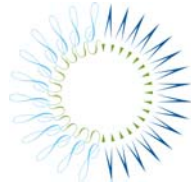


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The Future of Democracy

Transcript

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**Astor Ballroom
The St. Regis Hotel
923 16th St, NW
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JOHN MORTON: Good morning. On behalf of the Pew Charitable Trusts I would like to welcome you to today's symposium, The Future of Democracy, which is co-hosted by Pew and the Hudson Institute.

My name is John Morton, and I am the Managing Director of the Economic policy department at Pew, and also oversee the portfolio under whose auspices today's event is being held. The Economic policy department is Pew's newest and focuses on issues such as economic mobility and the economic dream, the engagement between the government and market economy, and fiscal responsibility and budget transparency. All of our work in this new area echoes Pew's mission, which is to inform and influence pressing policy debates with solid data and facts and through cultivating bipartisan coalitions.

One of the most compelling and provocative policy debates of the last several years concerns the future of democracy, and the role of the U.S. in promoting democracy abroad. And as we have seen, it is also an issue which has challenged divisions between Republicans and Democrats and is therefore ripe for greater bipartisan consensus.

Two years ago, in response to a perceived opportunity to help inform a more bipartisan consensus, Pew and Hudson created a monthly briefing series engaging policymakers and opinion makers on both sides of the aisle in candid, off-the-record discussions and learning sessions on related issues. And today I am sure that speakers will cover many of the themes and issues that we have covered in these last years.

Democracy promotion has long been a key pillar of American foreign policy but it has gained particular relevance and centrality in the last few years. Perhaps precisely because it has been elevated in today's policy portfolio, it continues to provoke a rich series of debates that have not inconsequential implications, both for U.S policy and for the hopes and aspirations of peoples around the world. Yet it remains an issue that vexes scholars and practitioners alike, partially because democracy promotion appears to be nearly impossible to apply consistently, and partially because its application has not always been met with success.

As we enter a new age in Washington, some key questions must be answered: What are the roles and responsibilities of the U.S in promoting and strengthening democracy overseas? How could the U.S best use the instruments at its disposal in the cause of democratization? And most fundamentally, has the world reached a point of democratic saturation or will we continue to see the expansion of global democracy in the coming years?

Thank you again for coming this morning; I hope you are looking forward to this discussion as much as I am. And I would now like to introduce Amy Kauffman, my counterpart at Hudson Institute, to introduce our speakers and our moderator.

AMY KAUFFMAN: I would like to thank everybody for coming today, and I would also like to thank everybody from Hudson Institute who helped put this event together,

and also to our partner, Pew Charitable Trusts. Pew has been a wonderful partner, and we look forward to a continuing relationship on these briefing series.

As John mentioned, we put together this series two years ago, to bring together senior level Hill staffers from the right and from the left, to talk about different issues and to find some common ground. At today's panel, we also have speakers from the right and from the left, and without giving too much away, if you've looked at your blue folders on the chairs, you will see that we have found some common ground. I hate to spoil it, but everybody does think there is a future for democracy here today.

Our panelists today are a wonderful bunch of 8 top public intellectuals. Starting at the end of the table, we have Michael McFaul. Mike is a professor at Stanford University as well as being a senior advisor to the Obama administration and the transition team. Next, Leon Wieseltier, senior editor at *The New Republic*. Ambassador Williamson—I should say that we are very happy to have Ambassador Williamson as Paul Wolfowitz, who had previously been part of this panel, had to drop out at the last minute. Ambassador Williamson was kind enough to take over his spot, and he is the President's Special Envoy to Sudan as well as being the past Ambassador to the United Nations on human rights. Next, Larry Diamond, senior fellow at the Hoover Institute, and professor of political science at Stanford University. Our moderator, George Stephanopoulos, who I will give a further introduction to in a few minutes. Professor Shibley Telhami at the University of Maryland. Hudson Senior Fellow Zeyno Baran, who directs Hudson's Center for Eurasian Studies. Carl Gershman, President of the National Endowment for Democracy. And Jack Snyder, Professor of political science at Columbia University, and author of the book, "Why Emerging Democracies Go to War."

When we originally put together this panel, we thought, how best to have an open discussion? We did not want to have a traditional panel where people would talk to the audience and give a sound byte, and we thought, who could best lead a panel, and the answer was obvious. George Stephanopoulos, the anchor for This Week as well as ABC'S Chief Washington Correspondent. George is without a doubt the leader of journalism here in Washington, as well a leader in conducting these kinds of discussions. So without any further ado, I want to turn this discussion over to George, who will be handling it for the next hour and a half. Thank you.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Thank you. With the expectations raised so high, thank you, thank you Amy. It is great to be here, and I think it is a perfect moment to have this discussion because there is so much thought being given to this topic both by the outgoing administration and the incoming team. And I want to use this as the jumping off point.

President Bush has given a series of speeches and statements in the last several weeks as he is wrapping up his tenure on this particular topic and I was struck in his interview with Charlie Gibson about two weeks ago, Charlie asked him, "what was your favorite

moment of the Presidency?” and he cited the moment right at the beginning of his second term. He said when he gave his second inaugural address, and that was of course the address where he said, “It is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nature and culture with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in the world.” And Leon [Wieselstier], let me begin with you, because you write in your paper, even though that one statement was the focus of a lot of criticism at the beginning of his second term, you write that it was basically unexceptional.

LEON WIESELSTIER: Oh, I remember that sentence vividly, and I think that it was divided upon itself. I think that the first half was exactly right and I think that the second half had sort of a utopian perfectionist spirit that can be the bane of any democratization program. It was a strange sentence: the first half was uncharacteristically precise and modest for Bush’s formulation of these ideals. It was not about the transformation of the world, it was right—you seek and support democratic movements where they exist, the implication being you don’t pretend that you can create them, democracy is an indigenous phenomenon, we will find the good guys, and we will help the good guys. There was no echo of shock and awe or use of force. The first half of that was fine, and we can talk more about that—democratization is a very complicated and difficult process that takes time. Americans don’t like things that take time, which is a big problem.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: I do want to get into that later, but was it a mistake to lay out the goal?

LEON WIESELSTIER: No, no. I think that speaking about freedom; when the President of the United States speaks about freedom as a goal of American foreign policy, he actually helps the cause of freedom. The deadening phrase for this used to be declaratory policy, but in fact it is American philosophy, it is the *raison d’etre*. When the President of the United States says that this will be one of goals of our foreign policy, dissidents all around the world hear him, and dictators all around the world hear him. Now they can wonder exactly what he means and so on, but I think it is one of the responsibilities of the President of the United States to make dissidents sleep better and dictators sleep worse.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Larry [Diamond], do you agree with that?

LARRY DIAMOND: If we follow through. He also said that when you stand up for freedom, we will stand up with you. I wonder how that resonates in the ears of Ayman Nour now, the presidential candidate who stood up for freedom in Egypt, challenged Hosni Mubarak in a presidential election that occurred in Egypt—I will say, let’s acknowledge this, some of the good things the Bush administration did. Because of the pressure that President Bush put on the Egyptian regime to open up and have a competitive contested presidential election in Egypt for the first time, and there were more competitive parliamentary elections for the first time. And there was a contested election in Palestine, more or less democratically in terms of a reasonably level playing field, for the first time. And elections in Iraq, and elections in Lebanon, and then the Islamists gained or won all four of those elections, and the Bush administration, instead

of standing back and reflecting, adjusting, and steeling their nerves for what is going to need to be a very long, protracted struggle to advance freedom in the Middle East in the world, I think panicked, lost its nerve, might have said some things privately but largely abandoned these people. And I would tell you George; there is a tremendous sense of betrayal now, in Egypt and in the Arab world. And when there is a gap, particularly between the second half of the sentence that Leon spoke about, between very lofty, elevated rhetoric that we cannot deliver on, and what we actually do, it does not advance the cause of freedom, it breeds cynicism and despair among the very dissidents whose hopes you want to lift. And so I think that what is needed now, it is very important that we not abandon the broad goal—I think there is going to be largely consensus here on that. But we need to lower the rhetoric a bit, promise a little less, and deliver more, more consistently and with a willingness to take some risks in a transitional period in order to help and defend these people that are struggling for freedom.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: I want to dig down one more layer into what we should do next, and let me bring Jack [Snyder] into this as well and join this discussion on the last 8 years. President Bush, at the Saban Center just the other day, said that despite the frustrations and the disappointments that the both of you talk about, the Middle East in 2008 is a freer, more hopeful, and more promising place than it was in 2001. True?

JACK SNYDER: Certainly freer in the sense of media information availability due to satellite TV, but freedom is not necessarily making the Middle East a more stable place. Right after the elections in Lebanon, who was the big winner, it was Hezbollah—it gave it the freedom of action to pursue its goals towards Israel which led to war. Elections were destabilizing in the Palestinian territories. So just because there is more contentious politics, more elbow room for political action, doesn't mean that it is going to be either stabilizing or establishing a foundation for real democratization.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Ambassador Williamson, one issue we can't ignore is the role that the war in Iraq played. Fundamentally, as we look back over the last, now more than 5 years plus since the invasion, what role did that play in advance or setting back the cause of democratization?

RICHARD WILLIAMSON: I think the mismanagement of the Iraq conflict post-Saddam's collapse poisoned the well. At that point lots of reasons were given post-invasion for that, including the spread of democracy, and the contentious halting progress in Iraq and the impatience of the American people have resulted in a certain tainting of the democracy cause, which is unfortunate. Also for some putting in this context that democracy is spread by armed intervention, which is unfortunate. So the whole idea that Bush's inaugural speech that overshot the mark, it is interesting to compare it to Reagan's speech in 1982 in Westminster which was the catalyst for the National Endowment for Democracy which Carl [Gershman] so well runs and these other institutions. Reagan talked about the gradual growth of democracy, and that we have to have some patience while we do the things to advance it. So I think that the combination of the impatience,

frustration with the Iraq war and the rhetoric perhaps overshooting the mark has created a dissidence that is going to have to be overcome in spreading the democracy movement.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: And Carl [Gershman], on the theme of patience, Larry talks about the administration losing its nerve after the elections in the Palestinian territories and Lebanon. Was perhaps the administration too impatient in pushing for the elections too quickly, before the institutions, before the territories were ready?

CARL GERSHMAN: Hamas had not renounced violence, and I think that has to be a threshold that people have to pass before they can really participate in elections. You can't participate in an electoral process and want to use violence, and I think that was the problem. Having said that, everything has to be gradual—I agree with everything that has been said—it has to be gradual, it has to be indigenous, you cannot impose it from above, and so forth. There is one thing that Bush's emphasis did—in choosing the Middle East as the basis for a freedom strategy, he was not choosing the most hospitable region. This was the reason why it was really written off as a place where any kind of democratic progress could be possible. But I think it is probably fair to say that as a result of the emphasis the Bush administration put on democracy in the Middle East—and sometimes unrealistically—I think they helped stimulate the emergence of a new civil society movement in the Middle East. In other words, a region that did not participate in the third wave of democratization during the 1980s and was seen to be incapable of having democracy, Bush said, no, no, it is possible. And one of the results of that—you can say there were many factors that caused this—but certainly one of the things that has happened in the last 10 years is that a movement has emerged—Ayman Nour and people like that. And it's true that these people emerged and they didn't get the kind of support they should have gotten—there are a lot of complaints, but they are there now. And I think that the very, very important issue for the new Obama administration is how to support people like this, how to build democracy support into U.S foreign policy as a long-term strategic objective, not as a short-term policy goal which is very, very difficult, and I think we all agree on that.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Zeyno [Baran], if I read your paper correctly, you probably take issue with some of that, because you seem to suggest that fundamentally there is a contradiction between Islamism and democracy and to the extent to which there has been an embrace of democracy in this region it is purely tactical and there is no real commitment.

ZEYNO BARAN: The way I define Islamism is a set of ideology that opposes ideology and says—and this is not me saying, it is in their own writings and thinking saying—that we can use democracy but the way that we define freedom is freedom from democracy, not freedom to necessarily be part of the liberal system. And I think I will go back and basically say that we are where we are as a result of decades of this exceptionalism, that the Middle East has not been touched, and we have been stuck supporting either the secular authoritarians or the radical Islamists. And what I argue is that what happens to true liberal democrats that are natural American allies and why are they never supported? And the issue keeps coming up, and the issue is always, 'oh, it will take too long' and

they are not there, they are just a small group of people. That group of people, the liberal democrats that are going to be fundamentally helping American interests as well as transforming their countries the way we would like to be transformed. Instead of that group becoming bigger and having a more democratic pluralistic culture becoming the norm, we are still going to be stuck between the two. And the concern is that continuing to support moderate Islamists against violent Islamists is going to get us back to a cycle where in 10 years or so we are going to say, how did we end up with this?

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Then what is the alternative?

ZEYNO BARAN: The alternative is that if the U.S is going to be actively providing money, institutional support, and training, it should be to the liberal democrats. They are the ones that are mostly neglected. The other side, the Islamist side, gets assistance from other countries that would like to promote more of an Islamist alternative to democracy. Fundamentally there is a competition of ideas and a competition of systems and sets of beliefs. So if the U.S is not supporting democracy, no one else is going to be on the same lines. So the Islamists will get support from other countries, the authoritarians already have control, and we are not going to get those true allies.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Shibley [Telhami], take on the question, because I think that part of what the danger there is that we end up saying if we are going to support the liberals, say we should, that might mean that at various times we have to oppose elections because the liberals would be overwhelmed?

SHIBLEY TELHAMI: That is a good point, and I want to take it up, but I want to go back to the original question you asked, and I am actually struck by this a little bit. I am actually struck by the fact that we are taking at face value what you read as President Bush's statement about spreading democracy. I think that it is odd because if you look at it from a historical perspective, even in terms of what the President says drove him to go to Iraq now—the weapons of mass destruction—and most people around the world view the spread of democracy notion mostly as a rationalization or justification for the war. And certainly in the Middle East, where I have been conducting public opinion polls in the Arab world with Arabiya International, every single year, beginning with the year prior to the Iraq war, every single year the vast majority of the Arab public did not believe that America was out to spread democracy. In fact, less than 10 percent believed that we were out there to spread democracy. They believe we are there to control oil or help Israel weaken the Muslim world. And that has never changed, by the way, over the past 6-7 years. It is not just the follow-through; it is that the original intent was never believed.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Karl Rove said, I think it was last week, that had the intelligence on the WMD been different, there would not have been an invasion, and there would not have been a war.

SHIBLEY TELHAMI: So that is why I am so struck that we are kind of accepting that as an implicit assumption—this is really what we are trying to do. I don't think this is

what we are trying to do, and I think if it is what we are trying to do, then I think we are not being fully honest with ourselves because the reality of it is, when you are at war—you are fighting two wars, one in Iraq, one in Afghanistan—and you are fighting a transnational war on terrorism, two things are going on. First of all, the most important thing is to get allies, and you are going to go the Arab countries, and even if 90 percent of the Arab public say “I don’t want you to do this” you want them to do this. And because we have 200,000 forces in the Greater Middle East, they will do this, and they did do this. So in the process what do you do?

You increase the gap between publics and governments because how do authoritarian leaders react when they are insecure, when the vast majority of the public oppose them and they are frightened by that? They become more repressive. And that is why in fact when you actually ask people if the Middle East has become more or less democratic since the Iraq war, the majority of the people in the Middle East believe that the Middle East has become less democratic because they are witnessing that kind of repression. The counterweight to this is that when you are at war, your most important bureaucracies are military and intelligence—let’s face it. The Secretary of Defense is out most important cabinet member when you are in a time of war. And when they are operating in these countries in the Middle East, who are their most important—we can talk about Egypt and say it’s the government, maybe it’s the USAID people talking to their interlocutor in the Middle East, or our Ambassador making a representation to the Prime Minister about you should do this or that—but in the end the relationship when you are at war is anchored in the bureaucratic relationship between our military and their military, between our intelligence and their intelligence. Our military in desperate need of their help for the war, for transit, for cooperation, every place in the Middle East, our intelligence, as we know, is very weak, particularly on issues related to terrorism, is in desperate need of the intelligence support of these very institutions in the Arab world.

And so what does that mean? It means that in the process, in terms of our economic aid, training, political support, we are supporting the very institutions that are the anchors of repression in the Middle East. And that trumps everything we do or say because in the end when you are at war, you want to win the war. When you are worried about terrorism, you want to fight the war on terrorism. So we have been dishonest in this debate about this issue.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: But address directly what I think the counter-argument would be from President Bush and members of his administration—that may be, and there is not always a perfect correlation between elections and democracy, but we have had elections in Lebanon, in Palestine, in Afghanistan, in Iraq we are about to have elections again, and that is a democratic advance.

SHIBLEY TELHAMI: And by the way, they are not new. We have had elections in Lebanon before, we have had elections in Palestine before—the first election was actually a very democratic election after the Oslo agreement that resulted in the election in the Palestinian Authority of Yasser Arafat with international support. Those are not new elections; this is not a new experiment in democracy. The United States has always

advocated democracy. When you look back at the Bush-Quayle administration in the late 1980s, there was a push for democracy—the end of the Cold War was seen as a new era for democracy. We pushed, and we got a liberalization effort in Yemen, in Algeria, in Jordan. But you know what happened—Iraq invaded Kuwait, and then we are at war again, everything was trumped by this issue, and in places like Algeria Islamists won, and we are terrified and we pull back, and I think we are doing the same thing right now.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Michael (McFaul), pick up on this, because you write of a democratic erosion over the last decade.

MICHAEL MCFAUL: I do, and I want to say first, I am here as Professor McFaul; I am not here in any way representing the Obama transition team, just so we get that clear. And I am glad we are not just left-right, but also East-West, and thank you for bringing us from the West coast, because we think of things differently sometimes out there.

The line is basically flat over the Bush administration if you measure it by regime types. Larry [Diamond] has written an excellent book on this; there have been some breakthroughs in Georgia and Ukraine, and there have been some setbacks. But if you measure it by regimes, and you take Freedom House scores, it has been flat under President Bush. If you measure it by civil society, and I think Carl makes a very important point thinking about the Middle East, and that is your yardstick, and yes, I think there is more going on. There most certainly was a renaissance in the Middle East among liberal thinkers, and I am using that word very precisely, in the mid-term of the Bush administration. But then, as Larry rightly pointed out, we did abandon them. And my beef with that speech—I remember listening to it very closely—I think the word freedom was mentioned 87 times. Freedom, liberty, democracy, all good things and really big things, but what was missing was the strategy to achieve it and you have to ask yourself why? Well, George W. Bush did not come to Washington to spread liberty and freedom, and let's remember that. This is something that he adopted after September 11. I actually spent a couple of hours with the President before September 11 talking about big, grand theory—liberalism and realism, international relations theory.

SHIBLEY TELHAMI: Humility was his big theme.

MICHAEL MCFAUL: Yeah, we are going to build missile defenses and we are going to pull back, and then, we are going to manage the Chinese and the Russians in a very Realpolitik way. Secretary Rice, soon to be Professor Rice, that is the way she thought back then as well. And then September 11 happened and we weren't invaded by China or Russia and missile defense certainly did not do us any good. And they adopted this other long-standing tradition, as my colleagues have said. But they adopted it on the fly. They didn't adopt it 20 years ago like Ronald Reagan did before he came to the White House, and therefore the strategy feels like a strategy on the fly. So at the end of the day, rather than democracy in Egypt—yes, just get Ayman Nour out of jail—right, do something very concrete with this thing called American power. Of course I agree with everything President Bush said in terms of the strategic objective, but the strategy just never...

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Leon, put yourself in President Bush's position the day after 9/11. assume that this is a person, as Michael points out, that came in against nation-building for a humble foreign policy, and this catastrophe strikes the United States, is embracing the idealistic tradition of promoting democracy the right response to 9/11?

LEON WIESELTIER: I hope that the discussion of democratization here will not just be a discussion of Bush and the war in Iraq, because it is really a much bigger subject, especially with this big place called China that has nothing to do with a lot of this. Your question is to the point where I would disagree with Shibley is that in the conceptualization of the war on terrorism by President Bush after 9/11—and I have to say I've often thought what I was like to be Bush and God help me even what it was like to be Cheney on September 11th or September 12th--and I have to say I am being weak and patriotic when I would have sworn an oath to be positively vindictive on behalf of American security. I mean I actually sort of understand that part, but what they did preside over which surprised me was the rehabilitation of what used to be called the root causes analyses of terrorism, which you will recall in the late 1970s and early 80s the right reviled. It was the office of [off mic]—they are depraved and they are deprived. And in fact the American right suddenly discovered that there was the problem of terrorists who had to be killed and the problem of terrorism which was in fact a social problem and an economic problem and a political problem.

And in that sense I think through a back door and certainly on the fly, and with a great deal of incompetence, etc, etc, there has been restored a proper analysis of terrorism as something which has social roots, and therefore which will take a long time to eradicate by means of political and economic and social liberalization. And in that sense I think there was a kind of natural analytically impulse toward democratization in formulating Bush's war on terrorism. I was amazed to hear Bush and Cheney and all these people go on about the root causes of terrorism because, when Al Haig was Secretary of State sometime in the late 19th century, you will recall, if you said root causes you were a left wing appeaser. It was as simple as that. You were not really interested in getting the bad guys. And the administration, I have to say, did discover democratization was an important point about security.

Of course, they simplified it in Bush's speech made the argument that democratization was an essential condition of our security—I always thought that was a little overstated because security is a rather immediate thing, and this is a long-term project. The one point I wanted to make is this: since we don't like fundamentalism, I don't think we should be fundamentalists about democracy either. And I think that since we are talking about the Middle East, there is a certain moral awkwardness that I have always felt about this because in fact, if democratization in Egypt were to bring to power a government that would destroy the Israel-Egypt peace accord for example, in my own humble view I think the damage would be incalculable, not just to democratization in the region but to the entire region. I do think that one has to, in certain cases, sometimes the analysis from the standpoint of democracy is not all you need to know when it comes to the question of liberalization and reform of governments and one has to be very careful about this. One

element of a solution to this problem would be what you suggested earlier, I think, which is basically to defetishize elections.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: That is what I basically wanted to get back to. Let me bring Carl in on this exact point, and I am not an expert on this by any means, but I was just following the newspapers on the conflict in Thailand over the last couple of weeks and what I appears you have there is civil society rising up against the result of an election because those in charge are able to play prejudices, fears, and biases of the poorest parts of society, and they feel—they took over the airport because they felt that their freedom was going to be restricted. So pick up the point that Leon is talking about, the fetishization of elections and how to put it in the proper context.

CARL GERHSMAN: It doesn't make them right in Thailand, and all these electoral processes like the elections that are going to take place in Bangladesh soon, do not come as a result of U.S pressure. The people often do not want military rule, the military overreaches, and they want to go to elections, they want to have ownership of the press, constitutional guarantees and rights need to be respected. Thailand is not helped by the removal of politics in the streets.

Elections are by no means the sum total, they are not all there is, but they are part of democracy and they have to be made to work, and in the middle east, it is not necessarily the first stage you go at—it should be a gradual process in countries like Morocco, in Jordan, in Kuwait, they are looking at how to gradually move towards democracy and deal with the issue of the monarchy and maybe at some point move to a constitutional monarchy. These things can be done gradually. It is possible and I think we as a country have to be able to get this right.

We have talked about the longstanding U.S commitment to democracy—it started out, in the time of George Washington, who saw our experiment sort of representing the future of this idea for the whole world. Then Abraham Lincoln said we had to get rid of slavery because how could we be a model to the world if we had slavery? It was the idea of the U.S as a model. Then Reagan came along and he introduced this idea that we could actually promote democracy through things like the NED and so forth, and then USAID got into the business. Bush carted us away further, that all the agencies of the U.S government had to get into the act and we somehow could make it happen ourselves. And I think we have to step back from that.

But it is possible I think for the U.S to get this right, to have a coherent approach to this, to address our security issues as we did in WWII—we allied with Stalin in WWII in order to defeat the Nazis. It is possible for the United States to make realistic decisions in its foreign policy but yet go about the work of advancing democracy gradually at the grassroots, perhaps through non-governmental agencies in a lot of different circumstances. It is possible to have a coherent approach to this issue and to look to the President and the State Department to make statements defending Ayman Nour, to defend people when they are in trouble. Today is human rights day—we want to see our government speak out for human rights. But to have a realistic approach which

recognizes the fact that we have very difficult security challenges that we have to address those security challenges. But that doesn't mean that we abandon the efforts to support the kind of people that Zeyno was talking about, who are working to advance democratic values in the world. Democracy is not easy, it was not easy, did not come quickly to France, they had a lot of trouble, and Germany had a lot of trouble, and Spain over two hundred years, it is going to be a messy process, but we have to stick with it, even if it may take 100 years or 150 years. But that is not bad if you consider the experience of the West.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Michael, I know you are not here on behalf of the Obama transition, but listening to Carl, it brings me back to the press conference last week when the national security team was announced, and where you heard echoed in just about every statement was this idea that what is important for the United States is the power of our example, much more than our rhetoric. And you write of the renaissance of realism. Is that what we are going to see, you believe, with the President's new team?

MICHAEL MCFAUL: No, of course not. A couple of things. First, you have to get your own house in order. I have been in Tehran, I have been in China, Beijing, Moscow in the last several years talking about these issues, and you have no moral authority at all, especially if you look and talk like me in places like that when you have the record that we have here. So you have to get that in order and it is bigger than, by the way, just the Bush administration, let's be clear. Problems with our elections, how we count votes, a lot of things that if we are serious about it we have to get that done first.

Second, I don't know who is going to be who in terms of running the Administration—oh, I do, but I will tell you afterwards (laughter)—I do know what President Elect Obama has said on this. I think he has been very clear that he understands that we need to do both of these things at the same time. And I think that the problem is, in academia and in this town if I may, you are either in one camp or the other camp, right? So you are either an idealist, which I firmly associate myself with being an idealist, or a Wilsonian liberal, or Reagan, whatever Reagan was, I am in that camp. But it is naïve and stupid to say that we are going to stop having diplomatic relations with Saudi Arabia because of our ideals, that is ridiculous. Likewise, the notion that realism is going to save us, and if we just stop talking about democracy, we are going to have stability in the Middle East, that is equally ridiculous.

The Middle East is changing. To me is whether change is in a revolutionary way or an evolutionary way. But to think that you are going to put the genie back in the box and Saudi Arabia is going to be run the way it is being run 50 years from now, that to me is naïve. To think that the monarchy in Morocco is going to be around in 300 years time, that to me is naïve. So the question is, to me, how do you maintain to do both of these things in a kind of realistic way.

The same thing with elections by the way. Fetishizing elections, the most arrogant thing that Americans can say, in my opinion, is you people out there that don't have democracy yet, you need to wait and not have elections now. Take 50 or 60 or 70 years, build the

rule of law, build your media, build all these other liberal institutions, do it like we did it, and then you can have elections. Well guess what folks; we don't have that kind of power. That is the most arrogant thing you can say as an American, that we are going to tell you not to have elections until you give it all these other liberal things. It just, in my opinion, it overplays our power in the world.

LARRY DIAMOND: Thank you George. I think that we can go around the table and discover reasonable consensus around the point that Leon introduced, that in many cases we should not lead in a democracy promotion strategy with an emphasis on purely democratic and competitive elections at the national level very soon. And that there could be significant downside risks to doing that, number one.

Number two, and it is an implication of what Zeyno Baran has been writing about, that we some period of time in which we pursue a deliberate strategy of seeking to build up, open space for, and assist the capacity of a variety of liberal forces that are sincerely committed to democracy. I think some of them may not be secular—they may be quite pious Muslims—but the point is that they won't be Islamists. And I think that one of Zeyno's points is you can reject the use of violence, but then still have the same ultimate objectives as Islamists who are willing to use violence, and this is where we get into the trap of moderate Islamists.

But then I think where we may begin to diverge around the table is in the analysis of how stable these authoritarian regimes are in the region, and how much we should cling to their stability and what we risk in the medium to long run in doing so. Now we can all revisit 1979 in Iran and whether Carter did tremendous damage to the American national interest, as Jean Kirkpatrick argued, by pulling the rug out from under the Shah. But the point is the Shah's regime was crumbling. The legitimacy of his regime was badly eroding during the course of the 1970s and some of us were saying back then, we needed a different strategy.

The same thing is happening to the Mubarak regime in Egypt now. It is a [off-mic], profoundly corrupt regime with an expanding gap between, I think these are Shibley's words, although he may not agree with the specific analysis, between this decadent regime and the people. At some point the man who is now, I think, past 80, is going to have to yield the Presidency, perhaps by the force of nature. And if the regime tries to foist his son in a pharaonic succession on this society which is young, angry, frustrated, increasingly dispossessed, this place could blow up at some point. And I think that the fundamental point is that if we don't get ahead of the curve in a number of Arab regimes and others around the world that we see as our allies, we could experience anti-American blowback in the same way we did in Iran.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: I do want to broaden up the discussion, but I think this is worth digging down on first, and let me bring in both Zeyno and Shibley on this question. Let's take as a point of origin Larry's analysis of where Egypt is right now, and given that, what would an American administration do facing this potential cavalcade?

SHIBLEY TELHAMI: I think, look, we all agree on something. We all agree that we should stand for democracy and freedom around the world. I don't think that you can just have, this is one of our values, it is important, and we could do something. We all agree that in order to do that you have to have credibility which means you cannot spread democracy by subverting; you cannot spread human rights by not being an example. We all agree on that. What I think the problem is that our realism about how much we can do, particularly when we are war, when we have a heavy military footprint.

My argument has been on the Middle East, is not that the Middle East is not open to democracy, because I think it is. I think there are many examples of possibility in the region. I think that the question is whether our policies that are not specifically oriented towards democracies, such as war, military presence, our position on the Arab-Israeli issue, worries about energy. Whether those have more consequence for democracy than the democracy policy and whether in fact at all we can really make the progress without lengthening our military footprint in the region, without ending the war which is clearly working against the democracy in the region, I don't think it is possible. And I do think we have to be modest about what we can do. If our policy is regime change, it is still going to be our part-time policy. We have too many things in the world to make that our top priority.

For these guys it is the number one priority, and they know their backyard a lot more than we do. In fact, we are relying on them for information which they are providing to us. So we have to have some way of moving forward. I would suggest two areas. One is human rights. I think that we have not done enough on human rights. I think that should be our top priority, more than democracy broadly speaking and change over time. We need to focus on human rights and I think we can do it particularly because they are international, not just American, values. You can do it when you uphold the issue yourself. That is why I think closing Guantanamo very early on is a very good signal to what our priorities are.

The second thing is that we have to find a way that is somewhat beneficial to the regimes. They don't want to leave, but they also know what Larry said, which is that they are under pressure, they are struggling. This is not a happy environment for them—yes, they are ruling, but they are facing all kinds of challenges and so there are areas in which we can help their societies. Maybe they won't lose power, but they are going to have to trade some of that power so it would be more of a win-win. We have to work on some of those areas. And we have to not pretend that if we push them, they are going to collapse. The idea that Egypt is about to blow-up; I think that Egypt is at a transitional point, no question, and I think that there are a lot of challenges facing it. But we have been saying this about every society in the Middle East.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Let me try to create the real-world hypothetical, and Zeyno try to take it on. Assume that the next six months it does appear that the U.S will continue to withdraw from Iraq. We are lessening the military footprint. President-Elect Obama makes the decision to close Guantanamo while figuring out where all the prisoners are going to go. Yet he still faces a decision nine months from now, President

Mubarak basically anoints his son. You are in the oval office, what do you tell him to do and say about Egypt at that moment.

ZEYNO BARAN: Before I have to say a couple of things if I may. First of all, whether the U.S likes it or not, whether the US promotes it or not, elections have been taking place and will take place. The question is what role does the US play in trying to help its allies who have been inspired by what President Bush said and also I think it was Secretary Rice who say that we are making a generational commitment now, and all those people are now saying what happened? It hasn't even been one generation! And the reason was again, what McFaul was saying, after 9/11 the decision, or the understanding once again was that if people are oppressed or filled with hate and have no tolerance, what do you expect is going to come out of those societies? Now that is indirectly related to Egypt, and that gets back to what Diamond said, of course pious Muslims are not the issue.

The issue is Muslims can be democrats just like any other religious peoples can be. Islamists cannot and are not. And I think there is a fundamental lack of understanding of the issue because if, and we don't have time to discuss Islamism, but if people are taught to hate Jews and Christians and other Muslims who are not like them, and if you bring that kind of mentality to leadership, what is going to happen to Israel? What is going to happen to a whole set of things that are important, not for just America for regional concerns as well? And it is not just about education necessarily, it is what is in people's minds in terms of world view. We have seen perfectly well-integrated, looking outwardly, well-educated doctors and scientists in Europe committing terrorist attacks, and I think people are still very much in denial in trying to understand that we may want to think about a solution in 6 months, but unfortunately these solutions are just not going to be short term.

That is why I think that we do need to really look at comprehensively what has been going on over the past 60 years? And I know that doesn't solve the issue, but context matters, in terms of civil society and what is the dominant mood and aspirations of civil society. In Georgia we have seen civil society rise up against false elections in 2003 and I think that was a great moment for democracy and the US stood by those people. But it did not happen on its own. The US did not do it, but the US has been supporting institutions and civil society groups and has actually used conditional assistance and basically said, we will be supporting you, Georgia, against more aggressive Russia—it hasn't happened just with Putin—we are going to support you but you need to democratize, you need to open up this system.

So you can work with these countries and you can have empowerment in civil society that will say we want to the freedom and we want the democracy and can get successes but each country is going to be different. We have seen similar things in Ukraine, but then when some different types of people rose up in Kyrgyzstan, we said, great, we are going to support the civil society there. But it wasn't necessarily the democratic civil society there—you had drug involvement, crime involvement. So we really need to look at it country by country.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: I am going to stick on country by country, and bring in Jack Snyder here, and try to get my hypothetical answered—maybe it is a futile effort? It is nine months from now, and Mubarak wants to hand off power to his son. What does President Obama do?

JACK SNYDER: I think that we should realize that our ability to influence attitudes in Egypt and elsewhere in the Middle East is quite limited at the moment, and there our strategy should best be an indirect approach trying to create long-run facilitating conditions for democratic transition in the region. That does not mean elections right away; it may not even mean promoting civil society groups right away if they are weak in these countries. Social science research has a pretty-much agreed list of conditions that facilitate transition to democracy: GNP per capita in the country, transition to democracy when the country is extremely poor, the changes are that democracy is not going to last long, it is going to collapse. If you have the transition when the country is wealthier, the changes are it's going to take hold and consolidate.

Another thing that we know for sure is that democratization in a nation where there is no agreement on which groups are the nation, and what the borders of the country should be, is a recipe for disaster. We know that democratization goes badly in countries that are dominated by oil and gas production. So what does this mean? In part it means that the US should engage countries like Egypt economically to strengthen their market forces, bring up their per-capita wealth, diversify their economy, integrate it with the world economy, create a middle class constituency for democracy, and it also means that we need to work on the problem of self determination of the Palestinian people in the sense of, who is the nation, what are the borders of that nation. That should come first, and the democratic elections should come later. It is the opposite of what Natan Sharansky wrote in that book.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Let me suggest a rich area to explore right now. You talk about how increasing GNP per capita helps foster democracy and especially if it is happening while you have a new democracy it strengthens the new democracy. So what do we do now that we are facing a situation, basically, and let me bring everyone in on this, heading toward a global recession—some say depression. What kind of challenges does that pose for emerging democracies at this time? Larry, why don't you start?

LARRY DIAMOND: I think the first thing we need to appreciate is that in the last global depression in the early 1930s, quite a number of democracies and sort of aspiring semi-democracies went under. Jack is right, when you have a lower per capita income, also a younger life as democracy, institutions are less settled, they are more vulnerable. And then when things go bad and there are objective stressors like a depression or a severe recession they are more a risk of popular disenchantment and disaffection and some man on the white horse of the military coming in. now that means not just that they are going to need economic assistance—there is a limit to what is available, and the IMF and the World Bank and so on and so forth, though obviously we are going to need to mobilize that and try and put some floor below which they won't sink.

And of course we have got to do as much as we can as quickly as we can to revive our own economy as one of the engines of global economic growth. But the thing that may not be adequately appreciated, George, is that there are very inexpensive things we can do in terms of the expenditure of funds, to enable these democracies or incentivize these democracies to work better, to govern better. If these democracies fail in this period of tremendous stress, one of the reasons why will be massive, endemic corruption, bad governance, weak institutions on the executive side, on the representative side, and in civil society. Democratic assistance to strengthen legislatures, to strengthen accountability processes, audit commissions, counter-corruption commissions, independent media, the old print and electronic media, the new digital media, and civil society organizations, these are some of the least expensive, most cost-effective things we can do to buttress these democracies in difficult periods.

So while it may seem counter-intuitive, I would actually increase political assistance to democratic groups and where there is the political will to make them work, democratic institutions in emerging and struggling democracies in this period, because they are going to be at risk and the amount of additional money we would invest in things like the NED is a tiny, tiny increment of what we do even in foreign aid, not to mention our international involvement more broadly.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: I see Leon scribbling, and the Ambassador shaking his head, so I want to bring both of you in the response here.

LEON WIESELTIER: Well, I just wanted to say that where it is obvious, and I think that Larry is right that economic misery and the social unhappiness that it causes is fertile ground for fascism and populism and all kinds of undemocratic preferences, but I am a little anxious about the easy correlation between economic progress and political progress. I think that one of the things we are seeing, certainly in Asia in this period, are a variety of experiments, each a little bit different, but a variety of experiments in capitalist authoritarianism.

And certainly the thesis that the Chinese are now trying to prove is that you can have economic liberalization without political liberalization. Now speaking as the economists say, secularly—know I don't know what will happen in 300 years from now—but certainly this hypothesis of theirs which by the standards of a lot of Americans is ipso facto false, is having a very good and long run. It really has.

So I think one has to complicate that—it is a lot of the enemies of democracy do not oppose democracies because they are poor, or because of the low quality of their standard of living. They oppose democracy for political or philosophical or ideological grounds and I think they would oppose it rich or poor. I think that whereas the world economic crisis obviously is not the best news for democratization, I think that it will be very important not to take an economist analysis of emerging democracies or the policies of democratization because I don't think that is necessarily the overwhelming factor.

RICHARD WILLIAMSON: Can I make a few comments? It has been about 45 minutes since I made in intervention, so there have been a lot of things I want to comment on, but I will try to be quick. Let me just note that with the elections over, the American people have made a judgment. Nonetheless, I would assert that Bush's embrace of the freedom agenda has been helpful.

Second, the topic has been democracy expansion, not just in the Middle EAST, and if we talk about Zimbabwe, Kenya, Sudan, we have difficult issues, Thailand, Cambodia, certainly near-abroad, the authoritarian drift in Moscow and their more concerted effort to influence those are all parts of this discussion.

Third, I think you raised an important point regarding balancing it. In 90 minutes I will be in the Oval office with the President discussing Sudan and I will be arguing how we should use Cairo to advance the Qatar peace initiative to help Darfur. And it doesn't mean I don't care about democracy in Egypt, but my responsibility is to try and end the genocide in slow motion and Cairo can be helpful. So it is not just defense versus democracy and human rights. There are other human rights issues that also impinge on that.

Fourth, as Larry's book on Iraq makes clear, this is a rambunctious, difficult business. And as somebody over the last 30 years who has been in and out of government-26 years ago was my first Ambassadorship-it is a rambunctious business making policy and even more so to implement it. This is not clean, academic or abstract. And I think that is especially true on democracy.

Fifth, I suggest that one of the things that the Obama administration should focus on is the gradual awakening of the importance of peace building. And the Clinton administration was slow to get to it, but they became pretty good. Dobbins, Nash and others who worked on it. Bush's speech at VMI in May of 2002 acknowledged the need for this.

But as we tried to develop institutions, the governance side and democracy side are still anemic and need attention and more practical help. Finally, let me just say on the economic issue, if you look at what happened in Central Europe in the 1990s, people go to democracy because they think it is going to be a change, and it is. They feel good and they will be empowered, and it is. And having observed elections in Liberia, Afghanistan, Russia, Cambodia and elsewhere there is this incredible bravery and enthusiasm. But all the changes they aspire for isn't realized. Just like they won't be as a result of the election last November 4th.

But they don't have the habits and practices that there will be another election. Their experience has been not that I win, you loose, but I win, you die. So the formament is different, we have to be patient to help build those guardrails, which goes to civil society, which goes to the rule of law, which goes to institutions, which goes to media. But also we have to recognize that there is an economic meltdown, turndown, a lot of these fledgling democracies, the people are not going to get what they expect. It is not a

question of USAID money; it is a question that their standard of living is going to be constant or less. And when that happens they are going to vote for those who tend to be authoritarian. We have gone through a few waves in the former Soviet Union and Warsaw Pact. We should at least be thinking about that, and I think that it is a good question that next administration has to be prepared and we have to be able to respond.

SHIBLEY TELHAMI: On the impact of the economic crisis on fledgling democracies, I am not sure which ones we have in mind, because I think again, we have sort of started this narrative that has emerged that has a lot of fledgling democracies. Obviously Afghanistan and Iraq, but those are situations where there is a war and the outcome there is going to be far more dependent on what the internal dynamics and the war dynamics than anything to do with the economic crisis. But in general the impact on reform—lets forget about new democracies, the incentive for reform is often greater when you have an economic crisis, and we have seen that in the oil countries. They have tremendous cash, they just basically think they can buy loyalties and they don't need to go through reform. When there is tension and pressure they feel that they need to involve their public in, and they have tried to take on some reform. Look at what happened with our own oil prices when the price of oil is at \$4 a gallon, everybody has an incentive to change, and our habits, that are full of things we should have been doing for the past several decades, we now do and then we go back to \$1.5 a gallon and no one has an incentive to change oil habits. So it does have, actually in some ways, it puts pressure on regimes to respond. They don't all do it well...

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Let me challenge that and bring Zeyno in on this, because I was thinking of what you were writing of how Putin is a challenge to democracy as well, and it seemed like he had license to be authoritarian when oil prices were high because people were doing great. They were saying, fine; go do whatever you want to do, because I am living better. Now, at the same time, oil prices collapsing, Russia in more trouble and it doesn't seem like that leads to cause for democratic reform—it says, fine, bring him back, maybe he can fix the situation.

ZEYNO BARAN: Well, yes, of course, I think he has not allowed much of an alternative to emerge. A lot of the businesses and others that have been getting rich and benefiting have all been dependent on him and his goodwill, and there is very little room left for dissent. There is of course a lot of opposition still, but also again, I do go back to this sort of indoctrination, and one of the things that I am sure Prime Minister Putin is extremely concerned about is precisely his inability to continue what he is doing. So he will continue to create enemies, and the signals coming from the Putin-Medvedev administration is immediately after the US elections they were the first ones to start challenging. And I think that the concern with an authoritarian regime like this is that because they need the sort of victimization and humiliation and outside enemy, and not that different from some of the Middle Eastern cases we have seen, we can see instead of more opening, probably even more oppression and more aggressive behavior, especially towards the outside world.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Michael, how does the US deal with that? And I wanted to take up something else that Zeyno writes about—she talks about, and I am paraphrasing, the sort of romanticism about Russian soft power, especially here in the United States among Russian specialists and that has somehow constrained us from effectively promoting democracy in Russia.

MICHAEL MCFAUL: If I may, in the same spirit of sitting for 33 minutes and then lots of comments. To get to that, I want to back into it in a way to address this question about economic growth, autocracy versus democracy. Because the conventional wisdom in Russia is that you had democracy in the 1990s and economic depression; you had autocracy today and economic growth. So they look at the China model and say, we want to go down that path. I think that is a spurious correlation, and I have written about that and I think there is nothing to it. But the bigger picture, I want to remind us all, is for every China there is a Zimbabwe.

This model, on average, over the last 40 years, what we know in terms of the data, is that democracies and autocracies grow at the same rate. So it is a myth to say that if you have autocracy and growth—what we know is that democracies are slow, they are kind of in the middle—and some autocracies grow really fast, like China, fantastic model. And a lot of autocracies don't grow at all—they are the kleptocracies that Larry was talking about. So on average they grow about the same rate.

Second thing we know: Jack is right that once you have a transition to democracy your probabilities of success are higher the higher the GDP per capita and I think according to Shawarsky and his colleagues, it is \$6000 GDP per capita. If you are over that, and I think Argentina was the richest country that experienced a democratic regression, and if you are poor, it is under \$1000 GDP per capita, it is about a 0.5 that you are going to fail. But it is not the case that all poor countries fail at democracy.

Obviously India is a great example. Nor is it the case that that in any way predicts when you get democratization. That notion that the richer you get, then that spurs democratization, in fact the data does not say anything about that. And I think we need to be careful about that because there is this notion that if we just promote economic reform in Egypt that is our strategy for democratization. That is a bunch of bull. Moreover, to answer your hypothetical, again, reminding everybody that I am a professor of political science and not have anything to do with what is going to happen later, the one thing I would just say, at least, maybe we don't have anything that we can do in the name of democracy, but we might stop subsidizing an autocracy. We give money to that regime, serious money, for three decades now, and what the liberal human rights activists that you are talking about, Zeyno, that is what they say, that is what the Mossad says.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Ambassador Williamson.....

MICHAEL MCFAUL: Why do we have to pay a billion dollars to get him to talk to us in the Sudan? Why not, and at least if we are going to pay him that money, let's not call it democracy assistance. Ok? The Egyptian budget right now, under democracy and

freedom, they are one of the top 10 recipients of what we now call democracy assistance. Let's at least call a spade a spade and say, ok, we are going to deal with you on this, but we are not going to call you a democrat, and we are not going to call the money we give you democracy assistance.

RICHARD WILLIAMSON: I would comment that I would love it if the United States was willing to use a billion dollars of leverage to get progress to stop the genocide in Darfur. It is not giving that money to Egypt for that reason. Now if your argument is that we should recalculate the Egyptian-Israeli relationship, which is why we give them that money, that is a different debate. But let's not pretend we are giving it to them because we want to defend an autocratic administration. I would welcome that debate, I think it would be fascinating if President Elect Obama would engage in that public debate, I doubt if he will, so I hope that that is engaged in behind closed doors. But the trade-off is not because of Sudan, not because of anything but what has been accepted as a vital interest to the United States for 60 years, which is the support for the longest-living democracy in the Middle East. So if we are willing, or want to recalibrate our commitment to, or what we will do as a consequence of, changing that commitment to Israel, that is an interesting debate. Personally, I would like to keep the support of Israeli security. But that is a debate the new administration can engage in.

MICHAEL MCFAUL: I need to clarify. I in no way want to undermine our relationship with the democracy of Israel. I agree with you, but the assumption in your answer, sir, is the bribe that we pay to Egypt is a necessary condition to support democracy in Israel. And I want to question that. You are absolutely right sir, why does a deal that we made in 1979 cost us \$2 billion annually to keep that? Those two are very different things in my mind, and again, speaking as a professor, not anything to do with Obama.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Shibley and Carl, did you want to come in on this point?

CARL GERSHMAN: Well look, part of the discussion assumes something that we didn't really know when we got into this business after the fall of Communism. We thought it was going to be easy. There is much more authoritarian resilience out there than we thought. A lot of the authoritarian governments in this world have learned how to hold on and how to deal with people like us. So we are dealing with a difficult and complex environment. You are right George when you say that the economic crisis could create a lot of instability. But it also may create certain opportunities. The fact that oil prices have dropped as sharply as they have is going to make life extremely difficult for Mr. Chavez in Venezuela, and Ahmadinejad in Iran, and for Mr. Putin. We don't know what opportunities lay ahead. The one thing we do know...

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: are we seeing opportunities in China as well?

CARL GERSHMAN: China is successful but the likelihood is that they have not built into their system a certain resilience. We don't know if they could sustain a real economic setback, and there is a lot going on inside China. There are tens of thousands of

protests; there are thousands of miners that every year, there are all sorts of resistance. We don't know where it is going in China. But what we do know is that breakthroughs come sometimes at the least expected time, and one of the reasons to have an approach that is steady and engaged with the elements on the ground is to be ready when that opportunity comes, and we don't know when it is going to come.

Nobody has mentioned a word about Burma here, which on human rights one should note that they are arresting all of the people who were involved in the Saffron revolution. Well, the Saffron revolution was crushed, but it is going to come back at some point. We have to be ready for that. We have to support that. My sense is that we are approaching a very interesting moment of transition in Cuba. There are a lot of opportunities out there and we have to be ready to take advantage of those opportunities.

Maybe one last thing which I think President Elect Obama would be sensitive to this, when you asked before about if Mubarak appoints his son, what does he do, what does he say? I think we need to be listening not just to specialists here or talking to governments there, we have to have our ear to the ground and what are people saying on the ground in these societies. Obama is somebody who worked on the ground; he knows that there is a lot to be learned from people on the ground, and I think that what you would probably hear in situations like that is how to deal with these tough situations, how can a place like Egypt—none of these activists we are talking about want to see bad guys take over.

How do you move gradually to dilute the influence of these bad guys who tend to be able to function more effectively if there is no political space? How do you gradually enlarge a political space? You have to be listening to the people on the ground who have a sense of this. I actually was in a meeting, I once brought a democracy activist in from Egypt to see President Bush, and they were talking about this issue of Islamists and Bush wanted to know what he thought, and he used the word dilution. You have to dilute the influence of the Islamists and the way you dilute it is by expanding political space.

Gradually, that can be done. And if you listen to the people on the ground as to what they think and give some support and solidarity to them, that is terribly important. Last thing, in terms of cost and low-cost, the one thing that doesn't cost a penny is voice. To give voice to these people and their aspirations. I realize you want to do it in a realistic way and you don't want to raise expectations in a way you are not going to fulfill them.

But Obama will have an articulate voice on these issues. If he uses it well it can get enormous encouragement to a lot of these people who are involved in very, very difficult struggles on the ground. Without, I caution here, without giving unrealistic expectations as to what the US is able to do, because these regimes, even when they are corrupt and bankrupt like in Burma or North Korea, they have a certain capacity to stay on.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Let me follow up on that, but also ask a question on top of that. Are the expectations on President Elect Obama exceptionally unrealistic in part because of the barriers he has broken by getting elected? You were talking about our example, and I wonder to what extent—how long does the halo effect of the election last.

SHIBLEY TELHAMI: Not long, and obviously the challenges and enormous expectations are high and there is a dangerous game here in terms of, again, if you want credibility you raise expectations and you don't deliver. But I want to say on President Elect Obama, I think if you look, one of the things that the Bush administration did well whether you agreed with it or not, one thing it did well is present a new framework for American foreign policy, a new notion of the national interest, whether it was democracy, whether it was the war on terrorism, the axis of evil.

They put forth some compelling ideas that galvanized the public early on, that people around the world could relate to them, to know what the American interest is, and they can make an assessment whether they like it, whether America is credible, whether they trust the US, whether they like its objectives. They can make an assessment. I think he does have an opportunity, regardless of what he does on specifics, and that is what is what is open to a new President, is to put forth a new framework, a new vision, new ideas that could in some ways make us reassess even some of the options that were put on the table during the Bush administration. Maybe if Obama said the same speech that Bush delivered in a different context, it could actually resonate more. So he does need to do that, and I think that is going to be his first mission.

But in the end, going back to the early conversation about the aim of our aid, what is it for. Historically, certainly throughout the Cold War, but since, but since it has been rewarding governments for cooperating with us strategically. That has been the primary aim of aid. We have always advocated democracy, we have always advocated human rights—America stood for that. But in the end most of our aid has been strategic aid. And I think if there was a change in a way after 9/11-- at least among our political elite, I don't know how much our government internalized it—it was not only to stand for democracy as an American value—that has always been there—but it was some kind of assumption that the advocacy of democracy is in our national security interest. That it is the way to fight terrorism, the way to achieve security. So it became an instrumental argument besides being a value of its own.

That's problematic, because if it turns out that it is not the case, as we have seen, at least in the short to medium term, if you get different consequences, then you can start walking backward from it, and that is what happened. Now we walked backward in part because to go back to the argument of space available to the regime, what do we have, what options do we have. We don't like authoritarian regimes; most people do not like the Islamists, the US worries when the Islamists win. I happen to think that having Islamists in power is problematic, because Islamists are not Islamic. The vast majority of people in the Middle East consider themselves good Muslims, but most of them do not support the Islamists. Islamist is a political movement that uses religion to rationalize its being in power and it does advocate the imposition of shariaa law.

And whether or not they can accommodate that with our notion of what democratic is, I don't know. Some people disagree on it. I am not sure. So it is problematic on some level, at least for the societies in terms of it is not incompatible with our notions of what

we think is democratic. But the bottom line is this: I am not sure we can create a third space. I don't think we have the capacity. We are a multi-party democracy, but does anybody know that? We only have two parties, and any time we have competition and you have clustering of two powers that balance each other in most places, coalitions emerge, it is rare that you would have a third way.

So the regimes set it up, and they can set it up, and we cannot fight them on it. It is going to be either us, meaning the regimes, or the Islamists. They are not going to create a third way, and the Islamists are not going to create a third way or operate in the creation of a third way. Now I don't want to exaggerate. There are possibilities—I am talking here about the ultimate end. We have to be a little bit modest about what we can do. I think that people within these countries can do more and I think that what we need to do is in some ways intervene less and allow them to do more on the ground.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Larry and Zeyno?

LARRY DIAMOND: Well, Shibley knows more about the Middle East than I will ever learn in my life, but I think you would agree that we are not starting from scratch. There are places—Morocco might be the most hopeful—where there is a considerable amount of pluralism already there. And in Egypt there are a lot of seeds to build on. And I think we would all agree, we cannot just snap our fingers and will it into being. The concept of widening space is to create the room for that to happen. And you are exactly right; I would not disagree with it. Human rights are the wedge of this. In fact, McFaul and I have written repeatedly that one of our goals should be to try and bring about in the Middle East what helped to transform Eastern Europe, which was an international regime that began as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe in which there were commitments that regimes made to allow human rights monitoring. That is the beginning of widening space, and to recognize certain human rights standards—now what those standards, well, the two most important ones are freedom of the press and freedom of association, and then some degree of due process of law that goes along with it. If we insist on those things, then the actors on the ground there will gradually widen space, and the regimes will be deprived of the most important instruments of repression that they have used to close down this space.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Zeyno, build on this. How do we expand space?

ZEYNO BARAN: I agree with Larry and maybe I will go back on one issue that we cannot say that we are going to overthrow your regime and then expect cooperation. We have done that, not just with Egypt in the Sudan case, but go back to Uzbekistan. The US had a military base there and cooperation with the government and the military, but then we also were supporting movement to get rid of the government. So we cannot expect that they are going to open up. Because they know that opening up means the end of the regime.

Maybe what Mike said is that we don't use certain terms, but we do the work without calling them what they are. And then also when we listen to the people on the ground,

who we listen to and why these people say the things they say matter to us. In terms of Egypt or other places, you listen to the people in Egypt; you also talk to the people outside because what happens in Egypt really affects the whole neighborhood as well. So they do have some important inputs. One of the things that has been done, and this is again on expanding on the human rights issue, is shame. A lot of these cultures still don't want to be ashamed of certain things they do. On Sudan, one of the areas where I think Egypt could be cooperating is maybe to help the US to rally up other Muslim majority countries. This has been one of the most dishonest aspects because you have all these countries around the world saying America is killing Muslims, but they are turning a complete blind eye to what is going on in Sudan because of other issues.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: Let me stop you there because I hear, I know you have a response to that particular point.

RICHARD WILLIAMSON: This goes back to their vital interests too. And if you are one of the 9 states bordering Sudan, even if we are unhappy with them, we cannot deny that their first interest is a certain stability so refugees don't flood into their countries, or that Sudan becomes part of an arc from Somalia to Sudan to the West of a terrorist belt at the Sahara-Sub Sahara joining. So I am sympathetic to that, my God I have had enough discussions in Cairo, but I think you have to recognize that were we are going to be able to make progress on Arabs tend to be those that don't have interests that are quite so vital. The US should to a better job of selling that we are trying to help Muslims because a high percentage of those that have been killed in Darfur are Muslims and the US has been in the forefront morally, politically, and financially to help them.

ZEYNO BARAN: On the human rights issue, again going back to one thing we have an incoming Secretary of State who has said women's rights are human rights. And that is an area where we can also work with other countries. This is one way to go around the whole shariaa issue. I don't think America or a lot of the liberal and women's groups should remain silent to women being stoned to death anymore. That is an area where I think the US has to speak up.

JACK SNYDER: There is an area in which our interest in good state-to-state relations is consistent with our goals to try to create the facilitating conditions for democracy, and that is the most authoritarian regimes want to improve their economies and they need to plug into the world economy to do that. So this gives the United States and the other wealthy democratic countries a card to play—we can say if you want to have economic improvements through relations with us, you need to improve your legal system, you need to have some sort of a bureaucracy that is going to be predictable and not corrupt, you need rule of law reform if you are going to trade with us and get wealthier. This is the path that we have been taking with China, and it is a path that South Korea, Taiwan and Chile took successfully. They were authoritarian regimes that cleaned up their bureaucracy and traded successfully and created an economic dynamism that propelled them towards democratic consolidation. This may not work everywhere, but it is an area where there is common interest between the advanced democracies and many authoritarian regimes.

CARL GERSHMAN: That is adequate on one level, but it is not enough. I think that it is important to work with governments to try and encourage them to take the right steps and so forth, but frankly if they are locking up people, if they are brutal to people, you have got to speak out against that. And that is the way you defend and try to expand political space, through human rights defense, through protecting activists, by doing all the things that we want to see our government do.

Another very important area which [off-mic] just touched on very, very briefly but hasn't been mentioned here is free media. To expand the ability of newspapers, of radio and television stations, of internet users, to be able to get information around to the population as a way to empower the population, is a way to make the government more accountable. Even in China the fact that there are hundreds of millions of internet users and over half a billion cell phones has created real accountability which didn't exist before in China, because people can make stories that were not about issues of controversy that before were simply buried.

One other point, a concrete example, again returning to Egypt, about how to expand political space. After Condi Rice went to American University in Cairo and delivered a very important speech in June of 2005; the month after that Mubarak gave a big speech where he laid out a whole agenda for reform. He never implemented that agenda for reform, but it had in it a lot of elements that would have moved Egypt forward. I think that should have been part of the regular discussion of the United States of getting him to stick to that agenda. The moment they had the elections, the parliamentary elections, and the Islamists did a little better, they used that as a way of saying we cannot move forward. I don't think we should allow these governments just to play the fear card with us. There are ways to move forward in ways that will actually reduce the danger of certain extremists taking over and we need to have that as part of the regular dialogue with governments like that, especially where we have a friendly relationship with the government. And I don't think we did that sufficiently.

JACK SNYDER: There is a basic issue about whether expanding political space is always the best thing to do, both for stability and for the long run prospects of democracy. International donors went to Burundi in 1992-3 and said you have to expand political space, you have to increase your media freedom, and you have to hold free and fair elections, and they did and within very short order 200,000 people were dead because it mobilized the ethnic conflict between the Hutu and Tutsi there. Likewise in China, we need to ask ourselves, what will constitute a political opportunity in a country that has huge disparities of wealth, and where one very likely use of communications freedom there will be to play nationalists issues towards Taiwan, Tibet and Japan to the hilt. We need to be very careful of knowing when we are facing an opportunity and when we are just facing a situation that could lead out of control in dangerous ways. The basic dispute that we are having is whether you want to open a political space first, or whether you want to create facilitating conditions for democracy in the economy and institutionally as you are increasing political space.

LEON WIESELTIER: Getting back to your practical question to Obama, nine months from now, I do worry about that. I think that in the first place when you open political space, when you open the public square, everybody flows into it. The public square is not just going to be occupied by liberals and democrats. I think that, lets say, there is a crisis in Egypt and lets say Mubarak does appoint his son and so on, and the President has to tell him something. You could talk about the composition of his government—you could put Ayman Nour into the government the way mutating the mutanda the way the Shah put in Bakhtiar into the government when things go bad.

But the fact is that there two kinds of critics of the Mubarak regime: there are the liberal critics and the Islamist critics. And no matter how much political space you open in certain societies and no matter how much you get little Mubarak to complicate the composition of his government and so on, the Islamists and other enemies of democracy are not going to go peacefully, and I think this is a genuine problem. I think you get into questions here of what you tell little Mubarak about the use of the Army in certain situations—obviously you don't want things to get worse and so on—but there are people who will sacrifice their life for the prevention of democracy. And not in all the societies we are talking about, but since Egypt is the case, I guess what I am saying is I don't know what you do and the President of Iran wants the entire discussion, because by the time the crisis happened, it was too late, much too late. So you had Bakhtiar and all these half measures, you had band-aids basically. This should trouble Hillary Clinton's sleep, or Jones' sleep, because I don't know what would happen in this situation.

RICHARD WILLIAMSON: I would suggest that the tragedy of 200,000 dying in Burundi had a lot more to do with the broiling turmoil in the Eastern Congo that slopped over and played to the Hutu-Tutsi split, and I spent time in Bujumbura at the time. I would go back to what Carl said, we should be cautious about accepting the fear card, err on the side of trying to support a freer media, freer expression, and creating political space. Every situation is fact-driven, the difficulties have to be assessed, but the presumptions should be to give elbow room for civil society to build as the best chance for a sustainable democracy to emerge.

MICHAEL MCFAUL: I am a little bit nervous about this assumption that we have had for a little more than an hour now that if there are free and fair elections in Egypt, anti-democratic forces are going to take over the country. Maybe, but maybe not. And nobody knows that answer to that for sure until they are in the process. And that is I think is the paradox, right? I have been looking at cases and what we have in mind, we have Hitler in mind, we have Algeria in mind, and we have the elections in Palestine of 2006 in mind. All of those were highly flawed—the notion that it was democracy that brought these autocrats into power is highly flawed, and we don't have time to get into the specifics of those cases.

But I would really challenge the notion that all three of those cases were democratic processes leading to bad guys coming into power. And by the way, not having elections for a decade in Palestine helped to create the Hamas base—let's not forget that. Second thing, we don't know what the [Muslim] Brotherhood would do if they are in power.

Yeah, we can read their doctrines—I have, the PGD in Morocco read very closely—but the bottom line is they believe in shariaa, well, with all due respect, there are people in my party, the Democratic party, who I think have some incredibly illiberal ideas about how to run the economy, and in the Republican party, if you just read what they say, you would not say, that doesn't look so democratic to me.

But there are institutions in place that check that, and we won't really know what is going to happen until they come into power. It reminds me George of, and I am glad you brought up Chile, and South Korea and I would add South Africa in the 1980s, because when you go back and you read about those cases, the boogeyman was always a Communist. Pinochet—if we have free and fair elections, the Communists are going to come into power and they are going to ride right up to New Mexico—he said that, almost literally. And then we put pressure on them—they had free and fair elections and the Communists did not take over, and there was democracy. The same thing in the Philippines—they had elections, we are going to lose our base there, but we didn't. South Korea—same thing, we didn't lose our base. South Africa, until 1985 the ANC was listed as a terrorist organization by the State Department. And they were called Communists and we were afraid of them, we didn't talk to them, and finally Schulz said this is ridiculous, and he met with Oliver Tamba, and by the way the hard-liners in his administration said, you are meeting with the terrorists, that is the word they used—and it turned out that yes, there were some in the ANC that were the people you are describing, that wanted social revolution, that didn't want democracy, that wanted to seize the property rights and create a socialist utopia. But it turned out that, a) the negotiated settlement didn't let them do that; and b) there were others in the ANC that wanted other things. And we won't know until there is a transition.

LEON WIESELTIER Can I ask you one thing? Lets just take the Egyptian example—the stakes are really high...

MICHAEL MCFAUL: Compared to South Africa in the 1980s?

LEON WIESELTIER: Yes...I think that the stability of the entire Middle East in some deep way continues to depend in some way on the stability of the Egyptian-Israeli peace. Now I have no way of knowing that if there were free and fair elections in Egypt that that peace would be destroyed. And I understand that we are already in the middle of it, and as Robert Frost once wrote, the best way out is always through. On the other hand, one cannot simply approach the possibility in the spirit of curiosity and liberal hope because the stakes here are really, really high.

MICHAEL MCFAUL: I want to be very clear about that. So, we know that sometimes that maybe the possibility is there. But I remember the arguments about Turkey, and the AKP party is going to promote civil war throughout, I remember the arguments about the PJD in Morocco...Let me finish, and then you tell me the real facts, the real things in Turkey. My point is not that, my point is that there is a way to avoid handing over all power immediate to the Brothers, which is what they did in Chile. So they had an election, and they said, we are going to experiment with these radicals, and by the war,

Carl, there was engagement on the civil society side as well, but we are going to have Pinochet in charge of the military for 20 years. And that is the part we have not been focusing on. It is too black and white for me, this conversation.

CARL GERSHMAN: There is something else that happened in Chile, I just want to note, which is the transformation of the socialist party into a social democratic party, and that was a conscious effort by the opposition to try and move that party into a European social democratic direction. It will be more difficult in the Middle East but ultimately that is what people are hoping can happen in the Middle East with the Islamists.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: We are out of time...

MICHAEL MCFAUL: The last point, give the bad guys their property rights. That is my point. Let the whites, as they did in Poland, South Africa, Chile, and the Philippines, if you guarantee the property rights, that is part of the negotiation. That is the nasty notion about democratic transition that we don't like to talk about, because it has nothing to do with human rights, it has to do with negative rights, but it facilitates democratic transitions in all those countries we just described.

SHIBLEY TELHAMI: Michael is right after all, in that you can't really predict what is going to happen in Egypt. But one thing we do know is that we, the United States of America, do not know how to engineer the right outcome, and we haven't done it, we can't do it, we are not going to be able to do it, and let's remember the number one thing: everybody in the world wants liberty. I think democracy is a value that people share in the Middle East and everywhere. But they want other things even more in the immediate term—they don't want anarchy like we have in Iraq, they want clothes for their children, they want schooling and education, and let's keep this in perspective.

It is very hard for people to take us seriously around the world and certainly in the Middle East when you have 88 percent of the public not only having an unfavorable view of us, but thinking that we are one of the two biggest threats to them in the entire world. Until we change that, which means changing our policy—after all, spreading democracy is about the will of the people. If our position on issues, whether it's Iraq or our presence or Arab-Israeli relations, is at odds with the people, and then how are we going to be patient enough to allow the will of the people to take over when in fact the people think we are a threat to them. It is a real problem, and I think that we are not coming to grips with it.

GEORGE STEPHANOPOULOS: We are going to have another discussion soon, because there is so much to follow up on. Thank you all very much, this has been terrific. Thank you.