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## U.S. Democracy Promotion in the Middle East: More and Less Than Meets the Eye

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U.S. Democracy Promotion in the Middle East:

More and Less Than Meets the Eye

Senior Project submitted to

The Division of Social Studies

of Bard College

by

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## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIPTLS	Arab Institute for Parliamentary Training and Legislative Studies (Lebanon)
AIPU	Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union
APLN	Arab Parliamentary Libraries Network
BAB	Budget Analysis Bureau (Morocco)
CID	Center for International Development
CSO	Civil Society Organization
FTA	Free Trade Agreement
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations
IQC	Indefinite Quantity Contract
LRTC	Legislative Resource and Training Center (Jordan)
LSP	Legislative Strengthening Program
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MEPI	Middle East Partnership Initiative
MP	Member of Parliament
PBO	Parliamentary Budget Office (Jordan)
PSP	Parliamentary Strengthening Program
QIZ	Qualified Industrial Zones
RFTOP	Request for Task Order Proposal
SOW	Scope of Work
USAID	United States Agency for International Development



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## Introduction

This study will attempt to answer the following question: under what circumstances can an external actor effectively promote democracy? Of course, there are several different forms of democracy promotion such as supporting civil society, legislative strengthening, diplomatic efforts, sanctions, and more. Often, many forms are used in concert with each other as part of a multifaceted democracy promotion effort by an outside force. I am focusing specifically on legislative strengthening because I understand parliaments to be a fundamental aspect of democracy in general, as well as the branch of government that is most representative of the public.

Many countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) lack truly democratic parliaments and yet political institutions are a surprisingly understudied topic in Middle Eastern studies. This is because Arab parliaments are often viewed as irrelevant and lacking in meaningful power when compared to the monarch. However, I will focus on the MENA because I believe that strengthening legislatures is crucial to democracy promotion even in countries where the parliament's power is limited. In addition, several different and comparable legislative strengthening projects have been implemented in the MENA by the U.S., particularly after September 11th, 2001. The region will likely continue to be critical for U.S. interests because of oil, the presence of ISIS, as well as the U.S. relationship with Israel, and therefore could likely continue to be a target for democracy promotion. As such, legislative strengthening programs in the MENA bring U.S. interests and democracy promotion into sharp relief, highlighting how one is meant to support the other in ways that is not the case in regions where the stakes for the U.S. are not as high.

Also, the U.S. has historically been a major intervener in other nations affairs. I think it is a useful choice for study because spreading democracy is often discussed in political rhetoric as a major “American value” and thus a critical part of international relations. I will examine U.S. legislative strengthening programs in Lebanon, Jordan, and Morocco and compare the independent and intervening variables in each case. I will also attempt to draw larger lessons about democratization in the MENA region more broadly. These programs represent an important time in American history in which the Bush Administration declared a state of exception after September 11th that was used to justify a wide range of both foreign and domestic policy decisions. Although President Bush often framed democracy promotion as a response to counter the threat of terrorism, it also reflects a longstanding strain of U.S. foreign policy strategy. This strain is worth investigating in order to discern under what circumstances supporting the growth of democracy abroad might be worthwhile both for the implementer and for the target nation.

A comparative case study will be able to most fully answer my research question since I will be examining three different cases in which legislative strengthening programs were implemented and then attempt to determine how these cases demonstrate the complex web of actors and circumstances that affect democracy promotion. The independent variable is the program design, which includes factors such as U.S. foreign policy objectives in the target country, the organization that is implementing the program, duration, and the scope of work. Most of this information can be found in the annual and final reports submitted to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) by the implementing organization, or the organization that actually carries out the program on the ground.

The dependent variable is democracy, measured through the lens of legislative performance which will examine oversight, representation, constituent services, and legislation, as well as whether changes made during the duration of the democracy promotion program were institutionalized. This variable will attempt to measure the extent to which democratic processes, specifically with regards to the legislature, have been strengthened. The word “legislature” is the general term for many entities that might be called parliament, congress, council, and more. In all of the cases explored in this paper the legislative body is called the parliament. Therefore, the words legislature and parliament will be used interchangeably. Measuring the dependent variable will be an evaluative process based on conclusions about success in reports as well as interviews with individuals who worked on these programs in the MENA.

In between the aforementioned variables is an intervening variable that includes characteristics of the nation where the democracy promotion program is being implemented. Like the independent variable, the intervening variable impacts the extent to which democracy can successfully be promoted, or the dependent variable. Morocco, Jordan, and Lebanon are different enough in regime type, religious makeup, and other factors to produce different results, but also share enough similarities so that the differentiating variables are not overwhelming.

Studying these three cases will provide a way to test a variety of inquiries about the democratization process in the MENA. It is valuable to look at cases in the Middle East and North Africa because they present an important counterbalance to military intervention cases like Iraq and Afghanistan that were described as “democracy promotion” efforts but in reality were not. The meaning of “democracy promotion” will be explored later but most definitions do not include violent interventions that lead to a decade-long conflict that becomes a civil war. These military interventions are frequently what stands out in the mainstream imagination when

thinking about democracy promotion rather than actual instances of democratization efforts. This analysis will attempt to investigate these real cases and learn about how foreign and domestic actors can better support democracies in the MENA region.

## Chapter I

Americans have been interested in supporting democracies abroad as early as World War I, when President Woodrow Wilson famously said “[t]he world must be made safe for democracy.”<sup>1</sup> Wilson was arguing that Germany’s warmongering behavior posed a threat to democracy across the world. His statement had broader implications than just the defeat of Germany because it suggested that it was actually in the interest of the United States to support democracy abroad. This idea became a more organized policy after World War II when the U.S. supported nations in Western Europe and Japan under the Marshall plan in the hopes that increasing the emergence of democracies around the world would be in the interest of American national security.<sup>2</sup> The Cold War period largely weakened America’s consistent interest in promoting democracy as the U.S. supported many autocratic regimes such as Nicaragua, Greece, and Turkey in an attempt to counter the spread of communism.<sup>3</sup> However, also during this period several organizations were founded with the explicit mission of supporting democratic development abroad. For example, the National Endowment for Democracy, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute were all founded in the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> With the fall of the Soviet Union, the U.S. funded several democracy assistance programs across Central and Eastern Europe to aid former Soviet states begin a path to democracy. In the 1990s these programs expanded to Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa through President Clinton’s “Enlargement” Doctrine which aimed to “enlarge the community of free and open societies”

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<sup>1</sup> "Making the World 'Safe for Democracy': Woodrow Wilson Asks for War," George Mason University, accessed April 22, 2017, <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/d/4943/>.

<sup>2</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Democracy Promotion: Cornerstone of U.S. Foreign Policy?*, by Susan B. Epstein, Nina M. Serafino, and Francis T. Miko, 28, December 26, 2007, accessed April 22, 2017, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RL34296.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> "Who We Are," International Republican Institute, accessed April 25, 2017, <http://www.iri.org/who-we-are>.

through the opening of foreign markets and democracy promotion efforts.<sup>5</sup> Apart from a program in Lebanon after its civil war, the Middle East was largely left out of Clinton's Enlargement policy.

However, this all changed under the Bush Administration, particularly after September 11th, when the MENA became the primary focus of all democracy promotion efforts. President Bush and his administration had very clear beliefs about the importance of spreading democracy abroad. His logic is aptly represented in a speech he gave at the National Endowment for Democracy in 2003. He stated,

[t]he failure of Iraqi democracy would embolden terrorists around the world, increase dangers to the American people, and extinguish the hopes of millions in the region. Iraqi democracy will succeed — and that success will send forth the news, from Damascus to Teheran — that freedom can be the future of every nation... As in Europe, as in Asia, as in every region of the world, the advance of freedom leads to peace.<sup>6</sup>

President Bush elevated democracy promotion to a national security interest. His words are reminiscent of the Democratic Peace Theory, or the idea that democracies generally do not go to war with each other and therefore the growth of democracy worldwide is in the interest of democratic nations like the United States.<sup>7</sup> Of course, many have questioned the integrity of President Bush's goals and whether the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan represent genuine attempts at democracy promotion. I would argue that those cases are certainly not instances of true democracy promotion. However, President Bush also allocated enormous amounts of money to democratization efforts in the MENA in the form of legislative strengthening, civil society and economic liberalization programs. During the Bush years, USAID was under enormous pressure

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<sup>5</sup>The White House, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement*, 2, February 1995, accessed April 22, 2017, <http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/doctrine/research/nss.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup>George W. Bush, "Remarks by President George W. Bush," speech, November 6, 2003, National Endowment for Democracy, accessed April 22, 2017, <http://www.ned.org/remarks-by-president-george-w-bush-at-the-20th-anniversary/>.

<sup>7</sup>Immanuel Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, trans. M. Campbell Smith, 3rd ed. (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1917).

from the White House to launch democracy promotion programs in the MENA region. When President Bush took office in 2000, American official development assistance was \$9.95 billion and steadily increased to \$26.84 billion by 2008.<sup>8</sup> In other words, while there is extensive criticism of Bush's military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, the increased funding that USAID received under the Bush years went to many different programs and initiatives that should be examined separately from the violent failures that characterize much of his presidency.

USAID is the major funder of American democracy promotion programs today. It was created in 1961 under President Kennedy who believed that U.S. aid efforts would be best administered under a single agency.<sup>9</sup> Of course, USAID's role evolved over the course of different administrations and foreign policy strategies. Democracy promotion became a priority to the agency beginning in the 1990's, in concert with President Clinton's interest in supporting the development of democracies abroad.<sup>10</sup> In 1999, Clinton shifted public diplomacy to become a responsibility of the State Department as it was previously handled by the U.S. Information Agency.<sup>11</sup> Today, USAID works in concert with the State Department to decide which countries should be the recipients of democracy promotion programs.

It is crucial to point out that in addition to democracy promotion, public diplomacy is another principal goal of the projects that will be explored in this paper. William Rugh, a Foreign Service Officer with over thirty years of experience primarily in the Arab world, provides us with a useful definition of public diplomacy in the American context: "The phrase 'American public diplomacy' means, as it has meant for decades, U.S. government programs intended to

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<sup>8</sup> John Norris, "President Bush and his Development Legacy," Devex, last modified July 5, 2016, accessed April 22, 2017, <https://www.devex.com/news/president-bush-and-his-development-legacy-87725>.

<sup>9</sup> "USAID History," USAID, accessed April 22, 2017, <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/usaid-history>.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> William Rugh, "Fixing Public Diplomacy for Arab and Muslim Audiences," in *A Practical Guide to Winning the War on Terrorism*, ed. Adam Garfinkle (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 2004), 145, accessed April 26, 2017.



support our national interests by providing information and interpretation to foreign audiences about matters relating to the United States.”<sup>12</sup> As Rugh notes, American public diplomacy seeks to improve foreign views of the United States in order to further national interests. Of course, it is much easier for the U.S. to influence other nations if it is respected and well-liked by those nations. In addition, improving foreign views of the U.S. could provide another way of fulfilling President Bush’s counterterrorism efforts since individuals who hold positive views of the U.S. might be less inclined to join a terrorist group.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, it is important to keep in mind the influence of public diplomacy goals when studying democracy promotion programs because they have the potential to impact the design and implementation of programming.

### Bureaucratic Process

When studying legislative strengthening and democracy promotion programs more broadly, understanding the bureaucratic steps that lead to the creation of these programs is essential. Much of USAID’s democracy development work is carried out by contractors, and the contracting process lends many insights into the formulation, implementation, and goals of U.S. democracy promotion. This trend of hiring contractors for foreign policy efforts began under President Reagan who believed that utilizing the competitive and efficient nature of the private sector could benefit government.<sup>14</sup> This trend continued and expanded when the Clinton Administration allowed third-party military personnel to be present in Colombia.<sup>15</sup> At present, hiring contractors is a norm in the U.S. government, particularly in development work under USAID.

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 146.

<sup>14</sup> Allison Stanger, the united states of market values to *One Nation Under Contract* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 15.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

The bureaucratic process often begins with an Indefinite Quantity Contract (IQC) that serves as a short list of contractors that USAID can select to implement democracy promotion programs. A contractor must apply for an IQC to prove that it is qualified to carry out development efforts within the particular area of specialization. Proof often includes demonstrating success with democracy promotion efforts in the past. These contractors can include nonprofit organizations or companies that engage in this work for-profit. However, this study only examines programs that were implemented by the SUNY Center for International Development (CID) which is a nonprofit university-based center that carries out foreign development programs.<sup>16</sup> CID is a useful organization to examine because it implemented several legislative strengthening programs in the MENA region under the Bush Administration and has experience carrying out projects across the world.

When USAID receives its annual budget, the American embassies in foreign countries hold country meetings where they decide how to spend the funding. Decisions are based on a combination of directives from high-level USAID personnel and input from Foreign Service Officers in the foreign country. Once a program is decided upon, USAID sends out a Request for Task Order Proposal (RFTOP), or a call for a certain program to be carried out in country X. Organizations that are on the short list can apply to be the contractor by submitting a technical proposal which explains how they would carry out the program, as well as details about the personnel they would employ and how they would measure success if chosen. Once an organization is selected as the contractor, it must submit an even more detailed document called the Scope of Work (SOW), which describes how it will implement the program. The contractor

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<sup>16</sup> "About Us," SUNY Center for International Development, accessed April 30, 2017, [http://www.cid.suny.edu/about\\_us/about\\_us.shtml](http://www.cid.suny.edu/about_us/about_us.shtml).

must also submit annual reports detailing the status and results of the program. These reports will be analyzed in the subsequent chapters.

### New Institutionalism

U.S. democracy promotion programs have largely focused on the development of institutions abroad. This focus is based on certain assumptions about the role of institutions in democracies and democratization. Political science has a long tradition of studying institutions, which has ebbed and flowed over the last several decades. Accordingly, this study falls into a strain of political science known as new institutionalism, which arose in the United States in the 1970s and 1980s. New institutionalism focused on the role of institutions in state behavior and international relations, arguing that not enough attention was being paid to the subject in the field of political science. James March and Johan Olsen wrote a seminal article in 1984 entitled, “The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life,” which explained this strain of thought and why it was specifically relevant to the field at the time of writing. The authors assert, “Social, political, and economic institutions have become larger, considerably more complex and resourceful, and *prima facie* more important to collective life. Most of the major actors in modern economic and political systems are formal organizations, and the institutions of law and bureaucracy occupy a dominant role in contemporary life.”<sup>17</sup> This growing importance of institutions in political life can be seen quite clearly in the U.S. government where many decisions are made by large groups of politicians or bureaucrats. However, new institutionalism is also responding to what its scholars consider to be a period where not enough attention was being paid to institutions. Thus, part of the goal of the field is to return focus to institutions at a time when they may be more consequential than ever.

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<sup>17</sup> James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "The New Institutionalism: Organizational Factors in Political Life," *The American Political Science Review* 78, no. 3 (September 1984): 734, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://www.la.utexas.edu/users/chenry/core/Course%20Materials/March1984/0.pdf>.

This is not to say, however, that studying institutions is less important in nations where they possess limited power. This notion has actually led to the lack of analysis of institutions like the legislature in authoritarian or monarchical nations because it is assumed that power is so concentrated in the executive branch that the legislature is irrelevant or purely a front. The MENA region in particular is one where the role of institutions has been largely understudied because they have been seen as dominated by authoritarian regimes and therefore *de facto* rubber stamps. The following analysis will attempt to fill part of this academic gap and show that political institutions in the MENA can be of value in the process of democratization.

New institutionalism brings a specific approach to the study of political science. In an article entitled “Elaborating the ‘New Institutionalism’” March and Olsen write, “[t]he rules, routines, norms, and identities of an ‘institution,’ rather than micro-rational individuals or macro-social forces, are the basic units of analysis.”<sup>18</sup> In this tradition institutions are viewed as actors in their own right and therefore are understood to possess specific identities that impact behavior. While this paper will utilize a similar approach, this does not mean that a specific individual, or larger social force will never be examined in order to better understand legislative strengthening. Rather, the development of democratic institutions will be the basic measure for change and particular people or macro-norms will be studied when relevant.

A critical part of new institutionalism that is particularly pertinent to my study is its implicit belief that political institutions can prove incredibly valuable to the process of democratization. When discussing new institutionalism, Baaklini, Denoeux and Springborg assert, “An active legislature can generate greater popular interest in, and understanding of, the political process and thus have a catalyzing effect on civil society. Parliamentary debates or the

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<sup>18</sup> James G. March and Johan P. Olsen, "Elaborating the New Institutionalism," *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, September 2009, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199548460.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199548460-e-1>

adoption of a new law can mobilize a formerly quiescent constituency or provide disparate social interests with an incentive to form a coalition.”<sup>19</sup> As these writers note, parliaments can do important democratic work and are crucial in engaging with the public and civil society. This is even possible in nations where the legislature has limited power but can contribute to small steps toward democracy. My analysis builds upon new institutionalism by particularly focusing on democracy promotion programs that attempted to strengthen parliaments and other political institutions. In short, through these programs the U.S. is operating under the assumption that institutions matter because they make democracy work - and democracy matters for U.S. interests in the region. So what is the best way to make these institutions work?

### Defining Democracy

The term “democracy” is contested across disciplines, countries, and contexts. It is fraught with a power dynamic that privileges Western countries that like to think of themselves as democracies, and promote the system elsewhere. As a result of this disparity in definitions, I will examine several different ways in which the term is defined in order to arrive at how I will use it in this study. Some scholars provide concise and simple meanings of the word that may encompass many governments across the world. For example, Adam Przeworski describes democracy as “a system in which parties lose elections. There are parties: divisions of interests, values, and opinions. There is competition, organized by rules. And there are periodic winners and losers.”<sup>20</sup> The most important aspect for Przeworski seems to be the existence of competition between parties or factions via elections. Thus, some might argue that his definition is specifically for an “electoral democracy” rather than a “liberal democracy.” While elections are

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<sup>19</sup> Abdo I. Baaklini, Guilain Denoeux, and Robert Springborg, *Legislative Politics in the Arab World: The Resurgence of Democratic Institutions* (Boulder, Colo.: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1999), 23.

<sup>20</sup> Adam Przeworski, *Democracy and the Market: Political and Economic Reforms in Eastern Europe and Latin America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 10.

arguably fundamental to any democratic system, several scholars have argued that an electoral democracy alone is not enough and can easily be used by authoritarian or quasi-authoritarian regimes to create the semblance of democracy.<sup>21</sup> I would argue that this is the case in many countries in the MENA region and elsewhere, as elections are held but most power is ultimately concentrated in the executive.

Robert Dahl presents us with a slightly more comprehensive definition of the term in his book, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition*. He writes that in a democracy,

All full citizens must have unimpaired opportunities:

1. To formulate their preferences
2. To signify their preferences to their fellow citizens and the government by individual and collective action
3. To have their preferences weighed equally in the conduct of the government, that is, weighted with no discrimination because of the context or source of the preference.<sup>22</sup>

This definition lays out a few more requirements than the first. The second requirement in Dahl's definition suggests that there must exist spaces within society where citizens can gather and freely express their ideas without fear of recrimination. This is crucial because freedom of speech cannot exist unless citizens have places to freely articulate and proclaim their views. Number three importantly points out that all votes and "preferences" should be treated with equal weight, regardless of the identity of the citizen. This point is aimed at eliminating the possibility of systemic discrimination which most, if not all countries still struggle with today.

Larry Diamond's definition of democracy is much more stringent and detailed than those previously mentioned. He puts forth ten requirements for "liberal democracy" which include things like independent media, constrained executive power, protection of minority groups both under the law and in practice, the freedom to assemble and demonstrate, and laws that protect

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<sup>21</sup> Michael McFaul, *Advancing Democracy Abroad: Why We Should and How We Can* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2010), 29.

<sup>22</sup> Robert Alan Dahl, *Polyarchy: Participation and Opposition* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1971), 2.

citizens from torture.<sup>23</sup> For Diamond, democracy means much more than simply holding elections. Rather, it also represents a set of values and rights that may never be completely achieved but are an ideal. Diamond's understanding of democracy is valuable because it conceptualizes it as much more than a system of government but also a way of viewing the world. While no nation on earth currently fulfills all of his requirements, his definition represents what all governments and citizens should constantly be working towards.

The notion that democracy is an ideal rather than an easily achievable status, is quite common among different definitions of the word. For example, the United Nations published a document in 2009 entitled "Guidance Note of the Secretary-General on Democracy" in which it reiterates the idea that democracy is not necessarily an achievable status. The document reads,

[t]he majority of States in the world today describe themselves as democratic. However, democracy is a dynamic social and political system whose ideal functioning is never fully achieved... Democracy, based on the rule of law, is ultimately a means to achieve international peace and security, economic and social progress and development, and respect for human rights – the three pillars of the United Nations mission as set forth in the Charter of the UN.<sup>24</sup>

This definition understands democracy as a means to achieve important ideals such as the protection of human rights, social and economic equality, and international peace. This is important because it implies that democracy has the potential to be beneficial to the world, not just the specific country where it reigns. The assumption is that a system in which the people rule, or at least have a meaningful voice, is more inclined to promote the interests of the public, instead of the few. The interests of the public could include both domestic and foreign policies, like refraining from starting a war. Ideas about how the system of democracy could potentially be beneficial to the world will be explored more later.

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<sup>23</sup> Larry Diamond, defining and developing democracy to *Developing Democracy: Toward Consolidation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1999), 11-12.

<sup>24</sup>The United Nations Democracy Fund, *Guidance Note of the UN Secretary-General on Democracy*, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://www.un.org/democracyfund/guidance-note-un-secretary-general-democracy>.

The USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance published in 2013 defines democracy as,

a civilian political system in which the legislative and chief executive offices are filled through regular, competitive elections with universal suffrage. Democracy is characterized by civil liberties, including the rights to speech, association, and universal suffrage, as well as the rule of law and respect for pluralism and minority rights... Following from this basic conception, the extent of democracy in a given society can be considered along three key dimensions: 1) the degree of free contestation for political authority; 2) the extent and character of inclusion in that contestation; and 3) the level of recourse to democratic deliberation based on dialogue and the exchange of ideas.<sup>25</sup>

The way Diamond and USAID define democracy share many similarities including mention of minority rights, freedom of speech, and competitive elections. The notion that “the extent of democracy” can be measured suggests that it is on a spectrum rather than a binary. I find this definition to be most accurate and practical because while a country may be quite democratic in certain ways, it may at the same time be lacking in other democratic aspects. For example, the U.S. government holds regular elections and has historically had peaceful transfers of power but also suffers from systemic racism and has on some occasions sanctioned torture.<sup>26</sup>

I will use USAID’s definition of the term democracy because in theory USAID measures its own success of promoting democracy abroad against its own definition of democracy. In addition, I believe in the notion that democracy is an ideal on a spectrum and includes human rights. However, it is important to note that the USAID definition and the Bush Administration’s rhetoric appear to be slightly at odds since USAID tells us that democracy is an ideal to work towards but President Bush often spoke about democracy promotion as a policy between one

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<sup>25</sup>U.S. Agency for International Development, *USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance* (2013), 37, accessed April 21, 2017, [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pdacx557.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdacx557.pdf).

<sup>26</sup> Andrew Cohen, "The Torture Memos, 10 Years Later," *The Atlantic*, February 6, 2012, accessed April 21, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/02/the-torture-memos-10-years-later/252439/>.



country that has democracy and one that does not.<sup>27</sup> Thus, while this paper accepts and utilizes USAID's definition of democracy, it does so with the understanding that democracy promotion does not occur within a binary of one democratic country and one non-democratic. Rather, such programs tend to be carried out by a nation that is *more democratic* than the target nation.

While there exists a plethora of definitions of the word democracy across academia and institutions, it is important to note that much of the literature on democratization does not explicitly define the phrase "democracy promotion." It is frequently assumed that providing a definition of "democracy" is enough. This proves to be a notable gap in the literature. This section will consult the few definitions that can be found as well as the scholarship that explores logic behind the strategy. The following statement addresses USAID's goals regarding democracy promotion:

The goal of USAID's Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance (DRG) Strategy is to support the establishment and consolidation of inclusive and accountable democracies to advance freedom, dignity and development. To achieve this goal, the Strategy sets four strategic objectives:

1. Promote participatory, representative and inclusive political processes and government institutions.
2. Foster greater accountability of institutions and leaders to citizens and to the law.
3. Protect and promote universally recognized human rights.
4. Improve development outcomes through the integration of DRG principles and practices across USAID's development portfolio.<sup>28</sup>

Similar to the USAID definition of democracy, this passage indicates that USAID hopes to advance other ideals such as freedom, human rights, and equal representation. What is notable here is the focus on empowering institutions in order to promote inclusion, accountability, and participation. While the statement is quite vague about how USAID will achieve these goals,

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<sup>27</sup> Bush, "Remarks by President," speech, National Endowment for Democracy.

<sup>28</sup> Bureau for Policy, Planning, and Learning, *USAID Strategy on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance Fact Sheet* (2013), 1, accessed April 21, 2017, [https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2496/DRG%20Strategy%20%20paper\\_7-25-13.pdf](https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2496/DRG%20Strategy%20%20paper_7-25-13.pdf).

leaving room for countless possibilities, it is clear that strengthening institutions is understood to be an important and useful means to work towards the ideal of democracy.

In a Chatham House report entitled “Holding Steady? U.S. Democracy Promotion in a Changing World” published in 2014, the authors provide the following definition of democracy promotion: “the widest range of actions that one country with all its actors can take to influence the political development of another towards greater democratization.” It continues, “traditionally, democracy promotion has ranged from diplomatic engagement, public diplomacy, assistance and capacity-building programmes, conditionality of diplomatic and economic relationships and membership of international institutions, economic and other sanctions, and direct support to local democracy actors.”<sup>29</sup> This definition is much more explicit than that provided by USAID as it lists specific ways in which democracy can be promoted. However, it also makes clear that many different policies and state behaviors can be considered under the umbrella of “democracy promotion.” It is worth noting that this definition does not consider military intervention to be a “traditional” method of democracy promotion. This could be viewed as a rejection of violent interventions referred to as “democracy promotion” such as the war in Iraq. As mentioned earlier, this paper does not entertain the notion that military intervention is an effective or humane method of promoting democracy. Of course, my analysis is primarily focused on legislative strengthening as a way to promote democracy. Thus, while this study understands that democracy promotion can be any policy from diplomacy to direct monetary assistance that aims to bring a nation closer to the ideal of democracy, its focus is on the ways in which parliaments, legislatures, and other democratic institutions are strengthened.

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<sup>29</sup>Nicolas Bouchet and Nicole Bibbins Sedaca, "Holding Steady? US Democracy Promotion in a Changing World," Chatham House, last modified February 1, 2014, accessed April 21, 2017, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/publications/papers/view/197475>.

Equally crucial to understanding the definition of democracy promotion, is grasping the logic behind it. Why has democracy promotion been an important part of U.S. foreign policy? When attempting to trace the genealogy of democracy promotion, particularly how it began to be perceived as a potential national interest, one must analyze Immanuel Kant. In 1795, Kant published his famous essay “Perpetual Peace” in which he argues that nations with “republican constitutions” are more averse to war than authoritarian or monarchical regimes. Kant explains what he means by “republican constitution” in the following passage: “this constitution is established, firstly, by principles of the freedom of the members of a society (as men); secondly, by principles of dependence of all upon a single common legislation (as subjects); and, thirdly, by the law of their equality (as citizens).”<sup>30</sup> Important for Kant is that power is held by the people who, as citizens, enjoy both freedom and equality and are subject to the laws of the constitution. His idea of a republican constitution overlaps with certain themes we encountered in our earlier exploration of defining democracy. The U.S. Constitution would likely be considered Republican according to Kant’s framework. Kant argues that if the decision to go to war is with the people who must bear the burden of the death and destruction, they will certainly be against it. He writes that the republican constitution, “gives a favorable prospect for the desired consequence, i.e., perpetual peace. The reason is this: if the consent of the citizens is required in order to decide that war should be declared... nothing is more natural than that they would be very cautious in commencing such a poor game, decreeing for themselves all the calamities of war.”<sup>31</sup> While it is tempting to respond to Kant with examples of republics going to war, it is important to note that he is not arguing that this will never happen. Rather, he suggests that initiating aggressive state behavior is more difficult to do in a nation that must receive the approval of its citizens, or those

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<sup>30</sup> Kant, *Perpetual Peace*, 121.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

citizens' representatives, than it is in a country where a single person, or only the elite makes the decision that will likely not directly impact them personally.

This idea has been complicated by contemporary forms of warfare that do not necessarily require congressional approval, but his argument is that a system that allows representatives of the public to participate in foreign policy decisions, is less likely than an authoritarian regime to go to war. Kant continues, "For, if fortune ordains that a powerful and enlightened people should form a republic, which by its very nature is inclined to perpetual peace, this would serve as a centre of federal union for other states wishing to join, and thus secure conditions of freedom among the states in accordance with the idea of the law of nations."<sup>32</sup> In this passage Kant goes even further to say that the more republics exist in the world, the more countries there are that are inclined to choose peace and therefore, the greater the possibility of "perpetual peace." This represents the first notion that spreading democracy, or the republican constitution as Kant calls it, is in the interest of democracies everywhere. Although the idea was largely speculative at the time, it later evolved and became more rooted in history and data.

In his book *Grasping the Democratic Peace*, Bruce Russett provides a history of the democratic peace theory and puts forth his own ideas on the subject. He explains that when Kant was writing, although he articulated some of the democratic peace ideas, they were primarily theoretical as there was little empirical evidence to support his claims at the time. Russett posits that it wasn't until after World War II that the lack of war between democracies began to be truly noticed and spoken about.<sup>33</sup> Before that point there were not many democratic nations and of those that did exist, very few shared borders with each other so it was not particularly surprising that democracies were not fighting each other. However, the creation of the United Nations after

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 134-135.

<sup>33</sup> Bruce M. Russett, *Grasping the Democratic Peace: Principles for a Post-Cold War World*, 2nd ed. (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 10.

WWII and the rise of the Cold War brought the alliance between democratic countries into greater view. By the end of the 1980s Russett argues, the democratic peace theory was firmly established in the field of international relations. He also mentions that in the 1990s U.S. leaders such as President Bush and President Clinton were referring to zones of “democratic peace” in speeches.<sup>34</sup> But it is important to note that simply because democratic peace theory had not entered mainstream rhetoric and media until the late 20th century does not take away from the fact that democracies had rarely engaged in violent conflict with each other for over one hundred years.

After providing a brief history, Russett then presents the reader with his own ideas. He argues both empirically and theoretically that democracies are less inclined to go to war with each other. However, Russett puts forth slightly different reasons for this argument than did Kant. Russett writes:

In the modern international system, democracies have almost never fought each other. This statement represents a complex phenomenon: (a) Democracies rarely fight each other (an empirical statement) because (b) they have other means of resolving conflicts between them and therefore do not need to fight each other (a prudential statement), and (c) they perceive that democracies should not fight each other (a normative statement about principles of right behavior), which reinforces the empirical statement. By this reasoning the more democracies there are in the world, the fewer potential adversaries we and other democracies will have and the wider the zone of peace.<sup>35</sup>

Russett comes to a similar conclusion to that of Kant in “Perpetual Peace,” namely that the greater number of democracies in the world, the fewer the opportunities for war and aggression for those states. However, Russett believes that the reason democracies do not fight each other is because they have alternative methods of conflict resolution and because there are powerful norms in place that view war between democracies as negative. This logic not only encourages

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 4.

democracy promotion on the part of democratic nations, but it also assumes that democracies share important liberal values which will positively impact their relationships with each other.

This narrative is very common in U.S. government rhetoric, particularly when talking about the importance of democracy promotion. In an interview with Jeffrey Goldberg in April of 2016, President Obama stated, "I am also an idealist insofar as I believe that we should be promoting values, like democracy and human rights and norms and values, because not only do they serve our interests the more people adopt values that we share... but because it makes the world a better place."<sup>36</sup> President Obama even goes as far as to argue that democracy and democratic values make the world a better place, not simply for democratic countries. Thus, the notion that promoting democracy is valuable for national and even global security purposes is extremely common and powerful in the United States.

However, this is not to say that democracy promotion does not have its fair share of critics. Particularly in the wake of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq which were argued for in terms of democracy promotion by the Bush administration, many people in Washington as well as academia became convinced that promoting democracy abroad was bad policy. Michael Cox, Timothy J. Lynch, and Nicolas Bouchet discuss this in their book *US Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion: From Theodore Roosevelt to Barack Obama*. They write, "by associating his intervention in Iraq with the idea of democracy promotion it did great damage to the idea. In fact, by linking democracy promotion with what many now come to regard as a deeply flawed foreign policy design, democracy promotion now almost became a dirty word."<sup>37</sup> While it is quite understandable why failures in Iraq and Afghanistan would lead people to be wary of any

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<sup>36</sup>Jeffrey Goldberg, "The Obama Doctrine," *The Atlantic*, April 2016, [Page #], accessed April 21, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/04/the-obama-doctrine/471525/>.

<sup>37</sup> Michael Cox, Timothy J. Lynch, and Nicolas Bouchet, eds., *U.S. Foreign Policy and Democracy Promotion* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2013), 3.

policy calling itself “democracy promotion,” as we established earlier, the phrase can have a variety of manifestations and more often than not does not involve military intervention. Part of the purpose of this paper is to complicate our understanding of democracy promotion by not assuming it is always advisable or discounting it altogether. Rather, this analysis hopes to produce a more nuanced evaluation by studying specific cases and attempting to draw larger lessons about the process of democratization in the region.

### Legislative Strengthening

Why are legislatures worth studying when attempting to check the pulse of democracy in a state? What is the function of the legislature in a nation? These are important questions to consider when focusing on the legislature as a measure for the success of democracy promotion programs. In a handbook published by USAID in February 2001 on legislative strengthening, the authors describe the role of legislatures: “legislatures are the people’s branch of government, the institution where citizen interests and preferences are expressed and transformed into policy, and the point at which, at least potentially, people most closely engage their national government... legislatures are key to achieving the democratic potential embodied in free and fair elections.”<sup>38</sup> The importance of a legislature rests on its function of connecting decision makers with citizens, while at the same time serving as a check on the executive. While legislatures vary from system to system and country to country, the three fundamental responsibilities that all legislatures ideally should carry out are representation, lawmaking, and oversight.

The USAID handbook lays out specific reasons why it believes legislative strengthening is a worthwhile means of promoting democracy. These reasons are, “Effective, representative legislatures bring benefits to the large majority of citizens” and “Effective legislatures support

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<sup>38</sup>Center for Democracy and Governance, *USAID Handbook on Legislative Strengthening* (2000), 1, accessed April 21, 2017, <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2496/200sbb.pdf>.

additional good governance objectives and U.S. foreign policy goals.”<sup>39</sup> Examples of “good governance objectives” included in the handbook are “reducing state control over economies, devolving power closer to people, and requiring greater government transparency.”<sup>40</sup> The argument here is that legislative strengthening has the potential to impact more people’s lives than other forms of democracy promotion because it empowers the most representative branch of government. In addition, a strong legislature will then encourage other liberal values that the U.S. would like to see develop across the globe. USAID views legislative strengthening as a valuable means of promoting democracy because of its potential to have a wide impact and encourage other liberal ideas. It understands the direction of causation to be from strengthened legislatures to better democracies.

Clearly legislatures prove absolutely crucial in a democratic system. But as established earlier, democracy is an ideal and is on a spectrum. Thus, a legislature can create democratic processes even in a country that may not possess other characteristics of a democracy. This is particularly relevant for the purposes of democracy promotion where the implementing nation cannot change the fact that there is a monarchy in power but it may be able to strengthen the legislature and increase public political engagement. Several important studies have shown that there is a strong correlation between the strength of the legislature in a state and the extent of democratization. For example, in his article “Stronger Legislatures, Stronger Democracies,” Michael Steven Fish presents us with a study that shows that countries with stronger legislatures are better able to democratize. He writes, “[s]tronger legislatures served as a weightier check on presidents and thus a more reliable guarantor of horizontal accountability than did weaker legislatures. They also provided a stronger stimulus to party building. Where legislatures were

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 3-4.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.



more powerful, people invested more in parties and parties grew stronger.”<sup>41</sup> As Fish points out, states that possessed more powerful legislatures paved the way for better executive oversight as well as encouragement of greater political participation and competition. While the study Fish examines focuses on post-communist countries, the conclusion that the power of legislatures is a useful predictor of future democratization is likely applicable globally.

Fish continues, “would-be democratizers should focus on creating a powerful legislature. In polities with weak legislatures, democrats should make constitutional reforms to strengthen the legislature a top priority.”<sup>42</sup> Similar to USAID, Fish concludes that legislative strengthening can lead to further reform and liberalization. The direction of change seems to be understood as coming from legislative strengthening to democratization. Using this idea as a foundation, this paper will study democracy promotion through the power and effectiveness of institutions.

As mentioned earlier, political institutions in the MENA region have been particularly understudied in the field of political science, even within new institutionalism. In their book entitled *Legislative Politics in the Arab World*, Baaklini, Denoeux, and Springborg write,

Parliaments constitute arenas that are central to the process of democratic transition and consolidation... so few studies concentrate on the role that parliaments play in the process of democratization and even fewer provide a detailed analysis of the internal organization, rules, procedures, and resources of legislatures in countries that are in the throes of democratic transitions.<sup>43</sup>

These writers believe that part of the importance of studying political institutions rests in their potential to influence and contribute to the process of democratization. Thus, it is valuable to analyze these institutions in regions where democratization may be occurring or where the U.S. hopes to support democratic development, like the MENA.

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<sup>41</sup>M. Steven Fish, "Stronger Legislatures, Stronger Democracies | Journal of Democracy," *Journal of Democracy* 17, no. 1 (January 2006): 18, accessed April 21, 2017, <http://www.journalofdemocracy.org/article/stronger-legislatures-stronger-democracies>.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Baaklini, Denoeux, and Springborg, *Legislative Politics*, 26-27.

### What is Success?

While it is obvious that all legislative strengthening programs hope to achieve success, how is “success” defined? It is a concept that is difficult to define and find agreement upon when it comes to measuring democratization. There can be huge ideological disagreements about what constitutes successful legislative strengthening. Thomas Carothers, an expert on international democracy promotion writes, “agreeing on precise criteria for successful political institutions and processes is not easy... What, for instance, is an ideal degree of legislative efficiency? Some people might think that bills should speed through the legislature in a few days or weeks. Others would be more concerned about giving interest groups the opportunity for full consultations.”<sup>44</sup> As we can see, success is not an objective status, particularly when it comes to democratization. This is why it is crucial to consult different sources when evaluating programs and to consider the political context in a nation that may affect the success of certain democracy promotion efforts.

Carothers also discusses the fact that establishing causation can be quite difficult.<sup>45</sup> Perhaps positive democratic change occurred in the target nation but was this actually a result of the democracy promotion program? Not only can this be difficult to discern, but it is also in the interest of the program officers or evaluators to attribute any sort of positive change to the USAID program. The definition of success often gets reduced to whatever the program officers define as success. In addition, final reports are written directly following the end of the program when in reality years must pass before it is possible to evaluate whether any achievements were lasting. For this reason, all program reports must be examined with a critical eye and evaluated in the larger context of democracy.

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas Carothers, *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve*, 3rd ed. (Washington: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2003), 282.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

Another crucial question to consider is, does the success of a specific objective within a program actually reflect the goals of democracy promotion writ large as defined by USAID? While it is important and necessary to assess whether the specific goals of the legislative strengthening program were achieved, it is also crucial to measure these goals against the larger more general ones set forth by USAID. For example, CID may have succeeded in installing an electronic voting system (particular goal), but does that tackle or even contribute to larger USAID objectives such as promoting political participation, fostering institutional accountability, or promoting human rights? There is a sizeable gap between how success is being measured on the micro, that is particular program level, and the macro, institutional and governmental level. One important structural problem that may help perpetuate the gap is the fact that the U.S. government relies heavily on contractors that actually carry out the democracy promotion programs. As their name suggests, these contractors have few-year contracts with USAID and they must report on progress that can be measured in that time period. Carothers writes:

the effort to assess the impact of democracy programs by using highly reductionist indicators is a deeply flawed undertaking that is consuming vast resources, producing little useful insight or knowledge, and introducing serious distortions into the designing and implementing of such aid... democratization in any country cannot be broken down neatly and precisely into a set of quantitative bits.<sup>46</sup>

The problem is that sometimes the nature of democracy gets reduced to contract obligations and any kind of deeper analysis of how the program contributed to democratic processes in general is absent. After all, a program is only as successful as its enduring effects. When evaluating my cases, I will explore this gap and attempt to analyze the differences between the success of accomplishing a specific task and the success of creating lasting change. I will also pay attention to the greater political context that may impact how the program was received.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 291.

The ensuing three chapters will examine the three cases previously mentioned, namely, Lebanon, Jordan, and Morocco. The paper will end with a conclusion that comments on trends that were found across cases and discuss lessons and recommendations for legislative strengthening in the MENA. The concluding chapter will also attempt to reveal useful insight into democratization in the region more broadly.

## Chapter II: Morocco

On October 1st, 2004 CID employees began implementation of the Moroccan Parliament Support Project. As mentioned earlier, the program represented an active effort within the U.S. government to counter the effects of terrorism through democracy promotion. The relationship between Morocco and the U.S. has a long history that is often characterized as positive and stable.<sup>47</sup> For many years, the United States has provided aid to Morocco to help fight terrorism and protect the country's national security interests. This assistance ensures Moroccan cooperation with American counterterrorism efforts in the region. In 2004, the year the parliamentary strengthening program was proposed, the United States provided roughly \$37 million in aid to Morocco.<sup>48</sup> For reference, Iraq received \$8.7 billion<sup>49</sup> that year while Jordan received \$633 million.<sup>50</sup> Thus, compared to its neighbors, Morocco's 2004 aid package is quite low but is in keeping with the amount it had historically received under the Bush Administration.

Throughout the 1990s Morocco slowly implemented a series of democratization reforms that gave more power to the legislature. A new constitution in 1992 increased the powers of the Parliament by giving it the authority to veto a new government after it is appointed by the king.<sup>51</sup> The new constitution also required that ministers reply to the questions of parliamentarians within twenty days, a small step meant to empower parliamentary oversight. Legislative elections were organized in 1993, and in 1996 both the upper house of Parliament was restored,

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<sup>47</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Morocco: Current Issues*, by Alexis Arieff, 1, 2013, accessed April 30, 2017, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/row/RS21579.pdf>.

<sup>48</sup> "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Morocco," USAID, accessed April 22, 2017, [https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/MAR?measure=Obligations&fiscal\\_year=2004](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/MAR?measure=Obligations&fiscal_year=2004).

<sup>49</sup> "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Iraq," USAID, accessed April 22, 2017, [https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/IRQ?measure=Obligations&fiscal\\_year=2004](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/IRQ?measure=Obligations&fiscal_year=2004).

<sup>50</sup> "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Jordan," USAID, accessed April 22, 2017, [https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/JOR?measure=Obligations&fiscal\\_year=2004](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/JOR?measure=Obligations&fiscal_year=2004).

<sup>51</sup> Baaklini, Denoeux, and Springborg, *Legislative Politics*, 116.

as was an amendment that allowed for direct elections of lower house members.<sup>52</sup> In addition, the death of King Hassan II in 1999 and the subsequent ascension of his more tolerant son, King Mohammed VI, to the throne gave citizens and observers hope for continued democratic reforms, since Hassan had built a reputation for showing no mercy to his political opponents.<sup>53</sup>

The United States had and continues to have several strategic interests in Morocco that had the potential to complicate the implementation of a democracy promotion program. Morocco has been the site of several U.S. military and naval bases, primarily because the country encompasses the Straits of Gibraltar.<sup>54</sup> As mentioned earlier, Morocco is of critical importance to the U.S. in counterterrorism efforts. At the time the democracy promotion program began, President Bush was attempting to limit the power and spread of groups like Al Qaeda in the region. Morocco has received American aid for counterterrorism and continues to assist the U.S. by maintaining a close relationship with our military and intelligence services. In addition, Morocco has become an important trading partner, particularly after it signed a free trade agreement (FTA) with the United States in 2004.<sup>55</sup> The agreement reduced trade barriers between the two nations, making it easier for Morocco to receive American exports. While it is certainly debatable whether this agreement, and FTA's more broadly, is beneficial to Morocco, trade remains an important part of the U.S. - Morocco relationship. Morocco has also been a helpful actor in the Israel-Palestine peace process. In 2003, Morocco hosted several senior Israeli officials who visited to restore relations after they were suspended in 2000.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 111.

<sup>53</sup> Robert Fisk, "The Two Faces of King Hassan II," *The Independent*, last modified July 24, 1999, accessed April 23, 2017, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/the-two-faces-of-king-hassan-ii-1108656.html>.

<sup>54</sup> Robert E. Looney, ed., *Handbook of US-Middle East Relations: Formative Factors and Regional Perspectives* (London: Routledge, 2009), 238.

<sup>55</sup> "Morocco Free Trade Agreement," Office of the United States Trade Representative, accessed April 23, 2017, <https://ustr.gov/trade-agreements/free-trade-agreements/morocco-fta>.

<sup>56</sup> Looney, *Handbook of US-Middle*, 244.

The parliamentary strengthening program in Morocco was proposed at a time when President Bush was pressuring USAID to launch democracy promotion efforts in the MENA as a form of counterterrorism. Considering the warm relations between the two countries and their mutually advantageous relationship, Morocco seemed like an ideal choice. Also, the reforms of the 1990's and King Mohammed VI's rise to the throne, all pointed to the potential for change. The project was to be funded by the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), a State Department-funded program created in 2002 with the goal of improving citizen empowerment.<sup>57</sup> MEPI truly represented the Bush Administration's belief in democracy promotion as counterterrorism since Dick Cheney's daughter, Liz Cheney, headed the initiative.<sup>58</sup> However, MEPI did not have the capacity to manage the procurement system and hire its own contractor. Instead, MEPI enlisted USAID to design and plan the program so that holders of IQCs, or the organizations that have proved themselves to be qualified to implement development programs, could compete to carry out the project. Thus, while MEPI funded the program, USAID actually planned it and oversaw CID's implementation.

USAID believed there to be much room for improvement in the Moroccan Parliament in terms of efficiency, access to resources, and organization. As written in the RFTOP, USAID's major goal of the project was to "strengthen elected representative government at the national, sub-national and local levels and to promote government transparency and accountability."<sup>59</sup> The RFTOP specified four tasks that the chosen contractor would carry out. The first task was simply to create a performance monitoring plan that included a results framework, baseline data and indicator targets, which are all used to measure success throughout and at the end of the program.

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<sup>57</sup> "About MEPI," U.S. Department of State, accessed April 23, 2017, <https://mepi.state.gov/about-mepi/>.

<sup>58</sup> Tamara Cofman Wittes and Sarah E. Yerkes, "The Middle East Partnership Initiative: Progress, Problems, and Prospects," Brookings, last modified November 29, 2004, accessed April 15, 2017, <https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-middle-east-partnership-initiative-progress-problems-and-prospects/>.

<sup>59</sup> USAID, Request for Task Order Proposal under the Deliberative Bodies IQC Scope of Work (n.p., 2004), 1.

Task two was to strengthen parliamentary committees by improving the quality and efficiency of legislative output, educating members of committees on laws that apply to their work and creating mechanisms to improve coordination between parliamentarians, committees and elected officials. This task emphasized educating parliamentarians through technical training, particularly those who were members of the Commissions on Finance and Economic Development, and Commission on the Interior, Decentralization, and Infrastructure. These two commissions have the potential to play vital roles in positive reform because the first reviews the government budget while the second oversees decentralization efforts.

The goal of task three was to strengthen advocacy efforts before Parliament and hoped to provide assistance to advocacy groups that possessed clear policy objectives. This would include improving advocacy skills of groups, building coalitions centered around specific issues and attempting to make a more participatory budget process that considers the voice of civil society and educational institutions. Task four was to develop specialized budget expertise within Parliament in order to more effectively hold the executive accountable. This task would create a budget office in Parliament with trained staff members that would produce fiscal impact reports on proposed legislations and analyze the government budget. These tasks place a large emphasis on education as well as on increasing the involvement of civil society in parliamentary work. The RFTOP also seems to value strengthening committees within Parliament as a way to provide greater oversight of the executive.

A few months later CID submitted a technical proposal to USAID, detailing how it would implement the parliamentary strengthening program in Morocco and attempt to achieve the goals set forth in the RFTOP. The proposal states that CID's mission is to improve the perceived legitimacy of the parliament, as well as its accountability, autonomy, transparency and



effectiveness.<sup>60</sup> Providing training and workshops on a variety of legislative responsibilities is a crucial strategy proposed by CID in this document. This training would cover topics from democratic norms and practices to budgetary analysis to advocacy methods. As addressed earlier, one goal of the program discussed in the technical proposal and in the RFTOP is to strengthen parliamentary committees. USAID and CID want to provide committees with the proper resources and training to be able to propose amendments to draft bills and initiate inquiries. According to CID, much of this will be accomplished through educational efforts, the development of a database of experts and civil society organizations (CSOs), linking committees and members of Parliament (MPs) with local actors, and improving inter-cameral coordination.

Another important means of strengthening the legislature cited in the proposal is enhancing coordination between and among parliamentary committees and civil society organizations. CID states that this will be achieved through workshops, forums for CSO's, committees, and MPs to interact, as well as through assistance given to the public information office in Parliament to increase information flow from the legislature to the public. In addition, CID plans to organize roundtables to give Moroccan media outlets opportunities to interact with MPs, staff and representatives of CSOs. This is an effort to improve the quality of journalism and reporting about Parliament.

The final task included in the proposal is to create a budget analysis unit within the legislature that would oversee and analyze the public expenditure and attempt to make sure it is consistent with the national interest. If successful, this task could result in the formation of a valuable check on the executive branch, setting a precedent for greater parliamentary involvement when it comes to finances and the national budget.

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<sup>60</sup> SUNY CID, *"Strengthening Parliamentary Processes in Morocco" Technical Proposal* (n.p., 2004), 4.

Overall, the technical proposal seems to address many of the deficiencies within the Moroccan legislature without seriously threatening the power of the monarchy. After all, this is a U.S. government funded program and Morocco is an important regional partner with which the U.S. would like to maintain good and stable relations. When examining the technical proposal and attempting to understand the goals of the project, it is crucial to remember that while it does seek to strengthen the Moroccan legislature, public diplomacy is another major goal, if not the most important goal of the program. This means that no controversial action is planned that would jeopardize U.S.-Moroccan relations. In addition, while a task may be successfully implemented, the true measure of success is whether institutions and practices established through the program remain once CID has left. Of course, the program does not simply seek to make change while it is present in a country but also for those changes to last and grow. The goal is for Morocco to one day be a nation that does not need legislative strengthening assistance. While of course this is a long-term hope, it is still necessary for the program to encourage sustaining reform that can ultimately operate independently of USAID. These are important points to remember as we analyze the final report.

The final report of the Parliament Support Project in Morocco submitted by CID serves as an important review of the initiative. Of course, it is crucial to keep in mind that this report was submitted to the institution that funded the program by those that implemented it and therefore there may be less critique than there would be if evaluated by an external organization. As a CID staff member so succinctly framed it, “You don’t bite the hand that feeds you.”<sup>61</sup> Further exploration of evaluation procedures will be discussed in the conclusion.

The executive summary of the final report reads, “As a result of USAID support, the Parliament of Morocco is a more robust institution overall and has greater awareness of its role

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<sup>61</sup> Name redacted, interview by Julia Gordon, February 24, 2017, transcript.

and the improved means to carry out committee work, oversee budget processes and communicate with civil society and constituents.”<sup>62</sup> This is a fairly positive assessment of the program and would suggest that the Moroccan Parliament is stronger when the program ended in 2009 than it was in 2004. However, what does this mean practically? How do we measure democratic change? One way that progress is measured is through “indicators” that are meant to reflect whether change has occurred. For example, one indicator created by CID that parliamentary committees have been strengthened is “an increase in the number of substantive voted amendments in the four target committees [the finance and interior committees in both houses].”<sup>63</sup> The word “substantive” is defined in the report as an amendment that is not related to “linguistic shortcomings and redundancies.”<sup>64</sup> The assumption here is that if committees are producing more amendments, they have greater power to affect legislation. The number of voted amendments dramatically increased in 2008 only to be followed by a huge decrease in 2009, likely a result of local elections that took place distracting MPs from their legislative duties. The final report posits that this inconsistency is indicative that members of Parliament view legislative work as ultimately unimportant. This example speaks to the difficulty of planting seeds for long-term legislative change in Morocco. While the enormous number of voted amendments in 2008 seemed to show promise, the steep decline in 2009 shows that the change was likely more circumstantial than symptomatic of a meaningful difference in the way MPs view and exercise their power.

Another example of this was the lack of full implementation of the electronic reports system and archiving software. This software was intended to increase legislative efficiency by saving time and improving organization but this goal was not fully accomplished due to

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<sup>62</sup> SUNY CID, *Final Report: Morocco Parliament Support Project* (n.p., 2009), 2.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

“parliamentary obstruction and lack of accountability.”<sup>65</sup> In other words, MPs were not particularly concerned about increasing efficiency within committees. A major impediment to exciting MP’s interest in legislative work is the fact that the system is not set up to incentivize democratic behavior. On the contrary, parliamentarians may have reason to fear acting in ways that could be perceived as advocating for democratic change since this could upset the monarchy. While this does not mean that no progress was made in the way of strengthening parliamentary committees, it is to say that legislative work will likely continue to be given secondary or tertiary importance until the system incentivizes otherwise.

An additional indicator chosen by CID for the development of specialized budget expertise within Parliament was an increase in the number of adopted amendments to the budget bill. Similar to the previous indicator, more adopted amendments suggest greater involvement on the part of parliamentarians in the construction of the national budget. The number of adopted amendments proposed by MPs increased 2.5 times from 2004 to 2009 indicating a clear strengthening of parliamentary participation.

Another important indicator utilized was an increase in the number of committee initiatives designed to conduct oversight on the government on budgetary and financial issues. “Committee initiatives” include “fact-finding committees and/or hearings, investigations, site visits to public institutions, calling the Government for a public discussion on a specific issue in a plenary session; or actions such as requesting leadership for appointment of a special Task Force.”<sup>66</sup> This indicator measures the extent to which parliamentary committees are carrying out their purpose, which is to provide oversight on the executive branch. The number of initiatives increased from 3 in 2004 to 9 in 2009, suggesting stronger oversight with regards to the budget.

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 35.

This is certainly a positive change although it is difficult to discern just how meaningful these initiatives were and what kind of impact they had. The final report does not elaborate on the increase, leaving it unclear whether the initiatives had any kind of influence on the budget process or the executive's monopoly of power more broadly. This lack of deeper analysis that goes beyond a quantitative evaluation is reoccurring throughout the report. It would be much more valuable to have a report that does not simply assume that an increase in parliamentary participation suggests real or lasting change.

As emphasized in the technical proposal, an important goal of the project is to improve advocacy efforts before Parliament by educating civil society organizations about effective ways to represent their causes and fight for policy change. Many of the strategies used to accomplish this goal were based on an assessment of civil society in Morocco undertaken in 2005 that attempted to discern whether CSOs were lobbying Parliament and participating politically. The assessment concluded that "citizens' organizational capacity to plan and implement advocacy campaigns remained in a nascent developmental state."<sup>67</sup> In response to this, a curriculum was developed to address the gaps in knowledge of CSOs about the ways they can impact parliament. The report states that over the course of the program, CSO's overall perception of Parliament improved based on questionnaires completed by ten CSOs that had regular interactions with the legislature. Advocacy efforts initially increased but then decreased during the last two years when funding for advocacy strengthening efforts was not renewed in 2008. In other words, CSO advocacy seemed to improve while resources lasted. Despite the lack of funding, the report notes that a few CSOs continued their advocacy efforts after the program ended, which suggests that they consider lobbying Parliament a worthwhile activity. Altering conceptions about the power civil society organizations and members of Parliament have to enact change is a crucial step

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid., 19.

since many of these actors do not believe they possess meaningful power. As emphasized earlier, while providing CSOs with the tools and strategies to advocate for themselves can be extremely helpful, this assistance is temporary and will only be truly valuable if civil society can continue to use the newfound skills once the program has ended.

As discussed earlier, public diplomacy represents a crucial reason why these types of democracy promotion programs exist. In addition to legislative strengthening goals, the USAID also seeks to improve Jordanian views of the U.S. One initiative that sought to achieve public diplomacy objectives was the senate fellowship program that sent a Moroccan scholar to the New York State Senate to work with the Senate's majority leader.<sup>68</sup> After spending nine months at the NYS Senate, the fellow returned to Morocco and hosted a roundtable with the Parliament Staff Association to share knowledge from his experience. While the potential impact from this initiative may seem quite small, the hope is that the fellowship improved the Moroccan scholar's view of the U.S., which he will then share with other important decision makers.

The report also includes a "Lessons Learned" section where CID reflects on how it could have better implemented the program and identifies the impediments to success. One major point of reflection briefly mentioned earlier is that the structure of the legislature makes it difficult to challenge the status quo. The initial purpose of the Parliament when it was created in 1963 was not to give more power to the people but rather to more easily divide and conquer the King's political opponents.<sup>69</sup> The report notes that over time political elites took control of the legislature and put protections in place for party leaders to act in ways that privileged their private interests. This only worsened the potential for the Parliament to push for greater participation for the people. It should be noted that this creation story is not unique to the

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 24.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 42.

Moroccan Parliament and does not mean that it will never become a robust institution. Rather, it simply means that a parliament that is not structured to encourage democratic work can pose challenges to program implementation. In order to create space for democratic behavior, implementers must locate where incentives can be installed and convince MPs that improving government accountability, transparency and effectiveness is in their interest. The report reads, “The processes of Project design and implementation require a firm understanding of incentive structures in order to identify areas where the interests of USAID and the Parliament overlap.”<sup>70</sup> While CID may not be able to completely alter the system to incentivize democratic action, it can take advantage of shared goals. For example, in the past, Moroccan MPs and CSOs have often had adversarial relationships because they believed they were competing for popular support. However, by creating opportunities for MPs and CSO representatives to meet and discuss common concerns, the program helped them realize that they can pool resources and accomplish more together. CID hoped that this would lead to greater coordination between MPs and CSOs in the future.

One of the project’s most important successes cited by the report was the creation of a budget analysis bureau (BAB) within parliament. This proved to be a critical institutional step in increasing MP’s access to budget information, as well as useful analysis. Forming an office like the BAB presents the potential for a lasting institution that could work towards greater parliamentary participation in budgetary oversight. The BAB published more than 35 reports throughout the course of the program and provided valuable technical support to the finance committees in parliament. However, I was informed by a CID staff member who worked on the program in Morocco that the BAB was comprised of existing staffers who all had other jobs,

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 43.

making it more like a committee than an independent office.<sup>71</sup> Likely as a result of this, the budget unit was not institutionalized and no longer exists. While it is possible that there is some other body that carries out the functions of the former budget bureau, one must question the success of the BAB if it could not continue existing in the years after the program ended.

If change is not institutionalized, a democracy promotion project just serves as a temporary influx of aid. A major problem with American democracy promotion efforts is that USAID does not require the implementing organization or its own staff to produce reports that measure long-term change. The final report of the Parliamentary Strengthening program in Morocco was submitted almost immediately after the program ended. Thus, rather than measuring lasting and meaningful change, the report evaluated whether efforts were successful while USAID was present in the country. Instead, the report should examine which changes, if any, were sustained three, five, and ten years after the program has ended. Institutional change is slow and must be evaluated over the long-term.

An important achievement of the program cited by the report was its creation of seven national CSO coalitions, encompassing 268 different CSOs that lobbied Parliament for their respective causes. The program helped forge relationships between coalitions, CSO leaders and MPs leading to greater communication and collaboration. What became clear through this part of the program was that when given the right resources and education, CSOs can have an impact on the legislative process. The CSOs that showed the most promise were those three that continued to lobby Parliament even after the program ended, which included an organization that advocated for the rights of the disabled, as well as one that fought for the passage of a right of information law.

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<sup>71</sup> Name redacted, interview by Julia Gordon, February 24, 2017, transcript.



The final report also cites the creation of a “verbatim transcription unit” in both houses of Parliament as a positive result of the program. This new unit publishes records of the plenary sessions on the internet within 48 hours of their occurrence. These sessions are forums where MPs can ask government ministers questions, a unique environment within the Moroccan political system. Before the establishment of the transcription system there was a three year backlog in the publication of plenary session records. The report comments on the importance of this achievement, “As the oral question and answer sessions provide the only public and routine forum for Moroccan citizens to hear their ministers answer questions and provide information about the work being conducted by their ministries, the transcription system has provided a crucial linkage between government, the Parliament, and the citizenry.”<sup>72</sup> The system improves government transparency and allows for greater citizen engagement with politics. According to the report, information from the plenary sessions is increasingly quoted in the media, leading to even greater public accessibility. The more that citizens and journalists take advantage of this newfound access, the larger the impact this seemingly small change can have. The most important part of this achievement is that the transcription unit was institutionalized and therefore able to exist when the program ended.

The report argues that the program led to the empowerment of a parliamentary culture that rose above internal political divisions. In other words, MPs have become more open to education, partnership, and advocacy. While this is an achievement that is difficult to measure quantitatively, its importance should not be taken lightly. The program made it possible for training and legislative work to become a regular part of everyday life. According to the report, this contributed to a “parliamentary culture” in which certain behaviors that were previously underutilized or risky, such as submitting amendments to a law or producing budget analysis

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<sup>72</sup> SUNY CID, *Final Report*, 28.

literature, actually became norms.<sup>73</sup> While legislative work may still fall secondary to other priorities like getting re-elected, the normalization of actions that inch the system closer towards democracy is progress in itself.

Classifying the parliamentary strengthening program in Morocco as simply a success or failure would not lead to rigorous engagement with the nuances that exist in the findings. Instead I will locate both successes, failures, and efforts that fall somewhere in between. One aspect of the program that I believe was successful was that it was able to impact several different sectors including members of parliament, civil society organizations and potentially even regular citizens. For example, the CSO that was lobbying Parliament to increase rights for the disabled could certainly impact civilians. In addition, improvements in transparency across the legislature are beneficial to civilians because it increases their access to information about their government.

I think a crucial way in which the program failed was that it was unable to institutionalize most of its efforts, the only exception being the transcription unit. Much of the program's initiatives were characterized by training sessions or temporary resources such as the small grants program for CSOs, which have finite endings and cannot be input into the system. While those efforts certainly could have impacted what CID calls the "parliamentary culture" in Morocco, they did not create concrete institutional spaces for legislative work to continue after the program ended. The BAB was meant to become a lasting institution but was not formed with an eye for long-term change. As mentioned earlier, all its staff members had other jobs and therefore could not be devoted to the BAB. The success of a democracy promotion program is severely limited when its efforts are not institutionalized. While CID conducted countless training sessions, helped forge relations between MPs and CSOs and provided stipends to CSOs, these efforts resulted in minimal institutional change.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 30.

Another factor to consider is that the final report for the Morocco program was exceedingly technical in nature and paid little attention to exploring whether the project's efforts contributed to democratization writ large. For this reason, it is useful to consult other sources that track democratic development in countries over time. Freedom House is a nonprofit organization that publishes an annual report evaluating freedom around the world.<sup>74</sup> The report assigns every country a status of either "free," "partly free," or "not free," as well as a numerical score for overall freedom and more particular scores for political and civil liberties. The report also includes detailed explanations of why countries were given their ratings and the political events that impacted the given status. In 2004, the year the parliamentary strengthening program began implementation, Morocco's status according to Freedom House was "partly free" and its freedom score was a 5, on a scale of one being the most free and seven being the least.<sup>75</sup> In 2005, Morocco's freedom score had improved to 4.5 due to the nation's adoption of a new family law that expanded women's rights.<sup>76</sup> Since 2005, however, Morocco's freedom status and score have remained the same. While this does not necessarily mean that no progress has been made in any facet of democratic development, it does indicate that Morocco has taken few steps to bring the nation as a whole closer to democracy. This chapter's analysis of the legislative strengthening program and annual Freedom House reports come to similar conclusions about the lack of institutional change in Morocco in the last 12 years.

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<sup>74</sup> "About Us," Freedom House, accessed April 26, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/about-us>.

<sup>75</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2004*, accessed April 25, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2004>.

<sup>76</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2005*, accessed April 25, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2005/morocco>.

### Chapter III: Jordan

The Parliamentary Strengthening Program in Jordan set ground in 2005, as part of President Bush's larger foreign policy strategy in the region. At the time, Jordan was, and continues to be, a nation of critical importance to the United States because it is an ally in counterterrorism efforts as well as a valuable player in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Jordan has been a key partner in intelligence and security cooperation, particularly after the attacks on September 11th, 2001.<sup>77</sup> Its geographic location placed it at the center of several American security interests in 2005 most notably Israel and Iraq.

Historically Jordan has been fairly cooperative with U.S. interests, apart from its refusal to join the coalition against Iraq in 1990.<sup>78</sup> While this refusal certainly negatively impacted U.S.-Jordan relations, they were later recovered as Jordan aided the U.S. in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process throughout the 1990s.<sup>79</sup> Despite pressure from neighboring countries as well as from Jordanian citizens, Jordan has not severed diplomatic ties with Israel. However, King Abdullah II has repeatedly called on the United States to play a greater role in the peace process, supporting complete Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories.<sup>80</sup> The semi-cordial relationship Jordan maintains with Israel has made the nation an important ally to the U.S. in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

All of these factors make Jordan a logical candidate for a USAID program under the Bush Administration's foreign policy framework and considering its belief that democracy promotion is a way to fight terror. However, when examining the history of American democracy promotion, Jordan is a rather radical choice since for many years the United States

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<sup>77</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Jordan: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Jeremy M. Sharp, 1, March 6, 2008, accessed April 28, 2017.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 10.

has chosen stability over democracy. In other words, the U.S. usually does not launch programs in nations where democratic activities could seriously threaten a country's stability because such action could threaten other U.S. interests. But as discussed earlier, President Bush and his followers genuinely believed that promoting democracy could limit the spread of terror and his foreign policy reflected that belief.

Jordan received roughly \$647 million in aid from the U.S. government in 2005, the year the program began.<sup>81</sup> US. aid to Jordan dramatically increased in 2003 due to its assistance with American efforts in Iraq and general support for President Bush's War on Terror. Although Jordan publicly disapproved of military intervention in Iraq in 2003, it privately provided logistical support to the American mission to remove Saddam Hussein from power.<sup>82</sup> Since 2003, the Jordan International Police Training Center has trained more than 50,000 Iraqi cadets.<sup>83</sup> Another important aspect of the U.S.-Jordan relationship is trade. In 2000, the two countries signed a free trade agreement effectively eliminating commercial barriers for bilateral trade while also requiring Jordan to uphold certain labor standards. In addition to a FTA, the U.S. has also established Qualified Industrial Zones (QIZ) in Jordan, which legislate that goods with particular levels of Jordanian and Israeli input can be exported to the U.S. duty free. The United States has also sold millions of dollars' worth of weapons to Jordan in an effort to modernize the Jordanian military.<sup>84</sup>

Jordan is a hereditary constitutional monarchy ruled by King Abdullah II of the Hashemite family. The country has a bicameral legislature made up of an appointed 55-member

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<sup>81</sup> "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Jordan," USAID, accessed April 28, 2017, [https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/JOR?implementing\\_agency\\_id=1&measure=Obligations&fiscal\\_year=2005](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/JOR?implementing_agency_id=1&measure=Obligations&fiscal_year=2005).

<sup>82</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Jordan: Background*, 11.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, 20.

upper house and an elected 110-member lower house called the House of Deputies.<sup>85</sup> The parliament's ability to act and be involved in the legislative process is based on the will of the King who can dissolve or suspend Parliament at any time. In addition, parliamentary sessions average only five months, which means that there is no institution that provides oversight of the executive for more than half of the year. Voter turnout is strongest in rural, pro-government regions as a result of frequent gerrymandering and electoral laws designed to create palace majorities in all constituencies.<sup>86</sup>

Minimal public confidence in the legislature provides another factor that limits the power of the institution in Jordanian politics. During the nation's 2003 elections for the House of Deputies, voter turnout was 57.75% which is ironically much higher than U.S. voter turnout for the House of Representatives election in 2002 falling at just 36.3%.<sup>87</sup> Despite the fact that voter turnout was higher in Jordan for electing representatives in 2003, it still means that just under half of the population did not vote. Considering that voting is one of the few, if not the only way for citizens to participate politically, the fact that many of them are not taking advantage of this infrequent opportunity means that they must not believe their vote will matter. Thus, one of the program's intended goals was to improve the public view of the Jordanian parliament.

The RFTOP produced by USAID in 2004 states that the central goals of the program are to improve transparency and accountability of the legislature while also modernizing the parliamentary process and strengthening the skills of staff.<sup>88</sup> Secondary to those are another set of goals which include boosting public opinion of the legislature and increasing citizen as well as

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>87</sup>"Elections," Election Guide: Democracy Assistance and Election News, accessed April 28, 2017, <http://www.electionguide.org/elections/past/>.

<sup>88</sup> United States Agency for International Development, *Statement of Work Legislative Strengthening Program Jordan* (n.p., 2004), 1-2.

civil society participation in the legislative process.<sup>89</sup> These objectives seem to address some of the major problems with the Jordanian legislature mentioned above, placing an emphasis on education and the provision of resources. Of course, we also know that a major goal of the project is to maintain or strengthen relations with Jordan, particularly as a partner in the fight against terrorism and the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. U.S. foreign policy is generally met with more skepticism and disdain in Jordan than in Morocco, particularly during and in the years following the Iraq War. This is important for USAID and CID to consider when both planning and implementing the program. The RFTOP notes that the inclusion of Jordanian experts and institutions in USAID's democratizing efforts will hopefully mitigate distrust of American aid.

CID responded to the RFTOP with a technical proposal explaining how it would implement the Parliamentary Strengthening program in Jordan as per USAID's specifications. The technical proposal ambitiously states that the program will "increase transparency and accountability in the parliament, strengthen internal capacity in law-making, budget review and analysis; increase public participation in the legislative process; and enhance the legislature's public visibility and credibility."<sup>90</sup> One of the primary ways CID hoped to make the Jordanian Parliament more transparent is through technical improvements such as by installing an electronic voting system as well as a recording system. In theory, it is more difficult to interfere or meddle with election results if they are recorded electronically. In addition, a recording system could allow for parliamentary sessions to be more accessible to the public. CID also hoped to improve the efficiency and internal capacity of the Parliament by training MP's in topics ranging from legislative bill drafting to budget analysis to policy research skills. The document proposes holding workshops for parliamentary committees and developing the legislative library through

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> SUNY CID, *"Legislative Strengthening Program in Jordan" Technical Proposal* (n.p., 2005), 1.

technology and the establishment of a database of experts. These efforts aimed to respond to the Parliament that was simply not working as efficiently as it could. This was partly due to a lack of resources but also to the absence of proper training.

In addition, the ease with which the King can dissolve Parliament certainly does not encourage democratic behavior that would challenge the status quo. One way to mitigate the King's monopoly of power is to increase public participation in the legislative process. CID planned to do this through a small grants program for civil society organizations as well as advocacy training for CSOs and workshops that bring together CSO representatives and MPs.<sup>91</sup> A final important goal of the project as stated in the technical proposal was to enhance the public perception of the legislature and its perceived credibility. CID states that accomplishing this goal would require increasing media access to parliamentary sessions by holding roundtables, and training the Parliament's public relations office.<sup>92</sup> CID would also attempt to better understand the public perception of the legislature through conducting surveys and monitoring changing views.

As discussed in the Morocco chapter, parliamentary strengthening programs are also used as a way to develop closer relations between the U.S. and receiving countries. A manifestation of this goal in the technical proposal is the discussion of sending a MP from the Jordanian Parliament to participate in a fellowship in the New York State Senate. The MP would serve as a mid-level staffer on a committee in the NYS Legislature and would work alongside American colleagues.<sup>93</sup> Rather than directly contributing to institutional strengthening, this initiative attempts to foster cross-cultural interaction and teamwork and give the Jordanian MP an opportunity to potentially develop a more positive opinion of the United States than he or she

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., 13.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., 12.



previously held. While this fellowship may seem limited in terms of reach, the impact of strong personal relationships should not be underestimated, particularly if the chosen fellow returns to Jordan and shares his or her newfound perspective with others in power. Public diplomacy often has long-term results, rather than the short-term deliverables that the development world requires. The MP that participates in the fellowship may not influence others with his or her views of the U.S. tomorrow, but perhaps in a few years the MP will have a more influential position and remember his or her time in Albany. Efforts such as fellowships that bring foreign legislators to an American political institution are unique in that they have the potential to achieve both capacity-building and public diplomacy goals, or improve the individual's skills and their view of the United States. For this reason, such fellowships were part of countless USAID democracy promotion programs across the world.

Similar to the final report for the Moroccan PSP, the final report for the Jordan program was published just a few months after CID left the country. The report was submitted by CID to USAID, its funder. The program was implemented for five and a half years from 2005 to 2011, beginning during the Bush years and ending under the Obama administration. The executive summary of the report states that “significant and demonstrable results are evident” and that “some of these achievements have now been assimilated and are an integral part of the Jordanian Parliament itself.”<sup>94</sup> This emphasis on the assimilation of change is visible throughout the report and a point that was lacking in the Morocco final report. The Jordan report takes a more qualitative approach to evaluation instead of making use of quantitative indicators. It is written almost like a narrative, as it divides the program into phases and explains how CID's efforts evolved over time.

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<sup>94</sup> SUNY CID, *USAID Legislative Strengthening Program Jordan: Final Report* (n.p., 2011), 6.

The report explains that during Phase one of the program, from 2005 to 2006, CID was instructed to carry out four major goals. These goals were, to install electronic voting and recording systems, to enhance the parliament's budget review, law making, and financial oversight capacities, to increase citizen participation and to improve the public view of parliament.<sup>95</sup> These goals later expanded but when CID first arrived in Amman, these were the main objectives to be accomplished. The first few weeks and months were spent doing research and attempting to assess the needs of the Jordanian Parliament. Two CID staff members conducted a critical needs-assessment of the "operations, products, services, procedures, and resources currently existing in the research and library functions of Parliament" in order to understand how the program could best serve the legislative library.<sup>96</sup> CID coordinated several other needs-assessment initiatives on a variety of facets of the legislature including parliamentary committees and information management technology capacities. The program also organized a Voting and Transcription Systems Study Tour to Lebanon for technicians and senior staffers from the Secretariat to observe an electronic voting system in another country and learn about which system would best suit the Jordanian Parliament.

The small grants program for CSOs also began during phase one of the program and approved grants to four organizations representing a variety of causes ranging from women's rights, to the rights of journalists, to democracy projects for Jordanian youth. CID facilitated several training sessions and workshops to educate the chosen CSOs on best advocacy practices. In addition, the program held several public policy dialogues in which MPs as well as CSO and public representatives gathered to share perspectives on specific pending legislation. The program held ten public policy dialogues by the end of the five and a half years and they proved

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid., 3.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., 14.

to be valuable sites of exchange between the legislature, the public and civil society. Topics ranged from taxation policies, to a political parties' draft law, to a press draft law.<sup>97</sup>

Phase two of the program took place from January 2007 to May 2008 and focused on instituting change and creating new structures within the legislature. It was during this time that CID facilitated the creation of the parliamentary budget office (PBO). Throughout the course of the program the PBO held many training sessions for MPs on budget-related topics including gross domestic product, foreign trade, deficit/surplus and budget preparation.<sup>98</sup> Six parliamentary staffers were selected to provide support to the PBO during the annual budget review. Several training sessions were organized for the seconded staff, making them better able to contribute to PBO activities. The report argues that the addition of parliamentary staffers to the PBO team proved to be a critical factor in the ultimate assimilation of the office into the legislature.<sup>99</sup> The most important function of the PBO is to provide financial analysis, particularly of the annual government budget, for MPs and the finance committee. This analysis took the form of briefings as well as more formal reports. The PBO also submitted a working paper to the Secretary General on the Jordanian tax system. MPs are better equipped to provide oversight of the budget process when they are armed with information and analysis.

Another crucial institutional project was the creation of the Legislative Resource and Training Center (LRTC). This initiative began in phase two of the program with a needs assessment that provided recommendations of what upgrades and items would be most helpful in enhancing library capabilities. In addition to important technological upgrades, the program also helped organize several training sessions covering topics from human resources, to report writing, to the role of statistics in lawmaking. The LRTC also held a training session for research

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

officers on research methods. In addition to technological improvements, the program also upgraded the Parliament's visitor reception area with new chairs, telephones and a publication stand.<sup>100</sup> This represented an effort to make the Parliament more accessible to the public. It was also during phase two that the installation of the electronic voting and recording systems was finally completed. In addition, the program financed the purchase of new computers and servers in offices throughout parliament.

Increasing public participation in the activities of the legislature represents one of the four original goals of the program and remained important throughout the five and a half years that CID was in Jordan. One manifestation of this effort during phase two and three of the program was the organization of regional policy workshops, which were events held in regions of the country that perhaps do not get as many opportunities to publicly participate as do large cities like Amman. The first of these workshops was held in the South of Jordan and focused on nationwide policies that impact the Southern region and how MPs can properly respond and represent rural Jordanians. A second regional workshop was held in Jordan's Central region and a third in Northern Jordan.<sup>101</sup> It is important that MPs are sufficiently informed about the issues affecting Jordanians across the country, not just in the capital. Not only do these events have the potential to engage the public politically but also to improve the public's view of their parliament, which is another goal of the program. During this phase, CID also partnered with local actors to create a database of experts and CSOs to serve as both a resource and a way to encourage collaboration between government and civil society.

As discussed earlier, public diplomacy is a critical objective of the legislative strengthening program. There are several initiatives in the program that are clear attempts to

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., 20.

improve the Jordanian view of the United States. For example, the program sent two staffers from Parliament to do fellowships in the New York State Senate. While this may seem like an effort that impacts very few people, ideally staffers would work with the New York State Senate and return to Jordan with a more positive view of the U.S. and share that perspective with others. The program also organized a study tour that brought twelve MPs and two parliamentary staffers to Washington, DC, Annapolis, and Albany to observe budget processes at the legislatures in each of these locations.<sup>102</sup> Similar to the NYS Senate fellowship, the study tour is a public diplomacy initiative that aims to forge positive relationships between members of the Jordanian Parliament, members of the NYS Legislature and members of Congress. As discussed earlier, the results of these public diplomacy initiatives can often only be seen in the long-term.

Phase three of the program took place from June 2008 to January 2011 during which the effort to institutionalize change and ensure sustainability continued. However, several additional tasks were added to the program at the request of USAID primarily in response to King Abdullah II's decision to dissolve Parliament in November 2009, which of course represented a huge challenge to program activities.<sup>103</sup> After the dissolution, the program placed a greater emphasis on working with parliamentary staff in the absence of MPs. New tasks included analysis of laws that related to forthcoming parliamentary elections as well as possible reform of the legislative processes.<sup>104</sup> USAID also requested that another small grants program be implemented with a specific focus on NGOs involved in election activities. Under this initiative, seven small grants were administered totaling \$225,000.<sup>105</sup> Among the causes that the chosen organizations

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<sup>102</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>104</sup> Ibid.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., 29.

represented were women's rights and leadership, the rights of the disabled, and youth empowerment in political arenas.

The program continued its efforts to institutionalize the PBO in phase three. One way of doing this was by beginning monthly training sessions on skills required by all PBO staff. The PBO also began to produce periodic bulletins which were made up of macroeconomic data and analysis and were distributed to over 200 individuals encompassing parliamentary staff, Senate members and representatives of the media.<sup>106</sup> Ideally, when CID leaves Jordan and the PBO begins functioning without foreign support, its staff would be able to use its skills to provide useful services to MPs.

The LRTC also continued to engage in meaningful work in phase three of the program by providing research support to MPs, parliamentary staff and committees. In addition, an Integrated Library Systems Software was installed and LRTC staff were trained on how to use the system, resulting in the cataloguing of 7000 books.<sup>107</sup> The Parliamentary Library was also upgraded with a barcode printer, barcode reader, data collector, and label and barcode software.<sup>108</sup> All of these improvements make it easier for the library to function and support parliamentarians, and would hopefully lead to greater use of the library by MPs and staff.

During phase three, several initiatives were enacted to improve the transparency of parliament. For example, the program upgraded the Parliament's website considerably, updating its content, accessibility and making it available in two languages.<sup>109</sup> In addition, the program conducted training sessions to educate staffers on how to use the intranet system. Training was also held on the electronic transcription system for staff members responsible for delivering the

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., 23.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., 25.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., 26.

minutes of parliamentary sessions. In the course of five years, transcription time was reduced from five to six months to 72 hours.<sup>110</sup>

The final section of the report is entitled “Major Results Achieved” and details the initiatives that CID believes were most successful and why. As mentioned earlier, this report places an important emphasis on the assimilation of improvements so that they continue long after the program has ended. The section begins by noting that implementers faced a series of challenges throughout the course of the five and a half years such as the dissolution of Parliament, regional tensions and intervening election cycles which tended to take MP’s attention away from legislative strengthening and towards getting reelected.<sup>111</sup> The report states that the PBO may have represented the program’s greatest success primarily because it is an initiative that was institutionalized. The PBO provided several services including “economic analysis and forecast, budget analysis, production of briefs and policy papers, staff training, fiscal impact analysis of legislation, and responses to individual requests of MPs and committees on a variety of fiscal issues.”<sup>112</sup> While these services may seem mundane, the PBO has the potential to empower the legislature and make MPs better informed about the budget process and their role in it.

The LRTC is also noted as an achievement because it provided useful election-year analysis, technical assistance to local legislative councils and the parliamentary library as well as research training for parliamentary staffers and orientation for new MPS. The report argues that as a result of the LRTC, “parliamentary leadership, members, committees, and staff are now benefitting from quality training, upgraded resources, frequent white papers, and improved data

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<sup>110</sup> Ibid., 28

<sup>111</sup> Ibid., 30

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

collection and analysis.”<sup>113</sup> While this may be true, the LRTC was not formally institutionalized. Despite the importance of the aforementioned achievements, without the assimilation of it into the parliamentary structure, it is much easier for the LRTC to become weak and insignificant after the program ends.

Another “major result” listed by the report is the installation of several technological improvements including an electronic voting and recording system, a transcription system, an updated parliamentary website, as well as over seventy new computers. As discussed earlier, the final report was written just a few months after the program ended. However, when I spoke with a CID employee who worked on the program in Jordan, she informed me that the electronic voting system is not currently in use and was utilized very few times.<sup>114</sup> She believed that this may have been because the Jordanian monarchy realized that an electronic voting system was too transparent and made it more difficult to influence elections. Thus, while Jordan allowed for an American legislative strengthening program to be implemented, it was unwilling to allow change that might threaten the King’s power. Unfortunately, the electronic voting system proved to be an enormous waste of time and money for USAID as it was only briefly used and lots of effort and coordination was put into making its installation possible. This example demonstrates why it is absolutely crucial to carry out evaluations of legislative strengthening programs years after they have ended because reports written immediately after the implementer leaves the country cannot meaningfully assess long-term success. While it may not have been the fault of USAID or CID that the voting system ultimately did not have any kind of lasting impact as sometimes it is the host country that requests such technological installations, it is possible to be critical of USAID for not returning to find out how its program is affecting politics years later.

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<sup>113</sup> Ibid., 31

<sup>114</sup> Name redacted, interview by Julia Gordon, February 24, 2017, transcript.



Another result achieved according to the report is staff development. The program provided countless opportunities for MPs and parliamentary staffers to learn about best practices in a plethora of topics including legislative drafting, policy analysis, and research methods.<sup>115</sup> CID argues that these activities improved the efficiency of day to day parliamentary functions. A more efficient legislature is able to get more accomplished and waste less time. As mentioned earlier, creating connections between Parliament and civil society was an important goal of the legislative strengthening program. While there were many initiatives launched throughout the five and a half years aimed at tackling the lack of coordination and collaboration between the legislature and CSOs, the report notes that “there remains a great deal for Parliament to accomplish in the area of engagement with the public and useful connections to external stakeholders...there is not as of yet a prevailing attitude of openness and accessibility among parliamentary leadership, members or staff.”<sup>116</sup> Perhaps had the program lasted longer it would have been able to make greater strides in this arena. However, changing the attitudes of MPs about their relationship with civil society is a slow process particularly when Parliament is not structured to encourage democratic behavior.

The Parliamentary Strengthening Program in Jordan makes clear that success is complex when it comes to promoting democracy abroad. While the program had some successful initiatives, it also spent money and utilized resources on projects that gained little to no traction. King Abdullah’s decision to dissolve Parliament posed a significant challenge to program activities and certainly impacted the program’s ability to strengthen the legislature. The most meaningful achievements are of course those that left a legacy and did not simply wither away once the program ended. It is important to remember that legislative strengthening programs are

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<sup>115</sup> SUNY CID, *USAID Legislative*, 31.

<sup>116</sup> *Ibid.*, 32.

meant to contribute to a broader effort to promote democracy in Jordan, working alongside other USAID efforts and domestic initiatives.

The annual report published by Freedom House represents a useful measure for tracking democratization writ large. According to Freedom House annual ratings of Jordan from 2005, the year the program began, to the present, Jordan has actually become less free. In 2005, Freedom House classified Jordan as “partly free” with a freedom rating of 4.5, one being the most free and seven the least free.<sup>117</sup> In 2010, Jordan’s Freedom House classification changed to “not free” with a freedom rating of 5.5, primarily as a result of the dissolution of Parliament and the yearlong period during which there were no elected representatives.<sup>118</sup> The legislature is clearly a meaningful institution if its dissolution impacted Jordan’s freedom score. If it was a completely inconsequential entity, a suspension would likely not have such an impact on Freedom House’s evaluation. In the 2016 report, Jordan’s ratings are the same as they were in 2010, not free.<sup>119</sup> Jordan’s lack of improvement from 2010 to 2016 is a result of several factors such as the strain the Syrian refugee crisis has placed on the nation. The fact that Jordan’s freedom rating actually decreased during the course of the program and in the years following its end does not necessarily mean that the legislative strengthening program made no progress at all. It is of course nearly impossible to draw causation between the program and the nation’s freedom score. However, history has taught us that democratization is a nonlinear process and often entails achievements followed by setbacks. This is because democratization can be extremely destabilizing since institutions and individuals are subverting the executive branch, even if in small steps. While it is more than reasonable to be critical of the legislative strengthening

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<sup>117</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2005*, accessed April 25, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2005/morocco>.

<sup>118</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2010*, accessed April 28, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2010>.

<sup>119</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2016*, accessed April 27, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016>.

program in Jordan, it is also important to remember that moving towards the ideal of democracy is a slow process. A program needs to be present in the country for more than just six years in order to make serious change.

## Chapter IV: Lebanon

The Program to Strengthen the Lebanese Parliament (PSLP) operated from April 2010 to March 2012 and represents the most unorthodox of our three cases. This is because it did not go through the normal process that USAID programs usually follow, but more on this later. The relationship between the United States and Lebanon has historically been a positive one due to its sizeable Christian population, the pro-Western stance of many of the country's leaders, and the fact that Lebanon is more democratic than most of its neighbors in the region.<sup>120</sup> Lebanon's location between Israel and Syria, a region that has historically been ridden with conflict, makes it a key country to consider in U.S. foreign policy.

Some have argued that the U.S. has no critical interests in Lebanon because the country does not have oil fields or international waterways, and lacks any U.S. military bases.<sup>121</sup> However, I would argue that Lebanon was of strategic value to the U.S. at the time that CID started working and continues to be important. Firstly, mitigating Iranian, Syrian, and Saudi Arabian influence in the country was a big priority as all of these nations were vying for influence in Lebanese politics in 2010.<sup>122</sup> Maintaining stability in the Levant despite this proxy war was an important interest for the U.S. in the region. In addition, Syrian and other foreign interference in the Lebanese political system made it more difficult for Lebanon to function democratically. Iran was and remains to be of particular concern primarily due to its history of funding Hezbollah. Although Hezbollah is a political party in Lebanon, it is also considered a terrorist group by the U.S.<sup>123</sup> Thus, another important interest of the U.S. and Israel, a critical

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<sup>120</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Lebanon: Background and U.S. Relations*, by Casey L. Addis, 2, February 1, 2011, accessed April 28, 2017, <https://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/R40054.pdf>.

<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

<sup>123</sup> Jonathan Masters and Zachary Laub, "CFR Backgrounders: Hezbollah," Council on Foreign Relations, last modified January 3, 2014, accessed April 28, 2017, <http://www.cfr.org/lebanon/hezbollah-k-hizbollah-hizbullah/p9155>.

ally to the U.S., is to limit the power of Hezbollah in Lebanon. It can be difficult to encourage the growth of democratic institutions while at the same time curb the influence of Hezbollah since it is a recognized political party in the country and has supporters. The Lebanese Parliament represents the only way that CID staff can communicate with members of the Hezbollah party although it is done indirectly, since there is a U.S. law that forbids Americans from providing material support or resources to terrorist organizations.<sup>124</sup> As mentioned earlier, Hezbollah represents an important political party in Lebanon with substantial power and therefore it is useful to have even an indirect mode of communication available. Lebanon also has a significant Palestinian population inside its borders which makes it an essential country to consider in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

While the U.S.-Lebanese trade relationship is not as strong as U.S. trade with other neighboring countries like Jordan that have free trade agreements in place, trade does occur between the two nations. The U.S. International Trade Administration reported that in 2009, the year before the program launched, Lebanese exports to the U.S. were \$77 million, while the country's imports from the U.S. were \$1.4 billion.<sup>125</sup> After the war between Israel and Hezbollah in the summer of 2006, the U.S. began to increase aid to Lebanon. This trend hit an all-time high in 2008 when the U.S. provided \$273 million in assistance to the nation.<sup>126</sup> In 2010, the year the parliamentary strengthening program began, U.S. aid to Lebanon was \$159 million<sup>127</sup>. In addition, several civil society projects were going on in Lebanon at the time which also made it a viable candidate for further U.S. programming.

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<sup>124</sup> "Foreign Terrorist Organizations," U.S. Department of State, accessed April 29, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/j/ct/rls/other/des/123085.htm>.

<sup>125</sup> Congressional Research Service, *Lebanon: Background*, 17.

<sup>126</sup> "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Lebanon," USAID, accessed April 28, 2017, [https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/LBN?implementing\\_agency\\_id=1&measure=Obligations&fiscal\\_year=2008](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/LBN?implementing_agency_id=1&measure=Obligations&fiscal_year=2008).

<sup>127</sup> "U.S. Foreign Aid by Country: Lebanon," USAID, accessed April 28, 2017, [https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/LBN?implementing\\_agency\\_id=1&measure=Obligations&fiscal\\_year=2010](https://explorer.usaid.gov/cd/LBN?implementing_agency_id=1&measure=Obligations&fiscal_year=2010).

Lebanon is a parliamentary republic and has a unique political system that attempts to strike a balance of religious representation. The president must be a Maronite Christian, the prime minister a Sunni Muslim and the Speaker of the Parliament, a Shi'a Muslim.<sup>128</sup> The president is indirectly elected by the National Assembly and must receive a two-thirds majority, while the prime minister is appointed by the president.<sup>129</sup> The president is endowed with the power to dissolve parliament, make appointments to public office, negotiate international treaties, propose new legislation, and propose laws for reconsideration that Parliament has already approved.<sup>130</sup> While the Lebanese constitution spends little time describing the role of the prime minister, historically the prime minister has presided over ministerial meetings, advised the president on the formation of the cabinet, represented the cabinet before the Parliament, and provided oversight of the ministries.<sup>131</sup> The president ultimately has much more authority than the prime minister and possesses some of the same powers that monarchs do in our other cases, namely to dissolve parliament. While Lebanon's political system is arguably more democratic than that of Jordan and Lebanon as it is not lead by a king, it certainly still concentrates power in the executive branch of government. Lebanon also has a unicameral legislature consisting of 128 members who are directly elected for four year terms.<sup>132</sup>

The RFTOP for this program was originally issued in 2004 for a different location. The primary intention was to create a legislative resource center in the Gulf that would provide training and resources to legislatures in Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab

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<sup>128</sup>Bethan McKernan, "Lebanon Ends More than Two Years of Political Gridlock by Electing New President," *The Independent*, last modified October 31, 2016, accessed April 28, 2017.

<sup>129</sup>"The World Factbook: Lebanon," Central Intelligence Agency, accessed April 28, 2017, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/le.html>.

<sup>130</sup> Issam Saliba, "Lebanon: Constitutional Law and the Political Rights of Religious Communities," Library of Congress, last modified December 2010, accessed April 28, 2017, <https://www.loc.gov/law/help/lebanon-constitutional-law.php>.

<sup>131</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>132</sup> "The World," Central Intelligence Agency.

Emirates, and Saudi Arabia.<sup>133</sup> MEPI conceived of the program and asked USAID to run it through the IQC. As mentioned earlier, MEPI was headed by Dick Cheney's daughter, Liz Cheney, and therefore truly represented the Bush Administration's ideology that democracy promotion was a valuable way to fight terror.<sup>134</sup> It envisioned a program that would enhance linkages between governments, legislatures, and civil society in the region and improve the skills of parliamentarians and staffers.<sup>135</sup> While this proposal may seem ill advised in hindsight considering the Gulf encompasses some of the least free nations in the world, when one remembers President Bush's foreign policy at the time, it is not surprising that a program like this might arise. As mentioned earlier, the Bush Administration believed that democracy promotion was a valuable counterterrorism strategy. In addition, the majority of the September 11th hijackers were from Saudi Arabia so perhaps it is not completely baffling why MEPI might have been interested in starting a program in the Gulf.<sup>136</sup> However, it gained very little traction resulting in a modification of the contract in 2007, changing the location and scope of work.

Once it was decided that the program would be relocated to Lebanon, USAID took full control from MEPI as the agency had a long-standing presence in the country.<sup>137</sup> The size and nature of the USAID bureaucracy makes the process of alteration extremely slow. Indeed, it took a year to change the contract to reflect new goals and a new location. Implementation did not begin until March of 2010 due to several factors including political conflict in Lebanon in 2008 as well as a series of administrative delays.<sup>138</sup> It is important to note that even though implementation did not begin until 2010, the money that made the program possible was allotted

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<sup>133</sup> SUNY CID, *"Strengthen Legislative Institutions in the Middle East" Technical Proposal* (n.p., 2004), 1.

<sup>134</sup> Wittes and Yerkes, "The Middle," Brookings.

<sup>135</sup> SUNY CID, *"Strengthen Legislative"*, 1.

<sup>136</sup> Uri Friedman, "Where America's Terrorists Actually Come From," *The Atlantic*, last modified January 30, 2017, accessed April 29, 2017, <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/01/trump-immigration-ban-terrorism/514361/>.

<sup>137</sup> "Lebanon: Our Work," USAID, accessed April 29, 2017, <https://www.usaid.gov/lebanon/our-work>.

<sup>138</sup> SUNY CID, *"Program to Strengthen the Lebanese Parliament" Final Report* (n.p., 2012), 4.

under the Bush administration. The project was originally budgeted for three years, however, the administrative delays led to a decrease of the duration to 18 months. The length was even further shortened when it was discovered two months after implementation began that the State Department had not obtained the required legal authorization to initiate the program. As a result, USAID instructed CID to “slow operations, limit interactions with the Parliament and concentrate on project activities with non-Lebanon specific application.”<sup>139</sup> Authorization was finally obtained in August of 2010, allowing full project operations to resume. All of these delays resulted in an active implementation period of 16 to 17 months, which of course is not enough time to create lasting change.<sup>140</sup> However, CID was still able to have a small impact in Lebanon.

The program had three distinct components, each strengthening an existing institution within Parliament or creating a new one. The first component was to deliver technical assistance to the Directorate of Studies and Information and improve the policy research and analysis skills of its staff. Also, included in this effort was the provision of material and technical assistance to the parliamentary library. Component two focused on committees and training committee staff in operations, report writing, research and bill drafting.<sup>141</sup> The final component sought to aid in the formation of the center for parliamentary training and legislative studies. Thus, project goals addressed both strengthening the legislative capabilities of the Lebanese Parliament as well as creating a center for parliamentary training and legislative studies that could serve as a resource for the region.

As mentioned earlier, the first component of the program focused on strengthening the capacity of the Directorate of Studies and Information. Before the program began, outside

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid., 6.



entities had funded training for the Directorate's staff but these trainings did not give enough attention to policy analysis or legislative research.<sup>142</sup> Thus CID aimed to provide the Directorate with the necessary resources and materials to function, as well as the required skills and knowledge. Resources included books, periodicals, a barcode scanner, and library management software which are all crucial for the functioning of a library. The procurement and installation of these materials allowed for the library collection and loans to be managed electronically, making it possible for 23,000 volumes to be catalogued by January 2012.

CID held several training sessions for the staff of the Directorate of Studies and Information explicitly focusing on research methods and legislative analysis. The first session was an introduction but CID later held intermediate and advanced trainings for those who wanted to continue learning and improving their skills. Tests were administered both before and after training in an attempt to measure if the knowledge of the trainees increased as a result of the sessions. The tests showed "a 23% increase in knowledge across the board, with a significant level of increase among the library staff."<sup>143</sup> These results make clear that training sessions are increasing the knowledge of parliamentary staff about legislative research and analysis. CID also held basic training for twelve parliamentary staffers in budget and fiscal analysis.<sup>144</sup> Some of the trainees were staffers from the Finance Department or Budget Committee, which shows that the trainings are seen as valuable even by those who might already be familiar with the material. It is important that parliamentary staffers from a range of departments are informed about budget analysis so that the legislature as a whole can more actively and efficiently participate in budget review.

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>143</sup> Ibid., 11.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid., 12.

The second component focused on capacity building in parliamentary committees. The program sought to improve committee staffers' ability to prepare reports and minutes, conduct legislative research and draft bills, as well as strengthen their administrative skills.<sup>145</sup> Since the length of the program was cut short, some of the activities under the second component were classified as optional. Thus, this component had fewer activities than the third component. In April of 2011, the program hired an Australian parliamentary expert to travel to Lebanon and conduct a needs assessment of parliamentary committees. The expert interviewed 28 individuals including MPs, committee chairs, and parliamentary administrators in order to discover where committees were most in need of assistance.<sup>146</sup>

A few activities occurred before the needs assessment was conducted. For example, in February of 2011, the program held the first session of a three-part training series on legislative drafting for staff members of the Directorate of Committees and Sessions.<sup>147</sup> The training was led by an Egyptian legislative drafting expert. On the last day of the first session, trainees produced a draft report on a legislature-related topic in the Arab world. The second session occurred in June of 2011 during which trainees read and revised existing legislation according to Institutional Legislative Theory and Methodology (ILTAM) principles.<sup>148</sup> By the conclusion of this session, participants had written their own drafts of a bill on Lebanese regulations around smoking and the sale of tobacco. The program also organized a two-month long training in which thirteen committee secretaries took eight courses on computer applications.<sup>149</sup> This training was responding to findings that revealed much committee work to be non-standardized

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<sup>145</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid.

and in some cases done by hand. Feedback indicated that this initiative was well-received and considered useful.

The third component sought to establish a center for parliamentary training and legislative studies. The first two components paid particular attention to improving the capacity of the Lebanese Parliament while this component focused on creating a resource for legislatures across the region. At the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union's (AIPU) 12th conference in 2006, the Lebanese Parliament and the AIPU agreed that establishing a training center based in Beirut would be valuable to Lebanon and its neighbors. The idea was to have a center where legislative training and resources would be provided to the Lebanese Parliament as well as to visiting parliamentary delegations from around the Arab world. Training would include topics such as, "legislative administration and management; legislative research; legislative drafting; budget review and analysis; and other areas of legislative functions and processes."<sup>150</sup> The AIPU proved to be a crucial local partner in this task as it provided seed money in addition to an annual donation to cover operating expenses.

The Arab Institute for Parliamentary Training and Legislative Studies (AIPTLS), or the Institute, was inaugurated in July of 2011 and was attended by MPs, ministers, and AIPU staff as well as representatives from other Arab legislatures including, Kuwait, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Iraq, Palestine, and Lebanon.<sup>151</sup> The event ended with a discussion forum for representatives of Arab parliaments to share their ideas about how the Institute could be most useful. After the inauguration, CID staff put together a public relations strategy outline and presented it to the Institute. Once the strategy was approved, a public relations company was contracted to create promotional materials and a brand for the Institute. Materials included 1000

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<sup>150</sup> Ibid., 17.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

copies of a brochure as well as a template for the Institute's newsletter. In addition, the program hired a web design company to create a website for the Institute which was launched in March 2012.<sup>152</sup> CID arranged for one staffer selected by Parliament to be trained on website maintenance so that the Institute's website could continue to exist after the program ended. The Institute was equipped with an auditorium, a training room, translation facilities and a lecture hall. By the end of the program, the Institute had also acquired a Xerox machine, a smart board, as well as computers, printers and copiers.<sup>153</sup>

Another important initiative was CID's effort to assist the parliamentary library with organizing the Arab Parliamentary Libraries Chapter of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA).<sup>154</sup> This was an event that took place over two days in January 2012 and represented the first meeting of the Arab parliamentary libraries and research services. The goal of the meeting was to share knowledge on parliamentary library practices and organize the creation of an Arab regional network that would encourage exchange among Arab parliaments beyond the meeting.<sup>155</sup> Both current and former staff of the UK House of Commons, the New Zealand Parliament and U.S. Library of Congress presented at the event. After the two days, the Arab Parliamentary Libraries Network (APLN) was established and its constitution was discussed and adopted by members. In addition, the APLN elected its first executive committee, consisting of five librarians, three of whom were women, from five different Arab parliaments serving two-year terms.

Also during the meeting, participants formulated a plan of action with goals for the APLN for the coming year. These goals included, distributing surveys to Arab parliamentary

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<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>155</sup> Ibid., 20.

libraries, developing specialized trainings and conferences, surveying Arab parliamentary libraries beneficiaries, and creating an electronic portal for laws in Arabic.<sup>156</sup> Several months after CID left Lebanon, the Chief of Party of the program was notified that the APLN would be attending IFLA's annual conference in August 2012. In addition, IFLA's Section on Libraries and Research Services for Parliaments organized a one-day pre-conference training for APLN members and twelve Arab parliaments committed to participating.<sup>157</sup> Thus, not only did the APLN continue to exist, but it remained involved with IFLA and other parliamentary libraries across the world.

The program also organized a two-day regional workshop that covered information communications technology (ICT) and was held at the Institute.<sup>158</sup> Senior parliamentary ICT staff from 13 different Arab countries attended the event, as well as 25-30 individuals from the Lebanese Parliament. The sessions covered subjects including the role of the legislative library in research services, methods of recording parliamentary proceedings, documentation management, and standards of parliamentary websites.<sup>159</sup> The event represented the first of its kind in the region, proving that the Institute could be a force for exchange, partnership, and networking among Arab parliaments.

It is worth noting that unlike the Morocco and Jordan programs, the Lebanese project did not encompass any study tours, internships, or other efforts that might be classified as serving public diplomacy goals. CID found other ways to carry out the implied diplomacy objectives that are present in all U.S. democracy promotion programs. The final report acknowledges this, "the project also adhered to USAID's branding requirements on all but one of its activities,

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid., 21.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Ibid.

making the funding agency visible and recognized for its assistance... PSLP did not ‘buy’ this relationship through significant use of study tours or major equipment procurements, but rather developed it through the excellence of its support and quality of its staff.”<sup>160</sup> This passage recognizes that one of CID’s tasks is to present the U.S. government in a positive light and even venture to improve Lebanese MP’s view of the United States. However, it also seems to be commenting on the nature of “branding” and suggesting that study tours or equipment procurements are perhaps less effective and less genuine ways of implementing public diplomacy. The report is arguing here that the positive relations that were forged between CID and the Lebanese Parliament were a result of good work and dedicated staff rather than gifts. This argument is a compelling one since USAID’s branding requirements can sometimes undermine public diplomacy efforts. One can imagine that there are many countries in which a logo associated with the United States posted on products or places could be poorly received or even dangerous. Thus, finding other ways to carry out the goals of the program and at the same time portray a positive image of the U.S. without being obnoxious, is incredibly useful and will likely lead to greater programming success.

The report provides data and a series of numerical indicators to evaluate progress. For example, the report notes that the first and second component of the program held 129 participant trainings to 45 individuals.<sup>161</sup> CID also conducted tests to measure knowledge enhancement as a result of training. However, I would argue that such quantitative indicators offer minimal insight into whether the program actually strengthened the Lebanese Legislature. While the trainings were certainly valuable as they increased the knowledge and skills of participants, several of the most successful initiatives cannot be fully understood by a purely

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid., 22.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., 25.

quantitative evaluation. For example, the ICT regional workshop was remarkable because it brought together several different representatives from a range of Arab countries and helped set the foundation for further collaboration and exchange.

Also, CID's efforts helped the Institute become associated with high quality discourse and information.<sup>162</sup> This conclusion can be gleaned by the narrative sections of the report as well as by talking to individuals who worked on the program. The report points out that further success and proper institutionalization of change would have been possible were it not for the short duration of the program. The report reads, "it must be recognized that 17-months of technical assistance is insufficient time in which to expect significant program impact and institutional reform."<sup>163</sup> While the Institute as well as other program initiatives proved to be worthy causes, 17 months of active programming is simply not enough time to fully implement these institutional goals and make them last. Indeed, when interviewing individuals who worked for this program on the ground, they expressed their frustration that USAID decided not to extend the contract. This was likely a result of decisions made at the State Department which is the entity that ultimately decides upon and carries out U.S. foreign policy outside of the president. Despite the fact that both the Lebanese Parliament and the AIPU communicated with USAID on several occasions requesting their desire for continued programming, the State Department's priorities in Lebanon had changed and the program ended in 2012.

One of the CID staff members I interviewed informed me that the Institute still exists and is being supported by other donors such as the UN Development Programme but is significantly less active than it once was. This likely has to do with CID's limited time in Lebanon as well as

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<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., 26.

the bombings that occurred in Lebanon in October 2012.<sup>164</sup> Regional projects like the Institute are very hard to organize because USAID operates on a country-based system. In addition, an institution that serves the region rather than just a single country faces the challenge of sometimes getting entrenched in politics between nations. After the 2012 bombings, several Gulf countries issued a travel ban on civil servants traveling to Lebanon, effectively limiting the ability of the Institute to encourage exchange of knowledge among Arab Parliaments. Also, the civil war in Syria and the subsequent refugee crisis has placed an enormous strain on Lebanon leaving less time for legislative strengthening.

Similar to the Jordan case, Lebanon became less free over the course of the program according to Freedom House ratings. This is largely a result of the violent government backlash against protests that followed the appointment of Najib Miqati as prime minister in January 2011. In addition, several restrictions imposed on individuals voicing support for democratic change in Syria influenced Lebanon's lower freedom rating.<sup>165</sup> In 2010, the year the program began, Lebanon was categorized as "partly free" with a rating of 4, one being the most free and seven being the least free.<sup>166</sup> In 2012, Lebanon was still classified as "partly free" but had been given a freedom rating of 4.5, showing a slight decrease in freedom according to the Freedom House formulation.<sup>167</sup> As mentioned earlier, this change in rating is largely due to political factors in the country and clamping down on civil liberties for citizens.

The program was most successful in its effort to create a legislative resource center for the region. Creating opportunities to convene groups and allowing political actors to interact in

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<sup>164</sup> Anne Barnard, "Beirut Blast Kills at Least 8, Including Top Security Official," *The New York Times*, last modified October 19, 2012, accessed April 29, 2017, <http://www.nytimes.com/2012/10/20/world/middleeast/bomb-blast-in-beirut-lebanon.html>.

<sup>165</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2012*, accessed April 25, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2012>.

<sup>166</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World*, 2010.

<sup>167</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2012*.



ways that they otherwise might not is incredibly valuable. While the program also implemented initiatives to strengthen the Lebanese legislature that resulted in lots of trainings and other educational opportunities for parliamentarians and staffers, whether these efforts resulted in any kind of lasting success is much less clear. The Lebanon case reveals the potential benefits of organizing programming that is accessible to several different legislatures across a region, therefore allowing participation to countries that might not be suitable to host U.S. democracy programs but can still reap the benefits of major events and conferences. This case also proves that legislative change is a slow process and a truly successful program must be committed to staying in the country for many years in order for institutionalization to occur.

## Conclusion

The three cases in the previous chapters point us to a number of important conclusions about democratization in the MENA that should be of concern for the U.S. as a potential implementer as well as nations or actors that are interested in promoting democracy more broadly. One crucial lesson learned from legislative strengthening programs in Morocco, Jordan, and Lebanon is that public diplomacy is one of the most important—if not the most important—goals of these efforts. Maintaining positive relations with countries in the MENA region is advantageous to the U.S. for several reasons such as forming partners in counterterrorism efforts as well as affecting stakeholders in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The U.S. government, like any government, is in a better position to further its own foreign policy agenda if it has good relations with other nations that have influence on the world stage.

A few significant questions follow from this logic. Firstly, how do U.S. foreign policy goals affect the implementation of legislative strengthening programs? Also, are these programs actually successful in advancing U.S. interests? To begin to answer the first question, it must be acknowledged that there is a distinction between the priorities of USAID, the State Department and those of CID employees, or any contractors on the ground. U.S. foreign policy goals are of utmost importance for decision makers at the State Department and U.S. embassies in the target nations but are less of a driving force for USAID and CID implementers. However, although USAID has a fair amount of independence, the agency technically reports to the State Department which is the lead entity for U.S. foreign policy. The U.S. ambassadors in Morocco, Jordan, and Lebanon set the tone of the U.S. presence in the nation. This means that USAID cannot launch, alter, or extend any kind of aid programs abroad without some kind of approval from the State Department that such an effort fits into the larger U.S. foreign policy strategy.

USAID personnel generally see their mission as development focused, which can sometimes find itself in tension with the priorities of decision makers at the State Department who see themselves as guardians of American strategic interests. An example of this tension could be a result of a legislative strengthening program in a country like Morocco where the State Department would like to maintain close relations with King Mohammed VI and is concerned that a U.S. democracy promotion program could potentially jeopardize those relations. Such concerns could lead the State Department to not approve an extension of a democracy promotion program. As became clear with the Lebanon case, although CID employees and Lebanese MPs pushed for the contract to be extended, a legislative strengthening program in Lebanon was no longer considered of interest to the U.S. government and therefore the program did not continue. This is an example of when the agenda of the U.S. government undermines USAID and CID efforts to most effectively promote democracy.

While of course USAID is the funder and therefore has a huge impact on the entirety of the program, there can and often is a disparity between its goals and those at the State Department. When interviewing both USAID and CID employees, I frequently encountered the notion that there is a disconnect between what is called “high policy” and “low policy.” High policy refers to U.S. foreign policy interests and diplomatic engagements with the target nation, while low policy is the legislative strengthening program and the goals of CID and USAID. It is not necessarily possible for CID staff or USAID employees who plan and fund the programs, to bypass the foreign policy strategy set forth by the State Department. Put differently, high policy, or U.S. foreign policy interests, almost always trump low policy. While implementers and USAID staff can certainly advise State Department decision makers or other U.S. government officials about the best methods to achieve certain goals, they ultimately must defer to them.

Thus, U.S. foreign policy strategy impacts the implementation of these programs a great deal and this fact can sometimes create less than ideal circumstances for effective democracy promotion.

It is also useful to comment on the different set of priorities that occupy the minds of implementers. CID and other implementing organizations are most interested in the business of development, or obtaining more projects. Although CID is a non-profit organization, it of course needs to win contracts to continue functioning. This is not at all to suggest that individuals who work at implementing organizations are not committed to strengthening legislatures, but rather that they often focus on micro-level objectives that can easily be measured so that they can demonstrate success. This can sometimes result in a lack of attention to encouraging democratization more broadly in the country because democratic development writ large is much more difficult to track and often out of the control of the implementer. Public diplomacy goals are also often viewed as a distraction from proving success, which was evident in the final report for the Lebanon program. While CID is concerned about being able to exhibit clear success, USAID is focused on the ideals of development and the State Department holds the reigns of the entire operation, always steering towards U.S. strategic interests. With so many separate entities involved in the process of democracy promotion, there are several different sets of goals that sometimes find each other at odds and hugely impact the ways in which projects are decided upon, implemented, and evaluated. The reality of the development process is that U.S. interests are the priority and likely always will be. The task of evaluators is to decide if those interests interfere with programming to the point that democracy promotion efforts achieve minimal success. This will be explored more later.

This brings us to our next question, namely, do these projects actually advance U.S. interests? One way to answer this is simply, they do advance U.S. interests and when they don't

they are not extended. Measuring the extent to which a democracy promotion program furthers the U.S. foreign policy agenda is difficult to do and could probably result in different answers depending on who one asks. However, generally speaking, forging positive personal relationships between Americans and foreign members of parliament has the potential to be advantageous to the U.S., particularly when it is attempting to exert influence over a political event or issue in the region. In addition, having individuals on the ground who are engaged with MP's and informed about local politics can allow for several different channels of communication apart from just one with the executive branch.

Apart from these advantages, we must also remember that the Bush Administration acted according to a genuine belief that spreading democracy is in the interest of democracies everywhere and is a valuable way to fight terror. In a speech made at the University of Cairo in June 2005, Condoleezza Rice stated, "Today, liberty is threatened by undemocratic governments. Some believe this is a permanent fact of history. But there are others who know better... Liberty is the universal longing of every soul, and democracy is the ideal path for every nation."<sup>168</sup> Secretary Rice is suggesting that undemocratic governments pose a threat to democracy as a system and countries that are democratic across the world. Therefore, it is in the interest of all free nations to support the growth of democracy worldwide so that their own way of life can be preserved. The Bush Administration believed that these programs could be valuable both to U.S. interests in the MENA, as well as beneficial to democracy writ large. The point is not to be convinced by this argument, but rather to better understand why these programs were funded.

Although it is questionable whether legislative strengthening programs in the MENA contributed to democratization in the region writ large or if it is even reasonable to expect this, it

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<sup>168</sup> Condoleezza Rice, "Remarks at the American University in Cairo," speech, June 20, 2005, U.S. Department of State Archive, accessed April 19, 2017, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/48328.htm>.

is important to investigate if any of the nations studied here moved closer to democracy during the course of the program or since it ended. It is worth noting that for two out of our three cases, the Freedom House scores of the host countries, namely Jordan and Lebanon, were worse when the program ended than when it began. While of course this is not to suggest that there is causation here as this lowering in score is largely a result of political instability and conflict, some might argue that it is proof that the U.S. should not be promoting democracy in the MENA. I would argue that such a stance represents a simplistic understanding of democratization. Americans should know from their own country's history that the process of democratization is nonlinear and still ongoing. In the 2016 Freedom House report, the U.S. was given a "downward trend arrow," reminding us that democracy is an ideal that must always be worked towards and improved upon.<sup>169</sup> It is unrealistic to expect any country to transition into a flourishing democracy in the span of a six-year program. Democratization is often a destabilizing process in the short-term because old norms are challenged as new institutions are being formed that do not yet have the capacity to be fully effective. Thus, it is expected that the monarch might respond aggressively to democratic lobbying. Reform happens slowly and some have even argued that such incremental reform is preferable to swift and sweeping change. Baaklini, Denoeux and Springborg argue, "over the long haul, reforms implemented in this gradual fashion are more durable because they have been accepted and negotiated with those segments of society that have more to lose from democratization (i.e., those forces that are represented in the executive branch and military)."<sup>170</sup> Slow and incremental change is normal and actually more durable because it is less likely to be reversed. In addition, setbacks do not mean that a country is doomed to forever

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<sup>169</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2016*, accessed April 27, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2016>.

<sup>170</sup> Baaklini, Denoeux, and Springborg, *Legislative Politics*, 249.

live in monarchy. Instead of doom, these changing freedom scores show the complexity of democratization and that persistence is required.

It is easy for Westerners to observe a political system like that of Morocco or Jordan and conclude that MPs or even citizens more broadly in these countries do not have the “political will” to become democratic. I encountered this notion a few times in my research and am very hesitant to grant it any credence. This notion that if only MPs in the MENA had the will to fight for democracy then reform might occur is misguided. When used in this way the term often means that decision makers abroad are not doing what we want them to do and so we claim that they lack political will. In reality it is much more complicated than individual will, and there are many reasons why change may not be occurring. Some MPs may have hopes of democracy for their country but they are participating in a larger system in which change is slow. Of course, there are environments in which any kind of U.S. sponsored program would be rejected and therefore find no success. However, this may not be due to a lack of “political will” to fight for liberal reform, but rather a reasonable response to countless instances of corrupt American and European meddling into other nations affairs. In addition, many nations that have been recipients of democracy promotion programs are quite corrupt themselves and their systems lack incentives for key actors like MPs to behave democratically or challenge the executive branch. Yet, to attribute a lack of change to the absence of political will is to ignore the many other complex reasons that are leading to the maintenance of the status quo.

Another common assumption is that civic culture and political will must exist within a society before democratization can occur. Counter to this common belief, these characteristics often arise after democratic institutions have been installed. Baaklini, Denoeux and Springborg write,

Logically, it is not clear whether a certain type of culture is required for democracy to develop, as political culture explanations claim, or whether it is instead the presence of a democratic political system that fosters the development of democratic norms, beliefs, and values. Civic culture, in other words, may be more the consequence of democracy than its cause.<sup>171</sup>

As these authors note, this idea that a certain culture or ideology must be present before a country can make steps towards democracy is weak and unsubstantiated. In addition, this argument is often used to support the idea that Islam is somehow incompatible with democracy. These clash of civilizations-type arguments are rooted in racism and xenophobia. Instead of entertaining these weak claims we should instead turn to the many examples of countries where democratic institutions were introduced through party systems or labor unions and then were followed by the rise of civic culture, such as Japan.<sup>172</sup> In addition, the Morocco final report noted that programming led to the empowerment of parliamentary culture among MPs and staffers who began to see certain democratic activities as norms such as advocacy and partnership with CSOs. An existing civic or democratic culture in a society is not a required circumstance for democratization. For our purposes, it is crucial to acknowledge that while the process of democratization may be circuitous and filled with bumps and stumbles, that is the nature of working towards an ideal. Evidence shows that a strong commitment to strengthening democratic institutions and participation can lead to slow and steady reform.

Studying U.S. legislative strengthening programs also sheds light on USAID and how the institution works. What becomes clear almost immediately is that USAID is an enormous bureaucracy and moves very slowly. In the case of Lebanon, amending the program's contract to reflect the new scope of work and location took almost an entire year. This slow process of change delayed the ability of the program to begin working and also discourages requests for

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<sup>171</sup> Baaklini, Denoeux, and Springborg, *Legislative Politics*, 24.

<sup>172</sup> *Ibid*, 25.



change more broadly. This can pose problems when working in environments that require quick adaptation to changing events.

Another point of interest is that there is limited disparity between the goals stated in the RFTOP, technical proposal, and final report. While at first this continuity may seem positive, it is actually rather concerning because one would expect many disparities given that democratization is an unpredictable and nonlinear process. This unusual continuity reflects the fact that these programs are not designed to tackle macro-level issues that represent the largest challenges to democratization. Rather, programs are often designed to accomplish easier tasks that can be simply measured and are more predictable. While it is certainly unreasonable to expect a legislative strengthening program to transform a monarchy into a democracy, it is important that these programs set goals to instill democratic norms and behaviors into the system. Of course, project success is largely determined by project design. Since demonstrating success is in everyone's interest, namely CID, USAID, and the State Department, success is frequently defined down or based on the number of trainings, workshops, or events. While measuring success with regards to democratization is certainly difficult, it is crucial that the institutions claiming to promote democracy are evaluating their progress against democratic development writ large, rather than simply using numerical indicators that tell us little about meaningful progress. The Lebanon program was most able to set goals and measure success of those goals with an eye for democratization writ large. The LRTC in particular created an environment in which political representatives across the region could attend legislative trainings and engage in dialogue that had the potential to plant seeds for further democratization. The Morocco project was much more technical in nature in terms of both implementation and evaluation as it was primarily focused on the number of workshops and proposed amendments.

The Jordan program fell somewhere in the middle since it devoted time in the final report to discussing whether programming contributed to institutionalization of change but also had several goals that were quite technical and focused on the micro-level.

The analysis also revealed that the USAID bureaucracy is not set up to encourage long-term evaluation of programs. As was discussed in the previous three chapters, the final evaluations for each program were written within weeks or months after CID left the nations, making it impossible to measure long-term change, which, in theory is the point of these initiatives. The problem is that there is little to no money set aside for long-term reporting. Since most of these types of programs operate through contracts, once the contract has ended there is no more money to pay for anything. Of course, theoretically it should be possible to somehow allot money for the purposes of returning to the recipient countries years later and evaluating change. When I asked someone who works for the Center on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance at USAID about long-term reporting he talked about a few evaluative reports that have been done on Indonesia, Uganda, and Ukraine. While one of the reports usefully situates itself in the context of legislative studies literature, none of the reports seriously analyze the relationship between legislative strengthening and democratization in the country as a whole. It is possible that these countries were chosen because they represent successes or paint a rosier picture of U.S. democracy promotion efforts than would an evaluation of Jordan.

However, such reports have not been conducted on the three cases that this paper explores. In other words, while a few long-term reports have been done, there is no systematic requirement that makes it part of the larger process of democracy promotion. Perhaps USAID has decided that setting up such a process presents too many risks because the reports could make U.S. democracy promotion efforts look like failures if such evaluations find that the

foreign legislature has remained weak and change was never institutionalized. Put differently, perhaps USAID has concluded that ignorance is bliss. If this is in fact the case it would suggest that USAID and therefore the U.S. government is not actually interested in instituting long-term reform in foreign parliaments, or at the very least it is not a priority of these projects. While this may seem remarkably obvious to cynics, we must remember that not everyone who works for or represents the U.S. government is an imperialist only interested in an American grand strategy. The reality is of course much more complex. There are plenty of people who work for USAID, CID, and other implementing organizations who are genuinely committed to strengthening foreign legislatures. The problem is less the individual employees and more the system that is not structured to institute or evaluate long-term change. Tom Dichter, a development veteran who has worked in the field for over 50 years argues,

The main reason there is so little change is that aid has become an industry, and is rapidly moving towards what a present day Eisenhower might call an 'aid-industrial complex,' an interlocking set of players (NGOs, government agencies, and private contractors, among others) who have largely closed off outside criticism and internal learning and become self-referential and entrenched.<sup>173</sup>

As Dichter points out, the field of foreign development has become one that only considers its own evaluations and only conducts evaluations when USAID decides they are necessary. It seems wildly irresponsible for USAID to implement a short-term project, expect the foreign parliament to become a robust democratic institution in five years, and then never return to the country to evaluate change. Such a process requires no reflection, which will only lead USAID to make the same mistakes again and again. Hopefully this paper can serve as an intervention.

The crucial question that follows is, should the U.S. even be implementing such programs if the system that funds them is not concerned about long-term reform? While these programs

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<sup>173</sup> Tom Dichter, "I've worked in foreign aid for 50 years--Trump is right to end it, even if his reasons are wrong," Quartz, last modified April 21, 2017, accessed April 25, 2017, <https://qz.com/959416/time-to-end-foreign-aid-but-for-the-right-reasons/>.

can certainly be valuable, they should only be implemented if the duration of programming is at least ten years in order for institutionalization to occur. There is minimal value in spending millions of dollars on efforts that disappear as soon as the implementing organization leaves the host country. Democracy is not a switch that can just be flipped on. Rather, it is a constant process that must be continually worked at and reflected upon. USAID should be making sure that it does not leave until institutions like the budget office have been assimilated into Parliament and people are trained to keep it running. While in rare cases dangerous political events might force the program to end, this was not the case in the projects studied here. Unfortunately, we are not privy to the reasons why USAID decided to end these programs despite requests to continue them, as was the case in Lebanon. However, we can certainly speculate that decision makers in the agency concluded that it was no longer in the interest of the U.S. to fund such efforts. As mentioned earlier, U.S. government interests trump CID employees' desire to continue operations.

USAID must reform the process by which it plans, funds, and evaluates democracy promotion programs so that it systematically encourages long-term implementation. For the sake of effectiveness, USAID personnel should seriously consider whether a long-term presence is possible before they launch a program. Evaluations should be required several years after programming has ended and should be conducted by an outside organization rather than the implementing organization in order to limit biases. If USAID can change to create a system that is more attune to instituting and measuring long-term change, progress could be made. However, if it cannot make these systemic reforms, then it should seriously rethink how it as an institution answers the question of democratization.

It is important to note that lessons about democratization in the MENA region are useful not just to foreign implementers like the U.S. but also to other actors such as the host countries themselves, as well as other groups that may be interested in moving closer to democracy. Thus, what has this analysis revealed about democratization in the Middle East and North Africa more broadly? One recurring lesson we observed in all three of our cases is that the parliaments in Morocco and Jordan, and to a lesser extent Lebanon, are not set up to encourage democratic behavior. While this is crucial to acknowledge, we also must realize that this does not mean these institutions can never become ones that do incentivize democratic behavior and serve the people. The Magna Carta for example, which many consider to be a symbol of freedom, was also largely designed to protect the rights of the elite.<sup>174</sup> Thus, the lack of incentives for democratic behavior is better understood as a present challenge than a determinant of failure. As discussed earlier, it is the job of implementers, both foreign and otherwise, to find sites of shared interest, or places where it is advantageous for MPs to act democratically. We saw several examples of these sites in our three cases. For example, it is in the interest of MPs to become more responsive to their constituents because it increases their chances of getting reelected. It could also be beneficial for MPs to collaborate with civil society organizations in order to advocate for certain policies or reform.

Another important conclusion with regards to democratization in the MENA is the importance of institutions, particularly parliaments. These entities are often assumed irrelevant both by citizens and foreign observers because of the imbalance of power that affords the monarch or president greater jurisdiction. This assumption that legislatures are inconsequential is actually part of the problem because if the public does not take advantage of their ability to vote

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<sup>174</sup> "Magna Carta," History, last modified 2009, accessed April 27, 2017, <http://www.history.com/topics/british-history/magna-carta>.

or communicate with representatives, the legislature cannot serve the people. This is why many of the programs studied here included efforts to improve public perceptions of parliament. Legislatures in the MENA can exert influence on politics and encourage collaboration and exchange across the region. I would argue that legislatures could actually be the key to progress. This progress does not necessarily need to be achieved through foreign democracy promotion programs but ideally would be advocated for by parliament and civil society groups. In other words, the legislature has the potential to be a valuable platform for slow and steady change. After all, it represents one of the few ways citizens of our three countries, particularly Morocco and Jordan, can participate in politics.

It is hopeful that in recent years, all of our countries of focus have continued to implement legislative reforms. For example, important changes were made to Jordan's electoral law in 2016 that put in place a new system intended to encourage political parties.<sup>175</sup> In 2011, a constitutional referendum took place in Morocco resulting in new policies that now require the King to appoint the prime minister from the party that secures the most seats through parliamentary elections.<sup>176</sup> In addition, Morocco held its first regional and municipal elections in 2015 proving to be most favorable for its moderate Islamist Justice and Development Party, the largest party in Parliament, which secured many seats on both the regional and municipal level.<sup>177</sup> Finally, the new president of Lebanon has vowed to hold parliamentary elections and replace the current controversial majoritarian electoral system with a new proportional one.<sup>178</sup> As we can see, many of the most recent steps towards democracy in the MENA have been focused

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<sup>175</sup> Areej Abuqudairi, "Can Jordan's New Parliament Spearhead Political Change?," Al Jazeera, last modified September 26, 2016, accessed April 27, 2017, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/09/jordan-parliament-spearhead-political-change-160926054613800.html>.

<sup>176</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2016*.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid.

<sup>178</sup> Hussein Dakroub, "Row over parliamentary elections law heats up," The Lebanon Daily Star, last modified January 18, 2017, accessed April 27, 2017, <http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Lebanon-News/2017/Jan-18/389876-row-over-parliamentary-elections-law-heats-up.ashx>.

on strengthening the legislatures. A clear lesson emerges: even in times of intense political instability across the region, parliaments can exert influence and create meaningful, slow change and should not be underestimated.

Our current administration does not appear at all committed to funding development. As troubling as this is, perhaps it also provides a useful opportunity for USAID to reflect on how it spends its money. USAID does not have the budget to waste funds on projects that it is not prepared to be fully committed to. While President Obama reduced the budget for foreign humanitarian and democracy promotion efforts, the development community is particularly concerned about the fate of the field under the Trump Administration.<sup>179</sup> USAID must be particularly intentioned with what it chooses to fund so that it can continue to aid and develop despite its budget cut. Trump's victory not only represents a threat to the field of development but also reflects the rise of fascist leaders across the world. The 2017 Freedom House Report suggests that freedom and democracy are experiencing a global decline. The report reads, "While in past years the declines in freedom were generally concentrated among autocracies and dictatorships that simply went from bad to worse, in 2016 it was established democracies—countries rated Free in the report's ranking system—that dominated the list of countries suffering setbacks."<sup>180</sup> While USAID focuses on foreign countries and supporting democracies abroad, it is important to acknowledge that freedom across the world is on a downward trend, including in the United States.

Many Westerners conveniently subscribe to a theory known as "democratic consolidation" or the idea that "once countries develop democratic institutions, a robust civil

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<sup>179</sup> Josh Rogin, "Obama cuts foreign assistance to several countries in new budget request," *Foreign Policy*, last modified February 14, 2011, accessed April 27, 2017, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/02/14/obama-cuts-foreign-assistance-to-several-countries-in-new-budget-request/>.

<sup>180</sup> Freedom House, *Freedom in the World 2017*, accessed April 25, 2017, <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/freedom-world-2017>.

society and a certain level of wealth, their democracy is secure.”<sup>181</sup> This paper’s understanding of democracy as an ideal, rather than an achievable status, fundamentally takes issue with “democratic consolidation.” Americans should be able to see the cracks in their system that point to racism, corruption, and plutocracy—rather than democracy—that have been widening long before Trump ever considered running for office. The U.S. is not finished working towards democracy and neither is any other nation. While the rise of Trump and other toxic ideologues certainly represents a unique threat, it is also absolutely critical to acknowledge that even if Hillary Clinton had won the election, the U.S. government would still need to reevaluate the way it has promoted democracy. In fact, many of the above lessons are valuable to any outside actor who seeks to support democratization in other countries as well as groups and decision makers in the MENA who are hoping to further democratic practices in their own nations. Perhaps the current state of the world presents a crucial time to promote democracy and strengthen legislatures. Of course, Americans should be engaged in their own threatened democracy and defend the rights of those who are vulnerable in the U.S. But USAID is an institution that was created to give aid to foreign countries. At a time when nations across the world are turning to tyrannical measures, perhaps USAID is needed now more than ever. If this is in fact the case, it is imperative that the above lessons and conclusions are seriously considered.

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<sup>181</sup> Amanda Taub, "How Stable Are Democracies? 'Warning Signs Are Flashing Red'," New York Times, last modified November 29, 2016, accessed April 27, 2017.



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