



Memos To The Next President

From:

Re:

Jon B. Alterman.....Unchanged Priorities
 James A. Bill.....Gulf Policy Problems
 Marshall J. BregerProactive Involvement
 Richard W. BullietDemocratic Islamists
 Patrick Clawson.....Peace and Containment
 Stephen P. CohenListening Deeply
 Anthony Cordesman.....Flawed Approaches
 Laura Drake.....Transitional Dynamics
 John L. EspositoMuslim Sensibilities
 Jerrold D. GreenStructural Problems
 Richard N. HaassProminent Faultlines
 Frederic C. Hof.....Special Pleadings
 Richard HolmesSanctions Reform
 Michael C. Hudson.....Policy Machinery
 John MarksNew Domestic Politics
 Daniel Pipes.....Rule of Law
 William B. Quandt.....Fresh Team
 Abdul Aziz Said.....Islam and Democracy
 Hisham SharabiRestoring Credibility
 Gary Sick.....Engaging Iran
 Henry Siegman.....Unilateral Withdrawal
 Steven L. Spiegel.....Supporting Moderation
 Kenneth W. SteinStaying Engaged
 Richard B. Straus.....Doing No Harm
 Shibley TelhamiThinking More Broadly
 Michael Van Dusen.....Priorities Beyond Peace
 Milton Viorst.....Worried Partisans
 Corinne Whitlatch.....Sharing Jerusalem
 Philip C. Wilcox Jr.Asserting Leadership
 David Wurmser.....Defeating Tyranny

MEMORANDUM

To: The Next President
From: Daniel Pipes
Re: Rule of Law



This is, as usual, an exciting time in the Middle East, and the region once again presents a disproportionate share of problems for the United States. Here's a quick run-down of the issues with some policy suggestions:

The Arab-Israeli conflict. Although the current round of negotiations—optimistically called the “peace process”—have been underway since late 1991, nearly a decade of concessions—both actual and offered—by Israel have not won the expected change of heart by its Palestinian, Syrian, and other opponents. Instead, the Israeli willingness to make unilateral concessions has led to a greater sense of ambition among its enemies. The last two administrations made the mistake of pushing the Israelis to make more concessions; your obligation—a more counter-intuitive one—is to urge them to go slow and watch for their security. Otherwise, we will be called in to pick up the pieces.

Islamism. This is the most vibrant extremist ideology in the world today, a threat to our interests not just in the Middle East but from West Africa to Southeast Asia, and even here in the United States. Islamists hate us for who we are, not what we do. There is no hope of achieving a *modus vivendi* with them. You need to show them early and often that they cannot push this country around.

Iraq. President Saddam Hussein remains an aggressive tyrant intent on making his mark on the world stage through either weapons of mass destruction or his control of the oil market. We are not usually in the business of regime change; here is the exception. The best vehicles for this are the opposition groups desperate for US backing.

Iran. Though widely criticized, our sanctions policy toward Iran has worked. The economy—and therefore the military threat—is

much diminished thanks to our efforts to keep investors at bay. The regime is slowly crumbling spiritually; the process has a way to go and things could get much nastier before they get better.

Turkey. Turkey may not be in the US government's definition of the Middle East but it is nonetheless in the region. We have long had a queasy attitude toward the military's role in Turkey's political arena; that's a valid concern but we should not forget that the military is protecting that country from the threat of Islamism, and so we should view it with some tolerance.

Oil and gas. To general surprise, the price of petrocarbons has rocketed up, not so much through actions by oil exporters as by the large-scale mistakes of the major oil corporations. It is time for them to stop buying each other's assets and drilling for oil and gas again. We can encourage this through changes in the tax laws. In the meantime, increased revenues to the exporters means that some of our friends like Saudi Arabia get a break, but so do several of our opponents such as Libya, Sudan, Iraq, and Iran; this could be a real problem.

Democracy. Looking beyond the immediate brushfires, it is important to develop a policy that will help the Middle East extricate itself from the current demons of extremist ideology, autocratic politics, and

impoverishment. There is only one long-term solution: making governments accountable to their citizens through the rule of law, guaranteed freedoms, and elections.

It won't be easy to push in this direction because we have a lot warmer relationship with the existing rulers than with those likely to be freely elected (e.g., Saudi Arabia), but the process needs to be started and you have the vision and courage to do so.



Daniel Pipes is director of Middle East Forum and editor-in-chief of Middle East Quarterly. Previously he served in the US Department of State and US Department of Defense. His books include Syria: Beyond the Peace Process and Conspiracy: How the Paranoid Style Flourishes and Where it Comes From.