

## **US Policy and the Geopolitics of Insecurity in the Arab World**

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*In the wake of 9/11, President George W. Bush downplayed traditional ‘realist’ security concerns by defining America’s goal as countering threats generated by the internal characteristics of Arab societies. Bush advanced a strategy of regional transformation based on regime change in Iraq and economic, social, and political reform across the Arab world. This strategy, however, failed to address the security interests of regional governments while generating insecurity for Arab societies. To explain these results, the article develops a framework for understanding the Middle East regional system that recognises the role of societal discourses of insecurity and the system’s multipolar structure. The framework is used to suggest an alternative strategy for US Middle East policy. Rejecting both a renewed project of regional transformation and a return to neorealism, the paper outlines a strategy based on managing a multipolar, pluralist system.*

Since World War II, the Middle East has been a region of strategic interest to the United States due to its vast oil resources, strategic waterways, and proximity to Europe and the Soviet Union. Coinciding with the decline of modernisation theory in comparative politics and the rise of neorealism as the dominant trend within American international relations (IR) theory, since the late 1960s American policy makers, analysts, and IR scholars have generally discussed US policy and interests in the region using the tools and language of neorealism. As Michael Barnett observes, ‘Realist imagery dominated our understanding of Arab politics.’<sup>1</sup> Societal and non-state actors were of concern as internal threats to regimes and/or tools of rival states.

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Even liberal IR scholar Joseph S. Nye comments that Arab politics ‘best fits the realist view of international politics.’<sup>2</sup> Throughout the remainder of the Cold War, the US sought to deter threats to its allies and interests as well as prevent the rise of a regional hegemon by cultivating bilateral alliances – supported by military and economic aid – and following a policy of off-shore balancing, in which US military power, located ‘over the horizon,’ was periodically deployed to counter threats to US interests and allies.<sup>3</sup>

In the wake of 11 September 2001, however, many American officials, scholars, and media commentators began to adopt a discourse about US policy and interests in the Middle East that downplayed these traditional ‘realist’ geopolitical concerns and strategies. Instead, they emphasised the need to redefine American strategy in the Middle East to better counter ‘deterritorialised’ and ‘undeterrable’ threats such as those posed by the Iraqi regime, non-state terrorist networks, widespread anti-Americanism, and the rise of radical Islamist ideologies. This discourse understood the forces driving emerging threats to US interests as due not to geopolitical conflicts, imbalances of powers, or other ‘system level’ factors but rather due to the domestic characteristics of Arab states and societies or ‘second image’ factors such as the lack of political and economic freedoms and the failure of the region’s states and societies to embrace globalisation.<sup>4</sup>

This shift was largely driven by the policies and geopolitical discourse of the George W. Bush administration as it developed an ambitious vision for forging a new regional order across the Middle East based on regime change and societal transformation. At the centre of this strategy was the invasion of Iraq, a global ‘war on terrorism’, and programmes to promote democratisation and reform across the region. But even among scholars, analysts, and media commentators who did not support Bush’s strategy, the mainstream public debate about US policy in the Middle East after 9/11 became largely refocused on the ‘malignant’ social conditions inside the Arab world. Some blamed these conditions on access to oil resources that enable ‘rentier states’ to forgo globally competitive production and political accountability.<sup>5</sup> Others emphasised what they consider to be a distinctly anti-liberal Arab-Islamic political culture.<sup>6</sup> Most notably, historian Bernard Lewis – a close advisor to Vice President Dick Cheney – argued that the current political and economic formations in the region are the product of the Islamic world’s historic failure to adapt to the economic and political practices of Western modernity.<sup>7</sup> Such views of the region have led many Americans to argue that reform and transformation must be the priority of American Middle East strategy.

Long before the Bush administration finished its second term, it was clear its project for regional transformation had failed and, among other challenges, Iran had emerged as a powerful rival to regional US interests with ties to political forces and militia movements across the Arab world. While analysts and pundits have exposed how limited expertise, lack of

planning, faulty intelligence, and bureaucratic infighting contributed to this outcome and suggested different tactics, few have suggested alternatives to either a revitalised grand strategy of regional transformation or else a return to a strategy defined by neorealism.<sup>8</sup> This essay reconsiders the connections between social forces, geopolitics, and US policy in the Middle East. It challenges the logic of the Bush administration's approach to American strategy in the Middle East by exposing how it failed to recognise and address the security interests of regional governments and the sources of insecurity of most concern to Arab societies. The essay develops a framework for understanding the Middle East regional system that highlights the importance of societal actors and their perceptions of threat as expressed in political discourse and social mobilisation. By incorporating the role of societal forces, the framework can offer a more complex map of the system's multipolar structure that encompasses states, societal, and transnational actors. The framework helps explain the divergence across the Arab world between how political regimes and their societies perceive security threats. Iran, I argue, has risen to become a regional power able to challenge US interests by exploiting this divergence. This framework is then used to suggest an alternative strategy for US Middle East policy based on addressing regional sources of insecurity and maintaining a multipolar, pluralist system.

#### IN THE WAKE OF 9/11: REIMAGINING US STRATEGY IN THE MIDDLE EAST

George W. Bush came to office in January 2001 with a sceptical attitude towards international institutions and predisposed to the unilateral use of force. He seemed to operate within the language of, albeit very muscular, realism.<sup>9</sup> Like President Bill Clinton, Bush sought to contain Iraq through economic sanctions and the projection of military power. He initially only diverged from the Middle East policies of the Clinton administration by withdrawing from direct involvement in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations in the aftermath of the failure of the Camp David talks in 2000. In the years following 9/11, however, President Bush – often drawing on ideas and images associated with neoconservative foreign policy intellectuals – developed a reconceptualisation of Middle East politics that effaced many aspects of traditional neorealist geopolitical thinking. Bush argued that the most pressing threats to American interests emerged from domestic characteristics of Arab states. These were believed to make some states undeterrable, allow terrorist groups to emerge and gain support from within the societies of allied states, and sustain non-state terrorist networks which Bush portrayed as a global strategic threat akin to the totalitarian movements of fascism and communism.

Prior to 9/11, countries like Iran and Iraq that opposed the growing US role in the Middle East were defined as 'rogue states' subject to strategic containment, political isolation, and economic sanctions.<sup>10</sup> But in the wake of 9/11, and with the failure of sanctions and containment to topple these regimes or conclusively end their quest for weapons of mass destruction, Bush viewed these states as presenting urgent, undeterrable threats to American interests and allies. 'After September 11,' Bush explained, 'the doctrine of containment just doesn't hold any water. . . . My vision shifted dramatically after September 11, because I now realize the stakes, I realize the world has changed.'<sup>11</sup> The images of 9/11 – the use of hijacked jet planes to inflict mass casualties – heightened fears of an attack with weapons of mass destruction. Bush henceforth would not tolerate the possibility of hostile powers in the Middle East gaining such capabilities anytime in the future.

The other major component of Bush's new geography of threat was a focus on international terrorism as a strategic threat. While concerns about international terrorism and various so-called deterritorialized dangers had been increasing since the end of the Cold War,<sup>12</sup> it was only after 9/11 that American grand strategy came to focus on them as the most pressing threats facing the United States. Soon after 9/11 Bush launched a war in Afghanistan against the leadership of al-Qaida and their local supporters, declaring this campaign the start of a 'global war on terror.' Portraying this threat as a complex, ever-growing transnational network 'seeking to overthrow all moderate governments in the region, and establish a radical Islamic empire that spans from Spain to Indonesia,' Bush defined all major US policies toward the Middle East in terms of combating a global strategic threat.<sup>13</sup>

### Societal Sources of Threat

Soon after 9/11, Bush began arguing that the rise of these new, undeterrable threats was in large part a product of domestic social and ideological conditions in the Arab world. In reframing American strategy, he placed homeland security at the centre of his public discourse:

In an age of global terror and weapons of mass destruction what happens in the Middle East greatly matters to America. The bitterness of that region can bring violence and suffering to our own cities.<sup>14</sup>

To address these threats, Bush sought to project US power to topple uncooperative regimes and transform social conditions in the Arab world. He argued, 'The advance of freedom and peace in the Middle East would drain this bitterness and increase our own security.'<sup>15</sup>

Bush explained the cause of the most pressing threats to US interests in terms of the failure of the states of the Middle East to embrace globalisation and expand economic opportunities and political liberties for their

peoples. As Simon Dalby observes about *The National Security Strategy of the United States* (2002), 'Most of these regions whence danger emanates are marked by the absence of economic liberty understood in American terms. The absence of integration into the global markets by rogue states and the Axis of Evil is noted as something in need of correction.'<sup>16</sup> President Bush's strategy found its clearest expression in a November 2003 speech in which he announced that 'the United States has adopted a new policy, a forward strategy of freedom.'<sup>17</sup> Bush defined the lack of freedom, in itself, as a security threat to the United States stating, 'In the long run, stability cannot be purchased at the expense of liberty. As long as the Middle East remains a place where freedom does not flourish, it will remain a place of stagnation, resentment, and violence ready for export' as witnessed on 11 September 2001.<sup>18</sup> A few months later, the Bush administration even tried to frame his regional strategy within a newly invented geographical expression, the 'Greater Middle East,' referring to the countries of the Arab world, plus Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, and Israel. This label defines its object in reference to Western security interests rather than any regional conceptions, identities, or geographical features. A draft memo outlining the American proposal for a 'Greater Middle East Partnership Initiative' (GMEPI) to be discussed at the upcoming G-8 summit explains that:

So long as the region's pool of politically and economically disenfranchised individuals grows, we will witness an increase in extremism, terrorism, international crimes and illegal migration.<sup>19</sup>

The memo supports its vision with a review of data drawn from Arab Human Development Reports (AHDRs) that starkly illustrate the various 'gaps' between the social, economic, and political conditions in the Arab states and the rest of the world.<sup>20</sup> The GMEPI announces the region is at a crossroads and must choose between continuing on the same path 'adding every year to its population of underemployed, undereducated, and politically disenfranchised youth' or, instead, taking the 'alternative . . . route to reform.'<sup>21</sup> The document also states that 'the liberation of Afghanistan and Iraq from oppressive regimes' is one the factors that has presented Western countries with 'a historic opportunity' to 'forge a long-term partnership with the Greater Middle East's reform leaders and launch a coordinated response to promote political, economic, and social reform in the region.'<sup>22</sup>

## EXCAVATING THE GEOPOLITICS OF THE MIDDLE EAST

Bush brought a new emphasis to issues such as domestic political conditions, ideology, and non-state actors to public foreign policy debates in the US. His discourse, however, largely decontextualised the discussion of threats to

US interests from their territorial and geopolitical location. At the broadest level, this discourse fails to recognise the Middle East as a regional system defined by competing state, societal, and transnational actors. In doing so, it also fails to understand the dynamics that shape the context of states and societies that have challenged US interests. In this section, I offer an alternative approach to understanding the role of societal factors in Middle East politics by outlining a framework for analyzing the Middle East as a regional system and identifying how societal perceptions of insecurity impact the system.

### The Middle East as a Regional System

Middle East specialists aware of the historical, cultural, and political ties that create regional interdependencies, have long noted the value of viewing the Middle East as a regional interstate system. Within this system, major events or shifts in relative power in any part of the region have impacts on states across the system.<sup>23</sup> The Middle East regional system, however, does not fully conform to neorealist models as it consists of heterogeneous units at multiple levels. Politics within each state have long been subject to transnational ideologies and political movements, such as various Arab nationalist and Islamist ideologies and movements. Most critically, as I elaborate below, the system maintains a multipolar structure with competing state, transnational, and societal actors. In the modern era, no great power or local hegemon has been able to order the system while alignments at the international level, such as those of the Cold War, never neatly matched up to regional divisions and rivalries. Moreover, political parties, social movements, tribal formations, political and business figures, armed militias and terrorist networks shaped the nature of threats and alliances.

Writing in the mid-1980s, the diplomatic historian L. Carl Brown observed that 'the Middle East is the most penetrated international relations subsystem in today's world.'<sup>24</sup> By 'penetrated' Brown means, on the one hand, 'the Middle East has been more consistently and more thoroughly ensnarled in great power politics than any other part of the non-Western world,' while, on the other hand, no outside power has ever been able to attain hegemonic control or successfully order the region.<sup>25</sup> The reasons for outside interference are clear enough. The region's proximity to great powers, the presence of natural resources and strategic waterways, and the historical legacy of the Ottoman Empire's slow decline led to constant external intervention by great powers seeking to gain relative advantage over other great powers.<sup>26</sup> More recently, the US became the dominant outside power driven by its interest in protecting global flows of oil and defending its strategic allies including Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. To these concerns, Bush added the goal of eliminating threats associated with 'extremist

Islamist terrorism.' External powers, however, have failed to establish a stable regional order either through the careful maintenance of a balance of power between regional powers, by backing the rise of a regional hegemon, or governing the region through direct control.<sup>27</sup>

Avi Shlaim describes the twentieth-century phase of this dynamic as a product of the 'post-Ottoman syndrome' produced by the effort of the European powers to create a new order for the region after World War I by imposing 'a state system based on European ideas, interests and management.'<sup>28</sup> Within the League of Nations' Mandate System, several states, such as Jordan and Iraq, had political leaders and territorial boundaries defined more by colonial geopolitical interests than local notions of territory and sovereignty. Even after they were granted independence, ruling elites in Arab states were often more dependent on external powers rather than popular support for maintaining their power. Thus rather than creating a stable order, this system met rejection by powerful societal forces driven by Arab nationalist ideology, various territorial nationalisms, Islamic solidarity, populism, and tribal identity. Most states lacked legitimacy and they only maintained their power by developing a coercive apparatus and co-opting a selected segment of society. As Gregory Gause concludes, Arab states 'have overwhelmingly identified ideological and political threats emanating from abroad to the domestic stability of their ruling regimes as more salient than threats based upon aggregate power, geographic proximity and offensive capabilities.'<sup>29</sup> This system has helped maintain external penetration as regional elites must rely on external resources and aid to maintain power, which, in turn, continues to foster domestic opposition, regional rivalries, and interstate conflicts.

### US Strategy and Societal Discourses of Insecurity

A complicating factor for British and French policy during the middle of the twentieth century and US strategy today is that across much of the Arab world societal actors define insecurity (and thus their primary political interest) in different ways than their own state elites and political regimes. This disjunction is reflected in what I refer to as *societal discourses of insecurity* that define rival ways different societal actors perceive threats and understand the security of their community.<sup>30</sup> This feature of the system represents a deconstruction of the inside/outside boundary of the nation-state maintained by neorealist theory as the state fails to function as the primary affiliation of citizens, thus impeding the state-led promotion of a unitary national identity.<sup>31</sup> By the same token, various societal actors – such as political parties, social movements, tribal formations, political and business figures as well as armed militias and terrorist networks – have come to play autonomous roles in shaping the nature of threats and alliances. Moreover, as Steve Niva observes, 'There has also existed a powerful discourse of

regional insecurity about the threat to the region posed by the West and Western powers.<sup>32</sup> As a result, ‘Opposition movements in the region frequently contend that the present global order subordinates the rights of the colonized and postcolonial states to the requirements of the self-defined national interests and security concerns of the West.’<sup>33</sup>

In the 1950s and 1960s when pro-Western regimes were often challenged by Arab nationalist forces and threatened by military coups, Egypt’s president Gamal Abdel Nasser sought to exploit societal discourses of insecurity to gain popular legitimacy and organise the region under his leadership. By seeking to lead and provide security for the ‘Arab nation’ against external powers, he gained a massive following across the region. Popular Arab nationalist demonstrations in Lebanon and Jordan pressured those regimes to forgo pro-Western alliances while Syria, for a time, merged with Egypt to form the United Arab Republic. By the 1970s, however, state consolidation – produced by state building efforts and access to oil rent and aid – allowed leaders to more boldly let *raison d’état* guide their foreign policy.<sup>34</sup> For example, in the late 1970s, Fouad Ajami wrote about how Egypt’s embrace of the Camp David peace process under President Anwar Sadat marked the waning of Pan-Arabism as a populist transnational movement that had the ability to challenge the stability and the foreign policy orientation of states in the 1950s and 1960s.<sup>35</sup> This transition facilitated American efforts to develop a regional Middle East strategy based on off-shore balancing by supporting regimes, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq, that protected US interests and balanced regional rivals.

This strategy, however, enabled and encouraged Arab states to build ever more authoritarian forms of rule that suppressed societal forces, such as the growing Islamist movements. As Bush’s Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice told an audience at the American University in Cairo on June 20, 2005: ‘For 60 years, my country, the United States, pursued stability at the expense of democracy in this region here in the Middle East – and we achieved neither.’<sup>36</sup> Rice failed to recognise, however, that the societal interests and ideological movements that were being suppressed were increasingly ones that opposed American regional interests as their states became increasingly tied to US interests.

The logic of basing US policy towards the region on the suppression of societal forces was unashamedly defended in the 1991 congressional testimony of Martin Indyk, who would later serve in the Clinton administration. He noted, ‘The apathy towards the West that is likely to follow’ the 1990–1991 Iraq war ‘has *long* been present in the Arab world. It can not be resolved through accommodation.’<sup>37</sup> What matters, he suggests, is not ‘whether they hate us or love us’ – since he notes, ‘for the most part, they hate us’ – ‘but whether they are going to respect our power.’<sup>38</sup> The end of the Cold War marked a new era in the Middle East, one sometimes referred to as the ‘American era’. With no global challenger or other great power for

regional states to seek aid and support from, the US rose to regional dominance during the 1990–1991 Gulf War. The US mobilised a broad coalition of Arab states to defeat Iraq and, in the war's aftermath, the US was able to simultaneously foster an Arab-Israeli peace process as well as maintain – with its unchallenged military power – a policy of 'dual containment' against Iraq and Iran.

Bush's vision of the Middle East refused to see the US role in the region within the history of patterns of great power intervention and local societal resistance, such as the 1920 uprising against the British in Iraq.<sup>39</sup> By the time George W. Bush took office in January 2001, the American position within the Middle East, established in the wake of the 1990–1991 Gulf War, was seriously under strain. The Arab-Israeli peace process had collapsed and Palestinians and Israelis were engaged in a low-intensity war. The post-Gulf War containment regime over Iraq was falling apart as regional support for maintaining harsh sanctions waned. Meanwhile, Iran was expanding its regional influence and secretly developing a nuclear programme. By the late 1990s, even the limited experiments with political liberalisation and democratisation offered by US allies, such as Jordan and Egypt, were being reversed. These states faced increasing societal opposition – often led by Islamist forces – to their regime's dependence on external support from the US that made them beholden to American regional security interests. Moreover, the American military presence in the Gulf and its sanctions regime over Iraq was provoking domestic opposition and anti-Americanism within key pro-US states such as Jordan, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the smaller Gulf states.<sup>40</sup>

As the US increasingly relied on the unilateral projection of military force to contain Iraq, the effectiveness of that power to achieve American goals diminished while it simultaneously fostered societal opposition to the regimes of US allies and the American presence in the region. Thus the broadest (societal-driven) threat to American interests that Bush faced was not due to the rise of non-state terrorist networks or irrational Arab leaders but from the erosion of the American capability to manage the region as it had done during the Cold War through offshore balancing and since 1991 through supporting the peace process and maintaining a containment regime around Iran and Iraq.

### Arab Insecurity under the Bush Doctrine

The Bush administration's public justification for the 2003 invasion of Iraq and American proposals for political and economic reform in the Middle East explicitly stated that they promoted American (or in some cases 'Western') security interests by seeking to transform the conditions that lead to 'violence ready for export.' In the months following the invasion, as evidence that Iraq had posed an imminent threat went lacking and as the collapse

of public order in Iraq only fostered greater societal insecurity there and in neighbouring states, the Bush administration emphasised in ever more simplistic terms that it viewed US policy goals as defined by countering the threats posed by 'terrorism.' This view failed to recognise societal discourses of insecurity across the Arab world. While many Iraqis and other Arabs may have welcomed the downfall of Saddam Hussein and supported the expansion of democracy in the region, the occupation of Iraq and US efforts to reshape the political landscape of the Middle East was viewed by most Arab societies as one of the greatest threats the region had ever faced.

Even before invading Iraq, the strategic consequences of ignoring Arab societal discourses of insecurity were apparent in the Bush administration's policy towards the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. There is little doubt that Arab society and media view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as one of the region's most pressing concerns, with most defining 'Israeli aggression' (as they see it) as a major threat to Arab security.<sup>41</sup> Bush, however, first ignored the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, which had flared up into the second Palestinian intifada. In 2002, when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon launched a re-invasion of Palestinian areas granted autonomy under the Oslo process in order to capture and kill the militias responsible for continuing attacks on Israelis, Bush fully backed Sharon and famously praised him as 'a man of peace.' When Bush finally addressed the breakdown of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, he ignored the territorial, nationalist, and political developments and geopolitical issues that led to increased insecurity for both sides, and focused instead on the need for internal legal, economic, and political reform within the Palestinian authority.<sup>42</sup> Rather than addressing how the Palestinians might achieve security and sovereignty he blamed corruption within the Palestinian authority for leaving the Palestinians with 'no means to defend and vindicate their rights.' In a revealing passage, rather than recognise the challenge that the Israeli occupation poses to the Palestinians and their quest for sovereignty, Bush only noted that 'permanent occupation threatens Israel's identity and democracy.'

When faced with criticism (even from American allies in Europe and the Middle East) about how the Bush administration's vision for political, economic, and cultural transformation across the Arab world ignored the Israel-Palestine conflict, American officials replied, 'We cannot allow reform to be held hostage to the peace process.'<sup>43</sup> This approach, however, ignored the regional consequences of an intensified Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Israel's 2002 re-occupation of the Palestinian territories and its unilateral building of a 'separation barrier' that confiscated land and further impaired mobility, sparked a re-polarisation of regional politics and put great strains on US allies such as Jordan and Egypt that had peace treaties with Israel. While both states gain regime security from their peace treaties, by sustaining US backing for their regimes, the Palestinian issue became a major cause for oppositional social mobilisation. Regimes found demonstrations and calls

to boycott American products hard to suppress due to their broad societal support, so they reacted by closing down other avenues for political expression and democratic accountability.<sup>44</sup> And with Arab societies watching the destructive siege of Palestinian towns on satellite television, the renewed conflict led to increased societal support among Palestinians and other Arabs for the use of violence against Israel (including the use of suicide bombings as conducted by Palestinian militants) and against regional US policies and influence.

In the wake of 9/11, as the Bush administration came to view anti-Americanism as motivating the rise of terrorist threats and challenging American interests, it launched a programme of public diplomacy, which Bush suggested 'can help people around the world learn about and understand America.'<sup>45</sup> As most assessments of these public relations efforts have shown, they were marred by incompetent design and execution. They had little positive impact, largely because they were barred from addressing the reasons why many Arabs opposed US policies. In explaining their failure, Marc Lynch has explained how the rise of independent Arabic-language satellite television stations, such as *Al-Jazeera*, has given rise to an autonomous pan-Arab public sphere.<sup>46</sup> The deterritorialised public sphere has sustained an increasing diversity of societal norms and identities often at odds with the norms and identities of particular states as well as American efforts to shape or influence Arab public opinion and societal views. 'These new Arab media,' Lynch explains, 'increasingly construct the dominant narrative frames through which people understand events.' As a result 'Anti-American rhetoric earns one a reputation for authenticity, courage, and clear thinking, whereas a pro-American line – though praised by Americans as the height of courage – is usually perceived in the Arab world as cheap opportunism.'<sup>47</sup> Without engaging Arab interests and security concerns, American public diplomacy efforts lacked the credibility and legitimacy necessary to combat anti-American propaganda and myths about the US that circulated within the Arab media. A survey of Arab public opinion in 2003 predictably reported that 'the bottom has fallen out' of support for the United States in the Arab and Islamic world.<sup>48</sup> As Joseph Samahah, then the Beirut-based editor for *Al-Safir* newspaper, noted about a GMEPI precursor, the 2002 Middle East Partnership Initiative, its purpose seemed to be 'to link the ambitions of some people in the Arab world to the objectives of the United States, not the objectives of the United States to the ambitions of people in the Arab world.'<sup>49</sup>

Islamist voices and attitudes are not only important players in this pan-Arab public sphere, they have also become some of the most powerful and well-organised trends among opposition movements across Arab societies. While the Bush administration sought to promote secular and liberal social forces, such movements remain marginal to politics in the Arab world. Many secular reformers in the Arab world feared that the GMEPI

and other US policies would discredit their own efforts while allowing Washington-friendly regimes to get away with superficial political reforms.<sup>50</sup> Meanwhile, with al Qaeda propaganda seeking to portray US policy as a threat to 'Islam,' Bush's vision for the region left no room to accommodate even moderate Islamist forces. While the Clinton administration had briefly considered opening ties with moderate Islamist movements, such as members of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt and Jordan, the Bush administration adamantly refused to come to terms with the rise of political Islam in the Arab world. Since the late 1970s, Islamists have represented the leading oppositional force challenging the policies and legitimacy of Arab regimes, including most US allies. The blindness to Islamist forms of political identity and legitimacy was evident in Iraq where, to the surprise of many American officials, Islamist forces quickly dominated politics outside the Kurdish community. Moreover, it was the Shia religious scholar Grand Ayatollah Ali Sistani who led the campaign of mass street protests demanding the American occupation authorities allow Iraqis to elect their own political representatives.<sup>51</sup>

In a sign of the drafters' ignorance of regional struggles for civil liberties, political inclusion, and democracy, the original GMEPI memo included no reference to Islam or moderate Islamist movements who have long been leading forces in many such struggles.<sup>52</sup> In contrast, most scholars of the region understand that 'there will be no democracy, no stability, without their participation in the politics of the region.'<sup>53</sup> At minimum, any legitimate political reform or democratisation efforts would need to engage, if not accommodate, these forces. As Oliver Roy explains, the Bush administration imagined it could unleash the power of 'enterprising individual citizens' to promote liberal reforms and democracy while failing to understand the nature of the collective identities that define politics across the region.<sup>54</sup> Roy reminds us, however, that 'there can be no democracy without political legitimacy.'<sup>55</sup> Islamist movements have become powerful because they are anchored in discourses of Islam as well as nationalism that resonate across Arab societies. They have also built social support through the provision of social welfare benefits that meet the needs of the poor through clinics, hospitals, and schools. Islamists have maintained their claims to political legitimacy in the face of repression and exclusion by authoritarian regimes, many of which are viewed as largely subservient to US interests.

Bush often sought to portray US efforts in the Middle East in terms of the struggle for 'freedom' for Arab societies. While echoing Cold War discourses, he nevertheless avoided addressing issues related to regional security and territorial conflicts. He thus rejected earlier approaches adopted by the US in its efforts to support reform and human rights within the Eastern bloc states. While the GMEPI was being developed, some policy makers, government officials, and analysts outside of the administration had been discussing the value of a Helsinki process for the Middle East. At the heart

of the 'Helsinki Process' of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe was the formation of agreements between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries in which Western countries accepted the political division of Europe while the Soviet Union agreed to a human rights monitoring component. Such an approach might have offered a model for Bush's effort to promote reform across the Arab world. Bush, however, did not value stability and regional security in what he seemed to view as a unipolar world. Talk of the Helsinki model 'started taking the administration in a direction it did not want to go, that is, toward a discussion about security issues.'<sup>56</sup> American policy makers were 'not willing to offer the states of the [Middle East] anything on the security front in exchange for significant commitments on political and economic reform.'<sup>57</sup>

The failure of American strategy to address the security concerns of Arab states is particularly striking. In the Helsinki process Western states were willing to accommodate some of the security concerns of the USSR, but the Bush administration chose to minimise the geopolitical interests of even its allies, such as Jordan, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. This approach guaranteed that the reform programme would be immediately rejected by all Arab states. The GMEPI was derailed when it was leaked to the pan-Arab daily newspaper *Al Hayat*. The publication of the memo caused a firestorm of criticism. Marwan Muasher, the reform-minded foreign minister of Jordan publicly criticised the GMEPI arguing that 'reform is important and needed in the Arab world . . . but for it to work we need ownership of the process, not a one-for-all blue-print from Washington . . . our objective is for this document never to see the light.'<sup>58</sup> Nader Fergany, a principle author of the AHDRs, commented that the American administration's 'arrogant attitude in respect to the rest of the world . . . causes it to behave as if it can decide the fate of states and peoples.'<sup>59</sup>

More broadly, from Bush's declaration in his 2002 State of the Union speech that Iran and Iraq formed part of an 'Axis of Evil', the stated willingness of the US to unilaterally use force threatened other states and regional security. After the forced removal of the regime in Baghdad, Bush sought to use the American military presence in Iraq to pressure states like Syria and Iran into adjusting their behaviour to suit American interests. These efforts failed and only gave both states more reason to aid a range of actors, from Iraqi political movements to Arab jihadists, who actively opposed the occupation of Iraq. Meanwhile, the US opposed several efforts to resolve regional conflicts and internal conflicts including Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations using Turkey as a mediator, Saudi Arabia's efforts to forge a unity government after Hamas won parliamentary elections in the Palestinian territories, and Qatar's effort to resolve stalemate over the selection of a president in Lebanon.<sup>60</sup> When conflicts broke out between Israel and Hamas and Israel and Hizballah, the US blocked UN efforts to call for a ceasefire. Most notably, in 2003 the Bush administration refused to respond to Iran's offer to forge a

'grand bargain' which would include Iranian cooperation on regional security issues and US forswearing a policy of regime change while recognising the legitimacy of the Iranian regime and its regional security interests.<sup>61</sup>

### Resilient Multipolarity and the Challenge of Iran

After stepping down from a senior State Department post, Richard Haass wrote in late 2006 that, in the wake of the ill-fated invasion and occupation of Iraq, 'the American era in the Middle East' was coming to an end.<sup>62</sup> US influence over the region, he argued, was declining due to mounting anti-Americanism, the persistence of radical Islamist ideologies, and the rise of regional rivals. Like many realists, he noted the US had shifted the balance of power by toppling the Sunni-dominated Baathist regime in Iraq that had helped contain Iranian power. He feared that Iran was a 'classical imperial power with ambitions to remake the region in its image and the potential to translate its objectives into reality.'

Limited by his neorealist balance of power framework, Haass fails to recognise how Iran's rise and expansion of regional influence is less a product of its 'imperial power' than its ability since the mid-1990s to exploit the societal dimensions of the regional Middle East system during the erosion of the American post-Gulf War order. Iran's challenge to regional US interests has not been primarily based on projecting military or economic power, of which it has little relative to the US or US allies such as Israel, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia. Rather, Iran has been able to take advantage of the fault lines of the multipolar system at both the state and societal levels. Through fostering transnational ties to non-state actors, exploiting state-society cleavages in the Arab world, and aligning itself with regional discourses of insecurity Iran has established itself, for the first time, as a major force within Arab geopolitics.

In the 1980s, in the wake of the Islamic revolution and during the Iraq-Iran war, Iran found itself facing a broad alliance of US-backed Arab states – including Egypt, Jordan and the Gulf states. The Iraqi regime portrayed its war with Iran as a defence of the Arab nation from an external foe. State perceptions of threat and societal discourses of insecurity were largely aligned. In 1990, two years after Iran agreed to end the war, Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait. As the US brought a massive military force into the region, initially to defend Saudi Arabia, the Iraqi leader attempted to rally societal support across the Arab world. While anti-US protests broke out in many Arab cities, Iraq was only able to gain support from the PLO and the 'neutrality' of Jordan and Yemen. Meanwhile, the US was able to organise a broad Arab coalition of states, including Syria, that viewed Iraq as a regional threat. State and societal perceptions of threat were shifting. In the aftermath of the war, as noted above, the US sought to forge a regional order based on promoting Arab-Israeli peace and dual containment. Expanding Arab-Israeli peace,

including the Oslo peace process and the 1994 Israel-Jordan treaty, led to the broadening of the set of Arab regimes aligned with the US along with Israel and Turkey. The US acquiesced to Syrian hegemony over post-civil war Lebanon hoping eventually to bring Syria and Lebanon into a regional pro-US alignment. At the same time, the US sought to strategically contain Iran and Iraq and isolate them through economic and political sanctions. By 1998, the US officially sought to promote regime change in Iraq and coerce Iran into accepting US regional hegemony.

The US, however, failed to sustain a unipolar order. Throughout the 1990s, the erosion of the US dominated order facilitated the expansion of regional Iranian influence. The faltering of the Oslo process allowed Iran to make political inroads in the Arab world by backing opponents of the US-sponsored peace process, namely Syria, Hamas and, most of all, Hizballah. For most Palestinians inside the West Bank and Gaza, the Oslo process and the creation of the Palestinian authority with control over isolated enclaves only increased their insecurity due to territorial fragmentation, limits on mobility, and expanding Israeli settlements. As the leadership of the Palestinian Authority became increasingly corrupt and ineffective, popular support for the militant group Hamas grew. When Hamas-affiliated figures won the 2006 parliamentary elections, and the movement faced Israeli repression and international isolation, Iran publicly backed the movement. The increasing popularity and strength of Hamas increased the strategic importance of Iran's ally Syria, which supports the movement and gives sanctuary to its political leaders.

Meanwhile, in Lebanon, Hizballah developed from an Iranian-founded terrorist organisation into a well-organised military force focused on combating the remaining Israeli forces that occupied a swath of southern Lebanon. It gained broad support across Lebanon's many sectarian and political groups as a 'resistance' organisation. When Israeli forces unilaterally withdrew in 2000, Hizballah claimed victory and in the process inspired Hamas to develop greater military capacity. Hizballah also began taking part in elections and gaining a greater voice and political power for Lebanon's long-marginalised Shia community.

The US invasion of Iraq led to expanding Iranian influence not simply by removing Iraq as a balancing force. It also politically marginalised, and generated intensive insecurity within, Iraq's Sunni Arab community. This insecurity led the community to oppose the occupation and fostered a deadly insurgency movement. Arab Sunni jihadists came from across the Arab world to wreak havoc in Iraq while all Arab states, including close US allies, withheld support for the new regime developed under American occupation. At the same time, the US found that the only credible political forces to emerge within the Arab community were pro-Iranian Islamist movements. The largest, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), had been set up in Tehran and fought on Iran's side during the

Iran-Iraq War. To establish a functioning, representative government, US forces were required to cooperate with movements like SCIRI and grant them control and influence. Meanwhile, in addition to the Sunni-based nationalist and jihadist insurgencies, the US also faced resistance from the Sadrist movement, led by the son of a popular Iraqi cleric murdered by government forces under Saddam Hussein. The rapid emergence of the Sadrists as a powerful force, especially within poor Shia neighbourhoods, was largely due to their ability to quickly form a local militia to provide communal security as lawlessness broke out after the fall of the regime.<sup>63</sup> While the Sadrist movement generally opposed Iranian influence in the country, many analysts believe that Iran has helped fund and arm members of the movement.

Some have tried to portray Iran's rising regional influence as the product of a sectarian Sunni-Shia divide. In 2004, King Abdullah of Jordan even referred to the rise of an Iranian-backed 'Shiite crescent' threatening the region, highlighting the transnational religious and cultural ties between Shiite Iran and Shia communities in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and the Gulf. The promotion of this image, however, is better understood as an effort by US-aligned states to recast the rise of societal insecurities in the Arab world caused by the Iraq war. As Valbjørn and Bank argue, the discourse of a 'Shiite crescent' and the supposed unearthing of a centuries-old sectarian conflict between Shia and Sunni Muslims at a regional level was a means for the leaders of pro-US states to rally their societies to view Iran as a threat.<sup>64</sup> Doing so would better align these societies' concerns with the interests of the regimes (even as it would place Sunni jihadist movements within a 'pro-Western' alignment as became the case in Lebanon). But outside right-wing Lebanese Christians, pro-Western secularists, and Sunni extremists, Arab societal discourses no longer cast Iran as a threat to the Arab world. Rather, Arab societies generally see Israeli and US policies as the most urgent sources of insecurity.<sup>65</sup>

A test of societal alignments came in the summer of 2006 when war broke out between Israel and Hizballah. Hizballah had inadvertently provoked the war by launching a raid into Israel to capture soldiers to trade for the release of Lebanese and Palestinians held by Israel. As part of the raid, Hizballah launched some short-range missiles into Israel and ended up killing several Israeli soldiers. Israel responded by launching an all out war. Israeli forces bombed the airport and blockaded Lebanon from the sea. Over several weeks of bombing, Israel destroyed the country's power and transportation infrastructure and targeted Shia populated regions in southern Beirut and south Lebanon that were under the movement's control. Soon after the war broke out, the US-backed regimes of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan sought to rally popular support against Hizballah by condemning the movement for what they saw as its reckless actions provoking the war which led to suffering by all Lebanese. With its roots as an Iranian-backed

terrorist cell, Hizballah had limited Arab-wide support. Meanwhile inside Lebanon, many non-Shia had come to see it as too closely aligned with the Syrian regime, which had been forced to withdraw its troops from Lebanon in 2005 after mass protests broke out in the wake of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri. Thus in the early days of the summer of 2006, the charge of recklessness stung. But as Israeli forces continued their disproportionate retaliation and the US refused calls for a ceasefire from the Lebanese government headed by a pro-US prime minister, Arab societies began to rally in support of Hizballah. In contrast to Arab memories of past confrontations with Israeli forces, the movement's dedicated soldiers waged war with unguided rockets targeted at Israeli population centres and used guerrilla tactics against Israeli forces when they launched a land invasion. Hizballah's charismatic leader, Sayyid Hasan Nasrallah, was widely praised as an Arab hero and likened to Nasser as masses watched his televised speeches. In the aftermath of the war, Hizballah emerged as a more assertive political movement. It also maintained its popular support by effectively accommodating those displaced by the war and mobilising a reconstruction effort funded by Iran and other sources.

Over the course of the next two years, while Iran secretly resupplied its military arsenal, Hizballah steadily sought a greater share of power while guarding its right as a 'resistance' movement to maintain its weapons. These demands led to a political stalemate in Lebanon between the Hizballah-led opposition and the pro-US political forces that led the government since the election of 2005, held soon after the evacuation of Syrian forces. With the opposition boycotting the government, Lebanon remained without a president at the end of pro-Syrian Emile Lahoud's term. In the spring of 2008 when the pro-US forces in the government sought to close down Hizballah's communication network, the opposition responded with show of force, briefly sending their militia forces to take over the streets of West Beirut.

The political stalemate only ended with an agreement signed in Doha under the mediation of the small state of Qatar. Qatar was in a unique position as it has ties to multiple rival parties in the region. While its larger neighbour Saudi Arabia has close ties to the pro-US forces in Lebanon, Qatar has ties to Hizballah as well as Iran, which most Arab Gulf states view as a potential threat. At the same time, Qatar has allowed the Americans to base their regional military command and control operations in the country. Moreover, Qatar simultaneously maintains open commercial and less formal diplomatic ties to Israel. The 2008 Doha agreement brought an end to the political crisis in Lebanon by granting Hizballah's political demands, designating the non-affiliated commander of the Lebanese Army as the next president, and setting the rules for new national elections the following year. The Doha agreement effectively allowed Hizballah to consolidate its political gains and it also displayed the ability of Qatar – with ties to the Lebanese

opposition and Hizballah's external backers in Iran – to play a role in managing regional political conflicts that the US did not have the capability or inclination to play.<sup>66</sup>

### RETHINKING US STRATEGY: MANAGING A MULTIPOLAR, PLURALIST SYSTEM

In the waning days of the Bush administration, Secretary Rice – promoting what she referred to as ‘American realism’ – claimed that ‘a strategic realignment is unfolding in the broader Middle East, separating those states that are responsible and accept that the time for violence under the rubric of “resistance” has passed and those that continue to fuel extremism, terrorism, and chaos.’<sup>67</sup> The outlines of such a strategic realignment, however, remained unclear. The refusal of the US under George W. Bush to help resolve regional conflicts and accommodate rival forces has only eroded US influence while expanding Iran's leverage and regional influence. In all major arenas of regional conflict, Iran finds itself backing one of the important players. American and Israeli efforts to wield their superior military forces have only increased societal insecurity and political instability. Attempting to foster a ‘new Arab cold war’ while seeking to build an anti-Iran coalition, as some have suggested, does not increase US leverage. It may even foster conflicts as it binds the US to a narrow set of actors while exacerbating domestic and regional cleavages.

The approach to understanding the regional Middle East state system presented in this article helps explain Roy's conclusion that ‘Iran is therefore the key to the current situation in the Middle East.’<sup>68</sup> The US can only limit Iran's regional influence by resolving the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, ameliorating Israeli tensions with Lebanon and Syria, and settling the struggles for power in Lebanon and Iraq. To do any of this, however, will require engagement with the forces Washington seeks to defeat, including Hamas, Hizballah, Syria and the Sadrist trend in Iraq. In each case, Iran has tools to assist or hinder resolution.

Without attempting to survey the broader, ongoing debate about a future US grand strategy in the Middle East,<sup>69</sup> I want to conclude by outlining the implications of the framework put forward in this essay for understanding the Middle East regional system. Following in the footsteps of the British Empire during its era of decline, the failure of the Bush administration's strategy for regional transformation, during a period of unrivalled American military dominance, highlights the enduring value of L. Carl Brown's observation that ‘no outside power has ever been able to attain hegemonic control or successfully order the region.’<sup>70</sup> Like the efforts of the British and French with the Mandate system, US policy under Bush fostered regime and societal insecurity and facilitated the rise of a regional challenger that was able

to exploit these insecurities. In his presidential campaign Bush's successor, Barack Obama, suggested he would offer an alternative, declaring, 'The mission of the United States is to provide global leadership grounded in the understanding that the world shares a common security and a common humanity.'<sup>71</sup> And in his high profile June 2009 speech at Cairo University announcing a 'New Beginning' he made several references to Arab notions of dignity and security.<sup>72</sup> Still, Obama showed little sign that he would allow Arab societal interests and perceptions of insecurity constrain or define US policy goals. An alternative approach would forgo attempting to eliminate rival political forces, or 'reform' Arab states and societies in ways that would supposedly make them more conducive to a US-dominated regional order, and instead attempt to manage a multipolar, pluralist order.

Neorealist theory suggests that multipolar systems are the most unstable and prone to war as they present more dyads for conflict and offer a complex pattern to maintain in balance.<sup>73</sup> The multipolarity of the regional system, however, is embedded in the history of Middle East state formation. The Middle East state system was structured to reflect the strategic interests of external powers rather than to express popular sovereignty and thus, even with the decline of Arab nationalism as an ideology, societal discourses continue to challenge the legitimacy of the regional state system and often oppose the intervention of external powers. Meanwhile, the efforts by state elites to maintain power have generally led to the suppression of social forces and fostered more incongruent societal discourses of insecurity. Given this regional geopolitical architecture, the US could consider supporting the establishment and maintenance of a pluralist, multipolar system in which the US seeks to insulate both state and societal actors from insecurity. Rather than seeking to align state and societal actors with US interests, in the long run the US may be better served by gaining leverage in managing the constantly shifting, unbalanced system. In such a role the US would facilitate adjustments to shifts in regional power and accommodate the rise of various social forces, such as Islamists, while limiting regional and civil conflicts.

A first step would involve retracting the US projection of power in the region by relocating American military forces 'over the horizon' and assuming a policy of 'offshore balancing.' The logic of such a strategy is that the US need not defeat all rivals but only ensure that no hostile power is able to dominate the region's oil resources and militarily threaten the sovereignty and well-being of other states. The US would need to intervene only when state sovereignty and vital US interests are threatened, such as during the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait. Meanwhile, it would use its military capability and diplomatic action to deter regional powers from destabilising actions. As some neorealist have argued, by making 'American involvement less threatening to states in the region'<sup>74</sup> and allowing rival states more regional influence, the US would be less frequently drawn into direct intervention while gaining leverage to manage conflicts between states.

But in contrast to neorealist approaches, within a pluralist approach the US would also remain wary of political forces seeking to drag the US into regional and civil conflicts as a means to tip the balance of power their way. Thus a second component of such a pluralist grand strategy would be to focus on defusing and resolving regional and civil conflicts with limited regard for the past or future political alignments of the parties. In doing so, the US would need to work with multiple regional and international parties and accommodate rival interests, as Qatar was able to do in the case of Lebanon. The 2008 Doha agreement allowed the political forces opposed to the 'pro-US' government to consolidate their position. From a narrow balance of power framework, this agreement would appear to increase instability and potential threats to US interests as it failed to contain and disarm Hizballah. From a pluralist perspective, however, the maintenance of a stalemate may be the best the US can hope for given the strength and popularity of Hizballah and the opposition's coalition, which includes members from all of Lebanon's sectarian groups. To the degree that the US can assist in such negotiations it may gain leverage and credibility to assist in the expected future rounds of negotiations and accommodation. Due to the configuration of regional geopolitics and the expected future rise of social forces – such as Islamist and populist forces – who challenge the existing configuration of power within states like Lebanon, Iraq, Egypt, Palestine and elsewhere, the US cannot expect the regional system to move towards and maintain equilibrium, let alone 'secure' US interests. While Iran currently gains leverage when the region is most out of balance, the US can only gain long-term influence and limit anti-Americanism by becoming a credible manager of conflicts.

One important implication of such a switch in strategy is that it would position the US to redefine its strategic interests and open up policy options. In particular, the US would no longer need to support Israel's occupation of the West Bank and regional military posture, nor unconditionally back repressive Arab regimes. While the US would want Israel to maintain its ability to deter hostile attacks, the US would have a strong interest in deescalating the Arab-Israeli conflict even if a final settlement of all historical claims remains out of reach. In the meantime, the US could focus its resources on protecting the sovereignty and security of the different communities.

A similar strategy may be applied to conflicts between authoritarian regimes and opposition movements. While the US has an interest in opposing the overthrow of regimes by force, its long-term interest would be best served by facilitating a re-negotiation of state-society relations in Arab countries leading to increased power and legitimacy for opposition movements. In promoting pluralism rather than democracy or particular reforms, the US only supports increased voice for opposition movements while backing regimes only against the threat of a violent takeover of power. While rising political forces are likely to be less supportive of US interests than

current pro-US regimes, with this new approach to the region the transition would more likely be gradual. And the US would benefit with ties to multiple parties, rather than remain beholden to narrowly based, authoritarian regimes.

Third, the United States could use its regional ties and resources to help establish a series of regional security forums to promote multilateral negotiations centred on Arab-Israeli conflict, Lebanon, Iraq, and the Persian Gulf.<sup>75</sup> Such an approach would echo the experiences of the Helsinki process negotiations between NATO and Warsaw Pact countries that began in the 1970s and could build on the experience of the regional working group established following the Madrid Peace conference in 1991. At such forums 'relevant issues could be debated and discussed, information exchanged, and agreements framed.'<sup>76</sup> The US would have close ties to numerous participants but would be required to accommodate regional rivals and forego its quest to order the region along its own design. While not able to replace multipolarity, the US could help limit the axes of regional rivalry that generate security dilemmas. Such processes would be facilitated by the negotiation of a 'grand bargain' between the US and its main regional rival Iran. In such an agreement the US might gain Iran's cooperation to maintain security in Iraq, a stable government in Lebanon, and avoid future regional conflicts in the Levant or Gulf. Such a strategy would require the US to forswear a policy of regime change while recognising the legitimacy of the Iranian regime and its regional security interests.

Seeking to manage a multipolar, pluralist system is not an easy task and would require careful planning and diplomacy. Such a strategy could not be expected to resolve all regional conflicts or diminish US interest in the region, but could help define a shift in the dynamics of US policy and interaction with the region. It offers a 'realism' shaped not primarily by American interests or the balances of power between states but one that reflects the complex, multilayered nature of the geopolitics of the Middle East.

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72. President Barack Obama, 'Remarks by the President on a New Beginning', available at <[http://www.whitehouse.gov/the\\_press\\_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/the_press_office/Remarks-by-the-President-at-Cairo-University-6-04-09/)>.

73. Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy* (note 3) pp. 338–344.

74. J. Mearsheimer and S. Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2007) p. 340.

75. See Shai Feldman and Abdullah Toukan, *Bridging the Gap: A Future Security Architecture for the Middle East* (Lanham, MD: Roman and Littlefield 1997); *The Iraq Study Group Report: The Way Forward-A New Approach* (New York: Vintage Books 2006); Pollack, 'Securing the Gulf' (note 40). Note that only in the Feldman/Toukan effort are Arab (state) notions of security considered as equivalent with US and Israeli ones. But still none of these proposals engaged societal notions or human rights as the Helsinki process did. The 2009 Arab Human Development report comes close by addressing the notion of 'human security', see Marc Lynch, 'Grading Places', *The National* (Abu Dhabi), 30 July 2009.

76. Pollack, 'Securing the Gulf' (note 40) p. 13.