leadership, we blame our own leaders also on not utilizing the -- properly the opportunities and the good will that was there from the international community and on top of that, of the United States. So we squandered opportunities.

But then also, the focus of that approach of intervention of (inaudible) from the outset from United States and the rest of our partner was focusing on one individual rather than on building institutions and gaining time for the institutions to grow.

Karzai was the darling for everybody until 2008, where -- and then in 2009, when -- when things got (OFF-MIKE). And then who else, if not Karzai? That was the wrong question to be asked.

The question is, what are the institutions and the strength of them? If a person goes wrong, then those institution would operate properly to replace the wrong guy and -- and to put. Now, that picture that Ambassador Eikenberry -- the last three pictures that he -- he (inaudible) well, to me, while president Karzai in the early days I loved him. In fact, his -- his picture was framed on my -- my -- my office wall. But then he was only good for that (inaudible), and the transition was limited for two years.

He was not the man with a vision and with an understanding how to run a -- a state institution and to build those state institutions. And therefore, the entire focus and the approach, putting only -- all the key to success through one individual have -- have given us where we are today, basically squandering opportunity for Afghanistan to become -- to become a success.

Now, 2014 was to me an example where an institutional operated well, but also an institution, because of the political structure of MADIST (ph) failed to not deliver. But then the result of this also was 2014 (OFF-MIKE), a political maturity of created of -- of -- of growth and of -- of -- and created a country where the political leaders, at the verge of violence as a result of the divisive election, had the ability to come together and agree on a political settlement.

So it was two side of the country, where one institutional weakness; on the other hand, you see political maturity. And the time leading to -- to the 2014 election was very violent, as most of you followed up on some of the time. The Taliban deliberately attacked poll workers, electoral institutions, and anything related to a democratic practice.

What has happened in -- in country, to -- to a lot of experts and international experts who have spent less time in Afghanistan, a lot of their understanding or -- or belief, that people have embraced democracy in the midst of that violence, and went through -- through almost a process of defiance when the -- the -- the violence have increased, so that the larger number of people who start queuing up early in the morning at 4 a.m. to get a voter -- a voter card and to register as a voter.

One day I went to check on -- on one of the voter registration sites, and it was very, very long queue. And I saw a very old woman, around 70-plus, and she was hardly walking to -- on the queue to reach to -- to -- to the table to register herself. I went to her and I say, "Ma'am, how long have you been here?"

She said she'd been here from 6 a.m. and it was already 10. And -- and then when I looked to the queue it was another hour for her to -- to get the voter registration card. And I say, "Why bother? Why -- why you've come here and stayed all this? And you're -- you look ill and very old."

He looked at me and said, "Well, son, do you want those -- those guys who are blowing up my son everybody else to succeed? I'm here to show them that we are not afraid, and we love this process, we want to participate into this. And I'm going to go on election day and -- and vote."

And that was very, very overwhelming response that I've heard. And this was throughout the country. So it was a message of defiance. It was not coming immediately through a small (OFF-MIKE). It was a process of (OFF-MIKE), and it was a route to the history of that country, also, that they wanted to be participants.

As I said before, it was also an -- a pragmatist approach on the part of Afghan people. They've seen governments coming, or leaders coming, taking power in the past 30 years through killing, through

coups, through -- through violence. They've seen the election as the only mean instrumental to get them a process or a result where there's less violence but the government (OFF-MIKE).

Now, I'm giving you a few brief, as I exhausted most of the -- my time -- few brief -- on -- on result of -- of the survey we conducted about this very concept and definition of democracy and how Afghans define democracy in their view, and if they are support for them or not. Because most of the time you, as -- as our international partners, have faced this question that Afghans may not want democracy. If they don't want democracy, why we are pushing for this.

This survey was conducted throughout the country. It's on our website also in -- in much more detail. What we have found, a massive support throughout the country for the ideal of democracy: 92 percent of those who we've talked throughout the country say that they are supporting the ideal of democracy. It was a month before the election we asked if they are going to participate in the election; 76 percent of them said they would definitely participate in the election.

When we looked to the turnout on the election, it was over 60 percent. It was very much closer to what the people told us in the survey. And then we asked them if they think this election is going to be free and fair. Only 26 percent said they think it will be free and fair. It was a puzzle to us.

When I was looking at the analysis I asked my (OFF-MIKE), shall we do another -- another round of focus group discussions in different provinces to ask people -- only one-third of those responded think that it's going -- it's going to be free and fair, and why they're participating in it. The response was not surprising to me, but very encouraging, from that pragmatist sense, that they saw -- they said exactly what I said before: Election is the only mean to prevent violence in getting power.

Now, they may not know theoretically that election is an exercise where people get a chance to choose their leader through participating in an election, and this is a -- this is a Western value. But they know, through practice and through what they have experienced, that this is the best way forward for -- for them in that -- in -- in that country.

Now, those who were opposing the election, which was a very limited number, but when we look to the geographical -- different geographical parts of the country, was also very interesting. And it was not more than average of -- at the national level, like Oruzgan, Zabol, and Helmand, four, five, and three percent, each of them were opposing the -- the election.

And the places where we -- most of us think or most of those who watch from outside the country, they say, "These spots will certainly support the insurgency and the Taliban. They don't like democracy." But that level of five percent of opposition to -- to election was -- was a national average, and that indicates, certainly, an -- an overwhelming support to the processes.

Now, other elements of democracy that people are defying is -- was independent judiciaries. Every democracy is built not only on elections and not -- not only to be defined, but then in event (ph) the judiciary defines a functioning democracy, also. Eighty-five percent of people strongly said they need to see the judicial reform and independent judiciary need to be -- to be there.

Eight-seven percent of the population said everybody need to be equal before the law. These powerful people need to be subject equally to the law.

Now, that's a very, very average Afghan's view in a very remote corners of that country. And this -- when you put the different elements of their thinking of democratic society, it is not different from what you call here separation of power, and then judiciary, and rule of all, a -- a -- a free media and -- and freedom of expression. All of that is being expressed by -- by a public through (OFF-MIKE).

But they may not necessarily know that these are very much set Western practices. They see themselves in a -- a -- a value in -- in each of these -- these institution and in each of these sets of values that they are -- they are looking at.

Now, what we see these figures, and on daily basis when I engage 10,000 civic activists throughout the country voluntarily working to promote democracy throughout the country in very remote parts of the country.

Despite all the challenges that we've seen in the elections, the functioning of this national unity government, which you can be proud of because we are proud of what we are doing, and you could be proud of your contribution as those army officers and soldiers who have contributed to the creation of that (OFF-MIKE) and that kind of environment in Afghanistan, is that the future looks, in my view, despite all the challenges, much more promising.

Afghans are overwhelmingly for not only stability with, naturally, every human being, but for much more of a country based on certain liberties, certain freedoms, and -- and democratic principles.

Now, when I look, the current debate in the country on electoral reform and how much importance for people it has, when you look -- ask them the top five priorities, the first is, of course, security; the second is economy; the third is election reform. Now that indicates that -- that the path in the country you've chosen is a path to much more stable democracy.

It would certainly take time. The path ahead of us is very, very bumpy, and the messages that we receive from our international partners sometimes adds to those challenges.

As an example, the different that we have from President Bush side and his speeches about Afghanistan, where always there was a -- an element of support to democratization of the country and woman rights and human rights, to President Obama's speeches, where no word about promotion of democracy or support for democracy is seen there.

And my discussion with our officials at the State Department and the embassy each time I come here to the States, they tell me the argument that there need to be distance from what you've heard (OFF-MIKE) morning, also from was the rhetoric in the past.

We do the same thing. We do support democracy. We do support human rights. But we don't say it, simply.

But in our part of the world, these messages are immediately translated. Some of the politician and political (OFF-MIKE) if they see that it's not important for a key ally and partner, then they are not going to put much of emphasis to it. And therefore, as we go to that difficult path, it's key and important and vital for us that our international partners support us and back us in these messaging as we continue our fight for a stable Afghanistan.

DR. TARZI: Thank you.

Dr. Shadi Hamid, please? Welcome, again. And thank you for coming all the way from Afghanistan. We appreciate that.

Twenty-five minutes?

DR. HAMID: Yeah. Thank you, Dr. Tarzi and a pleasure to be here with all of you.

So I'm going to start my talk with a puzzle. I was in Tahrir Square February 11, 2011. I was living in Doha at the time and we knew something world historical was happening, so I just took a flight over to Cairo. And on that day I remember I was in the square when the announcement happened: Mubarak stepped down.

And there was this buzz in the crowd, and then the buzz built up into these deafening cheers. And it was really one of those once-in-a-lifetime moments. And I remember later that night I was writing an article at a cafe and I overheard an Egyptian woman saying, "I've never seen Egyptians so happy in my life."

So that was, in a sense, at least for me, the start of my Arab Spring experience.

Now, for -- if I had to pick one day that marked the definitive end of the Arab Spring, didn't happen too much later than February 11, 2011, I'd put that date at August 14, 2013, and I'll explain why.

So, as you know, there was a military coup in Egypt on July 3, 2013, and the supporters of Mohamed Morsi and the Muslim Brotherhood organized two sit-ins, including in an area called Rabaa. So I was actually doing interviews, so my -- my research background is I -- I focus on Islamist movements and, in particular, the Muslim Brotherhood.

In early August I was in Egypt and I was interviewing Muslim Brotherhood activists and leaders in Rabaa during their sit-in. And it was really interesting for me because it's an -- let's put it this way, it's an odd thing to wait for a massacre.

Everyone knew it was going to happen. The military was saying that it was going to move in. And you read about it in graduate school: How -- how does it happen that people start to kill, or how do they become willing to kill their countrymen?

Well, that's what happened on August 14, 2013, what Human Rights Watch calls "the worst mass killing in modern Egyptian history." So about 800-plus people were killed in broad daylight in the matter of a day.

So -- and what was interesting for me, and disturbing, was -- I'm born, raised in -- in the U.S., but my relatives -- I'm originally Egyptian and I have many relatives in Egypt, and many of my relatives are part of what we might call the secular elite in Egypt, so very pro-military, anti-brotherhood, and so on. So I remember when I was in Egypt in early August I was talking to some of my relatives -- uncles, and so

on -- and I saw something that I had never seen in -- in -- in person before: a kind of bloodlust. And I had uncles who were openly calling for mass killings.

And the interesting thing, though, is usually when you want to kill people you feel a little bit bad about it, right? What was interesting is that there wasn't really that kind of shame. So for me it was a fascinating question. It raised a set of fascinating questions.

But anyway, many of those who were self-proclaimed Democrats and liberals in Egypt, they supported not only the military coup but also cheered on the massacre, including many of my family members.

And so I tried -- I wanted to understand where this bloodlust came from. What leads to that? What provokes that?

And it raises the kind of age-old question that we all grapple with and think about, which is: How and why do otherwise good people do evil things? And when do otherwise good people cease to be otherwise good? Where is the line there?

Anyway, this is just a lead-in to kind of present to you a puzzle of understanding Egyptian perspectives on democratization.

Democracy is nice in theory, and if we did one of those polls in mid-2013 in Egypt you'd probably have a very large majority who -- who would say to a pollster that they support democracy. But democracy in theory and democracy in practice are very different things, especially if you're Egyptian and you have to live with the consequences of elections.

When someone we really don't like wins an election here in the U.S., you know, we get angry, we get sad, but we learn to live with it because we believe that our system, as Americans, is strong enough to withstand the polarization. Now, if Donald Trump wins we'll test that theory, I suppose, but for now we -- we learn to -- we learn to live with it.

Now, the question is, what if you're not willing to live with it because you don't think state institutions are strong enough, you're worried that the party that you hate, that party threatens your -- it's an existential threat; it threatens your way of life, it threatens the way you live every day as an Egyptian, and you're not entirely sure what will happen if that group stays in power for a long period of time?

So you might actually think to yourself, "Well, I like democracy in theory, but I'm not willing to live with the Muslim Brotherhood in power for a significant period of time."

Now, Egypt in some ways I think is exceptional because if we look at other examples of ideological polarization and military coups that we might be more familiar with -- and Chile for me is a very interesting example. So in 1973 -- and we played a role in supporting this -- you know, we -- Allende, who was a socialist, was forced out of -- forced out of power, and then Pinochet came to power.

Now, the so-called -- the people who called themselves liberals and Democrats in Chile were divided. Some supported the coup; some opposed it. And even those who supported the coup, like the

Christian Democrats, after they saw what Pinochet's rule looked like in practice, they regretted their decision and then came to oppose the coup and oppose the regime.

What's very interesting about Egypt, though, is that there has been no such division. And the people that we call liberals in Egypt, there was near -- it was near unanimous, their support for the military coup. Very few exceptions.

And I used to play -- we used to play a game, some of us who focus on Egypt, of how many liberals -- prominent liberals in Egyptian politics -- can you count who opposed the coup. And depending on how you define the word "opposed," we would usually get to two, three, maybe four. And I mean that literally.

So that's very different than Chile. There's something going on here where it's so polarized to the extent that there's almost no one in between. So again, that's a puzzle that we have to think about.

Let me offer a couple ways of at least trying to understand that puzzle.

In Latin America, in places like Chile and Argentina, they were very polarized and there was considerable violence, but at the end of the day the primary cleavage in these societies was largely economic in nature. So essentially, you had socialists who believed certain things about the economy; then you had far right neo-liberals.

They hated each other, but ultimately their main disagreement was about the organization of the economy. It was about material interests. It's a little bit of an oversimplification because there's an ideological element that's part of that, but, you know, you can split the middle on economic issues.

So socialists could -- and this is what they did in Chile -- they were able to reassure regime elites that if there was a democratic transition those -- the -- the material interests of the regime elites would be protected. And that allowed the two sides to come together and pave the way for democratization in Chile.

Now, how do you split the middle on religion? How do you split the middle on ideology? It's difficult because it's not tangible. It's not something you can touch or feel or measure. It's almost metaphysical.

And the primary divide in a place like Egypt is between Islamists and non-Islamists. And at the center of that divide is a really deep existential, foundational divide over the most basic of -- the most basic of things: the meaning, nature, and purpose of the nation state. So it's -- it's the most basic thing.

It's about the role of religion in public life. It means -- it's about what it means to be an Egyptian. It means, what is the Egyptian state and how do we understand our relationship to this state?

So these basic problems of statehood have not been resolved in a country like Egypt and -- and there are fundamental disagreements.

At the end of the day, some of it's about power and politics and economics, but Islamists -- so I'm talking here about an Islamist movement like the Brotherhood -- Islamists are Islamists for a reason.

They have a distinctive social vision for their countries. That's why we call them Islamist. If they were Islamist, we'd call them something else.

I think there's a tendency sometimes to say, "Well, you know, it's really about power and it's not about ideas," but there are fundamentally different ideas. If you talk to a Muslim Brotherhood member in Egypt and you talk to a liberal in Egypt, they have very different visions for what Egypt should look like. And that's where the existential tenor of it comes from.

Now, when I would talk to some of my liberal or secular friends, colleagues, and relatives in Egypt, and I would try to engage them to try to understand why they felt this was so existential, they had problems, obviously, with Morsi's one year in power, but it went beyond that. It was more a fear of what might happen in the future at some later, unspecified point, so that if Morsi stayed in power, the nature of the Egyptian state would change.

It's very difficult to have a conversation about something which hasn't happened yet and may or may not ever happen. How do you actually come to a common understanding? And this is -- this is the kind of dead end that I always came to in these conversations.

So we'd agree, OK, Morsi has done X, Y, and Z bad things during this one year in power. But is that enough to justify a military coup? No. But it -- it was a concern of what he might do if we let him stay in power. So on and so forth.

Now, the other thing, too, is that Morsi was growing unpopular towards the end in the -- let's say the spring of 2013, but his opposition weren't convinced that they could beat the Muslim Brotherhood in an election because liberals and secularists were not very well organized, they didn't have strong parties.

So you'd say, "Well, why don't you just wait for the next election?" But they weren't convinced that they could win the next parliamentary election. And that left only one option: to end the democratic process as we knew it.

OK. So I want to now shift to the other side of this to understand, how does a group like the Muslim Brotherhood view democracy? Because they're obviously part of the problem, as well.

If I had to kind of sum it up I would say that the Muslim Brotherhood accepts the democratic process in a procedural sense, but would like to use democracy -- or maybe "use" isn't quite the right word, but they want to be a part of the democratic process so they can push Egypt in a particular direction. And that is an illiberal direction.

And this is where I would make a careful separation between democracy and liberalism. And so often, in -- here in our own country, we see them as being interchangeable, that when people say "democracy" it's essentially shorthand for "liberal democracy."

But there's actually a very interesting academic literature about how democracy in the sense of popular rule or respecting the will of the people, and so on, can actually come at cross-purposes with liberalism. And by "liberalism" here I mean civil liberties, personal freedoms, the constitutional foundations; the Bill of Rights in our own context is very much part of the liberal tradition.

So what happens -- and it raises a challenging question when it comes to the question of Islamists coming to power through democratic elections. What if the majority of Egyptians, Jordanians, or Tunisians, or whatever, decides through the democratic process that they would rather not be liberal? What do we, as Americans, have to say about that?

There are two things that we value, because most Americans are small-d democrats and small-l liberals. But what happens when the two come into conflict? There isn't necessarily an easy question to that, and I think it's up to everyone to decide what they would prioritize.

Now -- now moving on a little bit, I want to say something a little bit more practical about what actually happened when the Brotherhood was in power, and this period is the subject of a lot of debate. So a colleague and I, last year we published an article where we tried to measure quantitatively how democratic or undemocratic Morsi was during his one year in power.

So we scored Morsi's year according to the Polity IV index, which is the -- which is the most widely used social science data set on democracy. So we scored Morsi as a two. The upper bound of our score was a four, but we thought that Morsi -- Morsi was not really governing in an inclusive spirit and he was alienating opposition, all the bad things that we know about.

We thought that to be -- to be as objective as possible, we would put him at a two. And, you know, not to go too much into the detail. If you're interested in the -- in the article, you can just -- it's -- it's title, "Was Mohammed Morsi Really an Autocrat?"

Anyway, we compared Morsi -- Morsi's score to a random stratified sample of the comparable category of what are called "societal transitions," according to the Polity IV index. And the average score for societal transition was -0.97 and Morsi got a two. So he was actually three points better than the average.

If we compare Morsi to another category in Polity IV, positive regime change or democratic transitions, he does a little bit worse. The average there was 2.18, and Morsi got a two. But still, it's almost the same.

So as bad as Morsi seemed in real life as we were following him, in the broader sweep of history if you look at other transitions -- because we know that transitions are messy, they don't really work out so well; I mean, we have to be realistic about that -- we find that Morsi wasn't great, but he also wasn't an autocrat, although there were certainly authoritarian elements in his rule.

Anyway -- and I -- I should also say, I got to know Morsi before he became president, and it's -- it's kind of funny to look back, because when we were -- when I met him, the few times I met him, we would have never guessed -- I would have never guessed and he would have never guessed that he'd become the first democratically elected head of state. And I remember when I met him for the first time in May 2010 I thought to myself, "Wow, this is a really unimpressive guy," and that's actually why I waited a long time to meet him.

I mean, he was one of the last prominent Brotherhood leaders that I met. And that's because people would say to me, "Well, he won't really tell you anything interesting. He's a kind of loyalist apparatchik," so on and so forth. And it's just interesting how history moves.

Now, OK, so the other point I wanted to make is whether -- if -- Islamists might have come to terms with the democratic process, or at least mainstream Islamists. I'm not talking about extremists of the Al-Qaida or ISIS variety.

Mainstream Islamists in many of these countries may have come to terms with the democratic process, but there's always this debate about whether or not they're sincere. Do they really believe it or are they using democracy,?

And you can kind of have a -- a -- a thought experiment at what if you got an Islamist in Egypt, a Muslim Brotherhood member, you divorced them from their context and from history in a way, and you said, "You have unlimited resources, unlimited funding, and no superpower is going to block you or try to stop you if you do something they don't like. What would be your ideal form of government?" It's an interesting question of what, in an ideal world, would they really actually want.

But of course, we don't live in an ideal world. So while that's an interesting thought experiment, it's not a thought experiment that has any bearing on real life because the Muslim Brotherhood, like any other group, is a product of its own society, so you can't actually divorce them from their political context.

And I should also note that if we look historically, I would say that secularists or liberals in the Arab world have a less impressive record when it comes to democratic commitments than mainstream Islamists do. And the record there is actually indisputable, if you look at the various countries.

So as I close here, I want to say something about -- in the five minutes or so that I have -- about the Sisi regime and where -- where the Sisi regime fits, and then maybe look a little bit forward. So the Sisi regime, according to the Polity IV index, is a negative four. So essentially what we have is a drop from two to negative four. It's a pretty massive drop of six.

Now, you're all probably familiar with the Sisi regime's record. I -- I think it's hard to find people in D.C. now who would say that, you know, Egypt is undergoing a democratic transition. I think we all know now that that's very much not the case. This is a very repressive regime, all of that sort of thing.

But Sisi's regime is different than Mubarak's. When people say, "Well, this is a return to the Mubarak era," I think it's more complex than that. And there are actually three reasons why I think the Sisi regime will be durable, at least for the foreseeable future.

Number one, Sisi is a lot more popular than Mubarak ever was. Now, his popularity is taking a hit to some extent, but there's a group of Egyptians who are very passionate and enthusiastic about Sisi, and there's a kind of personality cult, which has reached levels of absurdity. There's -- the most extreme example of this was female underwear with Sisi's picture on -- I guess that's the best way to explain it. It's really bizarre, but there's pictures of -- of this on -- on -- online.

But this actually complicates matters a little bit because what happens -- it's one thing to be repressive, but it's another thing to have the support of millions of Egyptians in your repression. And I said before, you have Egyptians who are cheering on the military and the regime saying, "We want you to be brutal against the Brotherhood." So the people are not a -- a constraint; they're actually in some ways an enabler of repression.

In this sense, the wall of fear, which we said was broken and was supposed to have been broken during the Arab Spring, is now being rebuilt. And we now have cases of neighbors and friends informing on each other, saying, "Well, my neighbor -- I think he might be a Muslim Brotherhood member."

And this is something we never saw during the Mubarak era. It's a different level of repression that is more all-encompassing and more frightening. So that's one thing to keep in mind.

The second reason why I think the Sisi regime is durable is the disunity of the opposition. So the Muslim Brotherhood is still the main opposition force and other associated Islamists. Then you have the secular liberal opposition, and they -- they really don't get along and there's been very little cooperation so far. That might change in the future, but so far that -- that has not -- there has not been any real substantive cooperation, for the most part.

And the third factor, which we shouldn't forget, is the international environment. So unlike -- unlike you know, let's say the 2000s, where there was pressure from the Bush administration on the Mubarak regime, there is now, by and large, international acquiescence to the Sisi regime in the name of fighting terrorism, in the name of stability.

Not only that, Saudi Arabia and the UAE are the two leading patrons of the Sisi regime now, and they're putting billions of dollars into -- into Egypt to essentially shore up the regime. And we haven't seen these kinds of numbers in really any case that I can think of, even really in other regions.

Some analysts put the -- the total -- the total number since the coup at $20 billion or more -- $20 billion being poured into the Egyptian economy and to the Egyptian military. That's a lot to work with, and it keeps the economy afloat.

My last two minutes, I think what we're seeing is some radicalization -- and if we look at the Brotherhood side of it, where a growing number of young Brotherhood members are now open to the use of low-level violence, and -- and that can mean anything from burning police cars, targeting security personnel, economic sabotage. And that's a real shift for the Brotherhood, which, for the last several decades, has very much been a gradualist organization that has avoided talk of revolution or over-confrontation with the state, but now we're seeing a more confrontational posture.

Ultimately, there's going to have to be -- like, looking forward, there's going to have to be some kind of national reconciliation of some sort when -- if and when a political opening happens. What's troubling to me, though, is if you look at -- there's something called consociational democratic theory, which is about how groups that -- groups that hate each other, how do they learn to live with each other.

There are actually some interesting European cases. So, for example, Austria, Belgium -- Belgium -- the Flemish and the Walloon, for example. But in a lot of these -- a lot of these cases -- or even Shias and Sunnis in Lebanon, Middle Eastern example where they're not killing each other, at least -- they're able to separate from each other because these are distinct groups. So there's almost, as some analysts have put it, a kind of “voluntary apartheid,” where each group kind of keeps to itself.

What's challenging about Egypt is that it's actually relatively homogeneous. So about 90 percent of the country are Sunni Muslims.

So the key divide here is not actually between sects or between religions; it's within the family. And this is what makes, I think, the case of Egypt so disturbing.

And there are many cases that I know of where it's father against son, brother against brother, mother against daughter, where people I know who are in exile now in Doha or Istanbul have told me stories of how -- I remember one female journalist who's -- who's Islamist, and she was telling me about how her -- her father thinks that she's a terrorist and doesn't want her to ever come back to Egypt.

And a lot of these families in Egypt are divided because every family has at least a secular or a liberal or two, and every family, even maybe a distant cousin could be a member of the Brotherhood. So you can't separate them. So at some level, Egyptians are going to have to learn to live with each other, but it's a very long road ahead.

Thank you.

DR. TARZI: Thank you, (inaudible) Shadi.

Mohammed Albasha, please? Thank you again for accepting our invitation to discuss Yemen.

MR. ALBASHA: Thank you.

It's tough to speak after Shadi but, you know, he has a Ph.D., more articulate. But at least I'll say that I have more gray hair than he does.

And I apologize. I was -- had my notes on my bigger iPad, and now I -- my daughter was playing with it and...

(LAUGHTER)

ALBASHA: (inaudible) why Apple calls it the mini. I'm like, wow.

So, Yemen. I -- I spoke in March -- in -- in February in Woodrow Wilson about Yemen and warned about a lot of things, and like, "This is going to happen. Please, do this, do that," and that -- since then, everything that we spoke to -- we spoke about in February happened, and so it's -- it's tough times. It's -- it's a troubled country. It's a mysterious nation: 30 million people, there's an ongoing civil war, pervasive humanitarian crisis, high unemployment.

It aches me to say, but Yemen is a failed state. I need to go back and apologize to the foreign policy journalist who wrote that Yemen was going to be a failed state 10 years ago, and I was like, "That's not going to be a case," and got into an argument. I guess he was right.

Yemen has become a failed state. It's not a lawless state with rival factions. AQAP and ISIS branches are competing, expanding, and many would argue that the country with 60 million guns has become a ground zero for the next proxy regional war.

The best code to describe how things has got is the International Red Cross Committee chief said that Yemen in -- after five months because Syria after five years. The U.N. chief said that 80 percent

of -- U.N. chief aid director said that Yemen's 80 percent of population, over 21 million, are in needs of some sort of form of humanitarian aid.

The World's Food Program Assessment recent said that we are one step away from famine. In July, U.N. agencies declared Yemen as a level three.

U.N. in the past few months documented 6,000 civilian casualties, including 2,112 civilian deaths -- actually, today the number went up to 3,000; 4,500 wounded; 402 children were killed; 606 children were wounded. And there's a collapse of the health care system. A hundred and fourteen schools were damaged; 315 partially -- schools were partially damaged. And the interruption of over 1.8 million of children can't go to access.

Now, why am I highlighting all these current affairs stats? I strongly believe that if Yemen was a democratic state we won't be in this position today. This is why when Adam first asked me to come here I was like, "Democracy now? Like, this is not the time to be talking about democracy." But the -- the -- the more I dug deeper into the issue, the more I realized that it was a big component of it.

What we're witnessing today is a culmination of the '48 constitution revolution, which I'm proud to say that my great-grandpa was a part of; a '55 failed coup; a '62 republican revolution; the '60s independence war from the colonial; the monarchists '60 war; the '70s north and south war; the '80s central region war. So it's -- it's four or five decades of every decade there's a war. It was a problem. There's an ongoing problem.

In 2006 -- I think that's the one -- a -- a period where everybody assumed there was going to be hope in Yemen. Bush actually -- President Bush actually said that elections in Yemen was going to be a model for the region. The E.U. called it that we were on the right path and there was fair and accessible elections. The Washington Post described it as an embryonic democracy. The New York Times described it as "anything but ordinary."

What went wrong? I guess we realized -- in the earlier topics today you've heard that democracy is not just about voting. It is not about people just going to the ballot box.

It's about equal rights, good governance, rule of law. The values of democracy are embedded in Yemen's history, in our religion. The Quran mentions three times Shura consultations, praises those who conduct their affairs for mutual consultations.

This is a counter-argument to AQAP and ISIS that says that democracy does not exist. It does. Read the Quran the right way.

You can't import democracy. You can't just pick up a model that the West or another country tried to implement and see if it's going to work in Yemen. It has to be an indigenous movement. It has to come from within, and real democracy in Yemen will need deep, deep reforms.

Let's backtrack. The first democratic movement was, again, the -- the '48 constitution revolutionary. That movement that elites, and the sheiks and the -- and the merchants challenged the monarchy that was in Yemen for 1,000 years. All they wanted was just decentralization and more participatory system, but the -- the public turned against the elites and supported the monarchy because they were not familiar with the idea.

In the south of Yemen, which was an independent state back then, parties started coming up -- the Marxist movement, the socialists, the Ba'ath Party and their influence in the north. Eventually the evolution turned into a revolution.

In '62 we had the republic revolution. A lot of the officers that went to Syria, to Egypt, to Iraq came back with the idealisms of revolution and toppled down the monarchy.

Yesterday I was reading a very interesting book on Yemen that was written in 1967 -- 1967 -- by former president Al-Iryani. It was democracy or massacres, democracy or massacres.

So in 1967 he was warning. He was like, "If we don't choose this path of democracy, we're going to choose a path of massacres." Let it be. Since the '60s through today, every decade. We had a -- a war in every decade.

In '67 we had the council -- or Shura Council. It was appointed that they elected the first leader. After that you had the -- 1970 we had the first constitution and we had the 13th of June movement, a bloodless coup or a correction movement.

That movement brought president Hamdi. President Hamdi suspended the constitution, suspended the parliament, but he was actually the leader who instituted institutions -- courts, prosecutors, laws, treasury, budget, all that came during the Hamdi days. He was assassinated four years later in '77. President came after him, Ghashmi, lasted a year, was assassinated.

Then president Saleh came. The people's council voted him in. He lasted for 33 years. A few years after he became the president in '82 did a referendum for the national charter, which led to the ruling party's formation, the General People Congress.

The General People Congress prevented politely other parties from coming to the scene until the 1990 unity between the north and the south. That introduced the multi-party system.

We had three election -- parliamentary elections: '93, '97, and 2003. And you could see the rise and dominance of the ruling party and the weakening of the other parties.

You had three presidential elections: 1999, and 2006, and 2012. After those elections, you started seeing all the opposition groups formed a coalition together and they started challenging the ruling party.

The ruling party promote the ruling party's -- their -- the coalition of opposition challenged the ruling parties because the ruling party used state media, state funds, used all the apparatus of the government to promote themselves. Recently -- I only recently found, actually, that political parties in Yemen were funded by the government. So it was just -- it was interesting how, you know, you will -- you'll -- you'll bite the hand that will feed you in -- in that perspective.

When former president Saleh in '06 didn't want to step down, he -- he wanted to step down, the tribes of the north were the first to rally and try to bring him back in, and -- because they were afraid they were going to lose their interests.

And for those who are really interested in -- in academic perspective of democracy in Yemen, there's a book by Sarah Phillips. It's called "Yemen's Democracy Experiment in Regional Perspective." It's a very academic book that highlights this issue.

Things are different now. I -- I called a couple of people, family friends and contacts, two days ago to ask them. They came -- "I'm -- I'm going to go up to the Marines University. This is my first gig after I left the embassy a few months ago, and -- and now I work as a consultant. And what should I say about democracy?"

And they all reacted like I was insulting them, like this is not the time, like, you know, "I -- I haven't got paid in six months. My -- my -- my seven kids are -- are in the house 24/7. There's no schools. They're -- they're driving me crazy."

And -- and -- and the list went on and on, on and on. And that reminded me, when I was talking to a regional officer in the regional military, and I'm like, "Don't you have the urge for freedom and democracy?"

And he's like, "Why? Everything is set up for me in life school-wise, financially. Like, there is no need for democracy. It's like, you know, everything is set up for me."

And -- and when I start listening to my friends now in this situation, like all my cousins are unemployed, all my relatives are shell-shocked. The war crushed the aspirations of the people. At this point, their concern is job security, safety, shelter, access to food and basic services.

We could exchange blame and point fingers: this guy, this guy, this did. Sarah Phillips has a -- a very good paragraph when she says that in the Yemeni system both the regime and the opposition have gained something. Yemen's opposition has been driven by the conviction that the alternative to the current system would be even worse, incorporating those capable of challenging in the -- the regime into patronage and networks.

Fast-forward to 2011. You have a -- a complete breakdown between all the opposition parties and -- and the ruling party. The Arab Spring showed up.

Former president Saleh was forced to step down. There was a GCC initiative. The GCC initiative had some ideals of liberal democracy and the former ruling party (inaudible) after join a cabinet with the opposition, but now the ruling party came into the cabinet with the opposition mentality, and the opposition continue opposing.

So for three years we had all these factions in one government and they were all opposing each other. And they were supposed to be ruling the country.

In 2013, we had a unique experiment with the National Dialogue Conference. It was our happy days. Everything was the model. This was the roadmap.

And I think the ash that broke the camel's back was the idea of implementing federalism, regionalism. For 1,000 years the tribal highlands in the north ruled the country, and with federalism and regionalism you're going to take away that power and authority.

We have a saying in Yemen that's called (SPEAKING IN ARABIC), "the holy center." So federalism was going to challenge that holy center.

And this is -- quickly we started seeing the -- the Houthis moving into the capital. On September 21, 2014 they seized the capital. The Houthis are part of the regional axis of resistance. That's how they like to call themselves.

My -- my cousin said that the West exported democracy to Yemen, the Arab world exported quasi-political religious movement to Yemen, and Iran exported their Islamic movement to Yemen.

Fast-forward a few months later, March 2015. President Hadi requested the assistance of the coalition led by Saudi Arabia to intervene militarily, and kinetic operations started going in hopes of stopping the Houthis and bringing back the state.

What do we have today? Today we have a de facto Houthi controlling the government in Sana'a. We have president Hadi in exile in Riyadh. His -- his cabinet controls patches of the country, mainly in the south.

There is a sharp rise in regional identity. This is the most troubling thing to me right now is identities that were gone for hundreds of years are now back again. The plateau, the northern highlands, the tribes -- the Shiaz (ph), the -- the Shataiz (ph), the Zadis.

The -- the powerful sheifs that we saw were dominating the scene are now collapsing. An analyst called them ATMS. You know, once you start cutting the funding for the sheifs he's no longer an ATM, he's no longer someone who's influential. Militants are recruiting disfranchised youths. AQAP, ISIS is expanding.

Politically, with the support of UAE, Aden seems to be -- going to be in the next few months the financial and economic capital for Yemen. The central bank in Sana'a has less than $1.7 billion in reserves.

Actually, today they informed all the embassies in the world that they're only wiring 50 percent of the salaries, that they're not going to be able to wire more than 50 percent. And they said God's willing, in Challah (ph) next month you will get the rest 50 percent.

The central bank will relocate to Aden, and it seems that the -- the ports in the north are no longer going to be functioning. The anti-Houthi forces are in control of all the natural resources -- the oil wells, the gas, the LNG, in -- in Marib and Shabwah and Hadramaut.

So future thoughts: Yemen will never be the same again, basically. I -- I can't see we going back to the republic that we had in 1990 during the unity. Something different is going to come out -- out of this crisis.

We are witnessing the meltdown of the post-1962 military. We have now mini militaries rising in Taiz, in Shabwah, in Aden, in Abyan, in Lahij. Hopefully the idea is for these smaller militaries to join and become the national military. I doubt that will -- that will be easy, from learning in the region.

The local problem has become a regional problem. The Gulf are very determined not to repeat the Hezbollah model. They want to make sure that Houthis and some outlaws (ph) are not going to be a threat on their borders. So they're -- and spilled blood exhausted treasury on Yemen's soil.

Generally speaking, there's going to be -- for things to work out -- and the war will come to an end. Sooner or later, everybody will sit down at a table and they will sign a -- a political settlement.

But there's going to be -- we're going to need four phases for things to work out. I think phase one should be financial and economic stability. Whatever government they're going to agree on, it's going to come to a bankrupt state. They're not going to be able to pay current expenditures or salaries.

Looking at Afghanistan, if you don't -- aren't able to even pay salaries, you're not going to be a functioning government. You're going to be toppled next day.

The post-conflict -- and -- and -- and the -- and -- and -- and phase two, it's going to be policing and security. That's something that we have to debate. Do you disarm the militias? Disarming is not going to be easy without a -- a buy-back plan. We've tried it in the past in Yemen and it worked.

Do you integrate them in the national army? But are -- these are not geographically linked militias. How are you going to move them to other parts of the country? How are you going to convince them to -- OK, this is the national army. You're going to be now mobilized to the coast. You're going to be mobilized to the -- to the highlands.

So that's -- that's going to be difficult, but that's -- that has to be done and decided.

Phase three is going to be the long-term reconstruction of Yemen. I'm hearing at this point that just for the infrastructure and from the government side, that at the low end it's $30 billion for reconstruction, and at the high end the numbers go up to $60 billion.

We have to examine the possibility of Yemen, for it to be sustainable peace, to be integrated into the GCC. Doesn't have to be a one- or two-year plan. Look at Turkey's relationship with the E.U. and figure out something -- a -- a similar model. And possible blood money to pay for reconciliation for all the victims and -- and the civilian casualties.

The final four, which is the democratic phase. We have to ensure that we're going to end the era of powerful elites. You do that by empowering institutions. You don't only empower institutions. You hold the institutions accountable to the people, accountable to the aspirations.

And we need serious reform. Having an entire battalion from one clan is not a national military. It's not a national army if the commander of the battalion -- everybody is representing from one area. So it has -- we need some deep reforms into the military.

To promote the federal state -- I think at this point we have a de facto three to four regions. So it's just about how to legitimize the -- the regions and how to give them the mechanism for them to -- to -- to rule themselves. I'm worried. I'm not optimistic. I don't see an end in sight.

Yesterday, the Houthis and their political allies announced that they're going to establish a cabinet in 10 days. Meanwhile, we have seen an additional mechanized battalion cross the Saudi border into Marib.

In the worst case scenario, we're going to have a repeat of these battles. It's going to be a low-intensity Africunti (ph) conflict. And this may be -- may well be a protracted civil war. It may be a prolonged invitation for a prolonged proxy war.

And the recent events -- unfortunately, recent events have showed that Yemen transition to democracy is a -- is a far-fetched goal. It's setting precedent for many generations to come that for change, force is the only way. Democracy is needed, and the main principle is that, hey, let's coexist.

Thank you.

DR. TARZI: Thank you very much.

I will also take the prerogative and ask each one of you one question, and then we can open it up to everyone.

On -- to Nader (ph), if -- if -- we talked about Afghanistan quite a bit today and we never heard -- which was (OFF-MIKE) partially, about the last election in the (MIKE-OFF) which was not democratic.

Those of you who are not familiar, the last -- the current situation in Afghanistan, where you have a president and a -- a CEO, a chief executive officer, a position that does not exist in the Afghan constitution. It was arranged mainly by the United States. It's extra-constitutional (OFF-MIKE). And also, nobody knows who won the election. The results -- they were never announced.

You said something that elections in Afghanistan are regarded, if I -- if I understood you correctly, as a way to change -- you know, change without violence. So would you say that the Afghans by and large are more satisfied with this seemingly undemocratic -- and, as I said, extra-constitutional -- arrangement, rather than the alternative that could be violence between the groups that are now forming, either the -- around president Ghani and CEO Abdullah, or even around more ethnic and other lines?

So that's the question for you.

Shadi, for you I -- it kind -- it kind of has two points. Number one is, you made reference that -- that Islam is the (inaudible) being the Muslim Brothers, that they are -- they are not looking at democracy as a way to maybe gain power, right? Now they are being pushed out anyway.

But would you say that in -- I'm not talking about the violent Islamists, but the more gradual Islamists -- are they still looking at democracy as a way to gain whatever they want to gain -- power they have given up, knowing that even if they win legitimately with a -- a, you know, democratic measure, that because of the ideology, that they will be ousted either by forces within the country or forces without?

In the same measure, I agree with you that Mr. Sisi right now is -- is looked upon as a counter-balance to forces like ISIL. Do you see a incorporation of aspects of the nonviolent Islamist ideology by the Sisi government in order to counter ISIL?

And ISIL also, of course, now is acting in parts of Egypt and doing permanent damage. Because Egypt always, at least with the Sunni Islam, was looked at as a center of Islamic learning and all of that. You cannot counter ISIL ideology or rhetoric without Islam in it, but how can you get the ideology of Islam where you're massacring 800 Muslims?

So -- and on Yemen, I -- and I -- I -- I kind of -- somebody who -- who, you know, who originally come from Afghanistan, I feel your pain. That's all I can say to you. Because Afghanistan has gone through the same period and -- and (inaudible).

You put still democracy as the fourth level of a almost an unknown journey for -- for your country, which -- which gets there. But even if you get to that -- the first three points -- the cessation of hostilities and -- and getting to the money that is required to put -- you know, come in there; you -- you did mention reconciliation, some sort of reconciliation -- you think democracy per se would be what would at least keep this country from falling apart?

A democracy would actually lead more than one state or one (OFF-MIKE), but democracy actually will be a -- even if the first three aspects that you mentioned, a democracy will actually -- and in which case a military solution, maybe not similar to Egypt because Yemen has other factions, would be something to keep Yemen intact?

Thank you very much.

MR. NADERY: A very -- very important question, indeed. The -- the 2014 elections have given us the -- the reality of how focusing on individuals rather than on institutions -- strengthening institutions for the long term -- gave -- brings back to the -- the same point or the same place where we start.

The constitution, which is the only document that last for the -- a decade, certainly has a lot of respect to that constitution in the country after a long time that constitutional setup. But as we have tried to, like, find political ways to our failures in meeting constitutional requirements throughout the past one-and-a-half decades.

And therefore, our international partners and the United States also have walked with us through those processes where we kind of established the practice of violating that constitution, in terms of -- especially when it came to the timelines of the -- the elections and -- and holding a certain timelines or deadlines, but in that -- in that constitution.

What we see -- what we saw in this 2014 election was a massive and -- and overwhelming enthusiasm and excitement in the public in participation -- in participating in the first democratic transition through an election after decades.

On the other hand, what we have seen was that that election, through the mismanagement of the -- the institutions in charge of it, have resulted to a very serious dispute. They mismanaged and there was a lot of fraud. The fraud was committed by the different parties and different -- supporters of the different candidates in different degrees in support of the -- the two main -- main candidates.

But the election commission was unable to manage the crisis. And therefore, both the -- the sitting president at the time, president Karzai, acted as indifferent to the -- the unfolding crisis; and our international partners, who have had a lot of stake, and especially the United States, who have put a lot of money in these elections to see a first democratically elected transition from one person to another, from one administration to another, after -- after decades, and especially after a decade of investment.

They did not respond swiftly and fastly to solve it through the institutions itself, to solve it through the election commission, to empower the commission or to put the right kind of pressure on the election commission to -- to be the manager of the crisis that unfolded and that there -- there was and because of their -- their mismanagement of operations.

And what happened, it empowered the strong man in a very polarized political discussion. The -- the election have become so much divisive, the south versus the north, and a strong man, who have received and -- what I call the warlords -- who have received support because of the different realities and objectives of the -- especially the military objectives, they will receive support also and become so much stronger and big.

They have literally intimidated the entire setup of calling that they would run with their forces to the palace and bring their candidate to the palace. So there was a potential for violence.

Now, at that point an engagement have started. Secretary Kerry engaged, and his engagement avoided a fall-apart and -- and a real political devices to go to -- to violence.

But the setup that came out of it was not done through taking time, doing it properly, based on the outcome of the election. So what was required, like what was happening in 2009, grants (ph) keeping us here, there was an audit in 2009.

That audit resulted to the cleaner, I would say -- if not entirely clean, but cleaner outcome of the election, and renew. President Karzai had certain percentage that was more than Dr. Abdullah Abdullah, who was the second candidate and the (OFF-MIKE).

In this election, the entire democratic exercise, people have risked their life and put so much effort making it succeed, and participated in the midst of the war and threat and intimidation of the Taliban.

That was put aside, and what was taking priority was a political arrangement. And that was the -- the key of current deadlock that -- that we see, the fractionality of the national unity government, the two-headed state that -- that's pulling the state institutions in a different direction and creating a situation of paralysis.

Now, what was required, which at the end, the second round of negotiations with Secretary Kerry going into Kabul to discuss and to broker an agreement, there this element of looking to the outcome of the result of the election, and whoever comes out of that result of the election after the audit will be leading as the president. As the successor of that outcome, will be leading the -- the presidency, and the second one will be the CEO.

Now, there was a positive aspect of that, because the 100 percent audit of the vote, which was a massive operation (OFF-MIKE) in all the ballot boxes, because part of the agreement was that this all needed to be audited in Kabul. And there was a lot of international observers, Afghan observers. It was watched, and it -- the audit process have taken over a month. There was a result.

And then another victimization of the -- of -- of the democratic process have happened in the time when again there was an intervention because the intimidation from one group was saying -- was coming to not announce the election result, because they were looking back, because they were claiming that only fraud happened on one side and the outcome of the audit was showing that it was a problem on both sides. And then the outcome was suggesting that there was a winner, and the winner will, in reality, as far as the agreement, will take the -- the -- the presidency.

And the pressure, and those intimidation -- which most of that was taken serious without proper analysis, that these intimidation were not real, did not have the base, because people in public would not support any kind of violence. But the assumption was that these, as an example, ex-governor would want to (OFF-MIKE) then certainly would attack Kabul and will -- will create violence. And therefore, we have to listen to them, and then the result was kept silent. The (OFF-MIKE) did not release the result of the audit.

And there, it was (OFF-MIKE) practice and exercise. Now what we have is a constitution that's (OFF-MIKE), a government that is very much paralyzed and cannot act decisively and fastly, as it's required at a time of huge transitions -- economic transition, military transition, an increase in the level of violence, what was -- at that moment the key was to prevent violence. But not the process after that day, when these -- this government is taking off.

There were clear examples of the national unity government failure (OFF-MIKE). Kenya, Zimbabwe was the two recent ones, but (OFF-MIKE) and therefore, for people, the constitutional setup is key and important, and that's why most of the debate through the public and media was around the constitution and how the constitution was being violated through -- through this setup.

Now, for the public it is not that election is only an instrument to prevent violence. That ideals of election, with its core element of enabling people to participate in major decision-making, is highly appreciated and still looked for. And that's why people, a massive number, are going to -- to participate in election.

But when you look to any other experience, a people would strengthen an exercise and turn it to a foundational part of their political life if they see practical value in it. And that's what makes me optimistic, that Afghans do see a practical value in the exercise of election and democracy, and therefore, they will continue to learn and improve it.

When I look, I have watched -- when I founded the Free and Fair Election Foundation in 2004 I (OFF-MIKE). In both of those capacities I've watched, and each of the -- the -- the round of elections that we have gone through is there were major failures of taking each of those steps have improved our exercises, and that we're -- I think it's important to continue and understand that both from a pragmatist point of view, but also from -- from a value (inaudible).

DR. TARZI: Thank you.

Hamid?

DR. HAMID: Yeah. So on the first part of your question, the longer the conflict goes on in Egypt, naturally you're going to have more Islamists who lose faith in democracy as an idea, as a process.

And also what we're seeing now is losing faith in the Egyptian state. And this presents problems for national reconciliation, because usually you'd have some kind of neutral state institution that brings the different sides together, helps as a kind of third-party guarantor.

But now that state institutions are so thoroughly politicized on one direction, you would actually have to look for a third-party guarantor outside of Egypt. And this is where I think the international community becomes very important, and the U.S. in particular, whenever that happens, which will still probably be a long ways away.

But if there is a political opening in Egypt, you would have to be able to guarantee to Islamists that if they contest elections that the outcomes would be respected, otherwise they have no incentive to rejoin the political process. So in that sense it's rather basic.

And this leads me to, I think, you know, to a broader point that -- so sometimes people say that you can't have democracy with Islamism. I would actually say it's exact opposite: You can't have democracy in the Arab world without Islamists.

We don't have to like them. As Americans we maybe shouldn't even -- we shouldn't like Islamists and what they stand for. But from a practical perspective, they have to be included as part of the process because they represent a significant subsection of their populations.

And we know from pretty much all the polling we have that large majorities in a country -- in countries like Egypt or Jordan, for example, want there to be more Islam in politics, not less. It doesn't mean they'll always vote for Islamists, but it does mean that there's a natural constituency for Islamists. And part of what democracy is about is reflecting popular sentiment, so there's no way you can really avoid that.

On your second question, I'm really troubled -- I think we're moving away from it in D.C., but there was a time maybe six months ago where this idea that Sisi could be a positive or useful counterweight against ISIS, that was becoming popular. And I would -- I would really want to question this idea that Sisi offers a path for stability.

By any reasonable measure, Egypt is less stable today under Sisi than it was before the coup. And we can look at the insurgency in the Sinai. The number of attacks has increased exponentially post 2013, and it -- it continues to get worse year by year; 2015 has actually been the worst year, in terms of the monthly -- the monthly number of attacks in the Sinai. ISIS -- the ISIS affiliate in the Sinai, which is called Sinai Province, is gaining ground.

So we have to ask ourselves, well, OK, Sisi is repressive -- let's say Sisi was repressive but the insurgency was actually weakening. You could actually make an argument that, OK, he might be repressive and bad and immoral, but at least he's good for our interests. I think it's very difficult to argue now that Sisi is good for American interests.

And we're also looking at increased number of terrorist attacks in -- in the mainland. In Cairo, on a -- on a weekly basis we're seeing attempted or successful terrorist attacks. This is new and it's getting worse. So, you know, so we have to be, I think, realistic about that.

In terms of -- I think also it's a mistake to look at Sisi as secular. Sisi is a lot of things; he is not secular. In fact, no one has used the religious establishment more than Sisi. He's very aggressively used Al-Azhar, which is the premier seat of Sunni Islamic learning in the Middle East, and he's essentially gotten leading clerics to say that Brotherhood members are heretics, comparing them to a heretic sect of about 13 centuries ago, the Kharijites, which some of you might be familiar with.

So they actually have fatwas (ph) saying that Brotherhood members are beyond the pale; they're outside the fold of Islam. And therefore, their blood is licit, which is exactly the same argument ISIS makes about apostates, that anyone who disagrees with ISIS is not a legitimate Muslim, and therefore their blood is licit and you can kill them. So there's a kind of mirroring, which is -- which is very -- which is very -- it's interesting and unexpected, but we are seeing that sort of thing.

So we have to be very careful about seeing the Sisi regime as a partner, and I -- I think that it's actually more the opposite.

MR. ALBASHA: When it comes to Yemen, democracy is going to be a key component, making sure that the country's still intact 10 years from now. What Decisive Storm coalition, or the Restoration Hope coalition, did is it leveled the playing field by weakening everybody.

So we're at a point now where you don't have one group that's going to be able to dominate on the rest of the country, and that means that foreign intervention, good or bad, will be also a key component in the future stability of the country, particularly when it comes to financial aspect. By the end of this year there's not going to be any treasury left to do anything. So -- so that's going to be a very influential aspect of -- of the society.

Something that Shadi mentioned that I also would echo in Yemen is the bloodlust within families now, those who are pro-Houthi wishing death against those who are pro-resistance, and vise-versa, on -- on many scales.

And -- but Yemen is more complicated. I remember sitting with a Western senior official who was trying to understand, and he's like, "So Ansarullah is good and Ansar al-Sharia is bad, or Ansar" -- I'm like, "No."

And he's like -- Ansarullah is -- Ansar al-Sharia and Ansarullah are the Houthis, so he's like, "Oh, so the Houthis are good and Ansarullah is bad." I'm like, "No. Ansarullah is the political name."

So it's a -- it's -- it's a very -- it's a very complicated situation, and I could see him going back to his desk and he's like, "Wow. What have we gotten ourselves into?"

So the -- the -- the future of Yemen is a very fluid situation. It's very unclear. But that saying where, "You broke it; you own it," at this point we're shattered to the point that the international community has no choice but to step in now and -- and do what -- what -- what they could do to -- to help to come up with a -- with a roadmap.

Maybe the National Dialogue Conference outcome for the NDC is -- is a good roadmap, that it could be revisited, tweaked. But at this point, it's just -- it's a mess. It's a messy situation. I understand...

DR. TARZI: No, I -- I -- I got that. Thank you very much.

Floor is open.

QUESTION: Thanks. I'm Harry Sullivan (ph). I'm a Foreign Service officer, but a student this year at Marine War College.

So this is a question for Dr. Hamid. I have a framework for looking at the situation in Egypt. That said, I don't work on Egyptian issues at the State Department, so what I'm about to say isn't mainstream over there.

But my theory is that there's a deep state in Egypt with security forces, military intelligence, and that there really hasn't been any sort of revolution or any kind of regime change at all, and that the same people have maintained influence over the state throughout this entire process, and that they viewed Mubarak as -- a being increasingly ineffective in championing their interests, and therefore were very susceptible, particularly when people hit the streets, to subsequent U.S. suggestions that they try democratization as another way of, in their -- in their view, of maintaining their interests.

So they tried it out, and Muslim Brotherhood won, and they decided to see how it would go. But -- and one of the readings we had actually was showing how Muslim Brotherhood and the security forces successfully worked together for a while.

But Morsi then marginalized non-Islamists from the constitution creation process and became more assertive, almost in a Mubarak way, of asserting the Brotherhood's interests, at which case the -- both the secular opposition and the military took umbrage and the security state then reasserted itself in yet another way.

So those are the folks that have been in control for the whole time. They continue to maintain control over the state and frankly, I don't see that changing any time soon. But in any case, I'd like you to respond to this framework, if -- if that remotely reflects reality, and -- and respond to it. Thanks.

DR. HAMID: So, well, first of all, I think your point about Morsi marginalizing the liberals and seculars in the constitution drafting process is -- is really important and is worth highlighting. And it -- it sort -- it underscores the importance of getting constitutions right, because that -- that alienates people quite a bit, understandably, if they feel that they don't have a stake in the founding document of this new political process.

So the problem with the Brotherhood is they came into that constitution drafting process with a majoritarian approach, which maybe you can get away with, but that's not a good way of approaching a constitution, and we saw some of the results of that in the kind of the bad will that created.

You -- you make a very good point about the deep state, and this deep state never went away; it had no intention of going away. When the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces came to power after

Mubarak fell and they were supposed to be the ones managing the democratic transition, they were very reluctant to let go of power.

And that became one of the big issues in that early period: Will the military ever truly let go of power and allow for truly free and fair elections? They did, but they tried to keep control of the process and did whatever they could do.

And one -- one example of that is when the Brotherhood did very well in the parliamentary elections, the military and judiciary dissolved the parliament in -- in June 2012, so right before Morsi was elected. And that's why during Morsi's tenure there wasn't a real parliament, because it had been dissolved.

And it's never good to dissolve a democratically elected parliament, and that contributed to a lot of the Brotherhood's paranoia. So both sides kept on getting more and more paranoid over the course of time. ®MD+IN¯®MDNM¯But one thing I heard from, you know, Morsi's senior advisers and other senior Brotherhood officials during that one year in power is this kind of war -- war of attrition with the bureaucracy.

So Morsi was elected and he had appointment powers for some senior officials, but the -- pretty much the -- the heart of the bureaucracy was still old regime, so it was very hard for the Egyptian -- for this new Egyptian political process to produce positive outcomes because you have an elected leadership and then you have an un-elected leadership, also known as the deep state, and they had very different visions for the future of Egypt.

QUESTION: Regarding Morsi regime, Muslim Brotherhood, if we take out the word "Muslim," Brotherhood, and we keep it as a Brotherhood. What you will say about it? What's the goal of that regime or that party, et cetera, from Hassan al-Banna now, which is (inaudible) party?

Second thing: the foundation of Morsi regime, in the beginning of the regime, et cetera, when he take power in Egypt, the -- the founding was from UAE, Saudi, Qatar, from different part of the GCC countries, to help Egypt to stay in -- in life, because we have Arabic region we say, "If Egypt falls, the Arabic civilization falls with it." That's why everybody's supporting Egypt.

When Sisi comes to power he came to power after a second revolution. It is not about the military who controlled the -- the country, or -- or something like what you said.

The revolution was (inaudible) into Gharib with a huge number, more than what happens in the first revolution. I have a lot of thoughts over here, but I cannot understand my handwriting.

(LAUGHTER)

QUESTION: OK. The trial of Morsi right now in the court -- could you highlight it -- highlight it for us, please?

DR. HAMID: Sorry, the -- the what?

QUESTION: The trial. He is now in the trial in Egypt in the court...

DR. HAMID: Yeah. Yeah.

QUESTION: ... and in what case he's there in the -- in that court...

DR. HAMID: OK.

QUESTION: ... or the trial? I'm sorry for that.

DR. HAMID: OK. The first part of your question, when you said take the "Muslim" away from "Muslim Brotherhood," I didn't know what you were getting at, and you...

QUESTION: Yeah. The -- the party of Muslim Brotherhood, as I believe and as I read about it from the creator or that Muslim Brotherhood, Hassan al-Banna -- Hassan al-Banna tries to make it Islamist...

DR. HAMID: Yeah.

QUESTION: ... Brotherhood. But then the other leaders of Muslim Brotherhood make it more the policy of them are -- they are running around (inaudible). It's not related to Islam anymore.

DR. HAMID: OK. Sure. Thank you for your -- for your comments.

So on that first point, there is no doubt that the Muslim Brotherhood, like any political party, wants power. The question is what they want that power for and what the end goal is.

And it's a debate how -- what does the Brotherhood really want 20, 30, or 40 years down the road? How serious are they about an Islamist agenda?

But I wouldn't disagree with you. The Muslim Brotherhood wanted power, and I think that was one of the -- and actually, the -- my book on the Brotherhood is called "Temptations of Power" for precisely that reason, because they succumbed to these temptations.

And that was ultimately a mistake. They shouldn't have run a presidential candidate. That's a decision they made.

So I think you're -- you're right to point out that the desire for power can be dangerous and problematic. And I remember before the 2011 revolution Morsi and other Brotherhood leaders were telling me that they want to be careful about rising to power too quickly. So they knew the dangers but they still succumbed to those dangers nonetheless, which I think is interesting.

On -- on the point of the role of Saudi Arabia and the UAE, I mean, we know now -- and there's been a lot of reporting from the New York Times, the A.P., Reuters, so on and so forth, and I've also heard this directly from State Department officials who were part of the negotiations after the coup -- so right before the Rabaa massacre, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, the E.U., and the U.S. were trying to forge some kind of understanding to prevent the massacre.

Anyway, we know now that the UAE and Saudi Arabia were undermining those negotiations, and senior officials have admitted this in private. But also, if you look at the reporting from various news outlets, the UAE and Saudi Arabia were supporting the military and encouraging a military coup well before it happened.

So in the several months in the lead-up to July 3rd there was active agitation, and the movement that was -- was trying to get Morsi out of power, called the Tamarod movement, we know that there was -- there was a relationship between them and the Egyptian military that was secret at the time but has now been revealed through reporting. You know, so that's -- that's what we know.

And -- and I don't think there's any doubt, and I don't think any Saudi or UAE officials would deny that they didn't like it that Morsi was in power and they would prefer to have someone like Sisi in power. And that's their prerogative.

And they see the Brotherhood as a regional threat. Again, that's their prerogative, and that's where they, I think -- there's a gap between how the Emirates sees this and how the U.S. sees it. The U.S. was somewhere in between, I would say.

On whether it was a second revolution, the July 3rd coup -- it's -- it's a classic textbook case of a coup. And if you look at all the political science definitions, what happened on July 3rd fits almost perfectly into what we would call a coup.

And that's why I think that if you look outside of Egypt, no one really in the West would deny that this was a coup. Maybe they didn't always call it that publicly, but everyone at the State Department that I know and talk to will admit, at least in private, that this was a very obvious coup.

And yes, there were 2 million or 3 million people, however much, who were protesting against Morsi, and there's no doubt that there was a lot of anger against Morsi. But it raises the question, should 1 million or 2 million people be able to bring down a democratically elected government? If that happened, then you could pretty much organize protests anywhere in any democratic country and say, well, forget elections; we have 2 million people who are out on the street.

That's not the way democracy works, and it's -- democracy is actually a way to protect against people protesting and bringing countries down or bringing governments down through street protests.

What you hope will happen is that people who are protesting on the street can channel their anger through the democratic process and maybe form a new political party, maybe try to use their pressure to -- to kind of bring people away from the Brotherhood. And that's how -- that's how it's done in this country; it's how it's done in European countries; it's how it's done -- you know, so that's what I would say about that.

QUESTION: Gentlemen, thank you for your insight. This is Farad Pajwak (ph) with Booz Allen Hamilton, and I happen to manage their AFPAC program, and regional expertise and culture.

So the question is probably going to go to Mr. Nadery here. And we've got quite a bit about Afghanistan and how it has evolved, but I'm just wondering, how do you trend the -- the Afghan youth? Obviously the -- the majority of the population are very young.

I haven't gotten the sense that there is a particular urge to form political parties. The only time that I hear about certain political activities on campuses has to do with more Islamist-orientated parties, such as Hizb ut-Tahrir, or (inaudible) and all of that.

What is your reading? I mean, where do young people -- those that have matured in the last decade or more -- what is their hope for the future? And what if the economy in that future doesn't have any tangible benefits for them, the way things are evolving? Where are they going to go?

MR. NADERY: Thank you.

The -- the Afghan youths could be seen of two main groups: one, those who really been part of the past 14 years. They're been not only as actors in helping certain public services to be delivered, but also rise through the leadership. And when you look to the current cabinet as an example, you can see at least quite a good number, over five of the cabinet member are below 30 -- below 40, and -- and one is 32.

So you can see the rise of the youth within -- within the political and -- and the leadership level is -- is very much visible. You can see most of the very successful institutions are run and helped to -- to -- to succeed by the younger generation. And most of those who have either received education in -- in -- in the universities here, or Europe, or -- or have had the opportunities in Afghanistan itself to -- to go through some sort of education and get the opportunity to -- to work.

But there is also another reality of Afghanistan, of those who live in the camps in Peshawar in Pakistan or in Quetta. They also receive some sort of training, and they receive scholarship, free educations, and those are in those (inaudible), are supported in different way, either by -- mostly -- no either, mostly by Haqqani groups and network, and -- and other radical Islamists.

And there is this -- this fight of survival for both group, as you can see and as we move to the future.

What gives us hope is that an increasing number of Afghan youth are connected, as -- as never before, through the social media. I receive tweets or e-mails from the most remote places. Some of you may have heard of Ghor, a very mountainous, remote part of the country -- very, very underdeveloped; Uruzgan -- very, very underdeveloped -- that people are connecting there and all of them are -- are the youth.

The most active part of the society, as they make the majority of -- of Afghanistan's population, are the younger generation. But there are certain dangers as -- as -- as we move on.

The military transition have resulted to significant number of unemployment naturally that comes when the military engagement -- there is massive activities, there are more projects that are being implemented, so there are a lot of people being -- being recruited, part of them as either translator, officer workers, or contractors in different levels.

Most of them have lost those jobs, and most of them are living in difficult areas. Kandahar, as an example, is witnessing a large number of youth losing their jobs and -- and are unemployed.

The same -- the same thing happens in -- in other major -- major cities, because operations are lower, economic activities are slowing down significantly because of the second factor. The political transition have brought a situation where the economic activities have gone so -- so down also, and it's -- it's almost kind of bursting the bubble of the -- the international aid that was -- that was injected throughout all -- all these 14 -- 14 years. And that effect is a lot of people who -- who have lost their jobs.

The second element is, of course, when they don't have jobs they choose either -- if they have made some money, they are choosing to leave the country. And you can see a wave of refugee because they are threatened, they -- they worked with the military, some of them have gone -- got an opportunity to be using this what they call SIV visa, arrangement for them to -- to come to U.S. or other NATO partners.

But the majority of them prefer, of course, to stay, and now, as the insurgency rises less protection for them, they feel threatened so they -- they use that money to go to the West.

The rest of them remain there, and -- and some of them organize themselves in social movements. There are a number of youth political parties or organizations that emerged that, because of this divisive political landscape during the election, their activities, like Afghanistan 1400 or Afghanistan analysis and evaluation -- analysis group, which was famous (inaudible).

They're a group of young politicians throughout the -- throughout the country. Their activities slow down and this uncertainty is putting a pause on them. On the other hand, you see a rise on the coming of the youth from Pakistan, from those Madrassas, and they are fighting for a space all.

The coming few years are very, very much critical, though if this government is going to be able to provide more job opportunities for this -- those young Afghans who are -- a massive number are graduating from universities. If not, they will find other ways of joining radical movement or, those who are coming from Pakistan, they will gain more -- more space.

This -- it's -- it's a survival battle that will be defined (OFF-MIKE).

DR. TARZI: Thank you.

Last year Heritage Foundation came here for a project on democratization. We partnered, looked at that paper they had, and that kind of brought in our mind here at Middle East Studies to look at democratization within the United States policy, specifically during the presidencies of President George W. Bush and President Obama, and specifically for us here at the -- as a PME (ph) organization, on the impact of our policies in the Middle East, which we are -- is our AOR, basically, to see how those have impacted us.

We ran a series of lectures last year here in this room or other rooms on different countries. We looked at different countries.

And I think this was a wonderful culmination of that aspect to see that, and I -- I -- I cannot thank everybody who participated before. We could have not have had this without the help of Marine Corps University Foundation.

Thank you very much for all you did.

And for -- specifically for the participants, as far away from Afghanistan, and Canada, and those of you who live here in the United States, I think it enriched our understanding. What somebody at one point asked Adam and me that, "Oh, you should not discuss democracy right now because it's not being debated in Washington."

I said, "Perhaps not in a policy world. We do not make policy."

You are here for a year to look at policy's path and actions and think about it. This is a -- an amazing opportunity for students to get -- whether you're in uniform or outside, and whether you come from -- our guests from Mexico, Malaysia, and -- and the United Arab Emirates -- to look at these things, how they're implemented. We have all different ideas.

So I think this was at least to launch an idea. Our next program will start in October on civil military relationship. We actually will start, again, with -- with Egypt. And -- and we see how that will take place; we will discuss this aspect of Iran and other countries -- Israel. I think Israel will be in December, and then -- so please come in as -- as part of this education outside the classroom.

Again, I also, at the end, want to thank one person who tirelessly put all of this together. I kind of sit here and look pretty, but Adam Seitz, who is standing in the back, without his help this would not have happened.

(APPLAUSE)

TARZI: Thank you for everyone else. I also have for you some wonderful notepads. Please take notes from us. And...

(LAUGHTER)

TARZI: (OFF-MIKE)

(LAUGHTER)

TARZI: Thank you very much. God bless.

(APPLAUSE)

END