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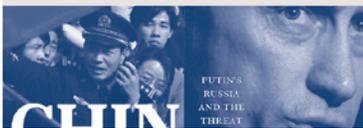
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Back to the Future: The Rising Backlash Against Democracy Promotion

BY CARINA PERELLI



he first decade of the twenty-first century has been an exciting one for those of us in the business of promoting democracy and democratic development around the world. We have seen the “third wave” of democratization—which began in the 1980s and accelerated with the fall of global communism in the late 1980s and early 1990s—continue across the globe. At the same time, new twenty-first century “information age” technology allowed global audiences to view in real-time the moving and dramatic images of the so-called “Color Revolutions” in Georgia, Ukraine, and Kyrgyzstan, the “Cedar Revolution” in Lebanon, and the indelible ink-stained fingers of Iraqis who braved the threat of sectarian violence to cast their votes for the first time in free and open elections. International democracy assistance and promotion NGOs credited their own work—though not always deservedly—for [Continued, Page 24]

Fragmented Oppositions and Stalled Democratization in the Arab World: Political Parties and Civil Society Associations as Agents for Change

BY CORY JULIE

Why do Arab leaders remain seemingly allergic to democratic politics, while their counterparts in other world regions have, to a greater extent, begun to relinquish their traditionally autocratic mantles? In accounting for authoritarian stasis in the Arab world, regional scholars have tended to focus exclusively on the role of the state and the able elites at its helm. Heydemann, (2007) for example, identifies the recently improved and even exceptional capabilities with which Arab leaders “upgrade authoritarianism.” “Upgrading” strategies combine “tried-and-true” past maneuvers such as repression and corruption with innovations designed to respond to the present-day challenges of markets, globalization, and democratization.¹

While state-centric theses such as these hold significant explanatory weight, they neglect the potential role of alternate forces in accounting for authoritarian resilience. This paper seeks to fill this gap by citing the fractious nature of Arab political oppositions as a facilitator of persistent authoritarianism in the region. Throughout the bulk of cases of successful democratic reform and transitions in other parts of the world, I contend, cohesive oppositions played a pivotal role in toppling authoritarian regimes and creating a new political reality. Not only were these oppositions *cohesive*, but also *comprehensive*. They consisted of strategic, society-wide coalitions between political parties of the formal opposition establishment willing to [Continued, Page 20]



From the Director
BARAK HOFFMAN

Authoritarian Consolidation

Democracy is having a rough year. Political instability is rising from Africa to Europe to Asia. More troubling, the global stresses on democracy we are currently witnessing are a continuation of disturbing trends. According to Freedom House, the number of electoral democracies has been declining since 2005, marking the first democratic recession since the end of the Cold War. In some cases, countries are backsliding from democracy to weak or fragile states. In others, they are transitioning from democracy to autocracy. The fall 2008 issue of *Democracy and Society* examined failed states. The current one analyzes authoritarian consolidation and how democracy assistance programs can respond to it. Some of the articles highlight that authoritarian regimes are becoming more sophisticated in defusing demands for political reform and one even cautions against supporting democratic reformers. Others find reasons for optimism and argue that innovative democracy assistance programs may produce positive results in ways that current programs cannot. On balance, the articles suggest that while authoritarian consolidation is real, it is not inevitable.

Three of this issue's articles are pessimistic about the prospects for democratic change in most authoritarian countries. Naazneen Barma, Ely Ratner, and Regine Spector of the University of California, Berkeley examine the phenomena of "open authoritarian regimes," political systems that are able to embrace economic and social modernization without succumbing to demands for democracy. Barma, et al. argue that open authoritarian regimes are able to manage this difficult process through framing rights in sovereign and communal terms, rather than in individual ones. Cory Julie of Georgetown University takes a novel look at an enduring problem, the lack of democracy in the Middle East. Julie argues that existing theories on why authoritarian regimes endure in the Middle East focus too much attention on the state and incumbent regimes, and not enough on opposition forces. Julie

contends that the fragmentation of opposition parties, not only the strength of ruling ones, explains a large part of why demands for democracy fail to materialize to meaningful political change in the region. Finally, Jennifer Heeg Markusa of Georgetown and Texas A&M Universities contends that democracy is likely to do more harm than good in most Persian Gulf states. According to Markusa, since non-citizens comprise the vast majority of the populations of most states in the Gulf, such as Kuwait and Qatar, democracy is likely to accentuate differences between citizens and non-citizens, thus provoking political instability. Instead, Markusa contends, those concerned with political reform in the Gulf are more likely to elicit positive change by focusing on improving human rights.

Not all are as pessimistic as the authors above. Rana Siu Inboden sees hope for democracy assistance programs to produce political reform in China. According to Inboden, too often existing programs seek to cooperate with the Government of China. These programs typically—albeit inadvertently—strengthen the capacity of the government to repress demands for reform. Rather, Inboden argues that coordinated multilateral attempts to exploit democratic openings are more likely to generate positive political reform. Aleksander Shkolnikov and John Sullivan of the Center for International Private Enterprise see a silver lining in the current financial crisis for democracy. Shkolnikov and Sullivan contend that in many authoritarian countries, the crisis is clarifying the need to improve governance. The authors argue that organizations involved in economic reform programs should use the crisis as an opportunity to call for these changes. Finally, Carina Perelli of the International Foundation for Electoral Systems cautions those in the democracy assistance community against despair at recent democratic setbacks. Perelli observes that while democracy assistance programs face a more difficult environment today than they did a decade ago, it is far easier for practitioners to operate now than during the Cold War. She maintains that the current pessimism in the democracy assistance community reflects doubt about the utility of the endeavor rather than the challenges of it, and suggests these organizations need to improve their own resolve.

We compliment our articles with reviews of five recent books on authoritarian governance and reform. Three of them, Robert Kagan's *The Return of History and the End of Dreams*, Michael Klare's *Rising Powers*, and Edward Lucas's *New Cold War* see the resurgence of authoritarian regimes creating a global order that poses direct challenges to the[Continued, Page 26]

The Challenge of China

BY RANA SIU INBODEN

INTRODUCTION

Despite recent introduction of limited legal and political reforms, economic liberalization measures, increased public consultation, and allowance of a measure of personal space for its citizens, China remains dominated by a single-party authoritarian regime. The government restricts political dissent, autonomous labor unions, independent religious organizations, opposition political parties, a free and independent press, and other institutions, groups or activities perceived as threatening to its interests. While there exist many potential factors in accounting for China's authoritarian resilience, this paper is concerned with the limited results of current efforts by the international community at fostering democracy there, and prescribing recommendations to refocus and reshape them.

Democracy funding in China has produced limited results primarily because many funders have failed to adopt effective, thoughtful, and appropriate strategies. Recent funding programs generally neglect to address core problems, are not tailored to tackle the authoritarian nature of the regime, and are not designed to have maximum impact. While the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has proven resilient and successful at maintaining power, funders should not be deterred nor conclude that trade and economic development alone will democratize China, as then-presidential candidate George W. Bush did when he advised: "Trade freely with China, and time is on our side."¹ Rather, funders should reevaluate their approaches in order to improve impact. The implication for democracy funding more generally suggests a need to tailor such assistance to the nature of the system and the methods the regime uses to hold on to power.

CURRENT APPROACHES TO DEMOCRACY PROMOTION IN CHINA

International efforts to promote democratic reform in China began following the 1989 Tiananmen Square Demonstrations. Initially, the international community responded with vigorous policies that included UN censure, sanctions, strong public statements, and suspension of high-level contact. As foreign governments replaced these policies, which China termed "confrontation," with "dialogue and cooperation," these governments—including Australia, Canada, Norway, and Sweden—began engaging in bilateral human rights dialogues. These were complemented with democracy-related projects, intended to take advantage of limited but promising government reforms, including a stated commitment to the rule of law, experiments with local elections, and space for

some civil society activity. International organizations, such as the United Nations Development Program, also began to fund democracy-related projects, in an attempt to link democratization with other goals such as economic growth and sustainable development. These efforts have produced limited results in part because of an overemphasis on "dialogue and cooperation" with Beijing. As a result, foreign-funded projects appear to be shaped by the Chinese government's preferences, rather than being tailored to address core issues that could have significant impact on the reform process.

Although the U.S. government was a latecomer to democracy funding for China, it has since become one of its largest supporters. The majority of funding is administered through the State Department's Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF). Between FY 2002 and FY 2008, the U.S. Congress appropriated over \$100 million in HRDF funding for China.² This funding is part of a strategy of pairing diplomatic tools, such as public statements and an annual human rights report, with support for projects that seek to encourage gradual reform from within China. In 2006, for example, the U.S. Agency for International Development invested \$1.1 million to fund a legal education program in China. USAID's program has since expanded to include other activities, and now operates with a \$10 million budget. The Department of Labor, the U.S. Embassy's small grants fund, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs—which administers a Congressional earmark for Tibet—and the Broadcasting Board of Governors—which runs Voice of America and Radio Free Asia—also provide democracy-related funding.

Despite these efforts, U.S. government-funded programs have had a mixed record, having introduced only some initiatives that are well suited to address China's core problems. At the same time, other projects have been misguided, focusing almost exclusively on capacity building, while apparently ignoring the authoritarian nature of the regime. All such U.S. government programs would benefit from refocusing efforts on building internal forces for change and increasing coordination among funders—especially multilaterally—and adopting a "whole of government" approach.³

THE WAY AHEAD

The durability of authoritarianism in China and the shortcomings of democracy promotion efforts should not be considered reason enough to cease democracy funding there. The potential for democracy funding is underscored by the Chinese government's very suspicion of it. The "Color Revolutions" that swept through Eastern Europe and Central Asia, in fact, alarmed PRC officials, who saw a connection between democracy assistance and democratic breakthroughs. Chi-

nese authorities responded by launching an investigation, cracking down on some NGOs, and tightening approval of foreign-funded political and legal reform projects.

The limited success of democracy promotion, then, suggests a need to review and revise current approaches in order to capitalize upon the available potential in China. The recommendations below are aimed at improving the effectiveness of democracy assistance, and may provide insight into approaching other authoritarian regimes.

Rethink Partnering with the Chinese Government A number of funders have implemented programs in cooperation with the Chinese government. This approach runs the risk of surrendering too much control to a regime that has not embraced democracy. The Chinese government has used its influence to water down projects or select grantees and implementers that are either quasi-governmental organizations or closely aligned with the government.⁴ In order to avoid this problem, some funders, including the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights, the State Department’s HRDF, and the National Endowment for Democracy, make grants directly to organizations without consulting the Chinese government.⁵ Other funders have carefully sought out reform-minded government officials with whom to work, or targeted their programs to support only the most promising reforms. Others should consider adopting these approaches.

Leverage Government Cooperation When funders have opted to partner with the Chinese government, they have often failed to take advantage of the potential benefits associated with this approach. This includes better access to policymakers, the ability to support the work of reform-minded government officials, the opportunity to link projects to policy debates and extant government reforms, and using projects to encourage and deepen reforms. For example, a recent judicial reform initiative with the Supreme People’s Court (SPC) failed to push the courts toward greater reform. Instead of using access to the government to advance and strengthen reforms, the proposed project focused on increasing efficiency rather than transparency and accountability.

Avoid Enhancing Governmental Capacity A number of foreign-funded projects, particularly in governance, appear to support dubious “reforms” that have the potential to strengthen the regime by increasing government capacity and efficiency without also promoting liberalization and accountability. For example, the World Bank, UNDP and EU supported projects to assist the Ministry of Civil Affairs in classifying, registering, rating and managing NGOs.⁶ Although there clearly exists a need to address the lack of financial transparency and accountability among NGOs in China, such assistance has the potential to help the *regime* monitor and target organizations that are perceived to be critical of government policies. Funders can avoid this mis-

take by focusing on reform-oriented activities that make the system more accountable, transparent and responsive.

Push the Reform Agenda Some observers argue that the Chinese government uses limited reforms, such as village elections, administrative law reform, and public hearings to allow the public to express grievances and create a pretense of change without making the system genuinely more responsive.⁷ While these reforms may be government-initiated efforts to shore up support, they also represent opportunities to reform the system from within. It is therefore crucial that funders focus on projects that seek to enhance and deepen reforms, and bolster reform-minded officials. Funding agencies like the Australian Agency of International Development, which describes its governance program as “guided by China’s own reform agenda,” should move away from this model toward one in which funders push the Chinese government toward greater and more meaningful political reform.⁸

Address Root Problems The majority of democracy-related projects have failed to address the most serious abuses of the Chinese regime, such as: political imprisonment; stifling of dissent; lack of freedom of expression, association and religion; internet censorship and surveillance; and instrumental use of the law for political purposes. For example, under the rubric of Governing Justly and Democratically, USAID is funding a partnership between U.S. and Chinese law schools to provide legal education, including legal clinics. While legal education is part of the longer-term solution to building a society governed by the rule of law, USAID could complement this approach with other projects that address the most severe forms of repression and rights violations.

Move Away From A Development Approach Foreign governments generally administer democracy-related funding through their international development agencies. As a result, such projects tend to be designed and conceptualized within a capacity-building framework. For example, a USAID officer’s instinct was to design a program that provided training and additional resources to government agencies. Such an approach is more appropriate for transitional countries,⁹ and therefore less applicable to China. This approach misses the fundamental problem in China—the regime’s determination to defend its monopoly on political power. For authoritarian regimes, funders should develop tailored approaches, based on sound expertise of the target regimes.

Improve Coordination Given Beijing’s efforts to impede democracy promotion, donor coordination is especially important in order to prevent duplication of efforts and maximize resources. Several funding agencies describe remarkably similar projects. For example, the UNDP and the Asia Foundation both support the Ministry of Civil Affairs in creating an enabling legislative and regulatory environment for NGOs. As a program officer with a multilateral institu-

tion complained, “the same project is often done over 14 times.”¹⁰ Although an informal gathering of funders meets occasionally in Beijing, there needs to be a regular donor coordination mechanism that includes sharing of information on projects and lessons learned. Some progress has been made toward including donor coordination as part of the Human Rights Exchange, which brings together countries engaged in human rights dialogue with China.¹¹

Work Multilaterally Although the U.S. has been among the most vocal in championing democracy promotion, other actors are engaged in this endeavor and should be treated as essential partners. With anti-Americanism and nationalism growing in China, working with other actors, such as other foreign governments, private foundations, and international organizations, will give greater credibility to democracy as an international norm and increase the effectiveness of democracy promotion. While foreign funders are often driven by competition for influence and credit, they should focus on cooperating and presenting a range of democratic solutions.

Sustain Internal Support for Democracy A democratic future in China depends on internal support for change. Therefore, increasing domestic support for democracy should be a major focus of democracy funding. In particular, projects should seek to sustain activists under siege, increase understanding of democratic concepts and values, support free media and provide uncensored information and news, such as Radio Free Asia and Voice of America. As the Charter 08 movement demonstrates, access to news and information about events outside China strengthens the domestic support for democratic change. Democracy should also be presented as a means of addressing issues of concern to Chinese citizens, notably corruption, consumer safety, environmental health hazards and unsafe schools.

Desensitize Foreign Funding The Chinese government—and to a certain extent the Chinese public—remain wary of democracy-related foreign funding and its true intentions. As a result, some individuals accepting foreign funding come under suspicion or government scrutiny, and foreign-funded projects are occasionally cancelled or postponed. In order to desensitize foreign-funding, donors should make clear to both the government and the public that their intent is to support gradual reform, which is in China’s interest, and funding is not intended to weaken or divide the state.

Continue to Use a Variety of Tools Democracy funding should be paired with other tools including demarches, public and private advocacy, UN censure and meetings with dissidents. Countries should also adopt a “whole of government” approach. The goal of these efforts should be encouraging the Chinese government to make concessions that create more political space which can be used by domestic reformers.

CONCLUSION

The tenacity of China’s authoritarian system is a test for democracy assistance. China’s growing stature, political and economic leverage, and ties with foreign business communities present democracy funders with a unique challenge. Funders can have greater impact by pursuing more thoughtful strategies that are tailored to China and take advantage of the openings that exist. These include experiments with public hearings and strengthening government oversight mechanisms such as the administrative legal apparatus and People’s Congress system. The Chinese people themselves have not given up on a democratic future. Democratic movements, including the May 4th movement, Democracy Wall, Tiananmen Square, the China Democracy Party, the “One World, One Dream” open letter prior to the Olympics and most recently, Charter 08, dot China’s history. The implication for democracy funding more generally is not the futility of democracy assistance but rather a need to adopt thoughtful, tailored strategies, especially when faced with an authoritarian government that actively uses repression and incentives to quell domestic support for democratic reform. Another lesson from China may be the limits of any link between development and democracy, and the futility of a passive democracy policy oriented around trade and business.

RANA SIU INBODEN, *Human Rights and Democracy Consultant*

ENDNOTES

- 1 George W. Bush. Speech at Boeing, May 17, 2000. See also “Bush Backs China Trade Deal,” BBC News, May 17, 2000.
- 2 For further information on funding figures, see Congressional Research Service, “U.S. Funded Assistance Programs in China,” <http://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS22663.pdf>.
- 3 A “whole of government” approach utilizes a range of tools and resources, such as diplomacy, advocacy, and public comments in addition to funding, and transcends bureaucratic boundaries.
- 4 The Chinese government’s refusal to approve several EU projects in 2005 provides an example of some of the difficulties of partnering with the Chinese government. During the EU-China human rights dialogue in October 2005, Chinese officials objected to several of the EU’s selected grantees. Previously, EU officials had informally told the Chinese government the identities of grantees without Chinese objection. The impasse resulted in the EU’s decision to cancel the entire program of funding for that year, and centralize future funding for human rights in China.
- 5 EIDHR Programming 2005-2006, 5. http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/worldwide/eidhr/documents/eidhr-programming-2005-2006_en.pdf. However, a portion of EU funding is run as a cooperative program in consultation with the Chinese government.
- 6 See www.cecc.gov/pages/virtualAcad/index.php?showsingle=49325 for information on the MOCA classification system.
- 7 See Andrew Nathan, “China’s Changing of the Guard: Authoritarian Resilience.” *Journal of Democracy*, January 2003, 6.
- 8 www.usaid.gov/au/china/aid/cfm [Continued, Page 26]

Two Out of Three Ain't Bad: The Future of U.S. Policy in the Gulf

BY JENNIFER HEEG MARUSKA

Whether it's oil, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, or terrorism, the United States continually has reason to focus on the Middle East. The Persian or Arabian Gulf (henceforth, "the Gulf"), in particular, is coming under increased attention by economic experts, as the area's enormous wealth of oil and gas reserves have transformed its tiny emirates into major players on the world stage.¹ The Gulf is also of singular military-strategic importance, not only for its natural resources but also because of the "neighborhood:" the Gulf emirates are surrounded by Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. To ensure stability and a free flow of resources, the U.S. maintains a heavy military presence, including CENTCOM and naval and air bases in Bahrain and Qatar, which have been central to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In the Gulf, where security and economic interests both abound and interact, then, preservation of stability is not only good for America; it is a *public good* for the entire world.² As such, this essay focuses on the Gulf as a crucial sub-region of the Middle East, arguing that the U.S. should focus on promoting stability and human rights there—and forget about democracy for the time being.

U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East, both in rhetoric and practice, has traditionally centered on three broad goals. The first is regional stability, including securing oil production and seeking an end to sectarian, civil, territorial, and religious violence. Second is support for human rights, through initiatives such as the State Department's annual Trafficking in Persons Report, assistance to humanitarian organizations, and a new Secretary of State—Hillary Clinton—who has pledged to make women's rights a focus of U.S. policy. Finally and most recently is democracy promotion in the Middle East, a policy that is unlikely to disappear anytime soon. While President Obama has been highly critical of military interventionist strategies, as a U.S. Senator, for example, he co-sponsored a major bill funding democracy promotion through peaceful means worldwide.³

As a concept, democracy promotion is thought to bolster human rights at the domestic level, and stability at the international level, thereby rendering these three goals complementary. In reality, however, they are often in tension with one another. And in the Middle East, tensions too often become outright conflicts. Whereas one goal of democracy promotion is to improve human rights by making governments more accountable, and another is to enhance interstate stability (via the reasoning of the "democratic peace" theorem, which posits that democracies do not fight one another), both log-

ics are deeply flawed in the Gulf. In fact, neither rights nor stability are dependent on democratization; both may actually be hindered by it. Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates, none of which are democratic regimes, are all stable U.S. allies with improving rights records. It's time, then, to leave democracy promotion aside, and focus on the more realistic agenda of furthering the cause of human rights. This, in turn, can help the U.S. achieve its fundamental goal in the Gulf: the preservation of stability.

WHY PROMOTE HUMAN RIGHTS OVER DEMOCRACY IN THE GULF?

As Tony Evans writes, "We must treat the claim that human rights and democracy share a symbiotic relationship with great caution."⁴ Historically, as it were, democratic regimes have often been exclusionary, offering rights only to a select few. Consider the classic example of Athenian Greece, where only adult males born in Athens were afforded freedoms, and women and slaves were exempted.⁵ The Athenian example translates well to the Gulf, where migrant laborers flock to share the benefits of the oil and gas industries, leading to slim citizen majorities in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia, citizen minorities in Kuwait and the UAE, and demographics as dramatic as the Qatari case, where the most recent estimates indicate that citizens make up as little as 14% of the population.⁶ This excluded majority could very well threaten the stability of the region unless its rights are protected.

Human rights activists and democracy promoters tend to occupy two separate camps in Washington. The differences between them, according to Tom Carothers, are straightforward.⁷ Democracy promoters believe that a world filled with democracies will be a more peaceful place. At the domestic level, continues the argument, democratically elected leaders are more likely to preserve the rights of citizens. In contrast, human rights advocates are reluctant to get tied into the promotion of democratic ideology, concerning themselves instead with protecting individual rights in a variety of political systems. Moreover, they generally do not buy into the claim that democratization constitutes a "silver bullet." These activists contend, rather, that a focus on strengthening democratic institutions is misguided, and elections can be superficial, leaving "underlying anti-democratic forces" intact.⁸ And even in cases when elections do signal a move toward authentic democracy, freely elected governments may likely be unfriendly to the West. In the Gulf at present, the heads of state are not democratically elected, but they are at once highly integrated into the global economy, and acquiescent to a large American military presence within

their sovereign territory. International relations specialists and policymakers subscribing to the realist school, then, pose the obvious question: “Why jeopardize success by antagonizing [Gulf] leadership or worse, prompting elections that may elect parliaments opposed to an American presence?”⁹ Unfortunately, democracy promotion is not an adequate answer. Instead, the goals of human rights activists and realist-oriented security specialists are (perhaps oddly) synergistic in the Gulf.

RHETORIC AND RISK

In spite of all its rhetoric, U.S. foreign policy has historically favored stability over democracy and human rights. The invasion of Iraq aside, the United States has often chosen to support and ally with non-democratic regimes in the Gulf region and throughout the world. As Carothers writes:

All three [most recent American presidents—George H.W. Bush, Bill Clinton, and George W. Bush] pursued what might be described as a semi-realist policy in practice: Where supporting democracy in another country or region was consistent with U.S. economic and security interests, the United States stood up for democracy; but where policy makers saw strong economic or security reasons for staying on friendly terms with authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes, Washington almost always downplayed its democracy concerns.¹⁰

Hereditary monarchies headed by an autocratic emir embody the most typical regime type in the Gulf. Oil and gas wealth, as well as the increase in international notoriety and reputation of upstarts such as Qatar and Dubai, have led to an era of relative regional stability. Whereas democratization would likely be destabilizing in the region (as it has historically been worldwide), the promotion of human rights and stability seem entirely complementary.

So, why is the promotion of human rights integral to the preservation of stability in the Gulf? The answer, straightforward yet often overlooked, is based on regional demographics. A vast majority of Gulf residents are migrant laborers from South Asia, and the gap between them and citizens of the Gulf states is only projected to increase over time. In the UAE, it has been forecasted that by the year 2020, only 1% of residents will be Emirati nationals.¹¹

The human rights records of Gulf states toward their alien residents have drawn international condemnation from various organizations,¹² who deplore these states' draconian sponsorship policies for migrant workers, and point to the denial of basic human rights through practices such as passport confiscation, unclean and unsafe work and home environments, illegal sale of visas, and regularized withholding of pay.¹³ In some instances, migrant laborers have begun to fight back, including riots and strikes in Dubai and Bahrain in 2006 and 2007. Because of the rapidly changing demographics of the

Gulf, many citizens see instability caused by large expatriate populations as posing a major threat to both their personal security and that of the state.¹⁴ In fact, it is internal unrest from the expatriate community, not regional tensions, that some experts are coming to believe may pose the most critical immediate threat to stability in the region.¹⁵

As long as rights abuses continue, stability may be at risk. Domestic instability in particular threatens the entire region, as contagion and emulation effects could cause labor unrest to spread throughout the Gulf. In order to preserve regional stability, then, it seems that a certain level of rights must eventually be extended to migrant expatriates. And because the leaders in most Gulf states are pragmatic, forward-thinking actors keen on maintaining power, they are likely to be responsive to calls to improve human rights—as long as the legitimacy of their own rule is not called into question.

While improving human rights is linked inextricably to preserving security in the Gulf, democratization would achieve neither the domestic-level goal of human rights nor international stability. Leaving aside the powerful and plentiful arguments that democracy may not be a preferable form of government to Gulf Arab citizens themselves, foreign policymakers must consider what the end result of democratization might be. Even if all citizens voted in free and fair elections, for example, in Qatar, they would most likely elect the current emir, who enjoys extremely high popularity (conversely, elections in Kuwait have seen an increase in the strength of conservative Islamic political parties, another potential risk of democratization in the region). At any rate, in these highly stratified societies where the majority of citizens are well off and expatriates do the “dirty work,” the labor underclass would still lack an institutionalized voice, leaving them legally vulnerable. A large majority of the population would remain unable to petition a government that, even if fully democratic, would still not be their own.¹⁶ Reform of the system that attempts to protect the rights of all residents has to go beyond providing democracy for its citizens, and also protect expatriates.

PROMOTING STABILITY THROUGH PROMOTING RIGHTS

Democratization processes are by their nature political. As a result, they are often viewed as conflictual, and potentially violent. As Hawthorne reminds us, “fundamental political change is always destabilizing.”¹⁷ The international community must only encourage destabilizing reforms, then, only if and when a democratized regime will yield the domestic and international-level effects of improving the lives of residents, and enhancing relations with other democracies. In the Gulf, I hope I have demonstrated that this is not necessarily the case.

It is not my intention to argue that internal, organic moves towards democracy should not be a goal for Western policy in the Middle East. I instead provide [*Continued, Page 11*]

Open Authoritarian Regimes: Surviving and Thriving in the Liberal International Order

BY NAAZNEEN H. BARMA, ELY RATNER,
AND REGINE A. SPECTOR

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT

Conventional and scholarly wisdoms in the West hold that authoritarian regimes contain within themselves the seeds of their own inevitable destruction, and that those with successful economies will invariably become democratic in due course. Empirically, the waves of regime changes over the past three decades in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and most recently in Eastern Europe and Eurasia fueled these wisdoms and inspired a vast and distinguished literature.¹ Scholars have uncovered the causes of transitions that culminate in competitive elections, generating a variety of explanations that emphasize internal socioeconomic crises, as well as the strategic behavior of both elite and mass-level actors who exploit and capitalize on these openings.

Yet, for decades now, it has also been an empirical fact that a set of modern authoritarian states has experienced astonishing economic growth and prosperity while simultaneously restricting political freedoms.² Building on the teleology of modernization theory, and relying on examples such as South Korea and Taiwan, many observers argue that the success of these emerging economies will predictably lead to democratic transitions; the only real question is how soon. In this project, we contend, on the contrary, that at the turn of the twenty-first century, a subset of authoritarian regimes with particular characteristics—we label them “open authoritarian regimes”—appear indefinitely sustainable. These regimes deliver economic success to their populations through versions of state-controlled capitalism, and excel at plugging into the international system in ways that allow them to benefit from global connectivity while retaining their grip on domestic power. It is their very openness to the liberal international order that sustains their authoritarian model.³

In this project, we conceptualize this new category of regimes, explain the mechanisms that underlie their success, and provide empirical evidence to demonstrate the plausibility of the argument. We argue, in short, that open authoritarian regimes have been able to modernize economically and socially *without* democratizing because they are integrated with the international system in specific ways that dually enable

their success and shield them from pressures for domestic political reform.⁴ Our objective is not to claim that today’s open authoritarian regimes will never democratize; rather it is to highlight the current global context for their particular non-democratic equilibrium. In doing so, instead of focusing on the potential pitfalls these regimes face, we shift the emphasis to understanding the reasons and mechanisms that allow them to stay in power.⁵

We claim that the international system as it exists today is peculiarly conducive to the survival and relative success of a subset of authoritarian states by articulating the ways in which open authoritarian regimes use their ties to the international system as a way to strengthen their rule at home. They are able to reap the economic and social benefits of integrating with the liberal international order while maintaining relatively closed or illiberal domestic political systems. Furthermore, by leveraging their international posture, open authoritarian regimes have improved their ability to respond to precisely the types of internal pressures and contradictions that scholars have assumed would lead to their downfall.

Our logic is twofold. First, we argue that successful open authoritarian regimes increasingly rely on their growing material and ideological leverage to choose the terms of their *selective interconnectivity* with the liberal international order. The foundation of their impressive growth and poverty reduction records has come through their integration into the global economy. Yet, from the oil-rich states of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf that control energy supplies to the Asian manufacturing powerhouses that rely on cheap labor, they have been careful about precisely how they are connected, all the while jealously protecting their sources of competitiveness. These states have accumulated their material wealth through neo-mercantilist foreign economic policies and have, more recently, begun to push a complementary normative foreign policy agenda that emphasizes non-intervention and appeals to perceptions of inequality in the global system. In short, open authoritarian regimes have become particularly adept at reaping the benefits of international connectivity while sidestepping the costs of conditionality and liberal reform that are typically required by the liberal international community.

Second, we submit that open authoritarian regimes increasingly excel at domestic control through a strategy of *sociopolitical leapfrogging*. The concept of leapfrogging has often been applied to technologies; for example, developing countries can provide phone coverage to their populations by skipping to cell phone technologies, bypassing the costly interim step of land lines. Alexander Gerschenkron, seeking to understand how economically backward countries catch up to those more advanced, developed the notion of institutional leapfrogging. He examined strategies that countries in the 19th and early 20th centuries used to accumulate capital

to industrialize and found that countries late to enter the industrialization arena were able to both imitate and innovate upon the strategies used by earlier industrializers.⁶ In this spirit, we argue that open authoritarian regimes are adept at policy leapfrogging, bypassing less efficient or failed social, economic, and domestic political policies for more successful ones that they both mimic and improve upon. Open authoritarian governments observe the at times haphazard policy experimentation of democratic countries, cherry-pick the most promising policies, and apply them in their countries in an incremental and controlled manner. They are as connected to the international system as democracies — economically, technologically, militarily — and thus their elites are increasingly as able as democracies to respond adaptively to domestic and external pressures for reform.

We conceptualize open authoritarian regimes as domestic political systems that, due to the very nature of connectivity in the international system, are strategically placed to arbitrage their consumption of international public goods. Open authoritarian regimes take from the liberal world a set of successful policies and ideas that have been vetted through democratic checks and balances while at the same time free riding on the international capitalist system. They have also been at the forefront of innovating alternative modes of governance that sustain their regimes. These include, most prominently: a sustainable mode of state-controlled capitalism many now recognize as “the Beijing Consensus;” an increasingly assertive foreign policy stance that privileges statism and communal rights over liberal conceptions of individual rights; and a set of domestic policies designed to protect themselves against the threat of electoral revolutions.⁷ The Janus-faced open authoritarian state enables its own survival by combining sociopolitical leapfrogging and selective interconnectivity to keep delivering on, and when necessary modifying, its unique state-society compact.⁸ In short, open authoritarian regimes are increasingly able to sustain themselves as a result of a dual posture vis-à-vis the rest of the world: plugged into the international economy to reap the spoils of connectivity, and insulated as a group from international pressures that many scholars have to date assumed would lead to their downfall through democratic transition.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS

The concept of open authoritarianism challenges predominant paradigms of political science in at least three important ways. First, we reject the notion that the processes of globalization and interconnectivity are necessarily homogenizing. The concept of a flattening world in which economic integration leads to political and social normalization is deeply embedded in American political thought. Our insight here is that open authoritarian regimes are using precisely the processes of globalization — through strategies of selective interconnectivity and sociopolitical leapfrogging — to

maintain their non-democratic, non-western orientation. We argue that more attention should be paid to the proliferation of preferential connectivity in the international system and to examining the variation in the content and consequences of that connectivity.

Second, we break free from the teleological notion that all nations eventually evolve into democracies. This dominant normative inclination is evident in the transitions literature, as well as in the manner in which political scientists conceptualize “stalled” transitions or democratic “backsliding.” Here, we posit that non-democracy can exist at a stable equilibrium. The challenge of this project is to highlight the mechanisms through which the international environment can support that equilibrium.

Third, our work illustrates a pathway through which states can modernize socially and economically, and perhaps even politically at the margins, without democracy in any recognizable form. Critics will inevitably argue that institutions borrowed and adapted from democratic countries will eventually take on liberalizing tendencies and that connectivity with the liberal international order will someday transform these regimes. In defining the equilibrium that open authoritarian regimes currently inhabit, we believe we shift the burden of proof to the other side.

IMPLICATIONS FOR AMERICAN FOREIGN POLICY

Our research suggests a set of “gut-wrenching choices” for American foreign policymakers. The basis of our argument is that open authoritarian regimes appear to be particularly sustainable given the international environment in which they currently coexist. Because many of the states we include under this rubric — such as China, Russia, and Singapore — are gaining increasing influence in international politics, this presents a number of tough questions for U.S. policymakers. Below we outline three interconnected dilemmas.

First, does the United States need to formalize and clarify its position on the question of sovereignty and international intervention? American hypocrisy on this issue is widely recognized. On the one hand, the United States has refused to participate in international treaties (e.g., the Kyoto Protocol) and international organizations (e.g., the International Criminal Court) that could delimit foreign policy flexibility. On the other hand, the American government has fervently defended its right to violate the sovereignty of others either when its own interests are at risk or when it identifies gross violations of liberal norms. Given the rise of the alternative ideology, espoused by open authoritarian regimes, of absolute sovereignty and noninterference, this hypocrisy becomes both more evident and more damaging. It has been doubly destructive to the cohesion of the international liberal order by weakening multilateral initiatives [Continued, Page 10]

as well as providing the impetus for notions of absolute sovereignty that reject liberal intervention altogether. For the sake of re-energizing the liberal international order, how must the United States reconsider its own doctrines on sovereignty, the use of force, and liberal intervention?

Second, will the United States continue to privilege political rights in the hierarchy of human rights and individual freedoms? The economic success of open authoritarian regimes is the linchpin of their sustainability—it offers legitimacy to the governance model itself and provides the resources necessary to satisfy and co-opt potential challengers. Regimes in the developing world have thereby diminished calls for political reform by overtly stressing the primacy of economic development. And, in most cases, they are delivering on their promises of raising standards of living. It is increasingly difficult for liberals to argue that economic development and political liberalization are necessary, or even compatible, co-travelers. Is the United States willing to reject this redefinition of human rights, for instance, by declaring that political rights are more important than economic development and poverty alleviation?

Finally, should the United States treat regime type as the defining feature of international politics? This strategy has been advocated—in the form of a Concert of Democracies—by some liberal interventionist thinkers, as exemplified in the Princeton Project on National Security,⁹ and more recently the presidential campaign of Senator John McCain. Their logic is that democratic polities tend to share similar values and will therefore be more effective at managing global problems. Put aside the obvious danger of inspiring a counter-balancing coalition. The argument presented in this project cautions that powerful non-democratic regimes may be surprisingly sustainable. In the long run, if major players in global politics remain authoritarian, can the liberal West tackle the world’s most pressing problems—such as climate change, terrorism, and weapons proliferation—while excluding non-democratic regimes? How does the notion of sustainable open authoritarian regimes reshape the way in which we think about whether the United States should either engage or seek to isolate non-democracies? None of these questions are easily answered. But they all deserve serious consideration in the context of the rise of powerful and sustainable open authoritarian regimes.

NAAZNEEN H. BARMA, ELY RATNER, AND REGINE A. SPECTOR
are Research Fellows at the New Era Foreign Policy Project at the University of California, Berkeley.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 See, *inter alia*, Huntington 1991; Diamond and Plattner 1993; O’Donnell, Schmitter, and Whitehead 1986; Bratton and Van de Walle 1997; and Bunce 2003.
- 2 Authoritarian regimes are characterized by non-democratic central governments, lack of transparency, manipulation of the media, and active suppression of opposition and dissent. They are differentiated from totalitarian regimes—such as Nazi Germany, the Soviet Union under Stalin, China under Mao, and modern-day North Korea—that use an even more oppressive form of governance based on charismatic leadership and ideology. See Linz 2000.
- 3 Our conceptualization of “open” regimes should not be confused with the literature on “closed” regimes, in which “closed” refers to the lack of electoral competition. Our definition of open regime does not correspond to genuine electoral participation; rather, it refers to the ability of regimes to

integrate into the international economy and thereby pursue economic and social modernization.

4 We acknowledge the existence of long-lasting “closed authoritarian” regimes, but an explanation for their sustainability is beyond the scope of this project. Furthermore, we do not claim that international openness is the only route to sustainability. Instead, we seek to elucidate the strategies that open authoritarian regimes use to survive, as distinct from those available to regimes the likes of Zimbabwe and North Korea. For a discussion of the former, see Case 2006. For a discussion of the latter, see Byman and Lind 2008.

5 Recent studies on the sustainability of non-democratic governments have focused almost entirely on the internal mechanisms of control, and the domestic pressures regimes face (For the importance of the role of parties in authoritarian stability, see Brownlee 2007; Magaloni 2006. For the role of legislatures, see Gandhi and Przeworski 2007. For the role of institutional rules, see Lust-Okar 2007). Moreover, the international environment in

which authoritarian regimes currently exist is largely omitted from the democratization and broader regime transitions literatures. To the extent that it is studied, as discussed below, lines of inquiry focus on how international efforts in a variety of forms alter domestic debates and practices regarding democracy. Our perspective begins with the premise that all regimes sit at the intersection of the domestic and international arenas and develop complementary strategies to survive in both.

6 Gerschenkron 1962.

7 Barma and Ratner 2006; Barma, Rather, and Weber 2007; Spector and Krickovic 2007.

8 Skocpol 1979. Skocpol recognized that the state sits at the intersection of domestic and international processes and referred to this quality of the state as its “Janus-faced” nature.

9 Ikenberry and Slaughter 2008.

MARUSKA, *Continued from Page 7*

an alternative lens, based on my assessment of the Gulf, to encourage policymakers to go beyond democracy promotion in the region. In doing so, I hope to have emphasized two main points. First, for the international community, promoting human rights may be an easier and smarter sell to the stable authoritarian regimes of the Middle East (the Gulf specifically) than democratic reform. Secondly, the positive effects that good democratic governance tends to have on a people—especially the protection and extension of individual rights—will not come to fruition in a state where the vast majority of residents are non-citizens. The Gulf states are unique, and they must be treated that way.

JENNIFER HEEG MARUSKA, *Assistant Lecturer, Texas A&M University in Qatar, PhD Candidate, Georgetown University*

ENDNOTES

1 Qatar, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates are #1, #5, and #25 respectively in 2008 GDP worldwide rankings.

2 Michael Ryan Kraig. 2006. “Forging a New Security Order for the Persian Gulf.” *Middle East Policy* 13(1): 84-101, 84.

3 S.516: ADVANCE Democracy Act of 2005. This bill and its 2007 successor both died in committee.

4 Tony Evans. 2001. “If Democracy, Then Human Rights?” *Third World Quarterly* 22 (August): 623-642, 628.

5 Ibid.

6 According to the Qatar Statistics Authority, as reported in “Males Out-number Females.” *Gulf Times*, 22 August 2008.

7 Thomas Carothers. 2004. *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion*. Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

8 Ibid., 15.

9 Jill Crystal. 2005. “Political Reform and the Prospects for Democratic Transition in the Gulf.” *Fundacion para las Relaciones Internacionales y el Dialogo Exterior (FRIDE) Working Paper Series (July)*: 1-11, 4.

10 Carothers 2004, 7.

11 Jeremy Tamanini. 2007. “Dubai Inc: Development and Governance, not Democracy.” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Arab Reform Bulletin* 5 (June): 1-2. It should be noted that this estimate was made before the current global financial crisis.

12 Human Rights Watch has perhaps voiced the loudest and most sustained criticism; other NGOs contributing their voices include the Solidarity Center, Amnesty International, and within Qatar, the government-sponsored but sometimes candid National Human Rights Committee.

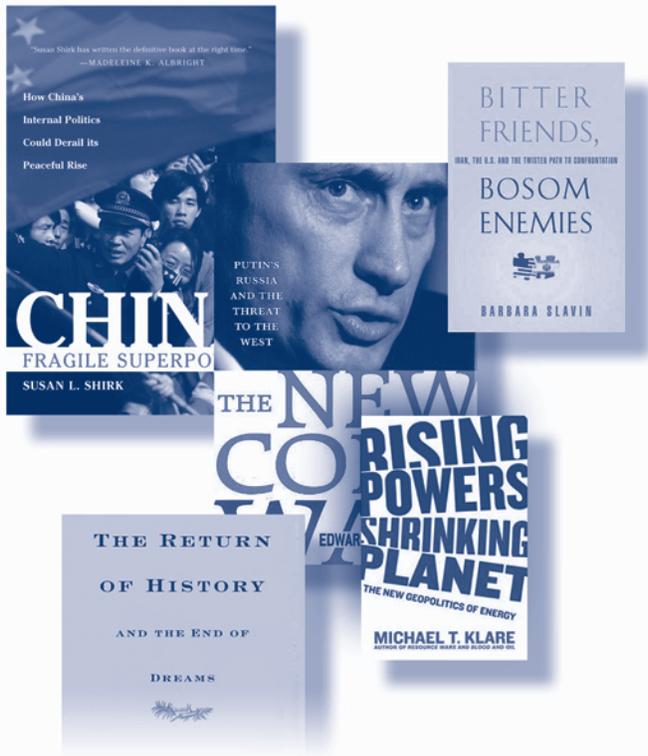
13 Scholars point increasingly to the structural violence encouraged by the sponsorship system in the Gulf. They argue that the laws inherently create opportunities for and even encourage worker abuse. For an excellent recent treatment, see Andrew Gardner (forthcoming): “Engulfed: Indian Guest-workers, Bahraini Citizens and the Structural Violence of the *Kafala* System.” In Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz, eds., *Deported: Removal and the Regulation of Human Mobility*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

14 Anh Nga Longva. 1999. “Keeping Migrant Workers in Check: The *Kafala* System in the Gulf.” *Middle East Report* Number 211, “Trafficking and Transiting: New Perspectives on Labor Migration,” pp.20-22, 22.

15 Suggested to me by Colonel the Hon. Alastair Campbell, Director of the Qatar offices of the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI). As my dissertation argues, the “securitization” of migrant labor in the Gulf is not natural or inherent; rather, the security threat is socially constructed.

16 Extending citizenship to these migrant laborers is highly unlikely; the dissertation-length version of this essay discusses the issue of citizenship at length.

17 Amy Hawthorne. 2004. “Middle Eastern Democracy: Is Civil Society the Answer?” *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Democracy and Rule of Law, Paper Series (March)*: 1-24, 19.



China: Fragile Superpower by Susan L. Shirk

■ Review by Jennifer G. Raymond

The Return of History, And the End of Dreams

by Robert Kagan

■ Review by Alan Gropman

New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West by Edward Lucas

■ Review by Maria Vassilieva

Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy by Michael T. Klare

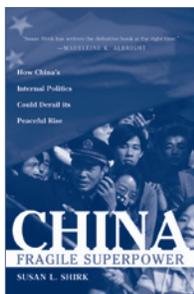
■ Review by Harry Merritt

Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S. and the Twisted Path to Confrontation by Barbara Slavin

■ Review by Bruce Riedel

China: Fragile Superpower by Susan L. Shirk

REVIEW BY JENNIFER G. RAYMOND, *PhD Candidate, Department of Government, Georgetown University*



It is an oft-observed pattern in international relations that rising world powers rarely match or surpass dominant ones without violent conflict. In *China: Fragile Superpower*, Susan L. Shirk challenges the position that such clashes are unavoidable and draws on decades of study and years of diplomatic experience to elucidate the international behavior of one of the world's

most widely acknowledged rising powers. Shirk explains China's behavior in the international arena by opening up—to the extent possible—the black box of its domestic politics. In so doing, she makes the argument that China's leadership, for all that it may wish to avoid international conflict, is fundamentally constrained by its desire to remain in power and avoid domestic unrest. Where these goals converge, as in the pursuit of economic growth accompanying outreach to much of Southeast Asia, China's leaders have a great deal of flexibility. But where they are incompatible, particularly in attempts to build relations with Japan, Taiwan, and the United States, Chinese leaders find themselves bound by domestic popular nationalist sentiments that constrain

their response to any major crisis. As much as leaders recognize that a friendly foreign policy might behoove China's economic rise, domestic demands for strength drive Beijing to take a harder line in an effort at regime self-preservation.

Shirk notes that this tension has only arisen in the last twenty or so years, and attributes it primarily to the major changes that have taken place within China's own domestic politics. She argues that China's shift to a more open foreign policy, which set in during the late 1970s with Deng Xiaoping's reorientation of Beijing towards a market economy, only became problematic in the wake of the 1989 Tiananmen Square affair. At that point, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), recognizing the erosion of the Marxist ideology that had been the basis of its claim to legitimacy, made a conscious effort toward propagating nationalism—with the CCP serving as its standard-bearer—as the country's binding force. With the rise of a market-based media and fairly widespread access to the Internet, Shirk argues that CCP leadership no longer has control over the ideological force it unleashed to consolidate its power. Fearful of looking weak to a domestic populace demanding strength in the face of perceived foreign aggression, China's leaders sometimes find their options limited in responding to international crises.

To develop her point, Shirk looks at relations between China and the three governments most likely to set off domestic

opinion: Japan, Taiwan, and the United States. In examining the major flashpoints in each relationship over the last twenty years, Shirk conducts her analysis from the perspective of the CCP executive leadership. In each case, she considers not only the overall trend in the relationship and the geostrategic aspects of the crises, but also Chinese domestic pressures reflected in citizens' protests, coverage in the pseudo-free press, and especially postings on increasingly popular Internet blogs and message boards. She concludes that Chinese leaders feel themselves constrained by the very forces they uncorked in order to regain legitimacy after Tiananmen and facilitate market-led economic growth. Moreover, she presents substantial—though perhaps not thoroughly persuasive—evidence to show that Chinese leaders are also paying attention to these sources of popular pressure, especially from the Internet.

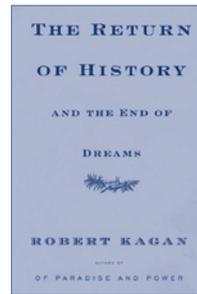
Fairly early in the book, Shirk acknowledges that Internet posts and sensational media reports likely represent only the views of the more extreme segments of the population, and that there is probably a large “silent majority” far less hostile to the three aforementioned countries than their more vocal counterparts. She also acknowledges that Chinese leaders probably know this. Importantly, however, she notes that in authoritarian regimes, leaders concern themselves primarily with the thoughts of the more extreme and mobilized elements of the populace, and not those of the majority.

Herein lies the tension of Shirk's arguments, and particularly her prescriptive musings towards the end of the book. Ever the diplomat, Shirk avoids advocating any kind of broad-sweeping political change within China. Nonetheless, her arguments do seem to amount to a soft version of the “democratic peace” theory: the very mechanism that keeps China's leaders in power is the one that may lead them into unwanted war. In identifying leaders' insecurity in the face of popular nationalist sentiment as the driver of Chinese bellicosity, Shirk advises that more democratic institutions and procedures may be the only systemic solution to the problem. She simply suggests that such institutions need not necessarily be instituted within the context of full democratization.

Overall, Shirk's extensive research and nuanced perspective result in a book that is well worth reading for its insight into China's behavior in the international arena. Yet even more than a book about international politics, Shirk's work presents a view into the dynamics underlying authoritarian regimes. She depicts a Chinese government that is insecure in the face of its own people and hamstrung by the very measures taken to preserve regime stability. While the delicate balance between relative economic and informational openness and political authoritarianism may be sustainable for some years to come, Shirk shows just how difficult that balance will be for China to maintain.

The Return of History, And the End of Dreams by Robert Kagan

REVIEW BY ALAN GROPMAN, *National Defense University*



Robert Kagan is a member of the Kagan and Sons (and Daughter in Law) Family Company of Distinguished Scholars, Strategists, and Analysts. Don (the Dad to whom the book is dedicated), Robert, Fred, and Kim (the last a member of the firm by marriage), have contributed mightily to those wishing to be enlightened strategists. Robert Kagan has written an important essay (116 pages, including ten pages of notes) refuting Frank Fukuyama's end of the Cold War notions about “the end of history.” He works for the Carnegie Endowment (among others) and contributes a monthly op-ed piece in the *Washington Post*. His *Return of History* essay is valuable reading for anybody teaching or taking courses in History or Government at Georgetown. It is a provocative analysis of the world as it is and how it is likely to become during our lifetimes.

Robert, like his father and brother, is a synthesizer, pulling together wisdom from diverse sources to make his points concerning the challenges facing the United States and the globe in the 21st century. Regarding the book title and the theme, Kagan argues:

The modern democratic world wanted to believe . . . the end of the Cold War did not just end one strategic and ideological conflict but all strategic and ideological conflict. People and their leaders longed for ‘a world transformed.’ But this was a mirage. [Soon after the tensions with the Soviet Union disappeared], the old competition between liberalism and autocracy . . . reemerged (3).

And when it did, the democracies found themselves disunited and demoralized because of the financial and political implications the restored rivalry signified. Kagan asserts: “History has returned, and the democracies must come together to shape the world, or others will shape it for them” (4).

Kagan is primarily a realist (as opposed to a neoconservative or Wilsonian), who believes in liberal democracy. He thinks the United States—because of its ideals, wealth (this reviewer wishes the book had been written after the recent stock market crashes and bank failures), and military power—ought to lead democratic states, as it is the only country able to manage a grand coalition that can effect positive results in tomorrow's world. But his notion is more defensive than offensive, more containment than reform, because he has no illusions about the turbulent character of global politics.

The author recognizes clearly the magnitude of the problem brought about by Russian and Chinese ambitions as

well as Islamic fundamentalist longings. These difficulties, moreover, are magnified by America's past errors (faulty execution of the Iraq invasion and occupation is one of many), strategic shortcomings (sanctioning Kosovo's independence is one of several examples), hypocrisy (Kagan cites examples of United States leaders saying one thing and doing the opposite, such as "promoting democracy" while supporting repressive regimes in the Middle East), and most importantly, the question of why and how the autocracies and Muslim fundamentalists will confront and test this country and democracies in general. For Kagan, just defending the United States and its allies, and preventing the encroachment of authoritarian regimes constitute full-time occupations.

He calls for resolve among democracies led by the United States, and concludes by citing Reinhold Niebuhr, who believed: "The world's problem cannot be solved if America does not accept its full share of responsibility in solving it" (105). Kagan goes on to assert:

Today the United States shares that responsibility with the rest of the democratic world, which is infinitely stronger than it was when World War II ended. The future international order will be shaped by those who have the power and collective will to shape it. The question is whether the world's democracies will again rise to that challenge (105).

I think anybody reading this book would enjoy having a conversation with Kagan, and were I to do so, I might challenge his nearly deterministic (emphasis on my adverb, vice my adjective) approach to global politics. There is an aroma (nothing stronger) of "the more things change, the more they stay the same" about the bulk of the book: Russia was an autocracy from the time of the first Tsar, to the Soviet interlude, to Putin. China has been an autocracy for 5,000 years. Imperialism (often under other names)—the desire to dominate other peoples or states—is almost coded in national DNA.

It seems to me, however, the European Union presents a case of real change. The border between France and Germany (and all other European Union states for that matter) is now no more significant than the boundary between Maryland and Virginia. Unemployed Poles move to Germany or France freely if the "grass is greener" to the west. Try that before the middle of the 20th century! (I am holding my breath, however, waiting to see if the European Union weathers the current economic crisis).

I would also challenge Kagan's ideas on "nationalism," which he appears to see sometimes as positive. I don't! He states:

'Nationalism' is a dirty word in the postmodern Enlightenment lexicon, but there is no shame in a government restoring a nation's honor. Pride in China's growing international status [one of Kagan's several examples of the value of nationalism] has

become one of the great sources of legitimacy of the ruling oligarchy of the Chinese Communist Party" (35).

I see nationalism in China, however, as a two-edged sword.

I also see nationalism mainly as a curse because it was so for Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Milosevic's Serbia, Hirohito's Japan—the list is endless. I end by citing another realist strategist, MacGregor Knox:

Nationalism does not come in two kinds, 'good' and bad,' Mazzini and Mussolini. Nor does it become virtuous through underdog status of wrongs suffered. It operates along a continuum running from the brothers Grimm to Auschwitz, from philology and folklore and poetry to service of the national idea to the extermination of neighbors. Not all nationalisms reach extremes...[but] the doctrine's logic drives all impartially toward domination and extermination" (*The Making of Strategy*, 632).

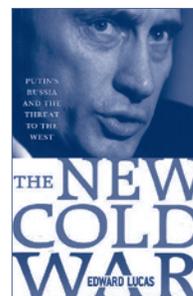
I don't give nationalism a pass, Mr. Kagan, I think it is a global blight.

Read this well written, timely, stimulating book!

DR. ALAN L. GROPMAN is the Distinguished Professor of National Security Policy at the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, (ICAF) National Defense University, and an Adjunct Georgetown Professor teaching in the Strategic Studies Program. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the National Defense University, the Department of Defense, or the U.S. Government.

New Cold War: Putin's Russia and the Threat to the West by Edward Lucas

REVIEW BY MARIA VASSILIEVA, PhD Candidate, Department of Government, Georgetown University



The title of Edward Lucas's new book about contemporary Russian politics—*The New Cold War*—is very provocative, something clearly intended by the author. In the introduction he acknowledges the most obvious objections to his attempt to revive the Cold War model, essentially agreeing that Russia is no longer a repressive totalitarian regime that poses a direct military, diplomatic and ideological threat to the West. Despite these admissions, Lucas believes that developments in Russia over the last eight years are alarming enough to warrant the introduction of the *New Cold War* model to describe them. Lucas indicates that under Putin, "Russia has first tacitly and then explicitly abandoned the aim of becoming 'normal'—an advanced industrialized country marked by po-

litical liberty and the rule of law” (8). Lucas attempts to show that Russia’s contemporary trajectory toward a more aggressive authoritarian regime consists of three separate elements, purposefully engineered by the Kremlin: repression at home; emergence of a dominant ideology; and aggression abroad. Overall, the author argues that these three components, while substantively different from the old Cold War model, are the clearest signs of the emergence of the New Cold War.

First, Lucas methodically demonstrates how during the last eight years amidst stability and economic prosperity, authoritarian tendencies in Russian politics and state-society relations have become painfully apparent. Putin stabilized the economy, giving many Russians the opportunity for a relatively free economic existence compared to the Soviet or post-Soviet period under Yeltsin. In exchange for economic stability, however, the Kremlin severely repressed social and political pluralism, including opposition parties, independent journalism, and collective action by unsanctioned social and political groups. Throughout his narrative, Lucas supplements the well-known incidents of harassment and persecution of businessmen, progressive oligarchs, and independent journalists with accounts of ordinary citizens, something he documented as a journalist for *The Economist*. He emphasizes the parallels between the Kremlin’s current tactics — psychiatric incarcerations, political imprisonment, bureaucratic harassment and accusations of espionage — and the techniques used by the Soviet Union.

Next, Lucas discusses the issue of the new Kremlin-propagated ideology, founded on the principles of predatory capitalism, nationalism, historical revisionism and anti-Western xenophobia. While Russia is certainly capitalist, its brand of capitalism is very different from that of the West. Driven by natural resources, its economy operates with little regard for the legality, openness and transparency that define European and American capitalism. According to Lucas, such practices are a part of a greater framework the Kremlin promotes: a uniquely Russian type of economic and political governance necessary to restore Russia’s super-power status, even if at the expense of individual freedoms.

Finally, Lucas details how the Kremlin employs this new ideology to justify its more assertive foreign policies. Contemporary Russian aggression is predominantly economic and includes the use of natural resources as its main weapon, particularly toward Europe and the Caucasus. The 2005 conflict with Ukraine over gas prices (repeated in 2009) is the prime example of the type of leverage Russia can exert upon both Eastern and Western Europe through gas pipeline politics. However, the renewed military exercises by Russian forces over the Baltic countries, Georgia, the North Atlantic, and even the U.S. base at Guam have reminded the world of the type of classical military power Russia used to project during the Cold War.

The current evidence of changes in Russia’s policies leads Lucas to conclude that the New Cold War has arrived. Thus, the West needs to emerge from its complacent slumber to both prevent Russia from becoming a real threat and help it transition to “normal” country status. Lucas argues that the West must acknowledge the reality of the New Cold War, hold the moral ground in economic dealings with Russia, work collectively to protect its new allies in Eastern Europe, and encourage movement toward more open, accountable, and lawful practices in Russian politics.

Lucas consistently argues that although Russia is no longer communist, it continues to use Soviet tools to accomplish the goals of its new regime. The Russian ruling elite acts purposefully and consistently, moreover, toward one particular goal — restoring Russia’s power at home and abroad. The concept of a united Russian elite was one of the basic assumptions of the old Cold War model, and Lucas’s new model depends similarly upon it. However, Lucas fails to present convincing evidence that the Kremlin elite does in fact operate as a single agent with uniform purpose. Instead, some recent cases suggest that in fact the Kremlin elite is a group of individual actors often motivated by their own self-interests. The well-publicized case of Alexander Litvinenko, for example, cited by Lucas in several chapters, could be interpreted either as a poorly executed assassination ordered by the Kremlin, or as a mid-level bureaucrat’s sloppy plan to endear himself to his bosses. Both interpretations are grim, but they lead to different conclusions regarding the amount of agency and organization within the system.

This example also demonstrates the problematic nature of using a deductive approach in a single case study, which can lead to a fitting of the facts in support of a model that might not be optimal for a specific case. Lucas’s interpretations of the facts suggest an exceptionally menacing Russia, seemingly pre-determined by his overreliance on the New Cold War model. Lucas’s argument appears driven by the mere fact that the Cold War occurred, rather than by a consideration of whether the model is appropriate for describing contemporary Russia.

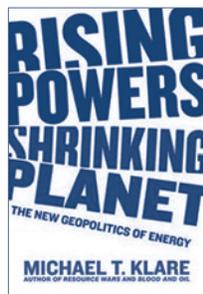
Such a path-dependent model also fails to reflect today’s multi-polar global order. Russia has clearly evolved into an increasingly aggressive authoritarian state, driven by an exceptionalist and anti-Western nationalist ideology. However, a number of other countries also fit this description: China, Iran, North Korea, Venezuela, and others. Thus, it seems strange that Lucas insists on a conceptual framework that focuses the West’s attention on Russia and downplays the significance of other influential authoritarian states.

The book’s strengths lie in its journalistic aspect: the factual narrative is very detailed and rich, and it accurately captures the depressing reality that has materialized in contemporary

Russia. The book's main weakness is its use of a questionable New Cold War model. This approach leads Lucas to arrive at grossly overstated conclusions about the reasons behind Russia's political actions, the extent of the menace Russia poses to the West, and the kinds of actions that the West should ultimately take in response.

Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet: The New Geopolitics of Energy by Michael T. Klare

REVIEW BY HARRY MERRITT, *Master of Arts in German and European Studies candidate at Georgetown University*



In January 2001, two men with years of experience in the oil industry entered the White House. Shortly thereafter, George W. Bush and Dick Cheney created a far-reaching national Energy Task Force as a centerpiece of the new administration's agenda. Indeed, had the terrorist attacks of September 11th, 2001 not intervened, President Bush might be remembered primarily for his

focus on energy. Now, under the Obama administration, use of the term "War on Terror" fades into the background while "energy security" is retained in the official lexicon. Michael T. Klare, seizing upon this contemporary *zeitgeist* of energy, has made an admirable attempt to tie together several prominent memes related to this overall theme in his new book, *Rising Powers, Shrinking Planet*. In making his case for a new international order centered on energy, Klare draws several important conclusions, culminating in the idea that the twenty-first century world has been realigned geopolitically to resemble the nineteenth more than the twentieth century.

Klare knits together concepts familiar to most readers, starting with resource scarcity. Reserves of easily accessible petroleum, quite literally the fuel of the global economy, are dwindling. Likewise, other hydrocarbons like natural gas as well as various other minerals like uranium are facing similar declines. Even as potential supplies of these vital resources diminish, demand—until the current Global Financial Crisis intervened—was soaring due to the explosive economic growth of a number of developing nations, most notably China and India, which Klare groups together as "Chindia." It comes as no surprise that higher prices impact energy consumers negatively, yet some states have benefited a great deal from these pressures of supply and demand. Russia spent the 1990s as a mere shadow of the superpower that was the USSR. But under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Russia has become a major player in geopolitics once again through the control of critical energy resources and the means to distribute them. This position is unlikely to change even under a temporary drop in energy prices.

However, unlike Russia, lesser powers blessed with large reserves of hydrocarbons or minerals are generally less capable of translating these resources into increased geopolitical power. Located primarily in Central Asia, the Caspian Basin, and Africa, these states have become an arena for the great powers of the contemporary world as they seek to access and control underexploited sources of hydrocarbons. Ironically, since these areas were centers of colonial competition in the nineteenth century, this struggle for resources amounts to a new iteration of "The Great Game" and the "Scramble for Africa." The great powers that are involved in this struggle—including, but not limited to, the United States, Japan, China and Russia—treat control of resources as a zero-sum game. Klare predicts that incipient Russo-Chinese and Japanese-American coalitions competing in Eurasia for access to energy sources might eventually engage in open conflict as their national strategies have caused "the barrier between peaceful and warlike activities" to effectively break down (Klare, p. 210).

From each of these trends and concepts, Klare sews together a new master narrative for this era. In illustrating his thesis of energy becoming the primary force behind foreign policy, Klare provides the reader with examples both numerous and instructive. He opens the book with the blocking of the sale of Unocal to Chinese CNOOC by a Republican-controlled Congress. This vignette reveals the extent to which state capitalism is practiced on the topic of energy, even under ostensibly *laissez-faire* governments. Through its possession of vast and relatively untapped resources Russia is able to command the attention of economically much more powerful nations. In 2005 for example, the leaders of China and Japan both trekked to Moscow as they each sought to be the end point on a new pipeline, in a manner not unlike vassals traveling to the court of a king. Though not directly stated by Klare, the twenty-first century energy dynamic seems to be the most simple and succinct explanation for the rapprochement between China and its Cold War rivals Russia and India; antagonism has been exchanged for Sino-Russian partnership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and collaboration by Chinese and Indian state petroleum corporations in joint ventures overseas.

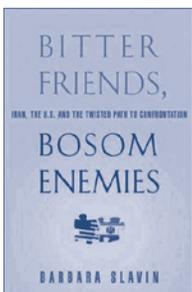
As with many books of this type, the diagnosis is more thorough than the cure prescribed. Klare places much hope in institutional and technical cooperation between the top energy-consuming powers. He says that this process could work much the same as Cold War arms control, which was born out of limited cooperation between the superpowers beginning with *détente*. However, the successful model of Cold War cooperation compares unfavorably with earlier historical allusions provided by Klare, such as the period of New Imperialism that began with German unification. Since the rise of Imperial Germany—Klare's analog for modern-day China—ended with World War I, the reader will justifiably have misgivings as to the efficacy of such a

solution. Curiously, Klare places much faith in the promise of clean coal technology yet offhandedly rejects nuclear fuel reprocessing and fast breeder reactors, doubting whether such methods “will ever prove practical on a commercial basis” (55). Readers may also question the validity of Klare’s thesis in light of the ongoing financial crisis, which has had the additional effect of significantly depressing commodities prices and slowing the growth of formerly dynamic economies. However, the fundamental components of his framework—the scarcity of energy resources and their necessity in a modern economy—have not subsided. When economic growth returns to the global economy, it seems likely that the processes documented by Klare will unambiguously return to prominence.

While not a groundbreaking piece of original research, Klare’s book provides an excellent introduction to the geopolitical realities of the twenty-first century. Despite its faults, the data and analysis Klare synthesizes relentlessly back up his case. A brief survey of recent publications suggests that Klare is at the vanguard of a new school of thought on the geopolitics of the contemporary world that bridges the liberal-conservative divide. Klare, a writer for liberal publications, last year joined neoconservative intellectual Robert Kagan in noting a return to nineteenth century-style international relations. As public debate continues to rely on concepts like energy security and pipeline diplomacy, this work will be a valuable reference for those seeking to integrate these concepts into a meaningful whole.

Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies: Iran, the U.S. and the Twisted Path to Confrontation by Barbara Slavin

REVIEW BY BRUCE RIEDEL, *adjunct Professor at Georgetown University and a senior fellow in the Saban Center for Middle East policy at the Brookings Institution. He has served as a senior advisor on Middle East issues to four Presidents in the White House on the staff of the National Security Council.*



Barbara Slavin is one of a handful of Americans who have spent considerable time over the last quarter century inside Iran, talking to its top leaders as well as the man and woman in the street. For most Americans Iran since 1978 has been a forbidden land, and one ruled by fanatical Shia Islamic clerics who support terror and violence around the Middle East. *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies* presents a much more complex and nuanced Iran, and takes on the enigma of America’s tortured relationship with Iran.

This book provides an overview of the intricate world of Iranian politics from the perspective of a journalist who has

met personally with the key players like Ayatollahs Rafsanjani and Khatami and watched it develop over two decades since she first traveled there in 1987 as the Iran-Iraq war was reaching its finale. She calls the decision making process “Iranian Square Dancing” where the Supreme Leader sits in the middle of a web of political intrigue and conspiracy that is almost impossible for outsiders to understand or to penetrate.

The book also offers candid portraits of many of Iran’s key figures. Arguably, the most fascinating is that of Iran’s current President, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, whom the author has interviewed. Ahmadinejad has startled the world with his calls for wiping Israel off the map and for arguing that the attacks of September 11, 2001 should be investigated further because the American narrative that blames them on al Qaeda is insufficient. In this book Slavin makes the convincing case that his world view was developed during the Iran-Iraq war, a conflict that killed and wounded hundreds of thousands of Iranians and which many Iranians saw as an American inspired attempt to destroy Iran’s revolution using Saddam Hussein’s Iraq as its proxy.

The importance of the eight year long war between Baghdad and Tehran is often underestimated by Americans to whom it is a long forgotten footnote in the turbulent history of the region. Donald Rumsfeld’s and Ronald Reagan’s embrace of Saddam Hussein has been removed from most Americans’ memory but not from the memory of Iranians who were gassed by Iraq’s army and whose cities were pummeled by its missiles while America provided its army with intelligence targeting data. For Iranians, as Slavin persuasively shows, this was a transformative event that still shapes their world view.

The focus of the book is on the twisted relationship between America and Iran. Slavin takes the reader through the tangled history of Washington’s effort to deal with the revolutionary regime in Tehran. The record is not a pretty one. Efforts to pressure Iran with sanctions and isolation have had little success. Attempts to find common ground for engagement have failed to mature.

The relationship between Iran and the administration of George W. Bush receives special attention, especially whether the Bush White House missed a unique opportunity to engage with Tehran in an authoritative dialogue after 9/11. At that time, there was a moment when Americans and Iranians faced a common goal in toppling the Taliban dictatorship in Afghanistan. On the ground, the CIA and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards were both backing the same Afghans fighting the Taliban and al Qaeda. In the Bonn diplomatic process, which was aimed at creating a new Afghanistan, US and Iranian diplomats worked together to build the Karzai government. Iran apparently was prepared to go further. *Bitter Friends, Bosom Enemies* [Continued, Page 26]

Exposing the Inherent Contradictions of Authoritarianism

BY ALEKSANDR SHKOLNIKOV, PH.D. AND
JOHN D. SULLIVAN, PH.D.

Karl Marx redefined the debate and thinking on capitalism by pointing out its inherent contradictions. Considering the role of labor, production incentives, and the nature of competition, Marx argued that capitalism would generate a tremendous amount of economic wealth. Yet, by putting that wealth in the hands of a few, capitalism would ultimately collapse under its own weight.

Marx's theory has been refuted by the advance of new institutional economics. Institutions of a market economy, such as property rights, have proven effective in providing the foundation for fostering inclusive and sustainable economic growth. Hernando de Soto, for example, clearly showed how market economy institutions lift people out of poverty.¹ While no longer appropriate for capitalism, Marx's attention to the contradictions of an economic system remains relevant today if applied to authoritarian regimes.

In fact, the current economic crisis is exposing the internal contradictions of authoritarian regimes. On the one hand, authoritarian countries *can* (although not always do) turn out impressive economic growth figures, on the other—their growth strategies are not as sustainable over time and their legitimacy is significantly shaken when they exhaust their short-lived economic potential.

THE WEAKNESS OF THE AUTHORITARIAN MODEL

As Marc Plattner has recently noted, authoritarian countries are being battered by the waves of the current economic storm to a much higher degree than established democracies.² In the process, they are beginning to face legitimacy tests as populations grow impatient with the inability of their leaders to deliver economic goods.

For instance, proposals to increase tariffs on imported used cars in Russia, in large part to protect domestic manufacturers, sparked public protests across the country. In Russia's Far East, these protests threatened to spill over into larger public outcry over low pensions and low quality of life, and riot police were flown in from Moscow to disperse the crowds. In light of the worsening economic crisis and the huge unemployment problem, the Chinese government is also deeply worried about social stability. In February 2009, more than 3,000 chiefs of Public Security Bureaus

from all across the country were summoned to Beijing to participate in a specialized training program to deal with stability issues.

The roots of the modern authoritarian success story were detailed by Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George Downs who argued that authoritarian leaders have figured out how to restrict political liberties while offering economic benefits in exchange.³ The key, however, is that the model holds as long as countries continue to supply economic benefits, but it breaks down when they are unable to do so. Then, one should expect to see demands for political and economic liberties mount.

In light of this, the inherent contradiction is that authoritarian countries eventually come to the point where they are unable to supply those economic benefits; or, alternatively, they come to the point when they can no longer provide substitutes for public demands for freedoms. The reason has to do with the nature of their economic growth—it is not sustainable over time because it is not based on fundamental market economy institutions.

Riding on the wave of economic prosperity resulting from the natural resource boom of the last decade, many of the authoritarian governments have essentially received a free pass to do as they like. In fact, in terms of political reforms they could not go wrong—regardless of decisions and steps taken, their economies continued to grow, generating employment and increasing incomes. As such, it was easy to expel foreign investors, easy to pick favorites in domestic industries, and easy to silence the critics of democratic reversals.

But today, as the downturn hits the real economy, authoritarian leaders face difficult questions with no ready answers. What happens when the numbers of unemployed swell and take to the streets, or when the lack of competitiveness of domestic industries becomes painfully evident? What happens when national currencies have to be rapidly devalued and the prices for the basic goods and services rise sharply?

The absence of institutions of a market economy is eroding the economic victories of the past decade and authoritarian leaders are increasingly worried about both the economic downturn and their political legitimacy. These doubts are not only coming from foreign organizations, often muted domestically, they are also coming from the inside.

For example in Russia, academics from the Higher School of Economics and others have published a number of articles recently evaluating the Russian response to the economic crisis and outlining political reforms that must be put into place if the country is to move forward. Among propositions is reform of the centralized system of government, which would repeal appointment of governors and introduce direct

elections instead. At the same time, companies continue to complain about bureaucratic corruption, which has changed, because of the crisis, into something that not only increases the costs of business but also that can put companies out of business entirely.

In Venezuela, the private sector continues to grow skeptical about President Hugo Chavez's efforts to stabilize the economy. His recent decision to send the National Guard to occupy the rice production facility owned by Polar Enterprises is a clear signal of the measures he intends to quell those who don't walk the line. In fact, after his win in the referendum that removed term limits on his presidency, there has been a rupture in relations between business-oriented representatives within the government and the private sector.

In a telling sign, authoritarian leaders continue to control what media outlets publish about the crisis, but occasional protests still break out. Even in Kazakhstan, where public protests against the regime are rare, several hundred activists recently took to the streets in the capital, demanding the resignation of the government over its handling of the crisis. The difference in media coverage of the crisis is quite evident if one compares media segments from an established democracy to those in authoritarian countries. Authoritarian leaders may be worried, as they should be.

ECONOMIC CRISIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR MORE ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL FREEDOMS

The greatest danger of the economic crisis is that it will allow some authoritarian leaders to continue nationalization of key economic sectors under the guise of fixing the economy. Yet, it can also be viewed as an opportunity. The crisis is exposing the economic weaknesses of authoritarian countries, and, therefore, it is a good opportunity for the promotion of true institutional reform. By strengthening economic institutions and leading countries on the path of sustainable economic growth — growth that is not tied only to the exploration of natural resources or a single domestic industry — reforms can also lead to the improvement in the quality of institutions that guarantee and safeguard political freedoms.

Sound economic growth requires institutions of economic freedom that allow the entrepreneurial potential of citizens to generate jobs and overall wealth. It also requires the open flow of information. Governments must have information in order to implement a range of important economic functions, such as to be able to allocate resources, define reform priorities, and determine policy effectiveness. As Hayek has pointed out, open and transparent debate is crucial to the economic sustainability of countries, because only then are policymakers presented with a variety of options, opinions, and reform recommendations to be better equipped in making an informed decision.⁴ This is precisely why command

economies failed — they did not, and could not, obtain the necessary information for making decisions. Focus on market institutions and high quality economic growth could strengthen fragile democracies. And it can be a tremendous help in the struggle against authoritarianism by providing real working examples of successful transitions to democracy and show democracy as a serious alternative to the same old authoritarianisms.

Both friends and opponents of democracy have seen that the enthusiasm for democratization evident in the 1980s and 1990s is in decline. The number of electoral democracies, as a percentage of the total number of countries, has remained relatively stagnant since the mid 1990s, oscillating between 61 and 64% according to Freedom House rankings. Improvements in governance during the same decade have also been limited.

Since Fareed Zakaria explored the problems of illiberal democracies,⁵ we've seen managed, sovereign, social, and many other types of democracies popularized in mainstream development circles. What has become increasingly evident in following the path of various "democracies with adjectives," is that achieving electoral democracy, while important in its own right, is a task that is much easier in scope than institutionalizing procedural elements of a democratic rule. In other words, elections alone do not guarantee that a government will govern democratically by, for instance, providing all citizens with opportunities to affect policy creation through civil society institutions. Larry Diamond provides a number of good examples where elections did not necessarily lead to more democratic governance in countries as diverse as Venezuela, Russia, Nigeria, Thailand, Kenya, Philippines, and others.⁶

There are many ways in which one can disguise the lack of institutions of democratic governance, but none of the adjectives is a true substitute for those institutions. Unfortunately, despite increased attention paid to democratization, true successes in democratic governance are still few and far between. It could be that the lack of success is partly linked to the lack of incentives for democratic consolidation — especially in recent years many fragile democracies have faced incentives to mirror the growth models of China, Russia, and others. The current economic crisis could be such an incentive because it is exposing the limitations of the economic model of authoritarian regimes — they may grow at rapid rates for a short period of time, but long-term sustainable growth demands much needed political reforms.

Perhaps, the best illustration of democracy consolidation challenges comes from the part of the world that gave us a new hope for democratic prosperity only two decades ago — Central and Eastern Europe. There, the quality and sustainability of democratic institutions, despite the countries' EU membership, still face some [Continued, Page 23]

JULIE, *Continued from Page 1*

cooperate with one another, on the one hand, and the various organizations of “civil society” (civil society associations, henceforth CSAs) on the other.² This symbiosis of party actors and activists from civil society forms a necessary collective agent for democratic political transition, which I refer to as political society. Unfortunately, though, cohesive political societies remain relatively absent from the contemporary Arab world, and therefore a factor we must consider in accounting for the region’s stalled political development.

Conceptualizing the issue in this way is important for two reasons. First, as alluded to above, we need to stop blaming the failure of political reform initiatives solely on the state. True, the incumbent regime represents perhaps the most critical actor in that without at least its tacit consent to gradually open the boundaries of political participation, transition is virtually impossible. In closed authoritarian set-ups such as North Korea or China, for example—where either sheer repression and political closure rule supreme, or sham elections take place in which the regime relies on co-optation and intimidation to “win” by nonsensical margins—such consent is virtually nonexistent, and potential for opposition cohesion, let alone activity, is minimal. Competitive authoritarian regimes, however, present a different scenario. In such cases as Egypt or Malaysia, although the ruling clique may frequently utilize repression, fraud, and other illiberal means to create an uneven playing field, regular, competitive elections are held between the ruling party and a legal, legitimate opposition, which at least partially determine the distribution of political power in the state.³

Second, it is high time to refine the oft-cited claim that “civil society causes democracy.” Although this is part of a much larger question in comparative politics, we must be clear that with respect to democratic transition, civil society refers specifically to politically engaged non-state actors and organizations with a pro-democracy focus, operating to effect change from within the authoritarian polity.⁴ These actors are fairly ineffective independently, but by generating novel ideas and strategies, raising public consciousness, and monitoring parties and elections, CSAs can contribute to political change by linking citizens to key policy issues, and ensuring parties stay true to those issues both during the campaign process and once they enter government.⁵

A look at Serbia’s democratic transition in 2000 highlights this dynamic at work. Throughout the early to mid-1990s under the repressive regime of Slobodan Milosevic, Serbian political parties were bitterly divided over key issues such as the legitimacy of continued cooperation with the state, resolution of the “national question,” and minority rights. As Belgrade’s domestic and foreign policies continued to generate global controversy, it was not until CSAs—primar-

ily *Otpor*⁶—engaged in systematic pro-democracy activism that the opposition began to close ranks in order to challenge the regime.

Otpor emerged in 1998 as a student movement protesting the introduction of state laws designed to repress and curb media freedom and the autonomy of universities.⁷ It was received successfully and quickly due to a horizontal, non-hierarchical structure, dedicated membership at the local level, and most importantly, its insistence on coordination with the party establishment. This coordination was tempered by *Otpor*’s relentless demands for party accountability and refusal to tolerate parties who worked with the Milosevic regime.⁸ Other CSAs soon followed *Otpor*’s lead, flooding the oppositional environment with information that parties could use to make the case against the state, and novel reform ideas with which citizens could take to the streets and demand free and fair elections.⁹ The main party leaders subsequently reconciled their differences. When elections finally did take place in September of 2000, continuous protest from political society exposed the irregularities and corruption that led to Milosevic’s sham “victory.” The 5th October Overthrow facilitated Milosevic’s resignation and relinquishment of power to the Democrats’ coalition under Vojislav Kostunica.

Recent evidence from Morocco and Egypt, by contrast, underscores both the fragmentation of party establishments and their failure to coordinate efforts with CSAs for effecting political change in competitive authoritarian regimes of the Arab world. Much of this fragmentation is a result of seemingly irreconcilable differences between secular Arab parties and perhaps the most relevant actors in Middle Eastern civil society, the Islamists.

In Morocco, once the mainstay of the secular opposition establishment, the *Union Socialiste des Forces Populaire* (USFP) and *Istiqlal* party, now work in tandem with the regime of King Mohammed VI. This is the result of an arrangement made by the late King Hassan II, who, after liberalizing the country’s political system in 1999, reached out to the most prominent opposition parties, permitting them to dialogue with the regime and field their candidates in the 1997 elections in place of traditional palace parties. The USFP and *Istiqlal* had previously refused such overtures on the grounds that cooperation was inappropriate until a constitution was put in place that could rein in the monarchy’s powers and embolden the parliament. Ultimately, however, they accepted the king’s bait for fear of up-and-coming Islamist parties, particularly the reformist Justice and Development Party (PJD), which had fared well in the elections. *Kutla*’s¹⁰ subsequent entrance into government rendered it largely ineffective both in and outside regime circles, and unable to challenge the king as the final arbiter of Moroccan politics.¹¹ Despite indications that the PJD was willing to work with CSAs to reform state institutions (the 2005 reform of the

mudawanna, the code regulating marriage and family life in the country, is a success case in point), the *Kutla* parties made sure to avoid and sideline Islamists at all costs. They thereby further entrenched themselves into the regime's patronage networks and adopted a conciliatory position vis-à-vis reform.¹² As a result, secular CSAs largely failed to find like-minded allies in the party establishment, rendering their actions "embedded into the general political framework of appeasement between the opposition political parties and the monarchy."¹³

The recent activity of Morocco's Islamists has further exacerbated current opposition potential. The country's most popular CSA, *Jami'at al-'Adl wal-Ihsan* (Society of Justice and Spirituality), is an Islamist group that provides masses of followers with both social services and ideational sustenance, and rhetorically seeks to establish a liberal Islamic polity based on the tenets of Western democratic procedure. In practice, though, the *Jami'at* rejects participation in the political process outright, and regularly calls for boycotting local and parliamentary elections, placing it at fundamental odds with the pragmatism of the PJD.¹⁴ The PJD, despite its image as Morocco's only force independent and capable enough to initiate a real reform process, has thereby been pushed and pulled between the regime and its opponents, left with increasingly diminished popular support and maneuverability to challenge the monarchy in a meaningful way.¹⁵ Although it made tremendous strides in the elections of 2002, the PJD has since had zero legislative impact nor found any common ground with other opposition groups in parliament. Its consistent tussling with the *Jami'at*, moreover, combined with the demobilization of secular civil society, facilitated widespread voter apathy during the 2007 elections. In addition to the fact that the PJD only gained another four seats in parliament during 2007, the *Kutla* block showed signs of growing irrelevance as well, as the once dominant USFP finished in fifth place.¹⁶ The convergence of the regime's continued cooptation of secular opposition parties, those parties' fear of Islamists, and tense relations among the various factions of both secular and Islamist civil society, has helped the monarchy retain its stranglehold on the political system and block any extant yearnings for reform.

The Egyptian opposition briefly reignited the battle for reform in the run-up to the 2005 presidential elections. During this period, President Husni Mubarak amended Article 76 of the state constitution, switching the elections procedure to a competitive process, in which the president was to be elected directly by the public, among a list of opposition candidates.¹⁷ Despite the hoped-for effects of Mubarak's overture, not much ultimately changed in Cairo: the president was reelected with close to an 88% majority, and the ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) managed to retain 72.5% of all seats in subsequent parliamentary elections. Setting aside obvious instances of regime repression, the fragmentation of political society was likely a key cause

of the opposition's inability to capitalize upon the potential momentum provided by Mubarak's announcement.

The party establishment, for example, was immediately taken aback by Cairo's gambit, and differences of opinion over "top-down" vs. "bottom-up" formulations of reform policy inhibited the main parties from both fielding a cohesive initial response and dialoguing with the regime on the basis of a common platform.¹⁸ These initial fragmentations were coupled with various components of civil society exploring their own avenues of opposition activity, independently of consultation with the parties, or each other. *Kifaya*, for example, which formed as a mass-based front containing elements of Cairo's poor, youth, socialist-communist and Muslim Brotherhood community networks, staged its own demonstrations demanding full political and constitutional reform. Despite the movement's potential appeal, its rhetoric was incoherent and inconsistent, and the leadership failed to present a viable strategy for working with the opposition establishment in countering the regime.¹⁹

Similar to Morocco, however, the more disruptive divisions in Egyptian political society were those between (and among) Islamists and secularists. The Muslim Brotherhood presented a particularly tough challenge, as both internal disagreements and clashes with secular parties compromised the cohesion of the opposition's fabric. Within the organization, older generations—much like the *Jami'at* in Morocco—showed more interest in the propagation of Islamic values and implementation of *Sharia* law, without directly challenging the dominance of the ruling NDP. The "young guard," however, sought to confront the regime through elections and commandeering a sizable position in parliament, while limiting its religious platform to the incorporation of *Sharia* elements into a modern nation-state. Outside of it, the Brotherhood's undisciplined policy proposals found acceptance within only select elements of the secular party establishment, while others, namely the *Tagammu* Party, opposed them unconditionally.²⁰ This adversely affected the one comprehensive bid for unity attempted by the opposition: the National Front for Change (NFC).

The NFC was a loose alliance of the *Wafd*, *Tagammu*, Nasserist, and Labor parties, and included elements from civil society such as *Kifaya* as well.²¹ Despite the tremendous possibilities of this forum, the NFC suffered from seemingly irreconcilable tensions within Egypt's political society. Feuding between the *Wafd* and the recently formed, popular *al-Ghad* party leaderships resulted in *al-Ghad*'s exclusion. More importantly, though, the Brotherhood was left out of the alliance, allegedly as a result of miscalculations on both sides.²² Clearly, the opposition as a whole presented a hard case for voters to opt for political reform at the expense of stability and provision of social services. This helps explain not only the poor record of secular opposition parties in the 2005 elections, but also the success of the Muslim Brothers.²³

Clearly, then, there are factors responsible for sustaining authoritarianism in the Arab world outside of state repression itself, and the lack of cohesive oppositions seems to be one of them. In contrast to closed Arab authoritarian regimes such as Syria, elections in more competitive systems like Egypt and Morocco are capable of redistributing political power in parliament. While this does not necessarily entail democratization, it places alternative actors within the structures of the state who can begin to challenge the regime through a gradual, tit-for-tat process. If this process is to be meaningful and effective, though, the oppositions must feature strong political societies comprised of a cohesive party establishment and engaged actors from civil society. Those in the business of democracy promotion would be well-served to concentrate on developing and strengthening these relationships. In addition, they must come to the realization that not only can we no longer afford to ignore the Islamists when addressing political change in the Arab world, but their exclusion from opposition activities hurts chances for reform, confuses voters, and plays into the hands of the ruling regime.

CORY S. JULIE is a PhD candidate in the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies and Department of Government at Georgetown University. He can be reached at csj8@georgetown.edu.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Steven Heydemann, "Upgrading Authoritarianism in the Arab World." Analysis Paper No. 13, (October 2007). The Saban Center For Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. <http://www.brookings.edu/papers/2007/10arabworld.aspx>. The specific "upgrading" strategies cited by Heydemann are as follows: 1) Managing political contestation; 2) Capturing the benefits of selective economic reforms; 3) Manipulating civil society; 4) Controlling communication technologies, and 5) Diversifying global linkages.
- 2 According to many standard definitions in the literature, CSAs may include any type of organization operating between the state and the family. My analysis, however, is concerned primarily with politically focused associations, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs), think-tanks, advocacy groups, and pro-democracy mass movements.
- 3 Marc Morjé Howard and Philip G. Roessler, "Liberalizing Electoral Outcomes in Competitive Authoritarian Regimes." *American Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 50, No. 2, April 2006, pp. 365-81.
- 4 While the "civil society causes democracy" argument is limited to cases of transition from authoritarian regimes, there is an extensive literature on how civil society strengthens and "deepens" democracy in democratic regimes. Drawing this distinction is important because while organizations such as glee clubs and bowling leagues might help consolidate existing democracies, a very different type of CSA will seek to and succeed at effecting political change in aspiring ones. See Robert Putnam, *Making Democracy Work*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.
- 5 Although the literature on civil society-party cohesion is not very developed at present, Weiss makes a convincing case in her study of Malaysia. See Meredith L. Weiss, *Protests and Possibilities: Civil Society and Coalitions for Political Change in Malaysia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2006. In addition, there is a fairly extensive literature on the importance of "opposition cohesion" for effecting democratic change. See, for example, Nicolas van de Walle, "Tipping Games: When do Opposition Parties Coalesce?" in (ed.) Andreas Schedler, *Electoral Authoritarianism: The Dynamics of Unfree Com-*

petition. Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2006, pp. 77-92.

- 6 A Serbian word meaning "resistance."
- 7 "Serbian Opposition Unites." BBC News. 11 January, 2000. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/597964.stm>; and Gabriel Partos, "Milosevic Opponents Unite for Demo." BBC News. 14 April, 2000. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/713178.stm>.
- 8 Gabriel Partos, "Analysis: OTPOR's Challenge to Milosevic." BBC News. 15 May, 2000. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/749469.stm>.
- 9 The Center for Free Election and Democracy, for example, emerged in response to election fraud, and dedicated itself to observing and analyzing elections, monitoring elections regularities, and proposing alternative election laws.
- 10 The newly formed bloc of opposition parties operating within the regime's sphere. It includes the USFP, *Istiqlal*, and a number of smaller leftist parties.
- 11 Marina Ottaway and Meredith Riley, "Morocco: From Top-down Reform to Democratic Transition?" Carnegie Papers No. 71 (September 2006), Democracy and Rule of Law, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., p. 6.
- 12 James N. Sater, *Civil Society and Political Change in Morocco*. New York: Routledge, 2007, p. 57.
- 13 *Ibid.*, 161-5.
- 14 Abdessalam Yassine, *Winning the Modern World for Islam*. Iowa City: Justice and Spirituality Publishing, 2000.
- 15 Amr Hamzawy, "The 2007 Moroccan Parliamentary Elections: Results and Implications." Web Commentary (September 2007), Middle East Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington D.C., p.17. http://www.carnegieendowment.org/files/moroccan_parliamentary_elections_final.pdf.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p.4.
- 17 Abdel Monem Said Aly, "Prelude to Change: Egyptian Democratization, 2005." *Middle East Brief* No.2. The Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University, January 2006, p. 1.
- 18 See "Egypt: Political Reform and the Constitutional Amendment: Mubarak's Decision to Amend Article 76," Chapter 2 of *The Arab Strategic Report*. Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies. 2004-2005, p. 3. <http://www.ahram.org.eg/acps/eng/ahram/2004/7/5/ARAB36.HTM>. The gist of the difference between "top-down" and "bottom-up" approaches was a belief in parliamentarians initiating the reform process vs. predicating the process upon the right political environment vis-à-vis press freedoms, civil liberties, etc., respectively.
- 19 Jacky Angus, "Kifaya as Political Culture: The Egyptian Presidential Election, 2005," in (ed.) Helen James, *Civil Society, Religion, and Global Governance: Paradigms of Power and Persuasion*. New York: Routledge, 2007, pp. 277-287, p. 283.
- 20 Dina Shehata, *Opposition Movements in Egypt*. Unpublished PhD Dissertation, Department of Government, Georgetown University. December 2007.
- 21 Amr Hashem Rabie, "After the Foundation of the National Front for Change, What's Next?" *Egyptian Commentary* Issue 42, October 2005. Cairo: Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies, p. 2. <http://www.ahram.org.eg/acps/eng/ahram/2004/7/5/EGYP48.HTM>.
- 22 Shehata, "Opposition Movements in Egypt," p. 70.
- 23 Secular opposition parties gained only nine seats in total (six for the *Wafd*, two for *Tagammu*, and one for *al-Ghad*), while the Muslim Brothers took eighty-eight seats as independents.

SHKOLNIKOV & SULLIVAN, *Continued from Page 19*

serious challenges. These challenges are another proof that democratic reforms are a slow and painful *process* for which there is no single correct timeframe. Countries' institutions do not necessarily change immediately after new rules and regulations are put into effect.

Corruption remains rampant in Romania and Bulgaria; in fact, the levels have been so high that the European Union is withholding some development funds until corruption levels are brought down. In recent years Hungary has also had its fair share of political corruption scandals, going right up to the top posts in government. Poland has faced corruption crises of its own, highlighted by the arbitrary installation of ruling party loyalists in key government posts in 2007.

Look further east, and one will find it hard to miss the inability of Ukraine to capitalize on the wave of democratic hope following the Orange revolution—in fact, the country has been stuck in battles for political influence and empty, populist promises. Timoshenko's economic plan proposed after the Orange revolution split the government. Since then, the government has not been able to implement meaningful policy reforms, and dismissals of government and new elections have become a new face of the Ukrainian politics.

What is even more troubling is the evident nostalgia for the old days of communism, revealed in some recent surveys in the region. The ongoing economic downturn, which has significantly affected living standards, has plainly led many people to question the ability of their governments to provide economic goods.

Perhaps the most worrying sign for democratic reformers in Eastern Europe came when Hungary had to turn to the IMF for bailout funds in the fall of 2008. The need for the IMF bailout showed that the country's economic progress over the past two decades remains very fragile. If Hungary, the unofficial Eastern European poster-child in post-communist privatization and market liberalization had to turn to IMF for help, what does this say about the prospects of democratic transition more generally? And what does this mean for Hungary's neighbors?

CONCLUSION

No country seems to be immune from the current economic crisis—whether established democracies, fragile ones, or authoritarian countries. However, the extent of the economic pain differs along with the ability of governments to reform and weather the crisis. The global economic crisis highlights what we knew all along—that sound democratic governance and, more importantly, sound market institutions must remain at the heart of reform efforts.

If there is one thing that unites democracies and authoritarian regimes, it is the need to bring their populations sustainable socio-economic growth and development. In light of the fact that the ability of any government to survive is tied directly to its ability to deliver real, concrete benefits for its citizens, both democrats and authoritarians are worried about the same thing—political survival: Yet, from somewhat different perspectives.

In democratic countries, leaders worry whether they will win the next elections. In authoritarian countries, leaders worry that if they don't provide enough economic benefits to the people and retain enough political capital, they might not be able to keep power by whatever means they have. The focus of international democratization efforts must therefore turn to improving the underlying ability of countries to generate sound economic growth for their populations, and not merely to a select few. This approach could make fragile democracies more stable and legitimate. For authoritarian regimes, the emphasis on sound economic growth tied to economic freedoms and competitiveness could be, in fact, a path to greater political openness and democratization.

JOHN D. SULLIVAN is Executive Director and ALEKSANDR SHKOLNIKOV is Senior Program Officer for Global Programs at the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE).

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- 1 Hernando de Soto. *The Mystery of Capital: Why Capitalism Triumphs in the West and Fails Everywhere Else*. 2000.
- 2 Marc F. Plattner. "Democracy's Competitive Edge: Why Authoritarian Economies Could Have More to Fear From the Crisis." *The Washington Post*, Tuesday, January 13, 2009.
- 3 Bruce Bueno de Mesquita and George W. Downs. "Development and Democracy." *Foreign Affairs*, Vol 84, Number 5. September/October 2005.
- 4 F.A. Hayek. "The Use of Knowledge in Society." *American Economic Review*, XXXV, No. 4; September, 1945, 519-30.
- 5 Fareed Zakaria. "The Rise of Illiberal Democracy." *Foreign Affairs*, November/ December 1997, Vol 76, Number 6.
- 6 Larry Diamond. "The Democratic Rollback: The Resurgence of the Predatory State." *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2008, Vol 87, Number 2.

PERELLI, *Continued from Page 1*

playing a vital role in fomenting such upheavals, and the world's remaining autocratic governments took notice.

By 2005, a growing number of governments began to crack down on the activities of international democracy building programs within their borders, denouncing such activities as illegitimate foreign meddling, harassing foreign NGOs, and passing laws to regulate the activities of both foreign and domestic groups. In 2006 in a seminal article in *Foreign Affairs*, Thomas Carothers sounded the alarm, arguing that the recent democratic transitions had produced a “backlash” against democracy promotion that would only grow as its proponents learned from and fed off of one another (Carothers 2006). This backlash has continued as Carothers predicted, and, consequently, become particularly worrisome for many practitioners and policymakers, who perhaps never expected such severe opposition to their activities.

While a relatively rare phenomenon during the 1990s, anyone whose memory extends past the end of the Cold War will recall that opposition to democracy promotion and democratization itself is hardly something new. Indeed, it was a fact of life for many prior to the fall of the Iron Curtain. What makes this renewed backlash so disturbing, however, is that it comes at a time when the West has begun to doubt itself and question its core beliefs. Yet, the triumph of democracy and its expansion over the past 30 years has been real. And while the process of democratic transition and consolidation is often messy, imperfect, and painfully long, there still exists no other system that better enables human societies to influence the way in which they are governed than does liberal, representative democracy. Moreover, transitioning and new democracies around the world face a myriad of threats, from a resurgence of populist authoritarianism to what may be a protracted and painful economic crisis. If there were ever a time for the West to retain its resolve and act with confidence to promote and provide assistance for democratization around the globe, that time is now.

BACK TO THE FUTURE: DEMOCRATIZATION AND ITS DISCONTENTS

Carothers and others have brought to the attention of policymakers a trend that has caused a great deal of heartburn in recent years for those of us working in democracy assistance: the growing official backlash in many transitioning countries against international pro-democracy NGOs. Indeed, these NGOs have found their activities curtailed and heavily regulated by new laws in Russia and some former Soviet republics. In other countries, NGOs have faced the official closure of offices and expulsion of foreign staffers, as occurred in 2005 to my employer, the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), in Ethiopia. And

perhaps most disturbing of all, in some countries, local pro-democracy groups face official harassment or even criminal prosecution for cooperating with international NGOs. This was the case in 2004 in Venezuela, where the leaders of a local civil society organization were indicted for treason for having accepted a \$48,000 grant from the National Endowment for Democracy.

This backlash has often gone hand in hand with what many fear is a resurgence of authoritarianism. Interestingly, this new authoritarianism often employs a democratic, albeit highly populist, rhetoric to win citizen support at home and even allies in left-leaning intellectual circles abroad. And perhaps more disturbingly, the new authoritarianism utilizes regular elections as a sort of democratic window dressing. These elections are rarely transparent, open, or fair, and are hampered by regulations designed to favor governing parties and state resources deployed to support pro-government candidates. This authoritarianism disguised as democracy—what Fareed Zakaria has labeled “illiberal democracy” (Zakaria 2003)—has made inroads in many countries over the past five years, including Russia, Azerbaijan, Venezuela and Nicaragua.

In addition, this new authoritarianism is internationally active, presenting itself as an alternative to liberal democracy in the developing world. Firebrand Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez has bought influence on the international stage through his considerable oil-financed largess. While government accounts remain opaque, estimates indicate that Chavez has spent just as much dispensing subsidized oil and other forms of financial support and aid to various Western allies than he has on his wildly popular and expensive populist social service programs at home. Chavez's enormous generosity has sustained the communist regime in Cuba and supported would-be autocrats in Bolivia, Ecuador, Argentina, and Nicaragua who seek to undermine democratic institutions and stall or reverse the process of democratic consolidation in their respective states.

And Chavez is not alone in this. Russian President Vladimir Putin and his puppet successor in Moscow have introduced new laws to undermine democracy promotion at home, while providing aid to friendly regimes—regardless of their governance records—to thwart it abroad. In an effort to sideline pesky international election monitors who might seek to expose flawed electoral processes, Chavez and Putin have each formed their own election observation groups to provide a rubber stamp for questionable elections in friendly countries. While the US and Europeans often condition foreign aid and diplomatic initiatives in the developing world on states' adherence to democratic norms, Venezuela, Russia, and China do not. Would-be authoritarians have lately not been at a loss for friends with deep pockets, and this is undermining the powerful diplomatic leverage once wielded by the West. Indeed, the West's diplomatic carrots

have little pull when Venezuela, Russia, and China are offering carrots with far fewer strings attached.

As disturbing as they may seem, though, these developments should not come as a surprise. The levers of government bestow enormous political and economic privilege and power on those who hold them, especially in developing countries. No one should expect authoritarian leaders to give up that privilege easily. Authoritarian backlash is not only to be expected; it is, in fact, old news. Those who lived through the Cold War will recall that opposition to pro-democracy organizations and the undermining of their activities was a fact of life. In the 1960s, 70s, and 80s, military governments in my native Uruguay and its southern cone neighbors Argentina, Paraguay, and Chile, regularly detained, tortured and killed pro-democracy activists. Even worse, the military governments conducted such killings with the tacit acceptance of the US, who supplied them with military and economic aid as a reward for the juntas' hard line against communism and the Soviets. The majority of US allies in the developing world during the Cold War, in fact, were authoritarian states, whose regimes Washington was more than willing to prop up as long as they supported anti-communist objectives. While the US has always publicly professed a belief in and dedication to democracy, its drive to contain communism took priority during the Cold War, and undermined efforts to promote democracy in the developing world.

When examined with an eye to the past, we see that the challenges faced by democracy promoters today are not all that different than those of the Cold War. We continue, for example, to face official harassment and opposition in many of the countries in which we work. We find our work, moreover, often at odds with the foreign policy objectives of the US and other developed democracies, especially in strategically important states such as Egypt, Pakistan, and Uzbekistan. These challenges, however, are present in fewer countries today because there exist fewer undemocratic states, and far fewer among them remain "police states." According to Freedom House, of the world's 161 countries in 1979, 32 percent were considered "free," 33 percent "partially free," and the largest proportion, 35 percent, "not free." By 2009, Freedom House reported that the percentage of the world's now 193 countries that were considered "free" had grown to 46 percent, those considered "partially free" had declined to 32 percent, while those considered "not free" had declined significantly to just 22 percent (Freedom House 2009). And while many of the world's countries remain in the "not free" column of Freedom House's annual reports, there have been dramatic changes within these countries as well. Today, for example, democracy assistance NGOs face an uphill battle in most of the former Soviet Republics, but at least they *can* work in these countries. Just thirty years ago, the thought of any NGO functioning in Moldova, Tajikistan, or even Russia and living to tell the tale would have been absolutely laughable.

THE END OF HISTORY MEETS THE RETURN OF MALAISE

To many in the West, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the USSR discredited communism and signified the triumph of western, liberal democracy. It seemed that the global spread of democracy was, in fact inevitable, and the "End of History" had set in (Fukuyama 1992). And indeed, the early years of the 1990s seemed to support such thinking, as one dictator, junta, or single party state after another fell to democratizing forces, from Chile to Croatia, Nicaragua to Taiwan, and South Korea to South Africa.

Yet pro-democracy parties and activists faced opposition to their work in these places just as they do today in Russia, Moldova, and Venezuela. Indeed, the work of promoting democratization has always invited opposition from those who stand to lose power and influence as states democratize. But such opposition did not cause the kind of worry among Western democracy promoters and policy makers in the 1990s as it does now. If authoritarian opposition to democracy promotion and democratization has always been a fact of life, why is it now causing the West so much heartburn? What has changed?

What has changed is how the West feels about itself. And what makes this backlash so disturbing to the West has little to do with the backlash itself and everything to do with its timing, which has coincided with developments that have shaken the West's self-confidence and caused it to question its core beliefs. In the past five years, a drawn-out and unpopular war in Iraq, the enormous difficulties of establishing working democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan, and a global financial crisis that threatens to be the worst since the Great Depression have left the West feeling rather insecure. Leaders and opinion makers now openly question whether "some cultures" (read: Arab culture) are compatible with democratic governance and if promoting democracy is even worth the sacrifice at all. In short, the West has come down from its "End of History" high of the 1990s to a feeling of malaise. But, like the malaise felt by Americans in the aftermath of Vietnam and Watergate, I believe, this too shall pass.

The advance of democracy over the past thirty years has been real and significant. Furthermore, countries that were considered outright undemocratic thirty years ago are today assisting newly democratizing countries. Over the past two years, for example, technicians from Mexico's election management body—the *Instituto Federal de Elecciones* (IFE)—have provided training to their counterparts in Lebanon and Iraq. That such South-South cooperation has become increasingly common over the past few years is hardly surprising. Having lived without it for so long, leaders in these countries possess a personal understanding of democracy's value. They know all too well what Winston Churchill meant when he said: "Democracy is the worst

form of government... except for all the others that have been tried.”

But South-South cooperation alone will not fill the void left by a self-doubting or isolationist West. While introspection may not necessarily be a bad thing, now is not the time for the West to lose its resolve when it comes to promoting democracy in the world, and assisting countries through the long and sometimes painful process of democratization. As we have seen, the challenges transitioning countries face today are many, and the cost of failure is far too high... and all too familiar.

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HOFFMAN, *Continued from Page 2*

United States and its traditional allies. Barbara Slavin's *Bitter Friends, Bitter Enemies* examines the complex relationship between Iran and the United States. Slavin focuses significant attention on how US support for Iraq in its war with Iran in the 1980s shapes the Government of Iran's negative views of the US today. Finally, Susan Shirk in *China: Fragile Superpower* argues that the Government of China often takes aggressive stances in its foreign policy in order to remain popular at home.

This issue of *Democracy and Society* also coincides with two good-byes. First, our second class of MA students in Democracy and Governance will graduate in May. I know they will all go onto to bright careers and although I will miss them, I look forward to tracking their progress. Second, my two highly capable editors, Cory Julie and Neil Rogachevsky, will also be leaving. It was a pleasure to work with both of them.

INBODEN, *Continued from Page 5*

- 9 Given that China is still authoritarian and the leadership has not made a commitment to move toward democracy, China does not fit the definition of a country in transition to democracy. The usefulness of the democratic transition paradigm has been the subject of debate.
- 10 Interview with the author. November, 2008.
- 11 The Human Rights Exchange was formerly referred to as the Bern Process, and was initiated by Switzerland.

BOOK REVIEWS, *Continued from Page 17*

includes an appendix with the text of an Iranian proposal for a grand bargain to end the enmity between the two countries. Instead of building on this seemingly promising start, the Bush team ignored it because it was inconsistent with their ideological view of Iran. Whether Iran was really serious we will never know.

Now America has drawn a line in the sand for Iran, promising never to allow Tehran nuclear weapons. Soon that line in the sand may be tested. This book is a valuable insight into how we have come to this point.

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Volume 7 • Issue 1

ISSUE THEME

Globalization, Capitalism, and the State

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We are seeking well-written, interesting submissions of 800-2000 words on the themes below, including summaries and/or excerpts of recently completed research, new publications, and work in progress. **Submissions for the issue are due Friday, October 2, 2009.**

The current global financial crisis has the potential to lead to a significant reshaping of the relationships between globalization, capitalism, and the state. The solution to recent financial crises, such as those in Asia, Eastern Europe, and Latin America, has been greater deregulation, privatization, and global integration. The solution to the current financial crisis, by contrast, seems to be tighter regulation, more limits on globalization, and an increasing role for the state in the economy. As a result, the financial crisis may turn out to have profound political consequences because it could lead to a renegotiation of the sphere of the market and the sphere of the state.

The financial crisis appears to be changing global economics and politics in three ways. First, domestic politics is filtering governments' responses to the crisis. In some countries, citizens are only demanding expansion of social safety nets. In others, the crisis is leading to strident calls for economic nationalism. Most ominously, some countries are experiencing extreme political instability and face the prospect of regime collapse. Second, the crisis is leading to a different configuration of globalization. The rise of Brazil, China, India, and many other emerging economies means that more countries are involved in fashioning a solution to the crisis that we have previously witnessed. The G7 is no longer sufficient to solve the world's problems. Rather, the G20 appears to be the forum of the future. While it is reasonable to expand the number of countries that devise global economic regulations to include rising powers, a more diffuse distribution of financial power is likely to make gaining consensus on global financial regulation more difficult. Paradoxically, global economic integration may become more difficult as economic power becomes more diffuse. Third, the scope of the crisis may lead to a fundamental change in the role of the state. Deregulation and privatization have been the leading economic doctrines over the past three decades. The solution to the current crisis might be regulation, especially in the financial sector, and a far greater scope for the government in the economy.

This issue of *Democracy & Society* will analyze the economic and political implications of the current financial crisis on globalization, capitalism, and the state. We are interested in examining these subjects from the points of view of the state, the market, and internationally. In which countries will the economic crisis become a political one? Is the crisis going to lead to an end of the era of increasing global integration, privatization, and deregulation? Is the greater role of the state in the economy likely to be permanent or will it recede with the resolution of the crisis? How will globalization evolve as power becomes more diffuse? At the most fundamental level, will the crisis changing the relationship between globalization, capitalism, and the state?

Please email submissions (MS Word preferred) to democracy.and.society@gmail.com. Endnotes preferred. Please include your name, department or organization, title, and contact information.

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