

Istanbul Papers

**Democracy and Human Development
in the Broader Middle East:
A Transatlantic Strategy for Partnership
Istanbul Paper #1**

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in the Broader Middle East:
A Transatlantic Strategy for Partnership
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** The views expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of, and should not be attributed to, the authors' affiliation.*

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Foreword

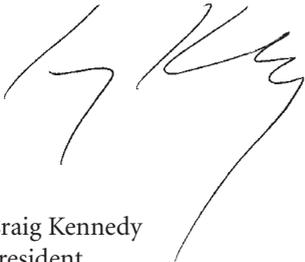
Last fall the German Marshall Fund of the United States formed a working group to debate what a transatlantic strategy toward the broader Middle East might look like. We did so as part of our commitment to fostering greater understanding and common action between the United States and Europe on new, global challenges facing both sides of the Atlantic in the 21st century.

We believe that the challenge of promoting democracy and human development is a critical part of a broader strategy to address the dangers that emanate from the broader Middle East. While both sides of the Atlantic increasingly recognize the failings of past approaches to the region, it was our sense that there was insufficient dialogue taking place over what a bold yet realistic blueprint for promoting democratic reform could consist of.

GMF convened this working group to try to sketch out such a blueprint. We selected thinkers and experts from different political and intellectual communities focusing on transatlantic relations, democracy promotion and the broader Middle East. All individuals participated in their private capacity and not as representatives of their national governments or the institutions that employ them.

The report presented here is the result of several months of meetings and debate. It represents an effort to lay out the broad contours of a transatlantic strategy to promote democracy and human development in the Broader Middle East could and should look like. The authors challenge us to go beyond current conventional wisdom and propose the building blocks of a grand strategy to help the broader Middle East transform itself. Their ideas they present are intended to spur further debate and discussion, including with democrats and reformers in the region itself.

The German Marshall Fund is proud to present this strategy report as the Istanbul Paper #1 in the run-up to the NATO Istanbul summit. This paper is intended to help further a dialogue that has already begun across the Atlantic and with the region but which now must be deepened. In doing so, we hope to make a contribution to greater understanding and cooperation across the Atlantic on one of the key challenges of our era.



Craig Kennedy
President

The German Marshall Fund of the United States

Democracy and Human Development in the Broader Middle East: A Transatlantic Strategy for Partnership

At the beginning of the 21st century, the Atlantic community faces a new challenge — to help promote democracy and human development in the broader Middle East. The reasons are both strategic and moral.

Stretching from Morocco to Afghanistan, the broader Middle East has become a locus for some of the greatest dangers and threats we face today — both for the countries of the region and for the world. In addition to providing a critical portion of the world's energy needs, the Middle East is the most likely place to foster the dangerous combination of totalitarian ideologies, state failure, terrorism and access to weapons of mass destruction. There is little doubt that terrorists would use such weapons should they acquire them. Even without possessing weapons of mass destruction, radical political forces can cause great harm to both the peoples of the region and to North American and European societies.

As the United Nations' Arab Human Development Reports point out, this region is stagnating instead of moving forward. Leaders have failed to meet the needs and aspirations of their societies or the challenges of modernity and globalization. All too often, ineffective, repressive and, at times, corrupt governance has held the region back. At a time when other countries around the world have opened up and become more democratic, the broader Middle East has become less free. Key regional conflicts such as the Israeli-Arab dispute have remained unresolved. These trends have helped to breed the alienation and despair that drive many young Muslims into the embrace of radical ideologies and terrorism.

This anger is often directed against the West, in part because of our own doing. For too long, the United States and Europe have embraced autocratic regimes in the region, especially when they were seen as accommodating our strategic interests. While our countries embrace universal democratic values and freedoms, both the United States and European governments have attached little priority to the internal order in this region. It is in the broader Middle East where there is the starkest gap between the democratic principles the West stands for and the policies we have pursued.

Our reluctance to speak up for human rights and democracy in this region has often been justified by the fear that dangerous radicals are the only likely alternative to the existing autocratic regimes. But many of these regimes have not tempered the growth of radical Islamist ideologies. Instead, some of them have stoked anti-Western feelings as an outlet for domestic discontent. Supporting autocratic governments has also helped delay the economic and political reforms that could improve lives and provide the foundation for a more durable stability. As a result, the West, and the United States in particular, is seen more and more as a bulwark of a dis-

tasteful status quo increasingly rejected by the societies of the region.

Thus, our strategic and moral imperatives now clearly converge and argue for a radical shift in our policy. Strategically, Western societies cannot be secure against terrorism if we do not address the deeper causes of alienation and despair throughout the region. Morally, the wealthy Western democracies have an obligation to use their relations of aid, trade, investment, and diplomacy to promote human development and just, responsive, accountable governance. Pervasive inequality, injustice, and lack of political dignity and voice are helping to breed hatred, intolerance and violence. These sources of human insecurity can only be reduced and ultimately eliminated through a fundamental political transformation of the region's regimes.

A New Paradigm

It is time for a paradigm change in how the United States and Europe approach the region. We must abandon the chimera of stability offered by an autocratic status quo and instead overhaul our policies to put the weight of Western influence on the side of promoting democratic transformation and human development as an antidote against those radical ideologies and terrorist groups that seek to destroy our societies and values. In making this change, we will have to overcome a deep legacy of skepticism and cynicism. Both autocratic leaders and democracy activists doubt whether the West is serious. We need to demonstrate, in word and deed, that we are.

Many in the West still question whether the peoples in the region want democratic change. We believe that there is a deep yearning in the region for change — for governments that provide greater justice and political participation. Many voices in the region, ranging from the authors of the Arab Human Development Reports to the intellectuals who gathered at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in March 2004, are calling for greater civil and political freedom, both as an end in itself and as a fundamental condition for human development. Many brave activists have risked their personal well-being and their lives in the struggle for democratization. It is time we started listening to them and supporting them.

Changes of this magnitude will not be accomplished overnight. This is a generational project for which we must summon historic staying power. That is why we — a group of thinkers and writers from North America and Europe — have come together to sketch out a long-term transatlantic strategy to promote democracy and human development in partnership with the region. In doing so, we recognize that many of our governments have started to embrace this need. Indeed, during this month of June

we have seen American and European leaders coming together in a series of G-8, U.S.-EU, and NATO summits to discuss these issues.

We welcome these indications of change in Western policy. However, this is only a first step in what will be a long journey. Even within our own governments, this shift is not yet fully secured, nor have the details of a new approach been laid out. We believe that much more must and can be done if this shift in Western policy is to become permanent and be followed by specific policies and resources. The ideas contained in this paper are intended to be additional contributions to the debate and an invitation to a broader discussion with reformers in the region. Our goal in putting them forward is to help set a new course in which North America and Europe put their political weight, resources, and influence on the side of those leaders and reformers in the region promoting democratic change and human development.

Does the strategy laid out in these pages involve risks? Yes. Democratizing regimes are not necessarily stable. A hastily designed political opening could empower anti-democratic forces and perhaps run the risk of simply bringing a different kind of autocrat or dictator to power as opposed to creating a real democratic breakthrough. Some states are so brittle that they could risk dissolution when they attempt to reform. But the lessons of the terrorist attacks we have experienced is certainly that the risks to our societies and to the region itself are much greater if we cling to the current failing status quo and policies profoundly at odds with our own values.

A transatlantic strategy to promote democracy and human development in the broader Middle East should be based on the following principles:

Regional Ownership. Democratization and human development in the region must spring from indigenous roots. Western democracies should not seek to impose any formula for democratic change. But they can and must help from the outside — morally, politically, and materially.

Engaging Rulers and Ruled. In identifying the “owners” and partners for reform, the West cannot only look to state officials. Rather, we must reach out directly to civil society. We must engage and work with both the rulers and the ruled.

Islam and Democracy. We reject the argument that the peoples of the region are incapable of democratic governance or do not want the same rights that are taken for granted in most other parts of the world. As many Muslim thinkers are persuasively arguing, Islam and liberal democracy are compatible. Public opinion surveys underscore that people in the wider Middle East value democracy.

Tailored Policies. Each country in the region is unique with its own history, problems and opportunities. While a regional approach has clear benefits, it must also be based on a clear understanding of this. Each country should be encouraged to come up with its own national reform plan for democratic change, resulting from an open negotiation between the government, the political opposition, and civil society.

The Credibility Gap. Western governments must address their credibility gap in the region. This is not solely a problem of public relations but of overcoming our own track record and past double standard. Few in the region today believe that the West cares about democracy and human rights. Horrific acts of prisoner abuse by American soldiers in Iraq do not *undermine* America’s image in the region; they confirm an image developed long ago. To change this, our governments and societies must demonstrate that they are serious about promoting genuine democratic change, and are willing to sustain a serious commitment even in the face of short-term risks and costs. Words are not enough; only our behavior will change the way people in the region interpret our motives.

The impetus for change in the broader Middle East must come from within societies in the region. The West cannot export democracy as such. At the same time, the West can and, in our view, must play a critical supporting role from the outside — as it has in democratic breakthroughs and transitions in other parts of the world. External support — moral, political, and material — can serve as a catalyst for change, both by weakening autocratic ruling coalitions holding a monopoly of power and by strengthening the hand of the reformers inside and outside the state working for change. In the last two decades, many democratic breakthroughs throughout the world occurred only through the combination of mobilization for change from within these societies coupled with strong support for change coming from the outside.

A transatlantic strategy to promote democracy and human development in the broader Middle East should be based on three pillars. First, it must aim to help strengthen the forces for democratic change and stable liberal democratic politics within these societies. Second, such a strategy must also work to create a more secure regional foreign policy context that can facilitate democratic transformation. Third and finally, the United States and Europe need to organize themselves across the Atlantic and with partners in the region to effectively sustain these policies for a generation or more.

I. Strengthening Democracy and Human Development From Within

If North America and Europe are serious about promoting democracy and human development in the broader Middle East, then the issue of the internal order in these countries needs to move to center stage in our official policies and dealings with these states. Simply put, the overall quality of our relationship with government of this region must be linked to their progress in reforms. Up until today it has not been — and both regimes and reformers know it.

As previously mentioned, there is no single magic bullet or one-size-fits-all blueprint to promote transformation and democratic change in the region. In some cases, autocratic regimes may make a strategic decision to open up and initiate a democratic transformation from above. In other cases, the impetus will have to come from below. The West must be prepared to assist in both

cases. The principles guiding Western policy must be clear and consistent. But we also must be flexible in tailoring policy to meet the specific circumstances of individual countries.

The following elements should form the key building blocks for a strategy to strengthen democracy and human development from within.

1. North American and European governments should directly tie economic assistance to genuine political reform and good governance. If we are to change the incentives and calculus of governments in the region, we need to change the way our governments provide them with such assistance. Through a transparent benchmarking process, we need to reward those countries that are making progress on democracy and good governance — and be ready to withdraw privileges from those that do not.

The Bush Administration's Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) is an important step in the right direction in that it creates incentives for and rewards countries that are making progress on economic and political liberalization. These accounts need to be expanded to help countries seeking to initiate reform as well as those already reforming. Moreover, this program was erected in parallel and not in place of existing assistance programs for countries like Egypt that lack such benchmarks. Those programs, too, must now become linked to progress toward democratic reform and good governance.

The EU not only provides more substantial levels of economic assistance to the region, but it already has a framework in place with a dozen countries in the region through the Barcelona Process. Many of the benchmarks we would want to see established already exist in agreements the EU has reached with these countries. All too often, however, the EU's track record of upholding conditionality has been underwhelming. As a result, such assistance has often ended up propping up rather than transforming the status quo. Recent plans by the EU to revamp the financial arm of the Barcelona Process are welcome but have been small in scope and slow in coming. The amount of resources devoted directly to democracy promotion is still too small. Both the U.S. and the EU need to become much more serious and rigorous about conditionality in their assistance programs in the region.

2. Such benchmarks need to be extended to others areas of cooperation beyond economic assistance. There is a much broader range of bilateral and multilateral cooperation and forms of assistance that the United States and European countries provide to countries in the region. In many cases, they can also be linked to progress toward reform. They range from trade liberalization to debt relief to high-level visits, including by heads-of-state. In order to be effective and to impact the calculus of these regimes, the goal of promoting transformation and democratic development needs to move to center stage in our overall agenda and the relationships our governments have with these governments.

3. The West must reexamine its relationships with the security institutions in the autocratic regimes of this region. Both the United States and European governments enjoy close and often valuable relationships with security and intelligence institutions in these countries. These relationships can provide critical intelligence information for the West, including in the war on terrorism. In many cases, however, these same institutions are also instruments of repression in these countries. And we often pay a price for our close relationships with institutions widely seen as pillars of an arbitrary, unjust, and autocratic order. As part of a strategy to promote democratic rule, such institutions must become subject to constitutional principles and subjected to proper oversight — as they are in democracies elsewhere in the world. The United States and Europe must find ways to use their influence with the militaries and intelligence services of these countries to foster, and not impede, democratic change. Leaders in the region must understand that our cooperation on fighting terrorism will not constrain our longer-term policy of engaging democratizing forces in the same country. When appropriate, Western governments should use their leverage with security and intelligence agencies in autocratic regimes to constrain their repressive policies against democratic forces. No Western democracy should ever encourage or condone the use of torture or other actions that compromise human dignity.

4. The West must establish a new and common transatlantic benchmark for showing solidarity with and defending people in the broader Middle East already working to promote human rights and democracy. In many countries in the region democratic activists sit in jail because of their commitment to democracy and human rights. Yet, North American and European governments have done too little in the past to lend them political and moral support. A new strategy to promote democracy in the region must set a higher transatlantic benchmark in speaking out on behalf of those groups and individuals already fighting for democracy. While the West must, at times, engage with autocratic regimes in the region, it must step up its moral and political support for democracy activists.

Our dialogues with these countries cannot be limited to governments alone. Civil society and pro-democracy forces in these countries must also become key interlocutors. No senior American or European leader — whether from the executive branches of government or parliament — should visit the region without raising these issues or meeting with leading representatives of civil society and those already fighting for democracy and human development. Western governments and NGOs should maintain and monitor a comprehensive list of political prisoners in the region and be prepared to raise these cases with host governments.

5. Beyond such political and moral support, the West must also increase its material support for civil society and those groups that serve as an incubator for democracy promotion and human development. Throughout the region, there is a fierce struggle underway between democratic and anti-democratic leaders for the

hearts and minds of their societies. The West must help empower the moderate, democratic side by significantly increasing our support of local NGOs working to create the foundations for more just, free, and democratic societies. Regional governments that receive aid from the West should not be allowed to restrict the flow of assistance to NGOs, think tanks, or other actors supporting democracy promotion activities.

While helping empower civil society will require spending more resources, it is a tiny fraction of what we currently spend on defense and security to combat threats coming from this region. But the principle U.S. nongovernmental instrument for democracy promotion, the U.S.-based National Endowment for Democracy, for example, has been funded at only around \$40 million annually in recent years, and only a fraction of this is spent in the Middle East. The U.S. government itself spends an estimated \$600 million annually on democracy promotion through the Agency for International Development (AID) around the world. To make the necessary impact, we must increase by several times the levels of democracy and governance assistance directed toward the region. For its part, the European Union should dramatically increase its democracy promotion efforts in the context of a revamped EU-Mediterranean dialogue. It should be politically feasible to increase the funding for the EU's democracy promotion program (MDP) to at least 500 million per year.

The transatlantic community also needs new non-governmental instruments to help strengthen democratic voices and civil society in the region. Together, the United States and Europe should create a non-governmental Middle East Foundation modeled after the Asia and Eurasia Foundations. Ideally, this new foundation would receive financial support from all countries in the transatlantic community to help ensure that it is not misunderstood as an institution promoting short-term national interests of any individual country. Such a foundation would directly fund civil society organizations, think tanks, and civic education programs as well as exchanges, scholarships, partnerships, and any other activities that facilitate the flow of ideas.

While such institutions should receive government funding, it is important that they be fully independent to maximize their operational freedom and credibility, with non-governmental officials administering the majority of their funds. The U.S. State Department and European foreign ministries are in the business of managing official relations. The same people cannot effectively conduct state-to-state affairs with an autocratic regime and simultaneously work to transform or democratize that same government.

6. Contacts between the people in the wider Middle East and people in the West must be expanded exponentially. One of the best weapons we have to assist these societies in transforming themselves is not NATO's Rapid Reaction Force, but the school board in Des Moines or a gymnasium in Munich or a mosque in Bloomington, Indiana. Societies can integrate and develop transnational connectivity much faster than states can. The more people

who witness democracy in action, the greater our potential impact can be. These exchanges between our societies can greatly alter perceptions about the West and vice versa. The mayor of Bozeman, Montana, can be as important a communicator of American democratic ideals as the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Solidarity veterans and democracy activists in Poland and Central and Eastern Europe can share more valuable lessons about trade union organizing with their aspiring counterparts in Egypt than can any abstract translated text about civil society.

Both the European Union and the United States should increase dramatically the number of scholarships to study at European and American universities. Likewise, exchanges between local government officials, judges, party leaders, civic activists, religious leaders as well as teachers and professors must increase. Direct contacts between societies in the West and the broader Middle East will provide the most efficient channels of communication about democratic ideas. Equally important, greater societal contact will also lessen the ignorance in the West about Islamic culture and religion — and vice versa. None of these people-to-people programs can work without a new visa regime for travelers from the Middle East. Just as customs authorities create special lists to identify terrorists and criminals, they should develop special lists to expedite the acquisition of visas for known friends and allies, who, once vetted, remain on a “fast track.”

7. Western governments must be prepared to provide technical assistance to strengthen the institutions of democratic governance, especially once genuine democratization has begun. Reforming states in the region will need to strengthen the capacity and independence of a wide range of governance institutions, including national legislatures, the courts, counter-corruption and audit agencies, local governments, and democratic means of overseeing the military, police, and intelligence agencies. Ideally, liberal reforms that help to constrain discretionary government behavior should occur before direct elections in order to lower the stakes of politics and thus make it less threatening for autocrats to give up their monopoly on power.

8. Western governments — and especially the U.S. government — will be limited in effectively helping democratic forces in the region until they articulate a consistent message and develop a clear track record regarding our true intentions in the region. President George W. Bush has spoken more forcefully about the cause of freedom and democracy in the broader Middle East than any other U.S. president. But the United States still suffers from a major credibility problem in the region. Many in the region — advocates and enemies of reform alike — see Washington focused on the military component in the war on terrorism and eliminating weapons of mass destruction. Still others believe that the United States seeks to obtain influence if not control over the region's energy resources. When Western leaders praise cooperation with regional dictators without mentioning democracy or human rights in these countries, we send the wrong mes-

sage to those on the front lines fighting for democracy in the region.

To be sure, the West also needs a more competent public diplomacy and articulation of our policies. Political liberalization must be championed as a win-win outcome for both the West and the people of the region. But, at the end of the day, it is the policy and behavior of Western governments that must change. As our willingness to work and fight for democracy and human development becomes clear, attitudes in the region toward the West and our motives will change as well.

II. Creating the External Environment to Facilitate Democratic Change

All too often in the past, both Western and Arab leaders have posited a false dichotomy between the pursuit of external security and democracy in the broader Middle East. In the interest of maintaining stability and security, it was argued, it was necessary to set aside our desire for democracy. We believe that democratic development and the enhancement of external security are complementary, not contradictory. For democracy and human development to flourish in the broader Middle East, both the internal and the external security order in the region must change. This means trying to tackle the difficult foreign policy conflicts that bedevil the region. Those problems are not only geopolitical in nature but often directly intertwined with the nature of these regimes.

The second pillar of a transatlantic strategy to promote democracy and human development in the broader Middle East must therefore work at this dilemma from both ends — working to help change the internal order of the region and creating an external environment conducive to democratic change in the region. History has produced exceptional cases when courageous leaders have advanced democracy against the backdrop of insecurity or conflict. And it would be a mistake to assume that the conflicts of the region must be solved before movement toward democracy can take place. But it is certainly easier to build and consolidate democracy during times of peace and in a secure regional environment than during times of conflict or when threatened by neighbors. History has shown time and again that insecurity can be the breeding grounds for nationalistic and anti-democratic forces, whereas democracy and regional security are mutually reinforcing.

The need to create a regional security environment conducive to the consolidation of democracy was a central consideration in U.S. and Western strategy toward Europe after World War II. NATO was created not only to deter a Soviet threat, but also to establish the security umbrella under which fragile post-war West European democracies could establish themselves. In the 1970s and 1980s, the Helsinki Final Act and the OSCE created a framework that both encouraged democratic change and helped ensure a soft and largely non-violent landing when communism eventually collapsed. At the end of the Cold War, the need to consolidate fragile democracies was also a key factor leading NATO and the European Union to extend a security umbrella to Central and Eastern Europe.

The situation in the broader Middle East today obviously cannot be compared with Europe. These examples nevertheless show how past Western strategy has incorporated the goal of promoting and consolidating democracy development into our strategy in other parts of the world. We must now do the same in our future policy vis-à-vis the broader Middle East. Neighborhoods do matter, and one can hardly imagine a less auspicious neighborhood for building democracy today than the current one in the broader Middle East. Interstate tension may be higher than in any region in the world. Few, if any, effective multilateral frameworks exist to ease bilateral or regional rivalries, let alone provide for regional cooperative security. Even if one or another Middle Eastern regime achieved a democratic breakthrough, it would have few means or options to anchor such an experiment regionally.

Consequently, if the West wants to help promote democratic change in the region, it must step up its efforts, together with other countries, to resolve the core geopolitical conflicts that afflict the region. Creating a more peaceful and stable regional security environment must become a central objective. Indeed, the West's leverage and potential contribution in this area may be indispensable for success. While many of our governments have been working to resolve these conflicts for years, the imperative to promote democratic change in the region puts an even higher premium on making progress.

A transatlantic strategy to create the regional security environment conducive to promoting democracy in the broader Middle East must include the following objectives:

1. The cause of democracy and human development in the region will be enhanced immeasurably by a final resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue and the broader Israeli-Arab conflict based on United Nations Security Council resolutions 242 and 338 and the vision of two states — Israel and Palestine — living side-by-side in peace and security. Many in the Arab world today see a Western — and especially American — commitment to a renewal of the role of honest broker in Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations as a litmus test of Western intentions in the Arab world more broadly, including on democracy. We believe that the United States and Europe should adopt such a role. But it would be a mistake to insist that progress toward democratic reform be conditional upon such a peace settlement. Peace with neighbors and domestic reform are both worthy goals and should be pursued in parallel and in their own right.

The way forward in a common transatlantic strategy must be to work in parallel on resolving the Israel-Arab conflict *and* on promoting democracy across the region. A truly democratic Palestine that has abandoned terror would not be a reward to the September 11th terrorists, but rather would be their worst nightmare. At the same time, the West cannot credibly make the case for democracy across the region if it is, or appears to be, unwilling to support the Palestinians' right to political self-determination and a resolution of this conflict in all of its aspects.

There is also little doubt that a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict would resolve a highly neuralgic item that currently crowds the region's political agenda and absorbs energies that otherwise could be devoted to internal reform. Autocratic Arab governments could no longer hide behind or use this conflict to deflect domestic pressures for domestic change. Terrorists across the region could no longer exploit this conflict to recruit men and women into their ranks. The West would no longer require the cooperation of a dictatorial regime in Syria, or be deterred from pushing for reform in autocratic allies such as Egypt because of their potentially critical role in peace negotiations. The benefits of a resolution of this conflict for a strategy to promote democracy and human development are multiple and obvious.

A settlement of this conflict requires the creation of a viable, democratic, sovereign, and contiguous Palestinian state committed to living side-by-side in peace with the state of Israel and committed to preventing acts of terrorism and violence from being perpetrated against Israel from within its borders. Reaching this goal requires all the key actors — Israelis and Palestinians, as well as the United States, Europe and Arab states in the region — to actively support and work for peace in word and deed. In addition to a peace agreement with the Palestinians, the long-term solution to Israel's security concerns and the threats confronting it lies in the transformation of the region into a set of more democratic societies that welcome the rewards of living in peace and in which the forces of radicalism and terrorism have been marginalized.

To sustain peace over time, Israel and an independent Palestine should both be embedded in a broader multilateral security framework, which may have to include the United States and European partners. Following four years of violence and lack of progress in peace negotiations, there is a growing debate over the possibility of an expanded role for the international community in brokering and sustaining a possible peace settlement, as well as in helping to build a new sovereign and democratic Palestinian state. That debate includes suggestions ranging from a NATO-led peacekeeping force helping monitor or secure a future peace settlement to a possible UN-led or international trusteeship as a step toward creating executive authority and security in a future Palestinian state.

The feasibility and acceptability of such proposals need to be closely examined. As part of a new transatlantic effort in the region, the United States and Europe should, in principle, be prepared to join forces and assume a major role in such efforts, assuming that both Israelis and Palestinians welcome such steps. As part of such an effort, the United States and Europe should also be prepared to offer both Israel and a future Palestinian state the opportunity to develop closer ties and relationships with the European Union and NATO as both institutions become more involved in the region.

2. The West must succeed in the two democratic experiments in the broader Middle East in which it is already deeply engaged — in Afghanistan

and Iraq. Failure in either would deal a major setback not only to the peoples of these two countries but also to the broader cause of democratic change and human development in the region. In spite of the very real problems and obstacles facing the West in each country, it would be a historic mistake for the West to lower its sights or abandon the goal of establishing some form of democratic rule in both countries. The big losers of such a strategy would be more than just the Afghan and Iraqi peoples. Western democracies, and especially the United States, will never be credible in calling for democratic reform throughout the region if we abandon our own deeply stated commitments to democracy in these two countries.

The credibility of the Atlantic Alliance, as well as the international community more broadly, is on the line in Afghanistan. American and allied NATO armed forces are engaged on the ground to help provide security in the country, a precondition to any further progress in democratization. There can be no meaningful elections in the country this fall — the next critical step in the democratization process — if the security situation further deteriorates and citizens are afraid to vote. If the new government in Afghanistan fails, antidemocratic forces that promise order — autocratic order, that is — will replace it. The West already made the mistake of abandoning Afghanistan once. On September 11, 2001, we paid a heavy price for that error. We cannot walk away again, but must instead help this country rebuild.

The situation in Iraq is even more critical and the consequences of failure even more dire. In spite of the deep differences over the wisdom and justness of the war in Iraq, it is time for leaders on both sides of the Atlantic to look forward, not backward. The stakes in Iraq are extraordinarily high — for the Iraqi people, for the region, and for both the United States and Europe.

In spite of the continuing violence and the torture scandals at Abu Ghraib, it would be a mistake for the West to abandon the goal of a free and democratic Iraq. As in Afghanistan, one key to progress lies in providing the kind of security that will allow the political and economic reconstruction of the country to move forward. While the security vacuum in the country will increasingly need to be filled by the forces of the new Iraqi state, international troops are likely to be needed in the foreseeable future. They should serve at the behest of the new freely elected Iraqi government and stay so long as their help is needed and desired.

Increasingly, the security vacuum in Iraq will need to be filled by the legitimate forces of the new Iraqi state. The transatlantic alliance, working with the U.N., must place an urgent priority on helping the Iraqi Interim Government to recruit, train, equip, and deploy Iraqi police and armed forces in sufficient number, and with sufficient discipline and coherence, to restore order. Whatever human and financial resources are needed for this task must be provided.

As envisioned in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546, unanimously adopted on June 8, a United Nations mission, headed by a resident Special Representative of

the Secretary General, should provide the coordination of international assistance in Iraq. The transition to democracy in Iraq also requires steps to build a rule of law and level the political playing field. Working in cooperation with the United Nations, the United States and Europe should support and press for the full and effective operation of all the instruments of legality and accountability in the new Iraq, including the new Supreme Court, the Special Tribunal, the Human Rights Commission, and the audit and public integrity commissions. As with the new electoral administration and security forces, international assistance is needed to help train, equip, and support these agencies.

Similarly, the Western democracies, working through party foundations and NGOs, should play an active role in helping to train and support the new political parties and civil society organizations — including, very importantly, women's organizations — that are seeking to establish democracy in Iraq. In order to help level the playing field in the first democratic elections, they should collectively provide a generous pool of finance for a political parties fund, to be distributed by the Iraqi Independent Electoral Commission in equal amounts to all political parties that pass a certain threshold of demonstrated popular support.

The Iraqi people want and deserve to have the opportunity to live in a free and democratic society. And the democracy foundations and NGOs of the West have the means and desire to help them. The crucial conditions for enabling these real possibilities for progress to unfold are significant improvement in the security situation and a more extensive and explicit sharing of international responsibility, led by the United Nations.

3. Iran must be a key priority in a transatlantic strategy to promote democracy and human development in the region. Iran today is a country that exhibits a real degree of pluralistic politics, pitting rulers against a sophisticated — if currently demoralized — democratic movement. Despite recent setbacks, no other country in the broader Middle East still has more potential for a democratic breakthrough than Iran. At the same time, no other country in the region seems closer to acquiring nuclear weapons. And the current Iranian regime's support for terrorism by Hamas and Hizbollah, directed largely against Israel, prevents any meaningful rapprochement with the West.

Western policy, therefore, must seek to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons while simultaneously fostering genuine democratization and working to convince Iran to abandon its support of terrorism. Preventing Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons is of paramount importance, since a nuclear Iran could set off a proliferation chain reaction, which in turn would further heighten regional tensions and worsen the conditions for democratization within both Iran and its neighbors. Nonetheless, this goal must not come at the expense of undercutting Iran's democratic movement.

Western governments should pursue arms control with the elected government in Tehran and support the

democracy movement at the same time. To insure that Iran meets its international treaty obligations, the United States and Europe must join forces to push Tehran to submit to a more effective inspections regime given that country's past track record in meeting international obligations. If Iran is found to be in violation of the Non Proliferation Treaty, the IAEA must refer the issue to the U.N. Security Council, where our governments should push for a system of targeted sanctions.

At the same time, to maximize the chances of a change in the calculus of the Iranian leadership, the United States should be prepared to offer a step-by-step lifting of sanctions. In parallel, the EU for its part could offer to re-start negotiations on a trade and cooperation agreement with Tehran as well. However, the West should make it crystal clear that such incentives are fully conditional upon changes in Iranian behavior, particularly a verifiable end to its nuclear program. While Iran has the right to pursue the peaceful use of nuclear power, the West could offer to provide low-grade enriched uranium in exchange for the abandonment of those technologies that could be used for developing nuclear weapons.

If managed properly, lifting aspects of the current economic sanctions would not reward Tehran's dictators but potentially would create more political space and opportunity for the democracy movement. A policy that allowed Western businesses to operate would help undermine the current regime's ability to use the rents created by sanctions to finance their autocratic power. WTO membership would not only increase trade and investment, but the organization's transparency rules on subsidies also would undermine the role of the religious foundations that distort the Iranian economy and fund extremist religious groups. These are just several ways in which Western engagement can help create movement toward democracy.

Iran's democratic movement, and civil society more generally, would benefit greatly from more contact with the West, and such contact today can only take place with some level of engagement with the Iranian regime. Current U.S. policy makes it next to impossible for American NGOs to engage or assist their democratic partners within Iran. Americans and Europeans must be united in offering incentives for cooperation as well as sanctions for non-compliance. The US and Europe should set out which Iranian moves would trigger what European and American responses. Positive steps forward in the area of non-proliferation, democracy, and counter-terrorism should be rewarded with further trade, investment, and integrative measures while every backward step should be met with a firm, pre-identified response.

For such a dual-track strategy to succeed, a common and unified plan across the Atlantic is required — something that has heretofore not existed. To be sure, there is no guarantee that a new democratic regime in Tehran would abandon Iranian nuclear ambitions. But it is more likely to pursue a responsible policy on this key issue. It would also be more likely to abandon Tehran's support of terrorism and assume a constructive position on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Iran is a clear example where

a solution to the West's security concerns and the human development of the Iranian people both would be greatly enhanced by democratization.

4. It is vital for both sides of the Atlantic to work together in completing the anchoring of a democratic and secular Turkey in the West. Turkey stands at the epicenter of the divide between an increasingly stable and secure Europe and an increasingly unstable and insecure broader Middle East. Fully integrating a democratic, secular, and largely Muslim democracy like Turkey into the EU, in addition to its long-standing membership in NATO and other European institutions, would be a critical step toward repositioning the core institutions of the Euro-Atlantic to face the challenge of promoting democracy and human development in the broader Middle East. A clear prospective EU membership can also deepen and consolidate democracy in Turkey itself.

Turkey is not a model for the broader Middle East. Its historical trajectory and distinct brand of secularism rooted in the Ataturk legacy is unique and may not be easily replicated, and its relationship with the Arab Middle East is not without complications. But Turkey is one of two western democracies in the region today. It is also an example of how Islam and democracy can thrive side-by-side. In addition, how the West deals with Turkey is closely watched by many in the broader Middle East as a test of our intentions and our willingness to embrace a largely Muslim country as a full and equal partner in our own institutions. That is why the European Union's embrace of Turkey and its aspirations can dramatically underscore Europe's commitment to promoting democracy and human development in the region.

Decisions on possible membership in the European Union belong exclusively to the member states of that institution. They should be made based on the same Copenhagen criteria used for other recent candidates and cognizant of the EU's longstanding commitment to eventual Turkish membership. They should reflect the important progress politically and otherwise that Ankara has made recently in meeting these criteria. Whether and how the EU decides to move forward later this year in possibly starting accession negotiations with Ankara nevertheless can affect the transatlantic community as a whole and our ability to project influence in the broader Middle East. Now more than ever, the West needs a successful secular and democratic Turkey at its side as a full partner to promote democracy and human development in the region.

5. Our future strategy must not only address the deficits of our adversaries but also the shortcomings of our allies in the region, including Egypt and Saudi Arabia. This issue goes to the core of establishing Western credibility and the need to overcome the double standard that has plagued U.S. and European policy for decades. Moreover, we also must face the fact that terrorist groups who today threaten our societies also draw support and recruits from autocratic pro-Western regimes. A majority of the terrorists who carried out the September 11th and March 11th attacks in the United States and Spain, respectively, came from countries considered allies of the West.

Promoting democratic change within states that have enjoyed close ties with the West poses a different challenge than with strategic adversaries, but one that is just as important. These are regimes with which we potentially have considerable influence and leverage because they are far more open to us. In a number of cases, these are also regimes that have already made modest progress in liberalizing their political systems and may be closer to and more ready for a political opening. Leaders in Morocco and Jordan, for example, have made important first steps. They should be encouraged to make the harder move to genuine democracy. The region needs a success story — an example of a partnership between a reforming regime and a supportive West that produces positive results for the country in question.

At the same time, the most rigid dictatorships allied with the West cannot be ignored. Rather, they must be at the forefront of our efforts to promote democratic change. Failure to change the way we engage long-standing allies such as Egypt or Saudi Arabia will only further exacerbate the West's credibility woes in the region. To be sure, countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt are quite different and should not be lumped together. In fact, changes in both have already begun. Rulers in both countries face real demographic pressures, economic changes, and persistent radical challengers that will not wither under the status quo. Both countries are also likely to face the issue of political succession in the not-too-distant future.

The questions now are when these regimes will lose their grip, whether the process will be evolutionary or revolutionary, and what new political system will emerge when these regimes give way. If leaders in Saudi Arabia and Egypt initiate political liberalization now while they are still relatively powerful, they may be more likely to shape the transition process from above. Such a transition may leave some undemocratic practices in place, but might also produce an evolutionary transition from autocratic rule. If the Saudis and Egyptians wait, however, their regimes run the risk of ending in revolution like Iran in 1979 or Romania in 1989.

6. A transatlantic strategy must also support efforts to create a regional cooperative security regime that draws on the lessons of the Helsinki experience in Europe and other regions. One striking aspect of the broader Middle East is the absence of any kind of functioning multilateral security regime that could establish regional norms, confidence-building measures, or other forms of dialogue and political reassurance. Today, the countries of the region lack the means for any meaningful multilateral security dialogue involving the region as a whole. Those structures that do exist are often geared to supporting the current autocratic status quo, not promoting democratic change or human development.

Over the next decade, the emergence of such a regime can help create the kind of regional setting in which democratic transitions are more likely to take place and to endure. The impetus for creating such regional structures must come from within the region. A dialogue exploring how to build such a system is already under-

way. It should be supported from the outside, especially by the democratic countries of North America and Europe. Such efforts can draw inspiration from past experiences in Europe and elsewhere. At the heart of the Helsinki process was the recognition that true security depended not only on relations between states but also on the relationship between rulers and the ruled.

The concepts of “indivisible security” or “comprehensive security” — i.e., that all states have an equal right of security regardless of their size or that security must go beyond military issues and include things like minority rights or the shared management of resources — show how such principles can be applied in another part of the world. Above all, it is essential that such a regime have the kind of review mechanisms that help hold governments accountable to their commitments. Many Middle Eastern governments have signed statements committing themselves to democratic reform. What is lacking is a regime that can empower the societies to hold their own rulers accountable to such pledges at home and in their relations with their neighbors.

Building such a regional cooperative security regime will take time, as it did in other parts of the world. It will require a sustained commitment of time and political capital to succeed. The countries themselves will have to define the contours of such a system, settle on which baskets of issues are most critical, and balance the needs for democratic change, human development, and security. Such a regional structure for the broader Middle East would not replace but rather serve as a complement to other existing security arrangements, including with the United States and Europe. Yet, one can hardly imagine a region in greater need of such a regime than the broader Middle East.

III. Retooling the Transatlantic Relationship to Promote a Partnership for Democracy and Human Development

The third pillar in a new transatlantic strategy to promote democracy and human development in the broader Middle East must focus on reorganizing the West to meet this challenge. Our governments today are not organized to pursue the kind of long-term strategy outlined in this paper. If North America and Europe truly believe that the broader Middle East is the number one security challenge for the next generation, and if they embrace a new paradigm that puts democratic change and human development at the forefront of our strategy, then we need to organize ourselves in ways that put these issues at the center of our foreign policy and provide the priority, focus, and resources needed to sustain such a strategy.

This is not the first time the West has faced the need to reorganize itself to meet the challenges of a new era. Following the end of World War II, Western governments had to meet the strategic and moral challenges of the Cold War. They restructured themselves internally and created new international institutions both to confront the USSR and to promote common strategies and cooperation among themselves. In the United States, a whole set of new government and non-governmental organizations were set up. European countries likewise

built up a body of knowledge and set of institutions to generate intelligence, policy expertise, and influence in the Soviet bloc. Internationally, the post-war period was one of the most creative ever in terms of multilateral institutions. The United Nations, International Monetary Fund, the World Bank, North Atlantic Treaty Organization, and the European Economic Community were all created at this time.

By comparison, since September 11, 2001, American and European governments have been far less ambitious in adapting their national security and foreign policy structures to meet the challenges ahead. Our current multilateral institutions have changed even less. The most far-reaching changes underway or under debate have centered on reorganizing homeland security or reforming our intelligence communities to be able to fight terrorists more effectively. Despite a strong rhetorical commitment of Western leaders for supporting reform and democracy change in the broader Middle East, very little has been proposed thus far, and even less accomplished, in terms of adapting existing institutions or creating new ones.

The West has thus far primarily focused on playing defense — tightening borders, strengthening intelligence cooperation, improving and transforming defense capabilities and establishments to combat terrorists more successfully. Our leaders have invested considerable resources and political capital in this effort, especially in the United States. However, when it comes to playing offense and developing the kinds of strategies that prevent such threats from emerging in the first place, there have been few creative ideas or ambitious policy proposals. Neither Washington nor European capitals have engaged in a serious effort to reorganize themselves to create the knowledge and capabilities to pursue such a long-term effort.

To prepare to meet this long-term challenge, the United States and Europe must focus on reorganizing themselves in three key areas.

1. Upgrading Our Knowledge. We need to create a new generation of scholars, diplomats, military officers, and democracy-builders who know the region’s religions, languages, history, and cultures, and who have the skills to advise our leaders on the best policies and how to pursue them appropriately. American and European levels of knowledge and understanding of the broader Middle East have been declining for years. That trend now must be reversed. Just as the West had to create a new generation of experts to better understand Europe and the USSR after 1945, we now need to create a new pool of expertise and talent to better analyze the broader Middle East.

What can be done? While we do not face the kind of monolithic bloc or single threat we faced from the USSR during the Cold War, nevertheless, the manner in which the West organized itself then offers lessons for today. In the United States, for example, the federal government provided funds to establish new studies centers at leading American universities to systematically study both Europe and the USSR as well as to teach the language

skills needed to understand a part of the world about which we still knew little. Through exchange programs, Americans and Europeans were able to gain first-hand expertise in the countries that were top foreign policy priorities. Regional expertise and strategic studies were brought together to provide an integrated understanding of the region and the key strategic issues governments were grappling with.

In addition, the United States and leading European allies set up special programs to bring young leaders and legislators from both sides of the Atlantic together to foster a common view and approach on the major strategic challenges of the day. In both the United States and Europe, competence on these issues deemed central to America's or Europe's national security became a prerequisite for a successful career in national security as well as for anyone aspiring to national office.

Today we need to think in similarly bold and ambitious terms. We need, first and foremost, to deepen our knowledge of the broader Middle East and of the complex historical and cultural background to the current problems in the region. On both sides of the Atlantic, we need a new generation of experts who combine knowledge of the Middle East, democracy promotion, and strategic studies. Today it is rare to find a program at any leading American or European university that produces this combination of expertise. Neither the department of government at Harvard nor the department of political science at Stanford University has a tenured faculty member specializing in the region. The situation at leading European universities is little different.

In addition, we need to expand contacts with key leaders in the region representing an array of societal actors, including both governments and civil society. Today many American and European government officials, legislators, diplomats, or military officers have not only a cursory understanding of the region, but also of their counterparts. A parallel effort is needed to bring American and European leaders together to discuss what a common transatlantic strategy to the region should be. The same programs and institutions which promoted a common view on how to deal with core European security issues in the past must now be reoriented to face these new issues. Academia and the think tank world will not fill this void unless prompted by government or private foundations on both sides of the Atlantic.

2. Reorganizing Our Structures. A strategy to promote democracy and human development in the broader Middle East will also require us to reorganize our national security and foreign policy establishments to highlight this new priority. At the moment, the task of democracy promotion is buried down in the second, or even third, tier of our foreign policy bureaucracy. Promoting democracy and political reform is often considered something slightly exotic — a distraction even from the day-to-day exigencies, as opposed to a core priority — especially when it comes to the broader Middle East.

If this issue is to become a top national priority for decades to come, then it needs to be treated as such in

our own policy-making structures. As mentioned earlier, both American and European governments have started reorganizing themselves in response to the new threats we face from the broader Middle East. The creation of the Department of Homeland Security, for example, is one of the largest governmental reorganizations in the United States in decades. In Europe, the pace of change has been slower but is now accelerating as the EU has stepped up its intelligence and law-enforcement coordination and has also created a new coordinator for terrorism. Both sides of the Atlantic are debating potentially far-reaching reforms of their intelligence communities and defense establishments.

Thus far, there has been no equivalent effort to upgrade the task of democracy promotion and human development in the broader Middle East to an equivalent national priority. This needs to change. Doing a better job at penetrating terrorist cells, stopping the terrorists at our borders, or having a better capability to defeat them in those cases where we actually confront them militarily is not enough. We need to be as good at supporting democratic transitions and/or engaging in nation building as we are at toppling despotic or tyrannical regimes.

The need for more effective strategies and capabilities in this area has been obvious for some time. In recent years, successful military operations ranging from the Balkans to Iraq have been followed by much weaker efforts at political and economic reconstruction. We urgently need to improve our post-conflict reconstruction performance. More important still, we need to improve our ability to affect peaceful democratic change. Acquiring that capability requires a reorganization of our current national security institutions.

There are different ways in which one can approach this key task. We believe that governments on both sides of the Atlantic should consider separating the task of democracy promotion and human development and elevating it to a senior level where it will enjoy high-level political support and can command the resources necessary for the task. In the United States this would mean creating a cabinet-level Department for Democracy Promotion and Development. The Europeans for their part should create an equivalent EU Commissioner with the same responsibilities in the new European Commission. When the EU appoints a new Foreign Minister under the new Constitutional treaty, this Commissioner for democracy and human rights should become one of his or her deputies.

The rationale for this step is simple. In the United States, the State Department's mission is diplomacy between states, not helping the transition to democracy or promoting human development. The Pentagon's mission should remain defense; its assets for regime reconstruction should be moved into this new department, which would also appropriate resources from the U.S. Agency for International Development and other government departments and agencies. This new department must be endowed with prestige, talented people, and, above all, resources. The point of creating these high-level posts is to give leadership and political

accountability to both American and European efforts to promote democratic change.

3. Reforming the Transatlantic Partnership. These changes would also help to build a better foundation for creating a common transatlantic strategy vis-à-vis the broader Middle East. Despite the breadth and depth of the transatlantic relationship, currently there is no place where the two sides meet on a regular basis to develop and coordinate a common strategy along such lines. While NATO is the strongest institutional link across the Atlantic, it is a military alliance whose focus is too narrow to serve as the forum to coordinate our policies in the areas laid out in this paper. The Alliance can make an important contribution to such a strategy but it will not be the central player.

On paper, the U.S.-EU relationship potentially could become a key forum for both sides of the Atlantic to coordinate policies and build a common approach. The EU has experience and a number of assets in the area of promoting democracy, even if its track record has, thus far, been often timid and inconsistent. However, it would require a significant overhaul and upgrade of a relationship that neither side has heretofore used as a key venue for issues of such importance. At the same time, such an overhaul is long overdue as the United States looks for a venue to coordinate strategy on non-military issues and as European nations turn over responsibility for policy on these issues to Brussels. The relative weight of the three elements of the transatlantic relationship — NATO, relations with capitals, and U.S.-EU — is changing. In years to come more transatlantic “traffic” will have to go through the EU-U.S. channel, especially when it comes to the broader Middle East.

In the 1990s, the United States and its European allies took a transatlantic relationship that was forged during the Cold War and designed to contain Soviet power and transformed it into a new partnership focused on consolidating democracy in Central and Eastern Europe, halting ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, and building a new partnership with Russia. Today this relationship and its key institutions must again be overhauled to meet a new set of challenges centered in the broader Middle East. A strengthened U.S.-EU relationship and a transformed NATO can become key instruments in developing and pursuing such a strategy — if our leaders today are as creative and bold in adapting them as the founding fathers were in establishing them a half century ago.

Conclusion

Promoting democracy and human development in the broader Middle East is a historic imperative — for the peoples and societies of the region as well as for the United States and Europe. The democratic reform and transformation of this region would be a critical step forward in ensuring a more peaceful and secure world. Assisting this region in meeting the challenges of human development, modernity, and globalization would be a critical step in combating terrorism and in providing an antidote to the radical fundamentalist movements that employ it.

Meeting this challenge is first and foremost a challenge for the peoples and governments of the region itself. But the outside world — and North America and Europe in particular — can and should help. Developments in the region today have a direct impact on our security and well-being. The threats emanating from radical terrorist movements constitute one of the greatest dangers to our societies and to world order. Both strategically and morally, our own interests are tied up with this region’s future.

That is why we believe that American and European interests are best served by pooling our political strength and resources to pursue a common strategy of partnership with the region. At the moment, there is a danger that Europeans and Americans will pursue competing democratization strategies. Whilst both sides bring different things to the table — and there are real advantages in complementarities — it would be far more effective to pool the best proposals available on both sides of the Atlantic and to coordinate their implementation in a joint endeavor. One of the great historical lessons of the 20th century is that the world is a much safer, more peaceful and democratic place when America and Europe cooperate. That is as true today as it was in the past.

There is perhaps no more fitting task than for the democracies of North America and Europe to come together to help promote democracy and human development in a part of the world where it is most absent and most needed. Our governments have taken the first steps in recognizing the failings of our past policies and in accepting the need to steer a new course vis-à-vis the region. We welcome these initial steps. At the same time, we believe there is a need for bigger and bolder thinking about the specifics of a future Western strategy. This paper is meant to stimulate discussion on this issue — on both sides of the Atlantic as well as in dialogue with our partners and interlocutors in the region. We hope it will be received in that spirit. We look forward to a dialogue on these ideas.

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About GMF

The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) is an American public policy and grantmaking institution dedicated to promoting greater cooperation and understanding between the United States and Europe.

GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working on transatlantic issues, by convening leaders to discuss the most pressing transatlantic themes, and by examining ways in which transatlantic cooperation can address a variety of global policy challenges.

Founded in 1972 through a gift from Germany as a permanent memorial to Marshall Plan assistance, GMF maintains a strong presence on both sides of the Atlantic. In addition to its headquarters in Washington, DC, GMF has five offices in Europe: Belgrade, Berlin, Bratislava, Brussels, and Paris.

About TESEV

Established in 1994, the Turkish Economic and Social Studies Foundation (TESEV) is an Istanbul-based, nongovernmental think tank supported by private sector funding from Turkey and abroad.

Since its establishment TESEV expanded its research and agenda range to include a more active interest in international affairs, with a particular focus on Turkey-EU relations and regional economic and security questions.

TESEV focuses on the most important policy questions facing Turkey and the region in the new century. Its areas of work are grouped under three titles: Governance and Transparency, Democratization of Turkey, Foreign Policy and International Relations.

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