

U.S. Promotion of Democracy in the Post-Cold War Era

by

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Abstract

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George Washington asserted that the American people had been entrusted with the preservation of “the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government.” The character of that “preservation” has evolved and expanded as the nation’s power and reach have grown; reaching new heights when the collapse of the Soviet Union gave American Presidents the mandate to pursue a “new world order” built on a democratic foundation. This paper begins with a contextual analysis of democracy--what was promoted, why it was promoted, and how it was promoted--and provides an allegorical description of democracy promotion as torch bearing, shield bearing, and standard bearing. It then examines how Presidents George H. W. Bush, William J. Clinton, George W. Bush, and Barack H. Obama promoted democracy. It offers four broad recommendations for democracy promotion: demonstrate that liberal democratic values are a litmus test for policy decisions, clarify the role of military power in the promotion of democracy, reassert American Exceptionalism, and distinguish between the promotion of liberal values and the nurturing of democratic institutions.

U.S. Promotion of Democracy in the Post-Cold War Era

President Barack Obama identified a wide array of national challenges as he spoke to the American people and the world during his inaugural speech in January 2009. Most of the challenges were familiar to those who had heard such speeches before, but one was unique in modern American history--the crisis in confidence, at home and abroad, in America's role as a leader in the world.¹ The assertive and sometimes aggressive promotion of worldwide democracy by United States (U.S.) administrations since the Cold War, ongoing domestic governance and budgetary challenges, and actions associated with the War on Terror that appeared inconsistent with the nation's declared values, had generated widespread uncertainty regarding America's right and ability to lead. As then-Senator Obama noted in a 2007 *Foreign Affairs* article, the world had "lost trust in [America's] purposes and principles."²

The crisis in credibility that led to such an atmosphere of international distrust and domestic disillusion also had a dampening effect on America's ability to export two of its most valuable resources--democratic values and good governance.³ Obama was correct to be concerned because that loss of confidence had, and continues to have, significant implications for American power and identity. The "legitimacy of U.S. policies and the values that underlie them," along with the evident benefits we derive from them, are the basis of America's soft power.⁴ They are what has drawn others to share America's vision, imitate its political and economic systems, and seek its shores. They also represent an essential component of America's strategic culture and national identity; a unifying value and sense of purpose that has framed what Americans believe and how they define proper national behavior. Regaining credibility and rebuilding

confidence in America's right to be democracy's champion is, in that sense, a core national interest.

Obama has sought with some success to reestablish America's image, both as a responsible great power and the legitimate leader of democracies, but he must find a way to leverage that renewed influence to effectively promote democracy. This paper will offer ways and means for pursuing a calibrated promotion of democracy that advances liberal democratic values, encourages democratic governance, and enhances U.S. credibility.⁵ It will begin with a contextual analysis of democracy; what America's presidents have sought to promote, their motives for promotion, and the manner in which they engaged in promotion. That will be followed by a comparative analysis of Obama's promotion of democracy relative to his three post-Cold War predecessors; examining public statements, national security strategies and policies, and foreign policy actions.⁶ The paper will conclude with recommendations regarding an appropriate engagement that conforms to the enduring national values being promoted, reinforces the best aspects of the nation's identity, and effectively promotes the global spread of democracy.

Establishing the Context

Democratic policies and the values that underlie them are essential elements of America's strategic culture. The political scholar Colin Gray asserts that it is useful to examine strategic culture in terms of context because "culture as context provides meaning for events."⁷ To that end, the paper begins with an examination of the "what," "why," and "how" of America's democracy promotion; clarifying the link between the activity and America's strategic culture to provide essential context.

Aspects of Democracy: The What

The word democracy has been used to describe a wide array of political structures, processes, purposes, and/or principles; either in isolation or in combination.⁸ One way to think about democracy is as a set of functional structures and processes. The classical theory of democracy defines it in terms of the will of the people (the source of power) and the common good (outcomes from the use of power). Modern political scientists have sought, instead, to focus on the relationships between sources and outcomes.⁹ The result has been a modern definition that includes mechanisms for the selection of leaders, competition among candidates for public support, and government restraint due to public accountability.¹⁰

An alternative method of thinking about democracy involves developing rather than discarding the classical theory's will of the people and common good. Focusing on people within the democratic structures and processes leads to the use of words and phrases like inalienable rights, freedom, liberty, independence, and rule-of-law. These words and phrases do not represent elements of democracy, but principles embodied in the political philosophy called liberalism.¹¹ The fusing of democratic structures and such values is commonly reflected in the use of an adjective to define the type of democracy—for instance emphasizing the individual (liberal democracy) or the society (social democracy).¹²

Combining the elements of process and principle when considering democracy provides a means of effectively differentiating between a full democracy and what has been called a “hollow democracy.” The first manifests both process and principle, while the second displays democratic processes like voting but lacks democratic principles like political rights and civil liberties.¹³ Journalist Fareed Zakaria has called states in this

latter category “illiberal democracies,” and observed that they undermine the credibility of the liberal democracy being promoted by the U.S.¹⁴

Motives for Promotion – The Why

The belief that America’s democratic ideals and system of governance make it unique among nations has been a cornerstone of America’s cultural identity since its founding. George Washington, in his first inaugural address in 1789, asserted that “the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the republican model of government are justly considered, perhaps, as deeply, as finally, staked on the experiment entrusted to the hands of the American people.”¹⁵ His statement conveyed the belief that America held a divine torch that would be a blessing to mankind, and the conviction that it had a noble obligation to protect and nurture that flame.

That sense of purpose--with its inherent perception of responsibility and honor--has shaped America’s national identity, framed its political narrative, and guided its foreign engagement. The image of America as a torch bearer is central to American Exceptionalism, which embodies the conviction that America is unique among nations due to the divine “truths” upon which it was founded and the role those beliefs have played in shaping and guiding its system of governance.

America still views itself as a torch bearer. President Ronald Reagan employed a similar image when he spoke of America as “the shining city on a hill,” a description that has since become synonymous with American Exceptionalism.¹⁶ Nearly 225 years after Washington’s inaugural address, Obama concluded his own address with a torch-bearing metaphor, challenging Americans to “answer the call of history and carry into an uncertain future that precious light of freedom.”¹⁷

The Practice of Promotion – The How

For the first hundred years of the nation's existence the prevailing definition of democracy promotion among its leaders involved preservation of the flame so that it might spread its radiance. Abraham Lincoln, in 1863, still thought of democracy as an experiment that might fail. He said the Civil War was a test to determine whether America, "Or any nation conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal," could last.¹⁸ The obligation at the turn of the twentieth century remained to preserve democratic governance and practice democratic values in a manner that would, in Washington's words, "Win the affections of [the Nation's] citizens and command the respect of the world."¹⁹

The perception of what it meant to defend and nurture freedom and democracy grew with the scope of U.S. power and global engagement. The new role, proclaimed by Woodrow Wilson in his call to build "a world made safe for democracy," was that of a shield bearer responsible for assuring a global environment in which democracy could survive and thrive.²⁰ Subsequent presidents embraced that role as they sought to counter threats during World War II and the Cold War by providing "a shield behind which democracy could flourish."²¹ However, the duty in the Truman Doctrine was to "support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures."²² The goal was to enhance security, with the benefits of democracy treated as a bonus.²³

Democracy promotion took on an assertive edge with the end of the Cold War, and the new mandate involved building a democratic world. The Soviet Union's collapse and fall of the communist system in Eastern Europe were perceived to be a validation of democracy that required its active and even vigorous promotion. America's new role, as

the sole superpower and leader of the growing community of worldwide democracies, was that of a standard bearer.

Each of these approaches to democracy promotion underwent changes that corresponded with America's increasing power and reach. There is an evident shift in the national identity over time; reflected in the motives that drove actions, the objectives that shaped actions, and the words used to describe the actions and their ends. The three approaches are summarized as follows:

- The torch bearer, obligated by providence to reflect a virtuous system of liberty and justice for others to admire and emulate;
- The shield bearer, obligated by providence and strength to protect the freedom of others who pursued that virtuous system; and
- The standard bearer, obligated by providence and/or enlightened self-interest to champion the spread of political systems and economies that would embrace liberty and the rule of law within a world community of democracies.

The nation did not merely exchange one burden for another during these transitions, but added the new to the old. As a result, Presidents George H. W. Bush, William J. Clinton, and George W. Bush could employ a mix of all three approaches. That was not to be the case for President Obama.

Post-Cold War Promotion of Democracy

Thomas Carothers, a scholar who follows democracy promotion at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, properly notes that "any administration's approach to democracy [promotion] is inevitably an amalgam of highly varied policies."²⁴ The type of action taken and level of effort invested will likely vary from region-to-region and, in

some cases, country-by-country. The virtue of the three approaches from the previous section is that they can be readily applied to all four post-Cold War presidents; who sought to project, protect, or advocate democratic principles and processes.

George H. W. Bush – 1989 to 1993

George H. W. Bush took office at a moment in history when the Soviet Union was imploding and Soviet Bloc countries were in a state of transition. He viewed those events to be an affirmation of the founding fathers' vision and a vindication of America's democratic institutions and values.²⁵ His foreign policy message calls to mind an image of Woodrow Wilson, trying to prepare Americans for a unique role in a new international environment--what Bush initially described as a "new world" and a "new era."²⁶ He envisioned a community of nations united by a shared respect for freedom, democracy, and free markets--what he eventually came to call a "New World Order."²⁷

Bush understood the world was at a crossroads and confidently promoted the path toward democracy.²⁸ He viewed the spread of democracy with a sense of certainty; asserting that people, given a choice, would "inevitably" choose freedom and elections.²⁹ That did not prevent him from conveying a sense that history had provided a fleeting opportunity, which must be seized with both hands. He challenged Americans to pursue a "common vision of the peaceful world we want to see," Identifying six ways in which it could do so and beginning each with "it is time. . . ."³⁰ When explaining the basis for the nation's obligation he bluntly declared "[we] are Americans; we have a unique responsibility to do the hard work of freedom."³¹

Bush's foreign policy reflected a desire for partners, an understanding of the need to maintain a sense of perspective as the world's only superpower, and the desire to actively employ all three approaches to democracy promotion--the torch bearer, the

shield bearer, and the standard bearer--in shaping the new world order. Bush stressed that the post-Cold War era represented an opportunity for the United Nations (U.N.) to fulfill its charter with regard to world peace and prosperity. Highlighting the U.N.'s success in its mandated operations to drive Iraq from Kuwait, he dedicated a portion of the 1991 National Security Strategy (NSS) and large portions of two U.N. speeches to identifying ways in which the U.N. could, and must, live up to the vision that had inspired its founding.³²

Critics noted that Bush, when he might have established America's vision of liberal democracy as the new global norm in his 1991 speech before the U.N. General Assembly, made no mention of democracy. Instead, he spoke of sovereignty, rule of law, and human rights (a mix of realist and liberal concepts).³³ Bush appears to have been subordinating a desire to promote the American model of democracy to a need to establish trust among nations unused to a world with the U.S. as its sole superpower.³⁴ When preeminent power might have tempted Bush to assert U.S. hegemony by defining American democracy as the global benchmark, he opted instead to promote trust and pursue partnership.

In truth, Bush did not see promotion of democracy and partnerships as mutually exclusive. He expected NATO to provide the secure environment in which democracy might thrive and grow in Europe.³⁵ He instituted U.S.-sponsored programs like the Support for East European Democracy, Freedom Support Act, and New Enterprise for the Americas to promote democratization through economic reform and political stability, international connectivity, and growth through development of free market economies.³⁶

Bush could occasionally send mixed messages with regard to the promotion of democracy. He initially justified the deployment of U.S. forces to Panama in December 1989 as a response to the “reckless threats and attacks upon Americans” by forces under Panamanian dictator, General Manuel Noriega.³⁷ One month later he proudly announced to Congress that democracy had been restored in Panama, mixing cause and effect.³⁸ On a broader scale, Bush talked about the new world order as a universal event, when in fact his national security strategies reflect a concentration on Europe and Eurasia, with some attention to Asia and South America and almost none dedicated to the Middle East or Africa.³⁹ Bush vigorously waved the democratic standard in his effort to gather former Soviet states into a new community of democracies, but if he was bearing the democratic torch for Africa, he was not holding it very high.

William J. Clinton – 1993 to 2001

William Clinton’s priority during his first months in office was the implementation of a broad-reaching domestic agenda designed to address an economic crisis and implement welfare reform. That focus and level of effort came at the expense of foreign policy.⁴⁰ Clinton, an internationalist at heart, appears to have been satisfied to carry on Bush’s pursuit of the new world order. However, he does not seem to have felt a need to publically declare his foreign policy vision until growing criticism and worrisome isolationist trends forced the issue in late summer 1993.⁴¹ He and his senior foreign policy advisors unveiled the policy of enlargement in four speeches between September 21 and 27, 1993.⁴²

The enlargement policy outlined in the four speeches was informed by observations that supported three basic premises:

1. The world is more secure but less stable; as isolationism, factionalism, and separatism compete with liberal democracy for preeminence.
2. More nations are embracing democracy and market economics in a manner that “resonates” with America’s core values.
3. Free-market democracies promote prosperity, increase stability, are more reliable partners, and tend to resolve disputes through ways other than war.

Those premises, in turn, shaped an enlargement strategy that called for the U.S. to strengthen the existing community of market democracies; nurture and add new democracies and market economies to that community; protect the community from states opposed to democracy and free markets; and promote democracy and free market economics as part of humanitarian efforts (called the “humanitarian agenda”).⁴³ It was a strategy that clearly embraced the roles of torch bearer, shield bearer, and standard bearer.

Clinton balanced his internationalist predisposition with realist policies. He had committed the U.S. to lead the international community, but added the qualification that U.S. national interest would determine the time and place for any active intervention.⁴⁴ America would support reform and democracy, foster good governance, and “serve as the fulcrum for change and a pivot point for peace;” but it could not solve every problem and would not become the world’s policeman.⁴⁵ This approach required his people to weigh each national security challenge on its own merits to determine whether national interests demanded action.

Enlargement placed great emphasis on open markets as the basis of democracy promotion.⁴⁶ Clinton’s seven National Security Strategies dedicated extensive text to

trade and economic development. He said “open markets and rule-based trade are the best engines we know of for raising living standards, reducing global poverty and environmental destruction, and assuring the free flow of ideas.”⁴⁷ Clinton appreciated open markets for the example of prosperity they provided, but valued them most as a force for integration among nations and societies in an increasingly globalized economy. His expectation was that “market democracies,” having been freed from the Soviet threat and a constant requirement to invest in containment, would seek to enlarge their community.⁴⁸

One of the enlargement strategy’s four elements that did not appear in Clinton’s 1993 address to the U.N. was the “humanitarian agenda.”⁴⁹ Part of that agenda involved “working to help democracy and market economies take root in regions of greatest humanitarian concern.”⁵⁰ Clinton, in the 2000 NSS, combined promoting human rights abroad with promoting democracy and identified the combination as one of his three “central goals/core objectives.”⁵¹ The concept sounds innocuous, but the integration of democratic promotion and humanitarian concerns promotes what Australian political scholar John Kane calls “the fractured myth of virtuous power,” and provides a moral framework has been used justify regime change.⁵² Clinton would later use this rationale to justify interventions in Serbia and Kosovo.⁵³

At a personal level, Clinton’s statements do not reflect a belief in either the divine provenance of democracy or its inevitability. He did not hesitate to mention God in public gatherings, but his explanations for why things occurred appear to have been more secular and historical in nature.⁵⁴ That tendency is reflected in his assertion that “[one] of the most important lessons of the last fifty years is that democracy and free

markets are neither inevitable nor irreversible.”⁵⁵ Such a view, combined with a sense of the moment, likely made him more prone to actively promote both democracy and free markets.

George W. Bush – 2001 to 2009

An examination of democracy promotion under George W. Bush (hereafter referred to as Bush 43 to distinguish him from his father), reveals a clear change in the president’s focus and tone during his second term in office. The aspect of democracy he was promoting--the “what”--underwent a fundamental shift. That shift was likely due to the momentous events which occurred during his first term: the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the initiation of the War on Terror in Afghanistan, and the war in Iraq.

Bush 43, during his first years in office, was an active promoter of liberal democratic principles, supporting what he called “the non-negotiable demands of human dignity.”⁵⁶ His 2002 NSS called for the nation to “champion aspirations for human dignity,” by promoting “the rule of law; limits on the absolute power of the state; free speech; freedom of worship; equal justice; respect for women; religious and ethnic tolerance; and respect for private property.”⁵⁷ In contrast, he viewed democratic systems as being tailored to fit the society they served, saying, “[The] form that freedom and democracy take in any land will reflect the history, culture, and habits unique to its people.”⁵⁸ He clearly viewed the structures and process of democracy as being negotiable.

It appears Bush 43 avoided using the word “democracy” in a promotion context during his early years in office.⁵⁹ In his first inaugural address he described the nation’s democratic faith as “an ideal we carry but do not own, a trust we bear and pass along.”⁶⁰ It was a sharing rather than a promoting approach--that of a torch bearer rather than a

standard bearer. More prominent in his speeches were words like “freedom,” “justice,” “liberty,” “peace,” and “free markets.” He supported these principles with money dedicated to programs like the Millennium Challenge Account, the African Growth and Opportunity Act, and the U.S.-Sub-Saharan African Trade and Economic Cooperation Forum.⁶¹

Bush 43, during those early years in office, clearly drew a distinction between promoting human dignity and promoting democratic institutions. There was no question that his priority was human dignity. In the 2002 NSS, a document with nine sections, the text dedicated to “championing” human dignity was in section two. It included a pledge of action: to openly challenge violations, use foreign aid to promote freedom, make freedom and democratic values central to bilateral relationships, and promote freedom of religious expression.⁶² In contrast, the text associated with “Building the Infrastructure of Democracy” was section seven and involved development programs designed to enhance health, education and welfare--activities that would improve quality of life but not necessarily advance democratic practices or values.⁶³

A significant shift in tone and focus with regard to democracy promotion occurred in 2004. Noting the tendency to tolerate oppressive regimes for the sake of stability, Bush 43 announced in June 2004 that the U.S. would continue to work with any country dedicated to fighting terrorism, but in the long term would “expect a higher standard of reform and democracy” from partners.⁶⁴ There was a very stark contrast between his two inaugural speeches. Where the first referred to passing along America’s democratic faith, the second proclaimed a global policy of dedicated democracy promotion with “the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.”⁶⁵ U.S. relations with other countries would

be tied to their support for human dignity and opposition to oppression. America would not enforce its style of government on the unwilling (process remained negotiable), but it would help others to find their voice and attain their freedom (both nonnegotiable). Democracy promotion had become democracy coercion; particularly for those deemed to be “outlaw regimes.”⁶⁶ Bush 43 had set aside the torch and picked up the shield and standard.

The decisions and actions associated with the War on Terror and regime change in Iraq have had a far-reaching effect on democracy promotion by the U.S. The torture, degradation, and long-term imprisonment without trial of terror suspects undermined America’s image as the torch bearer for democratic values like rule-of-law and equal access to justice.⁶⁷ Bush 43 pursued many forms of democracy promotion during his presidency--including expanded engagement with Africa--but in the end people considering America’s role as the leading proponent of democracy will likely remember his later attempt to justify the war in Iraq as an effort to build a new democracy; establishing a difficult linkage to break.⁶⁸

Barack H. Obama – 2009 to Present

The world that Barack Obama spoke to on inauguration day in January 2009, differed from that of his three post-Cold War predecessors. Each of them had taken office in a time when America was embracing its role as the sole superpower and leader of a rapidly growing community of democratic states. Each had enjoyed a degree of flexibility in their promotion of democratic values and systems; choosing when and how America would bear the torch, shield, and/or standard as democracy’s champion. Their challenge had been to employ the elements of national power in a way that advanced

U.S. interests while reinforcing the nation's image abroad as a partner rather than a hegemon.

Obama took office at a time when America's post-Cold War hegemony--what some have called America's "triumphalist moment"--had passed; and with it had gone the assumption that the U.S. would lead the inevitable rise of a world community of market democracies.⁶⁹ Many of the values, virtues, and structures that had been the basis for America's democratic reputation had been called into question in the previous six years. In addition, the financial crisis of 2008 and subsequent global recession, along with the rise of China as an economic powerhouse, left some wondering whether efforts to establish market democracies were really their best way of achieving prosperity.⁷⁰ Obama's challenge in this environment was not one of choosing how and when to hold up the torch, shield, or standard of democracy; but of reestablishing America's right and ability to bear all of them.

His 2009 inaugural address began the process with the words, "[Starting] today, we must pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and begin again the work of remaking America." His message that morning focused on reclaiming the things that had made America unique: its values that still represented a light worth following, its reputation as a reliable friend, and the obligations that came with greatness.⁷¹ Within two days the new President issued three executive orders designed to help restore America's reputation for due process and the rule of law by establishing a prohibition against torture, directing the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention center, and initiating a review of legal procedures for holding and trying suspected terrorists. Progress on the

latter two has been slow, but Obama succeeded in sending “an unmistakable signal that our actions in defense of liberty will be [as] just as our cause.”⁷²

Obama understood the fundamental truth that the honor of bearing the torch of democracy (a prerequisite for being trusted to take up the shield or standard), must be earned. To that end, he highlighted the need for domestic democratic renewal in his 2010 NSS; asserting that America’s right and ability to lead the world and shape events abroad required work on democratic values at home. In a section entitled *Renewing American Leadership--Building at Home, Shaping Abroad* the NSS stated, “The most effective way for the United States of America to promote our values is to live them. America’s commitment to democracy, human rights, and the rule of law are essential sources of our strength and influence in the world.”⁷³

It is worth noting that the 2010 NSS routinely spoke of engagement rather than enlargement in its references to the pursuit of international relationships; possibly attempting to follow the 1991 example of George Bush in emphasizing America as a partner rather than a superpower.⁷⁴ Obama sought to reinforce this perspective as he shared his views regarding the promotion of democracy in a September 2009 speech before the U.N. General Assembly. He acknowledged the U.S. had “too often been selective in its promotion of democracy.”⁷⁵ Echoing a view expressed by Bush 43 early in his first term, Obama went on to assert that nations pursuing democracy must shape it to fit their needs and culture. Structure was again negotiable. He announced that the U.S. was once again prepared to lead and concluded with a declaration that America was ready to begin a new chapter in international cooperation.⁷⁶

Much has happened in the years since Obama made that declaration before the U.N. His responses to foreign threats and opportunities during that intervening period have reflected an effort to regain the international community's trust and the American public's confidence. His approach to foreign policy has been reminiscent of the balancing acts performed by Presidents Bush and Clinton; promoting a liberal desire for international norms and structures even as he made decisions based on a realist's balancing of risk and interest.⁷⁷ The result has been a foreign policy that might be called selective engagement, as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Responding to protestors seeking to overthrow the authoritarian Tunisian regime in January 2011 (called the Jasmine Revolution), Obama employed carrots and sticks in a year-long effort to promote a relatively fair and free election. Tunisia is now an Islamic Democratic state with a National Constituent Assembly.⁷⁸
- In 2011 the Egyptian people sought to oust President Hosni Mubarak, their ruler for three decades and a long-time U.S. partner. Obama pressed Mubarak to step down in favor of a democratic process and accepted the results of that election, though it handed power to an Islamist party not friendly to the U.S. When the Egyptian Army overthrew the elected government in July 2013, jeopardizing \$1.5 billion in U.S. aid, Obama suspended joint exercises and some arms sales but did not cut off aid entirely.⁷⁹ He ultimately subordinated democratic values to practical regional security concerns.
- Obama wanted to assist Islamic rebels attempting to oust Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in 2011, particularly after the use of chemical weapons by the regime. However, the rebel forces that appeared most capable and coherent

were affiliated with radical Islamic groups the U.S. could not support. Obama, with the threat of air strikes and Russian assistance, compelled Assad to hand over Syria's chemical weapons stockpiles; but he has not yet identified a tenable strategy for overthrowing the Syrian dictator.⁸⁰

- The U.S. is increasingly engaged in fighting one of the same radical Islamic groups as Assad--the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). ISIL's success in Iraq has created a problem for the President. There is a sense of obligation to aid Iraq, a democratic state established by the U.S., but it has been tempered by domestic concerns regarding the return of U.S. ground forces to the country. Obama has taken a middle path, seeking to "degrade and ultimately destroy ISIL" through U.S. air strikes and support to partners on the ground.⁸¹ However, his initial decision to restrict U.S. ground forces to non-combat missions has so far limited the nation's ability to assume the mantle of leadership he has claimed for it.

Obama has moved beyond establishing America's credibility to actively assert its leadership role. This can be clearly seen in the contrast between his two National Security Strategies. Where the 2010 NSS spoke of "renewing" and "building a stronger foundation" for leadership, the newly issued 2015 document proclaims in bold text that the U.S. will "lead with purpose,' 'lead with strength,' 'lead by example,' 'lead with capable partners,' 'lead with all the instruments of U.S. power,' and 'lead with a long term perspective.'"⁸² It uses words like "essential" and "indispensable" to describe American leadership today.⁸³ The 2015 NSS reflects the U.S. as leading through a combination of independent action, regional partnerships, and support for international

organizations. According to the document, the U.S. will promote three of its four enduring interests--security, stability, and economic prosperity--through this hybrid approach.⁸⁴ It is significant, from the perspective of democracy promotion, that the NSS reserves only one national interest solely for U.S. action: the promotion of values.⁸⁵ The President has clearly reclaimed the role of torch bearer.

Another important change in the new NSS is Obama's acknowledgement of American Exceptionalism. The President was criticized during his first administration for his avoidance of the word "exceptional" when describing America, and on one occasion drew criticism for implying the U.S. was no more exceptional than any other country.⁸⁶ Until recently he seemed to be tacitly agreeing with political analysts that were asserting the U.S. had entered a "post-exceptionalist era."⁸⁷ That is not, however, the attitude he conveys in the 2015 NSS. His cover letter to that strategy document ends with the assertion that Americans "embrace our exceptional role and responsibilities at a time when our unique contributions and capabilities are needed most."⁸⁸ Obama appears to have reclaimed the duty of bearing the democratic standard as well.

Recommendations:

Based on my research, I offer the following set of four recommendations regarding ways in which President Obama and his successors can systematically pursue the promotion of democracy as bearers of the torch, shield, and standard:

Presidents need to demonstrate that core liberal democratic values are a litmus test for policy decisions. Bush 43's initial pursuit of "human dignity" as a non-negotiable basis for policy decisions serves as an example of this practice. However, his actions following the 9/11 attacks undermined the approach by sacrificing core values in pursuit

of security interests. Furthermore, the practice of making foreign policy decisions on a case-by-case basis as Clinton did, suggests the need for a consistent values-based standard. They should clearly and consistently identify the role that values play in their administration's pursuit of national interests, holding high the torch.

Presidents need to clarify the role of military power in the promotion of democracy. A risk associated with the first recommendation is that it can lead to poor decisions regarding the use of military power unless there is a policy that defines the military's role in promoting liberal democratic values. Many post-Cold War foreign policy challenges have involved situations in which U.S. values were infringed, but the appropriateness of military action was not clear. Unstable global conditions have further complicated the matter by blurring the line between human rights and humanitarian concerns. They should establish a policy that defines and guides the use of military power when value-related interests are at risk; thereby helping military planners, allies, and enemies alike understand when and where America will bear the shield.

Presidents need to reassert American Exceptionalism. President Obama has declared that America is prepared to embrace its "exceptional role and responsibilities."⁸⁹ He should build on that assertion by developing and implementing a communications strategy to publicize that America remains an exceptional nation. Consistently emphasizing the linkage between policies and values, as outlined in the first recommendation, would support such a message. Presidents should promote American Exceptionalism as the basis of a national identity that has instilled in Americans a unique sense of obligation, optimism, and authority; inspiring the nation to

use of its unrivaled power in pursuit of a better world for all. They should consistently wave the standard.

Presidents need to continue to distinguish between the promotion of liberal values and the nurturing of democratic institutions. Bush 43's view that democratic values should be non-negotiable, but that democratic systems should be flexible, has great merit. Efforts that focus on countering corruption, encouraging public participation in governance, and investing in initiatives that provide shared prosperity are essential to building societies that can embrace democratic institutions like representative government and open market economics. Focusing on the establishment of democratic structures in the hopes of promoting liberal values has too often produced hollow democracies. They should maintain a clear vision of what they are promoting.

Conclusion

The four post-Cold War presidents share three things in common with regard to the promotion of democracy: all embraced it as an American responsibility; spoke of it in idealist terms that envisioned a global community of democracies; and pursued it within a realist decision-making process. George H. W. Bush promoted a New World Order built on a foundation of democratic principles. William Clinton embraced that vision and pursued it through a policy of enlargement. George W. Bush (Bush 43) began his term of office emphasizing democratic values, what he called "human dignity," but refocused his efforts to pursue the establishment of states with democratic institutions as an element of the War on Terror and a proclaimed objective of his war in Iraq. In the midst of these latter pursuits the American government engaged in behavior that belied its proclaimed values, undermining the nation's credibility as democracy's champion.

Barrack Obama has sought, with some success, to reestablish trust abroad and confidence at home in America's ability to be that champion. He began by establishing that the nation still holds to its values and is worthy to bear democracy's torch. His new National Security Strategy proclaims that America is not only ready to bear the shield and standard of democracy as well, but embraces that mission as the obligation of an exceptional nation. Like his predecessors, Obama declares the need for international democratic structures to address the challenges of an increasingly unstable world, but makes foreign policy decisions defined largely by America's interests. Systematically applying the four recommendations will enable him and his successors to more effectively bear the torch, shield, and standard of democracy; enhancing their ability to promote democracy as the path to a better world.

Endnotes

¹ Unlike his predecessors, President Obama had to speak of core values and national obligations in terms that indicated they had been lost and must be reclaimed. He used similar language with regard to America's status as a world leader, declaring that America was ready to "lead once more." Barack Obama, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 2009, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=44> (accessed January 13, 2015).

² Barack Obama, "Renewing American Leadership," *Foreign Affairs Online* 86, no. 4 (July/August 2007): [PROQUEST](#) (accessed February 23, 2015).

³ University of Toronto human rights professor Michael Ignatieff observed that America, "[once] a model to emulate," had by 2005 become "an exception to avoid." Pew Research Center polling data supports this view. Andrew Kohut and Bruce Stokes, *America Against the World* (New York: Henry Holt, 2006), 29-36; Thomas Carothers, *Democracy Policy Under Obama: Revitalization or Retreat? Online* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, January 11, 2012), 7-8, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/democracy_under_obama.pdf (accessed November 11, 2014).

⁴ Joseph S. Nye, Jr., "The Decline of America's Soft Power," *Foreign Affairs Online* 83, no. 3 (May, 2004): 16-20, [PROQUEST](#) (accessed January 16, 2015).

⁵ This paper will focus on the issues under presidential authority and control. Though domestic governance and budgetary challenges have a direct bearing on the government's credibility at home and the country's reputation abroad, the executive branch has limited power to resolve them.

⁶ This paper will draw from a variety of statements, but rely most heavily on speeches delivered in four formal venues – inaugural addresses, State of the Union addresses, addresses to the United Nations, and speeches to the service academies – because they are common to all four presidents in this study and therefore provide a reasonable baseline for analysis.

⁷ Colin S. Gray, *Modern Strategy* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 129.

⁸ Samuel P. Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century Online* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 6, <http://polisci2.ucsd.edu/democracy/documents/Huntington-ThirdWave.pdf> (accessed September 13, 2014). Sean M. Lynn-Jones, "Why the United States Should Spread Democracy," *Discussion Paper 98-07 Online* (Cambridge, MA: Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard University, March 1998), 3-4, http://belfercenter.ksg.harvard.edu/publications/2830/why_the_states_should_spread_democracy.html (accessed September 13, 2014).

⁹ Joseph Schumpeter called this relationship a "democratic method" and Robert Dahl identified it as "competition and participation." Joseph A. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism, and Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1950) quoted in Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 6; Michael Coppedge, Angel Alvarez and Claudia Maldonado, "Two Persistent Dimensions of Democracy: Contestation and Inclusiveness," *The Journal of Politics Online* 70, no. 3 (July 2008): 632-647, [JSTOR](http://www.jstor.org/stable/254647) (accessed January 22, 2015).

¹⁰ Huntington, drawing from Schumpeter and Dahl, asserts that a "political system is democratic to the extent that its most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote." Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 6-7; Lynn-Jones, "Why the United States Should Spread Democracy," 3-4.

¹¹ T. F. Rhoden, "The Liberal in Liberal Democracy," *Democratization Online* (2013): 6, (<http://www.tandfonline.com.ezproxy.usawcpubs.org/doi/pdf/10.1080/13510347.2013.851672> (accessed January 23, 2015); Lynn-Jones, "Why the United States Should Spread Democracy," 4; Huntington, *The Third Wave*, 7.

¹² Michael Mandelbaum sees democracy as a "fusion" of liberty and popular sovereignty; noting that the exercise of liberty requires institutions with skilled people to support it, values to provide limits, and autonomy over time to internalize it. Michael Mandelbaum, *The Ideas that Conquered the World: Peace, Democracy, and Free Markets in the Twenty-first Century* (New York: Public Affairs, 2002), 2; Philippe C. Schmitter and Terry Lynn Karl, "What Democracy Is... and Is Not," *The Journal of Democracy Online* (Summer 1991): 114, <http://www.lcusd.net/cms/lib04/CA01000868/Centricity/Domain/346/What%20Democracy%20Is%20and%20Is%20Not.pdf> (accessed January 16, 2015).

¹³ Claudia McElroy, "Private Eye: Liberia's Hollow Democracy," *The Guardian Online*, July 26, 1997, in ProQuest Research Library (accessed December 3, 2014). See also "Freedom in the World 2014: The Democratic Leadership Gap," *Freedom House Online* (2014), 18-22.

<https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/Freedom%20in%20the%20World%202014%20Booklet.pdf> (accessed December 3, 2014). According to Freedom House, nineteen of the forty nine states in sub-Saharan Africa were “electoral democracies” at the end of 2013. Only ten of those nineteen qualified as being “free” – actively supporting both political rights and civil liberties. The other nine were only “partially free” because their citizens did not enjoy the full range of civil liberties.

¹⁴ Fareed Zakaria, “The Rise of Illiberal Democracy,” *Foreign Affairs Online* 7, no. 76 (November 1997): [PROQUEST](#) (accessed January 23, 2015).

¹⁵ George Washington, “Inaugural Address,” April 30, 1789, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25800> (accessed January 15, 2015).

¹⁶ Newt Gingrich, *A Nation Like No Other: Why American Exceptionalism Matters* (Washington, DC: Regnery, 2011), 29, iTunes iBook; Ronald Reagan, “Remarks Accepting the Presidential Nomination at the Republican National Convention,” August 23, 1984, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=40290> (accessed January 15, 2015); Ronald Reagan, “Farewell Address to the Nation,” January 11, 1989, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29650> (accessed January 15, 2015).

¹⁷ Barack Obama, “Inaugural Address,” January 21, 2013, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=102827> (accessed January 15, 2015).

¹⁸ Abraham Lincoln, “The Gettysburg Address,” November 19, 1863, *Voices of Democracy Online*, <http://voicesofdemocracy.umd.edu/lincoln-gettysburg-address-speech-text/> (accessed January 16, 2015).

¹⁹ George Washington, “Inaugural Address,” April 30, 1789.

²⁰ Thomas M. Kane, *Theoretical Roots of US Foreign Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 79-80, quoted in Edward H. Buehrig, *Woodrow Wilson and the Balance of Power* (Bloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1968), 248.

²¹ George H. W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 1990), preface, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1990.pdf> (accessed January 24, 2015).

²² Harry S. Truman, “Recommendation for Assistance to Greece and Turkey,” March 12, 1947, *The Truman Presidential Library Online*, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/study_collections/doctrine/large/documents/pdfs/5-9.pdf#zoom=100 (accessed October 14, 2014).

²³ Michael McFaul, *Advancing Democracy Abroad: Why We Should and How We Can* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), 12.

²⁴ Thomas Carothers, *U.S. Democracy Promotion During and After Bush* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2007), 3, http://carnegieendowment.org/files/democracy_promotion_after_bush_final.pdf (accessed November 11, 2014).

²⁵ George Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," January 29, 1991, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=19253> (accessed January 18, 2015); George Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," January 28, 1992, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=20544> (accessed January 18, 2015); George Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: The White House, March 1990), Preface, 11, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1990.pdf> (accessed January 24, 2015); George Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States* (Washington, DC: The White House, August 1991), preface, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1991.pdf> (accessed January 24, 2015).

²⁶ George Bush, *National Security Strategy*, March 1990, 18; George Bush, *National Security Strategy*, August 1991, 1, 6; George Bush, "Address to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 21, 1992, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=21478&st=&st1> (accessed January 19, 2015).

²⁷ George Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," January 31, 1990, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=18095> (accessed January 13, 2015); George Bush, "Address to the 44th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York, New York," September 25, 1989, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=17559> (accessed January 19, 2015); George Bush, "Remarks at the United States Coast Guard Academy," May 24, 1989; George Bush, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," January 29, 1991; George Bush, "Remarks at the Richard Nixon Library Dinner," March 11, 1992, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=20709> (accessed December 19, 2014).

²⁸ George Bush, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 1989, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16610> (accessed January 19, 2015); George Bush, "State of the Union," January 29, 1991.

²⁹ George Bush, "Address on Administration Goals Before a Joint Session of Congress," February 9, 1989, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=16660> (accessed January 18, 2015). See also George Bush, *National Security Strategy*, August 1991, 8. It states, "It is only a matter of time" before Cuba joins the democratic western hemisphere and that other regional players must help Cuba "accept the inevitable peacefully."

³⁰ George Bush, "State of the Union," January 31, 1990.

³¹ George Bush, "State of the Union," January 29, 1991.

³² George Bush, *National Security Strategy*, August 1991; George Bush, "Address to the 46th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 23, 1991, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=20012>; George Bush, "Remarks to the United Nations Security Council in New York City," January 31, 1992, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=17559> (accessed January 19, 2015); George Bush, "Remarks to the United Nations Security Council in New York City," January 31, 1992, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=20555> (accessed January 18, 2015).

³³ Charles Krauthammer, "First, Democracy; the Element Bush Missed," *The Washington Post Online* (September 27, 1991), [PROQUEST](#) (accessed January 23, 2015).

³⁴ Bush noted that the world, though recognizing the absolute power of the U.S., was not afraid because it "trusts us with power, and the world is right." He was clearly sensitive about maintaining that trust. George Bush, "State of the Union," January 29, 1991.

³⁵ George, Bush, *National Security Strategy*, August 1991.

³⁶ George Bush, "Statement on Signing the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989," November 28, 1989, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=17874> (accessed January 24, 2015); George Bush, "Remarks Announcing the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative," June 27, 1990, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=18644> (accessed January 24, 2015); George Bush, "Statement on Signing the FREEDOM Support Act," October 24, 1992, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=21658> (accessed January 24, 2015).

³⁷ George Bush. "Address to the Nation Announcing United States Military Action in Panama," December 20, 1989, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=17965> (accessed January 24, 2015).

³⁸ George Bush, "State of the Union," January 31, 1990.

³⁹ George Bush, *National Security Strategy*, March 1990, 9-14; George, Bush, *National Security Strategy*, August 1991, 5-11. The 1993 *National Security Strategy* is a retrospective look at the administration's accomplishment rather than a shaping document for policy action. The successes it claims in the realm of "promotion of peace and democracy" are surprisingly shallow given the vision provided in the previous two documents. George Bush, *National Security Strategy*, January 1, 1992, 5.

⁴⁰ Douglas Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine," *Foreign Policy Online* 106 (Spring, 1997): 113, [PROQUEST](#) (accessed January 24, 2015); John Dumbrell, "Was There a Clinton Doctrine? President Clinton's Foreign Policy Reconsidered," *Diplomacy & Statecraft Online* 13, no. 2 (2002): <http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/fdps20> (accessed January 24, 2015).

⁴¹ Douglas Brinkley, "Democratic Enlargement: The Clinton Doctrine," 113; James M. McCormick, *American Foreign Policy and Process Online*, (Boston, MA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning, 2010), 182, [https://books.google.com/books?id=m_MOrBfBEmYC&pg=PA242&lpg=PA242&dq=McCormick+American+Foreign+Policy+and+Process+5+pdf&source=bl&ots=HUzbRMu4rZ&sig=h54VlymJfjop8 - Pon_OWxQEJdo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=rlvEVIf1OtPlsASB9YDYAw&ved=0CEcQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=McCormick%20American%20Foreign%20Policy%20and%20Process%205%20pdf&f=false](https://books.google.com/books?id=m_MOrBfBEmYC&pg=PA242&lpg=PA242&dq=McCormick+American+Foreign+Policy+and+Process+5+pdf&source=bl&ots=HUzbRMu4rZ&sig=h54VlymJfjop8-Pon_OWxQEJdo&hl=en&sa=X&ei=rlvEVIf1OtPlsASB9YDYAw&ved=0CEcQ6AEwBw#v=onepage&q=McCormick%20American%20Foreign%20Policy%20and%20Process%205%20pdf&f=false) (accessed January 25, 2015).

⁴² James M. McCormick, *American Foreign Policy and Process*, 182. The speeches were given by Secretary of State Warren Christopher at Columbia University on September 20th, National Security Advisor Anthony Lake at Johns Hopkins University on September 21st, U.N. Ambassador Madeleine Albright at the U.S. National War College on September 23rd, and the

President before the U.N. General Assembly on September 27th. See Warren Christopher, "Building Peace in the Middle East," *U.S. Department Of State Dispatch Online* 4, (September 27, 1993): 654-657, [EBSCOHOST](#) (accessed February 9, 2015); Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," speech delivered to Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies in Washington DC on September 21, 1993, online at <https://www.fas.org/news/usa/1993/usa-930921.htm> (accessed December 10, 2014); Madeleine Albright, "Use of force in a post-cold war world," *U.S. Department Of State Dispatch Online*, 4 (September 27, 1993): 665-668, [EBSCOHOST](#) (accessed February 9, 2015); William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the 48th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 27, 1993, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=47119> (accessed January 20, 2015).

⁴³ The substance of the strategy was most explicitly stated in Anthony Lake's presentation at Johns Hopkins University. Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement."

⁴⁴ William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy of Engagement and Enlargement* (Washington, DC: The White House, July 1994), 5, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/1994.pdf> (accessed January 24, 2015); William J. Clinton, "Remarks on International Security Issues at George Washington University," August 5, 1996, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=53161> (accessed January 20, 2015); William J. Clinton, "Remarks at the United States Naval Academy Commencement Ceremony in Annapolis, Maryland," May 25, 1994, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=50236> (accessed January 20, 2015); James M. McCormick, *American Foreign Policy and Process*, 182-183.

⁴⁵ William J. Clinton, "Remarks to Midshipmen," April 1, 1993 *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46391> (accessed January 20, 2015); William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly," September 27, 1993. William J. Clinton, "Remarks on International Security Issues at George Washington University," August 5, 1996.

⁴⁶ William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly," September 27, 1993.

⁴⁷ William J. Clinton, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union," January 27, 2000, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=58708> (accessed January 25, 2015).

⁴⁸ Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," September 21, 1993; William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly," September 27, 1993.

⁴⁹ Clinton's humanitarian agenda pre-dates the U.N. convention regarding "responsibility to protect," under which sovereignty no longer shields a state from foreign interference if the welfare of its people are in doubt. Whether one led to the other, or both were a consequence of growing internationalism is not clear. See United Nations website under "Responsibility to Protect," <http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/responsibility.shtml> (accessed January 25, 2015).

⁵⁰ Anthony Lake, "From Containment to Enlargement," September 21, 1993; William J. Clinton, "Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly," September 27, 1993.

⁵¹ William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, DC: The White House, December 1999), iii, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2000.pdf> (accessed January 25, 2015).

⁵² John Kane, "American Values or Human Rights? U.S. Foreign Policy and the Fractured Myth of Virtuous Power," *Presidential Studies Quarterly Online* 33, no. 4 (December 2003): 772, [PROQUEST](#) (accessed February 28, 2015).

⁵³ William J. Clinton, "Remarks Announcing the NATO Decision on Air Strikes in Bosnia and an Exchange With Reporters," February 9, 1994, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=49509> (accessed January 25, 2015); William J. Clinton, "Remarks at the United States Naval Academy," May 25, 1994; William J. Clinton, "Interview With Dan Rather of CBS News," March 31, 1999, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=57340> (accessed January 25, 2015).

⁵⁴ While George Bush acknowledged God's grace in the Cold War victory, Clinton asserted it was due to democracy providing "more prosperity and more personal human happiness" than communism. William J. Clinton, "Remarks at the United States Military Academy Commencement Ceremony in West Point, New York," May 29, 1993, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=46638> (accessed January 20, 2015).

⁵⁵ William J. Clinton, "Remarks at the United States Coast Guard Academy Commencement in New London, Connecticut," May 22, 1996, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=52848> (accessed January 20, 2015).

⁵⁶ George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America Online* (Washington, DC: The White House, September 2002), 3, <http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/63562.pdf> (accessed January 25, 2015).

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ George W. Bush, "Commencement Address at the United States Military Academy in West Point, New York," June 1, 2002, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=62730> (accessed January 25, 2015); George W. Bush, "Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 21, 2004, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=72758> (accessed January 20, 2015); George W. Bush, "Remarks to the Plenary Session of the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 14, 2005, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=58797> (accessed January 26, 2015).

⁵⁹ A review of speeches and press interviews Bush 43 gave during his first thirty days in office reflect virtually no use of the word "democracy." The few exceptions typically involved shared American ideals rather than promotion abroad. See the University of California/Santa Barbara's American Presidency Project online database at <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/>.

⁶⁰ George W. Bush, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 2001, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25853> (accessed January 20, 2015).

⁶¹ George W. Bush, "Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly," September 21, 2004; George W. Bush, "Remarks Announcing the United States – Sub-Saharan Africa Trade

and Economic Cooperation Forum," May 16, 2001, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25853> (accessed January 23, 2015).

⁶² George W. Bush, *National Security Strategy*, September 2002, 4.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 21-23.

⁶⁴ George W. Bush, "Commencement Address at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado," June 2, 2004, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=72640> (accessed January 20, 2015).

⁶⁵ George W. Bush, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 2005, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=58745> (accessed January 20, 2015).

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Mary E. Stuckey and Joshua R. Ritter, "George Bush, <Human Rights>, and American Democracy," *Presidential Studies Quarterly Online* 37, no. 4 (December 2007): 658, [PROQUEST](#) (accessed March 17, 2015); Joseph S. Nye, "Democracy's Challenge in the Age of Terrorism; Both Preventing New Terrorist Attacks and Avoiding the Mistakes of the Past are Essential for the Future," *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette Online*, August 21, 2011, [LEXISNEXIS](#) (accessed March 17, 2015).

⁶⁸ Thomas Carothers, *U.S. Democracy Promotion During and After Bush*, v.

⁶⁹ Daniel Deudney and G. John Ikenberry, "Democratic Internationalism: An American Grand Strategy for a Post-exceptionalist Era," *Council on Foreign Relations Working Paper Online* (November 2012): 4, <http://www.cfr.org/grand-strategy/democratic-internationalism-american-grand-strategy-post-exceptionalist-era/p29417> (accessed November 11, 2014).

⁷⁰ Harsh V. Pant, *China's Rising Global Profile: The Great Power Tradition* (Portland, Oregon: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 6.

⁷¹ Barack Obama, "Inaugural Address," January 20, 2009.

⁷² Barack Obama, "Remarks at the State Department," January 22, 2009, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=85694> (accessed January 20, 2015); Barack Obama, "Executive Order 13491 - Ensuring Lawful Interrogations," January 22, 2009, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=85669> (accessed January 26, 2015); Barack Obama, "Executive Order 13492 - Review and Disposition of Individuals Detained at the Guantánamo Bay Naval Base and Closure of Detention Facilities," January 22, 2009, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=85670> (accessed January 26, 2015); Barack Obama, "Executive Order 13493 - Review of Detention Policy Options," January 22, 2009, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/index.php?pid=85671> (accessed January 26, 2015).

⁷³ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, May 2010), 2, <http://nssarchive.us/NSSR/2010.pdf> (accessed January 24, 2015).

⁷⁴ The 2010 NSS spoke of pursuing comprehensive engagement and used the word “engagement” forty two times in sixty pages. The word “enlargement,” pursued by Clinton, never appears in the document. See Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*, May 2010.

⁷⁵ Barack Obama, "Remarks to the United Nations General Assembly in New York City," September 23, 2009, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=86659> (accessed January 26, 2015).

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Mark Landler, “A Region’s Unrest Scrambles U.S. Foreign Policy,” *The New York Times Online*, January 25, 2011, http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/26/world/26diplo.html?_r=0 (accessed January 26, 2015).

⁷⁸ Alexis Arieff and Carla E. Humud, “Political Transitions in Tunisia,” *Congressional Research Service Online* (October 22, 2014), <https://www.fas.org/sqp/crs/row/RS21666.pdf> (accessed January 26, 2015); Barack Obama, “Statement on the Situation in Tunisia,” January 14, 2011, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=88899> (accessed January 26, 2015).

⁷⁹ U.S. law prohibits the provision of funds to a military that overthrows a democratic government. To buy time for resolution the administration avoided using that word coup. Michele Kelemen, “Obama Struggles To Find Effective Egypt Policy,” *NPR Online* (August 18, 2013), <http://www.npr.org/2013/08/18/213088735/obama-struggles-to-find-effective-egypt-policy> (accessed January 26, 2015); Barack Obama, "Remarks on the Situation in Egypt," February 1, 2011, *The American Presidency Project Online*, <http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=88954> (accessed January 26, 2015).

⁸⁰ Kenneth Pollack, “Assessing the Obama Administration’s Iraq-Syria Strategy,” *Brookings Online* (September 26, 2014), <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2014/09/26-pollack-assessing-obama-administration-iraq-syria-strategy> (accessed January 26, 2015); Adam Entous, "Inside Obama's Syria Debate," *Wall Street Journal Online*, Mar 30, 2013, [PROQUEST](http://www.wsj.com) (accessed January 26, 2015).

⁸¹ Barack Obama, “Statement by the President on ISIL,” a televised Presidential address to the nation posted on the White House website (September 10, 2014), <http://www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/09/10/statement-president-isil-1> (accessed February 26, 2015).

⁸² Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (May 2010), 4, 7; Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy* (Washington, DC: The White House, February 2015), 2-4, http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/docs/2015_national_security_strategy.pdf (accessed February 6, 2015). There are thirty five references to the U.S. assuming an active leadership role in the 37-page document. The word democracy--As something to be promoted, protected, or supported--appears forty one times.

⁸³ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*, February 2015, cover letter.

⁸⁴ Ibid., cover letter, 2, 15, 24.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 3, 19. The fourth section of the NSS is entitled *Values*.

⁸⁶ Kathleen Parker, "President Obama and That 'Exceptional' Thing," *Washington Post Online*, January 30, 2011, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2011/01/28/AR2011012805190.html> (accessed November 10, 2014).

⁸⁷ Deudney and Ikenberry, "Democratic Internationalism: An American Grand Strategy for a Post-Exceptionalist Era." See also Andrew J. Bacevich, *The Limits of Power* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2008); Peter Beinart, "The End of American Exceptionalism," *National Journal Online* (January 30, 2014): <http://www.nationaljournal.com/magazine/the-end-of-american-exceptionalism-20140203> (Accessed November 10, 2014).

⁸⁸ Barack Obama, *National Security Strategy*, February 2015, cover letter.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*