

Countering Islamists at the Ballot Box: Alternative Strategies

Nov 3, 2006



In-Depth Reports

Since the September 11 attacks, promoting democracy has been a cornerstone of the Bush administration's Middle East policy, viewed as the best antidote to radicalism. Washington has allocated hundreds of millions of dollars to advancing Middle Eastern civil society, and the region has witnessed an unprecedented array of elections. In many cases, however, Islamist political parties appear to be winning the day. Why is this happening? Can Islamists be countered at the ballot box, or should Washington focus on democratization efforts beyond elections? What strategies might be used to strengthen liberals and prevent the empowerment of parties inimical to the fundamental elements of democratic life?

During a recent conference, The Washington Institute convened an extraordinary panel discussion aimed at addressing these questions. Now, the Institute is pleased to announce a new Policy Focus that includes edited transcripts of remarks by the three speakers -- **Soner Cagaptay**

(<http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/templateC10.php?CID=3>), F. Gregory Gause III, and Mona Makram-Ebeid -- along with a special introduction by David Schenker. Using historical comparisons, sober observations of conditions on the ground, and personal political experience from the region, the speakers offer starkly different approaches to the Islamist problem, ranging from a massive, Cold War-style U.S. campaign to complete disengagement from regional democratization efforts. In the wake of Islamist successes across the Middle East, U.S. officials would be wise to review the options offered in these candid and compelling presentations.

- 24 pages

RECOMMENDED



BRIEF ANALYSIS

Nuclear Agency Chief Visits Iran: Expectations and Next Steps

May 3, 2024



Simon Henderson



BRIEF ANALYSIS

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq Collates a 200-Day Attack Scoreboard

May 3, 2024

Michael Knights

(/policy-analysis/islamic-resistance-iraq-collates-200-day-attack-scoreboard)



BRIEF ANALYSIS

Ongoing Debates over Water and Electricity Privatization in Morocco

May 1, 2024

Soufiane Elgoumri

(/policy-analysis/ongoing-debates-over-water-and-electricity-privatization-morocco)

TOPICS

Arab & Islamic Politics (/policy-analysis/arab-islamic-politics)

U.S. Policy (/policy-analysis/us-policy)

Democracy & Reform (/policy-analysis/democracy-reform)