Chapter-I

DEMOCRACY PROMOTION: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

Introduction:

For generations, American leaders have accentuated the promotion of democracy abroad as a significant element of America’s foreign policy. President Woodrow Wilson proclaimed that America was fighting World War-I to make the world safe for democracy. In the 1920s and 1930s, US administrations cast numerous military interventions in the Caribbean and Central America as missions to establish democracy. In World War-II, America fought against fascist autocracies in the name of protecting freedom and democracy. The US policy makers in the post World War-II period emphasized more on democracy promotion as a fundamental policy toward a defeated Japan and Germany. In the 1950s the American leaders, who devoted most of their foreign policy energy to contain the spread of communism, often have spoken of protecting democracy. They have pronounced that the expanding cold war was nothing but a struggle to preserve the values and norms of the free world. In the early 1960s, President John Kennedy championed the idea of fostering democracy in the developing world. Two decades later, President Ronald Reagan renewed the democracy proposition by forming his zealous anti-Soviet policy as a democracy crusade. In the 1990s, President George H.W. Bush and Bill Clinton asserted that democracy promotion was one of the key organizing principles of US foreign policy in the new context of the post Cold War era. More recently, President George W. Bush embraced the idealistic notion of spreading democracy across the globe as a key foreign policy objective. His democratic crusade was invigorated by the belief that Islamic authoritarianism ‘breeds terror’ and ‘political extremism.’ The best answer to this predicament lies, in his views, in the immediate democratization of the Muslim world. Thus it is
understood that there is a long history of American articulation of a policy for promoting democracy around the world. However, looking behind the long chain of policy rhetoric, one finds a less consistent policy in reality. Security and economic interests have often outweighed or undermined the policy of promoting democracy. Throughout the Twentieth Century, the US cultivated friendly relations with several dictatorial regimes, and intervened in other countries for the reason other than the promotion of democracy. Pro-democracy rhetoric was in reality a policy contrivance. Nevertheless, democracy promotion is perceived as an important part of America’s international tradition by successive US Administrations.

**Delineation of the Theme:**

The promotion of democracy has been put forward as a central objective of the United States foreign policy, during the Presidency of George W. Bush. Since taking office, President Bush often spoke about the need for the promotion of democracy, and it was central to his administration’s policy on the war on terrorism. It was also over all a grand strategy, in which it was assumed that political and security interests of the US were advanced by the spread of liberal political institutions and values abroad. The Bush Administration’s national security policy concentrated on the direct application of military and political power to promote liberal democracy in strategic areas. It reflected the new post-9/11 conventional wisdom that democracy in the Muslim world could be the best antidote to the Islamist terrorism. Nonetheless, the real issues of concern in the United States were: access to oil, foreign cooperation in counter-terrorism, fostering peace between Israel and its neighbors, stemming the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and preventing Islamist radicals from seizing political power. Fighting Islamist militant and safeguarding oil compelled the United States to
cooperate with authoritarian regimes. The United States took a tough line against Iran and Syria on the issue of democracy. At the same time it appeared reluctant to push Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Tunisia, and other friendly autocrats, very hard. Despite President Bush’s conviction on democratic change in the West Asia, a great deal of ambivalence annoyed the policy makers about the prospects of any rapid political opening in the region. Some foreign policy experts worried that given the political mood of the Arab world, most of the citizens are annoyed at the United States and sympathetic to political Islam. In this situation, free and open election could result in some distinctly unfriendly regimes. For most of the last five decades, Washington had done very little to promote democracy. It relied more on the autocratic leaders of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and other friendly regimes to protect its vital interest in the Arab neighborhood. On the morning of September 11, 2001, US priorities in this region remarkably changed. All of a sudden, the Bush Administration realized that ‘democratization’ is the critical means through which American interest could be achieved. This had previously ranked below security and stability, in its list of concerns for the Arab world. Arab authoritarianism could no longer be viewed as a source of stability; it instead, constituted the primary threat. Even before this shift, Washington had already attempted to promote democracy in the West Asia quietly. But it had never done anything like Bush’s rhetorical enthusiasm or fixation on democracy. This skepticism, however, was no longer warranted. Only a minority of the US public supported democracy promotion as a desirable policy goal. Both the Republican and Democratic parties were internally divided on the very subject of democracy promotion. The actual extent of the President Bush’s commitment to democracy promotion was much less than the President’s sweeping rhetoric suggested. Although from the day one, the Bush Administration claimed that the Iraq intervention was a democratizing
mission. But this very proposition came to be intensely debated at home as well as abroad. Bush policy in the rest of West Asia temporarily diverted from the traditional line of supporting autocratic Arab allies. But finally returned to it during the closing years of the Bush presidency. The positive effects of Bush policy on global democracy have been meager. Despite the hope in 2004 - 2005 that West Asia was under the experience of a “Baghdad Spring,” the region remained stuck in authoritarian rule. The spread of democracy stagnated in the rest of the world, with democratic reversals or backsliding outweighing gains. The foreign policies of Presidents Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, and Bill Clinton all combined in various proportions had given an emphasis on democracy with substantial realist elements. However, to some extent President George W. Bush’s approach to democracy promotion was distinctive. Its distinguishing features were: centrality of military intervention, focus on the Middle East, and tie-in with the war on terrorism. But all of them were highly problematic. Although President George W. Bush and his foreign policy team had many international ambitions; a sense of resolution for any issue was noticeable. The remaining ambitions, whether victory in Iraq or peace between the Palestinians and Israelis, were more of wishful plans than realizable projects. Moreover, the accumulated fatigue at home and abroad with both the substance and style of the Bush foreign policy approach was powerful. President Bush profoundly raised the visibility of the democracy issue, both by casting the war in Iraq as a democratizing mission, as well as rooting the war on terrorism in a global “freedom agenda.” In this situation, democracy promotion became an unavoidable part of any serious foreign policy debate during his presidency. The proposition of democracy promotion achieved significant bipartisan support within the US policy community and public from the late 1980s until the early years of this decade. But that consensus soon got fractured, because
democracy requires the consent of the governed. Democracy cannot be forced onto an unwilling population. The US effort to build a lasting, liberal democracy in West Asia was a project of ambivalent ambition. Much attention in the American press and academic world was given on uncovering the true motivations for this audacious mission. At the same time, an equally interesting and important query emerged is that; how US foreign policy elites could believe that the goal of democratization would actually be accomplished. The issue of how the United States could or could not bring democracy in the region was, and still is, the subject of an intense intellectual debate around the world.

The present work is a humble attempt to understand the evolution of policy and implication of US goal of democracy promotion abroad, with a special focus on Afghanistan and Iraq. Also it is a modest endeavor to examine the concept of democracy promotion and examine the strategic necessity for the United States to use this concept.

Chapter-I analyzes the theoretical evolution of the concept of democracy promotion; starting from Thomas Paine’s famous metaphor for the United States as the “new world regenerates the old” to the Bush Doctrine’s proclamation on the United States as the “crusader of freedom and liberty”. One school of thought suggests that American institutions and value should be perfected and preserved at home, and another school argues that America must take initiatives to spread its universal political values.

Chapter-II analyzes the importance of democracy promotion in the Muslim world, where the democracy can be the best antidote for the people who suffer under the extremist ideology of the totalitarian regime. That’s why the American foreign policy concentrated on “regime change”, where it traces President Bill Clinton’s initiatives and Congressional endorsement of such a policy and goes on
to analyze President George W. Bush’s justifications of regime change. It analyzed the prospects and consequences of democracy promotion in this region.

Chapter-III specifically deals with Afghanistan issue. It examines how the failed state like Afghanistan is experiencing democracy and how enduring peace can be achieved for the greater good. It explains the politics of Bonn Agreement to Rule of Law initiatives, and its successful enterprise of nation-building.

Chapter-IV describes American initiative to hold General Election in Iraq, which was free and fair under the supervision of international observers and participated by numerous political parties in Iraq. Many groups, who historically wanted to rule over Iraq, accepted the new system. It explains it is really a challenge for the US to keep the nation united.

Chapter-V concludes this research by analyzing the difficulties in democracy promotion, its ethical implementation, and its achieved success in Afghanistan and Iraq. These are very deeply divided society with no history of liberal democracy. The US involvement or guidance does not seem to be producing positive results. Most of the Middle Eastern countries have authoritarian regimes, and several of them are American allies. They do not seem to have been inspired by the experimentation of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq; and the US does not appear to be interested in transplanting other friendly regimes in this region with its own version of “democracy”.

Review of Literature

Democracy is the key American political idea; and that promoting it worldwide fulfills America's destiny. As these points suggest, Exporting Democracy tackles a topic no less than America's place in the world. In this context, Joshua Muravchik in his book Exporting Democracy: Fulfilling America’s Destiny (1991) uses the term ‘democracy’ to mean something more than honest, open, and competitive elections.
He also includes unfettered political discourse in the term; in other words, democracy for him is liberal democracy. A three-fold assumption lies behind the notion of "exporting democracy": that democracy in some fashion belongs to Americans; that it can be exported; and that other peoples want it. Muravchik convincingly establishes each of these points. First, democracy does belong to Americans in the sense that virtually every country that democratizes draws extensively on the American experience. Second, democracy can be exported. Americans have exported democracy to many countries, including Nicaragua, the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Germany, Italy, Austria, Dominican Republic, Grenada, and Panama. Although not every case witnessed success, the record is indeed satisfactory, and completely unmatched by any other occupying power. Third, as for others wanting democracy, Muravchik traces its steady expansion from its birth in the United States to the present. When the modern version of democracy first emerged in 1776, less than a million individuals enjoyed its benefits. Today, some two billion individuals partake or two thousand times as many. Muravchik sees benefit in democracy both for American interests (What is good for democracy is good for America) and for foreign peoples. Politicians should make promotion of democracy the central theme of US foreign policy. Moreover, the American president "should see himself not merely as custodian of the country, but as the leader of the democratic movement." Democratic ideas won the Cold War for America and now "the opportunity of a lifetime" exists to take advantage of weakened structures and decayed will in that country to democratize. This he deems "by far the highest goal of US foreign policy." To miss the chance for basic change would be "unforgivable." To achieve it would point to the twenty-first century as the true American century. America's century means not that its power or institutions dominate, but that its ideals have spread across the globe.
For years, democracy promotion sat on the sidelines of American foreign policy. Foreign policy specialists paid ritualistic deference to it, respecting the ideal, but invested little close attention to the actual practice. Now that has all changed. Over the years the entire world has watched the unfolding drama of the United States and its coalition partners struggling to transform Iraq into something resembling a working democracy. Moreover, the US and the Europe are in the early phase of what they declare to be a historic new commitment to helping the entire Middle East find a democratic future. And central to the global war on terrorism is the idea that promoting freedom where authoritarianism now reigns is critical to eliminating the roots of political extremism and violence. Democracy is the front and center in the international stage and the consequent need for knowledge and expertise about democracy promotion is enormous. In this connection a critical discussion on intervention of USA and its allies on the pretext of democracy can be carried out. The book Critical Mission: Essays on Democracy Promotion (2005), written by Thomas Carothers gives a clear view on this aspect. The book provides a vivid description of the role of the United States to promote democracy in the world in general and in the Middle East in particular and much needed answers to the fundamental question about democracy assistance. However, the Arab people in spite of being interested in democracy oppose American way of promoting democracy especially in Iraq. That’s the reason why they are more lineal toward political Islam hence Authoritarian regime. In this critical juncture, it is really challenging for the United States to win the confidence of the general public by promoting democracy as well as avoid unfriendly regime to form the government.

For one of the most debated foreign policy questions, it is remarkable how little agreement there seems to be about the meaning of American democracy promotion in practice. Thus, some analysts view it as an unnecessary into the
otherwise normal conduct of diplomatic relations, a position still championed by Henry Kissinger. Some regard it as a part of practical strategy designed to advance American national interests. More cynical observers see it as a mere facade designed to mask the hard edge of American hegemony. However, few scholars dismiss it almost completely as being of very minor importance in understanding the deeper source of American conduct in world affairs. There is even a strand of thinking which seems to feel that the democracy promotion is a form of western arrogance, stemming from the quite false assumption that a concept of human rights born under one set of conditions has universal meaning and could and should be applied to others. In the book of *American Democracy Promotion: Impulse, Strategy and Impacts* (2000) Michael Cox explained how the debate goes on pitting one school of thought against another, proving that there are as many views about democracy promotion as there are perhaps ideological perspectives.

In a world full of ethnocentrism, prejudice, and violent conflict, there is a vital need for core democratic values to resolve ethnic and religious conflicts and to prevent their escalation to violence. The absence of democratic mechanisms to sort out conflicts within a country often makes it easy for conflicts to spill over into violence. Although the history of each region has left a distinctive legacy of cultures, languages, and religions, fundamental democratic principles--applied in ways that fit indigenous circumstances--can be useful to all. In this highly informative essay, Larry Diamond in his book *Promoting Democracy in the 1990s: Actors and Instruments, Issues and Imperatives* (1995) makes a cogent case for the fostering of democracy, addressing the major problems in a constructive and thoughtful manner. The essay clearly shows the need for sustained efforts toward building democratic processes and institutions throughout the world. Any democracy needs a systematic, fair process for implementing consent of the
governed. The development of election systems constitutes one crucial piece of this puzzle. Another component is the development of strong civic organizations in societies that have been harshly limited by authoritarian regimes. Ultimately, pluralism is at the heart of democracy. Pluralism fosters the dynamic interplay of ideas, enterprises, parties, and a great variety of nongovernmental groups on the basis of reasonably clear, agreed-upon rules that reflect an attitude of tolerance, mutual respect, and sensitivity to fundamental human rights.

Is democracy so difficult to be transplanted into new soil? The fall of so many dictatorships, first in Southern Europe, then in Latin America, then Eastern Europe opens new, more optimistic perspectives on democratic development. The crises of dictatorships and the search for a new political order offer fertile ground for an examination of how best to effect democratic transitions. By focusing on the objective conditions that make democracy probable, sociological and historical theories of democracy often lose sight of what is possible. Here Giuseppe Di Palma in his book *To Craft Democracies: An Essay on Democratic Transition* (1990) instead explores those conciliatory political undertakings that political actors on all sides now engage in to make the improbable possible. His emphasis is on political crafting: in regard to constitutional choices, to alliances and convergences between contestants, to trade-offs, to the pacing of the transitions. Di Palma also examines the reasons—stalemate, the high cost of repression, a loss of goals, international constraints and inducements—that may motivate incumbents and non democratic political actors to accept democracy, even in those cases, as in Central America and Eastern Europe, where acceptance would seem least likely. An original and imaginative work that, in the light of recent transitions, challenges our assumptions about fledgling democracies and breaks new theoretical ground, which will appeal to anyone interested in the way we forge our political communities today.
The US has spent much of the post-Cold War decade attempting to make messy places safe for democracy. Since the end of the Cold War, the international community, and the USA in particular, has intervened in a series of civil conflicts around the world. In a number of cases, where actions such as economic sanctions or diplomatic pressures have failed, military interventions have been undertaken. The book *Democracy by Force: US Military Intervention in the Post Cold War World* (2000) by Karin Von Hippel examines four US-sponsored interventions (Panama, Somalia, Haiti and Bosnia), focusing on efforts to reconstruct the state which have followed military action. Such nation-building is vital if conflict is not to recur. In each of the four cases, Karin von Hippel considers the factors which led the USA to intervene, the path of military intervention, and the nation-building efforts which followed. The book seeks to provide a greater understanding of the successes and failures of US policy, to improve strategies for reconstruction, and to provide some insight into the conditions under which intervention and nation-building are likely to succeed. Interventions undertaken to remove an embarrassment through Panama, to please important domestic constituencies through Somalia and Haiti and to avoid a transatlantic rift through Bosnia, which have acquired state-building functions as policymakers have become increasingly aware of the uselessness of sending troops without addressing a conflict’s causes.

Another good work on this issue is “Promoting Democracy in the Middle East” (2005), written by Naom Chomsky, who is one of the greatest intellectual celebrities of our time and the hardest critic of American policy towards Middle East is extremely critical and sceptical of the merits of spreading democracy. He argued that anti-American feelings are widespread throughout all Arab regions. Promoting democracy means establishing anti-American regime in the region. Most of the Arabs believe that current American policy is nothing but the
emergence of the war between the cross and the crescent and like previous crusade again they have to swallow the bitter pill of defeat, which is not acceptable to them. For this reason they are not supporting the cause of promoting democracy. Another argument what Chomsky has made is the Arab people never consider American way of democracy is the right form of democracy, so they simply reject this American idea of Democracy. This rejection is reflected or may be cited as a burning example through the situation in Iraq.

Why has the United States decided to promote democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq if the domestic impediments to democratization in both countries are substantial and efforts to promote liberal institutions may compromise America’s material interests? This paper of M. J. Peceny on “Democracy Promotion and US Foreign Policy: Afghanistan, Iraq and the Future,” (2005), argues that the US promotes democracy during its military interventions to legitimate those interventions to a domestic audience in the US, an international audience among America’s liberal allies, and/or to people within the country in which the US has intervened. Because domestic actors in the target country recognize that this dynamic is a recurrent theme in US policy, they often push for democracy as a strategy designed to build alliances with the US In Afghanistan, the Bush administration embraced democracy promotion more as a response to an international audience and to the initiatives of Afghans than as a way to legitimate the intervention within the US It embraced regime change in Iraq initially because policy-makers believed that the promotion of democracy would be the best strategy for transforming Iraq into a strong and stable ally and were convinced by Iraqi exiles that a transition to democracy would be relatively easy. More broadly, this war was designed to spread the democratic peace to the Middle East by imposing democracy on Iraq. As opposition to the occupation of Iraq increased over time
within the US, Bush responded by placing increasing emphasis on liberal themes to legitimate that occupation. The combination of domestic structural impediments to successful democratization and the strategic imperatives that can lead the United States to attempt to manipulate electoral outcomes is likely to generate some political liberalization and limited electoral competition, but is not likely to lead to fully consolidated democracy. The developing global norm of democratic governance, however, provides all actors with strong incentives to maintain the institutional forms of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq, even if the quality of those democratic institutions may not reach the standards of full democratization.

Any society wants to achieve a substantive democracy must have a history of civil society and some understanding of democracy. This issue has been raised by Eric Davis in his article “Past as Prolog in Building Democracy in Iraq” (2005). The author has analyzed Iraqi history, rise of civil society and Iraqi understanding of democracy. He visualizes the prospects of democracy in Iraq, and what should be the American policy to the maintenance of democracy. He has analyzed the social structure, ethnic realities and sectarian features of Iraq as well as election methods in a detailed manner. They have proposed the alternative vote system and minority provisions as an alternative for Iraq after analyzing the whole issue as well as merits and demerits of list proportional representation in Iraqi system. He has also opined that people see Iraqi political situation in a distorted way. Also he suggested that historical memory in Iraq in the process of building democracy must not be overlooked.

In a country where there is civil war type situation and sectarian violence, killings, mass murder are rampant; the talking about a strong stable and democratic country is like a daydream. The law and order situation in Iraq after the war suggests the policy failure of American policy makers. In this regard Joseph S.
Nye Jr. who is one of the prominent political analysts of America, in his article “US Power and Strategy after Iraq” (2003), writes that the Americans were largely indifferent and uncertain about how to shape a foreign policy to guide their world power status. American should understand that their support for American pre-eminence is as much a boost for international justice as many people are capable of giving. It is also a boon for American interests for what might be called the American spirit. To succeed in Iraq, America must not only maintain its hard power but also understand its soft power and how to combine the two in the pursuit of national and global interests. Because the terrorist attack of September 11 showed, even a super power needs friend.

Scope of the Study

The study includes the American debate on democracy promotion as a policy option and describes different school of thoughts and their competing conceptual views on it. It compares the positive set of steps taken by the Bush Administration for democracy promotion with the negative policies that obstructed goal realization. It examines the relevance of democracy promotion strategy in the war on terrorism, and analyzes the factors responsible for making democracy promotion a difficult goal. It also analyzes the contesting reasons and alternative visions of American intervention and its experiment with democracy promotion to transform the heart of the Islamic World.

Significance of the Study

At the onset of this century the unfathomable incidence of 9/11 accentuated the discourse of democracy promotion to make the world safer and better place to live. The Bush Administration continuously emphasized the importance of “democracy promotion” particularly in the Muslim World as its foreign policy priority and attempted to do so with varying rates of success. President Bush’s policy of
democracy promotion reflected the traditional American ideal from its foundation that clashed with prevailing harsh realities of various regions and with pragmatic requirements of an administration. Liberal great powers generally have their identity clearly defined by their principles and translated those into a national grand strategy.

**Objective of the Study**

This study specifically focuses on the following objectives:

- To discuss the theoretical and conceptual aspects of American policy of “promoting democracy.”
- To make a systematic analysis of factors responsible for inducing the US to emphasize establishment of democratic governance abroad.
- To study and examine George W Bush’s various initiatives with regard to democracy promotion.
- To analyze the consequences of the policy of democracy promotion under the Bush Administration.

**Research Questions**

- Why does democracy promotion considered an important policy by the successive American Administration?
- How have various American Administrations justified their policy of democracy promotion over the years?
- What is the rhetoric and reality of democracy promotion under the Bush Administration?
- What are the effects of George W. Bush’s policy of democracy promotion, especially in selected countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan?
Hypotheses

- “Democracy Promotion” is a policy instrument aimed at preserving and promoting American interest in the Islamic world.

- The Bush Administration’s efforts to establish democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan were at best a partial success.

Research Methodology

- The study uses descriptive and analytical method. While discussing the general policy of democracy promotion with special reference to the Bush Administration, a deductive approach has been adopted to examine how the policies were formulated and implemented to achieve the desired goal.

- The study has referred both primary and secondary sources of information and data. The primary sources include various available reports of the US Government, the US Congressional proceedings, reports of the Department of State, and the National Security Council. The secondary sources include books, journal articles, newspapers; and other relevant materials available in the Internet.

Democracy Promotion as US Strategy:

The factors that delineate and differentiate the United States as self-contained political community are varied and vivid. It has been defined in terms of both adherence to a set of liberal, universal political ideals and a professed obligation to spread those norms internationally. For this reason, American political experience has been unique in its nature. The concept of the United States as an agent of historical transformation and liberal change in the international system, hence explains large part of history of the US foreign policy. Thomas Paine wrote to George Washington in the dedication of The Rights of Man, the United States was founded to see “the new world regenerate the old.” And he also mentioned,
“Monarchical sovereignty, the enemy of mankind, and the source of misery, is abolished; and the sovereignty itself is restored to its natural and original place, the nation. Were this the case throughout Europe, the cause of wars would be taken away” (Paine 1984: 34). According to Jeanne Kirkpatrick, “No modern idea holds greater sway in the minds of educated Americans than the belief that it is possible to democratize governments anytime, anywhere, and under any circumstances” (Kirkpatrick 1978: 37). Thus democracy promotion is not just another foreign policy instrument or idealist diversion; but is central to the American political identity and sense of national purpose.

There are two possible contending schools have been emerged with respect to the long-term promotion of democratic change. One perspective is termed as “exemplarism,” which conceives of the United States that is originated in separation from the Old World politics. It suggests that US institutions and values should be perfected and preserved, often but not exclusively through isolation. The United States exerts influence on the world through the force of its example; an activist foreign policy may even corrupt liberal practices at home, undermining potency of the US model. Another significant perspective is “vindicationism,” which shares this “city on a hill” identity. It argues that the United States must move beyond example and undertake active measures to spread its universal political values and institutions. Henry Kissinger observes these “two contradictory attitudes” explaining America’s international role: America is both beacon and crusader (Kissinger 1994: 18). Anthony Smith, a British historian of nationalism, recognizes this same dichotomy in more general terms, drawing distinction between “covenanted peoples who turn inward away from the profane world and missionary peoples who seek to expand into and transform the world” (Smith 2003: 93).
Both exemplarism and vindicationism follow from foreign policy nationalism that regards the United States as a precedent as well as instrument of democratic change in the international system. Given this broad agreement on moral and strategic objectives, Americans are all or at least historically have been, liberal exceptionalists. The strategy organized around the United States, one as an exemplar, and the other as an evangelist. The stakes between them are a series of normative and causal claims about the nature of international politics, and the capacity of the US power to generate major social and political changes abroad. These are, in effect, competing theories of democracy promotion.

Though these contending approaches have coexisted throughout the US political history, they have also prevailed at different times. The character of liberal exceptionalism began to shift in the late nineteenth century. Scholars of American history generally agree on the direction of change. Whereas, the first few generations of US political leaders believed that the United States was exceptional for the example it set. Vindicationism largely prevailed in the twentieth century, culminating in the Bush doctrine. It suggests that the active and even coercive promotion of democracy is a central component of US grand strategy.

In summer 2004 interview, President Bush expressed, “I have a deep desire to spread liberty around the world as a way to help secure the United States in the long run (Bush 2004).” Again he explained, “As in Europe, as in Asia, as in every region of the world the advance of freedom leads to peace (Bush 2003).” But if we analyze little further then we can find that simultaneously, Washington has done little to promote democracy in other countries of the Arab region. It otherwise, relied on the autocratic leaders of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and a few other countries to help protect vital US interest in the region. The Bush Administration, however, came to see ‘democratization,’ as one of the significant means to fight terrorism,
and subsequently Arab authoritarianism could no longer be viewed as a source of stability. It instead, got to be perceived as a root cause of terrorism.

Although a radical departure in many other respects, the Bush Administration’s affirmation on liberalism and democracy was taken seriously within the mainstream of American diplomatic traditions. It could be argued that broad variation in the US approach to democracy promotion is explained by power. Political realism predicts that due to the motivation and pressure created by international political environment, the expansion and contraction of state’s political interests tend to complement with changes in relative power. In fact, the broad change from exemplarism to vindicationism correlates with massive increase in relative power. As the United States acquired the capability to use intervention as a mechanism of democratic change, it exercised it. But the queries are: is the early exemplarism explained on the fact that the US political leaders presided over a weak state? Was it because the exemplarism was inapplicable to the conduct of US hegemony? To appropriate Robert Kagan’s pithy formulation, exemplarism is just a “weapon of the weak” (Kagan 2003: 3). It can be argued that the periods of activist democracy promotion of the United States can be explained by two influences. They are: the expansion of material capabilities, and the manifestation of a nationalist domestic ideology that favors vindicationism over exemplarism. While power is an important factor, long-term variation in the United States’ democracy promotion strategy turned elusive. Because of that, significant ideational shifts in the doctrine of liberal exceptionalism have been taking place. The founding fathers’ views of politics were grounded on Calvinism and political-realism. They were unconvinced toward the capacity of the United States to actuate democratic change abroad. They were also skeptical about the deliberation of power necessary to implement an activist foreign policy. They resolved to limit the
US liberal mission to demonstrating the success of an experiment in self-government.

**American Exceptionalism:**

The American national political identity is often expressed in foreign policy statements through the idea of “exceptionalism.” Historically, this doctrine has referred to the perception that the United States differs qualitatively from other developed nations. It is because of its exceptional historical origins, evolution, and distinctive political institutions and experiences. The US political community is uniquely defined by a set of universal, liberal and democratic values. According to Michael Barone, “Every nation is unique, but America is the most unique” (Barone 2004: 38). This notion of liberal exceptionalism is expressed internationally in terms of foreign policy nationalism. It has a belief that the US foreign policy should substantively reflect the liberal political values. It is which defines the United States as a national political community and meaningfully distinguishes it from others. Many historians of the American political tradition believe, “Perhaps no theme has ever dominated the minds of the leaders of this nation to the same extent as the idea that America occupies a unique place and has a special destiny among the nations of the earth” (Burns 1957: 102).

Distinctive from traditional great powers, American political identity has been organized around a particular conception of the national purpose. This is expressed in the foreign policy as the belief that Americans are “a chosen people,” an elect nation guided by a “special providence” to demonstrate the essence and spread of the democratic institutions and values. This is called the American experiment. Many national communities have conceptualized themselves as superior being or bestowed with an obligation to enlighten the world. Nonetheless, because of the ideational origins of the US political identity, the US nationalism has
been historically defined in terms of both an adherence to the set of universal political values that constitute constitutionalism, individualism, democracy, egalitarianism, and a perceived obligation to promote those values in its external relations (Myrdal 1944: 132). By this argument it is confirmed that the US interest in democracy promotion originated from the very definition of the existence of the United States. Democracy promotion should not only be viewed as the maximization of some material interest, but in a moral obligation to the universal political values that defined the United States as a self-reliant political community. The nationalists’ belief in possessing a special mandate to promote liberal democratic values and institutions abroad largely derives from three sources: Calvinism, the Enlightenment, and Historical Necessity.

**Calvinism:**

The first source of American mission to spread democratic value is seventeenth century Calvinism. The Calvinist influence was confined primarily to the Puritans in New England, but it was also manifested in settler communities in Pennsylvania, New York, and New Jersey (Burn 1957: 11). Although a minority of total colonial population, the Puritans exercised a disproportionate political and cultural influence on early American life. They reaffirmed through subsequent, periodic revivals and great awakening. According to Samuel P. Huntington, “The Puritan influence reinforced republican and democratic tendencies in the eighteenth century and provided the underlying ethical and moral basis for American ideas on politics and society” (Huntington 1981: 15). Puritanism imbued the US nationalism with a belief that the United States was a chosen instrument of God, divinely appointed to introduce a government and society on the American continent. It is where the individuals would possess the blessings of liberties God had granted them. The first Puritan settlers believed that they were commissioned by God for a
special purpose. As John Winthrop wrote in 1630, “The work we have in hand, it is mutual consent through a special overruling Providence...to seek out a place of cohabitation and consorting under a due form of government both civil and ecclesiastical” (Nye 1966: 92).

The conviction of religious mission and providential mandate, later secularized, provided a core tenet of the US national identity and sense of purpose. By using the biblical metaphor Herman Melville wrote, “We Americans are a peculiar, chosen people, the Israel of our times; we bear the ark of liberties of the world” (Melville 2002: 151). The geographic isolation of the United States seemed to be further evidence of God’s special preference for the Americans. The concept of separation, and its implicit denunciation of Europe, became a major idea in the formation of the US national identity organized around liberal exceptionalism. To the Puritans American isolation was not only strategic but righteous, and this was the will of God.

*The Enlightenment:*

The second major source of the US moral commitment to democracy promotion was the influence of the eighteenth century Enlightenment. Through the Enlightenment faith in a common rationality, a cosmopolitan spirit, and the universal constancy of human nature came into existence. Many of the liberal norms that came to define the US national identity were framed in absolute and universal terms. Early American leaders such as Thomas Paine, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin regarded themselves as “children of the Age of Reason.” Among the generation of US revolutionaries, the belief was wide spread that, as Jefferson wrote, “They had acted not for ourselves, but for the whole human race,” suggesting that political ideas that motivated the revolution were universal and exportable (Nye 1966: 169). Enlightenment thought also contributed a specific set of
political principles to the American Creed. The thought expressed by including the belief in constitutionalism and government limited by the rule of law, individualism, egalitarianism, and the Lockean social contract. These basic political values were considered universally valid and applicable. It inevitably provides a set of standards by which the US foreign policy could be evaluated, and goals toward which it was substantively oriented.

**Historical Necessity:**

The Historical Necessity demanding the creation of a cohesive nation state from early American colonies was the third source of the notion of democracy promotion. In addition to their philosophical origins in Enlightenment rationalism, framing the political and cultural norms that defined US national identity in universal terms, served an important functional purpose. The early American colonies were in need of the reasons that often served as sources of cohesion in other nation-states. Those reasons are ethnic solidarity, a distinct language, a common history, a church, a monarchy, or a military or aristocratic class. According to Anthony Smith, “In addition to lacking what has termed a dominant or latent ethnicity, an early commitment to religious pluralism precluded defining national identity exclusively in terms of traditional Protestantism. Consequently, the US national identity became defined in civic and ideational, and not ethnic or organic terms” (Smith 1986: 140). Civic ideology and institution were necessary to deliver a cause of political cohesion and national consciousness. Both were unifying the United States as a self-contained political community and meaningfully differentiating it from others. Functionally, a set of universally framed political ideas were necessary to unite a regionally, ethnically, and religiously diverse state, providing the social cohesion and sense of national purpose necessary for consensual, liberal democratic politics (Kupchan 2002: 116). According to Gunnar
Myrdal, “These general ideas formed the cement in the structure of this great and disparate nation” (Myrdal 1984: 3). American national identity is inseparably associated with the principle of liberal exceptionalism, where the United States perceived as an agent of democratic change as well as a promoter of democracy. It is because of the historical unifying function of defining the US nationalism in terms of both universal political norms, and a perceived national purpose to spread these norms.

**Two Schools of Democracy Promotion:**

As two sides of liberal exceptionalism, exemplarism and vindicationism are in effect competing sets of interrelated causal beliefs. It is merged into coherent doctrines relating liberalism to US power. Each one of them is approving different mechanism to achieve international democratic change. Causal beliefs can be defined as logical propositions justified by policy makers about relations of cause and effect. According to Judith Goldstein and Robert Keohen, they are often served as road maps for decision-making under the conditions in which there is incomplete information about both the range of the options of possible policy and the likely effects of those policies (Goldstein & Keohen 1994: 34). Similarly, Barry Posen and Stephen Walt conceptualized the ‘grand strategies’ as the aggregations of hypotheses on what is the cause of one’s security. As a subset, exemplarism and vindicationism represent underlying causal logics of advance competing theories. It can be seen that how best exemplarism and vindicationism can be the reason of the promotion and consolidation of democracy abroad.

**Exemplarism:**

Exemplarists argue that the United States should promote democracy by offering a benign model of successful liberal democratic state. The United States should focus on perfecting its own domestic political and social order. It should close the gap
between the ideals of the American Creed and the actual performance of US political institutions. By this logic, the instrument of change in international politics is the moral force of the US example. Exemplarism appears to be a more passive and less ambitious approach to democracy promotion. Nonetheless, it advances the overtly strategic claim that the United States can better serve the cause of universal democracy by setting an example rather than by imposing a model (Mead 2001: 182).

Two corollary arguments tend to be grouped with the nationalist concept of mission as example. First, exemplarism makes the fundamental claim that an activist foreign policy undermines liberal domestic political culture and institutions. The external pressures generated by international political and security competition tend to concentrate power in the state, as the process and mechanisms of creating military power. Those institutions, which connect the state to its society and enable it to transform societal sources into military capabilities, are those, which can end to promote strong, centralized states (Zakaria 1992: 179). Because of its geographical insularity and the absence of immediate military threats, the United States was able to avoid these consolidating tendencies in its early political development. A national political community developed in the country around a set of liberal democratic principles. It was essentially disagreed with the functional, centralizing requirements of security and foreign policy institutions. Consequently, Exemplarists acknowledge a paradox in which those security and power creating institutions necessary to project power, and advance liberalism abroad. It is precisely for those who threatens liberalism and undermines the desirability of the US example.

A second corollary is that improving a quality of the US domestic political and social order, serves the strategic purpose of strengthening the charm of the
American liberalism. Exemplarists have been historically more skeptical toward political institutions, or at least more acquainted of the need for reform and refinement. Rather than spreading the US institutions abroad, exemplarists advocate somewhat indirect foreign policy strategy of strengthening them at home. The United States has strategic interest in preserving and perfecting its own institutions, making its example more compelling for the rest of the world. Exemplarism also contains a claim about efficacy of democracy promotion and the limits of US power. Exemplarists have been relatively uncertain of the US capacity to produce liberal change in the world. They have been ambivalent about America’s ability to directly promote and consolidate democratic institutions abroad.

**Vindicationism:**

Alternatively, vindicationists argue that the United States must move beyond example and undertake active measures to spread its universal values. According to H. W. Brands, “The United States must actively use its power to vindicate the right in an otherwise illiberal world” (Brands 1998: 2). The exemplarists expect that other states will emulate the US example, which is viewed as at best inefficient, and at worst utopian. They argue that the United States should accelerate this process of democratization, through involvement or intervention, if necessary. Those advocating the concept of the United States as evangelic also tend to be more optimistic about the quality of democracy at home. The US institutions, even if flawed, are comparatively superior and fit to be propagated or to be exported.

Vindicationism also contains a principal claim about efficacy of the US power to generate democratic change. According to this school, the expansion of the US power tends to associate positively with the expansion of democracy internationally. Huntington, for example, argues, “Any increase in the power of
influence of the United States in world affairs generally results... in the promotion of liberty and human rights in the world” (Huntington 1982: 25). Vindicationists are comparatively less concerned about the potential for inherent abuse of any missionary exercise. American power is less likely to be misused or corrupted by its government than that by any other government, both because of American leaders’ commitment to liberal democratic values and the constraints imposed by the institutional dispersion of power, thus its political system (Huntington 1981: 257).

**The Efficacy of Democracy Promotion:**

There is substantial evidence that the founding fathers regarded the American Revolution and their subsequent political system as a liberal democratic model and standard for others. Consistent with a predominant enlightenment universalism, the American Revolution was viewed as exercising a moral influence through the sheer force of example. As the Continental Congress expressed in 1789, “the success of the revolution granted the cause of liberty... a dignity and luster it has never yet enjoyed, and an example will be set which cannot have but the most favorable influence on mankind” (Nye 1966: 169). The founders’ view on politics and human nature were influenced by a profound political realism and a particular interpretation of Calvinism. Both of which conditioned their expectation about the US liberal mission and the likelihood of promoting democracy abroad. The founding fathers constructed a system of government around a fundamentally pessimistic view of human nature. This underlying worldview was stated by George Washington, “A small knowledge of human nature will convince us that with far the greatest part of mankind, interest is governing principle... no institution not built on the presumptive truth of this maxim can succeed” (Fitzpatrick 1944: 363). John Adams was similarly skeptical about the prospects of changing an otherwise depraved human nature; tyranny is rooted in “passion of
“men” that are “fixed and timeless” (Hartz 1955: 40). This view of human nature was complemented by intense suspicion of power.

Thus, the founding fathers’ understanding of American democracy was grounded in a worldview, which emphasized the inherent delicacy of republican institutions and the experimental nature of the American polity. But it is not emphasized as a teleological mission to accelerate the inevitable triumph of liberalism. According to Schlesinger, the founders maintained “an intense conviction of the improbability of their undertaking” (Schlesinger 1986: 7). Certain foreign policy modesty followed as the United States was not viewed as immune to the laws of power and interest, which governs the behavior of both individual and states. Consequently, US ambition was limited to testing both secular and religious historical experiment, what its political community represented. This skepticism about the feasibility and difficulty in propagating democracy both at home and abroad was reinforced by a number of other factors. The study of the classics was widespread among the first generation of US leaders. They were all aware of the fate of democracy in ancient history, from the thirty tyrants’ overthrowing democracy in Athens to Julius Caesar’s undermining the Roman republic. Moreover, the violent degeneration of the revolution of France and the failure to consolidate democratic change in Latin America following various anti-colonial movements corroborated pessimism about democratic change and the limits of US influence (Mead 2001: 182).

**Democracy Promotion at Home:**

The second set of arguments advanced by the founding fathers in favor of examplarism, involved concern for the domestic effects of a vindicationist foreign policy. Originally, this included the fear that active international engagement would produce domestic disunity and factions, undermining and even corrupting
the US political institutions. Fear of foreign subversion and the corrupting influence of “Old World” power politics, the French attempt to influence American public opinion in favor of the 1794 Whiskey Rebellion in Pennsylvania, influenced the thinking of the exemplarist (Mcdougall 1997: 31). Intervention in the politics of other states could lead to foreign powers provoking factionalism within the United States.

As the US institutions stabilized and the fear of factionalism subsided, exemplarist had a second domestic concern. That is: an activist foreign policy would concentrate power within the state and executive in particular, and would lead to deterioration of individualism. Exemplarists recognized that the foreign policy and security institutions, necessary to project power in the service of liberal ends. These institutions have precisely determined liberal government at home. Exemplarists quoted Alexander Hamilton, who once said, “Standing Armies are the engine of despotism, but the security threat compels nations the most attached to liberty… to institutions which have tendencies to destroy their civil and political rights” (Random House 1941: 39).

For these reasons, the first generation of American political leaders resolved the debate over the nature of liberal exceptionalism in favor of making the United States an example for others. As the US power and influence over a large part of the globe increased, exemplarism was gradually replaced by vindicationism.

The Bush Doctrine:

The Bush Administration manifested a very good example of vindicationist influence in its policymaking. Internationally, the United States commands overwhelming power and influence. Domestically, its dominant policymaking process conceptualizes the United States through the exceptionalist prism of liberal evangelism, and not liberal exemplarism. Although, there are clear ideological
divisions within the administration, which appears to be convergent on an irreducible set of normative and causal ideas about liberalism and power in international politics (Mann 2004: 13). After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, the Bush Administration took radical steps in its national security policy. This policy defined the US security requirements in terms of the US capacity to influence the domestic political structures and societies of failed and intimidating states. Vindicationism has thus been elevated to one of the central pillars of post-September 11 grand strategy. It is evident by two regional wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, reflecting a major element of the US response to the strategic threat posed by international terrorism. The “Bush Doctrine” represents an operationalization of neo-conservatism. The doctrine expressed the US security interests in terms of expansion of American style liberalism and the nationalist vision of the United States as a redeeming force in international politics. It also provides an essential point of continuity with preceding generations of grand strategy, where the Bush Doctrine and its underlying neo-conservative disposition deviate from tradition. However, this is in the particular intensity with which it adheres to a vindicationist framework for democracy promotion. The aggressive use of the US power is working as the primary instrument of liberal change. The US’ nationalist obligation to the world is discharged. Its security and political interests defended, through the policy mechanism of mission, and not example.

The main elements of the Bush Doctrine were delineated in a document, “the National Security Strategy of the United States,” published on September 17, 2002. This document is often cited as the decisive statement of the doctrine. It was updated in 2006 and is stated as follows: “The security environment confronting the United States today is radically different from what we have faced before. Yet the first duty of the United States Government remains what it always has been: to
protect the American people and American interests. It is an enduring American principle that this duty obligates the government to anticipate and counter threats, using all elements of national power, before the threats can do grave damage. The greater the threat, the greater is the risk of inaction and the more compelling the case for taking anticipatory action to defend ourselves, even if uncertainty remains as to the time and place of the enemy’s attack. There are few greater threats than a terrorist attack with WMD. To forestall or prevent such hostile acts by our adversaries, the United States will, if necessary, act preemptively in exercising our inherent right of self-defense. The United States will not resort to force in all cases to preempt emerging threats. Our preference is that nonmilitary actions succeed. And no country should ever use preemption as a pretext for aggression” (Bush 2006).

The Bush Doctrine has been formulated as a collection of strategy principles, practical policy decisions, and a set of rationales and ideas for guiding United States foreign policy. Two main components are identified in this doctrine: preemptive strikes against potential enemies and promoting democratic regime change. The Bush Administration claimed that the United States is locked in a global war, which a war of extreme ideology. In this ideology, its enemies are bound together by a common belief and a common hatred of democracy. Out of the National Security Strategy, four main points are highlighted as the core to the Bush Doctrine: Preemption, Military Primacy, New Multilateralism, and the Spread of Democracy. The document emphasized preemption by stating: “America is now threatened less by conquering states than we are by failing ones. We are menaced less by fleets and armies than by catastrophic technologies in the hands of the embittered few.” and required “defending the United States, the American people,
and our interests at home and abroad by identifying and destroying the threat before it reaches our borders” (Bush 2002).

In the 1890s, it is widely acknowledged as representing a major shift in the US foreign policy. During this decade the United States emerged as a great power. With an impressive extent of growth in the decades after the Civil War, the United States acquired the capabilities to project itself as a major military power overseas. It began to exert the political influence successfully beyond its immediate hemisphere, and initiated a program of territorial annexation. In the 1898, Spanish-American War and the subsequent colonial interest in the Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, the Hawaii, and the Cuban protectorate established the United States as the World Power. This period also witnessed the first attempt to promote democracy, directly to the Philippines and indirectly through the humanitarian support in liberating Cuba from an imperial European power (Besner 1975: 22).

Like the period of 1890s, the foreign policy outcome didn’t become a broad grand strategic change. But vindicationism was the centrality to the Bush Administration’s approach to security policy and grand strategy. Here it can be argued that the convergence of unipolarity and key ideological dimensions of neo-conservatism has produced particularly an aggressive recurrence of vindicationist agenda of democracy promotion. This exposition builds in two ways: Firstly, the same explanatory model is applied to both cases by providing further evidence on the American strategy. The variation in the American policy of democracy promotion is a function of both a system level causal factor i.e. relative power, and domestic level factor i.e. the nature of the American nationalism. Secondly, the actual ideological content of neo-conservatism contains substantial equivalents with earlier waves of vindicationist thought, and progressive era of optimism in international politics. It indicates a belief in the benign and virtuous nature of the
US power, and its capacity to effectively promote liberal change abroad. These assumptions are augmented by a series of causal suppositions about the exercise of power and the importance of resolve in international politics.

**Material Expansion:**

As during the period of overseas expansion, the Bush Doctrine follows a period of enormous material expansion. The United States was widely believed to be a relatively declining power in the mid-to-late 1980s (Waltz 1993), and many observers expected the end of the Cold War to result in a multipolar international system with new centers of power emerging in Asia and Europe. Instead, the United States ended the 1990s at the top of unipolar distribution of power, commanding a greater share of world capabilities than any state in modern international history. The US economic dominance is even more disproportionate. The US defense spending in 2003 was more than the combined defense spending of the next twenty-five military powers, and many of these military powers are the US allies. The United States conducts approximately eighty percent of the world’s military research and development. The United States dominates across most of the quantitative dimensions of power. Traditionally this was used by political scientists to measure polarity, as well as in many qualitative, information age measures. The extent of current US extensiveness is difficult to overstate. It is the only state with global power projection capabilities, and the post-September 11 exercise of US military force had made these asymmetries in power somewhat latent during the 1990s even more evident (Wohlforth 1999). Because of these power projection capabilities, the Bush Administration took the decision unilaterally to exercise power and exert influence in the name of promoting democracy, even ignoring the United Nations.

**The Political Effects of Unipolarity:**
The US behavior under the Bush Doctrine broadly corroborates the basic realist hypothesis. This behavior suggests that variation in political expansion is a function of its political and security interests abroad. The Bush Administration published the official strategy document proposing to maintain its position of primacy by adding to its margin of superiority and deterring peer challengers. Realism suggests that this outcome follows inevitably from the US unipolar position and maintain that states rarely observe voluntary restraint on their behavior in the absence of countervailing power. According to Robert Jervis, “The forceful and unilateral exercise of the US power is not simply the by-product of September 11… It is the logical outcome of the current unrivaled US position in the international system” (Jervis 2003: 82). The contingent effects of September 11 incidences may account for the specific direction of the US policy and the timing of political expansion. But realism generally expects that under the accommodating conditions of unipolarity, a doctrine authorizing the aggressive use of power is very likely. Although occurring in a widely different international environment than 1890s, the expansionary political effects of structural change are similar. However, realism cannot capture the liberal character of this expansion. Realism is necessary, but not sufficient for the condition in explaining the contemporary rise of the US vindicationism.

**Neo-Conservatism:**

Neo-conservatism emerged in the mid-1970s as a faction of Cold War anti-communism disillusioned with détente and the post-Vietnam distrust of the US power. Many of its central strategic ideas can be traced to Cold War debates over the strategic superiority. Over the time, neo-conservatism came to establish a distinctive and somewhat coherent set of causal and normative beliefs. It was organized around the assertion of the US military strength, determination, and
political values. Although, occasionally dismissed as temporary or unconventional, neo-conservatism falls precisely within the vindicationist wing of American nationalism. The Bush Administration clearly subscribes to the nationalist proposition of the United States as the force for democracy; much in the way Pericles described Athens as a “School for Hellas.” President Bush contended that the United States represented the “single sustainable model for national success: freedom, democracy, and free enterprise” (Bush 2002: 3). In this view, democracy promotion is inextricably linked with national identity; as President Bush stated in his acceptance speech at the 2004 Republican Convention, “Our nation’s founding commitment is still our deepest commitment: In our world, and here at home, we will extend the frontiers of freedom” (Bush 2004). President Bush was consistently forceful in his belief that the United States had been the beacon for freedom in the world and that he had a responsibility to promote freedom that was as solemn as the responsibility to protect the American people, because the two go hand in hand (Woodward 2004: 89).

Like missionary Calvinism, Progressivism, and the Social Gospel, neo-conservatism appeals to what Walter Lippman identified as the “Persistent evangel in Americanism” (Lippman 1944: 83). There are three dimensions to the administration’s missionary take on liberal exceptionalism, from which a vindicationist policy follows: liberal optimism, a belief that the US power is inherently benign, and a belief that the exercise of the US power and leadership can effectively promote democratic change. In conjunction, these ideas constitute the neo-conservative theory of democracy promotion.

**Liberal Optimism:**

Consistent with the history of vindicationist thought in the United States, neo-conservatism contains an underlying view of progress. It is fundamentally
optimistic about the possibilities for liberal political change in the international system. Although often couched in the language of security and threat, the neo-conservative view of democracy promotion implicitly suggests that the essential character of political life is harmonious. The qualitative improvement in a political and social order can be achieved through purposive, assertive action.

Progressivism assumed that liberal rationality spread when illiberal obstructions were removed. Similarly, principal Bush Administration policymakers presupposed that, far from being a product of rare or unusually favorable conditions, democracy is spontaneous and natural in the absence of some artificial obstacle. These obstacles can be self-serving elites or a subversive, violent minority. Part of the optimistic tone of the Bush Administration was directly traceable to the personal and political style of Ronald Reagan. As one commentator eulogized upon his death, “Optimism is ultimately what the Gipper was all about” (Fields 2003). Ronald Reagan’s optimism about the spread of American ideals is evident. In the 2002 National Security Strategy’s statement, President Bush asserted that “American power could be used to create conditions in which all nations and all societies can choose the rewards and challenges of political and economic liberty for themselves. State can be compelled to embrace liberalism because given a choice; it is unlikely that any competing political model would be freely chosen.” As the National Security Strategy continues, “No people on earth yearn to be oppressed, aspire to servitude, or eagerly await the midnight knock of the secret police” (Bush 2002: 9). The implication of this view of progress rooted in progressivism and the Social Gospel. Any obstruction to this default position can be resolved through the application of political power. The liberal institutions can therefore be advanced at little to moderate cost.
This liberal optimism is reinforced by a belief that the political values and institutions that have traditionally defined the American national identity are universal and exportable. President Bush had consistently and apparently employed a diplomatic language of right and wrong; “the values of freedom are right and true for every person, in every society.” This Universalist belief creates certain expectations about the viability of a program of active democracy promotion, where the Bush Administration believes that, “If the self-evident truths of our founding fathers are true for us, they are true for all” (Bush 2003).

**Benign Nature of US Power:**

Like Progressivism, neo-conservatism is motivated by the belief that the US power is inherently benign. It is a redeeming force in international politics, and its foreign policy is exceptional in character. Unlike traditional great powers, the US foreign policy is believed to be based on as President Bush expressed, “distinctly American internationalism that reflects the union of our values and our national interests” (Bush 2002: 7). Echoing the neo-conservative ideas of the 1970s, President Bush argued in his West Point commencement speech that, “Wherever we carry it, the American flag will stand not only for our power, but for our freedom. Our nation’s cause has always been larger than our nation’s defense” (Bush 2007). These arguments would not surprise some scholars like Neibuhr, who observed that, “The United States is almost perpetually inclined to pretend that our power is exercised by peculiarly virtuous nation” (Kaplan 2004: 20). Although President Bush contended that the United States had no utopia to establish, thus it could be trusted to wield power without constraints in international politics. These arguments were grounded as opposed to pragmatic side of the sixteenth century Calvinist legacy discussed earlier. The United States is conceived of as a favored, elect people, mandated with a redemptive mission and thus exempt from the
lessons of history and immune from the political factors that bear on and corrupt other states (Bush 2002: 7).

**Efficacy of American Power:**

Neo-conservatism contends that the US power can be effectively deployed as an instrument of liberal change in the international system. This belief in turn relies on series of causal suppositions about the operation of power and coercive force in international politics. Two assumptions in particular underlie the Bush Administration’s belief that the exercise of power can be an effective mechanism of liberal change. First, the band wagoning is more common than balancing, second, the technological change and preeminence of the US military power. This allows the United States to overcome previous constraints on vindicationist way of democracy promotion. These two assumptions are embedded within neo-conservatism’s traditional agenda of restoring the US will to use its power on behalf of its political values.

Neo-conservative views on the efficacy of the US power in promoting democratic change are implied in restoring faith of the United States by capacitating the useful projection of its power. And it is reversing the perception of the US weakness and failure of will, both domestically and internationally. The neo-conservatives of the 1970s argued that détente and the failure in Vietnam resulted from, and in turn contributed to, the belief that there were clear limits to the US power, and it is consequently shrinking. Prominent neo-conservative writer Norman Padhoretz characterized it as “Culture of Appeasement” (Padhoretz 1980: 34). Perception of decline and constraint were paralleled by academic debates over the usability of power and structural diffusion of military and economic capabilities from bipolarity to multipolarity. It resulted in a gradual drift towards exemplarism, as practiced by President Jimmy Carter’s Administration in the late
1970s. Neo-conservatives regarded it as a failure of will and resolve; thus, argued that this psyche about the US and the use of force continued throughout the 1990s (Keohen & Nye 1977: 82).

However, the confluence of primacy, acute threat, and the political environment created by September 11 provided an opportunity in which the US power could again be rendered usable. The military action in Afghanistan and Iraq and the successive democracy promotion program, in addition to their immediate security motivations, were driven in part by the neo-conservative desire to restore the US strength and credibility. This action actually manifested domestically by reversing popular reluctance about the use of force, and internationally by reversing perceptions of the US weakness and failure of will. President Bush’s speeches rhetorically emphasized action and will, “The only path to safety is the path of action. This nation will act.”

Understanding the Democracy Promotion:

Despite what the public debate over Iraq and Afghanistan might lead one to believe, democracy promotion is not a new idea in the US foreign policy. It is actually one of the oldest policies. In this situation, there are two important questions arises. One, is there a viable policy alternative to the contemporary dominance of vindicationism? Two, does exemplarism no longer have any relevance to the US foreign policy in an age of unipolarity? Some historical elements of the exemplarist position are absent and are not likely to return. The military, despite the Iraq prison scandal, remain one of the most trusted public institutions in the United States (Fields 2003). There is no viable isolationist political faction in the US today. So the necessity of a foreign policy bureaucracy to manage international engagement is no longer questioned.
Nonetheless, certain exemplarist themes are reemerging. The traditional tension between the functional requirements of military institutions and liberal distrust of concentrated authority remain a dilemma. It is as acute as ever in the war on international terrorism and the domestic security issues it raises. For example, in her rejection of the assertion of presidential authority to designate and detain “enemy combatants” indefinitely, Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O’Connor employed classic exemplarist arguments; “A state of war is not a blank check for the president when it comes to the rights of the nation’s citizens… We must preserve our commitment at home to the principles for which we fight abroad” (Lewis 2004: 27). Ironically, some of the most well known statement of this exemplarist views were articulated by earlier generations of neo-conservative thinkers. For example, Jean Kirkpatrick, former ambassador to the United Nations in the Reagan Administration, argued that, “Democracy is the result of a complex set of conditions that can be achieved only through a process of political evolution, and that attempts to change political systems by force not only often fail to achieve their objectives, but frequently produce unintended consequences that undermine their benign intentions” (Ehrman 1995).

This history of democracy promotion of the United States illustrates the explanatory accomplishment. It combines both ideological and material factors often posed as mutually exclusive sources of foreign policy behavior, situated at different levels of analyses. Vindicationism is inexplicably linked with power. It is the precondition for the use of intervention or coercion as a mechanism of democratic change. Moral persuasion and the power of example are not usually the preferred policy instruments of hegemonic states. But both during the 1890s and the early 21st century, the rise of vindicationism was associated with underlying ideological changes toward the nature of progress. Scholars are gradually coming
into consensus that both power and ideas interact to produce outcomes of interest in international politics. The consensus between power and idea demonstrate the utility of this approach. It is producing a more theoretically sound and empirically comprehensive understanding of the US foreign and security policy.

When US administrations have encouraged democratic reform, they have claimed that benefits for the country, its neighbors, the United States, and the world will result. Many experts believe that extending democracy can reduce terrorism while encouraging global political stability and economic prosperity. In its 2006 National Strategy for Combating Terrorism, the Bush Administration cites democracy promotion as a long-term solution for winning the War on Terror (Bush 2006). In contrast, others claim that, in some instances, promoting democracy can be a destabilizing factor in a country, as well as its region, and have documented a backlash to democracy promotion, including restrictions on freedom in some countries where democracy promotion has taken place (National Endowment for Democracy 2006). The benefits and costs of democracy promotion may vary, depending on the circumstances in which the programs are carried out. For example, costs could be starkly different if democracy is militarily imposed on a country as opposed to the country itself taking the initiative. On the other hand, democracy promotion can succeed even in apparently inhospitable environments. While Whitehead points out the difficulties of achieving democracy, he also notes the widespread aspirations for democracy. He states, “Comparative evidence is clear that in a surprisingly wide range of countries and regions…… both elite and popular opinion can be energized by the democracy promotion programs of the established powers of the post-war international system. The desire to participate can generate democratizing aspirations that extend beyond the boundaries of any single nation, and that may drive cumulative long-term change
even in the face of intervening disappointments and distortions” (National Endowment for Democracy 2006: 267). “Durable democracies,” he concludes, “can be regarded as regimes that have slowly evolved under pressure from their citizens, and that have therefore been adapted both to the structural realities and to the social expectations of the societies in which they have become established” (National Endowment for Democracy 2006: 268).

Perceived Benefits:

Immanuel Kant proposed that democracies do not go to war with one another. This is sometimes referred as the democratic peace theory. This is the common rationale offered by proponents of democracy promotion, including former Secretaries of State Madeleine Albright and Condoleezza Rice. Experts point to European countries, the United States, Canada, and Mexico as present-day examples. According to President Clinton’s National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement: “Democracies create free markets that offer economic opportunity, make for more reliable trading partners, and are far less likely to wage war on one another” (Clinton 1996: 2).

Some have refined this democratic peace theory by distinguishing between mature democracies and those in transition. They suggest that mature democracies do not fight wars with each other, but that countries transitioning toward democracy are more prone to being attacked. It is because of weak governmental institutions or because of the new found aggression toward others for their own protection. States that made transitions from an autocracy toward early stages of democracy and were involved in hostilities soon after, include France in the mid-1800s under Napoleon III, Prussia/Germany under Bismarck (1870-1890), Chile shortly before the War of the Pacific in 1879, Serbia’s multiparty constitutional monarchy before the Balkan Wars of the late 20th Century, and Pakistan’s military guided pseudo-
democracy before its wars with India in 1965 and 1971 (Mansfield & Snyder 2005: 70).

The Bush Administration asserted that democracy promotion is a long-term antidote to terrorism. The Administration’s *Strategy for Winning the War on Terror* asserts that inequality in political participation and access to wealth resources in a country, lack of freedom of speech, and poor education all breed volatility. By promoting basic human rights, freedoms of speech, religion, assembly, association and press, and by maintaining order within their borders and providing an independent justice system, effective democracies can defeat terrorism in the long run (White House 2006). Another reason given to encourage democracies is the belief that democracies promote economic prosperity. From this perspective, as the rule of law leads to a more stable society, equal economic opportunity come into existence. It helps to stimulate economic activities, economic growth; and particularly increased per capita income is likely to follow. In addition, a democracy under this scenario may be more likely to be viewed by other countries as a good trading partner and by outside investors as a more stable environment for investment. Moreover, countries that have developed as stable democracies are viewed as being more likely to honor treaties (Prseworski 2000).

*Potential Downsides:*

Pushing democracy promotion as a primary objective of US national security and foreign policy has reduced support, and generated a skepticism around the world, for democracy promotion activities. According to one study: “The rhetorical conflation by the Bush Administration and its allies of the war in Iraq and democracy promotion has muddied the meaning of the democracy project, diminishing support for it at home and abroad….. Some of those opposed to the invasion of Iraq, Americans and others, appear to have been alienated from
democracy promotion more generally and this is to be regretted” (Melia 2005: 1).

The high military and opportunity cost of some activities currently associated with democracy promotion is criticized by many observers, especially when democracy is imposed by outsiders rather than initiated by local citizens (Clinton 1996: 2). Democracy promotion expenditures compete with domestic spending priorities. Critics note that using the various tools to promote democracy abroad like foreign aid, military intervention, diplomacy, and public diplomacy can be very expensive and may provide little assurance for the long-term gains. They add that it involves a high probability of sustaining costly long-term nation-building programs down the road. US funding obligations supporting America’s democracy promotion efforts in Iraq, for example, are estimated to be about $10 billion per month (Belasco 2011). Many Americans came to view the military and opportunity cost of funding democracy promotion activities overseas are unnecessary. Rather, the funds should have been spent on domestic programs or other pressing global concerns, such as infectious disease and extreme poverty.

Another concern about democracy promotion is that it can have a destabilizing effect on an entire region. Harvard Study of 2005 concluded that, “Our research shows that incomplete democratic transitions-those that get stalled before reaching the stage of full democracy- increase the chance of involvement in international war in countries where governmental institutions are weak at the outset of the transition” (Mansfield & Snyder 2005: 4). At times, the region can become unstable because the transitioning country initiates cross-border attacks, or may be the victim of these attacks, particularly if it has weak democratic institutions or a weak military (Mansfield & Snyder 2005: 34). While many democracy promotion proponents opine that democracies “don’t war with each other,” a critic on the democratic peace theory, Joanne Gowa of Princeton, contends that this theory has
more to do with the alignment of interests and the bipolar balance in the world after World War-II than democracy/peace characteristics that many today claim exist. She says that democratic peace is a Cold War phenomenon; that is, the available data show that democratic peace is limited to the years between 1946 and 1980 (Gowa 1999: 113). She additionally points out that there are nondemocracies that do not war with each other and may be able to constrain their leaders from embarking on military actions abroad about as effectively as democracies (Gowa 1999: 111).

Some view democracy programs as inappropriately interfering in the domestic politics of foreign countries. It has often produced a backlash against the organizations, both foreign and domestic, that carry them out. Over the years, the United States has been investing effort and money in democracy promotion in Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. The backlash against democratic reform in Russia, the elections of anti-American governments in the Palestinian Territories, and the rise to elected office of Hezbollah in Lebanon have caused some to question the value of US democracy promotion investments. While a recent USAID-commissioned study concluded that US democracy and governance assistance does have a positive effect on democracy growth worldwide, the democracy gains were modest (USAID 2006: 83). At the same time, US government and NGO assistance for civil society strengthening can lead to human rights repercussions, triggering some governments to react by clamping down on NGO activities and on the local citizens.

Means of Democracy Promotion

A perfect democracy where all citizens have equal say in their government and where the government is responsive equally to each of its citizens does not exist. Just as democracies can evolve and grow more democratic; so too can they devolve and
become abusive, corrupt, and unaccountable to their population. Moreover, populations can become disinterested in working to maintain a democracy. The United States provides democracy assistance to many countries in a variety of circumstances and with mixed degrees of success. Analysts categorize country circumstances and effects of assistance in different ways. Generally, analysts have viewed US democracy aid as facilitating transitions either from authoritarian or communist rule, as in Latin America and Central Europe, or from conflict, as in Bosnia and African nations such as Sierra Leone and Liberia (Karatnycky 2002: 51). The range of US democracy promotion activities and programs also varies greatly, from assistance for elections to aid in developing institutions and to funding of civil society groups. Thus far, there is little agreement among experts and practitioners on the circumstances in which democracy promotion may succeed. Beyond the lack of consensus on what programs work best in certain circumstances, the countries themselves have obstacles in attaining a democratic government. Many interests and emotions come into play during such political transitions. Thomas Carothers of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace warns of some fundamental impediments: “The truth that politics involves harshly competing interests, bitter power struggles, and fundamentally conflicting values not to mention greed, stupidity, and hatred is downplayed until it asserts itself, unwanted, at some later stage” (Carother 1999: 102). Generally, post-conflict situations are considered more difficult and the success rate is considered lower. Although, even where transitions have been seen as relatively smooth and successful, the events in Central Europe suggested that democratic change in post-authoritarian circumstances can be difficult. Backsliding in some countries increases the difficulty of determining the achieved success. Larry Diamond argues that the political institutionalization the establishment of capable, complex, coherent and
responsive formal institutions of democracy is the single most important and urgent factor in the consolidation of democracy. If it is a liberal democracy that we have in mind, then the political system must also provide for a rule of law, and rigorously protect the right of individuals and groups to speak, publish, assemble, demonstrate, lobby, and organize (Diamond 1999: 259). Carothers points at the troubled political parties as an ubiquitous institutional deficiency in the global landscape of attempted democratization, examines their problems, and suggests new approaches to political party assistance (Carother 2006: vii).

Democracy assistance efforts may well face a wide range of impediments to the establishment of viable institutions. According to Carothers, those promoting transitions may often encounter entrenched concentrations of political power, deeply rooted habits of patronage and corruption, mutually hostile socio-economic or ethnic groups i.e. the underlying interests and power relationships that are most often resistant to change (Carother 1999: 177). He suggests that democracy assistance programs will be more effective by building the underlying interests and power relationships into them but warns that effective programs require much deeper knowledge about the recipient society than most aid providers have or want to take the trouble to acquire (Carother 1999: 178).

The other means to promoting democracy is the creation of a vibrant civil society, which many argue, is the sine qua non for a functioning democracy. Karatnycky views an active and dynamic civil society as the crucial agent in ensuring a durable, democratic outcome. The evidence from dozens of post-conflict and post-authoritarian transitions shows that the best way for advanced democracies to increase the chances for successful support of democratic openings is by maximizing the resources devoted to the development of civic nonviolent forces (Karatnycky 2002: 54). Civic empowerment appears to be more significant in
determining democratic outcomes than whether or not a society suffered wrenching violence. Carothers and Diamond believe that political institutionalization is more critical, and Diamond points to civil society as promoting not only a transition to democracy, but also its deepening and consolidation once democracy is established (Diamond 1999: 233). While in Diamond’s view, civil society does not play the central role initially the more active, pluralistic, resourceful, institutionalized, and internally democratic civil society is the more likely democracy will be to emerge and endure (Diamond 1999: 260).

**Continuing Challenges**

Democracy promotion is a highly uncertain art. In the era of constrained resources, the policy and budgetary implications of identifying the most appropriate modes and settings for democracy assistance, and the means to success, can be profound. Transitions from conflict is as greater challenge as the transition from authoritarian regimes. Transitions from authoritarian and communist regimes involve to create an entirely new political order. In communist regimes a new economic order takes place, and post-conflict transitions involve overcoming bitterly divided societies and economic devastation. Many analysts suggest that post-conflict settings have special needs. Because ethnic loyalties and divisions may complicate the implementation of peace settlements. Carothers argues that democracy promotion should be supplemented by other efforts. For instance, the danger of holding elections too early in a peace process, the need to blend them with broader negotiations setting the political rules, and the importance of avoiding winner-take-all scenarios are important considerations in post-conflict transitions. Aid providers are also focusing on reconciliation as an essential element of democratization in such situations, an element that should be supported by aid efforts that consciously combine democracy and conflict resolution methodologies.
(Carother 1999: 111). Some analysts suggest that success and difficulties in democracy promotion in post-conflict settings can vary by the nature of the conflict, however. Success in such settings tends to be found in situations where the conflict is based on politics rather than on ethnic or religious differences, according Karatnycky, who cites El Salvador and Nicaragua as two successes of the former sort (Karatnycky 2002: 52).

In addition to the widespread view of ethnic differences as an impediment to democracy building, it is believed that democracy is more likely to succeed in areas having previous experience and cultures of democracy. According to Carothers, it is clear that countries with no history of democracy, with desperate economic conditions and powerful internal divisions are having a much harder time making democracy work than countries with some pluralistic traditions, a growing economy, and a cohesive social and cultural makeup. Democracy promoters are just beginning to relate democracy aid to the full range of factors bearing on democracy beyond the political institutions and immediate problems of political life including economic conditions, educational levels, historical traditions, and social and cultural divisions (Carother 1999: 114). Democracy promoters are gaining an appreciation of the varied political paths, each requiring different approaches for democracy aid (Carother 1999: 113).

Other analysts, however, discount ethnic differences and cultural factors as a special impediment to democracy promotion. A 2003 RAND study on nation-building concluded that it is the level of effort the United States and the international community put into the democratic transitions of Germany, Japan, Bosnia, and Kosovo that led to relative success versus Somalia, Haiti, and Afghanistan, not the latter’s levels of Western culture, economic development, or cultural homogeneity (RAND 2003). Nation-building is a time and resource
consuming effort. The United States and its allies have put 25 times more money and 50 times more troops, on a per capita basis, into postconflict Kosovo than into postconflict Afghanistan. This higher level of input accounts in significant measure for the higher level of output measured in the development of democratic institutions and economic growth (RAND 2003). The RAND analysts argue that democracy promotion efforts may succeed in spite of specific difficulties. The spread of democracy in Latin America, Asia, and parts of Africa suggests that this form of government is not unique to Western culture or to advanced industrial economies: Democracy can, indeed, take root in circumstances where neither exists (RAND 2003).