

Making Democracy Promotion Work

A Game of Rhetoric and Manipulation

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Abstract

Democracy promotion is a foreign policy goal that the United States started to emphasize in the last three decades. In recent years, the goal was met with criticism by those that perceive US claims of promoting democracy as euphemisms for strategic goals that may undermine actual democratic initiatives. Democracy theorists often identify this as a problem that contributes to cynicism around the globe towards United States. This was especially true at the end of President George W. Bush's second term in office in 2008. Mr. Bush's five-year war in Iraq was publically justified as an attempt to bring democracy to the people of Iraq.¹ Developments in the war and new information regarding the attack led many to view it as an attempt to further US power. This paper is an attempt to determine whether or not the presidential administrations of the last twenty years made efforts to genuinely promote democracy. By examining the language of democracy promotion in the national security strategies of the last three presidential administrations, and pairing that language with the actions of each president, the research concludes that democracy promotion has been a mix of rhetoric and action. Lack of universality among the national security strategies, coupled with a lack of a definition for democracy or democracy promotion, allows the US to manipulate the idea to fit its own interests. Other variables also limit the effectiveness of promotion policies. The paper also offers policy recommendations that could lead to effective promotion or a decrease in foreign skepticism regarding the actions of the United States.

¹ *Responding to the Democracy Promotion Backlash*, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senate Cong., (2006) (testimony of Thomas Carothers).

Part I. Introduction

The government of the United States of America was once the symbol of freedom and hope for those living without the privileges of democratic rule. Despite domestic and international hypocrisy on the behalf of the United States government, the image of liberty and freedom prevailed into the later half of the twentieth century. Today, this is not the case. The United States still touts the message of freedom and democracy, but in light of recent actions and the US' ascent from nation-state to world superpower, many have grown to view the US as an oppressor rather than a liberator. The shift has led to disruptive regimes and actions across the globe that tax the limits of US power and challenge its role as a global hegemon.

The roots of much of this dissent can be attributed to a foreign policy that has paid lip service to the ideal of self-determination and democracy while often overtly and covertly denying these principles in favor of strategic goals. This was blatantly obvious during the United States' Cold War with the Soviet Union when the U.S. would stop at nothing to halt the spread of communism. The backing of dictators over elected officials was fair game in the all out effort to triumph over the Soviets. The prospect of change began in the early eighties.

In 1983 President Ronald Reagan introduced the idea that the United States could tangibly promote democratic change abroad as a goal of United States foreign policy. Regardless of his commitment to the policy, the prospect of doing so would have been difficult for Reagan as the United States remained deadlocked in the realities of the Cold War until 1991. By 1992, however, with the Soviet Union dismantled, the United States could focus more on promoting democracy abroad with respect to the democratic choices of foreign nations, rather than intervening when those changes did not match United States policy. The change was not realized. To be sure, the language of democracy promotion was present among the last three

presidential administrations and in some cases so too were the initiatives in place to promote democratic change, but this was not congruent with a broad based change in policy. Although the post Cold War presidencies offered more of a call for democratic change, in most cases democratization followed the same patterns present during the Cold War.

The development of new institutions for democratic change was a reality, but the administrations continued to cling to realist notions that supported the strategic goals of the United States over real democratic initiative. As a result, democracy promotion since 1992 has been a mix of rhetoric and action. Research concludes that a lack of universality among the national security strategies and rhetoric of United States presidents, coupled with a lack of a definition for democracy or democracy promotion, allows the US to manipulate the idea to fit its own interests. This makes the success of a democracy promotion policy a mixed bag at best.

Research Methodology and Organization

In developing the conclusion that democracy promotion has been hindered by inconsistencies in language and action of the Presidencies of the last twenty years, this research began by assuming that democracy promotion was a possible reality in the post-Cold War era.

To test the hypothesis the following research questions were asked:

- What is democracy promotion?
- Is democracy promotion a viable policy objective of the United States?
- What has been the state of democracy promotion over the last three presidential administrations?
- To what extent has the policy been a clear objective of these presidents and to what extent has it simply been rhetoric?
- Are there any other competing variables that limit the ability of the United States to promote democratic change?

To answer these questions an initial effort was made to define democracy and democracy promotion as a whole. Following a general study of a democracy promotion, a qualitative study

of the National Security Strategies of President William J. Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack H. Obama was conducted. Each strategy was examined for its discussion of democracy and democracy promotion and then paired with subsequent actions of each president to determine if these actions matched the language contained in the National Security Strategy. The study relied on research of events that occurred during each administration and analysis of leading democracy promotion theorists regarding analysis of each action. For the purpose of brevity, cases were limited for each president, highlighting key incidents when rhetoric and action did not align. More could be highlighted, but the mere presence of multiple instances where the two fail to align were determined to demonstrate a lack of congruence between policy and action.

In addition to research of National Security Strategies, speeches and documents regarding democracy promotion and democracy were also included to demonstrate commitments to the idea of democracy promotion that went beyond National Security Strategy. Institutions that attempt to promote democracy were also investigated for their role in aiding or obstructing the ability of the United States to promote democracy. Evidence of this was determined using previous research results, but was paired with this study's analysis of the democracy promotion strategies of each President.

Relevant Theories in International Relations

Theories of international relations that pertain to this study include realism, liberalism, and democratic peace theory (Basic definitions of each of these theories were surmised from the book *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches* by Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen.) Realists assume that the world operates as an anarchic system of states. Each state seeks its own interest and is concerned with the security and survival of its state. Liberals view the world under the parameters of the state system but believe that cooperation and

collaboration are possible amongst states. Liberals also believe that individuals and groups influence foreign policy. Democratic peace theory is considered a part of liberal theory and it emerged towards the end of the Cold War. According to author's Robert Jackson and Georg Sorenson, the theory claims "that foreign policies conducted between liberal democracies are more peaceful and law-abiding than are foreign policies involving countries which are not liberal democracies."² The promotion of democracy then, will yield more democracies and a more peaceful planet.

Each of these theories was considered when evaluating the state of democracy promotion. The assumption that the promotion of democracy is a viable theory is the premise for many initiatives to promote democracies on a global level. The contention of this report, however, is that most presidential action reverts to realist strategy and will abandon commitments to democracy in favor of strategic interests. Democracy promotion is a goal, but it is secondary to state interests. There are times when it falls in line with state interests. In those situations the promotion of democracy can be considered a realist goal because of its role in developing states that promote the security and interests of the promoter.

Review of Relevant Literature

The evaluation of democracy promotion is not a new topic. Theorists have discussed the merits of this topic at length and many reports have evaluated the US policy of democracy promotion. Some reports and journal articles explain that the idea has merits while others dismiss democracy promotion as a myth. Noam Chomsky, political activist and MIT Professor of linguistics and philosophy, has been an ardent critic of US democracy promotion policies over the last forty years. Chomsky's most recent publication, *Making the Future; Occupations*,

² Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen. *Introduction to International Relations: Theories and Approaches*. Third ed. New York: Oxford UP, 2007.

Interventions, Empire, and Resistance, asserts his long held belief that democracy promotion is not an intended goal of US foreign policy. In it, he writes “Washington and its allies definitely do not want public opinion expressed in policy, one measure of functioning democracy.”³

Chomsky also calls democracy promotion a “fabled yearning,” of American policy stating “democracy is tolerable only insofar as it conforms to strategic-economic objectives.”⁴ These claims are further asserted by Chomsky’s contemporary, Lebanese political scientist Gilbert Achcar who said in 2006 “what Washington wants, and what it means by democracy, is the installation of governments under U.S. control with democratic facades, and nothing more.”⁵

Most agree with Chomsky’s and Achcar’s statement regarding the general history behind democracy promotion during the Cold War and the Bush presidency, but some give the United States more credit for genuine attempts to further democracy. Thomas Carothers, vice president of studies at the Carnegie Endowment of International Peace, is considered the leading democracy promotion analyst in the country today. Carothers looks at democracy promotion through an optimistic lens that recognizes positive steps towards democracy promotion while critically analyzing the differences between US policy and US action. Analysts Kenneth Wollack and Michael Mandelbaum have also attacked the idea of democracy promotion. Wollack believes there is both realist and idealist value in democracy promotion, but this reality has not been fully understood over the last twenty years.⁶ Mandelbaum characterizes the

³ Noam Chomsky. *Making the Future: Occupations, Interventions, Empire and Resistance*. San Francisco: City Lights, 2012. p. 260

⁴ Chomsky *Making the Future* p. 260

⁵ Noam Chomsky and Gilbert Achcar, and Stephen Rosskamm Shalom. *Perilous Power: The Middle East & U.S. Foreign Policy : Dialogues on Terror, Democracy, War, and Justice*. Boulder: Paradigm, 2009. p. 51

⁶ Kenneth Wollack. "Assisting Democracy Abroad." *Harvard International Review* (2010): 1-6.

promotion of democracy under the United States as a policy failure in spite of the growth in democracies over the last twenty years.⁷

In addition to leading theorists, government and international institutions have conducted studies that assess the success and progress of democracy promotion policies. These institutions include but are not limited to, the following; US Congress, the United States Agency for International Development, the United Nations, and the US Government Accountability Office. The infrastructure of democracy promotion has also received heavy analysis and is viewed as another variable that effects the promotion of democracy on the whole. Thomas O. Melia conducted a report analyzing these institutions in 2005 that this study relied on for analysis.

The literature on democracy promotion is extensive. This report attempted to focus mainly on National Security Strategies, their language, and the effect this might have on democracy promotion as an achievable foreign policy goal.

Part II. Democracy and Democracy Promotion Defined

To properly understand the idea of promoting democracy it is necessary to define democracy and what it might look like to promote it. Critics and proponents of the idea of democracy promotion alike make note of this factor. One might easily define a democracy through the common notion that it is simply a government created by and for the people. Still, this definition is broad and difficult to measure. In 2007, by the request of Congress to build a report on democracy promotion, the Congressional Research Service (CRS) came up with a definition. According to their report a democracy is a government that must have at least minimal elements of “ effective participation by the people, under a constitution, respect for

⁷ Michael Mandelbaum. "Democracy Without America." *Foreign Affairs* Sept/Oct. (2007).

human rights, and political equality before the law for both minorities and the majority.”⁸ The report goes on to say however, that even this definition is minimal. And, citing scholars and state department officials, the CRS further notes that democracy promotion and democratization are complex processes that take time and may not be fully measureable at first. As the report notes, one can easily say that a democracy exists because there are free and fair elections, but there is so much more to ensuring that it works. Richard Haass, a former state department official, is noted for his claim that “democracy is more than elections; it is a diffusion of power where no group within a society is excluded from full participation in political life.”⁹ Checks and balances, independent media, unions, political parties, schools and universities, freedom of speech, and equal democratic rights are all noted by the CRS report as further indicators of democracy. Still, despite these indicators, there is no clear definition of what democracy is. This is a major obstacle for a nation that is attempting to promote democracy.

To highlight the murkiness of the word democracy, one need look no further than the Nobel Prize Organization’s recent democracy project and democracy map website. According to the website, all countries in the world, except for four, call themselves democracies.¹⁰ So, other than Vatican City, Saudi Arabia, Burma, and Brunei, every country in the world is a democracy and there is no need for promotion? Not quite. The Nobel Organization notes that today there are over one hundred nations which the organization identified as non-democratic or partly democratic. Taking it a step further, the *Economist* has created a democracy index to measure the level of democracy within nations across the globe. Out of the 167 countries polled, only

⁸ Susan B. Epstein, Nina Serafino, and Francis T. Miko. *CRS Report for Congress. Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of US Foreign Policy*. Rep. no. RL34296. Washington, D.C.: Congressional Research Service, 2007. p. 6

⁹ Epstein, Serafino, and Miko *CRS Report for Congress* p. 6

¹⁰ "Democracies in the World." *Democracies in the World*. Web. 12 May 2012.

<http://www.nobelprize.org/educational/peace/democracy_map/production/index.html>.

15% could claim to be full democracies, while 31.1% remained under authoritarian rule.¹¹ The same index lists the United States, the world's purveyor and promoter of democracy, as the nineteenth most democratic nation in the world. *The Economist's* formula is complex but they base their analysis on five indicators: electoral process and pluralism; civil liberties; the functioning of government; political participation; and political culture. When the survey of each country is complete "Countries are placed within one of four types of regimes: full democracies; flawed democracies; hybrid regimes; and authoritarian regimes."¹² *The Economist* also notes that "Free and fair elections and civil liberties are necessary conditions for democracy, but they are unlikely to be sufficient for a full and consolidated democracy if unaccompanied by transparent and at least minimally efficient government, sufficient political participation and a supportive democratic political culture"¹³

The Economist, Congress, and the Nobel Prize Organization are not the only organizations that provide definitions for democracy. In fact, the Noble Prize Organization bases its definition of democracy off of the non-governmental organization Freedom House which calls democracy "rule by people."¹⁴ The National Endowment for Democracy (NED), the US State Department, news organizations, USAID, and several other organizations also offer definitions of democracy. Across these definitions there are similarities, but indicators of democracy vary. Most stress rule of law, free and fair elections, and freedom of speech; others mention independent media organizations, schools and universities, labor unions, multiple parties, and secularism as indications of democracy. Among presidents, free market capitalism and participation in the global market place, are also indications of democracy.

¹¹ Economist Intelligence Unit. *Democracy Index 2011: Democracies Under Stress*. Rep. London: Economist, 2011. p. 2

¹² Economist Intelligence Unit. *Democracy Index 2011* p. 2

¹³ Ibid p. 2

¹⁴ Democracies in the World." *Democracies in the World*. Web. 12 May 2012.

Again, considering such varying degrees and definitions of democracy it is difficult to decide where and when to “promote,” democracy or if the United States is even qualified to do so. In fact, as the CRS report notes, this has often deterred congressional leaders from backing democracy promotion. By the same token, it has also lead to a wider range of institutions working to promote democracy.

The Princeton Project on National Security created a report in 2005 on what they called “The Democracy Bureaucracy,” which noted the institutions of democracy promotion. The extensive study was compiled by Thomas Melia and was titled: *The infrastructure of American Democracy Promotion*. According to the report, the current infrastructure of democracy promotion includes the National Endowment for Democracy, several non-profit organizations, for profit enterprises that operate as government contractors of democracy, the U.S. Agency for International Development, the State Department, the Department of Justice, the Department of Labor, the Defense Department, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Program, the U.S. Intelligence Community, and international broadcasting companies like Voice of America and Radio Liberty.¹⁵ Much like defining democracy, there is no definitive way to promote democracy. Sometimes democracy promotion is an initiative by the state department to engage other countries in discussions that have “shared values.”¹⁶ Other organizations have offered aid through “accountability mechanisms,” that measure “good governance.”¹⁷ Some interventions have offered financial support while others have involved military intervention in to “bring

¹⁵ Thomas O. Melia *The Democracy Bureaucracy: The Infrastructure of American Democracy Promotion. The Princeton Project on National Security*. Princeton University, Sept. 2005. Web. 10 Feb. 2012. pp. 5-6

¹⁶ Melia *The Democracy Bureaucracy* p. 2

¹⁷ Ibid p. 2

democracy,”¹⁸ to the people. There is also disagreement over what the process should look like. According to the Princeton study some understand that “democratization is a developmental process akin to economic and social development.”¹⁹ This process would take place over a long period of time and would involve aid organizations that facilitate the growth of democracies through the development of a political, economic, and social infrastructure that will help to spur democratic growth. This could be through the facilitation of free and fair elections, the development of educational institutions, or the expansion of trade and economic opportunities. In some cases it has even manifested itself through the promotion and backing of candidates deemed more democratic than their opponents. The second school of thought calls for “quick-burst,”²⁰ interventions that aim to fix problems immediately. This could mean helping to draft a new constitution or using force to oust a leader that is contrary to democratic change. Part of this process, as the Princeton study notes, must involve an assessment as to whether the obstacles to democracy are societal or created by a minority that wields the power.²¹

In the end, much like democracy itself, democracy promotion is hard to define. Melia’s study makes it clear that democracy promotion is not a one size fits all or quick fix scenario. It is a multifaceted effort that takes time to develop. Democracy promotion is a policy that aims at aiding democracy development in countries where its growth might be challenged by a multitude of factors. Even still, this is a process that needs some clarification and uniformity. It does, however, seem to be a process that the United States has deemed necessary moving forward. Since the Cold War, Presidents Clinton, Bush, and Obama have all made democracy promotion a

¹⁸ Ibid p. 2

¹⁹ Ibid p. 2

²⁰ Ibid p. 2

²¹ Ibid p. 2

key part of their National Security Strategy. Thus far their methods and their results have been mixed.

Part III. Background and History of US Democracy Promotion

Democracy promotion is not a concept that happened over night. Throughout its history, democracy and its promotion have been central themes in the rhetoric of United States foreign policy. From 1776 to 2012, presidents and state officials have promoted the belief that democracy is fundamental to just government. In the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson told world that the power of a government comes only from the consent of the citizens that allow it to govern. All men were equal and entitled to certain unalienable rights. The words inspired thousands at home and abroad, but early on this did not translate to international action against regimes that impeded democratic growth, nor did it translate to universal democracy at home. Jefferson himself owned slaves²² and refused to back the rebellion of black Haitians against the colonial regime of the French, despite parallels to America's revolution against Great Britain.²³ The hypocritical trends set by Jefferson did not change after his presidency. American democracy remained limited and internationally the United States preferred isolationist policies that did not offer much support for burgeoning democracies. This lack of follow through did not deter international support for American ideals. American democracy was an ideal that many celebrated internationally, even when domestically it could only be celebrated by America's land owning white males.

Over time barriers to democratic change at home were gradually broken. America also entered the fray of international politics and became a major player on the world stage by the

²² Annette Gordon-Reed. "Was the Sage a Hypocrite?" *Time Magazine* 4 July 2004. Print.

²³ Edwidge Danticat. "Thomas Jefferson: The Private War: Ignoring the Revolution Next Door?" *Time Magazine* 4 July 2004. Print.

early twentieth century. As time passed, and democratic growth continued at home, the language of democracy promotion became more and more apparent in the administrative doctrines of United States Presidents. The most blatant change came from President Woodrow Wilson in April of 1917 as he prepared Congress for his proposed recommendation to enter into World War I. For Wilson, the reason for fighting, for forgoing America's original position of neutrality:

“we shall fight for the things which we have always carried nearest our hearts—for democracy, for the right of those who submit to authority to have a voice in their own governments, for the rights and liberties of small nations, for a universal dominion of right by such a concert of free peoples as shall bring peace and safety to all nations and make the world itself at last free.”²⁴

Wilson claimed that the goal of the United States was to “make the world safe for democracy.”²⁵ Wilson continued to push for this aim as the war came to a close. In his post-war plan for peace he outlined self-determination as a key component in ending future wars. Wilson spoke to the American people and the world when he issued his now famous *Fourteen Points*, a document distributed in January of 1918. In this document Wilson expressed his great hope for world peace on the basis of self-determination and sovereignty amongst the nation-states of the world. The premise was anticipated by nations struggling to receive such acknowledgement on the international level. Unfortunately its application only came to fruition amongst the nations of Eastern Europe. Thus, beginning a trend of hypocritical foreign policy in underdeveloped nations. Many of the nations in the defunct Ottoman Empire, or most of the modern Middle East, came under the imperial control of France and Great Britain rather than receiving independence and the ability to determine their own fate. In Latin America, Wilson displayed a

²⁴Woodrow Wilson. "War Message." Woodrow Wilson's War Message. House Chamber of Congress, Washington, D.C. 2 Apr. 1917. Address.

²⁵ Wilson "War Message."

foreign policy in which the United States effectively opposed the sovereignty and democratic decisions of nations in favor of intervention on the basis of the US interests. Author James

Loewen points out the lack of continuity between Wilson's speech and his actions:

“Under Wilson, the United States intervened in Latin America more often than any other time in our history. We landed troops in Mexico in 1914, in Haiti in 1915, the Dominican Republic in 1916, Mexico again in 1916 (and nine more times before the end of Wilson's presidency), Cuba in 1917, and Panama in 1918. Throughout his administration Wilson maintained forces in Nicaragua, using them to determine Nicaragua's president to force passage of a treaty preferential to the United States.”²⁶

Though democracy promotion had entered into the language of American diplomacy, it was clearly not the deciding factor in America's international actions. The United States would never fully integrate into the international system in the immediate aftermath of World War I, but a premise was laid for future foreign initiative. Democracy and freedom were important, but the application of each could be delayed or subverted for that which better served the interests of the United States government. Strategic interests of the United States vary. In this case the interests were two fold. The neighboring location of Latin America to the United States, is of geopolitical importance. By dominating Latin America the United States can also dominate the western hemisphere. In this case economic interests were also at play. The resource rich nations were exploited by American businesses like United Fruit and in countries like Guatemala the United States began long-term occupations to maintain control of the resources and hegemony in the region.²⁷ As Latin American scholar Eduardo Galeano put it in 1973, “our region.... Continues to work for the service of others' needs, as a source and reserve of oil and iron, of copper and meat, of fruit and coffee, the raw materials destined for rich countries which profit more from

²⁶ James W. Loewen. *Lies My Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong*. New York: New, 2008. p. 23

²⁷ "History of U.S. Interventions in Latin America." *History of U.S. Interventions in Latin America*. Web. 16 May 2012. <<http://www2.truman.edu/~marc/resources/interventions.html>>.

consuming them than Latin America does from producing them.”²⁸ The trend would continue after World War II when the United States moved from the shallow end of foreign affairs and into the deepest depths of international relations. The shift and policies of the United States would decide its fate for years to come.

After World War II the United States emerged as the leader of the free world. The evil of Nazi Germany was destroyed and the empire of Great Britain began to fade. Left relatively unscathed by the War, the United States’ wealth, military prowess, and political authority fairly labeled the nation as a superpower that could only be matched by the growing power of the Soviet Union. The dynamic left the two powers to compete globally during the latter half of the century. Such a unique situation also called for a referendum on United States foreign policy. Under the Monroe Doctrine, written in 1823, the United States had remained relatively neutral in foreign affairs, preferring to isolate itself from major foreign entanglements. Monroe issued the doctrine to help stabilize the nation’s foreign policy. The United States asked that Europe stay out of the affairs of the Western Hemisphere, and the United States would isolate itself from the affairs of the Eastern Hemisphere.²⁹ Now, the U.S. was a leader in the global community and

Much like Wilson, President Harry S. Truman faced the dilemma of leading one of the world’s victors in the wake of a massive World War. Many believed the end of the war would lead to a system of peace and partnership that would prevent future conflicts from occurring. While there was no World War III, the United States did not avoid conflict on the international stage.

²⁸ Eduardo Galeano. *Open Veins of Latin America: Five Centuries of the Pillage of a Continent*. New York, USA: Monthly Review, 1997. p. 1

²⁹ "The Monroe Doctrine." *Our Documents* -. Web. 13 May 2012. <<http://www.ourdocuments.gov/doc.php?flash=true>>.

The Soviet Union and the United States grew in power and developed growing conglomerates of nations that were deemed satellites by some and allied states by others. Regardless of name, both were piling up significant amounts of territory that were influenced and in some cases dominated by the dueling superpowers. Again, like Wilson, Truman had also claimed that he would work to facilitate democracy and the principles of a free world to combat the Soviet threat. In the Truman Doctrine the President outlined these principles and set the United States on a path to containment of the Soviets and communism at all costs. In a 1947 address Truman compared the path of communism versus the path outlined by the democracy of the United States. He said:

One way of life is based upon the will of the majority, and is distinguished by free institutions, representative government, free elections, guarantees of individual liberty, freedom of speech and religion, and freedom from political oppression.³⁰

Of the communism he wrote:

The second way of life is based upon the will of a minority forcibly imposed upon the majority. It relies upon terror and oppression, a controlled press and radio, fixed elections, and the suppression of personal freedoms.”³¹

And in response to such governments Truman stated “I believe that we must assist free peoples to work out their own destinies in their own way.”³² The document would become the overarching framework of American foreign policy for the next forty-three years. The United States would work to contain any communist threat abroad for fear that its growth would increase the influence of the Soviets. With the Soviets the US saw a world superpower that could challenge the United States economically, politically, and militarily. The United States was

³⁰ Thomas G. Paterson and Dennis Merrill. *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations: Documents and Essays*. Lexington, MA: D.C. Heath, 1995. p. 221

³¹ Patterson and Merrill, *Major Problems in American Foreign Relations* p. 221

³² Ibid. p. 221

determined to block the influence of this nation and counterbalance their strength. Again, geopolitical interests came into play.

The United States would support democratic regimes world-wide for fear that communism could spread rapidly, leading nations of the world to fall to its tenets like dominoes. The real danger was that the power of the Soviet Union would then exceed the power of the United States. The issue was one of power and influence rather than democracy and sovereignty. As a result the U.S. began to support any government that kept in line with its own national interests. Communism was a cause for undermining foreign governments but as time passed the US would pursue similar policies towards any nation that challenged US supremacy. The policy would create a laundry list of problems for the future of the United States.

Instead of acting on the belief that free peoples should be supported with respect to the political process of self-determined nations the United States came to view the policy of containment as a call to act no matter what. The reality should have been understood from the time of Wilson. Democracy was essentially the tool. The United States was not acting as a bastion of democratic rule or freedom; the government was acting as a realist state securing its own interests under the guise of democracy and freedom. Under the general premise of realism states must act within an international system that is inherently anarchical to achieve security, survival, and sovereignty. States, like people, can be animalistic and will threaten security of others if not kept in check. A state must act to maintain that security, sometimes at the expense of other states or institutions that hinder power, security and survival. The United States viewed Communism and the Soviets as an immanent threat to its security, survival, and power. The policy soon clouded the vision of self-determination and sovereignty. If sovereignty and self-

determination threatened the interests of the United States or benefitted the Soviets, the US would intervene, protecting its own interests not necessarily those of the nation targeted.

On multiple occasions the United States acted to eliminate the threat of communism and Soviet power by subverting and undermining national elections and democratic reforms. Perhaps two of the most glaring incidents occurred in 1953 and again in 1973. In 1953, under President Dwight D. Eisenhower, the US overthrew democratically elected left-wing leader Mohammed Mossadegh in Iran. This was well documented in Douglas Little's book *American Orientalism*.³³ Little notes that the Middle East was of vital importance to the US and its allies because it contained over 60% of the world's oil reserves. Mossadegh and his party threatened to nationalize the oil and kick out British companies that worked with the US. The US, together with the Iranian military, brought the authoritarian rule of the Shah back into power; a government that would support the US in the region for the next twenty-plus years.

In 1973 Chile elected Salvador Allende as president. His rule, however, was short lived as he was eventually shot by members of the Chilean military in a coup aided by the United States government and the Central Intelligence Agency of the United States.³⁴ Despite his rise to the presidency through free and fair elections the United States viewed him as a threat because he was a socialist candidate that could have supported the Soviet Union in a region where the United States aimed to maintain hegemony. The policies of previous governments had been acceptance of United States investments in the copper industry that ranged from 22 to 42 million annually from 1953 to 1958³⁵ Allende's program raised wages, promoted health and nutrition for the poor and working poor, and redistributed the wealth from Chilean industry to those most in

³³ Douglas Little. *American Orientalism: The United States and the Middle East since 1945*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 2008. pp. 216 - 217

³⁴Tim Weiner. *Legacy of Ashes: The History of the CIA*. New York: Anchor, 2008. pp. 354-357

³⁵ Simon Collier and William F. Sater. *A History of Chile, 1908-1994*. Cambridge; Cambridge UP, 1996 p. 278

need. “Many poorer Chileans, perhaps for the first time in their lives, ate well and clothed themselves somewhat better than before.”³⁶ Allende was acting on his socialist beliefs as President, and he was doing so in the name of democracy. “Allende and many of his followers sincerely believed that socialism could be built on the solid foundations of the Chilean democratic tradition.”³⁷ Despite the democratic change the US made a move to better serve its interests instead of democratic values.

To achieve state security and sovereignty during the Cold War the United States should have adhered to the true premise behind the words of Wilson and Truman. Sovereignty by nature would mean less involvement by the United States in the affairs of weaker states, but its role in facilitating or respecting the democratic wishes of these nations would create a stronger perception of the United States, reduce United States military needs, decrease costs to the United States economy, and develop allied partners throughout the world. When the United States chose the opposite path it generally had the opposite effect. More money was pumped into these nations, direct military involvement was often pursued, and the regional regimes generally came to view the United States as an oppressive imperialist power. In turn this has left the security of the American people and the power of the United States in question. The policy of pursuing interests over democracy continued into the 1980’s but the possibility for change arose as the Cold War came to a close.

Part IV. Democracy Promotion After the Cold War

Despite this blatant disregard for democracy in policy, in the early nineties there was cause for optimism. With the Soviet Union dismantled, the United States could focus more on promoting democracy abroad with respect to the democratic choices of foreign nations, rather

³⁶ Collier and Sater p. 230

³⁷ Ibid. p. 231

than intervening when those changes did not match United States policy. As the lone superpower there was a window for the change. This becomes clear when reviewing the National Security Strategies of Presidents William Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama. Starting with Clinton in 1992, the National Security Strategy moved away from containment policies set up during the Cold War in favor of a strategy that promoted “engagement and enlargement.” Clinton’s acknowledgement of these stated goals was published in 1995, three years into his first term as President. According to Clinton, this strategy would sustain the national interests of the United States through mutually supportive goals. These goals included sustaining military strength, bolstering the economy at home, and promoting democracy abroad. Clinton claimed that the lines between domestic and foreign policy were deteriorating and that this three-pronged process would ensure the needs of the country at home and abroad.³⁸ Clinton’s proposed plan offered the idea that the United States would engage in discussions with all nations that shared core values of democracy, as well as those that were open to creating a stronger relationship with the United States. The United States would also intervene in situations where it saw democracy threatened. Additionally, the administration believed that democracy might be a slow process that could take time to facilitate. By engaging in discussions with all nations, democratic or not, they hoped to instill economic changes that would eventually lead to democratic change.

In 2000 George W. Bush also took up the mantle of democracy promotion. This time the language was a clear and direct. Not only would the Bush administration look to promote democracy, it would also look to bring democracy to the people of the world. The language change is subtle, but it makes it clear that democracy was not an option or a gradual change.

³⁸ William J. Clinton. *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: Office of the President of the United States, 1995.

Instead the US would actively seek out “rogue states,” and terrorist organizations that the administration saw as the primary threats to democracy abroad. In 2002, echoing what would become a part of his National Security Strategy, Bush gave his annual State of the Union address to Congress and singled out Iran, Iraq and North Korea as states that could soon be targets of Bush’s new policy. Immediately after referencing each he state Bush said:

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.³⁹

By 2003, the seriousness of these policies came to fruition through the war in Iraq. It was the realization, that states could not harbor terrorists, threaten democracy, or develop weapons of mass destruction while Bush remained President. If states participated in these activities, the United States would seek them out and eliminate the regimes that were detrimental to democratic change. One can easily debate the merit of the Bush Administration’s claims, and even the outcomes of the war itself, but the commitment to democracy, at least in language, remains clear. This was a clear initiative in his National Security Strategy developed in 2002 as well as speeches and statements he made throughout his presidency.⁴⁰

The commitment to democracy promotion has not faltered with the administration of Barack Obama. Obama’s National Security Strategy, published in May of 2010, outlines a plethora of goals. His initial statements, however, focus on the fact that the current global environment is one in which free nations, open markets, and extensive democratic growth are ever present. Obama outlines new dangers to America but also emphasizes the fact that it will be

³⁹ George W. Bush State of the Union Address. House Chamber of Congress, Washington, D.C. 29 Jan. 2002. *Presidential Rhetoric*. Web. 12 May 2012. <<http://www.presidentialrhetoric.com/speeches/01.29.02.html>>.

⁴⁰ George W. Bush *The National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. Rep. Washington, D.C.: Office of the President of the United States, 2002.

the role of the United States to continue to advocate for democracy abroad. In his words to “advocate for the basic rights upon which our nation was founded.”⁴¹ This statement was a reference to the United States’ role as a nation that will set an example for democratic states rather than impose its will or values on others. As he states later in the document, the United States will use democracy to “speak to the hopes of the nations of the world.”⁴² He makes it clear that the United States, despite past history and perception, is not an empire but a country that seeks a world in which nations can determine their own destiny. This was a clear statement to curb some of the sentiment left over from the Bush Administration of seeking out and “bringing” democracy to nations that the U.S. deemed to be rogue states. Obama also notes that the promoting of democracy will include; greater partnerships with foreign nations, fighting of poverty and corruption worldwide, and a concerted effort with other powers to eliminate problems like terrorism, to stabilize failed states, to reduce the effects of climate change, and to deal with the problems created by economic upheaval in 2008. Much like Clinton, this strategy is multifaceted and sees democracy as something that can take place once a number of problems are tackled.

Although the post Cold War presidencies have offered more of a call for democratic change, in most cases democratization followed the same patterns present during the Cold War. These presidencies brought the idea of democracy promotion into the forefront of their national security strategy, but the actions of the Presidents seemed to tell a different story. As evidence will show later, Clinton, Bush, and Obama used the rhetoric of democracy promotion, but in practice the results may not have promoted democratic change. At the same time, even the

⁴¹ Barack H. Obama. *National Security Strategy*. Rep. Washinton, D.C.: Office of the President of the United States, 2010. p. II.

⁴² Obama. *National Security Strategy* p. II

current infrastructure and model for democracy promotion leaves much to be desired. There is no uniformity in the definition of what a democracy looks like, nor is there uniformity in the application of its promotion. As such, it is hard to measure what states need support and which do not, and the effectiveness of the strategy as a whole. Ultimately, the goal of democracy promotion is one that will benefit the United States in the long run, but there are parameters that must be met. First, policy makers must allow democracy to take shape at the pace of each nation and on the terms of each nation. Second, there must be a uniform definition of democracy and democracy promotion so that lines cannot be blurred. It should not be so easy to recommend military intervention in one region where democracy is challenged, and move towards economic aid in an area that may face the same problems. The administrations must move towards a policy that welcomes democracy, regardless of strategic advantage. This would promote the security and well being of the United States more than one that supports democratic change if and only if that change is in the best interests of the United States. This must be a goal that is taken up whole-heartedly with less emphasis on intervention and more on peaceful change. President Obama's strategy has moved away from intervention, but the trend must continue. An analysis of specific decisions and changes over the last twenty-years will reveal the problems with current efforts to democratize. A further discussion of the current infrastructure that supports democratization will also show that a more streamlined approach is necessary.

V. Critical Analysis: Rhetoric vs. Action 1992-2012

Democratization as a goal of international policy is difficult. As noted, there is no clear definition of democracy let alone its promotion. As such, recent Presidents have been left without a distinct operational protocol for implementing and promoting democratic change abroad. In addition, institutions that aim to supplement democratic change internationally also

lack common goals and implementation methods. Due to the inconsistency across bureaucratic structures and foreign policy doctrines, the ability of the United States to effectively promote democracy will continue to be an uphill battle. The current trend has yielded mixed results.

The Clinton Years: Engagement and Enlargement

President William J. Clinton's National Security Strategy would set the tone of the key goals of the United States government heading into a global environment where the country could free itself from the policies set by the doctrines of the Cold War. In 1995, Clinton outlined three key components of the nation's security strategy. First, "to sustain our security with military forces that are ready to fight." Second, "to bolster America's economic revitalization," and third, "to promote democracy abroad."⁴³ The formula was simple: maintain military and economic strength and be ready to use those forces to maintain America's standing as a dominant global power. The third piece, democracy promotion, would ensure that America would have more allies abroad and less conflict with these democratic partners.

The third point was defined as a cornerstone of the Clinton policy. Within the same document Clinton wrote "All of America's strategic interests-- from promoting prosperity at home to checking global threats abroad before they threaten our territory -- are served by enlarging the community of democratic and free market nations"⁴⁴ Despite this commitment, there is no clear definition of what democracy is. The document makes note of governments that are democratic, respect human rights, and are open to free market capitalism. The definition then, can be deduced as nations that have made efforts to develop governments that adhere to some sort of basic democratic principles. For lack of a definition the assumption can be made

⁴³ Clinton. *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* p. 4

⁴⁴ Clinton p. 22

that this means democracy in its most basic form; where the people are represented in the development and implementation of government. In addition, these governments must respect human rights and must be willing to adopt free market policies. The third piece is key. In the document democracy and markets are nearly interchangeable and usually paired together. Not far from the Cold War policies of the past, the Clinton administration remained tied to the belief that free market capitalism was essential for democratic change. Although vague in definition, the administration was clear in its policy strategy for implementing democratic change.

As the Cold War ended nations that claimed democratic governance were on the rise. Clinton notes that from 1980 to 1995 there was “an explosion in the number of states moving away from repressive governance and towards democracy.”⁴⁵ Under the climate Clinton’s strategy called for a policy that encouraged such trends to continue by engaging those eager for democratic change. The strategy supported the tenets of realism. Below, Clinton clarifies where and when the United States would look to promote democracy:

The core of our strategy is to help democracy and markets expand and survive in other places where we have the strongest security concerns and where we can make the greatest difference. This is not a democratic crusade; it is a pragmatic commitment to see freedom take hold where that will help us most. Thus, we must target our effort to assist states that affect our strategic interests, such as those with large economies, critical locations, nuclear weapons or the potential to generate refugee flows into our own nation or into key friends and allies. We must focus our efforts where we have the most leverage. And our efforts must be demand-driven—they must focus on nations whose people are pushing for reform or have already secured it.⁴⁶

This early strategy did not call for boots on the ground in nations where democracy did not exist. Instead it sought to encourage democracy where it already existed, where the United States had national security interests, and where people were asking for help and seeking democratic change. To do so, Clinton proposed an effort that was multifaceted and included: mobilizing

⁴⁵ Ibid p. 22

⁴⁶ Clinton p. 23

international resources, open markets to integration in the world economy, take immediate public positions where oppressive regimes are reversed, assist the UN in creating international organizations to protect human rights, engage Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) with similar goals, i.e. labor unions and environmental advocates, and finally to support relief efforts and continue global humanitarian assistance.

Even if the definition of democracy was vague, the methods of promoting democracy, and where the administration would intend to do so, were clear. Overall, the strategy was positive for the United States. As discussed below, the United States improved relations abroad, created trading partners out of former enemies, and sent aid to nations in need. This is not to say that democracy was effectively promoted. The strategy had its flaws.

Promotion in Practice

As Clinton stated in his strategy the United States would intervene in democracy promotion where it saw fit. This happened in Haiti, Bosnia, Iraq, North Korea, Northern Ireland, South Africa, and the Middle East during his presidency. In each situation there was a clear challenge to democracy or human rights that Clinton believed deserving of the attention of the United States. In Haiti in 1994, a military coup had ousted the democratically elected Jean Bertrand Aristide and Clinton intervened with nearly 20,000 troops and 2 billion dollars in support. The intervention restored the democratic process in Haiti, although the strength of the nation's democracy was called into question after the intervention. In Bosnia, Clinton held true to his promise to intervene with military force when repressive Serbian nationalist forces initiated violence and ethnic cleansing practices toward their own people. In Iraq, Clinton ordered an attack on the dictatorship of Saddam Hussein to destroy chemical weapons plants that

Clinton believed Hussein could use on his own people or others. In Ireland, South Africa, and Palestine Clinton initiated and engaged in peace talks between warring communities whose histories had been filled with violence that prevented true democratic peace. In North Korea, true to his policy of engaging foreign nations that were willing to talk, Clinton met with oppressive dictator Kim Jong-Il in an effort to open the nation to western influence and the free market. The actions taken by the administration made it clear that democracy promotion was not a joke. The problem, however, lay in Clinton's initial definition. Democracy promotion was not a grand plan to define and seek out true democratic change abroad. It was a realist policy that called for intervention in nations where the interests of the United States were best served. Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Southeast Asia were all targets of Clinton's interventions. What became clearer was that this intervention was also targeted at the implementation of free market capitalism abroad.⁴⁷

It was clear that the Clinton administration defined democracy as congruent with free market capitalism. This meant that the United States would open its doors to those willing to accept the rules of the growing global market. It did not mean that those nations had to make changes that would foster democratic growth. It also meant that the United States would seek regional trade agreements to develop allied support, even if that meant undercutting the democratic NGO's Clinton claimed to support, like unions and environmental groups. This was clear when Clinton signed into law the North American Free Trade Agreement between the United States, Canada, and Mexico. While supporting neo-liberal free trade policies, the US was ignoring the calls of labor unions in the United States to support workers at home.

⁴⁷ Information from the Clinton Presidency compiled from multiple sources including: Zinn, Carpenter, Peceny, and Sanchez-Terry.

The Clinton philosophy seemed to favor an acceptance of what author Ha-Joon Chang refers to as Thomas Friedman's golden straitjacket. Chang narrows the philosophy down to certain categories. A country must "privatize state owned enterprises, maintain low inflation, reduce the size of government bureaucracy, balance the budget, liberalize trade, deregulate foreign investment, deregulate capital markets, make the currency convertible, reduce corruption and privatize pensions."⁴⁸ For Clinton it seems as though countries could accept these policies over democracy. The interest of furthering free-market capitalism and globalization policies was deemed to be of strategic importance for Clinton. The National Security Strategy, as well as the actions of the administration, made this clear. Democratic changes to Russia in the wake of the Cold War were deemed essential for the Clinton administration, but this was more on the grounds of installing capitalism and aiding markets. Despite Russian efforts to suppress independence movements in Chechnya, Clinton extended support to Russia and its president Boris Yeltsin.⁴⁹ Despite a government that is today listed as one of the worst violators of human rights, the Clinton administration opened trade initiatives with Vietnam in 2000. Aid to Indonesia was extended during Clinton's presidency while the country was under the control of a military junta that was responsible for the mass killing of nearly 200,000 of its own citizenry. This was noted by historian Howard Zinn in the following article from the *Boston Globe*, which he documented in his book *The People's History of the United States*. In noting the consideration to continue to aid Indonesia the article notes:

⁴⁸ Ha-Joon Chang. *Bad Samaritans: The Myth of Free Trade and the Secret History of Capitalism*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2009. p. 20

⁴⁹ Howard Zinn. *A People's History of the United States: 1492-present*. New York: HarperCollins, 2003. pp. 654-657

The arguments presented by senators solicitous of Suharto's regime—and of defense contractors, oil companies and mining concerns doing business with Jakarta—made Americans seem a people willing to overlook genocide for the sake of commerce.⁵⁰

In perhaps his most egregious disregard for democracy or even human rights, Clinton chose not to intervene in Rwanda, despite the genocide that killed nearly one million in 1994.

Clinton was not adverse to democratic change, nor did he define his National Security Strategy as one that would initiate democratic change in countries where it was not present. The policy even lacked a definition of what democracy actually was. Important for democracy promotion, however, was the fact that Clinton claimed his administration would “promote democracy.” As the first president to serve the country without the prospect of Cold War with the Soviet Union looming, Clinton initiated the policy but it did not stray from the realist interests that were previously initiated. Its main goal was to secure the interests of the United States. If democracy were to flourish as a result than the administration would view such changes as a positive.

The Bush Presidency: Democracy through pressure and power

If Clinton's policy could be characterized by the subtlety of its cause for democracy promotion, George W. Bush's presidency could be characterized as anything but subtle. The Bush Presidency took Clinton's democracy promotion rhetoric to new levels and its actions continued along the same lines. Clinton's policy did not define democracy and it only stated that the United States would intervene in non-democratic states when those states were of interest to the U.S. or actively repressing their people. Bush took on a similar stance but also made it clear that the United States would seek out regimes that did not support democracy and bring

⁵⁰ Howard Zinn. *A People's History of the United States* p. 655

democracy to those states. Just months into the war with Iraq, a war that would define Bush's presidency, he had the following to say in a speech given to the National Endowment for

Democracy (NED):

Our commitment to democracy is also tested in the Middle East, which is my focus today, and must be a focus of American policy for decades to come. In many nations of the Middle East -- countries of great strategic importance -- democracy has not yet taken root. And the questions arise: Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Are millions of men and women and children condemned by history or culture to live in despotism? Are they alone never to know freedom, and never even to have a choice in the matter? I, for one, do not believe it. I believe every person has the ability and the right to be free.⁵¹

Bush continued to speak in the orientalist tradition of his predecessors and he also fundamentally changed the policy set by Clinton. To be clear, Clinton never defined democracy or departed from the realist methods of past presidents, but Bush was taking the democratic rhetoric to a new level. Democracy was something that the United States would bring to those that the Bush Administration felt were lacking. This meant bringing military force to nations that were deemed rogue states.

In his National Security Strategy from 2002 Bush quoted himself from a speech he gave at West Point in June of that year, three months prior to the issuing of the strategy. The quote states:

Some worry that it is somehow undiplomatic or impolite to speak the language of right and wrong. I disagree. Different circumstances require different methods, but not different moralities.⁵²

This was an aggressive stance. In his statements it was as if Bush viewed the previous eight years under Clinton as a reactive presidency. Bush would take a stance that was proactive,

⁵¹ George W. Bush. Freedom in Iraq and Middle East: Address at the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy. Washington, D.C. 6 Nov. 2003

⁵² Bush. *National Security Strategy of the United States* p. 3

seeking out those that denied democracy or were incongruent with American ideals. In his State of the Union speech in January of 2002 Bush stated, “Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September 11, but we know their true nature.”⁵³ The reference was to the regimes of North Korea and Iraq, the former of which Clinton was willing to engage in discussions in hopes of fostering economic and later governmental change. For Bush, this was not possible, or at least not possible for some nations. Even when the nations did not pose a threat, or by his own admission remained quiet, the United States understood their true nature and would not engage in any discussions with these nations. As noted earlier, in the same speech, he defined Iraq, North Korea, and Iran as states that were part of an “axis of evil.” States that were threats to democracy, that should be wary of the United States. In all of this rhetoric, however, Bush neither defined democracy nor democracy promotion. He used the words democracy and the phrase democracy promotion quite often but neither were actually defined. In the same State of the Union address Bush mentioned what made these states evil, qualifiers that included seeking weapons of mass destruction, providing arms to terrorists, and attacking allies of the United States. In his speech to the NED Bush elaborates more, highlighting women’s rights, secular governments, free market capitalism, schooling and education, free speech and the right to fair elections as part of what it means to be democratic, but again there is no clear cut definition. What’s worse is the lack of understanding or acknowledgement of where these changes may or may not be taking place. As mentioned earlier, the Nobel Prize organization highlights democracies around the world. Of the countries that exist in the world today, only four claim to be non-democratic states. One of these, Saudi Arabia, a long standing American ally in the Middle East, was highlighted by Bush in his speech to the NED as a nation pushing for

⁵³ Bush. State of the Union Address

democratic reforms. To quote the former President, “The Saudi government is taking first steps toward reform, including a plan for gradual introduction of elections. By giving the Saudi people a greater role in their own society, the Saudi government can demonstrate true leadership in the region.”⁵⁴ Perhaps Bush was referring to Saudi Arabia’s climb on *The Economist’s* Democracy Index, where out of the world’s nations Saudi Arabia ranked higher than only six authoritarian regimes in its providing of *some* democratic processes within the country.⁵⁵

Promotion in Practice

The point of this discussion is that the United States under Bush did not change. Democracy promotion and democracy were only relevant when the objectives fell in line with those of the United States. Perhaps it was better for Bush and Clinton to avoid a clear cut definition of either, doing so would cause the United States to be tied down by actual democratic standards. Under the Clinton and Bush strategies the language could be vague and it allowed for both administrations to operate under realist principles, seeking democracy promotion when it favored the United States. In the case of Bush, it also enabled the president to use the language of democracy promotion to make a case for the 2003 war in Iraq. Under its original premise the war was initiated to oust Saddam Hussein who the Bush administration charged with developing weapons of mass destruction. This was a feasible reason for some in the wake of terrorist attacks on New York City on September 11th; despite the inability to link Hussein to the attacks on New York. When such weapons were not available, Bush’s rhetoric shifted to democracy promotion as the war wore on. Ultimately, the war itself turned out to be a conflict that began under the premise of democracy, and weapons of mass destruction, however, this war was a realist conflict over control of a nation that was situated in a region that was of key interest to the United States.

⁵⁴ George W. Bush. Freedom in Iraq and Middle East

⁵⁵ Economist Intelligence Unit. *Democracy Index 2011*

Geopolitical interests were at stake for US allies in the region like Israel.⁵⁶ If the United States were to gain control in Iraq or establish a regime friendly to the Americans, it would create greater strength in the region for the US. In addition the nation of Iraq holds nearly 12%⁵⁷ of the world's oil reserves, and it is no secret that American companies like Haliburton began to sign multi-billion dollar contracts to control the oil by December of 2003⁵⁸, just nine months after the war began.

To make matters worse, highly publicized reports came out of Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and the US' Guantanamo Bay detention facility in Cuba that the United States had abandoned civil detention practices in favor of torture and humiliation. Many of the detainees were held on charges of terrorism towards the US and the tactics were deemed reasonable in order to protect American security.⁵⁹ Once again, in the post- Cold War world, democracy was used as a key ingredient in presidential rhetoric, but without a clearly defined idea of democracy or its promotion it fell short as a policy standard.

The Obama Administration: Democracy Promotion Redux

In November of 2008 Barack Obama took office with optimism and support from his own nation and those around the world. The reaction to Obama's election came in the wake of Bush's presidency that ended with presidential approval ratings as low as 30%.⁶⁰ Internationally the presidency had done all it could to devalue the idea of democracy promotion. Leading

⁵⁶ Iraqi War information compiled through data from Little, Chomsky and Achcar, Carothers, and Wollack

⁵⁷ Chomsky and Achcar *Perilous Power* p. 85

⁵⁸ John Burnett. "Examining Halliburton's 'Sweetheart' Deal in Iraq." *NPR*. NPR, 22 Dec. 2003. Web. <<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=1559574>>.

⁵⁹ *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 14 July 2005. Web <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/07/13/AR2005071302380.html>>.

⁶⁰ "Daily Presidential Tracking Poll - Rasmussen Reports." *Daily Presidential Tracking Poll*. Web. <http://www.rasmussenreports.com/public_content/politics/obama_administration/daily_presidential_tracking_poll>.

democracy promotion analyst Thomas Carothers commented in the fall of 2007 that “the Bush administrations close identification of democracy building with the war in Iraq has discredited the concept both at home and abroad.”⁶¹ Carothers went on to write:

America’s standing as a global symbol of democracy and human rights has been crippled by the many U.S. abuses of rule of law in the war on terrorism. The glaring gap between the president’s sweeping rhetoric about a freedom agenda and his administrations many efforts to secure economic and security favors from autocratic allies around the world multiplies the cynicism and confusion.⁶²

The task of the Obama administration was difficult; deal with ongoing conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, while reestablishing America’s position as a symbol for democratic change abroad. The 2009 speech in Cairo was a start. Obama capitalized on the international support he garnered in 2008 and began to speak like a president intent on reestablishing relationships abroad and with a concern for the sovereignty of nations in the Middle East and elsewhere. His national security strategy looked to establish these principles as well. Similar to Clinton, Obama backed the idea of engaging other nations around the world while enlarging America’s circle of allies. Unlike Clinton and Bush, however, Obama established democracy as part his national strategy, not a focal point.

Obama’s strategy begins with a discussion of the strategic environment that the United States faced at the start of his presidency. It is clear that the Obama administration recognized, or viewed, the current international order as one impacted by the phenomenon of globalization. For Obama this meant that the national security strategy of the United States could not focus on one or two goals, but needed to be multifarious in nature to address the current climate. Obama notes persistent problems in the global environment, including; wars over religious, ethnic, and

⁶¹Thomas Carothers. "Repairing Democracy Promotion." *Washington Post*. The Washington Post, 14 Sept. 2007. Web. 13 May 2012. <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/09/13/AR2007091302241.html>>.

⁶² Carothers. “Repairing Democracy Promotion.”

tribal identity, nuclear dangers, inequality and economic instability, environmental damages, food insecurity, dangers to public health, and threats of insecurity and increased competition in a global economy.⁶³ Although he notes the importance of democracy, democracy promotion is not a strategy in and of itself. The report details four key components that the administration would focus on to advance the interests of the United States. Those components included; security, prosperity, values, and the international order. Democracy promotion is mentioned as a subset under values. It is clear that the Bush idea of promoting democracy affected the approach of the Obama administration. Unlike Bush, who noted in 2003 that the United States would no longer “excuse,” or “accommodate,”⁶⁴ nations that did little to respect freedom within their own borders, Obama would move towards a strategy of engagement. Obama would cautiously wade into the idea of democracy promotion because Bush had done so much to make many across the globe view it as rhetoric used to further the agenda of the United States. For Obama, democracy promotion was listed as a part of the administration’s focus on values. Those values also included strengthening the power of America through example and promoting dignity by helping people meet their basic needs. The first of these values set the tone for the rest.

More than any other action that we have taken, the power of America’s example has helped spread freedom and democracy abroad. That is why we must always seek to uphold these values not just when it is easy, but when it is hard. Advancing our interests may involve new arrangements to confront threats like terrorism, but these practices and structures must always be in line with our Constitution, preserve our people’s privacy and civil liberties, and withstand the checks and balances that have served us so well.⁶⁵

This was democracy promotion by a new name, perhaps a reaction to Bush. Obama was making it clear that the United States would not seek to push democracy on others, or dictate governments in other nations, but instead the administration would attempt to promote

⁶³ Obama. *National Security Strategy* p. 1

⁶⁴Robert McMahon. "The Brave New World of Democracy Promotion." *Foreign Service Journal* January (2009): 31-39. Print.

⁶⁵ Obama. *National Security Strategy* p. 36

democracy by example. As if to mend the fences broken by the Bush Administration, Obama outlined principles of the American example which pertained to legality, transparency, and rule of law. All which were questioned by the international community in the wake of Iraq, Afghanistan, and the atrocities at Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo Bay. His second principle made it clear that the United States would also have a plan for promoting democracy when the power of example was not enough.

Democracy promotion as a value of United States policy was broken down into five subsets. The first of these was duty of the United States to ensure that new and fragile democracies delivered tangible improvements for their citizens. Through aid, work with NGO's, and diplomacy the United States would work to promote free and fair elections, strong legislatures, civilian control of militaries, honest police forces, fair judiciaries, a free and independent press, a vibrant private sector, and a robust civil society. This would be done through cooperation with the citizenry, not imposed on them. The second step would be the engagement of non-democracies, a departure from Bush's policy of isolating and targeting non-democracies. Obama called this a "dual-track approach."⁶⁶This would involve engaging these nations in a dialogue on human rights, engaging civil society in peaceful opposition, encouraging NGO's, using the international community, and drawing on economic incentives and disincentives as a means of promoting change. The third subset stated that the US would recognize the legitimacy of all peaceful democratic movements and welcome all candidates regardless of party. It would also relinquish support for those that sought democracy to obtain power but were then ruthless once they obtained it. Finally, the administration would make efforts to promote the rights of women world wide and strengthen international norms against

⁶⁶ Obama p.38

corruption. The final piece was yet another indication that the US would move away from an aggressive stance on democracy promotion and towards a position that advocated for international cooperation and normalcy on such issues. Moving away from taking the lead in favor of seeking a cooperative approach to democratization.

The policy outlined in the rhetoric of Obama's early speeches and security policy was new. The rhetoric had changed. In one way, he reverted back to Clinton's policy of engagement and enlargement, but in another sense he made it less about democracy and more about values. The language was no longer that the United States would bring democracy to other parts of the world, a la George W. Bush, but instead it would support democracy with an international effort. In practice this is a much easier stance to take on democracy promotion, because it is essentially not a stance. It is saying that the United States is concerned for and about democracies around the world but its overall strategy as a nation is not to seek out and promote such governments. It is up to the citizenry or nations around the world to do so. The US will encourage such changes and support those seeking change, but it will not interfere by sparking change through its own initiatives. Like his predecessors, Obama is concerned with the promotion of democracy but unlike Clinton and Bush it was not framed as an endeavor of the United States. Under the Obama strategy the United States will set the example, encourage trade and engagement with all nations, encourage and support citizenry seeking democratic change, and disengage nations that actively oppress their people by countering democratic change. In the end, however, the goal is to make democracy and human rights an international norm and an international concern. Passing the responsibility to the world rather than to the US. Obama said as much in a speech he made in Moscow in January of 2009.

As President of the United States, I will work tirelessly to protect America's security and to advance our interests. But no one nation can meet the challenges of the 21st century on

its own, nor dictate its terms to the world. That is why America seeks an international system that lets nations pursue their interests peacefully, especially when those interests diverge; a system where the universal rights of human beings are respected, and violations of those rights are opposed; a system where we hold ourselves to the same standards that we apply to other nations, with clear rights and responsibilities for all.⁶⁷

Promotion in Practice

Unlike the previous two administrations, President Obama's policy is easier to match to his actions as president. His strategy and terminology leave him open to change and decisions based on interests. The generalities that he uses afford him more leeway when comparing rhetoric to decisions that actually took place under his watch. This phenomenon was analyzed recently in a discussion given at the Carnegie Endowment's International Organization for Peace. The speaker was Thomas Carothers and his commentary said much about Obama's policy as well as his predecessors. Carothers identified two initiatives under Obama's administration that point to a backing off from the language of democracy as a result of Bush's overuse of the term in the past. Afghanistan and Iraq, for example, were not spoken of in terms of democracy but in terms of counterterrorism and international security. Second, Carothers notes that much of what Obama does in terms of democracy, he does with an eye towards international effort. It is what Carothers calls a repositioning of democracy. "An emphasis on international norms and frequent reference to universality," "this is an administration that takes multilateralism seriously; and a need for the United States, due to its changing power in the world—the relative loss of US power vis a vis other countries—to find ways to be an effective partner rather than an imposer."⁶⁸ The policy has led to an administration that acts on its interests when it needs to, promotes democracy when international support is there, engages non-

⁶⁷ Ibid. p. 40

⁶⁸ Thomas Carothers. Proc. of Democracy Under Obama: Revitalization or Retreat?, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington, D.C. 12 Jan. 2012. p. 8
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/011212_transcript_democracyobama1.pdf>.

democratic nations in an effort to open economic ties or secure interests, and takes caution with international partners that they may not promote democracy, but remain trusted international partners.

Early indications of a nation that will act on interests over democracy was evident through Obama's commitment to Iraq and Afghanistan in the wake of George W. Bush. And although Obama explained that he would close Guantanamo Bay, the detention facility remains open four years after he was elected. In Latin America, Obama pledged his support for and signed a free trade agreement with Columbia. The office of the United States Trade Representative said of the deal:

Over 80 percent of U.S. exports of consumer and industrial products to Colombia will become duty free immediately, with remaining tariffs phased out over 10 years. The U.S.-Colombia Trade Promotion Agreement (TPA) will support more American jobs, increase U.S. exports, and enhance U.S. competitiveness.⁶⁹

The deal has been widely criticized as a result of Columbia's track record on trade and labor practices. In a column written in April of 2012 author Amy Goodman noted that "Colombian and US labor leaders decried the move, since Colombia is the worst country on Earth for trade unionists. Labor organizers are regularly murdered in Colombia, with at least 34 killed in the past year and a half."⁷⁰ The deal, however, was made with American economic interests in mind. Additionally, the trade site makes note of the poor labor practices and states that the United States will work closely with Columbia on a labor action plan to deal with those practices. The example highlights the President's commitment to engagement over democracy first policies.

Like Clinton, the opportunity to establish a stronger economic partner is more important than

⁶⁹ "U.S.-Colombia Trade Agreement." *Office of the United States Trade Representative*. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://www.ustr.gov/uscolombiatpa>>.

⁷⁰ Amy Goodman. "The Real Scandals of Obama's Latin America Summit." *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 19 Apr. 2012. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2012/apr/19/real-scandals-obama-latin-america-summit>>.

current democratic violations within the country. Or, the economic partnership encourages an opportunity for change in the democratic policies of the country.

By the same token, the Obama administration has also shown that democratic change may be *the* impetus for engagement. The recent case of Myanmar is a clear example. After acting as the leading nation for decades in efforts to sanction Myanmar as a means of forcing democratic change, the United States has recently begun a new partnership with the nation after sweeping democratic changes took place in early 2012. It would be easy to dismiss the democratic changes that have taken place in Myanmar as posturing by the authoritarian regime with more emphasis placed on rhetoric and less placed on real action. In turn, one could also question the involvement of the United States as an effort to act in its own strategic interest by fostering a relationship with a nation that is in close proximity to China with valuable resources that are currently being harvested by the Chinese. These reforms, however, were noted in a report from Joshua Kurlantzick of the Council on Foreign Relations. Kurlantzick wrote:

the government has liberalized investment laws, planned to free the currency, launched plans to end the country's myriad civil wars with various ethnic minority insurgencies, invited back the IMF and other international financial institutions, and aggressively courted investments and relations from countries all over the world. Last month, Myanmar announced it would start letting in foreign banks, a major opening to financial reform. Many incoming investors and analysts are comparing its potential opening to the early days of reforms in China.⁷¹

By most indications, it is clear that the United States made efforts to engage Myanmar in early 2009, three years before the reforms, but did not make an effort to drop sanctions or reestablish diplomatic ties until real democratic change began to take place. The example shows an administration that will take steps to engage and promote democracy. It will also do so with greater interest when the democratic change in a particular nation reflects its own interests, in

⁷¹ Joshua Kurlantzick. "Myanmar's Elections: Is Reform Real?" *Council on Foreign Relations*. 2 Apr. 2012. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://www.cfr.org/burmamyanmar/myanmars-elections-reform-real/p27824>>.

this case economic growth and posturing towards China.

The greatest test for the Obama policy on democratization came during the Arab Spring of late 2010 and early 2011. The upheaval in the Arab world, which began with Tunisia in December of 2010 and moved to Egypt by January of 2011, would force the United States to take a position on democracy and democracy promotion worldwide. Here, Obama expressed caution that reflected an overall policy mantra: the United States would support democracy when it fit with the interests of the US and it would avoid support when that support could jeopardize the allegiances the nation built in a place of such strategic importance. In this case, the Middle East, rich in oil resources and key to geopolitical interests like allegiance to Israel and regional stability, was treated with caution. Obama was not ready to back a rebellion right away, because the outcomes of that rebellion, democratic or not, might not reflect the strategic goals of the United States. This observation was noted by Thomas Carothers in the fall of 2011.⁷²

In a report written in May 2009 in the *New Yorker*, author Ryan Lizza noted Obama's early predictions that democratic uprisings would begin in the wake of the "Green Revolution," in Iran. In the story, Lizza notes a memo that outlines Obama's intentions to take each situation on a "country by country," basis. Noting the need to maintain allegiances while also recognizing the importance of democratic change.⁷³ Thomas Carothers called this reaction a "half and half policy,"⁷⁴ *The Guardian* called it a sort of selective democratization. After Obama gave his first speech in the wake of the Arab Spring, author Ian Black noted that the speech touted billions of dollars of aid that would be made available to Egypt and Tunisia, but failed to mention Saudi

⁷² *YouTube: Thomas Carothers on the US Response to the Arab Spring*. Dir. Youtube: FPA1918. Perf. Thomas Carothers. *YouTube*. YouTube, 28 Oct. 2011. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O-9uRcv5Id8>>.

⁷³ Ryan Lizza. "The Consequentialist." *The New Yorker*. 2 May 2011. pp. 1-6 Web. 14 May 2012. <http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2011/05/02/110502fa_fact_lizza>.

⁷⁴ Thomas Carothers *Democracy Under Obama* p. 10

Arabia or the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.⁷⁵ The first of which demonstrates the US' backing of an authoritarian regime and the latter a situation in which the United States favors the position of one state over people that feel under represented in their own homeland.

Recently, Obama has pledged over \$800 million in aid to Egypt⁷⁶ but continues with a “wait and see,”⁷⁷ policy in other regions. This is what Thomas Carothers called a “divided policy.”⁷⁸ The divide can also be seen in how aid is distributed and how intervention is handled. As a long supporter of the Hosni Mubarak regime in Egypt, the United States did not pledge major support initially and waited until 6 months after the uprising began to pledge support for democracy. This was in contrast to quick support and quick action against an oppressive regime in Libya. In noting this contrast Carothers said “...in Libya...the administration was not so hesitant, got deeply involved—partly for humanitarian reasons, but clearly a political change impetus as well.”⁷⁹ Such is the nature of the new wave of democracy promotion under Obama. Although its action shares similar traits to the Bush and Clinton administrations, the Obama administration avoided the early rhetorical calls for democratic change, in some ways backed away from democratic change, and positioned itself to react based on the situation itself without tripping over its own rhetoric.

⁷⁵Ian Black. "Barack Obama Signals Selective US Response to 'Arab Spring'" *The Guardian*. Guardian News and Media, 19 May 2011. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2011/may/19/barack-obama-response-arab-spring>>.

⁷⁶Susan Cornwell. "Obama Proposes \$800 Million in Aid for Arab Spring." *Reuters*. Thomson Reuters, 13 Feb. 2012. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/02/13/us-usa-budget-foreign-idUSTRE81C1C920120213>>.

⁷⁷ Thomas Carothers. *Youtube*

⁷⁸ Thomas Carothers. *Democracy Under Obama pp.9-10*

⁷⁹ Ibid. p. 9

Part VI. The Other Variable

The Democracy Bureaucracy

Aside from the charge of Presidents that aim to develop and promote democracy as a part of foreign policy, the United States has created what the Princeton Institute dubbed “the Democracy Bureaucracy,” in an effort to assist in democracy promotion through means that were outside of the realm of administrative action. This began in 1983 with President Reagan. In 1983 Reagan initiated the creation of the NED⁸⁰ an organization which touts itself as “a private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to the growth and strengthening of democratic institutions around the world. Each year, with funding from the US Congress, the NED “supports more than 1,000 projects of non-governmental groups abroad who are working for democratic goals in more than 90 countries.”⁸¹ The NED was the flagship of Reagan’s policy and it has remained a part of democracy promotion for over twenty years. In addition, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) spends a considerable amount of time on democracy promotion. The agency contains a branch whose focus is Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance and attempts to promote these ideals by using field workers to promote free and fair elections, an independent and politically active society, rule of law, more transparent and accountable governance, human rights, and freedom for the media.⁸² These organizations intend to initiate positive changes in the regions where they work and have dedicated the funds to do so. From 1995 to 2003 USAID dedicated 1.23 billion dollars to aiding free and fair elections in

⁸⁰ Robert McMahaon. *The Brave New World of Democracy Promotion* pp. 32-33

⁸¹ "Home Page | National Endowment for Democracy." *Home Page | National Endowment for Democracy*. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://www.ned.org/>>.

⁸² "USAID Democracy and Governance: Civil Society." *USAID Democracy and Governance: Civil Society*. Web. 14 May 2012. <http://www.usaid.gov/our_work/democracy_and_governance/>.

Latin America and 43 million dollars to the same endeavor in the Middle East.⁸³ Despite these efforts a 2008 study by the Carnegie Endowment noted that rough 60% of Middle Easterners polled believed that U.S. democracy promotion activities in the region were generally bad. The same poll showed that this did not mean that the Middle East was fearful of democracy, as nearly 70% of those polled believed democratic governance to be the best form of government available. In turn, roughly 60% of the nation's polled believed that armed violence against the United States was justified.⁸⁴ In addition, non-democratic governments remain in place in Latin America and some authors argue that these governments have grown stronger by associating U.S. democracy promotion activities with imperialism and imperial goals. How can this be? One explanation, much like the incongruence among Presidential Administrations, is the multipolarity of the institutions that aim to support and promote democracy.

While USAID might have contributed money to elections in a free and fair manner, skepticism grows after the United States government also intervened with heavy military force in Iraq and Afghanistan for the sake of promoting democracy. In Latin America, particularly Venezuela, Hugo Chavez has pointed out on numerous occasions that the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) has made multiple attempts at his life.⁸⁵ Whether true or not, the convergence of multiple goals and multiple means of achieving those goals is evident within the democracy bureaucracy. There is also the difficulty of diverging from one path. The United States

⁸³ Steven E. Finkel, Daniel H. Wallace, Anibal Perez-Linan, and Mitchell A. Seligson. *Effects of U.S. Foreign Assistance on Democracy Building: Results of a Cross-National Quantitative Study*. Rep. no. 34. Nashville: Vanderbilt University, 2006. pp. 40-41

⁸⁴ "Sada ØμØ- Û⊕." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://www.carnegieendowment.org/sada/2008/10/08/has-united-states-poisoned-democracy-in-arab-world/6cvi>>.

⁸⁵ Jeremy McDermott. "CIA "plot to Kill Hugo Chavez."" *The Telegraph*. 3 June 2009. Web. <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/southamerica/venezuela/5437251/CIA-plot-to-kill-Hugo-Chavez.html>>.

government and the administration in power may have certain realist objectives that it attempts to promote and maintain while in power. These objectives, as mentioned earlier, have a tendency to move away from democracy promotion for the sake of democracy promotion. One might think that it would be up to the outside organizations to continue in this promotion, however, many of these “independent,” organizations like NED are actually funded in large part by the United States government. At times this makes it difficult for such organizations to avoid being a part of the policy.

Take for example the “Color Revolutions,” that began in Eastern Europe in early 2000. These revolutions were hailed as a major achievement of democracy promotion, but current research shows that many of these revolutions were funded by organizations that promoted individual candidates in an effort to expel regimes that did not align with the policies of the United States.⁸⁶ Additionally, a problem for some of these groups is that they have to continue to justify such funding. As democracy and democracy promotion are hard to define, it is also hard to measure what each group actually does to support and aid democratic growth in country. Many groups find themselves funding the same agents for democratic change or organizations that will implement change itself. This has led to an organization like the NED funding only four NGO’s as a means of democracy promotion, with a failure to explore others for new solutions and ideas in the problem of promoting democracy.

Finally, the United States is not alone in its promotion of worldwide democracy. This is a problem as multiple groups are again working to promote the same thing, with different tactics and solutions to the problem. Thomas Carothers has noted that the effect of this has been less cooperative than it should be. Instead the United States programs are viewed as stronger by

⁸⁶ Thomas Carothers. "Responding to the Democracy Promotion Backlash - Carnegie Endowment for International Peace." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 8 June 2006. Web. 14 May 2012. <<http://carnegieendowment.org/2006/06/08/responding-to-democracy-promotion-backlash/1wst>>.

some and according to Thomas Melia's Study, focus on individual parties and partners within other countries instead of working through a more cooperative lens.⁸⁷ Carothers also points out that this view created by the United States is one of many reasons there continues to be a backlash against the policy of promotion. The combination of the issues created by the democracy bureaucracy, along with the inconsistency among Presidential regimes, has led to a policy idea that many have difficulty measuring, acting on, or promoting to its fullest.

Part VII. Policy Recommendations and Conclusions

Policy Recommendations

Barack Obama has begun to change the culture and the idea behind democracy promotion, which is a good thing. Emphasis on the promotion of democracy as a policy is far too vague and difficult to do. If this were to be a viable policy, the United States would need to come to some sort of consensus definition of what democracy and democracy promotion should look like. Additionally, there must be some way for this policy to extend beyond administrative change over. It also must be progressive and thoughtful enough to deal with democratic changes that may actually be detrimental to the United States or that might be questionably democratic. This is a difficult task. At the same time there needs to be consolidation amongst the "democracy bureaucracy," and groups like the NED must become a part of US government bureaucracies that already exist or establish themselves as an NGO. Consolidation would limit the number of activities dedicated to democracy promotion and it would also make it more measureable as a policy objective. These policy goals would be logistically difficult to accomplish. It would involve the elimination of several governmental organizations and a consensus amongst United States political parties on the issue of democracy and democracy

⁸⁷ Melia. *The Democracy Bureaucracy: The Infrastructure of American Democracy Promotion*.

promotion. As this is not likely to happen, there is a radical alternative that President Obama's rhetoric currently advocates for.

A radical alternative would be to eliminate the idea of promoting democracy from Presidential rhetoric, including national security strategies and speeches. To do so would not mean that the United States would have to abandon democracy promotion or values for democratic change. It would mean that the United States would move towards a policy that values example over action in many respects, and encourages others to follow the example by offering incentives and disincentives for those that violate the principles of freedom. This would also involve the development of a greater coalition amongst international partners and a commitment to holding nations to international norms and indicators of freedom. This does not necessarily entail a greater definition of democracy, but rather an outline of policies that each country must have with respect to human rights. In this case the language changes from one of regime change and promotion of government upheaval, to one of human dignity and basic rights. The policy change would be radical but it would also allow the United States more flexibility in dealing with nations that attempt to subvert democracy. The policy of engagement and enlargement need not be abandoned and economic incentive can be a powerful tool in convincing others to join the world on normative levels of human rights. This change is already apparent in Myanmar today. There is also a level of change that cannot happen overnight and will not be perceived positively if it does at the hands of US intervention. Elections were established in Afghanistan and Iraq, however, these elections were challenged by the international community as a means of United States empire building.

Eliminating the language of democracy promotion means that it is eliminated as an agenda of the United States government. Instead, democracy and its ideals become part of the

general interests of the United States, but not an overarching goal that aims to change nations around the world. The United States can still work to promote the ideas of democracy and the values of freedom, but doing so through a directed agenda gives the impression of imposition over promotion, which devalues the entire process. One might argue, that abandoning the policy simply means a return to the realist agenda of the past, but that has not changed under the current practices and principles outlined by the organizations and administrations that aim to promote democracy in the world.

Conclusion

There are several problems with the current methods of democracy promotion in the United States. These problems include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Democracy and democracy promotion are not clearly defined across administrations. Avoiding a clear-cut definition avoids standardization of democracy policies.
- Each administration has taken a different approach to democracy promotion, but realist objectives remain the key to United States policy.
- The democracy bureaucracy that exists in the United States and abroad impedes the action of democracy promotion. Diverse groups with diverse interests often contradict each other's efforts.
- Democracy promotion is a viable goal but it would involve a restructuring of the system currently in place and agreement across administrations as to what democracy is and when one should promote it.

The idea that the United States is the purveyor of world democracy is a noble one. This is a cause that is worthy and admirable but if rhetoric does not match practice it can be equally as devastating as the preponderance of non-democracies around the world. If the language is

used by Presidential administrations, they must be prepared to act on their words in a universal and fair manner. The inability to hold to such standards hurts the standing of the United States and democracy in the long run.

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