Introduction

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The United States Institute of Peace (USIP) is an unusual organization in many ways. A research institute that promotes scholarship on peacemaking and conflict resolution, it also has an activist and advocacy mission to advance local, regional and global solutions to a vast range of conflicts, and where possible, to create mechanisms to prevent such disputes from exploding in the first place. Created by Congress in 1984 and publicly funded, it is nevertheless an independent institution that provides analyses and recommendations that often challenge the premises or direction of U.S. foreign policy. Academics, policy makers within and outside the U.S. government, and non-governmental organization (NGO) activists on a global level look to USIP for a distinctive combination of analytical objectivity and passionate commitment to the principle that conflicts ultimately must be resolved on the terrain of social and political action.[1]

With the attacks of September 11, 2001, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq, USIP faced the task of pursuing its mission in a global context of escalating security threats. With the U.S.-led struggle against terrorism and insurgency often overshadowing diplomacy, dialogue, or negotiation, many Muslims concluded that U.S. efforts to reach out to the Muslim world were a smokescreen for the use of force. However exaggerated or unwarranted, such suspicions complicated efforts to advance a vision that spoke credibly to the two conflict arenas that USIP sought to address after September 11: conflicts within and between Muslim states and societies, and conflicts between the United States and that diverse range of states and societies that, for want of a better term, we call the Muslim world.

Seeking to illuminate the two arenas of conflict, USIP supported dialogue and track-two meetings that brought American academics, policymakers, and NGO activists together with their counterparts from Iraq, Iran, Egypt, Morocco, Yemen, Jordan, Sudan, Nigeria, and elsewhere. At the same time, it promoted innovative research on religious and political

1. For an overview of USIP's history and programs, see Corine Hegland, "Foreign Affairs: Peace Work," *National Journal Magazine*, April 26, 2008, pp. 33–44, available at http://www.nationaljournal.com/njmagazine/fa_20080426_5541.php.

conflicts in the Middle East and beyond. USIP's fieldwork in Iraq, Yemen, Afghanistan, the Balkans, Indonesia, and Nigeria demonstrates its grassroots commitment to peacemaking[2] while USIP's support of high-profile, bipartisan analyses, such as the *Iraq Study Group Report,* has helped to redefine some of the contours of U.S. Middle East policy.[3] In the past seven years, these and other efforts have produced a wealth of books, reports, and studies. As their full depth and scope cannot be conveyed in a single volume, this book highlights a complex issue that has received scant attention in policy and academic circles: the analytical and policy challenges that escalating identity conflicts within Muslim-majority states pose both the Muslim world and the West.

This focus on Muslim-world conflicts is not meant to downplay the vital task of addressing the breach between the United States and the Muslim world. U.S.–Muslim-world relations continue to suffer, though less from an existential clash of civilizations[4] and far more from basic disagreements over daunting foreign policy questions, such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the legitimacy of using violence for political ends, or conflicting perceptions of the credibility and ultimate purpose behind the U.S. push for democratic reforms.[5] In the years after September 11, these and other issues created a shared antipathy toward the United States; magnified by globalized communications, this resentment dominated policy debates in the capitals of the West and the Muslim world. But the 2003 toppling of Saddam Hussein took the lid off simmering sectarian, religious, and ideological tensions between Christian and Muslims, Muslims and ethnics Kurds, and most of all, between Shi'ites and Sunnis. Though rooted in Iraq's historical experience, these tensions echoed in many quarters of the Muslim world. Across the Middle East, sectarian conflicts between Shi'ites and Sunnis in Kuwait, Bahrain, and Saudi Arabia; ethnic tensions between Berbers and

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2. Seven USIP centers or programs have supported or organized conflict resolution studies or grassroots initiatives in the Muslim world. The Center for Mediation and Conflict Resolution (http://www.usip.org/mediation/index.html) has been active in Kashmir, Darfur, Nigeria, and Israel/Palestine. The Religion and Peacemaking Program (http://www.usip.org/religionpeace/index.html) has been active in Iran, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iraq. The Center for Conflict Analysis's Muslim World Initiative (http://www.usip.org/muslimworld/index.html) has focused its energies on the Arab world. The Education and Training Center (http://www.usip.org/training/onsite) has been active in Iraq, Sudan, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Palestine-Israel, and the Balkans. The Center for Post-Conflict, Peace, and Stability Operations (http://www.usip.org/peaceops/index.html) has an extensive Iraq program as well as projects in Afghanistan and Sudan. USIP's Rule of Law program (http://www.usip.org/ruleof law/index.html) has been active in Afghanistan and Iraq. Finally, the Grants and Fellowship Program (http://www.usip.org/gf.html) has supported a wide variety of research on political and social change in the Muslim world and on U.S.-Muslim relations.

3. The *Iraq Study Group Report* can be found at http://www.usip.org/isg/index.html.

4. See Samuel P. Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, no. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22–49.

5. See Shibley Telhami, *Reflections of Hearts And Minds: Media, Opinion, and Identity in the Arab World* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2007).

Sunni Arabs in Algeria and Morocco and between Kurds and Turkish nationals; and ideological tensions between Islamists and non-Islamists all intensified.[6] In South Asia, tensions mounted among Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras, particularly after the 2002 downfall of the Taliban and the ensuing bid to build a democratic polity in Afghanistan. In neighboring Pakistan, ethnic conflicts between Pashtuns on one side and Sindhis, Balochs, Pathans, and Hazaras on the other worsened in tandem with ideological disputes between Islamists and non-Islamists and sectarian conflicts between Sunnis and Shi'ites.[7]

As such tensions grew, the problem of dissension, or *fitna,* sometimes seemed to eclipse the issue of Muslim-U.S. relations.[8] Yet rather than disappearing, Muslim-U.S. disputes became entangled in the prevailing identity conflicts. The Iraq gambit placed the United States at the center of a violent internal power struggle; Washington's subsequent efforts to promote power sharing in Afghanistan and to prod Middle East leaders to democratize drew the United States into a wider maze of religious, ethnic, and ideological disputes. Thus policy makers and activists in the United States, Europe, and the Muslim world today face a growing challenge: how to prevent disputes that are now woven into the fabric of Western-Muslim relations from splintering entire political communities. Can Western governments and NGOs help rival parties in the Muslim world forge democratic, power-sharing solutions that promote domestic peace and reconciliation? Or will such efforts only exacerbate identity conflicts in ways that widen the U.S.-Muslim or Western-Muslim divide?

This book addresses these and other related questions by highlighting insights from a talented group of international scholar-activists. Many are independent analysts who bring a diverse range of normative, analytical, and disciplinary interests to their work. But this diversity of perspective is equally true of contributors from USIP: Far from articulating some impos-

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6. See Ellen Knickmeyer, "Sectarian Strife in Iraq Imperils Entire Region, Analysts Warn," *Washington Post,* November 16, 2006, p. A1. For a broader view of the Islamic World's chief sectarian schism, see Vali Nasr, *The Shia Revival: How Conflicts within Islam Will Shape the Future* (New York: Norton, 2006). While recognizing the importance of ethnoreligious conflict in the Middle East, we join Eric Davis in warning against the "conclusion that the region's instability and violence are a function of a defective political culture." Sectarian conflicts are rooted in many factors, including the dynamics of state and nation building as well as the instrumentalization of confessional identifies by regimes, oppositions, and foreign powers. The use and abuse of identity cleavages is a major theme in this book. On this critical topic, also see Eric Davis, "A Sectarian Middle East?" *International Journal of Middle East Studies,* vol. 40, no. 4 (November 2009), pp. 555–558.

7. For a critical view of the argument that Pakistani society is fractured along ethnoreligious lines, see Arif Rafiq, "Like a Broken Record: Selig Harrison on Ethnic Discord in Pakistan," The Pakistan Policy Blog, available at http://pakistanpolicy.com/2008/02/01/like-a-broken-record-selig-harrison-on-ethnic-discord-in-pakistan/.

8. See Gilles Kepel, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2004).

sible or unwelcome consensus, their essays reflect the contending analyses and views that are central to the institute's work. Our goal is to reflect this pluralism while identifying points of convergence and difference that together suggest innovative ways to address the interwoven arenas of U.S.-Muslim relations and Muslim-world democratic conflict resolution.

This book is divided into six parts. Part one introduces a question that once had largely concerned scholars but now preoccupies policy makers as well: Does the future of the diverse societies that constitute the Muslim world hinge on an elemental reinterpretation of Islamic ideals—in effect, a renewal or reformation of Islamic thought? Or does it largely depend on the pragmatic exigencies of political and institutional reform? Because the debate between renewal and reform frames many of the issues explored in the subsequent chapters of this book, we carefully delineate its main contours while also highlighting the grand debate's policy implications for scholars and activists seeking to promote more democratic conflict resolution in the Muslim world.

Part two and part three use the renewal-reform debate to explore the complex link between identity conflicts and political reform in Muslim majority polities. When Washington proclaimed its Freedom Agenda in 2003, more than a few U.S. policy makers and media pundits argued that political reform might very well alleviate such identity conflicts.[9] However, such expectations suggested a lack of a familiarity with a fundamental paradox of democratic reform in societies deeply divided by ethnic and religious cleavages: as Arend Lijphart and other scholars have long argued, because elections raise the prospect that one group might use the ballot to impose its religious or ideological agenda on others, political reform can sometimes heighten tensions among competing identity groups.[10] While this democratic paradox is dramatically manifest in the conflicts between Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq, it has emerged in less dramatic but equally important forms in corners of the Middle East and South Asia, particularly when Islamist electoral gains have provoked the fears of their non-Islamist rivals.[11]

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9. *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman was perhaps the most vocal pundit making the democratic case for Iraq. See his "Four Reasons to Invade Iraq," in *Slate's* forum, "Liberal Hawks Reconsider the Iraq War," http://www.slate.com/id/2093620/entry/2093763/. The optimistic case for Iraq was made most cogently by Adeed I. Dawisha and Karin Dawisha in "How to Build a Democratic Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 3 (May–June 2003), pp. 36–50.

10. Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977). See also Larry Diamond and Marc Plattner, eds., *Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Democracy* (Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994).

11. The term *non-Islamist* is preferred to *secular,* as the latter term is far too narrow for this reader's purposes. The term *non-Islamists* includes secularists, but it also refers to traditional or even orthodox Muslims who favor distancing mosque and state, as well as to Sufi Muslims, who seek to protect their mystical practices by opposing efforts to politicize Islam. That said, when the identity divide pivots around an Islamist-secular cleavage, we use the terms *Islamist* and *secular* to capture it.

This book's contributors analyze the prospects for mitigating identity conflicts through two different though potentially complementary analytical angles. Part two employs a culturalist lens to highlight the interpretive struggle among Muslim intellectuals to reshape Islamic ideas. Part three employs a political-institutional lens to explore efforts to forge political accommodations that cut across sectarian or Islamist–non-Islamist divides.

The next two parts of the volume explore prospects for narrowing the U.S.-Muslim divide in ways that facilitate democratic conflict resolution in the Middle East and the wider Muslim world. Part four highlights efforts to narrow the cultural and religious chasms between the United States and the Muslim world. The contributors—some of whom have worked on the problem directly as conflict mediators—emphasize the positive role that religious leaders have played in tackling this difficult challenge. Part five explores U.S. and European efforts to engage mainstream Islamist activists and, more ambitiously, to help Islamists and their non-Islamist rivals forge a common vision of political reform.

The conclusion argues that conflict resolution in the Muslim world is unlikely to succeed without a concerted effort to strengthen the architecture of peacemaking and security in the Middle East and South Asia. This architecture must include—and yet move far beyond—the challenge of actively advancing a comprehensive Arab-Israeli peace. As the United States and its Western allies look ahead to the second decade of the millennium, their wider task is to forge a multifaceted Muslim-world diplomatic strategy that advances dialogue with friends of the United States, such as Turkey, as well as with rivals, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran and even Afghanistan's Taliban. A bold strategy of engagement, pursued by a new administration in Washington in concert with European allies, might reinforce the political leverage of moderates, enhancing the prospects for genuine and sustainable political reform in the Middle East and the wider Muslim world.

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The Grand Debate: Islamic Renewal or Political Reform?

What are the obstacles to and opportunities for creating new avenues of U.S.-Muslim world engagement and cooperation? Are the barriers and openings rooted in a long enduring cultural or religious divide? Or are they of more recent ideological and political vintage and thus susceptible to a dynamic of political, legal, or institutional engineering, a dynamic that might eventually navigate beyond—or even transform—the supposed impediments of culture or religion?

In the wake of the violence and fears generated by the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the above questions were hotly debated in Washington and beyond, first by scholars and eventually by policymakers,

political activists, journalists, and media pundits. The shift to a wider public policy debate occurred in tandem with, and in response to, the Bush administration's bold decision to make Middle East democracy promotion a top U.S. foreign policy. Henceforth, at stake was not simply an issue of academic analysis; more fundamentally at play were the contrasting policy prescriptions that flowed from what we call the Grand Debate over Islam, democracy, and U.S. foreign policy.[12] Complex, multifaceted, and often contentious, two camps—the Islamic renewalists and the institutional reformists—defined the main contours of this debate.

Abdeslam Maghraoui articulates the Islamic renewalist position. A Moroccan-American scholar and former director of USIP's Muslim World Initiative, his article is informed by an implicit and crucial assumption, namely that the Muslim world and the West are not separated by a static cultural divide, but rather by their very different developmental paths. The West benefited from the separation or distancing of church and state, while the Muslim world suffered from the reinvigoration of the bonds between politics and religion. Yet, Maghraoui suggests, the failure of the Muslim world to experience its own Reformation was a product of social and political conditions rather than a consequence of any logic intrinsic to the Islamic faith itself. There is no reason why Islamic values cannot be worked to legitimate a modern or pluralistic vision of politics; inasmuch as an *ijtihad*, or independent interpretation, provides a method for advancing such a project while still remaining authentic to Islam, hopes for political reform in the Middle East hinge—first and foremost—on a transformation of Islamic thought.

Maghraoui acknowledges that the "battle . . . over the soul of Islam" faces many obstacles. He warns against the simplistic idea that Muslim thinkers can or should emulate the historically unique experience of the Protestant Reformation. Yet in a strong echo of the modernist Islamic tradition—to which he clearly subscribes—Maghraoui suggests that within Islam there is a wide symbolic field for a reinterpretive enterprise that could produce a de facto Muslim Reformation. The question is who should pursue this mission and how it should be achieved.

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The complexity of the author's answers lies in a strand of his argument that is easily missed, but vital to his policy prescriptions: While Islamic values may be flexible, Maghraoui argues that their interpretation is dominated by traditional leaders and institutions that have legitimacy within conservative sectors of Muslim societies. Thus the modernist project can

12. For an instructive look at how this debate unfolded in official circles of the U.S. policy making community, see United States Department of State, "Islam and Democracy: Possibilities, Challenges, and Risks of Bringing Democracy to Islamic Nations, Government, and People," presentation at the secretary's open forum, Washington, DC, June 16, 2003, available at http://www.state.gov/s/p/of/proc/22190.htm.

only advance through, rather than against, the will of the "religious councils, tribal chiefs, charismatic leaders, local assemblies, and similar informal bodies." What is more, it must be pursued prudently, lest it fall into the hands of extremists. Because even the most "moderate Islamic parties" are likely to "fall back on conservative, populist ideologies to harness votes," Maghraoui suggests a certain tension between the modernist project and democratic politics.

If Maghraoui's argument is not in favor of autocracy or against U.S. support for democratic reform, it certainly amounts to an implicit call for restraint. The author seems to envision a process of political liberalization that creates sufficient space for independent Muslim intellectuals to argue for an Islamic renewal, while insuring that traditional leaders and institutions play a stabilizing role in advancing a modernist project. Mincing few words, Maghraoui invokes the "lesson of Iraq" to warn against the polarizing effects of a system of "majority rule" and argue in favor of a consensual system for "negotiating divisive, substantive issues."

How can the United States promote this tricky balancing act—promoting modernist ideas while sustaining traditional and even autocratic institutions and elites, without playing into the hands of either ruling despots or radical Islamists, both of whom have asserted that their autocratic agendas will defend Islamic values? Maghraoui's answer is for the United States to pursue a policy of "normative engagement" with mainstream Islamist activists while helping modernist intellectuals to unify their ranks. In this way, "American policy could tip the balance between extremist and modernist interpretations of Islam." Some analysts might question this last and decidedly bold assertion, but arguments in favor of engaging Islamists have provided powerful rationales for U.S. official and non-governmental support of mainstream Muslim groups in Morocco, Egypt, Yemen, Algeria, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, Indonesia, and Malaysia.

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David Smock endorses such efforts, but makes the case that they should not be limited to Islam itself. The larger challenge is for the U.S. government to "devise a better strategy to effectively and respectfully engage" with a "religious realm" that includes representatives who speak for all the major faiths of the Muslim world. Such an initiative, he argues, must contend with the failure of U.S. policy makers to appreciate the positive role that Jewish, Christian, and Muslim leaders have played in mediating a vast array of conflicts. But how can policymakers and activists enhance the authority of such religious leaders while avoiding the pitfall of privileging the role of religion in conflicts that are not necessarily born purely and simply of religion? After all, as Smock observes, disputes that appear to be religious often pivot around social and political struggles dressed up in the claimed moral certainties of religious symbols. Moreover—as Iraq, Somalia, Afghanistan, Sudan, and Nigeria all clearly show—ethnicity, clan,

and regional identities rather than religion frequently define the actual cleavages of political conflict or civil war. If domestic and regional conflicts have such multiple roots and identities, how can religious leaders credibly and effectively mediate such disputes?

The answer, Smock suggests, lies in interfaith dialogue and mediation, the immediate purpose of which is not to resolve all the diverse issues that divide contending groups, but to use the moral authority of religious leaders to create a safe umbrella under which rivals can begin to "diffuse interfaith tensions," creating the elemental trust required for more comprehensive efforts at conflict resolution. Highlighting experiments in interfaith dialogue and mediation in Sudan, Iran, Iraq, and Israel-Palestine—several of which USIP supported or organized—Smock's analysis suggests that efforts to mitigate Muslim-world identity conflicts should include, but not rely on, a transformation of Islam. What counts is a wider sociopsychological dynamic that must engage and also transcend the boundaries of competing faiths, so that Islam is only part of the solution.

Daniel Brumberg echoes some of the themes raised in Smock's analysis but directs them in a very different direction. A keen proponent of the institutional-reform wing of the Grand Debate, Brumberg warns against the "erroneous assumption that Islam itself provides the foundation of political identity." While the Islamic faith will always shape public life, he argues that identity conflicts pivot around a complex array of disputes, some of which are ideological or even cultural. The author points to Morocco to illustrate this point. There, Islamists and non-Islamists not only disagree about the extent to which Islamic law should shape politics; on a more basic level, they articulate conflicting definitions of Moroccan identity. Given the virtually existential nature of this divide, Brumberg raises doubts about the capacity of any modernist Islamic project to bridge it. Moreover, he analyzes a range of social, political, and ideological conditions that, in the Arab world in particular, have hampered efforts to mobilize mass constituencies behind the modernist project that the Islamic renewalists advocate.

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If a reinterpreted Islam is not the solution, what is to be done? The answer, Brumberg argues, is not to fix Islam, but rather to repair the political and institutional context in which Islamists and their many rivals compete. Taking a conceptual page out of the literature on regime transitions and political pact making,[13] the author advocates negotiating institutional and constitutional guarantees to ensure that democratic reforms produce governments that incorporate all groups—including those who have the most to lose as a result of a free and open ballot. Absent such power-sharing

13. Guillermo O'Donnell, Philippe Schmitter, and Lawrence Whitehead, *Transitions from Authoritarian Rule: Tentative Conclusions about Uncertain Democracies* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986).

provisions, many non-Islamist political actors who might otherwise favor democracy will continue to rely on autocratic regimes for protection.

The problem is that strongly institutionalized autocracies have little reason to change the political game in ways that might undermine the state-managed protection racket. Brumberg argues that, instead of promoting constitutional, legal, and institutional reforms that could give non-Islamists the means to compete with Islamists, autocrats have chosen to limit the playing field to a two-player—and highly polarized—standoff between themselves and Islamists. In this way they have effectively heightened the risks of democratic reform, not merely for non-Islamists, but also for Western democracy promoters seeking to ensure that elections strengthen political pluralism.

What is the solution to the dilemmas of democratic reform if autocracies have set the traps that await political reformers? The answer is far from obvious, not only because regimes have little interest in changing the status quo, but also because most Islamist parties want to sustain the populist mystique that comes from being—or appearing to be—the only viable alternative to existing regimes. What incentive do Islamists have to challenge a two-way political contest that makes their slogan of "Islam is the solution" (*al islam hu il hal*) sound so compelling? Islamic renewalists argue that this incentive can only come from a long-term intellectual struggle that could easily be undermined by a premature rush to elections. Institutional reformists acknowledge these risks but hold that the hazards are outweighed by sustaining a status quo that is widening the breach between regimes and youthful societies. The challenge, Brumberg and other reformists argue, is to advance reforms that give non-Islamists a chance to compete with Islamists, reducing the uncertainties of free elections.

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The tricky bit is getting the timing right. Institutional reformists and Islamic renewalists are motivated by a common desire: to ensure that democracy does not compromise freedom. Renewalists look to a long-term process of dialogue and *ijtihad* to realign politics, while reformists hope for such a transformation, but hold that Muslim-world identity conflicts necessitate more timely institutional and political reforms.

Islamic Renewal: Fixing Islam?

The cultural challenges of reforming the Muslim world are daunting; they include technical problems associated with the practice of independent interpretation, or *ijtihad,* as well as political, practical, and philosophical questions, not least of which are the practical and moral purposes of the interpretive enterprise itself. The political and institutional challenges are equally complex, but they are not bounded by any particular cultural or religious logic. On the contrary, reformists argue that there comes a point where the costs

of a "mutually harmful stalemate" convince protagonists to accept a mutually beneficial agreement or political pact—an agreement rooted in a pragmatic ethos that all political leaders can grasp, regardless of cultural differences. Yet as the essays included in this volume also show, when it comes to the concrete dynamics of conflict resolution, the specific and universal logics of culture and institutions are bound together. Institutional changes may be vital to creating the legal and organizational umbrella under which the dynamics of cultural dialogue, reinterpretation, and transformation unfold.

"*Ijtihad*: Reinterpreting Islamic Principles for the Twenty-first Century," written by David Smock, highlights a USIP-hosted debate between a distinguished group of leading Muslim scholars. While offering a range of views, the scholars agree on these points. First, if Islam is a total way of life in theory, in practice the rules of conduct collectively known as *sharia* have been deduced from a range of sources, creating a flexible process of legal reasoning that Muslim scholars have used to imbibe insights from many cultures and civilizations. Second, the flexibility has limits, one of which is that the practice of *ijtihad* is restricted to jurists who have the requisite legal training and expertise. Third, in Sunni Islam—the dominant branch of the religion—the scope for independent interpretation was theoretically closed during the Abbasid Dynasty (750–1258), thus limiting *ijtihad* to the four existing schools of Islamic jurisprudence. Fourth, there is a pressing need to reopen, or at least expand, the space for and by which *ijtihad* is pursued.

Who then has the right to lead the reinterpretive enterprise, and what are its proper vehicles, subjects, and scope? While all the participants in the debate affirm that democratic reforms are essential for *ijtihad,* they emphasize the need for greater political freedoms, leaving the reader to ponder what role elections should play. If only Muslim jurists can engage in *ijtihad,* elected assemblies may not be the proper vehicles for Islamic renewal. That said, given the very unhappy experience of countries that have created clerical councils to supervise legislation, such as the Islamic Republic of Iran, there are clear dangers in making conservative jurists the arbiters of any reinterpretive enterprise. Viewing this catch-22, one Muslim scholar calls for entirely removing the interpretive process from any one elite orinstitution, be it an elected assembly, high court, or even university. As Ingrid Mattson puts it: "Our problems are not going to be solved by having scholars think more deeply. If we limit . . . innovation to . . . those who have the qualifications to reason from the text, we are not going to get anywhere." Thus, she concludes, *ijtihad* must be left to the creative domain of individual imagination.

Mattson's position may seem radical and even unpractical: If everyone can contribute to the Islamic renewalist project, the end-product may be a chaotic multitude of ideas that has no authoritative spokesperson or arbiter. Yet, though it is perhaps a little unruly, Mattson's proposal is in keeping

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with the pluralistic ethos of Islamic modernists, most of whom believe that Islamic jurists and their semiofficial institutions are major obstacles to Islamic renewal. Paradoxically, the conservative wing of the renewalist project—sometimes referred to by the imperfect term *fundamentalist*—shares this critical view of Muslim jurists. Fundamentalists and modernists both seek to bypass the four major schools of Sunni Islamic jurisprudence in favor of an interpretive enterprise rooted in the founding ideals of Islam itself. Yet beyond this shared impulse, modernists and fundamentalists differ as to how to identify these values, and moreover, who should do the identifying.

Ahmad Moussali's essay, "Two Discourses on Modern Islamic Political Thought: Fundamentalism and Modernism," probes the divergent paths of fundamentalist and modernist thought. Although complex for the uninitiated, his analysis helps to explain why it is that conservative Islamic thinkers have often proven far more influential than their modernist rivals, a point of great consequence for conflict resolution in the Muslim world.

The appeal of fundamentalist thought, Moussali argues, cannot be attributed exclusively to the strong psychological attraction it exerts during periods of great social, political, and cultural change. It is far more than a salve for alienation that exercises its healing magic through a language of religious fanaticism. Instead, Muslim fundamentalism, the author argues, is informed by a deeper worldview—a vision with philosophical and practical complexities, contradictions, and nuances that must be grasped, particularly by those most eager to provide credible Islamic alternatives. Central to this worldview, Moussali suggests, is the notion of a "morality that is beyond the scope of human reason." God has given man the intuition, or *fitra,* to grasp God's revelations, but the truths that Prophet Mohammad revealed—eventually written down in the Quran—are natural, objective facts or laws that society must obey without "logical proofs." Moreover, because God's laws cannot be authenticated, challenged, or recast by dint of man's reason, it follows that any political or social order that upholds and defends God's divine laws is acceptable and even legitimate. Yet if in theory this position allows for a highly pragmatic approach to politics, such pragmatism has its limits. As Moussali notes, from a fundamentalist perspective, "any social order that is incapable of fulfilling human *fitra* is unnatural, unjust, and unsuitable." In their quest for a political order that manifests the spiritual and worldly unity (*tawhid*) of God's divine message, fundamentalists came to champion a vision of community that ties together "politics, economics, ethics, theology, and all aspects of life." If not totalitarian, this understanding of *tawhid* is totalistic and illiberal, and thus profoundly suspicious of the Enlightenment ideals that guide so much of Western political thought.

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However, Moussali does not attribute the hostility to Western ideals to Islam itself. Although influenced by and partly derived from Islamic ideas, fundamentalists and modernists both advance *ideological* constructions, the precise contents of which differ from thinker to thinker and from era to historical era. Moussali argues that the contemporary construction of *tawhid* was loaded with meanings that were never present in its original, traditional form. More important for our purposes, Moussali's analysis demonstrates that while struggling to forge a culturally or religiously authentic worldview, fundamentalists and their modernist cousins borrowed selectively from Western political thought. This paradox was harder for the former than the latter to tolerate, as fundamentalists made a fetish of their anti-Westernism, whereas modernists openly embraced Western ideas. Such openness gave the latter's ideas a tolerant, flexible, and pluralistic hue. But their acceptance of the West also plays into the hands of fundamentalists, who often accuse their modernist rivals of advancing Western ideals in a superficially Islamic cloth.

The fundamentalist accusation has some merit. As Moussali himself notes, "the nature" of modernist thought "was oriented for immediate political goals but not fully grounded in theoretical advancements." In their quest to advance a more tolerant political vision that brought West and East together, the modernists focused their critique on the rigidity—rather than the content or consistency—of fundamentalist or traditionalist ideas. Similarly, while they advanced a case for democracy by linking Western notions of political participation to Quranic concepts such as *shura* (consultation) and *ijma* (consensus), modernists did not provide an intellectually coherent theory that they could defend adequately on religious grounds: "The fact they did not write a theory," the author argues, "allowed the fundamentalists to use the adopted modernist notions" to construct their own interpretations of *shura* and *ijma.* Embedded in a traditionalist framework, the masses often viewed fundamentalist constructions of democracy as more authentic than the pro-Western vision that the modernists advanced.

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This perception of inauthenticity has had serious implications for efforts to advance democratic conflict resolution in the Arab and wider Muslim world. It not only goes a long way toward explaining why fundamentalists have been more successful than modernists in mobilizing a mass base; it also helps to account for the difficulties that Islamists and non-Islamists have had in forging political alliances. Non-Islamists often suspect that the Islamists are committed to notions of political participation that are only superficially democratic, if not autocratic. Fearing that Islamists use ideological camouflage to mollify non-Islamists—while ultimately, and successfully, directing their real message to a mass base of angry youth—non-Islamists have not only spurned offers from Islamists to join forces,

but they have often relied on the protection that autocratic regimes offer. As a result, the breach between society and state has widened.

Keenly aware of this unhappy trend, in recent years modernists from Morocco to Jakarta have striven to direct their ideas to a wider and more youthful public. USIP has supported some of these efforts, as the two remaining contributions in part two demonstrate. Mohammad Abu-Nimer's "Islamic Principles of Nonviolence and Peace Building: A Framework" is both an academic analysis that echoes some points made by Moussali and a modernist tract that makes a powerful case that, in the author's words, "the ultimate purpose of the Qura'nic revelation for Muslims is to create a peaceful and just social order." Like other modernists, Abu-Nimer relies on the Quran to argue that Islamic values such as *qist* (fair play), *ihsan* (kindness), and *salam* (peace) require an "uncompromising militancy of nonviolent techniques." Focusing on these techniques, his analysis includes but moves beyond well-known Quranic admonitions on the questions of justice ("bear witness for justice and let not hatred of a people seduce you," 5:8), the sacredness of human life ("if any one saved a life, it would be as if he saved the life of the whole people," 5:32), or the need to tolerate differences ("so that you may know one another," 49:13). Abu-Nimer's essay advocates a comprehensive Islamic vision of conflict resolution, as relevant to disputes between Muslims and non-Muslims as it is to conflicts among Muslims. In both cases, he argues, the Quran highlights the critical role that third-party arbitration plays in facilitating reconciliation. What is more, in his discussion of Islamic community, or *ummah,* and in the ensuing analysis of pluralism and diversity, Abu-Nimer makes a strong case for respecting ideological and religious diversity within the Muslim community itself. "Muslims," he writes, "have freedom of choice and decision . . . after the message of Islam has been delivered."

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David Smock's "Applying Islamic Principles in the Twenty-first Century" moves the discussion from the realm of theory to that of action and policy. Surveying efforts in Nigeria, Iran, and Indonesia to resolve internal religious, ideological, and ethnic conflicts, he reminds us that the interpretive enterprise pursued by Muslim peace advocates has scored some modest but still important successes. These include a USIP-supported peace education project in Indonesia's conflict-ridden Aceh province.[14] Invoking Quranic as well as traditional Acehnese values, the project produced a 385-page teaching manual that was distributed and actually taught in local religious primary schools. In short, the modernist message was not only directed to a grassroots audience; it was placed in the hands of traditional

14. For more on this, see U.S. Institute of Peace, "Religious Education in Indonesia: Implications for Interreligious and Interethnic Relations Public Event," public event at USIP, Washington, DC, November 21, 2006, available at http://www.usip.org/events/2006/1121_religious_education.html.

religious teachers, or *ulema,* who were then given the challenge of making its message accessible to their students.

This program illustrates the enduring challenges that the modernist enterprise faces: how to render a complex vision meaningful to new generations in contexts of domestic, regional, and global strife. In Indonesia, where many primary religious schools, or *pesantran,* are run independently of the state, some teachers have tried to advance a more tolerant vision of Islam. Their efforts have been reinforced at the university level by think tanks and government-supported Islamic centers of education. By contrast, in the Arab world, governmental and educational institutions are under the thumb of autocratic governments or clerical institutions, neither of which favor a modernist project. Such differences illustrate one of the Islamic renewalists' most important points, namely that a transformation of Islamic thought requires support from the highest institutions of the state. Yet precisely because most autocratic rulers and their clerical establishments not only spurn modernist ideas but sometimes echo fundamentalist notions, the struggle to promote a more pluralistic Islamism will take many years. This sobering reality points to the institutional challenges of political reform and to the key role that such reform could play in promoting, rather than exacerbating, identity conflicts.

Fixing Politics? Power Sharing and Political Reform

There are two related reasons why institutional solutions to identity conflicts make sense. First, the intellectual transformation that the Islamic renewalist camp advocates is unlikely to take root in the near or medium term. In the interim, other methods must be found to address the identity conflicts that are tearing at the fabric of the political community in the Middle East and South Asia. Second, the identity disputes cannot be reduced to questions of Islamic identity or to some all-encompassing, binary conflict between Islamists and secularists. Equally and sometimes more important are religious conflicts between Muslim majorities and non-Muslim (Christian) minorities, sectarian disputes between Shi'ites and Sunnis, and ethnonational disputes between Arabs and Berbers or Kurds, or in Afghanistan, ethnoreligious conflicts among Pashtuns, Tajiks, and Hazaras. Exacerbated by myriad socioeconomic conflicts, these disputes can-not be resolved by relying on the long-term and often irrelevant dynamics of Islamic renewal. Instead, they must be addressed through a process of negotiation over the institutional and legal parameters of a new politi-cal system that guarantees power sharing and inclusion for all relevant groups.

Such power-sharing arrangements are hard to forge and even harder to sustain. In highly institutionalized autocracies, such as Egypt, Tunisia, Syria, or Algeria, rulers have few incentives to negotiate with opponents.

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Moreover, as noted above, where autocratic states protect key groups, there is little incentive for the latter to join in a common campaign for dramatic political change. By contrast, in weak or collapsed states, such as Somalia, Afghanistan, and post-2003 Iraq, oppositions might have an opportunity to replace the existing regime.[15] But absent an indigenous third party to legitimately enforce that order, power sharing often depends on a security blanket from outside military forces. Welcomed by some and hated by others, foreign forces may not be well placed to advance domestic reconciliation, but they cannot exit prematurely without inviting renewed or even intensified domestic political conflict.

Afghanistan and Iraq illustrate the challenges and dilemmas spawned by foreign intervention and the subsequent effort to promote democratic conflict resolution in weak or toppled states. Encouraged by a very partial victory over the Taliban, in 2002 the United States and its Western allies supported a national reconciliation process that inadvertently exacerbated identity conflicts. A similar story began unfolding a year later in Iraq. But in contrast to previous cases of U.S. or European intervention in the Muslim world, such as Kosovo and Afghanistan, the Iraq case was distinguished by the scale and centrality (if not quasi-unilateralism) of U.S. intervention, as well as by the depth of ethnoreligious conflict—a challenge for which Washington was ill-prepared. Yet if subsequent U.S. missteps grew out of such exceptional circumstances, Iraq's sad story nevertheless suggests wider lessons about the complex dynamics of democratic power sharing that apply beyond the country's borders.

Power Sharing in Weak States: Afghanistan and Iraq

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Thomas Johnson's "Afghanistan's Post-Taliban Transition" illuminates a tale of what political scientists call path dependency, or the long-term (and in this case, negative) cumulative consequences of the initial decisions made in building a new political system.[16] The story begins with the 2001 defeat of the Taliban and is followed by the signing of the Bonn Agreement in December of that same year, the creation of an interim power-sharing cabinet under President Hamid Karzai, the selection of the Grand Assembly, or *loya jirga,* in 2002, the naming of a constitutional review commission (CRC) in 2003, and the holding of presidential elections in 2004 and legislative elections in 2005. At each stage of the story, the actions and choices

15. Weak state means a state that has limited control over the means of coercion and exercises minimal legal, constitutional, and administrative authority over substantial degrees of its national territory. Power-sharing arrangements are usually closely concerned with efforts to forge interim governments, to negotiate a political and constitutional exit from a period of internal conflict. On this issue, see Karen Guttieri and Jessica Piombo, eds., *Interim Governments: Institutional Bridges to Peace and Democracy?* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2008).

16. See S.J. Liebowitz and Stephen E. Margolis, "Path Dependence, Lock-In, and History," unpublished paper, available at http://www.pub.utdallas.edu/~liebowit/paths.html.

of Afghanistan's leaders mirrored what the author sees as a basic, long-standing social reality:

> Not only do Afghans lack a sense of national identity . . . they . . . do not agree on what form of state Afghanistan should have. . . . Pashtuns would like a strong, Pashtun-run central state. Tajiks focus on power sharing in the central state, and Uzbeks and Hazaras desire recognition . . . and . . . local government. . . . Pashtuns emphasize tribal structures and codes at the expense of the state.

From the outset, the internationally blessed Bonn Agreement promised to exacerbate the above tensions. After all, rather than setting the stage for a process of international reconciliation and peacemaking, it provided a platform by which the "winners of the U.S.-led Operation Enduring Freedom" shut out their major rivals, that is, the Taliban and their allies in the Pashtun community. Yet, the author notes, as even the winners were "historically opposed," sectarian conflict emerged in the heart of the government. Karzai's efforts to balance the primacy of power and place given to Panjshiri Tajiks in the cabinet by appointing more Pashtuns may have mollified the latter. But his decisions also provoked the Tajiks, undercutting the authority of the new government. While subsequent drafting of the constitution provided an opportunity to create a genuine and more inclusive domestic peace process, in an interesting foretelling of what happened in Iraq two years later, the truncating of the period set out for drafting the new constitution cut out nonsectarian leaders. This opened the door to a Pashtun *jihadi*-dominated commission, which proceeded to draft a constitution favoring the ideological and institutional interests of tribal warlords and religious figures. The October 2004 presidential elections further institutionalized sectarian politics, as did the 2005 legislative elections. Indeed, the single nontransferable vote system (SNTV) weakened political parties as it reinforced confessional politics. Three years after waging war against the Taliban, Washington found itself allied with an Afghani government in which half of the elected parliament was made up of Islamist or religious leaders. Without intending it, the United States and its allies blessed a political dynamic that may have facilitated the 2005–06 revival of the Taliban.

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Jonathan Morrow's "Iraq Constitutional Process II: An Opportunity Lost" offers a similar story of missteps and unintended disasters. Morrow and other USIP colleagues participated in efforts to bring Sunni leaders into Iraq's constitution-making process, and his frustration with the results is not hard to miss.[17] Nevertheless, his coolheaded conclusions are echoed

17. For examples of the activities and initiatives undertaken by USIP's Rule of Law Program in Iraq, see http://www.usip.org/ruleoflaw/projects/countries/iraq.html.

in many other accounts of the events and decisions that provoked Sunni Arab opposition to Iraq's first democratic constitution.[18]

Morrow's assessment rests on a premise that all advocates of institutional analyses hold dear, namely that in societies deeply divided by ethno-religious conflicts, the process of constitution making itself determines, and thus is in some ways more important than, the substantive outcome of the process. In divided societies, constitution making is inextricably intertwined with peacemaking.[19] As the author observes, from the outset many Iraqis viewed a permanent constitution

> as a kind of intercommunal peace treaty. This constitution-as-treaty would not be a principled discussion leading to the consolidation of Iraqi political identity, it would, more modestly, represent a modus vivendi to settle competing interests surrounding religious law, local self-governance, and resource management.

In their efforts to shape the modus vivendi, political leaders representing Kurds, Shi'ites, and Sunnis competed to define the negotiating agenda and the terms of the final bargain. Throughout the process, Kurds and Shi'ites—who together account for some 75 percent of the Iraqi population—joined forces to outmaneuver Sunnis. The latter's boycott of the January 2005 parliamentary elections put Sunnis at a disadvantage from the start. But in Morrow's view, the root cause of Sunni alienation lay in the decision to limit constitution making to only one month. This truncated schedule did not allow for integrating Sunni leaders into negotiations, even when Shi'ite and Kurdish leaders made a tactical retreat by adopting mechanisms that gave Sunnis a somewhat greater voice in the discussions. Given their history of persecution under Sunni-minority rule, it is possible that no reworking of the process could have blunted Shi'ite and Kurdish determination to advance positions that the Sunnis rejected. As Morrow notes, the Sunnis adamantly opposed the Shi'ite position on federalism, so much so that "the gap . . . may not have been reconcilable."

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The really big question, which applies especially well to Iraq but has wider resonance, is if historical legacies are so deeply embedded as to preclude democratic pacts in countries deeply divided by identity conflicts. To this question Morrow offers a well argued if modest no. Although Sunnis understandably feared that federalism amounted to little more than a Kurdish and Shi'ite codeword "for partition," a rebalancing of powers between the center and the provinces might have enhanced Sunni interests. As the author observes, "Conventional wisdom presented Iraq as a centralized

18. See, e.g., Larry Diamond, *Squandered Victory: The American Occupation and the Bungled Effort to Bring Democracy to Iraq* (New York: Henry Holt, 2005).

19. For a discussion of power sharing and constitutional reform in Africa, see Francis M. Deng, *Identity, Diversity, and Constitutionalism in Africa* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2008).

state undergoing . . . decentralization, when the reality was almost diametrically opposite. Regional powers were . . . negotiating the terms of a possible delegation of powers to the center." That Sunni leaders failed to recognize and act on this opportunity was not a consequence of some historical fate. Rather, it was at least partly the result of contextual factors, not least of which was the Sunnis' inability to "rally constituents . . . around a coherent constitutional strategy," as well as the Sunnis' lack of experience, talent, and resources in the art of negotiations by comparison to their Shi'ite and Kurdish rivals. Under such trying circumstances, the one-month timeline to negotiate a constitution precluded a basic shift in Sunni perceptions or strategy, even when some Sunni leaders began to recognize that certain federal arrangements might benefit them. In Morrow's view, if Iraq's story may have elements of a Greek tragedy, it played more like a sad farce, with the cumulative consequences of misperceptions, missteps, and mistakes producing a disaster that might have been avoided. Mincing no words, the author assigns primary responsibility for this unhappy outcome to the United States. If "Iraq's constitutional process was seen, with some justification, as an insult to Sunni Arab Iraqis," this resulted from the "pressure-cooker approach" that Washington used to push Kurds, Shi'ites, and Sunnis toward an agreement.

Readers must judge for themselves whether Morrow's analysis supports his sharp judgment. More important is his wider analytical point—which all institutional reformists embrace—that while historical legacies matter, through a combination of political will and imaginative thinking, leaders can overcome the great structures of an inherited past. If leadership is important, the problem is that much time and some pain is often required before protagonists grasp the logic of compromise. While one can never know whether the particular story that Morrow tells might have turned out differently, one must ask whether Iraqi and U.S. leaders have learned something from the two years of conflict that followed the disaster of 2005. If they have, can Iraq's leaders, with U.S. support, snatch victory from the jaws of defeat?

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The odds are not great. As Rend Al-Rahim Francke's "Political Progress in Iraq During the Surge" demonstrates, despite the costs of violence that all groups shouldered as a result of the failure to compromise, the heavy weight of history continues to shape the attitudes of Shi'ites and Sunnis. The former believe that, after "centuries of oppression," they have an absolute right to rule. For Shi'ites, "demography *is* democracy" (Rahim's emphasis). Sunnis, by contrast, "have an existential fear of Shia domination and cannot accept the reality that they are no longer the ruling elite." These attitudes notwithstanding, the author argues that in 2007 more moderate leaders began to emerge. Their voices were raised in tandem with the U.S.-led military surge in the Sunni tribal areas (Anbar, Diyala, and south of

Baghdad). By backing tribal groups willing to battle the Iraqi branch of al-Qaeda, the United States enhanced the leverage of Sunnis in the struggle to renegotiate the parameters of power sharing. While this was an important development, the introduction of another sectarian player into a fractionalized political arena complicated matters, as it antagonized Shi'ites while exacerbating personal, ideological, and resource-based disputes within the Shi'ite and Sunni camps. More violent than intercommunal disputes, these intracommunal tensions undercut the leverage of leaders who had the courage to push for a more inclusive system.

Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's spring 2008 campaign against Shi'ite militias took aim at the threat of intracommunal tension. But if the already fragmented ranks of radical Shi'ite Sadr militia were further weakened, and if the surge restored a measure of peace and safety on the ground—thus discouraging Iraqi civilians from turning to militias for protection—Iraq's long-term political prognosis remains guarded. The problem is not merely the persistence of communal tensions; the essential problem lies in the double-edged nature of power sharing itself. Although communal pacts move ethnoreligious conflict from the battlefield to the political arena, they are negotiated by the sectarian rivals whose conflicts created the impetus for power sharing in the first place. Invariably, many of these leaders develop an interest in resisting demands for change made by insiders who want a larger piece of the confessional pie or, even more so, by outsiders seeking a nonconfessional or fully democratic system. Moreover, because demands for change cannot be easily negotiated, they quickly invite renewed violence. In short, by institutionalizing sectarian conflicts under the umbrella of elite cartels, power-sharing systems can freeze or even exacerbate communal tensions, blocking a transition to a competitive, nonsectarian democracy.[20]

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How can leaders assure that the long-term costs of power sharing do not exceed its short-term benefits, particularly when sectarian leaders can rarely see beyond their noses? For better or worse, the job of getting leaders to see the bigger picture often falls in the lap of a foreign power or powers, who in the absence of a strong state, must act as third-party enforcers of the original power-sharing deal. Yet as the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) learned in the Balkans and as the United States has experienced bitterly in Iraq, because sectarian leaders invariably—and often correctly—believe that such third-party enforcers are not neutral, outside forces face huge hurdles in their efforts to redesign the power-sharing system.

The Iraqi story amply illustrates the overlapping problems. As Morrow notes, by privileging sectarian leaders and their institutions, the confessional

20. See Donald Rothchild, "Executive Power-Sharing Systems: Conflict Management or Conflict Escalation," in Guttieri and Piombo, eds., *Interim Governments*, pp. 73–93.

system adopted in 2005 virtually froze all forces that advocated a nonsectarian or secular agenda. Three years later, the barriers to entrance are huge, giving women's groups, civil society activists, and middle-class professionals few if any opportunities to espouse a national Iraqi agenda. Certainly, the parliament seems to be the least likely candidate to embrace this nonsectarian mission. As Rahim observes, "parliament . . . has little power" because all legislation ultimately must be blessed by groups who not only stand outside parliament, but whose armed militias resist the efforts of the fledgling Iraqi army to defend the integrity of a weak state.

Power Sharing (and Hoarding) in Strong States: Morocco, Egypt, and Yemen

Advocates of democratic conflict resolution face numerous challenges in strong states, two of which merit emphasis.[21] First, they must forge an accommodation between state and society under conditions that favor states or regimes. With robust security establishments and a vast range of economic and political resources to buy off potential opponents, strong states have little incentive to compromise their powers. Second, proponents of power sharing must unite the opposition.[22] In societies suffering from ethnoreligious and ideological conflict, this task is formidable, and well aware of this, autocrats have skillfully manipulated opposition divisions. As noted above, in the Arab world, authoritarianism is sustained by a protection racket that regimes use to coopt groups that feel most threatened by the uncertainties of a democratic process. Unless these vulnerable groups can be convinced that they have more to gain than to lose by withdrawing their tacit consent for authoritarianism, they are unlikely to support demands for any basic political reform. Such change thus requires pacts or political alliances between rival opposition groups. Without a shared vision of power sharing, autocrats will continue to coopt key elements of the opposition, forestalling demands for a power-sharing arrangement that realigns the relationship between state and society.

If cross-cutting ideological alliances are a necessary condition for democratic change, the record suggests that a certain degree of political reform can nevertheless be sustained without opposition pacts. As Brumberg has argued, the "liberalized autocracies" of the Arab world are especially adept

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21. Strong state means a state that enjoys a significant degree of control, ranging from substantial to monopolistic, over the means of coercion and a significant degree, ranging from substantial to complete, of judicial-bureaucratic control over territorial boundaries. Thus state strength must be viewed in terms of a low to high continuum, with Morocco and Egypt at the high end and Yemen at the lower end.

22. See Marc Howard Morjé and Philip G. Roessler, "Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes," *American Journal of Political Science,* vol. 50, no. 2 (April 2006), pp. 365–381.

at using state-controlled political openings in the press, parliaments, electoral, and NGO arenas to selectively win over or coopt potential opponents.[23] Because they feel threatened by Islamists, some secular elites readily accept the seductive offer of state-controlled political liberalization. This offer usually comes in the form of opportunities to build "civil society organizations," not a few of which are discreetly or even openly funded by the state. These quasi-autonomous, quasi-official organizations give non-Islamists a chance to advance agendas that secularists would otherwise not be able to secure through democratic political contests, which in the Arab world invariably favor the better-organized and more popular Islamist forces.

That said, state-managed liberalization is not designed to favor secularists exclusively. On the contrary, Arab regimes use selective political liberalization to channel political, institutional, and economic favors to both secular and mainstream Islamist groups. By allowing the latter room for maneuver, the state creates space for the threat that induces secular groups to seek state protection in the first place. Thus state-managed political liberalization is a highly effective strategy for both containing and dividing oppositions.

State-managed liberalization can be found throughout the Muslim world. At various times, the rulers of Turkey, Indonesia, and Pakistan have tolerated or even supported Islamist forces to deflect internal and external pressures for substantive political change.[24] Yet, however effective, the use of such survival strategies has lacked the institutional coherence and durability that has animated the Arab world's liberalized autocracies, which have not only endured, but prospered: In the past ten years, Yemen, Algeria, Qatar, and Bahrain have joined the liberalized autocracy club. Even Saudi Arabia has seemed ready to apply—very cautiously and slowly—for membership.

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That the liberalized autocracy club has expanded can be attributed partly to U.S. pressures for political reform after the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the initiation of the Freedom Agenda. As Mona Yacoubian's "Promoting Middle East Democracy II: Arab Initiatives" shows, most of the reform projects proposed during the 2003–05 period hewed closely to the logic of state-controlled liberalization. The only project that defied this logic was the June 2004 Doha Declaration. Issued after a two-day conference organized by the Egyptian reformer Sa'ad Ed-Din Ibrahim, the declaration called for "'national pacts' that would delineate the principles of political participation" for both oppositions and the regimes. In sharp contrast, the

23. Daniel Brumberg, "The Trap of Liberalized Autocracy," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 4 (October 2002), pp. 56–68.

24. The strategic use of political liberalization is a survival strategy widely used in developing states. See Marina Ottaway, *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003).

2004 Alexandria Charter promised no such pact; largely orchestrated by the Egyptian government, it was an implicit effort to coopt liberal reformers and appease international demands for reform. This cooptation pattern emerged throughout the Arab world, as government after government effectively reshaped the reform agenda to avoid the challenges of substantive democratization.

While the governments' efforts left the basic institutions of autocracy intact, in a few instances, they allowed for a measure of genuine—if highly circumscribed—political reform. The most notable example of such hobbled progress is Morocco. After assuming the throne in 1999, King Mohammed seemed to open the door to a genuine process of negotiation and reconciliation between the regime and the opposition. In 2004 the king did what no ruler of any Muslim-majority state had ever done: He established a truth and reconciliation commission (TRC) to publicly expose human rights abuses that had occurred under the previous monarch—his own father. This bold move seemed to signal a new political era in Morocco. After all, where such commissions have been established, such as South Africa, the public ritual by which the victims of human rights abuses exposed their wounds and their abusers acknowledged their guilt (and asked for forgiveness) facilitated the transition to democracy.[25]

But as Pierre Hazan illustrates in "Morocco: Betting on a Truth and Reconciliation Commission," Morocco's TRC was never intended as a necessary, if clearly insufficient, step along the path to a renegotiated vision of state-society relations. On the contrary, by selecting prominent leftists and liberals to head up the commission, King Mohammed sought to display his reformist credentials while soliciting the support of secular elites during a period of rising challenges from Islamist radicals, including terrorist attacks. In this way he divided the opposition while enhancing his authority as the ultimate arbiter of the political field, a role the constitution bestows upon the Moroccan king as Commander of the Faithful.

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Why did honorable men and women accept appointment to a commission with a mission that was skewed to serve the regime's purposes? This very legitimate question points to a wider dilemma facing all oppositions in liberalized autocracies: whether to play a regime-controlled game in the hope that its rules can be tweaked to favor opposition interests, or to boycott the game and lose any chance to shape regime policies? As Hazan notes, in Morocco, the president of the TRC, the late Driss Benzekri, wagered "that the work of the truth commission" would "create a dynamic of . . . reform, leading to a parliamentary monarchy." But this was not to be the case. As Hazan further notes, the monarch and his appointed commis-

25. See Susan Collins Marks, *Watching the Wind: Conflict Resolution during South Africa's Transition to Democracy* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2000).

sioners used different language to describe the TRC's mission. Invoking the Islamic concept of forgiveness, the king emphasized his supreme authority to speak on behalf of a community of Muslim believers united by a supposed common religious ethos. By contrast, the commissioners spoke in familiar legal terms of amnesty to "keep the process in the realm of politics." In short, the king sought to depoliticize the entire process while the opposition sought to enhance the TRC's role as a key element in a wider architecture of political reforms.

The Moroccan story reminds us that so long as oppositions remain divided by conflicting visions of reform, hopes for a negotiated pact or accommodation between regimes and oppositions remain slim. A minimal level of societal and ideological unity is a necessary though insufficient condition for substantive democratic reforms. Is such unity possible in the Muslim and particularly Arab world, where the divide between Islamists and non-Islamists remains ideologically and politically salient? How can civil society organizations and political parties create common ground? Finally, does political participation itself encourage political learning or ideological moderation, without which there is little hope for cross-ideological alliances?

USIP has both funded and organized a number of studies that address the above questions. Judy Barsalou's contribution to this volume, "Islamists at the Ballot Box," summarizes the findings of three USIP-funded studies of elections involving Islamist groups in Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, and Turkey. The authors of these studies offer a variety of insights, but all of them cast doubt on the conventional wisdom that political participation provides an enduring, powerful incentive for ideological moderation. Carrie Rosefsky Wickham argues that in Egypt, Kuwait, and Jordan, mainstream Islamist parties "reject the liberal ethos which informs the secular legal codes of the West." Janine Clark argues that in Jordan, "cross-ideological interactions per se cannot be said to lead to the increased . . . moderation of Islamist parties." Perhaps most revealing, reflecting on his study of Turkey's Justice and Development Party (JDP), Tepe Sultan suggests that there is good reason to wonder if this democratically elected, post-Islamist party is ready to "translate its commitment to the procedures and ideals of democracy to the actual practice of liberal democracy."

USIP's Muslim World Initiative casts further light on the complex question of ideological moderation in its Arab Political Oppositions Project. Supported by the United States Agency for International Development's Office of Democracy and Governance, this project focused on efforts to forge Islamist–non-Islamist alliances in Egypt, Morocco, Jordan, and

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Yemen.[26] All four studies demonstrate that fundamental—even existential—ideological differences continue to undermine alliance building in the Arab world. Yet if these differences loom large, the four studies also suggest that regimes have successfully manipulated ideological tensions to divide oppositions. This manipulative strategy has proven most effective in regimes that tolerate political pluralism, whereas they have been somewhat less successful in more closed regimes.

The studies' seemingly counterintuitive conclusion actually makes sense. In more open systems, especially monarchies, rulers stand—or appear to stand—above the partisan political fray, arbitrating political, social, and economic conflicts in ways that promote myriad client-like relationships between regimes and their divided oppositions. In more closed systems—especially presidential regimes that rule via a dominant ruling party—oppositions have fewer incentives and channels to lobby regime patrons and thus are more likely to cooperate. More autocracy can be a unifying force, whereas more pluralism can be a source of disunity.

Dina Shehata's contribution to this volume, "Islamists and Non-Islamists in the Egyptian Opposition," illustrates just how successfully Egypt's leaders have deployed repressive laws and informal client networks to fragment or coopt oppositions.[27] But Shehata also suggests that opposition leaders bear some responsibility for their fate. Contradicting the prevailing wisdom about the presumed moderating effect of political participation on mainstream Islamists parties, she argues that Islamists are most likely to form alliances when they are weak and most likely to spurn cooperation with secularists when they feel emboldened or closer to power. Her study suggests that, absent a change in the balance of power between Islamists and secularists, or a shift in the doctrines that Islamists and secularists espouse, the prospect for sustainable alliance making remains slim. For this reason, the author places her hopes on a new generation of actors who might find common ground because they are not beholden to long-standing political parties or organizations, such as Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood. Egypt's 2004–06 Kifaya movement may have signaled the rise of such new leaders, although the movement's travails suggests that advocates of Islamist-secular reconciliation have a difficult road to travel.

Yemen offers the Arab world's only case of a sustained Islamist-secular opposition alliance that has partly transcended narrow tactical considerations. The shift to a solidly strategic vision of alliance may be far from complete, but the progress so far can be attributed partly to the origins of

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26. See Muslim World Initiative, "Oppositions, Liberalization, and Democracy: A New Dynamic?" available at http://www.usip.org/muslimworld/projects/liberalization_democracy.html.

27. This essay summarizes the main findings of Dr. Shehata's contribution to USIP's Arab Political Oppositions Project.

the Joint Meeting Parties (JMP) alliance. In their essay "The JMP Alliance: New Political Pragmatism in Yemen?" Iris Glosemeyer and Hesham Sallam show that, during the brief 1994 civil war, the Islamist-oriented Islah backed the efforts of the northern-based GPC to bring the southern-based, secular-oriented Yemen Socialist Party (YSP) to heel. Given this bitter legacy, it took a formidable incentive for YSP and Islah to even imagine a coalition. The impetus emerged when the ruling GPC turned against Islah. Threatened, Islah leaders initiated talks with the YSP; as in Egypt, a perception of weakness—rather than a transformation of ideological commitments—was the original motivating force behind an Islamist opening to secular opposition groups.

So far this story is by no means unique. As any good student of conflict resolution and political reform knows, a change of doctrine rarely brings rivals to the negotiating table. On the contrary, democratic transitions are often launched by rivals who view democratic reform not as an intrinsically worthy end, but rather as a means to shift conflicts to a nonviolent arena of politics. But for democratic peacemaking to succeed, at some point rivals must forge a common vision of reform.[28] In Yemen, the proverbial hatchet may be buried, but wounds are still fresh. Moreover, Islah is hardly united. Its urban political wing backs the JMP, but many of its tribal leaders continue to accept the patronage of President Salih and his allies in the ruling party.[29] Such splits might help to account for the absence of any reference in the JMP's founding documents to matters of first principle, such as the role of Islamic law. For the moment, the alliance agrees on the mechanics rather than the ultimate purpose of democratic reform.

The Challenges of Engagement

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Yemen's JMP was not created in a regional or global vacuum. On the contrary, the National Democratic Institute (NDI), a foreign-policy wing of the U.S. Democratic Party, helped bring together the leaders who created the alliance.[30] That NDI did so during a period of growing estrangement between the United States and the Muslim world suggests that Arab political activists

28. John Waterbury casts doubt on the notion that ideological rivals—particularly religious actors—have the will or capacity to forge and sustain a common strategic commitment to democracy. See his "Democracy Without Democrats? The Potential for Political Liberalization in the Middle East," in Ghassan Salame, ed., *Democracy Without Democrats? The Renewal of Politics in the Muslim World* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1994), pp. 24–37. For a broader critique of the means or process-oriented theory of democratic transitions, see Thomas Carothers, "The End of the Transitions Paradigm," *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 13, no. 1 (January 2002), pp. 5–21.

29. See April Longley, *Shifting Light in the Qamariyya: The Reinvention of Patronage Networks in Contemporary Yemen*, Georgetown University, Department of Government, PhD Dissertation, April 2008.

30. For NDI's programs in Yemen, see "NDI: Yemen," available at http://www.ndi.org/yemen#PoliticalContext.

can and sometimes do distinguish between the overall foreign policies of the U.S. government and the particular motivations and goals of American democracy promoters, including those working for or supported by the U.S. government.

The U.S. work in Yemen is just one example of Western efforts to assist governments and oppositions in finding common political ground. As noted at the outset of this essay, in the wake of September 11, and even more so following the 2003 U.S.-led campaign in Iraq, these efforts multiplied in a context of escalating identity conflicts in the Middle East. This unprecedented intertwining of U.S. foreign policy and Muslim-world identity disputes posed a difficult challenge for the United States. After all, in many quarters of the Muslim world, Washington was viewed as both an instigator of conflict and as a partisan ally of one group or another. As a result, the U.S. effort to support democratic conflict resolution ran headlong into a widespread perception that the Freedom Agenda would endure as long as political reforms did not strengthen exponents of terrorism or, more generally, political forces opposed to U.S. foreign policy.[31]

Events in late 2005 and early 2006 seemed to bear out the prediction. Islamist electoral successes in Egypt and then Palestine were followed by a backlash against democracy promotion in some arenas of the U.S. foreign policy establishment. Whether justified or not, the developments became intertwined in a broader debate regarding the proper role that Western governments and civil society organizations should play in engaging social, religious, and political forces in the Muslim world.[32]

Part four highlights the importance of people-to-people diplomacy—especially between religious leaders—in advancing Muslim-Muslim and Muslim-U.S. relations since September 11. The American Muslim community emerged as an increasingly important player in a range of bridge-building initiatives. These civil society–focused programs not only tackled the challenge of promoting understanding between the Muslim world and the United States; they also addressed the complex task of building bridges within regions of the Muslim world suffering identity conflicts. Part five moves beyond people-to-people diplomacy to explore the wider issue of Muslim-U.S. relations and the challenges of democratic conflict resolution. These topics encompass but surpass the role of Islamists. In a context of escalating identity conflicts throughout the Middle East, a democracy promotion strategy that privileges religious domains could exacerbate disputes

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31. On the corrosive effect of Washington's credibility problem in the Muslim and especially Arab world, see Thomas Carothers, *U.S. Democracy Promotion during and after Bush* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007).

32. See Susan B. Epstein, Nina M. Serafino, and Francis T. Miko, "Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of U.S. Foreign Policy?" CRS Report for Congress, December 28, 2007, available at http://ftp.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34296.pdf.

between Islamists and non-Islamists in ways that reinforce the leverage of ruling autocrats. The trick is to recognize Islam's importance while promoting institutional solutions that provide for the inclusion of all relevant groups in efforts to promote democratic conflict resolution.

Engaging Peoples and Politics

People-to-people dialogues, particularly those undertaken by non-governmental religious organizations, occupy an important place in the recent history of Western-Muslim relations. During the 1970s and 1980s, the Arab-Israeli conflict provided the most compelling impetus for such efforts, as Muslim, Christian, and Jewish leaders began meeting in myriad interfaith dialogues. During the 1990s the rise of Islamist activism helped to expand the scope of such initiatives. The idea of an essential clash of civilizations—advanced by conservative American scholars such as Samuel Huntington, but paradoxically supported by many of his Islamist critics—created the impetus for a new dialogue between civilizations. Seizing the moment, Iran's former president, Mohammed Khatami, advocated a new era of people-to-people exchanges between the Muslim world and the West.[33] The tragedy of September 11 at first seemed to work against such initiatives. Yet ensuing events—including the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan, the toppling of Saddam Hussein, and the onset of civil conflict in Iraq, as well as the specter of radical Islamist terrorism in the heart of Western Europe—all combined to create an even greater impetus for religious leaders to seek common ground.

David Smock's "Building Interreligious Trust in a Climate of Fear: An Abrahamic Trialogue" summarizes two such dialogues, the first of which occurred less than a year after September 11. Organized by USIP's Religion and Peacemaking Initiative, the two meetings brought together twenty-one religious leaders from Europe, the Middle East, and the United States. Not surprisingly, the Arab-Israeli dispute loomed large throughout the discussions. Addressing this key issue, religious leaders argued that any hopes for a productive dialogue requires, at the very least, a readiness to empathize with the pain and suffering of both Israelis and Palestinians. This very important message rings true to this day; after September 11, it served as a point of departure for a much wider and fundamental debate. As Smock notes, the debate included but extended far beyond the usual suspects of cultural and religious misunderstandings among Christians, Jews, and Muslims. The conference participants tackled the more pressing issue of confronting the efforts of extremists on both sides of the Western-Muslim divide "to see a clash of religiously defined civilizations."

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33. See Address by Mohammed Khatami, "Round Table: Dialogue among Civilizations: United Nations, New York, September 5, 2000," available at http://www.unesco.org/dialogue/en/khatami.htm.

To counteract extremism, religious moderates must challenge and discredit the efforts of religious extremists to define Muslim, Christian, or Jewish civilization for everyone. Interfaith dialogues may provide a useful framework for coordinating such efforts. But, as the author notes, insofar as the "participants . . . tend to be like-minded moderates," they may not "reflect the majority view of their coreligionists." In a context of escalating domestic, regional, and global conflict, the need for dialogue can expand in tandem with approaches that can become increasingly irrelevant or ineffective by bringing together seemingly politically acceptable religious leaders only. Yet if interfaith dialogues include radical leaders who have the ear of their restive or alienated publics, this more inclusive approach could work against compromise and interfaith understanding. As David Smock notes, the effort to make religion part of the solution rather than part of the problem "carries liabilities," not least of which is the tendency of many coreligionists to grasp their faith in exclusivist terms. After September 11, the challenge for moderates was not merely to advance a pluralist vision; the greater task was to demonstrate that the religious, cultural, and ethical walls that religious extremists build to define the boundaries of their respective civilizations are not immutable. Turning the proverbial apple cart over, one prominent Muslim thinker, Dr. Abdul Aziz Said, put it this way:

> The shared cultural roots joining Islam with the West are forgotten far too often. . . . Classical Islamic civilization was constructed out of Arab, Biblicist, and Hellenic cultures, but cast a wider net by integrating Persian, Central Asian, and Indian components within its cultural synthesis. Historically, Islam is the true bridge between East and West.

Said's spirited defense of religious eclecticism subverts the very notion of a culturally or religiously coherent civilization and implies that Muslims should embrace a pluralistic vision that requires dialogue and compromise, not merely between but within civilizations. Such a vision is bound to encounter resistance from radical Islamists, for whom the dualistic concept of a conflict between Islamic and Western civilizations constitutes the essential point of departure. Following September 11, that radical Islamist resistance exploded in a wave of terrorist bombings carried out by European affiliates (or sympathizers) of al-Qaeda.[34] Although one of the attacks' strategic goals may have been to punish Spain and Britain for supporting

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34. From 2002 to 2005, a series of terrorist bombings occurred in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and Southeast Asia, carried out by local affiliates or followers of al-Qaeda: on April 11, 2002, a Tunisian synagogue bombing; on October 12, 2002, a bombing in Bali, Indonesia; on November 28, 2002, attacks on Israeli tourists in Mombasa, Kenya; on May 16, 2003, suicide bombing attacks in Casablanca; on November 15, 2003, car bombs at two Jewish synagogues in Istanbul; on November 20, 2003, a second pair of bombings at the British consulate and the offices of the London-based HSBC bank in Istanbul; on March 11, 2004, ten bombs exploded within minutes of each other on four crowded commuter trains in the center of Madrid; and on July 7, 2005, the London tube bombings.

the U.S.-led campaign in Iraq, the bombings were probably also designed to widen the already considerable gap between a new generation of alienated Muslim immigrants and their host populations. But if these campaigns failed to unleash a new conflict between civilizations in the heart of Western Europe, they vastly complicated efforts to enlist Muslim diasporas in the quest for Muslim-Western engagement. By 2006, the intriguing idea that the leaders of these communities might create a new East-West synthesis—a notion championed by Arab-European writers such as Tariq Ramadan—had fallen on very hard times indeed.[35]

The unhappy trend was not replicated in the United States. On the contrary, as Qamar ul-Huda explains in "The Diversity of Muslims in the United States: Views as Americans," American Muslim interest groups, professional associations, and advocacy organizations have come to occupy increasingly important positions in the associational landscape of American political life. These groups advocate a moderate Islamic vision that calls for interfaith dialogue and an active respect for ideological diversity within Muslim communities.

What explains the dynamic of integration and moderation? Paradoxically, part of the answer lies in September 11. In its wake, American Muslim leaders sought to disassociate their organizations and religion from terrorist acts. Moreover, with the passing of the USA Patriot Act, they felt a pressing duty to create new organizations that could defend the civil rights of Muslim organizations and individuals. Yet, in retrospect, September 11 only accelerated a process that had started well before that fateful day. The creation of the Muslim Public Affairs Council in 1998 and the Council on American Islamic Relations in 1994 set important precedents for a quintessentially American tale of diaspora awakening, organization, and integration into a pluralistic arena of interest-group representation. American Muslim organizations, Huda writes, reflect and reinforce an ethos of being "included in the larger spectrum of American society and liberal democracy."

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The developments in the American Muslim community have global implications. American Muslim organizations such as the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy, KARAMAH, and the Cordoba Initiative have taken their efforts to promote interfaith dialogue and pluralist approaches to Islam to the Muslim world itself. These and other groups, Huda argues, are not only creating a "distinct position and identity from the global Muslim community"; they are building multiple bridges of understanding, between the West and the Muslim world and between and within Muslim communities.

35. For an overview of the thinking of Tariq Ramadan, a Swiss national and grandson of Hasan al-Banna, the founder of Egypt's Muslim Brotherhood, see his Web site at http://www.tariqramadan.com/spip.php?lang=en.

Engaging Parties and Movements: Beyond Islam

People-to-people exchanges, particularly between religious leaders, can sometimes create crucial terrain for rebuilding trust between the United States and the wider Muslim world. Yet if such efforts have expanded since September 11, they have done so in tandem with, and partly as a consequence of, the increasing efforts of Western governments and NGOs to advance democratic forms of conflict resolution in the Middle East. These efforts, as noted above, have survived the growing estrangement between the United States and the Muslim world, but their future remains unclear. Islamist electoral successes in Palestine and Egypt in 2005–06, as well as the reassertion of the Taliban in Afghanistan and Pakistan, have raised basic questions about whether the United States and its Western allies can promote democratic reforms in the Muslim world, or whether they should remain committed to the work.

Complicating the picture, from the outset some European leaders harbored doubts about the ultimate motives behind Washington's Freedom Agenda. They not only wondered whether the Iraq gambit had irrevocably discredited that agenda, but also feared that political reforms would destabilize Arab states in ways that undermined the domestic stability of Britain, France, Germany, Spain, Belgium, and Holland, all of which were contending with rising Islamist militancy and the specter of instability in Muslim communities.[36] Stoked by a new generation of disaffected Muslim immigrants, this militancy seemed to escalate in tandem with a U.S. democracy agenda that largely ignored an issue of paramount concern to many Muslims: the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Most Western European leaders considered it folly to promote democracy without an equal or even more robust bid to resolve this long-standing dispute.

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If the suspicions and fears that the Iraq gambit provoked still lingered in 2006, in the ensuing two years, escalating security challenges in Lebanon, Iran, Israel, Palestine, Afghanistan, and Pakistan provoked a policy shift in Washington that was welcome news in many Western European capitals. Tracing this shift in "Between Realism and Wilsonianism: The U.S. and the Muslim World after Iraq," Daniel Brumberg argues that a sudden embrace by U.S. policy of a more realpolitik approach to the Muslim world promises

36. Gilles Kepel argues that Islamist militancy in Western Europe was most pronounced—and violent—in those countries that, in the name of pluralism or multiculturalism, had tolerated the emergence of Islamist subcultures, as occurred in the United Kingdom. By contrast, in countries that tried to assimilate Muslims, such as France, outbreaks of violence in the Muslim community had more to do with social disadvantage than cultural or religious alienation. While Kepel makes a strong case, it is likely that France would have witnessed an outbreak of Islamist violence had it backed Washington's Iraq gambit, or had its press been involved in media controversies similar to those that broke out in Holland in 2004–05. See Kepel's *Beyond Terror and Martyrdom: The Future of the Middle East* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008).

to be as unrealistic and unproductive as was the previous period of neo-Wilsonianism.[37] Rather than abandoning the quest for democracy, the United States and its Western allies must forge new policies that carefully balance the quest for security and reform in ways that speak to the complexities, contradictions, and tensions that animate politics in the Muslim world.[38]

Using and Abusing Islam in Weak States: Sudan, Somalia, and Pakistan

Will the new administration in Washington be up to the task of balancing security and reform and will it find like-minded allies in Western Europe? Steven Heydemann's "The Challenge of Political Islam: Understanding the U.S. Debate" points to the basic conundrum that policy makers will have to address. On the one hand, he notes that "more than six years" after September 11, "no overarching architecture for managing U.S. responses to political Islam has taken hold." On the other hand, policy coherence may be "neither feasible nor desirable." Total coherence involves imposing overly rigid and even ideological solutions on complex realities; a more pragmatic approach allows greater flexibility. Such an approach must apply strategies of engagement, accommodation, negotiation, containment, and confrontation, depending on the different mix of challenges that Islamist groups present. The trick is to make sure that such "flexibility and responsiveness" constitutes a "policy asset rather than a source of confusion, mixed signals, and flawed implementation."

If Islamist movements and ideologies present formidable challenges, the quest to forge a more coherent engagement strategy must also acknowledge that, in the Muslim world, Islam (or political Islam, i.e., Islamism) itself is not always the source of the problem or the solution to it. As argued above, the Muslim world is split by myriad identity conflicts that are religious, ethnic, sectarian, and ideological. Islamists might welcome policies that reduce the challenges of U.S.-Muslim world engagement to questions of religion, but left to its own devices, such a policy could easily exacerbate wider identity disputes, working against democratic conflict resolution.

The dangers of reducing politics in Muslim-majority countries to matters of faith—or the political construction of faith—are especially evident

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37. Brumberg's paper, as well as those of Steven Heydemann, Annette Weber, Dorina Bekoe, and Steven Cook that follow, was originally prepared for the USIP-German Institute for International and Security Affairs (SWP) 2007 Berlin conference, "The Challenge of Islamists for EU and U.S. Policies: Conflict, Stability and Reform." See http://www.usip.org/muslimworld/events/0927_berlin_conference.html for the conference and USIP-SWP monograph that was published after the Berlin meeting.

38. USIP's Muslim World Initiative has organized the Study Group on Reform and Security in the Muslim World to help define a more coherent and sustainable strategy for balancing security and political reform. See http://www.usip.org/muslimworld/projects/reform_security.html.

in weak or failed states. No strategy to promote conflict resolution can hope to succeed in such states if it focuses purely on the issue of political Islam: State weakness or collapse often has occurred precisely because ethnic or tribal groups successfully resisted the unitary ideologies and programs of modern Islamist groups. Annette Weber's "Islam and Symbolic Politics in Somalia" amply demonstrates this lesson. The country's repeated slide into civil war and state collapse, Weber argues, can be partly attributed to a "massive influx of Wahhabi charities" and to the rise of radical Islamist movements, which in 2006 became active in the Islamic courts. While these movements "used and abused" Islam, regional and international actors also aggravated the situation. Rather than recognizing the heterogeneous nature of the Islamic courts, the United States backed an alliance of warlords against Islamist radicals, magnifying the latter's appeal. Although the U.S.-backed Ethiopian invasion of Somalia in December 2006 provoked Islamists into a tactical retreat, Weber argues that U.S. policies backfired by creating a "mobilization factor for jihadists not yet seen in Somalia."

Sudan offers a second cautionary tale. As Dorina Bekoe notes in "The Conflicts in Sudan: American and European Policies," U.S. and EU efforts to address violent conflict between Khartoum and its regional challengers in Southern Sudan, Darfur, and Eastern Sudan are of recent vintage, poorly informed, and thus, marked by a tendency to frame conflicts in terms of simplistic dichotomies such as Muslim versus Christian, Arab versus non-Arab, or north versus south. Such binary categorizing reflects and distorts a complex reality. Khartoum has tried to impose versions of Islamist rule on the animist or Christian south for decades. Yet this policy—which, during the 1970s and early 1980s, the United States effectively abetted in a bid to counter Marxist Ethiopia—misses the underlying economic and resource conflicts that in recent years have pitted Khartoum against the regions. These conflicts were supposed to be addressed through a power- and wealth-sharing arrangement envisioned in the 2006 Eastern Sudan Peace Agreement. But the international community has failed to give the agreement sustained financial and diplomatic support. Thus Sudan languishes, in part because the West no longer attributes decisive strategic importance to that hapless country.

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The same cannot be said for Pakistan, which in the coming decade will pose some of the most vexing problems for the United States and its Western allies. The great paradox of Pakistan is that while Islamists have rarely scored major electoral successes, and identity cleavages pivot largely around ethnicity and region, radical Islamists are making steady political and military inroads. This development can be attributed partly to the shifting in 2002–03 of the war on terrorism to Iraq and, three years later, to Washington's counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq, which has induced al-

Qaeda's allies to direct their terrorist campaign back to Afghanistan and Pakistan. But radical Islamist gains in Pakistan also stem from the conditional support that Washington gave President Parviz Musharraf in the years after September 11. This policy did little to help Pakistan's leaders collectively remedy the problems of an endemically weak and fragmented state. On the contrary, Washington's policy came at the expense of promoting a democratically elected government that could tackle the threat of radical Islam with a modicum of popular support.

USIP Pakistan Policy Working Group's recent report, *The Next Chapter: The United States and Pakistan*, points to the challenges ahead.[39] Going to the heart of the matter, the report notes that Musharraf's own government—particularly its security services—allowed "extremism to fester in tribal areas" while promoting "a strategic doctrine on Afghanistan that tolerated, if not assisted, the Taliban." Such policies, combined with deep personal divisions within the non-Islamist opposition parties, set the stage for the resumption in 2007 of democratic politics in a context of growing security threats and political fragmentation within and between the main political parties. Looking to the immediate future, the report urges the United States to adopt a policy of aggressively supporting economic development and political institution building. For this purpose, Washington should press "Pakistan political parties to achieve . . . reconciliation," transparency, and accountability. Without such a policy, the report warns that "political parties may be doomed to repeat the familiar cycle of delegitimization, incomplete terms of office, and prolonged military intervention" that has haunted Pakistan for decades.

Engaging Islamists and Non-Islamists in Strong States

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Given Pakistan's geostrategic importance to Washington, it is hardly surprising that the United States tolerated General Pervez Musharraf's authoritarian policies. Autocrats exploit whatever leverage they can from "partnering" with the United States in the struggle against Islamist radicalism—a strategy that, by hook or by crook, Washington has sometimes abetted. But as the case of Pakistan also demonstrates, such a policy can backfire when it effectively discredits regimes in ways that encourage support for Islamist extremists. That autocrats from Cairo to Islamabad are not eager to promote democratic alternatives to these extremists is a problem discussed several times in this volume. Whether the United States and its Western allies can undermine such a cynical protection racket is one of the most crucial and complex challenges Washington must confront.

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39. See Pakistan Policy Working Group, *The Next Chapter: The United States and Pakistan* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2008), available at http://www.usip.org/pubs/ppwg_report.html.

That said, in some corners of the Arab world, the United States has scored a few modest successes in its efforts to undermine the allure and logic of the autocratic protection racket. These gains come not merely from a strategy of engaging mainstream Islamist parties, but from pushing a process of political mobilization that enhances non-Islamist voices to promote alliance making across the Islamist-non-Islamist divide. Mona Yacoubian's "Engaging Islamist and Promoting Democracy" analyzes the efforts of U.S. democracy promoters to advance Islamist-non-Islamist cooperation in Jordan, Morocco, and Yemen. Her analysis demonstrates that these effects are rarely decisive; they are constrained by myriad domestic political factors, such as regime type, the nature of opposition-regime relations, and the relative balance of power between Islamists and non-Islamists.

Generally speaking, all strong regimes pay a price for imposing a system that makes non-Islamist groups depend on their protection. Having weakened non-Islamists, rulers find themselves confronted by a rising tide of Islamism that strengthens the leverage of regime hard-liners, thus widening the gulf between states and societies. However, regime type can matter in ways briefly discussed above. U.S. efforts to promote more moderate Islamist forces, and in particular, to encourage such forces to work with their secular rivals, have been least effective in the two monarchies that Yacoubian analyzes. In Morocco and Jordan, the arbitrating role of monarch has encouraged a patron-client relationship with both mainstream Islamist and non-Islamist forces. Under these conditions, there have been few if any opportunities for the United States and the West to push an existing process of intraopposition cooperation forward.[40] By contrast, in the one case of presidential rule that Yacoubian analyzes, the efforts of President Ali Abdul Salih to consolidate and extend his power created an impetus for cooperation between Islah and the Yemen Socialist Party. This development created an opportunity for U.S. democracy promoters, who in 2006 skillfully assisted in creating the Joint Meeting Parties, or JMP.

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Reflecting this alliance, one Islamist leader acknowledges that Islah and the YSP have "subordinated" their "ideological agendas to the one thing we all have in common . . . which was the realization that political reform was a necessity if we were to save democracy." Such pragmatism can jump start democratic conflict resolution. But as previously argued, without a deeper vision of democracy as an end rather than a means, Islamist–non-Islamist cooperation will remain an insufficient condition for sustained and peaceful political reform.

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40. Building on Yacoubian's research, the Muslim World Initiative has a grassroots project directed at encouraging Islamist–non-Islamist dialogue. See "Wasat Generation Dialogues: Easing Sectarian and Ideological Conflicts in the Middle East," available at http://www.usip.org/muslimworld/projects/wasat_generation.html.

Reform, Security, and Diplomacy: Challenges Ahead

Mounting instability in Lebanon, Iraq, Palestine, Pakistan, and Afghanistan has fostered a new consensus in Washington and European capitals that democratic conflict resolution in the Muslim world requires a sustained effort to reinvigorate the architecture of security and peacemaking in the Middle East and South Asia. Autocrats would surely welcome this realist shift, hoping that they could brandish their security credentials to deflect demands for political change. Successful regional peacemaking could counter such regime survival tactics by enhancing the leverage of moderate actors, facilitating democratic peacemaking at the national level. If handled intelligently and carefully, regional security and domestic reform can be mutually reinforcing.

The failure to address and ultimately resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict highlights the complex synergies between reform and security. Although Hamas is opposed to any two-state solution to the conflict, its rise as a political force in the West Bank and Gaza came about partly because of a failed peace process. Had progress toward an economically and politically sustainable Palestinian state living in peace alongside Israel been achieved early on, it is likely that elections would have strengthened Palestinian advocates of peace, creating a more stable environment for domestic reconciliation in the Palestinian community itself. Moreover, as Daniel Kurtzer and Scott Lasensky argue in *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East,* the multiplier effect of Arab-Israeli peace would be considerable. A vibrant peace process might in the short run mobilize the suppliers of Islamist radicalism, but in the longer run, Israeli-Palestinian peace would also reduce the demand or support for militant ideology and action within the wider Muslim community. Thus, the authors conclude, without a sustained U.S. commitment to push all parties toward a just and comprehensive settlement of the Arab-Israeli dispute, Washington has little chance of achieving its wider strategic and political goals—including democracy—in the Middle East.[41]

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Any push for Arab-Israeli peace must unfold alongside a wider bid by the United States and its Western allies to advance peacemaking and regional cooperation in other arenas of the Middle East and South Asia. As in the Israel-Palestine area, such efforts could enhance prospects for domestic political reform in Muslim-majority states suffering from destabilizing identity conflicts.

The essays on Turkey, Afghanistan, and Iran included in the final section of this volume highlight the complex and sometimes corrosive synergies

41. Daniel C. Kurtzer and Scott B. Lasensky, *Negotiating Arab-Israeli Peace: American Leadership in the Middle East* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2008).

between regional and domestic political reform. As Steven Cook notes in "Islamist Political Power in Turkey," the electoral successes of the Islamist-oriented Justice and Development Party (AKP) poses local, regional, and national challenges. Although the AKP's leaders claim that the party is post-Islamist and adheres to a secularist agenda, many Turkish secularists harbor strong concerns about the party's ultimate aims. This divide looms over Turkey's political horizon, threatening to undo the country's rocky transition to full, competitive democracy.[42] Membership in the European Union could go a long way in encouraging all parties to forge common ground. Yet, as Cook writes, inasmuch as "most people within the EU believe that there is no place for an overwhelmingly Muslim country in Europe," a key structural incentive for advancing democratic consensus building in Turkey may go missing.

There is little doubt that the United States has advocated Turkish EU membership in the hope that it would moderate the AKP's policies and thus enhance political reconciliation between Islamists and secularists. Given Europe's unease, one may never have the opportunity to test the theory that EU membership would strengthen the leverage of AKP moderates. However, Cook's essay suggests a different regional path to promoting democratic peace building in Turkey. Paradoxically, that path is rooted in escalating security challenges, not least of which is the U.S. invasion of Iraq: In responding to these events, Turkey's leaders are fashioning a realpolitik strategy that, far from expressing an Islamist agenda, seeks good relations with all neighbors. Such pragmatism, Cook argues, could be marshaled to promote Middle East stability and peacemaking, provided that Ankara is allowed to "come into its own" as a major economic, political, and diplomatic player. This process could also facilitate democratic consensus building in Turkey, particularly if Ankara effectively helps to mediate conflicts between Israel and its Arab neighbors and, more globally, between the United States and Iran.

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Turkey's ability to mediate disputes between the Muslim world and the West is a function of the coherence and strength of the Turkish state. Although identity conflicts between Islamists and secularists, or Turkish nationals and the Kurdish minority, continue to rattle Turkey's political system, the state is sufficiently robust to absorb such shocks. Despite—or perhaps due to—periodic threats from the military, the political elites on both sides of the Islamist-secular divide have stepped back repeatedly from the brink,

42. See Gallup, "Role of Sharia: A Fault Line in Turkish Society," available at http://www.gallup.com/poll/109318/Role-Sharia-Fault-Line-Turkish-Society.aspx. On the political implications of this fault line for the evolution of Turkey's democracy, see Cemal Karakas, *Turkey: Islam and Laicism between the Interests of State, Politics, and Society,* report no. 78 (Frankfurt: Peace Research Institute Frankfurt, 2007), available at http://www.hsfk.de/downloads/prif78.pdf.

enhancing efforts to square the quest for political stability with the equally important drive for democratic reform.

By contrast, the great challenge in Afghanistan is to advance domestic peacemaking and reform in a weak and fragmented state that is suffering from a growing Islamist insurgency, led by a revived Taliban and al-Qaeda forces. Mohammad Masoom Stanekzai's "Thwarting Afghanistan's Insurgency" sets out a comprehensive national reconciliation strategy, designed to deflate the Taliban's sails. In contrast to the gloomy analysis of Afghanistan that appears earlier in this book, Stanekzai argues that after long years of conflict, the "majority" of Afghans are "willing to support a peace process" that includes elements of the Taliban. President Hamid Karzai foreshadowed this policy in April 2003, when he declared that "a clear line has to be drawn between the ordinary Taliban who are real and honest . . . and those who still use the Taliban cover to disturb peace and security." This promise went unfulfilled, but Stanekzai argues that declining popular support for the Taliban, the growing strength of the Afghan military, and a much-improved annual economic growth rate have created a window of opportunity to advance national reconciliation.

Such domestic conditions, if they can even hold, will be at best a necessary but insufficient condition for progress. Success in Afghanistan, the author argues, will require nothing less than a surge of NATO and International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) troops, without which the "cost of security over the long term will be intolerably high." What is more, he suggests that the United States must coax Pakistan, India, and Afghanistan into a direct dialogue aimed at ending the "use of Afghanistan soil as a proxy Indo-Pakistani battleground." Without such a regional initiative, Pakistan's notorious security services will probably continue to support the Taliban, undercutting the leverage of the Afghanistan government in ways that work against domestic reconciliation.

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Stanekzai may be asking a lot, particularly given that the *mujahideen* and Taliban occupy positions in the elected national assembly, or Wolesi Jirga, and that warlords aligned with the Taliban are unlikely to support reconciliation if it requires giving up opium cultivation, upon which the economy depends. These and other challenges are formidable. Still, to set the stage for talks with the Taliban, the United States and its Western allies will probably have to increase military, economic, and humanitarian support for Afghanistan, where, of course, the post-September 11 struggle against al-Qaeda began.

An enhanced engagement strategy in Afghanistan will attract Iran's attention. Hard-liners will not welcome the prospect of more U.S. troops on the Islamic Republic's southeast flank; that said, in 2002, Tehran sup-

ported the U.S. effort to crush the Taliban.[43] From Iran's perspective, a revived Taliban could invite a return to civil war, a prospect that would hardly serve Tehran's interests. Thus it is not inconceivable that U.S.-Western efforts to rescue Afghanistan from total chaos might facilitate talks between Washington and Tehran. Moreover, as the United States struggles to define and implement a feasible exit strategy from Iraq—one that enhances rather than undermines domestic political reconciliation—there may be further incentive to engage Iran. Given that the long-term prospects for sustaining democratic power sharing in Iraq are not encouraging, it is likely that at some point, Washington and Tehran will have to find ways to talk to one another about Iraq's future.

Any engagement strategy faces enormous obstacles, not least of which is Iran's enhanced influence in the Middle East and its associated quest to build a nuclear power complex that serves military ends. Paradoxically, U.S. policy opened the door to this development: By suggesting that the effort to promote democracy in Iraq was a prelude to regime change in Damascus or Tehran, U.S. officials and their allies in some Washington think tanks encouraged Iran's bid to shape the Iraqi political arena to serve its own interests. Closely aligned with Iraq's two main Shi'ite parties, Tehran's leverage has increased in tandem with its worrisome drive for nuclear energy.[44]

A second crucial factor hindering U.S.-Iranian engagement is the complex and potentially explosive interplay of Iranian domestic politics and foreign policy. Iran's current regime was founded partly on an ideology of hostility toward Israel and the United States; its leaders cannot completely shed this ideological inheritance without antagonizing powerful domestic forces. President Khatami learned this lesson the hard way: When he promoted a "dialogue of civilizations" that sought to create a new foundation for U.S.-Iranian reconciliation, his domestic opponents saw in this campaign a bid to increase the domestic political leverage of the reform movement. Matters only worsened in 2002 when Iran was included in the Axis of Evil, an action that seemed to help seal the fate of Iran's reformists.[45] By 2005, the hard-liners, led by newly elected president Mahmoud Ahmadenejad, reasserted control over the political system.

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43. There is evidence that Iran's Revolutionary Guard has given tactical support to the Taliban. While this cynical policy amply reflects the enduring influence of Iran's hard-liners, under different circumstances—particularly in the context of a wider U.S.-Iranian dialogue on the nuclear question—Washington and Tehran might once again find common ground in Afghanistan.

44. See Geoffrey Kemp, "Iran and Iraq: The Shia Connection, Soft Power, and the Nuclear Factor," Special Report 156 (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2005), available at http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr156.html.

45. See Daniel Brumberg, *End of a Brief Affair? The United States and Iran*, Carnegie Policy Brief no. 14 (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2002), available at http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=922&prog=zgp&proj=zdrl.

Ahmadenejad has had some success with the messianic, populist, and anti-American and anti-Israeli ideology that the late Ayatollah Khomeini had championed.[46] Yet Iran's Islamic Revolution was constructed around the conjoining of an array of contending and even contradictory ideological traditions, some of which Khatami and his allies in the reformist movement tried to recast in their effort to advance a pluralistic vision of reform at home and engagement abroad.[47] If they did not succeed, there are still powerful forces in Iran that want to resuscitate the engagement agenda. These forces include pragmatic conservatives within the regime, who favor a more normal relationship with Washington.

The last essay, "Negotiating with the Islamic Republic of Iran: Raising the Chances for Success," highlights the opportunities for and impediments to forging an effective engagement strategy with Iran.[48] The author, John Limbert, a distinguished American diplomat and scholar of Iran, was also one of the hostages held in the U.S. Embassy by Iranian students from November 1979 to January 1981. Thus he brings a unique combination of personal and professional experience to bear on this most complex of subjects.

Limbert begins his analysis by noting that in May and July 2007, Tehran and Washington held the "first official bilateral . . . contacts since relations were formally broken in . . . April 1980." That these talks were held in Baghdad should come as little surprise, as with the possible exception of Afghanistan, there is no other country in the Muslim world where the United States and Iran might find a greater measure of diplomatic (and actual) common ground than in Iraq. However, though the rationale for dialogue grew in the wake of the Iraq gambit, U.S.-Iranian relations are weighed down by a thirty-year cold war, the legacies of which—as Limbert shows—have repeatedly made any effort to substantially redefine the relationship politically risky for leaders in both Washington and Tehran.

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The risk is not equally shared. Because "many in power in Iran today have gained their positions by riding waves of anti-American sentiment," and because the country's leaders "see the power of American popular culture as a direct threat . . . to the dominant ideology," Iranian advocates of engagement have to navigate a sea of obstacles far more daunting than those that their analogues in Washington face. American diplomats must surely be sensitive to the many wounds that the United States suffered in

46. See Suzanne Maloney, *Iran's Long Reach: Iran as a Pivotal State in the Muslim World* (Washington, DC: USIP Press, 2008).

47. Daniel Brumberg, *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000).

48. Given Iran's enhanced strategic position in the Middle East, any opening to Iran would require efforts to shape a regional environment that would reduce Iranian leverage and thus provide a more productive incentive for Tehran to engage Washington. For this purpose, U.S. engagement of Syria and a strong push for Israeli-Syrian peace may be a prerequisite for effective U.S.-Iranian engagement.

its contentious relations with Iran. But their primary challenge is to forge a strategy that anticipates the cultural, ideological, psychological, and institutional landscape of Iranian politics in ways that advance rather than undermine the cause of U.S.-Iranian engagement.

Limbert offers fifteen points that he argues should facilitate, but by no means guarantee, successful diplomacy with Tehran. While many of his points are relevant for all negotiators in all negotiations, he highlights two potentially countervailing challenges specific to the Iranian arena. First, he warns against treating the Iranian side as irrational. Such an approach, he argues, creates a "self-fulfilling prophecy" by effectively inviting Iran to comply with the "time-honored view of Iranians as emotional or incomprehensible." Instead, the United States should focus on potential areas of converging U.S.-Iranian geostrategic interest, paying careful attention to talking to the "right people," even if this means negotiating with hard-liners. Second, Limbert suggests that U.S. negotiators with Iran must attend to the many cultural and symbolic minefields that await them. The Iranian quest for dignity is a psychological challenge that clashes with the pragmatic, problem-solving bent of U.S. diplomats. How to address the important symbolic aspect of discussions is a tricky question, particularly when U.S. diplomats often suspect that their Iranian counterparts play the respect card to avoid making the hard choices involved in genuinely normalizing U.S.-Iranian relations.

Scholars of conflict resolution argue that the most effective way to tackle such emotive issues is through "symbolic incentives and concessions." Using culturally relevant gestures and statements that show empathy for a rival's deepest grievances, negotiators can reinforce the political leverage of moderates, opening up the possibility for material concessions that otherwise could not be imagined.[49]

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Limbert's analysis points toward the logic of symbolic incentives, but also argues that ultimately, the first priority for Iran's leaders is very concrete: "regime survival." Do American leaders have the political will and domestic support to, in the author's words, "reassure the Iranian side" that an agreement "will not destabilize the Islamic Republic?" And even if conditions emerge for formal U.S. recognition of the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Islamic Republic, would Iran's leaders reciprocate, knowing that normalizing relations with the United States entails relinquishing one of the last remaining ideological props of the Islamic Revolution? Because a genuine opening to the United States could eventually strengthen Iranian moderates and even tilt the balance of power back to the reformists, would

49. See Jeremy Ginges, Scott Atran, Douglas Medin, and Khalil Shikaki, "Sacred Bounds on Rational Resolution of Violent Political Conflict," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, vol. 4, no. 19 (May 2007), pp. 7357–7360.

the Islamic Republic's supreme leader ever countenance a real burying of the hatchet with Washington?

There are no easy answers to these difficult questions. Engagement and normalization with rivals always entails daunting and complex tradeoffs. But one thing is clear: Without a bold effort to test the waters, the U.S.-Iranian cold war will continue, a prospect that surely warms the hearts of radicals throughout the Middle East and beyond. As the United States and its Western allies look beyond a decade of estrangement with a Muslim world increasingly fragmented by its own domestic and regional conflicts, the impetus for dialogue with both friends and foes will grow in concert with the benefits and risks associated with a sustained strategy of engagement.

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