

Session 4: Francis Fukuyama and History's End

Introduction

FRANCIS Fukuyama's "end of history" thesis emerged at a moment when Americans were seeking a new framework for understanding the world. For nearly half a century, the Cold War had provided one. International politics could be organized around the rivalry between two superpowers, two economic systems, and two universal ideological claims. By the late 1980s, that structure was visibly collapsing. Communist regimes in Eastern Europe were losing legitimacy, the Soviet Union was weakening, and liberal democracy appeared to be advancing across Southern Europe, Latin America, and parts of Asia. Fukuyama's 1989 essay, followed by *The End of History and the Last Man* in 1992, offered an exceptionally ambitious interpretation: fascism had destroyed itself, communism was collapsing, and no alternative with comparable universal aspirations seemed capable of challenging liberal democracy.

The argument resonated because it offered more than just a prediction; it provided a comprehensive theory of the post-Cold War world at a time when the old categories no longer met expectations. Fukuyama did not claim that wars or crises would cease, but that the ideological battle over the legitimate shape of the modern state was nearing its end. He argued that what had triumphed was not liberal practice itself, but the liberal idea: even authoritarian regimes increasingly had to legitimize themselves through the language of popular sovereignty, while no alternative doctrine appears to assert a superior form of political modernity.

The Middle East and Islam posed an immediate challenge to this thesis. Fukuyama acknowledged from the outset that Islam was unlike most surviving alternatives to liberal democracy. It was systematic, coherent, potentially universal, and capable of providing a complete moral, social, and political order. Yet he argued that Islam did not constitute a genuine competitor to liberal democracy to the extent that communism once had. Its political appeal remained largely confined to societies already shaped by Islamic culture, whereas liberal ideas continued to attract adherents within the Muslim world itself. For the end-of-history thesis to survive, Islam therefore had to be understood as a powerful resistance to modern

liberalism without becoming an alternative destination for humanity as a whole.

That distinction became much harder to sustain after September 11. The attacks seemed to dramatize precisely what the optimistic 1990s had underestimated: religious identity and ideological hatred could mobilize people willing to reject liberal modernity altogether. Fukuyama did not abandon his thesis. Instead, he reinterpreted radical Islam as a violent backlash against modernization rather than as the emergence of a viable post-liberal order. Liberal democracy and market capitalism, he argued, still possessed a developmental logic that no Islamist regime had demonstrated it could match. Yet he now had to take far more seriously the possibility that culture and religion could resist convergence for a very long time.

His explanation became increasingly sociological. Fukuyama rejected the claim that Islam, as a religion, was inherently incompatible with democracy. Instead, he interpreted radical Islamism as a distinctly modern phenomenon, generated by failed modernization, urbanization, social displacement, loss of identity, authoritarian politics, and the disruption of traditional communities. In this respect, he compared Islamism with fascism and Bolshevism: ideologies that appealed especially to people uprooted from traditional life and caught between old communities and an incompletely realized modern world. Radical Islam, or “Islamofascism,” could therefore be deeply dangerous without refuting the broader direction of modernization.

This initially left Fukuyama surprisingly close to the intellectual premises of the post-9/11 neoconservative project. If liberal democracy was the most compelling form of modern political order, and if dictatorship in the Middle East was neither culturally inevitable nor permanently rooted in Islam, then political transformation there seemed at least conceivable. Fukuyama initially supported overthrowing Saddam Hussein. Yet Iraq soon revealed a crucial distinction between believing that history tends toward liberal democracy and believing that the United States can produce that outcome through military power. Fukuyama increasingly emphasized that liberal institutions do not automatically appear when dictatorship ends. States, legal systems, civil society, and political habits are difficult to build. Looking back, he complained that some neoconservatives had confused the eventual direction of modernization with the ease of engineering its arrival.

This growing skepticism drew Fukuyama away from the neoconservative movement and put him in sharp conflict with Charles Krauthammer, an exchange included in these readings. The disagreement was not merely about whether the Iraq War had been badly managed. It concerned what American power meant in the post-Cold War world. Krauthammer had famously described the Soviet Union's collapse as creating a "unipolar moment" and argued that the United States should use its unprecedented predominance to defend and extend a liberal world order. After 9/11, he interpreted radical Islamism as the latest in a series of existential ideological enemies confronting the West.

Fukuyama increasingly came to see this confidence as the problem. By 2004, the failure to find Iraqi weapons of mass destruction, the insurgency, the absence of a stable democratic order, rising anti-Americanism, and the costs of occupation led him to accuse Krauthammer of overestimating both the threat facing the United States and America's ability to control the political consequences of its power. This was not a turn to traditional realism. Fukuyama still believed that American foreign policy should reflect democratic values. But he argued for an internationalism constrained by the limits of knowledge, institutional capacity, legitimacy, and political sustainability.

The Krauthammer–Fukuyama debate mattered because it exposed a fault line within the broad camp that had initially supported an assertive American response after 9/11. Both believed liberal democracy was desirable and rejected the idea that Arabs or Muslims were culturally condemned to dictatorship. Yet they drew different conclusions from those premises. Krauthammer emphasized the dangers posed by ideological enemies and the opportunities created by American predominance. Fukuyama emphasized the distinction between the universality of liberal aspirations and the capacity of American power to create liberal institutions abroad. As he put it, "possibility is not likelihood": culture is not destiny, but neither can democracy simply be summoned into existence by political will.

The readings therefore trace more than the evolution of a famous thesis. They follow Fukuyama's effort to reconcile the post-Cold War expectation of liberal convergence with the persistent challenge posed by Islam, the shock of 9/11, and the experience of Iraq. They also reveal a broader argument about the relationship between ideas and power: does the

apparent universality of liberal democracy give the United States a mandate to accelerate history, or does the difficulty of creating institutions impose strict limits on what even the most powerful state can accomplish? That question became one of the central intellectual disputes of the post-9/11 era.

Explanatory notes to the readings appear from page 61.



Francis Fukuyama (b. 1952) is an American political scientist, political economist, and public intellectual whose career has moved between government, policy research, and academia. Born in Chicago and raised in New York, he studied classics at Cornell before earning a doctorate in political science

at Harvard. Early in his career he worked at the RAND Corporation and twice served in the U.S. State Department, where he dealt with Middle Eastern and European political-military affairs and later with long-range policy planning. He subsequently taught at George Mason University, Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, and Stanford University.

Fukuyama first became widely known through his 1989 essay "The End of History?" and the 1992 book *The End of History and the Last Man*, but his later work ranged well beyond that thesis. He wrote on trust and social capital, biotechnology, state-building, political development, and the institutional foundations of liberal democracy. Books such as *Trust* (1995), *State-Building* (2004), *The Origins of Political Order* (2011), and *Political Order and Political Decay* (2014) reflected an increasing concern with how effective states, the rule of law, and accountable institutions actually emerge and why they sometimes deteriorate.

Politically, Fukuyama was initially associated with the neoconservative intellectual world and supported a forceful American response to Saddam Hussein, but he later became a prominent critic of the Iraq War and of the belief that American power could rapidly remake foreign societies. In later years, he identified more strongly with liberal internationalism while devoting increasing attention to nationalism, populism, identity politics, democratic backsliding, and the resilience of liberal institutions. His career is therefore notable not only for one famous thesis but also for a sustained effort to understand the political conditions that make liberal democracy possible—and the forces that can undermine it.



The End of History and the Last Man (1992, excerpts)

What is emerging victorious, in other words, is not so much liberal practice, as the liberal idea. That is to say, for a very large part of the world, there is now no ideology with pretensions to universality that is in a position to challenge liberal democracy, and no universal principle of legitimacy other than the sovereignty of the people. Monarchism in its various forms had been largely defeated by the beginning of this century. Fascism and communism, liberal democracy's main competitors up till now, have both discredited themselves. If the Soviet Union (or its successor states) fails to democratize, if Peru or the Philippines relapse into some form of authoritarianism, democracy will most likely have yielded to a colonel or bureaucrat who claims to speak in the name of the Russian, Peruvian, or Philippine people alone. Even non-democrats will have to speak the language of democracy in order to justify their deviation from the single universal standard.

It is true that Islam constitutes a systematic and coherent ideology, just like liberalism and communism, with its own code of morality and doctrine of political and social justice. The appeal of Islam is potentially universal, reaching out to all men as men, and not just to members of a particular ethnic or national group. And Islam has indeed defeated liberal democracy in many parts of the Islamic world, posing a grave threat to liberal practices even in countries where it has not achieved political power directly. The end of the Cold War in Europe was followed immediately by a challenge to the West from Iraq, in which Islam was arguably a factor.

Despite the power demonstrated by Islam in its current revival, however, it remains the case that this religion has virtually no appeal outside those areas that were culturally Islamic to begin with. The days of Islam's cultural conquests, it would seem, are over: it can win back lapsed adherents, but has no resonance for young people in Berlin, Tokyo, or Moscow. And while nearly a billion people are culturally Islamic—one-fifth of the world's population—they cannot challenge liberal democracy on its own territory on the level of ideas. Indeed, the Islamic world would seem more vulnerable to liberal ideas in the long run than the reverse, since such liberalism has attracted numerous and powerful Muslim adherents over the past century and a half. Part of the reason for the current, fundamentalist

revival is the strength of the perceived threat from liberal, Western values to traditional Islamic societies....

The current revival of Islamic fundamentalism, touching virtually every country in the world with a substantial Muslim population, can be seen as a response to the failure of Muslim societies generally to maintain their dignity vis-à-vis the non-Muslim West. Under the pressure of competition from a militarily dominant Europe, a number of Islamic countries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries undertook crash modernization efforts to assimilate the Western practices seen as necessary to remain competitive. Like the reforms of Meiji Japan, these modernization programs involved thoroughgoing attempts to introduce principles of Western rationalism into all walks of life, from the economy, bureaucracy, and military, to education and social policy. The most systematic endeavor in this direction was undertaken by Turkey: the Ottoman reforms of the nineteenth century were followed in the twentieth by those of the founder of the present-day Turkish state, Kemal Atatürk, who sought to create a secular society based on Turkish nationalism. The last major intellectual import accepted from the West by the Islamic world was secular nationalism, represented by the great pan-Arab nationalist movements of Egypt's Nasser, and the Ba'ath parties of Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq.

Unlike Meiji Japan, however, which used Western technology to defeat Russia in 1905 and to challenge the United States in 1941, most of the Islamic world never assimilated these Western imports in a convincing way, or produced the kind of political or economic success for which the modernizers of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had hoped. Until the advent of oil wealth in the 1960s and 70s, no Islamic society was able to challenge the West militarily or economically. Many indeed remained colonial dependencies through World War II, and the project of secular pan-Arab unity foundered after Egypt's humiliating defeat by Israel in 1967. The Islamic fundamentalist revival, that came into view with the Iranian Revolution of 1978-79, was not a case of "traditional values" surviving into the modern age. Those values, corrupt and latitudinarian, had been soundly defeated in the course of the previous hundred years. The Islamic revival was rather the nostalgic re-assertion of an older, purer set of values, said to have existed in the distant past, that were neither the discredited "traditional values" of the recent past, nor the Western values that had been so poorly transplanted to the Middle East. In this respect, Islamic fundamentalism bears a more than superficial resemblance to

European fascism. As in the case of European fascism, it is no surprise that the fundamentalist revival hit the most apparently modern countries the hardest, for it was they whose traditional cultures had been most thoroughly threatened by the import of Western values. The strength of the Islamic revival can only be understood if one understands how deeply the dignity of Islamic society had been wounded in its double failure to maintain the coherence of its traditional society and to successfully assimilate the techniques and values of the West.



Has history started again? (June 2002)

World politics, it would seem, shifted gears abruptly after September 11. During the dot-com era (which today seems like an enchanted, long-ago time), America was on a roll. Communism, the last big competitor to liberal democracy, had collapsed just like fascism and monarchy before it, the U.S. economy was going gangbusters and democratic institutions seemed to be making headway in all parts of the world. Technology, it was said, was bringing the global village closer together in ways that made traditional nation-states irrelevant.

Today, everything looks different. The United States has defeated the Taliban and is at war with Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan after suffering an unprecedentedly successful attack on its own territory, and is now preparing to take on Iraq. Large numbers of Muslims are now mobilised in opposition to the United States, and countries around the world are being asked to choose sides in the struggle. Security concerns have thrown sand in the gears of the just-in-time economy, which depends on open borders and the free movement of goods and people.

What is going on here? Are we seeing the beginning of a decades-long 'clash of civilisations' pitting the West against Islam, a conflict that expands remorselessly out of the Afghan swamp to engulf ever larger parts of the world? Will the very technologies that seemed to promote freedom, like airplanes and skyscrapers and biology laboratories, be turned against us in ways that we cannot ultimately stop? Or will the present conflict recede and the old world of an ever-integrating global economy come back once Osama bin Laden and the terror network are rolled up?

More than ten years ago, I argued that we had reached the ‘end of history’: not that historical events would stop, but that History understood as the evolution of human societies through different forms of government had culminated in modern liberal democracy and market-oriented capitalism. It is my view that this hypothesis remains correct, despite the events since September 11: modernity, as represented by the United States and other developed democracies, will remain the dominant force in world politics, and the institutions embodying the West’s underlying principles of freedom and equality will continue to spread around the world.

The September 11 attacks represent a desperate backlash against the modern world, which appears to be a speeding freight train to those unwilling to get onboard. But we need to look seriously at the challenge we face. For a movement that has the power to wreak immense damage on the modern world, even if it represents only a small number of people, raises real questions about the viability of our civilisation. The existence of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of virulently anti-American or anti-Western forces and their possible use has become a real threat. The key questions that Americans face as they proceed forward with this ‘war’ on terrorism are how deep this fundamental challenge is, which sorts of allies it can recruit and what we must do to counter it.

A clash of civilisations

The distinguished political scientist Samuel Huntington argues that the present conflict could turn into a ‘clash of civilisations’, one of the cultural conflicts which, he predicted several years ago, would rack the post-Cold War world. While the Bush and Blair administrations have been correctly asserting that the current struggle is against terrorists, not a war between the West and Islam, there are clearly cultural issues at play.

Americans have tended to believe that their institutions and values—democracy, individual rights, the rule of law and prosperity based on economic freedom—represent universal aspirations that will ultimately be shared by people all over the world, if given the opportunity. They are inclined to think that American society appeals to people of all cultures. The millions of immigrants from countries all over the world who vote with their feet to move to America and to other developed societies seem to testify to this fact.

But events since September 11 challenge this view. Mohamed Atta and several of the other hijackers were educated people who lived and studied in the West not only were they not seduced by it, they were sufficiently

repelled by what they saw to be willing to drive planes into buildings and kill thousands of the people among whom they lived. The cultural disconnect here, as for Osama bin Laden and his fellow Islamic fundamentalists, would seem to be absolute. Is it just our cultural myopia that makes us think that Western values are potentially universal ones?

The logic of history

There are, in fact, reasons for believing that Western values and institutions are immensely appealing to many if not most non-Western people. This is not to deny the historical tie between both democracy and capitalism to Christianity, or the fact that democracy has its cultural roots in Europe: as philosophers from Alexis de Tocqueville and Georg Hegel to Friedrich Nietzsche have pointed out, modern democracy is a secularised version of the Christian doctrine of universal human equality.

But Western institutions are like the scientific method, which, though discovered in the West, has universal applicability. There is an underlying historical mechanism that encourages a long-term convergence across cultural boundaries, first and most powerfully in economics, then in the realm of politics and finally (and most distantly) in culture. What drives this process forward in the first instance is modern science and technology, whose ability to create material wealth and weapons of war is so great that virtually all societies must come to terms with it. The technology of semiconductors or biomedicine is not different for Muslims or Chinese than it is for Westerners, and the need to master it necessitates the adoption of certain economic institutions, like free markets and the rule of law, that promote growth. Modern technology-driven market economies thrive on individual freedom—that is, a system where individuals rather than governments or priests make decisions on prices or rates of interest.

Economic development in turn tends to engender liberal democracy—not inevitably, but often enough that the correlation between development and democracy constitutes one of the few generally accepted ‘laws’ of political science. Economic growth produces a middle class with property rights, a complex civil society and ever higher levels of education to maintain economic competitiveness. All these factors together create fertile ground in which demands for democratic political participation take shape, which eventually get institutionalised in democratic government.

Culture—religious beliefs, social habits, longstanding traditions—is the last area of convergence, and also the weakest. Societies are loath to give up deeply rooted values, and it would be extremely naive to think that

American popular culture, seductive as it is, will soon engulf the entire world. Indeed, the spread of McDonald's and Hollywood around the world has provoked a considerable backlash against the very prospect of globalisation.

But while cultural differences remain in modern societies, they tend to be put in a box, separated from politics, and relegated to the realm of private life. The reason for this is simple: if politics is based on something like religion, there will never be any civil peace because people cannot agree on fundamental religious values. Secularism is a relatively recent development in the West: Christian princes and priests in Europe used to mandate their subjects' religious beliefs and persecute those who dissented. The modern secular democratic state emerged out of the bloody religious conflict in Europe during the 16th and 17th centuries in which different Christian groups slaughtered one another mercilessly. The separation of church and state became a necessary component of modernisation precisely because of the need for civil peace—a startling thesis that was argued by philosophers like Hobbes and Locke in a great tradition that culminated in the American Declaration of Independence and Constitution.

This underlying logic of modernisation suggests that Western values are not just arbitrary cultural offshoots of Western Christianity, but do embody a more universal process. What we need to ask then is, are there cultures or regions of the world that will resist or even prove impervious to the modernisation process?

The West and the rest

If we look at Asia, it is hard to see insuperable cultural barriers to modernisation. Former Singaporean prime minister Lee Kuan Yew used to argue that there were 'Asian values' that supported authoritarianism, not democracy, but in recent years South Korea and Taiwan have democratised as they got richer. India has of course been a successful democracy since independence in 1948 and has recently embarked on a series of economic reforms that could help lift it out of poverty as well.

In Latin America and the former communist states of Europe, the cultural barriers are even less pronounced: for them the problem is more on-the-ground failure to achieve modernisation rather than unhappiness with the goal of modernisation itself. Sub-Saharan Africa has numerous problems, from AIDS to civil war to wretched government, but it is hard to see how its diverse cultural traditions will prevent societies there from modernising if they can get their acts together in other respects.

Islam is the one major world culture that arguably does have some very basic problems with modernity. For all the sophistication of Muslim societies, they can boast only one working democracy (Turkey), and have not seen any economic breakthroughs like Korea or Singapore. It is important to be precise, however, in specifying where the basic problem lies.

How Islam is different

It is doubtful that there is something inherent in Islam as a religion that makes it hostile to modernity. Islam, like Christianity, Hinduism, Confucianism or any of the world's other great religious or cultural traditions, is a system of extraordinary complexity that has evolved in manifold ways over time. In the period noted above, when Christian Europe was torn by wars of religion, different faiths were living peacefully under the Ottoman millet system. In the 19th and early 20th centuries, there were important liberal trends in Islam in Egypt, Iran, and Turkey. Kemal Ataturk's Turkish Republic became one of the most thoroughly secular regimes in modern history.

The Islamic world differs from other world cultures today in one important respect. In recent years it alone has repeatedly produced significant radical movements that reject not just Western policies but the most basic principle of modernity itself, that of religious tolerance. These groups celebrated September 11 because it humbled a society that they believed was at its base corrupt. This corruption was not just a matter of sexual permissiveness, homosexuality and women's rights as they exist in the West, but stemmed in their view from secularism itself. What they hate is that the state in Western societies should be dedicated to religious tolerance and pluralism, rather than to serving religious truth. While people in Asia, Latin America, the former socialist bloc or Africa find Western consumerism appealing and would like to emulate it if only they could, fundamentalists like the Saudi Wahhabis, Osama bin Laden or the Taliban see it as evidence of Western decadence.

So this is not simply a 'war' against terrorists, as the American and British governments understandably portray it. Nor, as many Muslims argue, is the real issue American foreign policy in Palestine or toward Iraq. Unfortunately, the basic conflict we face is much broader, and concerns not just a small group of terrorists, but a much larger group of radical Islamists and Muslims for whom religious identity overrides all other political values. It is radical Islamism that forms the backdrop to a broader sense of

grievance that is far deeper and more disconnected from reality than elsewhere. It is this type of Islamist who refuses to believe that Muslims were involved in the World Trade Center attacks, attributing them instead to Israel. They may complain about U.S. policy, but they interpret that policy as part of a larger anti-Muslim conspiracy (conveniently forgetting that U.S. foreign-policy has in the past supported Muslims in Somalia, Bosnia, Kosovo and Chechnya).

If we recognise that the underlying struggle is not just with actual terrorists but with radical Islamists who see the world as a Manichaean struggle of believers and nonbelievers, then we are not talking about a small and isolated group of fanatics. Osama bin Laden has evoked substantial sympathy throughout the Muslim world since September 11 for standing up to the United States, from slum dwellers in Karachi to professionals in Beirut and Cairo, to Pakistani and Algerian citizens in Britain and France. The Middle East specialist Daniel Pipes estimates this radicalised population to be some 10 to 15% of the Muslim world.

Islamofascism

Why has this kind of radical Islamism suddenly emerged? Sociologically, the reasons may not be that different from those driving European fascism in the early 20th century. The Islamic world has seen large populations uprooted from traditional village or tribal life in the past generation. Many have been urbanised and exposed to a more abstract literary form of Islam that calls them back to a purer version of the religion, just as extremist German nationalism tried to resurrect a mythical, long-dead racial identity. This new form of radical Islam is immensely appealing because it purports to explain the loss of values and cultural disorientation that the modernisation process itself has engendered.

It may therefore clarify things to say that the present conflict is not simply a fight against terrorism, nor against Islam as a religion or civilisation, but rather with Islamofascism—that is, the radically intolerant and antimodern doctrine that has recently arisen in many parts of the Muslim world.

A strong finger of blame for the rise of Islamofascism must point at Saudi Arabia. The fortunes of the Saudi royal family have been intertwined with those of the puritanical Wahhabi sect for many years. The former have for years sought both legitimacy and protection from the clerics by advancing Wahhabism. But the Saudi rulers made huge new investments in promoting their brand of Islam during the 1980s and 1990s, particularly following the abortive takeover of the Great Mosque in Mecca in 1979. Wahhabi

ideology easily qualifies as Islamo-fascist: a text book mandated for use in Saudi 10th-grade classes explains that 'it is compulsory for the Muslims to be loyal to each other and to consider the infidels their enemies.'

The Saudis have promoted this doctrine not just in the Middle East but in the United States as well, where they have reportedly invested hundreds of millions in building schools and mosques to promulgate their brand of Islam. All this money from the Gulf allowed Osama bin Laden and his followers in effect to buy themselves a country, Afghanistan, for use as a base to train a whole generation of Arab fanatics. In this, the United States is blamable as well for having walked away after the Soviet withdrawal and not taking responsibility for the emergence of a stable and moderate political order there.

A final reason Islamo-fascism took off in the 1980s and 1990s has to do with 'root causes' like poverty, economic stagnation and authoritarian politics in the Middle East that are combustible material for political extremism. But we need to be very clear as to what was actually at the root of these root causes, in light of the frequent charge that the United States and other Western countries could have acted to alleviate them in some significant way.

In fact, the outside community, through international agencies like the World Bank, has been assisting Muslim countries all along, as has the United States in its bilateral dealings with nations like Egypt and Jordan. Very little of this aid has done any good, however, because the underlying problem is a political one in the Muslim world itself. The opportunities for economic and political reform were always there, but few Muslim governments, and, in particular, no Arab governments, have undertaken the kinds of policies followed by countries like South Korea, Taiwan, Chile or Mexico to open up their countries to the global economy and lay the foundations for sustained development. No Arab governments have decided on their own to voluntarily step down in favour of democratic rule, like the Spanish monarchy after the dictator Franco or the Nationalists in Taiwan or the various military dictatorships in Argentina, Brazil, Chile and other parts of Latin America. There is not a single instance of an oil-rich state in the Persian Gulf that has used its wealth to create a self-sustaining industrial society, instead of creating a society of corrupt rentiers who over time have become more and more fanatically Islamist. These failures, and not anything that the outside world has done or refrained from doing, is the root cause of the Muslim world's stagnation.

The future

The challenge faced by the United States and other Western governments today is more than a fight with a tiny band of terrorists. The Islamo-fascist sea within which the terrorists swim constitutes an ideological challenge that is in some ways more basic than the one posed by communism. What will be the broad march of history from this point forward? Will radical Islam pick up ever more adherents and new and more powerful weapons with which to attack the West? We obviously can't know, but certain factors will be key.

The first is the successful outcome of the military operations in Afghanistan against the Taliban and Al Qaeda, and beyond them Saddam Hussein in Iraq. Much as people would like to believe that ideas live or die as a result of their inner moral rectitude, power matters a great deal. German fascism didn't collapse because of its internal moral contradictions; it died because Germany was bombed to rubble and occupied by Allied armies. Osama bin Laden gained an enormous popularity throughout the Muslim world by successfully attacking the Twin Towers. The destruction of his base of operations in Afghanistan and his eventual death or capture at the hands of U.S. forces makes all that he represents much less appealing. A military campaign against Iraq will have great radicalising potential, unless it is concluded quickly, cleanly, leaving in place a decent and democratic successor regime.

The second and more important development will have to come from inside Islam itself. The Muslim community will have to decide whether to make its peace with modernity, and in particular with the key principle of a secular state and religious tolerance. The Islamic world is at the juncture today where Christian Europe stood during the Thirty Years War in the 17th century: religious politics is driving potentially endless conflict, not just between Muslims and non-Muslims but between different sects of Muslims (many of the recent bombings in Pakistan have been the results of Sunni-Shiite feuds). In an age of biological and nuclear weapons, this could lead to disaster for everyone.

There is some hope that a more liberal strand of Islam will emerge because of the inner historical logic to political secularism. An Islamic theocracy is something that appeals to people only in the abstract. Those who have actually had to live under such regimes, for example in Iran or Afghanistan, have experienced stifling dictatorships whose leaders are more clueless than most on how to overcome problems of poverty and stagnation. Even as

the September 11 events have unfolded, there have been continuing demonstrations in Tehran and many other Iranian cities on the part of tens of thousands of young people fed up with the Islamic regime and wanting a more liberal political order. For them, earlier chants of “Death to America!” have been replaced with cries of ‘We love you, America,’ even as American bombs were raining down on the Taliban next door in Afghanistan.

Indeed, it seems that if there is any country that is going to lead the Islamic world out of its present predicament, it will be Iran, which 23 years ago initiated the current fundamentalist upsurge by toppling the shah and bringing Ayatollah Khomeini to power. A generation later, hardly anyone under the age of 30 in that country seems any longer to have sympathy for fundamentalism, and if Iran can create a more modern and tolerant form of Islam, then it will serve as a powerful example to the rest of the Muslim world.

Muslims interested in a more liberal form of Islam must stop blaming the West for painting Islam with too broad a brush, and move themselves to isolate and delegitimize the extremists among them. There is some evidence that this is already happening. American Muslims are waking up to the extent of Wahhabi influence in their own community, and those abroad may come to this realisation if the tide turns decisively against the fundamentalists in Afghanistan.

The struggle between Western liberal democracy and Islamofascism is not one between two equally viable cultural systems, both of which can master modern science and technology, create wealth and deal with the de facto diversity of the contemporary world. In all these respects, Western institutions hold all the cards and for that reason will continue to spread across the globe in the long run. But to get to the long run we must survive the short run. And unfortunately, there is no inevitability to historical progress, and few good outcomes absent leadership, courage and a determination to fight for the values that make modern democratic societies possible.



Francis Fukuyama and Nadav Samin

Can Any Good Come of Radical Islam? (2002)

What is going on in the Muslim world? Why does it produce suicide hijackers on the one hand and, on the other, lethargic and haphazardly capitalist societies that have delivered neither economic development nor democracy? A good if partial answer to these questions—partial because it is limited to the Arab region of that world—can be found in a United Nations “development report” issued in July. As the UN assessment concludes, the entire Arab sector, with all its oil wealth, is “richer than it is developed.” Its economies are stagnant, illiteracy is widespread, political freedom is hardly to be found, and its inhabitants, especially its women, are denied the basic “capabilities” and “opportunities” of the modern world.

The UN report—written, significantly, by a group of Arab intellectuals—was commissioned well before last fall’s attacks on the U.S. But its pertinence to those attacks has seemed clear enough to commentators. Thomas Friedman of the *New York Times* called it the key to understanding “the milieu that produced bin Ladenism, and will reproduce it if nothing changes.” An editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* found “little wonder” in the fact that “such an isolated culture became a breeding ground for the Islamic fundamentalism that spawned September 11.”

The Islamism of Osama bin Laden and his followers is indeed inseparable from the developmental failures of the world’s Arab societies. All the same, however, it would be a mistake to conceive of the Islamist movement as nothing more than an expression of those failures. The phenomenon of radical Islam is more complicated than that, and in all sorts of surprising ways its long-term effect on the entire orbit of Islamic society may turn out to be more complicated still.

LAST September’s attacks against the United States were carried out by a group of Muslims led by a gaunt, bearded ascetic sitting in a cave in Afghanistan and spouting unfathomable rhetoric. So all-consuming was the hijackers’ hatred of America that they were willing to blow *themselves* up for their cause—something that set them apart from earlier generations of terrorists. Where did this zeal, so foreign to the modern democratic temperament, come from?

On the part of many observers, the immediate impulse was to attribute it to deep cultural factors, and in particular to the teachings of fundamentalist Islam. And of course there was, and is, much to be said for this view. In particular, the fact that, far from repudiating bin Laden, Muslims and Westerners tended to line up on opposite sides in their interpretation of the events of September 11 gave credence to the paradigm of the Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington, who predicted a number of years ago that the post-cold-war world would give rise to a “clash of civilizations.”

Still, foolish as it would be to downplay the role of religious or “civilizational” factors, it will not do simply to call Osama bin Laden an Islamic fundamentalist. For the Islamism of which he is a symbol and a spokesman is not a movement aimed at restoring some archaic or pristine form of Islamic practice. As a number of observers have argued, including most recently the Iranian scholars Ladan and Roya Boroumand in the *Journal of Democracy*, it is best understood not as a traditional movement but as a very modern one.

Groups like al Qaeda, the Boroumands write, owe an explicit debt to 20th-century European doctrines of the extreme Right and Left. One stream of influence can be traced to Hassan al-Banna, the schoolteacher who founded the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in 1928. From Italy’s Fascists, al-Banna borrowed the idea of unquestioning loyalty to a charismatic leader, modeling the slogan of his paramilitary organization—“action, obedience, silence”—on Mussolini’s injunction to “believe, obey, fight.” Taking a cue from the Nazis, he placed great emphasis on the Muslim Brotherhood’s youth wing and on the marriage of the physical and the spiritual, of Islam with activism. Unsurprisingly, al-Banna also taught his followers to expect not encouragement but repression from traditional Islamic authorities.

A second European source of Islamism can be traced to Maulana Mawdudi, who founded the Jamaat-e-Islami movement in Pakistan in the early 1940’s. A journalist well-versed in Marxist thought, Mawdudi advocated struggle by an Islamic “revolutionary vanguard” against both the West *and* traditional Islam. As the Boroumands observe, he was perhaps the first to attach “the adjective ‘Islamic’ to such distinctively Western terms as ‘revolution,’ ‘state,’ and ‘ideology.’ ”

These strands of the radical Right and Left eventually came together in the person of Sayyid Qutb, the Egyptian who became the Muslim Brotherhood’s chief ideologist after World War II. In his most important work, *Signposts Along the Road*, Qutb called for a monolithic state led by

an Islamic party, advocating the use of every violent means necessary to achieve that end. The society he envisioned would be classless, one in which the “selfish individual” of liberal societies would be abolished and the “exploitation of man by man” would end. This, as the Boroumands point out, was “Leninism in an Islamist dress,” and it is the creed embraced by most present-day Islamists.

Though developed among Sunnis, this virulent ideological mix reached the Shiite world as well, most notably through its influence on Ayatollah Khomeini in Iran. Indeed, the Iranian revolution of 1979 conferred on Islamism a degree of religious respectability that it had never before possessed. But the fact that the movement could so easily bridge the bitter Shiite-Sunni divide also suggests just how sharply divorced it is from Islamic history and custom. As the Boroumands conclude, the key attributes of Islamism—“the aestheticization of death, the glorification of armed force, the worship of martyrdom, and ‘faith in the propaganda of the deed’ ”—have little precedent in Islam but have been defining features of modern totalitarianism. The seeming rigor of Osama bin Laden’s theology belies the reality of his highly heterodox beliefs.

SO MUCH for the ideological side of things. On the sociological side, there is still another close parallel between Islamism and the rise of European fascism. Though Hitler was a great entrepreneur of ideas, the roots of his movement, as described in classic analyses like Fritz Stern’s *The Politics of Cultural Despair* (1974), lay in the rapid industrialization of central Europe. In the course of a single generation, millions of peasants had moved from tightly-knit village communities to large, impersonal cities, losing in the process a range of familiar cultural norms and signposts.

This rapid transition—captured in Ferdinand Tönnies’s famous distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (community) and *Gesellschaft* (society)—was perhaps the most powerful impetus behind modern nationalism. Deprived of local sources of identity, displaced villagers found new social bonds in language, ethnicity, and—ultimately—in the mythopoetic propaganda of Europe’s extreme Right. Though the various right-wing parties pretended to revive ancient traditions—pre-Christian Germanic ones in the case of Nazism, Roman ones in the case of the Italian Fascists—their doctrines were really a syncretic mishmash, old symbols and new ideas brought together by the most up-to-date forms of communications technology.

Islamism, as the late Ernest Gellner was among the first to note, has followed a similar path. Over the last several decades, most Muslim

societies have undergone a social transformation not unlike that of Europe in the late 19th century. Large numbers of villagers and tribesmen have moved to the vast urban slums of Cairo, Algiers, and Amman, leaving behind the variegated, often preliterate Islam of the countryside. Islamism has filled the void, offering a new identity based on a puritanical, homogenized creed. Syncretist in the manner of fascism, it unites traditional religious symbols and rhetoric with the ideology of revolutionary action.

Some observers, especially after September 11, have suggested that the real engine of Islamism's growth is poverty, but this is not the case. According to the recent UN report, for example, the Arab world actually compares favorably to other developing regions when it comes to preventing abject want. Rather, like European fascism before it, Islamism is bred by rapid social dislocation. More often than not, its leaders and propagandists are newcomers to the middle or upper classes. Islamism introduces these educated but often lonely and alienated individuals to a larger *umma* (community) of believers, from Tangier to Jakarta to London. Through the magic of the cassette tape recorder (in Khomeini's case) or video (for bin Laden), they become members of a vibrant, if dangerous and destructive, international community.

SEEING Islamism for what it really is goes beyond correct taxonomy. It also points us in the direction of an important, if seemingly perverse, question: could it, like both fascism and Communism before it, serve inadvertently as a modernizing force, preparing the way for Muslim societies that can respond not destructively but constructively to the challenge of the West?

The question is not as absurd as it may sound. Comparisons are especially tricky here, but the Bolsheviks succeeded in creating an industrialized, urbanized Russia, and Hitler managed to get rid of the Junkers and much of the class stratification that had characterized prewar Germany. Through a tortuous and immensely costly path, both of these "isms" cleared away some of the premodern underbrush that had obstructed the growth of liberal democracy. There are, of course, much safer and more peaceful routes toward modernization, like those taken by countries like Korea or Britain or the United States, and less expensive paths to modernity were surely available to Russia and Germany. But one has to deal with what one has, and in Islamic cultures, in any case, there is arguably much more

underbrush to be cleared away. If Islamism is directed as much against traditional forms of Islam as against the West, could it, too, be a source of such creative destruction?

There are myriad ways in which not only Islamic practice but the rigid legal framework within which it is encased has obstructed change. The economic historian Timur Kuran has documented in painstaking detail a series of traditional Islamic institutions whose inflexibility and legalism have served as immense barriers to development. Interest rates are fixed by religious authorities, schooling focuses on rote learning of religious texts and discourages critical thinking, women are kept out of political and economic life, and so on. Even an institution like the *waqf*, or traditional Islamic charity, which could serve as a bulwark of civil society in a reformed Islamic order, fixes the bequests of wealthy individuals in perpetuity, with no opportunity for adaptation to changing circumstances.

Many of these same constraints existed historically in the Judeo-Christian West, and were eliminated or ameliorated only after long struggle. All of them continue to exist in the Islamic present, and can only be removed through the exercise of political power. Islamism has already demonstrated the capability of doing this, and even of accommodating Western norms when it has to: though Khomeini brought back the chador, or veil, for women, he also reluctantly sanctioned women's right to vote in Iranian elections, a practice (won under the Shah) that he had once likened to prostitution.

In Egypt, the Muslim Brotherhood as well as other, even more radical Islamist organizations have created a layer of voluntary associations standing between the family and the state. It was, for example, Islamist charities that stepped into the breach at the time of the 1992 Cairo earthquake, providing important social services unavailable from the inept and corrupt Egyptian state. The Islamists clearly hope to reunite religion and political power one day, which would be a disaster. But they are learning—and inculcating—habits of association and independent action that, if somehow divorced from their radical ideology, might yet help lay the groundwork of a true civil society.

THERE is another area in which the reactionary ideas of the Islamists may play a potentially progressive role, and this has to do with the fundamental sources of authority and legitimacy in the Islamic world.

The traditional system of Islamic jurisprudence—with its rigid rules and hierarchies—has been under attack, in one way or another, since at least the 19th century. The most important early figures in this effort were modernizers, like the Iranian Jamal aldin al-Afghani (1839-1897) and his student, the Egyptian reformer Muhammad Abduh (1849-1905). Abduh was among the first to depart from the rigidly textual form of interpretation that had characterized the Sunni world since the earliest caliphates. In his view, human reason was the only appropriate tool for applying the fundamental truths of the Qur'an and the Sunna (the traditions of the Prophet). Appointed mufti of Egypt toward the end of his life, Abduh issued rulings reflecting, in the words of one scholar, his desire “to render the religion of Islam entirely adaptable to the requirements of modern civilization.”

The implications of this turn were profound. Though the institutional base of orthodox Sunni Islam remained intact, the long-sealed gates of doctrinal explication were unhinged. Like a Muslim Luther, Abduh shook up the clerical establishment by reviving, under the influence of his mentor al-Afghani, the possibility of independent legal interpretation. His example gave unprecedented latitude to all subsequent construers of Islamic tradition, whether saints or demagogues—the latter including anti-Western radicals like the Muslim Brotherhood's Sayyid Qutb and, eventually, Osama bin Laden.

In the battle for interpretative power, it is no coincidence that the primary breeding ground for Islamism has been the brittle oligarchies of Saudi Arabia and Egypt. Both regimes have co-opted the traditional clergy, forcing the populist current of Islam into back alleys and store-front mosques and turning it into an ideological guerrilla movement. Detached from the moorings of tradition, the Islamists have proved adept at manipulating the symbols of faith and appropriating them for their own revolutionary purposes.

Osama bin Laden's famous 1998 *fatwa*, in which he declared jihad on the United States and any American fair game for his followers, is a case in point. Though the content of this declaration is itself contrary to traditional Islamic moral teachings—as the eminent Middle East scholar Bernard Lewis has observed, “At no point do the basic texts of Islam enjoin terrorism and murder”—the most notably radical thing about it is the identity of its author. Osama bin Laden has no credentials as a religious authority and no right, under traditional Islamic practice, to issue a *fatwa*. It is a bit like Hitler issuing a papal encyclical, or Lenin a decree in the name of the Russian Orthodox church. The mere fact that bin Laden was willing

to cross this line shows the extent to which Islamism has undermined traditional Islamic legal authority. But a line crossed in the name of waging all-out war against the West may yet be crossed in the name of healthier purposes.

WE SHOULD not kid ourselves. The modernization of Islam is hardly imminent, and it will not occur without enormous struggle. There are several deeply imbedded obstacles in Islamic society, not least the often-noted lack of a tradition of secular politics. To many Muslims, what may simply seem more “natural” is a totalizing ideology that seeks to unite society and the state within a single revolutionary whole. Nor is it clear, despite the UN’s recent report, that the Muslim world is capable of the realistic self-appraisal necessary for a modernizing shift to occur.

Many non-Western societies, after all, have tried the path of violent resistance to the enormous military, economic, and cultural power of the West. It was only when faced with defeat and domination that nations like China and Japan undertook a serious study of what, in Lewis’s phrase, “went wrong.” Joining the West when they could not beat it, they adopted a variety of Western institutions while retaining a core of their own culture. This process of social learning has been much slower in Muslim societies; for Arabs in particular, it has been all too convenient to blame Israel and the United States for their own lack of progress.

If the wait for Muslim modernization is likely to be a long one, how, then, should the West respond in the short term as it faces the continued prospect of terrorism, suicide bombings, and weapons of mass destruction? The determined application of military power is certainly part of the answer. European fascism did not fall because of the inherent wickedness of its animating ideas; having brought havoc to the societies that embraced its doctrines, it lost legitimacy because it was crushed on the battlefield. Just as Osama bin Laden and his cause gained status and support with the successful attacks of September 11, so the rout of al Qaeda from Afghanistan and continuing U.S. operations against radical Islamic terrorism are absolutely key to dampening Islamist fervor.

But the more important struggle must take place within the Islamic world itself. For too long, genuine Muslim modernizers have sat in the wings while traditionalists and Islamists battled one another on center stage. The great need now is for Western-oriented Muslims to take advantage of the

turmoil created by September 11 to promote a more genuinely liberal form of their religion.

There is reason to think that such an opening exists. Though many Muslims continue to favor Islamism in the abstract, the movement has left a disastrous record everywhere it has come to power. Saudi Arabia, home of the extremist Wahhabi strain of fundamentalist Islam, is one of the most corrupt and mismanaged regimes in the contemporary world. Even with the country's vast oil wealth, per-capita income fell in real terms from \$11,500 in 1980 to \$6,700 in 1999. As for Afghanistan under the Taliban, ordinary Afghans were overjoyed to be liberated from their yoke, and eagerly returned to such simple modern pleasures as watching cheesy Indian movies on their long-buried VCR's.

It is the Iranians, who, having lived under Islamist rule for the past generation, are most likely to lead the Islamic world out of its current impasse. Though Western hopes for the seemingly reform-minded President Khatami have proved misplaced, there is one basic demographic fact working in favor of eventual liberalization: 70 percent of Iran's population is now under the age of 30, and from all reports these young people tend to abhor the Islamic theocracy. Having brought the first Islamist regime to power, Iran would set a powerful example for the rest of the Middle East—and beyond—if it were to move toward liberalization on its own steam.

In the end, it is as important not to overestimate the strength of Islamism as it is fatal to underestimate it. It has little to offer Arabs, much less the rest of the Muslim world. Its glorification of violence has already produced a sharp counterreaction, and—provided it is defeated—its “successes” may yet help pave the way for long-overdue reform. If so, this would certainly not be the first time that the cunning of history has produced so astounding a result.



Radical Islam's Threat to Democracy (2007)

The deeper question that's been raised by a lot of scholars is whether there are permanent cultural obstacles to modernization, either in the economic or in the political form, and that somehow this one particular cultural group represents a particularly severe obstacle. My general view of that is it's extremely unlikely that this is true; that there is really, as far as I can see, no inherent reason in the religion itself, Islam, to think that a Muslim society cannot modernize economically. And in fact, you've had several fairly successful cases of that, like Turkey and Malaysia, or Indonesia at a lower level of development.

And I also think there's no particular reason why a Muslim society cannot create and sustain a liberal democracy. And again, you've got a number of examples: Turkey, Mali, Senegal, Indonesia since 1997.

So the question is really: what is the radical rejection of modernity being driven by? And here I would say it comes less out of the religion Islam per se, because Islam is a religion that's very legalistic. It's very rooted in local traditions and customs that define and ascribe to individuals their particular identities.

But what's very interesting about the people in the contemporary world that tend to be attracted to these Islamist or jihadist groups is that they actually are not people living in traditional Islamic societies. They are people living at the fringes of Western societies. Sometimes that's the case when they live in Western Europe, in Muslim minority communities, as was the case of Mohamed Atta, or Mohammed Bouyeri, who killed the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, or the July 7th subway bombers in London.

Sometimes the alienation comes when the modern world comes to visit people in the Middle East in the form of the Internet, television, the Western cultural onslaught that we associate with globalization. And I would argue that the extremism you see is actually the result of what is a fairly familiar loss of identity for people that are caught in this cultural no-man's-land between traditional societies and successfully modernizing societies.

It's quite interesting that successfully modernizing societies like India and China do not produce this kind of terrorist, but they really come more out of a stratum of people that have been exposed to modernization but have not gotten on the train successfully.

And this actually, I think, makes the phenomenon something—it's not that it should make you feel good about it—but it's something we've seen before, because that was the classic sociological explanation for the social origins of both fascism and Bolshevism. The typical Bolshevik or fascist was a working-class person who did not find a home in the industrialized world, just left the village, the tightly woven community, now living in a big city without a clear identity. Hitler comes along and says, "I'll tell you who you are. You are a German."

And I think Osama bin Laden in many ways has been doing that. He says, "I'll tell you who you are. You're a member of this global Muslim ummah, and I can define your identity very precisely in terms of the following ideology."

So that doesn't mean that we are not going to have a lot of big problems dealing with this political movement now, but I just do not think that this rises to the level of a civilizational challenge.



What Became of the 'Freedom Agenda'? (2010)

Barack Obama's recent drop in the polls has not been accompanied by a corresponding rebound in public opinion concerning the foreign policy of his predecessor George W. Bush. This is particularly true with regard to the promotion of democracy in the Middle East, or what the Bush administration called the "Freedom Agenda." The consensus of foreign-policy experts on the left and right now deems this a naive initiative that was rightly abandoned by the Bush administration itself shortly after the rise of Hamas in the Gaza elections of 2006.

While Mr. Obama paid lip service to the need for greater Middle East democracy in his June 2009 Cairo speech to the Muslim world, he has done very little concretely to back this up in terms of quiet pressure for democratic change on the part of allies like Egypt, Jordan or Morocco. Indeed, the administration's ramping up of military support for Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh in the wake of the attempted Christmas day airliner bombing suggests that the U.S. has gone back to the traditional U.S. policy of reliance on Arab strongmen.

This would be a big mistake. For the core premises of the Freedom Agenda remain essentially correct, even as its enunciation in the midst of the Iraq invasion undercut its credibility. Mr. Obama runs the risk of falling in bed with the same set of Middle Eastern authoritarians and alienating broad political populations in the region. He may even live to see them blow up in his face for lack of legitimacy, just as the Shah of Iran did in 1979.

The Bush administration asserted a number of points under the rubric of the Freedom Agenda that remain valid to the present moment. Back in 2003, President Bush said that “Sixty years of Western nations excusing and accommodating the lack of freedom . . . did nothing to make us safe. . . . 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.”

In his second inaugural in January 2005, Mr. Bush went on to say that there was no cultural reason why the Arab world should remain the one part of the world resistant to the broad wave of democracy evident everywhere else.

As a report published last month by the U.S. Institute of Peace, “In Pursuit of Democracy and Security in the Greater Middle East,” argues, there are good reasons for thinking that the lack of democracy in the Arab world is political rather than cultural. Arab authoritarians like Hosni Mubarak of Egypt have tolerated—and in some cases promoted—the participation of Islamist candidates in elections as part of a strategy to prove to Western backers that they are the only thing standing in the way of cataclysmic Islamic revolution.

They've also gotten good at a cynical game of state-managed liberalization, whereby they open up their political systems just enough to convince outsiders that they are "transitioning" to genuine democracy, only to clamp down again once their control is threatened.

All of this has led, in the view of the Institute of Peace report, to an increasingly dangerous political, social and ideological gap between rulers and their societies. And in this struggle between state and society, the U.S. is widely seen throughout the region as selfishly propping up an unjust and corrupt old order.

The problem with the Bush administration's Freedom Agenda wasn't its fundamental analysis, but the way that it was articulated in the midst of the highly unpopular Iraq war. Democracy promotion was used from the start to justify the invasion, and in the eyes of many Arabs became synonymous with American occupation.

The high-flown rhetoric of Bush's second inaugural, when he asserted that there could be no difference between U.S. security interests and our democratic ideals, was manifestly hyperbolic and led to inevitable charges of hypocrisy when the U.S. failed to endorse Hamas as the sole representatives of the Palestinians in Gaza. By making Middle East democracy promotion an instrument of the war on terror, the U.S. both tainted the cause of democracy itself and undermined the credibility of its own foreign policy.

Mr. Obama arrived in office with none of this baggage, and therefore had an opportunity to recommit the United States to peaceful democratic change. But the window is rapidly closing as the U.S. draws closer to the region's authoritarian rulers. In Jordan, for example, cooperation on the war on terrorism has been accompanied by the regime's curbing of political freedoms through the passing of nearly 100 temporary new laws. This has not prevented Mr. Obama from telling King Abdullah "Your Majesty, we need to clone you."

The most immediate danger lies in Yemen, which has become the focus of counterterrorism efforts since the abortive Christmas day attack. Rather than aggressively pressing Mr. Saleh to negotiate with opposition groups

and broaden his base of support, we are repeating the classic mistake of putting all of our eggs in one authoritarian basket and making cooperation on counterterrorism the primary criterion for economic and political support.

Taking a Middle Eastern democracy agenda seriously does not mean that we should return to the loud trumpeting of promises of support for regional democracy that we cannot keep. Nor does it mean playing the authoritarians' game of affirming fake liberalization as the real article of democracy.

It does mean working quietly behind the scenes to push friendly authoritarians towards a genuine broadening of political space in their countries through the repeal of countless exceptional laws, defamation codes, party registration statutes and the like that hinder the emergence of real democratic contestation.

The longstanding risk that true democratization will lead to takeover by radical Islamists remains real; our ideals do not require us to commit suicide in this manner. But the idea that radicalism is the only alternative to an illegitimate status quo is one we need not accept.



50 years hence, al-Qaida will be but a footnote (2011)

In the immediate aftermath of the September 11 attacks, there were grand assertions that “everything was different” and that the “world had changed.” We were forced to confront a bearded man in a cave spouting incomprehensible invective about crusaders and jihad, and reorient foreign policy in dramatic ways. But with 10 years' hindsight, did the world actually change on that date? And what will Osama bin Laden's historical legacy be?

The answer to both questions is: not much. It is my view that in a longer historical perspective, al-Qaida will be seen as a mere blip or diversion. Bin Laden got lucky that day and pulled off a devastating, made-for-media

attack. The United States then overreacted, invading Iraq and making anti-Americanism a self-fulfilling prophecy.

But while al-Qaida's form of radical Islamism appealed to a minority of discontented individuals, it never represented a dominant social trend in the Middle East. The broader and more important story that was emerging in the past decade was the social modernisation of the Arab world that has resulted in the Arab Spring.

People could be excused for thinking that the world had changed after September 11. The World Trade Centre attacks involved the killing of innocent people for its own sake, a nihilistic act that could have claimed the lives of 10 or 100 times as many victims, had the technological means been available. The threat of weapons of mass destruction had been around for a long time, but up until that point no one seemed malevolent enough to use them in this fashion. In the days after the attacks, every thoughtful person began to realise how vulnerable modern technological societies were.

It turned out, however, that once the world's intelligence and security establishment was turned to focus on the problem of Islamist terrorism, it was possible to mount a defence. The fact that there have been no follow-up attacks on American soil was not for want of trying; but many plots were uncovered and broken up before they could be realised. The truly frightening possibility remains terrorist access to nuclear or biological weapons, but the route to these capabilities is not so easy for groups like al-Qaida and its affiliates.

The real problem was political. As the terrorism expert Brian Jenkins points out, democratic publics always overreact to the threat of terrorism. It would have been very difficult for an American administration of any stripe to tell the public the truth after September 11, namely, that western civilisation was not facing an existential threat from al-Qaida, but rather a long twilight struggle best fought by police and intelligence agencies.

The Bush administration did much the opposite, elevating the "war on terrorism" to the level of 20th-century struggles against fascism and communism, and justifying its invasion of Iraq on these grounds. By neglecting Afghanistan and occupying Iraq, it turned both countries into

magnets for new terrorist recruitment, diminished its own moral stature through prisoner abuse, and tarnished the name of democracy promotion. September 11 spawned many theories of a Muslim or Arab exception to the global trend toward democracy. After the green uprising in Iran and the Arab Spring, we can see clearly that this was one area where the Bush administration was right: there was no cultural or religious obstacle to the spread of democratic ideas in the Middle East; only, it would have to come about through the people's own agency and not as a gift of a foreign power. Even if democracy does not emerge quickly in places such as Egypt and Tunisia, the popular mobilisation we have seen signals a key social trend far more powerful than anything a Bin Laden or Zawahiri could muster.

September 11 will have legacies. Al-Qaida and its affiliates continue to operate, and may still succeed in downing an airliner or exploding a car bomb in a shopping mall. Pakistan, with its stockpile of nuclear weapons, is a very scary place, the one part of the Muslim world where trends have been going in the wrong direction. In western countries, distrust of Muslims has grown since 9/11, as evidenced by the controversy of the so-called "Ground Zero" mosque in the US or the rising of anti-immigrant populist parties in Europe. All of this will make the already difficult integration of immigrant communities much more difficult to accomplish.

Since 2001 the most important world-historical story has been the rise of China. This is a development whose impact will almost certainly be felt in 50 years' time. Whether anyone will remember Osama bin Laden and al-Qaida at that remove is a different matter.



Democracy and Islam (2015)

Interviewer: Let's talk a little bit about the Middle East, both on its own terms and as a problem for U.S. foreign policy, and indeed for the world. How do you rate the chances of liberal democracy developing in the Middle East? You've written about this several times, and you've been a little bit ambivalent, I'd say, in your judgments. How do you view it now?

Fukuyama: From the perspective of 2015, I don't think we're going to see democracy break out in places like Egypt or Yemen anytime soon. Syria is a total disaster.

Of all of the countries in that region, only Tunisia seems to have some chance of actually producing a relatively liberal democracy. And I think the challenges are pretty great. I think that you have this initial mobilization—

Interviewer: So what happened to the Arab Spring?

Fukuyama: The Arab Spring, I still think, laid a foundation for the possibility of democracy, because you can't have democracy if people aren't mobilized and angry and want to get rid of tyranny. And I think you saw that in one Arab country after another. But—and this kind of gets to the theme of my books—you can't have democracy without institutions.

So Libya today is basically a bunch of militias, guys running around with AK-47s shooting each other. There's no state. And so the first thing that they need to do is actually develop a state that has a monopoly of force and that can protect citizens from this kind of depredation.

You need political parties. And I think to this day in Egypt, it's not clear to me that there weren't more people that would favor a more liberal, Western-oriented government than the ones that voted for the Muslim Brotherhood. But the problem was the Muslim Brotherhood was extremely well organized, and all the liberals ended up fighting each other, and they lost the presidential and parliamentary elections early on as a result. And so that again is a failure of institutions.

Interviewer: I mean, that's a striking claim. Let's just analyze that for a second. Typically you see figures that the liberal elements—students and the rising middle class—are small, ten, fifteen percent or something at most, of the electorate, if you want to call it that, in Egypt. But you think it's much larger?

Fukuyama: Yeah. I think that if you looked, for example, at the election that brought Morsi to power, part of the problem was the non-Islamist opposition was quite severely divided. And if you added up the other candidates, it's not clear they couldn't have won a majority.

But the Islamists in all of these countries, they've been driven underground, and as a result they're tough. They know how to organize, and they also appeal to a kind of less-educated rural population. Unfortunately, the people that we tend to like better, the more liberal types, are more urban, educated, and they don't know how to make connections to that part of the population. So I think that was one issue.

But then there's just the issue of the radicals. There's no question that there's something in the contemporary interpretation of Islam that is breeding beheadings and suicide bombers and so forth. Now that segment of the Muslim world is a sliver, but it's an important one, because they can drive fear and they're well organized. And unfortunately, that's the threat that we've got to deal with right now.

Interviewer: Let's pursue that a little. Your analysis, which has been consistent and well wrought over a number of years now, is that the problem of Islamism, or these fanatical subgroups of Muslims, isn't really a true product of Muslim religion or culture so much as it's a strictly modern phenomenon washing over into the Middle East. You've said that Islamism appeals mostly to urbanized Middle Easterners and sort of deracinated Muslim immigrants in Europe who are looking for a way to ground themselves, to root themselves, to find an identity.

Does that thesis cause problems for what you just said, however, that there's a fertile movement, a kind of ideology of sorts, that is recruiting and imperiling progress in the Middle East?

Fukuyama: No, those two are two sides of the same point. I mean, there's definitely a very radical, dangerous ideology, and it appeals to a certain kind of person.

So if you look at all these fighters that are now going to work for ISIS, or fighting Assad in Syria, they're mostly unemployed young men without girlfriends, without much in terms of career opportunities. They're deeply alienated, and that's why they see that there's a cause that's larger than them, that they can belong in this society in a way that they couldn't belong in Amsterdam or Paris or wherever they started out.

So I do think that there's a kind of sociological basis for the kind of extremism that we're seeing. I think the larger point that I've been trying to

make is that Islam, like any other complex religion, is subject to different forms of interpretation. So if you roll the clock back fifty or seventy-five years in the Middle East, everybody was a secular nationalist, right? There were no suicide bombers; there was none of this absurd jihadism. Rather, you had people like Nasser, or the early Ba'athists, who were suppressing the Muslim Brotherhood.

So I just think that these religious traditions are complex, and they're subject to reinterpretation with every generation.

Interviewer: I wanted to contrast your view of this with that of your teacher at Harvard, Sam Huntington. He is famous for one of his later books, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. That was 1996. His argument was that there's something about Islam itself as a kind of civilization that is difficult for liberal democracy to digest, and hence his prediction was that along the borders of Islam with the rest of the world there would be conflict, which prediction has held up at least reasonably well. So why are you right and he was wrong?

Fukuyama: Certainly in the short run, he is correct that, of all the cultural groups that he referred to, or the civilizations, Islam is the one that actually believes that it's a civilization. The Chinese don't think that they're part of Confucian civilization; they're citizens of China, or Singapore, or Taiwan, or whatever. But there is a sense in which Muslims do believe that there's a Muslim ummah, a community that transcends particular nation-states.

And it is true that separation of mosque and state has existed historically in medieval Islam, but in recent years it's been much more fused. And that's really, I think, the core of the political problem that these Islamist movements face, or pose.

But the question down the road is: Is this a permanent, essential characteristic of Islam that will never be overcome under any circumstances? And I just think that if you look at the history of Christianity and democracy, there's some ground for thinking that that's not the case. Because in some sense modern liberalism arose out of the sectarian wars within Christianity that were fought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Interviewer: Yes, not the Crusades, as the president said the other day. I mean, he really should have invoked the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Fukuyama: Well, the Thirty Years' War in Germany killed maybe a third of the population of Germany at that time. And I think part of the reason that you had the principle of tolerance spread in Europe was the fact that everybody was just tired of this after 150 years of unrelenting warfare. And they said, well, the better principle is just to let people privately exercise their religious beliefs and have the state be neutral with regard to that.

And so I think what's going on now in the Middle East is you're having a spreading Sunni-Shiite war that is going to be extremely costly.

Interviewer: And prolonged.

Fukuyama: And prolonged, yeah. I mean, I hope it doesn't go on for 150 years, but at the end of this it may be the case that people step back and say, "Hey, how about some liberal tolerance instead of the sectarian definition of politics?"

Interviewer: And that brings me to the second sort of question I wanted to put to you, which is: What do we do? I mean, problems like Libya or Somalia or Yemen, where you have failed states—the solution used to be empire, as a way of governing them against their will or without their consent. That seems to have gone out of style. So what does that leave us as a foreign policy?

Fukuyama: Well, it's a very tough question. I think that the experience of Iraq and Afghanistan has really demonstrated that the United States just does not have the kind of collective willpower to really dictate a political outcome in that part of the world. Meaning, we wanted to create a modern, corruption-free democracy. We got the democracy part to some extent, but we certainly didn't get the modern-state part, the low levels of corruption.

What we've created are these two basically rent-seeking monstrosities, in a certain sense, that are not capable of really providing impersonal public services.

Interviewer: You're referring to the state apparatus?

Fukuyama: The state apparatus, right.

And so I think we ought to draw a lesson from that. It might have been possible if the United States had been willing to occupy these countries for fifty years and put lots of boots on the ground and spend a lot of treasure, both in terms of lives and dollars, but we're just not willing to do that.

And so my view is that we ought to have a much more modest policy of containment, where we want to prevent certainly these terrorists from attacking targets in our part of the world, and we should try to make sure that they don't overrun more decent communities, the Kurds and other places. But I think we should just admit to ourselves that we don't have the staying power or the wisdom really to dictate a solution in a place like Syria.

Interviewer: Do we have the right to do that if we did have the wisdom and power?

Fukuyama: That bothers me a little bit less. I mean, I think that you do have situations where the United States has exercised a lot of judgment in the kinds of institutions—we certainly did that in places like Taiwan and Japan and South Korea after 1945—and I think they turned out pretty decently. But here it's much more a question of capability. I just don't think that we have the ability to bring that kind of result about in these places.

Interviewer: And is that primarily an intellectual failing, or is it simple exhaustion?

Fukuyama: It's both. In fact, it's that plus a lack of incentive. In Germany, Italy, Japan, Korea, we were fighting a Cold War, and that's why we stayed as long as we did. We thought that we had a very strong strategic interest. It's not clear we've got a similar strategic interest in a place like Syria.

It's certainly a question of knowledge and wisdom. We just don't understand the politics in these places, and I just think we don't have the local knowledge that's necessary for doing that. And then we are exhausted. I think that these two long wars have made the American public pretty leery of getting involved in another one.

Interviewer: So why did the occupations of Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan go so much better than the occupations of Iraq or Afghanistan? There was the Cold War emerging at the time.

Fukuyama: But I think the most important difference was that these were already developed countries. That's why we were fighting them. I mean, they're very powerful, industrialized, modern countries with modern states. And the problem in both places was not to construct these modern institutions from the ground up; it was to basically get them going again, to prime the pump and get the state machinery working. And that, in both cases, happened within five years of their defeat. I think that was really the main reason.

Interviewer: You were critical of some neoconservative thinkers, although you yourself once were a neoconservative, or were happy to be, I guess, included in that circle. And your argument was that the young neoconservatives had forgotten their elders' criticism of massive social-engineering projects. Has the second generation learned that lesson, do you think?

Fukuyama: Well, I don't want to cast any particular aspersions, but I think that it still probably hasn't been absorbed sufficiently. I just think that *The Public Interest*, that Irving Kristol published for many years, a great journal primarily about domestic American social policy, was all about caution with regard to what you can expect from public-policy interventions.

And if you consider trying to do something even more massive in a distant part of the world that we don't really understand, that is culturally very different, I think there was a tremendous amount of hubris in thinking that we could really engineer these kinds of outcomes.

And I would say that to this day there's still an overestimation of, for example, whether we could actually settle the Syrian conflict and bring about some kind of decent outcome in that situation. And I think there are still some neoconservatives that think we can, and I just don't believe that's possible.

Interviewer: In explaining their optimism, or overoptimism, they sometimes of course would cite Frank Fukuyama, whose guarantee of universal liberal democracy seemed to suggest to them that it would be

easy, once you got rid of the bad old government, to have a market economy and a liberal democratic political structure spring up from the earth.

Fukuyama: That was a misunderstanding. I think that what's missing there is the difficulty of creating institutions. Liberal democracy is not the default form of government that simply arises wherever you get rid of a dictator. And that's really the central point of these two books that I've written, is that these institutions are really hard to create.

Debate: Charles Krauthammer vs. Fukuyama



Charles Krauthammer (1950–2018) was an American psychiatrist turned political commentator who shifted from liberal Democratic politics in the 1970s to a leading role in the conservative intellectual establishment. After medical training at Harvard, he served as a speechwriter for Vice President

Walter Mondale and then entered journalism, eventually winning the Pulitzer Prize for his Washington Post column. Krauthammer was especially influential in foreign-policy debates, rejecting both isolationism and traditional realist caution in favor of assertive American internationalism. After the Cold War, he argued that the United States should use its unrivaled power to defend liberal democracy and maintain a favorable world order—a position he famously described as the “unipolar moment.” After 9/11, he became a prominent advocate of the Iraq War and democratic change in the Middle East, while later criticizing both Barack Obama’s retrenchment and Donald Trump’s populist challenge to the conservative tradition he represented.



Democratic Realism: An American Foreign Policy for a Unipolar World (Krauthammer’s speech, 2004)

Realists choose not to be Gulliver. In an international system with no sovereign, no police, no protection—where power is the ultimate arbiter and history has bequeathed us unprecedented power—we should be vigilant in preserving that power. And our freedom of action to use it.

But here we come up against the limits of realism: You cannot live by power alone. Realism is a valuable antidote to the woolly internationalism of the 1990s. But realism can only take you so far.

Its basic problem lies in its definition of national interest as classically offered by its great theorist, Hans Morgenthau: interest defined as power. Morgenthau postulated that what drives nations, what motivates their foreign policy, is the will to power—to keep it and expand it.

For most Americans, will to power might be a correct description of the world—of what motivates other countries—but it cannot be a prescription for America. It cannot be our purpose. America cannot and will not live by realpolitik alone. Our foreign policy must be driven by something beyond power. Unless conservatives present ideals to challenge the liberal ideal of a domesticated international community, they will lose the debate.

Which is why among American conservatives, another, more idealistic, school has arisen that sees America's national interest as an expression of values.

It is this school that has guided U.S. foreign policy in this decade. This conservative alternative to realism is often lazily and invidiously called neoconservatism, but that is a very odd name for a school whose major proponents in the world today are George W. Bush and Tony Blair—if they are neoconservatives, then Margaret Thatcher was a liberal. There's nothing neo about Bush, and there's nothing con about Blair.

Yet they are the principal proponents today of what might be called democratic globalism, a foreign policy that defines the national interest not as power but as values, and that identifies one supreme value, what John Kennedy called “the success of liberty.” As President Bush put it in his speech at Whitehall last November: “The United States and Great Britain share a mission in the world beyond the balance of power or the simple pursuit of interest. We seek the advance of freedom and the peace that freedom brings.”

Beyond power. Beyond interest. Beyond interest defined as power. That is the credo of democratic globalism. Which explains its political appeal: America is a nation uniquely built not on blood, race or consanguinity, but on a proposition—to which its sacred honor has been pledged for two centuries. This American exceptionalism explains why non-Americans find this foreign policy so difficult to credit; why Blair has had more difficulty garnering support for it in his country; and why Europe, in particular, finds

this kind of value-driven foreign policy hopelessly and irritatingly moralistic.

Democratic globalism sees as the engine of history not the will to power but the will to freedom. And while it has been attacked as a dreamy, idealistic innovation, its inspiration comes from the Truman Doctrine of 1947, the Kennedy inaugural of 1961, and Reagan's "evil empire" speech of 1983. They all sought to recast a struggle for power between two geopolitical titans into a struggle between freedom and unfreedom, and yes, good and evil.

Which is why the Truman Doctrine was heavily criticized by realists like Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan—and Reagan was vilified by the entire foreign policy establishment: for the sin of ideologizing the Cold War by injecting a moral overlay.

That was then. Today, post-9/11, we find ourselves in a similar existential struggle but with a different enemy: not Soviet communism, but Arab-Islamic totalitarianism, both secular and religious. Bush and Blair are similarly attacked for naïvely and crudely casting this struggle as one of freedom versus unfreedom, good versus evil.

Now, given the way not just freedom but human decency were suppressed in both Afghanistan and Iraq, the two major battles of this new war, you would have to give Bush and Blair's moral claims the decided advantage of being obviously true.

Nonetheless, something can be true and still be dangerous. Many people are deeply uneasy with the Bush-Blair doctrine—many conservatives in particular. When Blair declares in his address to Congress: "The spread of freedom is . . . our last line of defense and our first line of attack," they see a dangerously expansive, aggressively utopian foreign policy. In short, they see Woodrow Wilson.

Now, to a conservative, Woodrow Wilson is fightin' words. Yes, this vision is expansive and perhaps utopian. But it ain't Wilsonian. Wilson envisioned the spread of democratic values through as-yet-to-be invented international institutions. He could be forgiven for that. In 1918, there was no way to know how utterly corrupt and useless those international institutions would

turn out to be. Eight decades of bitter experience later—with Libya chairing the UN Commission on Human Rights—there is no way not to know.

Democratic globalism is not Wilsonian. Its attractiveness is precisely that it shares realism's insights about the centrality of power. Its attractiveness is precisely that it has appropriate contempt for the fictional legalisms of liberal internationalism.

Moreover, democratic globalism is an improvement over realism. What it can teach realism is that the spread of democracy is not just an end but a means, an indispensable means for securing American interests. The reason is simple. Democracies are inherently more friendly to the United States, less belligerent to their neighbors, and generally more inclined to peace. Realists are right that to protect your interests you often have to go around the world bashing bad guys over the head. But that technique, no matter how satisfying, has its limits. At some point, you have to implant something, something organic and self-developing. And that something is democracy.

But where? The danger of democratic globalism is its universalism, its open-ended commitment to human freedom, its temptation to plant the flag of democracy everywhere. It must learn to say no. And indeed, it does say no. But when it says no to Liberia, or Congo, or Burma, or countenances alliances with authoritarian rulers in places like Pakistan or, for that matter, Russia, it stands accused of hypocrisy. Which is why we must articulate criteria for saying yes. Where to intervene? Where to bring democracy? Where to nation-build?

I propose a single criterion: where it counts. Call it democratic realism. And this is its axiom: We will support democracy everywhere, but we will commit blood and treasure only in places where there is a strategic necessity—meaning, places central to the larger war against the existential enemy, the enemy that poses a global mortal threat to freedom.

Where does it count? Fifty years ago, Germany and Japan counted. Why? Because they were the seeds of the greatest global threat to freedom in midcentury—fascism—and then were turned, by nation-building, into bulwarks against the next great threat to freedom, Soviet communism. Where does it count today? Where the overthrow of radicalism and the beginnings of democracy can have a decisive effect in the war against the

new global threat to freedom, the new existential enemy, the Arab-Islamic totalitarianism that has threatened us in both its secular and religious forms for the quarter-century since the Khomeini revolution of 1979.

Establishing civilized, decent, nonbelligerent, pro-Western polities in Afghanistan and Iraq and ultimately their key neighbors would, like the flipping of Germany and Japan in the 1940s, change the strategic balance in the fight against Arab-Islamic radicalism.

Yes, it may be a bridge too far. Realists have been warning against the hubris of thinking we can transform an alien culture because of some postulated natural and universal human will to freedom. And they may yet be right. But how do they know in advance? Half a century ago, we heard the same confident warnings about the imperviousness to democracy of Confucian culture. That proved stunningly wrong. Where is it written that Arabs are incapable of democracy?

Yes, as in Germany and Japan, the undertaking is enormous, ambitious and arrogant. It may yet fail. But we cannot afford not to try. There is not a single, remotely plausible, alternative strategy for attacking the monster behind 9/11. It's not Osama bin Laden; it is the cauldron of political oppression, religious intolerance, and social ruin in the Arab-Islamic world—oppression transmuted and deflected by regimes with no legitimacy into virulent, murderous anti-Americanism. It's not one man; it is a condition. It would be nice to find that man and hang him, but that's the cops-and-robbers law-enforcement model of fighting terrorism that we tried for twenty years, and that gave us 9/11. This is war, and in war, arresting murderers is nice. But you win by taking territory—and leaving something behind.....

At the dawn of the twenty-first century, we can see clearly the two great geopolitical challenges on the horizon: the inexorable rise of China and the coming demographic collapse of Europe, both of which will irrevocably disequilibrate the international system.

But those problems come later. They are for midcentury. They are for the next generation. And that generation will not even get to these problems unless we first deal with our problem.

And our problem is 9/11 and the roots of Arab-Islamic nihilism. September 11 felt like a new problem, but for all its shock and surprise, it is an old problem with a new face. September 11 felt like the initiation of a new history, but it was a return to history, the twentieth-century history of radical ideologies and existential enemies.

The anomaly is not the world of today. The anomaly was the 1990s, our holiday from history. It felt like peace, but it was an interval of dreaming between two periods of reality.

From which 9/11 awoke us. It startled us into thinking everything was new. It's not. What is new is what happened not on 9/11 but ten years earlier on December 26, 1991: the emergence of the United States as the world's unipolar power. What is unique is our advantage in this struggle, an advantage we did not have during the struggles of the twentieth century. The question for our time is how to press this advantage, how to exploit our unipolar power, how to deploy it to win the old/new war that exploded upon us on 9/11.....



Fukuyama's Reply:

The Neoconservative Moment (2004, excerpts)

Krauthammer is a gifted thinker and his ideas are worth taking seriously for their own sake. But, perhaps more importantly, his strategic thinking has become emblematic of a school of thought that has acquired strong influence inside the Bush Administration foreign policy team and beyond. It is for that reason that Krauthammer's writings, particularly his AEI speech, require careful analysis....

The 2004 speech is strangely disconnected from reality. Reading Krauthammer, one gets the impression that the Iraq War—the archetypical application of American unipolarity—had been an unqualified success, with all of the assumptions and expectations on which the war had been based fully vindicated. There is not the slightest nod towards the new empirical facts that have emerged in the last year or so: the failure to find weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, the virulent and steadily mounting anti-Americanism throughout the Middle East, the growing insurgency in Iraq, the fact that no strong democratic leadership had emerged there, the

enormous financial and growing human cost of the war, the failure to leverage the war to make progress on the Israeli-Palestinian front, and the fact that America's fellow democratic allies had by and large failed to fall in line and legitimate American actions ex post.

The failure to step up to these facts is dangerous precisely to the neo-neoconservative position that Krauthammer has been seeking to define and justify. As the war in Iraq turns from triumphant liberation to grinding insurgency, other voices—either traditional realists like Brent Scowcroft, nationalist-isolationists like Patrick Buchanan, or liberal internationalists like John Kerry—will step forward as authoritative voices and will have far more influence in defining American post-Iraq War foreign policy. The poorly executed nation-building strategy in Iraq will poison the well for future such exercises, undercutting domestic political support for a generous and visionary internationalism, just as Vietnam did.

It did not have to be this way. One can start with premises identical to Krauthammer's, agree wholeheartedly with his critiques of the other three positions, and yet come up with a foreign policy that is very different from the one he lays out. I believe that his strategy simultaneously defines our interests in such a narrow way as to make the neoconservative position indistinguishable from realism, while at the same time managing to be utterly unrealistic in its overestimation of U.S. power and our ability to control events around the world. It is probably too late to reclaim the label "neoconservative" for any but the policies undertaken by the Bush Administration, but it is still worth trying to reformulate a[n]... alternative that combines idealism and realism—but in a fashion that can be sustained over the long haul.

Excessive Realism

Krauthammer and other commentators are correct that what is seen as "Kissingerian" realism is not an adequate basis for American foreign policy. A certain degree of messianic universalism with regard to American values and institutions has always been an inescapable component of American national identity: Americans were never comfortable with the kinds of moral compromises that a strict realist position entails. The question...: What kinds of bounds do you put around the idealistic part of the agenda? Krauthammer answers this key question in the following manner:...

I propose a single criterion: where it counts. Call it democratic *realism*. And this is its axiom: *We will support democracy everywhere, but we will commit blood and treasure only in places where there is strategic necessity—meaning, places central to the larger war against the existential enemy, the enemy that poses a global mortal threat to freedom.* [italics in the original]

While this axiom appears to be clear and straightforward, it masks a number of ambiguities that make it less than helpful as a guideline for U.S. intervention.

The first has to do with the phrase “strategic necessity”, which of course can be defined more and less broadly. Krauthammer initially appears to be taking a realist position by opting for the narrow definition when he refers to an “existential enemy” or an enemy posing a “mortal” threat. If these words have any real meaning, then they should include only threats to our existence as a nation or as a democratic regime. There have been such threats in the past: the Soviet Union could have annihilated us physically and conceivably could have subverted democracy in North America. But it is questionable whether any such existential threats exist now. Iraq before the U.S. invasion was certainly not one: It posed an existential threat to Kuwait, Iran and Israel, but it had no means of threatening the continuity of our regime. Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist groups aspire to be existential threats to American civilization but do not currently have anything like the capacity to actualize their vision: They are extremely dangerous totalitarians, but pose threats primarily to regimes in the Middle East.

This is not to say that Iraq and Al-Qaeda did not pose serious threats to American interests: the former was a very serious regional threat, and the latter succeeded in killing thousands of Americans on American soil. Use of WMD against the United States by a terrorist group would have terrible consequences, not just for the immediate victims but also for American freedoms in ways that could be construed as undermining our regime. But it is still of a lesser order of magnitude than earlier, state-based threats. The global Nazi and communist threats were existential both because their banner was carried by a great power, and because ideologically there were many people in the United States and throughout the Western world seduced by their vision. The Islamist threat has no such appeal, except

perhaps in countries like France that have permitted high levels of immigration from Muslim countries.

I suspect that Krauthammer's intended use of the term "strategic necessity" is actually broader than is implied by his own words about existential threats. At the end of his axiom he leaps to the need to fight an "enemy that poses a global mortal threat to freedom", and elsewhere speaks of the United States as "custodian of the international system", suggesting a broadminded understanding of self-interest.

Does "global" here mean threats that transcend specific regions, like radical Islamism or communism? If the enemy's reach has to be global, then North Korea would be excluded from the definition of a "strategic" threat. Or does "global" instead mean any mortal threat to freedom around the globe? Does the fact that an "enemy" poses a mortal threat to another free country but not to us qualify it as our "enemy?" Is Hamas, an Islamist group which clearly poses an existential threat to Israel, our enemy as well? Is Syria? And if these are our enemies, why should we choose to fight them in preference to threats to free countries closer to home like the FARC or ELN, which threaten democracy in Colombia, or Hugo Chavez in Venezuela? What makes something "central" in this global war? Was Iraq central to the war against radical Islamism?

It is clear that Krauthammer's axiom provides very little practical guidance for answering these questions. He might respond that applying the general principle requires prudential judgment. He might further respond that his position is very distinct from that of the realists because he is using democracy as an instrument to advance U.S. strategic interests: By transforming Iraqi politics and turning a bloodthirsty dictatorship into a Western-style democracy, new possibilities will open up for the entire region that promise to get at some of the root causes of terrorism. This is indeed an ambitious and highly idealistic agenda, and it is precisely in the prudential judgments underlying the current project of transforming the Middle East that his argument is fatally flawed.

Excessive Idealism

Of all of the different views that have now come to be associated with neoconservatives, the strangest one to me was the confidence that the United States could transform Iraq into a Western-style democracy, and go

on from there to democratize the broader Middle East. It struck me as strange precisely because these same neoconservatives had spent much of the past generation warning—in *The National Interest*'s former sister publication, *The Public Interest*, for example—about the dangers of ambitious social engineering, and how social planners could never control behavior or deal with unanticipated consequences. If the United States cannot eliminate poverty or raise test scores in Washington, DC, how does it expect to bring democracy to a part of the world that has stubbornly resisted it and is virulently anti-American to boot?

Krauthammer picks up this theme in his speech. Noting how wrong people were after World War II in asserting that Japan could not democratize, he asks, "Where is it written that Arabs are incapable of democracy?" He is echoing an argument made most forthrightly by the eminent Middle East scholar Bernard Lewis, who has at several junctures suggested that pessimism about the prospects for a democratic Iraq betrays lack of respect for Arabs.

It is, of course, nowhere written that Arabs are incapable of democracy, and it is certainly foolish for cynical Europeans to assert with great confidence that democracy is impossible in the Middle East. We have, indeed, been fooled before, not just in Japan but in Eastern Europe prior to the collapse of communism.

But possibility is not likelihood, and good policy is not made by staking everything on a throw of the dice. Culture is not destiny, but culture plays an important role in making possible certain kinds of institutions—something that is usually taken to be a conservative insight. Though I, more than most people, am associated with the idea that history's arrow points to democracy, I have never believed that democracies can be created anywhere and everywhere through sheer political will.

Prior to the Iraq War, there were many reasons for thinking that building a democratic Iraq was a task of a complexity that would be nearly unmanageable. Some reasons had to do with the nature of Iraqi society: the fact that it would be decompressing rapidly from totalitarianism, its ethnic divisions, the role of politicized religion, the society's propensity for violence, its tribal structure and the dominance of extended kin and patronage networks, and its susceptibility to influence from other parts of the Middle East that were passionately anti-American.

But other reasons had to do with the United States. America has been involved in approximately 18 nation-building projects between its conquest of the Philippines in 1899 and the current occupations of Afghanistan and Iraq, and the overall record is not a pretty one. The cases of unambiguous success—Germany, Japan, and South Korea—were all ones in which U.S. forces came and then stayed indefinitely. In the first two cases, we were not nation-building at all, but only re-legitimizing societies that had very powerful states. In all of the other cases, the U.S. either left nothing behind in terms of self-sustaining institutions, or else made things worse by creating, as in the case of Nicaragua, a modern army and police but no lasting rule of law.

This gets to a much more fundamental point about unipolarity. Krauthammer has always stressed the vast disparity of power between the United States and the rest of the world, vaster even than Rome's dominance at the height of its empire. But that dominance is clear-cut only along two dimensions of national power: the cultural realm and the ability to fight and win intensive conventional wars. Americans have no particular taste or facility for nation-building; we want exit strategies rather than empires—a point Krauthammer reiterated at the start of his lecture. Where then does he think the domestic basis of support will come from for this unbelievably ambitious effort to politically transform one of the world's most troubled and hostile regions? And if the nation is really a commercial republic uncomfortable with empire, why is he so eager to expand its domain? Lurking like an unbidden guest at a dinner party is the reality of what has happened in Iraq since the U.S. invasion: We have been our usual inept and disorganized selves in planning for and carrying out the reconstruction, something that was predictable in advance and should not have surprised anyone familiar with American history....

Dealing with the Middle East

Krauthammer has thought long and hard about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and his views on how the Israelis need to deal with the Palestinians color his views on how the United States should deal with the Arabs more broadly. Krauthammer has not supported strongly engaging the Arab world through political strategies. In the past, he has put forward a particular view of Arab psychology, namely, that they respect power above all as a source of legitimacy. As he once said in a radio interview, if you want to win their

hearts and minds, you have to grab a lower part of their anatomy and squeeze hard.

Towards the end of his speech, Krauthammer speaks of the United States as being in the midst of a bitter and remorseless war with an implacable enemy that is out to destroy Western civilization. This kind of language is appropriate as a description of Israel's strategic situation since the outbreak of the second intifada. The question is whether this accurately describes the position of the United States as well. Are we like Israel, locked in a remorseless struggle with a large part of the Arab and Muslim world, with few avenues open to us for dealing with them other than an iron fist? And in general, does a strategic doctrine developed by a small, vulnerable country surrounded by implacable enemies make sense when applied to the situation of the world's sole superpower, a country that spends as much on defense as the next 16 most powerful countries put together?

I believe that there are real problems in transposing one situation to the other. While Israel's most immediate Arab interlocutors are indeed implacable enemies, the United States faces a much more complex situation. In Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist groups, we do in fact confront an enemy that hates us for what we are rather than for what we do. For the reasons given above, I do not believe they are an existential threat to us, but they certainly would like to be, and it is hard to see how we can deal with them other than by killing, capturing or otherwise militarily neutralizing them.

But the radicals swim in a much larger sea of Muslims—1.2 billion of them, more or less—who are not yet implacable enemies of the United States. If one has any doubts about this, one has only to look at the first of the United Nations Development Program's two Arab Human Development reports, which contained a poll asking whether respondents would like to emigrate to the United States if they had the opportunity. In virtually every Arab country, a majority of respondents said yes. On the other hand, recent Pew surveys of global public opinion show that positive feelings about the United States in Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan and other supposedly friendly Muslim countries has sunk to disastrously low levels. What these data taken as a whole suggest is that for the broad mass of public opinion in Muslim countries, we are disliked or hated not for what we are, but rather for what we do. What they do not like is a familiar list of complaints about our foreign policy that we somehow continue to fail to take seriously: our

lack of concern for the plight of the Palestinians, our hypocritical support for dictators in Muslim countries, and now our occupation of Iraq.

The War on Terror is, in other words, a classic counter-insurgency war, except that it is one being played out on a global scale. There are genuine bad guys out there who are much more bitter ideological enemies than the Soviets ever were, but their success depends on the attitudes of the broader populations around them who can be alternatively supportive, hostile or indifferent—depending on how we play our cards. As we are seeing vividly in Iraqi cities like Fallujah and Najaf, counter-insurgency wars are incredibly difficult to fight, because we must somehow destroy the enemy without alienating the broader population and making things worse. Counter-insurgency requires a tricky mixture of precisely targeted force, political judgment and extremely good intelligence: a combination of carrots and sticks.

Israel used carrots during the Oslo process and then shifted to sticks after its collapse and the beginning of the second intifada. I do not want to second-guess either of these approaches, neither of which seems to have worked very well. But an American policy toward the Muslim world that, like Sharon's, is largely stick will be a disaster: we do not have enough sticks in our closet to "make them respect us." The Islamists for sure hated us from the beginning, but Krauthammerian unipolarity has increased hatred for the United States in the broader fight for hearts and minds. This suggests that we need a much more complex strategy that recalibrates the proportion of sticks and carrots. This has begun to happen with the leaking of the Bush Administration's Greater Middle East Initiative, but that is only the beginning of a much longer political struggle.

Israel's policy of constantly being on the offensive, pre-empting and taking the initiative (as in its policy of targeted assassinations) is also something that does not scale well. Unlike Israel, the United States has a substantial margin of strategic depth and does not constantly have to run risks in order to stay on top. A sole superpower that is seen as being inclined to intervene pre-emptively and often will frighten not just its enemies but its friends as well. The United States must never abjure its right to pre-empt, but it is a right that needs to be exercised cautiously. Even talking about such a strategy, as we did in the National Security Strategy document, will tend to promote opposing coalitions and resistance to U.S. policies. Israel can afford to antagonize potential allies and disregard international public

opinion as long as it can count on support from the United States. The United States could, I suppose, survive if it were similarly isolated, but it is hard to see why we would want to put ourselves in this position. It is hardly an advantageous position from which to launch an idealistic Wilsonian crusade to reshape the Middle East in our image.



Krauthammer's Rejoinder:

In Defense of Democratic Realism (2004, excerpts)

Democratic globalism, often incorrectly called neoconservatism. It sees the spread of democracy, “the success of liberty”, as John F. Kennedy put it in his inaugural address, as both the ends and the means of foreign policy. Its most public spokesmen, George W. Bush and Tony Blair, have sought to rally America and the world to a struggle over values. Its response to 9/11 is to engage in a War on Terror whose essential element is the global spread of democracy.

Democratic globalism is an improvement on realism because it understands the utility of democracy as a means for achieving global safety and security. Realists undervalue internal democratic structures. They see the state system as an arena of colliding billiard balls. Realists have little interest in what is inside. Democratic globalists understand that as a rule, fellow democracies provide the most secure alliances and most stable relationships. Therefore the spread of democracy—understood not just as elections, but as limited government, protection of minorities, individual rights, the rule of law and open economies—has ultimately not just moral but geopolitical value.

The problem with democratic globalism, as I argued in my address, is that it is too ambitious and too idealistic. The notion, expressed by Tony Blair, that “the spread of freedom is... our last line of defense and our first line of attack” is a bridge too far. “The danger of democratic globalism”, I wrote, “is its universalism, its open-ended commitment to human freedom, its temptation to plant the flag of democracy everywhere.” Such a worldwide crusade would overstretch our resources, exhaust our morale and distract us

from our central challenge. I therefore suggested an alternative, democratic realism, that is “targeted, focused and limited”, that intervenes not everywhere that freedom is threatened but only where it counts—in those regions where the defense or advancement of freedom is critical to success in the larger war against the existential enemy. That is how we fought the Cold War. The existential enemy then was Soviet communism. Today, it is Arab/Islamic radicalism. Therefore “where it really counts today is in that Islamic crescent stretching from North Africa to Afghanistan.”

An Existential Threat

At its most fundamental, Fukuyama’s critique is that I am misreading the new world because there is no existential struggle. By calling our war with Arab/Islamic radicalism existential, I exaggerate the threat and thus distort the whole fabric of American foreign policy. “Krauthammer”, he writes, “speaks of the United States as being in the midst of a bitter and remorseless war with an implacable enemy that is out to destroy Western civilization.” “Speaks of”—as one might speak of flying saucers. In reality, asserts Fukuyama, “Al-Qaeda and other radical Islamist groups aspire to be existential threats to American civilization but do not currently have anything like the capacity to actualize their vision.”

Fukuyama apparently believes that the phrase “not currently” saves him from existential peril. But the problem is that precisely as we speak, Al-Qaeda is energetically trying to make up for the deficiencies from which Fukuyama so complacently derives comfort. When Hitler marched into the Rhineland in 1936, he did not “currently” have the means to overrun Europe. Many Europeans believed, delusionally, that he did not present an existential threat. By Fukuyama’s logic, they were right.

What defines an existential threat is intent, objective and potential capability. Existential struggle is a struggle over existence and identity. Until it lost heart late in life, Soviet communism was utterly committed to the eradication of what it called capitalism, in other words, the entire way of life of the West. Its mission was to do to the world what it had done to, say, Lithuania and Czechoslovakia—remake it in its image. Existential struggle is a fight to the end—extermination or, even better, conversion. That is what distinguishes it from non-existential struggles, in which the contending parties in principle can find compromise (over territory or resources or power).

Fukuyama is unimpressed with radical Islam because, in his view, it lacks the global appeal of such true existential threats as communism and Nazism. But Nazism had little global appeal. A masterrace theory hardly plays well among the other races. Did it really have more sympathizers and fifth columnists in the West than does Islamism today? Islamist cells are being discovered regularly in just about every European capital, and some even in the United States. And these, of course, are just the fifth columnists we know about. The thought is sobering, given how oblivious we were to the presence among us of the 9/11 plotters. Just because Islamism in the West may not, like its Nazi or communist counterparts, take the form of a political party or capture Western celebrity intellectuals, does not minimize the threat or the power of its appeal. Radical Islam does not have its Sartre or its Pound. It is the conceit of intellectuals to think that this counts for more than a Richard Reid, armed this time not with a shoe-bomb but a nuclear suitcase or consignment of anthrax.

Disdaining the appeal of radical Islam is the conceit also of secularists. Radical Islam is not just as fanatical and unappeasable in its anti-Americanism, anti-Westernism and anti-modernism as anything we have ever known. It has the distinct advantage of being grounded in a venerable religion of over one billion adherents that not only provides a ready supply of recruits—trained and readied in mosques and madrassas far more effective, autonomous and ubiquitous than any Hitler Youth or Komsomol camp—but is able to draw on a long and deep tradition of zeal, messianic expectation and a cult of martyrdom. Hitler and Stalin had to invent these out of whole cloth. Mussolini's version was a parody. Islamic radicalism flies under a flag with far more historical depth and enduring appeal than the ersatz religions of the swastika and hammer-and-sickle that proved so historically thin and insubstantial. Fukuyama underestimates the power of religion. He underestimates the power of technology. He is trapped in the notion that only Great Powers can threaten other Great Powers. Because the enemy today does not resemble a Germany or a Japan, the threat is “of a lesser order of magnitude.” For a realist, he is remarkably blind to the revolution that technology has brought. The discovery of nuclear power is the greatest “order of magnitude” leap in potential destructiveness since the discovery of fire. True, the atomic bomb was detonated half a century ago; but the democratization of the knowledge of how to make it is new. Chemical and biological weapons are perhaps a century old; but the diffusion of the capacity to develop them is new. Radical Islam's obvious intent is to decapitate the American polity, cripple its economy and create

general devastation. We have seen what a mere 19 Islamists can do in the absence of WMD. We have seen what but two envelopes of mail-delivered anthrax can do to the world's most powerful capital. Imagine what a dozen innocuous vans in a dozen American cities dispersing aerosolized anthrax could do. Imagine what just a handful of the world's loose nukes, detonated simultaneously in New York, Washington, Chicago and just a few other cities, would do to the United States. America would still exist on the map. But what kind of country—and what kind of polity—would be left? If that is not an existential threat, nothing is.

Fukuyama, of course, has a stake in denying the obvious nature of the threat, having made his reputation proclaiming the “end of history”, which, if it means anything, means an end to precisely this kind of ideological existential threat. One can understand how he would be loath to acknowledge that history has returned, that the 1990s were not the end of history but a holiday from history, and that we find ourselves once again, sadly but unmistakably, with everything at stake. But he goes further. He has so persuaded himself in denial of this new reality that he needs some psychological reason to account for why I and other neoconservatives are so inexplicably convinced that we are in an existential struggle. His answer: Neoconservatives apparently identify so strongly with Israel that they have come to confuse America's predicament with Israel's. Neoconservatives think the United States is in the same boat as Israel. Fukuyama points out that it is not.

This is bizarre. Of course the United States is not in the same predicament as Israel. So what? You do not have to be Israel to be existentially threatened. If Israel's predicament represents the standard for existential threat, then the West never experienced it during the six decades of anti-fascist, anti-communist struggle that Fukuyama himself insists was existential. Israel is threatened with Carthaginian extinction. France was conquered by Nazi Germany, and is still France today. Poland and Hungary were conquered by the Soviet Union, and have become Poland and Hungary again. If Israel had been conquered in any of its wars, it would not be Israel today, nor ever again. Simply not matching up to the Israeli standard says nothing about whether one is engaged in an existential struggle.

What is interesting about Fukuyama's psychological speculation is that it allows him a novel way of Judaizing neoconservatism. His is not the crude

kind, advanced by Pat Buchanan and Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad, among others, that American neoconservatives (read: Jews) are simply doing Israel's bidding, hijacking American foreign policy in the service of Israel and the greater Jewish conspiracy. Fukuyama's take is more subtle and implicit. One is to understand that those spreading the mistaken idea that the War on Terror is existential are neoconservatives so deeply and unconsciously identified with the Jewish state that they cannot help seeing the world through its eyes. What makes this idea quite ridiculous is that the leading proponents of the notion of existential threat are George Bush and Tony Blair. How did they come to their delusional identification with Israel? The American war cabinet consists of Dick Cheney, Colin Powell, Don Rumsfeld and Condoleezza Rice. They speak passionately of the existential nature of the threat to the United States. Are they Marranos, or have they been hypnotized by "neoconservatives" into sharing the tribal bond? ...

What Fukuyama fails to understand is that there are two major strains of neoconservative thinking on foreign policy, not one. There is the democratic globalism advocated by Blair and Bush and long elaborated by such thinkers as Robert Kagan and Bill Kristol. And there is the democratic realism that I and others have long advanced. Both are "democratic" because they advocate the spread of democracy as both an end and a means of American foreign policy. But one is "realism" because it rejects the universalist scope and high idealism of democratic "globalism" and always requires geopolitical necessity as a condition for intervention....

Hence the central axiom of democratic realism: We will support democracy everywhere, but we will commit blood and treasure only in places where there is a strategic necessity—meaning, places central to the larger war against the existential enemy, the enemy that poses a global mortal threat to freedom.

Fukuyama finds this central axiom "less than helpful as a guideline for U.S. intervention" because "it masks a number of ambiguities." He asks the following questions. Does "global" here mean threats that transcend specific regions, like radical Islamism or communism? Yes. If the enemy's reach has to be global, then North Korea would be excluded from the definition of a "strategic" threat. North Korea is a discrete problem. Islamism is not our only problem, no more than Soviet communism was our only problem in the second half of the 20th century... North Korea is

not on a deliberate mission to spread *Juche* communism around the globe or to destroy the United States. Its mission is regime survival, with intimations of threat to South Korea. Its ambitions do not extend beyond that. Which is why it is a very different kind of threat from the existential Arab/Islamist one we face, and falls outside the central imperative. It needs to be contained. But there is no imperative for its invasion, overthrow and reconstruction—unless we find that, for commercial and regime-sustaining reasons, it is selling WMD to our real existential enemy. Under these circumstances it would be joining the global war on the other side.

Or does “global” instead mean any mortal threat to freedom around the globe? Any serious threat to what was once known as the “free world” as a whole is “global.” In the 1930s and 1940s, that meant fascism. In the second half of the 20th century, that meant communism. Today it means Arab/Islamic radicalism.

Does the fact that an “enemy” poses a mortal threat to another free country, but not to us, qualify it as our “enemy?” No. Is Hamas, an Islamist group which clearly poses an existential threat to Israel, our enemy as well? As it defines itself today, as an enemy of Israel, no. Were it to join the war on the United States, then the answer would be yes. Is Syria? Because of its hostility to Israel? No. To the extent, however, that it allies itself with and supports the jihadists in Iraq, it risks joining the enemy camp.... What makes something “central” in this global war? Whether a change in the political direction of a state or territory will have an important, perhaps decisive, effect in defeating Arab/Islamic radicalism. Afghanistan meets that test. So does Iraq.

Nation-Building

The last of Fukuyama’s questions about my “central axiom” was this: Was Iraq central to the war against radical Islamism? I believe it was and is. I argued that before the war, and I believe it is all the more true today. September 11 led to the inexorable conclusion that a half-century of American policy towards the Arab world had failed. Ever since Franklin Roosevelt made alliance with King Ibn Saud, the United States has chosen to leave the Arab world to its own political and social devices, so long as it remained a reasonably friendly petrol station. The arrangement lasted a very long time. Had 9/11 never happened, it would have lasted longer. The policy of Arab exceptionalism was never enunciated, but it was universally

understood: America was pursuing democratization in Europe, East Asia, South and Central America—everywhere except the Arab world.

Democratization elsewhere was remarkably successful and was the key to stability and pacification. The Arab exception proved costly. On 9/11, we reaped the whirlwind from that policy and finally understood that it was untenable. We could continue to fight Arab/Islamic radicalism by catching a terrorist leader here, rolling up a cell there. Or we could go to the heart of the problem and take the risky but imperative course of trying to reorder the Arab world. Success in Iraq would be a singular victory in the war on radical Islam. Failure in Iraq would be a singular defeat.

I never underestimated the task. I have written before, during and after the war that the task was enormous, the risk great and failure possible—but that the undertaking was necessary. Fukuyama never addresses the necessity question. Instead, he invokes our difficulties and setbacks to discredit the very idea of nation-building in the Middle East, not just because of local conditions but because Americans are no good at nation-building. Iraq is a fool's errand that was bound to fail: We have been our usual inept and disorganized selves in planning for and carrying out the reconstruction, something that was predictable in advance.

Curiously, however, Fukuyama never predicted it in advance. He waited a year to ascertain wind direction, then predicted what had already occurred. At the time of decision before the war, Fukuyama now tells the *New York Times*, he had private doubts which he kept to himself: He did not think the war was wise, but “for all I knew, it might have worked.” At the time, then, failure was not “predictable in advance”, after all.

And how does he come to predict now? He writes as if the history to come has already been written. It has not. Iraq is rid of Saddam, and its future is in play. We are in the midst of a generational struggle, both in the War on Terror in general and in the reconstruction of Iraq. Fukuyama's unmistakable conclusion that Iraq is lost is, to put it mildly, premature. It is reminiscent of John Dos Passos's famous 1946 essay, “Americans are Losing the Victory in Europe.” We have made serious mistakes in Iraq. We may yet fail. But Fukuyama's conclusion that Americans are simply no good at nation-building is retrospective presumption. We have succeeded in the monumental task of reconstructing Germany, Japan and South Korea. We failed in Haiti and Somalia. What was the principal difference? Great

knowledge of the local culture? Democratic tradition? In Korea we did not have any great knowledge of the culture nor did Korea have a democratic tradition upon which to draw. Yet South Korea is a remarkable success.

What was the key? Strategic value. When the stakes were high, and correctly perceived at home as such, we stayed the course and devoted the requisite effort and time to succeed. Where the strategic stakes were minimal, as in Haiti or Somalia, we failed because we correctly understood that nation-building is a huge task and that these places were not remotely worth the cost. The single most important factor in the success of nation-building is seriousness. To say that the country that rebuilt Germany and Japan and South Korea from rubble—perhaps the three greatest achievements in nation-building ever—is intrinsically no good at the job is silly. And if that is the case, by the way, should we not be cutting our losses in Afghanistan as well, since it is far more tribal, primitive and underdeveloped than Iraq?

What is remarkable about Fukuyama's pessimism about the spread of democracy in an enormous swath of humanity and amid one of its most venerable civilizations is that not long ago he declared that all of humanity had already made the critical turn toward democracy and its triumph was inevitable. As he now admits, "I, more than most people, am associated with the idea that history's arrow points to democracy." Except among Arabs, it seems. One searches Fukuyama's essay for a single "hearts and minds" idea to give "history's arrow" a bit of nudge in this critical region. What does one find? A single passing reference to the Bush Administration's "Greater Middle East Initiative", a tepid State Department aid and exchange program of democratic engagement—already hopelessly watered-down and understood by all to be a façade.

This will not do. Before 9/11 we were content to wait passively for however many generations it took for the Arabs to achieve what had been achieved with the help of American (often military) intervention in Europe, East Asia and the Americas: democratization, modernization and pacification. After 9/11 we no longer have the luxury of time.

The rejection of nation-building, whether on grounds of American incompetence or Arab recalcitrance, reduces the War on Terror to cops-and-robbers, to fighting Al-Qaeda operatives here and there, arresting some, killing others in some cave. It simply does not get to the root of the

problem, which is the cauldron of political oppression, religious intolerance and social ruin in the Arab-Islamic world—oppression transmuted and deflected by regimes with no legitimacy into the virulent, murderous anti-Americanism that exploded upon us on 9/11. You cannot be serious about post-9/11 foreign policy unless you confront this reality.

Explanatory Notes

- **p. 6 — “pretensions to universality”** — A claim by an ideology to furnish principles valid for humanity as a whole, rather than for one nation or culture. This is crucial to Fukuyama’s distinction between Islamism and communism as competitors to liberal democracy.
- **p. 7 — latitudinarian** — Religiously broad, permissive, or tolerant of doctrinal variation. Fukuyama uses it to characterize the less rigorous forms of inherited Muslim practice against which modern fundamentalism reacted.
- **p. 8 — “just-in-time economy”** — Production and distribution system dependent on minimal inventories and tightly synchronized global supply chains; Fukuyama invokes it as emblematic of the highly integrated globalization of the 1990s.
- **p. 10 — “logic of history”** — Fukuyama’s shorthand for a directional mechanism of modernization: science and technology push societies toward similar economic arrangements, which in turn tend to generate pressures for political liberalization.
- **p. 11 — “Asian values”** — 1990s argument, particularly associated with Lee Kuan Yew, that East Asian traditions favored social order, hierarchy, and communitarian obligations over Western liberal individualism and therefore supported a distinctive, less democratic modernity.
- **p. 12 — millet system** — Ottoman arrangement granting recognized religious communities considerable autonomy in personal-status, religious, educational, and communal affairs. Fukuyama cites it against the proposition that Islam is intrinsically incapable of religious pluralism.
- **p. 13 — Manichaeism** — A conception of politics as an absolute struggle between forces of good and evil, admitting little ambiguity or legitimate compromise.
- **p. 13 — “Islamofascism”** — Term Fukuyama used in the immediate post-9/11 period for radical Islamism understood as a modern revolutionary and totalizing ideology with sociological similarities to European fascism. It does **not** mean Islam generally.
- **p. 17 — Arab Human Development Report** — UNDP-sponsored series written largely by Arab scholars beginning in 2002. The first report emphasized deficits in freedom, knowledge, and women’s empowerment and became an important reference point in post-9/11 debates over Arab political and economic stagnation.
- **p. 18 — Ladan and Roya Boroumand** — Iranian scholars whose work argued that modern Islamism borrowed heavily from European totalitarian ideologies rather than simply reproducing traditional Islamic political thought.

- **p. 18 — Maulana Mawdudi** — Abul A‘la Mawdudi (1903–1979), South Asian Islamist thinker and founder of Jamaat-e-Islami. Particularly important for conceptualizing Islam as a comprehensive revolutionary ideology and the Islamic state as an ideological project.
- **p. 18 — revolutionary vanguard** — Leninist concept of a disciplined ideological elite that leads the broader population toward revolution. Fukuyama and Samin emphasize its appropriation by modern Islamist movements.
- **p. 19 — “aestheticization of death” / “propaganda of the deed”** — Terms associated with modern revolutionary politics. The latter refers to spectacular acts of violence intended not simply to achieve an immediate objective but to inspire, mobilize, and communicate politically.
- **p. 19 — Fritz Stern, The Politics of Cultural Despair** — Influential study of intellectual and cultural currents in Germany that helped prepare the ground for radical nationalism and Nazism. Fukuyama invokes its account of modernization-induced dislocation.
- **p. 19 — Gemeinschaft / Gesellschaft** — Ferdinand Tönnies’s distinction between *Gemeinschaft* (“community”), based on close traditional social bonds, and *Gesellschaft* (“society”), characterized by impersonal, contractual relationships typical of modern urban life.
- **p. 19 — Ernest Gellner** — Social anthropologist and theorist of nationalism who also wrote extensively about Muslim society. He argued that modernization often weakens localized folk religious practices while strengthening a standardized, scriptural form of Islam.
- **p. 20 — umma** — The worldwide community of Muslims, conceived as transcending territorial and national boundaries.
- **p. 20 — “creative destruction”** — Usually associated with economist Joseph Schumpeter: the process by which established structures are destroyed and replaced by new ones. Fukuyama provocatively asks whether Islamism might inadvertently destroy traditional impediments to modernization.
- **p. 20 — Junkers** — Prussian landed aristocracy that exercised disproportionate military and political influence in Imperial Germany. Fukuyama invokes their decline as an example of older social structures cleared away by twentieth-century upheaval.
- **p. 21 — Timur Kuran** — Economic historian known for arguing that particular institutions of classical Islamic law—including inheritance rules, partnership forms, and the *waqf*—contributed to the Middle East’s later economic divergence from Western Europe.

- **p. 21 — waqf** — Inalienable charitable or religious endowment under Islamic law. The issue here is not its basic definition but Kuran’s argument that the rigidity of traditional *waqf* rules could inhibit institutional adaptation.
- **p. 22 — Jamal al-Din al-Afghani** — Nineteenth-century Muslim activist and intellectual associated with Islamic reform, anti-imperialism, and efforts to reconcile Muslim strength with selected elements of modernity.
- **p. 22 — Muhammad Abduh** — Egyptian reformist theologian and jurist who sought to reopen Islamic interpretation to reason and adaptation to modern conditions.
- **p. 22 — “gates of doctrinal explication”** — Allusion to the controversial notion that the “gate of *ijtihad*” had been closed in Sunni Islam: that independent legal reasoning had given way to adherence to established schools of jurisprudence.
- **p. 22 — ijtihad** — Independent reasoning in Islamic jurisprudence used to derive legal judgments from authoritative sources when established rulings do not directly settle an issue.
- **p. 22 — fatwa** — Nonbinding legal opinion issued by a qualified Islamic jurist or mufti. Fukuyama and Samin stress bin Laden’s lack of conventional scholarly credentials to issue one.
- **p. 24 — “cunning of history”** — Hegelian idea that historical processes can produce outcomes very different from the intentions of the actors involved; destructive movements may inadvertently advance broader historical transformations.
- **p. 25 — deracinated** — Uprooted from one’s inherited social or cultural environment. Central to Fukuyama’s sociological explanation of jihadism among migrants or partially Westernized Muslims.
- **p. 27 — state-managed liberalization** — Controlled opening by authoritarian regimes—limited elections, parties, press freedoms, or civil-society activity—designed to relieve pressure or secure external legitimacy without risking genuine transfer of power.
- **p. 30 — “twilight struggle”** — Cold War-era phrase, famously used by John F. Kennedy, for a prolonged, diffuse conflict rather than a conventional war with a decisive battlefield conclusion. Fukuyama applies it to counterterrorism.
- **p. 35 — monopoly of force** — Weberian definition of the modern state as the institution successfully claiming legitimate control over coercive force within a territory.
- **p. 35 — rent-seeking** — Use of political power or privileged access to extract wealth without creating corresponding productive value. Fukuyama uses it to describe weak states dominated by patronage and corruption.

- **p. 37 — The Public Interest** — Influential neoconservative policy journal founded in 1965 by Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell. Its skepticism about ambitious government social engineering becomes central to Fukuyama's accusation that later neoconservatives abandoned their own intellectual inheritance.
- **p. 39 — “unipolar moment”** — Krauthammer's term for the unprecedented concentration of international power in the United States after the Soviet collapse.
- **p. 40 — Hans Morgenthau** — Foundational theorist of twentieth-century political realism, particularly associated with the idea of national interest defined in terms of power.
- **p. 40 — realpolitik** — Foreign policy based primarily on calculations of power and practical national interest rather than ideological or moral objectives.
- **p. 40 — democratic globalism** — Krauthammer's label for an assertive foreign policy that treats the spread of liberal democracy as both a moral objective and a means of improving American security.
- **p. 41 — Wilsonian** — Derived from Woodrow Wilson: an approach to foreign policy emphasizing democracy, self-determination, international law, and international institutions. Krauthammer distinguishes his own democracy promotion from Wilsonian reliance on international institutions.
- **p. 42 — democratic realism** — Krauthammer's proposed modification of democratic globalism: support democracy in principle everywhere, but commit major American resources only where democratization bears directly on a vital strategic struggle.
- **p. 45 — “Kissingerian realism”** — Shorthand for the state-centered, balance-of-power foreign policy associated with Henry Kissinger, relatively indifferent to the internal political character of other states.
- **p. 45 — messianic universalism** — Belief that a nation's political ideals have universal validity and that it possesses some mission to advance them beyond its own borders.
- **p. 47 — FARC / ELN** — Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia and National Liberation Army, the two principal Marxist guerrilla movements in Colombia; Fukuyama invokes them to test the consistency of Krauthammer's definition of strategically important threats.
- **p. 48 — social engineering** — Deliberate attempt by governments to reshape social institutions or behavior on a large scale. Fukuyama uses the term critically to contrast early neoconservative skepticism about domestic social planning with confidence in remaking Iraq.

- **p. 49 — “commercial republic”** — Classical liberal conception of a polity oriented toward commerce, private prosperity, and limited government rather than imperial expansion. Fukuyama uses it to question the domestic sustainability of an American imperial project.
- **p. 51 — Greater Middle East Initiative** — Bush administration effort launched in 2003–04 to promote political, economic, and educational reform across the broader Middle East. It reflected the post-9/11 belief that authoritarian stagnation contributed to extremism.
- **p. 54 — fifth columnists** — Persons within a country believed to be secretly assisting an external enemy or subversive movement.
- **p. 54 — Sartre / Pound** — Jean-Paul Sartre, whose sympathy for revolutionary Marxism exemplified communism’s attraction to Western intellectuals; Ezra Pound, who supported Italian Fascism. Krauthammer argues that Islamism need not attract comparable intellectual celebrities to constitute a serious ideological threat.
- **p. 54 — Komsomol** — Communist youth organization of the Soviet Union, intended to socialize younger generations into Communist ideology.
- **p. 54 — “democratization of knowledge” of WMD** — Krauthammer’s argument that technological diffusion permits non-state actors to acquire destructive capacities once monopolized by great powers.
- **p. 55 — “Carthaginian extinction”** — Total destruction of a political community, alluding to Rome’s destruction of Carthage in 146 BCE. Krauthammer uses it to distinguish Israel’s conception of existential danger from ordinary military defeat.
- **p. 56 — Marranos** — Historically, Jews in Spain and Portugal who converted to Christianity, often under coercion, some of whom were suspected of secretly continuing Jewish practices. Krauthammer uses the term sarcastically.
- **p. 57 — Juche** — North Korea’s official ideology of national self-reliance and political autonomy, developed under Kim Il Sung.
- **p. 57 — “Arab exceptionalism”** — In Krauthammer’s usage, the implicit U.S. policy of promoting democratization in many regions while treating authoritarian rule in the Arab world as an enduring exception for strategic reasons.
- **p. 59 — “hearts and minds”** — Counterinsurgency phrase referring to winning the political allegiance or cooperation of the population rather than relying solely on coercion.