

## THE 2002 ARAB HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT: IMPLICATIONS FOR DEMOCRACY

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The Arab Human Development Report for 2002<sup>1</sup> (hereafter AHDR or Report) is an impressive 170-page document (the English version) that provides detailed description and critical evaluation of the economic, demographic, social and political conditions in the Arab region. Emphasizing the fact that all of its authors are Arab, the Report claims to provide an insider's look at the problems of development in the region.<sup>2</sup> The Report covers all the traditional areas of interest to the U.N. Development Program (UNDP), such as economic growth, income distribution, demographic trends, poverty, access to education and health care, and infant mortality. The Report's novelty, however, stems primarily from at least six factors.

To start with, this is the first UNDP report on the Arab region as a whole. This implies U.N. recognition of the many common (political, economic and social) features of the countries of the region, as well as an endorsement of Arab efforts towards heightened economic cooperation and eventual integration. While the Report is mindful of the disparities among Arab countries (as well as within each country) it

stresses the many similarities in the conditions they face.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the Report is inspired by a certain pan-Arab spirit that stresses Arab economic integration as one chief instrument for overcoming the problems of underdevelopment and addressing the challenges posed by globalization.

Second, the Report brings politics back into the development picture to a far greater extent than earlier UNDP reports. An entire chapter (chapter 7) is devoted to the issue of governance, with many recommendations on how to reform (that is, democratize) Arab political systems in order to enhance their capacities to deal with modern challenges (especially the globalization challenge) and to provide the Arab people with the right institutional milieu to develop politically, economically and intellectually. Chapter 7 provides a rich and sophisticated analysis of political conditions in the Arab region and the impact of politics on development. Perhaps the most interesting contribution of this chapter lies in its discussion of the human-welfare index, which is essentially a measure of the freedoms enjoyed by citizens. The index distinguishes between high, medium and low human-welfare

countries. No Arab country achieves high human welfare, while seven Arab countries with about 9 percent of the Arab population enjoy medium welfare. The remaining countries (with more than 90 percent of the Arab population) are characterized by low human welfare. The Report concludes, "If development is understood as 'a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy' then the challenge of human development, calculated to include variables associated with various forms of instrumental freedom, remains a real one for over 90 percent of the Arab population" (p. 113).

While the terms "democracy" and "democratization" appear infrequently in the Report, there should be no doubt that implementing all or most of the reforms called for in chapter 7 will lead to the emergence of governments that fulfill "democratic" criteria. This should be clear in light of the institutional reforms that the Report calls for to strengthen the powers of legislatures, particularly their oversight function, while ensuring that they are "chosen based on free, honest, efficient and regular elections" (p. 114); recognizing the right of opposition parties to exist; making the executive branch more accountable to the legislative branch and to the people at large; introducing or strengthening mechanisms for ensuring alternation of power; making the judiciary independent of other branches of government; trimming the size of the civil administration and enhancing its productivity; and strengthening the role of local governments. The Report also calls for changing the laws governing the formation of associations to remove from the state the power to ban the formation of NGOs.

Third, the Report is openly critical of the performance of Arab regimes in most

of the areas that it covers. It faults those regimes for allowing three interrelated deficits to develop: the freedom, knowledge and gender deficits. Capturing the Report's spirit, Alan Richards speaks of a fourth deficit that the Report highlights; the "democratic deficit."<sup>4</sup> The Report's authors rightly argue that enhancing citizens' access to knowledge and combating discrimination against women are important goals for their own sakes as well as for the sake of expanding individual freedoms (and ensuring such freedoms for all members of society.) The Report highlights the inextricable links between individual freedoms and development. Not only is development not possible without the protection of individual freedoms (e.g. freedom of conscience, speech and assembly, as well as economic freedoms), but also the ultimate goal of development is the maximization of individual freedoms. Individual freedoms are thus posited as both means and ends of the development process. This focus on the links between individual freedoms and development should be music to the ears of those who prefer liberal democracy to other forms of government. Nevertheless, as social scientists, the Report's authors should have tried harder to distinguish (at least at an analytical level) between the two concepts of development and individual freedoms. Furthermore, while the Report distinguishes between different types of individual freedoms (p. 19) – mainly political, economic and social freedoms – it does not address the inherent contradictions among them.<sup>5</sup>

Fourth, the Report makes a clear distinction between the concepts of economic growth and development. It views development in a holistic way to include much more than economic growth. The

downgrading of the purely economic aspects of development is reflected in the construction of the Alternative Human Development Index (AHDI), which does not include per capita GDP as one of its components. The AHDI (discussed in chapter one) is based on six indicators of development: life expectancy at birth, educational attainment, freedom score, gender empowerment, Internet hosts per capita, and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. As the Report notes, the ranking of the Arab countries deteriorates as we move from the traditional HDI to the AHDI. The authors have a simple explanation for this phenomenon: Arab countries are richer than they are developed.

As we will see below, the replacement of the HDI by the AHDI received considerable criticism from several Arab authors. The Report views development in terms of building, efficiently utilizing and, perhaps most interestingly, “liberating” human capabilities. As chapters 4 and 5 argue, the building of human capabilities requires improving health and environmental conditions and thoroughly reforming the educational system. The effective utilization of human capabilities calls for stimulating economic growth to reduce unemployment and poverty as well as improving access to information, especially via modern means such as the Internet. As for liberating human capabilities, this hinges on implementing the political reforms called for in chapter 7. As mentioned above, the Report is clearly interested in the political dimension of development: political reform is not only presented as a necessary condition for economic and social development, but the establishment of transparent and accountable governments (democratic ones) is treated as one of the fundamental

goals of the development process.

Fifth, the Report does not shy away from the sensitive issue of discrimination against women. While the Report praises the achievements of Arab countries in enhancing women’s access to education, it remains critical of the status of Arab women. It notes, for example, that the rate of maternal mortality in the region is double that of Latin America and the Caribbean and four times that of East Asia (p. 2). It also notes that “women suffer from unequal citizenship and legal entitlements often found in voting rights and legal codes” (p. 3). The Report is particularly critical of the fact that only a small number of Arab women hold political office in comparison to other regions in the Third World. The inclusion of a Gender Empowerment Measure in the AHDI, and the Report’s assertion that development that is not engendered is endangered (p. 2), are clear indications of the importance the Report places on women’s empowerment.

Sixth and last, the Report exudes a humanistic spirit that positions the individual at the center of the development process in a manner reminiscent of Renaissance and Enlightenment authors in Europe who placed the individual at the center of the universe. This humanistic spirit (which runs throughout the Report) is quite apparent, especially in the first chapter and in the chapters on education and governance (chapters 3 and 7 respectively.) In chapter one there is a long quote from *Development as Freedom* by Nobel Prize laureate Sen on the connection between development and freedom (box 1.4, p. 19). In chapter 3, and in the context of discussing the principles that should guide the reform of the educational system, the Report notes: “The individual should be central to

the learning process. Without implying indifference to the community or absence of cooperative behavior, the dignity of the individual should be respected” (p. 55).

Chapter 7 views the protection and expansion of individual freedoms as the ultimate goal of political reform and indeed of the entire development process. I call this spirit humanistic rather than neoliberal (for in neoliberalism there is also quite an emphasis on the unleashing of individual initiative and the protection of individual rights, particularly property rights) because many of the Report’s recommendations regarding the need to fight unemployment and poverty and to actively engage the government in the health, women’s empowerment and environmental domains run counter to the precepts of neoliberalism. Nevertheless, neoliberals would not take issue with several of the Report’s recommendations, particularly with regard to the primary role that the private sector should play in the production process (with the role of government restricted to the regulatory and redistribution spheres), the need for the state to respect property rights (including intellectual-property rights) and the importance of expanding trade and investment links to the global economy.

In brief, the Report neither rejects nor wholeheartedly embraces the precepts of the neoliberal paradigm. But as a document produced by Arab scholars, it represents a growing awareness among at least a small section of the region’s intelligentsia of the many failures and the current inadequacy of the étatist or state-led development strategy. That this étatist development model has encouraged the emergence and persistence of authoritarian regimes is also indicated in the Report, although the Report does not dwell on the links between

authoritarianism in the political realm and state-led growth in the economic realm.

## REACTIONS TO THE REPORT

Being the first UNDP Report to cover the Arab region as a whole – and making some very strong assertions about the status of women, the knowledge deficit, the need for good governance or democracy, and the inexorable link between development and individual freedoms – the AHDR triggered strong, and on the whole negative, reactions in the Arab world. This hostile reaction can be contrasted to the far more positive reception it received from Western academicians, policy makers and journalists, who approvingly quoted sections of the Report.<sup>6</sup>

One of the strongest Arab critics of the Report is the Palestinian author Munir Shafic, who questions the validity of the AHDI, arguing that it is not necessarily a better measure of development than the more conventional HDI.<sup>7</sup> Shafic quotes the renowned Egyptian economist Galal Amin (another critic of the Report), who questioned the validity of giving equal weight to all six components of the AHDI, as well as the existence of a causal link between such components and development. Shafic notes that the only reason behind employing the AHDI was to bring down the ranking of Arab countries to the lowest possible level. Galal Amin makes the same accusation.<sup>8</sup> Shafic also takes issue with the AHDR’s contention that the freedom, knowledge and gender deficits are causes of underdevelopment. He points to countries that achieved remarkable development under authoritarian regimes (e.g. the East Asian Tigers and China). He also notes that the empowerment of women in the West came as a consequence of the

Industrial Revolution (development) and was not a cause of it. George Corm, a Christian intellectual who served as Lebanon's finance minister 1998-2000, also questions the existence of any linkage between development and democracy.<sup>9</sup> He argues that the issue of individual freedom, while important in itself, should be separated from that of development. He further notes that an equitable distribution of income should take precedence over granting economic freedoms.

It is clear that there is a fundamental difference here between Amin, Corm and Shafic and the authors of the AHDR regarding what development means. Amin, Corm and Shafic still view development in the more traditional sense of economic growth, probably accompanied by a better distribution of income, but they are not sensitive to the political dimensions of development (e.g., that without individual freedoms and good governance – or democracy – there is no development).

A more moderate critic is Ahmad Baalbaki, who also faults the Report for giving prominence to issues of knowledge acquisition and individual freedoms in the measurement of human development, and for not stressing the role of international factors (mainly Western political and economic dominance and the prescriptions of the World Bank and IMF) in causing underdevelopment (and in particular poverty) in the Third World.<sup>10</sup> Riyadh Tabbara, Lebanon's former ambassador to the United States, who currently heads a research center, has strongly criticized the methodology of the Report and its findings. His criticisms focus on the validity of the AHDR as a measure of development and the selective use of statistics in the Report to portray a gloomy picture of human

conditions in the Arab region. Tabbara further warns that the Report would play into the hands of Western media to further tarnish the image of Arab and Muslim societies, following the events of September 11, and could be used by Western governments to impose change from outside in the name of democracy or good governance.<sup>11</sup> Clovis Maksoud, the Arab League's former representative at the United Nations, and a member of the AHDR's advisory board, responded in detail to the criticisms of Tabbara, noting that political change must come from inside, because it is in the interest of the Arab people, regardless of the West's position towards democracy and individual freedoms.<sup>12</sup>

Mounir Khawaja, professor at the American University of Beirut, observes that the AHDR emphasizes the negative aspects of development in the Arab countries over the positive ones.<sup>13</sup> He further accuses the Report's authors of painting a bleak picture of the development situation by deliberately excluding per capita GDP from their AHDI, while including other indicators on which they knew the Arab region was going to score low. According to Khawaja, the AHDR assumed that Arab countries had the freedom to choose their development policies; those choices were, however, framed by the prevalent international environment, he noted. Similar to Tabbara, who argued that the Report was that of activists rather than academics, he concluded that the AHDR was a political report rather than an academic or scientific one.

Hassan Mneimneh, professor at the Lebanese University, took issue with the AHDR's contention that the Arab region fell well behind other Third World regions in terms of the freedoms enjoyed by its

citizens.<sup>14</sup> He questioned whether the citizens of countries that toed the U.S. line (such as South Korea) were really freer than Arab citizens. Mneimneh further objected to the way the AHDR gave Jordan and Kuwait (two U.S. allies) the highest scores within the Arab region for the independence of their media.

Saudi author Nouaiman Uthman, who is more balanced in his assessment, also criticized the AHDR for the way it defines poverty, its play on words (using *al-tanmiyyah al-insaniyyah* rather than *al-tarbiyyah al-bashariyyah*) and its neglect of the role of religion as a factor influencing the different aspects of the development process.<sup>15</sup>

Naturally, not all Arab thinkers came out against the Report. The late Edward Said agreed with what the Report had to say about the absence of democracy, persistent discrimination against women, and the lagging behind of the Arab region in the scientific and technological domains.<sup>16</sup> Fahmia Sharaf Eddine, a professor at the Lebanese University, praised the Report's methodology and findings; she criticized the Report, however, for not going far enough in recommending how to change current conditions in the Arab world.

Furthermore, a cursory look at the views (expressed in English) of Arab intellectuals residing in the United States reveals a more sympathetic appraisal of the AHDR than the one generally given by Arab intellectuals residing in the region and writing in Arabic.<sup>17</sup> One may argue though that Arab authors residing in the West and writing mainly for a Western audience had little or no impact on Arab public opinion, since their views were expressed in venues that did not reach the Arab world. In brief, those intellectuals who spoke (in Arabic) in

favor of the Report represented a minority within the Arab intelligentsia.

### EXPLAINING THE HOSTILITY

The task at hand is to explain the causes of the negative, even hostile, reaction from Arab thinkers residing in the region to the Report's conclusions and recommendations. First, many Arab intellectuals seem to worry about the consequences of implementing liberal reforms (in the political, civic and economic realms) on the state's ability to retain its commanding position in society. This preference for strong (but not necessarily tyrannical) states remains rampant among Arab intellectuals. Many of them have experienced a certain upward mobility thanks to greater state intervention in the economy and society (e.g., through free education at state universities.) At a more ideological level, a strong state is deemed essential for promoting the "grand causes" (to use John Waterbury's term<sup>18</sup>) that Arab intellectuals and a broad section of the Arab public continue to believe in: Arab unity, economic and social development (defined rather differently from how the AHDR defines them), the application of the *Sharia* (for the Islamists) and the struggle against Israel and Western imperialism. A strong state is needed to promote such causes. When adopting a critical posture towards their regimes, Arab intellectuals are far more likely to complain about the failure of safety nets to protect the poor and unemployed, the emergence of crony capitalism (often blamed on privatization), and the inability or unwillingness of Arab regimes to stand up to the United States and Israel than about the lack of individual freedoms and democracy.

Second, Arab intellectuals are appre-

hensive about how criticism of economic, social and political conditions in the Arab world (especially when such criticisms come from inside the region) can be used by Western governments and the Western media to discredit Arab states and undermine their achievements in the post-independence period. All the above-cited critics of the AHDR share this concern. There are deep-seated reasons that so many Arab intellectuals (and perhaps the majority of Arab populations) mistrust and even fear the West. This is not the place to discuss these reasons. Nevertheless, one may mention a few related factors: (1) the experience with Western imperialism (even in the guise of the mandate system), (2) the establishment of the state of Israel (with British and U.S. backing)<sup>19</sup> and the consistent support it has received from the West, (3) U.S. animosity towards Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser<sup>20</sup> (still cherished by many Arab intellectuals), (4) the failure of Arab oil-exporting countries to maintain control over the price of oil beyond a brief period in the 1970s, (5) U.S. naval and military presence in the Persian Gulf area since the early 1980s, and (6) the recent U.S. invasion and occupation of Iraq.

Despite their many differences, secular Arab nationalists and Islamists are equally apprehensive about Western intentions towards the region. For them, Western governments are either not really democratic or not interested in promoting democratic governments in the Arab and Muslim worlds for a mixture of economic and strategic reasons. The attack on the AHDR was in part a response to the positive way in which it was received in Western circles and hailed in *The New York Times*, *The Financial Times*, *The*

*Guardian* and *The Economist*.<sup>21</sup> For Arab thinkers like Amin, Shafic and Tabbara, the AHDR provided ammunition to the West, and the United States in particular, in its assault on the Arab and Muslim parts of the world. Tabbara, for example, pointed out how anti-Arab authors like Thomas Friedman sought to use the Report to legitimize the U.S. war on Iraq or to discredit the Arab struggle against Israel.<sup>22</sup> Maksoud ably answers this charge. He argues that it is the duty of Arab intellectuals to identify the political, economic and social problems that the Arab region is reeling under and to recommend solutions to these problems. It is better for the impetus for reform to come from the inside rather than the outside via Western governments and Western-dominated financial institutions like the World Bank and IMF. Maksoud, Nader Fargany (the lead author of the Report) and the few Arab thinkers who contributed editorials in Arabic newspapers in support of the AHDR were, however, clearly in the minority and on the defensive. If the AHDR was intended to provide an insider's view of the problems of development, freedom and democracy in the Arab World, this view was not shared by the majority of Arab thinkers residing in the region.

### **THE AHDR, THE WEST AND DEMOCRACY**

The AHDR achieved one minimal objective. It succeeded in triggering a debate about the meaning and dimensions of human development, particularly the relationship between democracy and development. The intensity of the criticisms leveled at the Report, however, reveals that a major segment of the Arab intelligentsia has (to be gracious) ambivalent attitudes

toward individual liberties, democracy, free access to information and gender equality. Such attitudes are clearly a hindrance to the development of liberal-democratic institutions and practices.

As for the Arab citizens (the ones that the Report was supposed to help), I am doubtful that the Report's authors were able to reach them. The Report did not draw the attention of broad segments of the Arab public. The debate about it, while intense, was over in a few months. Furthermore, the Arab media (including those free of state control) devoted far less attention to the Report than they did to the Palestinian intifada, Iraq and the U.S. anti-terror campaign. It has been more than a year since the Report's appearance (a second AHDR was released in October 2003), and there have been no apparent efforts on the part of Arab governments to implement any of its recommendations, or any pressures from below on Arab governments to do so.

Most Arab citizens seem to worry more about events in Palestine and Iraq, and their own survival under tough and uncertain economic conditions, than they do about democracy, freedoms, Internet access and gender empowerment. Democratic attitudes and practices are not likely to flourish under conditions of political and economic uncertainty and in states and societies that feel besieged by more powerful forces. As *The Economist* points out, in the Arab world the emphasis is much more on national liberation, as currently represented by the struggle of the Palestinians against Israeli occupation (and perhaps in the struggle of the Iraqis against U.S. occupation) than on individual liberty.<sup>23</sup>

Neither has U.S. policy, especially in

the aftermath of September 11, helped the cause of democracy in the region. As Alan Richards points out:

. . . [T]he main result of the post-9/11 policy shifts has been to ensure that any authoritarian who resolutely pursued violent enemies of the United States could depend upon U.S. support. Such an environment only strengthens hardliners within authoritarian regimes, giving them fewer reasons than before to seek accommodation with opposition elements.<sup>24</sup>

But it was not just the United States. The West as a whole did not act to promote democracy in the Arab region. In the words of Chris Patten:

Given the support the West has extended to oppressive Arab regimes, it is understandable that all this talk of democratization arouses suspicion on the so-called Arab street. For too long, Western countries have followed the path of expediency in the Middle East, propping up pro-Western strongmen for fear that what might replace them would be substantially worse.<sup>25</sup>

Patten's views are shared by the great majority of Arab and Muslim thinkers, who are quite dubious about Western claims regarding the promotion of democracy in the Arab and Muslim world. Muqtedar Khan, for instance, writes, "Many [Muslims and Arabs] remain skeptical as well as cynical, since democracy in the Middle East was never in the U.S. interest in the past, and a democratic Middle East may make the pursuit of narrowly conceived U.S. interests in the region more difficult."<sup>26</sup>

Jordan's foreign minister, Marwan Muashar, warns that U.S. ramblings about

“rearranging the region” are weakening the hands of reformers who seek democratic change by making them look like they are “doing America’s bidding.”<sup>27</sup>

In conclusion, and despite a few positive signs coming from Jordan, Morocco and the small Gulf states, the prospects for democracy in the Arab region do not seem to be particularly bright. The cause of democracy is hindered by at least three main factors. First, regimes in pivotal Arab states such as Saudi Arabia, Syria and Egypt are extremely reluctant to democratize out of fear of losing power. For authoritarian and not-so-popular regimes, losing power is tantamount to losing political relevance and even risking the loss of life (or at least property acquired during years in power) for members of the regime and their families.

Second, and as the hostile reactions to the AHDR reveal, the Arab intelligentsia (in both its secular and Islamic wings) has not been won over to the cause of democracy, particularly its liberal variant. To put it succinctly, opinion shapers in the region are not sending clear and consistent messages to the Arab populations in favor of democ-

racy and individual freedoms.

Finally, the whole debate over democracy seems to generate only limited interest in the so-called Arab street. What the struggling Arab masses seem to aspire to is not liberal democracy, but the success of the Palestinians in ridding themselves of Israeli occupation (while making as few concessions as possible to the Jewish state); the restoration of Iraq as a strong, united and independent (but not necessarily democratic) state; the end of U.S. hegemony over the region; and the building of just domestic orders in which the state acquires an Islamic character (by basing its laws on the Islamic Sharia), while reaffirming its role as protector (against external enemies) and provider for the less fortunate.

Finally, the United States and the West, in general, do not seem to be overly troubled by the lack of democracy in the Arab region.<sup>28</sup> But, even if they were, given prevailing attitudes about the West (and the United States in particular), it is not likely that Western pressure would aid the cause of democracy. On the contrary, it might backfire.

<sup>1</sup> United Nations Development Programme and Arab Human Fund for Economic and Social Development, *Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating Opportunities for Future Generations* (New York: United Nations Publication, 2002).

<sup>2</sup> In an interview with *Al-Hayat* (London), Rima Khalaf Huanidi, director of the Arab Regional Bureau of the UNDP, notes that the Report “was written by Arabs for Arabs.” United Nations Information Center (UNIC), Beirut. Press Review: Special Issue on UNDP Arab Human Development Report, July 5, 2002.

<sup>3</sup> See also the remarks of Rima Khalaf Huaidi, *Gulf News*, October 29, 2002.

<sup>4</sup> Alan Richards, “Modernity and Economic Development,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. X, No. 3, Fall 2003, p. 67.

<sup>5</sup> On how economic freedom can undermine political and civil freedoms, see, in particular, Sylvia Chan, *Liberalism, Democracy and Development* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), especially chapter 2, “Decomposing Liberal-democracy,” pp. 39-56.

<sup>6</sup> For works by academics and policy makers, see mainly Richards and Chris Patten, “How Not To Spread Democracy,” *Foreign Policy*, September/October 2003, pp. 40-46.

<sup>7</sup> *Al-Hayat*, October 4, 2002, p. 10.

<sup>8</sup> *Al-Safir*, November 7, 2002, p. 19.

<sup>9</sup> *Al-Nahar* (Beirut), August 16, 2002, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> *Al-Safir*, December 11, 2002, p. 17.

<sup>11</sup> *Al-Hayat*, November 10, 2002, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> *Al-Hayat*, December 30, 2002, p. 12.

<sup>13</sup> *Al-Safir*, September 25, 2002, p.7.

<sup>14</sup> *Al-Safir*, January 22, 2003, p. 19.

<sup>15</sup> *Al-Hayat*, November 11, 2002, p.10.

<sup>16</sup> *Al-Hayat*, August 19, 2002, p. 9.

<sup>17</sup> See, for example, the views expressed by UCLA Law professor, Khaled Abou El Fadl, and president of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, Ziad Asali, during their appearance on “Hardball with Chris Mathews” (9:00 PM ET) CNBC, July 2, 2002 (CNBC News Transcripts).

<sup>18</sup> Quoted in Richards, p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> See, for example, Ussama Makdissi, “Anti-Americanism in the Arab World: An Interpretation of a Brief History,” *Journal of American History*, Vol. 89, Issue 2; online at <http://www.historycooperative.org/journals/jah/89.2/makdissi.html>.

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

<sup>21</sup> See, for example, Barbara Crossette, “Study Warns of Stagnation in Arab Societies,” *The New York Times*, July 2, 2002, p. A11. Karen DeYoung, “Arab Report Cites Development Obstacles; Study Blames Poor Education, Political Repression, Treatment of Women,” *The Washington Post*, July 2, 2002, p. A10; Richard N. Haass, “The Goal Becomes Muslim Democracy; A Priority Shift in Washington,” *The International Herald Tribune*, December 11, 2002, p. 4; “The Arab World Takes a Hard Look at Itself,” *The Washington Post*, July 14, 2002, p. B3; and “Special Report: Arab Development,” *The Economist*, July 6, 2002, pp. 24-28. Critics of the AHDR (such as Riyadh Tabbara) pointed in particular to the Special Report in *The Economist* and to Thomas Friedman’s editorials in *The New York Times* to point out how the AHDR was being exploited by Western media to tarnish the image of the Arabs and of Islam.

<sup>22</sup> Thomas Friedman notes that the United States should “make it clear that it was going into Iraq, not just to disarm Iraq but empower Iraq’s people to implement the Arab Human Development Report . . . .” *The New York Times*, October 23, 2002, p. A23. In another editorial, Friedman argues that one should only read the AHDR to “understand the milieu that produced bin Ladensim, and will reproduce it if nothing changes . . . .” *The New York Times*, July 3, 2002, p. A23. An editorial in *The Columbus Dispatch* (Ohio) argues that the AHDR shows that the causes of Arab underdevelopment are internal. It goes on to note that Arab governments try to blame their problems on the West and Israel. “Blaming Israel also perpetuates another self-destructive notion . . . that Arab problems are caused by outsiders. Destroy or drive them out and all will be right in the Arab world, goes this flawed reasoning.” *The Columbus Dispatch*, August 19, 2002, p. A6. According to another editorial, “If you wonder why Arab states are the way they are, read the Arab Human Development Report,” *The Dallas Morning News*, July 6, 2002. To provide one last example of how the AHDR was used by certain commentators in the United States, Jack Kemp stresses the Report’s findings with regard to the “freedoms deficit” to criticize Muslim societies for their treatment of their Christian minorities. He claims: “The Egyptian Christian Copt minority is persecuted by the government, and hundreds have been massacred by Islamist groups since 1988,” *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, July 10, 2002, p. B5.

<sup>23</sup> *The Economist*, July 6, 2002, p. 26. Writing a few months after the AHDR came out, and prior to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, David Hirst noted: “[In Cairo] the preoccupation with the two things that seem most fateful for the future – the Israeli-Palestinian struggle and U.S. plans for a possible war against Iraq – is overwhelming.” “One Year on: The Arab Perspective: ‘America wants to wage war on all of us’: Regime Change Seen as New Term for Old Enemy,” *The Guardian*, September 6, 2002, p. 4.

<sup>24</sup> Richards, p. 70.

<sup>25</sup> Patten, p. 43.

<sup>26</sup> Muqtedar Khan, “Prospects for Muslim Democracy,” *Middle East Policy*, Vol. X, No. 3, Fall 2003, pp. 79-89.

<sup>27</sup> *The New York Times*, April 26, 2003, p. A19.

<sup>28</sup> President George W. Bush, however, made several references to the need to democratize the governments of the region including governments (like Egypt and Saudi Arabia) that have been close U.S. allies. See, for example, President Bush’s speech before the National Endowment for Democracy on November 6, 2003. *The New York Times*, November 7, 2003, pp. A1&16. It remains to be seen whether the administration will combine words with deeds.