

Respite from The Global Crusade:  
The Middle East Quagmire and the Rejection of Melting  
Pot Democracy

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The great Greek thinker Aristotle dictated that human experience is deeply political. For him, we are “political animals” because nature has equipped us with speech and the ability to convey common ideas of fairness. Through natural social processes, human groups have formed political units of increasing magnitude and complexity over time. From ancient settlements to vast social democracies, these political communities exist “for the sake of life, and for the sake of the good life” (trans. Saunders I.2.1252b27–30). At heart, we seek political association to lift us from our original pit of savagery and barbarism.

Politics, however, cannot be separated from the will to power. Despite civilizing us in a basic sense, political community has also freed human imagination to devise instruments for delivering death and destruction. This capacity manifests itself both within the state and between states. The father of political realism, Hans Morgenthau, asserts “the desire to attain a maximum of power is universal, all nations must be afraid that their own miscalculations and the power increases of other nations might add up to an inferiority for themselves which they must at all costs try to avoid” (Morgenthau 208). For Morgenthau, there is nothing but this unwavering rationality. In the tradition of Thucydides, “the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must” (trans. Crawley 5.84-116).

For the last half-century, however, the intellectual community has challenged bleak realist principles. A belief has emerged among many scholars that government can move beyond human nature and, likewise, the nation-state. Economists, appealing to efficiency, evangelize the gains of absolute trade liberalization (Anderson & Van Wincoop 2001). Moral philosophers such as Amartya Sen equate de-recognition of states with the end of a “tyranny of [harmful] ideas” (Sen 143). Others see the demise of realism as not only righteous but inevitable. Social theories presented by Castells and Latour predict the demise of nation-states as globalization erodes borders and national identity. Even realist stalwarts such as Stanley Hoffman began to wonder deeply about “the fate of the nation-state” in later theories (Hoffman 862).

These modern political theorists have corralled these ideas into an idealistic framework buttressed by two doctrines. The first doctrine, political cosmopolitanism, emphasizes the transfer of political power from the domestic level to the international level. The second doctrine, inclusive democracy, focuses on the growth of tolerant republican governments within states. The two doctrines have some differences, most notably the rejection of the need for state-level democracy by cosmopolitan scholars. However,

the global community has utilized both strategies on the pathway to building a harmonious international system.

Yet, recent world developments paint a sad scene for the new narrative. Progress has been derailed at both the domestic and international levels. Though more than a few examples of this breakdown exist, I want to focus the first part of my talk mainly on the crisis in Syria. Civil war, the human rights disaster that has resulted, and Russian resurgence have beckoned realist logic back into an international system that appeared increasingly cooperative. In the wake of the UN's systematic ineptitude, the cosmopolitan dream of an integrated global community has reached a new low. Meanwhile, the latest attempts to introduce inclusive democracy have failed epically as complex divides tear apart institutional frameworks in the Middle-East. The second part of my presentation analyzes how Western attempts to turn Afghanistan and Iraq into "melting pot" democracies have made matters worse. I propose a realistic alternative that may be unappealing to some, but offers a better chance of resolving the current crisis.

The causes of these failures- tribalism, nationalism, opportunism, selfishness, jealousy- all share a common root in human nature. While it is disturbing that realist principles still loom over our international system,

running away from this truth is dangerous. Policy resolutions should be wary of pressing a new world order upon immature actors. Forcing the issue on unwilling leaders and governments only provokes further loss of human life and dignity. My argument throughout this talk is that policy should embrace pragmatism-even accepting sobering compromises- in places where evil is resilient. While we sacrifice our ideals temporarily, these compromises ease humanitarian disaster today without sacrificing our long-term vision for the world.

For cosmopolitan scholars, the UN has been the most important indicator of the world's acceptance of international government. Emerging from the ashes of World War II, the UN has been the world's most active and inclusive international political institution ever known. It now boasts 193 member states and its budget is 40 times greater than what it was in 1966 (McGreal). Indeed, the UN's mere existence is a significant step towards realist upheaval. Observers of the Imperial Age prior to World War I would be mystified by the international cooperation witnessed today. However, it is clear that those who drafted the UN Charter knew they were creating a global government constrained by a predominantly *realist* power structure. There is no rosy vision for a cosmopolitan world at the heart of the UN charter. Indeed, the gifted 2<sup>nd</sup> General Secretary of the United Nations,

Dag Hammarskjold, once remarked, “The U.N was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell.”

This is not to understate the importance of the UN as a humanitarian agency. Following the mandate of its Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the UN has saved millions from genocide, famine, and disease in places from Haiti to Kosovo. Globally, countless children have received greater chances to succeed through the educational and developmental programs of Unicef. Even as a reactive unit, the UN has made enormous strides protecting the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family.

On the other hand, is there more the UN could do for the world? As globalization pulls us closer, statesmen and scholars alike have hoped that the UN can transform itself from an emergency response unit into a primary agent of geopolitical change. Sadly, this hope is just that, a mere hope. No bets should be placed on the UN making this transformation anytime soon. As exemplified so clearly in Syria, there are deep structural barriers to the ascension of the UN as a legitimate world force for good.

Bashar al-Assad and the Syrian government are responsible for horrific humanitarian crimes. Everyone knows this. Even prior to 2011 when government troops opened fire on peaceful protests, Assad headed one of the

world's most authoritarian regimes known for suffocating basic freedoms. Human Rights Watch and numerous other watchdogs reported arbitrary arrests and torture. As unrest spiraled into armed rebellion, there have been confirmed reports of attacks on heavily populated areas with indiscriminate weapons such as poison gas and carpet bombs. Fleeing warzones, millions of Syrians are internally displaced or currently migrating long distances to seek asylum abroad. As President Barack Obama made clear earlier this week at the UN, "when a dictator slaughters tens of thousands of his own people, that is not just a matter of one nation's internal affairs — it breeds human suffering on an order of magnitude that affects us all." Yet, four years since the eruption of violence, the UN and the global community have failed to bring about meaningful change. Why?

One key reason is the structure of UN governance. Any international intervention must be approved by the UN's arm of foreign relations, the Security Council. The Council is made up of 15 members who all get a vote in passing security resolutions. However, only 5 members hold a permanent seat. Unsurprisingly, the 5 permanent members, the US, Russia, China, the UK, and France, make up the major victors of World War II. France and the UK, especially, are relics of the post-war power structure. If 9 members of the Security Council vote for a proposal then it is passed BUT if a single

permanent member votes no, the measure is rejected. This veto power is the crux of the UN's internal woes. If there is any conflict of interest between permanent members, no matter how significant, the result is always the same: gridlock and inaction.

Concerning Syrian intervention, Russia and China have already defeated an overwhelming global majority 4 times through use of veto. Justification is found in Putin's General Assembly speech that envisions the UN teaming up with Assad in a new "anti-Hitler coalition" this time against ISIS and legions of terrorists. As most shrewd observers have guessed, the real reason for the veto and recent Russian military presence in Syria is that Assad's regime is Russia's last ally left in the Middle-East. Carrying out a realist power calculation, Putin has decided he will not allow Russia's influence to wane in the region even if it means propping up a mass-murderer. It is the same story in Crimea as Russia used its veto twice to deny UN resolutions under the trumped up pretext of "Crimean self-determination".

The US is not innocent, either, denying a 14-1 majority resolution censuring Israel in 2011 that was supported by the UK, France, and Germany. That veto continues a long trend of defending Israel's breaches of international agreements in the Palestinian territories, Lebanon, and Egypt.

However painful it is to observe, inaction should come as no surprise given the rational selfishness each permanent member possesses.

The cosmopolitan solution to end UN stalemates calls for democratization of the Security Council. Cosmopolitan scholar Daniele Archibugi is exactly right when he proclaims, “Here we are confronted with something with no democratic justification: in no other constitution or organization founded on democratic principles is it accepted that some few members alone may invalidate the decisions of the majority” (Archibugi 306). The obvious solution, as Archibugi advances, is the elimination of the veto or alternatively the introduction of an override that is triggered when 14 of 15 members are unanimous against the sole dissenter. The situations in Syria and Ukraine have ramped up efforts in the General Assembly to change the Council. Jamaica, in particular, drafted a proposal that garnered a surprising level of support before China, the most active anti-reform campaigner in the UN, registered its disapproval and nipped it in the bud. In fact, any proposed reforms will meet the same fate one way or another. Even if the 2/3 required vote is achieved in the Assembly, all five permanent members can veto reforms to the Council. In essence, the 5 permanent members must all voluntarily elect to give their powers for any change to

take place. As the Guardian's Borger and Inzarraulde state, "When the five created the council, they built a fortress with high walls."

So how does cosmopolitan theory break through the ceiling? US ambassador to the UN Samantha Power has talked about "forum-shopping" and the possible creation of another international government. This is most likely a scare tactic. In direct contrast to Power's words, Obama's speech at the General Assembly this week spoke of "carrying forward" the faith of the UN's founders "into the future". Prior to that, he announced heightened US contributions to UN peacekeeping forces, a small but important token for its display of loyalty. Tellingly, Obama's speech aimed many barbs towards Putin and Russia but none were specifically directed at the procedural rules that allow Russia's intransigence. After all, the US has benefitted greatly from its veto in the past, especially in protecting Israel from reprimand. The Obama administration would never admit to it, but the US has much to gain by keeping the legitimacy of the UN *just* above water. This legitimacy maintains the image of "leader of the free world" without any power to scold American unilateral action. Taken together, the procedural checks of the Security Council and the reluctance of world powers to comply erect a nearly insurmountable barrier for global political integration. Sadly, the next

step for political cosmopolitanism is unclear. Cosmopolitans must brace for a long wait until exogenous conditions shift in their favor.

As for a Syrian resolution, the US and its western allies have their backs against a wall. In this age, a direct challenge to another nuclear power is unthinkable. The US must consider working with Russia if it intends to save civilian lives. While a compromise represents a geopolitical defeat, it is the only chance for a humanitarian victory. Make no mistake, this compromise will not be a united effort to end terrorist tyranny. Though ISIS and other terrorist organizations may be caught in the crosshairs, the west will compromise only because humanitarian inaction and the symptomatic refugee crisis has become too much to bear. Some reports suggest that Putin is open to ushering in a “kinder, gentler” authoritarian government in Syria—that is, one without Assad—so long as it stays allied to Russia (Pitel). While not ideal, the removal of Assad would still mark a significant accomplishment for the west and greatly ease future Syrian suffering. With greater presence in Syria, a western coalition can force Russia to more stringently target terrorist rebel factions while creating safe-havens for displaced Syrians. Russia would likely approve of an agreement that offers moderate rebels immunity from attack if they drop their weapons and retreat to these safe-havens. It is deeply unsavory to settle for a partial solution but

a better humanitarian option does not exist at this point. A compromise with Russia is the only option if we value Syrian human rights. Otherwise the west must resign itself to heightened bloodshed as Russia descends into folly.

Other failures in the Middle-East have reflected poorly on a second modern political ideal, inclusive democracy, and subsequently the hope that the Middle-East can transition into the global community. While we point to extremely corrupt men such as Hussein, Gaddafi, and Assad, authoritarianism is a symptom of the central problem. Dictators in the region are terminally linked to widespread tribal tension, a basic condition of the Islamic world. The west often mischaracterizes or fails to recognize this evidence. While we often frame group conflict in the Middle-East in terms of religion, we should not fixate on religion in its traditional sense. In essence, sectarian strife is a mask for the same human angers, jealousies, and insecurities we all face. These pent-up feelings fuel a resilient tribalism that only has been crystallized by religion. Accordingly we should avoid placing too much attention on the “Sunni-Shia” divide and recognize the fact that tribes frequently compete within their own branch for hierarchical standing.

For example, Saudi Arabia is a “Sunni” nation. However, its awful human rights record can be owed directly to a small minority, the ultra-

conservative House of Saud that has politically marginalized the other Sunni houses and sects. As is the case in Saudi Arabia, whichever faction acquires the means to power, whether that be control of production (oil), the favor of retreating colonial governments, or famed ancestral lineage, tends to keep this power strictly “in-house” while holding it over rival factions. All over the Middle-East, from Jordan to Qatar, political power mirrors the caste system. Non-state actors such as ISIS are byproducts of the caste system. Fighting alongside heavily publicized foreign fighters are mainly rural and illiterate Arabs born into the lower tiers of these tribal networks.

Of course, western powers have always had trouble grasping the complexity of these networks. European empires, after exploiting ethnic tension as a deflection tactic during colonial rule, went on to create states that were ignorant of tribal and ethnic divides. Even in countries where populations were distributed along clear ethnic lines, borders were drawn indiscriminately. Indifferent to the fate of the newly independent Iraq, the exiting British grouped Shias, Kurds, and other minority groups under a Sunni-controlled kingdom leading to widespread persecution. The tendency for western intellectuals and policy-makers to group the vast diversity of Middle-Eastern society under one umbrella-culture has been so prominent that it has earned its own term, orientalism. This “intellectual shorthand”, as

historian Douglas Little calls it, has had grave implications in modern initiatives towards ushering the Middle-East into the global political community.

President Bush was certainly asking the right question in 2003 when he remarked, "Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Are millions of men and women and children condemned by history or culture to live in despotism?". On this fundamental question, he is right. On both humanitarian *and* strategic principles, it is in our interest to undermine authoritarian values. After all, every human possesses some element of the will to power. We resent being controlled by others and will only take so much before lashing out. As a result, the audacity of strongmen is limited in the long run. However, Bush's "forward strategy for freedom" was intended to propel democracy to the full extent of the definition. Nothing, he insisted, would be accomplished without "persistence and energy and idealism." However, the opposite has been true in the Middle East. Our idealism compounded by a cultural knowledge deficit is at the heart of recent failures.

Idealism and western ignorance has plagued the approaches of both Bush and Obama in Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan, Bush's objective to eradicate Al Qaeda and beat back the Taliban was a success. These were

healthy and pragmatic goals centered around legitimate domestic security concerns. However, the idea of a broad-based democracy surviving in Afghanistan has always been farcical. When the last NATO troops finally withdraw, Afghanistan's "democratic" government will likely fold.

Afghanistan is simply not a country in the traditional sense. Its borders are porous and the region's tribal confederations have united only when threatened by foreign invasion. As historian William Dalrymple asserts, "Any occupying army here will hemorrhage money and blood to little gain, and in the end most throw in the towel". The US has followed this script perfectly in the last decade. Since landing, 3,407 coalition soldiers have been killed while the total American expenditure now tallies \$700 billion. It may have been labeled Bush and Obama's "good war" but neither president has an excuse for our vain attempts at enduring freedom. We stayed due to an unwarranted confidence propelled by ignorance of underlying tension and paid the price.

While the lesson learned from Afghanistan warns against naïve intervention in pursuit of democracy, Iraq's failure provides instruction on how to re-envision democracy. If we value lives and stability, pragmatism is the answer. As previously mentioned, Iraq is a state where ethnic divisions are distributed along clear geographical lines. Put simply, the Kurds and

other minorities such as Yazidi and Assyrians inhabit the north, the Shias live in the southeast while Sunnis make up Anbar province in the Iraqi west. The gravest mistake of the Bush administration's policy of "forward democracy" was not using these ethnic distributions towards creating a more stable region moving forward. Instead, American policy pinned instability on Saddam Hussein and the regime while ignoring ethnic divides.

Additionally, our ideal of a "melting pot" democracy has proven extremely harmful to all groups involved. The trend we saw in Saudi Arabia is also present in Iraq. The Shia government caters to itself, excluding the Sunni and Kurd factions from the political process. In effect, Iraq has self-corrected into three unofficial autonomous regions splintered along ethnic lines. Yet, American insistence on an inclusive central government meant greater loss of Iraqi lives and a power vacuum in the Iraqi west that has given us the Islamic State. Is a diverse society really so precious that we group rival factions within the same borders despite high likelihood of conflict? This *status quo* could have been achieved without those ill-effects if we had simply partitioned Iraq upon intervention and cultivated three separate governments absent of ethnic tension. Specifically, partition could consist of three separate nation-states or a "soft," federal solution of maximum autonomy within a uniting Iraqi constitution.

Granted, the partition solution has problems of its own. No nation-state is truly pure: there will be ethnic and religious minorities within each of the three sectors and persecution of these groups is likely. Guarantees of minority protection within each sector should be pursued. If this fails, relocating minorities to friendlier sectors should be considered. Relocation would be costly in both economic and social terms, but compare those costs to the suffering that has taken place for over a decade since the fall of Saddam. Relocation could be aided by redrawing boundaries to more closely follow the population distribution.

Another problem with partition is the strong possibility that the Sunni sector of Iraq could be controlled by ISIS. This means that before a process for partition or federalization can begin, a plan for defeating Islamist militants must be developed and supported by the United States and the region, but led by Iraqi Shi'ite and Sunni and Kurds. Though it appears the current military campaign against ISIS is not going well, there is some evidence for cautious optimism. ISIS, when attacking any significant military force, has been defeated. Kurdish militias, capable units but not heavily armed military juggernauts, stifled the Islamic States's advance north at the town of Kobane two months ago. Indeed, their domain is limited

to the power vacuums in the impoverished Sunni areas of Western Iraq and East Syria.

There no longer should be a taboo in partitioning dysfunctional states into narrow ethnic or tribal democracies. State borders are not set in stone. They were created by men and can be redrawn again. In the future, the global community should be proactive in its recognition of new states reflecting national identity. A first step would be recognizing a Kurdish state in north Iraq and further down the road, creating a Houthi state in the Yemen. While we sacrifice the inclusive and harmonious element of democracy, conflict will be kept to a minimum and these smaller states are endowed with greater chances to succeed.

To conclude, I want to make clear that I do not regard the UN as irrelevant to the resolution of regional or global conflicts. Serving as a forum for world leaders to state their viewpoints and dialogue with each other is not an unimportant function. The humanitarian mission of the UN and other relief organizations is essential to dealing with the tragic effects of conflict. UN peacekeepers play a vital role in enforcing agreements among nations, and they could be a useful tool in any future Middle East settlements. However, hard-nosed negotiations among superpowers and regional actors, taking into account the tribal realities of the region, are

necessary to stop the bloodshed. Dealing with bad actors is a sad reality, but to wish them away is even more dangerous.

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you want the middle east to be safe USA has to leave and leave for good i don't mean just soldiers i mean there covert ones as well.

7. 1. Related Questions. More Answers Below. Why is democracy struggling in the Middle East? Is it a good thing or a bad thing that democracy is struggling in this region? What is an informal democracy, and in what way is related to the Middle East? Why hasn't democracy been working in the Middle East so far in so many countries? Why did democracy fail in Russia? Is Israel the only true and stable democracy in the middle east? Anand. The rulers, Kings & other leaders in Middle East did not do anything to increase productivity of their lands. They learned nothing from Israel. So citizens remained poor.

2.2. The state of democracy in the Middle East.

91. References 110. Chapter 4. The state of democracy in Asia and the Pacific. 166. 4.1. Introduction. This publication has benefited from contributions made by many individuals at International IDEA, and from the input of members of the Institute's partner organizations. The Global State of Democracy 2019 was led by the report editor Annika Silva-Leander, Head of International IDEA's Democracy Assessment and Political Analysis (DAPA) unit, and written and compiled by the members of the project team, including Annika Silva-Leander, Armend Bekaj, Martin Brusis, Elisenda Ballester Buxà, Rosinah Ismail-Clarke, Naomi Malaki, Joseph Noonan and Adina Trunk (from the Secretary-General's Office).

What effect did the Crusades have on the Middle East? Learn more about their impact on the course of history. The Crusades were sparked by religious fervor in Europe, by exhortations from various popes, and by the need to rid Europe of excess warriors left over from regional wars. What effect did these attacks, which came from out of the blue from the perspective of Muslims and Jews in the Holy Land, have on the Middle East? Short-Term Effects. In an immediate sense, the Crusades had a terrible effect on some of the Muslim and Jewish inhabitants of the Middle East. During the First Crusade, for example, adherents of the two religions joined together to defend the cities of Antioch (1097 CE) and Jerusalem (1099) from European Crusaders who laid siege to them. But the melting pot imagery has been contested by the idea of multiculturalism, the "salad bowl theory", or as it is known in Canada, the "cultural mosaic", whereby the immigrants retain their own national characteristics while integrating into a new society. Some go further. Harvard political scientist Samuel Huntington says that large-scale Latino immigration poses a threat to American identity. Mexican Americans feel increasingly comfortable with their own culture and often contemptuous of American culture. Douglas Rivelin from the National Immigration Forum contests Mr Huntington's view of Latinos as different from other immigrant groups. "I was astounded that someone so smart could write such a book," he says. "He is totally missing what is going on in the US. A global nuclear standoff with the Soviet Union ended peacefully -- as did the Soviet Union. The nations of Europe are moving towards unity, not dividing into armed camps and descending into genocide. Our commitment to democracy is also tested in the Middle East, which is my focus today, and must be a focus of American policy for decades to come. In many nations of the Middle East -- countries of great strategic importance -- democracy has not yet taken root. And the questions arise: Are the peoples of the Middle East somehow beyond the reach of liberty? Yet there's a great challenge today in the Middle East. In the words of a recent report by Arab scholars, the global wave of democracy has -- and I quote -- "barely reached the Arab states."