CROSSING BRIDGES

Crossing Bridges

Democratizaton in the Middle East and a Christian Democratic Approach

DEMOCRATIZATON IN THE MIDDLE EAST AND A CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC APPROACH

C E S
CENTRE FOR EUROPEAN STUDIES

CDA WI
Wetenschappelijk Instituut

Crossing Bridges

Democratizaton in the Middle East and a Christian Democratic Approach

Democratizaton in the Middle East and a Christian Democratic Approach

A project of the Centre for European Studies with the support of the Research Institute for the CDA.

Centre for European Studies
Rue du Commerce 10
Brussels, B-1000
Tel: +32-2-2854149
Fax: +32-2-2854141

Research Institute for the CDA
PO Box 30453
2500 GL The Hague
Tel: +31-70-3424870
Fax: +31-70-3926004
www.wi.cda.nl
wi@cda.nl

ISBN/EAN 978-90-74493-59-8
2008 Centre for European Stidies / Research Institute for the CDA

Design: Mullerdesigns

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

This publication receives funding from the European Parliament.

The European Parliament and the Centre for European Studies assume no responsibility for facts or opinions expressed in this publication or their subsequent use. Sole responsibility lies on the authors of this publication.

Contents

Preface

The title of this report, "Crossing Bridges", refers to the bridge between Christian Democracy and the Muslim World. For both Christian Democrats and Muslims, religion is a source of inspiration for their lives and their political orientation. Our experience is that religion can be a very rich source for democracy.

In this report we investigate 'Democratization in the Middle East' and compare this process with 'A Christian Democratic Approach' to which the subtitle refers. We invite Muslims in the Middle East to come over the bridge and look at our centurial struggle for democratization and the positive impact religious beliefs have had on the formation of democratic constitutional states in the Western world.

The perception of the Western world is not very positive in the Middle East. The secular aspect of Western societies is the most visible – the consumption and the decadence – and less so the Christian roots of democracy and freedom rights. Religion is seen as part of a confrontation strategy ("Axis of Evil"), rather than part of the dialogue. The religious bridge is not often being used. In this report we point to the potential positive influence of religion on politics and to the positive influence it could have in the Middle East if combined with freedom of the people. The study is about our relationship with the Middle East, our attitude towards the Middle East and our contribution to the Middle East. The question is which elements of our tradition and history are most productive for this dialogue.

To understand the Middle East is, however, not an easy task. The material is difficult to grasp. Situations can be only partly sketched, analyses only partly made. Definite answers will not be given in this study. Our hope is that it will provide a starting point and a sketch of the broader picture in which the questions and answers should be placed.

The promotion of the democratic constitutional State in the Middle East - the main theme of this report – is a complicated matter. Democracies can take many forms, dependent on local, cultural and historical differences. Nevertheless, the positive attitude towards the religious roots of democracy can be an asset for Christian Democrats in the promotion of the democratic constitutional state in the Middle East, where religion plays an important role. We hope that the approach proposed in this report will be valuable for political decision-making and the influence of Christian Democracy on this issue.

The board of the Research Institute for the CDA would like to express their gratitude to the commission led by Drs. A.M. Oostlander for their work. Members of the com-

mission were Mr. J.J.C.A. van de Linden, Mw. Drs. J.H. Netjes, Dr. J.R.T.M. Peters S.J.. Special thanks to Mw. Drs. M.A. Servaes-Loos (secretary until January 2008) and Drs. E.J. van Asselt, who finally finished the manuscript.

Prof. dr. C.P. Veerman	T. Huhtanen	Prof. dr. R.H.J.M. Gradus
Chairman *Research Institute for the CDA*	*Director* *Centre European Studies*	*Director* *Research Institute for the CDA*

1 | Introduction

This report is about the Netherlands' foreign policy towards the Middle East, with a focus on the promotion of the democratic constitutional state and the special contributions which can be expected to be made by the Christian Democratic Party (CDA). While often referred to as MENA, i.e., the Middle East and Northern Africa, in this paper we call this region the Middle East, which should be understood to mean the Middle East and the larger Arab world. As an illustration of this, we refer in some places in the text to the situation in Turkey and the Balkans.

Not only the dominance of oil and gas supply in the relationship between the Middle East and the West, but also the increasing interdependency between our two regions, requires a well thought out Middle East policy.

We actively seek cooperation with the Middle East. The Barcelona Process is a context for broad collaboration between the EU and a great number of North African and Middle Eastern states. Trade and development in the broader sense are central in this process. Middle Eastern countries are our partners in a number of foreign affairs that are of great importance for the solution of some problems in which we are very much involved (the Israeli-Palestinian issue, the combating of terrorism and the prevention of illegal immigration).

We see an increasing interdependency as a result of globalization, international migration and the development of technology. The influence of the Middle East on our country is undeniable. Here are some examples:

- There is an ongoing process of integration into Europe by people with various Middle Eastern backgrounds;
- Immigrants from the Middle East contribute to a high degree to the economies of the EU member states. Without this labour force several enterprises would not survive;
- Migration from Arab countries has a direct impact on the Dutch representative democracy. The Dutch-Moroccan Member of Parliament Khadija Arib was asked to take seat in the Human Rights Council in Morocco to advise King Mohammed II. Wilders' Islamophobic Freedom Party (the PVV) attacked her fiercely for that. The same kind of discussion arose about the dual nationality of the Turkish-Dutch Minister Nebahat Albayrak and the Moroccan-Dutch Minister Ahmed Aboutaleb. Again the PVV questioned their loyalty towards the Dutch State.
- Governments in the Middle East tend to continue to influence their former residents who have emigrated to the West. This influence is sometimes even political. An important example of this is the Turkish Ministry for Religion, Diyanet, which ensures that the official state religion under Turkish nationals is maintained (Shankland, 1999:30).
- The cartoon affair in which the publication of political cartoons about the prophet Mohammed in a Danish newspaper led to actions aimed against the

West in large parts of the Middle East and other Islamic countries and has made us realize that occurrences in the West can have a direct impact in the Middle East and vice versa.
- The invasion of Lebanon by the Israeli Army after the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier by Hezbollah in the summer of 2006 led to large-scale outrage and anger among Muslims in Western European countries, which in some cases was translated into an increase in anti-Semitism among Muslims in Europe.
- People in the Middle East interpret the Western invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq as 'new' evidence that the West wants to control the Middle East and/or is targeting Islam. This fuels an anti-Western attitude which in turn leads to terrorism against Western targets.
- Terrorist actions carried out by Middle Eastern Muslims cause some people in the Netherlands to see Muslims in this country as potential terrorists and their religion as intrinsically antidemocratic and violent. The tendency of the Western media to portray Muslim extremists as the 'true ones' misleads the Islamic youth and disturbs their self image.
- The objectification and antagonism of Islam by populist movements that exploit negativism (as does the famous film of Mr. Wilders) strengthens the claims of radical thinkers both in the West and in the Middle East who argue that the West aspires to global hegemony and is on a 'crusade' against the Muslim peoples. It also disenfranchises moderate Islamists, neo-Islamists and other non-secular activists who are too easily dismissed as 'fundamentalists'. On the other hand, the modest reactions of the Muslim community in the Netherlands and elsewhere after 'Fitna' was released, has a weakening effect on Wilders' claim. The absence of the predicted escalation strengthens moderates in their views, instead of radicalizing them.

As we can learn from the examples above, international tensions and conflicts thus no longer affect only the international and foreign political relations between countries, but also greatly influence relationships between population groups within a country via events and images. Even if our relationships with governments in the Middle East are stable, tensions and violent conflicts within and between Middle Eastern countries can have a significant impact in Europe and the Netherlands, both for Muslims and non-Muslims.

Stop hiding behind the dikes

And yet the present focus in the Netherlands is on internal issues. Foreign policy has not been a key issue in Dutch politics for a long time: not in the past governments, nor in the last elections, nor in the negotiations leading towards the fourth Balkenende Cabinet of Christian Democrats (CDA/CU) and Social Democrats (PvdA). However, this seems to be changing. CDA Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Verhagen announced that he wants to change this inward-looking attitude of the

Netherlands. In an interview with national newspaper *De Volkskrant* (May 26, 2007) he mentioned that Holland has to stop 'hiding behind the dikes'. He regards this attitude as potentially dangerous for a small country like the Netherlands with its open structures in this era of globalization. We agree with him; in today's world reasons for isolationism have ceased to exist. Besides, this inward-looking attitude is not compatible with the Dutch Constitution, which states that the Netherlands must give priority to international legal order, nor with the values that are recognized by the Christian Democratic Party and which are laid down in the European Charter.

Definitions of democracy

Democracy is an overloaded concept. Historically, it has meant different things to different people: 'people's democracy' or 'direct democracy', democracies devoted to one leader or which vanguard the nation's elite, democracies in which the majority rules with disregard for minorities, and liberal democracies. For Christian Democrats, democracy exists in states or societies where the political and public responsibility of citizens is recognized and is put into practice in order to maintain and strengthen the constitutional state and a free and responsible society. Strictly speaking, we should think about democracy in terms of a democratic constitutional state. It is essential that citizens bear responsibility. Democracy is a way to serve the rule of law, meaning the norms and values which transcend people's spontaneous desires. Christian Democrats hold a concept of democracy which reflects the view that all citizens have a transcendental calling to take personal responsibility for the quality of the public authority and the common good. According to the Bible, public authorities have as their central task the promotion of justice in a civil and social sense, with respect for the dignity of humankind, which is 'created in the image of God'. They should meet this criterion and cannot justify their position by referring to a pretended *droit divin* that allows them to follow their own interests, aloof from the rights of the citizen and with disregard for the right and duty of these citizens to keep those in high offices under public control. The heavy religious overtone of this concept of democracy, embedded in the values of the constitutional state, differs sharply from a secularist approach and may be shared by other religions that underline the dignity of the human person as a gift from God. Spirituality and faith demand freedom; sincere faith can only freely be adopted. Contrary to the traditional emphasis on the themes of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution (which have their own transgressions), we put forward the idea that the real roots of our Western freedom and human rights can more easily be linked to religious motives as expressed in the Dutch Resistance to Spain, in the Glorious Revolution which England experienced (interestingly enough also led by a Dutch monarch) and in the American Revolution. Recent literature, too, stresses that even the secularist founding fathers of the Enlightenment confessed that the insights into the significance of democracy and the rule of law could not be achieved without the heritage of religion.

Embedded in this normative thinking, elections have their own meaning. They are important tools on the path to increasing political participation and making governments more accountable. Elections have come to be the most visible embodiment of people's aspirations to keep public authorities under control and to exercise personal responsibility for public affairs according to the dignity of the human person and the demand for justice. In the Middle East, however, elections have in general not led to more accountable systems. Many authoritarian leaders in the Middle East use the vocabulary of elections and democracy as a means to claim their political legitimacy against the demands of justice and constitutional law. They frame their oppressive regimes as being the will of the people. It's important to remember that elections should not be viewed as simply the expression of 'the will of the people', which per definition cannot be criticized, but as an advanced method of involving citizens in public responsibilities.

For this reason, Christian Democrats perceive democracy as more than simply holding elections in an open, free and fair way. Democracy requires embedment in the rule of law and the constitutional state; a separation of powers; checks and balances; protection of the basic liberties of religion, speech, assembly and property; and independent media. We should therefore not focus too much on the procedural aspects (elections), because it is the content which counts.

Yet democracy is not a uniform concept. Democracy is not a one-size-fits-all proposition. Democracies take many forms, depending on local, cultural and historical differences. They are embedded in specific cultural modes, rules and traditions. The special forms of democracy reflect the obstacles and opportunities societies meet on their way to full democratic participation of the citizens. For this reason the Dutch democracy looks different from that of France or the US. In order to be successful, democratic systems must emerge organically from *within* each society's culture, reflecting its shared values and adapting to the needs and interests of its citizens. Citizens should be able to identify themselves with the democratic order in which they live and to exercise their political responsibility. The process of democratization is a slow and complex. It is also clear from even the most superficial analysis that countries democratize in different ways: some more gradually, some suddenly; some as a result of deep socioeconomic change; others as the result of political upheaval. There is certainly no universal pattern. Moreover, maintenance of democracy is for all countries – including Western countries – a task that requires continuous effort. Keeping democracies democratic is a constant struggle.

Outline

The outline of this report is as follows. First we will discuss the need and wish for democracy in the Middle East. In the second chapter we look for an explanation of the democratic deficit, i.e., which internal and external factors play a role. In the third

chapter we look at the Arab, American and European initiatives for democratization. In Chapter 4 we take a closer look at one country: Egypt. Egypt is a large country with a stable political situation, a clear democratic deficit and need for democratization, with a secular regime and an Islamic opposition which is officially forbidden and which receives support from the United States. Because of these characteristics it is well-suited as a case study. The fifth chapter formulates a strategy. Principles and instruments are treated. Chapter 6 concludes with some recommendations.

2 | The need and wish for democracy in the Middle East

2.1 The democracy deficit in the Middle East

In July 2002, less than a year after the 9/11 attacks, an UN-commissioned panel of 30 Arab experts from a variety of disciplines issued the first *Arab Human Development Report*.[1] The report offered a grim study on the state of the Arab world. Because of its Arab authorship, the study had great resonance, proving an instance of introspection that many outside the region complained had been lacking.[2] The report stated that the wave of democracy that transformed governance in most of Latin America and East Asia in the 1980s and Eastern Europe in the early 1990s had barely reached the Arab states. The Arab world is noted as having the lowest level of political freedom of any region in the world (AHDR, 2002:2). Of the 121 nations classified by Freedom House in its latest annual report as electoral democracies (free elections being an essential element of full democracy), not one is Arab. In fact, according to the Freedom House criteria, Arab countries are not only strikingly less free than their counterparts elsewhere in the world, but are slightly less so today than they were a quarter of a century ago. During this interim period, nowhere in the Arab world has the political leadership of the state been removed from office through the ballot box. According to the writers of the Arab Human Development Reports (2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005) this freedom deficit undermines human development and is one of the main causes[3] of the many problems facing most Middle Eastern counties. Below, we examine the different aspects of the democracy deficit in the Middle East in more detail.

1 | Arab Human Development Report, "Creating opportunities for future generations" (2002). Three Arab Human Development Reports followed: "Building a knowledge society" (2003), "Towards freedom in the Arab world" (2004) and "Towards the rise of women" (2005).

2 | In the Arab world the AHDR met quite some resistance. Some Arab intellectuals thought that it degraded the Arab world before Israel and the US at a time when Arabs were being besieged globally. They charged the Report's exclusive emphasis on internal sources of decline as one-sided, totally ignoring the role of colonialism and 'imperialist intervention' in causing the development malaise of the Arab peoples. They also feared that the Report could be used to justify American expansionist policy and Israeli domination in the region (Bayat, 2005). Several writers who contributed to the reports have stopped contributing because of the resistance they experienced and the pressure this brought with it.

3 | In the Arab Human Development report two other deficits are mentioned: deficit of women's empowerment and the knowledge deficit. In this report we focus on the democracy deficit.

Table 1: Freedom House, Freedom in the World 2007 (on a scale from 1 to 7; 1 represents the most free and 7 the least free rating.)

Free	*Partly Free*	*Not Free*
1.0	**3.0**	**5.5**
		Algeria
1.5	**3.5**	Egypt
Israel		Oman
	4.0	Qatar
2.0	Kuwait	Tunisia
		United Arab Emirates
2.5	**4.5**	
	Jordan	**6.0**
	Lebanon	Iraq
	Morocco	Iran
	5.0	**6.5**
	Bahrain	Syria
	Yemen	
		7.0
		Libya

Elections and political competition

With a few exceptions, some of which are cosmetic, free presidential elections involving more than one candidate do not occur in Arab countries. In only three Arab countries (Algeria, Sudan and Yemen) and in the Palestinian Territories are presidents elected through direct elections with more than one candidate and with presidential limits. Totally or partially elected parliaments now exist in all Arab countries except Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. However, the political competition is often limited, because in many states there are legislative restrictions limiting the rights to form political parties, for example requiring prior authorization from predominantly governmental committees. Moreover, the rights to political participation have often been little more than a ritual, representing a purely formal (procedural) application of constitutional entitlement. Hence, elections have not played their designated role as a participatory tool for the peaceful alternation of power – reason enough to never be satisfied with procedural, more or less correct elections without the introduction of full democracy. (Other essential elements of full democracy are mentioned later in this report.)

Clannism and elections

In several countries parties are organized along ethnic lines. The clan or tribe to which voters belong is more important than their views on the common good or the well-being of state and society. Politics is frequently conceived as the way leaders serve their own constituency (clan, tribe, etc.) This rigid clientilism leads to predictable electoral outcomes because everyone votes for the representant of his or her

tribe or clan. This clannish, merely procedurally correct type of elections is also found in Iraq. But even more serious are voters' fears of belonging to a minority. If you don't belong to the dominant clan you are 'not served'. This type of election can hardly be considered democratic because it rejects fundamental values of the constitutional state and is a source of internal conflicts. Even worse is the situation in countries where a clan in power successfully suppresses the non-dominant groups and withholds from them the right to organize themselves.

Checks and Balances
Arab states have in common that power is concentrated at the top of the executive pyramid. The heads of state have often become the supreme leaders of the executive branches, the councils of ministers, armed forces, judiciaries and public services of their countries. In addition, there are mechanisms that increase the concentration of power in their hands. The executives use the ordinary and exceptional judiciaries to eliminate and tame opponents, rivals and even supporters who step out of line. Secondly, the key buttressing power of the executive is the intelligence apparatus, which is not accountable to the legislature or to public opinion, but is directly under control of the president or king and possesses powers greater than those of any other organ. Arab states vary in their embodiment of these mechanisms, particularly in the margin of freedom that the regime considers unthreatening.

Rule of Law
While *de jure* acceptance of democracy and human rights is, in most Arab countries, enshrined in constitutions, *de facto* implementation is often neglected and in some cases deliberately disregarded by regimes in the Middle East. These regimes use other legal provisions, such as emergency laws, to restrict constitutional rights, often referring to 'national security'. By using the term 'war on terror' they hope to earn the support of the US and to avoid the criticism of the democratic world in general. In a few cases Arab constitutions (e.g. the Yemeni constitution) contain provisions that conflict with international human rights principles by assuming an ideological or religious character that removes public rights and freedoms or permits their removal. Most Arab constitutions take a consistent stance on upholding the independence and inviolability of the judiciary. But most maintain the executive presidency within the judiciary and its institutions. For this reason, the independence of the judiciary is often not secured.

Civil and political freedoms
The freedom to form associations is often violated by denying organizations permission to operate or by dissolving existing ones. Most restrictions have been directed against grass-roots human rights organizations and Islamic organizations. In Iran, for example, almost all websites of women's and human rights organizations are blocked.

Lack of an independent and free media

In spite of all the efforts, the spread of democracy is hindered by the lack of press freedom in Middle Eastern countries. With limited exceptions in some countries and certain areas, freedoms, particularly those of opinion, expression and creativity, are severely under pressure in most Arab countries. Journalists have repeatedly been targets of prosecution on the grounds of opinions they have expressed. The curtailment of freedom of opinion and expression, in the form of officially imposed censorship, also extends to literary and artistic creativity. Early in 2003, Arab Ministers of the Interior agreed to an anti-terrorism strategy, leading to further restrictions of freedom of opinion and expression and other human rights. In most cases journalists cannot freely give their opinion in the Arab media. As we saw under the Arab initiatives, the responsibility of the media receives a lot of attention and already is taking a more prominent place in conference agendas. A free press is essential in a democracy. It is also essential for a developing democracy. The freedom to criticize, to comment on decisions made by a government, to give attention to human rights and to publish stories about opposition parties all go hand in hand with democracy.

A truly free media is missing in most of the countries in the Middle East. Satellite television and Internet have placed autocratic regimes under new challenges. Political websites (such as Facebook, MySpace and YouTube) are blocked, and critical bloggers are sent to jail. Television stations are more difficult to control because they are received by satellite dish and are broadcasted elsewhere (i.e., Al Jazeera in Qatar). Many regimes in Middle Eastern countries have simply proscribed such senders. Others put pressure on the government of the hosting country.

In Syria disseminating false information leads to a jail sentence. To criticize public officials in Morocco ruins the messenger through means of very high fines. In Jordan a journalist can easily be accused of slander. Writing about the health of Egypt's president Mubarak recently led to the imprisonment of journalists. In some countries the emergency law has become permanent; emergency law offers rulers a broad possibility of ways to accuse someone who writes unpleasant things about the regime. Fighting terrorism is the newest umbrella under which authoritarian regimes keep the media under control (examples are mentioned in The Economist, 7 February 2008, "How Governments Handle the News").

Women's rights

In general, women suffer from inequality with men and are vulnerable to discrimination, both under the law and in practice (UNDP, 2005). Despite laudable efforts to promote the status of women, success remains limited. Violence against women peaks in areas of armed conflict, especially in Sudan, Somalia and Iraq.

Protecting minority rights

Minorities are insufficiently protected in Arab countries. In areas of protracted conflict, as in Iraq and Sudan, minority groups have suffered both overt and covert

persecution. In Arab Gulf countries Bedouin and naturalized citizens suffer from discrimination. The former, being stateless, have nowhere to go and are regarded as foreigners, while the latter are treated as second-class citizens: they are denied the rights to stand for election to representative bodies and to vote.

Religious minorities

Religious minorities in particular are under severe pressure. They are often not free to practice their own religion (at least not in public). Many believers are put in jail, or worse, are killed. In some countries, like Saudi Arabia, simply the possession of a Bible is reason for imprisonment. Conversions from Islam to another religion (apostasy) are often forbidden. In Saudi Arabia it is punishable by death. In many other countries converts lose their families and jobs. In Jordan converts from Islam are still considered Muslims.

Other Arab countries are more liberal regarding other religions. In Qatar many Christian denominations are recognized by the stateChurch, although evangelism is not permitted. Syria allows freedom of religion, probably because it is home to various ethnic and religious groups (Kurds, Assyrians, Armenians, Arabs and many Iraqi refugees).

In other parts of the world it are Muslims who suffer religious discrimination. In Indonesia the Ahmadyah sect,[4] an Islamic sect with 10 million supporters worldwide, has been more or less forbidden. Opponents have argued that the freedom of faith is at stake.

Civil society

Both the establishment of civil associations and their activities are heavily circumscribed and subject to rigorous control in Arab countries, with a few exceptions where civil society is approached more liberally, as in Morocco and Lebanon.

Differences within the region

A proper assessment of the state of democracy in the Arab world should also recognize the existing diversity within it. In Morocco, for example, people enjoy more political freedoms than in countries such as Syria and Saudi Arabia. Moreover, women in Iraq, Morocco and Algeria enjoy more freedom and participate more in economic, professional and political activities than women in Saudi Arabia. Regarding governmental accountability, Jordan and Kuwait do much better than other Arab countries, and in terms of government effectiveness Oman, Tunisia, Jordan and Qatar score a bit above the world mean, while Iraq scores far below. Lastly, judging the quality of institutions, the data indicate that Kuwait and Lebanon have above-average scores while Iraq, Syria and Yemen are below average (AHDR, 2002:165).

4 | The Ahmadiyah see themselves as Muslims. Other Muslims perceive them as heretics because the deny that Mohammed was the last prophet. They are now forbidden to say that there was a prophet after Mohammed.

Wish for democracy

In the face of the democracy deficit, the wish for democracy is very strong among people in the Middle East. Opinion polls regularly show that democracy stands very high on their wish list (Inglehart, 2005; Moadded, 2007; Zogby, 2003; The Gallup Organization, 2006). Evidence from the World Values Survey (Inglehart, 2005:19-20) reveals that at this point in history democracy has an overwhelmingly positive image throughout the Arab world. Great majorities in the Middle East consider democracy the best form of government. The figures range from a low of 69% in Iran to highs of 98 percent in Egypt. Figures from James Zogby (2003) from the Arab American Institute confirm this view: between 90 and 96 percent of the 3,200 respondents in eight Arab countries rated "civil and personal rights" as their highest priority among a list of potential concerns that included personal economic conditions, health care and moral standards. Clearly, the public of Middle Eastern countries supports democracy. However, public reactions in, for example, a developed state like Turkey on freedom of the press, freedom of minorities and criticism about the structure of the state suggest that support for democracy does not always mean that the respondent is also in favour of the 'civil and personal rights' of people whose opinions, religion or ethnicity he or she dislikes. Yet only then can people be considered true defenders of democracy and human rights.

2.2 The case for promoting democracy in the Middle East

In the last section we concluded that there is a lack of democracy in the Middle East. In this section we make a case for the promotion of democracy in the Arab world. We look at some of the sources and fruits of democracy. Religion can be a rich source of inspiration for the democratic constitutional state. Democracy contributes to such international interests as peace, welfare and fighting terrorism.

2.2.1 Democracy and religion

The inspiration to build democratic societies has most often – or perhaps always – found its origin in religion (Lilla, 2007). This is in contrast to the pretentions of secularists with their laicist dogma on the separation between religious conviction and public life (as opposed to the much more enlightened thesis on the separation between church and state and the call to generally avoid confusions between authorities with different responsibilities).

In the Christian religion the role of the citizen is related to the biblical anthropology in which mankind is created in the image of God. This heavily underscores the dignity of the human person and his/her rights and duties. For as such, people have a God-given responsibility to keep public authorities under control, to assist them in their task to do justice and to care for the common good. The concept of justice is very central in the Old and New Testaments. The kings of Israel were always tested

against the criterion of whether they were doing justice or whether they "did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord". Justice was not meant in a minimalistic way but was intended to allow people to flourish. The Christian tradition accentuates the equality of all people men before God, care for the vulnerable, rejection of the role of ethnic differences ("in Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek"), the role of the public authorities to combat evil and disorder and to warrant a peaceful life; all these biblical notions are elements on which a just democracy can be built. This has been done throughout history in spite of many mistakes. It is a great advantage that human rights and democracy are built on a most serious foundation: the belief in God.

Secularist laicism, which tries to ban religion from public life, is usually connected with the so-called 'secularization hypothesis' which is in fact itself the object of a dogmatic belief. It says that modernization goes parallel with a decline of religion. (See Taylor, 2007, for a profound rejection of this assumption, which he calls 'subtraction stories') This thesis is also applied to political life. The associated concept of people's sovereignty is regarded as being in contrast to the idea of transcendental criteria which should control political life as explained above. This is a disadvantage compared with the conviction that the Bible transcends all – authorities and citizens, minorities and majorities - so there should always be room for criticism (including self-criticism) and comment.

The suggestion that democracy implies secularism is in itself a considerable barrier to the introduction of the democratic constitutional state in societies where religion plays a strong role. A Christian Democratic approach to democracy might be helpful in such societies, as there is a certain common ground with other believers. The theist religions of Judaism and Islam overlap in their views on the role of the citizen and of political bodies like the state. As such, there are reasons for Christian believers to act in connection with, for instance, Islamic societies; all the more so if such behaviour may contribute to the establishment of better understanding and mutual trust.

In the Christian religion the unity of the human race is a fundamental principle. From this viewpoint the values of democracy can be expected to have a certain kind of universal validity. This does not mean that every culture will choose the same road towards a just and democratic order. Democracy as we know it arose in the West and has been influenced by the unique configuration of characteristics upon which the Western culture is founded. The history of the solution of societal and political problems demonstrates the role of the classical Greek heritage, Arab science and philosophy, Protestantism, the American and the French Revolutions, Marxism, colonial rule and missions, separation of secular and religious authority, the resistance against Nazi and Soviet dictatorships, racism and Apartheid, social pluralism, representation and individualism.

Perhaps one of the best examples of these roads towards a just and democratic order can be found in Turkey. The founder of the republic, Kemal Atatürk, borrowed elements from several political European models (Soviet, fascist and laicist) for his new state. A number of these elements are left behind now in order to create solutions for the roles of army and parliament. Special Turkish ways to create religious freedom, derived from Islamic culture, will probably be followed. The Hadit will be reconsidered, and its interpretation will be reformed. Even a new Constitution has now been formulated, which takes consideration of the draft European Constitution. This is natural, as the Turkish government participated in its production.

People are hardly aware of the worldwide influence of certain events, phenomena and philosophies. Frequently they are initiated in the West. Some are beneficial to societies; others have had an utterly negative impact. Always, lessons are learned by those concerned. In this way there is a convergence, a growing body of common experiences. We don't know where these converging roads will arrive. We have some idea because of the common support for the Charters of the UN. Luckily, the development of 'regional' charters of fundamental rights, which would soften humanitarian demands to the benefit of authoritarian systems, has not yet taken place. There is, however, a danger of alienation when 'democratization' is furthered in a secularist way. This gives rise in the Middle East to suspicion against democracy and human rights as a 'foreign construct' of non-believers and apostates, at odds with the cultural and social mores of their own traditional society. The West has to accept that the 'secularization hypotheses' is not helpful for Middle Eastern countries that want to find their own way towards more democratic government.

We believe in the universality of democracy in the sense that *people anywhere have reasons to see democracy as valuable.* We think that every human being has reason to wish for a free and dignified life in which he/she is treated equally and with respect, and in which he/she can count on a responsible and responsive government and fair rules and regulations that are enforced by independent courts. Furthermore, we believe that we should facilitate people's ambitions to accomplish this. By this measure there is growing evidence of all kinds that the values of the democratic constitutional state are becoming more and more universal; democracy has an ever-growing appeal among many people and many cultures, and the Middle East is no exception.

We will go into detail in this discussion about the relation between Islam and democracy in the next chapter (section 2.1.4), in which we refer to the existing diversity within each religion and each culture which make it impossible to make generalizations about their compatibility with democracy. For now we want to invalidate the notion that Islam and democracy are incompatible by pointing to the significant progress in democratization that some Muslim countries have made (e.g. Turkey and Indonesia, as well as the role of Bosnian Muslims in defence of the 'non-ethnic

state'). They might not be 'perfect democracies' but they have taken significant steps (Ibrahim, 2003).

2.2.2 The international interests of democracy

Increasing globalization and subsequent interdependency between different parts of the world make world-wide democracy a theme of significant interest. Different (assumed) merits of democracy are researched here.

'Democracy and peace thesis'

It is argued that democracy increases the chances of peace within a state and with other states. Democratic states are less inclined to go to war with one another (Brown, 1998). This assumption is frequently used by Western politicians as justification of their foreign policies. Former president Bill Clinton (State of the Union Address, 1994): "Ultimately, the best strategy to ensure our security and to build a durable peace is to support the advance of democracy elsewhere. Democracies don't attack each other." Current president George W. Bush (The White House, November 2004): "And the reasons why I'm so strong on democracy is democracies don't go to war with each other. And that's why I am such a strong believer that the way forward in the Middle East is to promote democracy." According to the Arab observer these are rather brusque statements, remembering some past and ongoing wars in the Middle East. Former European Commissioner for External Relations Chris Patten expects the same merit of democracy as the American presidents do (speech on the Human Rights Discussion Forum, November 30, 1999): "Free societies tend not to fight one another or to be bad neighbours." "A Secure Europe in a Better World: European Security Strategy" (December 23, 2003) states: "The best protection for our security is a world of well-governed democratic states." It is reasonable to expect governments to demonstrate some congruence between the principles and values which govern democratic constitutional state issues and those which are the guidelines for their foreign policies (the promotion of a just international order).

'Democracy and fighting terrorism thesis'

The democracy/peace thesis gained a whole new dimension in the beginning of the new century. Following the attacks of September 11, many people concluded that the democratic deficit in the Middle East had contributed to a large extent to the emergence of Islamist terrorism. It was assumed that the lack of opportunities for development, bad government, repression and the lack of regular institutional channels for expressing political discontent had formed a dangerous mix which encouraged (violent) radicalism against regimes in the Middle East and also towards the West, which supported these repressive regimes in order to assure stability in the Middle East. The US and EU's foreign policies were reconsidered on the basis of this assumption. Democratization became a priority of US and EU policies and is expected in the long term to counteract radicalism. Democratization and respect for basic

human rights enables people to mandate political parties that are responsive to voters' interests and respect democratic procedures and institutions. They also offer people opportunities to oust political leaders who neglect the agendas of development for their countries. Without these opportunities present radical groups will maintain their appeal, since they are the only ones in the position to challenge the established order, albeit without having to account to the population for their actions. In these circumstances, radical Islamic groups can easily obtain the lead over other competing political groups since they primarily spread their message through mosques, religious welfare organizations, and other religious network which, thanks to the protection of the banner of Islam, are less quickly exposed to direct government repression (Delacoura, 2006:508-510; WRR, 2006:18).

However, expectations should not be too high. For the citizens in the Middle East it is the political divide between the West and the Arab world which is at stake. Esposito and Mogahed (2008) state, supported by broad Gallup research, that the fear of being culturally and politically overwhelmed by people whose policies and lifestyles are considered unfair and unacceptable is related to terrorist actions, both 'at home' and in Western countries. Testimonies of suicide bombers point in the same direction. Besides, there's no conclusive evidence that democracy 'there' will automatically entail security 'here'. In new democracies with a long history of authoritarian control, for instance, democratic institutions are still very weak, the people have little trust in democratic procedures, and the newly chosen political elite plays on nationalist or populist sentiments to overcome domestic differences. We should also realize that democratization does not necessarily lead to a progressive, pro-Western attitude. A significant conclusion is that an excessive focus on democracy (or at least the formal procedural aspects of it) as the solution to the Islamist terrorist problem is misguiding. Delacoura (2006) and Gause (2005) argue that political exclusion and repression of Islamist movements is only one of the explanations for terrorism. Religion is also a dominant factor nowadays. Western policy must include a wide range of instruments and strategies tactics to effectively tackle the multifaceted, cultural and political phenomenon of Islamist terrorism. Even Mrs. Albright, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of the US, states that US embassies need experts in the field of religion to support the policies of the ambassadors. Taking religion seriously is of great importance. In order to overcome the gap between the West and the Islamic world we need the input of Christian-inspired parties that are not afraid of religion as secularist parties are. They are better equipped for the development of mutual trust.

'Democracy and economic development thesis'
It is also often claimed that democracies are better able to produce economic development than autocratic forms. Sharansky (2004) argues that regimes that suppress intellectual freedom and the open exchange of ideas are, in the long run, not capable of competing with societies that cherish the creative potential of people.

Freedom is essential for democracy and prosperity, especially freedom of opinion. Therefore, he advocates the promotion of democracy for oppressed peoples and heavily criticizes the politics of appeasing dictators and doing business with tyrants.

Also, the rule of law that democracy implies offers a better investment climate than do dictatorships with their arbitrariness. The latter was made quite clear by the new member states of the EU that were formerly under totalitarian rule. They underlined that they needed international security and the constitutional state, including a democratic system. If this aspiration could not be attained, they said, foreign investment would not come, nor would economic development. Devotion to democracy and the rule of law combines quite well with economic growth, as the 'Puritan case' according to Max Weber taught us.

This reasoning sometimes is belied by an opposing thesis that non-democratic systems are better at bringing about economic development. This thesis sometimes goes by the name of the "Lee hypothesis" due to its advocacy by Lee Kuan Yew, the former president of Singapore who managed to economically develop Singapore under an authoritarian regime. The other Asian Tigers seemed to confirm this.

The conclusion to which this all leads is that democracy contributes to economic growth. Freedom is in itself a major source of creativity and economic development. Yet the Lee hypothesis indicates that the democratic shortcomings of authoritarian rule can be compensated to a certain degree if other important elements of the constitutional state are warranted, such as a safe and just internal order with a fair degree of freedom of expression as well as freedom for initiatives and a relatively positive human rights record.

2.3 Summary and conclusion

This chapter has shown that the Middle East is substantially lagging behind other regions in terms of democracy. In most cases, the governance pattern is characterized by powerful executive branches that exert significant control over all other branches of state, in some cases being free from institutional checks and balances. Representative democracy is rare, not always genuine and frequently absent. Freedoms of expression and association are usually curtailed. Obsolete norms of legitimacy prevail.

There are many reasons for wanting to promote democracy in the Middle East. In the first place, according to our religious conviction, true democracy is a political confirmation of the dignity of the human person, as it is embedded in respect for the rule of law. For this reason we understand that universal values are behind such a democracy. Because of the 'unity of the human race' recognized by Christians, we suppose that people everywhere will sympathize with these values. We are not surprised that

democracy stands very high on the wish list of people in the Middle East. Secondly, we believe that democracy enriches the lives of citizens in many ways. Moreover, we expect that democracy may to some degree contribute to the following *interests* we have in the Middle East: (1) a more just and peaceful international order, (2) the international fight against terrorism and (3) economic growth in the region. All of these factors also contribute to opportunities for people in the Middle East to lead dignified lives in their own countries so that consequently that they are not forced into (illegal) migration to the West.

Yet we must realize that our desire to promote democracy in the Middle East can conflict with other interests that we have in the region. If we are sincere in our efforts to promote democracy we might have to use instruments from the foreign policy box that won't be very popular with the rulers in the Middle East, such as denouncing human rights violations by the regimes, pressuring the governments to open up political space, making foreign assistance dependent on regimes' efforts to implement reforms, etc. This might harm relations with these regimes and consequently the trade with these countries and especially Western access to oil. Another possible consequence of democracy promotion *might* be short-term destabilization in the Middle East. Instability and conflict in the Middle East also threatens Western trade interests and increases oil prices. Moreover, conflict generates streams of refugees. We have to realize that democratization is a long and complicated process. We must be active in the fields of human rights and democracy in our contacts with the Middle East. Only then can we prove that our interest in democracy is genuine and rebuild our damaged reputation.

3 | Explaining the democracy deficit

In the previous chapter we analysed the democracy deficit in the Middle East. Why do people in the Middle East suffer under authoritarian or even dictatorial regimes, while at the same time there is an enormous thirst among Arabs to get rid of despots and enjoy democratic governance? Why has democracy in the Middle East not progressed further than it has? What are the obstacles? In this chapter we will analyse factors that might have hindered the development of democracy in the region. We will make a distinction between internal and external factors. These vary among the different countries. We should understand them as making democratization more difficult but not impossible.

3.1 Internal factors

3.1.1 Entrenched corruption

Corruption and lack of transparency still constitute a very important challenge to development in the Middle East. Surveys of Transparency International, a global coalition against corruption, show that corruption is widespread in the Middle East. Of course, differences between countries exist. Table 2 shows the ranking of the Middle Eastern countries, both worldwide (first row) and regionally (third row). The Gulf states and Jordan do relatively well.

Table 2: Transparency International's *Corruption Perceptions Index*

Country Rank	Country/Territory	CPI Score 2007
30	Israel	6.1
32	Qatar	6.0
34	United Arab Emirates	5.7
46	Bahrain	5.0
53	Oman	4.7
53	Jordan	4.7
60	Kuwait	4.3
61	Tunisia	4.2
72	Morocco	3.5
79	Saudi Arabia	3.4
99	Lebanon	3.0
99	Algeria	3.0
105	Egypt	2.9
131	Yemen	2.5
131	Libya	2.5
131	Iran	2.5
138	Syria	2.4

Indexes from the Freedom House (see Table 1 in the previous chapter) show a similar picture. Corruption remains a principal obstacle to democracy in countries throughout the world.

3.1.2 Lack of social and economic development

Perhaps the most widely researched proposition in political science is the argument that economic development propels societies toward participatory forms of governance. Mass education, for example, is said to produce a more articulate public that is better equipped to organize and communicate, while urbanization and communications advances encourage the growth of horizontal civic associations. Higher levels of occupational specialization produce an autonomous work force with specialized skills that enhance their bargaining power against elites, so the theory goes. Advances in health care and greater income equality are said to promote democratization by satisfying the basic medical needs of citizens, allowing them to embrace post-materialist values, such as freedom and self-expression.

While the validity of these propositions, collectively known as *modernization theory*, remains the subject of intense debate among political scientists, it is clear that they cannot explain the Arab democratic deficit. Most socio-economic status indicators in the region are relatively high by Third World standards and have been rising steadily for decades. The only major exception is the Arab world's adult literacy rate, 57% in the mid-1990s, which ranks well below those of East Asia and Latin America and only slightly higher than Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, literacy rates in many Arab states are significantly lower than average relative to per capita income (on this basis, for example, Egypt should have a literacy rate of 70%, rather than 55%). A second, related exception is per capita Internet usage, which is also low, both in comparison to other regions and in relation to per capita income (Gambill, 2003:2-3). A third counter argument is that the 9/11 terrorists had all received a high education. The same applies to the terrorist attack at Luxor, Egypt, which was committed by doctors.

However, there is evidence that low literacy and Internet usage rates are themselves a result of authoritarianism and dictatorial rule in the Arab world. Although education budgets in the region are very large, much of this allocation is squandered on bloated bureaucracies (itself a symptom of autocratic governance), with little left over for educational materials. In addition, only a few Arab regimes have launched adult literacy campaigns. Similarly, low rates of Internet usage in the Arab world reflect the fact that most Arab regimes tightly control and censor Internet access. In Syria, for example, Internet access is censored. It is illegal to access the Internet except through government-controlled servers, and the expansion of government-provided Internet access has been slowed by the need to acquire costly monitoring equipment.

In short, the socio-economic status profile of the region does not suggest that Arab states are undemocratic because their populations are economically or socially 'backward'. States can be healthy without being wealthy. Under dictatorial rule, economic growth is the servant of the ruler, and there are states that respect the rule of law despite their lack of economic growth. The introduction of the constitutional state is, on the other hand, a precondition for growth, as the Eastern member states

of the EU demonstrate. Insofar as modernization theory tells us anything about Middle Eastern politics, it is that the region should be more democratic than it is.

3.1.3 The curse of oil

One of the possible reasons that economic growth in the Middle East does not lead to more democracy is the presence of large amounts of oil in some of the Arab states.[5] Despite the fact that these states have benefited immensely from global market dependency on their 'black gold', this kind of economic growth does not produce the combination of cultural and social conditions (occupational specialization, urbanization and higher levels of education) that is said to lead to democratization. Some even speak of the law of oil: the higher the oil price, the less the democratization efforts in the Middle East. Cochrane (2007) explains that while the oil-rich rentier states may grow very wealthy, they do so without investment in the modernization and diversification of their domestic economies. In fact, the generation of oil wealth has almost nothing to do with the productive processes of the domestic economy. Additionally, oil production is capital-intensive but not labour-intensive. The lack of a strong and diversified domestic market and labour market inhibits industrialization, specialization, and urbanization – all important factors in modernization.

There are other mechanisms that can also explain the alleged link between oil export and authoritarian rule. In the first place, rentier states use low tax rates and patronage to relieve pressure for greater accountability. This mechanism is called the 'rentier mechanism'. Case studies describe three ways in which this may occur. The first is through what might be called a 'taxation effect'. It suggests that when governments derive sufficient revenues from the sale of oil, they are likely to tax their populations less heavily or not at all, and the public will in turn be less likely to demand accountability from – and representation in – their governments. A second component of the rentier effect might be called the 'spending effect'. In oil-rich states, oil revenues can be used to fund assistance programs in order to temper social unrest and pressures for democratization. Programmes in Saudi Arabia and Libya financed by oil revenues are prime examples of this spending effect. The third component might be called a 'group formation effect'. It implies that when oil revenues provide a government with enough money, the government will use its largesse to prevent the formation of social groups that are independent from the state and hence may be inclined to demand political rights. Scholars examining the cases of Algeria, Libya, Tunisia and Iran have all observed oil-rich states blocking the formation of independent social groups; all argue that the state is thereby blocking a necessary precondition of democracy.

5 | More than half of government revenues in Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Kuwait and Qatar have, at times, come from the sale of oil. The governments of Jordan, Syria and Egypt variously earn large location rents from payments for pipeline crossing, transit fees and passage through the Suez Canal.

Secondly, resource wealth may allow governments to spend more on internal security and so block the population's democratic aspirations. Michael Ross (2001) argues that Middle Eastern democratization has been inhibited in part by the prevalence of the Mukhabarat (national security) state. There are at least two reasons why resource wealth might lead to larger military forces. One may be pure self-interest: given the opportunity to better arm itself against popular pressures, an authoritarian or dictatorial government will readily do so. A second reason may be that resource wealth causes ethnic or regional conflict; a larger military reflects the government's response.

Though the enormous oil revenues of authoritarian or dictatorial rentier states, coupled with limited mechanisms for distributional accountability and political participation, ensures a difficult road ahead for democratization, authoritarianism in oil-rich states is not inevitable. In some of the Gulf states (Kuwait, Qatar, Oman and Bahrain) important steps have been made towards reform (such as expanded elected assemblies, allowing for public debate, and even the widening of political rights of women) because oil-rich states are not necessarily free from popular pressure for reform. In view of the grave economic difficulties and social tensions in these countries, the Gulf monarchies have had little choice but to consider the introduction of economic and political reforms. Alternatives for managing oil wealth have also been proposed as a way to overcome the predictions of the oil-impedes-democracy discourse. One alternative proposed by Birdsall (2004) is the creation of special funds with constitutional or other restrictions on the use of revenues. These have been used in Kuwait and Norway for several decades and in Columbia and Venezuela since the 1990s. Also in the Netherlands extra gas revenues are collected in a special fund which is used for investments in knowledge and infrastructure. Oman has invested its oil revenues in infrastructure such as roads, schools and hospitals. Dubai has successfully been transformed from a desert state with limited oil reserves into a major global regional hub for business, finance, trade and tourism. These examples demonstrate that oil revenues can be used to promote the interests of the citizen, including their democratic responsibility, or simply the benefits and ambitions of the ruling class, disrespecting the dignity and rights of the people.

3.1.4 Secularism and a mistrust of religion

A typically Western, widespread, secularist explanation for the absence of democracy in the Arab world posits that the belief system and historical traditions of Islam have inhibited democratization. All principle variants of this argument draw upon the fact that Islam offers explicit prescriptions pertaining to social, economic and political issues, placing them outside the realm of public decision-making. This divine "blueprint", elaborated in a voluminous body of Islamic law (*shari'a*), is said to inherently undermine the legitimacy of any political system.

To examine this statement it is important to have a clear vision about the role of religion in society and regarding democracy.

Many people are inspired today by their religion. Most Christians see the roots of the democratic constitutional state in the Bible and Christian tradition.[6] Similarly, many Jews argue that democratic concepts and human rights have always been a part of Jewish thinking and are derived directly from the Torah. For instance, the belief that all people are created in the image of God logically leads to a very strong emphasis on the dignity of each human being, irrespective of class or standing. Justice is an ever-repeated issue in the Biblical tradition. The idea of the covenant between God and the Israelites, in which both parties accepted upon themselves duties and obligations, shows that being faithful, loyal and reliable are essential virtues. This is the way we are governed by God: "follow Him". In the Bible, tyrants who follow their own whims are rejected. The positive value of laws is stressed by the Jewish celebration of *Simchat Torah*, or 'Joy of the Law' (Moaz, 2005; Elazar, 2005).

According to many Muslims, Islam offers important democratic 'connection points', too. They regard Islam as a religion of tolerance, pluralism, justice and human rights and claim that the Koranic notion of *'shura'* (consultation) is to ensure the compatibility of Islam with democracy, and its valuation of human beings by their piety is to imply equality in race and gender and free will (Bayat, 2007:8; Esposito and Voll, 2001; Voll, 1994). Anwar Ibrahim (2006) adds that Islam has always expressed the primacy of *'adl'*, or justice, which is a close approximation of what the West defines as freedom. Justice entails ruling according to the prescripts of Islamic law, which emphasizes consultations and condemns despotism and tyranny. In his view there can be no question that several crucial elements of constitutional democracy and civil society are also moral imperatives in Islam, such as freedom of conscience, freedom of expression, and the sanctity of life and property.

We are aware of the fact that within religions there are different ways of understanding the Holy Scriptures. After all, interpretations of the Scriptures are products of human understanding of something which in the end is above our capacity to grasp. It is in the first place up to the dialogue between Muslims as to how they must understand the political consequences of Islam. Because Christians know for themselves how important religion is, they should participate in that dialogue, if invited. We can't know in advance where that dialogue will end. Christian Democrats are aware of the long road that has led to the democratic constitutional state as we know it now in the West; and of the quarrels, mistakes and also of successes on that

6 | By 1971, the Synod of Bishops saw the promotion of human rights as not only part of the work of the Church, but as central to the demands of the Gospel. Pope Paul suggested that followers of Christ, who embraced the human condition, must be lovers of humanity and are called to imitate him in defending the dignity and rights of every human person and of all peoples. The defence of human rights is the will of God according to the Roman Catholic Church (www.acsjc.org.au).

path inherent to the path. We may be sure that the criticism will be mutual, for we already have a lot of common history.

Mistrust of the influence of religion in the public sphere, be it Islamic, Christian or otherwise, is usually connected with the belief that democracy simply means 'the sovereignty of the people'. This is thought to be the basis for the procedure of majority rule decisions. This is indeed a practical procedure, useful for decision-makers. If only it is not elevated to the status of dogma. In a constitutional state the democratic-minded majority will frequently not follow the majority rule out of respect for the rights and dignity of the minority. Constitutions are formulated to restrict the powers of public authorities and the majorities which support them. Democratic majorities respect values and norms that transcend the desires of majorities. These values create the common platform for public debate. Christians and Muslims may express this point in the creed that only God is sovereign. This conviction puts the responsibility of people in the right framework. If we speak about the sovereignty of the people we are talking about an incomparably different level. We can better restrict our description of the role and dignity of the people by referring to the concept of 'responsibility'.

Problems may arise when public debate is made impossible because people suppose that they understand fully the meaning of the Holy Scriptures, be it the Bible or the Koran; or if doubts about the ideology, either communist or national-socialist, are heavily sanctioned. Christian Democrats stress that a complete understanding of the Scriptures is beyond human capabilities. A person who believes does not necessarily claim to know the whole truth. Insight into the truth does not necessarily imply a claim to infallibility. The opposite is more likely to be the case: freedom of religion by its very logic implies the possibility of holding different views. For this reason, religious belief does not exclude an open dialogue. This idea can also be found in the encyclical *Centesimus Annus*. We therefore speak about 'inspiration' by the Bible. This leads to a political philosophy, programmes of principles and – in the end – a party platform. On all those levels, from inspiration to party platform, public debate is welcomed and makes sense, because critique by people belonging to other traditions may help contribute to a better understanding of our own sources and interpretations. Serious listening is a consequence of religious life. This means that we need communities to strengthen and improve our policies. Pure individualism can hardly be combined with being religious. The human person is always embedded in social contexts. The individual is never 'sovereign'.

Religious beliefs can be sources of freedom rights, but that doesn't mean that religion as an institution is always a positive factor in a society. In some countries one would like to have a more secular government (Iran), where in others one would prefer the government apparatus to be more open to religion (Turkey). The relation between religion and politics has several dimensions. But in every country some form of separation of state and church or mosque is necessary. That relationship shouldn't be too close. Each has its own core business. The state should be neutral

to the belief of its citizens and not make one religion exclusive. The rights of minorities should be safeguarded. Sometimes they are better off with a secular state than a religiously inspired regime. The complexity of the theme of separation of church and state can be illustrated by the headscarf: forbidden in France, allowed – under protest of the secularist part of society – in Turkey by the AK party and culturally accepted in the Netherlands, where grocery stores print their logo on the headscarves of their employees.

The suggestion that democracy will be established only if religion is in decline is in itself an obstacle which threatens popular confidence in the concept of democracy – reason enough for Christian Democrats to openly reject this prejudiced approach and to describe the religious (Christian) sources of the democratic constitutional state. If we are able to overcome the secularist barriers that hamper the acceptance of democracy, then Christian Democracy may become a bridge with the Islamic world. An open dialogue on democracy with others who consider their religion as an asset in their social and political life requires respect for religion as such. Democracy has no chance if the religion of those living in the Middle East is not respected and politically taken seriously.

In fact, it is the internal political situation in a country which makes governments shy away from the introduction of more democratic freedoms and human rights. A striking example is Turkey, where the secular state previously did not have the courage to introduce certain freedoms (for instance, that of religion). Let us not forget that it is frequently Muslims in their own societies who are suppressed by secular regimes. The elites supporting these regimes fear Islam more than any Western government does. However, this fear, expressed in the slogan 'one vote, one man, one time', in fact became in Algeria the reality of today. Secularist states like the Baath regime of Iraq under Saddam Hussein are nevertheless no natural allies of the democratic 'West'. These examples demonstrate that it is far from easy to develop full democracy in Middle Eastern societies. But it is not impossible. Many Muslims already live under democratic rule. This invalidates the assumption of the incompatibility of democracy and Islam. It is not only a new, more advanced understanding of Islam but also political courage which counts.

3.1.5 Clannism

A second category of cultural explanations attributes the persistence of authoritarianism in the Arab world to the continuation of extended kinship ties.

Primordial solidarities play a very important role in the Middle East. People affiliate with ethnicity, tribe and clan. To varying degrees, Arab society is based on clannism in all its forms (tribal, clan-based, communal and ethnic). Kinship ties are politically relevant throughout the Arab world; specific families or clans directly control eight of the twenty-two Arab states and monopolize political power in several others. Saudi Arabia is ruled by the Al-Saud family; Kuwait by the Al-Sabah family; Bahrain by the Al-Khalifa family; Qatar by the Al-Thani family, Oman by the Al-Abu

Said family. The United Arab Emirates is ruled by a collection of families, including the Al-Nihian (Abu Dhabi), Al-Maktum (Dubai), and Al-Qassimi (Shariqah). Iraq and Syria also are dominated by clans. Jordan and Morocco have been ruled by dynasties dating back to 1920 and 1664, respectively. Clannism tightly shackles its followers through the power of the authoritarian patriarchal system. It implants submission, and is considered the enemy of personal independence, intellectual daring and the flowering of a unique and authentic human entity. Clannism prevents the formation of political parties based on vision and ideas about the common good. Tribal parties tend to view only the interests of their own tribe and to disregard the human rights of those not belonging to their own group. Clans tend to concentrate all power in the hands of members of the clan. In such a context corruption is not recognized as evil. Monarchies may avoid such narrow views, and currently the monarchs of Jordan and Morocco play a more and more constructive role in international affairs and in the modernization of the state. Notwithstanding all that, clannism may have some positive aspects, including a sense of belonging to a community and the pursuit of more than only individual interests. (AHDR, 2004:17,145; Gambill, 2003:5-6).

A number of scholars argue that the saliency of primordial loyalties in the Arab world stems less from inherent cultural predisposition than from the oppressive conditions of authoritarian rule. According to sociologist Barakat (1993:274), government suppression of autonomous civic associations has forced citizens to rely on primordial affiliations to articulate their interests. Conversely, tribal and ethno-sectarian divisions have been and still are exploited by Arab regimes to divide and rule their constituents. Most Arab governments have deliberately "cultivated religious, sectarian and tribal orientations" in order to legitimize their authority. Saddam Hussein, for example, being a leader who depended on his privileged clan, encouraged religious and tribal loyalties during the last ten years of his rule. In the first part of his rule Saddam Hussein downplayed religion, tribe and ethnicity, teaching that these were signs of backwardness. This was part of the Baath ideology. In the second part Saddam, the secular leader, became Saddam, the builder of mosques and the convener of tribal gatherings. In part this was Saddam's crude attempt to gain legitimacy. But it also reflects a general rise of identity politics in the Arab world.

Other scholars have demonstrated that the failure of most Arab governments to achieve sustainable economic growth and provide adequate social services has reinforced primordial ties. Since the Arab state has not met the challenge of economic development, society has resorted to its prenatal ties as a solution. Thus, as a result of government oppression and economic mismanagement in the Arab world, modernization has reified, rather than weakened, primordial identities and has inhibited the development of crosscutting allegiances. Clannism flourishes, and its negative impact on freedom and society is becoming stronger wherever civil or political institutions that protect rights and freedoms are weak or absent (AHDR, 2004:17).

The idea that the tribal culture is the root cause of the region's democracy deficit is undermined by the poor track record of cultural explanations of cross-country

political trends in other regions. In Africa, for example, primordial kinship ties are said to seriously undermine loyalty to the state, yet democratization in this region far surpasses that of the Arab world.

We may conclude that clannism, although not the source of authoritarian governance, is nonetheless not very helpful in the development of the democratic constitutional state, while it undermines the idea of 'justice for all'.

3.1.6 The apparent contentment of the masses

Under conditions of extreme poverty, the demand for democracy and the rule of law is sometimes overwhelmed by the desire to survive. Significant segments of the population lack the energy to fight for more than survival. The promotion of human rights thus seems to be of lower priority than improvement of the socio-economic conditions for deprived people. It is an important condition for change to be able to happen from the bottom up.

Sometimes people are satisfied with political structures that clearly are at variance with the principles of the constitutional state. This seems to be the case with significant parts of the Turkish state and society. We will elaborate on that example here.

The philosophy of the Turkish state does not yet seem compatible with the principles of the democratic constitutional state. Turkey wants to be a secularist, laicist state, conceived as a state which tries to ban the influence of religion from public life. Therefore, the Islamic communities are under strict political control. In other respects, too, there is no religious freedom, specifically not for minorities. This is the reason for the counterintuitive support that Dyanet, the Turkish Ministry of Religious Affairs, gives to Turkish mosques abroad: it is a way to control the religion. Only Sunni mosques are supported. Cultural rights of minorities (Kurds) are considered dangerous for the integrity of the state. There is an imbalance between collective interests and individual human rights. There are heavy political restrictions on the freedom of the press and in general a great sensitivity to criticism of the state and its organs. This political structure is guarded by the army, which is considered as the warrant of the secular state. The political role of the army is central in Turkish politics.

The philosophy of the Turkish state and its consequences were maintained until about 2000. The AKP government then started to introduce reforms in order to acquire membership in the EU. These reforms have been furthered by the EU and by the convictions of the AKP. However, there is a growing resistance from the side of the 'deep state': the old elite in the bureaucracy, juridical system and, of course, the army. They accuse the AKP of partly of abusing these EU-accession reforms to serve their electoral desire to expand Islamic freedoms, thereby weakening state control. Recent examples of this include the liberalization efforts regarding the wearing of headscarves at universities. The fact that the AKP has recently gained 'absolute' pow-

er in the presidential palace, together with its majority in Parliament, have raised considerable fears among the more secular part of Turkish society.

But also significant parts of the population resist the reforms of the government, and this tendency is getting stronger and stronger. The reason is not only that people fear loss of power, but also that many citizen share the conviction of the opposition that the demands for introduction of the freedoms of the constitutional state are going too far. There is a great fear in Turkey of a free 'church'. Perhaps the clergy and special communities might endanger the separation of church and state, so they think. Perhaps freedoms for the Kurds might lead to separatism. In the views of these people, free criticism of state and army might undermine those forces which are the warrants for stability.

Similar resistance from the side of citizens might be met in other countries where human rights and democracy are violated. This is reason enough to deeply analyze the philosophical background of these violations. Is there a fear of destabilizing effects which have to be overcome in order to democratize successfully? Should we take into account the time needed for such a historical process? How should we define the short-term and long-term objectives? Developmental assistance in the field of socio-economics has proven to be a very complicated affair which demands a great deal of expertise and detailed knowledge. This will be the case all the more with the change of political structures.

3.2 External factors

3.2.1 Foreign dominance: Viewpoints from the Middle East

Speaking about foreign dominance as the main cause of the democracy deficit and underdevelopment in the Middle East is widespread in the Middle East. Islamic literature is littered with the idea of Muslims being pawns in the hands of the Western world (Céu Pinto, 1999). According to some people in the Middle East, the imperialism of the West began at the time of the Crusades, in which thousands of Muslims were killed by Christian Crusaders (Lewis, 2003:38). Others do not go completely back to the Middle Ages, but see the recent history of the 19th and 20th centuries as the starting point of the exploitation by the West. The fall of the large Islamic empires, with the fall of the Ottoman Empire and Western superiority in the daily life of Muslims due to colonial and imperialist rule, was a reality.

Colonialism and the 'dumping' of Western ideas and plans have seriously damaged communities in the Middle East. Colonialism has largely destroyed Islamic inheritance – mainly the Islamic legal and education systems – by the introduction of modern Western legislation and schooling (see Turkey, Iran and Egypt), and also by scholars who were sent to Europe to learn languages and skills only to then reform the education system at home, so the reasoning goes. European colonialists did little to

promote the cause of good government and principles of human rights and responsibilities. In most cases they deliberately thwarted the need for good governance by weakening or removing intermediate layers that limited the executive power within the traditional relationships, for example in order to facilitate the maintenance of their domination. When French and British colonial rule in the Middle East folded (with the exception of Egypt, to some extent), little had been achieved in terms of political institutions and practices that could promote democracy. The post-colonial governments were confronted with the difficult task of starting nation-building from scratch and leading their citizens from the colonial political culture to a new one. What made this task of nation-building even more difficult was that the Europeans drew the national borders of the Middle Eastern states along artificial lines, which caused a lack of unity in these countries: people who were now fellow countrymen didn't have a shared history or language (Céu Pinto, 1999:11; Saikal, 2004).

Yet according to these comments from the Middle East, this was not all. In their transition they now had to contend with another development: US globalist behaviour in the context of the Cold War. The US approach was over-arching; it made no bones about what type of leader, government or sub-national force the US dealt with in the Middle East as long as it was prepared to support America's top foreign policy goal of containing Soviet communism. The Middle East was of strategic interest due to the enormous oil reserves that countries around the Persian Gulf possessed and on which both great powers were increasingly dependent. In the process it made little or no effort to tie its penetrations of many Middle Eastern countries to the promotion of good governance and democracy. On the contrary, in several instances the US actively propped up anti-communist dictatorial regimes, as in the case of Saudi Arabia under King Abdul Aziz and his heirs and Iran under the Shah… It pursued this approach throughout the Cold War and even afterwards, backing authoritarian regimes in most other Middle Eastern states, including post-Nasser Egypt. At no point did the US seriously link its friendship or alliance with these states to the need for democratization and the development of responsible, accountable and transparent governmental systems (AHDR, 2004:12).

Only since 9/11 has George Bush claimed his commitment to democratization in the Middle East. But his sincerity has met with great scepticism throughout the region. The majority of the Arabs doubt the motives of the war led by the US and do not expect the war to lead to democratization or a better standard of life for the Iraqis. The war in Iraq is sooner seen as an attempt to guarantee the safety of the state of Israel and as a chance to monopolize access to oil (Centre for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan, 2005). The broadcasted pictures of Muslims killed and the violation of human rights by the Americans and British in the Abu Graib prison by Al-Jazeera, Al-Arabia and various state television stations in the Middle East, do little good in this respect.

Comments on 'views from the Middle East'
Of course there is some truth in all of these reproaches. For Western politicians it is necessary to be aware of the image of Western powers in the Middle East. And indeed, colonial rule was not democratic and frequently not focussed on social and cultural progress in the colonies. Neither was the Cold War a favourable context for democratic development needs.

Foreign interventions have indeed played a role in the democracy deficit in the Middle East. However, by exclusive attention to the evils of colonialism and external intrigues, the prevailing dependency paradigm in the Arab region has contributed for decades to debilitating nationalist and populist politics in which a critique of self, of patriarchy, of authoritarian polity and reaching out to the world have been lost to defensiveness, political self-indulgence and conspiracy theory. This outlook, still prevalent among the political classes in the Arab world, has derailed the struggle for democracy, curtailed transnational solidarity, and has largely played into the hands of authoritarian Arab regimes that also play the nationalist cards (Bayat, 2005). Nevertheless, the pan Arabian satellites al-Jazeera and al-Arabia are more prone to giving a platform to self criticism than are national senders. In addition, the authoritarian rule of many post-colonial rulers cannot be reduced to being purely a relic of the previous period.

3.2.2 The role of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict

The Arab Human Development Report (AHDR) claims that the occupation of Palestinian territories casts a pall across the political and economic life of the entire region and is one of the main obstacles preventing democratization in the Middle East. Especially in neighbouring countries, such as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt, occupation dominates national policy priorities, creates humanitarian challenges for those receiving refugees and motivates the diversion of public investment in human development towards military spending. The continuing state of war between Syria and Israel, for example, has given the Syrian regime an argument to keep in place the State of Emergency that was first imposed in the country in 1963. The Syrian regimes seem to be postponing the issue of democracy until after they have resolved the Issues of Golan. The AHDR also argues that by symbolizing a felt and constant threat, occupation has damaging side effects: it provides both a *cause* and an *excuse* for distorting the development agenda, disrupting national priorities and retarding political development.

Carothers (2004) argues that autocrats abuse the conflict to deflect attention from their own internal short comings. The Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEA) highlights the paradox in which peace settlements between Israel and its neighbouring countries without solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict lead not to a democratic wave in the region but rather to more repression on many politi-

cal activities and public freedoms. Both in Jordan and Egypt, public opinion on the legitimacy of the rulers is closely connected to acceptance (or lack thereof) of any attempts to normalize relations with Israel. In Jordan, public opinion against the peace arrangements with Israel signed by the late monarch King Hussein effectively led to the withdrawal of the King's 'permission' for further democratization endeavours (see text block below). Likewise, Egyptians have experienced a serious clampdown by the authorities whenever discussions about normalizing relations with Israel have taken place.

In 1991, following the Madrid Conference, Jordan entered formal negotiations with Israel over a peace treaty. It had been a long-standing objective of King Hussein to repair his relations with the US and others. His pro-peace manoeuvrings brought political discontent at home, and a gradual clampdown followed. Soon the vocal democratic opposition witnessed a partial reversal of some of the hard-won gains of the preceding decade: a postponement of parliament in the fall of 1991 (to prevent a no-confidence vote on Taher Masri's government in the run-up to the Madrid Conference) and changes in the electoral law in advance of the November 1992 elections (to enhance the changes of pro-regime forces). A pliant parliament endorsed the peace treaty with Israel.

The important task of the international community is therefore to have parallel plans for promoting democracy and to enable a settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Until there is a solution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that gives security and dignity to both parties, resentment will infuse aspects of Arab politics and obscure the question of democracy. However, the continuation of the conflict is no excuse to postpone democracy promotion in other Middle Eastern countries.

The European involvement in the Israel-Palestinian conflict is a major stumbling block for an open and fair relationship with the Middle East. The genocide inflicted upon the European Jews still plays a role. The historical experience of the Jews with criminal European governments and with the immoral negligence of significant parts of the people in Europe offers little reason to trust the solidarity and eventual promises of the outside world. The way Western Europe involved Arabs and specifically Palestine in this question provides no reason for confidence from their side, either. Nevertheless, we all have to work for a just international order and for real democracy which is a precondition for a peaceful future for all.

Description of the conflict

It is clear that the conflict between Israel and the Palestinians is very damaging for both sides. The conflict has caused numerous deaths on the Israeli side. People still live in daily fear of new suicide bombings and rocket attacks, despite the security fence. Moreover, Israeli people feel threatened by Hamas, which does not recognize

Israel's right to exist[7] and by Iranian president Achmadinijad's call to "wipe Israel off the map".

At the same time, even far more Palestinians have been killed by the Israeli army. The occupation of the West Bank is felt heavily and, together with the settlement policy, remains a source of resistance. Moreover, the Israeli-built security fence[8] affects nearly every aspect of Palestinian life in the occupied West Bank. The hundreds of checkpoints and blockades curtail or prevent movement between Palestinian towns and villages, splitting and isolating Palestinian communities, separating Palestinians from their agricultural land, hampering access to work, schools, health facilities and relatives and destroying the Palestinian economy (Amnesty International, 2007:3).

In the Gaza strip, from where Israeli settlements were removed in 2005, closures imposed by Israeli forces continue to keep 1.5 million inhabitants cut off from other parts of the Palestinian Territories and the rest of the world. This isolation of the Gaza has resulted in increased economic paralysis and poverty (Amnesty International, 2007:31-32). It seems that certain parties are not interested in the type of solution seen in the rocket attacks by the Hamas militia. But Israel's ongoing expansionist settlement policy does not indicate the preparedness of its government to end the dramatic conflict.

The conflict causes negative side effects in the whole region and particularly the neighbouring countries: it hinders development and democratization in two ways. In the first place, as mentioned above, the conflict casts a pall across the political and economic life in these territories and in neighbouring countries such as Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and Egypt. Nevertheless, it is a hopeful and encouraging sign that at this moment Syria and Israel are negotiating the Golan issue with help of Turkey. The conflict dominates national policy priorities, creates humanitarian challenges for those receiving refugees and motivates the diversion of public investment in human development towards military spending. Secondly, and maybe even more importantly, autocrats in the Middle East abuse the conflict to deflect attention from their own internal short comings and to prevent democratization (Chapter 2). This link between the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and democratization in Arab countries makes it even more urgent to solve the conflict.

The EU and the larger international community should do its utmost to stimulate and facilitate a solution for the conflict, not only for the actors that are directly

7 | At other moments Hamas offered Israel 'hudna', a truce (Haaretz, 30 January 2006; Haaretz, 22 September 2006).

8 | The Israeli authorities contend that this regime of closures, restrictions and the security wall is necessary to prevent Palestinians from entering Israel to carry out suicide bombing and other attacks. The fence/wall, located as it is inside occupied territory, was judged unlawful by the International Court of Justice.

involved in the conflict, but for the whole region. Democratization in Arab countries would be an additional help in solving the conflict.

Headlines of the policy on the Israel-Palestine issue

For many years now, very much has been said about the conflict, numerous analyses presented and official proposals made. This report does not pretend to invent a new policy on the Israel-Palestine issue. But because of the impact of this conflict on the Middle East region, some insight into the vision of the CDA party is helpful. For the attitude of the CDA party we refer to contributions of the present Minister for Foreign Affairs[9] and the spokeswoman of the CDA group in Parliament. Combined, these lead to the following demands, standpoints and comments that have recently been made:

- A two-state solution comprising of an Israel with recognized and safe borders and a viable Palestinian state. The borders of 4 June 1967 should be the rule, corrections can be negotiated;
- The state of Israel should be recognized and the international accords should be followed;
- Stop new settlements and the expansion of existing ones on occupied territory; Israel should give up most of its settlements; territorial compensation should be given for the very few remaining ones as agreed upon by the involved parties;
- A partitioned Jerusalem as the capital for the two states;
- A limited return of refugees; most of them should be resettled on Palestinian and Arab territory, with financial compensation;
- Both parties should renounce violence, specifically against the civilian population. This refers, for instance, to suicide bombings, the rocket attacks from Gaza and the military Israeli reactions which go further than defence;
- Dismantling of the control posts on occupied territory in order to make free movement and normal contacts of the Palestinians possible as well as economic development and the build-up of a viable state. Stop the policy of isolation;
- The revenues which in fact belong to the Palestinian Authority should no longer be kept back by Israel. Financial support for Palestine should use alternative channels if funds otherwise tend to fall into the hands of corrupt or terrorist groups;
- No official contact with Hamas as long as it is on the list of terrorist groups. The relations with moderate parties should be strengthened.

We are aware that the Netherlands is a small – be it a significant – player in the Middle East. So the Dutch know that great powers are always needed to control affairs in the Israeli-Palestinian controversy, notably the United Kingdom and the United

9 | Lecture by the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Maxime Verhagen on the Herzliya conference in Israel, 21 January 2008 and 27 November 2007, Lecture '*Symposium van het Opperrabijn Hirsch Instituut*' in Enschede.

States. For the Netherlands, the Middle East policy should be embedded in a strong and convincing foreign policy of the EU which nowadays already plays a very important role because of its trade and association agreements (whose conditions should be maintained) and its financial support to the Palestinian Authority.

Nowadays the existence of Christian churches is taken into account. The Roman Catholic Church was aware earlier than the Protestants of its responsibility for churches in the Middle East. Also, the presence of a significant Hebrew-speaking Arab-Palestinian community within the state of Israel and represented in the Knesset is clearly appreciated. It allows Israel to avoid becoming a purely ethnic or even tribal state and underlines the mature character of the Israeli democracy. Their civil rights and those of other non-Jewish minorities should be respected fully. More support by the Arab states is indispensable on the way to a just and acceptable solution.

For a state like the Netherlands this broader objective is best supported by means of small-scale practical initiatives such as economic collaboration in industrial and agricultural projects, preferably where both parties within Palestine are involved. Especially in the water sector the Netherlands could deliver added value. Capacity building to strengthen the functioning of the Palestinian Authority is also very important. A critical attitude reflecting fairness in the implementation of criteria has to be expected from a democratic constitutional state where both internally and externally the human rights of all citizens are equally respected.

“Religious differences are easily used as smokescreen for the defence of mundane political or economic interests. Religious motivation should be bent towards tolerance, mutual comprehension and bridge-building” (Maxime Verhagen). This is a challenge for Christian-inspired parties, because in such a party religious motivation of other religiously-inspired people are better understood than in secularist parties.

Headlines of the position of the Churches
The constituency of the Christian Democratic parties belongs in great majority to the mainline Christian churches or are influenced by the theological leadership of these churches. The Israel-Palestine issue is seriously discussed in these churches. The Roman Catholic Church has long been aware of her sister churches in the Middle East. Therefore, her approach to the problems of the Middle East has been more balanced by using the generally applicable concepts of human dignity, justice and reconciliation. On the other hand, the Vatican acknowledged the state of Israel only in 1993. This was the result of a process that had started with the Second Ecumenical Council of the Vatican (Vatican I). From 1962 to1965 Pope John Paul II was personally committed to the subject. In the Israeli-Palestinian conflict the local structure of the Roman Catholic Church offers opportunities. For example, the Latin Patriarch of Jerusalem is a Palestinian.

More tension in the Israel-Palestine debate can be found in Protestant circles. Especially in the Protestant Church of the Netherlands (PKN), studies regularly appear about the position of Israel. Recently a new report was published which calls for a discussion of this topic (PKN, 2008).

The official PKN position since the '50s has been that 'there is an indissoluble bond' between the Churches and Israel. Yet this certainly does not imply a sanctification of the government of the state of Israel. 'Israel' should be understood in a theological rather than a political way. The Church believes that the special position of Israel depends upon the unconditional covenantal loyalty of God and not on the deeds of Israel. Still, in this way a special, highly privileged theological position for Israel is retained. This does not keep the PKN (in accordance with the New Testament teaching) from confirming its solidarity with all victims of injustice, violence and illness; this regards Jews and Palestinians equally. Half a century ago, the focus was more on the recognition of the individuality and self-understanding of Israel as people, land and state. In the present report (PKN, 2008) about the Israeli-Palestinian-Arab conflict (and some of its predecessors) there is still theological sympathy for this attitude, but Christian Zionism is firmly rejected. The position of the Arab churches is given proper attention now, and the Palestinian people are not forgotten. The attention for the Palestinians is no longer merely seen form a diaconal perspective, but also from an ecumenical perspective.

The Church calls for reconciliation within the conditions of:

- Recognition of the right of Israel to an autonomous political existence and security on the basis of international law;
- Rejection of religious claims to territory, which don't contribute to the dialogue between religions aimed at political solutions;
- The necessity to pay attention in the public debate to the constant fear by the Israeli people of terrorist attacks in defence of justice;
- Recognition of the fact that for many in the Jewish community worldwide the state of Israel is part of the Jewish identity;
- Recognition of the right to self-determination by the Palestinians, an autonomous political existence, security and adequate conditions for economic development;
- A two-states solution or any other solution if both parties so prefer, including steps towards peace;
- The Oslo agreements are considered as binding also for Israel, as are the numerous UN resolutions, which should be taken seriously. They contain the keys for any peace agreement. It is deplored that the International Court of Justice has been unable to enforce these resolutions.
- The necessity for consistent debate on the ongoing injustice to the Palestinian population, specifically in the occupied territories, in defence of justice;
- Diaconia for the survival of the victims of the occupation and recognition of the

ecumenical bonds with the Palestinian churches;
- Continuation of contacts between representatives of the Jewish community in Israel and the Palestinian community (among others the Middle East churches) for the promotion of the dialogue between both peoples.

Political comment on the PKN report
As the CDA considers Christian inspiration to be a source for creative and just policies, we may refer to the fact that both the Tenach and the New Testament are clear about the fundamentality of justice as the meaning and sense of politics. The old prophets were considered the more reliable as they criticised more consistently the kings who "did what was evil in the eyes of the Lord". Being loyal to the people of Israel (as is also demanded in the PKN report) means that present-day Christians are obliged to apply "a critical prophetic attitude" towards the state of Israel as they would to any other state. In Christianity (and luckily also in other religions and philosophical convictions) justice regards all people and so has to be applied equally to all governments and authorities; international law is valid for all parties involved in the Israel-Palestine conflict. This is in contrast to suggestions, sometimes met, which imply that international law would be a secularist affair and thus would not be applicable to Israel. This thesis would harm the rights and interests of both Palestinians and Israelis. The international community has to ensure Israel's and Palestine's rights to autonomous political existence and security on the basis of international law.

The PKN consistently confirms the role of international law, which is of significance for Christian-inspired politics. Together there are enough suggestions in the PKN report which supply politics with adequate support for the promotion of a more forceful role of international law.

Churches are able to demonstrate the contribution religion can make to the solution of the conflict. As the core business of churches is reconciliation, they are able to work across borders *par excellence* to connect people of both sides and bring in a bit of peace. Politics could build forth on the bases churches have created and invest in existing contacts that can become building blocks for democracy and peace in the Middle East.

3.2.3 The ambitions of Iran and the conflict in Iraq

The ambitions of Iran
Iran is a major factor in the Middle East. It directly influences Syria, Lebanon (Hezbollah), the Palestinian Territories (Hamas) and also Iraq (al-Sadr). The influence of Iran destabilizes individual countries as well as the region. The situation in Lebanon has deteriorated because of the conflict between pro-Iranian Hezbollah and the US-backed government. The Iranian support of al-Sadr fuels the conflicts in Iraq. Iran aims to gain a bigger role in the Middle East. It therefore resumed its own nuclear programme in 2006, which it didn't halt despite international pressure. The chance

that Iran will obtain nuclear weapons, in combination with the confrontational tone of President Ahmadinejad and his anti-Israel remarks, pose a threat to stability in the region.

The conflict in Iraq
After years of dictatorial rule by Saddam Hussein, the United States attacked Iraq in March 2003. The military battle was very successful, but the post-war reconstruction created even more problems for the US. A governance crisis and sectarian rivalry followed the war. The rebuilding of the country has proven to be much more difficult than winning a military battle of supremacy. The expected regime change wasn't enough. On the contrary, the position of the elected government is weak, and polarization is deeply rooted. To maintain a good balance between the interests of all the groups (Kurds, Shia and Sunni factions and all subcategories) is very difficult. The disruption of the society has led to large flows of refugees to adjoining countries.

Based on the so-called Wolfowitz Doctrine, after the end of the war in Iraq neighbouring countries feared that the United States would enforce democracy elsewhere in the Middle East and that democracy would spread from Iraq across the region. Meanwhile, the deception about democracy did spread over the Middle East. At first Arab governments took some steps towards more democracy. Later, when it became clear that the Americans had become bogged down, the situation deteriorated.

3.3 Conclusion

Why has democracy in the Middle East not progressed further than it has? What are the obstacles? To explain the democracy deficit in the Middle East, internal and external factors must be mentioned.

We have distinguished six internal factors. The first is entrenched corruption. An international comparison shows that corruption levels are still very high in the Middle East.

Secondly, there is a lack of social and economic development. On the one hand, states can be healthy without being wealthy. On the other hand, the introduction of the constitutional state is a precondition for growth, as the Eastern member-states of the EU demonstrate. Relative to the wealth of Middle East, the region should be more democratic than it is.

The third factor is the curse of oil. Regimes receive so much revenue from 'black gold' that they can afford not to reform the political systems towards a constitutional state. They don't have a need to tax the people, and social unrest and pressure for democratization can be tempered with money.

Fourth are factors of secularism and the mistrust of religion. A typically Western secularist explanation posits that the belief system and historical tradition of

Islam have inhibited democratization. Usually this belief is connected with the belief that democracy simply means 'the sovereignty of the people'. Christians and Muslims express the creed that only God is sovereign. This conviction puts the responsibility of people in the right framework. In this report it is stated that the mistrust of religion is in itself an obstacle to democratization. Democracy has no chance of success if the religions of those living in the Middle East are not respected and politically taken seriously.

The fifth internal factor is clannism. It undermines the principle of 'justice for all' and prevents the formation of political parties based on a vision and idea of the common good. If you don't belong to the dominant clan or tribe you are 'not served'. Clans tend to concentrate all power in the hands of members of the clan.

Sixth is the apparent contentment of the masses. Sometimes people are satisfied with political structures which clearly are at variance with the principles of the constitutional state. Significant parts of the population are impoverished and so lack the energy to fight for more than survival, let alone democracy and the rule of law. So the protection of human rights should as far as possible be coupled with improvement of the socio-economic conditions for deprived people.

A noteworthy external factor is the foreign dominance of the West, which in the view of the Middle East has made Muslims pawns in the hands of the Western world. Colonialism and imperialism have diminished the confidence in the concept of democracy, which is conceived as 'Western'. Other factors that play a role are the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the ambitions of Iran and the conflict in Iraq. These are destabilizing elements which give argument to authoritarian regimes for not democratizing.

4 | Democratization efforts

4.1 Arab initiatives

The first Arab Human Development report laid the groundwork for many Arab-initiated reform proposals by articulating the challenges facing the region. From Morocco to Saudi Arabia and beyond, governments, non-governmental groups (both secular and Islamist), the media and others have joined an often freewheeling discussion about the need for change. Many political scientists and politicians claimed that the 'Arab Spring' was near. In this chapter we examine the numerous reform initiatives emanating from the Arab world.

4.1.1 Multilateral initiatives: the Tunis Declaration

Judged by its content, the Tunis Declaration, issued by Arab governments following the May 2004 Arab League summit, holds the least promise of all reform initiatives. Compelled to develop a unified response to the G-8's Broader Middle East Initiative (see next section), the Arab League signed the thirteen-point Tunis Declaration, calling in vague terms for a wide range of reforms. However, the document represents the first multilateral Arab call for reform and offers an important entry point for Western governments as they confer with their Arab counterparts on the need for reform.

While the Tunis Declaration is symbolically important, the document suffers from several key flaws. First, the declaration reflects the least common denominator with respect to reform proposals, offering nothing new or innovative. Second, the declaration lacks specificity, relying instead on a series of vague endorsements of reform in principle without committing to anything more substantive. For example, it calls for "consolidating the democratic practice by enlarging participation in political and public life", but it does not propose any real steps such as lifting restrictions on NGOs. Third, the Arab League made no attempt to reach out to civil society activists and take their views into consideration. Indeed, the document was roundly criticized by Arab NGOs, claiming the declaration made rhetorical promises but offered no concrete programs or policies (Yacoubian, 2005:14).

Therefore, the Tunis Declaration's significance lies not in its substance but in the cover it provides for those who seek to engage Arab governments on the question of reform. While the prospects of constructive multilateral Arab engagement on the question of reform remain slim, the Tunis Declaration offers a key point of reference. At a minimum, Western governments can refer to the document, calling Arab governments on their promise to move toward greater reform. Ultimately, disagreements among Arab countries regarding the pace and direction of reform, as well as the differing internal dynamics of each country, suggest that successful Arab reform initiatives are unlikely to emerge from multilateral Arab venues.

4.1.2 Government reform initiatives

Reform initiatives have been proposed not only by Arab nongovernmental initiatives but also by the region's governments. Following the international outcry over Islamist terrorism in the wake of the 9/11 attacks, many Arab states have promoted some type of political reform package. Indeed, governments ranging from the religiously conservative absolute monarchy in Saudi Arabia to Syria's staunchly secular regime appear to be jumping on the reform bandwagon.

The government-sponsored initiatives vary significantly in scope and intent from country to country. An emerging tension between the antiterrorism measures implemented by governments in the region and calls for reform is also evident. Often, government reform efforts are largely cosmetic, designed to relieve pressure for change bubbling from below without implementing substantial and deep-rooted reforms (Ottaway, 2005:4-5). In some instances, government reform policies have translated into an expansion of political space, allowing an outlet for the expression of opposition. In fewer cases, government promises of reform have led to relatively free and fair elections. In nearly every case, political openings have been tenuous and fragile, subject to the whims of those in power. However, even if government calls for reform are superficial rather than genuine, they offer a potential entry point for the promotion of genuine change (Yacoubian, 2005:11-13).

4.1.3 People power: non-governmental reform initiatives

The boldest and most detailed reform proposals originating in the Arab world have emerged from non-governmental organizations (Yacoubian, 2005:1-10).

Arab NGOs Beirut Summit Letter, March 19-22, 2004

The Arab NGO summit, also known as the Civil Forum, is among the most compelling non-governmental reform initiatives. The forum comprised 52 Arab NGOs from 13 countries. The forum addressed a letter to Arab leaders and underscores the importance of political and constitutional reform for the region's future, lamenting that in the eyes of many in the world the Middle East has become little more than a haven for terrorism and violence. The reforms the forum proposes are repealing emergency laws, abolishing exceptional courts, releasing political prisoners, ending torture, lifting restrictions on forming NGOs and ensuring basic freedoms. Unlike many other reform initiatives, the forum directly addresses the role of Islam within the region and offers constructive suggestions for promoting dialogue on this critical matter. The initiative appears to make an important distinction between radicals and moderates. Its recommendations look to marginalize violent, extremist elements while allowing for the participation of peaceful moderates.

Doha Declaration for Democracy and Reform, June 3-4, 2004

More than 100 participants from across the Arab world, representing a broad spectrum of journalists, activists and politicians signed the Doha declaration. This decla-

ration states that no inherent contradictions exist between Arab culture, Islam and democracy, noting that two-thirds of the world's 1.4 billion Muslims already live in democracies. The declaration also calls on Arab governments to cease their exploitation of the Iraq and Palestine questions to postpone political reform. The proposal's key demands include calls for constitutional reforms that will transform absolute monarchies into constitutional monarchies and circumscribe presidential powers in republics. The initiative suggests that all non-violent opposition groups – secular and Islamist alike – should close national pacts. Essentially, these pacts could lay out the 'rules of the game' and establish an agreed-upon set of values and guarantees endorsed across the political spectrum. This would ensure that Islamist opposition groups would not implement antidemocratic measures once they are in power via genuine elections – a fear that many in the Middle East and the West have. Equally important is that these pacts could help consolidate and strengthen reform advocates, bridging the divide between secular and moderate Islamist reformers.

Alexandria Charter, March 12-24, 2004
The Alexandria Charter was drafted by a group of 150 Arab intellectuals, former diplomats and businessmen. The Charter adopts a multidisciplinary approach addressing political, economic, social and cultural reform. The quasi-governmental conference was opened by the Egyptian president Mubarak. Its political reform proposals reference the need for a transfer of power, free elections, and term limits. It calls for the abolishment of emergency laws, explaining that regular laws can adequately address all offences. The charter endorses the freedom to form political parties *within the framework of existing laws and the constitution*, as well as the need for a free press *via the laws regulating the publication of newspapers*. The charter falls short in key areas. In the first place, the document offers caveats to its recommendations by insisting that they fall within the purview of existing laws, many of which are restrictive and contribute to the region's closed political atmosphere. More generally, the document avoids the question of Islam, sidestepping another key issue that the region must confront. Indeed, Islamists, as well as other civil society groups, were largely excluded from the conference. There is an unwillingness to reach out to more moderate Islamist elements. Ultimately, the Alexandria Charter falters due to its lack of independence. The Egyptian government's influence is clearly discernible. A review of the Alexandria Charter was proposed at the most recent (fifth) Arab Reform Conference, a yearly conference with more than 500 researchers about democracy in the Arab world.

Sana'a Declaration, January 10-12, 2004
The Sana'a Declaration emerged from a conference of 820 participants representing 52 countries and including representatives from governments as well as a variety of civil society organizations and political parties. Co-sponsored by the not-so-democratic Yemeni government, the declaration, although vague, calls for elected

legislatures, an independent judiciary, respect for rule of law, women's empowerment, and a free and independent media. The most salient aspect of this declaration is its emphasis on the need to strengthen the partnership between government and civil society. Subsequent initiatives such as the Doha Declaration and the Civil Forum Letter offer more detailed and substantive recommendations.

Arab Reform Initiative
The Arab Reform Initiative is a network of independent Arab research and policy institutes, with partners in the United States and Europe. The initiative is founded by institutes in Egypt, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Jordan, Sudan, Lebanon, Palestine and Dubai, in joint operation with partners in Spain, Greece, the UK, the US and France.

Its goal is to mobilize the Arab research capacity to advance knowledge and develop a programme for democratic reform in the Arab World which should be realistic and home-grown. The focus is on an Arab conception of reform, rooted in its own history. The network offers a broad range of publications and news items on Internet (www.arab-reform.net)

4.1.4 Constituent-based reform initiatives

In addition to the numerous non-governmental reform initiatives, some more narrowly defined constituencies have put forward their own visions of reform for the region. These initiatives are not as comprehensive and do not target as broad an audience as other reform proposals. However, their significance derives from their connections to reform proponents who hail from diverse sectors of Arab society. Two specific constituencies – the business sector and the Islamists – are highlighted briefly below.

Arab Business Council Declaration
Established in June 2003 as part of the World Economic Forum, the Arab Business Council focuses primarily on global competitiveness issues, seeking to elevate the Arab private sector in order for it to compete at the global level. The declaration underscores the need for good governance, transparency, accountability and respect for the rule of law as critical elements in enhancing competitiveness. While limited in scope, the Arab Business Council Declaration is significant in that it represents another important constituency for reform (however, we should also realize that deeply entrenched business elites are often vested in the status quo and may be averse to reform measures).

Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood Reform Initiative
The Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood (MB), Egypt's most powerful opposition force, issued its own comprehensive reform platform in March 2004. The Muslim Brotherhood's reform initiative is fairly detailed, addressing several types of reform includ-

ing political, electoral, judicial, economic, social, educational and religious. We address this in more detail in the case study of Egypt in the next chapter. For now, it is important to mention that contrary to what many people think, Islamists, too, can be reformers. The Muslim Brotherhood's initiative is a significant document that could present an important opening for bringing moderate Islamists into the dialogue for reform.

4.2 American Initiatives

4.2.1 Pre-9/11/2001

Although democracy promotion had played a role in American foreign policy since the 1990s, bilateral relations were centred on military and economic cooperation, securing access to oil, and the peace process between Israel and the Arab world. The main focus was on economic reforms, with only rhetorical attention being given to human rights and democracy (Stahn and Hüllen, 2007:20). Economic growth would enhance stability in the Middle East according to the US and consequently the access to oil. International trade was seen as the motor for economic development. Under this assumption, President Clinton started to close free trade agreements with all countries in the region, except Syria and Libya due to their classifications as 'state sponsors of terrorism'. Although the US didn't have a comprehensive democracy promotion strategy in the nineties, it did start several small-scale democracy programmes that focused on civil society and the middle class. Political changes, it was thought, should be gradual and driven by internal demands. Hard demands for political reforms would be destabilizing and therefore a threat to American interests. The US didn't want to confront the authoritarian leaders in the Middle East and even asked permission to support civil society organizations.

4.2.2 Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI)

Attention for the Middle East's 'unsatisfactory' political situation has increased dramatically since the events of September 11, 2001, establishing democracy promotion in the Middle East as one of the major challenges in the 'war on terrorism', not least in a speech by President Bush at the NED in 2003. Most prominent is the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), which includes four 'pillars' of cooperation: economic, political, education and women's empowerment. The Middle East Partnership Initiative is complemented by plans for a US-Middle East Free Trade Area. If we take a closer look at the programmes in the political pillar, one can see that the focus on civil society and non-governmental organizations[10] (75% of MEPI) to promote democratization remains. Most of the money goes to secular CSOs and NGOs that are mainly occupied with 'safe' issues such as children's and women's rights. Most Islamist movements and organizations are excluded (although there have been some

10 | Because of the Brownback Amendment it has been possible since 2005 to directly support civil society organizations and NGOs without governmental permission.

recent attempts of the US government to include them). This bottom-up approach to democratization is increasingly complemented by high diplomacy in which US officials raise the subject of democracy and human rights in meetings with leaders in the Middle East.

The notion of conditionality has found more and more acceptance in US policy. In contrast to the EU, the US does not use bilaterally agreed-upon democratic conditionality, but relies instead on extensive rules and criteria for a country's 'eligibility' to agreements and foreign assistance. The Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) rewards only countries that are below a certain national income and meet the requirements of a just and democratic government. Thus, Morocco was eligible in 2005 and 2006, but has not managed to negotiate a compact. Jordan was eligible in 2007 and already received support in 2006 under the Threshold Program. Yet there are countries that don't fit all requirements but do receive funding. For this reason Rieffer (2005:401) states that MCA funds are divided on the basis of political considerations rather than objective criteria. In addition to the positive conditionality, the US Congress can implement the Accountability Act to put sanctions on countries that don't conform to certain preconditions (negative conditionality).

4.2.3 Greater Middle East Initiative

In 2004, the US pushed for a multilateral "Greater Middle East Initiative" (GMEI) that brings together the G-8 and countries of the region for cooperation on political and economic issues. Most of the recommendations, such as funding for literacy programs, training of legislative representatives, and technical assistance in adopting more effective investment and trade policies, did not represent a significant departure from current American and European reform programmes. However, the American proposal was innovative in three aspects.

First, GMEI proposed that G-8 governments work to directly empower Arab citizens by increasing direct funding to NGOs in the region that support democracy, human rights, media freedom and women's rights. Although Western governments often claim to provide such assistance, the current level of 'civil society aid' they provide is modest and much of it goes to what can best be described as quasi-governmental NGO organizations that have been approved by government to absorb foreign aid. Second, GMEI makes the lifting of governmental restrictions on public freedoms an explicit goal of G-8 diplomacy. G-8 member states should "encourage the region's governments to allow civil society organizations, including human rights and media NGOs, to operate freely without harassment or restrictions". Third, GMEI proposes a mechanism of monitoring progress. Specifically, it suggests that the G-8 "fund an NGO that would bring together legal or media experts from the region to draft annual assessments of judicial reform efforts or media freedom in the region".

Shortly after the Bush administration sent the proposal to other G-8 governments for comment, the London-based Arabic daily Al-Hayat obtained a copy and published it. Arab governments were outraged. "Whoever imagines that it is possible

to impose solutions or reform from abroad on any society or region is delusional", said Egyptian president Mubarak. However, Arab governments recognized that a G-8 statement of principles on Middle East democratization was inevitable once the Bush administration had underscored its commitment to the initiative, so they set about bracing themselves politically. They wanted to avoid being perceived as unresponsive to demands for change. As a result, reform initiatives were soon announced by governments throughout the Arab world (see section 3.1). In the end the G-8 accepted an altered version of the original GMEI, known as the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative (BMNAI), which is vastly different. Unlike its predecessor, BMNAI does not suggest that Middle Eastern governments should be encouraged by G-8 member states to change. "Successful reform depends on the countries in the region, and change should not and cannot be imposed from outside" – a point repeatedly emphasized in the text. Moreover, there is no longer mention of the right to establish direct relations with the various societies behind the backs of their governments.

4.3 European Initiatives

4.3.1 Global Mediterranean Policy and the Renovated Mediterranean Policy

From the seventies to the early 1990s relations with the Middle Eastern countries were structured in the Global Mediterranean Policy (GMP). The main focus was on economic and financial cooperation. In 1990 increased awareness of European neighbours both to the east and to the south instilled a sense of urgency about the need for concerted action on reform. In 1991 the European Union asserted that the promotion of democracy and human rights was an essential element of its foreign policy and a "cornerstone" of European cooperation (Yacoubian, 2004:4). It launched the Renovated Mediterranean Policy (RMP). The RMP introduced several important innovations, most notably the notion of partnership with Mediterranean countries and structural adjustment support for those countries engaged in liberalization and economic reform. Significantly, the revised policy stipulated that the European Parliament could freeze the budget of financial protocol (providing assistance to Mediterranean countries) in cases of serious human rights violations. For a brief period in 1991, the EP withheld aid to Syria and Morocco on human rights grounds (Yacoubian, 2004:4; Heera, 2007:54). Throughout the early 1990s the EU continued to signal the importance of human rights and democracy in its foreign policy. The EP launched the European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) in 1994, bringing human rights-promotion line items together under a single budget heading. Most importantly, in 1995 the EU developed a democracy and human rights clause governing relations with third countries that stipulated the suspension of aid and trade in the event of serious human rights violation (Stahn and Hüllen, 2007:18; Yacoubian, 2004:4). The clause was to become standard language in contracts be-

tween the EU and third countries. All association agreements as well as partnership and cooperation agreements contain this clause.

4.3.2 Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), or Barcelona Process

Established in November 1995, the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP), also known as the Barcelona Process, replaced the RMP and was intended to be Europe's answer to growing concerns about instability on its southern flank. Europe was alarmed by the socioeconomic chasm dividing Europe and the Middle East. The European Commission noted that European-Mediterranean income disparities stood at 1 to 12 and would increase to 1 to 20 by 2010 if no measures were taken. The commission also estimated that Mediterranean countries' population would grow from 220 million in 1995 to 300 million by 2010. The huge population growth and the lack of economic opportunities heightened European fears of massive illegal immigration that would destabilize Europe.

The EMP provides a framework for cooperation between EU member states and their twelve Mediterranean partners. The partnership consists of a series of bilateral association agreements as well as the Barcelona Declaration, which provides for broad multilateral cooperation in sectors such as agriculture, energy, tourism and youth. To date, all of the Mediterranean partners except Syria have signed association agreements. Together with EIDHR, the association agreements serve as the EU's principal instrument for promoting democratic change in the region. When signing association agreements, Mediterranean partners have been obliged to endorse the human rights clause, which stipulates a commitment to democratic reform. In theory, the EU could invoke the clause when governments commit serious human rights offences and withhold aid or suspend trade. In practice the EU has never used this clause.

Conceptually, the Barcelona Declaration divides the issues into three 'baskets': political, economic and cultural. The political basket aims to establish a Euro-Mediterranean area of peace and stability based on common respect for human rights and democracy. The creation of a Euro-Mediterranean Free Trade Area by 2010 constitutes the principle goal of the economic basket, while intercultural dialogue and understanding are the hallmarks of the third basket.

All projects of the EMP are funded by the MEDA program, which currently is allotted one billion euros annually. The majority of the MEDA funds have been spent on the EMP's second basket, economic and trade assistance. For many years MEDA aid was oriented toward economic liberalization and offsetting the social costs of these economic reforms. People assumed that economic reforms would have a spill-over effect on political liberalization. Human rights, women's empowerment, and press freedom projects constitute the majority of political basket funding. Judicial reform stands as another prominent focus. Only a small number of initiatives have been aimed at institutional reform, and the European Union has resisted funding parliaments, political parties or trade unions directly. Following tensions

with Mediterranean governments over some MEDA programming, MEDA II political basket funding is now geared more toward women's and children's rights. Indeed, only a small portion of MEDA funding directly targets democracy promotion; the vast majority of its funding is more closely oriented toward a traditional development mandate.

4.3.3 European Neighbourhood Policy and the strategic umbrella

Launched in March 2003, the Wider European Neighbourhood Policy offers a new framework for relations with Europe's new eastern and southern neighbours following the EU's enlargement. The resulting 'new neighbourhood' encompasses a vast swath of territory stretching from Morocco to Moldova. Rather than building a 'Fortress Europe' with an insulated front against outlying political and economic instability, the policy aims to create a 'ring of friends' around the EU, nations that share the same values of democracy, respect for human rights, and the rule of law. In hopes of developing a 'zone of prosperity' the EU offers its new neighbours the prospect of entry into its internal market and, ultimately, the four freedoms (freedom of movement of goods, of persons, of services, and of capital) in exchange for the implementation of significant political, economic and institutional reforms. Countries that show more progress receive more rewards from the EU.

Essentially, the ENP is intended to bolster and complement the Barcelona Process. It enhances and clarifies conditionality by offering a huge incentive – access to Europe's internal market – to encourage countries to undertake serious reforms. It also serves as a strategic overlay that articulates the principles of engagement with the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Three key documents – "European Security Strategy", "Strengthening the EU's Relations with the Arab World" and "Interim Report of the EU Strategic Partnership with the Mediterranean and the Middle East" – form a strategic umbrella for Europe's new democracy promotion strategy. While the ENP lays out concrete policy options for energizing movement of reform, the European Strategy and accompanying papers place these options in a broader, strategic context.

4.3.4 Union for the Mediterranean

The French president Sarkozy took the initiative in forming the Union for the Mediterranean, originally called the Mediterranean Union. It started in July 2008 and builds on the existing Barcelona Process (Euro-Mediterranean Partnership). All partners in that process, together with all the EU member states, form the new Union. The Union for the Mediterranean connects Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. The French president hopes it will bring peace between Israel and its Arab neighbours. May be the most important thing the Union can give, is economic perspective. European foreign direct investment can help the North African economies. A lot can be done: the infrastructure in the region is bad, the workforce poorly educated and unemployment high. Furthermore, there is almost no trade between the North

African countries. The new Union for the Mediterranean is a new opportunity within the Barcelona Process.

4.3.5 Other European democracy-promoting initiatives

While Europe's multilateral democracy promotion efforts have mainly focused on the Mediterranean region, the EU has initiated programmes with other sub-regions of the Middle East. These programmes are not as rich and varied as the EU's interaction with the Mediterranean region, nor are the same instruments and levers available.

The European Union-Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Cooperation Agreement was signed in 1989. The agenda does not address political reform, focusing instead on free trade issues, cooperation in fighting terrorism and the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons. The EU has offered to launch contracts on human rights issues but has met with reluctance from its GCC partners.

The European Union signed a cooperation agreement with Yemen in 1997. The agreement's objective is to facilitate cooperation in the areas of trade and development. A new political dialogue component was added in 2004.

With Iran, the EU started a Comprehensive Dialogue in 1998. The EU made a strategic choice to engage rather than isolate Iran. The political part of the dialogue covers regional issues, including the Middle East peace process, non-proliferation, human rights and the fight against terrorism. The EU also decided to explore possibilities for cooperation with Iran in the areas of energy, trade and investment, refugees and drugs control. The Dialogue has yielded few significant results. The Iranians have not been willing to make concessions on any of the key political issues. At the same time the EU has refused to relax its conditions and move forward with the trade agreement. In 2003-2004 relations between the EU and Iran deteriorated because of the nuclear aspirations of Iran and the outcome of the Iranian general elections, which were held under conditions criticised by the EU, and the Dialogue was suspended (Yacoubian, 2004:5-6).

The US and the EU work together in NATO's Enhanced Mediterranean Dialogue. Countries involved are Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia. The participating countries decide themselves on the extent and intensity of their participation.

4.4 Conclusion

What can be concluded from the Arab, American and European democracy efforts? We will focus our conclusion on Europe, with a view to the strategy that should be followed. The Arab and American governments are indirectly addressed.

Both the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy formally commit the EU to encouraging democratic reform in Arab states. Despite its devoting large sums of money to the region – the European Commission spends some 1 billion

a year on the MEDA aid programme alone – its reform efforts have been hampered by three major weaknesses (Mona Yacoubian, 2004; Richard Gillespie, 2004; Richard Youngs, 2006).

• *Lack of true commitment to democracy from the EU*
In the Middle East many people have the perception that the EU is not really committed to democracy. Some now suspect that European rhetoric about the importance of political change has more to do with paying lip service to the US agenda of democracy promotion across the broader Middle East than demonstrating genuine enthusiasm to support reform. A few examples illustrate this perception.

In the first place, it seems that the EU focus is more on controlling illegal migration and sharing information on counter-terrorism and less on encouraging democratic reforms. EU spending priorities supports this criticism. In December 2005, EU ministers agreed to make 800 million euros available for controlling illegal immigration from the southern Mediterranean after a series of deaths at the Ceuta and Melilla borders. In contrast, EU governments allocated a paltry 10 million in the same year to the European Commission-managed European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) for democracy promotion in the region. We should realize that the original intent of the Barcelona Process was not to promote political reform. The impetus for the creation of the EMP was less about spurring reform than about staving off the threat of massive illegal immigration and preserving political stability and the status quo.

In the second place, there's a perceived lack of genuine commitment to promote democracy because the EU doesn't exert real political pressure on autocratic regimes in the region. Although European leaders have been vocal about migration, terrorism and the Palestinian question, the EU as a whole is silent on democracy. There have been no EU communiqués on the slowing momentum of reform in Morocco and Jordan. Diplomatic pressure on the autocratic Tunisian regime has, if anything, eased since 2001. Meanwhile, Colonel Kadafi's agreement in 2003 to cease weapons programmes has brought him European silence on human rights issues in Libya. In Egypt it is the American rather than European rhetoric on democracy promotion that has spurred debate. The EU never used the available clause to suspend aid and trade in case of human rights violations despite the fact that they were violated several times by different regimes.

• *Lack of true commitment to democracy by Middle Eastern regimes*
Middle Eastern countries have shown their evident distaste for the political content of democracy. Ironically, the only Arab state to express enthusiasm for democracy and human rights was Tunisia, while at the same time it severely restricts freedom of speech. The other states that were given the opportunity to join (Morocco, Algeria and Egypt) had misgivings about the political content of the EMP, although not to the extent that their reservations outweighed hopes of greater financial assistance

and other economic benefits under the EMP. They could not, for the most part, afford to be seen as openly rejecting democratic designs. Furthermore, they had reason to expect that democracy promotion efforts might be neutralized: the new Partnership sponsorship of civil society projects was to take place "within the framework of national law", and the Barcelona Declaration lacked the legal status of an international treaty (Gillespie, 2004:5).

• *Meagre incentives for change*

The ENP has not lived up to its promise of offering Arab governments major incentives to reform. Part of the problem is that the EU had not specified which rewards would flow from which kinds of reforms. The official reason for this is a desire to retain flexibility and discretion. However, in practice it reflects widespread unease about the idea of conditionality.

Southern-tier countries in the EU have been less willing than their northern neighbours to rock the boat and push for reform. Their proximity to the southern Mediterranean heightens their concerns about illegal migration and instability and makes them uncomfortable with notions of conditionality.

Moreover, in the end the ENP cannot offer Arab states the two things that they want most: full access to the single market and free movement of workers. Although the November 2005 Barcelona summit committed the EU to the further liberalization of its agricultural markets, this was hedged with numerous 'exceptions' to market opening. On migration, there is even less scope: most member states are in favour of tightening up rather than liberalizing their immigration regimes.

A lack of coherent reform strategy and the avoidance of politically sensitive issues and instruments

Rather than making a serious strategy for boosting reform movements across the Middle East, the EU's approach has been rather scattergun: it supports a disjointed collection of individual projects. At the insistence of many Commission officials and MEPs, the EIDHR has retained a wide geographical coverage, with very small levels of funding distributed amongst a large number of countries (sixty-six target states were identified for 2005-2006). Besides, both the Barcelona Process and the ENP have been encumberedby an unwieldy bureaucracy. With its multi-year budget cycles and volumes of paperwork, the ENP is exceptionally bureaucratic. When policies and programmes need to be redefined, the process is extremely difficult to redirect.

Strict funding rules also hold back EU efforts because they give incumbent regimes a veto on grant giving. Since 2004 small amounts of money – up to 5 million euros per Southern Mediterranean country – have been made available for democracy and human rights projects from mainstream MEDA funds. However, unlike the money given under the EIDHR, the distribution of these funds has to be agreed upon with Arab governments. As a result, much of the money has been channelled through human rights councils and commissions controlled by Arab governments,

and many civil society groups receiving EU money are not independent. In Jordan, for example, much of the civil society support goes to NGOs headed by members of the royal family. Islamist parties and movements are usually not regime-sanctioned and consequently are not involved in EU programmes. Commission officials are reluctant to assume leading roles in engagement with Islamist reformers because of the political sensitivities involved.

Besides, EU democracy projects tend to shy away from controversial areas, preferring to take refuge in generic priorities such as NGOs, women's rights and human rights legislation rather than tackling the specific challenges of political reform facing each individual Arab country. One example of the apolitical nature of most rule of law projects was an EU judicial reform programme in Algeria which continued even though President Bouteflika was sacking independently-minded judges.

The EU and the US

The EU has clearly chosen for a non-confrontational, risk-avoiding approach, focused on partnership and dialogue. Authoritarian regimes are not confronted with the violations of the principles of democracy and human rights by the EU, southern EU member states hinder the implementation of conditionality to stimulate regimes to adopt reform policies, and the EU does not tackle the specific challenges of political reform. Instead, they tend to focus on (secular) semi-independent civil society and non-controversial themes such as children's rights and education. These choices suggest that the EU is more committed to short-time stability and the preservation of the status quo than to long-term democratization in the Middle East.

Comparison with the American efforts in the field of democracy promotion is not positive for the EU efforts. The apparent 'enlightened' slogan that "we should not impose democracy" is very useful in rationalizing the half-hearted and extremely modest policy of the EU on this issue. A worthy and coherent policy coordinated with the efforts of other democratic states (US) would better meet the expectations of the citizens of the EU and the Middle East. The EU is not in a position to reproach the US of hypocrisy. Such a reproach would evoke a boomerang effect. Whatever the mistakes and failures of the US might be, American governments turn out to be far more open to a moral political appeal than the member states of the EU. This should make Europe modest and less pretentious.

5 | Case Study Egypt

In this chapter a case study of Egypt is presented. The first three chapters were about democracy in the Middle East. The need for democracy was sketched; an explanation was given for the democratic deficit; and Arab, American and European initiatives for democracy were discussed. Now we want to illustrate this by means of the situation in Egypt. After a short introduction (4.1) the economic, social and political situation (4.2) and the government's reform policy (4.3) are analysed. The second part of this chapter is about the Western democracy promotion efforts (4.4) and, more specifically, about the supporting political parties (4.5) and conditional help (4.6).

Egypt is one of the most important countries in the Middle East and is a major interlocutor between the Arab and the Western worlds. Factors such as population size, historical events, military strengths, diplomatic expertise and strategic geographic position give Egypt extensive political influence in the Middle East. Cairo has been a crossroads of Arab commerce and culture for millennia, and its intellectual and Islamic institutions are at the centre of the region's social and cultural development. Having made peace with Israel in 1979, Egypt is likely to be a major player in any future resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But Egypt's internal stability has been preserved at the cost of stagnation in domestic political life. During the 1970s, 1990s and the period of 2004-2006 the regime was challenged by Islamic insurgency. Economic downturn now comes on top of acute demographic pressure. These developments are putting an unreformed political system under increasing strain. In addition, having experienced only four presidents (Naguib, Nasser, Sadat and Mubarak) since the revolution of 1952, Egypt now faces the likely succession of President Mubarak, in power since 1981, by his own son.

5.1 Economic, social and political situation

5.1.1 Economic Situation

Egypt is ranked as a low-to-middle income country, with a population of about 77 million. Agriculture accounts for 16% of GDP and plays an important part in the economy. Industry and services respectively account for some 34% and 50% of GDP. Since July 2004 the Egyptian government has been actively carrying out economic reforms. Bold trade, tax and financial reforms have led to a comeback in foreign confidence. With help from the IMF, budgets are now presented in line with international standards. The privatization process has been re-launched, and between July 2004 and March 2005 seventeen non-financial companies were privatized. The EU is Egypt's biggest trading partner, currently accounting for 42% of Egyptian export and 37% of import, with the balance of the trade still in the EU's favour. The EU is very important for Egypt's economy (EU Country Strategy Report: Egypt, 2007).

5.1.2 Social situation

Despite some improvements in social indicators over the past few decades, during the period 1990-2002 an estimated 44% of the Egyptian population was living on less than 1.7 euros a day (the upper poverty line). In official documents (for example the CIA Factbook), it is stated that 20% of the population lived under the poverty line in 2005, but in reality the percentage of people in Egypt that live close to or under the poverty line is much higher (some estimate as high as 80%). Experience in Egypt confirms that poverty is closely and inversely correlated to education, with almost half of poor people in the country being illiterate. The literacy rate for the whole of Egypt is 71.4% (83% of males and 59.4% of females). Egypt is ranked 119th of 177 countries according to the UNDP's Human Development Indicators for 2005. Given a population growth of 2% per year and around 600,000 new entrants to the labour market every year, per capita income has increased only modestly. Unemployment is officially measured at 10%, but again these are official numbers; in reality the percentage is much higher. The gender differential is considerable, with unemployment affecting females 2.5 times more often than males. Underemployment, both visible and invisible, is widespread, generating considerable economic losses (EU Country Strategy Report: Egypt, 2007:11; CIA Factbook). Although significant steps have been taken by Prime Minister Ahmed Nazif since July 2004 on economic reform, social reform has not received the same degree of attention.

5.1.3 Political Situation

Political system

Officially, Egypt is a multi-party democracy. But in practice this is very limited. The National Democratic Party has been in power since 1976 and usually wins elections with around 90% of the votes. Since the regime launched a limited liberalization programme in the 1970s, it has carefully crafted rules to allow for opposition representation in parliament but by insufficient members as to significantly embarrass the government.

- Certain political movements are excluded from the political arena by the Egyptian state. It refuses to legalize any political movement with an Islamic background, such as al-Wasat and the Muslim Brotherhood (the Muslim Brotherhood is banned as a party, but members of it were elected in 2005 as independent candidates – 88 out of 444 members of parliament).
- Opposition parties that are legalized by the regime (see text block below) face a variety of tools applied by the regime to weaken them, such as the close control of their licensing, the organizing of competition between them (divide-and- rule), and the careful devising of electoral rules before elections. Moreover, the regime abuses the State of Emergency. It authorizes the government to prohibit strikes, demonstrations and public meetings (though strikes and demonstrations do take place) and censors or closes newspapers in the name of national security. As such

it holds a major, permanent constraint on political freedoms in general and the public activities of opposition parties. For these and other reasons[11] the legal opposition parties are very weak.

POLITICAL PARTIES IN EGYPT

In 1976 President Sadat broke the Arab Socialist Union – the sole legal party – into three distinct parties. He and his government retained control of the centre grouping, which subsequently became the **National Democratic Party***. The left-wing fragment became* **Tagammu Party** *and the right-wing fragment became the* **Liberal party, al-Ahrar***. The National Democratic Party has been in power from that time on. In 1977 a second* **Socialist Labour Party** *was authorized, and in 1978 the original party of constitutional nationalism the* **Wafd***, banned since 1954, was re-legalized as the* **New Wafd Party***. Only one additional party was legalized during the 1980s, the* **Umma Party***, but 8 new ones were allowed in the 1990s and six have been authorized over the last 5 years, such as the* **Nasserist Party** *and the* **al-Ghad Party** *led by Ayman Nour. At the moment there are a total of 21 legal opposition parties. Only 4 (Wafd, Tagammu, the Nasserist Party and al-Ghad) are in parliament, however.*

Besides these legal opposition parties there are also other political movements. The most radical criticisms of the status quo have come from movements calling for reform which are not themselves political parties, the most significant being **Kifaya** *(Enough!). Kifaya came to prominence in late 2004. From the outset Kifaya has focused on two main targets: the prospect of continued rule by Mubarak and what is called the concentration of decision-making powers in the presidency. However, the most outspoken opposition comes from the* **Muslim Brotherhood***. It is the only organization that can claim to rival the National Democratic Party in social presence and influence, and the only political organization with explicit reference to Islam, by virtue of which it is banned and subject to frequent harassment. In 1996 a number of former Brothers and others with no links to the Society formed a moderate reformist Islamic party, the* **Wasat Party***. This party also has been refused legal status by the government.*

11 | We want to stress that there are also internal factors contributing to the weakness of the legal opposition. Typically, the opposition parties (like the NDP) are led by immovable and aging autocrats who tend to ignore or stifle internal dissent rather than encourage debate and its arbitration through democratic procedures. One consequence is the frustration of party activists and a tendency for young new figures to break away and found new parties, such as Ayman Nour of the Wafd Party that established al-Ghad. All these schisms and formations of new parties aggravate the fragmentation and thus the political weakness of the liberal wing of the political class. The opposition parties are locked in a permanent and more or less futile rivalry with one another, while sparing the NDP from any serious challenge.

Power Sharing

In Egypt, power and decision-making are very centralized. The legislative branch is extremely weak in relation to the executive. Parliament is not a major arena of decision-making but merely of rubber-stamping the decisions made elsewhere (by the Council of Ministers and, above all, the Presidency). The executive branch makes big efforts to exert influence on the judiciary. Some judges are more sensitive to this pressure than others. In 2006 two judges of the Court of Cassation that supervised the elections and established fraud were arrested. Many people, including judges, protested against their arrest.

Democratic culture

The culture of democracy and recognition of civil and political rights is very fragile in Egypt. These problems have their roots in general illiteracy and extreme poverty, as well as in a lack of experience in the structures and institutions of democratic practice. Participation in political life is very low (23% turnout in the presidential elections in 2005 and 26% in the 2005 parliamentary elections). The International Crisis Group argues that there is no real political demand in the country. For the Egyptian masses the real demands are socio-economic. Political demand often concerns the Egyptian elite, not the masses (ICG, 2005:17). Another explanation for the lack of political involvement is the risk that people face when they are politically active and oppose the regime. Opponents of the regime run very high chances[12] of ending up in jail.

Rule of Law

Egypt has ratified most of the major UN human rights conventions, though with reservations. In general, the provisions of international treaties are part of national legislation. The Constitution recognizes the freedom of opinion, expression, assembly and association, provides for freedom of press and forbids censorship. A major obstacle to the full enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms is the implementation of the *Emergency Law*, continuously applied since 1981 and renewed in mid-2006 by the government for a further two years, despite undertaking to the contrary. The main reason for the application of the Emergency Law is the continuous threat of – or actual – use of violence by armed Islamist groups.[13] The emergency legislation confers wide powers on security officials and the executive authority. It allows for arbitrary arrests and detention without trial. In their attempts to eradicate what they call 'terrorist cells' the Egyptian government has carried out mass

12 | These chances depend on the degree of outspokenness and the government's assessment of the threat that they imply.

13 | In 1981 the Egyptian President Sadat was assassinated. Since that time armed groups have targeted government officials and security forces as well as intellectuals, Egyptian Coptic Christians and tourists. One of the deadliest attacks in Luxor in 1997 left more than 50 people dead, most of them foreign tourists. Starting in 2004 there was a string of bomb attacks on the Sinai Peninsula. These attacks killed and injured hundreds of civilians.

arbitrary arrests and tried, convicted and sentenced people using unfair proceedings and with little evidence to substantiate the charges. Around 18,000 administratively detained – people held without charge of trial under orders issued out by the Interior Ministry – are languishing in Egypt's jails in degrading and inhumane conditions. According to Amnesty International, torture and other ill-treatment are systematic in detention centres across Egypt. Emergency legislation has also severely restricted the rights to freedom of religion, expression, association and assembly and allows people charged with certain offences to face grossly unfair trails before military and emergency courts (Commission of the European Communities, 2005; Amnesty International 2007).

We want to pay special attention to religious freedom in Egypt. The majority of people in Egypt are Muslim (93%). Muslims don't have full religious freedom, either. Under the Emergency Law, Egypt's state security courts continue to prosecute and imprison those accused of 'unorthodox' Islamic religious beliefs or practices. These courts have arrested and imprisoned – sometimes without charge – Shia and other non-Sunnis, as well as other Muslims deemed 'deviant'. The Egyptian government maintains tight control over all Muslim religious institutions, including mosques and religious endowments, which are encouraged to promote an officially sanctioned interpretation of Islam. All mosques must be licensed by the government, and sermons are monitored by the government, reportedly as a necessary precaution against religious extremism and terrorism. Muslim imams must be licensed by the government.

The largest minority religious group is Coptic Christians. Members of the Christian Coptic Orthodox Church of Egypt are not granted complete religious freedom, either. Copts are not treated equally to Muslims: not in building houses of worship, nor in conversion issues, nor in the way that many Muslims in society address Coptic issues.

5.2 Government Reform Policies

Since 2002, Egypt's ruling National Democratic Party has embarked on an effort to project a new, reformist image. Rising domestic demands for political accountability, deteriorating socio-economic conditions and popular dissatisfaction with the performance of NDP-led governments have forced the party to reconsider its public profile. A greater inclination on the part of the US and the EU to pressure Egypt on political reform has also played a role. In the past years, a cadre of younger technocrats has been injected into a party long dominated by older figures. This 'young guard' (under whom Gamal Mubarak, the son of President Hosni Mubarak), well versed in the rhetoric of democracy and good governance, has developed a National Development Plan. Hopes about democratization were further raised by the prom-

ises of political reform announced by President Mubarak during his 2005 presidential campaign. President Mubarak's election pledges included legislative reforms, free and fair elections, ending of the onerous emergency rule, greater press freedom, reform of judiciary, and freedom to form political parties.

However, the first multi-candidate presidential election suffered from serious restrictions and, since then, progress on delivering the promised reforms has been slow. Following elections, the regime returned to repression. Runner-up in the presidential election, Ayman Nour (al-Ghad party), was sentenced to 5 years of prison in a fabricated case for forgery (of his father's signature in order to authorize him in certain occasions). Two judges who alleged that the 2005 election was rigged faced disciplinary action, but popular protests on their behalf forced the regime to climb down; further protests called for judicial independence in mid-2006. Crackdown on the Muslim Brothers continues.

Moreover, in late December 2006 President Mubarak stated his intention to amend 34 articles of Egypt's Constitution and to replace the Emergency Law with new anti-terror legislation. In March 2007, the amendments were adopted in parliament and endorsed in a referendum that was boycotted by the political opposition and criticized by independent monitors as fraudulent. According to human rights experts, the amendments will give the president and the security forces unprecedented powers by entrenching – and making permanent through isolation – existing practices of unwarranted search and seizure, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture and unfair trials, thereby further eroding human rights protection. This will also clearly violate Egypt's international human rights obligations. A positive development concerning the protection of human rights is the creation of the National Council for Human Rights under the chairmanship of the former UN-Secretary Boutros Ghali.

During the last municipal and local elections, which took place on April 8, 2008, the regime tried to prevent members of the Muslim Brotherhood from becoming candidates. Many of them were arrested at night or subjected to restrictions. They were, for example, denied access to registration offices, or their registration papers were not accepted. The editor-in-chief of the English website of the Muslim Brotherhood was arrested, and his counterpart of the Arabic website was sought.[14] They had dared to publish about the more than 500 members of the Muslim Brotherhood who had been arrested preceding the elections.

The local elections are important for the presidency because a candidate for the presidential elections needs the support of at least ten elected members of every local council in at least 14 governorates. The Muslim Brotherhood is forbidden as an organization, but it has been common for its members to stand as independent candidates in national and local elections.

14 | The English website of the Muslim Brotherhood is: www.ikhwanweb.com.

Mubarak asserts that Egypt is still on the road to democracy, albeit step by step. The major legitimizing strategy for the government's go-slow approach has been two-fold: (1) systematically evoking the well-worn mantra that economic reforms must come before political reform and (2) consistently maintaining that the population needs to be prepared for democracy before reforms can take place. Yet the 'democratization in spurts' model has led to no more than minor reforms on the fringes of the political sphere. The system of power relationships and constitutional and legal arrangements organizing political participation remains essentially unchanged.

5.3 Western Democracy Promotion Efforts

5.3.1 Introduction

Egypt and the European Community first established diplomatic relation in 1966. Ten years later a first Cooperation Agreement was signed. Since 1995 relations between the EU and Egypt have been structured under the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). Egypt is a leading recipient of EU aid among the Mediterranean partners in terms of total funds received from the MEDA programme, the principal financial instrument of the EU for the implementation of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. Egypt has benefited from a total committed funding of more than €1 billion since 1995 (EU Country Strategy Report, 2007:15). Yet the trade balance is still in favour of the EU.

Egypt and the US began to cooperate in the mid-1970s after Sadat made peace with Israel. Between 1979 and 2003 the US provided Egypt with around $30 billion in *military aid*, making Egypt the second largest recipient of US military aid after Israel. Also, Egypt received about $30 billion in *economic aid* within the same time frame. The difference between the EU and US aid packages is significant.

Just as with the European Union, the main focus of Egyptian-US cooperation was on economic reforms, with only rhetorical attention given to democracy and human rights. After 9/11 democracy promotion in Egypt (and other countries) received more attention in Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). The Americans linked the lack of democracy in many Arab countries with international terrorism. There has also been a lot of protest against the US MEPI. This initiative is seen by some in Egypt as a US attempt to purge cultural discourse, educational curricula and the social relations of Islamic content under the guise of combating terrorism. There is a lot of mistrust of US policy and concern about Egypt's dependence. People are afraid of the so-called Americanization of Egyptian culture and society. Anti-American sentiments in Egypt are fed by the American support for the regime of Mubarak, America's invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan and the American attitude in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

In the next sections we will evaluate the instruments the EU and the US have used in their efforts to promote democracy in Egypt. A distinction will be made between diplomatic tools and foreign assistance.

5.3.2 Diplomatic tools

Positive and negative sanctions
The European Union has never placed sanctions on Egypt, despite the democratic regression of the past years. The US did withhold 130 million dollars when the director of the Ibn Khaldum Center for Democracy, Sa'd Al-Din Ibrahim, was jailed. The reaction to this American sanction was very negative, and the Egyptian (state) press promoted anti-American sentiments. Some journalists even compared America with Nazi Germany and Rumsfeld with Hitler. In December 2002 Ibrahim was acquitted. However, it was not clear whether the sanctions enforced this. However, in July 2008 Ibrahim was sent to jail again.

This sanction was the first and the last regarding the violation of human rights and democratic regression in Egypt. Moreover, this was a high profile case about secular human right activists. So far the US hasn't imposed any sanctions in reaction to, for example, the continued State of Emergency, the arrest and torture of political dissidents, etc. Even when Ayman Nour was arrested in 2005, neither the EU nor the US placed sanctions on Egypt. The US did postpone the negotiations about the free trade agreement, and Rice cancelled her visit to Cairo. A possibility governments haven't implemented so far is freezing the foreign bank accounts of Egyptian officials, for example in Malta.

5.3.3 Foreign Assistance

Democracy assistance targeting state actors
– Economic Liberalization
Egypt faced a severe economic crisis in the 1980 and 1990s. Mubarak was forced to call in the help of the World Bank and the IMF. Both the EU and the US also implemented programmes for economic liberalization in Egypt in the 1980s and 1990s. They assumed that economic reforms would have a spill-over effect on political liberalization. However, in Egypt the economic reforms didn't lead to political liberalization but to the deliberalization of markets. Most Egyptians agree that there's less freedom now than twenty years ago. There has been a regression in democracy (Heera, 2007).

Kienle (2000:144) explains this deliberalization by referring to the regime's fear of losing control over the population due to the measures to reform Egypt's economy. The regime had fewer means for patronage due to decreasing incomes and the development of state independent economic forces. To compensate this loss of

control the regime implemented new restrictions on groups that could challenge the power of the regime, such as the Islamists. Because of the growing socio-economic inequality and the growing poverty as a result of the economic crisis and reforms, Islamic groups who offered another model of social justice attracted a growing number of people. The regime feared this development and tightened control.

At the same time Egypt's regime also tried to limit the risks of the economic reforms by *neutralizing* their effects. In the process of privatization state companies were sold to clients of the regime. For example, the telecom company Orascom was sold to a family with strong relations with the regime. Moreover, the EU's compensations offered the regime even more means to invest in their network of patronage because these compensations were directly given to the regime (Youngs, 2001:68,69; Dillman, 2002:73,80). In this way Egypt's regime kept a very strong influence on the economy. Economic liberalization led neither to a division between economy and politics nor to political liberalization.

– Rule of law development

In the 1990s the EU and the US pushed the governments of President Mubarak to carry out rule of law reforms, especially judicial reforms to facilitate Egypt's attempted economic reforms and to help lay the foundation for political reform and democratization further down the road. Despite these efforts, however, rule of law reform made little progress in those years and remains blocked today. The reform programmes have been limited in scope and avoid essential components of genuine rule of law reform. The Egyptian government continues to exert political control over the adjudication of sensitive cases and to oppose efforts by judges to exert greater independence (the arrest of 2 judges in 2006 is only one example). The Egyptian security forces continue to operate in an opaque and frequently abusive manner. The government maintains the 25-year-old State of Emergency, limiting citizen's rights and reserving wide discretionary legal authority for the government. Democratization in Egypt seems not to be awaiting rule of law. Rather, the lack of genuine democratization – thanks to the Mubarak government's paralyzing grip – is preventing the development of rule of law. The ongoing State of Emergency seems to provide a way for the West to justify its continued tolerance of a lack of democracy in Egypt and for the Mubarak government to excuse its own non-democratic behaviour. Only if there's a serious political opening, including free and fair competition for the presidency, will there be any real hope for deep-reaching reforms, according to Carothers (2007:17).

Democracy assistance targeting non-state actors

– Support of political parties

Western governments have been very wary of supporting political parties. The European Union doesn't have any dialogue with opposition parties, whether secular or not. Official meetings with European donors usually include Egyptian government,

business and civil society representatives, not members of political parties. Semi non-governmental organizations such as the National Endowment of Democracy avoid focusing on political parties, either. The US, too, focuses mainly on NGOs and civil society. When political parties are involved it mainly concerns the training of party officials to monitor elections. In the early nineties Washington tried to establish contact with moderate Islamists but gave up this idea very quickly after Mubarak's angry reaction (Youngs, 2001:82). In 2006 the head of the International Republican Institute (IRI), which is linked to the Republican Party and provides assistance and training to political parties abroad, told in an interview that his institute was planning to accelerate political reforms in Egypt. Egypt responded to this announcement by closing its branch of the IRI until it had the necessary permits. The regime claimed that the institute was involved with internal affairs. In 2007 there were several rumours that Washington was again considering getting in contact with the Muslim Brothers. The US is already in contact with the Muslim Brothers in Syria and Iraq (New York Sun, 20 June 2007; The Arabist, 21 June 2007).

– Supporting more neutral civil society organizations

Instead of supporting political parties, both the US and the EU have targeted the more neutral civil society organizations. They have assumed that civil society organizations have the capacity to push for democratic changes. The US contributed 20 million dollars a year to civil society in the 1990s. Like the US, in the nineties the EU began to support civil society organizations in the least controversial areas, such as women rights, decentralization and children's rights. Although the EU gave technical and financial support to pro-democratic groups for a short period of time, this resulted in such a strong negative reaction that MEDA funding from that time on was only focused on uncontroversial themes. The EU-sponsored Group for Democratic Development, for example, was continuously harassed by agents of the regime (Heera, 2007:79). Another example is the Ibn Khaldum Center for Democracy that wanted among others to monitor the parliamentary elections with EU funding. The centre was closed in 2000 and the management was put in jail.[15] The regime claimed that the centre spread false information about Egypt, received foreign funding without permission and received illegal EU funding (claims that were denied by the EU). While the US held back 130 million dollars, the EU didn't place any sanctions on the regime. After these events it's not surprising that only 4% of the MEDA funding is spent on democracy promotion in Egypt.

But the non-controversial help that had the explicit or implicit permission of the state didn't lead to democratization in Egypt, either. The regime established GONGOs (Government Operated NGOs) to receive international funding themselves. The National Council for Women in Egypt was established with this goal in mind. This is the umbrella organization of several women's rights organizations, presided over by First Lady Suzanne Mubarak. Because this organization is responsible for distribut-

15 | In 2001 the Ibn Khaldum Center for Democracy was reopened.

ing the funding to these organizations, these women's rights activists work directly or indirectly on the agenda of the regime. The National Council for Human Rights also has relations with the regime. Although it's not entirely correct to claim that these organizations are only instruments of the regime, their independence from it is clearly questionable (Carapico, 2002; Heera, 2007:79). Moreover, it cannot be expected that these organizations will challenge the political status quo and stimulate true democratization.[16] However, for many organizations this is the only way in which their fight against human rights violations gets any attention in society.

The third problem with supporting NGOs is the regime's use of law number 84/2002 in which associations are permitted to register at the Ministry of Social Affairs (Heera, 2007:80). The ministry regularly turns down requests by fairly assertive organizations and therefore has a great deal of influence regarding who may receive international funding. The law also allows Mubarak to close organizations that form a threat to 'national security' or 'deteriorate public morale'. At the same time, the regime fostered the development of thousands of small, insignificant civil society organizations. For Mubarak it is preferable to have 5,000 small organizations than five big ones, because the existence of many competing NGOs impedes social activists' coordinated cooperation (Katerina Delacoura, 2005:10; Brumberg, 2003).

Finally, a large portion of Western funds is focused on secular, elitist, Western-oriented NGOs. The problem with these Western-style NGOs is that they only constitute 4% of the total number of NGOs, don't have true grassroots support and are dubbed by critics as "conference-promotion NGOs" (Katerina Delacoura, 2005:10). By contrast, non-violent Islamist movements such as the Muslim Brotherhood are well rooted in the Egyptian social and cultural fabric and have support among many people in Egypt (Amr Hamzawy, 2005).

Because of these mechanisms the chances are very low that Western support will affect the development of an assertive and vital civil society that is capable of challenging the regime's power. Daniel Brumberg (2003) even argues that by targeting civil society organizations, the West has contributed to the policy of 'controlled liberalization', which enhances rather than undermines authoritarianism. Civil society organizations can't compensate for the absence of well-organized political parties or truly representative parliaments.

5.3.4 Conclusion

Despite some international efforts to promote democracy in Egypt, democratic progress has been meagre. The assumed relation between economic liberalization and political liberalization was false since the regime was able to sell state companies to political allies and spend the EU compensation funds to uphold his network of patronage. Moreover, because of the growing dissatisfaction among the many people that suffered under the process of economic liberalization and turned to

16 | This is not to say that they aren't doing a good job in promoting women's rights.

Islamic organizations, the regime tightened control. There is currently a backlash against human rights, political freedom and women rights.

Secondly, the EU and the US had placed their expectations of civil society organizations too high. Their power is very limited because of the control that the Egyptian government asserts over them. Besides, both the US and the EU are inclined to cooperate with secular, elitist and Western-style NGOs that often lack grassroots support.

Thirdly, the development of the rule of law didn't lead to democratization either, because key elements of rule of law development directly threaten autocratic rule. As we have seen, an independent judiciary would be a source of power beyond the executive's reach.

Two instruments of democracy promotion that the EU and the US only use very modestly or not at all are the support of political parties and conditional help. We will explore these instruments in the next two sections.

5.4 Supporting political parties and party system

5.4.1 Introduction

As we have explained, the four major opposition parties – the liberal Wafd Party, the leftist National Progressive Unionist Party, the Arab Nasserists Party and the al-Ghad Party – are structurally weak and lack constituencies large enough to mobilize popular support. Ten other parties are active, but their numbers and political relevance are inconsequential. The weakness of Egypt's opposition derives from both the regime's suppression and internal factors such as power struggles. By contrast, the fundamentalist Islamist Muslim Brotherhood is very well-rooted in Egyptian society and possesses potential to forge alliances for political transformation. However, they are not legal political parties (the regime banned them). They do important social work for the poor, which gives them much credit under the population.

More and more people argue that supporting political parties and party systems that regulate their existence and functioning is the missing link in the EU and US' democracy promotion efforts. They are naturally essential institutions in political society. Political parties are the institutions that select leadership, aggregate the interests of citizens in formulating policies and programmes, are instrumental in the organization of elections, provide the electorate with choices, form governments and hold these accountable through opposition (NIMD, 2005:26). A question that therefore quickly arises when talking about political parties is the engagement with Islamist parties and, in Egypt, more specifically the engagement with the Muslim Brotherhood.

There is growing pressure both within and outside Egyptian society to reform Egypt's restrictive political system. *The main focus in this section is the question of whether the Muslim Brotherhood should be legalized by the Egyptian regime*. Before we can answer this question, we should know more about its history, its goals and the roots of its popularity.

5.4.2 History of Muslim Brotherhood

Hassan al-Banna founded the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928 along with six workers of the Suez Canal Company in reaction to the British involvement in Egypt. It began as a religious, political, and social movement with the credo, "Allah is our objective; the Koran is our constitution, the Prophet is our leader; Jihad is our way; and death for the sake of Allah is the highest of our aspirations." Al-Banna called for the return to an original Islam and followed Islamic reformers like Muhammad Abduh and Rashid Rida. According to Al-Banna him, contemporary Islam had lost its social dominance because most Muslims had been corrupted by Western influences. Shari'a law based on the Koran and the Sunnah were seen as laws passed down by Allah that should be applied to all parts of life, including the organization of the government and the handling of everyday problems. The Brotherhood also saw itself as a political and social revolutionary movement. Al-Banna strived to be a populist. The Muslim Brotherhood claimed to want to protect the workers against the tyranny of foreign and monopolist companies. It founded social institutions such as hospitals, pharmacies, schools, etc. By 1936 it had 800 members; this number rapidly increased to 200,000 by 1938. By 1948, the Brotherhood had about half a million members.

In 1948, with looming civic strife against the regime of the corrupted and westernized king, the Egyptian government dissolved the Brotherhood. Later that year a number of Brothers were implicated in the murder of the prime minister. Despite his public denunciation of the assassins, Hasan al-Banna was soon assassinated. He was succeeded by Hudaybi. The Brotherhood cooperated closely with the Free Officer Movement in its struggle against the British and the westernized elites and king. In 1952 the Free Officers staged a coup and deposed the government elites and the king (Gelvin, 2005:237). Their leader, Gamal Abdel Nasser, broke the promise he had made to the Muslim Brothers to Islamitize the new constitution. In reaction to this a member of the Brothers tried to kill Nasser, although the Muslim Brotherhood denies this reading of history. Nasser imprisoned Hudaybi and banned the Brotherhood. The Brothers' wounds throbbed with fateful questions: how could those who stood shoulder to shoulder with us against the British and the king now set their dogs on us? Can those tormenting devout Muslims really be Muslims themselves? Sayyid Qutb, then the most profound thinker in the movement, produced an answer that would echo into the twenty-first century: these were acts of apostates, *kafireen*. Accordingly, the regime was a legitimate target of jihad. But from his cell, Hudaybi disputed Qutb's conclusion. Only God, he believed, could judge faith. He rejected *takfir* (the act of declaring another Muslim an apostate). Within the Brotherhood,

Hudaybi's tolerant view prevailed, cementing the group's moderate vocation. Having lost the internal struggle for the Brotherhood, the radical followers of Qutb regrouped outside it, in sects that sought to topple regimes throughout the Muslim world (groups such as al-Jihad would furnish the Egyptian core of al-Qaeda). All the main extremist and violent movements in Egypt have been Qutbist. The most important ones are: al-Takfir Wa'l-Hijra, al-Jihad and al-Jamaá al-Islamiyya (Leiken and Brooke, 2007:108-111).

The Egyptian Brotherhood seems to have followed a path of toleration, rejecting violence and finding democracy compatible with its notion of slow Islamitization (Leiken and Brooke, 2007). In their 1994 testimony[17] they mention, for example, that "the violation of human freedom and rights under any banner, even Islam, is a degradation of man and a demotion from the high position in which God had placed him. It prevents man from utilizing his initiative and power to prosper and develop… The Muslim Brothers believe in the plurality of political parties in Muslim society and that there's no need for the authorities to place restrictions on the formulation and activities of political parties and groups."

5.4.3 What does the Brotherhood want?

The 2005 electoral platform of Muslim Brothers clearly expressed the priority of political reform. The movement has expressed a vision of reform that does not differ from those advanced by secular opposition groups and parties. All call for the immediate adoption of a series of policies and measures, including repealing the emergency law, lifting limitations placed on the formation of parties and civic associations, ending restrictions on political freedoms, providing guarantees for the independence of the judiciary and activating the parliament's oversight role. The Brotherhood also demands the protection of public freedoms, including those of belief, opinion, and expression.

Even though the Brotherhood has made a strategic choice to stress political reform, it still has a social and cultural agenda that come into conflict with its liberal political priorities. *There are some ambiguities in their thinking.* The Muslim Brotherhood's election platform is characterized by some notable internal tensions, some of which come in the context of its stress on its Islamic marja'iyya (source, reference point or authority). The platform states that "the marja'iyya upon which we base our program for change is an Islamic one with democratic means in a modern civil state." Elsewhere the movement calls for "a civil state founded to implement the shari'a and govern within the boundaries established by the Islamic religion". The platform does not expand on its conception of an Islamic marja'iyya when it treats the issue of political reform, nor does it so when it discusses the traditional issues such as the application of the Islamic shari'a and the Islamitization of public life.

17 | http://www.ikhwanweb.com/Article.asp?ID=4185&SectionID=81.

By its use of very broad but seemingly pragmatic terms, the Brotherhood's rhetoric provokes some genuine doubts. The question as to how much its principle of an Islamic marja'iyya remains in tension with its acknowledgement of the civic nature of the state is crucial and cannot be left to unspecified statements (Hamzawy and Brown, 2005; Leiken and Brooke, 2007). The potential for contradiction is strongest in the organization's concept of citizenship, the rights of non-Muslims, and the scope of religious restriction of public freedoms.

5.4.4 The popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood

The Muslim Brotherhood is very popular among many Egyptians. Some estimate that this organization would be able to seriously challenge the ruling National Democratic Party in free elections. The following two factors can explain the success of the Brotherhood:

In the first place, people believe that the Muslim Brotherhood represents a viable political alternative for the country. The movement's slogan 'Islam is the solution' and its religious discourse attracted those voters who believe in the need for Egyptian society to return to what they see as a truer Islam and to re-Islamitize public life. But the attractiveness of Muslim Brotherhood goes beyond ideology. It lies even more in the movement's intensive presence in a variety of social spheres and its ability to base itself on a variety of grassroots service organizations. The Muslim Brotherhood is connected with a broad social movement, parts of which work in the fields of health care, education, and poverty alleviation. The Egyptian state left a significant vacuum which the religious forces filled with their financial resources, organizational capacities and experience in charitable activities.

The second factor explaining Muslim Brotherhood success involves Egypt's other parties. The older opposition parties, but also new parties like the Tomorrow Party, lack an effective presence in Egyptian society. The non-Islamic opposition parties have failed to build a popular base (Hamzawy and Brown, 2005).

5.4.5 Engaging the Muslim Brothers?

The importance of the role of the Muslim Brothers in Egypt's political life is a fact. They are the biggest opposition force in Egypt and are trying to change their radical stances and to reach out to other groups. On the other hand, there remains serious contradiction with respect to the Brother's goals as outlined above. So, should we engage with the Muslim Brothers?

Those in favour of engaging with the Muslim Brothers stress that the organization has incorporated human rights and democratic principles and has broad and deep support in Egyptian society. They argue that the political behaviour of the Muslim Brothers in recent years (for example in professional associations, faculty clubs and student unions) shows that the Brothers are sincere in their attempts to adhere to democratic principles (Hamzawy and Brown, et. al., 2005). They believe there can be

a true dialogue with the Brothers and that under the right circumstances, they will further transform and adapt their programme to contemporary challenges. They also claim that any Western democracy promotion strategy which ignores these developments and the widespread popularity of the Muslim Brotherhood is irrelevant to the political realities of Egypt. Egypt will never democratize unless the Brotherhood is brought on board. Besides, if Western governments don't protest against the harassment of its members and periodic imprisonment of its leaders, it will be a denial of the very democratization principles that Western governments purport to be promoting.

Opponents to the engagement of the Muslim Brotherhood see this association as an undemocratic movement that if legalized would undermine the democratization process. For example, the Muslim Brothers believe that neither women nor religious minorities are eligible for the presidency (ICG, 2008). They reckon that if the Muslim Brothers comes to power they will introduce the shari'a and undermine democracy. In the words of Bernard Lewis, *One man, one vote, one time.* Especially the Coptic minority fears this development. Egypt's Copts would almost certainly feel gravely threatened by the legalization of the Muslim Brotherhood in the advancement of other broader political reforms. They suffer a significant degree of informal religious discrimination in public life as it is, and some, possibly many, view the prospect of further Islamists advances in public life with great anxiety.[18]Opponents of legalizing the Muslim Brotherhood also claim that the Brotherhood's non-violent stance is – in the words of Rachel Ehrenfeld (2006) – part of a "chameleon-like adaptation is tactical moderation with the ultimate objective of complete Islamization of society". Their real goals haven't changed, and in the end the Muslim Brotherhood still is a fundamentalist Islamic movement that wants to govern the world according to the shari'a. The Muslim Brotherhood is therefore a global movement, with branches in over 70 countries in the world. Opponents stress that the Muslim Brotherhood stood at the origin of the terrorist organization Hamas. The Muslim Brotherhood is still very negative towards Israel and peace with that country, and supports the violent stance of Hamas. The movement is also active in America and Europe. Through its ideology it influences mosques (especially radical ones) in Europe. The spiritual leader of the Dutch Hofstad Network (*Hofstadgroep*)[19] was a member of the Muslim Brothers. There are also links between Muslim Brothers and al-Qaeda.

18 | At present the Copts largely support the regime and the NDP in return for what they see as its protection against the advance of the Islamist movement. Should the regime abruptly legalize the Muslim Brotherood before taking other vital measures of reform such as ensuring satisfactory representation for Copts through other effective political channels, there would be a real risk that some Copts would react by establishing a confessional Christian party (International Crisis Group, 2005:22) as in Bosnia, leading to similar polarization between interest groups.

19 | The Hofstad Network (Dutch: *Hofstadgroep*) is an Islamist organization of young Dutch Muslims. Mohammed Bouyeri, one of the members, murdered the Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh on 2 November 2004.

The fact is that in a lot of Middle Eastern countries the Muslim Brotherhood is represented in Parliament. This is also the case in Egypt, but then as independent candidates. The Egyptian regime of Mubarak has repeatedly warned the Western world that to legalize the Muslim Brotherhood as a party would to be repeat Algeria's mistake and destabilize the country. Moreover, the economy would be severely damaged as well. Foreign investors would leave the country and unemployment would increase. Furthermore, Egypt would be isolated from the rest of the world. Just before the latest local elections the Egyptian government arrested a number of candidates who were members of the Muslim Brothers. They form a threat to the regime because under the Egyptian political system, local officials can vote for the presidential elections.

5.4.6 Conclusion

It is difficult to give a final assessment about the Muslim Brotherhood and their ideology. However, legalizing the Brothers *immediately as a political party* would create a dangerously unbalanced political situation in the view of opponents.

The Muslim Brotherhood is not a homogeneous movement. There is a moderate wing, but there are also links with terrorist movements. The practical wing is prepared to make a doctrinal revision in order to become politically accepted.[20] It is very difficult to predict in what direction the Brotherhood will develop. Only the future knows. Compatibility with democracy demands moderation of certain aspects of the Brotherhood's ideology through interaction on political and societal fields. In the meantime we should search for a solution to liberalize Egypt's political life without allowing it to become destabilized.

The problem in Egypt is not the presence of the Muslim Brothers but the absence of other credible parties. None of the already legal opposition parties could hope to compete, and there's no reason to doubt that the National Democratic Party would hold its own. Egypt would be bitterly polarized. To avoid this negative scenario the Western world should press the regime to address issues seriously in all its complexities and:

- Bring the Muslim Brotherhood as an *association* within the framework of law;
- Stop the harassment and periodic imprisonment of the leadership of opposition parties (Islamic or secular) and the violation of human rights;
- Permit other political forces - including Islamist ones - to develop their social presence so that a number of credible political options are available to Egyptian society; and
- When the ideology of the Muslim Brotherhood has become compatible with constitutional democracy after a process of moderation and interaction, allow the Muslim Brotherhood to participate collectively in political life.

20 | See: International Crisis Group, *Egypt's Muslim Brothers: Confrontation or Integration?*, Middle East/North Africa Report N°76, 2008.

In this way Egyptian political life can be liberalized without being destabilized.

5.5 Conditional help

Conditional help is not yet used as an instrument of democracy promotion by Europe and the United States. International efforts to promote democracy in societies where the trade-offs of undemocratic governance continue to be bearable for the ruling elites do not suffice to make political reforms plausible or viable (Amr Hamzawy, 2005). This is also the case in Egypt: until now the help pf the EU and the US has been unconditional, and as a consequence the costs of repression and the gains for democratization have been low. We can conclude that aid and benefits to the Egyptian government have not been sufficiently made conditional to its progress on political reforms and respect for human rights.

The EU hasn't sanctioned Egypt for any of its human rights violations and democratic regression, although every bilateral agreement with third countries contains a democracy and human rights chapter, making it possible to repeal all or parts of the agreement. The US only once used sanctions against Egypt to criticize the imprisonment of human rights activist Sa'd Al-Din Ibrahim, who has both an Egyptian and an American passport. Why don't the EU and the US use this instrument more often? One reason is that security motives play a role. The Western world is dependent on Egypt in the international fight against terrorism, and Western governments fear that democratization will cause instability in the short run (stability-democracy dilemma). For the EU, trade interests also play a role. As we see in the first section of this chapter, the Egypt-EU trade balance is still in favour of the EU. Sanctioning would damage this relation with Egypt, creating possibly serious negative consequences. Egypt and the Western world are mutually dependent. Besides, there are signs that sanctions can work counterproductively, which will be elaborated in the next chapter.

Nevertheless, the use of negative sanctions targeted at officials should be considered. Freezing foreign bank accounts of Egyptian officials, for example, could be effective. Other targets of negative sanctions could be big companies that profit from the regime through the fact that they don't have to pay tax. Sanctions can put pressure on the regime to give in to demands for more democracy.

The alternatives for sanctions are positive stimuli to promote democracy. An example could be that the EU would offer extra money or other rewards (such as membership of international organizations or free trade agreements) when positive steps towards democracy are made. Countries that make more progress would receive more aid, recognition and status than countries that don't. The EU already took the first steps for such an approach. In the EU Country Strategy Paper: Egypt 2007-2013 (p. 13) it

is stated that the scale of support will be subject to the extent in which reforms are carried through.

6 | Towards a Christian Democratic Democratization Strategy

We have concluded a need for democracy in the Middle East and have tried to explain the roots of the democratic deficit. Also, we have looked at initiatives to promote democracy from Arab, American and European sides. We presented a case study of Egypt. In this chapter we will try to formulate a Christian Democratic strategy for democratization. What principles should guide us (5.1) and accordingly, what are the instruments that we should use (5.2)? Recommendations based on this chapter are given in the next chapter (6).

6.1 Principles

A Christian Democratic democratization strategy for the Middle East means, first of all, a coherent implementation of the values of Christian Democracy. It starts with a clear view on the universal values behind the democratic constitutional state. Based on this insight we should arouse public support for the values of the constitutional state and introduce on an international level the constitutional state as a national interest. An appeal to the loyalty of governments toward the UN Charters should be made; agreements should be kept. We need a thorough knowledge of the risks that accompany change and must have fair self-criticism on the policies of 'the democratic West'. We see a special role for Christian Democrats in the dialogue with Islamic parties and groups. The ultimate goal is the establishment of a more just international order.

Along the following lines, these principles will be translated into a democratization strategy for the Middle East:
- Values constitute the framework of our Middle East policy;
- Consistency is very important to improve Western credibility in the Middle East;
- Democratization can be facilitated from outside but demands domestic support;
- Gradualism is needed while avoiding the risk of cosmetic reforms;
- We should tailor strategy specifically to the particular circumstances of individual countries; and
- Deal with Islam and Islamists in a positive way.

In the second part of this chapter (6.2) we will explore the instruments that agree with these principles.

6.1.1 Values constitute the framework of our Middle East Policy

If we want to develop a well thought-out Middle East policy it is very important to discuss what 'weight' we want to give to values and interests in this context.[21] Before we do that, we will take a general look at the role of values and interests in foreign policy.

21 | See also the publication of the Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Verhagen, "Towards a Human Existence" (*Naar een menswaardig bestaan*).

Values and interests in foreign policy

One of the biggest challenges in the creation of foreign policy is to find the appropriate place for values and interests. Different groups of people in different times will make different choices about attaching importance to values and interests, as we learn from these examples in the text box.

In 1994 'Paars' (coalition government of social democrats and liberals) came to power. It was the first Dutch government since 1918 that did not include Christian Democrats. 'Paars' announced some sweeping changes in the field of foreign policy: in the Herijking Nota (1995) it was clearly stated that from that moment on national interests should be the leading principle in Dutch foreign politics. The Christian Democratic idealism was exchanged for realism; the vicar had to stand aside for the merchant. Dutch diplomats were trained to put economic interests first, and the main emphasis was placed on organizing trade missions in order to improve the Dutch position in the world economy. Regarding the Middle East (and other parts of the world, such as Asia) the interest of oil and trade often outweighed human rights and democracy.

The opposite happened in the United Kingdom. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook held the opinion that the focus of Britain's foreign policy was too much on the national interest. Therefore, he argued that British foreign policy needed "an ethical dimension" as Foreign Secretary Robin Cook put it in his famous Mission Statement of 12 May 1997. Cook claimed that "The Labour government does not accept that political values can be left behind when we check in our passports to travel on diplomatic business". He went on to add that the government "would put human rights at the heart of our foreign policy".

There are two streams in the discussion about values and interests. There are people that uphold the principle that foreign policy is simply a matter of national interest, as was pretended by 'Paars'. They call themselves realists. Others – often described as moralists – want to focus foreign policy on the ethical dimension, as Robin Cook did.

Moralists

As heirs of religious traditions as well as of the Enlightenment, the moralists argue that ethical (or moral) values should govern all relationships. They say we cannot acknowledge morality's crucial place in our private, professional or domestic political lives and then toss it aside at the nation's borders. If fair play, freedom, justice and compassion make legitimate claims at home, so they must abroad. Morality cannot, on this view, be turned on and off at national convenience: life is either morally meaningful or it is not. What value do the Geneva Conventions, the Laws of War or the Conventions on Human Rights have if they can be set aside? The moral-

ists see their opponents, who call themselves the realists, as unregenerate cynics who appeal only to total selfishness if not implicit xenophobia and make a farce of humanity's attempt to gradually build a world of democratic, well ordered and law abiding states.

Realists

The realists see the world as a fearful jungle; only the fittest can prosper or even survive. Therefore, nations must determine their policies based solely on self interest. An unpretentious, hard-nosed pragmatism is seen as more or less inevitable. The realists also claim that, unlike the 'ethical', the 'national interest' can be calculated in solidly useful terms of money, jobs, trading contracts, political concessions, UN votes, etc. All these are seen as tangible features of the Real World. Moral values, by contrast, are seen to be culturally variable and at best controversial. Being moral is not thought to be very 'practical'. It's also suggested that other states will understand such a 'tradesman's attitude' much better than that of a preacher with whom it is hard to do business. The realists see the 'moralists' as essentially irresponsible do-gooders whose policies inevitably lead to needless sacrifice at home, disbelief abroad and deserved condemnations for hypocrisy all round (Smith and Light eds. 2001; Keal, 1992:28-29).

Comments on models of foreign policy

The moralist and the realist approaches in fact represent diverging philosophies about the 'national interest'. The more narrow view, called realism, focuses on national power, financial benefits and national prestige. The broader one, called moralism, comprises 'the common good', which is not restricted by national boundaries. The development and the implementation of a sound moral policy demand a thorough knowledge of all relevant aspects of the political reality. Power relations, trade interests and value systems all are part of this reality. Politicians are responsible for their intentions as well as for the effects of their measures. On the other side, when 'realists' deny the relevance and political reality of moral reasoning and moral reactions from public opinion, their realism has to be doubted. Most realists will rightly consider care for the interests of their own national constituency as a moral duty. This care becomes the more moral if it is embedded in a broader concern about the common good of the international community.

We see that the realist view should be given a place embedded in the broader view on the common good. The objective of foreign policy is described in some constitutions as the promotion of a just international order and the defence of national interest within that framework. (Dutch Constitution and the EU).

Christian Democrats base their foreign policy on a values-oriented view on national interests, as these are also embedded in moral systems. Examples can be given to show that the ethical itself partly consists of national interests:

- The promotion of human rights and democracy can contribute to international and national security;
- A reputation for mostly fair and honest dealing can prove an enduring asset and will stimulate trade;
- Development aid or disaster relief can earn a good reputation as well as contribute to a sustainable and just international order;
- To guarantee national security, countries have to cooperate with international organizations such as the EU, NATO, the UN and the World Bank. This also serves international security and peace in the world.

Christian Democrats have to be sensitive on the point that values should constitute the framework in which interests are served.

The thesis about the unity of the human race and the political translation of the concept of 'love your fellow man' obliges us to such a broader view. Double standards, tribalism, nationalism, indifference (a major political sin) all are sharply at variance with our understanding of the Gospel.

Values and interests in the EU's Democratization Efforts in the Middle East
How does this Christian Democratic view on foreign policy relate to the current EU policy to promote democracy in the Middle East?

Democracy is both a value and an international interest. In the first chapter of this report we stated that democracy enriches the lives of citizens in three different ways: first, the value of political participation and freedom in human life; second, the value of political incentives in keeping governments responsible and accountable; and third, the importance of democracy in the formation of values and in understanding of needs, rights and duties. Secondly we expect that democracy (as embedded in the rule of law) contributes to (1) international peace, (2) the fight against terrorism and (3) economic growth and is therefore of great international interest. At the same time, one should be aware that the attempts to promote democracy can damage our short-term interests such as trade and access to oil. Yet we believe that the short-term risks of a policy of democratization – although they should certainly be taken into account in our policy – shouldn't be reason not to pursue a policy of democratization in the Middle East.

In looking at EU's current policy regarding the Middle East, it is clear that the EU is at least formally committed to promoting democracy in the region. Peculiar enough, this objective was not mentioned specifically in the draft Constitution of the EU, nor in the Reform Treaty which came instead. This is in contrast to the US Constitution, which considers the spread of democracy as a national interest, as is mentioned before. The EU nevertheless spends some millions of euros to promote democracy in the Middle East through the European Initiative on Democracy and Human Rights

(EIDHR), the Barcelona Process (BP) and the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP). In the EIDHR programme the focus is placed on the intrinsic value of democracy. However, the Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy highlight the international interests involved with democratization. Yet democratization of the Middle East was not marked as priority in these programmes. Staving off the threat of massive illegal immigration was priority (see Chapter 3).

The choices that the EU made in its instruments to promote democracy could suggest a weak commitment to democracy, either.

- In the Barcelona Process much of the money goes to the economic pillar focusing on economic liberalization (see the case of Egypt).
- Regression in democratization and human rights violations of regimes in the Middle East are not consistently condemned.
- The conditional stimulation of democracy (both positive and negative) is hardly applied, as a result of different opinions in the EU.
- The EU neglects to tackle specific challenges of political reform because it does not want to confront the regimes and damage relations. So the EU focuses on non-controversial themes such as children's rights, NGOs and CVOs that are sanctioned by the regimes.

It seems that the EU is more committed to short-time stability and the preservation of the status quo. This reminds us of the policy of EU member states in the case of the war against the legal government of Bosnia Herzegovina, with its dramatic negative effects for the population of this state. (Serious actions against the Yugoslav People's Army, the JNA, were considered to be destabilizing.) We think that a democratization strategy for the Middle East should show more sincere commitment on our part and should include the right instruments to underline this (see section 5.2). The most important obstacle to implementing a more bold approach to democratization is our dependency on the Middle East with regard to fighting terrorism, illegal immigration and especially our need for oil.

6.1.2 The importance of consistency to the improvement of Western credibility

The lack of credibility is one of the biggest obstacles to Western efforts to stimulate democratization in the region. The main explanation for the lack of credibility can be found in the deep frustration felt by many people in the Middle East about the Western policy in general. It is perceived as being imperialistic, exploitative and serving merely Western interests. But what troubles people in the Middle East most about Western policy is their observation that the West applies different standards to them than to Europeans and Americans, both for what is expected of themselves and for what they themselves may expect in terms of economic welfare and political freedom: free trade is the elixir of economic growth, but not for agriculture; democratic elections are stimulated, but not if thereby Islamic fundamentalists should come to

power, as was the case in Algeria in 1991 and the recent elections in the Palestinian areas in which Hamas came to power.

People also stress the fact that while Americans preach the importance of human rights, they are themselves not free from violations of human rights in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq and Guantanamo Bay in the US. Besides, reference is often made to the fact that Western spokesmen repeatedly overlook or even defend actions which they would not tolerate in their own country and support authoritarian and dictatorial rulers. It is no secret, for example, that in the name of fighting against communism, to maintain their geopolitical dominance and secure the flow of cheap oil, many Western governments – the US but also the EU member states – have invariably helped the region's authoritarian states to crush nationalist, socialist, liberal, Islamic and popular struggles (Benzakour, 2001; Gilles Kepel, 2004).

This feeling became stronger in the Middle East after the American and British invasion of Iraq. Many people in the Middle East think that American intentions to democratize the region have nothing to do with sincere empathy for the Middle Eastern people that suffer under very restrictive regimes, but have everything to do with their interests in oil and the fight against terrorism. The lack of credibility of Western policy is today one of the most serious problems facing any kind of dialogue and partnership approach regarding democratization. Moreover, because of the Western credibility problem, endogenous reform initiatives are often regarded with suspicion as well: they are associated with the Western ideas, and reformers are seen as 'pawns of the West'. Arab reform initiatives risk losing credibility as long as they are associated with deeply controversial Western and, more specifically, American policies.

Although it's true that the EU's reputation is better than that of the Americans, the EU shouldn't be complacent: neither the EU nor individual European countries are always consistent in their actions, either. For a Christian-oriented political party it is not acceptable that some people are and other people aren't treated according to certain values. If we want to promote a policy based on values, we should be very sure that we continuously give the right example in our own actions. The government needs to demonstrate that it is applying the same principles to each case, that its actions are *consistent*. This does not mean that every case requires the same response. There are a range of prudential reasons why different cases demand different instruments in the foreign policy toolbox. For example, violations of human rights will in every case be disapproved; however, the instrument to denounce these violations will be dependent on timing, circumstances and the international playing field. The most important goal should always be to take a step forward towards our goal of democracy. Knowing what step to take requires thorough knowledge and investigation and an able use of the different instruments in the foreign policy toolbox.

6.1.3 Democratization demands domestic support

Democracy cannot come about in any society unless there's a strong domestic demand by local 'actors-elites', the people or civil societies that want it. The emancipation of democracy depends for a great deal, as suggested by de Tocqueville, on indigenous human initiative. In order to be successful it's very important that respect for the rule of law and a democratic system are felt as really important for the wellbeing of state and society. At least the leading forces who want to reform their society should be able to identify themselves with the values concerned. We should not forget that values, cultural modes, rules and traditions are deeply rooted in societies and that people are attached to them in spite of their pernicious aspects. Of course any adaptation to the rule of law and democracy must be respectful to the culture in which it develops, but the character of democratization should in the end be clearly recognizable. The basis for this requirement is the fact that all members of the UN subscribe to its main Charters. We keep its promises seriously. It cannot be our business to support anything less. The result will not be one uniform model. It is up to each people to preserve the aspects of their traditions and cultures which can be combined with the values of the constitutional state, adapted to the needs and interests of its citizens. The world will in this way see a rich and colourful pattern.

If the policy of democratization by external forces does not connect to domestic forces, many problems may be met, as the case of Iraq shows. The case of present Bosnia indicates that the establishment of the constitutional state requires that such a process should be driven by the society. Otherwise a 'protectorate mentality' is developed and the ownership of the transformation becomes clouded. This may in other cases lead to resistance against the external power that is imposing democracy unless there is a clear moral base for an external role. The anticipation of a regime change by an external force will dampen the initiative of domestic pro-democracy forces to actively pursue their goals, to cultivate popular support and to build alliances with forces of change. Instead of mobilizing support within their own societies, their focus of interest may conveniently shift to foreign capitals to lobby their leaders for support. The external forces should avoid undue lack of respect for national sovereignty.

Yet this does not imply that the West can't do anything to promote democracy. Sometimes the notion of 'endogenous democracy' is abused by Western powers to neglect making genuine efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East. Although the West can't impose democracy, it can back and facilitate internal democratization efforts, trying to help domestic actors achieve what they have already decided they want for themselves. Foreign support may be legitimately utilized if it is initiated in association with endogenous democracy movements in Arab countries (Bayat, 2007). As we have seen in Chapter 3, there have been quite a number of endogenous democracy movements in the Arab world that the West can connect with and support.

However, Western democracy promotion efforts appear to not always be in line with internal reform initiatives. Western governments should make greater use of the advice of reformers in the region.

6.1.4 Gradualism while avoiding the risk of cosmetic reforms

Democracy promoters sometimes call for *immediate* and *extensive* political reform. Many people are afraid that this kind of democratization, and especially a quick push towards elections, will have negative effects on democracy (Zakaria, 2004; Mansfield and Snyder, 1995). They argue that when tried in countries poorly prepared for it, a quick push towards democratization can and often does result in bad outcomes: non-liberal leaders or extremists in power, virulent nationalism, ethnic and other types of civil conflicts and interstate wars. They mention the attempted democracy building in post-Saddam Iraq as telling evidence of the consequences of a too early push towards democratization. Similarly, the gains of Islamists in recent elections in Egypt, Iraq and Palestine appear to some observers to be further indications of the dangers of moving too quickly toward elections in countries with little democratic history. They plea for a gradual opening of the political system.

Others like Daniel Brumberg (2003) argue that regimes' gradual political liberalization do little more than cement their grip on the state, allowing just enough political freedom and pluralism to give dissenters (and Western governments) the illusion of relative empowerment without really threatening regime stability. In many semi-authoritarian countries power holders often abuse the concept of gradualism by claiming that their political liberalization is a necessary halfway house on the way to democracy, when in fact it is a means to avoid altogether the kinds of far-reaching political changes that would threaten semi-authoritarian rule.

One of the key questions regarding political reform in the Arab world is how reform can be enacted through gradual opening while ensuring that the process is not stalled in cosmetic reforms. In many countries, democracy promoters are increasingly seeking a middle path between unrealistic calls for sudden political openings and excessive praise for minor reforms. There's a need for small but significant steps that create space and mechanisms for true political competition and point the way to an eventual end to the rulers' monopoly of power.

Such steps might include allowing independent civil society organizations that engage in politically related advocacy; permitting the establishment of political associations or other types of protoparties independent of the ruling party; holding local or provincial elections in which not just independent candidates but also candidates representing these political associations can compete; and tolerating a modicum of open public space in which truly independent media can operate and criticism of the rulers can find voice.

Yet we have to recognize that in practice the pace of democratization can't always be controlled. Countries will democratize in different ways: some more gradually, some suddenly; some as a result of deep socioeconomic change; others as the result of political upheaval.

6.1.5 Tailoring strategy to the circumstances of individual countries

A number of basic principles of the constitutional state should be emphasized across the whole the Middle East region, including human rights, political representation, constitutional checks and balances, tolerance, women's rights and transparency of decision-making. However, promoting political, economic and social change in the Arab world requires a country-by country strategy. There's no single formula for achieving democracy or for structuring it institutionally so that it works reasonably well. Different countries need different sequences, strategies and structures. Methods that work in one country can easily backfire in another.

There are parallels between the attempts to establish the democratic constitutional state and the struggle for peace. In the latter we need the prudential criteria for the justifiable war. The policy of democratization needs similar prudential criteria: the measures taken should lead to a real improvement of the living conditions of the people involved; they should be tailored to the context in which they are applied; they should reflect a real respect for the culture of the societies involved; they should avoid violence but focus on all kinds of non-violent means; they should find a strong basis in the population; they should not evoke suspicion about a hidden agenda; they should reflect a real devotion to the democratic constitutional state and a just international order by those who are taking such initiatives. At the same time we should be honest and open about the interests of our own people which have to be served (hypocrisy blocks all dialogue); criteria should not focus on elections only; they should warrant continuity of the democratic process; an so on. We outsiders should be very clear on all of those issues in order to be understandable and perceived as sincere in our policies.

6.1.6 Dealing with Islam and Islamists in a positive way

Introduction

It is impossible to constitute a democracy strategy for the Middle East without looking at the impact of Islam and Islamism in Middle Eastern societies. At the same time, we should not equate the Middle East with Islam and ignore the fact that there are many Christians and Jews as well. In this section we take a further look at the development of the role of Islam and Islamism in Middle Eastern societies and different streams within Islamism. There are streams of thought that demand that not only the Holy Scriptures should be followed but also parts of pre-Islamic traditions. These trends tend to reject modernity, democracy and (some) human rights as

'Western constructs'. At the same time there are streams of thought that claim that democracy and human rights are inherent to Islam. The following is about the way Christian Democrats should deal with this.

The emergence of Islamism

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the Middle East witnessed a general turn towards secularism. Ottoman reform movements in the nineteenth century (the *Tanzimat* and, later, that of the Young Turks) and the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905–1911) were examples of attempts to duplicate European models of building modern states, with marginalization of religion in public life (laicism, secularism) adopted as at least as an implicit principle. This trend reached its height with the rise to power of Kemal Atatürk (Turkey, 1923) and Reza Shah (Iran, 1925).

Many intellectuals and political elites were convinced that religion should only play a role in the private realm and reduced the influence of the ulema significantly. They assumed that modernization would extinguish religion's vitality (the well-known Western 'secularization hypothesis'). As people became wealthier, enjoyed greater political freedom and attained higher levels of education, the argument went that secularization and secularism as a legal and political principle would also advance, relegating religion to a much less significant role in world events (UN, 2006). Secularism in the Middle East increased the distance to the society's cultural roots; its objective has been a complete break with the past. For this reason, secularism has a negative connotation for many people in the Middle East. To aggravate matters, secularism has been appropriated by the ruling class in the Middle East to secure political power over their (often Islamist) opponents and to gain the backing of Western countries involved in the region. Secularism cannot be equated with democratization in the Middle East (Shakman Hurd, 2003:9-10,13). In reality it can function as a heavy blockade to the establishment of the constitutional state.

At different times throughout Middle Eastern history secularism has been confronted by Islamism of many stripes that has opposed secularist governments and tried to gain influence in the public domain. In this report we define Islamism (or Islamist activism) as the active assertion and promotion of beliefs, prescriptions, laws, or policies that are held to be Islamic in character (ICG, 2005:1). In some cases these Islamist groups succeeded, as in an extreme and special case in Iran (1979), where they drove away the authoritarian shah and established an Islamic state – a theocracy (for the Shiites political and confessional authority coincide). In other cases Islamists were less successful, because the secularist regimes banned them (for

example the FIS in Algeria[22] and MTI in Tunisia[23]) out of fear that they would abolish democracy and establish a theocracy like in Iran.

Today, Islamist opposition movements have established themselves as major political players in the Middle East and are often the biggest opposition block against ruling autocrats, despite the fact that many of them are still banned. They are mass movements of the twenty-first century. Their ideology prescribes a simple solution to the persistent crises of contemporary Arab societies: a return to the fundamentals, or true spirit, of Islam. This has great appeal. Islamist movements have shown the ability not only to craft messages with widespread popular appeal but also, and most importantly, to create organizations with genuine social bases and develop coherent political strategies. Other parties by and large have failed to do so. Islamist parties are an undeniable reality and reflect the expression of preferences by many Muslims. Recent research by the Gallup Organization (2006) shows that the vast majority of Muslims in the Middle East do not support an approach that refuses to refer to God in the governmental sphere. They favour a model of government embracing both religious principles and democratic values (UN, Alliance of Civilizations, 2006).

The rise of Islamist movements has become a matter of great concern for secular Arabs, who are suspicious of their ultimate goals, and for Arab governments fearful of the growing power of any movement they have trouble controlling. For this reason Islamist movements are being suppressed in many Arab countries. The leaders of the regimes defend their suppressive attitude towards Islamists by arguing that they are a threat to democracy. They claim that opening the political scene to Islamist parties will be "one man, one vote, one time". Another reaction of the ruling autocrats has been to co-opt Islamic religious leaders and incorporate a more conservative Islamic discourse to steal a march on the Islamist opposition movements. Incumbent governments throughout the Middle East are reacting to the challenges of defining Islam's role in public life by setting up subservient religious bodies with designated authority to interpret Islam.

Many in the West have always been very suspicious of Islamism in the Middle East. They tend to associate secularization with democratization, with legitimate political

22 | The overwhelming victory of the Islamic Salvation Front was aborted. Fearing defeat, secularists appealed to the army to intervene, allegedly to protect democracy from its enemies. They claimed they were protecting democracy from the majority, because to them the majority could not be trusted.

23 | The president of Tunisia, Habib Bourguiba, refused to give the Islamic Tendency Movement (MTI) a license which would legalize MTI as a political party although this movement gathered great popular support. Bourguiba voiced a "firm belief in the need to not mix religion and politics, as experience has shown that anarchy emerges and the rule of law and institutions is undermined when such a mixing takes place". Yet MTI's agenda did not present an attempt to establish a militant Islamic state. MTI wanted to reassert Tunesia's Islamic-Arabic way of life and values and promotion of democracy, political pluralism and economic and social justice.

order, with universal justice and with progress and tend to associate any public role of religion with antidemocratic tendencies (Shakman Hurd, 2003:2-3). This suspiciousness has been sustained since the attacks of September 11, 2001 by Islamist terrorists. Many Western observers and policy makers lump all forms of Islamism together, brand them as radical, treat them as hostile and ignore the non-violent currents of Islamism. Western powers support a number of anti-democratic governments that suppress non-violent Islamic groups.

Orthodox and liberal, violent and peaceful groups

Very slowly a more nuanced picture of Islamists movements is beginning to be accepted. It is generally acknowledged that there's a wide *mainstream of Islamic movements* that have officially renounced of refrained from the use of violence for a sustained period of time and are pursuing their goals through peaceful political activity. These must be distinguished from those organizations willing to use violence indiscriminately in order to attain their goals. The former can be found in parties and movements in the traditions of the modern Muslim Brotherhood or similar Islamic parties. The latter comprise Salafist movements like Al-Qaeda, the Egyptian Islamic Jihad or other violent movements. These groups are best known because of their mass killings against Muslims (which is forbidden in Islam) and may be characterized as heretic sects despite their claim of being ultra orthodox. Fundamentalists as such are mostly non-violent. This distinction between moderate Islamists who take part in the political process and radical fundamentalists groups who use non-legitimate means like terrorism to reach their goals is, however, not as clear cut as often thought.

For some analysts, the distinction between moderate and radical Islamists becomes more blurred when judging movements like the Palestinian Hamas or the Lebanese Hezbollah. These groups take part in the political process and subscribe to violent methods to reach their goals. Particular to both groups is their self-portrayal as resistance movements seeking to 'liberate their people' rather than waging a war or so-called jihad against the Western or the modernizing Arab world in general.

Whereas there is consensus across the political and geographical spectrum about the importance to combat violent Islamic sects groups, there exists no consensus about the perception of moderate Islamists movements and organizations, which are still viewed with suspicion and a lack of comprehension. People are not sure about the democratic potential of moderate Islamist groups and have strong doubts about their true intentions. (Brown, Hamzawy and Ottoway, 2006:19). In this report we will focus on moderate Islamists opposition[24] parties, because they, not the radical

24 | Islamist opposition movements only constitute one category of nonviolent Islamic organizations playing a political role in many Arab countries today. The other categories comprise what can be called the Islamic establishment; that is the complex of Islamic organizations, clerics and institutions close to the government. The official Islamic insti-

ones, will have the greatest impact on the future political evolution of the Middle East and are a constructive option left to organizations and governments that believe democratic development in the Middle East is in everybody's interest.

Moderate Islamists and 'grey zones'
We define Islamist parties as 'moderate' when they have asserted their commitment to *democracy* and *human rights* and have incorporated these concepts in political programmes and their rhetoric. They have accepted the constitutional state as not only the framework of their main activity but also as legitimate in itself, thus abandoning fundamentalist 'theocratic' or clergy-centred views which deny legitimacy to the state by counter-posing to it the non-national community of believers (umma). Moderates avoid confusing the sphere of politics with the sphere of the community of believers. They abandon the revolutionary goal of resisting the existing regime and replace it with a radically different 'Islamic state' in favour of strategies that, while often proposing constitutional reform, nonetheless accept the constitutional status quo as providing the legal framework and ground rules of political activity. Moreover, many of the Islamist movements have managed to incorporate into their agenda key elements of the demands of the constitutional state for accountability, constitutional reform and an end to political repression (ICG, 2005: 6-9; Brown, Hamzawy, Ottoway, 2006).

Christian Democrats will recognize here parts of their history of ideas. Religious inspiration is important, even essential, for politics. At the same time they strictly avoid clericalism. Within all organizations there remain tensions between the old goals of creating Islamic states and enacting uncompromising applications of the shari'a on the one hand; and the new goal of becoming political players in a pluralistic, democratic system on the other hand. However, every Islamist movement deals with these tensions in its own way, and also within these organizations people think differently about how to deal with issues like women's rights and the role of shari'a. The outcome of these tensions is a great deal of diversity in more or less moderate Islamist organizations and a lot of ambiguity in a number of issues. Brown, Hamzay and Ottoway call them *'grey zones'* (2006). This ambiguity is manifested both in the rhetorical statements of Islamist organizations and in their political actions.

– With respect to Islamic law, all movements call for the "application of the Islamic shari'a". This in itself does not shed a light on the clear programme of the parties. In fact, the Gallup poll (2005) found that a mean of 79% of the people surveyed in the Muslim world support the idea that shari'a should be a source of law. At the same time, a majority wants freedom of speech, freedom of religion

tutions have so far not been a source of political change. Rather, they have been content to leave the political sphere to the government, extending their influence in the social sphere instead.

and freedom of assembly. The areas where Islamists push for an Islamic revision of present laws differ strongly across countries. The Islamic penal code is not part of the demands of mainstream Islamists in most countries. The crucial point of contention between Islamists and non-Islamists in their differing conceptions of democracy is the source of sovereignty. Are laws derived from the authority of a clergy interpreting the will of Allah or from the people who, eventually inspired by Islam, elect legislators to formulate laws that govern the community? According to the Gallup research of Esposito and Mogahed, a great majority of people in Muslim societies does not insist that all laws must be drawn from Islamic sources but that they should where such sources are available, or that Islamic authorities should be consulted in the process of law making.

- The mainstream Islamist parties are all committed to non-violence and adhere to this principle despite the regime's suppression. However, the commitment to non-violence by mainstream Islamist movements often ceases when it comes to the issue of Israel and of Palestinian rights. Virtually all Islamist organizations believe that violence against Israel constitutes legitimate resistance rather than terrorism. Efforts to balance commitment to non-violence with the recognition that Palestinians have the right to resist have led some organizations to considerable ambiguity. An illustration is the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood. In a recent interview, the Brotherhood's Supreme Guide stated that the movement would respect Egypt's international agreements, implicitly recognizing the peace treaty with Israel. But in the same period, another official of the Brotherhood spoke of the need to prepare for jihad with the "enemy to the east", Israel.
- Further ambiguities persist in the areas of political rights and especially women's and minority rights. Islamists arouse suspicions about their commitments to the civil and political liberties of the individual. On a philosophical level, Islamists strongly emphasize collective interests over the interests of individuals. This justifies the fear that Islamists are ready to considerably restrict individual human rights for the sake of the collective. Islamist programmes remain deeply ambiguous on their ideas of advancing women's rights, although there are considerable differences between the Arab peninsula and the rest of the Arab world. Kuwaiti Islamists worked for many years to block women's right to vote based on their interpretations of the shari'a; while in Morocco the Islamist Justice and Development Party – after a long period of resistance – joined the commission that drafted the new liberal personal status law of 2004.
- With respect to minority rights there remain considerable differences across countries which also reflect the political and socio-economic realities of individual countries. In Egypt, the differences in attitudes become evident when comparing the Muslim Brothers with the Wasat party. Both recognize that shari'a cannot be applied to Copts. The Muslim Brotherhood as a purely confessional organization excludes Copts from membership in the organization. The Wasat Party, however, as a political organization with a moderate Islamist outlook, accepts Copts

as members. Minority rights are one of the pressing questions throughout the region that can only be resolved through the rethinking of a concept of citizenship which is positive but unbiased towards the religions.

–

There's no guarantee that time will automatically lead to the elimination of the grey zones and that non-violent Islamist organizations will continue to evolve in the direction of the constitutional state. Rather, the outcome is still uncertain and will be determined by how the political situation evolves in each country. At the same time, researchers that have been engaged in the study of Islamist movements conclude that reformist currents in the Islamist movement are real and that they are becoming much more sophisticated and flexible in their thinking, and also that recent political success in some countries is increasing the reformists' influence within their respective organizations. They have no doubt that there has been a real evolution in their way of thinking (Brown, Hamzway, Ottoway, 2006:4,19; ICG, 2005:6-9).

It is important that the potential of Islam's ability to be compatible with democracy be unleashed. Some fields of Islam need to go through a transition in order to capitalize on their inherent potential. One of the ways in which this could be generated is through creating spaces of opportunity in the political field in which Islamic opposition parties could have the possibility to gradually mature politically and moderate internal forces could have opportunities to adapt to modernization through the spaces created by gradual liberalization.

Engaging with non-violent Islamists?
Dialogue with moderate Islamist movements and organizations is undeniably making its way onto the agenda of international organizations, national parliamentarians and inter-parliamentary organizations.

Some people believe that Western countries shouldn't engage with Islamist parties. They think that the Islamists' transformation towards democracy and human rights is merely a matter of tactics. They claim that they only changed their strategy and have not altered the essence of their goals. According to this logic, these groups will continue to pursue the establishment of a thoroughly Islamic state based on the model of the early caliphates once they are in a position to do so (Ehrenfeld, 2006; Brown, Hamzawy and Ottoway, 2006:4, NATO PA, July 2006). These suspicions are reinforced by the ambiguities in the position of Islamist movements.

Others argue that based on the expressed adherence to democracy and human rights and on their democratic practice there can be a true dialogue with Islamists and that under the right circumstances, they will further transform and adapt their programme to contemporary challenges. They claim that participation will have a

moderating effect, just like exclusion has a radicalizing effect on Islamic movements (Delacoura, 2006; Brown et. al., 2006).

There are also people that remain deeply suspicious of Islamist movements but still agree on engaging them in the political process. They argue that Islamists run a high risk of failing in practical political life because their programmes do not encompass hard issues like economic and social reform. Government participation could therefore prove to be a sobering experience. It could demonstrate to their electorate that many premises of Islamists do not have solid and realistic foundations and may even have consequences which in the end cannot be reconciled with values of the Islam. Moreover, continuing to exclude or marginalize Islamist political participation would doom democracy by silencing a voice that resonates with an important segment of the public. Doing so would only provide governments with a justification for maintaining excessive controls over the entire political sphere, thereby stunting the development of other popular forces.

Western governments have so far been ambivalent on whether democracy promotion means buttressing secular opposition forces so that they provide a counterweight to Islamists opposition or supporting secular and Islamist opposition parties in equal measure against incumbent regimes. On the one hand, Islamists increasingly participate in regular political processes, are changing some of their radical stances and are reaching out to other groups. On the other hand, some of the positions remain serious obstacles. The persistence of doubt is inevitable.

Even if Islamist parties take moderate positions while fighting for a legitimate political role, nobody can be sure how they would act if they gained power. Past experiences bring both bad (Iran) and good (Morocco) experiences with Islamist parties coming to power. There are simply no certainties about how Islamist movements will develop. The AKP in Turkey demonstrates that a party that calls itself conservative democratic but which is Islamic in background and culture may become the initiator of reforms of the state towards a constitutional state in contrast to its secularist predecessors. The future of the AKP is, however, uncertain. Public prosecutor Yalcinkaya is preparing a closure procedure and ban over 70 party members. According to some specialists, the threat of prohibition of the party is realistic.

Conclusion

Knowing all of this, what should be the position of Christian Democrats in the discussion about the role of Islam and Islamism in democracy?

First and foremost we want to say that Christian Democrats traditionally regard the role of religion in public life – within the boundaries of the constitutional state – as positive and essential. This applies to all religions. The separation between church and state is an important principle of Christian Democracy. This separation reflects

the unfolding culture. It is a mistake to think that this implies marginalization of (or even a ban on) religion in the public domain (as is the case in French laicism, among others). Church and state should respect and eventually support each other's responsibilities and mandates. The church should not dominate the state and the state should not dominate the church. The latter domination was sometimes considered to conform to the 'Western' idea of the state. Kemal Atatürk and other leaders introduced that idea in the Islamic world. He borrowed it from the regimes he thought were effective. These happened to be dictatorial regimes (Mussolini and the Soviet Union) which indeed were deeply secularist. It is essential that this misunderstanding be eradicated.

We should develop a legitimate practice of democracy that avoids the pitfalls of both authoritarian secularism (with its disrespect for religion) and militant Islamism (which might have a clergy-dominated state in mind).

For this reason, we need a discriminating strategy that takes account of the diversity of outlooks within Islamism. We should make a distinction between those who want to use violence to attain their goals (radicals) and those who want to reach their goals through political means and adhere to democratic principles (moderates). We realize that the non-violence stance is a bit controversial in two ways. We are already dealing with Islamist governments that use violence to stay in power and violate human rights (e.g. Saudi Arabia and Iran). The question arises as to whether we should end contacts with these Islamic regimes.

Still, we believe that *moderate Islamists* could constitute a very important alternative to authoritarian secularism and radical Islamism and should not be excluded from any attempts to introduce or promote the rule of law in the Middle East. The Christian Democrats have therefore decided to be open to every Islamist movement that respects democracy and human rights and does not use violence to reach its goals (CDA Reaction to WRR Report on Islamic Activism, September 2007). The grey zones that still exist are, in our opinion, no reason not to enter into dialogue. In contrast: only through dialogue can we find out more. The possible dialogue with each of the Islamist parties will have different starting points, different perspectives and different methods. It is very interesting in this context to mention that some parallels exist between the struggle of moderate Islamist parties to reconcile the concepts of human rights and democracy with their ideological Islamic beginnings and also to find the right place for Islam in the public sphere, and the struggle that the Christian Democrats have been through in order to overcome attempts to marginalize them into the private sphere by secularist liberals who would deny them the right to be Christians in public life. The CDA gets requests on a regular basis from Islamic parties such as AKP (Turkey) and PJD (Morocco) to exchange views on this subject.

Potential parallels also exist between the societal organization along religious lines in Lebanon and, to a certain extent, Egypt, with the process of pillarization in the Netherlands. People and their organizations were organized into three pillars: a socialist, a Catholic and a Protestant pillar. Every pillar had its own (socialist, Catholic or Protestant) associations, schools, unions, etc. In this way religion contributed to the well being of society. Groups with different ideologies could live together in peace and build society in a constructive way. Communication was done through the leaders of the pillars. Within the pillars there was a process of emancipation of the people. For several decades this system worked well. For countries such as Lebanon and perhaps Egypt, this model could be interesting for a peaceful development of society.

Finally, Christian Democrats should condemn the suppression of non-violent opponents, including Islamists, by authoritarian regimes. This is against the human rights that we respect. Moreover, pressure should be put on the regimes to create or widen *genuine* political space. The EU should develop strategies to encourage political processes in which moderate Islamists, *along with other emerging forces*, can compete fairly and, over time, gain incentives to moderate the aspects of their ideologies which oppose the values of the constitutional state.

6.2 Instruments

The principles we formulated in the last section should be reflected in the instruments we choose to promote this goal. There are various instruments available.

A distinction can be made between three instruments of democracy promotion: military intervention, diplomacy and foreign assistance. Each of these instruments tries to influence the promotion of democracy in different ways and target state and/or non-state actors. We will now explore these instruments.

Instruments		**Influence Mechanism**	**Actor**
Military intervention (6.2.1)		Coercion through violence	State
Diplomacy (6.2.2)	Political dialogue and negotiations	Social learning and external incentives (bargaining)	State
	Unilateral declaration	Naming and Shaming	
	Positive and negative conditionality	External incentives (reducing or imposing costs of reform)	
Foreign assistance (6.2.3)		Capacity building and socialization	State and non-state

6.2.1 Military intervention as democracy promotion tool

Our starting point is that democratization should come from within and our efforts to promote democracy should be focused on backing and facilitating endogenous democratization initiatives (see section 5.1.3). This has to do with the importance of both a feeling of ownership to making democracy work and state sovereignty.

Responsibility to protect

In 2001 the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty published a report ("Responsibility to protect") that questions when, if ever, it is appropriate for states to take coercive, and in particular military, action against another state for the purpose of protecting people at risk in that other state (the right of humanitarian intervention). The commission finds that states have the "responsibility to protect". This embraces three specific responsibilities:

1. Responsibility to prevent: to address both the root causes and direct causes of international conflict and other man-made crises putting populations at risk;

2. Responsibility to react: to respond to situations of compelling human need with appropriate measures, which may include coercive measures like sanctions and international prosecution, and in extreme cases military intervention; and

3. Responsibility to rebuild: to provide, particularly after a military intervention, assistance with recovery, reconstruction and reconciliation, addressing the causes of the harm the intervention was designed to halt or avert.

It states that 'Military intervention for human protection purposes is an exceptional and extraordinary measure'. To be warranted, there must be serious and irreparable harm occurring to human beings, or imminently likely to occur, of the following kind:

- Large-scale loss of life, actual or apprehended, with genocide intent or not, which is the product either of deliberate state action, state neglect or inability to act, or failed state situation; or
- Large-scale 'ethnic cleansing', actual or apprehended, whether carried out by killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape.

Four precautionary principles have been put down on paper:

- Right intention: the primary purpose of the intervention, whatever other motives intervening states may have, must be to halt or avert human suffering. Right intention is better assured with multilateral operations, clearly supported by regional opinion and the victims concerned.
- Last resort: Military intervention can only be justified when every non-military option for the prevention or peaceful resolution of the crisis has been explored, with reasonable grounds for believing that lesser measures would not have succeeded.
- Proportional means: The scale, duration and intensity of the planned military intervention should be the minimum necessary to secure the defined human protection objective.
- Reasonable prospects: There must be a reasonable chance of success in halting or averting the suffering which has justified the intervention, with the consequences of action not likely to be worse than the consequence of inaction.

The principle of the "Responsibility to protect" was adopted by the UN in September 2005.

The US, together with Great Britain and politically supported by among others the Dutch government, used the tool of military intervention to invade Iraq in 2003. At first this invasion was legitimized by referring to Saddam Hussein's possession of weapons of mass destruction. Later on, arguments shifted towards the terrible situation in which the Iraqi people lived under Hussein's dictatorial regime and the goal of democracy promotion (since it became clear that there were no weapons of mass destruction). Looking at the criteria of the 'responsibility to protect' paradigm, the debate on Iraq is focussed now on the question of whether indeed there was "large-scale loss of human rights", all other non-violent instruments were exhausted, and the invasion was a proportional answer to the situation.

In any case, the period after the invasion in Iraq clearly underscores our basic starting point that building a democracy is a long and complicated process that is very difficult to impose from the outside. Preferably, democratization should come from within. Only then will it be supported by the people. One of the problems with Iraq is that the Western powers involved perhaps did not have sufficient correct information about the degree of popular support for their intervention.

If we take a look at the Arab countries we are studying, only in Sudan is there reference to large-scale 'ethnic cleansing'. In the other Arab states, although people do suffer (and sometimes even die) from the authoritarian regimes that violate human rights, large-scale loss of life or large-scale ethnic cleansing does not occur. So there are no grounds for using the extraordinary instrument of military intervention there. Besides, non-military means to promote democracy in Arab countries are far from exhausted. The conclusion to which this all leads is that one-sided military intervention as a means to promote democracy in the Middle East is at this moment neither legitimate nor desirable.

We should admit that there is no widespread preparedness within the UN to intervene where this might be justified. Unless requests from the legal government of Bosnia-Herzegovina during the ethnic cleansing of the 1990s, the EU member states did not come to its rescue. The US stopped those wars in a late stage. Rwanda and Burundi are other examples of the reluctance to intervene on time. In both cases the term 'genocide' was avoided because the UN Charters demand intervention if genocide is found.

The military intervention in Afghanistan is a special case. The sovereignty of Afghanistan is respected. The Afghan state and society are assisted in their socio-economic and political development. It is not purely humanitarian but also a form of defence against the Taliban. The Taliban functioned as host for the terrorist training camps. These proved to be a serious danger primarily for the US but also for Europe,

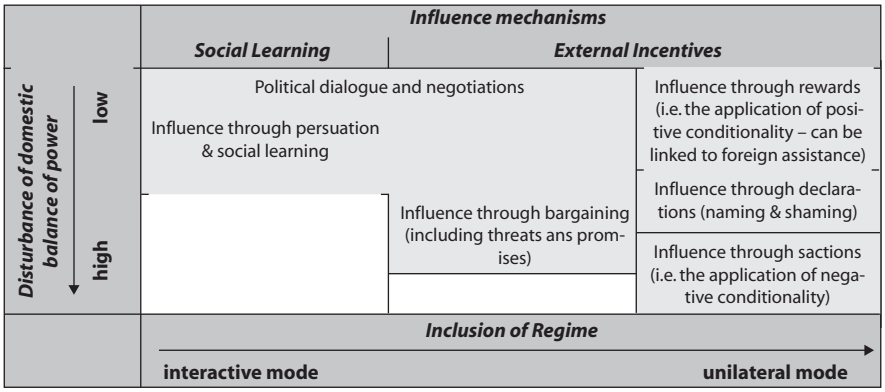
as was seen in the 9/11 attacks and the cruel terrorist actions in several European states.

6.2.2 Diplomacy and democracy promotion tool

There are several tools for promoting democracy that are all managed in the arena of international relations. These are political dialogue and negotiations, unilateral declaration, and negative and positive conditionality. Political dialogue and negotiations give room for arguing and bargaining processes that can lead to social learning or to the manipulation of the state's cost-benefit calculations through promises and threats. In declarations, the democracy promoter can voice his opinion on the domestic situation, including open praise and criticism. Done publicly, this 'naming and shaming' can create reputation costs that function as an external negative incentive. Conditionality can affect a state's cost-benefit calculation in both anticipation (after promises or threats are advanced) and in its actual application when rewards are granted or sanctions imposed.

These instruments vary in the degree that the regimes are included and also in the degree that the effects of the instruments disturb domestic power relations (see Table 3).

Table 3: Democratic Tools for Democracy Promotion



Source: Stahl and Hüllen (2007: 6)

Having looked at the EU's current policy (Chapter 3) and the case of Egypt (Chapter 4), it is clear that the EU's main instruments are political dialogue and negotiations. Also in the association agreements that the EU closed with nearly all countries of the Barcelona Process, a partnership approach is central. In cases of regression in democratization, such as during the past two years in Jordan and Morocco, the EU did not make public declarations calling upon these regimes to respect human rights. In the Jordanian case such a call would harm the Israeli-Jordan peace agreement. The

EU has also not denounced the jailing of Mubarak's political opponents in Egypt in either the case of Ayman Nour (the US did denounce this) or in other cases.

The EU never used the available clause to suspend aid and trade in case of human right violations despite the fact that they were violated several times by different regimes, hence it doesn't apply negative sanctioning. Over the past few years, the EU has tried to use positive conditionality to stimulate democratization in the Middle East. However, in practice this doesn't really work because of the lack of consensus between different member states. Southern member states are afraid both positive and negative conditionality will damage their interests. It is therefore questionable whether the degree of cooperation under the ENP really depends on an 'objectively' stated progress or also on the political will of the neighbours, e.g. refusing to negotiate Action Plans in the first place (Stahn and Hullen, 2007:18).

First, the EU should consider the use of more confrontational instruments to promote democracy in Arab countries. The EU has the moral obligation to at least disapprove of the violation of human rights in every country and use the instrument of declarations and other diplomatic instruments to raise this matter with the regimes.

Secondly, instruments of negative and positive sanctioning should be further developed and put into practice. There should be a clear view in what kind of circumstances negative and positive sanctions are effective (and in which circumstances not). Gillespie and Whitehead (2002) have researched the possible side effects of negative sanctions and the conditions in which sanctions – both positive and negative – are productive or counterproductive. The first negative side-effect to which Gillespie and Whitehead refer is that in many cases only the people on the streets and the middle class will suffer, while the elites are rich enough not to be bothered by negative sanctions. Another danger is the development of anti-Western sentiments as a consequence of aggressive sanctioning. These anti-Western feelings can diminish the appeal of democracy promotion in these countries and stimulate the implementation of cosmetic reforms by the current leaders in order to satisfy the donors. Further, there are risks that international actors will exclude themselves from any involvement in these counties and will only be able to watch from the sideline. In this context Gillespie and Whitehead make a distinction between two phases of democracy promotion. The first is the phase before democratization has begun, when it is not known when, or even whether, it will begin, and when only "softly, softly" low-key measures are possible. The second is the phase when local developments have placed democratization squarely on the agenda and the EU can move to a higher gear. Negative sanctioning is probably most effective in a situation where they provide a 'tipping point' for democratic change, while in the first phase a softer approach and positive sanctioning will in general be more effective (Heera, 2007:28). Hence, the EU should be very aware of the phase of democratization in

which a country is when deciding whether sanctions are effective. If the EU decides to use sanctions it is important that these actions target the right persons and are backed by the commitment of all EU member states.

6.2.3 Foreign assistance

Democracy assistance can both be directed toward both state and non-state actors. The inclusion of the regime in power in the promoter's agenda signifies here the extent to which he operates with or without the approval of the regime. Cooperation with state actors can only happen with government approval. But addressing non-state actors can be done with or without approval. It depends on the external actor's willingness and capacity as to whether he will forego the approval of the regime. This can range from simply bypassing the regimes (which tolerate the action) to working openly against the disapproval of the regime (that might take countermeasures). The level of disturbance that can be expected of the measures implemented depends very much on the choice of the specific actors targeted: the more politically active and critical of the regime actors are, the more support for them might pose a threat to the regime. The perception of threat and likelihood of open disapproval of bypassing democracy assistance are highly interrelated.

Table 4: Democracy Assistance

	Influence mechanism ***Capacity Building***		
Disturbance of domestic balance of power ↓ low / high	Primary targets: • State institutions • Gongos • Non political NGOs • Political active NGOs • Media • Political active NGOs • Political parties • Exclusively opposition parties	Primary targets: • State institutions • Gongos • Non political NGOs • Political active NGOs • Media • Political active NGOs • Political parties • Exclusively opposition parties	Primary targets: • State institutions • Gongos • Non political NGOs • Political active NGOs • Media • Political active NGOs • Political parties • Exclusively opposition parties
	With approval	***Without approval***	***Against dispproval***
	Inclusion of regime in choosing targets →		
	interactive mode		**unilateral mode**

Source: Stahn and Hüllen (2007: 7)

First we will look at foreign assistance targeted at *non-state actors*, secondly assistance designated for *state actors*.

6.2.4 Foreign assistance targeted at non-state actors

Strengthening civil society is frequently offered as the answer to the question of how countries in the Middle East can democratize. Western governments envision that, bolstered by outside assistance, democratically-minded, non-partisan, peaceful

citizens will erode authoritarian regimes. They often also expect these groups to operate as they do in the United States or Europe. That is, to act as a counterweight to state power and to 'check' or otherwise influence governmental behaviour, and they provide assistance to help them do so. In addition, the West assumes that through involvement in civil society, citizens will exercise the fundamental democratic values of participation and collective action and disseminate these values within their countries. As an illustration to the role that civil society can take in the process of democratization, people often refer to the Eastern European countries. These citizens have used civil society organizations to carve out independent political space, to learn about democracy, to articulate a democratic alternative to the status quo, to spread this idea within society and to mobilize millions of their fellow citizens against repressive regimes.

Contrary to these optimistic predictions and to the experience in other countries, civil society groups have not made a real dent in the Arab world's durable authoritarianism. The growth in the number of civil society organizations has not led to true democratization (at least yet), according to Amy Hawthorne (2004), Thomas Carothers (1999) and others. Several factors contribute to civil society's weakness as democratizing force.

State repression
State repression is the most obvious one of these factors. Some governments simply outlaw independent civic society altogether, while others permit it but impose severe restrictions. These include allowing registered NGOs, professional syndicates, Islamic organizations, and other groups to undertake only 'social welfare' or cultural work, forbidding all 'political activities'. They regularly intervene in labour and syndicates' activities. They require that NGOs' charters, boards of directors and meetings be approved by government officials who can send representatives to any activity. All funding must be approved by the government. In Jordan, all NGO volunteers must be vetted by the security services. In Egypt all NGOs and their funding must be approved by the government (see Chapter 4, Case study: Egypt). If we take a look at the table it becomes clear that the EU (like the US) focuses on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) that are approved by the regime. One exception is the democracy assistance through EIDHR which can be used without host government consent. Organizations approved by the government are often not independent and not able to challenge domestic power relations.

Political culture
Another obvious factor is political culture. The level of independent civic participation across the Arab world remains extremely low. Most civil society organizations attract only a very small percentage of the population; in reality membership is even less. Not only have decades of authoritarian rule bred widespread political apathy,

but throughout the Arab world social, economic and political life still revolves to a remarkable degree around the bonds of family, clan or tribe. Moreover, there are always risks concerned with being actively involved with the promotion of democracy and human rights in the Arab states. Many activists end up in jail.

Civil society organizations are not inherently counter hegemonic or pro-democracy
The third factor is that civil society organizations are not inherently counter-hegemonic or pro-democracy; particularly in authoritarian settings, civil society can be dominated by apolitical, pro-government or even authoritarian groups that fulfil other roles than democratization. For civil society to play a democratizing role in such settings, a critical mass of organizations and movements must develop three key attributes:

(1) Autonomy from the regime

Sectors of civil society that could ostensibly be a platform for the development of a pro-democracy movement are not sufficiently autonomous to do so. The webs of control and co-option are spun in various ways. Labour unions are essentially extensions of the state, with their leadership appointed by the government. Chambers of commerce are dominated by businessmen who for their business success rely on close economic and personal ties to government officials. Many think thanks are not truly independent, either: they are staffed by private citizens but receive all their funding from the government. Regimes have neutralized groups whose activities are deemed too sensitive by applying a combination of sticks (threat of repression) and carrots (funding and political protection).

(2) Pro-democracy agenda

The fact that a critical mass of civil society organizations has not adopted a clear pro-democracy agenda that can mobilize large numbers of citizens is another important characteristic of civil society in Arab countries. The informal parts of civil society are generally not politically inclined. The majority of the service NGOs do not engage in broader political activities, especially anything involving direct opposition to incumbent regimes. Their mission is not to challenge systems but rather to provide the services and socioeconomic development necessary to maintain social stability. In this sense regimes see these groups as partners in development, not adversaries, and they stimulate their existence.

The Islamic sector does not (yet) constitute a large and vital pro-democracy force, either, although it is growing. In some Arab countries pro-democratic Islamists seek to demonstrate that democratic concepts are compatible with the tenets of Islam (see the reform strategy of wings of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt). However, most have not pushed for democracy in a comprehensive fashion. Nonetheless, we have to acknowledge that there is potential for Islamic groups to constitute a strong pro-democracy group, especially once they use their strong popular networks

to spread the pro-democracy message. Other Islamic groups avoid political issues altogether, preferring to transform society through social and spiritual change.

The groups that do have a clear and strong democratic agenda have very limited influence. Repression is undoubtedly one reason for their ineffectiveness; precarious funding and weak management also play a role. In addition, in sharp contrast to Islamic organizations these groups lack a popular network and tools to spread a pro-democratic message. Pro-democracy NGOs are overwhelmingly the realm of the secular, liberal elite. It is a clear responsibility of Christian Democrats to show that democracy has deep roots in the Christian religion and that reforms may also be a concern of religious Muslims.

(3) The ability to build coalitions with other sectors of civil society

Civil society across the Arab world is deeply fragmented. The different sectors of civil society sometimes work side by side but can rarely coalesce in a sustained fashion. This hinders the ability of civil society to unite groups of citizens around common goals in a way that might put pressure on regimes. In part this polarization is due to regime's skill in manipulating and dividing civil society. But it also reflects a deeper reality: there is today no unifying vision for social and political transformation among the key civil society actors in Arab countries. In countries with deep social division, such as Lebanon, civil society is organized overwhelmingly along confessional lines. There is little awareness of a common good in which these parties might share views. The confessional parties behave as interest groups with only one issue: the interest and defence of their own constituency. Moreover, a deep polarization exists between those who want to use civil society as the leading vehicle to Islamitize society and those who believe that secular civil society is the only bulwark against such a transformation. The experience in Algeria and Tunisia provided a vivid example of this phenomenon.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many pro-democracy groups in Tunisia and Algeria initially sided with Islamic opposition groups to press for liberalization. A few years later when the Algerian and Tunisian regimes felt threatened and undertook blanket repression against Islamists these same pro-democracy groups lent their support to the regimes. They feared the Islamists' agenda more than they feared the rollback of their civil liberties and the regimes' continuation in power.

This doesn't mean that foreign assistance to civil society should not play a role, but conditions that hinder development towards democracy should be taken into account.

6.2.5 Foreign assistance focused on state actors

In addition to civil society support, the EU also supports states' initiatives to implement reforms. The approach of EU assistance to Arab states is based on the recognition that it should be the own wish of these regimes to pursue an international

reform agenda. That the scale of support will be subject to the extent to which reforms are carried through. All Middle Eastern countries have reform programmes, as we saw in Chapter 3. They vary in scope and intent from country to country, but in nearly every case, political openings have been very limited and fragile, subject to the whims of those in power. The political status quo is not really challenged. This is reflected in the choices for the kind of reforms the leaders are suggesting: economic liberalization (nearly all leaders argue that economic reform should come before political reform) and political reforms that do not seriously challenge the position of the leaders, so called 'cosmetic reforms'.

Economic assistance

The majority of the MEDA funds have been spent on economic and trade assistance. The Middle Eastern regimes are usually very open for this kind of support. For many years Middle East Development Aid was oriented toward economic liberalization and offsetting the social costs of these economic reforms. It was assumed that economic reforms would have a spill-over effect on political liberalization. However, in countries like Egypt the economic reforms didn't lead to political liberalization but to deliberalization. Most Egyptians agree that there's less freedom now than twenty years ago. There has been a regression in democracy (Heera, 2007). Egypt's regime tried to limit the risks of the economic reforms by *neutralizing* their effects: in the process of privatization state companies were sold to clients of the regime. Moreover, the EU's compensation funds offered the regime even more means to invest in their network of patronage, because these compensations were directly given to the regime (Youngs, 2001:68.69; Dillman, 2002:73,80). In this way Egypt's regime remained a very strong influence in the economy. In other countries like Morocco the expected 'spill-over effect' of economic liberalization also did not occur, because of neutralizing tactics of the ruling elites (Heera, 2007:65-67). Too often in the past, the EU and the US have stressed structural economic reforms while largely ignoring the underlying political and social shortcomings of Arab countries, particularly the impact of autocratic systems on development. Economic and political liberalization are mutually dependent.

Political Assistance

Rule of law development stands out as a prominent focus in the political assistance (Stahn and Hullen, 2007:18). Despite many efforts by both the Europeans and the Americans, rule of law development makes little progress in most Arab countries. Most programmes are quite limited in scope and avoid essential elements of genuine rule of law development, since this will threaten the regimes' positions. An anti-corruption campaign, for example, usually consists of some technocratic legal changes and public education about the evils of corruption, the establishment of an anti-corruption commission and perhaps a few selective prosecutions. However, the campaigns rarely entail a serious effort to produce deep-reaching systematic change,

starting from top and working down, by applying the law impartially and fully to all public officials and eliminating political constraints on and manipulation of the principal law-enforcement agencies (Carothers, 2007:15-18). Ambitious European and American rule of law programmes that focus on genuine rule of law development such as the independency of the judiciary are blocked by the regimes. Egypt is a telling example of the way in which a regime can block serious rule of law reforms (Chapter 4).

The core point is that genuine rule of law development and autocracy combine poorly. Key elements of the rule of law directly threaten autocratic rule. Impartial adjudication, fair and equal treatment of all persons before the law, respect for political and civil rights – all of these essential components of the rule of law restrict or remove the tools that autocrats typically employ to control political life and stay in power.

More positive are the experiences of the European Commission for Democracy through Law, better known as the Venice Commission, the Council of Europe's advisory body on constitutional matters. Established in 1990 by 18 members of the Council of Europe, it has developed into an international independent think tank. The Commission's goal is to contribute to the dissemination of the European constitutional heritage and to offer crisis management. Among its member states are Algeria and Morocco. Moreover, in 2006 the Union of Arab Constitutional Courts and Councils (UACCC) which covers 13 Arab countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Sudan, Tunisia and Yemen) approached the Venice Commission seeking cooperation. The Commission envisages meetings between European and Arab Courts and experts in the field of constitutional control as well as Arab contributions to the CODICES database, the infobase on Constitutional Case-Law of the Venice Commission.

7 | Recommendations

Democratic constitutional state

The promotion of the democratic constitutional state in the Middle East – the main theme of this report – is a complicated matter. Democracies can take many forms, depending on local, cultural and historical differences. Citizens should be able to identify themselves with the democratic order in which they live and exercise their political responsibility. Holding elections is not sufficient for a country to become democratic. Democracy requires embedment in the rule of law and the constitutional state, a separation of powers, checks and balances, the protection of basic liberties of religion, speech, assembly and property, and an independent media.

Democracy is a way to serve the norms and values which transcend the spontaneous desires of people (the rule of law). Embedded in this normative thinking, elections have their own meaning. They are important tools on the path to increasing political participation and making governments more accountable. Religion can provide a valuable contribution to the development of democracy, as spirituality and faith demand freedom. Sincere faith can only freely be adopted. Because of this foundation in freedom, the democratic constitutional state is firmly supported by the Christian faith. Christian Democracy holds a concept of democracy which reflects the view that all citizens have a transcendental calling: a calling to take personal responsibility for the common good and for the quality of the public authority. This concept of democracy may be shared by other religions that underline the dignity of the human person as a gift from God. The positive attitude towards the religious roots of democracy can be an asset for Christian Democrats in the promotion of the democratic constitutional state in the Middle East, where religion plays an important role.

Foreign policy guided by principles

Principles should guide our foreign policy. Regarding democratization in the Middle East, this means:

– Commitment to the democratic constitutional state

Our commitment to democracy should be reflected in the instruments we choose. This means we should not always select the 'easiest' (and often not the apparently most effective) instruments to promote our goal of democracy. Confrontational instruments should not be avoided when it can be expected that they will be the most effective.

– Consistency

If we want to promote a strategy based on democracy, we should be very sure that we are even-handed and fair in the application of this value. We need to demonstrate that we are applying the same principles to each case, that our actions are consistent. This does not mean that every case requires the same response: different

cases demand different instruments from the foreign policy box at different junctures.

– *Facilitating and backing*
We should follow the rules of prudency when we intervene from the outside in order to introduce democracy and human rights, specifically when our means are military. The promotion of the rule of law should connect with endogenous roots and actions by reformers. These reformers must be backed and facilitated, while respecting their 'ownership' of the transformations. The case of Iraq teaches us so.

– *Gradualism*
The promotion of democracy is a long and complex process containing many obstacles. It is unwise to use tools that force this process. On the other hand, we should be very careful not to apply instruments that generate only cosmetic reforms.

– *Tailoring strategy to the particular circumstances*
A number of basic principles of the rule of law should be emphasized across the Middle East region, including human rights, political representation, constitutional checks and balances, tolerance, women's rights and transparency of decision-making. However, different countries need different instruments.

– *Positive attitude towards Islam and (moderate Islamists)*
We should be open to talks with moderate Islamists because we believe they can play an essential role in democratization processes in the Middle East. Islamists should certainly be included in our efforts to promote democracy in the Middle East.

These principles should be reflected in the instruments we choose to promote this goal. A distinction can be made between three instruments of democracy promotion: military intervention, diplomacy and foreign assistance.

Military intervention as a tool to promote democracy
Building a democracy is a long and complex process that is very difficult to impose from outside. Preferably, democratization should come from within. Only then will it be supported by the people. There are, however, situations in which it is appropriate for states to take coercive and even military action against another state. According to the principle of the 'responsibility to protect', which was adopted by the United Nations in September 2005, states have the responsibility to protect people in other states when there is:

- Large-scale loss of life, actual or apprehended, with genocide intent or not, which is the product either of deliberate state action, or state neglect or inability to act, or failed state situation; or
- Large-scale 'ethnic cleansing', actual or apprehended, whether carried out by

killing, forced expulsion, acts of terror or rape.
If we take a look at the Arab countries we are studying, only in Sudan is there large scale 'ethnic cleansing'. In the other Arab states, although people do suffer (and sometimes even die) as a result of human rights violations by authoritarian regimes, large-scale loss of life or large-scale ethnic cleansing does not occur. So there are no grounds for using the extraordinary instrument of military intervention there. Therefore, one-sided military intervention as a means to promote democracy in the Middle East is at this moment neither legitimate nor desirable.

Diplomacy as a tool for promoting democracy
The EU should consider the use of more confrontational instruments to promote democracy in Arab countries. In any case, the EU and others have a moral obligation to disapprove of the violation of human rights in every (Arab) country and to use the instrument of declarations and other diplomatic instruments to raise this matter with the regimes.

Instruments of negative and positive sanctioning should be further developed and put into practice. There should be a clear view as to in what kinds of circumstances negative and positive sanctions are effective (and in which circumstances they are not). Negative sanctioning is probably most effective in situations where they provide a 'tipping point' for democratic change, while in the phase before democratization has begun a softer approach and positive sanctioning will in general be more effective. If the EU decides to use sanctions it is important that these actions target the right persons and have the commitment of all EU member states.

Foreign assistance as a tool for promoting democracy
Western governments frequently vest *unrealistic hopes* in civil society as a democratic and democratizing force. On the other hand, donors conceive of civil society quite narrowly, as comprising the non-profit organizations and public interests groups that seem to resemble those with which they are most familiar in their own countries and whose leaders speak English and are comfortable in international circles. However, these organizations often have the least political influence or the shallowest roots in the community. Donors often downplay or ignore religious organizations, social movements and other unfamiliar NGO forms of associative life. These organization can do a lot of good work. Governments should involve them more.

Therefore, new efforts to aid civil society in Middle Eastern countries should:
- Focus on assisting civil society organizations that could play a role in political change, such as politically active NGOs. Until now the European Union has resisted directly funding parliaments, political parties and trade unions, let alone faith-based organizations.
- Avoid perpetuating the *narrow* focus on the 'usual suspects' (secular and Western style) and the 'usual subjects' (children's rights, education, women's rights)

and take into account a broader range of civil society organizations including Islamic organizations for foreign assistance. Both types of organizations are important.

- When focusing on *influential* civil society organizations (Islamic, Christian or secular) the EU and the governments of individual countries should be careful about giving direct funding. Human rights activists and reformers in some countries can run into trouble with their governments once the regimes find out that they receive Western funding. They will be marked as foreign agents and run the risk of ending up in jail. On the other hand, the direct aid also serves as protection because the regime knows that these people are well-known by foreign donors and cannot be thrown in jail unnoticed. This mechanism occurs most in countries where strong anti-American and anti-Western sentiments exist, such as Iran. The EU and its member states might be object of these suspicions too, as the US is now.
- Think more strategically about civil society organizations. Donors should develop programmes that address the deeper reasons for civil society organizations' weakness as agents of democratic change and provide assistance that addresses the issue of repressive legal frameworks.
- Think more broadly about assisting civil society. Donors should, if prudency allows, combine direct assistance to civil society groups with indirect political activities such as political party development and the encouragement of more competitive elections and greater media freedom.
- Reinforce themes of civil society assistance at the diplomatic level.
- Establish open windows towards the democratic world in order to demonstrate to the elites and the people what the benefits of respect for the rule of law in daily life are; the British initiative to create TV and radio broadcasting in Arabic and possibly other local languages (as was previously done in Radio Free Europe) is an example to be followed by other countries and the EU.
- Create as many contacts as possible between citizens, students, civil servants, lawyers, trade unionists and businessmen; these may be stimulated through courses and exchange programmes, fairs, etc.

Regarding state actors, the EU chose to couple its assistance with governmental reform initiatives and therefore to focus on economic reform and often purely cosmetic political reforms. This is in line with the partnership approach it has with the Middle Eastern countries of the EMP.

- However, economic reforms do not automatically lead to a political spill-over effect due to several social and political shortcomings of Arab countries. This does not imply that the EU shouldn't give economic assistance to Middle Eastern countries. However, the EU shouldn't set its expectations too high about the spill-over effect and should have thorough knowledge about the mechanisms that can prevent this spill-over effect: the underlying political and social short-

comings.
- Genuine development of rule of law combines poorly with autocracy. Authoritarian leaders won't accept the core elements of genuine rule of law development because this threatens their position. They will only accept cosmetic reforms. Only if there is a serious political opening, including fair and free competition for power, will there be hope for deep-reaching reforms that can build the rule of law.

Diminishing dependency on Arab oil

The dependency of the West on energy supply from countries where human rights are not fully respected clearly frustrates the implementation of a straightforward human rights policy. Negative sanctions on human rights violations can return as a boomerang. The oil boycott of 1973 was 35 years ago but is part of our collective memory. The recent Russian threats toward Ukraine to stop the delivery of gas show that energy is still a very mighty political weapon. Diminishing the dependency on oil from the Middle East and non-democratic states is also a political strategic objective. The West can reduce the need for oil and gas by switching to durable energy sources such as solar energy, wind energy, bio fuels and – in the far future – nuclear fusion. Hydrogen can be used for the storage of energy. Thus the transition to durable energy is relevant not only to climate change but also to foreign policy. Here lies a new goal for the cooperation of the European Union. World political policy would be dramatically different if America and also the EU were no longer dependent on Arab oil. Oil will, however, always be needed, even if less as an energy source but as a raw material for the chemical industry. More ambition on the topic of durable energy would therefore be useful on two major levels: climate and peace. It can also unite the US and the EU in a joint strategy on the transition to durable energy resources.

European immigrants and democracy in the Middle East

Most immigrants from the Middle East don't lose their original nationality. So they never become complete outsiders to Middle Eastern affairs. Some of them are even nominated in committees in their home countries which are charged with reform. These immigrants frequently choose for their new fatherland because they share the values of the constitutional state. The process of integration and assimilation lead them to an ever-stronger identification with the political principles of the society in which they live. At the same time, there remain bonds with the country of origin. The family back home is supported, vacations are spent there and even after naturalization a double nationality is most often maintained, simply because it is impossible to get rid of the old nationality. Frequently this is considered a barrier against integration, but on the other side it might offer opportunities to create an open window to the democratic world. The relations with the countries of origin may also be an asset. The naturalized citizens of the EU member states may be a bridge

with the Middle East. They should not be criticized for that but supported in their democratic actions that benefit their home countries.

Economic cooperation is not sufficient
One lesson to be learned from the Egyptian case, but also from experiences with other countries, is that a one-sided emphasis on economic cooperation is not sufficient. The reasoning that economic aid will stimulate the donor country to become more democratic is false. Rather the reverse happens. The money is used to strengthen the political position of the rulers. The elite use the money for themselves instead of allowing it to help ordinary people. Monitoring is necessary in order to safeguard our objectives. Clientelism should not be given a foothold. The EU should be very sharp in this. If the donor country doesn't want to accept this, the aid should be stopped.

The EU should unite; the impact of Europe
The Netherlands is a small but still a relevant player on the international scene. Small states may have a contribution to international politics if their ideas and proposals are smart and convincing. Small member states of the European Union can enhance the weight of their policies if they are able to bring the EU member states together. An EU with 450 million inhabitants and a mighty economy will be far more influential than one or two member states alone, irrespective of their size. Politics is a question of making ideas convincing and having the power to further their implementation. As yet, however, the EU shows a cacophony of attitudes and statements on foreign affairs. It is important that the Reform Treaty of Lisbon (2008) tries, following the articles of the rejected draft Constitution for the EU, to work towards convergence of the foreign policies of the member states. This improves the internal order of the EU, but even more importantly it strengthens the perspectives for an EU that can truly exert a beneficial influence on world affairs. At the moment we are not that far. Member states have different views and interests, based on different histories of their relations with the Middle East and its member states. Several Middle Eastern countries had colonial relations with or were dominated by EU member states. Phenomena like illegal immigration, drugs trade and the threat of terrorism are even more important for southern member states than for northern ones. So it is an utterly complicated task to invent ways to harmonize foreign policies. The problem is that member states are seldom prepared to transcend their national interests and viewpoints. So the net result of their efforts tends to be near zero. If the Europeans are aware of their responsibility for the international order, the member states should be willing to adopt a higher, truly European viewpoint. It is therefore of great importance that there is an official EU institution with an EU mandate, an EU diplomatic service and an EU office with experts, purely to work on more coherence and perhaps consensus on more and more issues within the EU. The more the efforts of this EU institution strengthen the priority for a just international order over the simple power politics of before, the better and the more fruitful the contri-

butions will be. Perhaps smaller states understand sooner the interest everybody has in this priority. This understanding fits in the ancient tradition in international law of the country of Hugo Grotius. In the context of the EU (at least in the European Commission and Parliament), intelligence and creativity do matter more than the power of the country from whence the ideas come. For that reason even a think tank from a small country like Norway (not even a member state) could play a very significant role in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict ('Oslo'). For the implementation of these ideas, however, a broad, united power base in the EU is needed.

Transatlantic cooperation
NATO formalizes a number of ways in which EU countries collaborate with the US. A firm transatlantic relationship exists. The question is whether this relationship should be extended to the policies concerning the Middle East. Europeans tend to assume that their wisdom about and goodwill in the Middle East is greater than that of the US. We are confirmed in this view by the fact that there is much more criticism from Arab side on the US than on the EU. Despite this advantage the EU policy is rather insignificant mostly because of the chaotic noise we are producing in response to the problems of the Middle East. The American position is far more coherent and transparent. And the Americans are far more active in the region. Under the Bush Government, the US donates large amounts of money to selected Middle Eastern countries. Half of that amount goes, we admit, to the military. The EU, with the exception of France, hardly supplies these countries with military means. We hardly can speak of the complementarity of US and EU support however; the first being more military and the latter more economic, civic and humanitarian. This would be a misrepresentation, as also the non-military support of the US to the Middle East is significantly larger than that of the EU and its member states.

We would, however, be able to speak of complementarity as to differences in approach if there were respect for each other's policies and some coordination. It makes sense to be careful with democracies, as they need each other. We ourselves only recently (since the end of the 20th century leave behind a period in which democracies were scarce. It makes no sense to cultivate divergences within the North Atlantic Alliance. The new president of the United States probably will follow a political line which takes into account the views of the allies far more than President Bush did. Unity of approach in the Israeli-Palestinian case and in other problems of the Middle East is a precondition for solutions. The chances of the new US presidency should be used by the EU. This will also further the internal cohesion within the EU, as the new member states in the East of the Union were at the outset far more pro-US than pro-EU. Security and political power were and are essential for these states. The US could better provide in these needs than the EU. Anti-Americanism is not understood in the Central and Eastern European states. Increasing political influence of these states in the Union and convergence of political views of the member states

brings the EU closer to the US, Christian Democracy, religion and the dialogue with the Middle East.

There are serious reasons for the tensions between the Middle East and 'the West'. The main one is the different appraisals for the role of religion in public life. The Western elites who were involved in the colonialization followed as a rule the ideas of Western Enlightenment in its laicist form. These elites had hardly affinity with the dominant religion in these areas, Islam. They considered it to be a potentially oppositional force, rather than a way of giving meaning to life.

Christian Democrats consider religion to be a very important source of inspiration for their political work. Religion doesn't have to be an obstacle but can be a bridge between representatives of different religions, despite the differences between the religions. We believe that the understanding between Muslim Democrats and Christian Democrats has far better chances than with secularist parties. In this report we have frequently indicated where the parallelism between Christian Democrats and Muslim Democrats can be found. One of these is freedom of religion as a shared interest of Christian Democrats and the people in the Middle East.

Secularism and laicism are dead alleys for the understanding between the European Union and the Middle East. The world outside secularist Europe is not at all impressed by the European neglect and disrespect of religion. The a-religious enlightened attitude is a serious obstacle on the road to understanding. Western governments should not hesitate to hire religion scientists and to use their expertise. Christian Democracy has a special responsibility to use its inspiration in foreign affairs. The United States should also use its tradition of acceptance of religious motives in politics in its contact with the Middle East. These opportunities are too seldom seen and too often neglected – reason enough for common action between the EU and the United States and for a plea for religious inspiration in politics.

Literature

Al-Azm, Sadik, 'Schriftgeleerden zonder natuurwet', *NRC Handelsblad* (31 October 2006).

Amnesty International, *Egypt: Systematic Abuses in the Name of Security* (London, April 2007).

Amnesty International, *Enduring Occupation: Palestinians Under Siege in the West Bank* (London, June 2007).

Armstrong, Karen, *Mohammed: Een Westerse poging tot begrip van de islam* (Amsterdam, 2001).

Armstrong, Karen, 'Ghosts of our Past', *Modern Maturity* (January/February 2002).

Aslan, Reza, *Geen god dan God: Oorsprong, ontwikkeling en toekomst van de islam*, (Amsterdam, 2005).

Barakat, Halim, *The Arab World: Society, Culture and State* (Berkeley, 1993).

Barber, Benjamin R., 'De vruchten van de vrijheid', *De Groene Amsterdammer* (4 May 2002).

Bayat, Asef, 'Transforming the Arab World: The Arab Human Development Report and the Politics of Change', *Development and Change* vol. 36, nr. 6, pp. 1225-1237 (2005).

Bayat, Asef, 'Islam and Democracy: What is the Real Question?', *ISIM Papers* (Amsterdam, 2007).

Benzakour, Mohammed in Paul Aarts and Jan Keulen (red.), *Islam, de woede en het Westen* (Amsterdam, 2002).

Bermon, Paul, *Terror and Liberalism* (New York, 2003).

Birdsall, Nancy and Subramanian, Arvind 'Saving Iraq From its Oil', *Foreign Affairs* vol. 83, nr. 4, pp. 77-89 (July/August 2004).

Boehlert, Eric, *The Media's Islamic Blind Spot* www.salon.com.

Bremer, Stuart, 'Dangerous Dyads: Conditions Affecting the Likelihood of Interstate War, 1816-1965', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, pp. 309-341 (1992).

Brown, Michael, *Theories of War and Peace* (Massachusetts, 1998).

Brown, Nathan, Amr Hamzawy and Marina Ottaway, Islamist Movements and the Democratic Process in the Arab World: Exploring Grey Zones. Carnegie Paper No. 67 (March 2006).

Brumberg, Daniel, *Liberalization Versus Democracy,* Carnegie Paper No. 37 (April 2003).

Buruma, Ian and Avishai Margalit, *Occidentalisme: Het Westen in de ogen van zijn vijanden* (Amsterdam, 2004).

Carapico, Sheila, 'Foreign Aid for Promoting Democracy in the Arab World', *Middle East Journal* vol. 36, nr. 3 (2002).

Carothers, Thomas, 'Civil Society: Think Again', *Foreign Policy* (1999).

Carothers, Thomas, *Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion* (Washington, D.C., 2004).

Carothers, Thomas, 'The Sequencing Fallacy: How Democracies Emerge', *Journal of Democracy* vol. 18, nr. 1 (2007).

Centrum voor Strategische Studies/Universiteit van Jordanië, *Revisiting the Arab Street: Reseach from Within*, www.css-jordan.org (Amman 2005).

Christen Democratische Verkenningen, *Zonder geloof geen democratie* (Summer 2006).

Cleveland, William L., *A History of the Modern Middle East* (Colorado, 1994).

Cochrane, Marisa 'Perilous Petrodollars: The Effects of Oil Wealth on Democratization', *Elements* (Spring 2007).

Commission of the European Communities, Commission Staff Working Paper. Annex to 'European Neighbourhood Policy': Country Report Egypt (Brussels, 2005).

Dahlburg, John 'Your Government. Legacy of Fear: Afghanistan's Mix of Faith, Terror - A Global Scourge', *Los Angeles Times* (August 1996).

Danish Institute for International Studies, Democratisation and Security in the Middle East: Challenges and Possibilities (Copenhagen, 2005).

Delacoura, Katerina, *Political Parties and US Democracy Promotion in Egypt*, Paper prepared for the Workshop on 'Globalising Party Based Democracy', Warwick University (7-8 July 2005).

Dalacoura, Katerina, 'Islamist terrorism and the Middle East Democratric Deficit: Political Exclusion, Repression and the Causes of Extremism', *Democratization*, vol. 13, nr. 3, pp. 508-525 (June 2006).

Dillman, Bradford, 'International Markets and Partial Economic Reforms in North Africa: What Impact on Democratization?' *Democratization*, vol. 9, nr. 1 (2002).

Do Ceu Pinto, Maria, *Political Islam and the United States* (Reading, 1999).

Ehrenfeld, Rachel and Alyssa A. Lappen, *The Truth about the Muslim Brotherhood,* FrontPageMagazine.com (June 16, 2006).

Elazar, Daniel, *Judaism and Democracy: The Reality*, www.jcap.org/dje/articles2/judemoc.htm.

Elsevier, *Themanummer Islam* (Amsterdam, 2006).

Esposito, John L. and Voll, John, 'Islam and Democracy' *Humanities* (November/December 2001).

Esposito, John L. and Dalia Mogahed, *Who Speaks for Islam?: What a Billion Muslims Really Think* (Gallup Press, March 2008).

European Union, *Bestemming Europa: Immigratie en integratie in de Europese Unie* (Brussels 2005).

European Union, *Egypt: Country Strategy Paper* (Brussels, January 2007).

Frentop, Paul 'Er is iets mis met de islam' *HP/De Tijd* (5 October 2002).

Gallup Organization, *Special Report: Muslim World* (Princeton, 2006).

Gambill, Gary, 'Explaining the Arab Democracy Deficit' *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, www.meib.org/articles/0302_me.htm (February/March 2003).

Gause, Gregory, 'Can Democracy Stop Terrorism?' *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 84, nr. 5, pp. 62-76 (2005).

Gelvin, James, *The Modern Middle East: A History* (New York, 2005).

Gillespie, Richard and Whitehead, Laurence, 'European democracy Promotion in North Africa: Limits and Prospects', *Democratization* vol. 9, nr. 1, pp. 192-206 (2002).

Gillespie, Richard, A Political Agenda for Region Building? The EMP and Democracy Promotion in North Africa, Institute of European Studies (Berkeley, 2004).

Gray, John, *Al Qaeda and What it Means to be Modern* (London, 2003).

Hamzany, Amr and Brown, Nathan, *Can Egypt's Troubled Elections Produce a More Democratic Future?* Carnegie Policy Outlook (December 2005).

Hamzawy, Amr, *Challenges and Prospects for Political Liberalization in Egypt*, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace (21 April 2005).

Harris, Lee, *Civilization and its Enemies: The Next Stage of History* (New York, 2004).

Hassan, Riffit, 'Westen weet veel te weinig over islam' *NRC Handelsblad* (2 May 2006).

Hawthorne, Amy, *Middle Eastern Democracy: Is Civil Society the Answer?*, Carnegie Papers 44 (March 2004).

Heirman, Mark, *Oosterse dagen, Arabische nachten* (Antwerp, 2005).

Hossein-Zadeh, Ismael, 'The Muslim World and the West: The Roots of Conflict', *Arab Studies Quarterly* (Summer 2005).

Huntington, Samuel P., *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (London, 1997).

Ibrahim, Anwar, 'Universal Values and Muslim Democracy', *Journal of Democracy*, vol. 17, nr. 3 (July 2006).

Ibrahim, Saad Eddin, 'Reviving Middle Eastern Liberalism, *Journal of Democracy*, vol.14, nr. 14 (October 2003).

Inglehart, Ronald, *The World Views of Islamic Publics in Global Perspective* (Michigan, 2005).

International Crisis Group, *Islamism in North Africa II: Egypt's Opportunity* (2004).

International Crisis Group, *Egypt's Muslim Brothers: Cronfrontation or Integration?*, Middle East/North Africa Report No. 76 (June 2008).

International Crisis Group, *Reforming Egypt: In Search of a Strategy* (October 2005).

International Crisis Group, *Understanding Islamism* (March 2005).

International Crisis Group, *Israel/Hizbollah/Lebanon: Avoiding Renewed Conflict* (November 2006).

Isseroff, Ami, 'The Peace Process is Dead, Long Live the Peace Process', *MidEastWeb*, www.mideastweb.org/oslofailed.htm(17 January 2003).

Leiken, Robert and Brooke, Steve, 'The Moderate Muslim Brotherhood', *Foreign Affairs* (March/April 2007).

Low, David, *Expanding Democracy Around the World: Prospects and Challenges* (2003).

Kepel, Gilles, *The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West* (Harvard, 2004).

Keal, Paul (ed.), *Ethics and Foreign Policy* (Canberra, 1992).

Kienle, Eberhard, *A Grand Delusion: Democracy and Economic Reform in Egypt* (London and New York, 2000).

International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, *The Responsibility to Protect* (Ottowa, December 2001).

Jansen, Johannes J.G., 'De terreur van de brandende afgunst', *Internationale Spectator*, pp. 535-39 (November 2004).

Lagendijk, Joost and Wiersma Jan Marinus, *Sturen bij de moslimburen: Hoe Europa democratie kan bevorderen* (2007).

Lilla, Mark, *The Stillborn God: Religion, Politics, and the Modern West* (2007).

Lewis, Bernard, 'The Roots of Muslim Rage', *Atlantic Monthly* vol. 266, pp. 47-60 (September 1990).

Lewis, Bernard, *The Crisis of Islam: Holy War and Unholy Terror* (New York, 2003).

Lord Cromer, *Modern Egypt* (New York, 1908).

Luyendijk, Joris, *Het zijn net mensen* (Amsterdam, 2006).

Macron, Mary, *Arab Contributions to Civilization* (Washington, D.C., 1992).

Mamdani, Mahmood, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim* (New York, 2004).

Mansfield, Edward and Snyder, Jack, *Electing to Fight: Why Emerging Democracies Go to War* (MIT Press, 2005).

McCarthy, Justin, The Population of Palestine: Population History and Statistics of the Late Ottoman Period and the Mandate (New York, 1990).

Mernissi, Fatima, *Islam and Democracy: Fear of the Modern World* (New York, 1992).

Moadded, Mansoor (ed.), *Values and Perceptions of the Islamic and Middle Eastern Publics* (New York 2007).

Moaz, Asher, 'Can Judaism Serve as a Source of Human Rights?', *Tel Aviv University Law Faculty Papers* (2005).

Morris, Benny, *Righteous Victims, a History of the Zionist-Arab Conflict 1881-1999* (New York 2000).

Musharbash, Yassin, 'What Al-Qaida Really Wants', *Der Spiegel* on-line (12 August 2005).

NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Mediteranean Special Group, *The Year of Elections in the Middle East*, (Brussels, July 2006).

Netherlands Institute for Multiparty Democracy (NIMD), No Lasting Peace and Prosperity without Democracy and Human Rights: Harnessing Debates on the EU's *Future Financial Instruments* (July 2005).

Netherlands Scientific Council for Government Policy (WRR), Dynamism in Islamic Activism: Reference Points for Democratization and Human Rights (Amsterdam, 2006).

Neil, Clark, 'The Return of Arabophobia', *The Guardian* (20 October 2003).

Ottaway, Marina, 'Evaluating Middle East Reform: How Do We Know When It Is Significant?', *Carnegie Papers* (February 2005).

Oudheusden, Jan van, *De geschiedenis van het Midden-Oosten in een notendop* (2005).

Ray, James Lee, 'Does Democracy Cause Peace?', *Annual Review of Political Science*, pp. 27-46 (1998).

Research Institute for the CDA, *Investing in Integration: Reflections on Diversity and Commonality* (The Hague, 2003).

Ross, Dennis, *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace'* (New York, 2004).

Ross, Michael, 'Does Oil Hinder Democracy?', *World Politics* 53/3, pp. 325-61 (April 2001).

Roy, Sarah 'Why Peace Failed: An Oslo Autopsy' *Current History* (January 2002).

Pew Research Center, *The Great Divide: How Westerners and Muslims View Each Other* (Washington, D.C., 22 June 2006).

Pew Research Center, *Islamic Extremism: Common Concern for Muslim and Western Publics* (14 June 2005).

Pijpers, Alfred, *Een nieuw Europees engagement in het Midden-Oosten?* (Clingendael, Den Haag 2002).

PKN, *Het Israelisch-Palestijns-Arabisch conflict, bijdrage aan meningsvorming in de Protestantse Kerk in Nederland* (October 2007).

Rashdan, Mahmoud, 'Higher Education, Development and Democracy in the Arab World', *CSID Conferentie* (April 2005).

Rieffer, Barbara Ann and Mercer, Kristan, 'US Democracy Promotion: The Clinton and Bush Administrations', *Global Society*, vol. 19, nr. 4 (2005).

Said, Edward, Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World (New York, 1997).

Said, Edward W., *Orientalism* (New York, 1978).

Saikal, Amin 'The Middle East: Democracy and Authoritarianism', (speech on) International Conference "The Future of Islam, Democracy and Authoritarianism in the Muslim World" (Jakarta, 6-7 December 2004).

Schaefer, Udo, in Rene Derkse (ed.) *Islam: de onbegrepen religie* (Den Haag, 1988).

Shankland, David, *Islam and Society in Turkey* (1999).

Schaeps, Jep (ed.), *Oostersche Weelde: de Oriënt in Westerse kunst* (Leiden, 2005).

Scheffer, Paul, *Abel Herzberg Lezing* (2004).

Sen, Amartya, 'Democracy as a Universal Value', *Journal of Democracy,* vol. 10, nr. 3, pp. 3-17, (1999).

Shadid, W.A. and P. S. van Koningsveld, *De mythe van het islamitische gevaar: Hindernissen bij integratie* (Kampen, 1995, tweede druk).

Shaheen, Jack, *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People* (Northampton, 2001).

Shakman Hurd, Elizabeth, *Secularism and Democracy in the Middle East,* Paper Prepared for the Center for Study of Islam and Democracy, Fourth Annual Conference (16 May 2003).

Sharanksy, Natan and Dermer, Ron, The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror (New York, 2004).

Shavit, Ari, 'Reality Bites', *Ha'aretz* (10 January 2003).

Smith, Karen and Light, Margot, eds., *Ethics and Foreign Policy* (Cambridge, 2001).

Sowell, Thomas, *Waarom haten islamisten het Westen?, www.libertarian.nl*.

Stahn, Andreas and Hüllen, Vera van, Different Actors, Different Tools? Approaching EU and US Democracy Promotion in the Mediterranean and the Newly Independent States, Paper prepared for the European Union Studies Association (EUSA) Tenth Biennial International Conference (Montreal, Canada, 17-19 May 2007).

Taylor, Charles, *A secular Age*, (Cambridge and London 2007).

The Economist,'How Governments handle the news' (7 February 2008).

Udink, Betsy, *Allah en Eva* (Amsterdam, 2006).

United Nations, *Alliance of Civilizations*, (New York, 13 November 2006).

UNDP, Arab Human Development Report: Creating Opportunities for the Future 2002 (New York, 2002).

UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report: Building a Knowledge Society 2003* (New York, 2003).

UNDP, *Arab Human Development Report: Towards Freedom in the Arab World 2004* (New York, 2004).

UNDP, Arab Human Development Report: Towards the Rise of Women in the Arab World 2005 (New York, 2005).

Verstegen, Wybren, 'Al Andaloes', *Trouw* (12 November 2005).

Voll, John O., *Islam: Continuity and Change in the Modern World* (Syracuse, 1994).

Wetenschappelijke Raad voor het Regeringsbeleid, *Dynamiek in islamitisch activisme: Aankopingspunten voor democratisering en mensenrechten* (Den Haag, 2006).

Weyer, Robert van de, *De Islam en het Westen* (Aartselaar, 2002).

Wright, Lawrence, *The Looming Towers: Al-Qaeda and the Road to 9/11* (New York, 2006).

Yacoubian, Mona, *Promoting Middle East Democracy: European Initiatives* (Washington, D.C., October 2004).

Yacoubian, Mona, *Promoting Middle East Democracy II: Arab Initiatives* (Washington, D.C., May 2005).

Ye'or, Bat, *The Dhimmi: Jews and Christians Under Islam* (Cranbury, 1985).

Youngs, Richard, *Europe's Uncertain Pursuit of Middle East Reform*, Carnergie Paper No. 45 (June 2004).

Youngs, Richard, *Europe's Flawed Approach to Arab Democracy,* Centre for European Reform Essays (London, 2006).

Zakaria, Fareed, 'How to Wage War', *Newsweek* (21 April 2003).

Zakaria, Fareed, *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad* (New York, 2004).

Zogby, James, *What Arabs Think: Values, Beliefs and Political Concerns* (New York, 2003).

Crossing Bridges

This report is about promotion of the democratic constitutional State in the Middle East. The perception of the Western world is not very positive in the Middle East. Religion is seen as part of a confrontation strategy, rather than part of the dialogue. But there is a bridge. For both Christian Democrats and Muslims, religion is a source of inspiration for their lives and their political orientation. Our experience is that religion can be a very rich source for democracy. The question is which elements of our tradition and history are most productive for the dialogue.