

Democracy Promotion:
Its Origins and Development in American
Political Culture and Prospects for Success

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DEMOCRACY PROMOTION:
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CULTURE AND PROSPECTS FOR SUCCESS

HONORS THESIS

Presented to the Honors Committee of

Texas State University-San Marcos

In Partial Fulfillment of

the Requirements

For Graduation in the University Honors Program

By

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San Marcos, Texas

May 2008

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Thank you to the University Honors Program for giving me this opportunity.

I would also like to thank Dr. Leder and Dr. Grasso for all of their contributions; each of them had a huge part in the completion of this thesis.

Also, thank you to my friends and family who had to listen to endless conversations about my thesis.

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THESIS ABSTRACT:

This paper addresses the current political climate of America. American political culture is tied directly to democracy promotion and the religious character of this country has strongly influenced American policy. Democracy promotion as American policy is not a new development and the purpose of reviewing this subject is to better understand why this policy is tied directly to our own culture and sense of identity. This identity includes the belief that such a policy should be promoted worldwide. By reviewing the positives of such a policy, people begin to see the rationalization for promoting democracy worldwide, but in many ways limit the true reality of such a policy and its possible real-world consequences.

George Washington once said "Do not let anyone claim to be a true American if they ever attempt to remove religion from politics¹." From its very beginnings, it seems as if religion has a considerable influence on American politics and shaping the culture. America's political scene is undoubtedly influenced by people's morals. People's sense of morality appears to be directly inspired or founded by their religious beliefs and these shaped views as to what the nature of a just society or community is.

While American society is diverse, there appears to be a uniform belief in the right to self-governance. This may have its origins in America's revolutionary break with a monarchy but there is a connection between the desire for the self rule and America's religious tradition, both fostering a sense of unity. As Patrick Deneen says:

"The word 'religion' comes from the Latin *religare*, meaning 'to bind.' The idea that some kind of constitutive form of social cohesion is required in a democracy is at once an acknowledgement of democracy's valuation of the individual--reflected in the belief that each person's voice, and vote, counts the same as any other person's--and at the same time the reflection of deep concern that democracy requires 'binding' of that individual to the society and, further, requires a preliminary dedication by each individual to democracy as a fundamental condition of his or her individuality²."

Religious faith has come to mean faith in democracy in America. What this means is that a political culture emerged that was inspired by moral beliefs. Robert Kagan suggests

"The expansive, moralistic, militaristic tradition in American foreign policy is the hearty offspring of this marriage between Americans' driving ambitions and their overpowering sense of righteousness³."

This history of a sense of righteousness has given Americans the belief that their

¹ Kohut & Stokes; *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*; pg. 100

² Deneen; *Democratic Faith*; pg. 65

³ Kagan; *Neocon Nation: Neoconservatism, c. 1776*

government is superior to all other forms because of the supremacy of American values.

Democracy promotion becomes the goal because it attempts to alter all other forms of government and tends to hold that its ideals and tenets are universal and valid for everyone around the world. Democratic governments aggressively pursue altering the opinions of the entire world. In doing this, democracy promotion assumes everyone else's system is wrong and/or inferior--possibly even immoral--and should yield to America's political beliefs. This government appears to be the best solution due to its pursuit of human rights and its capitalist economic system. Paul T. McCartney writes

“The American style of foreign policy reflects an ideological and cultural interpretation of both the nation and its place in the world, one that posits that the United States enjoys universal significance because it is the archetype of virtue and the locomotive of human progress⁴.”

It is my contention that these views stem directly from deeply held beliefs.

In *Democratic Faith*, Patrick J. Deneen argues:

"Our schools in bringing together those of different nationalities, languages, traditions, and creeds, in assimilating them together upon the basis of what is common and public in endeavor and achievement, are performing an infinitely significant religious work. They are promoting the social unity out of which in the end genuine religious unity must grow ... and articulated consciousness of the religious significance of democracy in education, and of education and democracy⁵."

The American populace believes, then that there is a divine plan behind their national identity and their own political system. This is, in essence, the basis behind American democracy promotion throughout the world.

Democracy promotion has its roots in religious faith due to the shared commitment of both saving people and bringing them closer to the best way of life.

⁴ McCartney: *American Nationalism and US Foreign Policy from September 11 to the Iraq War*; pg. 401

⁵ Deneen: *Democratic Faith*; pg. 64

Robert Kagan notes

“More worrying still was America’s ‘messianic’ impulse, what Hans Morgenthau called America’s ‘nationalistic universalism,’ which claimed ‘for one nation and one state the right to impose its own valuations and standards of action upon all other nations.’ He and other realists warned in the late 1940s and 1950s—and Henry Kissinger repeated the warning in the 1960s and 1970s—that Americans must give up their ‘dream of remaking the world in their own image’ and rein in their ‘limitless aspirations for power,’ lest in a nuclear age they bring the whole world to ruin⁶.”

This sense of superiority is translated into policy.

American political culture, was and still remains committed to the belief that we are a righteous country. The very tenets and development of democracy in this nation makes this country often insistent on its unique place or mission in the world. McCartney says

“Embedded in Americans’ belief in their nation’s universal significance is a sense of mission, which sometimes emerges as a crusading mentality. This sense of destiny also reflects American exceptionalism, the conviction that the United States is qualitatively different from—and better than—other states⁷.”

There is, however, a strong sense among Americans that this nation is distinct and quite extraordinary. Despite differences between presidential candidates or political parties, all American policy seems to be committed to keeping America strong and promote freedom elsewhere. Kagan states:

“Today’s argument takes place within the narrow parameters of a common paradigm. Both sides share a belief in American primacy, including military primacy. Both sides have no difficulty agreeing with the statement of John Kerry during the last presidential campaign that ‘America must always be the world’s paramount military power, but we can magnify our power through alliances.’ When Barack Obama

⁶ Kagan: *Neocon Nation: Neoconservatism*, c. 1776

⁷ McCartney; *American Nationalism and US Foreign Policy from September 11 to the Iraq War*; pg. 403

talks about foreign policy, he evokes not Chomsky but Kennedy and insists America must be the 'leader of the free world.' It must lead the way 'in battling immediate evils and promoting the ultimate good.' Its 'larger purpose in the world is to promote the spread of freedom.'⁸”

Both sides of the political spectrum seem to have one thing in common and that is that America should defend freedom.

⁸ Kagan: *Neocon Nation: Neoconservatism*, c. 1776

THE HISTORY:

Puritanism:

The history of American politics is often viewed from the standpoint of the Puritans. Frequently, politics is associated with the Puritans because of their deep religiosity combined with their emphasis on self-government. In *Religion and Politics in America*, the authors write,

“The Puritans bequeathed to Americans strong civic institutions, a sense of national mission, and a reformist impulse that continues to shape American society and political culture⁹.”

Their ideas of morality strongly influenced their ideas on how to govern society. Much of American political culture today is derived from Puritan doctrine.

George McKenna argues in *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism*, that the Puritans were "the founders of America's political culture and rhetoric" and that their Protestantism emphasized political participation. The community was the center of social and political life¹⁰. Many of the Puritan emigrants were, in fact, families and this resulted in a desire among these families to have some sort of social order that unified and strengthened both their society and family unit. People around the nation started to create a society and a home in this country in which to raise their families. A formal ordering of society was natural and necessary to help identify and protect the community.

McKenna characterizes American patriotism in the context of a religious birth of a people with a unified mission. This unified pursuit of a commonwealth is thought to be the very root of American politics and, in general, the belief in a set of principles or guidelines that all should follow. There is no doubt that these guidelines were shaped by

⁹ Fowler: *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*; pg. 5

¹⁰ McKenna: *The Puritan Origins of American Patriotism*; pg. 4

their beliefs of right and wrong. These Puritans translated their idea of doctrine and virtuous living into a government with policies and procedures. Puritans believed freedom does not mean doing whatever one wanted but meant the ability to do right¹¹.

In John Winthrop's famous 1630 speech on board the ship *Arabella*, he suggested that the Puritan settlements in the New World be "like a city upon a hill, the eyes of all people ... upon us¹²." This country was to begin a new life with a new government that would prove to the more powerful nations that America would rise to success with colonists participating in the political process. Winthrop's speech and sheer enthusiasm for self government suggest these people wanted to serve as the model for the rest of the world by doing what they believed was ethical and just for everyone. They knew the right way to live and govern because the city would serve as an example to others. For the Puritans, this nation was a promised land with a providential destiny¹³.

So Americans have been united through the use of stated missions or the belief in the overall purpose of this nation. This purpose is to establish an example for the rest of the world and this example, though rooted in religion, evolved to promote our tenets or governmental system based on democracy. According to David F. Prindle,

"the basic conclusion to be derived from the work of several generations of scholars is that Puritan theology, for all its severe aspects, evolved in a direction that by 1776 had made it a moral underpinning for democratic theory¹⁴."

Democracy promotion proposes a unified mission and a commonwealth of people, much like the forms of Protestantism found in early America. The very tenets of Puritan government spawned beliefs such as these because Puritans and democracy

¹¹ Fowler: *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*; pg. 7

¹² Deneen: *Democratic Faith*; pg. 59

¹³ Fowler: *Religion and Politics in America: Faith, Culture, and Strategic Choices*; pg. 6

¹⁴ Prindle: *The Paradox of Democratic Capitalism: Politics and Economies in American Thought*; pg. 16

promotion supporters both want to have a positive influence in molding the world. This messianic impulse drives many to rally behind democracy promotion as a moral mission.

The American Revolution:

This Puritan political passion has Protestant origins and this is what has helped to shape the most basic codes of conduct that create American political culture. Seymour Martin Lipset describes this perspective as "an American Creed":

"Born out of revolution, the United States is a country organized around an ideology which includes a set of dogmas about the nature of a good society. The revolutionary ideology which became the American Creed is liberalism in its eighteenth and nineteenth century meanings¹⁵."

America's political culture rests primarily on the views that America's ascendancy to greatness means that it is the evolution of man and hence the most just and natural. There is a sense of a righteous mission to spread this greatness. This "American Creed" is much like a large community with shared values and includes the idea that this community is virtuous and its political system is based on a collective sense of righteousness and ultimately, the best way of doing things. The political system must be the best because it reflects the majority of the community. Michael Goodhart describes communities as "morally self-originating" since a "community is morally necessary because it creates and defines itself as a moral community¹⁶." A community comes together to define what they believe should be the political guidelines based on their common sense of morality.

In the American Revolution the community was much like a morality fight between the British and American colonists:

"...but the common people, those who protested British taxation in the streets, seem to have gained resolution from a deep Protestant tradition, a set of religious values recently reinforced during the Great Awakening. For ordinary men and women, the American Revolution

15 Lipset; *American Exceptionalism: A Double-Edged Sword*; p. 1

16 Goodhart; *Democracy as Human Rights*; pg. 95

may have seemed a kind of morality play, a drama that transformed complicated issues of representation and sovereignty into a stark conflict between American good and British evil¹⁷."

So the revolution was based on religious symbols and connotations which were needed to mobilize a people's spirit for political action.

The political culture of Americans derived strength from notions of public virtue and political writings with a strong moral component¹⁸. America, with a relatively large literate population, began to draw closer together through pamphlets and protests against the British. This united front is in many ways why Americans eventually gained their freedom and why they stood united against a political system they perceived as oppressive. But to view this break with Britain as a radical change is to ignore the most basic and natural "outgrowth of the British constitutional tradition¹⁹." Britain's ideas of government inspired the very ones Americans believed they were defending. However, in the New World the people were largely middle class and they would not accept being subjected to the oppressive rule they sought to escape. Divisive religious issues from the motherland were transplanted to the New World.

Also prevalent during this period were religious movements. These movements occurred outside of the political arena but had a dramatic influence on the politics and even the practice of American democracy of the times²⁰. Many people began to view politics with an almost fanatical fervor. This emotion stemmed from their religious involvement and rested largely on ideas about how to organize themselves politically. Evangelical revivals and other religious revivals went head to head denouncing each

17 Breen, Divine, Fredrickson & Williams; *America: Past and Present*; pg. 138

18 Breen, Divine, Fredrickson & Williams; *America: Past and Present*; pg. 133

19 Pestritto; *Woodrow Wilson and the Roots of Modern Liberalism*; pg. 58

20 Wilentz; *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*; pg. 265

other and their sectarian beliefs about sin, giving rise to intense displays of emotion. This period was called the Second Great Awakening and it lasted until the 1840s²¹.

There was still a great sense of unity despite the differences in religions in America. This unity came through the shared experience of political activism against the British. Independence seekers were successful because they were able to come together and "define their national community...and created a relatively weak national government²²" to combat the oppressive British.

21 Wilentz: *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*; pg. 265-267

22 Faragher, Buhl, Czitrom & Armitage: *Out of Many: A History of the American People*; pg. 134

Manifest Destiny:

America was unique, compared to areas of Europe, because it also was a society in which rich and aristocratic elements were never dominant and the influence of the average American remained very important in the eighteenth century²³. The average American was influenced more often than not by emotional appeals derived largely from religious or nationalistic (with strong religious undertones) sentiment. Religion gave many the justification of a political system that deemed man, eventually all men, a smaller version of God in his own world and his politics. Fareed Zakaria has noted,

"Only in the late 1940s did most Western countries become full-fledged democracies, with universal adult suffrage. But one hundred years earlier, by the late 1840s, most of them had adopted important aspects of constitutional liberalism—the rule of law, private property rights, and increasingly, separated powers and free speech and assembly²⁴."

This idea of a common people with God-given rights was widespread throughout the United States. There was a mission for Americans who believed they were unique.

These rights were limited to a few, but the idea of these important rights proved to be the justification for America as a pioneering country, determined to change the continent. These ideas of governance and expansion also began to be the basis for political thought in much of America.

The idea of expanding democratic principles to others, primarily the expansion of a *civilized* government, came later when the idea that America's vast frontier should be harnessed and tamed. This notion of the expansion of liberal principles began to spread. John L. O' Sullivan coined the phrase "Manifest Destiny" in a New York *Morning News* article:

23 Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 49-50

24 Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 20

"Away, away with all these cobweb tissues of rights of discovery, exploration, settlement...[The American claim] is by the right of our manifest destiny to overspread and to possess the whole of the continent which Providence has given us for the development of the great experiment of liberty and federative self government entrusted to us²⁵"

Basically, the argument was that America's expansionist policies were its God-given right and that backward or uneducated people would eventually benefit from this²⁶. All of those who did not benefit from these rights were still thought to need such a civilization. So Americans had to expand in order to ensure American civilization would prosper and extend these rights to others. The advancement of American civilization would benefit all.

There was also an economic element to these expansionist policies. Farmers and politicians needed to rally the American people in order to secure more land, more products and essentially more markets. To do this, all people must be willing to promote their way of life and basically their style of government. Expansion of ideas and products became the motto of the United States.

This Westward expansion had always had a deeply religious tone, but with the advent of language such as *Manifest Destiny*, America came to be viewed as a leading nation, one that had been chosen by God. This religious fervor behind the politics of the United States is rooted in the religious revivals that continued all around the world²⁷. The early eighteenth century Great Awakening rejuvenated the religious zeal in America and preachers would travel to even remote areas of America to convert others²⁸. These

25 Berkin, Brinkley, Carson, Cherny, Divine, Foner, Morris, Wood: *American Voices: A History of the United States*; pg. 97

26 Armitage, Buhle, Czitrom & Faragher: *Out of Many: A History of the American People*; pg. 256

27 Friedman; *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth*; pg. 70

²⁸ Cromartie: *Religion and Politics in America: A Conversation*; pg. 7

revivals encouraged the belief that God's will and God's work, were to be played out in America.

America had to be the model for the rest of the world and if this meant annexing portions of the continent that were already inhabited, then so be it. John L. Sullivan, the man who coined the phrase "Manifest Destiny," painted the picture of foreign governments trying to stop the annexation of Texas in the mid-nineteenth century²⁹. He used language like "chosen people" and "on God's side" to rally support and once again bring together people through religious pleas for political purposes. Emotional appeals worked to bring about a political change. Americans already believed they were special and now all they needed was this nationalistic spirit to bring them closer together.

29 Divine, Breen, Fredrickson & Williams: *America Past and Present*; pg. 345

Monroe Doctrine:

The Monroe Doctrine further demonstrates the American belief that the United States should be the dominant power in the Western Hemisphere. As Sean Wilentz notes, the politicians began

"... formulating the basic principles of what became known as the Monroe Doctrine--accepting the balance of power in Europe and British dominance on the high seas while committing the British to accept American dominance of the Western Hemisphere³⁰."

Although this mandate does not appear to be religious in nature, this doctrine has real implications for democracy promotion and hence American culture. Here we find that the United States has now proclaimed in official policy, its right to influence and control certain portions of the world. This reflected American political culture suffused with the religious belief that this nation was unique and had a moral mission to guide the world.

Behind this assertion that the United States is a hegemon in the region, there is also another contention; the United States has a just and wide-reaching mission. By instituting a policy that proclaims it has an inherent right over other nations or peoples, the United States has proclaimed that it may do as it wishes, where it wishes. The superiority of American beliefs is assumed and it is natural that these beliefs are universal and should spread, enhanced and be received openly around the world. The Monroe doctrine officially stated America's right to alter other peoples' governments and do so by simply stating and defending its moral obligation to lead others.

This proclamation has some very interesting implications. Why would American leaders believe that the United States had the right to control others? This may go back to the religious implications of a "God's people" who have a unified mission and a goal

30 Wilentz: *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*; pg. 241.

that all should follow. By asserting dominance, the United States is asserting righteousness.

Civil War:

Woodrow Wilson, a president credited for much of the democracy promotion pursued today, wrote extensively about the history of America. To Wilson, the Civil War was the high point of the progress of America. Without it, strongly opposing morals may have escalated and altered our political system that could have created nations within a nation. Our very view of a cohesive society would not hold the same strength as it does today.

The Civil War did away with a fractured society dependent on local government that ultimately evolved into the national unity of the United States³¹. The great conflicts throughout the history of America, Wilson argued, created the framework for American progress. Conflict led to (at least in theory) a unity of ideas.

However, this great conflict often invoked God as on the side of the South as well as on the side of the Union. Each believed that their side was the right one and that God was behind them. However, much of the emotional intensity derived from religion (due to the Second Great Awakening revivals) occurred in the South. These Southern revivals challenged existing structures of authority, making violent opposition to the North a natural transition³². In the song the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*, religious images were invoked to rally fighters against the evil side opposed to the liberty of man³³. Similar images and themes were used by Southerners to portray themselves as upholding God's law by exercising authority over slaves due to the slaveholders' assertion of their supremacy³⁴. Both believed that their views and ways of life were backed by God and

31 Pestritto: *Woodrow Wilson and the Roots of Modern Liberalism*; p. 99-100

32 Wilentz: *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*; pg. 267-269

33 Friedman: *The Moral Consequences of Economic Growth*; pg. 71

34 Wilentz: *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*: pg. 268

that they were the only ones living according to His plan. This sense of superiority characterized the Civil War culture. America (no matter what part) was absolutely right.

Unionists believed that this nation must remain committed to morality and freedom. This was a moral crusade:

“...when World War I came, Roosevelt and others of his generation regarded it as America’s second great moral crusade. The Civil War had been the first. ‘As our fathers fought with slavery and crushed it, in order that it not seize and crush them,’ Roosevelt declared, ‘so we are called on to fight new forces³⁵.’

The theme of a moral crusade during the civil war is a common theme in American political culture.

One result of the Civil War was that the idea of secession was dishonored and the nation was transformed³⁶. With the failure of the Confederacy, the democratic United States government persevered. The new nation that emerged from the war was one dedicated to the rebuilding of America and the renewed efforts to bring together a nation united by tenets of freedom. The southerners' restrictive view of freedom that allowed only white slaveholders a say was abolished (legally). In its wake a society committed, at least in theory, to the tenets of freedom emerged.

35 Kagan: *Neocon Nation: Neoconservatism, c. 1776*

36 Wilentz: *The Rise of American Democracy: Jefferson to Lincoln*; pg. 790

The Sixties:

In the 1960s, democratic principles began to flourish. People everywhere and of every gender, nationality, religion etc. started to demand that the theory of equality be played out in reality. During this period many people began to insist that everyone deserved and should demand equality. This renewed democratic emphasis flourished and took hold in America. The counter-culture that developed sought to change society and through many of the political tools that American democracy provided.

The new culture also relied on a different form of religiosity often through spirituality found in a variety of religions such as Eastern, Native American or the rediscovering of an "authentic Jesus³⁷." But the religious character of politics is what is remarkable about the time. Here we see determined student politicians who believed in changing the world with an almost religious like zeal. What is also interesting is the cohesion of values that emerged during this time. This counter culture embraced what were seen as universal values with a call to practice what they preach and to do good works even if it meant getting harmed in protests or rallies³⁸. Those in this counter culture committed to these democratic principles and invoked them frequently to change their society, just as Puritans had shaped their own society. This counter culture appealed to well established democratic norms present in American political culture. As religion changed the America of the past, now, the values of democracy were held with intense religious fervor.

The counter culture produced a backlash from the older generation, who also believed that politics and religion were essential to a good society. The older generation

37 Borstelmann, Jones, May, Ruiz & Wood: *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*; pg. 606

38 Barber: *A Passion For Democracy*; pg. 208

believed that the very values they fought for and that America believed in were losing their hold on their children. The conservative response illustrated that the "United States remained one of the most religious of industrialized societies, and conservative churchgoers emphasized obedience to authorities³⁹."

39 Jones, Wood, Borstemann, May & Ruiz: *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*; pg. 61

Kennedy:

John Fitzgerald Kennedy was the first Catholic president. In fact, religion almost seemed to be Kennedy's downfall in the election. Many people were concerned that their own American civil religion based on the constitution could be jeopardized by a president who took orders from the Pope⁴⁰.

Kennedy's presidency was a period of intense activity by the civil rights movement⁴¹. Demands for inclusion of all in American democracy were widespread. In his 1961 speech addressed to the American public and to the rest of the world, Kennedy proclaimed the willingness of America to "pay any price, bear any burden...to assure the survival and the success of liberty⁴²." Once again another United States' president proclaimed his undying commitment to the values of America's own political system. Kennedy was speaking about the promoting America's underlying political culture.

Kennedy was a president who believed that the Third World's call for self-determination should be recognized⁴³. In doing this Kennedy was asserting that these people should be able to determine their own government and that liberty meant that the people were involved in this process. The next step was to create policies that actively encouraged liberalization.

Democracy promotion became actual American policy during Kennedy's administration. Kennedy's Alliance for Progress program was designed to combat Communist or other revolutionary forces in Latin America by providing assistance to

⁴⁰ Cromartie: *Religion and Politics in America*; pg. 90

⁴¹ Nun: *Democracy*; pg. 68

⁴² Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy At Home and Abroad*; pg. 268

⁴³ Jones, Wood, Borstelmann, May, Ruiz; *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*; pg. 591

military or police forces⁴⁴. The aim of the program was to reduce poverty and inequality while supporting democratic governments favorable to the United States and its goals.

⁴⁴ Columbia Encyclopedia: *Alliance For Progress*

Carter:

Jimmy Carter became the President in 1976 with the proclamation "I will never lie to you⁴⁵." In part, Carter prevailed in the presidential campaign by emphasizing his moral character. Again morality served as a strong influence in the government and democracy promotion was championed again in many of Carter's policies.

Many rallied to this new president because of his proclaimed undying commitment to being a righteous president. Carter often spoke publicly "of his evangelical convictions⁴⁶." He was not shy about speaking frequently of his religion and of his moral duties influenced by his religion and he once spoke of his ethical obligation:

"I have never detected nor experienced any conflict between God's will and my political duty. It's obvious that when I violate one, at the same time I violate the other⁴⁷."

Carter's stance was to embrace moral principles in guiding foreign policy. This meant that he became committed to "ending racial discrimination at home and the promotion of human rights abroad⁴⁸." Carter remained committed to his moral principles and even issued human rights reports yearly⁴⁹. He used this moral posture to encourage treaties such as the Panama Canal and even cut military aid to Brazil and Argentina because of their repression of their own people⁵⁰. Throughout Carter's term, he encouraged nations to adopt democratic principles and to use democracy as a model.

Morality and human rights were hailed as chief components of American policy

45 Berkin, Brinkley, Carson, Cherny, Divine, Foner, Morris, Wood: *American Voices: A History of the United States*; pg. 818

46 Kohut & Stokes: *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*; pg. 101

47 Carter: Remarks to Members of the Southern Baptist Brotherhood Commission; Atlanta Georgia

48 Jones, Wood, Borstelmann, May, Ruiz; *Created Equal: A Social and Political History of the United States*; pg. 627

49 Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy At Home and Abroad*; pg. 258

50 Berkin, Brinkley, Carson, Cherny, Divine, Foner, Morris, Wood: *American Voices: A History of the United States*; pg. 820-822

and American foreign policy under Carter was driven by a desire to promote democracy around the world.

Reagan Era:

Reagan's administration also invoked morality to gain favor against the Soviet Union. Reagan called the Soviet Union, "the evil empire" and warned of its campaign to eventually dominate the entire world⁵¹. We see again a religious invocation of good and evil portrayed in Reagan's comments about the Soviet Union. Reagan appealed to American political culture with his pronounced morals of good and evil. The presence of a common enemy, one thought to be atheistic and void of ethics, again united American politics aimed at halting communism.

In Reagan's second inaugural speech, he used the idea of America, a land of religion and inherent morality, with the responsibility to spread its democracy and ideals around the world:

"may He continue to hold us close as we fill the world with our sound-sound in unity, affection, and love--one people under God, dedicated to the dream of freedom that He has placed in the human heart, called upon to pass that dream on to a waiting and hopeful world⁵²."

This "dream" could be understood as our political mission. We focused on governments that were threatening and had a different political mission. Reagan "imagined a Soviet Union that was politically and economically free⁵³." Here the idea that democracy would be the only ethically just system for everyone is found frequently in his comments about the Soviet Union. American political culture reacts strongly against perceived enemies to democracy.

Reagan gained support throughout his term because he often spoke of rebuilding

⁵¹ Collin: *Transforming America: Politics and Culture in the Reagan Years*; pg. 53

⁵² Deneen: *Democratic Faith*; pg. 59

⁵³ Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy At Home and Abroad*; pg. 262

“American power and prestige in the world” as well restoring “America's greatness⁵⁴.”

Many rallied once more around the tenet that the American way was the only right way to live and that others needed to emulate America. Our governmental system replicated would ensure other nations’ greatness as well.

⁵⁴ Berkin, Brinkley, Carson, Cherny, Divine, Foner, Morris, Wood: *American Voices: A History of the United States*; pg. 824

Overall Themes:

So exactly what is it about America that makes this nation unique in regard to how it actively promotes its unified mission around the world? This belief in absolute rights and wrongs is evident in American politics or at least forms the very foundation of our guiding principles. Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes point to the principles and zeal underlying democracy promotion:

"Indeed, Americans' zeal for democracy and capitalism rivals the fervency of their religiosity. For many Americans, these values are what the United States is all about. As the twin pillars of the American way of life, they define America's nature; they are its cultural legacy. To Americans, capitalism and democracy are universal norms that others would be well served to emulate⁵⁵."

Although these universal norms are much like the religious principles America inherited early on, they have evolved to include people who aren't particularly religious. Colin

Kidd notes:

"The former strain of nationalism is common to everyone in the US: Americans from all sorts of racial and religious backgrounds can celebrate freedom and democracy, the constitutional separation of church and state, the guarantee of equal civil rights for all citizens, and the bountiful prosperity of the American Way of Life. This is the 'American Creed...'⁵⁶"

This same zeal derived from and inspired by religion is an important cultural element of American politics and is tied to democracy promotion. American politics assumes our democracy is the future of the world.

Throughout American history, Americans have been called to a common mission. This common mission became policy at the beginning of the twentieth century. David

Gelertner notes:

⁵⁵ Kohut and Stokes: *America against the World: How We are Different and Why we are Disliked*; p. 120

⁵⁶ Kidd: *My God Was Bigger Than His*

“During Wilson’s administration, Americanism accomplished a fundamental transition. It had always included the idea of a divine mission. But was the mission? Until the closing of the frontier in the last decade of the 19th century, the mission was to populate the continent. With the frontier closed, the mission became ‘Americanism for the whole world⁵⁷.’”

Democracy promotion is a product of the evolution of American political culture.

Religious connotations in our language of “mission and divine purpose” characterize

American society and its receptiveness towards such a policy. This religious language is

also in our political institutions and forms the basis of American values and much of its

foreign policy.

⁵⁷ Gelernter: *Americanism---and its Enemies*; pg. 47

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION'S CHALLENGES:

What shapes the political culture of the United States? How can promoting democracy in foreign lands alter our perceptions and execution of foreign policy?

The word "democracy" comes from a Greek word meaning "the rule of the people"⁵⁸. But this description fails to explain exactly what democratic governments are.

Benjamin R. Barber says democracy is defined as the following:

"Politically, we may define democracy as a regime/culture/civil society/government in which we make (will) common decisions, choose common conduct, and create or express common values in the practical domain of our lives in an ever-changing context of conflict of interests and competition for power--a setting, moreover, where there is no agreement on prior goods or certain knowledge about justice or right and where we must proceed on the premise of the base equality both of interests and of the interested"⁵⁹.

In addition, Robert Dahl identifies democracy as a political system that satisfies the following

requirements:

- "1. effective participation (where can be made known)"
- "2. equality in voting (equal opportunity and must be counted)"
- "3. gaining enlightened understanding (opportunities to learn)"
- "4. exercising final control over agenda (choose matters to focus on)"
- "5. inclusion of adults (have full rights of citizens)"⁶⁰

Democracy can be a vague and differing term largely based on who is describing it. Making the spread of democracy as one of the most important goals in foreign policy further complicates the matter. Since different people hold different value systems, their political systems may reflect these values. The American experience has been one of

⁵⁸ Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 13

⁵⁹ Barber: *A Passion For Democracy*; pg. 20

⁶⁰ Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 37-38

religious fervor and idealistic politics. The political culture of any nation is based largely on how that culture and its leaders choose to validate or discredit whatever pieces of information fit into whatever course of action its leaders are trying to pursue⁶¹. For Americans this means that America holds the moral high-ground in the world.

⁶¹ Nau; *Why Do We Fight Over Foreign Policy*

THE CASE FOR PROMOTING DEMOCRACY:

Natan Sharansky argues for the importance of freedom in his book "The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror." Sharansky states that freedom prevents wars and conflict among nations and people. He contends that basic clashes and conflicts are rooted in the outcry for freedom. For conflict to occur, the assumption is some form of discrimination or oppression is occurring.

Sharansky also believes that September 11th was the result of a longstanding American Foreign Policy to remain committed to 'stability' even with regions committed to non-democratic policies/practices and to countries that blatantly reject human rights⁶². This means that remaining friendly or turning a blind eye to undemocratic regions is the very reason why we suffer attacks and skirmishes; it is necessary to deal with the consequences of the lack of pre-emptive involvement before another September 11th takes place. Here Sharansky places the blame on America for not promoting and actively installing democracies all over the world. By allowing autocracies to continue, fanaticism is born. Our continued existence is based directly on promoting countries with similar peaceful ideals and democratic institutions to combat conflict legally. The enemy is the nation that does not share our commitment to freedom.

Sharansky argues for democracy and believes linking economic and/or foreign policies with other nations that support some sort of democratic expansion is the key for the security of democratic regions⁶³. Sharansky believes ultimately this will make the world safer. By ensuring that nations that want something from us, give us something in return, is how we could ensure our safety and future. If a nation wants to work or trade

⁶² Sharansky: *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror*; pg. 14

⁶³ Sharansky: *The Case for Democracy: The Power of Freedom to Overcome Tyranny and Terror*; pg. 13

with us, we must charge the price of making the pursuit of democratic policies a necessity *beforehand* in that nation for the world's security and overall easement of external pressures.

Security is also thought to be given to the individual citizen of a democratic society. Democracies are by definition, systems in which political rights are guaranteed to the citizens of the government⁶⁴. Rights promised by democracies (at least in theory) may include the right to vote, public redress, as well as various property rights. However these rights themselves are based on demands by people. Barber says, “rights arise out of a politics of liberty, and liberty itself is a product of social struggle⁶⁵.” The idea is that democracy is necessary because in some way people are struggling against their government. The lack of liberty suggests that there is a prerequisite of a deficit of security for its citizens. Therefore, it may be assumed that only democracy may secure such rights.

In addition to one's own security, democratic countries have been known to have less conflict internally than non-democratic countries and typically democracies have less civil dissension and the institutions that do develop, help resolve many internal civil rights problems as well⁶⁶. Institutions like treaties and alliances as well as civil liberties are hailed as the component and even motivator of peace. Democracies encourage the creation of institutions and organized interest groups because civilians are heard through such institutions and typically need these institutions to be the negotiator for rights.

Democracies also tend to remain friendly with other democracies and these friendly relations reduce the likelihood of war and violent opposition between

⁶⁴ Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 49

⁶⁵ Barber: *A Passion for Democracy*; pg. 28

⁶⁶ Ignatieff: *Democratic Providentialism*.

democracies⁶⁷. Most democracies do not engage in violent behavior with one another. Between 1945 and 1989 no democratic state fought another democratic state in the thirty-four international wars during this period, but this is not to say that democratic states did not fight non-democratic states⁶⁸. Countries with similar goals are assumed to be less violent in their relations because they are working within the same system for the same goals, typically resting on the state's survival. This very survival is based on an economic and political system based on a cooperating global community. Peace tends to be more profitable for democratically governed states. It would seem absurd for states that depend on one another and their products to engage in a fiscally dangerous war. Today monarchies, as well as, fascism and communism have less popularity because of their outdated and counter-productive nature⁶⁹. Capitalist states drive the world economy and these states typically have democratic policies.

Democracies also tend to prevent the rise of brutal and inhuman governments such as autocracies⁷⁰. Dahl observes:

"Throughout all recorded history, including our own times, leaders driven by megalomania, paranoia, self interest, ideology, nationalism, religious belief, convictions of innate superiority, or sheer emotion and impulse have exploited the state's exceptional capacities for coercion and violence to serve their own ends. The human costs of despotic rule rival those of disease, famine, and war⁷¹."

In addition, autocracies are associated with violence. Autocracies are typically aggressive in nature and "pose the greatest danger of war⁷²." Autocracies limit the rights of their citizens and usually come to and remain in power through force. Preventing such

⁶⁷ McFaul: *Democracy Promotion as a World Value*.

⁶⁸ Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 57

⁶⁹ Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 13

⁷⁰ Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 46

⁷¹ Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 46

⁷² Waltz: *Man the State and War: A Theoretical Analysis*; pg. 8

forms of governance, and instituting a more peaceful one, such as democracy, may in actuality prevent inhuman acts against civilians or the entire world.

In addition, the richest countries in the world also happen to be the oldest democracies in the world⁷³. At the end of the twentieth century ideas began to change about whether autocracies were the only affluent states; now people hail democracies as the most affluent largely due to their market economies⁷⁴. There appears to be little doubt that capitalism is the key to acquiring wealth in today's global economy. Wealth is the motivator and variable often present in democracies due to the expansive system of capitalism. The wealth of capitalist states may be due to the promotion of education in democratic countries as well as effective communication networks and legal systems to ensure private property and contractual laws⁷⁵. Whatever it is, there is no doubt that capitalism offers the means to acquire more wealth and this system is associated with democratic states.

Democracy promotion has become one of the leading elements of the George W. Bush administration since the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. In Bush's second inaugural speech, he stated:

"it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world."

This view is said to be based on his judgment that:

"The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world⁷⁶."

⁷³ McFaul: *Democracy Promotion as a World Value*

⁷⁴ Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 58-59

⁷⁵ Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 59

⁷⁶ See George W. Bush's Second Inaugural Speech

The administration has several times stressed the importance of spreading democracy to rid the world of terrorists and injustice. George W. Bush in his *National Security Strategy* of the United States of 2002 argues that liberty and justice are right for everyone everywhere⁷⁷. In addition, Bush has spoken frequently of his faith in God: "I don't see how you can be president...without a relationship with the Lord⁷⁸." Somehow these two themes, democracy promotion and the morals inspired by religion seem to influence his politics. Bush often speaks of his political mission as a humane mission and that it is the duty of Americans to advocate and promote the development of liberty:

"The survival of liberty in our land increasingly depends on the success of liberty in other lands. The best hope for peace in our world is the expansion of freedom in all the world⁷⁹."

However, this mission or religious language is not new to America. Paul T. McCartney writes:

"Both the blending of national identity with U.S. foreign policy in Bush's rhetoric and his manner of enunciating U.S. foreign policy goals in lofty and frequently moralistic terms were consistent with established tradition⁸⁰."

Michael Ignatieff calls this "democratic providentialism" that proposes there is a moral rationale behind democracy growth and many believe this is God's work⁸¹. This moral high-ground has been the justification for policies promoting democracy in various places around the world. In the minds of many, democracy seems to be the only means to stop injustice and promote security.

The Bush administration has been adamant in its commitment to this policy and in its view of democracy's universality. In fact, Kohut and Stokes argue that many

⁷⁷ See page 3 of the National Security Strategy of the United States of America; September 2002

⁷⁸ Kohut & Stokes: *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*; pg. 101

⁷⁹ See Second Inaugural Speech of George W. Bush

⁸⁰ McCartney: *American Nationalism and US Foreign Policy from September 11 to the Iraq War*; pg. 400

⁸¹ Ignatieff; *Democratic Providentialism*

Muslims believe and even want democracy to work in their nations:

"Moreover despite soaring anti-Americanism and substantial support for Islamic fundamentalism, there is a considerable appetite in the Muslim world for certain democratic freedoms. People in these countries place a high value on freedom of expression, freedom of the press, multiparty systems and equal treatment under the law⁸²."

Democracy is often depicted as the only means to save mankind and end injustices to the weak and give a voice to the voiceless. This is the underlying theory behind democracy promotion; that, in fact, we are helping those who do not have the tools to fight for themselves and may need stronger yet more liberal governments to combat the corruption in their own governments.

Democracy has also gained increasing acceptance internationally due to its wide appeal and seemingly fair approach to governance. In *Democracy Promotion as a World Value*, Michael McFaul argues:

"First democracy as an international norm is stronger today than ever, and democracy is widely regarded as an ideal system of government. Democracy also has near-universal appeal among people of every ethnic group, every religion, and every region around the world⁸³."

McFaul says that democracy has not just been championed by the United States and that more and more regions and countries are making this form of government their goal due to the failure of alternative governments of fascist and Communist origin. Kohut and Stokes argue that democracy is the future and that its form of governing is widely accepted:

"After decades of struggle, democracy is now universally embraced in most parts of the world. According to numerous polls, Americans overwhelmingly believe they have the best form of government...They share this faith with people in Asia, Africa, Latin America and

⁸² Kohut and Stokes; *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*; p. 130

⁸³ McFaul: *Democracy Promotion as a World Value*; p. 148

Europe⁸⁴."

Many politicians point out that most Asian and Islamic cultures do not share this commitment to democracy because of vast cultural differences. However, Amartya Sen argues against this, saying that these cultures are very complex. Sen says that Confucian values are not the only "Asian values." Moreover, Islamic values tend to be very diverse and complex and they may include democratic components⁸⁵. Therefore, democratic values may be perceived worldwide. In fact, many cultures hold values that are co-existent with some tenets of democracy and even desire this form of government.

The very institutions that are promised by democracy in order to facilitate democracy are what guarantee citizens their fundamental rights⁸⁶. Institutions are created to oversee what governments locally and internationally are doing to citizens. There are representative political institutions such as assemblies that hold authorities accountable as well as direct or indirect functional institutions that either deliver services or oversee processes and secure enforcement of civil rights⁸⁷. All of these institutions act as watchdogs to ensure that rights are guaranteed and enforced. In addition, Kohut and Stokes say "the United States works with other nations through the World Trade Organization to open markets, stimulate economic growth, and create new jobs⁸⁸."

The argument for democracy promotion also rests on the fact, that few ideologies still exist today that are blatantly anti-democratic. Democracy has been considered by many as an elected government in which every adult citizen could vote⁸⁹. Although there

⁸⁴ Kohut and Stokes: *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*; pg. 127

⁸⁵ Sen; *Democracy as a Universal Value*; pg. 15-16

⁸⁶ Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 49

⁸⁷ Goodhart: *Democracy as Human Rights: Freedom and Equality in the Age of Globalization*; pg 167-173

⁸⁸ Kohut & Stokes: *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*; pg. 191

⁸⁹ Zakaria; *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 13

are illiberal regions with antidemocratic ideologies and racist norms, "only Osama bin Laden-ism and its variants constitute a serious transnational alternative to liberal democracy today⁹⁰." And these terrorist or anti-democratic regions have yet to rival democracy's hold on the world. Over 62 percent of all countries in the world have elected governments where adult citizens vote⁹¹. Dahl says that there are over one-hundred and ninety two countries considered democratic (those with male or full suffrage)⁹². So it appears that democracy is taking root all over the world and gaining acceptance.

In addition, many point to the expansion of democracy through the success of international norms that have taken root since World War II. Democratic or liberal tenets such as human rights have increased in popularity, challenging the argument for state sovereignty and even in some cases leading to military intervention that directly oppose state sovereignty⁹³. Michael McFaul says:

"In fact, international treaties and laws crafted to protect the human rights of all individuals have already expanded dramatically in reach and scope...Under the doctrine of universal jurisdiction, domestic courts can try foreign defendants accused of slavery, genocide, torture and war crimes⁹⁴."

⁹⁰ McFaul: *Democracy Promotion as a World Value*; p. 150

⁹¹ Zakaria; *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 13

⁹² Dahl: *On Democracy*; pg. 8

⁹³ McFaul: *Democracy Promotion as a World Value*; p. 153

⁹⁴ McFaul: *Democracy Promotion as a World Value*; p. 154

THE CASE AGAINST DEMOCRACY PROMOTION:

The idea of democracy promotion has been challenged. Americans believe that democracy is a universal value. Jeane J. Kirkpatrick says:

"although most governments in the world are, as they always have been, autocracies of one kind or another, no idea holds greater sway in the mind of educated Americans than the belief that it is possible to democratize governments, anytime, anywhere, under any circumstances⁹⁵."

Many scholars, including Kirkpatrick, think that this American view is an oversimplification of the reality of successful democracies. Democratic policies seem at first glance policies that many, if not all, people agree with and want. The initiative on how to institute democracy, however, is widely debated.

John Stuart Mill outlined three conditions for democracy. One was that a people should want representative government. Another condition is that its preservation is dependent on the people's willingness to do what it takes in order to continue this form of government. In addition, the people must execute the duties and functions democracy requires of them⁹⁶.

However, Kirkpatrick believes that this view is oversimplified and for democracies to take hold, the people that comprise the society must be willing to compromise, pursue legal means, as well as have independent institutions for resolving conflicts, and democracies develop slowly⁹⁷. The option that many experts point to is not to hurry along democracies. In the twentieth century alone, more than seventy democracies gave way to authoritarian regimes⁹⁸.

⁹⁵ Kirkpatrick; *Dictatorships and Double Standards*

⁹⁶ Kirkpatrick; *Dictatorships and Double Standards*

⁹⁷ Kirkpatrick; *Dictatorships and Double Standards*

⁹⁸ Dahl; *On Democracy*; pg. 145

Many newly-formed democracies are considered fake or pseudo-democracies and often tyrannical and have some forms of disenfranchisement, exclusion and use violence against some or most citizens⁹⁹. Kirkpatrick states in *Dictatorships and Double*

Standards:

"Hurried efforts to force complex and unfamiliar political practices on societies lacking the requisite political culture, tradition, and social structures not only fail to produce desired outcomes; if they are undertaken at a time when the traditional regime is under attack, they actually facilitate the job of the insurgents¹⁰⁰."

The argument is that democracy must not be forced, because such actions may in actuality promote the very opposite of what is intended. Democracy must evolve, not be imposed on society. Zakaria says that:

"Most Third World countries that proclaimed themselves democracies immediately after their independence, while they were poor and unstable, immediately became dictatorships within a decade¹⁰¹."

Hurried efforts may, in fact, be detrimental to the promotion of democracies because states do not have the capabilities to successfully change an entire political system overnight. To put another form of government in place of one that, in some cases, has been in place for centuries may be setting the new form of government up for failure. And although democracy may be, in some instances, more beneficial for a nation, it is very difficult to meddle in the affairs of autocracies, even if it is to the aid of, what is considered by an American administration, the voice of a discontented population. Democracy requires from its subjects, a knowledge of and desire for this form of government. In addition, Dahl says that a culture must have the belief and predisposition

⁹⁹ Zakaria; *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 18

¹⁰⁰ Kirkpatrick; *Dictatorships and Double Standards*

¹⁰¹ Zakaria; *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 58

conducive to democratic institutions¹⁰². So century old beliefs of divine rights or kingships, may not receive democratic culture particularly well or even at all. It depends largely on the existing political culture in a state.

Ironically, sometimes democracies have produced dictatorships. It is possible for the majority to elect or vote in anti-democratic policies or leaders. Zakaria says

"But in many developing countries, the experience of democracy over the past few decades has been one in which majorities have--often quietly, sometimes noisily--eroded separations of power, undermined human rights, an corrupt long-standing traditions of tolerance¹⁰³."

If a state is experiencing internal conflict, then the introduction of democracy could be quite dangerous. Thomas Jefferson once said "that the despots 'might have been chosen by ourselves'¹⁰⁴."

The majority in a society might even exacerbate problems using the tools of majority rules, aggravating ethnic conflict and civil strife¹⁰⁵. Laws and procedures familiar to democratic governments may in actuality be used against the proposed goal of democracy to bring equality to all. Dahl refers to the use of democratic means to institute a "tyranny of the majority¹⁰⁶." The majority may be un-democratic.

Another difficulty in promoting democracy may come from cultural differences. In his essay, "*The Clash of Civilizations?*" Samuel P. Huntington proposed that the future of international conflict would be primarily based on cultural differences exemplified by various civilizations that he identified as Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and maybe African¹⁰⁷. Among these

¹⁰² Dahl; *On Democracy*; pg. 157

¹⁰³ Zakaria; *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 106

¹⁰⁴ Dahl; *On Democracy*; pg. 22

¹⁰⁵ Zakaria; *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 114

¹⁰⁶ Dahl; *On Democracy*; pg. 47

¹⁰⁷ Huntington; *The Clash of Civilizations?*; pg. 25

civilizations, Huntington recognizes that the Confucian-Islamic civilizations that challenge the West are doing so by cooperating with other non-Western interests. This means that one of the gravest dangers to the West is the effort of non-Westernizing civilizations to compete with if not to defeat the West. Despite the claim that democracy is "the world's most valued political system"¹⁰⁸,

Huntington states:

"On the one hand, the West is at a peak of power. At the same time, however, and perhaps as a result, a return to the roots phenomenon is occurring among non-Western civilizations...Most important, the efforts of the West to promote its values of democracy and liberalism as universal values, to maintain its military predominance and to advance its economic interests engender countering responses from other civilizations"¹⁰⁹.

So democracy promotion, may in actuality be the very cause of fierce opposition and a resisting extremist movement.

On a related note, culture has often been declared another victim of democracy.

In many ways democracy promotion has eliminated or extremely altered cultures abroad as well as at home. Zakaria points out that the new culture is one dominated by the popularized tenets:

"Culture has also been democratized. What was once called "high culture" continues to flourish, of course, but as a niche product for the elderly set, no longer at the center of society's cultural life, which is now defined and dominated by popular music, blockbuster movies, and primetime television"¹¹⁰.

This globalization of culture means that many all over the world believe that the promotion of a certain lifestyle that is defined by the markets (a side effect of democracy) may in actuality be eliminating other cultural traditions and this new culture is advancing

¹⁰⁸ McFaul: *Democracy Promotion As a World Value*

¹⁰⁹ Huntington: *The Clash of Civilizations?*; pg. 26

¹¹⁰ Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 14

at a much faster pace and may, in fact, threaten people's happiness¹¹¹. A homogenized culture may eventually erode the individualism that democracy values.

José Nun writes, "the boom of neoliberalism and the globalization strategies that have so far prevailed in the world have led everywhere to a significant increase of inequality¹¹²."

Although it appears that democracies are wealthier, there is also another problem to address. Sometimes it is the Western democracies that are wealthier, while the non-Western democracies still struggle to catch up. Michael Goodhart states:

"Specifically, there is an almost hypocritical silence about how measures needed to protect Western levels of benefit and standards of living ('democracy') conflict with steps crucial for improving conditions in the developing world ('race to the bottom')...The point is that existing inequalities in wealth and power among states make it dangerous and misleading to generalize about democracy from the experience of Western democracies¹¹³."

A number of people also believe that democracy promotion is used only when it serves us best. Otherwise the United States has been accused of using a dualistic approach. Thomas Carothers contends that America often turns a blind eye to undemocratic or autocratic regimes or states due to the friendly relations we have fostered with them¹¹⁴. He lists Pakistan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kygystan, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Malaysua, Russia and South America as regions that have had support or even praise from the United States despite human rights violations, military abuse or all around civil abuses. Fareed Zakaria says:

"Across the globe, democratically elected regimes, often ones that

¹¹¹ Kohut and Stokes: *America Against the World: How We Are Different and Why We Are Disliked*; pg. 156

¹¹² Nun: *Government of the People of Government of the Politicians*; pg. 105

¹¹³ Goodhart: *Democracy As Human Rights: Freedom and Equality in the Age of Globalization*; pg. 20

¹¹⁴ Carothers: *Promoting Democracy and Righting Terror*

have been re-elected or reaffirmed through referenda, are routinely ignoring constitutional limits on their power or depriving citizens of basic rights¹¹⁵."

In addition, Carothers notes that our past efforts to forcibly remove dictators have not always gone well. For democracy to take root in Iraq, the process would be slow and massive due to century -old ethnic and religious variations¹¹⁶. Carothers also points to the use of using democracy promotion to pursue favorable political results or changes in states:

"If democracy promotion is reduced to an instrumental strategy for producing political outcomes favorable to U.S. interests, the value and legitimacy of the concept will be lost¹¹⁷."

Other people skeptical of democracy promotion point to the loss of American civil liberties at home. Some say that democracy promotion falls on deaf ears when there is democracy revocation at home. Carothers identifies this as a ripple effect:

"The heightened terrorist threat has inevitably put pressure on U.S. civil liberties. But the administration failed to strike the right balance early on, unnecessarily abridging or abusing rights through the large-scale detention of immigrants, closed deportation hearings and the declaration of some U.S. citizens as "enemy combatants" with no right to counsel or even to contest the designation¹¹⁸."

Many argue that for democracy to even take root, there is an important prerequisite. For democracy to be sustained there has to be an efficient amount of wealth. Countries with less wealth or a single commodity may not be able to even implement a democratic political system. Samuel P. Huntington states:

"The correlation between wealth and democracy implies that transitions to democracy should occur primarily in countries at the mid-level of economic development. In poor countries

¹¹⁵ Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 17

¹¹⁶ Carothers: *Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror*

¹¹⁷ Carothers: *Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror*

¹¹⁸ Carothers: *Promoting Democracy and Fighting Terror*

democratization is unlikely; in rich countries it usually has already occurred¹¹⁹."

Economic development promotes the growth of entities such as private businesses and an educated class independent of the state that are able to wield influence, which in turn, creates liberties important to the development and maintenance of democracy¹²⁰. Many say that, of course, Western democracies are wealthy because they had the historical ability to develop and sustain wealth. This is not to say that there were no difficulties in developing the full expansion of democracy (as seen through the Civil Rights Acts in the United States). However, what about states with little in the way of resources or wealth that try to institute democracy? The question remains as to how a state without the necessary structures and wealth needed to sustain such structures, can establish and sustain a complex and evolving political system such as democracy.

¹¹⁹ Huntington: *Democracy's Third Wave* (In the Democracy Sourcebook; p. 97)

¹²⁰ Zakaria: *The Future of Freedom: Illiberal Democracy at Home and Abroad*; p. 73-74

CONCLUSION:

Religion has historically had a significant role in America politics. Religious beliefs account for the American impulse and desire to impose its values on others. Our governmental system is based upon these strong beliefs of right and wrong that ultimately derive from our religious heritage.

Puritanism stressed the importance of a common society with widespread morals. Much of our political thought in shaping our entire nation is derived from this Protestant religious background. The American Revolution saw this religious influence at a peak and the moral underpinnings of our very society were based on the belief that there had to be good and bad.

In the Monroe Doctrine, we acted on our belief that we were fulfilling God's mission by asserting control of our own hemisphere and promoting our own beliefs in that hemisphere. This doctrine could be seen as early illustration of democracy promotion.

Manifest destiny included belief in a mission to spread universal ideals. This sense of an American mission was driven by religious zeal. Ultimately, this policy began to shape the political culture of the United States and even the Civil War contained elements of this culture defined by a vision set forth by God. American ideas and values were considered special and these needed to be shared by the rest of the world.

In the 1960s internal dissension once again appeared. Americans (through protests and petitions) demanded that these ideals be actualized. Kennedy believed that the world as well needed to adhere to these ideals and his policies reflected his desire to bring democracy to other states. Carter adamantly claimed a moral high ground in his

appeal to the American people. He emphasized and appealed to the American belief that democracy was the one true form of government for all mankind. Reagan harnessed this American belief to emphasize America's strength and its responsibility to change the world and to adhere to what we believed necessary for peace.

Many point to the absence of democracy worldwide as a major cause of conflicts around the world. Without democracy, there is less chance for peace.

Conflict is also believed to be reduced by means of democracy. Institutions such as alliances, treaties and judicial redress are believed to be democracy's way of preventing and ending such conflicts. Also, democracies tend to be peaceful with one another and democratic political systems prevent the cruel and oppressive policies typical of autocracies.

Promoters of democracies also point to the belief that wealth is inherent in such systems. The wealthiest states tend to be democratic in nature. Naturally, assumptions are made about the governmental system and its economic success. Democracies are typically the most successful government in a very interconnected global economy.

George W. Bush has made clear his belief that his plan to promote democracy around the world is truly ethical. He asserts that this is the only way to promote peace and stability. In addition, much of Bush's rhetoric centers around his religion and how this influence his policies. Morality appeals to Americans have historically evolved into policies like democracy promotion.

There is also a strong belief that democracy works in any setting and every religion. Some say that cultural differences do not necessarily prevent acceptance of democracy and that, in fact, all cultures value certain tenets of democracy. All must

believe in the universality of democratic principles because it appears to reflect the majority of that society.

Also, many point to the fact that there are very few remaining ideologies that directly challenge democracy and that most countries consider the tenets of democracy to be universally valid. Most people want freedoms that ensure that they are citizens and that they are secure and able to participate in government. Democracy may provide citizens the tools to have a say in their state

However, there is a school of thought that does not believe that democracy promotion is universal or even possible for every society. People hold differing views as to the exact nature of democracy and many disagree on how to institute a democratic political system.

In addition, many challenge the idea that democracies are everywhere. Some point to the fact that some countries claim to be democratic may not hold free-elections or in some ways may not adhere to all or even some of democracy's most basic principles. These pseudo-democracies cannot be considered democratic.

Democracies that have been erected overnight typically fail. In some cases democracy is even used to isolate or incite prejudice against some people. Democratic means may have undemocratic results.

There is also a belief that civilizations are clashing with one another. This clash could be seen as a response to United States' policies, including democracy promotion.

Critics of democracy promotion also point to the fact that war still occurs. Although democracies rarely fight each other, there are several cases in which democracies fight non-democracies. In fact, some point to the policies of democratic

states as threatening world security.

Cultures also seem to be threatened by democratic promotion. People all over the world are noticing that a common culture is emerging and this culture is inspired by American policies. This common culture is thought to be Western and capitalist in nature and that this culture might, in fact, erode local and national traditions.

Critics also do not accept the proposition that democracy actually promotes accumulation of wealth. Some critics go on to say that only the Western democracies are wealthy and that no matter how hard the rest of the world tries, they cannot keep up. In fact, there are several theories that a certain level of wealth is necessary to even become democratic.

Furthermore, many believe that the United States champions democracy when it serves us best and that in many cases we often support anti-democratic states as long as they are friendly and do business with us. This makes many skeptical of democracy promotion, when the United States does not pursue it universally.

Democracy promotion has a religious dimension derived from American political culture and the American historical experience. This religious tradition often seeks converts with all the promise and difficulties that entails and so it may be with the American practice of democracy promotion.

The American value system is grounded in a set of intensely held beliefs. The desire and effort to promote democracy around the world reflects these beliefs.

Huntington notes:

“Belief in the universal validity of those values obviously reinforces and reflects those hypocritical elements of the American tradition that stress the United States’ role as a redeemer nation and lead it to attempt to impose its values and, often, its institutions on other

societies. These tendencies may, however, be constrained by a recognition that although American values may be universally valid, they need not be universally and totally applicable at all times and in all places¹²¹.”

American foreign policy is anchored in strongly held beliefs about the superiority of democracy and the American way of life. This sense of righteousness has often been characterized by an impulse to change the world. What does this mean for the future? It remains to be seen whether, in Samuel P. Huntington’s words, this impulse will be constrained.

¹²¹ Huntington: *American Ideals versus American Institutions*; pg. 22

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