DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE GULF COUNTRIES: ROLE OF THE UNITED STATES DURING THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION (2000–2008)

Thesis for the Award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Politics and International Relations—A Partial Fulfillment

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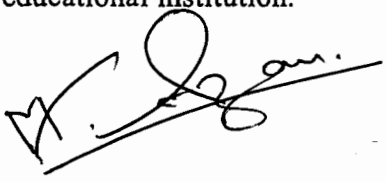
DECLARATION

I, Muhammad Azam, hereby declare that this Dissertation has been written by me in its entirety on the basis of my research work under the sincere guidance of my supervisor, Professor Dr. M. Nazrul Islam, Dean Faculty of Social Sciences, IIUI. No portion of this Dissertation has been copied from any source. No portion of the research, presented in this Dissertation, has been submitted before for any degree or qualification in this or any other university or educational institution.



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Certification

Certified that contents and form of thesis entitled **"Democratization of the Gulf Countries: Role of the United States During the Bush Administration (2000-2008)"** submitted by **Muhammad Azam Reg# 3-FSS/PhD(IR)-03,** have been found satisfactory for the requirements of the degree of Ph.D. Politics and International Relation.

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ABSTRACT

This study is an effort to contribute to understanding of the ongoing process of democratization in the Gulf region. The study explores the role played by the United States and its Civil Society in the process of democratization of the Gulf Countries, namely Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates, during 2000 and 2008. Among the questions addressed in this study are (a) to what extent has the Bush Administration supported democratization in the Gulf region? (b) what role the nongovernmental American organizations have played in this regard? and (c) what is the official response of the Governments in the Gulf region to the U.S. demands for democratic change?

Activities carried out by the American State and Civil Society that promote democratic values and strengthen democratic institutions have been examined. The study is an effort to examine what role the United States played to enhance democracy in the Gulf region during 2000 and 2008.

Focus of the study is on areas of politics, economy, education, civil society, human rights, women empowerment, and media. Goals, objectives, approaches, strategies, and tools adopted by the U.S. State and Society have been examined in the light of the Bush Administration's policy of democracy promotion in the Middle East.

The study also takes an account of the reforms and changes that have taken place in the region during this period.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I do not find appropriate words to express my thanks to my supervisor, Prof. Dr. M. Nazrul Islam, who has been a source of inspiration and motivation for me throughout my doctoral studies, particularly during the research work. He engaged me in his research projects that helped me immensely in refining my research capacity. Not only he guided me at each and every step in a very professional manner but also allotted me a space in the Department and offered me to use his room for working on my dissertation. In fact, I could not be able to complete my dissertation without his guidance and help.

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I am profoundly grateful to Nicole Stracke, associated as a Researcher with the GRC and her colleagues. Stracke made all the arrangements for me at the GRC. I was provided with office with computer, internet, and telephone facilities, photocopier and refreshments; every thing free of cost. Like Hikmat at IIU Islamabad, I found IT engineers Noman, Kamran, and Jynor at the GRC very cooperative who kept my computers and internet working, at Islamabad and Dubai.

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At the Dubai School of Government (DSG), Dr. Nicolas enlightened me with his lively and crispy remarks on the sociopolitical environment prevailing in the GCC countries. Library Manager Dubai School of Government, Hamid Saeed, who is a very nice person, provided me the required materials in a very short span of time and also gifted a book to me and few others for IIUI Library.

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My nephew Hammad motivated me saying: "*Chachoo,* complete your PhD as soon as possible so that I call you 'Doctor *Chachoo*' (Doctor Uncle)." And I found my motivation for writing the dissertation at its peak.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAI	Arab American Institute
ADF	Arab Democracy Foundation
AFAC	Arab Fund for Arts and Culture
AIHC	American International Health Council
AKA	American Kuwaiti Alliance
AMEU	Americans for Middle East Understanding
AMIDEAST	American-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc.
ASCA	American Swimming Coaches Association
ASQ	Arab Studies Quarterly
AU	American University
AUK	American University of Kuwait
BHRS	Bahrain Human Rights Society
BMENA	Broader Middle East and North Africa
BWA	Bahrain Women Association for Human Development
CDEM	Center for Democracy and Election Management
CDHR	Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia
CDIW	Congress of Democrats from the Islamic World
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CIPE	Center for International Private Enterprise

CMU	Carnegie Mellon University
CSID	Center for Islam and Democracy
CSIS	Center for Strategic and International Studies
DCP	Democracy Coalition Project
DRL	Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor
DSC	Dubai Sports Council
DWE	Dubai Women Establishment
EMU	Eastern Michigan University
FNC	Federal National Council (UAE)
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
FTAs	Free Trade Agreements
GCC	Gulf Cooperation Council
GMEACS	Gulf & Middle East Association for Civil Society
GRC	Gulf Research Center
HRDF	Human Rights and Democracy Fund
HRW	Human Rights Watch
IRI	International Republican Institute
IVLP	International Visitor Leadership Program
KJA	Kuwait Journalists Association
KSHR	Kuwait Society for Human Rights

KTS	Kuwait Transparency Society
MEDD	Middle East Democracy and Development
MEFTA	Middle East Free Trade Area
MEMRI	Middle East Media Research Institute
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MENA BWN	Middle East and North Africa Businesswomen's Network
MEPC	Middle East Policy Council
MEPI	The Middle East Partnership Initiative
MERIP	Middle East Research and Information Project
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MNCs	Multi-National Corporations
MSU	Michigan State University
NAAP	Network of Arab American Professionals
NCUSAR	National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations
NDI	National Democratic Institute for International Affairs
NDRI	Network of Democracy Research Institutes
NED	National Endowment for Democracy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
NHRA	National Human Rights Association (Saudi Arabia)

NHRC	National Human Rights Committee (Qatar)
NU	Northwestern University
NUKS	National Union of Kuwaiti Students
NYIT	New York Institute of Technology
NYU	New York University
OMEP	Office of Middle East Programs
PEC	Permanent Elections Committee (Qatar)
POMED	Project on Middle East Democracy
RIT	Rochester Institute of Technology
SAF	Saudi-U.S. Forum
SFCG	Search for Common Ground
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises
SQCC	Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center
SUSRIS	U.S.-Saudi Arabian Strategic Dialogue
TIFA	Trade and Investment Framework Agreement
U.S.	United States
UAE	United Arab Emirates
USSABC	U.S.-Saudi Arabian Business Council
UW	University of Washington
UWEO	University of Washington Educational Outreach

VEDP	Virginia Economic Development Partnership
WRMEA	Washington Report on Middle East Affairs
WTO	World Trade Organization

THESIS STRUCTURE

The thesis consists of 7 Chapters including conclusion. Chapter 1 deals with the Introduction with special reference to the Statement of the Study, its objectives, justification, literature review, methodology, and periodization of the study.

Theoretical framework is outlined in Chapter 2. Defining issues with reference to democratization, democracy, liberal democracy, preconditions of democratization, basic factors of democratization, nature and characteristics of democracy and the process of democratization, all these points have been touched upon in the chapter on theoretical framework.

Chapter 3 is related to the background of the subject. Ground realities with reference to social, economic, political, and educational sectors have been underlined and situation of human rights, media, and gender issues has been discussed in the chapter on background.

Approach, goal, objectives, strategies adopted by the Bush Administration for the purpose of pursuing democratization policy in the Gulf countries come under discussion in Chapter 4. Focus of the chapter is on the practical on-ground measures taken and activities conducted by the Bush Administration.

Activities taking place under the American civil society and non-governmental organizations regarding the democratic process in the Gulf have been discussed in Chapter 5. Approaches, goals, objectives, strategies, tools of these organizations have been underlined in the fifth chapter.

After mapping activities, events, and measures on part of the American state and civil society during 2000 and 2008 for the purpose of democratization in the Gulf in the fourth and fifth chapters, in Chapter 6, an effort has been made to explain the outcome and impact of the above-mentioned American efforts on the states and societies in the Gulf region.

Findings, recommendations and concluding remarks are discussed in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.I Statement of the Study

Democratic system of governance has gained much currency all over the world, especially after the breakup of communist Soviet Union. More and more countries are becoming democratic as democracy is considered to be the best available political system. Given its popularity, millions of people living under authoritarian rule, mainly in Asia and Africa, are demanding and struggling for democracy.

Democratic world generally tends to support and promote democracy in parts of the world where people are still forced to live under undemocratic rule. Gulf region—Kuwait, Qatar, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, The Sultanate of Oman, and United Arab Emirates—is the most important region where hereditary kingdoms have a tight grip on their subjects and national resources. The governments, however, are under an increased pressure because of the demands of political reforms to democratize their respective states.

The demands for democratization have been made both from home and abroad. Currently, the international community, led by the United States, is pressing the Middle Eastern governments to speed up the democratization process. The notion of promoting democracy has been a defining factor of the U.S. national interest throughout the twentieth century and beyond. As one of the basic values and interests it has been dominating much of the country's foreign policy.

Earlier, during the Cold War, the emphasis was on protecting the democratic or non-communist nations from becoming a prey to "the beast of communism." The Americans continued to worry about democracy, both at home and abroad. Democracy promotion became more important in U.S. foreign policy after the Cold War. One of the basic aims to provide aid to Russia was promoting democracy in the former homeland of communism.

The Bush Administration proclaimed supporting promotion of democracy in the Middle East, including the Gulf region. The administration claimed that promoting democracy in the Middle East was vital to the U.S. interests. It linked terrorism, particularly after 9/11, to lack of democracy in the Middle East and other parts of the world. The Middle East became a central fix of American foreign policy. The Global War on Terror became the main foreign policy theme of the United States. And, the Bush Administration began to emphasize democracy in its rhetoric. In a speech in March 2005, Bush said that for a long-lasting peace, his administration's strategy was to change the conditions that breed extremism and terrorism, particularly in the Middle East.[1]

Morton Halperin, a former policy planner in the State Department, argued that poverty and lack of education in Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries are factors behind formation of al-Qaeda. Authoritarian rule, he said

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[1] F. Gregory Gause III, "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 84, No. 5.

further, was responsible for these problems and democratization was the only solution.[2]

The Americans are also apprehensive that the success of democracy in the Middle East today would translate into Islamist parties becoming legitimate political actors in almost every country. They could not ignore Hamas becoming victorious in the Palestinian elections in 2006. Similarly, in Lebanon, Hezbollah—designated by the United States as a terrorist organization—won fourteen seats in the 128-memeber parliament in 2005 and got a share in the cabinet.

Hence, it is argued that the United States should not emphasize on electoral democracy in the Middle East because Islamist parties will make their way easily to come into power. And some suggest that the United States should encourage secular liberal political forces before focusing on democratic electoral politics.

On one hand, the Bush Administration expressed its determination to democratize the Middle East, and, on the other, it refused to engage with Islamic movements, including those that participate in electoral politics and categorically reject violence.

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[2] *Ibid.*

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[2] *Ibid.*

Seemingly, after Hamas's victory and the Ikhwan's gains in electoral politics, the United States had no intention of pushing the matter of political reform and democratization. Furthermore, western secular democracy was not acceptable to the Middle Easterners. This situation, on one hand, posed a challenge to the U.S. foreign policy experts and compelled them to think what kind of democracy they should support in the region? Another implication of this scenario was that what kind of people the United States should seek to assign the leadership role to?

Following are the key questions which need to be addressed. These questions encompass the above-discussed questions as well.

1. To what extent has the Bush Administration supported democratization in the Gulf region?
2. What role the nongovernmental American institutions have played in this regard?
3. What is the official response of the governments in the Gulf region to the U.S. demands for democratic change?

To address these questions at an academic level, an intensive and extensive study is called for. This study was designed to achieve this objective. U.S. foreign policy towards the Gulf region has been examined, with an emphasis on the democratization issue. Exchanges and interactions between the Bush Administration and political actors in the Gulf region will be accounted for.

In this study, activities on part of the Americans have been looked at, which promote democratic values and strengthen democratic institutions. The study is an effort to explore what role the U.S. played, how and to what extent from 2000 to 2008.

In the absence of a democratic system as well as culture, democracy assistance in the Gulf region means familiarizing the peoples along with the ruling families with democratic values, norms, attitudes and behaviors. Thus, education activities and exchanges, people to people contacts, conferences, workshops and cultural exchanges matter more than they do in cases where democratic political system has already been introduced. In our case, GCC countries have never been democracies, so democracy assistance on part of the United States has been focused on the above mentioned strategies. This study examines these strategies and the related activities taken place during 2000 and 2008.

1.II Objectives of the Study

i. To examine the U.S. foreign policy of democratic promotion in the Gulf region during the Bush Administration.

ii. To examine the role of the American institutions other than the government, like Middle East Policy Council, Soros Foundation, AMIDEAST, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, and Freedom House, etc.

economically Saudi Arabia is a bigger economy, others are small. But, at the same time, they have common ethnic identity (Arab), and are situated in the same region. Saudi Arabia shares its borders with all other five GCC states; United Arab Emirates and Oman are also neighbors.

International community under the American leadership is playing a role in democratization of this region. America is the sole superpower and plays the hegemonic role in world politics and global economy. It also tops the list of countries who champion democracy. The United States has deployed huge hard and soft power in the region. For these reasons, the American role in democratization of the Gulf region needed to be analyzed.

What distinguishes this study from others is its focus on on-ground steps taken from a wide variety of American institutions, governmental and nongovernmental, both.

1.IV Periodization

This study is confined to the period from 2000 to 2008. Firstly, the period under study is most recent. Secondly, during this period, more emphasis on democratization in the Gulf region got attention in the Foreign Policy agenda of the United States. Finally, after 9/11 incidents, the Arab World came to the forefront in the world politics.

1.V Literature Review

Literature on the topic can be classified in thematic categories like purely theoretical and philosophical which deals with theories and philosophies of democracy and democratization. Then, there are works dealing with the policies, strategies, and approaches of democracy promotion adopted by the United States and other countries over the decades.

Another distinct category of literature on the subject is focused on the Gulf countries and broader regions of the Arab World and the Middle East. Within this category, a sub-category is identifiable dealing with democracy and democratization in the Gulf countries. Lastly, a category of literature deals with the role of the United States in democratization of the Gulf region. In the following paragraphs and pages, above-mentioned categories have been dealt with almost in the same order.

Crick has introduced democratic doctrine, practices, and institutions in his book, *Democracy*.[3] Various brands and conditions of democracy in today's world have also been discussed concisely in the book. In his *Democratization,*[4] Whitehead argues that democratization is best understood as a process extending

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[3] Bernard Crick, *Democracy: A Very Short Introduction,* (Karachi: Oxford Pakistan, 2002).

[4] Laurence Whitehead, *Democratization: Theory and Experience,* (Oxford Scholarship Online, Nov. 2003).

over generations and he proposes a variety of new perspectives on democratization.

Chomsky has written several works on democracy and democratization. In *Deterring Democracy*[5] he explains decline of democracy. "International Linkage and Democratization,"[6] written by Levitsky and Way, may be the best available analysis of the international community's role in democratization. The work is of a high quality. The writers have discussed various aspects of the subject very aptly.

In his edited work, *The Architecture of Democracy,*[7] Reynolds brings together different views on the theory of effective democratization. Frank Cunningham, in his *Theories of Democracy*[8] critically analyzes various theories in the field of democracy. It is a highly recommended book.

Carothers, Elshtain, Ibrahim and Bangura, in their co-authored article "A Quarter-Century of Promoting Democracy,"[9] point out that democracy promotion has gone through great advances over the past twenty-five years. On the contrary,

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[5] Noam Chomsky, *Deterring Democracy,* (Hill and Wang, 1992).

[6] Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "International Linkage and Democratization," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 16, No. 3 (Jul. 2005).

[7] Andrew Reynolds (ed.), *The Architecture of Democracy: Constitutional Design, Conflict Management, and Democracy*, (Oxford Scholarship Online, Nov. 2003).

[8] Frank Cunningham, *Theories of Democracy: A Critical Introduction*, (London: Routledge, 2002).

[9] Thomas Carothers *et al.*, "A Quarter-Century of Promoting Democracy," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 18, No. 4, (Oct. 2007).

Puddington observes that democracy has suffered a pushback in the recent past which poses a serious threat to the progress of freedom and democratization in authoritarian states.[10]

In an article, "Islamic Opposition Parties in Comparative Perspective,"[11] Sheely gives an account of Islamic opposition parties in Arab countries. In his work, "Global Democracy,"[12] Teune has tried to explain the process of democratization in a globalized world.

Ibrahim is one of the leading experts on the subject of democracy and democratization in the Middle East. His works offer a general understanding of democracy in the region. In an article, "Towards Muslim Democracies,"[13] he maintains that the Arab region presents the most difficult challenges for democratization.

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[10] Arch Puddington, "The 2006 Freedom House Survey: The Pushback against Democracy," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 18, No. 2, (Apr. 2007).

[11] Ryan Sheely, "Overcoming Commitment Problems in Emerging Democracies: Islamic Opposition Parties in Comparative Perspective," Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia Marriott Hotel, Philadelphia, Aug. 27, 2003.

[12] Teune Henry, "Global Democracy," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, Vol. 581, Globalization and Democracy, (May 2002).

[13] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Towards Muslim Democracies," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 18, No. 2, (Apr. 2007).

In his article, "Universal Values and Muslim Democracy,"[14] Ibrahim explores the impact of western democratic values on the democratization efforts in the Muslim World. He observes that authoritarian regimes are intensifying their assaults against democracy promotion.

Annual reports, *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World,*[15] prepared by Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies (Egypt), are a wonderful endeavor and a valuable source of information on the ongoing democratization process in the region. The reports cover around twenty countries including all six countries under study.

Chaulia's "'Shia Democracy': Myth or Reality?"[16] deals with Shiism as a factor in the Middle Eastern democracy. Schmeil's "Democracy before Democracy?" is an important study on the history of democracy and democratization in some of the Middle Eastern countries.[17] Piano and Puddington point out that the gains for freedom and democracy in the region were the most significant in 2005 since 1972.[18]

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[14] Anwar Ibrahim, "Universal Values and Muslim Democracy," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 17, No. 3, (Jul. 2006).

[15] Soft copies are available at http://www.eicds.org/english/publications/reports.

[16] Sreeram Chaulia, "'Shia Democracy': Myth or Reality?" Feb. 16, 2007, http://www.worldpress.org/Mideast/2677.cfm.

[17] Yves Schmeil, "Democracy before Democracy?" *International Political Science Review,* Vol. 21, No. 2, (Apr. 2000).

[18] Aili Piano and Arch Puddington, "The 2005 Freedom House Survey: Progress in the Middle East," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 17, No. 1, (Jan. 2006).

Nasr is also among the leading writers on the subjects of democracy and democratization in the Middle East. One of his articles "The Rise of "Muslim Democracy"[19] elucidates the rise of Muslim Democracy. In "A Viable Partnership: Islam, Democracy and the Arab World,"[20] Abu Khalil highlights that there are some strong forces working against the democratic process. Murphy and his co-authors, in their essay, "Muslims Back both Sharia, Democracy,"[21] find out that large majorities of Muslims support democracy and reject undemocratic forces.

"Middle East Democracy,"[22] published by Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, is one of the best articles available on the subject. In it, Ottaway and Carothers have argued that if democracy succeeds in the Middle East, "it won't be due to the efforts of liberal activists or their Western supporters but to the very same Islamist parties that many now see as the chief obstacle to change."

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[19] Vali Nasr, "The Rise of "Muslim Democracy"," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 16, No. 2, (Apr. 2005).

[20] Asad Abu Khalil, "A Viable Partnership: Islam, Democracy and the Arab World," *Harvard International Review*, Vol. 16, No. 1, (Winter 93).

[21] Dan Murphy *et al.*, "Muslims Back both Sharia, Democracy," *Christian Science Monitor,* Vol. 99, No. 104, (Apr. 25, 2007).

[22] Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, "Middle East Democracy," *Foreign Policy,* No. 145, (Nov.–Dec. 2004).

Ottaway's "Thinking Big: Democratizing the Middle East"[23] brilliantly enlightens the Islamist issue and the U.S. role in democratizing the region.

Democracy, War and Peace in the Middle East,[24] edited by Garnham and Tessler is an excellent book on the subject. It covers wide range of topics. One of its central concerns is the potential for democracy in the Middle East. Falk's, "Two models of democratization in the Middle East,"[25] is a good piece of work. The article is very helpful in understanding the democratization issue in the region. Issawi's article, "Economic and Social Foundations of Democracy in the Middle East,"[26] provides interesting findings on the prevailing condition of democracy in the region in the mid-twentieth century.

Nazrul has examined the linkage between democracy and nation-building in Asian societies.[27] In addition, he has explained the relationship between development and the process of democratization in Asian countries.[28]

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[23] Marina Ottaway, "Thinking Big: Democratizing the Middle East," Carnegie Endowment for International peace, *Boston Globe,* Jan. 5, 2003, http://www.carnegieendowment.org/publications/index.cfm?fa=view&id=1151.

[24] David Garnham and Mark Tessler (ed.), *Democracy, War, and Peace in the Middle East,* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995).

[25] Richard Falk, "Two models of democratization in the Middle East," The Transnational Foundation for Peace and Future Research, http://www.transnational.org/Area_MiddleEast/2007/Falk_Two_Democratizations.html.

[26] Charles Issawi, "Economic and Social Foundations of Democracy in the Middle East," *International Affairs,* Vol. 32, No. 1, (Jan. 1956).

[27] M. Nazrul Islam, *Consolidating Asian Democracy,* (Dhaka, 2003).

Khalilzad's treatise, "How to Nation-Build: Ten Lessons from Afghanistan,"[29] provides an insight into the U.S. efforts of rebuilding the Middle Eastern region. Menotti has addressed the issue with a focus on the European Union's role in democratization of the region in "Democratize but Stabilize: Democracy in the Middle East."[30]

Youngs has written a book entitled *International Democracy and the West,*[31] in which he gives an account of the West's role in democracy promotion. Whitehead's *The International Dimensions of Democrati-zation*[32] is focused primarily on the influence of U.S. foreign policy and other factors on democratization. Page and Bouton explicate democracy in U.S. foreign policy in *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders But Don't Get.*[33] Brands' "The Idea of the National Interest,"[34] details democratic promotion in the U.S. foreign policy in a historical perspective.

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[28] _____, *Problems of Nation-Building in Developing Countries: The Case of Malaysia,* (Dhaka: University of Dhaka, 1988).

[29] Zalmay Khalilzad, "How to Nation-Build: Ten Lessons from Afghanistan," *The National Interest,* (Summer 2005).

[30] Roberto Menotti, "Democratize but Stabilize; Democracy in the Middle East," *Middle East Quarterly,* Vol. XIII, No. 3, (Summer 2006), http://www.meforum.org/afticle/943.

[31] Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West,* (Oxford University Press, 2007).

[32] Laurence Whitehead (ed.), *The International Dimensions of Democratization: Europe and the Americas,* (Oxford Scholarship Online, Nov. 2003).

[33] Benjamin I. Page, Marshall M. Bouton, *The Foreign Policy Disconnect: What Americans Want from Our Leaders But Don't Get,* (The University of Chicago Press, 2006).

O'Loughlin, Ward, Lofdahl, Cohen, Brown, Reilly, Gleditsch and Shin have examined the linkages between the temporal and spatial dimensions of democratic diffusion.[35] Breuning and Ishiyama have produced an outstanding article, "Foreign Aid, Democracy and Political Stability in Post Conflict Societies."[36] It is a good explication of the impact of different strategies—including economic aid—used for democratizing a country or region from outside.

In his book, *Between Hope and History: Meeting America's Challenges for the 21st Century,*[37] Clinton lays stress on America's role as the world leader to promote democracy and freedom. In their edited work, *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts,*[38] Cox, Ikenberrry and Inoguchi have presented a number of impressive articles which appraise American policy and practice of democratic promotion.

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[34] H. W. Brands, "The Idea of the National Interest," *Diplomatic History,* Vol. 23, No. 2, (Spring 1999).

[35] John O'Loughlin, *et al.*, "The Diffusion of Democracy, 1946–1994," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers,* Vol. 88, No. 4, (Dec. 1998).

[36] Marijke Breuning and John Ishiyama, "Foreign Aid, Democracy and Political Stability in Post Conflict Societies," *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 6, No. 1 & 2, (Spring and Summer 2007).

[37] Bill Clinton, *Between Hope and History: Meeting America's Challenges for the 21st Century,* (New York: Times Books, 1996).

[38] Michael Cox, John Ikenberrry and Takashi Inoguchi (eds.), *American Democracy Promotion: Impulses, Strategies, and Impacts,* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

In "A Clash of Systems"[39] Harvery, Sullivan and Groves reveal a clash of systems in the Middle East and its implications for U.S.' Middle East policy. They, however, have exaggerated the power and influence of the Islamists in the region. In their book, *The Case for Democracy,*[40] Dermer and former Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, Sharansky, discuss democracy in the Arab world and give reasons for the role of the international community, particularly that of the U.S. Kamrava and Mora perhaps have carried out the best comparative study of democratization process in the Middle East and Latin America.[41]

Youngs' *International Democracy and the West*[42] explains international dimensions of democratization by exploring the politics and actions of Western governments, MNCs and NGOs. Wright's article, "Islam, Democracy and the West,"[43] furnishes two alternatives to counter the Islamists.

Several excellent works have appeared on the Bush Administration's democratization policy towards the Middle East. Hayajneh is one of the leading experts. In his work, "The U.S. Strategy: Democracy and Internal Stability in the

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[39] Andrew Harvery, Ian Sullivan, and Ralph Groves, "A Clash of Systems: An Analytical Framework to Demystify the Radical Islamist Threat," *Parameters,* (Autumn 2005).

[40] Natan Sharansky and Ron Dermer, *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror,* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004).

[41] Mehran Kamrava and Frank O. Mora, "Civil Society and Democratization in Comparative Perspective: Latin America and the Middle East," *Third World Quarterly,* Vol. 19, No. 5, (Dec. 1998).

[42] Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West: The Roles of Governments, Civil Society, and Multinational Business,* (Oxford Scholarship Online: Jan. 2005).

[43] Robin Wright, "Islam, Democracy and the West," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 71, No. 3, (Summer 1992).

Arab World,"[44] he investigates impact of the Bush Administration's "forward strategy" on behavior of the Arab states.

Zakheim establishes that democratic electoral process has provided legitimacy to some of the political actors unwanted to the U.S.[45] In his work, "The Bush Doctrine and the Rise of Islamic Democracy,"[46] Silverstein finds out that democratization efforts have suffered a number of setbacks in the region after the proclamation of Bush's "forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East". The article is one of the best on the subject.

Neep has examined the U.S. commitment to democratization and the forward strategy of freedom.[47] *America & the World,* edited by Tehranian and Clements, contains a brilliant article "Replacing the Bush Doctrine"[48] by Groff. Craner, in one of his scholarly articles, has assessed the workability of the U.S. democratization policy in the Middle East.[49] In "Can Democracy Stop

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[44] Adnan M. Hayajneh, "The U.S. Strategy: Democracy and Internal Stability in the Arab World," *Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations,* Vol. 3, No. 2&3, (Summer & Fall 2004).

[45] Dov S. Zakheim, "Blending Democracy: The Generational Project in the Middle East," *The National Interest,* (Fall 2005).

[46] Ken Silverstein, "The Bush Doctrine and the Rise of Islamic Democracy," *Harper's Magazine,* Vol. 314, No. 1882, (Mar. 2007).

[47] Daniel Neep, "Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East: the "Forward Strategy of Freedom," Sep. 22, 2004, http://www.mepc.org/journal_vol11/0409_neep.asp.

[48] Linda Groff, "Replacing the Bush Doctrine," in Majid Tehranian and Kevin P. Clements, *America & the World,* (Transaction Publishers, 2005).

[49] Lorne Craner, "Democracy in the Middle East: Will U.S. Democratization Policy Work?" *Middle East Quarterly,* (Summer 2006).

Terrorism?"[50] Gause refutes the Bush Administration's belief that bringing democracy to the Middle East will stop terrorism and enhance the U.S. security. In his second work, Gause has reasoned on the linkage between internal security and democracy in Saudi Arabia.[51]

Sharp's report for Congress, "U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East,"[52] published by Congressional Research Service, is a remarkable work on the subject. The report gives an account of the U.S. policy toward Islamist organizations in the Middle East.

The critics see the Bush Administration's policy of promoting democracy in the Middle East as a failure. But who lend support to the policy, say it has led to some important achievements. For example, they mention, the policy has created awareness against authoritarian rule and in favor of democracy. Chomsky and Ibrahim are among the leading critics of the U.S. Middle East policy.

Chomsky has critically analyzed issues, like, the New World Order and its implications for the Middle Eastern region,[53] flaws in the Bush Administration's

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[50] F. Gregory Gause III, "Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?" *op. cit.*

[51] _____, "How to reform Saudi Arabia without handing it to extremists," http://www.saudi-us-relations.org/newsletter2004/saudi-relations-interest-09-22.html.

[52] Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East: The Islamist Dilemma," CRS Report for Congress, (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 2006), Jun. 15, 2006.

[53] Noam Chomsky, "What We Say Goes: The Middle East in the New World Order," *Z Magazine,* May 1991.

policy of democratization of the Middle East,[54] impact of the policy on peace and conflict in the region.[55] Chomsky provides a good analysis of the ongoing war in Iraq and its negative effect on the U.S. policy.[56] His criticism of the shortcomings of the Bush Administration's Middle East policy is very helpful. According to him, Iraq War has damaged the democratization efforts in the Middle East.[57]

In "The 'New Middle East' Bush is Resisting,"[58] Ibrahim portrays major events and signposts in the democratic process in the region and the Bush administration's response to them. In "Wielding Aid Against democracy,"[59] DeBartolo comments that America's credibility on democracy is at stake in its response to Hamas.

Hamid is also among the leading scholars in the field. In a report, "Engaging political Islam to Promote Democracy,"[60] published by Progressive Policy Institute, Hamid maintains that the fear of Islamists has paralyzed

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[54] _____, "The Disconnect in US Democracy," *Khaleej Times,* Oct. 29, 2004.

[55] _____, "Middle East Diplomacy: Continuities and Changes," *Z Magazine,* Dec. 1991.

[56] _____, "Understanding the Bush Doctrine," *Information Clearing House,* Oct. 2, 2004.

[57] _____, "The Iraq War and Contempt for Democracy," *ZNet,* Oct. 31, 2003.

[58] Saad Edin Ibrahim, "The 'New Middle East' Bush is Resisting," Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies, 2006, http://www.eicds.org/english/publications/saadarticles/2006/new.htm, accessed on Apr. 23, 2008.

[59] David M. DeBartolo "Wielding Aid Against democracy," *The Harvard Crimson,* Apr. 6, 2006, http://www.thecrimson.com/article.aspx?ref= 512507, accessed on Apr. 23, 2008.

[60] Shadi Hamid, "Engaging political Islam to Promote Democracy," Policy Report, Progressive Policy Institute, Jun. 2007.

American democracy-promotion policy. In an informative essay, he and Koogler have discussed "managed" or "defensive" democratization in Moroccan context.[61]

1.VI Methodology

The study is based on both primary and secondary source materials. The primary source materials include data collection through sample survey from selected quarters. It also includes governments' documents, handouts, and other official documents and statements. These official papers have been reviewed to analyze the state of democracy in the Gulf States particularly in the period pre- and post-9/11 incident which brought about a major change and shift in the world politics.

A general questionnaire was designed to obtain viewpoints of the cross-section of academics, politicians, parliamentarians, lawyers, service-holders and most importantly the common people of the Gulf States to ascertain the future and consequences of introducing democratic norms in the region. Modern data analysis techniques, such as Statistical Presentation of Social Sciences (SPSS) were used to evaluate the collected data from the general questionnaires.

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[61] _____ and Jeb Koogler, "The Myth of Moroccan Democracy," Sep. 20, 2007, http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?article=the_myth_of_moroccan_democracy, accessed on Apr. 23, 2008.

The secondary sources include articles, books, and internet and materials relevant to the topic, like newspapers, journals and periodicals. Both primary and secondary source materials have been used in this Dissertation to understand the whole gamut of the problem of introducing democracy and its prospect in the Gulf region.

The bush Administration and the Americans in general use the term 'Middle East' or 'Mid East' of which the Gulf region is a part. Due to this reason, in this study, 'Middle East' is referred to frequently. Arab' world or 'Arab' countries are also referred to because all of the six states under study are Arab states.

American spellings are followed for the obvious reason that the study is focused on the role of the American state and society. It seems logical to spell 'center' rather than 'centre' while mentioning the Saban Center.

Absolute accuracy regarding amounts and conversions thereof was not possible because of differences in methods of (a) financial reporting and (b) estimating dollar values. Thus, the cited figures can be taken just as indicators.

CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Since this study is focused on democracy and democratization, we need to know a bit in detail what do we mean by democracy and democratization. Not only we need to know about their definitional dimensions, but about salient features and characteristics of the process of democratization and a democratic political system. In the following lines and pages we are going to deal with these issues. In addition, preconditions or prerequisites for democratization have also been touched upon.

Because this study deals with the role of the United States in democratization of the Gulf Countries and the United States essentially is a 'liberal democracy,' the process of democratization in this context can be properly viewed, comprehended and analyzed only through keeping in mind liberal democratic ideals and principles. Whether the United States promotes liberal democracy in the Gulf or some other brand, is discussed in the following chapters.

Because of the above-mentioned reasons, basic tenets, ideals, characteristics of liberal democracy have been discussed briefly in this chapter.

First of all, Bryce used the term 'democratization' in 1888. Many of the available definitions of 'democratization' do not help much in having a clear-cut picture. In McLean's words, democratization is "the process of becoming a democracy." Rummel defines democrati-zation as "the process through which a

political system becomes democratic."[1] Both of these definitions are more or less similar to one another. We can take these two definitions as a one set. Then, we have another set of definitions. Democratization is also defined as to "introduce a democratic system or democratic principles to." And, lastly, democratization is to "make a country or an institution more democratic."[2]

In both sets of the definitions we can differentiate by paying attention to the type of verbs used. In the first set, the employed verb 'to become' is intransitive, whereas in the second set of definitions the verbs 'to introduce' and 'to make' are transitive. How this way of differentiating between these two types of definitions of democratization is relevant here? Since we are dealing with the role of one country (the United States) in the process of democratization in another group of countries (Gulf Countries), the second set of definitions is more appropriate to understand democratization in the context of this study.

After having defined democratization, the next question we need to address is, what are the characteristics of the process of democratization? Many theoreticians and analysts have identified different (sets of) characteristics.

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[1] Iain McLean, *Oxford Concise English Dictionary of Politics,* 1996; R.J. Rummel, "Democratization," http://www.hawaii.edu/powerkills/DEMOC. HTM, Sep., 28, 2002.

[2] *Concise Oxford English Dictionary* on CD-ROM, 11th edition; *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary*, 7th edition, 2005.

Freedom House, on an annual basis, surveys most of the states and categorizes them as (a) free, (b) partly free, and (c) not free. The categories are based on the level of democratization in different states. To gauge the level of democratization, Freedom House takes into consideration two main features of societies: political rights and civil liberties.

Categories on which the Index of Democracy of *The Economist* Intelligence unit is based are more inclusive. The Index takes into account five variables, (a) electoral process and pluralism, (b) functioning of government, (c) political culture, (d) political participation, and (e) civil liberties. The last two of these variable correspond to the two variables of Freedom House Surveys. It means that these two variables—political rights or participation and civil liberties—can be taken as more important and more relevant to the concept of democratization than others like electoral process, political culture, and functioning of government.

Rousseau emphasized on the primacy of the right of participation for a citizen to qualify as free.[3] Individualization is another characteristic of democratization identified by Teune. To Huntington and Starr, democratization is

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[3] Kenneth Minogue, *Politics: A Very Short Introduction,* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 84.

a process of change that is characterized by regularity, predictability, and that cannot be stopped.[4]

Vanhanen prepared an Index of Democratization and based it on two basic variables: competition and participation. In his thinking, these two are "crucial dimensions" of democratization. Pye thought that democratization goes beyond the issues just related to popular participation. In Hardin's observation, the theories of democracy and democratization presently revolve around the concept of 'representative government' though they had started with the discussion on 'direct participation.'[5]

Timing and the sequence are also seen as important in the process of democratization.[6]

Rejai divided the preconditions for democratization into six main headings: (a) physical, (b) economic, (c) religious, (d) social, (e) political, and (f) psychocultural preconditions.[7]

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[4] John O'Loughlin, *et al.*, "The Diffusion of Democracy, 1946–1994," *op. cit.*, p. 546.

[5] Tatu Vanhanen, *Democratization: A Comparative Analysis of 170 Countries,* (London: Routledge, 2003), p. 56; Lucian W. Pye, *Aspects of Political Development,* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1966), p. 88; Rusell Hardin, *Liberalism, Constitutionalism, and Democracy,* (Oxford University Press, 2007), p. 143.

[6] Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom, op. cit.*, p. 57.

[7] Mostafa Rejai, "The Metamorphosis of Democratic Theory," *Ethics,* Vol. 77, No. 3 (Apr., 1967), p. 205.

Gleditch and Ward, in a joint study, found that "much of the literature on democratization argues that democracy emerges as an outcome of social conflict when no single actor or group can impose its rule on others." They explain that democratization frequently alters the power structure of a society.[8]

Before holding multiparty elections at national level in a country, institution-building and reform of political structure is required to continue for almost five years, suggests Zakaria.[9]

In his *The Third Wave,* Huntington enlists 27 variables he considers contribute to democratization. In the same book but at a separate place he explains five changes that played their role in democratization of various countries in 1970s and 1980s. At both of two points, he identifies three of the variables: (a) a strong middle class, (b) high levels of education, and (c) economic growth and development.[10]

Among the other variables identified by Huntington are a strong bourgeoisie, the development of political contestation, social groups functioning under democratic authority structures, and values of respect for individual rights. In his theorization, among the factors behind the third wave of democratization

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[8] Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Michael D. Ward, "Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization," *International Organization* 60, (Fall 2006), pp. 911–8.

[9] Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom, op. cit.*, p. 155.

[10] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave, op. cit.*, pp. 37–8, 45–6.

was a major change in American policy of promoting democracy and human rights in mid-1970s along with the policies of the European countries.

Rudin adds a security dimension to the preconditions of democratization. He thinks that "men can become free when they are secure." He argues that democratization in Europe took place when the continent acquired a certain sense of security.[11]

Levitsky enumerates three conditions for a democratic process: (a) Competitive elections, (b) level-playing political field, and (c) ouster of autocratic governments, like Nepal. If rule of law is absent in a society, Miles explains, democratization process can neither move forward nor make progress.[12]

A huge number of definitions of democracy are available. Here, though we are not going into detail, at least one definition seems to be necessary to proceed further. Lipset defined democracy as "a political system which supplies regular constitutional opportunities for changing government officials."[13]

Democracy, in fact, is used in many different ways, sometimes opposite to one another. It is interesting to compare the alternatives and dimensions of

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[11] Harry R. Rudin, "Diplomacy, Democracy, Security: Two Centuries in Contrast," *Political Science Quarterly,* Vol. 71, No. 2, (Jun. 1956), p. 168.

[12] William F. S. Miles, "Tragic Tradeoffs: Democracy and Security in Chad," *The Journal of Modern African Studies,* Vol. 33, No. 1, (Mar. 1995), p. 57.

[13] Lipset (1959) *cited in* Adnan M. Hayajneh, "The U.S. Strategy," *op. cit.*

defining democracy explained by Crick on the one hand, and Dalton *et al.* on the other.[14]

Table 1: Alternatives and Dimensions in Defining Democracy

Crick	Dalton, Shin, and Jou
a) Institutions and procedures	a) Ideal or doctrine
b) Freedom and liberties	b) Behavior towards others
c) Social benefits	c) Institutional and legal arrangements

The only thing which is common between the two is 'institutions'. Paying some attention to these dimensions reveals that the last two dimensions of democracy underlined by Crick clearly refer to liberalism and individualism. In fact, in the Third World countries, democracy is frequently defined in liberal-democratic terms.[15]

In the West, "liberalism produced democracy and democracy fueled liberalism."[16] Liberalism basically means promoting and protecting individual freedoms, hence individualism is, in fact, in-built in liberalism and liberal

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[14] Russell J. Dalton, Doh C. Shin, and Willy Jou, "Understanding Democracy," *op. cit.*, pp. 11, 145.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 147.

[16] Fareed Zakaria, *The Future of Freedom, op. cit.*, p. 122.

democracy. Liberalism advocates structuring institutions in such a way that all individuals are permitted to grow and make progress as they want to. Mill, Tocqueville, and Madison advocated democracy and democratization to promote individual rights and liberties. Political liberalism and economic liberalism, both emphasize individualism and they are based on individualist philosophy.[17]

To Hegel, "the History of the world is none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom."[18] In Fite's words, democracy "stands for the principle of individual liberty." According to Spinoza, "the one who lives by the dictates of reason is the 'free man'."[19] But under authoritarian rule living by the dictates of reason is almost impossible.

In philosophical and theoretical discourse on the primacy of freedoms, a wide difference of opinion exists. Let us compare four democratic freedoms identified by Diamond, also highlighted by Roosevelt in his 1941 State of the Union address, on the one hand, and four basic democratic freedoms identified by Agee, Ault, and Emery on the other.[20]

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[17] Russell Hardin, *Liberalism, Constitutionalism, and Democracy, op. cit.*, pp. 1, 5, 177.

[18] *A Syntopicon of Great Books of the Western World,* (Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc., 1975), p. 991.

[19] Warner Fite, "The Theory of Democracy," *International Journal of Ethics,* Vol. 18, No. 1 (Oct. 1907), p. 1; Roger Scruton, "Spinoza," in Ray Monk and Frederic Raphael (eds.), *The Great Philosophers: From Socrates to Turning,* (London: Phoenix, 2001), p. 164.

[20] Larry Diamond, *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999) *cited in* Russell J. Dalton, Doh C. Shin, and Willy

As the Table 4 shows, both sets of freedoms are different from one another. It is only 'freedom of petition' on the right hand side that corresponds to 'equal justice before law' on the left hand side. Agee *et al.* suggest that upon these four basic freedoms depend other freedoms like freedoms of political choice, communication of ideas and information, intellectual growth and religious expression.[21]

Table 2: Basic Democratic Freedoms

Diamond	Agee, Ault, and Emery
a) Political liberties	a) Freedom of speech
b) Participation rights	b) Freedom of press
c) Equal justice before law	c) Freedom of assembly
d) Equal rights for women	d) Freedom of petition

Jou, "Understanding Democracy: Data From Unlikely Places," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 18, No. 4, (Oct. 2007), p. 144; Warren K. Agee, Phillip H. Ault, and Edwin Emery, *Introduction to Mass Communications,* 11th edition, (New York: Harper Collins College Publishers, 1994), p. 26.

[21] Warren K. Agee, Phillip H. Ault, and Edwin Emery, *Introduction to Mass Communications, op. cit.*, p. 26.

According to Mill, freedoms of (a) conscience, (b) expression, (c) thought, (d) life plans, and (d) combining with others, are the basic freedoms.[22]

How can we say that a certain society is free? Sharansky and Dermer, responding to this question, say a society is free if the individuals exercise the right to "express their views without fear of arrest, imprisonment, or physical harm."[23]

Tocqueville outlines the job of a liberal government, arguing that such a government permits people to decide their social, economic, and religious choices. The virtue of liberalism, explains Tocqueville, is in the fact that "it is not what is done *by* a liberal government but what is done *under* such a government by private agency that is the beauty and the good of liberalism."[24] The job of the state machinery in the modern globalized world is to "establish, maintain, refine, and reform an enabling framework for private enterprise and individual initiative."[25]

It is also relevant here to note that some of the social scientists see western approach as advantageous in Asia only to a degree.[26] But western influence in

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[22] Frank Cunningham, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[23] Natan Sharansky and Ron Dermer, *The Case for Democracy, op. cit.*, p. 40.

[24] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America,* p. 252, *cited in* Rusell Hardin, *Liberalism, Constitutionalism, and Democracy, op. cit.*, p. 6.

[25] Guido Bertucci and Adriana Alberti, "Globalization and the Role of the State: Challenges and Perspectives," in *Reinventing Government for the Twenty-First Century: State Capacity in a Globalizing Society,* (Bloomfield: Kumarian Press, 2003), pp. 22–3.

[26] M. Nazrul Islam, *Consolidating Asian Democracy, op. cit.*, p. 9.

Asian states seems to be of great relevance when it comes to political change. Gleditch and Ward find that change in the power structure and the process of democratization are also affected by external forces. And, that events taking place in other states and parts of the world *are* a factor in the democratic process in a given country.[27]

Levitsky and Way's *leverage* and *linkage* are much helpful in understanding the phenomenon. To them, Western *leverage* means governments' vulnerability to external pressure, and, *linkage* to the West means the density of a country's ties to the United States, the European Union, and Western-led multilateral institutions.[28] They further elaborate that at least three factors determine the level of Western leverage, (a) states' raw size and military and economic strength, (b) the existence of competing issues on Western foreign policy agendas, and (c) governments' access to political, economic, or military support from an alternative regional power.

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[27] Kristian Skrede Gleditsch and Michael D. Ward, "Diffusion and the International Context of Democratization," *op. cit.*, pp. 911–8.

[28] Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "International Linkage and Democratization," *op. cit.*, pp. 21–2.

CHAPTER 3: BACKGROUND

The Gulf region is important primarily because it possesses the largest oil reserves of the world. Historically, this region has been known for its deserts and for being the origin and the geographic center of Islam. The six countries, which are member of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) inclusively and exclusively, and which are focused on in this study, have many similarities. But at the same time, they are dissimilar in some other ways.

Arab ethnicity is the most prominent common feature. Therefore, a sense of Arab fraternity exists among the people of this region. Dynastic regimes are the second, if not the first, most prominent common feature among the six Gulf States. Looking at the dissimilarities, the most prominent point is the disproportionate territorial size of Saudi Arabia that commands 86 percent of the six countries' aggregated area. The country's immense size compared to remaining five GCC states has provided a base for the country's prominence in other areas like population, and volume of economy.

As we see in the following table, Bahrain is the smallest among the six countries with an area of 620 square kilometers, and its population is also the smallest. The highest rate of population increase is that of the United Arab Emirates (3.69%), and the highest rate of urban population is that of Kuwait (98%).

Table 3: Area, Population, Rate of Population Increase, and Urban Population

Country	Area (Km^2)	Population[1] (2009 est.)	Rate of Population Increase (2009 est.)	Urban Population (2008)
S. Arabia	1,960,582	28,686,633	1.85%	82%
Oman	212,460	3,418,085	3.14%	72%
UAE	82,880	4,798,491	3.69%	78%
Kuwait	17,820	2,691,158	3.55%	98%
Qatar	1,437	833,285	0.96%	96%
Bahrain	620	727,785	1.29%	89%

Source: www.cia.gov

Oman is different than other five GCC countries in the sense that it has the longest history of its independence. It is independent since 1650 while all other five states became independent in the twentieth century during 1932 and 1971 as the following table shows.

[1] These figures include non-nationals except in cases of Qatar and the United Arab Emirates.

Table 4: Date and Years of Independence

Country	Date of Independence	Years of Independence
Oman	1650	361
Saudi Arabia	1932	79
Kuwait	1961	50
Bahrain	1971	40
Qatar	1971	40
UAE	1971	40

Source: *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008,* Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies

Administratively, Saudi Arabia is divided into 13 provinces. Bahrain has 12 municipalities and Qatar nine. Oman is divided into eight units (six regions and two governorates) and Kuwait into six governorates. The United Arab Emirates is a federation of seven emirates.

3.I Constitutional, Judicial, and Political Background

Only four—Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and United Arab Emirates—of the six GCC countries have constitutions. Furthermore, constitutional history of Bahrain and Qatar is still less than ten years. In Bahrain, the constitution was adopted in 2002 whereas in Qatar it was adopted in 2003 but came into effect in 2005. Saudi Arabia and Oman, though at the top in the list of gaining independence and having

largest areas among the six GCC countries, have no constitutions at all. Kuwait has the longest constitutional history among the six where constitution was approved and promulgated in 1962. United Arab Emirates has the second longest constitutional history where constitution was introduced in 1971, though it was made permanent only in 1996.

There is no concept of elections with reference to the executive authority except for the United Arab Emirates where seven votes are cast by the rulers of seven emirates to elect the president. Prime minister, deputy prime minister, and cabinet members are again appointed by the president in the United Arab Emirates. In all other five states as well, cabinet members are appointed by the monarchs. Deputy prime minister in Kuwait and prime ministers in Bahrain and Kuwait are also appointed by the monarchs.

Though, civil law, secular codes, and English common law are part of the legal systems in these countries with varying degrees, Sharia and Islamic law are dominant features of the legal systems in the region. At the same time, the monarchs possess the ultimate legal and judicial authority.

Saudi Arabia is at the lowest with reference to independent judiciary and legal equality of the citizens in the region, as reported by Ibn Khaldun Center.

The worst way of dealing with the public demonstrations and assemblies is reportedly again that of Saudi Arabia.[2]

Judiciary has no say at all in constitutional matters in Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia. Saudi courts are filled by 'extremist judges" who discriminate against 'infidels" (religious minorities and non-Muslims). The judiciary is, in fact, dependent on the political leadership.[3]

Though, democracy and democratization cannot be envisaged without referring to almost all spheres of life of a given state and society, primarily they are concerned with the political sector. So, while outlining the background of this study, which deals with democratization of the Gulf Countries, we need to talk about the political system, structure, and culture of the countries under study a little bit in detail.

The Arab world as a whole is quite rightly referred to by an analyst as a "political desert"[4] where none of the governments allows formation of political parties. A banker in Abu Dhabi remarked "there is no politics here," when asked

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[2] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004.*

[3] Nathan J. Brown, "Judicial Review and the Arab World," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 9, No. 4, (Oct. 1998), p. 89; www.cdhr.info/Campaigns/ ReligiousFreedomBriefing, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009; Jean-Francois Seznec, "Democratization in the Arab World? Stirrings in Saudi Arabia," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 13, No. 4, Oct. 2002, 33.

[4] Fareed Zakaria, *The future of freedom: illiberal democracy at home and abroad,* (New York: W.W. Norton, 2003), p. 142.

about the political scenario in the United Arab Emirates.[5] Political dissent or criticism is not tolerated, in general, with few exceptions.

Qatar has a unicameral *Majlis al-Shura* (Advisory Council), United Arab Emirates has a unicameral *Majlis al-Ittihad al-Watani* (Federal National Council, FNC). Kuwait has a unicameral *Majlis al-Umma* (National Assembly), and Saudi Arabia has a *Majlis al-Shura* (Advisory Council). Bahrain and Oman practice bicameralism.

An Advisory Council and a Council of Representatives or Chamber of Deputies together form the Bahraini legislature. Both of the houses have 40 members each, appointed by the king to the upper house (Advisory Council) and directly elected by the people to the lower house (the Council of Representatives).

An upper house, *Majlis al-Dawla,* and a lower house, *Majlis al-Shura* form *Majlis Oman.* Like Bahrain, members of the upper house are appointed by the monarch and those of the lower house are elected by the people in Oman. The upper house of *Majlis Oman* has 71 members whereas the lower house 84 members.

The smallest number of seats is that of the Qatari *Majlis al-Shura,* 35. *Majlis al-Ittihad al-Watani* of the United Arab Emirates has 40 seats (half elected and half appointed), and *Majlis al-Umma* of Kuwait consists of 50 seats. The

[5] Personal discussion, Jan. 2010.

largest number of seats is that of the *Majlis al-Shura* of Saudi Arabia, 150. With the exception of Kuwait, almost all of these bodies have no real power.

Shaikh Sabah al-Ahmad Al-Sabah became Emir of Kuwait in 2006, Shaikh Abudllah bin Abdul Aziz took charge of power in Saudi Arabia in 2005, and Sheikh Khalifa bin Zahed al-Nahyan was chosen as the UAE President by the FNC in 2004. In Bahrain, Shaikh Hamad bin Isa came into power in 1999. In Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani acceded to the throne in 1995. Sultan Qaboos of Oman outdoes all of his regional counterparts who became the king in 1970 after staging a coup against his father.

What do the masses in the Gulf Countries think about politics? What sort of political beliefs and values they believe in? A survey study revealed that 93 percent of the Emiratis prefer status quo over a democratic setup in the country. Let us have a look at the following tables to understand the prevailing political preferences and currents in the Gulf region.

According to these figures, at the regional level, only a minority of the people supports democracy in the Gulf. Democracy supporters are in majority only in Kuwait and Bahrain. The lowest support to democracy in the GCC countries is in the United Arab Emirates—only 4%. The fact that 51 percent of the Saudi people are not sure about the political system they should have, alludes to the lowest level of political awareness in the country as compared to the other five Gulf countries.

Table 5: Percentage of Prodemocratic or Proincumbent (according to a Survey conducted in 2002)

	Proincumbent	Not Sure	Prodemocratic
UAE	93	3	4
Oman	65	17	18
Qatar	34	18	48
Bahrain	12	29	59
Saudi Arabia	12	51	31
Kuwait	4	8	88
Average	37	21	41

Source: Moataz A. Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World,* (New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, 2006), p. 66.

The following table shows the four political categories— traditionalists, statists, modernists, and pluralists—in the Gulf Countries and then the existing potential for democratization. According to the categorization, among the Islamists are traditionalists and modernists, and among the democrats are modernists and pluralists. According to the survey Islamists outnumber democrats at the regional level. At the state level, Islamists are more in number than democrats in four—Bahrain, United Arab Emirates, Oman, and Saudi Arabia—of

the countries whereas democrats are more in number than Islamists in the remaining two—Kuwait, and Qatar.

Table 6: Percentages of the Four Political Categories in the Gulf Countries (according to a Survey conducted in 2002)

	1	2	3	4	1+3	3+4	
	Traditionalists	Statists	Modernists	Pluralists	Islamists	Democrats	Democratic Potential
Bahrain	23	10	58	10	81	67	Medium
Kuwait	17	11	41	32	58	73	Medium
Qatar	23	8	45	24	68	69	Medium
UAE	30	3	60	7	90	67	Medium
Oman	31	5	46	18	77	64	Low
Saudi Arabia	46	2	48	4	95	52	Low
Average	28	7	50	16	78	65	–

Source: Moataz A. Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World,* (New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, 2006), p. 29.

Fattah further distributed the Arab countries into four primary categories with reference to acceptance, rejection, and internalization of democracy. Four of the GCC states fell under the 'Rejection of Democratic Governance' category; two fell under the 'Broader Acceptance of Democracy'; and none under the category of 'Internalization of Democratic Values,' as this table shows.

Table 7: The Spectrum of Democratic Beliefs in the Gulf Societies

Rejection of Democratic Governance		Emergence of Support for Democracy	Broader Acceptance of Democracy		Internalization of Democratic Values	
1 Steady	2 Less Certain	3	4 Steady	5 Less Certain	6 Steady	7 Less Certain
UAE Oman	Saudi Arabia		Qatar Bahrain	Kuwait		

Source: Moataz A. Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World,* (New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, 2006), p. 120.

Many of the observers have noted that conservatism and intolerance, in fact have deepened over the decades in Saudi Arabia. Among them are Hamzawy and bogari. The former argues that with the inflow of petro-dollars, grip of the Saudi regime tightened further and "a degree of pluralism...was replaced by an emerging

repressive state."[6] Bogari writes in his memoir *The Sheltered Quarter*[7] that the holy city of Mecca experienced a more tolerant environment in the first half of the twentieth century.

Conservatism is a common feature of all the sociopolitical systems in the Gulf where hereditary patriarchal rule is deep-rooted. The material face of the region dramatically changed in the last decades. Communication systems, high-tech gadgetry, luxuries of life are all-around, but "the fundamental basis of politics remained much the same."[8]

Six families—Saud (in Saudi Arabia), Sabah (in Kuwait), al-Thani (in Qatar), al-Nahyan (in United Arab Emirates), al-Khalifa (in Bahrain), and al-Bu Sai'di (in Oman)—rule the six states. Besides the top posts of heads of the states, heads of the executives, almost all of the important ministries are held by the ruling families and their entourages.[9]

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[6] Amr Hamzawy, Testimony before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight, Jun. 14, 2007.

[7] Hamza Bogary, *The Sheltered Quarter: A Tale of Boyhood in Mecca,* translated by Olive Kenny and Jeremy Reed (Austin: University of Texas Press, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, 1991), *cited in* Sharif S. Elmusa, "Faust without the Devil? The Interplay of Technology and Culture in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 51, No. 3, (Summer 1997), p. 348.

[8] J.E. Peterson, "The Nature of Succession in the Gulf," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 55, No. 4, (Autumn 2001), p. 599.

[9] Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State: Politics and Society in the Middle East,* (London: I.B. Tauris,1995), pp. 230–1; Zahlan, *Making of the Modern Gulf States,* appendix, *cited in* Ellis Goldberg, Resat Kasaba, and Joel S. Migdal (eds.), *Rules*

The ruling regimes "have weathered the worst of the recession" and they have a strong political hold. Social, cultural, and political sectors in the Gulf region changed "less than any Middle Eastern area." Concepts like interfaith harmony, mutual respect, and religious-existence are alien to this region. Most often, genes determine one's status in these societies.[10]

Ghalioun terms this phenomenon as "feudalization of modern states" where rulers "act as if they are the legitimate proprietors of whole states, whose resources and even populations the rulers may use according to the their whims.[11] Hereditary kings are all-powerful in these states. In Bahrain, for example, the ruler has the powers to appoint members of the upper house who can turn down any decision taken by the lower house, the Council of representatives.[12]

In Oman, the situation is even more interesting where a sole man is the prime minister, defense minister, finance minister, minister of foreign affairs, and the Chairman of the Oman Central Bank, and he is none else than Sultan Qaboos

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and Rights in the Middle East: Democracy, Law, and Society, (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1993), p. 35; Michael Herb, "Democratization in the Arab World? Emirs and Parliaments in the Gulf," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 13, No. 4, (Oct. 2002), p. 41.

[10] Paul Jabber, "Forces of Change in the Middle East," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 42, No. 1, (Winter 1988), p. 9; Stephen H. Longrigg, *The Middle East: A Social Geography,* (New York: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970), p. 85; Marcel Kurpershoek, *Arabia of the Bedouins,* (London: Saqi Books, 2001), pp. 89, 265; Carmen Bin Ladin, *The Veiled Kingdom: A unique insight into Saudi society and the Bin Laden family,* (London: Virago, 2005), p. 43.

[11] Burhan Ghalioun, "The Persistence of Arab Authoritarianism," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 15, No. 4, (Oct. 2004), p. 127.

[12] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

himself. The Ruling Family's Council has the power to nominate "a male descendant" of Sayyid Turki bin Said bin Sultan to the throne, according to the provisions made in the 1996 Basic Law of Oman.[13]

Similarly, in Saudi Arabia, only the male descendants of King Abdul Aziz ibn Saud can accede to the throne. The 1992 Basic Law of the Kingdom provides that "the rule passes through the sons of King Abdul Aziz...and 'the sons of sons.'" In Kuwait, the rule is confined to the descendants of Shaikh Mubarak Al-Sabah.[14]

Mohammad was designated as the Crown Prince, head of the Abu Dhabi Executive Council, and Deputy Commander of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates by the new ruler. Both of them are half-brothers.[15]

Despite the fact that the number of technocrats and other professionals is increasing in this region, the dynastic rulers enjoy unchecked powers.[16]

Drawing the comparisons among these states, Ayubi finds Oman as the most oppressive politically and Saudi Arabia the most repressive socially. On the

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[13] Abdulhadi Khalaf, "Rules of Succession and Political Participation in the GCC States" in Abdulhadi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani, *Constitutional Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf,* (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2006), p. 48.

[14] *Ibid.*, pp. 46–8.

[15] *Ibid.*, p. 50.

[16] Ellis Goldberg, Resat Kasaba, and Joel S. Migdal (eds.), *Rules and Rights in the Middle East, op. cit.*, p. 144.

other hand, the comparison reveals that Kuwait is relatively the most open politically whereas Bahrain as the most liberal socially. But, at the same time, the author finds all of them "generally conservative," politically as well as socially.[17]

When it comes to Saudi Arabia, observers and analysts explain the situation in the harshest and the most critical way. With reference to the conservative character, it is designated as "ultraconservative,"[18] "politically primitive—a theocratic despotic state,"[19] "a perfect example of an authoritarian state,"[20] and "one of the most closed political systems in the world."[21]

Kurpershoek, former Dutch ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and Carmen, a Swiss lady who was married to one of Osama bin Laden's brothers, both draw comparisons between Saudi Arabia and Netherlands and between Saudi Arabia and Geneva. In Kurpershoek's words, Saudi Arabia is "the antithesis of the Netherlands, where individual expression and experimentation are accorded the highest value." And, Carmen writes that Geneva is "a thousand years away."[22]

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[17] Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State, op. cit.*, pp. 230–1.

[18] Abeer Allam, "Saudi Arabia delays elections for two years," *Financial Times,* May 20, 2009.

[19] Stephen H. Longrigg, *The Middle East, op. cit.*, p. 85.

[20] Jean-Francois Seznec, "Democratization in the Arab World?" *op. cit.*, p. 33.

[21] http://www.ndi.org/content/saudi_arabia, accessed on Dec. 23, 2009.

[22] Marcel Kurpershoek, *Arabia of the Bedouins, op. cit.*, p. 265; Carmen Bin Ladin, *The Veiled Kingdom, op. cit.*, p. 43.

Various explanations have been furnished for the continuing strong grip of the dynastic regimes in the Gulf. These explanations include (a) political culture and social structures, (b) oil revenue and the rentier state, (c) direct and indirect role of Britain and the United States, and (d) a strict hierarchy (in case of Saudi Arabia particularly).[23]

In these oil kingdoms, two important principles have been employed by the ruling families to maintain their control, one is economic and the other is historical, explain Kamrava and Mora. Saudi regime has changed its strategy, points out Cordesman. The regime now tends to co-opt opposition "rather than repressing it." Officers in the Arab countries "are the ultimate defenders of their respective regimes."[24]

An interesting example of conservatism in the region is bans on radios, bicycles, and sunglasses in Oman at the time when Sultan Qaboos became the king. These items were seen as Western conventions.[25]

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[23] Abdulhadi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani (eds.), *Constitutional Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf, op. cit.*, p. 8; Peter Calvocoressi, *World Politics: 1945-2000,* 8th edition, (Longman: 2000), p. 478.

[24] Mehran Kamrava and Frank O. Mora, "Civil Society and Democratization in Comparative Perspective," *op. cit.*, p. 907; Anthony H. Cordesman, *Saudi Arabia Enters the Twenty-First Century: The Political, Foreign Policy, Economic, and Energy Dimensions,* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2003), p. 132; Steven A. Cook, "Getting to Arab Democracy: The Promise of pacts," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 17, No. 1, (Jan. 2006), p. 65.

[25] Michael Slackman, "With Murmurs of Change, Sultan Tightens Grip," *New York Times,* May 14, 2009.

But, the ruling families are not free of internal struggles for power and influence. And, the history is not free of successful as well as failing coups, though rare. Last palace coup in Bahrain, for example, took place in 1923. Disputes, discords, and competition, however, have marked the history of the ruling dynasty in Bahrain.[26]

Sheikh Hamad of Qatar and Sultan Qaboos of Oman seized power from their fathers in 1995 and 1970 respectively. Coups and countercoups were not uncommon in Qatar as well.[27]

Though, still not a democracy in the real sense, Kuwait is a distinct case in the entire Gulf region. The country's 1962 Constitution created its unicameral legislature with a 50 member National Assembly all popularly elected. The Constitution, in fact, "catapulted Kuwait into the forefront of Arab democratic development."[28]

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[26] Abdulhadi Khalaf, "Rules of Succession and Political Participation in the GCC States," *op. cit.*, p. 45.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 47.

[28] Abdul-Reda Assiri and Kamal Al-Monoufi, "Kuwait's Political Elite: The Cabinet," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 42, No. 1, (Winter 1988), p. 48; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*; http://www.ndi.org/kuwait#Political_Context, accessed on Dec. 23, 2009.

Since 1992, Kuwait is the only Arab country where parliament has a check on the authority of the executive and it is the only Arab parliament which forced cabinet members to resign. The parliament's first elections were held in 1963.[29]

3.II Education and Economic Sectors

In the Gulf region, like many other Arab countries, the problem is not with the literacy rates, as the following table shows, but with the type and quality of education imparted in the classroom. The phenomenon is sometimes referred to as "educational poverty" and sometimes "education deficit."[30]

In fact, it is because of the state policies that do not allow people freedom of thought and expression. Under these policies social sciences, particularly political science, are curbed.[31] In his survey study, Fattah found that in the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia, education negatively impacts on regard for democratic norms. And, in Oman, it does not make any impact at all in this respect.[32]

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[29] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*; Palmer and Perkins, *International Relations,* 3rd revised edition, (Delhi: A.I.T.B.S. Publishers, 2004), p. 456.

[30] Paul Salem, "Education is the most powerful weapon," *The Guardian,* Oct. 28, 2009.

[31] Michael Slackman, "With Murmurs of Change," *op. cit.*

[32] Moataz A. Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World,* (New Delhi: Viva Books Private Limited, 2006), p. 40.

Table 8: Literacy Rates in the Gulf Countries

Country	Literacy Rate
Bahrain	89%
United Arab Emirates	88%
Kuwait	83%
Qatar	82%
Saudi Arabia	79%
Oman	76%

Source: *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008,* Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies

In Saudi Arabia, Yamani observes, religious elite has a strong influence on higher education and that the number of complaints among the students is increasing about the "curriculum's lack of relevance to their everyday practical needs"[33]

The curricula are replete with sectarian content and attacks against non-Muslims.[34] Teaching non-Islamic philosophy is prohibited and one third of their school time students spend on learning and memorizing scriptures at the expense

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[33] Yamani (2000) *cited in* Moataz A. Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World, op. cit.*, p. 40.

[34] Stephane Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals: Saudi Arabia's New "Islamo-Liberal" Reformists," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 58, No. 3, (Summer 2004), p. 351.

of their professional subjects leading to a deficiency in their professional depth, some argue. This is the reason behind the fact that most of the Saudi business owners prefer hiring non-Saudis. Thus, unemployment rate is increasing day by day, runs the argument.[35] Analysts suggest reviewing the curricula and rewriting of history in a neutral way in Saudi Arabia.[36]

In the Gulf Countries, economies are neither free nor communist, rather what we see can best be termed as *economic monarchism.* If, in a free economy, free market is the central point, in these monarchical economies, everything revolves around the monarchs. If market forces determine economic trends and patterns in a free economy, the monarchs themselves determine everything in the monarchical economics.

Infamous practices like *kafil* and *muhawwil* continue to this day in the Gulf. Under these practices, *kafil* generally takes hold of the worker's passport as a guarantee. Work is done by the foreign workers but they can not own certain type of businesses and property.[37]

One of the stated reasons for lack of money available for investment in Saudi Arabia and other countries in the region is the huge amounts deposited in

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[35] *The Middle East in Crisis,* (New York: Council on Foreign Relations, 2002), pp. 108–9.

[36] *"I'adat Qira'at al-Ta'rikh al-Islami"* ("The Rereading of Islamic History"), *Al-Shari'a wa'l-Hayat,* Al-Jazeera TV, Dec. 13, 2000, *cited in* Stephane Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals," *op. cit.*, p. 351; Moataz A. Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World, op. cit.*, p. 42.

[37] Nazih N. Ayubi, *Over-stating the Arab State, op. cit.*, pp. 225–7.

foreign banks by Saudis and citizens of other Gulf Countries. According to one estimate, such amounts deposited only by the Saudis amount to somewhere between 700 billion or one trillion dollars.[38]

3.III Civil Society, Human Rights, and Media

The situation of human rights, civil society, and media is again like that of education and economy. It does not mean that no Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) or Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) exist in the region. There are many such organizations. But the problem with these organizations, in general, is their depoliticized character.[39]

The reason behind this phenomenon is the strong influence of the ruling regimes over these organizations and the states' own agendas in socio-political sectors.[40] The rulers do not provide sufficient space to civil societies and, as a result, civil societies in these countries have not developed a level of confidence required for an effective democratic role.[41] In general, civil society in these countries is weak and largely ineffective.[42]

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[38] *The Middle East in Crisis, op. cit.*, p. 109.

[39] Mehran Kamrava and Frank O. Mora, "Civil Society and Democratization in Comparative Perspective," *op. cit.*, p. 904.

[40] *Ibid.*

[41] Fatima Al-Sayegh, "Post-9/11 Changes in the Gulf: The Case of the UAE," *Middle East Policy*, Vol. xi, No. 2, (Summer 2004), p. 120; Mehran Kamrava and Frank O.

In the area of human rights, the situation is the worst. Discrimination, harassment, physical assaults, physical and sexual abuse of foreign workers including female workers, and human trafficking are not uncommon in the Gulf. International observer groups like Human Rights Watch frequently report incidents of serious human rights violations and physical abuses.

In May 2009, for example, Sheikh Issa bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, a half-brother of the ruler of Abu Dhabi and President of the United Arab Emirates, was shown in a video beating an Afghan national using a board with a protruding nail and then running over his bleeding body with a truck. In the video, he was also seen hitting the victim's private parts with a cattle prod.[43]

Foreign workers and religious minorities are the most unfortunate classes who as a whole become victims of human rights violations and abuses. It is in fact in-built in the sociopolitical system and structure of these societies which provides cover to the violators and abusers. The victims have no place to go for redress. Legal and judicial systems of these states are infamously in disfavor to these victims. Since they are non-citizens, they do not have rights. Since they do not

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Mora, "Civil Society and Democratization in Comparative Perspective," *op. cit.*, p. 904.

[42] Michael Slackman, "With Murmurs of Change," *op. cit.*; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[43] Ali Gharib, "UAE Torture Tape Complicates Nuclear Deal," www.ipsnews. net, May 21, 2009, accessed on Jun. 3, 2009.

believe and follow the rulers' religion or sect, they deserve humiliation and victimization. This is the mindset that prevails in these societies as a whole.

Foreign diplomats and ambassadors acquiesce to these violations "for fear of losing Saudi loans, favorable trade deals, and access to cheap oil."[44]

The ratio of executions of foreigners is much higher than that of Saudis. In 2003, for example, only 19 of the 50 persons executed were Saudis.[45] Here again, discrimination even among the foreigners is made. Africans and Asians cannot escape if caught but the westerners enjoy a privileged status. In Kurpershoek's words, who himself is a westerner, "westerners occupy an exceptional position among guest-workers in Saudi Arabia." In 2001 he observed that "no American or European has yet been publicly executed, while Arab, African and Asian heads regularly roll across Saudi market squares."[46]

The degree may vary but the human rights conditions are not desirable in all six Gulf States.[47] Within the area of human rights violations, women rights are even in a worse shape than those of religious minorities and foreign workers.

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[44] www.cdhr.info/Campaigns/MinorityRightsBriefing, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009.

[45] www.cdhr.info/Campaigns/EconomicReform, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009.

[46] Marcel Kurpershoek, *Arabia of the Bedouins, op. cit.*, pp. 180–1.

[47] Kenneth Katzman, "Kuwait: Post-Saddam Issues and U.S. Policy," CRS Report for Congress, RS21513, May 18, 2005; Emmanuel Sivan, "Constraints and Opportunities in the Arab World," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 8, No. 2, (Apr. 1997), p. 108; Mehran Kamrava and Frank O. Mora, "Civil Society and Democratization in Comparative Perspective," *op. cit.*, p. 906.

Despite the fact that women associations[48] exist in these countries—23 in Bahrain, 25 in Saudi Arabia, and 43 in Oman, for example—the condition of women rights does not provide much hope. In all of the GCC member states, with the exception of Saudi Arabia, participation of local women is lower than the foreigners in labor force.[49]

In the preceding decades, the situation was even worse than the present one. In late 1980s, Eickelman observed that there was no presence of women at all in the formal political system in the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, women in these states "are not judges, police officers, army commanders, ministers, tribal leaders or heads of state. They do not sit on tribal councils..., municipal councils, or legislative or consultative assemblies,"[50] the writer noted. During the same period, another observer remarked that "politics in the Arab Gulf States appears, on the surface, to be the exclusive domain of men."[51]

To democracy theorists, gender inequality and lack of freedom for women are taken as hurdles in path of democratization. But, women in the Gulf societies

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[48] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009,* (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2009), pp. 68–9.

[49] *Gender and Economics in MENA: From Theory to Policy Making,* (Dubai: Dubai School of Government, 2009), p. 26.

[50] Christine Eickelman, "Women and Politics in an Arabian Oasis," in Farhad Kazemi and R.D. McChesney (eds.), *A Way Prepared: Essays on Islamic Culture in Honor of Richard Bayly Winder,* (New York: New York University Press, 1988), p. 199, *cited in* J.E. Peterson, "The Political Status of Women in the Arab Gulf States," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 43, No. 1, (Winter 1989), p. 34.

[51] J.E. Peterson, "The Political Status of Women in the Arab Gulf States," *op. cit.*, p. 34.

face restrictions in all spheres of life.[52] Men on the one hand, control the lives of women and on the other, many of them think of women as weak and without intellect. They are taken as "the intimate enemy." And it is noticed that it is very rare that a woman is not afraid of her husband in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.[53] In the early 1990s, Tetreault reported that women lagged far behind men in education sector in Kuwait. In Jones' explanation, social structure of Oman is "patriarchal and conservative in its understanding of gender equality."[54]

In Saudi Arabia, the types of restrictions on women are more diverse, in fact, than they are in the neighboring countries. In education sector, they are not allowed to study subjects like chemistry and biology. In economic sector, they are not permitted to enter certain type of businesses and to deal with male customers. They are bound to hire a male manger if they want to run a business. They are not allowed to travel without a male guardian or his permission. According to an

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[52] Ellis Goldberg, Resat Kasaba, and Joel S. Migdal (eds.), *Rules and Rights in the Middle East, op. cit.*, p. 162; Mary Ann Tetreault, "Civil Society in Kuwait: Protected Spaces and Women's Rights," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 47, No. 2, (Spring 1993), p. 277; Mary Ann Tetreault and Haya al-Mughni, "Modernization and its Discontents: State and Gender in Kuwait," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 49, No. 3, (Summer 1995), pp. 407, 409; Carmen Bin Ladin, *The Veiled Kingdom, op. cit.*, p. 40; www.cdhr.info/Campaigns/Women RightsBriefing, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009; Abeer Allam, "Saudi Arabia delays elections for two years," *op. cit.*

[53] Marcel Kurpershoek, *Arabia of the Bedouins, op. cit.*, p. 90; Mary Ann Tetreault and Haya al-Mughni, "Modernization and its Discontents," *op. cit.*, pp. 406, 415; Carmen Bin Ladin, *The Veiled Kingdom, op. cit.*, p. 71.

[54] Mary Ann Tetreault, "Civil Society in Kuwait," *op. cit.*, p. 282; Jeremy Jones, *Negotiating Change: The New Politics of the Middle East,* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2007), p. 173.

estimate, only six percent of the Saudi women have identity cards.[55] So much so, that the Saudi women are not allowed to drive cars. As an unprecedented move during the Gulf War in 1990, a group of 70 Saudi women defied the governmental ban and drove cars through Riyadh.[56]

School girls are not allowed to play sports. "Women have been hoisted on the flag of national culture"[57] in Saudi Arabia, remarked an analyst to the end of the 1990s.

Freedom of press and expression are restricted in the Gulf Countries. Media, in some respects faces, restrictions and censorship, and in some others, exercises self-censorship to avoid the wrath of the regimes. Kuwaiti media is relatively free than that of other GCC states, as Table 9 shows.

Private media in the Gulf Countries has not been able to flourish, except for few examples like al-Jazeera. The primary reason are the state policies and control over media. In 2001, Saudi government warned the Internet users to

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[55] Eleanor Abdella Doumato, "Women and Work in Saudi Arabia: How Flexible are Islamic Margins?" *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 53, No. 4, (Autumn 1999), p. 569; www.cdhr.info/Campaigns/WomenRightsBriefing, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009; www.ndi.org/content/saudi_arabia, accessed on Dec. 23, 2009.

[56] Ellis Goldberg, Resat Kasaba, and Joel S. Migdal (eds.), *Rules and Rights in the Middle East, op. cit.*, p. 163; Richard Dekmejian, "The Liberal Impulse in Saudi Arabia," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 57, No. 3, (Summer 2003), p. 403; Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Special Report: Crises, Elites, and Democratization in the Arab World," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 47, No. 2, (Spring 1993), p. 298.

[57] Eleanor Abdella Doumato, "Women and Work in Saudi Arabia," *op. cit.*, p. 575; www.cdhr.info/Campaigns/WomenRightsBriefing, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009.

"refrain from publishing or accessing data containing...anything contrary to the state or its system." According to a report, Saudi Arabia is among the top ten worst countries with reference to blocking websites. Broadcast media is owned by the government in the country.[58]

Table 9: Index of Press Freedom, 2007

Country	Rank
Kuwait	63
United Arab Emirates	65
Qatar	79
Bahrain	118
Saudi Arabia	148
Oman	N/A

Source: Reporters Without Borders *cited in* Ibn Khaldun Center's Annual Report 2008

In Oman, the government relies on restrictions and security apparatus "to silence and frighten the people." Not only the writers but also those associated

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[58] Joshua Teitelbaum, "Dueling for Da'wa: State vs. Society on the Saudi Internet," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 56, No. 2, (Spring 2002), p. 238; Noimot Olayiwola, "Call to protect people's rights, www.gulf-times.com, accessed on Jun. 3, 2009; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

with the websites that publish any objectionable item, can be punished under Omanese law. The sort of media and media professionals, with few exceptions, one finds in the region are a hurdle in the way of democratization.[59]

3.IV U.S. Democracy Promotion and the Gulf Countries

Talbott, Rubin, Way, Bunce, Wolchick, Brands, Loughlin, and Zakheim have pointed out the role played by the United States in the process of democratization in different parts of the world like, Europe, and Latin America.[60]

The notion of promoting democracy has been a defining factor of the U.S. national interest throughout the twentieth century. As one of the basic values and interests it has been dominating "much of American foreign policy."[61] American imperialists and annexationists have been facing the argument that an American

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[59] Michael Slackman, "With Murmurs of Change," *op. cit.*; Mark R. Beissinger, "A New Look at Ethnicity and Democratization," *Journal of Democracy* 19, No. 3, (Jul. 2008), p. 90.

[60] Barry Rubin, "Dealing with Communalism," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 17, No. 1, (Jan. 2006), p. 61; John O'Loughlin, *et al.,* "The Diffusion of Democracy, 1946-1994," *op. cit.*, p. 546; Lucan Way, "The Real Causes of the Color Revolutions," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 19, No. 3, (Jul. 2008), p. 62; Dov S. Zakheim, "Blending Democracy," *op. cit.*, p.46; Brands, H. W., "The Idea of the National Interest," *op. cit.*, p. 239.

[61] Brands, H. W., "The Idea of the National Interest," *op. cit.*, p. 239. Charles W. *Kegley* & Eugene R. *Wittkopf, American Foreign Policy: Pattern and Process,* 5th Edition, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1996, pp. 31–6.

Empire means depriving the foreign people of democracy and it will extinguish democracy in the United States as well.[62]

John F. Kennedy maintained in 1962 that American nation was "commissioned by history to be either an observer of freedom's failure or the cause of its success." Ronald Reagan stressed that "we in this country, in this generation, are, by destiny rather than choice, the watchmen on the walls of world freedom."[63]

Carter also emphasized on democracy and human rights in international forums. Wilson wanted to "make the world safe for democracy." Neoconservatives ridiculed him for his stress on democracy and human rights.[64] In fact, Wilsonian idealism and the logic of *realpolitik* have been contending against each other in the United States. U.S. policy of supporting democratization in other countries experienced a major shift in 1974.[65]

During the Cold War the emphasis was on protecting the democratic or non-communist nations from becoming a victim of "the beast of communism." The Americans continued to worry about democracy both at home and abroad. Truman asserted that "it must be the policy of the United States to support free

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[62] _____, "The Idea of the National Interest," *op. cit.*, p. 240.

[63] Kegley and Wittkopf, *American Foreign Policy, op. cit.*, p. 48.

[64] Brands, H. W., "The Idea of the National Interest," *op. cit.*, pp. 254, 258–9.

[65] Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century,* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), pp. 45–6.

peoples who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures." He further said that "the free peoples of the world look to us for support in maintaining their freedoms, if we falter in our leadership, we may endanger the peace of the world."[66]

During the Cold War, even in the 1990s, the U.S. governments as well as foundations generally avoided talking about democracy in the Middle East.[67] But at the same time, it has been noted that the U.S. policy has not been always opposing democratic currents in the Middle East. After all, democratic Turkey and Israel have been close allies of the United States, the argument runs.[68]

Democracy promotion in the U.S. foreign policy became more important after the Cold War. Before going to war for librating Kuwait from Iraqi occupation, George Bush said that "the defense of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia would benefit democracy directly." Democracy and self-determination were also behind the "new world order."[69]

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[66] Brands, H. W., "The Idea of the National Interest," *op. cit.*, p. 248.

[67] Ellis Goldberg, Resat Kasaba, and Joel S. Migdal (eds.), *Rules and Rights in the Middle East, op. cit.*, p. 167; Sheila Carapico, 'Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World', *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 56, No. 3, (Summer 2002), p. 383 *cited in* Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, p. 149; Carapico, "Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World," *op. cit.*, pp. 380–1.

[68] _____, *Rules and Rights in the Middle East, op. cit.*, p. 164.

[69] Brands, H. W., "The Idea of the National Interest," *op. cit.*, p. 260.

In his authored book *Between Hope and History,* Clinton writes that he "wanted an America that stays secure by remaining the strongest force for peace, freedom, and prosperity in the world."[70] Under the Clinton Administration, democratic policy of the United States was focused more on promoting 'democratic culture' and less on 'institutional reforms'.[71]

Before Clinton, civil society, pluralistic culture, and elections were equally under focus. Under Clinton's policy of 'democratic enlargement', the U.S. government established the Interagency Working Group on Democracy.[72]

But, the Clinton Administration remained cautious while engaging democratic forces in the Middle East.[73] Although, his Administration supported political rights of women in the Gulf countries of Kuwait, Qatar, and Oman, it behaved differently with reference to Saudi Arabia. The analysts explain this behavior in terms of (a) U.S. national interests related to stability in the Middle

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[70] Bill Clinton, *Between Hope and History, op. cit.,* p. 6.

[71] Carnegie Endowment, Symposium on 'Advancing Democracy: The Clinton Legacy', Jan. 12, 2001, www.ceip.org/files/events, *cited in* Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, p. 33.

[72] Shattuck, J. and Atwood, J.B., 'Defending Democracy', *Foreign Affairs,* Vol. 77, No. 2, (1998), p. 179 *cited in* Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, p. 33; Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, p. 34.

[73] Phebe Marr, "The United States, Europe, and the Middle East: An Uneasy Triangle," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 48, No. 2, (Spring 1994), p. 222.

East, (b) security of the United States, (c) keeping the oil prices low, and (d) allowing American aircrafts on part of Saudi Arabia to use its air bases, etc.[74]

Not only the oil prices, but also other oil-related issues—including, ensuring continued production and supply of the oil to the United States and the West, and not allowing any of the regional countries to acquire an overwhelming domination of the oil producing region—have been the fundamental concerns of the successive U.S. Administrations over the past decades in this region.[75]

Every other U.S. national interest in the oil producing countries remained secondary, including the democratic ideal. Not only the Western governments but also the MNCs maintained close relationships with the autocrats in this region. [76]

Some of the U.S. Administrations, including that of Reagan had interests in addition to oil, like trade benefits or using Saudi Arabia to check the influence of Iran and Communist Soviet Union.[77] These have been, in fact, the primary concerns of the United States causing a sort of negligence towards the country's

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[74] *The Middle East in Crisis, op. cit.*, p. 91.

[75] Paul Jabber, "Forces of Change in the Middle East," *op. cit.*; Daniel Neep, "Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East," *op. cit.*; Djerejian, "War and Peace," p. 2, *cited in* Phebe Marr, "The United States, Europe, and the Middle East," *op. cit.*, p. 219.

[76] Noregn, O., *Oil and Islam: Social and Economic Issues,* (Chichester, John Wiley, 1997) *cited in* Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, pp. 14–5; Richard Falk, "Can US Policy Toward the Middle East Change Course?" *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 47, No. 1, (Winter 1993), p. 12.

[77] Daniel Neep, "Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East," *op. cit.*; Thomas Carothers, *U.S. Democracy Promotion During and After Bush,* (Washington DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007), p. 16.

long-pronounced policy of supporting democracy and freedom in the Arab Middle East. Though, at times, the U.S. governments, issued statements in support of political participation in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.[78]

Queen Noor describes how the oil concerns of the United States and British contributed to the First Gulf War in the wake of Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. She writes:

> Margaret Thatcher...was at a conference in Aspen, Colorado, on August 2, the day of the Iraqi invasion, and when George Bush arrived there the next day she told him in no uncertain terms that if Western forces did not stop Saddam Hussein he would roll his tanks not only into Saudi Arabia, but also into Bahrain and Dubai, and end up controlling 65 percent of the world's oil reserves.[79]

While explaining the factors behind the persistence of authoritarianism in the region under study even the observers and analysts seem to be somewhat surprised on the attitude of the Western powers including the United States. No effort was spared by the western powers regarding democracy in the ex-communist states, but they had a totally different set of priorities in the Arab world.[80]

According to a 1993 publication, Saudi police attacked a western diplomat's house during a party and misbehaved to the ladies and gentlemen, violating the privacy of the families. But none from the west, including the

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[78] Phebe Marr, "The United States, Europe, and the Middle East," *op. cit.*, p. 220.

[79] Queen Noor, *Leap of Faith: Memoirs of an Unexpected Life,* (London: Phoenix, 2004), p. 316.

[80] Burhan Ghalioun, "The Persistence of Arab Authoritarianism," *op. cit.*, p. 130.

western media, made any protests on it. The victims' reaction was "diplomatically hushed."[81]

Though, space does not allow discussing U.S. relationship with the Gulf States, it is interesting to note that the successive governments in the United States as well as Saudi Arabia, sought to strengthen mutual relations, including President Roosevelt and King Feisal. [82]

For around last forty years, largest trading partner of Saudi Arabia has been the United States. A district of Riyadh, An-Nasim, has been known as 'the Chicago of Riyadh.'[83] The United States established its first mission in Jeddah in 1942 and the U.S.-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation was launched in 1975.[84]

After the expulsion of Iraqi forces from Kuwait, there were demands of democratization of the Gulf States and some questioned the logic of reinstatement of the autocratic Sabah regime.[85] But almost nothing substantial took place except

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[81] Ellis Goldberg, Resat Kasaba, and Joel S. Migdal (eds.), *Rules and Rights in the Middle East, op. cit.*, p. 146.

[82] Peter Calvocoressi, *World Politics, op. cit.*, p. 477; Rachel Bronson, *Thicker Than Oil: America's Uneasy Partnership with Saudi Arabia,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 5.

[83] Abeer Allam, "Saudi Arabia delays elections for two years," *op. cit.*; Marcel Kurpershoek, *Arabia of the Bedouins, op. cit.*, p. 188.

[84] Rachel Bronson, *Thicker Than Oil, op. cit.*, p. 263; David K. Harbinson, "The US-Saudi Arabian Joint Commission on Economic Cooperation: A Critical Appraisal," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 44, No. 2, (Spring 1990), p. 282.

[85] *The Middle East in Crisis, op. cit.*, p. 87.

a few tinkering measures like introduction of a Basic Law of Saudi Arabia in 1992 that is sometimes referred to as the first constitutional document of the country.

Experts and writers had been urging the U.S. governments since long for a consistent democratization policy towards the Arab world.[86] However, it was the events of September 11, 2001 that pushed the world into a totally new situation where the concepts of peace, security, and stability in the world, in general, and in the United States and the Middle East, in particular, changed to a large extent.

In this new situation, pressure on the United States, hence on the Bush Administration, for pushing democracy in the Arab world was unprecedented.[87] The president and his administration did realize the pressure and utmost need of a mega shift in the policy and of taking steps in this regards.[88]

In the following chapter, we are going to see what sort of change in the U.S. policy of democratic promotion in the Gulf took place under the Bush Administration and what measures were taken.

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[86] Charles William Maynes, "The Middle East in the Twenty-First Century," *Middle East Journal,* Vol. 52, No. 1, (Winter 1998), p. 16.

[87] Steven A. Cook, "Getting to Arab Democracy," *op. cit.*, p. 67; *The Middle East in Crisis, op. cit.*, pp. xi, 72, 99; Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, p. 105.

[88] Sheri Berman, "How Democracies Emerge: Lessons from Europe," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 18, No. 1, (Jan. 2007), p. 29; Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, "Middle East Democracy," *op. cit.*; Daniel Neep, "Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East," *op. cit.*

CHAPTER 4: THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION

In the wake of 9/11, Democracy promotion became the foundation of the Bush Administration's foreign policy towards the Arab countries. Freedom Agenda launched by the Bush Administration marked a major policy shift. By some, the shift was seen as "a blanket repudiation of six decades of American foreign policy." Traditionally, the U.S. governments had been buying stability arguments and embracing autocratic authoritarian regimes in the Middle East, including the Gulf countries.

By embracing the policy, the Administration in fact rejected the arguments based on Middle Eastern exceptionalism or Arab exceptionalism. President Bush explained that "the peoples of the Middle East share a high civilization, a religion of personal responsibility and a need for freedom as deep as our own...." explained Bush. He further philosophized that "It is not realism to suppose that one-fifth of humanity is unsuited to liberty; it is pessimism and condescension, and we should have none of it."[1]

The Bush Administration linked the policy of promoting freedom in the Arab world to American security. The shocks of 9/11 had forced the Administration to revisit its policy of American security. In her visit to the Middle East, Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice explained, "For 60 years, my

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[1] www.nytimes.com/2003/11/20/international/europe/20PTEX.html? pagewanted=all, accessed on Apr. 19, 2010.

country, the United States, pursued stability at the expense of democracy in this region here in the Middle East, and we achieved neither." While speaking at the American University in Cairo, Rice revealed, "Now we are taking a different course. We are supporting the democratic aspirations of all people."[2] A fact sheet issued by the Office of the Press Secretary of the U.S. State Department in 2003 reads, "Our policy is based on core values that uphold human rights through democracy and the rule of law."[3]

The Bush Administration made use of four types of institutions to proceed with its democratic promotion in the Gulf countries: (a) its own governmental departments and their subsidiary organizations, (b) private American organizations (under public-private partnerships), (c) international institutions of whom the United States itself is a part or member like BMENA and American-Kuwait Alliance, and (d) local organizations from the Gulf. Among the international institutions were bilateral as well as multilateral. Engaging all types of these institutions and organizations helped diversify the activities.

Democracy promoting structures were redesigned. Three major initiatives were launched in order to implement the Freedom Agenda: (i) the Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA), (ii) the Broader Middle East and North Africa

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[2] www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20050622wedne sday. html, Jun. 22, 2005, accessed on Apr. 19, 2010.

[3] "Fact Sheet: President Bush Calls for a "Forward Strategy of Freedom" to Promote Democracy in the Middle East," Office of the Press Secretary, Nov. 6, 2003.

(BMENA), and (iii) democracy assistance programs. MEFTA's and BMENA's core program focus was on economic reform whereas democracy Assistance programs run by MEPI, DRL, and USAID also focused on political and education reform and women's empowerment.[4] In the Gulf region, MEPI and DRL were engaged but USAID was not much active in the region.

The seriousness of the Bush Administration towards democratic promotion reflected in the increase in funds available for the purpose. HRDF, for example, was provided .48 million U.S. dollars in fiscal year 2005 compared to only 13 million U.S. dollars in fiscal year 2001. Twenty-two (22) percent of the amount was provided to National Endowment for Democracy (NED), a private, non-profit organization.[5]

Under the Clinton Administration, little more than five million U.S. dollars were provided for political aid for the entire Middle East. Though, there were other bilateral fundings but the amounts were modest.[6] During 2002, the two bureaus—of Near Eastern Affairs, and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor—committed 29 million U.S. dollars for the cause of democracy

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[4] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, *What Price Freedom? Assessing the Bush Administration's Freedom Agenda,* Analysis Paper, No. 10, Sep. 2006, The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, p. 6.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 12.

[6] Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, pp. 49–50.

promotion in the Middle East.[7] For 2003-4, MEPI allocated 143 million U.S. dollars for the Middle East. Thirty-five million U.S. dollars from the amount were earmarked for democracy aid.[8]

This chapter deals with goals and objectives of the Bush Administration's democracy promotion policy, the approach adopted by the Administration, the strategies employed, and the tools used to achieve the goal and objectives of the policy. Departments, programs, and initiatives of the government that took part in formulating and implementing the policy, and programs and initiatives launched under the Bush Administration for the purpose of democracy promotion have been highlighted. Besides discussing the role played in the education, economic, and political areas, efforts to strengthen civil society and media are underlined. Measures to improve human rights conditions and to empower women are also taken into account.

Exchange programs and activities were conducted in many areas and sectors. For the sake of analysis, general exchanges are discussed under the subheading 'awareness campaign', educational exchanges under 'education sector', cultural exchanges under 'cultural sector', and business exchanges under 'economic sector'.

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[7] **Fact Sheet on U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative, U.S. Department of State, Dec. 12, 2002.**

[8] Richard Youngs, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

In this chapter, in fact, many of the aspects of the American relationship with the Gulf States during 2000 and 2008, which can be seen as promoting the democratic cause, have been underlined. It does not, however, mean that we are going to discuss the relationship per se in detail.

4.I Goal, Objectives, Approach, Strategy, Tools

The Bush Administration's enunciated goal of democracy promotion in the region was to address the root causes of terrorism originating from the region against the United States. Thus, the goal was directly linked to the U.S. security interests.

By having a look at the Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports,[9] prepared by the State Department's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor, published in May 2009, we see that improving human rights conditions and empowering women in all the six countries, are among the fundamental objectives of the democracy promotion. Similarly improving governance in all of the Gulf countries—except the terminology used with reference to Kuwait 'reducing governmental cronyism' is a bit different—is another objective. The terminology used with reference to other five countries is worded like 'rule of law,' 'transparency,' 'responsiveness,' and 'accountability and oversight of governments.' Building and sustaining democratic institutions in the Gulf

[9] http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/afdr/2008/, accessed on Jun. 19, 2009.

countries is also among the State Department's objectives. Here again, Kuwait stands as a separate case because the country has already built democratic institutions. In Kuwait's case, the focus is on 'democratic stability' and 'accountability of democratic institutions.' Still, there are some other areas where Kuwait completely stands as the sole exception in the entire Gulf region.

As the Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports suggest, promoting civil society, judicial reform and independence, political participation, and engagement of citizens were among the primary objectives of the Bush Administration regarding its policy of democratic promotion in the GCC countries. These reports show that the State Department also addresses human trafficking in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and United Arab Emirates and makes efforts to strengthen religious freedom.

The Advancing Freedom and Democracy Reports not only provide insight into the pronounced objectives of the United States' policy of democratic promotion in the Gulf countries but also tell us about the top priorities of the United States with reference to improving human rights and democratic governance in the Gulf region.

Looking at the history of democratization in different parts of the world and the American role therein, we come to know that for brining political awareness among the masses, overt propaganda campaigns were launched. The United States financed a number of radio stations, like Radios Free Europe, Asia,

Iraq, Iran, and Radio Marti in Cuba. Political oppositions and exiled dissidents were provided financial support.[10] Though, radio channels targeting the Gulf region were launched under the Bush Administration, its approach towards democracy promotion in the Gulf countries remained covert.

The Bush Administration's approach towards democratization of the Gulf countries was based on gradual change through peaceful means. The pivotal point of the approach was working at the grassroots level. Secretary of State, Colin Powell, explicated at the occasion of launching MEPI, "Any approach to the Middle East that ignores its political, economic, and educational underdevelopment will be built upon sand."[11]

Working at the grassroots seemed to be logical because some of the quarters in the region have been arguing that democracy imposed from outside will not work in the Middle East as the people will be apprehensive about it. 'It will work only if it emerges from within because the people, in this case, will own it,' ran the argument. Though, the argument basically came from the regimes, it was not ignored by the Bush Administration.

Ground realities also favored the gradualist and peaceful approach, while the United States was already engaged in two international wars in Afghanistan

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[10] Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, pp. 37–8.

[11] Colin Powell, *quoted in* Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, "What Price Freedom?" *op. cit.*, p. 17.

and Iraq beginning in 2001 and 2003 respectively. Starting more wars would be unrealistic, if not impossible. Furthermore, the regimes in the Gulf are friendly to the United States, unlike the hostile regimes of Taliban in Afghanistan and Saddam in Iraq. Regimes in the Gulf do not directly cause any serious problems to the United States and the oil continues to flow from the Gulf to the United States without any stoppages. In contrast, the regimes in Afghanistan and Iraq proved to be thorns in the American throat every now and then.

Removing the two regimes by using force was necessary in order 'to ensure American security,' and 'to liberate the people, from repressive regimes,' claimed President Bush and his Administration. Coercive actions were taken and elected regimes installed in Iraq and Afghanistan. We are not assuming, however, that the motive of Afghan and Iraq invasions was democracy promotion. In the Gulf, the incumbent regimes were persuaded through diplomatic endeavors, trade benefits and conditinalities. They were asked to introduce reforms in political as well as economic spheres in order to open up the system and to make it a participatory and a representative one.

The Administration worked with the governments of the Gulf region at bilateral level to achieve the democracy objectives. Coordinated diplomacy was one of the main channels of promoting the democratic cause in the region.[12] The Administration also employed the concept of public private partnership in order to

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[12] Lorne Craner, "Democracy in the Middle East," *op. cit.*

increase the efficacy of its programs and projects. MENA Businesswomen's Network and Vital Voices are the best examples of such partnerships. The Bush Administration also encouraged American NGOs to partner with local reformers in the region. Individuals working in the fields of human rights and making demands for reforms in the region were provided support by the Administration.

Sharansky observes that President Bush "was very firm in pushing for immediate elections" in the Middle East.[13] It may be true in case of other parts of the Middle East but not regarding the Gulf.

Soft power tools of 'persuasion, and 'shaming' were employed by the Administration. These tools had been also used in Central and Eastern Europe to introduce and strengthen democracy. The Administration also made a good use of civic education and propaganda strategies. The tools used included exchange programs, public diplomacy, training programs, funds and conditionalities. Conditionalities for political reform were attached to the proposal for Middle East Free Trade Zone[14] and to global U.S. aid with reference to governance based on justice and other related issues when the aid was increased by 50 percent in

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[13] Natan Sharansky, interviewed by Zvika Krieger, *Newsweek,* Jun. 11, 2007, p. 66.
[14] Richard Youngs, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

2002.[15] Levitsky and Way mention a number of tools the democratizers have used over time, including:

a) Incentives for developing world elites to adopt formal democratic institutions
b) Democracy assistance programs
c) Activities of transnational human rights and democracy networks
d) Diplomatic pressure
e) Political conditionality (bilateral and multilateral)
f) Punitive sanctions
g) Military pressure or intervention

First five of these tools were employed by the Bush Administration with reference to democratization in the Gulf. The last two were not used.

4.II Departments, Programs, and Initiatives Involved

First of all, the President provided direction to the Administration. Then, a large number of governmental organs, departments, and organizations started playing their role in the formulation and implementation of democracy-promotion policy in the Gulf countries and other Middle Eastern states. The State Department played the most significant role at both levels—policy formulation

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[15] *Ibid.*

and policy implementation. The Congress approved funds along with providing legal instruments and formulating policy. Furthermore, the Congress kept an eye on the program on the front of policy implementation. The two bureaus—the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, and the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor—in the State Department were responsible for the policy implementation.[16]

The Congress approved policies and funds for The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) and the Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF).[17] Human Rights and Democracy Fund (HRDF) finances Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) of the State Department. Middle East Partnership Initiative is funded from Economic Support Fund. DRL is also a source of financial support to National Endowment for Democracy (NED).[18]

The Congress also provided the required legal instruments. Advance Democracy Act of 2007 and the 9/11 Commission International Implementation Act of 2007, for example, are among such legal instruments. The act encourages and assists the government of Saudi Arabia to introduce reforms in various sectors. Under this act, the U.S. government provides financial support to the governments that reform educational systems of their countries. It is believed that the Act will significantly facilitate in addressing the most fundamental reasons of

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[16] Fact Sheet on U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative, *op. cit.*

[17] Jeremy M. Sharp, *U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East, op. cit.*, p. 8.

[18] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

religious extremism in Saudi Arabia.[19] The following extract from the act illustrates how the role played by Congress in the process of democracy promotion is significant.

> The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has...a lack of political outlets for its citizens, that poses a threat to the security of the United States, the international community, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia itself. ... It is the sense of Congress that, in order to more effectively combat terrorism, the Government of Saudi Arabia must undertake and continue a number of political and economic reforms, including...providing more political rights to its citizens, increasing the rights of women, engaging in comprehensive educational reform. ...the policies of the United States shall be to support the efforts of the Government of Saudi Arabia to make political, economic, and social reforms throughout the country.[20]

Thus, the Congress urged to government of Saudi Arabia to undertake reform in political, social and economic spheres.

It is important to note that at least fourteen programs and initiatives were launched by the Bush Administration during 2000 and 2008 (*see* Table 10). These programs contributed to the democratic promotion in one way or the other.

A brief introduction of the programs involved in implementing the democracy promotion policy seems to be necessary here. Besides, a mention of their objectives, strategies, and focus areas is also relevant.

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[19] www.cdhr.info/Campaigns/USLegislation, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009.

[20] www.cdhr.info/Resources/HR1TitleXIV, accessed on Dec. 26, 2009.

- ***Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)***

MEPI was established by the Bush Administration in 2002. It works under U.S. State Department and is focused on the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Its five stated goals are: strengthening civil society and the rule of law, empowering women and youth, improving and expanding education, encouraging economic reforms, and increasing political participation. Educational institutions, local governments, private businesses, and NGOs receive direct support from MEPI. One of the MEPI's two regional offices is located in the Gulf region (Abu Dhabi, the United Arab Emirates).

- ***Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative***

The Bush Administration has been credited for raising awareness on the need of political reform in the Arab world by helping create BMENA.[21] It was launched in 2004 under the G8 leadership. It is focused on Arab and other Muslim majority countries and makes efforts towards liberalizing the economies and politics through development and reform. BMENA supports Foundation for the Future and Fund for the Future.

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[21] Jeremy M. Sharp, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

Table 10: Organizations, Projects and Initiatives Launched during 2000–2008

Organization/Initiative	Year of Creation
1. Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Businesswomen's Network	2006
2. Foundation for the Future	2005
3. Fund for the Future	2005
4. American-Kuwaiti Alliance (AKA)	2003
5. The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)	2002
6. Forum for the Future	2005
7. Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA)	2004
8. MEPI Alumni Network	2002
9. Bahrain Forum for Public-Private Partnership	2007
10. U.S.-Saudi Arabian Strategic Dialogue (SUSRIS)	2005
11. Radio Sawa	2002
12. Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA)	2003
13. Office of Global Communication	2002
14. U.S.-Saudi Arabian Strategic Dialogue	2005

- ***Forum for the Future***

The Forum was inaugurated in 2005 in Bahrain under BMENA initiative as a result of efforts made by the Bush Administration. The Administration also participated in efforts leading to the foundation of Forum for the Future. U.S.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was present at the occasion. The forum brings civil society activists from the region together. The Fifth Forum was held in Dubai in 2008.

- ***Foundation for the Future***

Secretary of State, Rice, announced the launching of Foundation for the Future at the occasion of BMENA Forum in Bahrain in 2005. The foundation aims at fostering democracy and human rights in the BMENA region through promoting civil society initiatives. It focuses on areas including free and fair elections, rule of law, and independence of media. The foundation was created under the Forum for the Future, but both are independent of each other.

- ***Fund for the Future***

Fund for the Future and the Foundation for the Future were created on the same day. As a separate institution, Fund for the Future aims at assisting small and medium-sized businesses in the region. In fact, the fund is a collaboration between western and Middle Eastern governments. Its goal is to support indigenous reformers and strengthen democracy.

- ***MEPI Alumni Network***

Thousands of the people from the region who had the opportunities to be involved in MEPI programs are eligible to join the Network. It provides

networking opportunities to the members by arranging meetings, get-togethers, and discussion programs in the region.

- ***Middle East and North Africa Businesswomen's Network (MENA BWN)***

The network was founded in 2006. It aims at strengthening role of women in business and leadership positions. MEPI partnered with Vital Voices Global Partnership and local organizations of businesswomen in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) for establishing the MENA BWN.

- ***International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP)***

IVLP is a professional exchange program administered by the U.S. Department of State functioning since 1940. It aims at building mutual understanding between the United States and other countries. Current and emerging foreign leaders are invited to the U.S. where they experience American culture, visit educational institutions and learn about the government system. The visitors include NGO leaders, journalists, parliamentarians, entrepreneurs, academics and government officials.

- ***Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA)***

MEFTA was launched in 2003 to promote free trade between the United States and the Middle Eastern countries. The initiative was based on the notion that free trade will help foster democracy. The notion is based on the philosophy that free-market gives rise to economic liberalization and economic growth. In turn, growth and liberalization of economy give birth to a vibrant middle class. The middle class then demands "secure property rights, due process of law, and eventually political rights and freedoms from their governments."[22]

- ***U.S.-Saudi Strategic Dialogue (SUSRIS)***

It was established jointly by President Bush and then Crown Prince, Abdullah in 2005. It convenes meetings on six monthly basis to discuss issues of mutual concern. It aims at promoting mutual understanding as well as trade and cooperation in other areas between the two countries. Six working groups are responsible for planning and carrying out activities in different areas.

- ***American-Kuwaiti Alliance (AKA)***

The AKA was founded in 2003 in Washington, DC. President Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney, other government officials, and the then Prime Minister of

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[22] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Kuwait, Sabah, were present at the occasion. More than 350 leading figures from both of the countries also joined the event. They included academics, businesspersons and government officials. Its members comprise leading businesses from Kuwait and the United States. The alliance aims at fostering cross-cultural understanding and promoting partnerships between the two countries.

4.III Awareness Campaign and Diplomatic Front

The importance of awareness campaign to serve the cause of democracy promotion cannot be overemphasized. Awareness campaign for the purpose of democratization may include a wide variety of things. In order to bring awareness, the Bush Administration launched propaganda campaigns, organized trips, tours, and exchanges to increase people to people contacts between the Americans and the Arabs from the Gulf. Conferences, video conferences, seminars, group discussions, debates, dialogues, and fora were also held. At such events a huge number of issues related to democratization and reform in the Gulf were brought under discussion. Such events were held within the Gulf region and without. The events arranged for people to people contacts were also participated by people from democratic countries other than America. Large number of people from the Gulf had the opportunity to listen to and talk about democracy, human rights, women empowerment, and reforms. In this way, all types of these

activities played a crucial role in spreading the cause and demand for democratic governance among the masses in the Gulf.

Since the Administration engaged a wide variety of institutions and organizations—public, public-private, international, and local private—to push its democratization agenda forward, it was able to reach wider audiences from the Gulf. The activities also distributed in geographic and temporal terms both. A large number of venues were selected and the activities were scattered over different months and years. In fact, these are important aspects of any effective awareness campaign.

One of the key areas MEPI works on is encouraging engagement between youth from Arab and democratic countries. MEPI programs had a public diplomacy agenda. Some of its programs brought participants from the Arab countries in contact with Americans. Sometimes, Arabs were invited to America by the MEPI for the sake of interactions as a part of the reform promotion agenda.[23]

Role played by the initiatives like MEPI Alumni Network and the Forum for the Future was instrumental in running the awareness campaign through debate and dialogue. In 2008, at the occasion of the Fifth Forum for the Future in Dubai, themes like the slow pace of democratic reform and the need to engage the youth

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[23] *Ibid.*, p. 21.

in civil society organizations were discussed. Corruption, which is a facet of bad governance, was also among the debated issues at the occasion.[24]

At the first regional summit of the MEPI Alumni Network, 16 panels discussed how to expand civic activism in various spheres of life. Some of the panels examined issues related to governmental institutions, electoral systems, free media, and education. Some others talked about women empowerment and issues related to legal restrictions on NGOs. Among the discussed questions were how to empower entrepreneurs and how to promote public-private partnership.[25]

Activities organized by the American-Kuwaiti Alliance played an important role in spreading the liberal democratic norms and values in Kuwait. In September 2008, the Alliance hosted a traditional Kuwaiti cultural gathering *Ramadan Ghabga*. Prominent figures from Kuwaiti and American governments participated in the gathering. Almost all sectors of Kuwaiti society, including business community and academics, were represented at the occasion.[26]

Next month, the Alliance again arranged a get-together in honor of the Young American Business Fellow Association. Kuwait University students also

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[24] Michael Allen, "Forum for the futile? Arab democrats ask," Oct. 16, 2008, http://www.demdigest.net/blog/regions/forum-for-the-futile-arab-democrats-ask.html, accessed on Jun. 28, 2009.

[25] "MEPI Alumni Network Holds First Regional Summit," http://www.amideast.org/whats_new/press_releases/current/press_releases_feb_04_08.htm, Feb. 25, 2008, accessed on Dec. 27, 2009.

[26] www.americakuwait.org/our-mission.html, accessed on Jun. 21, 2009.

participated in the gathering. Members of the U.S. embassy in Kuwait were also among the guests.[27] Such exchanges facilitated cross-pollination of cultural values.

A special radio station, Radio Sawa, was established for the Middle East.[28] Radio Sawa is also broadcast live on the internet (www.radiosawa.com). The website has a separate transmission for the Gulf.

Political freedoms and religious and ethnic tolerance were among the topics discussed at different fora. In 2004, annual conference of the National Union of Kuwaiti Students (NUKS) was sponsored by American-Kuwaiti Alliance. In 2007, the AKA organized a multi-city tour to three American cities of Washington, Chicago and Atlanta for Kuwaiti dignitaries. Six American Corners housed in Omanese universities proved to be centers of activities designed to promote democratic awareness in the country.

Democracy Video Challenge was launched by the Department of State in collaboration with its partners[29] on the International Democracy Day—September

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[27] www.americakuwait.org/events/2008/1024.html, accessed on Jun. 21, 2009.

[28] Richard Youngs, *op. cit.*, p. 70.

[29] The Challenge Partners included: the Center for International Private Enterprise, the International Republican Institute, the National Democratic Institute, the International Youth Foundation, TakingITGlobal, the Directors Guild of America, Motion Picture Association of America, NBC Universal, New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, the USC School of Cinematic Arts, and the U.S. Department of State. YouTube provided the video platform, and William Morris Endeavor Entertainment provided part of the prize package.

15, 2008. The Challenge was launched online asking young video-makers to complete the phrase, "Democracy is..." through three-minute videos. More than 900 people from 95 countries submitted their videos. Young video makers from the Gulf countries also participated in the competition. Six winners from six different regions of the world were chosen online by the people. One of the six winners, Roding Hamidi, was from the United Arab Emirates.[30]

Trips to the American cities of New York, Washington, and Los Angles were offered to the winners. The winners had the opportunities of interacting with democracy groups beside visiting film, television, and other media organizations.[31] Thus, the video competition proved to be a multi-dimensional activity with regard to democratic awareness.

An IVLP was participated by a Kuwaiti official in 2007. Focus of the IVLP was promoting interfaith harmony. The United States ambassador to Kuwait and his colleagues made frequent visits to *diwaniyas* (evening political salons) and talked about how to develop democracy in the country.

On the occasion of election campaign in 2008 in the United States, American diplomats in the United Arab Emirates conducted a wide range of

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[30] www.redorbit.com/news/technology/1707851/firstever_democracy_ video _challenge_ winners_announced/; http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/entires/ democracy_video_challenge_votes/, accessed on Jun. 19, 2009.

[31] http://blogs.state.gov/index.php/entires/democracy_video_challenge_votes/, accessed on Jun. 19, 2009.

activities like debates, video conferences, seminars and other outreach programs. The purpose of this campaign was to place emphasis on the worth of electoral democracy. A diverse range of audiences were accessed during the campaign. Debates were organized among the students from universities and high schools on the topics related to democracy. Video conferences were organized for journalists along with students. The participants had interactions with the speakers and panelists in the United States. The seminars were focused on topics like women role in politics and civic participation.[32]

Right from the president at the top, and the secretaries and deputy secretaries of the state to the ambassadors and diplomats kept on building up the momentum at the diplomatic front. In their speeches almost all aspects of democratization were highlighted along with emphasizing its need. Quite often the speeches revolved around philosophizing the relevant issues. All the major arguments and criticisms against the democratic promotion in the Middle East or the Arab world were countered by the president and his colleagues in the government. On the one hand, governments in the Middle East were asked time and again to introduce reforms in their respective countries, and on the other, western governments were asked to join hands in promoting democratic governance in the Middle East. Hardly an opportunity was missed by the president and his senior colleagues in the government to emphasize the need for

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[32] http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/afdr/2009/nea/122955.htm, accessed on Aug. 4, 2009.

pushing the agenda of democracy promotion forward in the Middle East. In their speeches, they were quite successful in depicting their conviction and belief in the virtues of democratic governance.

Speaking at a number of fora the world over, officials of the Bush Administration explained the reasons and factors of why democratization of the Middle East is important for the United States and the world at large. American security and peace and stability in the Middle East and the outside world were linked to addressing the political grievances of the masses living under authoritarian regimes in the region.

At the diplomatic front the Administration made efforts to promote better understanding of democratic politics and to highlight the benefits of a free economy and individual freedoms.[33] The immense emphasis on the need of democratic reform in the Middle East was intended to build a diplomatic pressure on the incumbent regimes and encourage the Arab people to raise their voices and demand political rights and reforms.[34]

Besides providing the rationale, philosophizing the fundamentals of the policy, and countering the counter-arguments and criticisms, Bush and his colleagues also criticized incumbent regimes for human rights violations,

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[33] *Ibid.*

[34] Thomas Carothers, *U.S. Democracy Promotion During and After Bush, op. cit.*, p. 4.

corruption, and bad-governance. Criticism of the governments of Saudi Arabia, visibly mounted. It was repeatedly designated by the Bush Administration as a 'Country of Particular Concern' for violating religious freedoms.

The U.S. embassies and diplomats in the Gulf were not behind in pushing the democratic agenda and they encouraged the governments for introducing reforms in the fields of politics, economy, education and others. American embassy in the United Arab Emirates, for example, asked the government for expanding the electorate for the Federal National Council which selects 50 percent of its 40 members. It asked the government for empowering the council and introducing universal franchise.[35] The diplomats continued to persuade the governments by telling them the significance of democratic reforms for the United States.[36]

4.IV Political, Economic and Education Sectors

The Bush Administration relied on a covert policy of gradual change and did not threaten the authoritarian regimes in the Gulf. To promote electoral politics and strengthen parliamentary practices the Administration took many steps. Training and exchange programs were launched and technical support was

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[35] http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/afdr/2009/nea/122955.htm, accessed on Aug. 4, 2009.
[36] Lorne Craner, "Democracy in the Middle East," *op. cit.*

provided. Political reform gained more and more importance in terms of fund allocation. Over the years, MEPI allocated funds reflecting this pattern.[37]

In the areas of electoral politics and parliamentary support, the Administration's key objective remained expanding the role of parliaments and the consultative councils in legislation and governance in the Gulf. Programs to enhance the institutional capacity of the consultative bodies were funded by the United States and members of the *Majlis al-Shuras* were provided training and technical assistance.

An NGO funded by the United States arranged a training program for parliamentarians and political societies in Bahrain. For the sake of strengthening parliamentary politics, U.S.-funded implementing partners trained the members and administrative staffs of the Central Municipal Council and the Advisory Council in Qatar and the members and staff of *Majlis al-Shura* in Oman. In United Arab Emirates, the American officials kept on persuading the government for broader elections for municipalities, student councils, and the Federal National Council (FNC).

Two of the Bahraini parliamentarians were invited by the U.S. government for having consultations with the Congress and the state legislatures. Some of the

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[37] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

open meetings, which were held by the Bahraini parliamentarians for their constituents, were also joined by the American officials.

To introduce latest voting technologies and make local election officials familiar with polling procedures a program was arranged in Bahrain by the U.S. government. The purpose was to ensure transparency in electoral process. Members of *Majlis al-Shura* of Oman were engaged with public on issues related to environment through a funded program.

American officials in Qatar engaged prospective candidates in roundtable discussions. Permanent Election Committee of Qatar was provided assistance through an implementing partner at the occasion of third election for the Central Municipal Council in 2007. The objective was training the candidates and increasing the awareness among the voters. Prior to 2008 elections in Kuwait, a program was funded to educate voters. The candidates were provided assistance for planning and developing electoral campaigns.

Since the elections coincided with the elections in the United States, the U.S. officials in Kuwait carried out a number of activities. At two universities, video conferences were arranged between Kuwaiti students and American academics. Elections in the two countries were discussed in detail in these conferences. A question and answer session was held at the American University of Kuwait. The United States embassy in Kuwait hosted an "election watch"

breakfast after the U.S. elections. The event was attended by 300 guests. A series of lectures for Kuwaiti students was conducted in Arabic.

Not only the parliaments, central councils, and *Majlis al-Shura*s were paid attention to but also to the bodies working at the grassroots levels like labor unions and municipal councils. Members of the 178 municipal councils in Saudi Arabia were trained and were provided technical assistance through programs financed by the United States. Similar programs provided assistance to labor unions in Oman. One of such programs designed to familiarize union leaders with international best practices with regard to electoral processes.

Exchange programs in almost all six countries were arranged. One of these programs was offered to election officials in Qatar to familiarize them with the American electoral system. Another exchange program was offered to Qatari lawyers to make them aware of the democratic legal systems in America. Many IVLPs were arranged for Kuwaitis to promote participation in the country. In Bahrain, programs were funded for promoting rule of law and political participation. Collaborations were made with Bahraini NGOs and journalists were trained on issues related to democracy, elections, and parliament.

Democracy and capitalism are seen as indispensable for each other. Capitalist economic values are believed as facilitating and contributing towards the spread and deepening of a democratic culture. Free economy and free trade facilitate freedom in other spheres of life including politics, culture, social

behaviors and attitudes. In order to democratize a certain society, economic sphere cannot be ignored. Under the Bush Administration steps were taken to introduce economic reforms in the Gulf along with other Middle Eastern countries. Launching of the Middle East Free Trade Area (MEFTA) by the Administration can be taken as the most significant step in this direction.

In the economic sphere, like in the spheres of awareness and education, many types of activities were initiated using a number of tools and strategies. The activities like trade missions, business exchanges and meetings were arranged between the American and Arab business communities. Entrepreneurial trainings were organized and technical help was provided. More importantly, free trade agreements were concluded. The purposes of all of these activities were promoting small businesses and advancing free trade. MEPI, MEFTA, and USSABC were instrumental in carrying out all these activities. MEPI programs included entrepreneurial trainings. MEPI programs paid much attention to promote U.S.-Arab trade and small businesses in the Arab countries.[38]

Some of the projects and activities, seemingly, do not look related to democracy promotion. As Youngs notes, "sometimes the declared aim is to enhance communal self-administration and participation." Such projects apparently focused on the development of business, environment and cultural

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[38] *Ibid.*, p. 17.

cooperation, are many times funded, in fact, under political aid and for bringing political awareness.[39]

MEFTA initiative was launched by President Bush to make free trade agreements (FTAs) between the Middle Eastern countries and the United States. FTAs with Oman and Bahrain were concluded successfully. Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) between the U.S. and Kuwait was signed in 2005. Negotiations with the United Arab Emirates were initiated in 2005. Since 2007, both of the countries have been carrying out trade and investment enhancement activities under a TIFA-Plus arrangement. TIFAs are taken as crucial steps towards making free trade agreements.[40] The FTAs signed with Oman and Bahrain and TIFA agreement with the United Arab Emirates carry a potential of facilitating the economic reforms required for the foundations of building democratic societies in these countries. The FTAs have provisions on areas like governance, transparency, and labor standards.[41]

Trade ministries of the Gulf countries received help from the U.S. government through MEPI in order to bring the rules and regulations in conformity with the World Trade Organization (WTO) and other international

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[39] Richard Youngs, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

[40] http://www.ustr.gov/trade-agreements/other-initiatives/middle-east-free-trade-area-initiative-mefta, accessed on Dec. 21, 2009; http://www.americakuwait. org/media-release/6013.html, accessed on Jun. 21, 2009.

[41] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, *op. cit.* p. 7.

trade requirements.[42] Members of the business communities and civil society activists from the Middle East and the G8 were brought together in annual meetings of the Forum for the Future. The second Forum was held in the Gulf in 2005, in Manama, Bahrain.

International business and economic exchanges were organized by the U.S.-Saudi Arabian Business Council (USSABC). In March 2007, USSABC, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Commerce arranged a six-day Business Development Mission. Delegates from the U.S. companies were invited to Saudi Arabia. The mission comprised of 40 delegates from 30 companies. Firms and small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from 12 U.S. states were represented. Assistant Secretary and Director General U.S. Department of Commerce, Hernandez, also participated in the mission. The mission visited Riyadh, Jeddah, and the Eastern Province. Another four-day Business Development Mission was organized in December 2007 under collaboration by the two.[43]

In 2002, the USSABC in collaboration with the Virginia Economic Development Partnership (VEDP) arranged its first trade mission when delegates from Saudi companies, were invited to Virginia, USA. In 2007, in collaboration with the VEDP, the USSABC organized a four-day business development mission.

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[42] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[43] http://www.us-sabc.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageID=3602&textonly=1, accessed on Jun. 2, 2009.

A delegation of seven companies from Virginia visited Saudi Arabian cities of Dammam, Riyadh, and Jeddah. Interactions took place between the business-persons from the two countries. Examining the economic and business climate and investment opportunities in Saudi Arabia were also among the mission objectives.[44] Such missions provided networking opportunities.

In the education sector, many types of activities were conducted. Student discussion groups were formed. Scholarships were offered. Training programs were launched. Student exchanges were coordinated. MEPI not only engaged the governments in the Gulf but also the individuals who were offered exchange and training programs including political training. Because of these programs, MEPI Alumni Network expanded rapidly. The network engages, in turn, in discussions and interactions helpful to the democracy promotion efforts.[45]

Public sector universities offered degree and certificate programs. Co-educational studies were made possible. Efforts to reform the curricula were made. Virtual clubs were formed. MEPI programs included student exchanges. Among the tasks, assigned to MEPI, was also providing new materials for

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[44] http://www.us-sabc.org/i4a/pages/Index.cfm?pageID=3597, accessed on Jun. 2, 2009.
[45] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, *op. cit.* p. 21.

improving curricula and civic education. Story books were translated into Arabic for classroom libraries under programs run by the MEPI.[46]

American officials directly engaged the citizens in discussion groups and training programs on good governance. In these sessions, democracy related ideas and skills were imparted with school, college and university students. Scholarships for learning and teaching English were offered. American Corners, functioning in different parts of the Gulf, worked as community-based information and outreach centers.[47]

In 2007, USAID through its Office of Middle East Programs (OMEP) funded MENA Peace Scholarship Program for nine Arab countries including Oman from the Gulf. Micro-scholarships were awarded to 75 high school students from Kuwait on yearly basis for English-language programs. Community service projects and in-class elections were made components of the language programs. The purpose of these components was to inculcate the value of civic participation and democratic spirit in the students. In 2007, around 200 high school students from Kuwait availed the micro-scholarships. In the same year, under an exchange and study program, 16 high school students from Kuwait were sent to the United States who stayed there for one year.

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[46] *Ibid.*, p. 16.

[47] http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/afdr/2009/nea/122955.htm, accessed on Aug. 4, 2009.

In February 2008, high school students in Kuwait were trained by an American cultural envoy in writing and performing plays intended to impart political awareness. An award-winning female recording artist was invited to Kuwait on a visit by the U.S. officials in 2008. She trained high school girls on how to dramatize their problems and issues related to discrimination against various social groups.

Qatar University College of Law was provided technical support by an American implementing partner for curricular reform. Another partner shared technical expertise with the Supreme Education Council of Qatar to implement a program in middle schools for legal and civic education and improvement of curriculum.

In collaboration with the UAE Academy, University of Washington (UW), a public-sector American university, offered certificate programs in Abu Dhabi. The initiative was launched under University of Washington Educational Outreach (UWEO). Young job seekers were the main target. Quite interestingly, among the participants, females were more than 80 percent. It was a rare opportunity for the females to be part of such programs at graduate level and learn in an open environment. Despite the fact that females are much more in higher education institutions than their male counterparts, they have far lesser opportunities of visiting abroad or studying in western universities. In these circumstances, the

initiatives of this sort by the American universities were greatly helpful in popularizing liberal values and culture among people in the Gulf.[48]

The certificate programs offered by the University of Washington were helpful in a number of ways and served many purposes with reference to democratic promotion. The classes and sessions had a liberal environment. Male and female students were not segregated. A co-educational environment provided them the rare opportunity to interact with opposite sexes without unnecessary restrictions. Furthermore, the curricula and the content were same as taught at the University of Washington's main campus in Seattle. A part of the faculty members was also from the University of Washington and the remaining faculty was either trained or approved by the university. The concepts of teamwork and critical thinking are not generally emphasized in educational institutions in the Emirates. The University of Washington's programs put a greater emphasis on inculcating the two values among the students. UWEO program manager, Marisa Nickle, reflected, "We're getting these women and men ready for a co-ed workplace.... It's fun to watch them interact. They're not quite sure how to behave at first," she observed. How do these programs play a role in causing a change in the sociopolitical dynamics of a society, the program manager explains:

> These programs bring us closer to humanizing the politics.... People walk in with preconceived notions.... We have two veiled women with gloves

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[48] http://www.outreach.washington.edu/uweo/press/releases/010172008_abud habi.asp, Jan. 7, 2008, accessed on Apr. 26, 2009.

> and two men with beards and short robes in our programs—all signs of religious conservatism. But these four participate well,...and all are professional, engaged and interact with both genders. It's a real stereotype buster.[49]

Such activities contributed to cross-cultural exposure and carry a potential to lead to new exchange programs, hopes Dave Szatmary, Vice Provost UWEO. The initiative launched by the University of Washington has a potential to "serve as a launching pad for growth in the region,"[50] he comments.

Undergraduate and graduate degree programs were launched in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, by Michigan State University (MSU), another public-sector American university. According to MSU Provost, Kim Wilcox, MSU will ensure quality, and the programs and the courses are under its own authority. Activities in the field of research were also conducted by the MSU. In order to see a positive change in the region, educational sector cannot be ignored and a strong presence of western educators is required to achieve the goal, opines Simon, President MSU. He points out that "there are strong indicators that collaborations can have lasting regional impact."[51]

Students from Bahrain, Oman, and Saudi Arabia were provided opportunities to visit and join American universities.[52] The efforts were made to

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[49] *Ibid.*

[50] *Ibid.*

[51] http://news.msu.edu/story/799/, May 18, 2007, accessed on Apr. 26, 2009.

[52] "Middle East Students Learn about America in the Mid-West," *Purdue News,* Jul. 14, 2004.

encourage more and more students from the Arab countries to join American universities or their affiliated institutions in the region.

One of the main purposes of student exchanges was to encourage discussion of political freedoms for the people being ruled by authoritarian regimes. Similarly, the main purpose of updating the curricula was to promote discussion on democracy so that people think about and demand participatory governance in future.[53]

Student council elections were facilitated at local universities. The elections were seen as expanding the role of youth in the decision-making process. Furthermore student elections provide the university students an experience of democratic process. The elections also help them learn the benefits of electoral process and politics.[54]

4.V Strengthening Civil Society and Media

A strong civil society is also one of the preconditions to democratize a certain society. The Bush Administration also made it a fundamental part of its democracy promotion in the Gulf. Strategies were devised and programs were implemented according to the requirements of socio-cultural environment of the Gulf region. In most of the Gulf countries, civil society organizations are not

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[53] http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/afdr/2009/nea/122955.htm, accessed on Aug. 4, 2009.
[54] *Ibid.*

permitted under law. In other cases, where they exist, function under severe legal restrictions.

The U.S. government under Bush made efforts on all fronts to promote awareness about the vitality of a strong civil society for social and political development. Diplomatic, moral, financial, and technical support was provided to achieve the goal of strengthening civil society in the Gulf countries.

Like political reform, the civil society sector gained more attention of the MEPI over time.[55] Support was provided for a project to reform the civil society law in order to lessen the gap between the government and civil society in Bahrain. In January 2008, 56 teachers were trained in the country under an American-funded civic-education program. Small grants were provided for strengthening NGOs in Kuwait. The U.S. embassy in Kuwait initiated a series of bimonthly informal meetings in 2007. The meetings were attached by individuals from NGOs and diplomats.

U.S. ambassador in Oman encouraged reformers and civil society activists by inviting them from time to time to the embassy events. The American officials in Qatar also held informal roundtable discussions and emphasized the value of civic participation. Exchange programs for Qatari civil activists and potential NGO leaders were sponsored. U.S. speaker programs were hosted jointly by the

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[55] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

United States and local civil society organizations in Saudi Arabia to encourage civil society development.

Attention to promote civil society and promote civic education gained more importance in American democracy promotion. Allocation of U.S. democracy funds to civil society was one third in 1997. By 2002, it had increased to 48 percent.[56]

Like other sectors, media does not enjoy freedom in the Gulf. Freedom of expression is severely compromised. In most of the Gulf countries, discussing politics or criticizing the hereditary authoritarian regimes is not allowed. Because of fear of the wrath of the regimes, media organizations and journalists practice self-censorship. To promote independence of media and freedom of expression in the Gulf, the American government provided financial and technical support to journalists and media associations. Training programs and media exchange programs were also arranged and scholarships were offered.

Some of the training programs were organized or financed by the MEPI. Some of the governments in the Gulf censor internet websites. Global Online Freedom Act (H.R. 275) for enhancing freedom of expression on the internet, passed in 2007, is a key tool to address the issue in Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries.

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[56] Richard Youngs, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

It asks American businesses not to deal with the countries where governments censor internet.[57]

In 2007, two Kuwaiti journalists visited the United States under an exchange program. The purpose of their visit was to observe first-hand journalistic practices in the United States. The two journalists visited media schools and institutions. In the same year, Kuwait Journalists Association (KJA) was provided funds for drafting an amendment to the press law. Under a grant, journalists, editors, and eight NGOs from Kuwait were trained on the production of television announcements for public service in 2007. In 2008, U.S. ambassador to Kuwait hosted roundtables for local journalists throughout the year.

For training journalists on reporting on elections, two programs were financed by the American government in Qatar in 2007. Two journalists were offered scholarships in the same year. Next year, a political cartoonist and an editor-in-chief were sponsored for professional training. The purpose of these scholarships and trainings was to improve journalism standards and media professionalism in Qatar.

Hosts of radio and television talk shows from Saudi Arabia were engaged when a media exchange program was launched in March 2008. Among the

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[57] http://www.cdhr.info/Campaigns/USLegislation, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009.

program objectives were sharpening professional skills and promoting democratic values.

The U.S. government provided funds for training journalists from Bahrain on the problem of human trafficking. The American embassy in the United Arab Emirates facilitated cooperation between media law experts from America and journalists from the United Arab Emirates when the later needed help in proposing draft amendments to the press law in 2006.

4.VI Human Rights and Women Empowerment

Human rights is an area that is flawed the most in the Gulf region. Severe human rights violations continue till today. Forms and systems of the governments in the region are the basic reason behind the miserable conditions of human rights. The Bush Administration paid attention to improve the situation. Long-term as well as short-term goals were set and strategies implemented. It is noticed that the U.S. started championing human rights in the Middle East for the first time after 9/11.[58]

American diplomats in Saudi Arabia held meetings with the National Society for Human Rights and the Human Rights Commission. Saudi Arabian military was provided training and was educated on international norms of human

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[58] Richard Youngs, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

rights. Members of the civil society and the government of Saudi Arabia were sponsored under International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) in 2008. During their visit to the United States, they attended seminars highlighting issues like human rights, rule of law, and participatory democracy.

During her visit to Saudi Arabia, the First Lady, Laura Bush, made efforts to promote women rights and attended the signing ceremony of the U.S.-Middle East Partnership for Breast Cancer Awareness and Research.

Human trafficking is the most important area when we talk about human rights violations in the Gulf. The U.S. officials in the region made efforts to bring awareness on the issue among the people, particularly workers and laborers. American diplomats in Bahrain showed films highlighting the problem of trafficking. Discussions were also held after the shows.

American embassies in the Gulf countries made contacts and cooperated with the labor-sending countries, and made efforts to check human trafficking in the region. They also facilitated contacts between foreign workers in Qatar and NGOs in the sending countries. For drafting the anti-trafficking law, the U.S. government provided an expert to Oman for guidance and expert advice and the law was passed in 2008. Labor inspectors in Oman were trained in detecting incidents of human trafficking.

For effective implementation of anti-human trafficking laws, judges, lawyers as well as law enforcement officials were trained in Bahrain through programs funded by the United States. Some other programs were implemented for capacity building and enforcing worker rights in Bahrain. U.S officials in the country also created an online forum for bringing awareness on the status of foreign workers.

In 2008, U.S. ambassador to Kuwait held a meeting with the Deputy Prime Minister and talked about the deportation of demonstrating Bangladeshi workers. He also discussed human trafficking in a press roundtable. The U.S. embassy in the country published a brochure to make foreign workers familiar with their rights.

Oqsim campaign was focused on children rights in Kuwait. The campaign was run by Zawaya, a program sponsored by Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). Under the campaign workshops were held for youngsters to make them aware of their rights.[59]

The Gulf region, like most parts of the Third World, consists of male dominant societies. The women do not have rights, in general. They are kept behind systematically in every sphere of life. For the sake of bringing true

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[59] Rawan Khalid, "Oqsim holds workshop to boost youth talents," Aug. 05, 2009, http://www.kuwaittimes.net/read_news.php?newsid=OTEwODk2MzY0, accessed on Aug. 5, 2009.

democracy in the region, women rights have to be ensured. Unless women in the region are empowered, the long journey to the goal of democratization cannot be covered at a required pace.

The Bush Administration took necessary measures in the area of women rights and empowerment. During his visit to Kuwait in 2008, President Bush held a roundtable with female activists and discussed democracy and women rights. U.S. embassy in Kuwait arranged roundtables attended by female activists and governments officials. During a visit to Kuwait, an official from the Bush Administration hosted a roundtable discussion with eight female activists in 2008. In a four-day country-wide tour of Kuwait, an Arabic speaker discussed women rights. To discuss housing rights for women married to non-Kuwaitis, the U.S. ambassador to Kuwait held a meeting with the minister of housing in May 2008.

MEPI made arrangements for Arab businesswomen to join American companies as interns. MEPI programs also facilitated female education.[60] To improve the lot of women in Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, MEPI crafted a public-private partnership. Bahrain Forum for Public-Private Partnership was launched in 2007 the forum by the MEPI and the Vital Voices. Civil society organizations and other associations from private sector were offered membership.

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[60] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

Its main emphasis was holding regular dialogues and facilitating cooperation between private sector organizations and women NGOs in Bahrain.[61]

Another example of public-private partnership is Middle East and North Africa Businesswomen's Network (MENA BWN). It is a partnership between MEPI, Vital Voices Global Partnership and local businesswomen's organizations. The emphasis is put on empowering women in the business, economic and social spheres. The partnership envisaged a growing culture of women's entrepreneurship.

MENA Businesswomen's Network was established in 2006. Three organizations—Bahrain Businesswomen's Society, Dubai Business Women's Council, Kuwait Economic Society—of the seven founding members of the Network are from the GCC countries. In 2008, Qatari Business Women Forum was also invited to join. The network's goal is to "advance the role of women in society, and promote a regional culture of women's entrepreneurship."[62]

The Network Hubs organized a wide range of events in the region including the Gulf, for example, a lecture in Kuwait on the key to leadership. Corporate Ambassadors Program of MENA Business-women's Network was expanded in 2008. Women executives from the U.S. were brought to the Network

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[61] http://www.vitalvoices.org/desktopdefault.aspx?page_id=740, accessed on Apr. 26, 2009.

[62] *Ibid.*

Hubs for taking part in various events and activities like workshops and advocacy training. To support its members, MENA Businesswomen's Network launched a web-based portal (www.menabwn.org) in January 2008. The portal carries information on a range of topics and issues related to and required by businesswomen in the region.[63]

Among the participants of most of the public diplomacy exchange program organized by the American government in Oman in 2009, at least 50 percent were females. To study Islam and women, a Kuwaiti student was offered a Fulbright Scholarship by the American government in 2008. A U.S. funded program underway in 2008, was designed to bring awareness among Omanese women of their rights through technology training.

In Qatar, a program was sponsored by the United States, designed for training female journalists. The purpose was strengthening women's role in local media. Election-training programs were sponsored for Saudi women to promote their participation in politics.

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[63] *Ibid.*

CHAPTER 5: THE AMERICAN CIVIL SOCIETY

As the Bush Administration laid an increased emphasis on democracy promotion in the Arab world, attention of the American private sector also was drawn to the goal of promoting democracy in the region. Nongovernmental U.S. organizations worked shoulder to shoulder with the governmental organizations. It does not mean that the American NGOs have not been engaged in democracy promotion in the Arab world before 2000 when George W. Bush took charge of the presidential office. But the point is that there was a mega change in the frequency as well as volume of activities directed to the cause of democracy in the region.

As we shall see in the following pages, a large number of organizations, institutions and programs were launched during 2000 and 2008 by the private American sector—civil society and private businesses. Events of 9/11 not only had caused mega shocks for the Bush Administration but also for the Americans as a whole. Civil society and businesses in the United States could not stay indifferent to the miseries of those who suffered from the 9/11 events.

A strong sense of insecurity prevailed among the Americans. This sense of insecurity mobilized the American NGOs and businesses for making practical contributions to the American security in the longer term, in particular, and to the world security, in general. The realization of the need of 'doing something' and the resulting mobilization required a concrete policy and direction. This policy

and the direction were provided by the President: promoting democracy in the Middle East.

American civil society employed all types of resources in order to spread democracy in the Middle East, including the Gulf countries. A variety of American organizations, institutions and companies made contributions in introducing democratic values, norms and institutions to the Gulf societies. NGOs, obviously, were at the forefront. Besides, think-tanks, advocacy groups, universities, internet-based groups and networks, businesses, and media companies, also played their role in this regard. Many of the NGOs were provided support, financially and/or otherwise, by the Bush Administration.

NGO activities many times cause changes in governmental policies and programs and the NGOs carry a potential "to keep governments to their own commitments."[1] As Neep observed in 2004, "A commit-ment to democracy can be supported by a wide cross-section of the American political elite: it plays a key role in rallying support for Bush's vision of the role America should play in the world." The writer suggested that "Democracy offers an ideal opportunity to reach a national consensus over U.S. foreign policy."[2] Levitsky and Way explain how the American educational institutions and civil society linkages played their role in Latin America regarding democracy promotion:

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[1] Richard Youngs, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

[2] Daniel Neep, "Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East," *op. cit.*

> Throughout Latin America, U.S.-educated technocrats—often with close ties to North American academic and policy circles—hold top government positions, and these technocratic ties are reinforced by a dense web of transnational civil society networks, particularly in the areas of human rights and democracy promotion.[3]

The authors underline the effects of linkage of the authoritarian regimes and societies to the West in the post-Cold War democratization phase. They analyze that democratization was "most frequent in countries with extensive ties to the West."[4]

This chapter deals with approaches adopted, goals and objectives set and strategies devised and employed by the American civil society and private sector. Then, awareness and propaganda campaign is dealt with. Later on, role of the research enterprise is talked about. Activities carried out and efforts made in three sectors—education, political, and cultural—are also discussed. To the end of the chapter is discussed the role of American nongovernmental sector in strengthening media, improving human rights and empowering women.

Surprisingly, much less attention was paid by the American private sector to strengthening of civil society relatively. NDI worked for strengthening and enhancing the capacity of civil society organizations in the Gulf so that they play a meaningful role in reforms. NDI created a partnership with Kuwait Transparency Society (KTS) as a part of its civil society programming.

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[3] Steven Levitsky and Lucan A. Way, "International Linkage and Democratization," *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 33.

5.I Approaches and Strategies

Paying attention to education, culture, media, human rights and women empowerment was thought necessary and strategies were devised to liberalize and bring democratic change in these and other related areas. American educators and doctors were brought to the region for the sake of introducing democratic norms and values to the people. Monitoring the ongoing situation in the region was necessary in order for planning accordingly. In-depth understanding of the states and societies was required, so a large number of research works were generated by American think-tanks, academia, and professional researchers.

Unlike the Bush Administration, organizations working in the private sector followed different approaches. Most of these organizations made efforts for promoting liberal democratic ideals in an apolitical fashion. Perhaps this is why the critics argue that the NGOs "targeted the effects not the fact of autocracy." But exceptions were also there. Human Rights Watch, for example, took directly political stances. It criticized donors "for funding human rights bodies in developing states that lacked proper independence from non- or weakly democratic governments."[5]

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[5] Richard Youngs, *op. cit.*, pp. 153, 166.

NED worked to bring together democracy activists from democratic and autocratic countries into a "community of democrats."[6] NAAP made efforts to create social and professional networks between and among Arab-Americans in the United States and other parts of the world. Promoting political interests of the Arab American community in the United States was NAAP's another area of focus.[7] Creating a network of specialists from every Gulf country was a major area of work of the Gulf/2000 Project.

Center for Democracy and Electing Management (CDEM), at the American University, in Washington, D.C. acted "to pave the way for and strengthen democracy through improved electoral performance."

Many of the organizations built partnerships and made collaborations with one another in order to maximize the impact of their efforts. American NGOs worked with governments along with the civil society and private sector in the Gulf countries. The Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) worked in partnerships with think-tanks and other private sector organizations and associations in the Gulf.

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[6] Sheila Carapico, "Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World," *op. cit.*, p. 384.

American civil society and nongovernmental organizations pursued a wide variety of goals and objectives regarding democratization of the Gulf countries. Among their goals and objectives were:

— bringing awareness;

— reforms in educational and religious institutions;

— liberalizing economic, social, cultural sectors of the societies;

— making politics participatory and pluralistic;

— improving human rights conditions;

— empowering women; and

— enhancing ties among politicians in the region.

A range of strategies and tools were employed by the American organizations and businesses including:

— Persuading governments to introduce reforms;

— debate and discussions (conferences, seminars, congresses, colloquia, roundtables, dialogues, etc.);

— education programs;

— training schools and workshops;

— generating required information and providing new perspectives;

— launching blogs and websites;

— distributing newsletters through emails;

— advocacy;

— exchanges (trips, visits, tours, business missions, etc.);

— encouraging partnerships in the fields of education, business, entertainment, etc.;

— creation of networks;

— supporting democratic reformers;

— formulation and provision of policy recommendations;

— co-education;

— provision of funds;

— stimulation of collaborations; and

— talk shows.

5.II Organizations and Programs

Two types of American organizations in nongovernmental sector played their role: (i) focused on a single area, like research, human rights, etc., and (ii) working in more than one areas. Human Rights Watch (HRW) is an example of the first category and National Democratic Institute (NDI) of the second. A brief introduction to the leading American private organizations that worked on supporting democracy in the Gulf region seems relevant here. Jeremy includes

NED, NDI, and IRI among leading U.S. organizations supporting democracy in the Middle East.[8] But IRI is not much involved in the GCC countries.

- ***National Endowment for Democracy (NED)***

NED is a private, nonprofit foundation. It is the American NGO "most directly charged with promoting democratization."[9] NED is a bipartisan organization jointly created by Democrats and Republicans. It is dedicated "to fostering the growth of...democratic institutions abroad, including political parties, trade unions, free markets and business organizations, as well as...civil society..., an independent media and the rule of law." It "helps strengthen the bond between indigenous democratic movements abroad and the people of the United States." It provides financial support to four nonprofit organizations.

- ***National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)***

NDI works to promote citizen participation, and political and civic organizations to establish and strengthen democratic institutions. NDI engages parliaments, political parties, governments and civic groups. NDI is funded by NED.

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[8] Jeremy M. Sharp, "U.S. Democracy Promotion Policy in the Middle East," *op. cit.*, p. 8.

[9] Gerard Alexander, "There are no alternatives to the "Western" model of democracy," *The Brown Journal of World Affairs*, Vol. XII, No. 1, (Summer/Fall 2005), p. 156.

- ***Gulf/2000 Project***

School of International and Public Affairs at Columbia University in New York sponsors the Gulf/2000 Project. Ford Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, and others provide financial support to the Project. It supports professionals like journalists, businesspersons, and scholars having a professional association with the Gulf region.

- ***Middle East and North Africa Initiative of Open Society Institute***

The Initiative supports other initiatives for promoting rule of law, freedom of expression, emancipation of women, transparency, and accountability. The Initiative provides grants and technical support for these purposes.

- ***Middle East Program of the CSIS***

The Program focuses on key states in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is also identified by the Program as a key state in the region. Research is conducted on socio-political change in the Middle East. Creating partnerships between academics and policy professionals in the Middle East and the United States is also among the Program's objectives.

- ***Democracy Coalition Project (DCP)***

DCP is another initiative of the Open Society Institute, established in 2001. The Project works for the advancement of democracy and human rights by conducting research and advocacy.

Table 11: American Organizations Launched during 2000 to 2008

Organization		Year
1)	Brookings Doha Center	2008
2)	Carnegie Middle East Center	2006
3)	U.S.-Saudi Arabian Strategic Dialogue (SUSRIS)	2003
4)	Saban Center for Middle East Policy	2002
5)	Democracy Coalition Project (DCP)	2001
6)	Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia (CDHR)	2004
7)	Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center (SQCC)	2005
8)	Center for Democracy and Election Management (CDEM)	2002
9)	Network of Arab American Professionals (NAAP)	2001

Table 12: Cities Where American Civil Society Organizations / Programs are Based

Organization/Program	Cities
1) National Endowment for Democracy (NED)	Washington, D.C.
2) National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI)	Washington, D.C.
3) Middle East and North Africa Initiative of Open Society Institute	Amman
4) American-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST)	Washington, D.C.
5) Carnegie Middle East Center	Beirut
6) Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia (CDHR)	Washington, D.C.
7) Center for the Islam and Democracy (CSID)	Washington, D.C.
8) Middle East Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)	Washington, D.C.
9) Human Rights Watch (HRW)	New York
10) Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)	Washington, D.C.
11) National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations (NCUSAR)	Washington, D.C.
12) Search for Common Ground (SFCG)	Washington, D.C.
13) Transatlantic Democracy Network	Washington, D.C.
14) Middle East Institute	Washington, D.C.

- ***Center for Democracy and Election Management (CDEM)***

CDEM was established in 2002 at the American University, Washington, D.C. Its goal is "to pave the way for and strengthen democracy through improved electoral performance." The Center pursues this goal by organizing election management training institutes and election observation missions.

Many organizations and programs on permanent basis were established during the period under study. Some of the newly established ones and the year of their establishment are given in Table 11. Most of these organizations are based in Washington, D.C., with few exceptions, as Table 12 shows.

5.III Awareness Campaign and Research Enterprise

In 2002, Carapico noticed:

> The availability of grant money from...NED..., the Ford Foundation, and other sources opened up opportunities for old and new research-advocacy groups to get into the democracy brokerage business. Most of them were non-profit organizations working with governmental grants.[10]

There were two types of private American organizations and institutions that took part in the awareness, advocacy, and propaganda campaign for democracy in the Gulf. First type of these organizations strove for propagating

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[10] Sheila Carapico, "Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World," *op. cit.*, p. 383.

and advocating for democracy in the Middle East within the United States. The second type made efforts to propagate and advocate at the international level, including the Gulf region and the Middle East, and at international fora.

Among the organization falling into the first category are Middle East Policy Council (MEPC), National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations (NCUSAR), and Americans for Middle East Understanding (AMEU). AMEU endeavored "to create in the United States a deeper appreciation" of the culture, history, of the Middle East and current events taking place in the region. MEPC and NCUSAR were dedicated to improve Americans' understanding and knowledge of the Arab world and the Middle East.

Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) and Arab American Institute (AAI) advocated within the United State for Arab democracy. POMED made efforts for influencing American policy "to peacefully support sustained, authentic democratic reform" in the Middle East. AAI encouraged Arab American participation in the American electoral system.

Saudi-U.S. Forum (SAF) and U.S.-Saudi Arabian Strategic Dialogue (SUSRIS) fall in the second category of organizations that work at the international level. Both of these organizations provide information and resources that "contribute to a better understanding between the people of the United States and Saudi Arabia." Project on Middle East Democracy and Development (MEDD), Democracy Coalition Project (DCP), and other similar institutions also

carry out activities at international level. DCP campaigns for a permanent UN Democracy Caucus. MEDD builds understanding on strategies for political and economic reform.

These organizations and institutions employed different strategies and used multiple tools to achieve above-mentioned objectives. DCP, POMED, and AAI had advocacy agendas, besides other strategies. SUSRIS, POMED, and DCP held roundtables, dialogues, and periodic meetings. In addition to activities in other areas, AMEU and NCUSAR also launched educational programs. AAI, DCP, and POMED conducted research along with other activities. AAI publishes a bi-monthly *The Link*. SAF maintains a website for spreading information and sends emails to the subscribers.

CDHR focused on democratic reform in Saudi Arabia and also campaigns for improvement of human rights in the country. As a part of its campaign it has issued guiding principles for blue print of a transnational constitution of democratic Saudi Arabia. The guidelines revolve around the principles of free and fair elections, universal suffrage, fair political representation, limited terms of public office, and restricted mandates.

Academic, educational, business, and cultural exchanges were a crucial part of the efforts that contributed towards pushing democratic reform in the Gulf.

High profile visits also played a role. In 2008, Jimmy Carter, for example, visited Saudi Arabia and supported democratic reforms in the country.[11]

Three of the ten international conferences convened by the Gulf/2000 Project were held within the Gulf countries. A conference held by the Gulf/2000 Project in 2005 at the University of Pennsylvania was titled as "Borders, Battles, and Cultural Bonds: A Historical and political perspective on Gulf Societies."

In 2001, a colloquium on U.S.-Arab relations, held by the AMIDEAST, was participated by a group of 20 graduate students of University of Maryland College Park and a group of 20 Fulbright grantees from the Middle East. The University of Maryland University College hosted the colloquium.

In 2003, a conference was held by the Rockefeller Foundation on Saudi-Arabian-American relations. A conversation took place between around 20 Americans and Saudis. Saudi Arabia was represented at the occasion by an attorney, a minister of state, and two members of the Shura Council. Four of the Saudi representatives were from King Saud University, one each from College of Education, Department of Sociology, Department of Political Science, and Department of Social Studies. Women among the Saudi delegation were from

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[11] http://www.cartercenter.org/news/current_qa/jimmy_carter_on_middle_east. html, Sep. 30, 2008, accessed on Jun. 20, 2009.

Effat College and King Saud University.[12] Among the American delegates were an attorney and former ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Four American universities were represented, including University of Chicago and Johns Hopkins University. Yale Law School and Center for Strategic and International Studies were also represented. The conference was first in a series. The second was held in 2004. Around ten American organizations and institutions, including Democracy Coalition Project and International Studies Association, participated in the Sixth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies in Doha, Qatar in 2006.

In 2007, CSIS Middle East Program launched Gulf Roundtable Series on monthly basis to explore social, economic and political trends in the Gulf region. Goal of the series was "to identify opportunities for constructive U.S. engagement."

In 2004, NDI-sponsored Congress of Democrats from the Islamic World (CDIW) in Turkey, was also participated by individuals from Kuwait and Bahrain. Editor-in-chief *Al-Watan Daily* (Kuwait) highlighted obstacles faced by the democratization process in the country. The Congress decided to establish an association of democratic political parties from the Muslim countries. "Islam and

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[12] Clifford Chanin and F. Gregory Gause III, "U.S.-Saudi Relations: A Rocky Road," *Middle East Policy,* (Winter 2004).

democracy are compatible" was the message boldly delivered to the journalists and politicians by the Congress.[13]

Policy makers, scholars, and activists discussed how to promote democracy and freedom in the Muslim World at the CSID Fifth Annual Conference in 2004 in Washington, D.C. The conference also highlighted topics like 'political reform in the Muslim world' and 'establishing religious harmony'. Themes like 'impact of globalization on democratization and development in the Arab world' and 'voices of Muslim democrats' were discussed at CSID Sixth Annual Conference in Washington in 2005. Voices of democrats from the Arab world were highlighted in the CSID Seventh Annual Conference in 2006. A paper on 'promoting democracy in the Arab world: new ideas for U.S. policy' was presented in the CSID 10th Annual Conference.

A paper was presented on "enabling dialogue and supporting action in Arab feminism" at the NAAP National Conference in 2007. Political reforms in Saudi Arabia were discussed by a panel hosted by an American weekly magazine, *The News Republic,* in 2003. Tamara Cofman Wittes explained American role in building Arab democracy at an event organized by the Saban Center for Middle

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[13] *Establishing a Platform for Democratic Governance: Congress of Democrats from the Islamic World,* (Istanbul: National Democratic Institute, 2004).

East policy at Brookings in 2008. The discussion was arranged in connection with the publication of the speaker's book *Freedom's Unsteady March.*[14]

In the absence of local organizations, the American organizations took on themselves to produce, record, document and share information on different aspects of states and societies in the Gulf countries.

Newswires, digests, blogs, and bulletins generated huge volumes of information and contributed towards highlighting the human rights and political conditions in the region. Among these is the *Arab Reform Bulletin*. It is an online publication issued on monthly basis by the Carnegie Endowment. Weekly *Democracy Digest* is published by the Transatlantic Democracy Network and produced by the NED. Transatlantic Democracy Network is a joint venture of the World Movement for Democracy, based in Washington, D.C., and the Freedom House.

CDHR operates a blog and a Facebook profile. It also distributes a biweekly newsletter to about 5,000 recipients all over the world. *GulfWire Digest* is published by NCUSAR. The Council also maintains a website *arabialink.com.*

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[14] Tamara Cofman Wittes, *Freedom's Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy,* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2008).

understanding of the policy choices facing American decision makers" in the Middle East.[16] Doha Center, through its research work, makes efforts to bridge the gap between the Muslims of the Gulf region and policy makers in the United States. A brief introduction to some of the other institutions, that conducted research on the subject and related issues, seems to be necessary here.

- ***Middle East institute***

The Institute is among the well-known institutions working on the Middle East. The Institute publishes the *Middle East Journal*, instructs students in history and culture of the region, and houses a well-established library with valuable collection of source materials.

- ***Center for Islam and Democracy (CSID)***

Based in Washington, CSID focuses on the subjects of democracy and Islamic political thought and modern Islamic perspectives on democracy.

- ***Middle East Program of the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)***

CSIS carries out research and analysis and designs policy initiative with reference to the dynamics of change in future. Middle East Program of the CSIS

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[16] www.brookings.edu/saban.aspx, accessed on May 7, 2010.

conducts research on changing patterns of geopolitics and economics of the Gulf countries. The program promotes understanding of the challenges faced by and the opportunities rising in the region.

- ***Middle East Policy Council (MEPC)***

Washington-based, MEPC focuses on stimulating discussion and expanding understanding American foreign policy towards the Middle East and related issues. *Middle East Policy* Journal not only addressed issues facing the Gulf region collectively but also published research papers on topic related to individual countries in the region. Studies like "Democratization in the Gulf Monarchies," "The Gulf Sovereign Wealth Funds," "Measuring the Democracy Gap," "Arab Women's Development," "Democracy in the Arab Region," "Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East," and "The 2002 Arab Human Development Report: Implications for Democracy," addressed the issues at the regional level. Other papers focusing at individual GCC countries, published in the *Middle East Policy* were tilted like, "A Vision of Oman," "The Politics of Succession in Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates," and "Oman's Progress toward Participatory Government."

- ***Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center (SQCC)***

SQCC of the Middle East Institute was founded in 2005. It conducts research on the culture of the Gulf region. The Center has outreach programs and

carries out cultural activities bringing artists together from the Gulf and the United States together.

- ***Carnegie Endowment for International Peace***

Experts at the Endowment emphasize on the need of political reform in the Arab world. Its Carnegie Middle East Center, established in 2006 in Beirut, focuses on political and economic developments in the Arab world. It aims at creating a better understanding of the political process in the Arab countries. Carnegie experts conducted studies on Bahrain's experimentation with political reform, transformation in Kuwait, political liberalization in Oman, increased domestic political participation in Qatar, the possibility of political reform in Saudi Arabia, and ongoing liberalization in the United Arab Emirates.

- ***Washington Report on Middle East Affairs (WRMEA)***

The Report analyzes developments in the Middle East and American foreign policy towards the region. The report highlights issues like electoral process and modernization of education[17] in the Gulf countries.

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[17] Delinda C. Hanley, "Municipal Election Results Surprise Saudi Arabian Voters," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs,* (Apr. 2005); Delinda C. Hanley, "Qatar's Education City is building bridges to a better future," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs,* Aug. 2007.

- ***Middle East Media Research Institute (MEMRI)***

To bridge the language gap, MEMRI provides translations of the news and analyses published in the Middle Eastern Arabic and other media. The Institute also analyzes political, social, cultural trends in the region.

- ***Middle East Research and Information Project (MERIP)***

The major activity of the non-profit, nongovernmental, Washington-based MERIP is publishing *Middle East Report*. The report publishes news and perspectives on the Middle East and analyzes events and developments in the region.

- ***Center for Democracy and Human Rights in Saudi Arabia (CDHR)***

CDHR conducts research on topics related to human rights, religious tolerance, and women empowerment in Saudi Arabia. The Center provides thought-provoking analyses and interpretations of the events taking place and policies formulated and implemented in Saudi Arabia.

- ***Arab Reform Initiative***

It focuses on developing a program for democratic reform in the Arab countries through mobilizing the researchers' community in the Arab world. It

aims at promoting democratic reform by providing policy recommendations. The Initiative conducts surveys, organizes training programs, sponsors task forces, and produces country studies and policy briefs.

Network of Democracy Research Institutes (NDRI) of NED is an association of research institutes, centers and programs that conduct research on democracy and democratization. Gulf Research Center, Dubai is the only member of the network from the Middle East. Total members are around 80 institutions from across the world.

The *Journal of Democracy* may be taken as the leading one among the journals which contributed considerably to the subject during 2000 to 2008. The journal of democracy is published by the Johns Hopkins University Press. It is housed in National Endowment for Democracy in Washington, D.C. and is a part of the International Forum for Democratic Studies. Papers appearing in the journal explored a variety of aspects of democracy and democratization in the Gulf region. One of the papers talked about *emirs* and parliaments in the Gulf. Another paper explained the democratic stirrings in Saudi Arabia.[18] Papers appearing in the journal by Saad Eddin Ibrahim and Vali Nasr highlighted the "Muslim" dimension of democracy.[19] Alfred Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson co-

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[18] Michael Herb, "Democratization in the Arab World?" *op. cit.*; Jean-Francois Seznec, "Democratization in the Arab World?" *op. cit.*

[19] Saad Eddin Ibrahim, "Towards Muslim Democracies," *op. cit.*; Vali Nasr, "The Rise of "Muslim Democracy"," *op. cit.*

authored on "electoral gap" and "exceptionalism" and their "Arab" and "Muslim" aspects. Another paper on Muslim exceptionalism was contributed by Sanford Lakoff.[20]

In the light of surveys conducted by the Freedom House in 2005 and 2006, Arch Puddington highlighted the ups and down of democracy in the Arab Middle East in the *Journal of Democracy*. Adrian Karatnycky elucidated the democratic gap in the context of the 2001 Freedom House Survey.[21] Mark Tessler in collaborations with Jamal and Gao made attempts to gauge Arab attitudes towards democracy.[22] Thomas Carothers and others overviewed democratic promotion in the historical perspective.[23]

Middle East Journal published 75 items in roughly 52 years from 1947 to 1999 (averagely 1.4 items per year) on the Gulf. But the journal published 31

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[20] Alfred Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson, "An "Arab" more than "Muslim" Electoral Gap," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 14, No. 3, (Jul. 2003); Alfred Stepan and Graeme B. Robertson, "Arab, Not Muslim Exceptionalism," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 15, No. 4, (Oct. 2004); Sanford Lakoff, "The Reality of Muslim Exceptionalism," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 15, No. 4, (Oct. 2004).

[21] Arch Puddington, "The 2006 Freedom House Survey: The Pushback against Democracy," *op. cit.*; Aili Piano and Arch Puddington, "The 2005 Freedom House Survey: Progress in the Middle East," *op. cit.*; Adrian Karatnycky, "The 2001 Freedom House Survey: Muslim Countries and the Democracy Gap," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 13, No. 1, (Jan. 2002).

[22] Amaney Jamal and Mark Tessler, "The Democracy Barometers: Attitudes in the Arab World," *Journal of Democracy,* Vol. 19, No. 1, (Jan. 2008); Mark Tessler and Eleanor Gao, "Gauging Arab Support for Democracy," *Journal of Democracy,* vol 16, No. 3, (Jul. 2005).

[23] Thomas Carothers *et al.*, "A Quarter-Century of Promoting Democracy," *op. cit.*

items in eight years from 2000 to 2008 on the region (averagely 3.9 items per year). The average is around three times higher than it was in the previous period.

Papers published in the *Middle East Journal* debated various dimensions of democracy-related issues in the region. A few examples of the papers discussing the subject at the regional level were "Arab Intellectuals and the Bush Administration's Campaign for Democracy,"[24] "Democracy, "Arab Exceptionalism," and Social Science," "Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World," "The Nature of Succession in the Gulf," "Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World." [25] Among the papers debating the subject at the state level were "Kuwait's Democratic Experiment in its Broader International Context," "Between Islamists and Liberals: Saudi Arabia's New "Islamo-Liberal" Reformists."[26]

Journals of *Democracy and Society* and *Middle East Policy* of the Middle East Policy Council published extensively on the democratization in the Gulf. *Arab Studies Quarterly* (ASQ) published research works on topics including

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[24] Sami E. Baroudi, "Arab Intellectuals and the Bush Administration's Campaign for Democracy," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 61, No.3, (Summer 2007).

[25] Iliya Harik, "Democracy, "Arab Exceptionalism," and Social Science," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 60, No. 4, (Autumn 2006); Sheila Carapico, "Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World," *op. cit.*; J.E. Peterson, "The Nature of Succession in the Gulf," *op. cit.*; Michael Herb, "Princes and Parliaments in the Arab World," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 58, No. 3, (Summer 2004).

[26] Steve Yetiv, "Kuwait's Democratic Experiment in its Broader International Context," *Middle East Journal*, Vol. 56, No. 2, (Spring 2002); Stéphane Lacroix, "Between Islamists and Liberals," *op. cit.*

organizing Arab-American professionals and representation of Arabs in the media.[27] ASQ is an academic journal. It was established by Eastern Michigan University (EMU), Michigan, USA. Carnegie Endowment for International Peace published many works on the subject including *Essays on Democracy Promotion*[28] by Carothers.

In 2008, NED provided a grant of 63,000 U.S. dollars to SFCG for publishing 40 articles from Gulf countries on its website and other publications.

5.IV Political, Cultural, and Education Sectors

Activities focused on political sector included conferences, seminars, training sessions, workshops, and study missions. NDI and CDEM were more active than other organizations in this sector. Though, NDI carried out activities for youth, students, and journalists, it paid more attention to municipal councils and political societies.

NDI convened programs for the purpose of formation of a Gulf Municipal Councils Association. Efforts were also made by NDI for institutionalization of an annual conference of the Gulf municipalities. The objective of these efforts

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[27] Jamil Jreisat, "Organizing Arab-American Professionals: AAUG and Me," *Arab Studies Quarterly (ASQ)*, Vol. 29, No. 3-4, (2007); Steven Salaita, "Curricular Activism and Academic Freedom: Representations of Arabs and Muslims in Print and Internet Media," *Arab Studies Quarterly (ASQ)*, Vol. 30, No. 1, (2008).

[28] Thomas Carothers, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion,* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2004).

was to enable municipal officials to get organized and influence the GCC political system in a better way. It was based on the logic that "by aggregating resources, expertise and influence, the regional institutions will have a greater impact." The NDI provided technical assistance for the creation of the Gulf Municipal Councils Association on a request by the GCC leaders. An annual Gulf municipalities' conference was approved by the GCC ministerial committee in 2005. Thus, efforts made by the NDI became successful in this regard.

NDI held a seminar in 2005 as an effort to assist Saudis in political modernization. In Bahrain, NDI assisted political societies in drafting a proposed alternative legislation which was passed by the Nuwab Council in 2005.

A group of 21 municipal leaders from Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Kuwait, and Bahrain participated in a Foundational Workshop on Creating and Managing an Association in 2006, organized by the NDI. Later, a group of 10 municipal leaders from Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar was taken to the United States on a week-long study tour. In 2007, a group of Saudi municipal councilors visited Spain to study the country's municipal system. The trip was organized by the NDI.

Before elections in Kuwait in 2006 and in Qatar in 2007, NDI held training workshops focused on election campaigns, communication strategies, and development of media messages. In 2006, NDI held discussions with the members of civil society and government of Qatar to push the democratic development

forward by discussing the new opportunities. In a program, NDI and Kuwait Transparency Society (KTS) trained election monitors and observers. NDI also encouraged young people for participating in elections and used internet and social networks to this end.

In 2006, CDEM team visited the Gulf extensively to examine the training needs. Next year, a group of 20 election practitioners from Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar and other countries participated in a week-long institute on democracy and elections, organized by the CDEM.

In 2007, NDI launched a 13-month program in collaboration with Qatari Permanent Elections Committee (PEC) to make the Qatari people aware of their electoral system and to encourage them for voting and participating in elections. The PEC staff and volunteers were also trained during the program. The participants were sensitized on the subjects like the responsibilities of the Shura Council and its role.

From Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and other regional countries, a group of 25 participated in an Election Management Training Institute in 2008. Sponsored by the MEPI, the training institute was organized by CDEM in Washington, D.C. Among the participants were election practitioners, and members of civil society, media, and parliaments. The training institute's focus was on best practices in election management.

Cultural sector, in fact, was a less emphasized area. During the study, almost no direct activities by the Bush Administration were encountered designed to change the local cultures in the Gulf. Similarly, during the data collection and literature review, only few of the American NGOs were found carrying out activities in the cultural sector. However, the private sector, though only to some extent, did engage in collaborations and investments in the cultural sector.

In 2006, Guggenheim Foundation in New York launched Guggenheim Abu Dhabi having global art, exhibitions and education programs.[29] In 2007, New York Film Academy announced establishment of its Abu Dhabi branch (NYFA-Abu Dhabi). It was a milestone in the direction of establishing Abu Dhabi as a center for television and film in the Gulf. Professionals from different parts of the world are among its faculty. Curricula offered are same as at other locations of the New York Film Academy.[30]

American Swimming Coaches Association (ASCA) in collaboration with the UAE Swimming Association launched a plan in 2007, for uplifting the profile of swimming sports in the Gulf region. "Swimming has been an unlucky sport in the United Arab Emirates. But with this initiative I can see the changes it will undergo in a few months. And by 2010, we will witness a swimming revolution in

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[29] www.guggenheim.org/abu-dhabi, accessed on Apr. 26, 2009.

[30] www.abudhabifilmschool.com, accessed on Apr. 29, 2010.

the country," Dr. Ahmad Sa'ad Al Sharif, General Secretary of the Dubai Sports Council (DSC) expected.

Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC), though registered as a Swiss Foundation, among its founders were American organizations like Open Society Institute, Ford Foundation, and many others. It was launched in 2004. The Fund aims at promoting freedom of cultural expression in the Arab societies. Its policies also foster economic liberalization in the region. Supporting cultural research and stimulating cultural exchange are among the Fund's objectives.

Teune explains how educational institutions prove to be vehicles of socio-political transformation in different parts of the world:

> Helping democracy develop globally...will...require involvement of innovative institutions in the established democracies. The opportunities are in an engaged set of universities and other educational institutions that are global in aspiration, that have linkages to local societies around the world, and that are receptive to students from everywhere. The immediate future of global democracy depends on these institutions.[31]

Campuses of and programs offered by the American universities in the Gulf play their role in popularizing democracy in the region. Students who go to the United States for education purposes also get a taste of democratic culture and system. After getting back, they are more likely to behave in a democratic way

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[31] Henry Teune, "Global Democracy," *op. cit.*, p. 33.

compared to their compatriots. All four women elected in Kuwait last year, for instance, had acquired PhD degrees from the United States.[32]

Many American educational institutions established their campuses or launched degree and certificate programs in the Gulf region. Some of these institutions and the year of their establishment are given in the following Table 13.

Having a comparative look at six American educational institutions—New York University (NYU) Abu Dhabi, New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) Abu Dhabi, Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) Dubai, Northwestern University (NU) Qatar, American University (AU) of Kuwait, and Carnegie Mellon university Qatar—in the Gulf countries reveals that American private education institutions engage students in the Gulf countries almost at all levels—school, college, and university.

Not only programs in engineering, technology, management, and other sciences are offered but also in the areas of humanities, liberal arts, fine arts, performing arts, and behavioral and social sciences.

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[32] http://www.ndi.org/node/15508, accessed on Dec. 23, 2009.

Table 13: American Educational Institutions Established in the Gulf during 2000–2008

Institutions	Year of Establishment
1) Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) Dubai	2008
2) New York University (NYU) Abu Dhabi	2005
3) New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) Abu Dhabi	2005
4) Carnegie Mellon University (CMU) Qatar	2004
5) The Harvard Medical School Dubai Center	2004
6) American University of Kuwait (AUK)	2003
7) AMIDEAST office in Muscat, Oman	2008

These institutions bring at least a part of faculty from the United States, mainly from their main campuses in different American cities. Main campuses of these institutions are in Greenwich Village, New York (NYU), Old Westbury, New York (NYIT), Rochester, New York (RIT), Evanston, Illinois (NU), Washington, D.C. (AU), and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (CMU). The faculty is also highly qualified in the American colleges and universities in the Gulf. American University of Kuwait, for example, has 50 of its undergraduate faculty with PhD degrees.

As these institutions claim, curricula and education standards they offer are same as or identical to those their head branches offer in the United States.

Language of instruction is English and classes are coeducational. The values these American institutions espouse liberalism and democracy promotion. New York University, for example, promotes academic freedom and encourages students to challenge bodies of knowledge, ideas, and cultural traditions. AUK, like others, promotes critical thinking, encourages freedom to engage in academic inquiry, and aims at creating leaders. RIT Dubai aims at development of human capital in the Gulf region. Many of the institutions offer sports opportunities for their male and female students. New York University has athletic facilities for both men and women. Carnegie Mellon University Qatar aims at transcending traditional disciplinary boundaries and inculcating leadership qualities among the students.

Beginning in 2006, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) helped in establishing the Masdar Institute of Science and Technology, Abu Dhabi. "Making a meaningful contribution towards sustainable human development" is among the Masdar Institute's objectives. MIT conducts scholarly review of the Masdar Institute's potential faculty members. Full time faculty of the Masdar Institute spends one year at MIT in Cambridge where they work with the MIT faculty.

Harvard University joined hands with the Dubai Health Care City and established the Harvard Medical School Dubai Center in 2004. The Center aims at development of professionals in the fields of health and medicine. To promote breast cancer education in the region, Susan G. Komen Breast Cancer Foundation,

based in Dallas, Texas, partnered with the UAE government. The UAE government was also helped by the faculty of Hopkins' Bloomberg School of Public Health based in Baltimore, Maryland in establishing a public health doctoral program in the country.

Washington-based American-Mideast Educational and Training Services, Inc. (AMIDEAST) has field offices in many countries in the region, including Kuwait, Oman, and United Arab Emirates. It provides educational advising and English language trainings in these countries and administers academic exchange programs. In addition to providing services in all seven emirates of the UAE, it administered the Military Language Institute in the country. The Institute provides language trainings to military officers and personnel. For its online courses, AMIDEAST has registration offices in four—Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, and United Arab Emirates—of the six GCC countries.

5.V Media, Human Rights, and Women Empowerment

Workshops and trainings were organized and visits were sponsored by the American nongovernmental sector for strengthening media and promoting freedom of expression in the Gulf. NDI was among the leading institutions in this regard. It supported a roundtable discussion, for example, organized for journalists working with Arabic newspapers in Qatar. The purpose of discussion was to comprehend the lessons learnt from reportage of the previous elections.

A five-day training workshop was organized by Search for Common Ground (SFCG), headquartered in Washington, D.C., for producers, news anchors, and directors of Al Jazeera in Qatar. An emphasis was laid on production of talk shows.

In another workshop, media professionals from the United States took part along with online writers and journalists from the Gulf. The focus was on exploring the role of new forms of media influencing public debate. Case studies from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain were presented during the workshop that proved to be a fruitful opportunity for interaction between media professionals from the Gulf and the United States. A senior news editor from Internet based American newspaper, *Huffington Post,* explained the newspaper's role during the 2008 Elections in the United States.[33]

In 2008, in collaboration with Imagination Abu Dhabi, National Geographic Entertainment committed 100 million U.S. dollars for the production of 10 to 15 films. National Geographic Cinema Ventures and National Geographic Films were also engaged in this project.[34]

A group of journalists from Saudi Arabia visited the United States under a sponsorship program of NDI. The delegation held meetings and discussions with

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[33] Samar Fatany, "Online Journalism in the Gulf," Jun. 17, 2009, www.saudi-us-relations.org, accessed on Jun. 24, 2009.

[34] www.admedia.ae/english/press_details.php?id=11, accessed on Apr. 26, 2009.

reporters from major American newspapers. They were trained on political reporting and media ethics during the visit. The journalists also discussed the state of freedom of expression in Saudi Arabia with American NGOs. CDHR advocated flow of uncensored information in Saudi Arabia.

Relatively, areas of human rights and women empowerment in the Gulf region were much emphasized by the American nongovernmental sector. In 2008, NED provided a grant of 87,000 U.S. dollars to the Gulf & Middle East Association for Civil Society (GMEACS) to "set up and equip a coordination office in London, launch a tri-lingual website on human rights violations in Gulf countries," etc. In the same year, NED granted 36,000 U.S. dollars to Bahrain Human Rights Society (BHRS). The grant was made for seminars and workshops on civic rights and democratic values.

In a 131-page report, Human Rights Watch (HRW) highlighted abuses against domestic workers in the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait.[35] HRW published a policy paper on Labor laws in the United Arab Emirates and provided recommendations.[36] HRW is an international nongovernmental organization that conducts research and advocacy on human rights. Its headquarters are in New York City.

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[35] *Exported and Exposed,* (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

[36] *The UAE's Draft Labor Law: Comments and Recommendations,* (Human Rights Watch, 2007).

In 2008, American professor, Professor George E. Edwards, founding director of the Carl M. Gray Law School's Program in International Human Rights Law, visited Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Kuwait. He discussed legal dimensions of human rights with government officials and relevant individuals. He explained American legal education during his visit.[37]

Human Rights Program of the Carter Center provides support to victims of human rights abuses. In his visit to the region in 2008, Jimmy Carter emphasized on the need of improving human rights in the region. CDHR continuously highlighted the human rights abuses in Saudi Arabia and provided in-depth analyses of the ongoing situation in the target country. Bahrain, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia are members of the UN Human Rights Council, through which the Democracy Coalition Project (DCP) promotes its democratization policies.

U.S. organizations played a significant role and carried out a variety of programs for women empowerment in the Gulf countries. Study and training programs were launched in the United States as well as in the Gulf countries. The programs were spread over months. Focus group series were held to highlight the issues related to women empowerment and to understand the dynamics. In 2008, NED provided a grant of 20,400 U.S. dollars to Bahrain Women Association for Human Development (BWA).

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[37] http://indylaw.indiana.edu/humanrights/News.cfm?nid=297, accessed on Apr. 22, 2009.

In 2005, Saudi King Abdullah, who was then the Crown Prince, "apparently promised...Condoleezza Rice that he would introduce reforms that could give the Kingdom an elected government within 10 to 15 years," observed Nicholas Kralev of the Washington Times.[2]

In 2008, King Abdullah pledged "to continue on the path of reform and reinforce the values of candidness and transparency and tolerating criticism."[3] Emir of Qatar, Hamad bin Khalifa al-Thani, urged the Arab governments to take into account the Bush Administration's suggestions of opening up their respective political systems. "Arabs should no longer use the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and security fears to justify delaying such reform," said the Emir.[4]

Similarly, in 2007, president of the United Arab Emirates, Khalifa, upheld his promise of democratic reform. He pledged for broadening the purview of pubic participation and empowering the Federal National Council (FNC) further as a source of legislation and overseeing authority.[5]

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[2] Nicholas Kralev, "Abdullah sees elected leaders within 15 years," *The Washington Times,* Aug. 19, 2005, *cited in* Andrzej Kapiszewski, "Elections and parliamentary Activity in the GCC States: Broadening Political Participation in the Gulf Monarchies," in Abdulhadi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani, *Constitutional Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf, op. cit.*, p. 99.

[3] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 43.

[4] http://bryanvoell.com?p=1663, accessed on Jun. 14, 2009.

[5] "UAE 'committed to democracy', http://archive.gulfnews.com/indepth/nationalday07/sub_story/1017181, Dec. 2, 2007.

Without stating the United States, head of the National Human Rights Committee (NHRC) Qatar, Ali Al Marri, acknowledged that the Arab governments in the region faced a greater compulsion for democratic change.[6]

6.I Constitutional, Judicial, and Political Developments

Unprecedented constitutional developments took place in the Gulf monarchies during 2000 and 2008. Taking the lead, Bahraini government introduced a new constitution in 2002, followed by the Qatari government, which implemented its new constitution next year. The difference between the two constitutions is the public consent. The Qatari constitution was implemented after a popular referendum in which 96 percent of the Qatari voters, men and women both, voted for it in April 2003. In Bahrain, in fact, it was reinstatement of the 1973 Constitution, "which effectively meant the promulgation of the new constitution."[7]

Both of the new constitutions of Bahrain and Qatar were, in fact, big strides towards transformation of the political systems of the two countries into constitutional monarchies. In the new Bahraini Constitution, psychological as well as physical torture and ill-treatment of prisoners have been legally

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[6] Mohammed Saeed, "Govt strengthening civil society groups," *The Peninsula,* May 20, 2009.

[7] Andrzej Kapiszewski, "Elections and Parliamentary Activity in the GCC States," *op. cit.*, p. 110.

prohibited.[8] The provision helps the citizenry enjoy a better sense of self-respect and dignity.

Both of the Constitutions—of Bahrain and Kuwait—materialized the concept of 'separation of power.' Legislation authority, in Bahrain, is now put in the hands of bicameral legislative body. The body consists of the *Nuwab* Council (lower house) and the Shura Council (upper house). The former is an elected chamber whereas the latter is an appointed consultative chamber. Both of the chambers consist of 40 members. Members of the lower house are elected through universal adult suffrage.

The Qatari constitution distributes powers among the three branches of the government. The Emir and his cabinet exercise the executive authority. Legislative authority is entrusted to the Shura Council and judicial authority to the courts.[9]

The process of separation of powers also moved forward in Kuwait where the portfolios of prime minister and crown prince were separated for the first time in the history of the country. The prime minister is now answerable to the parliament and can face legal inquiries.[10] These reforms are in fact very

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[8] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, "Generations of Gulf Constitutions: Paths and Perspectives" in Abdulhadi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani, *op. cit.*, p. 69.

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[10] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

In Saudi Arabia, a core group of women journalists was facilitated by NDI in developing a network.[38] Some of the NDI's activities were focused on guiding women on how to deal with the challenges and how to avail rising opportunities in the newly-introduced electoral politics in Kuwait. A comprehensive voter education program was also arranged by the NDI to bring awareness among Kuwaiti women on their voting rights.

In 2004, NDI joined the campaign for women's political rights and universal suffrage in Kuwait. To this end, NDI provided advocacy tools to women activists. It organized its fourth Partners in Participation Regional Campaign School after the official announcement of granting Kuwaiti women the right to vote and run for office. The Campaign School was attended by more than 70 women activists. Among them, 30 were from Kuwait. The trainings were designed to make the participants learn how to build a network of women at the regional level and how to run successful campaigns.

Before elections in 2006 in Kuwait, NDI organized a one-month program for training female candidates. Eighteen (18) of the 32 female candidates were engaged in series of one-on-one consultations with elected women from other Arab countries. Consultations were also held between the female candidates and media and campaign experts. The series was focused on voter outreach, media

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[38] www.ndi.org/saudi_arabia, accessed on Oct. 31, 2009.

strategy, fundraising, and candidate image. The female candidates were also trained on speech development and campaign messages.

A series of focus group discussions was conducted by the NDI in the wake of 2006 elections in Kuwait. The purpose was to comprehend the factors of voters' political choices. Understanding the role of women in democratic politics of Kuwait was another goal of the discussions. The findings helped NDI plan future activities and strategies.

In a five-months advanced studies program in the United States, administered by the AMIDEAST, 29 young Arab women participated. All of the participants were specializing in law and business. AMIDEAST organized another four-month career and leadership program for Omani women. The 30 participants were high school graduates from four different regions of the country. Among the participants' career interests were public relations, social work, NGO-related work, and education. The basic purpose of the program was "instilling a sense of empowerment" in the female participants.

CHAPTER 6: THE U.S. GOVERNMENT AND CIVIL SOCIETY IN DEMOCRATIZATION OF THE GULF COUNTRIES

In the last two chapters we have talked about the role played by the American government and private sector during 2000 to 2008 with reference to democratization process in the Gulf countries. Now, the point is how to gauge the impact of the measures taken and activities performed by the Americans. Was anything achieved or not? Were all those efforts wasted or did they bore some fruit?

The changes that the Gulf countries have witnessed in the post-9/11 scenario, may or may not have been influenced by the American persuasion, pressure or activities. In other words, American factor may be one of the many factors causing change in the Gulf region. The problem is how to differentiate between the impact made by the American factor and that by the other ones. Can it be explored? Yes, it can be, but only to some extent.

In this chapter, we are going to see the nature as well as level of change and reforms in the GCC countries. The linkages between the American efforts and reform in the Gulf has also been established through overviewing the reforms and changes in the areas discussed in the last two chapters and the related ones. Developments in the constitutional, political, economic, educational sectors have been take into account. Similarly, reforms in the areas of human rights and women empowerment have also been explored.

Another possible way to see the linkage between the American pressure and activities for democracy-promotion in the Gulf is to see the observations made by the researchers, analysts, intellectuals, and experts on the region. In addition, occasional statements issued by the government officials or rulers of the GCC countries are also helpful in understanding the relationship between the two variables—American pressure and efforts, and reforms and change in the Gulf.

First of all, the question needs to be addressed here is, did the democratization process moved further after 2000. Did the ground realities change in the Gulf region or did they remain as the same? Were there any practical measures taken by the ruling authoritarian regimes in the direction of democratic rule?

In order to answer there questions, two methods were employed. Firstly, a comparative look has been taken of (a) Freedom House Surveys, and (b) Index of Democracy of *The Economist* Intelligence Unit. Secondly, a thorough look at the practical measures taken and reforms introduced by the ruling regimes and changes taking place in the region have been furnished. Response of the rulers to the American calls for democratic reform is another tool to see the linkage between the two variables discussed above.

In 1999, Kuwait was the only country identified as "partly free" in the Freedom House Survey. In 2005 Bahrain also qualified as "partly free". All the remaining four countries remained as "Not Free". Statistics compiled in the

following table from the Freedom House Surveys show that the area of civil liberties made a visible progress in all the GCC countries except the United Arab Emirates.

Table 14: Civil Liberties (CL) in the GCC Countries over the Years

	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE
1999	6	5	6	6	7	5
2001	5	5	5	6	7	5
2005	5	5	5	5	7	6
2006	5	4	5	5	6	5
2007	5	4	5	5	6	5

Source: Freedom House Surveys, *Journal of Democracy*

According to the Freedom House Surveys, as the following table shows, from 1999 to 2007, the situation of political rights in the GCC member states statistics remained as the same except for Bahrain where it improved from 7 to 5. But we need to keep in mind that the survey is not the only measure to understand the change taking place in these societies. Some other indexes show a different picture. One of such indexes is *The Economist* Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy.

Table 15: Political Rights (PR) in the GCC Countries over the Years

	Bahrain	Kuwait	Oman	Qatar	Saudi Arabia	UAE
1999	7	4	6	6	7	6
2001	6	4	6	6	7	6
2005	5	4	6	6	7	6
2006	5	4	6	6	7	6
2007	5	4	6	6	7	6

Source: Freedom House Surveys, *Journal of Democracy*

A comparison between *The Economist* Intelligence Unit's Index of Democracy for 2006 and 2008 shows a bigger change in the Gulf region. Index of Democracy of *The Economist* Intelligence Unit is based on five categories given in the following table. 'Ranking,' 'Overall Score' and the areas of 'Functioning of the Government,' 'Political Participation' and 'Civil Liberties' in these countries witnessed an improvement from 2006 to 2008. All of the six Gulf States, however, remained under the last category, namely "Authoritarian Regimes" in the Index of Democracy. The other three categories are 'full democracies', 'flawed democracies', and 'hybrid regimes'.

Kuwait moved five places—from 134 to 129—higher in the ranking of states in just two years; Oman and the United Arab Emirates three places—from 143 to 140 and from 150 to 147 respectively. Four of the GCC countries also

improved their "Overall Score"—Kuwait (from 3.09 to 3.39), Qatar (from 2.78 to 2.92), Oman (from 2.77 to 2.98), and the United Arab Emirates (from 2.42 to 2.60).

Functioning of the governments improved in all the six countries—Bahrain (from 2.57 to 3.57), Kuwait (from 4.14 to 4.29), Oman (from 3.07 to 3.57), Qatar (from 3.43 to 3.57), Saudi Arabia (from 2.36 to 2.86), and the United Arab Emirates (from 3.07 to 3.93). Political participation improved in three countries—Kuwait (from 1.11 to 2.78), Qatar (from 1.67 to 2.22), and Oman (from 1.67 to 2.22). And, civil liberties improved in two countries—Kuwait (from 3.24 to 3.53) and Qatar (from 3.82 to 4.41).

Two types of responses on part of the ruling regimes in the Gulf to the American demands came to the fore. One type of the responses were meant for the local consumption and the other for the international audiences, particularly the United States led by the Bush Administration. The regimes, for example, made arguments for local consumption like that the Bush Administration's reform project is an imposition of Western values ignoring the ground realities related to the Arab cultures and societies.[1]

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[1] Hasanain Tawfiq Ibrahim, *Political Reform in the Gulf Cooperation Council States,* (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2006), pp. 30–1.

Table 16: Index of Democracy of the Economist Intelligence Unit, Comparing 2006 to 2008

Country	Rank	Overall Score	i. Electoral Process and Pluralism	ii. Functioning of Government	iii. Political Participation	iv. Political Culture	v. Civil Liberties
2006							
Bahrain	123	3.53	3.50	2.57	2.78	5.00	3.82
Kuwait	134	3.09	1.33	4.14	1.11	5.63	3.24
Qatar	142	2.78	0.00	3.43	1.67	5.00	3.82
Oman	143	2.77	0.00	3.07	1.67	5.00	4.12
UAE	150	2.42	0.00	3.07	1.11	5.00	2.94
Saudi Arabia	159	1.92	0.00	2.36	1.11	4.38	1.76
2008							
Bahrain	130	3.38	2.58	3.57	2.22	5.00	3.53
Kuwait	129	3.39	1.33	4.29	2.78	5.00	3.53
Qatar	144	2.92	0.00	3.57	2.22	4.38	4.41
Oman	140	2.98	0.00	3.57	2.22	5.00	4.12
UAE	147	2.60	0.00	3.93	1.11	5.00	2.94
Saudi Arabia	161	1.90	0.00	2.86	1.11	3.75	1.76

significant with reference to transparency, good governance and institution building. For example, there had been no legislative elections in Bahrain for almost last three decades. The new constitution also called for the election.

Though the referendum was held in 2003 in Qatar, the Emir approved and promulgated the constitution in June 2004.[11] The new constitution of Qatar established a parliament consisting of 45 members, and provided the foundation for universal suffrage. Qataris aged 18 and above were given the right to take part in elections in May 2008 when the Shura Council ratified the election law. The law institutionalized secret and direct balloting.[12]

The Shura Council has the powers to review and amend the draft budget.[13] Shura Council in Qatar previously had no legislative powers when it consisted of 35 appointed members. Now the number of members has been increased to 45—30 elected and 15 appointed.

In Qatar, if a bill is endorsed by two-third majority in the Shura Council, becomes a law after the Emir's approval.[14] Shura Council passes the budget and

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[11] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 70.
[12] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 42.
[13] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 71.
[14] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

oversees government activities. The Council has powers to grill the ministers and send them home by passing a vote of no confidence.[15]

The new constitution of Qatar also ensures rights and freedoms of the Qatari people. Right of assembly and right to form associations were provided for. Independent judiciary and freedoms of expression and religious activities are also provided for.[16]

No amendment is allowed limiting the freedoms and rights of the people they enjoy constitutionally. In Jamal Yahya's words, "The new constitution...is one of the most modern in the Arab world."[17] The Amir of Qatar also took a new measure for the constitutional development by establishing the Supreme Constitutional Court.

After the reforms introduced by King Abdullah in February 2009 in Saudi Arabia, *The Economist* remarked that "in all likelihood,...the council...will choose Abdullah's successor, in what might prove to be, even if restricted to...princes..., the first quasi-democratic transition of power in Saudi history."[18]

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[15] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 117–8.
[16] *Ibid.*
[17] http://indylaw.indiana.edu/news/browsearchive.cfm, accessed on Apr. 22, 2009.
[18] "Tiptoeing towards Reform," *The Economist,* Feb. 19, 2009.

Conservative judges in Saudi courts were replaced with reform-minded judges by King Abdullah.[19] A conservative head of the judiciary was also replaced.[20] In February 2009, the King removed head of the Supreme Judicial Council, Sheikh Saleh Luhaydan, and a number of other senior judges. Luhaydan "was notorious for rulings such as one that said it would be legal to kill the owners of TV channels broadcasting "immorality".[21]

Where Saudi Arabia is identified as 'absolute monarchy', Bahrain and Qatar are identified as 'constitutional monarchies' and Kuwait as 'constitutional hereditary emirate' in 2008 Annual Report on 'civil society and democratization in the Arab world, published by the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies.[22] Kuwait, along with other Mideastern countries "was included in the Community of Democracies forum."[23]

Unprecedented reforms and changes in the political sector were witnessed in the post-9/11 period in the Gulf countries. The momentum produced by these changes and reforms still continues. Electoral as well as parliamentary politics

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[19] Abeer Allam, "Saudi Arabia delays elections for two years," *op. cit.*

[20] _____, "Senior Saudi calls for political reforms," *Financial Times,* Apr. 28, 2009.

[21] "Tiptoeing towards Reform," *op. cit.*

[22] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008,* Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies, pp. 27–8.

[23] Richard Youngs, *International Democracy and the West, op. cit.*, p. 70.

have experienced visible gains. Political systems have become more participatory. A wave of political pluralism caused a visible change in the region.

It is observed that the post 9/11 period witnessed a historical increase in the area of electoral politics in the Gulf countries. It became possible because of the constitutional development in the region.[24] Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Oman held their first ever elections after the proclamation of the policy of democratic promotion in the Middle East by President Bush in the wake of 9/11. Qatar held its first parliamentary polls in 2007. Details are given in Table 17.

In Parolin's words, "an unprecedented wave of popular voting" penetrated the Gulf.[25] Stepan and Robertson note that Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar have "recently generated some excitement among democrats optimistic about the possibility of political liberalization, as elections have begun to play some role in these countries."[26]

A trend of increased interest among the voters for electoral politics is also visible in the Gulf countries. In Qatar, for example, voter turnout in 2003 polls for

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[24] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 80.

[25] *Ibid.*, p. 80.

[26] Alfred Stepan with Graeme B. Robertson, "An "Arab" more than "Muslim" Electoral Gap," *op. cit.*, p. 37.

the municipal councils was between 25 and 35 percent in different municipalities. But, the turnout arose to 51 percent in April 2007 polls for the municipal councils.

Table 17: Year of First Elections in the Gulf Countries

Country	Year of Elections
Qatar	2007[27]
UAE	2006
Saudi Arabia	2005
Oman	2003
Bahrain	2002[28]
Kuwait	1962

Liberals also, in some instances at least, made their presence felt and made in-roads in the electoral politics and power structures in the Gulf monarchies. In Kuwait, for example seven liberal candidates won seats out of 50 in May 2008 election for the National Assembly.

Parliament in Bahrain had become a part of its history after its dissolution in 1975.[29] In 2002, it was launched anew and the government held first

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[27] In Qatar, first parliamentary polls were held in 2007 whereas first municipal elections were held in 1999. Municipal elections were held again in 2003.

[28] In Bahrain, first municipal elections were held in 2002 whereas, parliamentary elections were held first time after 1975.

parliamentary elections in the same year. First ever municipal elections in Bahrain were also held in 2002. Three hundred and twenty (320) candidates contested for 50 municipal seats. The elections were judged as free and fair—municipal and parliamentary both. Open campaigns were launched by the opposition. Large rallies were also held even by the boycotting political associations. One hundred and seventy-seven (177) candidates contested 40 seats in the Bahraini parliament.[30]

Oman also held its first ever parliamentary elections in 2003[31] on the basis of universal franchise.[32] The first ever elections in the United Arab Emirates were held in 2006. Twenty members of the Federal National Council were elected. Remaining twenty members were appointed by the government.[33]

In Saudi Arabia, municipal councils were created by the king in 2003. Fifty percent of the municipal members were to be elected by the people.[34] The government held first elections in 2005 for 178 municipal councils. The elections were extremely contested. For only seven seats in Riyadh, there were 646

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[29] "Bahrain—Pressing ahead with Democratisation," www.thefreelibrary.com

[30] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[31] Marc Valeri, "Liberalization from Above: Political Reforms and Sultanism in Oman," in Abdulhadi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[32] Joseph A. Kechichian, *Political Participation and Stability in the Sultanate of Oman,* (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2005), p. 53.

[33] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 199.

[34] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

contestants. Voter turnout remained between 25 and 35 percent. The municipal elections in Saudi Arabia, on the one hand, "set a precedent for opening up existing consultative bodies for pluralist contestation," and, on the other, "have garnered great attention among the Saudi population and in so far helped to better place reform debates in the public space."[35]

Observers note that successful electoral experiences in the neighboring countries of Qatar and Bahrain encouraged Saudi government for holding Municipal elections in 2005.[36]

Although political parties are not allowed in any of the six GCC countries, political groups and societies are tolerated in some of these states, like Bahrain and Kuwait.[37] Political societies in Bahrain are more than 15. The societies in fact function like political parties. They form their blocs in the parliament and field their candidates in elections.[38] These political societies represent leftists, fundamen-talists, Marxists, and liberals, etc. The Bahraini government allows them for organizing open forums and distributing weekly magazines.[39] Political society leaders in Bahrain took an extraordinary step when they opposed a proposed law on political societies in 2004. National Democratic Institute helped

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[35] Amr Hamzawy, Testimony before the House Committee, *op. cit.*
[36] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 94.
[37] http:www.cipe.org/blog/?p=56, accessed on Mar. 31, 2009.
[38] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 75.
[39] www.cipe.org/blog/?p=56, accessed on Mar. 31, 2009.

them in preparing a substitute for the proposed legislation. The draft of the proposed legislation was submitted to the *Nuwab* Council where it was approved in July 2005.[40]

The Consultative Council in Saudi Arabia was a purely advisory body, but in November 2003, its status was improved as a partly legislative body through a royal decree. Thus, its members got the power to table new bills.[41] Further powers were granted to the Council in 2005 through an amendment in the Article 17 of its regulatory provisions. Previously, the Consultative Council sued to submit its decisions and recommendations to the cabinet. The amendment in Article 17 permitted it to submit its recommendations directly to the king. Members of the Consultative Council were empowered further when they got more legislative powers through an amendment in Article 23 of the regulatory provisions.[42] It was also in 2005 that the members of the Saudi Consultative Council were empowered to debate the national budget, quiz the cabinet members and obtain state revenue data.[43]

In April 2005, seats in the Consultative Council were increased from 120 to 150.[44] The government's inclination towards reform in the country reflected in the

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[40] www.ndi.org/bahrain, accessed on Dec. 23, 2009.
[41] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 96–7.
[42] Amr Hamzawy, *op. cit.*
[43] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 96–7.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

fresh nominations to the Council. Well known economists and education experts made two-third of these nominations.[45]

Since the Council's jurisdiction has expanded and its membership has diversified, its role has become more important in the Saudi political structure. In his testimony before the House Committee on the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on International Organizations, Human Rights and Oversight, Amr Hamzaway commented that "although these measures appear less significant when compared to political developments in other Arab countries..., they constitute elements of a meaningful opening in Saudi authoritarian politics."[46]

Parliaments and legislative bodies in the Gulf countries gained vigor and became bolder compared to their role in the past. These legislative institutions have come to assert their power and authority more energetically. In 2006, for example, the emir of Kuwait was impeached by the parliament. The Kuwaiti parliament, in fact, reshapes the bills put forward by the government. The parliament also checks the power of the cabinet.[47]

In Bahrain also, a government sponsored bill was refused by a parliamentary committee. The bill was intended to control public meetings and

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[45] *Jordon Times,* Apr. 14, 2005 *cited in* Nicole Stracke, *op. cit.*, p. 26.
[46] Amr Hamzawy, *op. cit.*
[47] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

street protests. The committee declared it unconstitutional, saying, it would hinder rights and liberties of the people.[48]

The Council of Deputies in Bahrain also laid the foundations of another parliamentary practice when three ministers—the Minister of State, the Minister of Finance, and the Minister of Labor—were grilled in January 2004.[49] It was perhaps because of such bold steps that Bahrain was welcomed by the International Parliamentary union in 2003.[50]

In 2005, in Saudi Arabia, members of the Consultative Council debated the women's right to drive cars.[51] In Hertog's observation, the Consultative Council of Saudi Arabia "has increasingly proved its mettle and has substantially expanded the gamut of legislation."[52]

Some of the Gulf monarchies also employed the state media in order to popularize the debate on various issues. In 2003, Saudi government, declared to televise sessions of the Consultative Council on the state television. It was for the

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[48] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–5.

[49] Abdulhadi Khalaf, "Bahrain's parliament: The Quest for a Role," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, May 16, 2004, *cited in* Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

[50] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[51] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

[52] Steffen Hertog, "The New Corporatism in Saudi Arabia: Limits of Formal Politics," in Abdulhadi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

first time in the history of Saudi Arabia that the weekly Council sessions were decided to be televised.[53]

Oman, even earlier than Saudi Arabia, decided to broadcast question and answer session of the Majlis al-Shura in 2003. Some of the hearings at the Majlis al-Shura were also televised.[54]

6.II Education and Economic Sectors

In his *Democratic Values in the Muslim World,* Fattah identifies education sector one of the main areas to be considered while thinking or talking about democracy and democratization in any part of the world. In his words, "for highly educated people, the cost associated with acquiring information about how democracy works in other countries is low, and as a result, they exhibit more support for democracy."[55]

Keeping this in mind, in the previous chapters, we have along with other sectors, also talked about the education sector. While discussing reform measures taken by the Gulf monarchies after 2000, we again need to talk, at least to some extent, about reforms introduced in the education sector in the Gulf. The

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[53] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[54] Naomi Sakr, "Media Policy as a Litmus Test of Political Change in the GCC," in Abdulhadi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani, *op. cit.,* p. 137; Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 121

[55] Moataz A. Fattah, *Democratic Values in the Muslim World, op. cit.*, p. 40.

education sector did not go unaddressed by the ruling regimes in the GCC countries.

In Saudi Arabia, for example, "the religious elite lost its exclusive control over girls' education" in March 2002. English as a subject was introduced at earlier grades in the country. In the education ministry, conservative officials were replaced with forward-looking and dynamic ones by the king.[56]

A plan was introduced by the UAE Ministry of Education in 2002 to monitor education reforms. Local committees were formed and were assigned the task to go through the school textbooks and remove the content that might include "offensive and discriminatory language."[57]

In his book *Future of Freedom,* Zakaria highlights the significance of free economy for building and strengthening liberal democracy. He explains that "a genuinely entrepreneurial business class would be the single most important force for change in the Middle East, pulling along all other in its wake." In his thinking, "economic reforms must come first, for they are fundamental."[58]

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[56] Nicole Stracke, *Institutional Change in Saudi Arabia,* (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2006), p. 21; F. Gregory Gause III, "How to Reform Saudi Arabia Without Handing It to Extremists," *op. cit.*; Abeer Allam, "Saudi Arabia delays elections for two years," *op. cit.*

[57] Fatima Al-Sayegh, "Post-9/11 Changes in the Gulf," *op. cit.*, p. 120.

[58] Fareed Zakaria, *The future of freedom, op. cit.*, pp. 152–3.

After talking about the newly-found vibrancy among the people of the region, Sayed Wild Abah of *Asharq Alawsat* explains that "the rise of a middle class has created a vibrant private sector that has greatly contributed to the popular push for reform."[59]

As it has been already mentioned in the previous chapters, Oman and Bahrain signed free trade agreements (FTAs) with the United States. Kuwait signed Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) with the United States in 2005. The United Arab Emirates, made a TIFA-Plus arrangement with the United States in 2007.

Labor unions were permitted under law in Bahrain for the first time after concluding the FTA with the United States.[60] Women related reforms in the economic sector are discussed under the subheading 'Human Rights and Women Empowerment'.

It is noted that private sector in the Gulf countries has grown to such an extent where it is now playing its part in highlighting the demands for reform in the region.[61]

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[59] http:www.cipe.org/blog/?p=56, accessed on Mar. 31, 2009.
[60] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, "What Price Freedom?" *op. cit.*, p. 7.
[61] http:www.cipe.org/blog/?p=56, accessed on Mar. 31, 2009.

6.III Civil Society, Media, and Freedom of Expression

In the past, civil society could not flourish in the Gulf countries mainly because of legal hurdles. In Kuwait, for example, Public Gatherings Law No. 65 of 1979 required prior permission from the government for holding public gatherings. Similarly, in Bahrain, Public Gatherings Law of 1973 did not permit holding rallies near security-sensitive areas and places like shopping malls, airports, and hospitals. In Qatar, Law No. 8 of 1998 did not allow establishing professional associations.

In a changed regional and international environment, the Gulf monarchies loosened the grip over civil society. In Kuwait, 15 clauses of the Public Gatherings Law of 1979 were repealed by the Constitutional court in May 2006. Public Gatherings Law of 1973 of Bahrain was amended by the Parliament in May 2006 and ban was lifted from holding rallies near security-sensitive areas, hospitals, and airports, etc. Workers were allowed to establish unions under the Law 33/2002, without government permission.[62] Qatar, even two years earlier, in May 2004, took measures regarding civil society strengthening when it replaced Law No. 8 of 1998 with Law No. 12 of 2004. Thus, the right to set up professional associations was granted to the people.[63] In the same year, 2004, the

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[62] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit., pp.* 42, 94.

[63] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

government of Qatar allowed workers to set up autonomous unions. The unions were allowed to discuss with the employers and work out solutions to the problems related to time schedules, working conditions, and wages. If the issues are not resolved through negotiations, the workers were permitted to go on strike.[64]

In Saudi Arabia, none of the independent trade unions or voluntary associations existed before 2003. Then, civil society actors were brought under the legal structure. Saudi Journalists' Association was the first ever officially approved civil association in the country that was granted license in January 2003. Later, many civil society organizations were licensed, like Saudi Pharmacist Society. Establishment of a Saudi association of lawyers was approved by the Ministry of Justice in 2003.[65]

In order to minimize the regime's sway over NGOs in Saudi Arabia, a first-ever draft law was altered by the Shura Council in December 2006.[66] The draft law was passed by the Council one year later, in December 2007. Under this law, National Authority for Civil Society Organizations was set up. Its purpose was to oversee the NGOs. The law also explained the procedural requirements for

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[64] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.,* pp. 153–4; Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[65] Amr Hamzawy, *op. cit.*; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.,* p. 162; *Arab News,* Jun. 4, 2003, *cited in* Steffen Hertog, *op. cit.,* p. 248.

[66] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.,* p. 162.

establishing and functioning of civil society organizations.[67] Sanctioning civil society organizations "has created new spaces for citizens' participation," witnessed Hamzawy. In his view, though these steps seem to be modest according to the international standards "but bold when compared to steps taken in other areas."[68] Student unions caught very little attention in the reform agenda. First ever student union elections were held in May 2006 in Saudi Arabia.[69]

In 2002, Bahraini government allowed human rights organizations to undertake political activities. In Bahrain, 65 new associations were set up in just one year, 2002. Among them were 11 political and 13 professional. More than 300 civil society organizations had come into existence in Bahrain before the beginning of year 2004.[70]

In 2006, Kuwait had 55 societies pursuing different agendas like religious, gender reform, political and economic liberalization. Forty thousand (40,000) people were members of these societies.[71] Bahraini NGOs also pursue diverse agendas including religious, civic, and cultural. Besides trade unions, NGOs of all of these types have proliferated in Bahrain. Likewise, civil society has become

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[67] Saudi Press Agency, Jan. 1, 2008 *cited in Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 43.

[68] Amr Hamzawy, *op. cit.*

[69] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 159.

[70] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*; Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

[71] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

visible in the United Arab Emirates after 2000. Kuwait approved its first human rights association in 2004.[72]

Through a declaration in March 2003, six of the political associations in Bahrain called for further reforms to expand political rights and individual liberties. The need for women empowerment and elimination of corruption was also emphasized in the declaration.[73]

Media and freedom of expression also witnessed positive changes and refomrs during the period under study. Oman set up Gulf Press Freedom Organization. Objectives of its creation were strengthening freedom of expression, improving human rights conditions, and providing professional assistance to media persons in the Gulf countries and Yemen.[74] Saudi Journalists' Association was licensed in 2003 and was established in 2004. The association comprises a nine-member board and a chairman. All of the members are elected by Saudi journalists.[75] Three hundred journalists cast their votes in the first election held in 2004 for the Association.

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[72] *Gulf News,* Jun. 29, 2003, *cited in* Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 111; Fatima Al-Sayegh, *op. cit.*, p. 120; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 93.

[73] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

In addition to the professional media organizations, private television channels were also allowed by the ruling regimes in the Gulf. In 2003, for the first time, Kuwait committed itself to permit non-state-run local satellite television channels when a private TV channel was launched. The channel was located in Dubai Media City. Before the beginning of 2005, two of the satellite channels, based in Kuwait, were functional.[76] Al-Ikhbariya was established in January 2004 in Kuwait.

Emirati authorities licensed Al-Arabiyya in 2003. It is a private satellite TV channel. It was able to earn goodwill due to its independent and liberal coverage and discussions.[77]

In Qatar, in 2004, al-Jazeera established al-Jazeera Media Training and development Centre. Al-Jazeera's English news channel was established in November 2006. When a female Saudi newscaster presented inaugural news bulletin on Al-Ikhbariya, it was itself a piece of news as it was unusual in Kuwait.[78]

A number of legal measures were taken in Bahrain for strengthening media and freedom of expression in the country. In 2002, the government passed new

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[76] Naomi Sakr, *op. cit.*, pp. 140, 153.

[77] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008*, *op. cit.*, p. 203.

[78] Naomi Sakr, *op. cit.*, pp. 144, 146.

press laws.[79] Under the new laws, none of the publications can be shut down unjustifiably.[80] Upper house of the Bahraini parliament, the Shura Council, passed a draft law in May 2007 that "would remove criminal penalties for journalistic offences." The next year, in May 2008, the Council put an end to imprisonment of journalists and stated clearly that "editors may not be sued for articles they did not write." The Shura Council also asked the media "to play a greater role in the democratization process."[81]

A series of National Dialogues in Saudi Arabia, inaugurated by King Abdullah was also a demonstration of the acceptance of people's right of freedom of expression in the country.

6.IV Human Rights and Women Empowerment

Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates established organizations for improving and ensuring human rights. Legal structures were also reviewed in some of the GCC countries in order to improve the human rights conditions. The masses were allowed to demand their rights, lodge protests, and hold rallies.

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[79] *Ibid.*, p. 153.

[80] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[81] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit., pp.* 43–4; Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 113.

The government of Qatar established its National Committee for Human Rights in 2003. Kuwait Society for Human Rights (KSHR) was licensed in 2004, one year after Qatar's. Further one year later, Saudi Arabia established its Saudi Human Rights Agency in 2005. Next year, in 2006, the United Arab Emirates formed its first human rights association.

Qatar's National Committee for Human Rights comprises 13 members. Eight of its members represent various ministries while remaining five are well-known public figures.[82] The Kuwait Society for Human Rights had been working informally for last eleven years when it was licensed in 2004.[83]

For local workers in Saudi Arabia, a temporary accommodation was established in 2007 and in the same year, a law was prepared to check human trafficking. These steps were taken "following strong U.S. advocacy." Bahraini courts have not allowed the police "to hold detainees for more than 60 hours" after 2001, when the State Security Act was abolished. The first law on labor unions was introduced in 2002 in Bahrain.[84] Political prisoners were granted general amnesty when state security courts were done away with in 2002. In the same year, workers were granted the right to strike for safeguarding their economic

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[82] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit., pp.* 153–4.

[83] Naomi Sakr, *op. cit.*, p. 153.

[84] *U.S. State Department Democracy Reports,* http://www.state.gov/g/drl/rls/afdr/2008/nea/129903.htm, May 2008; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*; Hasanain Tawfiq Ibrahim, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

interests. Next year, Oman also allowed strikes in 2003. The government of Qatar, while creating the National Committee for Human Rights, gave it the task "to ensure the implementation of the goals specified in all the international human rights conventions to which Qatar is a signatory."[85] The government permitted workers the right to set up autonomous unions in 2004.

Human rights activists had been applying for permission to set up human rights associations in the United Arab Emirates in 2004 and 2005. One of the applications was put to the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare by a group for launching Emirates Human Rights Society. The group is led by Muhammad al-Roken, who has been heading the Independent Jurists Association formerly. Another application was submitted to the ministry by another group in 2005.[86]

Workers' community has come to exercise its rights to protest and strike. In the United Arab Emirates, for example, many protests were reported in a single year of 2007. Just in the month of February 2007, Abu Dhabi and Dubai, both experienced strikes and protests lodged by construction workers. Three thousand (3,000) of the workers struck in Abu Dhabi for five days. The management had to accept their demands "to raise daily wages, include pay for Fridays, and provide

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[85] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[86] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 201.

basic health insurance to workers." In Dubai, a busy highway was closed by three to four hundred protesting workers.[87]

A rather new phenomenon was witnessed in Saudi Arabia when the government-owned National Society for Human Rights, in its first report in 2007, objected on the conduct of *mutawwa'in*.[88] Until June 2007, Saudi authorities had agreed to establishment of two more human rights organizations.[89]

First Christian church (St. Mary's Roman Catholic Church) in Qatar's history was established in March 2008 in Doha. The emir provided the land as a donation. At the same time, five more churches were under construction in the country.[90]

Sunni regimes in the Gulf have long denied Shia their religious rights, despite the fact that the latter constitute majority in Bahrain. Not only Shia, Saudi authorities have been discriminating against followers of schools of thought other than the Hanbali one. However, the situation has started to change, though a little bit, over the last decade. Bahraini government, for example, not only allotted a

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[87] *Ibid.*, p. 206.
[88] *Ibid.*, p. 160.
[89] Amr Hamzawy, *op. cit.*
[90] www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=384&key=173&parent=16&rep ort= 76, accessed on May 20, 2010.

separate television channel for the Shia, but also televised Shia events on the state TV.[91]

The concept of religious pluralism has started gaining acceptance in Saudi society. For the first time, Wahhabi scholars showed their willingness to interact with Shiite and Sufi sheikhs, after the institutionalization of the national Dialogue by King Abdullah. Shia and sufis were invited to participate in the National Dialogue in 2004. Shias in the Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia were permitted to observe their religious rites publicly. King Abudllah has also increased the number of Shia representatives in the Shura Council.[92]

In May 2006, powers of the *mutawa'in* (Public Decency Police) in Saudi Arabia were curbed through a decree coming from the Interior Ministry. The decree pronounced that "their role ends as soon as the culprits are arrested and handed over to the regular police."[93] Reshuffle by King Abdullah in February 2009 made a headline "Bold Reform" in *Al-Hayat* newspaper when two influential

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[91] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[92] Abdulaziz H. al-Fahad, "Ornamental Constitutionalism: the Saudi Basic Law of Governance," *cited in* Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 77; F. Gregory Gause III, *op. cit.*; "Tiptoeing towards Reform," *op. cit.*

[93] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 165.

but conservative religious figures were laid off. *Saudi Gazette* highlighted the reshuffle as a "boost for reform" in Saudi Arabia.[94] *The Economist* noted:

> The new appointments are markedly diverse. The 21-man board of senior clerics which issues official religious rulings, or *fatwas*, now for the first time includes representatives of all four schools of Sunni Islam, so breaking the monopoly, exercised solely in Saudi Arabia, of the arch-traditionalist Hanbali School.[95]

NGOs are now reported to have the liberty of carrying out activities for improving human rights conditions in Bahrain. The Bahraini government also took some measures for improving human rights. As a signal towards alleviating discrimination against the minorities and other excluded groups, the king, for example, appointed two Jews as members of the Consultative Council in 2002[96] along with liberals, secularists, and women. The government allowed women and foreigners legally residing in the country and owning some property, for participating in elections.[97]

Women empowerment is the areas that took lead in terms of successes, achievements, and breakthroughs witnessed after 2000. All other areas, including politics, education, media, culture, and economics, etc. remained behind women empowerment. The most probable reason being that before the onset of the 21st

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[94] "Saudis welcome government shakeup as 'bold reform'," www.dailystar.com/lb/article.asp?edition_id=10&categ_id=2&article_id=99391, Feb. 16, 2009, accessed on Jun. 27, 2009.

[95] "Tiptoeing towards Reform," *op. cit.*

[96] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[97] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 110, 112–3.

century this area lagged behind all others when women suffered the most in the region. Keeping this fact in mind, reformers and democracy activists and promoters paid most of their attention toward emancipation and empowerment of women in the Gulf. As we have discussed in the preceding chapters that attention was paid to women rights and empowerment at almost every event organized or sponsored by the U.S. government and civil society, either in the Gulf States or in the United States, or elsewhere.

With the exception of Saudi Arabia, in every GCC country women held ministerial positions at the end of 2008.[98] In February 2009, Saudi Arabia also followed the course and appointed its first ever female minister. The process of introducing female ministers in the Gulf indeed started in 2003 soon after the proclamation of the policy of democratic promotion in the Middle East by the Bush Administration.

Women, not only contested and won seats in the parliaments and municipal councils in majority of the Gulf countries, but were also appointed by the governments to these bodies. By doing so, "the ruling regimes have shown their support of an expanded political role for women."[99]

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[98] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 73.
[99] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

Table 18: First Women Ministers in the GCC Countries

Country	Year
Qatar	2003
Oman	2003
UAE	2004
Bahrain	2004
Kuwait	2005
Saudi Arabia	2009

In Saudi Arabia, liberal-feminist struggle has gained momentum over the last decade. King Abdullah "has shown himself to be an ally" in the struggle. The king appointed Nora al-Fayez, an American educated educationalist, as deputy minister in the ministry of education in February 2009. She was to run the girls' section of the ministry. The section was previously in the clerics' control.[100] The government also engaged women as members of the National Human Rights Association when it was established in 2004.[101] Women were granted the right to vote and contest elections for the board of the Saudi National Agency for

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[100] http://u.tv/News/Female-SAudi-Arabian-ministers-TV-stance-confounds-rights-advocates/4798b6ba-94a8-41e5-a1a5-658b93403759, Jun. 8, 2009, accessed on Jun. 13, 2009; "Tiptoeing towards Reform," *op. cit.*

[101] Steffen Hertog, *op. cit.*, p. 253.

Engineers held in December 2005. One of the seats was won by a woman who was the only female among the 71 candidates.[102]

Two women were also elected to the board of Saudi Journalists' Association in June 2004.[103] The first occasion, when women were allowed to take part in elections in Saudi Arabia was in November 2004. They were permitted to vote in board elections for the Saudi Chambers of Commerce and Industry. Next year, in 2005, women were also allowed to contest elections for Jeddah Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Two seats were won by women in the board.[104]

The Saudi government also removed some of the legal restrictions from civic and social life of women. In 2008, the government lifted "a ban on women mixing with men in the workplace." A year earlier, in 2007, "bans on women checking into hotels alone and renting apartments for themselves" were removed. A separate hotel was set up for women in Riyadh in 2008.[105]

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[102] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 166.

[103] Steffen Hertog, *op. cit.*, p. 247.

[104] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 96.

[105] Abeer Allam, "Saudi women push for business equality," *Financial Times,* May 21, 2009; "Women's Rights in the Middle East and North Africa," http://www.freedomhouse.org/uploads/special_report/section/174.pdf, accessed on May 10, 2010.

King Abudllah, when he was the Crown Prince had suggested for allowing Saudi women to drive cars.[106] Saudi Foreign Minister also agreed to the idea in October 2007. He also agreed to the civil society demand that the women's right to drive be framed "as a social issue rather than a political or religious one."[107]

Women were also involved in the National Dialogue and they attended the sessions.[108] Reform measures were also introduced to enhance women role and participation in business and economy of Saudi Arabia. On his foreign trips, King Abdullah for the first time in the country's history took Saudi businesswomen along. With his support, Saudi women have been able to enter in the business areas previously prohibited for women like real estate and information technology.[109]

Saudi trade ministry, in a response to female activists' demand, took away the requirement "to hire a legal representative with power of attorney."[110] Entry into the labor force was also made easier for Saudi women.[111]

Female activists and educated women have been present at sessions of the Saudi Shura Council on repeated invitations by the Council's president. The

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[106] Fareed Zakaria, *op. cit.*, p. 120.
[107] http://www.ndi.org/content/saudi_arabia, accessed on Dec. 23, 2009.
[108] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/middle_east/3784879.stm, accessed on May 10, 2010.
[109] Abeer Allam, "Saudi women push for business equality," *op. cit.*
[110] *Ibid.*
[111] F. Gregory Gause III, *op. cit.*

women have been having the opportunities to discuss with the Council members social issues concerning women.[112]

In order to expand women's political rights, deputy minister for municipal and rural affairs, Prince Mansour bin Muteb, has proposed granting the right to vote to Saudi women.[113]

In 2002, Bahrain signed the international convention on women's rights.[114] The first female chairperson of the General Assembly of the United Nations was a Bahraini woman nominated by the government of Bahrain.[115]

Starting from 2004, women became ministers in Bahrain one after the other. The government appointed Noda Hafiz as minister of Health in April 2004. Thus, she became the first female minister in Bahrain. Next year, in 2005, another woman, Fatima Al-Baluchi, was appointed as Minister of Social Affairs. Mai bint Mohammad Al-Khalifa became Minister of Culture and Information in 2008.[116]

A woman, for the first time in Bahrain, was nominated to the Civil Court in 2007. In the same year, a woman became the Vice-Chancellor of the University of

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[112] Amr Hamzawy, *op. cit.*

[113] http://u.tv/News/Female-SAudi-Arabian-ministers-TV-stance-confounds-rights-advocates/4798b6ba-94a8-41e5-a1a5-658b93403759, Jun. 8, 2009, accessed on Jun. 13, 2009.

[114] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, pp. 46–7.

[115] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 63.

[116] *Ibid.*, p. 73.

Bahrain.[117] In 2008, 32 women were serving at the level of director general in the government of Bahrain. Five more top echelon posts were held by women.[118]

A Bahraini woman succeeded for the first time to win a parliamentary seat in 2006. In October 2002, eight women ran in the parliamentary elections in Bahrain. The king's wife provided considerable support to female candidates. Fifty-two percent of those who cast their votes in 2002 were women.[119]

Six women were nominated by the king to the Consultative Council in 2003. This number rose to 10 in 2006.[120] In 2002, 34 women contested municipal elections.

The government of Bahrain also took measures in order to improve civic life of women. In 2005, the king ordered for "the enactment of laws that would end all forms of discrimination against women." Patronized by the state, Supreme Council for Women supports NGOs working in the area of bringing awareness

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[117] *Ibid.*, p. 63.

[118] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit., pp.* 46–7.

[119] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 112–3; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[120] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit., pp.* 46–7.

among Bahraini women of their legal rights. The women were also permitted by the Bahraini parliament in 2005 "to sponsor their foreign spouses and children."[121]

Around one fifth of the top positions in media organizations are held by women in Bahrain. In Bahraini schools and universities, the number of women has surpassed the number of men. With enhanced representation in the Shura Council, expanded political rights, and signing of United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) by Bahrain, the lot of Bahraini women has visibly improved.[122]

A woman was appointed as minister in Kuwait in 2005 for the first time when Massouma al-Mubarak became minister of Planning and Administration Development. Professionally, Massouma is a professor of political science and columnist. She is a graduate of University of Denver,[123] a private American University. In 2008, Nouria Al-Subaih, another woman, was appointed as Minister of State for Housing Affairs.[124]

Two women, Fatimah al-Sabah and Fouzia al-Bahr, were appointed to the Municipal Council, for the first time in Kuwait's history. Appointment of first female minister in fact followed Kuwaiti parliament's approval of historical

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[121] *Ibid.*

[122] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 66; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 47.

[123] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 106.

[124] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 73.

legislation that granted women the rights to vote and run for elections. Political rights were granted to the Kuwaiti women in May 2005.

Though, they did not succeed, 32 women contested parliamentary elections in 2006 and 28 women contested in 2008. It was, however, in May 2009, when four of the women candidates won parliamentary elections and made headlines all over the world. All of the four winners—Massouma Al-Mubarak, Salwa al Jassar, Aseel al Awadi, and Rola Dashti—have graduated from American universities. Their margin of victory was above the observers' expectations. Other women candidates who lost the elections, also fared better than they did in the past. One of them, Thikra Rashidi, got 6,600 votes. In fact, women candidates have been running effective election campaigns in a professional manner in Kuwait[125] and other Gulf countries.

Women now also play a significant role in Kuwait's economy as they control half of the economic activities in Kuwait. In education, they have not only outnumbered males but by two-third majority in the universities. Males account for only one third share in the higher education institutions in the country.[126]

In Qatar, in May 2003, Sheikha Ahmad Al-Mahmoud took the charge of Ministry of Education as the first female minister in the country's history. In

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[125] http://www.ndi.org/node/15506; http://www.ndi.org/kuwait#Political_Context, accessed on Dec. 23, 2009.

[126] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 66.

2008, another woman, Shaikha Ghalia bint Mohammad Al-Thani was appointed as Minister of Health. Thus, she became the second female minister in the country's history. Shaikha Abdulla al-Misnad was appointed by the regime as president of Qatar University in 2003. In the same year, a woman was appointed for the first time in the country as a public prosecutor.[127]

In 2003, a woman stood unopposed and won the seat in municipal elections. She became Qatar's first elected female official. The election law approved by the Shura Council in May 2008 granted the women political rights.[128] But they had cast their votes before when they took part in the approval of the constitution in 2003.

A woman was also appointed as a member of National Committee for Human Rights at the occasion of its establishment in 2003.[129] Three women ran municipal elections in 2007. Qatar University, for the first time, admitted women students in electrical engineering, chemical engineering, and architecture in 2008.[130]

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[127] *Ibid.*, p. 73; Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 118–9.

[128] Gianluca Paolo Parolin, *op. cit.*, p. 81; *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 42.

[129] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit., pp.* 153–4.

[130] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit., pp.* 70–1; www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=384&key=173&parent=16&rep ort= 76, accessed on May 20, 2010.

In fact, Oman took the lead in appointing a first female minister in the entire GCC region in March 2003. All other five GCC members followed the course. Until 2005, five of the GCC member states had appointed women as ministers. The government appointed Aisha bint Khalfan as a first female minister in the country when she took the charge of National Authority for Industrial Craftsmanship in March 2003. In 2004, Rajiha bint Abdul Amir, Sharifa bint Khalfan, and Rawiyah bint Saud Al-Busaidiyah were appointed as Minister of Social Development, Minister of Tourism and Minister of Higher Education respectively.[131]

A woman became a member of the board of the Businessmen's Council in 2003.[132] The government of Oman also appointed two women as ambassadors, to the United States and Holland. In 2008, 16 percent of Majlis al Dawlah (the State Council) seats were filled by women and 35.4 percent of the posts in the civil service were also held by women in Oman.[133]

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[131] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 73.

[132] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 140.

[133] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit., pp.* 63, 66.

Fifteen women candidates ran for elections in 2003 and 20 in 2007. In 2006, there were nine women members in the State Council and 16 in the Shura Council.[134]

Increased political awareness among the Omanese women is indicated by the fact that the number of female voters increased by 100 percent in 2003 than it was in 2000. One hundred thousand women cast their vote in 2003. Thirty-eight (38) NGOs working for the betterment of women of Oman, are supported by state-sponsored Women's Association.[135]

Oman also took the lead among the GCC countries when Omanese women made entry in the General Prosecution Office in 2004. A woman, Farah Yahya Al-Numani, became a female firefighter for the first time in Oman.[136]

In November 2004, the government of United Arab Emirates appointed a woman as minister for the first time in the country when Shaikha Lubna Al-Qasimi was given the charge of the Ministry of Economy and Planning. Less than two years later, a second female minister was appointed. Maryam Al-Roumi became Minister of Social Affairs in February 2006. Further two years latter, two more women were appointed as ministers. Maitha Al-Shamsi and Reem Ibrahim

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[134] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

[135] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.; Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 140.

[136] Joseph A. Kechichian, *op. cit.*, p. 90.

Al-Hashemi became Ministers of State in 2008. Thus, the number of women ministers rose to four in the United Arab Emirates.

In July 2003, the foreign ministry inducted eight women as diplomats.[137] In 2009, women accounted for around ten percent of the country's diplomats. A woman was appointed as the Secretary General of the Council of Ministers. Nine out of total 40 members of the Federal National Council are women. Two of the Council's eight standing committees are also chaired by women. Emirati women have also been engaged in the activities of various international bodies like International Union of Parliaments, the Union of Arab Parliaments, and the Transitional Arab Parliament.[138]

United Arab Emirates signed United Nations' Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 2004. In 2002, a network of female professionals, UAE Businesswomen Council, was established. More than 12,000 women are its members. In November 2006, another organization—Dubai Women Establishment (DWE)—for the development of women was launched.[139]

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[137] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[138] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit., pp.* 63, 71–2.

[139] *Women in the United Arab Emirates: A Portrait of Progress,* Ministry of State for Federal National Council Affairs, www.uae-embassy.org, accessed on May 20, 2010.

First woman judge—Kuloud Ahmed Juoan Al-Dhaheri—was appointed in the United Arab Emirates in March 2008. In the same year, Fatima Saeed Obaid Al-Awani became first woman registrar in the country. Shaikha Najla Al Qasimi and Hassa Al Otaiba were appointed for the first time as the United Arab Emirates' female ambassadors to Sweden and Spain respectively. In 2003, 32 women were inducted in special security force. Women account for the 30 percent of the civil service in the country.

Women in the United Arab Emirates took part in elections in 2006 for the first time. Sixty-three candidates ran for FNC elections in December 2006. In 2007, female literacy rate was 90% in the United Arab Emirates. Eighteen percent of the faculty in higher education is female in the country. More than 4.5 billion dollars of wealth is in women's control in the United Arab Emirates.[140]

6.V Paradigm Shift

In the last pages, we have seen that a lot has been achieved during the last decade in the areas of political reforms, human rights and women empowerment in the GCC region. The visible things have been discussed in the preceding pages and chapter. Let us now talk a little bit about the things that are less visible.

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[140] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit., pp.* 66, 70–1.

The 'less visible' things are mainly concerned with the consciousness and awareness that the masses in the Gulf monarchies have acquired over the past years. Now people demand their rights. They have started expressing their demands for democratic reforms, more strongly. Ottaway and Carothers note that "talk about political reform and democracy is rife...in the Gulf monarchies where such issues had been taboo."[141]

Now people have got more courage to lodge protests, go on strikes, and put petitions forward boldly for reform to the regimes in the Gulf, even in a country like Saudi Arabia. Presently, a "new reality has pervaded the consciousness of opposition forces calling for democracy" in the region.[142] A considerable change in the attitude of the reformers and masses of these countries and in the behavior of the governments has taken place in the post-9/11 period.

Pro-democracy activists now have a "safety net" provided by the international pressure on the rulers for democratic reform and upholding human rights. The democratic reformers in the region are now aware of the reality that the margin of oppression for the Gulf monarchs has considerably constrained.[143]

Voices demanding reform have become vocal as well as vigorous. In Fattah's words, "pressure on leaders of the Muslim world to...mount democratic

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[141] Marina Ottaway and Thomas Carothers, "Middle East Democracy," *op. cit.*, p. 23.
[142] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*
[143] *Ibid.*

window dressing...has given Muslim intellectuals and activists more grounds for criticizing the status quo and those responsible for it."[144]

Unlike past decades, people now do not accept certain human rights violations and do not acquiesce to the undesirable governmental activities. People of Bahrain, for example did not accept the detention of Abdul Hadi al-Khawaja, who is a human rights activist. Opposition protested and held street demonstrations against his arrest in 2004.[145]

In April 2009, some of the Saudi women started a campaign "Let Her Get Fat" as a protest against the government's decision of closing down all-female health centers not monitored by a public hospital or clinic.[146]

Women in the GCC region have acquired a new confidence first time in the history. In August 2009, hundreds of female Saudi students blocked roads and a university and staged a sit-in as protest against the alleged malpractices of the university administration regarding admissions.[147] A South Asian observer commented:

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[144] Moataz A. Fattah, *op. cit.*, p. 134.

[145] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, pp. 114–5.

[146] http://u.tv/News/Female-SAudi-Arabian-ministers-TV-stance-confounds-rights-advocates/4798b6ba-94a8-41e5-a1a5-658b93403759, Jun. 8, 2009, accessed on Jun. 13, 2009.

[147] *Dawn* (Islamabad), Aug. 3, 2009.

> The recent protest by approximately 1,000 Saudi women is rare evidence of what is increasingly being viewed as a suffragette-style movement in the making.... This incident is a clear sign that women are gaining the confidence to assert their rights and are joining forces to lobby for changes in archaic customs and laws that do little to uplift their status.[148]

Similarly, in the United Arab Emirates, women have been empowered to an extent that the nation "no longer talks of whether it is permissible for women to perform a political role. Rather, the debate is about the nature of this role."[149]

People, particularly the democracy activists have mustered up enough courage to boldly and frequently forward petitions for radical political reforms. Most request petitions for democratic reforms were reported from Saudi Arabia. More than one hundred Saudi lawyers, academics, professionals, political activists, business-persons, and religious scholars signed the petition "A Vision for the Present and the Future of the Nation" and put forward to the king in January 2003. The petition drew an immediate positive response. Within the same month, January 2003, the Crown Prince invited 40 of the petitions' signatories for a discussion. Another petition "In Defence of the nation" was made in the same year, in September 2003 to the King, the Crown Prince, and the Defense Minister. Among the more than 300 Saudis who signed the petition were Shiites, Sunnis and 50 women from different regions of the country. In the month of December, a third petition "An Appeal to the Leadership and the People: Constitution Reform

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[148] "Winds of Change," editorial, *Dawn* (Islamabad), Aug. 5, 2009.
[149] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 66.

First" was prepared and submitted.[150] A petition signed by 77 Saudi activists was submitted to 20 officials besides the King.[151]

A diverse range of reforms were demanded through these petitions like constitutional monarchy and elimination of "secret tribunals" etc. An extract from the petition, "In Defence of the Nation" is furnished here as an example of language and tone used in this and the similar petitions:

> To recognize that holding out on reform for too long, and not allowing popular participation in decision making, are among the main factors that have led our country to the dangerous turning point at which it now finds itself. For this reason, we believe that denying all political, intellectual, and cultural trends in our society their natural right to express their views has resulted in the dominance of one [religious] trend that is incapable, by virtue of its own tenets, of engaging in a dialogue with others.... This particular religious trend represents neither the tolerance nor the diversity of Islam.... Countering terrorism cannot be realized through security means and solutions only, but also by diagnosing the...factors behind it, and by immediately starting the implementation of the political and economic reforms.[152]

In July 2008, a Saudi writer and scholar Khalid Al-Omair presented a formula to the King for furthering political reform in the country.[153]

Apart from these petitions focusing on political reforms, some other petitions were also made to the government authorities. In September 2007, for example, a petition was made by the Society for Protecting and Defending

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[150] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 93.

[151] Abeer Allam, "Saudi Arabia delays elections for two years," *op. cit.*

[152] http://www.carnegieendowment.org/pdf/files/SaudiPetitionTranslation.pdf, accessed on May 10, 2010.

[153] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 44.

Women's Rights to King Abdullah to allow women for driving cars. The petition was signed by more than 1,100 male and female Saudi activists.[154]

As one of the responses on part of the Saudi government to these petitions a series of National Dialogue was initiated in June 2003. The second and third rounds of the National Dialogue were held in December 2003 and June 2004.[155]

The second round was titled 'Extremism and Moderation: A Comprehensive Methodological View' and the third 'Women: Their Rights, Duties and Relations of Education to Them'. Participants of these dialogues included intellectuals, academia, opinion-makers, religious scholars, university professors and activists, males and females. Until 2008, five rounds of National Dialogue conferences had been completed.[156]

It is observed that in Saudi Arabia, "a growing opposition by enlightened religious elements and liberal dissidents are challenging the regime."[157]

A petition by well-known activists, academics, and journalists was made in Kuwait in 2003. The petition urged the government for changing the national

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[154] http://www.ndi.org/content/saudi_arabia, accessed on Dec. 23, 2009; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 166.

[155] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 93; Hasanain Tawfiq Ibrahim, *op. cit.*, pp. 56–7.

[156] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2008, op. cit.*, p. 166.

[157] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

constitution and making it more democratic. Some of the political societies asked the government of Bahrain to discuss political reform with them.[158]

Though the new constitution was a step forward on the journey towards greater public participation. The people of Bahrain, however, desired for more political reforms. To explore the ways and means for a true constitutional monarchy, a 'Constitution Conference' was convened by four of the societies—the National Democratic Action, the Islamic Action, the Wefaq, and the Nationalist Bloc—in 2004. They issued a public petition gathering more than 75,000 signatures.[159]

In May 2009, ninth Democracy, Development and Free Trade Summit was inaugurated by the Emir of Qatar in Doha.[160] Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser Al-Misned of Qatar established the Arab Democracy Foundation (ADF) in May 2007. ADF is headquartered in Doha and supports organizations and activists pursuing democracy in the Arab world.[161]

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[158] Farah al-Nakib, "The Constitutionality of Discrimination: A Search for Women's political Equality in Kuwait," in Abdulhadi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani, *op. cit.*, p. 187; *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

[159] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 114; http:www.cipe.org/blog/?p=56, accessed on Mar. 31, 2009.

[160] Dunia Al-Mohammedi, "Qatar hosts summit on democracy, development and free trade," May 11, 2009. www.al-shorfa.com/en/article/090511_democracy_summit_nws/, accessed on Jun. 3, 2009.

[161] http://www.adf.org.qa/, accessed on May 10, 2010.

6.VI Expert Opinions

In order to see the relationship between reforms and changes that have taken and are taking place in the Gulf and role of the United States during the Bush Administration therein, opinions of the experts on the region are very helpful.

Since the experts have been monitoring the developments in the Gulf, their observations and reflections on this topic explain, at least, part of the reality. To enhance our understanding on the question whether Bush Administration's policy of democratic promotion has worked as a factor in the GCC region or not, observations and explanations coming from two of the internationally well-recognized research institutes and 15 experts were collected.

One of the two selected research institutes, Gulf Research Center, Dubai, United Arab Emirates is located within the Gulf region, and the other, Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies, Cairo, Egypt, is also in the Middle East. Among the selected experts are authors, journalists, and academia from the GCC region, Middle East, United States, and other parts of the world.

While citing the expert opinions direct quotes have been resorted to frequently in the following lines and paragraphs. The purpose is to maintain the accuracy and originality of the statements, and not to compromise on the sense and tone conveyed by the experts.

In 2004, even when not a long span of time had passed, experts began to acknowledge the positive impact of the Bush Administration's policy of democratization of the Arab world. Hayajneh and Neep appreciated the positive response coming from the Gulf regimes to the demands for democratic reform by the Bush Administration. Hayajneh observed:

> The Arab states are accepting the games according to the U.S. terms. Do they have a choice? ...they are trying to deliver on U.S. demands. You see political changes in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait, Oman,...and many others. They are doing it namely to avoid U.S. military actions.... Most Arab states have started to implement some sort of political participation at different levels and in different paces. The whole idea of these initiatives is not their convinced belief on the importance of democracy, because they do not. Why they have not thought about it when their prisons were filled of citizens asking for more freedom? They are doing it because it is a U.S. demand.[162]

Neep also highlighted the pressure exerted by the Bush Administration and its impact on reform process in the Gulf. He explained that "Gulf States have begun the process of reform with one eye on the increased stability of the region...and the other eye on the benefits that the United States grants its allies."[163] Ibn Khaldun Center, in its *Annual Report 2004*, explained that "there can be no doubt that this U.S. stance...with respect to democratization and respect for individual freedoms has been a major cause for the present vigorous demands for democratic reform within many Arab societies.[164]

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[162] Adnan M. Hayajneh, "The U.S. Strategy," *op. cit.*

[163] Daniel Neep, "Dilemmas of Democratization in the Middle East," *op. cit.*

[164] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

Two years later, in 2006, experts from different parts of the world made similar observations. From the Middle East region, Fattah and Khalaf were among those who appreciated the ongoing reform process and role of the United States in this regard. Khalaf commented that Gulf monarchies, after 9/11, face "some unprecedented demands for reform.... Most proponents of reforms within the ruling families have long conceded that they must respond to domestic and foreign demands for political reforms."[165]

In Fattah's view, "the experience of recent years indicates that the United States cannot create real democrats on the ground, but it can put statist Muslim regimes on the defensive."[166] From the West, Wittes and Yerkes, in 2006, underscored the American role in the change taking place in the GCC region. In their words, "the Bush Administration's 'forward strategy of freedom,' and its flagship program, MEPI, have clearly made significant gains."[167]

Next year, in 2007, Carothers again underlined the linkage between the two variables at work in the region. In his view, the Bush Administration's "forceful talk about the need for democracy in the region did stir up some greater currents of discussion about the question of democracy." And, as a result political reforms

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[165] Abdulhadi Khalaf, "Rules of Succession and Political Participation in the GCC States," *op. cit.*, pp. 33–4.

[166] Moataz A. Fattah, *op. cit.*, pp. 134–5.

[167] Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

witnessed in the region under study are meant to alleviate "internal and external pressure for change through modest reforms."[168]

In 2009, when the Bush Administration had gone, Tahiri, an Iranian journalist and author of *The Persian Night*[169] commented that "by pushing for democratization, Bush changed the political landscape in our region."[170]

In Craner's words, "the strategy has already borne fruit." Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Bahrain have taken important steps with reference to democratic development, he notes. Thus, "there is no doubt that Washington's pressure has worked," writes Craner.[171]

Given its dominant positions in the Gulf region, Saudi Arabia attracted more comments and explanations by the experts. Ibn Khaludun Center, in its *Annual Report 2004,* expressed its recognition saying that the pressure exerted by the Bush Administration led to the establishment of a center for debate and the combating of extremism.[172]

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[168] Thomas Carothers, *U.S. Democracy Promotion During and After Bush, op. cit.*, pp. 13–14.

[169] Amir Taheri, *The Persian Night: Iran Under the Khomeinist Revolution*, (Encounter Books, 2009).

[170] _____, interview, http://article.nationalreview.com, Jun. 17, 2009.

[171] Lorne Craner, "Democracy in the Middle East," *op. cit.*, pp. 3–10.

[172] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

Explanations regarding the phenomenon by Hertog, Bronson, Hamzawy, and Kendall coming to the fore in 2006 again testified the existence of positive link between the pressure exerted by the Bush Administration and reform measures taken by the Saudi Arabia. Hertog explained:

> The intention to cater to an international audience probably played a role in the formation of NHRA and bar association, and in the embryonic attempts at labor organization. They all followed specific phases of international criticism.... International norms were regularly referred to—something that is not traditionally a prominent feature of Saudi politics.[173]

American aid for democratic spread in Saudi Arabia was a rather new phenomenon. Bronson pointed it out, "Until recently, it was almost impossible to get U.S. foreign aid into the kingdom."[174] Evaluating the political opening in Saudi Arabia, Hamzawy analyzed that "in recent years,...two factors—international and domestic reform demands—have injected new elements of dynamism and opening into Saudi Arabia's political reality."[175] In his opinion, Saudi regime feared losing its strategic relationship with America. This is why it took reform measures.[176]

Kendall noticed and evaluated the change taking place in Saudi Arabia saying that "from a European point of view, its reform at snail's pace. Seen

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[173] Steffen Hertog, *op. cit.*, pp. 261–2.

[174] Rachel Bronson, *Thicker Than Oil, op. cit.*, p. 258.

[175] Amr Hamzawy, *op. cit.*

[176] _____, "The Saudi Labyrinth: Evaluating the Current Political Opening," Carnegie Papers, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, *Middle East Series,* Vol. 68, (Apr. 2006), p. 19.

through Saudi eyes, there is a definite shift taking place."[177] After the departure of the Bush Administration, a writer of the *Financial Times* observed in 2009 that "the kingdom...has been gradually opening up" since 2005.[178]

In an assessment, Gulf Research Center published remarked that "it appears that the ruling authorities used external pressures to restrain the Islamic currents that reject, or have reservations about, the participation of women and their assumption of leading positions."[179]

In the experts' view the smaller states also felt the U.S. pressure and responded to the Bush Administration's calls for reforms. With reference to one of these smaller states, Qatar, for example, Ibn Khaldun Center, its director Ibrahim, and Kapiszewski recognized the link between the steps taken by the regimes and the U.S. pressure. In Kapiszewski's analysis, "there are at least two reasons why Shaikh Hamad decided to broaden political participation in Qatar." The reasons included "to obtain support from youngster Qataris...and to win friends in the West."[180] Ibn Khaldun Center reported that "it appears that a major

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[177] Bridget Kendall, "Saudi Arabia's unseen reform," http://news.bbc.co.uk, Apr. 29, 2006, accessed on Jun. 27, 2009.

[178] Abeer Allam, "Saudi Arabia delays elections for two years," *op. cit.*

[179] *Gulf Yearbook 2008-2009, op. cit.*, p. 74.

[180] Andrzej Kapiszewski, *op. cit.*, p. 118.

driving motive behind the recent stepped-up pace of reform is the government's strategic decision to augment its partnership relations with the United States."[181]

[181] *Civil Society and Democratization in the Arab World: Annual Report 2004, op. cit.*

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

To promote democracy in the Gulf region is a challenging task. Authoritarian political systems in the Gulf countries, namely Kuwait, Qatar, the Kingdom of Bahrain, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, The Sultanate of Oman, and the United Arab Emirates, are the primary factors behind the deprivation of masses of their rights in these countries. As it has been discussed in Chapter 2, blatant human rights violations have been a common phenomenon in these countries. Women, minorities, and foreign workers live in these states as second grade citizens. They do not enjoy equal rights as compared to those of ruling class and religious elite.

Single family rule, for example, Saud family in Saudi Arabia, Sabah family in Kuwait, al-Thani family in Qatar, al-Nahyan in the United Arab Emirates, al-Khalifa in Bahrain, and al-Bu Sai'di in Oman, has been the order of the day in this region. All powers are concentrated with and centered around these dynastic families.

a) Findings

Western democracies, in general, support democracy in various parts of the world. Ironically, they have been non-serious towards authoritarianism and democratization in the Gulf Countries mainly because of their vested interests. These interests generally circled around access to (cheap) oil. The United States was no exception in this regard.

Despite their proclaimed policies of to promote democracy in this region, western democracies continued to look the other way every time when it came to the violations and abuses of human rights in the Gulf Countries.

But, the history experienced a major shift with the onset of the era led by the Bush Administration in the United States. Particularly, after the events of September 11, 2001, the U.S. policy of democratization of the Arab Middle East, including the Gulf countries, got an unprecedented support from almost all corners of the country. Democracy fans and activists from around the world also welcomed and encouraged the Bush Administration's policy of pursuing the goal of bringing democracy to the Arab world.

None of the former U.S. Presidents or the administrations had ever seen the Middle East through this prism. As a result, democracy in the Arab world received huge attention in the United States.

Though, historically, successive U.S. Administrations have been emphasizing on the need of promoting democracy in the Middle East, the Bush Administration, in reality and undoubtedly made a difference. The Administration's approach was more assertive than that of the previous ones.

During the period under study (2000–2008), focus of the American democracy promoters was less on democratic structures and elections and more on the diffusion of the democratic awareness, as discussed earlier. Most of the

activities and efforts either made by the U.S. Government or by the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) were aimed at imparting with the individuals and groups from the Gulf States values associated with democratic, norms, culture and society.

The approach adopted by the Administration was a gradual change through peaceful means. Working at the grassroots level to familiarize the masses in the region to democracy was thought more appropriate than any other option. For this purpose, the U.S. government as well as the civil society worked both with the Governments of the Gulf Countries as well as with the people.

Role of the Bush Administration was in most cases indirect in the sense that it provided funds to the organizations both from the Gulf Countries as well as from the United States for carrying out activities aimed at introducing and strengthening democratic norms and culture.

It was in fact because of the Bush Administration's serious emphasis on a democratic Middle East that the U.S. civil society also paid a greater attention to promote democracy in the region.

The process of democratization in the Gulf Countries required new approaches and strategies different from the ones adopted and implemented, for example, in Russia after the breakup of the USSR. In post-Soviet Russia, a number of barriers in the process of democracy were removed all of a sudden

including the right to form political parties. The people got the right to form any political party or opinions which were denied during the Communist rule while intra-party elections had been practiced by the Communist Party throughout the Soviet Communist Regime. But, in the Gulf Countries, Kingships and sheikhdoms are the rule of the day, not allowing any active oppositions. So, the democracy assistance actors face a challenge much bigger than elsewhere. In Russia, for instance, the task for democracy promoters was "to make parties and elections more responsive to constituents, and therefore, more sustainable," but in the Gulf, the job for the democracy promoters, for instance, in case of the Bush Administration and the U.S. Civil Society, was to introduce democracy in the first place. Making democracy acceptable to the ruling elites as well as the masses of the Gulf States was a crucial and primary thing needed to be done first. And it still may remain to be carried on further for many years at least. This is the reason behind the fact that efforts made by the Americans during the selected period (2000 to 2008) were sort of dialogues, debates, conferences, education programs, people to people contacts, and workshops, etc.

Among the private and semi-private American organizations that took part in the process of promoting democracy in the Gulf during 2000 and 2008 were National Endowment for Democracy (NED), National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), Center for Democracy and Election Management (CDEM) and various foundations. Among the public organizations that took part in the efforts were The Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), Human Rights

and Democracy Fund (HRDF), Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (DRL) and Congress as well.

On the diplomatic front, President Bush himself, his colleagues, and U.S. diplomats reiterated their support for democratization in the region again and again, thus making the political and diplomatic environment favorable to the democracy promotion events and activities in the Arab countries, including the Gulf.

In political sector, institutions like Shura Councils were provided support in order to enhance their capacity to effect democratic change. People of these countries were sensitized on their political rights and their role in politics and economy. To this end, awareness campaigns were launched, and exchange programs training workshops were held. Workshops on electoral processes helped people understand not only the process but also the philosophy and importance of holding elections and choosing representatives.

Candidates including female candidates were trained in a number of programs on launching successful electoral campaigns and on how to bring the voters out of their homes on polling day.

In the economic sector, initiatives like Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA) and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) were concluded by the United States with majority of the Gulf Countries. Trade missions and business

exchanges were arranged with a purpose to introduce the notions related to liberal economy and free market.

In education sector, American public and private sector Universities and academics played a part in inculcating democratic values among the Arab students through classroom as well as extra-curricular activities. These programs were launched in addition to a number of scholarship schemes launched for the Arab students, and in addition to educational exchanges sponsored by the U.S. Government and Civil Society.

A large number of Arab students both male and female from these countries availed such scholarships and got education in various institutions of higher education in the United States, where they had the opportunity to experience democracy as a culture and a way of life, thinking and thought.

The areas of human rights and women empowerment drew greater attention than ever before. The regimes were asked again and again for taking measures to improve human rights conditions in their countries and to empower women. Women were educated and trained on their rights. Women in business were provided assistance and were trained on entrepreneurial skills and abilities. Arab women were engaged in various types of activities like training workshops and exchanges in order to familiarize them with their rights and potentials.

region. The type of activities and their liberal dimension strongly suggest that Americans, at both levels of State and Society, are pursuing a liberal model of democracy in the Gulf. For example, co-educational programs offered and workshops conducted and funded by the Americans in these countries had liberal aspects and content.

Activities carried out, efforts made, and pressure exerted by the United States during the Bush Administration did make an impact on the Gulf region. Visible reforms were introduced in all of the six countries under study. In addition to reform, another change which is equally, if not more, important took place in the region. That change, as discussed earlier, can be termed as a "paradigm shift." This paradigm shift has given birth to a new sociopolitical culture in the region. In this culture the mindset of the rulers vis-à-vis the ruled has changed, though only to a limited extent. The mindset of the men vis-à-vis women has changed to an extent that the debate is now '*what* is the women role' instead of '*is* there any role for women?' in social, political, and economic arenas.

In this new paradigm, people have gained a new confidence. As the evidence has been furnished earlier that people in these countries now demand their rights and political reforms in a bold fashion. Even women in Universities have recorded protests for their rights. Foreign workers have recorded protests and strikes in the United Arab Emirates. In fact, it is a beginning of a new era.

Speaking more cautiously, there is a sort of *beginning* of emergence of a new paradigm in the Gulf. In fact, many of the measures taken by the governments and many changes that have taken place in these countries, discussed in the previous chapters, indicate towards the emergence of a new paradigm.

During 2000–2008, constitutional developments were made in Qatar and Bahrain. The process of separation of powers of the government witnessed developments in the Gulf Countries. Parliaments became more confident and were granted more say in the governmental affairs.

Before 2000, there were few instances of elections in the Gulf States but before 2009 all of these States had held elections. Thus, a wave of social, political, and religious pluralism was felt in the region. Before the end of 2008, all of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) member States, except Saudi Arabia, had female Ministers. Saudi Arabia got its first in first half of 2009. Not only this, on many other important posts women were appointed by the governments. Women also won seats in the parliaments and municipal councils. In education sector, women in many respects outnumbered men in many of these countries. In economic sector, women now control a considerable share of the businesses in at least some of the Gulf Countries.

Some of the Gulf monarchies, according to some experts, now qualify as "constitutional monarchies," previously identified as "absolute monarchies". Out

of all six Gulf States under study, Kuwait remains at the top in democratic reform process.

To some extent, Obama Administration seems to be impressed by the Bush Administration's democratization policy in the Arab world. As Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton has pronounced that the new administration wants "to continue to export democracy."

Though, so much was achieved during 2000 and 2008 by the efforts of the American State and Civil Society, still democracy in these countries is far away. In fact, it has to go a long way further before it may be seen a true democracy taking roots in these societies. In other words, so much has to be done yet.

Still, there is not a single political party allowed to function in all six of the Gulf States. Women still lag far behind men in most of the spheres of life. Media still faces restrictions, censorship, and self-censorship.

Civil Society in these countries is in the stage of infancy. The ruling regimes need to be pressed for allowing the Civil Societies in this region to grow and make their presence felt.

People widely live in a condition of persistent fear and uncertainty. They, in general, do not enjoy freedom of thought and expression. It has also caused distrust among the people themselves. While talking about the rulers and their

attitudes, people remain cautious because of the possibility of being victimized by the secret agencies if they had said anything critical of the regimes.

b) Recommendations

It is observed that, from educational and technical point of view, the Gulf States are far behind even some of the Third World countries, including South Asian countries like India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh the children of the Gulf States need to be educated properly to take the responsibility of these oil-rich countries.

In order to have a meaningful democracy, liberal party politics may be allowed to flourish side by side with the political societies.

The print media should also cover the activities and performance of the governments in its reporting and at the same time, the public opinions particularly political oppositions may be allowed to present their viewpoints regarding the governance of their respective countries.

Political societies should also practice democracy with reference to their functioning so that the culture of democracy may get its way in the Gulf region which has been denied so long.

It may be suggested that the modern democratic societies, including the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, and Australia, etc. may continue to

exert pressure for further reforms in the Gulf region particularly in the areas of politics, human rights, and women empowerment.

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APPENDIX A

TITLE XIV—9/11 COMMISSION INTERNATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION

SEC. 1401. SHORT TITLE; TABLE OF CONTENTS.

This title may be cited as the '9/11 Commission International Implementation Act of 2007'. Subtitle A—Quality Educational Opportunities in Arab and Predominantly Muslim Countries.

SEC. 1411. FINDINGS; POLICY.

(a) Findings- Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States stated that [e]ducation that teaches tolerance, the dignity and value of each individual, and respect for different beliefs is a key element in any global strategy to eliminate Islamic terrorism'.

(2) The report of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States concluded that ensuring educational opportunity is essential to the efforts of the United States to defeat global terrorism and recommended that the United States Government 'should offer to join with other nations in generously supporting [spending funds] ... directly on building and operating primary and secondary schools in those Muslim states that commit to sensibly investing financial resources in public education'....

(b) Policy- It is the policy of the United States—

(1) to work toward the goal of dramatically increasing the availability of modern basic education through public schools in Arab and predominantly Muslim countries, which will reduce the influence of radical madrassas and other institutions that promote religious extremism;

(2) to join with other countries in generously supporting the International Arab and Muslim Youth Opportunity Fund authorized under section 7114 of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, as amended by section 1412 of this Act, with the goal of building and operating public primary and secondary schools in Arab and predominantly Muslim countries that commit to sensibly investing the resources of such countries in modern public education;

(3) to offer additional incentives to increase the availability of modern basic education in Arab and predominantly Muslim countries; and

(4) to work to prevent financing of educational institutions that support radical Islamic fundamentalism....

SEC. 7114. INTERNATIONAL ARAB AND MUSLIM YOUTH OPPORTUNITY FUND.

(a) Findings- Congress finds the following:

(1) The United Nation's 2003 Arab Human Development Report states that the quantitative expansion of Arab education remains incomplete.

(2) The UN report cities the decline in quality as the most significant challenge in the educational arena in Arab countries.

(3) Researchers argue that curricula taught in Arab countries seem to encourage submission, obedience, subordination, and compliance, rather than free critical thinking....

(6) Educational attainments in Arab and non-Arab Muslim countries—from literacy rates to mathematical and science achievements—are well below global standards....

(b) Purpose- The purpose of this section is to strengthen the public educational systems in Arab and predominantly Muslim countries by—

(1) authorizing the establishment of an International Arab and Muslim Youth Educational Fund through which the United States dedicates resources, either through a separate fund or through an international organization, to assist those countries that commit to education reform; and

(2) providing resources for the Fund to help strengthen the public educational systems in those countries....

(B) ASSISTANCE FOR TRAINING AND EXCHANGE PROGRAMS FOR TEACHERS, ADMINISTRATORS, AND STUDENTS-

(i) The establishment of training programs for teachers and educational administrators to enhance skills, including the establishment of regional centers to train individuals who can transfer such skills upon return to their countries. (ii) The establishment of exchange programs for teachers and administrators in Arab and predominantly Muslim countries and with other countries to stimulate additional ideas and reform throughout the world, including teacher training exchange programs focused on primary school teachers in such countries.

(iii) The establishment of exchange programs for primary and secondary students in Muslim and Arab countries and with other countries to foster understanding and tolerance and to stimulate long-standing relationships.

(C) ASSISTANCE TARGETING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY STUDENTS-

(i) The establishment in Arab and predominantly Muslim countries of after-school programs, civic education programs, and education programs....

(E) OTHER TYPES OF ASSISTANCE-

(i) The translation of foreign books, newspapers, reference guides, and other reading materials into local languages....

SEC. 1414. EXTENSION OF PROGRAM TO PROVIDE GRANTS TO AMERICAN-SPONSORED SCHOOLS IN ARAB AND PREDOMINANTLY MUSLIM COUNTRIES TO PROVIDE SCHOLARSHIPS.

...

7113. Program to provide grants to American-sponsored schools in Arab and predominantly Muslim countries to provide scholarships.'

Subtitle B—Democracy and Development in Arab and Predominantly Muslim Countries

SEC. 1421. PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST, CENTRAL ASIA, SOUTH ASIA, AND SOUTHEAST ASIA.

(a) Findings- Congress finds the following:

(1) Al-Qaeda and affiliated groups have established a terrorist network with linkages throughout the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

(2) While political repression and lack of economic development do not justify terrorism, increased political freedoms, poverty reduction, and broad-based economic growth can contribute to an environment that undercuts tendencies and conditions that facilitate the rise of terrorist organizations.

(3) It is in the national security interests of the United States to promote democracy, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, a vigorous civil society, political freedom, protection of minorities, independent media, women's rights, private sector growth, and open economic systems in the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia.

(b) Policy- It is the policy of the United States to—

(1) promote over the long-term, seizing opportunities whenever possible in the short term, democracy, the rule of law, good governance, sustainable development, a vigorous civil society, political freedom, protection of minorities, independent media, women's rights, private sector growth, and open economic systems in the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia;

(2) provide assistance and resources to individuals and organizations in the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and Southeast Asia that are committed to promoting such objectives and to design strategies in conjunction with such individuals and organizations; and

(3) work with other countries and international organizations to increase the resources devoted to promoting such objectives....

SEC. 1422. MIDDLE EAST FOUNDATION.

(a) Purposes- The purposes of this section are to support, through the provision of grants, technical assistance, training, and other programs, in the countries of the Middle East, the expansion of—

(1) civil society;

(2) opportunities for political participation for all citizens;

(3) protections for internationally recognized human rights, including the rights of women;

(4) educational system reforms;

(5) independent media;

(6) policies that promote economic opportunities for citizens;

(7) the rule of law; and

(8) democratic processes of government.

(b) Middle East Foundation-

(1) DESIGNATION- The Secretary of State is authorized to designate an appropriate private, nonprofit organization that is organized or incorporated under

the laws of the United States or of a State as the Middle East Foundation (referred to in this section as the 'Foundation')....

Subtitle D—Strategy for the United States Relationship With Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia

...

SEC. 1443. SAUDI ARABIA.

(a) Findings- Congress finds the following:

(1) The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia has an uneven record in the fight against terrorism, especially with respect to terrorist financing, support for radical madrassas, and a lack of political outlets for its citizens, that poses a threat to the security of the United States, the international community, and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia itself.

(2) The United States has a national security interest in working with the Government of Saudi Arabia to combat international terrorists who operate within Saudi Arabia or who operate outside Saudi Arabia with the support of citizens of Saudi Arabia.

(b) Sense of Congress- It is the sense of Congress that, in order to more effectively combat terrorism, the Government of Saudi Arabia must undertake and continue a number of political and economic reforms, including increasing anti-

terrorism operations conducted by law enforcement agencies, providing more political rights to its citizens, increasing the rights of women, engaging in comprehensive educational reform, enhancing monitoring of charitable organizations, promulgating and enforcing domestic laws, and regulation on terrorist financing.

(c) Statements of Policy- The following shall be the policies of the United States:

(1) To engage with the Government of Saudi Arabia to openly confront the issue of terrorism, as well as other problematic issues, such as the lack of political freedoms, with the goal of restructuring the relationship on terms that leaders of both countries can publicly support.

(2) To enhance counterterrorism cooperation with the Government of Saudi Arabia, if the political leaders of such government are committed to making a serious, sustained effort to combat terrorism.

(3) To support the efforts of the Government of Saudi Arabia to make political, economic, and social reforms throughout the country.

(d) Strategy Relating to Saudi Arabia-

(1) REQUIREMENT FOR REPORT ON STRATEGY- Not later than 90 days after the date of the enactment of this Act, the President shall submit to the

appropriate congressional committees a report, in classified form if necessary, that describes the progress on the Strategic Dialogue (established by President George W. Bush and Crown Prince (now King) Abdullah in April 2005) between the United States and Saudi Arabia, including the progress made in such Dialogue toward implementing the long-term strategy of the United States to—

(A) engage with the Government of Saudi Arabia to facilitate political, economic, and social reforms that will enhance the ability of the Government of Saudi Arabia to combat international terrorism; and

(B) work with the Government of Saudi Arabia to combat terrorism, including through effective prevention of the financing of terrorism by Saudi institutions and citizens.

(2) APPROPRIATE CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES DEFINED- In this subsection the term 'appropriate congressional committees' means the Committee on Foreign Affairs and the Committee on Appropriations of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations and the Committee on Appropriations of the Senate.

Source: http://www.cdhr.info/Resources/HR1TitleXIV, accessed on Dec. 26, 2009.

APPENDIX B

DEMOCRACY SPEECH BY PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH AT THE 20TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR DEMOCRACY

United States Chamber of Commerce

Washington, D.C.

Nov 6, 2003

PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome, and thanks for inviting me to join you in this 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy. The staff and directors of this organization have seen a lot of history over the last two decades, you've been a part of that history. By speaking for and standing for freedom, you've lifted the hopes of people around the world, and you've brought great credit to America....

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

Some skeptics of democracy assert that the traditions of Islam are inhospitable to the representative government. This "cultural condescension," as Ronald Reagan termed it, has a long history. After the Japanese surrender in 1945, a so-called Japan expert asserted that democracy in that former empire would "never work." Another observer declared the prospects for democracy in post-Hitler Germany are, and I quote, "most uncertain at best" -- he made that claim in 1957. Seventy-four years ago, The Sunday London Times declared nine-tenths of the population of India to be "illiterates not caring a fig for politics." Yet when Indian democracy was imperiled in the 1970s, the Indian people showed their commitment to liberty in a national referendum that saved their form of government.

Time after time, observers have questioned whether this country, or that people, or this group, are "ready" for democracy -- as if freedom were a prize you win for meeting our own Western standards of progress. In fact, the daily work of democracy itself is the path of progress. It teaches cooperation, the free exchange of ideas, and the peaceful resolution of differences. As men and women are showing, from Bangladesh to Botswana, to Mongolia, it is the practice of democracy that makes a nation ready for democracy, and every nation can start on this path.

It should be clear to all that Islam -- the faith of one-fifth of humanity -- is consistent with democratic rule. Democratic progress is found in many

predominantly Muslim countries -- in Turkey and Indonesia, and Senegal and Albania, Niger and Sierra Leone. Muslim men and women are good citizens of India and South Africa, of the nations of Western Europe, and of the United States of America.

More than half of all the Muslims in the world live in freedom under democratically constituted governments. They succeed in democratic societies, not in spite of their faith, but because of it. A religion that demands individual moral accountability, and encourages the encounter of the individual with God, is fully compatible with the rights and responsibilities of self-government.

Yet there's a great challenge today in the Middle East. In the words of a recent report by Arab scholars, the global wave of democracy has -- and I quote – "barely reached the Arab states." They continue: "This freedom deficit undermines human development and is one of the most painful manifestations of lagging political development." The freedom deficit they describe has terrible consequences, of the people of the Middle East and for the world. ...

There are governments that still fear and repress independent thought and creativity, and private enterprise -- the human qualities that make for a -- strong and successful societies. Even when these nations have vast natural resources, they do not respect or develop their greatest resources -- the talent and energy of men and women working and living in freedom.

Instead of dwelling on past wrongs and blaming others, governments in the Middle East need to confront real problems, and serve the true interests of their nations. The good and capable people of the Middle East all deserve responsible leadership. For too long, many people in that region have been victims and subjects -- they deserve to be active citizens.

Governments across the Middle East and North Africa are beginning to see the need for change....

In Bahrain last year, citizens elected their own parliament for the first time in nearly three decades. Oman has extended the vote to all adult citizens; Qatar has a new constitution; Yemen has a multiparty political system; Kuwait has a directly elected national assembly; and Jordan held historic elections this summer. Recent surveys in Arab nations reveal broad support for political pluralism, the rule of law, and free speech. These are the stirrings of Middle Eastern democracy, and they carry the promise of greater change to come.

As changes come to the Middle Eastern region, those with power should ask themselves: Will they be remembered for resisting reform, or for leading it? In Iran, the demand for democracy is strong and broad, as we saw last month when thousands gathered to welcome home Shirin Ebadi, the winner of the Nobel Peace Prize. The regime in Teheran must heed the democratic demands of the Iranian people, or lose its last claim to legitimacy. (Applause.)...

The Saudi government is taking first steps toward reform, including a plan for gradual introduction of elections. By giving the Saudi people a greater role in their own society, the Saudi government can demonstrate true leadership in the region....

As we watch and encourage reforms in the region, we are mindful that modernization is not the same as Westernization. Representative governments in the Middle East will reflect their own cultures. They will not, and should not, look like us. Democratic nations may be constitutional monarchies, federal republics, or parliamentary systems. And working democracies always need time to develop -- as did our own. We've taken a 200-year journey toward inclusion and justice -- and this makes us patient and understanding as other nations are at different stages of this journey....

Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom in the Middle East did nothing to make us safe -- because in the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export. And with the spread of weapons that can bring catastrophic harm to our country and to our friends, it would be reckless to accept the status quo. (Applause.)

Therefore, the United States has adopted a new policy, a forward strategy of freedom in the Middle East. This strategy requires the same persistence and

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