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The Foundation for the Future: What FOIA Documents Reveal

July 2010

Operating on the theory that if you say something enough times people will believe it, the Bush administration and its allies have in the last few years confidently put forth an array of assertions, predictions, and rationalizations about Iraq that have turned out to be nonsense... Now, they tell us that recent stirrings of democracy elsewhere in the Middle East are a direct consequence of our invasion of Iraq, that the neoconservative vision of contagious democracy has been realized. Given the administration's track record, we would be wise to greet this latest assertion with suspicion...

Today, American democratic values are admired in the Middle East, but our policies have generated popular resentment. Although it may come as a surprise to those of us here, there is a passionate resistance to the US "imposing" its style of democracy to suit American purposes. Democratic reformers in the Middle East don't want to have their own hopes and dreams subordinated to the political agenda of the United States...ⁱ

~ General Wesley Clark, May 2005

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APPENDIX I: Problems Regarding the State Department’s Implementation of FOIA Law

I. Preface

In 2007 the Government Accountability Project (GAP) received the payroll records of Shaha Riza – the romantic partner of then World Bank President and Iraq War architect Paul Wolfowitz – from a whistleblower. Riza worked at the World Bank as Senior Communications Officer and gender specialist for the Middle East and North Africa Regional Office prior to Wolfowitz’s appointment as president. Conflict of interest regulations at the Bank required that she be transferred beyond the reach of his supervision when he became president, as staff members are prohibited from supervising their partners. While Riza might have been assigned to several posts inside the Bank, Wolfowitz elected instead an assignment on “external service with pay.” In September 2005, at Wolfowitz’s direction, the Bank seconded Riza, a British national, to the US Department of State and then to a private “Foundation for the Future” (FFF) in 2006.

Payroll records sent to GAP in early 2007 showed that Shaha Riza’s transfer to external service was contingent upon salary increases that far exceeded those allowed under World Bank regulations. Wolfowitz had directed the Department of Human Resources to award Riza three times the allowable increase for her grade and circumstances (about \$47,000). One year later, she received a second raise that was double the maximum allowable amount. Her net annual salary of \$193,590 exceeded the gross pre-tax annual salary of Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice (her nominal superior) by about \$7,000.

GAP verified these records and numerous other documents showing misconduct on the part of Paul Wolfowitz and his aides and released them publicly in the spring of 2007. On May 17, 2007, Wolfowitz announced his resignation from the World Bank (effective June 30) in the wake of the wide-ranging scandals corroborated by these documents and testimony before the Ad Hoc Committee of the Board of Executive Directors.

The resignation of Paul Wolfowitz, however, left numerous questions about the Foundation for the Future and Shaha Riza. The arrangements finally made to transfer Riza from the World Bank to the State Department and then to the Foundation for the Future were unclear, and her visa status, tax status and security clearance appeared to be irregular. Moreover, additional questions surfaced regarding the relationship between high-level State Department officials and the FFF. In addition, little information was publicly available about the FFF, as the dialogue below between State Department Deputy Press Spokesman Tom Casey and a journalist shows:

QUESTION: I wanted to ask you something kind of on the margins of the whole World Bank Shaha Riza matter, and that is that, as you remember, Secretary Rice announced the formation or at least the launch of this Foundation for the Future in, I think, November of 2005.

And at least as far as -- well, it's very hard to find this foundation. You go to their website. They have a website but there's no phone numbers, there's no address. They appear to have not given out any grants. They haven't set up office, that (*sic*) at least one can find. And considering it was launched with some fanfare at the time, I'm just curious if you could bring us up to speed a little bit as to what this

foundation consists of and where you -- where it seems to be going. I don't even -- it's hard to see how much money it is that the US has put into this, for one.

MR. CASEY: Neil, I actually haven't, unfortunately, briefed myself on the latest activities from the Foundation. Look, as you know, this was something that has emerged out of the Forum for the Future process. It has an international board of directors representing -- with representatives from most of the participating regional countries there as well as an executive directorate. In terms of the amount of money involved at this point and some of the specific grant programs, I'll have to look into it for you...

QUESTION: But is Ms. Shaha a consultant or a fulltime employee of the board? What is her status?

MR. CASEY: My understanding is she is an individual seconded by the World Bank as an advisor to the board of directors of the Foundation for the Future...

QUESTION: So what does she do as the advisor? I mean, does she help advise on grants, or do you know what her job is?

MR. CASEY: I do not have a job description for her, no...ⁱⁱ

The media was subsequently able to locate some information about the Foundation and Ms. Riza's role there. In May, 2007, just before the Wolfowitz resignation, David Corn reported that:

The foundation has not gotten off to a big start. It has yet to provide a single grant. Its first president, Bakhtiar Amin, an Iraqi who served as a minister in the first interim government set up following the invasion of Iraq, left the post after a short time in the job. 'He was not up to the task,' says a source who has worked with the foundation. No replacement has yet been selected. The group also does not have a chief financial officer or a chief operations officer at this time. Last year, it decided to open its main Middle East office in Beirut--right before the war in Lebanon...ⁱⁱⁱ

Moreover, according to a *Washington Post* story:

Though Shaha Riza, who has been romantically linked to Wolfowitz, is not listed as part of the staff on the organization's [FFF] Web site, she is the only person working in the group's offices... 'It is basically just her running this thing,' said Tamara Cofman Wittes, research fellow at the Brookings Institution Saban Center for Middle East Policy, who closely tracks democracy programs in the region. She said the board members had no experience in grant-making and thus had 'started from zero,' with no bylaws or grant-making guidelines...^{iv}

In May 2007, GAP filed a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request with the US State Department in an attempt to obtain additional information that would answer lingering questions. In substance GAP's FOIA request sought:

- a. all incoming and outgoing correspondence regarding the "Foundation for the Future;"
- b. all correspondence with the World Bank between Elizabeth Cheney and J. Scott Carpenter regarding the Middle East Partnership Initiative; and
- c. all memoranda, talking points, policy papers, position papers, and background points regarding the Foundation for the Future.

The time period of the request was from January 1, 2005 to the present. Over the course of nearly 34 months, the Department of State released 182 responsive documents in full and 85 in redacted form; 53 responsive documents were withheld in full. This paper summarizes the information that GAP obtained through this FOIA request.¹

II. The Freedom Agenda

The information released by the State Department illuminates the evolving place of the FFF in the 'freedom agenda' of the Bush administration in the Middle East between 2005 and 2008. First, the Foundation provided evidence of the administration's ostensible commitment to democratic processes and human rights. Second, the structure of the Foundation, although unilaterally determined by the US State Department, was designed to convince the public of the multilateral nature of the undertaking. And third, while the entire production was almost exclusively financed and monitored by the US government, it was to be presented to the press and the public as a civil society organization.

In the lead-up to the Iraq War, both President George W. Bush and Vice President Dick Cheney argued that "regime change" in Iraq was necessary to eliminate a mortal threat to the security of the United States. At the same time, they also asserted that regime change would spread democracy in the country and throughout the Middle East. In August 2002, seven months before the invasion, Cheney delivered an address at a Veterans of Foreign Wars convention in which he claimed:

Regime change in Iraq would bring about a number of benefits to the region. When the gravest of threats are eliminated, the freedom-loving peoples of the region will have a chance to promote the values that can bring lasting peace... Extremists in the region would have to rethink their strategy of Jihad. Moderates throughout the region would take heart. And our ability to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process would be enhanced...^v

¹ The majority of these documents pertained to 1) the State Department's attempts to convince other countries to financially support the Foundation; and 2) the State Department's attempts to lobby the US government for legislative changes that would facilitate US government financing of the Foundation.

Similarly, less than a month before the US invaded Iraq, Bush gave the keynote address at an American Enterprise Institute event, in which he discussed the future of Iraq and his plans for democracy in the Middle East:

The world has a clear interest in the spread of democratic values, because stable and free nations do not breed the ideologies of murder... And there are hopeful signs of a desire for freedom in the Middle East ...A new regime in Iraq would serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom for other nations in the region.^{vi}

That same day, the State Department's Bureau of Intelligence and Research completed a classified report entitled "Iraq, the Middle East and Change: No Dominoes," which, according to the *Los Angeles Times*, expressed:

Doubt that installing a new regime in Iraq will foster the spread of democracy in the Middle East, a claim President Bush has made in trying to build support for a war ... The report, which has been distributed to a small group of top government officials but not publicly disclosed, says that daunting economic and social problems are likely to undermine basic stability in the region for years, let alone prospects for democratic reform... The thrust of the document, the source said, 'is that this idea that you're going to transform the Middle East and fundamentally alter its trajectory is not credible.'^{vii}

In the coming years, when weapons of mass destruction failed to materialize, the Bush administration would increasingly use the "democracy dominos" argument as a justification for the Iraq War. In November 2004 a story appeared in "*The New Yorker*" profiling then US Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz. According to that article, the administration shifted:

[its] rhetorical emphasis after Baghdad was taken. Given the lack of weapons of mass destruction or proven ties between Iraq and the terror attacks of September 11th, the liberation rationale acquired a primary importance that it had not had in the Administration's public argument for war. In turn, the developing insurgency, which eclipsed the parades and the cheering throngs, prompted renewed focus on the Administration's geopolitical strategy—the transformation of the region—as a war rationale. This grand idea of liberalizing the Middle East one country at a time, beginning with Iraq, was associated particularly with Wolfowitz...^{viii}

In passing, the article also refers to Shaha Riza – and her ideological impact on what was to transpire in Iraq. According to the article, "Another influence on Wolfowitz's thinking is an Arab feminist named Shaha Ali Riza, with whom he has become close. Riza, who was born in Tunisia and reared in Saudi Arabia, studied international relations at Oxford and subsequently became a determined advocate of democracy and women's rights in the Islamic world."

In 2005 the State Department began to advocate for a vehicle through which to implement Wolfowitz's (and Riza's) idea of spreading democracy in the Middle East. In May 2005 Bahrain hosted a meeting of the Group of Eight (G8)/Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Forum for the Future Steering Committee. During that meeting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs (PDAS NEA) Elizabeth Cheney – Vice President Cheney's daughter – stated that the US would like Forum participants to announce the launch of the Foundation for the Future at the November 2005 meeting:

As a result of our experience and conversations with the UK and EU, she said, our thought is to create an entity outside of official government donor channels which is multilateral, has a clear mandate, and whose members of the board of directors come from BMENA and donor countries. Initial funding should be \$60 million, of which the US would provide \$35 million. The US will distribute a proposal on the structure of the Foundation and the board. *(FOIA Document E2)*²

The Department subsequently mentions the Foundation for the Future as part of President Bush's freedom agenda *(Document E40)* and says that it opens an "essential front in the global war on terror." *(E86)* Indeed, a September 2006 State Department cable entitled "President Bush: 'America has made a choice: we will stand with the moderates and reformers,'" defines reform efforts in the Middle East, such as the FFF, as one of the key ways to win the "global war on terrorism." According to that cable:

At the upcoming Forum for the Future... we will clearly reiterate our commitment to this agenda of freedom to both governments and reformers alike. Working with our G-8 allies and partners in the region, we will follow up this message with vigor through BMENA activities and programs including the Foundation for the Future. *In the process we will strive for consensus on our vision and acceptance amongst the region's governments, while making it understood that our efforts reflect a fundamental recognition that our security and national interests are directly undermined by the democratic deficit that has too long characterized the Middle East. (E172)* (emphasis added)

In other words, the US government was to impress upon the BMENA governments that, while the Foundation for the Future was to be "consensual," it was also a matter of fundamental US national security and therefore not negotiable.

In order to gain support from other governments for the FFF and its role in Bush's "freedom" agenda, the US government repeatedly characterized the Foundation as a multilateral civil society initiative independent of the US government. As Elizabeth Cheney stated at the Forum for the Future May 2005 Steering Committee, "the announcement of the Foundation and the Fund at the November Forum meetings should be done jointly between the BMENA and G8 countries so it can be characterized as a multilateral (vice US) initiative responding to the region's needs." *(E2)* At the actual launch of the Foundation on November 12, 2005, Secretary

² This paper will refer to the FOIA documents that GAP received by the number that was assigned to them by the State Department (i.e. *E2, N118E, S1*).

Rice called it “a great multilateral effort – called for by the people of the Broader Middle East, and reflecting a new international consensus that greater democratic and economic reform is essential for the region.” (N118E) Similarly, in a State Department briefing in Washington in November 2005, Liz Cheney stated that “The civil society groups have asked for a foundation, some sort of entity that is *not connected with any one government*, that can provide support for their efforts to help to open up their societies.” (emphasis added)^{ix}

Descriptions of the FFF written by State Department officials for presentation to representatives of other governments repeatedly attempt to distinguish the FFF from the US government. But although the Foundation was portrayed as a multilateral effort, the US State Department was initially heavily involved in its day-to-day operations (as described in section III B below). In short, the documents suggest that while the State Department presented the Foundation for the Future as a multilateral initiative of civil society designed to promote peace and democracy, it was instead a unilateral production of the US government that was used, after the fact, to justify military invasion and war.

By the same token, the Bush administration used the Foundation as evidence of its commitment to human rights, at a time when it was accused of violating the human rights of prisoners in Iraq, Afghanistan, “black sites” around the world and Guantánamo Bay.³ In a December 2005 State Department cable, Karen Hughes, the undersecretary of state for public diplomacy and public affairs, encouraged all diplomatic and consular posts to schedule media and public outreach events for International Human Rights Day. In her communication, Hughes instructed staff to stress that the United States had “joined many other nations to create the Foundation for the Future and the Fund for the Future to support democratic reform and human rights in the Broader Middle East and North Africa.” (E108)

III. Red Flags Related to The FFF’s Establishment

A. Financial Role of the Eurasia Foundation and Lack of Open Competition

According to an article that appeared in *The Washington Post* in March 2005, the Bush administration “pumped substantial new funds into promoting democracy in Muslim countries but virtually nowhere else in the world. The administration has cut budgets for groups struggling to build civil society and democratic institutions in Russia, Eastern Europe and Asia, even as Moscow has pulled back from democracy and governments in China, Burma, Uzbekistan and elsewhere remain among the most repressive in the world.” The article describes the Eurasia Foundation – a non-profit organization set up by the State Department in 1992 (at the directive of James A. Baker III) to “promote democratic change at the grass-roots level in the former Soviet Union” (N95) – as facing budget cuts. According to the story, the Eurasia Foundation had been told “that the final installment of a \$25 million grant to set up a US-European-Russian democracy program in Russia may be delayed despite President Vladimir Putin's moves to clamp down on political opposition. ‘We can't give up,’ said Charles William Maynes, president of the Eurasia Foundation. ‘It would be disastrous if we do.’”^x Thus, it appears that in 2005 the Eurasia

³ See, for example, “Bush under fire over human rights: Watchdog says US setting bad example” at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2005/jan/14/usa.richardnortontaylor> .

Foundation, which was heavily dependent on government contributions,⁴ was at the mercy of an administration threatening to delay or cut its financial support.

A few months later, the Foundation for the Future concept appeared in a report from the Senate Committee on Appropriations that accompanied the Department of State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs Appropriations Bill. According to that June 30, 2005 report, which was submitted by Senator McConnell's office:⁵

The Committee provides the State Department with the authority to establish a private foundation and an enterprise fund utilizing MEPI [Middle East Partnership Initiative] funds. However, the Committee requests the State Department to consult with the Committee not later than 90 days after enactment of the Act on the advantages and disadvantages of establishing a private foundation funded by the U.S. Government, akin to the Eurasia Foundation.^{x1}

According to the president of the Eurasia Foundation, the senior advisor to Liz Cheney, Tammy Wincup, subsequently approached several foundations, including the Eurasia Foundation, to ask about establishing such a foundation. After initial meetings, the State Department invited the Eurasia Foundation to submit a proposal to establish the FFF.^{xii} It appears that open competition standards were not followed in this process, as documents released by the State Department did not yield a public request for proposals or proposals from other foundations. Based on the documents made available by the State Department, the invitation was apparently neither formal nor in writing.

On October 5, 2005, the acting president of the Eurasia Foundation (EF) sent Scott Carpenter, Elizabeth Cheney's subordinate at the State Department, a "revised proposal to assist your bureau in the creation of a new foundation to promote civil society development throughout the Broader Middle East and North Africa." (BMENA)⁶ (N96) The Eurasia Foundation proposed a "six-month, \$560,000 project to support the design and launch of this new institution."⁷ (N96) This letter was copied to Shaha Riza, who was identified as an advisor to the State Department. It is unclear why the Eurasia Foundation submitted this "revised" proposal in October, as the Forum for the Future – in which the launch of the Foundation for the Future was announced – had not yet occurred.

According to the U.S. Code of Federal Regulations ([22 CFR Part 145.11](#)) "(1) The Department shall notify the public of its intended funding priorities for discretionary grant programs, except for: (i) Awards for which funding priorities are established by Federal statute, (ii) Small awards, and (iii) Awards for which program purposes would not be served by public notice. (2) In the

⁴ According to the Eurasia Foundation's Oct. 1, 2004 – Sept. 30, 2005 990 tax form, for example, nearly \$21 million of its total annual revenue of just over \$23 million came from government contributions (grants).

⁵ Paul Wolfowitz had connections to Senator McConnell, the Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on State, Foreign Operations and Related Programs, as Mr. Wolfowitz hired Robin Cleveland, a former aide to the Senator, to work as his assistant at the World Bank. See: "Paul Wolfowitz's Fatal Weakness: The cronyism that may cost him his World Bank job is also what caused the Iraq debacle," available at <http://www.salon.com/opinion/feature/2007/05/14/wolfowitz/>.

⁶ GAP's FOIA request did not yield an "original" proposal, just two "revised" versions.

⁷ The actual time frame of the grant would be more than 18 months and the amount received was \$921,064.

case of the exception in paragraph (b)(1)(iii) of this section, the award file shall be documented with the rationale for not issuing a public notice.”^{xiii} It appears that at the time that the Eurasia Foundation submitted its proposal, there was no federal statute authorizing this grant, though a relevant law was passed one month later, before the grant funds were disbursed.⁸ The State Department has not, thus far, released documents setting out a rationale for failing to issue a public notice. This kind of arrangement certainly approaches the boundaries of propriety for grant awards, if it does not cross them.

It should be noted that this would not be the only case in which the Eurasia Foundation has had a questionable advantage in establishing a “non-profit” foundation for the World Bank/U.S. government under the second Bush administration. In 2008, Eurasia advertised prematurely for a program director to take charge of the establishment of the “Bota Foundation” in Kazakhstan – before an official request for proposals was issued. The Bota Foundation was to be funded with tainted money seized from Swiss bank accounts belonging to high-level Kazakh officials and established by arrangement between the World Bank and the US Justice Department. Ultimately the Justice Department disqualified Eurasia after complaints that its board and staff were too closely tied to the Kazakh government, and thus to officials who had originally pocketed these same funds in the form of bribes from foreign oil companies.^{xiv}

B. The Role of the State Department

On December 7, 2005, the Eurasia Foundation submitted a second revised proposal to the State Department, accompanied by a signed grant agreement. (N95) The proposal states that:

Ideally, the new foundation will be perceived as a joint undertaking of three constituent founders – the US, Europe and the countries of the BMENA region – and the location of its offices will have a major impact on this perception. In consultation with the State Department, EF will propose an organizational structure and office location plan that will achieve the desired objective of a foundation that is an international entity embraced by the people of the region... (N95A)

The proposal described the Eurasia Foundation as a “grantee and advisor to the State Department and as a potential consultant to the new foundation in its early stages of development.” (N95A)⁹

A 2007 memo written by Blake Thorkelson, who is described as the State Department “Program Monitor” for the FFF, stated that, “in the absence of Foundation staff, Eurasia is *advising both the State Department and the new board* by assisting with initial board meetings, draft documents and policies, and registration of the Foundation...” (*emphasis added, S7D*) Thus, the organization that was charged with making the Foundation for the Future operational reported directly to the US State Department – not to a multilateral group made up of either European and Middle Eastern governments or civil society organizations. In effect, the documents show that

⁸ Public Law 109-102, which provided that up to \$35 million could be made available to establish and operate a Middle East Foundation, was not signed into law until November 14, 2005.

⁹ The EF wrote that it would “not publicize its role in this initiative, but its relationship with the State Department under this assignment will be a matter of public record.” (N95)

the EF was a party to the plan to promote the FFF as a multilateral effort while recognizing that in fact it was not.

Indeed, it is clear that the State Department played a more significant role in the Foundation's launch than other "partner" governments. For example, the grant proposal from the Eurasia Foundation states that:

EF and the State Department will have discrete and complementary roles in the creation of the new foundation. The State Department will be responsible for the selection of a board chair and the official announcement of the new foundation in November. Longer term responsibilities of the State Department in consultation with other founding governments include the selection of a president, recruitment of board members, selection of initial country office locations in the BMENA region, and preparations for the first board meeting... EF will provide a conference room to serve as (*sic*) office, which will include work stations for the State Department advisors and others on the task force, and access to computers, telephone, fax machine and printer/copier. (*N95A*)

Although the State Department is presented as conducting some activities with other governments, the selection of the board chair and announcement of the new foundation are presented as the purview of the US government alone. State Department advisors are also to work on the FFF in the office space of the EF.

The Office of Middle East Partnership Initiative in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA/PI) actively managed the State Department's relationship with the Eurasia Foundation, attended early Foundation for the Future meetings and consulted closely with FFF staff and management during the start up phase.^{xv} Correspondence shows that Blake Thorkelson – the State Department's Economic Pillar Officer for NEA/PI – played an extensive role in the establishment of the Foundation in a way that other countries' representatives did not. For example, he helped to draft the FFF's Business Plan, the Policies and Procedures Manual (*N 87B*), and the board's first press release. (*N35*) State Department Advisor Shaha Riza also played a significant role in the day to day operations of the FFF, as described in Section VI(E) of this paper.

IV. State Department Pressure for Legislation Favorable to the FFF

Officials at the highest levels of the US State Department – including Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice – were heavily involved in pressing the US Congress for legislative changes that would facilitate the US contribution to an unspecified "Middle East Foundation," which was later designated as the Foundation for the Future. The Department successfully obtained provisions that pertained to the Foundation in three separate laws, including:

1. Section 534(k) of Public Law 109-102, the 2006 Foreign Operations, Export Financing and Related Programs Appropriations Act, as signed by President Bush on November 14, 2005.

2. Section 6801(b) of the “US Troop Readiness, Veterans’ Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007” (Public Law 110-28), as signed on May 25, 2007.

3. Section 2021 of Public Law 110-053, the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, as signed on August 3, 2007.

A. Public Law 109-102

On November 14, 2005, President Bush signed Public Law 109-102. Section 534(k) of the law states:

Of the funds appropriated by this Act under the heading “Economic Support Fund” that are available for the Middle East Partnership Initiative, up to \$35,000,000 may be made available, including as an endowment, notwithstanding any other provision of law and following consultations with the Committees on Appropriations, to establish and operate a Middle East Foundation, or any other similar entity, whose purpose is to support democracy, governance, human rights, and the rule of law in the Middle East region: *Provided*, That such funds may be made available to the Foundation only to the extent that the Foundation has commitments¹⁰ from sources other than the United States Government to at least match the funds provided under the authority of this subsection: *Provided further*, That provisions contained in section 201 of the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 (excluding the authorizations of appropriations provided in subsection (b) of that section) shall be deemed to apply to any such foundation or similar entity referred to under this subsection, and to funds made available to such entity ...

Elements of these terms were included at the request of the State Department. According to a memo from David Welch of the State Department’s Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA) to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice:

The FY 06 appropriations act included language that we requested for both the Fund and the Foundation for the Future providing that they be established and operated pursuant to longstanding authorities provided for the Eastern European enterprise funds under the 1989 SEED Act. These authorities have been used for other similar funds that the US has wished to capitalize with significant infusions of cash. These authorities include some that are highly desirable, such as that allowing a fund to retain interest, or to be capitalized by an endowment from the USG, while remaining autonomous from the USG. (SI)

B. Public Law 110-28

Although the State Department succeeded in obtaining favorable language in the FY06 appropriations act, officials later realized that obstacles remained which would prevent the FFF from receiving the funds provided in that law. Especially problematic was the SEED Act’s

¹⁰ The word “commitments” is not defined in the law or legislative history. According to Black’s Law Dictionary (8th ed. 2004), a commitment is “An agreement to do something in the future, esp. to assume a financial obligation.”

requirement that the majority of the Foundation's Board of Directors be US citizens. According to Mr. Welch's memo to the Secretary of State:

The Foundation board's greatest strength lies in its multinational character. The diverse board with strong regional representation has guaranteed wide support for the Foundation from Europe and the broader Middle East. To date, other governments have pledged over \$22 million to the Foundation; the SEED Act requirements place those commitments in jeopardy. We believe that the majority-American requirement could undermine the Foundation as originally conceived...

Senator McConnell's staff cannot make any commitment to this fix beyond talking with the Senator about it. As the Department will need to press a number of similar requests to improve provisions in the FY2007 appropriations bill (if it were to move forward) and in further Continuing Resolutions during the current fiscal year, we will have limited opportunities to plead only the *highest priority items*. *This request should be seen in that light. (emphasis added, S1)*

It appears that this Action Memo was not approved. Instead, it seems that the Foundation's newly created Board (which was formed in July 2006) began to lobby Congress directly. On September 25, 2006, Blake Thorkelson from the State Department sent an email to several people, including Shaha Riza, in which he stated that "this afternoon the ExCom [Foundation's Executive Committee] will meet with Senator McConnell and Congresswoman Lowey." (N148)

On January 24, 2007 Mr. Welch sent another action memo to Secretary Rice in which he requested that she sign letters to Senator Leahy (D-VT), Senator Gregg, (R-NH), Representative Lowey (D-NY) and Representative Wolf (R-VA) "seeking their support to add a provision on the Foundation for the Future to the FY2007 Continuing Resolution." (S5F) The letters, which were approved by Secretary Rice on January 31, 2007, say that:

The Foundation needs to have a much more diverse board, truly reflective of the region...I am therefore seeking your support to provide relief from this requirement, with respect to both the funds available for this Foundation under the FY 2006 act and in any FY 2007 act that may be passed. My staff will contact yours concerning ways of achieving this aim. (S5)

On February 27, 2007, Mr. Welch sent a memo to Secretary Rice regarding the US contribution to the Foundation for the Future. (S6) According to that document:

The Foundation for the Future's Executive Committee asked BMENA Coordinator Scott Carpenter to provide an update on the US contribution at the Committee's regularly scheduled meeting on February 21. Despite our ongoing efforts, Congress has yet to take action to ensure that the Foundation is not hindered by a SEED Act provision requiring a board consisting of a majority of Americans. This provision prevents us from fulfilling our \$35 million pledge.

The Executive Committee, including US board member Sandra Day O'Connor, expressed deep concern about the impact that the lack of a US contribution would have on its fundraising efforts. The United States would lose credibility, and other donors may rethink their pledges. Scott briefed on our efforts to amend the legislation, including your January 31 letter to the chairs and ranking members of the key Congressional committees, Jeff Bergner's discussion with HAFCO Chair Nita Lowey and regular NEA contract with key Hill staffers.

While the Executive Committee appreciated the update, Justice O'Connor impressed on us the importance of tracking this legislative fix closely, and she offered to help by calling Senator Biden. Scott assured the committee that we will do everything possible to include the necessary language in the FY 2007 Supplemental Bill. He spoke with Congresswoman Lowey's staffer on February 23 and has sent her information on why a delay in this legislative change will threaten the Foundation and, by extension, US image.

On May 25, 2007 President Bush signed the "US Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110-28). Section 6801(b) of this law applied to the Foundation for the Future and stated:

Section 534(k) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2006 ([Public Law 109-102](#)) is amended, in the second proviso, by inserting after 'subsection (b) of that section' the following: 'and the requirement that a majority of the members of the board of directors be United States citizens provided in subsection (d)(3)(B) of that section'.^{xvi}

The amended law would now read:

That provisions contained in section 201 of the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Act of 1989 (excluding the authorizations of appropriations provided in subsection (b) of that section *and the requirement that a majority of the members of the board of directors be United States citizens provided in subsection (d)(3)(B) of that section*) shall be deemed to apply to any such foundation or similar entity referred to under this subsection, and to funds made available to such entity... (*emphasis added*)

The State Department was thus able to obtain the Board related changes that it sought by attaching them to a Hurricane Katrina recovery and Iraq accountability bill, a measure with an assured prospect of passage. In light of the non-transparent way in which the Foundation was conceived, staffed and managed, this last designation was especially ironic.

C. Disbursement of "Matching" Funds

On June 12, 2007, Mr. Welch sent an Action Memo to the Acting Director of US Foreign Assistance, requesting that she approve "the notification and obligation of \$21,300,000 in FY 2006 ESF and FY 2006 Supplemental Economic Support Funds (ESF) by the Middle East

Partnership Initiative for the Foundation for the Future,” which she did that same day. (S7)
According to that memo:

The FY 2006 Foreign Operations Appropriations Act provided that up to \$35 million in ESF may be made available to the Foundation only to the extent that the Foundation has commitments from sources other than the United States government to at least match the funds provided under the act. As of June 1, 2007, a total of \$22.26 million has been pledged by other governments.

On June 15, a Congressional Notification Transmittal Sheet was sent from the State Department informing Congress of the intent to obligate \$21.3 million to the FFF. According to a description of the Foundation that accompanied this notification:

A total of \$22.26 million has been pledged by other governments, including the European Commission (1 million Euros or approximately 1.26 million), Spain (\$1 million), the United Kingdom (\$1 million), Switzerland (\$1 million), Denmark (\$2 million), Netherlands (\$1 million), Greece (\$1.5 million), Turkey (\$500,000), Jordan (\$1 million), Qatar (\$10 million), and Bahrain (\$2 million)... The amount notified here, combined with the funds already provided to Eurasia, make up the \$22.2 million allowable for the Foundation at this time under the Act's requirements for matching funds. (N190C)

On July 18, the Foundation signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the State Department regarding these funds. In this MOA, Anwar Ibrahim, Chairman and Acting President of the FFF Board, agreed that the Foundation had “received commitments from sources other than the United States Government to at least match any funds provided hereunder.” (N4)

The Foundation for the Future is required by Public Law 110-053 to submit its annual report to Congress. These annual reports suggest that the matching amounts cited in the Congressional Notification sheet and MOA were erroneous. The Table below compares the amounts received or owed to the Foundation in 2006-8 (based on its annual reports), versus the amounts represented by the State Department in its correspondence with Congress:

Country	Amounts pledged according to DOS	Actual 2006	Actual 2007	Accounts Receivable (as of Dec. 31, 2007) ¹¹	Actual 2008 ¹²	Does the State representation match the actual?
Denmark	2 million ¹³	\$500,000	-	1.5 million	?	Yes; provided balance is paid
Greece	1.5 million	\$300,000	\$300,000	\$900,000	?	Yes; provided balance is paid
Turkey	\$500,000	\$125,000	-	\$375,000	?	Yes; provided balance is paid
United Kingdom	1 million	-	\$588,238	\$411,762	?	Yes; provided balance is paid
Jordan	1 million	1 million	-	-	-	Yes
Spain	1 million	-	\$1,134,584	-	-	Pledged amount surpassed
Switzerland	1 million	\$750,000	\$250,000	-	-	Yes
European Commission	1 million Euros (~1.26 mill. USD)	-	-	-	Donated; amount n/a	The '08 report lists a donation, but no specific amount.
Netherlands	1 million	-	-	-	-	The '09 report lists a donation. Other reports do not. ¹⁴
Qatar	10 million	-	-	-	-	NO
Bahrain	2 million	-	-	-	-	NO
Germany	-	-	-	-	Donated; amount n/a	Germany was not an anticipated donor
Hungary	-	-	-	-	Donated; amount n/a	Hungary was not an anticipated donor
Interest Receivable	-	-	-	\$44,151	?	-
TOTAL	\$22.26 million	\$2.675 million	\$2,272,822	\$3,230,913	\$1,449,343 .56	NO

Thus, the actual amount of funds committed by other governments was far below the \$22.26 million figure that the State Department cited to justify authorization from Congress to disburse matching US funds and the \$56 million figure that the Department represented as committed by

¹¹ These are the accounts receivable according to FFF's 2007 Annual Report. Some of these outstanding donations may have been received in 2008.

¹² Unlike the previous reports, the '08 Annual Report lists donors, but not the amount that each country gave.

¹³ Amounts are in US dollars unless otherwise noted.

¹⁴ According to the FFF's 2009 Annual Report, the Netherlands is a donor to the Foundation. However, the report also shows that the FFF received no contributions at all in 2009. The 2008 Annual Report does not list the Netherlands as having ever donated to the Foundation, though it does say that it had "expressed interest" in donating. It is therefore unclear if the Netherlands actually donated. Correspondence shows that the Netherlands had told the State Department that it would donate, but wanted "to be actively involved in determining how the money is spent. REDACTION." (E75)

“partner countries” when it was lobbying for fiscal support from reticent governments.¹⁵ According to the Foundation’s Annual Reports, it actually received USD \$27,785,222¹⁶ total in government contributions from 2006-2009, \$21,388,057 of which were US government funds.¹⁷ Therefore, only USD \$6,397,165 – less than 30 percent of the putative \$22.26 million in “matching funds” – materialized.

The Foundation’s 2007 Annual Report does state that Bahrain, Italy and Qatar had “expressed interest in giving money to the Foundation,” (*N 118E*) but it appears that those countries had not actually donated by the end of 2009.^{18xvii} The State Department did have some reason to believe that the pledge would materialize from the Bahraini government, as according to a Department document with numerous redactions, the King of Bahrain had pledged \$2 million in funding (*E95*). But the State Department correspondence does not include a single document or cable from the government of Qatar confirming its substantial pledge.

D. The Qatari “Pledge” and the Rival Arab Foundation for Democracy

Though the US government repeatedly represented Qatar as having pledged \$10 million to the Foundation for the Future beginning in 2005,^{xviii} there is no document from the government of Qatar that confirms the pledge. Nor is there a record of the State Department soliciting such a pledge from Qatar, a silence that contrasts sharply with the Department’s communications with other donor governments, which were heavily pressured.¹⁹

The State Department documents are also silent regarding Qatar’s failure to deliver on its \$10 million pledge – the largest pledge of any country other than the US. The Foundation’s 2007 Annual Report only states that Qatar has “expressed interest in giving money to the Foundation.” (*N118E*) The 2008 Annual Report does not refer to the pledge from Qatar at all.

On June 7, 2007, the American Embassy in Doha sent a cable entitled “The Arab Foundation for Democracy – A Qatari Substitute for the Foundation for the Future?”²⁰ According to this cable, the establishment of the Arab Foundation for Democracy (AFD) was announced at the Second Forum on Democracy and Political Reform in the Arab world, which was held in Qatar from

¹⁵ A November 2005 State Department cable approved by Elizabeth Cheney that was sent to 14 American embassies told the posts to tell their host governments that “partner countries have already committed over \$56 million.” (*E93*) The State Department’s website (<http://bmena.state.gov/c16716.htm>) still says, to this day, that “pledges to the foundation total more than \$56 million.” (Last accessed March 17, 2010)

¹⁶ Not all of the 2007 accounts receivable were actually received.

¹⁷ The Foundation received a grant of USD \$88,057 from the Government of USA/Eurasia Foundation and \$21.3 million from the Government of USA/Department of State.

¹⁸ According to the FFF’s 2009 Annual Report, the Foundation received no contributions at all in 2009.

¹⁹ The only relevant document that GAP obtained was a February 2006 cable summarizing Under-Secretary Karen Hughes’ meeting with the Qatari Foreign Minister and another person whose name was redacted. This document only states that Qatar had announced that it was willing to “give free land for a FFF headquarters in Doha.” (*E135*) The Department withheld in full a five page March 2006 cable from the US Embassy in Doha to the Department of State that reported “on the conversation of the State Department’s Counselor with the head of the Qatar Foundation,” (Houser-Jackson, p. 43), her Highness Sheikha Mozah bint Nasser al-Missned.

²⁰ This cable was retroactively CLASSIFIED and denied in part. According to the State Department, the redacted section “speculates as to Qatar’s objectives in organizing the meeting.” (Houser-Jackson, p. 50.)

May 27-29. The cable states that AFD is possibly “a Qatari substitute for (sic) the Broader Middle East and North Africa Initiative’s (BMENA’s) Foundation for the Future.”

The AFD appeared to be a multilateral effort, as its Board Executive Committee included the former German Foreign Minister and Vice-Chancellor; the former Canadian Prime Minister; the former Sudanese Prime Minister; the former prime minister of Egypt; the former Prime Minister of Lebanon; and the former president of Ireland, among others. (E 187) The AFD was:

Tasked with supporting democratic reforms across the Arab world... The AFD will finance non-governmental organizations which focus on the promotion of democracy and institutional reforms, civil society capacity building, and human rights. The Amir donated **USD 10 million** as an initial grant to get the foundation off the ground. (*emphasis added, E187*)

While it is impossible to determine whether this particular \$10 million was the same \$10 million that the State Department claimed would be contributed to the FFF, it is clear that the AFD actually received the funding in question and the FFF did not. This is presumably where Qatar’s missing donation went – to a rival foundation. Because this cable was sent to the State Department on June 7, 2007, the Department was aware that the Qatari government had launched its own foundation and pledged USD \$10 million to it when it sent the Congressional Notification Transmittal Sheet on June 15th.

Moreover, according to the Eurasia Foundation’s president, the \$10 million pledge from Qatar was contingent on Qatar hosting the FFF’s headquarters.^{xix} The FFF Board, however, voted in July 2006 to establish the headquarters in Lebanon. (E176) Therefore, the US State Department likely knew in 2007 that a \$10 million donation to the FFF from Qatar was not forthcoming. The State Department’s notification sheet to Congress – which claimed that \$22.26 million had been pledged by other governments to the FFF, including \$10 million from Qatar – appears to be duplicitous.

E. Public Law 110-053

On August 3, 2007 Public Law No: 110-053, the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007, was signed by President Bush.^{xx} Section 2021 of the law repealed section 534(k) of Public Law 109-102. The original matching funds requirement was replaced with “proviso 2B,” which states that “In determining the amount of funding to provide to the Foundation, the Secretary of State shall take into consideration the amount of funds that the Foundation has received from sources other than the United States Government.” The unfulfilled matching requirement was thereby effectively eliminated two months after it appears that State Department officials were informed that Qatar had helped establish a rival foundation and would not contribute to the FFF. This legislative maneuver suggests that the State Department knew that the FFF had not received the required matching funds in FY 2007 and as a result moved to eliminate the constraint altogether.

On August 6, Thorkelson sent an email to several people at the State Department stating that:

HR 1 was signed by the President on Friday (PL 110-53). The act repeals the Foundation language in the FY06 FOAA... It does not contain a matching funds requirement or any requirement for the board composition... The act restricts Foundation grants to persons or entities other than governments or government entities. This would disqualify one of the Foundation's approved grants, to the Palestinian Central Election Commission, from US Funding. **REDACTION** (N115)

Most of the subsequent email correspondence regarding this topic is redacted due to the Attorney-Client privilege, as the subject matter allegedly related to "legal issues associated with the Foundation."^{xxi}

In an August 14, 2007 memo from David Welch to the Secretary of State, Mr. Welch confirms that the US contribution of:

\$21.3 million to the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Foundation for the Future was transferred to the Foundation's bank account on August 8 ... We have pledged a total of \$35 million to the Foundation and plan to contribute the remaining \$13 million in FY 2008.²¹ (S8)

On March 19, 2008, an Action Memo was sent from Mr. Welch to Deputy Secretary of State John D. Negroponte (former US Ambassador to Iraq) requesting that the deputy secretary "designate the Foundation for the Future as the 'Middle East Foundation' for the purposes of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (P.L. 110-53) and that you authorize notification to relevant members of Congress." The memo states that designating the FFF "as the Middle East Foundation would provide additional authorities to the Foundation, such as including organizations in Afghanistan and Pakistan as potential Foundation beneficiaries and removing the requirement for matching funds from other governments... With these additional authorities... we also would be able to fulfill the Secretary's pledge of \$35 million ... without a requirement that the funds be matched by other donors." (S10) It appears that by this point the Department was fully aware that the matching funds had not been obtained. On March 20, the Foundation for the Future was designated as the Middle East Foundation in Section 2021(b)(1) of Public Law 110-53, thereby removing the matching requirement (S10A).

Although redacted, documents released by the Department of State suggest strongly that senior State Department officials knew they could not meet the requirement for matching funds established by the US Congress as a condition for contributions to the FFF. Because the matching-funds requirement was an indicator of the multilateral character of the FFF, and the functions of the FFF were predicated upon its multilateral standing, the failure of governments other than the US to underwrite it compromised the Foundation's ability to fulfill its mission. Yet State Department officials misrepresented the scope of international financial support for the Foundation, secured the pledged US contribution and disbursed it in contravention of US law.

F. Possible Violations of US Lobbying Regulations by the Foundation for the Future

²¹ It appears that this FY 2008 contribution was never made.

State Department records suggest that FFF board members lobbied the US Congress on behalf of the Foundation. For example, at a February 21, 2007 meeting, FFF board member Justice O'Connor "impressed on us [State Department employees] the importance of tracking this legislative fix closely, and she offered to help by calling Senator Biden." (S6) Similarly, according to a September 25, 2006 State Department email, "this afternoon the ExCom [FFF Executive Committee] will meet with Senator McConnell and Congresswoman Lowey." (N148)

However, the Foundation for the Future's 2006 and 2007 tax documents filed with the U.S Internal Revenue Service do not reflect these lobbying activities.^{xxii} The relevant form (990) specifically asks "During the year, has the organization attempted to influence national, state or local legislation, including any attempt to influence public opinion on a legislative matter or referendum?" The Foundation said "No" to this question in 2006 and 2007.²² State Department correspondence suggests that this is inaccurate. It thus appears that the Foundation for the Future may have misrepresented its lobbying activities to the IRS.

It should be noted that according to OMB circular No. A-122, which governs US grant awards from Executive Departments to nonprofits, lobbying costs to "attempt to influence: (i) The introduction of Federal or State legislation; or (ii) the enactment or modification of any pending Federal or State legislation through communication with any member or employee of the Congress or State legislature (including efforts to influence State or local officials to engage in similar lobbying activity), or with any Government official or employee in connection with a decision to sign or veto enrolled legislation;"^{xxiii} are not allowable. However, the Eurasia Foundation's work plan, which was submitted to the State Department, includes a "Government Relations" section that lists "meetings with relevant members of congress and staff" as a step in launching the FFF. (N95D)

In effect, the activities of the FFF were rife with explicit lobbying efforts in the US Congress, efforts that used the personal contacts and influence of people connected to the Foundation. In addition to deploying Justice O'Connor, the Foundation apparently achieved one of its most questionable legislative "fixes" through the office of Senator Mitch McConnell, for whom Robin Cleveland, Paul Wolfowitz's aide at the World Bank, had worked. Wolfowitz, of course, was the romantic partner of Shaha Riza, and Riza was the State Department's adviser at the Foundation for the Future.

V. Concerns Raised about the FFF by Foreign Governments and Civil Society

In 2005 the State Department began an intensive campaign to solicit financial contributions from other governments for FFF. The Department viewed the support of BMENA countries as especially critical. (E8) Countries approached by the US for funding included Morocco,²³ Spain,

²² The 2006 form was signed by Anwar Ibrahim. The 2007 form was signed by the Foundation's CFO Mohammad Qazzaz.

²³ Both Secretary Rice and Deputy Secretary of State Robert Zoellick – who succeeded Paul Wolfowitz as president of the World Bank – solicited contributions from Morocco for the Foundation and/or Fund for the Future. (E 117, E9) It should also be noted that Zoellick served on the Eurasia Foundation's Board of Trustees from 1997 to 2000 and spoke at the Eurasia Foundation's 15th anniversary event in 2008 (<http://www.eurasia.org/e-bulletin/may2008/bulletin.aspx>).

Greece, Italy, Norway, Hungary, Canada, Japan, Finland, Poland, Estonia, Russia, Kuwait, Germany, Lebanon and India. The Department also discussed the Foundation with Yemen, Belgium, France, the Czech Republic, Turkey and Austria. Many of the governments approached by the US government – such as Canada, Japan, India, Russia and Kuwait – did not, in the end, contribute to the Foundation. The communications about the FFF indicate that several countries withheld their support because the US government appeared to be unresponsive to their concerns. Among the concerns raised by governments (and private entities) about the Foundation were:

The U.K.: A draft September 2005 cable from the American Embassy in London stated that UK officials met with an NEA delegation, which included Shaha Riza, and generally appeared to support the Foundation, but “expressed concern about some points. **REDACTION.**” The U.K. representatives had “misgivings about some of the details – or perceived lack thereof – in the proposal.” The British government seemed “particularly interested in learning more about how the USG has presented this to Congress. **REDACTION.**” The British representatives also questioned “whether the Foundation has enough regional backing to ensure that it has the appropriate indigenous imprint, given that it has more Western than Arab backers at present.” Although the British government appreciated the US vision for the Board, they thought that the structure would make it difficult to win the financial support of some Arab governments (*E27*).

In 2007, the nongovernmental organization Bretton Woods Project submitted a freedom of information request in the U.K. for documents related to the Foundation for the Future. One of the released documents revealed:

The lack of consensus between the 11 countries involved in the establishment of the foundation. The document shows the way in which the United States ignored some of the other countries' objections and preferences regarding the degree of civil society inclusion, the selection of a "Coordinator to do the initial work of the Chairperson", and the degree of financial commitment.^{xxiv}

Switzerland: The State Department withheld in full an April 24, 2007 cable that purportedly “reports Swiss concerns about the FFF, its independence, financing and management.”^{xxv} This document was originally UNCLASSIFIED but was retroactively designated as CONFIDENTIAL and withheld.

BMENA governments: The State Department naively expected BMENA governments to support a Foundation that would give their political opposition a platform from which to oppose them, an assumption that proved to be problematic. According to a summary of the November 11, 2005 senior officials meeting at the Forum for the Future:

A Kuwaiti government representative²⁴ raised a question that was of interest and concern to other delegates; namely, with government being called on to finance the Foundation, yet civil society organizations running its operations, what provisions would be put in place to ensure that those organizations do not

²⁴ Kuwait also expressed “reservations” in December 2005 about joining the Foundation, but those reservations were redacted from the documents that GAP obtained. (*E115*)

undermine their own governments? The Egyptian delegation also noted that many countries have regulations on the funding of civil society groups, which would need to be reflected in the final agreement. (E84)

The State Department subsequently tracked media coverage of the Forum for the Future. One of these articles mentioned that certain Arab countries, led by Egypt, “expressed reservations over funding and supporting unregistered NGOs by the Foundation for the Future” (E80).²⁵

In an article written several years later, Scott Carpenter reflected on the opposition that the overall BMENA Initiative – of which the FFF was one component – faced:

The United States launched the BMENA Initiative during its 2004 G-8 presidency as a means of turning President Bush's "forward strategy of freedom" into reality. Washington produced a working paper that suggested the G-8 create a "Greater Middle East Initiative," "agree on common reform priorities" toward the region, and commit "to promoting democracy and good governance, building a knowledge society, and expanding economic opportunities."...

Although the strategy was never an easy sell, the paper's leak to the Arab press produced a firestorm, and the initiative nearly aborted. Regional governments were furious at the United States for suggesting a cooperative approach that had no Arab input. Regional leaders also feared that they were being targeted for soft regime change, since the nongovernmental sector played a critical role in the plan. Furthermore, it appeared to them the United States was undercutting the Arab League by creating an alternative structure.

The paper also disturbed the Europeans. From their perspective, Washington was taking Europe's ten-year-old modernization process of the Maghreb – Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia – for granted. The idea of coordinating with the United States, which had dedicated fewer resources to the problem and whose image in the region was much worse than their own, was also anathema. Ultimately, the furor required high-level U.S. diplomacy to preserve the initiative, eventually producing only grudging acquiescence from the G-8 and many BMENA countries.^{xxvi}

Civil society: Based on a December 2005 cable from the American Embassy in Tunis, Arab civil society contacts appeared to be generally supportive of the Foundation, over which they felt a certain sense of ownership, given that they helped propose it (at “USG urging”) during the Democracy Assistance Dialogue (DAD) civil society meetings. However, in the somewhat contemptuous and certainly insensitive view of the US Embassy in Tunis, specific individuals seemed:

[O]bsessed with the politics of who’ll be on the board and other institutional minutiae, perfect grist for their well-developed conspiracy-theory mills. Looking

²⁵ *The Washington Post* article “Middle East Democracy Summit Ends in Rancor” also documents Egypt’s objections and focuses on how the Forum for the Future ended “without a formal agreement on democracy promotion.” <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2005/11/12/AR2005111200464.html>

ahead, they express concerns about the ... lack of a clear mechanism to maintain momentum and to allow for civil society input into the overall process...

They are concerned that the process for selecting the Foundation board and setting its operating procedures does not appear transparent. Underlying this anxiety is a penchant for conspiracy theory and hurt pride among NGO leaders who see the selection of the Foundation's board as an 'anointment' by the West of the leaders (*sic*) Arab civil society. This has led one Forum participant to comment 'we would all be better off if a Pakistani or Turk were Chairman of the board.' The lead NGOs in the DAD process (Yemeni, Italian, Turkish) have developed credibility among their confreres over the past year, according to our contacts. When we explained that these groups were involved in the process of establishing the Foundation, this went a long way towards easing some of their fears. (E116)

The State Department was also warned that the Foundation would face numerous obstacles once operational. A February 2006 message from the MEPI Regional Office to several American Embassies in the Middle East states that:

Restrictive laws that limit the establishment, funding and activities of NGOs and other civil society groups have been and will continue to be a major impediment for MEPI efforts – and later those of the Foundation for the Future – to seek and support the growth of democracy in Gulf countries...In the Gulf, the financial and administrative requirements for licensing an NGO or professional association are more extensive than other sub-regions of the MENA, and are far more onerous than Western standards. Even when those obstacles can be surmounted, the government often uses its broad discretion to prevent licensing. (E123)

The political context was further complicated by the fact that many local groups would be unable to accept FFF funding, as "local groups in five Gulf countries cannot accept USG funds without the host government's written permission." In addition "civil society groups in every Gulf country are legally prohibited from engaging in 'political' activities," and "MEPI is unlikely to get many proposals from local groups that are significantly more forward-leaning on political reform issues than their host governments." (E123)

The State Department documents do not include a response to this warning or any additional dialogue about the effect that such restrictions could have on the FFF. As a social sector and communications expert on the Middle East, Shaha Riza might have been expected to anticipate these difficulties and raise them with the Department. Instead, the State Department apparently moved forward with the launch of the FFF, without completely understanding the complex relationships between government and 'civil society' in a volatile part of the world, as if such a complex operational environment did not exist.

Yemen and the board selection process: In March 2006 the Yemeni Foreign Minister sent a letter directly to Secretary Rice in which he expressed several concerns about the Foundation. He

stated that “a strong presence of the region in the whole [FFF establishment] process should be ensured putting in mind that the object of this initiative are the peoples of the region.” The official was especially concerned about the decision to exclude political parties from the membership of the board of the Foundation.²⁶ He also said that “another point of concern to us is that a number of decisions are being taken without full participation and open debate to reach a decision. Many of the decisions concerning the Foundation for the Future are taken without the participation of the members of the forum” (S3C). A letter was subsequently sent from Condoleezza Rice to the Foreign Minister in which she thanked the Yemeni government for its “strong support for the Foundation for the Future,” and informed the Minister that FFF partners had agreed that no government officials would serve on the Board, in order to keep its activities independent of government influence. The Secretary also stated that “All Foundation partner governments, however, have been given the opportunity to nominate a board member so that their interests are represented. To ensure transparency, we asked an independent selection committee to develop a proposal for board membership, to be approved by contributing governments. The committee has made itself available to comments and suggestions throughout the selection process, and the Department of State has sent regular updates to all the Foundation partners” (S3A).²⁷

Despite Rice’s reassurance and the disdainful tone of the Embassy in Tunis about this issue, a closer review of the board selection process indicates that Yemen’s concerns were justified. In November 2005 the Department sent a cable approved by Elizabeth Cheney to American embassies in Turkey, Greece, Switzerland, Hungary, Denmark, the UK, Spain, Italy, Netherlands, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia, Canada and Japan (as well as to the European Union and “Info All Near East”).²⁸ These posts were requested to inform these governments “to submit nominations for a potential board chair by December 5. The Chair should come from the Broader Middle East region, be a credible leader of reform, and be trusted by both governments and civil society. Nominations can be submitted through the Embassy or directly to Shaha Riza (sriza@worldbank.org) and Blake Thorkelson” (E93). Therefore, it appears that the US State Department – and Shaha Riza specifically – would manage the selection of the Chair. The cable also stated that the Foundation’s Charter principles, potential Chairs and structure would be set out in December by “senior officials” meeting in Jordan. Then, in January and February 2006 the partner countries and civil society could nominate other board members.

In December 2005, Yemen nominated a candidate (whose name was redacted from documents released by the State Department) for the FFF chairman post and asked for the US government’s

²⁶ An action memo from Mr. Welch to the Secretary of State says that “This view is likely shaped by Yemeni consternation that members of the ruling General Peoples Council Party are barred from sitting on the Foundation board because they are in the government.” (S3)

²⁷ Several of the initial grants made by the FFF in 2007 went to initiatives in Yemen. These included a project entitled “Promoting Dialogue on Millennium Development Goals in Yemen through Budget Priorities as a Tool” proposed by the Cultural Development Programs Foundation; “Khamer Women Empowerment and Literacy Program,” proposed by SOUL for the Development of Women and Children; and “Regional Network for Human Rights and Press Freedom in Gulf States” proposed by the Human Rights Information & Training Center (S9C).

²⁸ It is not clear why these particular countries were chosen, as not all of them had committed to fund the Foundation.

support for this nominee.²⁹ According to the cable from the U.S. embassy in Yemen, the U.S. “post strongly endorses **name redaction** candidacy for the chairmanship. **Redaction** We believe he would make an excellent chairman of the Foundation for the Future” (E111).

Then, according to a February 1, 2006 conference call summary (with contributing governments and civil society representatives):

State Department Deputy Assistant Secretary Scott Carpenter said it had been difficult to arrive at a short list of nominees for a potential Chair of the Foundation for the Future. Instead, he proposed that three experts with long experience in working with civil society and supporting human rights, democracy, and freedom be asked to serve as a board selection committee to assemble a board for the Foundation. Shaha Ali Riza spoke about the three proposed committee members, Rahma Bourqia of Morocco, Bakhtiar Amin of Iraq, and Anwar Ibrahim of Malaysia. They all have been approached and are willing to serve. The committee will meet over the next month and, using the list of board nominees from governments and civil society, assemble a proposed board slate of about 12-15 people.

The Foundation partners agreed that this was a good approach. It was agreed that partners should submit names of proposed board members by February 15. The entire list will be circulated to all partners at the same time it is presented to the board selection committee. The committee will assemble a proposed board slate by March 3 and partners will consult by conference call before approving the slate by March 17. The new board will elect a chair from among its own membership or the candidates discussed at the Dead Sea meeting on December 14. The three selection committee members will become part of the board. (N268A)

Ms. Bourqia, Mr. Amin and Mr. Ibrahim were reportedly chosen “by consensus after consultations among civil society and contributors to the foundation in the US, Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa.” (N284E)³⁰

Although it appears that government partners approved the selection committee members, it also appears that Carpenter and Riza unilaterally nominated the candidates,³¹ a tactic that may have been resented by “partner” governments. It also appears that Riza de facto controlled the board

²⁹ In this cable Yemen also offered to host the FFF headquarters in lieu of a 1 million dollar cash contribution. It would later withdraw this offer in March 2006 (E146).

³⁰ Ms. Bourqia was described by the State Department as “president of University Hassan II Mahommadia in Morocco;” Bakhtiar Amin as the “former minister of human rights in Iraq and executive director of the International Alliance for Justice;” and Anwar Ibrahim as “former Malaysian deputy prime minister and jailed dissident.” (E121) Ibrahim and Amin both had close ties to the Bush administration. For example, Ibrahim was a longtime friend of Paul Wolfowitz, and Amin’s wife, Safia Taleb al-Suhail, was invited to sit next to First Lady Laura Bush at President Bush’s 2005 State of the Union address. (http://www.sourcewatch.org/index.php?title=Safia_Taleb_al-Suhail)

³¹ Journalist David Corn wrote about Ibrahim, “While helping to establish the Foundation for the Future at the State Department, Riza had recruited Anwar to serve as its initial adviser, according to Ahmad. The two then went about selecting a board of directors and drawing up the mandate for the group...”

selection process. On February 28, 2006, she sent an email (through her World Bank account) to unknown recipients (most likely the board selection committee) with the list of FFF board nominees from donors and civil society. In her message, Riza offered to meet with the email recipients in London, where they were to “agree on the selection criteria” and “narrow down the list to the most desirable candidates.” (N266)

In April 2006 a cable was sent from the American ambassador in Yemen to Scott Carpenter entitled “FM Asks Again if Political Party Official Can Be Named to Foundation for the Future Board.” The cable states that it is still:

Not clear to the Republic of Yemen Government whether it can or cannot nominate **REDACTION** as a Director of the Foundation for the Future... the Foreign Ministry sent a diplomatic note to the Embassy, stating that the ‘Ministry would like to reconfirm that the Yemeni vision does not require the governments’ representatives to participate in the Board of Directors of the Foundation for the Future, but it aims not to exclude the political candidates, taking into consideration that the political parties are part of the civil society organizations... Post strongly endorsed **REDACTION** candidacy as Chairman of the Board for the Foundation for the Future based on his reformist credentials. As he is not a government official, we recommend that the Department allow Yemen to nominate him as a Foundation Director. (E154)

It appears that the Yemeni candidate was not named to the board. According to a press release by Mr. Thorkelson, the FFF board held its first board meeting on July 16, 2006 in Qatar. In addition to the selection committee members, Board members included Andreu Claret Serra from Spain; Dr. Juhaina Sultan Al-Easa from Qatar; Laila al Hamad³² from Kuwait; Kamel Abu Jaber from Jordan; Ibrahim Kalin from Turkey; Jamil Mroue from Lebanon; Sandra Day O’Connor from the US; Abdul Rahman al Rashed from Saudi Arabia; Naguib Sawiris from Egypt; and Dr. Cornelio Sommaruga from Switzerland. (SIB)³³

At the first meeting the board elected Mr. Ibrahim to serve as Chair, Ms. Bourqia as Vice Chair, and Mr. Amin as President. (N35) Although Foundation partners had agreed that selection committee members would have seats on the board, the fact that the selection committee members were all elected to board leadership positions indicates a successful campaign to control the board directly by Riza and indirectly by the US State Department. It should be noted that the State Department had told donor countries to submit nominations for a board chair “from the Broader Middle East region.” (E93) Moreover, according to the Foundation’s Charter principles adopted in December 2005, “The Chairperson of the Board would be from the

³² Ms. al Hamad was described as “currently with the World Bank, where she focuses on regional efforts to engage civil society, parliamentarians, and the media in the region.” (SIB) It appears that Ms. al Hamad collaborated with Shaha Riza on at least one project at the Bank, the 2000 “Working together: The World Bank’s Partnership with Civil Society” report.

³³ At this meeting the board members “decided to drop ‘BMENA’ from the foundation’s name.” However, “in April 2007, it was brought to EF’s attention that another organization shared the name ‘Foundation for the Future.’ The other organization requested that the Foundation for the Future cease and desist using the name. EF consulted with a lawyer on behalf of the Foundation for the Future regarding the name usage” (N 85).

Region.”^{xxvii} However, the Board Chair ultimately selected, Anwar Ibrahim, was not from the region, and the tactics used to position him as the chair were not transparent.

It thus appears that concerns raised by countries and civil society were valid, although the Bush administration chose to ignore them. Instead, the administration adopted a posture that has been long criticized around the world: bullying other governments for support while neglecting their legitimate reservations. When civil society organizations raised concerns about the transparency of the Foundation board, they were dismissed by the administration as conspiracy theorists. When Yemen expressed its reservations about the FFF board, its government was reproved by Secretary Rice, who presented the board selection process as transparent, despite evidence to the contrary. When the U.K. government raised concerns about a lack of an indigenous “imprint” and regional backing, and Secretary Rice failed to acquire more financial support from BMENA countries, the State Department simply changed the FFF matching requirement and then apparently placed its regional favorites in board positions. This maneuver was apparently seen as sufficient to persuade reluctant partners that the FFF was a homegrown BMENA foundation, when its launch was, in fact, controlled semi-clandestinely by the US government, just as civil society and governments in the BMENA region had feared it would be.

The failure of State Department officials to act responsively to the concerns of the Yemeni government represents an early sign of dysfunction in the Foundation. Yemen was (and is) the poorest Muslim country in the region, with unemployment hovering at near 40 percent for many years, and nearly half of its population is under 16 years old. Condoleezza Rice had identified the young and the poor as the groups to be targeted by Foundation grants and actions, yet Yemeni concerns were treated dismissively by those establishing the Foundation. At the same time, Yemen had a troubling history with violent groups; the bombers of the USS Cole had originated in Yemen. Reputable analyses also showed that Al Qaeda was increasingly enmeshed in the social and political fabric of the country, and Edmund J. Hull, the US Ambassador to Yemen until 2004, in fact, later referred to the country as Al Qaeda’s “Shadowland.”^{xxviii}

VI. Key Actors

Despite its relatively low profile in the United States at the height of the Iraq War, the Foundation for the Future became a favorite project for a number of high-level political personalities. Included among them were the daughter of the sitting Vice-President, the Secretary of State, a Supreme Court Justice, and a former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and close friend of Paul Wolfowitz. In the end, however, it was Shaha Riza who, although virtually unknown at the time, would later become widely recognized in Washington as the only visible staff member of the FFF.

A. Elizabeth Cheney

In the State Department documents released, the idea of creating a Foundation for the Future is first mentioned by Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs (PDAS NEA) Elizabeth Cheney. In the May 2005 Forum for the Future Steering Committee, she stated that the US would like Forum participants to announce two “deliverables” at the November

meetings: the Fund and the Foundation for the Future. According to the corresponding State Department cable:

We will work with the World Bank on having a Bank official seconded to the Foundation to work on its establishment. (E2)

The sequence of developments regarding the Foundation is notable, as it reveals that Cheney envisioned Riza's role at the FFF long before the Foundation actually existed and before Paul Wolfowitz became President of the Bank, reportedly obliging Riza to leave the Bank on assignment to avoid a conflict of interest.³⁴ Cheney's advocacy on Riza's behalf was also noted in a 2006 *Financial Times* article: "Two experts said they had heard that Liz Cheney, the US State Department official leading the initiative, was considering Shaha Ali Riza, a Tunisian-born expert on gender issues seconded to the State Department from the World Bank, as a possible chair of the foundation. State Department officials, however, denied she was a candidate for the board. The experts said the US administration needed to find a candidate who would not be seen as a stooge of Washington."^{xxix} ³⁵

Although the FFF concept was promoted by Liz Cheney, one source familiar with the FFF's establishment did not believe that the Foundation was originally her idea. This source described the battle between the "pragmatists" and "crusaders" in the Bush Administration's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). S/he believes that the idea for the Foundation for the Future came from a pragmatist, potentially Riza, and was adopted by crusaders like Liz Cheney, who wanted quick results in the Middle East, even if this meant a whole-sale dismissal of diplomacy.³⁶

Wherever the FFF was conceived, Cheney was instrumental in its launch, and her opinion about it, as expressed at the 2005 Forum for the Future Steering Committee meeting, was circulating in the State Department:

As a result of our experience and conversations with the UK and EU, she [Cheney] said, our thought is to create an entity outside of official government donor channels which is multilateral, has a clear mandate, and whose members of the board of directors come from BMENA and donor countries... She noted that the announcement of the Foundation and the Fund at the November Forum meetings should be done jointly between the BMENA and G8 countries so it can be characterized as a multilateral (vice U.S.) initiative responding to the region's needs.(E2)

At the September 2005 Forum for the Future planning meeting Cheney also briefed participants on the Fund for the Future and the Foundation for the Future, announcing that the U.S. hoped countries with positive experiences in democratic processes would be

³⁴ Wolfowitz was nominated in March 2005, but did not assume office until June of that year.

³⁵ There are other indications that Riza occupied a fundamental and privileged position at the Foundation for the Future, among them, the fact that only Riza was authorized to travel "business class" on long international flights. (N95B)

³⁶ This concept of crusaders versus pragmatists was recently echoed in an article by Paul Wolfowitz, in which he criticized foreign policy "realists" who would rather "manage relations between states" than "alter the nature of states." (http://www.foreignpolicy.com/articles/2009/08/17/think_again_realism?page=0.0)

given time at the meeting to report on their countries' steps toward democratic governance and reform. Cheney also described a final ceremony that she envisioned, in which ministers would commit themselves to the principles of the Forum. She saw the principles becoming known as the 'Bahrain Declaration' or the Manama Declaration.³⁷ (E25)

As a result of Cheney's commitment, the Foundation did, in fact, emerge from this 2005 gathering in Bahrain, and its establishment was noted by the Associated Press: "The conference also launched a \$50 million foundation aimed at promoting democracy and political reform in the Middle East. Both initiatives were shepherded by Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Liz Cheney, the vice president's daughter, who accompanied Rice on a Mideast trip that also includes stops in Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Israel and the West Bank."^{xxx}

At the same time, Liz Cheney backed up the launch by lobbying governments to support the FFF financially. She sought a funding commitment for BMENA, with a special mention of the Foundation for the Future, from the government of Spain that fall (E14), and in November, she apparently briefed political counselors from 25 EU countries at the British Embassy in Washington about the Foundation (E93).

However, Liz Cheney – who has been described as "effectively the czar of promoting democracy in the [BMENA] region"^{xxxix} – was apparently the wrong person to fill this role, as her involvement made many potential partners skeptical about the U.S. government's intentions. In March 2010, Matthew Duss of *The Nation* reported that:

A former State Department employee who worked under her [Liz Cheney] but declined to be named says, 'It was always clear that she was speaking in her father's voice.' Another former State Department employee who worked with Liz confirms this, saying that she 'was someone who was comfortable letting it be known who her father was,' a practice that 'engendered resentment and created problems for programs.' According to this former employee, 'it was clear she was there to advance the VP's agenda.'

Middle East democracy promotion was a major part of Liz's portfolio, but the fact that she was the daughter of a high-ranking American official caused skepticism in the region. The second former State Department employee put it like this: 'You can't be a democracy promotion official and tell a government to be more open when the person you're doing advance work for is the VP's daughter.' What sign does it send, this colleague asks, 'when the person telling you to reform your government is only in her position because of nepotism? Her mere presence in that job undermined the moral legitimacy of the pro-democracy and open-government argument.'^{xxxii}

It is clear that governments in the region had noticed the apparent nepotism at the FFF, as well as the lack of transparency associated with its establishment.

³⁷ "The Forum did not issue the Bahrain Declaration, which focused on reform commitments by governments, due to specific objections regarding funding of civil society organizations that were not officially recognized by host governments" (E85).

After 2006, Cheney is no longer mentioned in the State Department references as she departed on maternity leave that summer. As one of her final acts as she left the Department, however, Cheney asked former Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor to serve as the US nominee to the board of the BMENA Foundation for the Future. According to a memo about the conversation, "Justice O'Connor said that she was very interested, but had questions about the Foundation's mission and how the board would function." (S4)

After Cheney left her post, commitment to her "crusade" at the State Department did not recover; *The Washington Monthly* reported in January, 2007: Cheney's post remained unfilled, and "the administration's democracy promotion goals stumble on multiple fronts."^{xxxiii}

B. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor

Documentation released by the State Department suggests that Justice Sandra Day O'Connor was, like Shaha Riza, hand picked by the U.S. government as an *ex ante* choice for the FFF. Early on in the board selection process, Justice O'Connor's name circulated at the State Department as a promising candidate for the Foundation's governing body. She was a well-connected Republican party stalwart and her stature as a Supreme Court Justice would lend prestige to a fledgling foundation promoting democracy in a troubled region. In a memo to Condoleezza Rice, David Welch asked that she, as Secretary of State:

Call Justice O'Connor at your earliest convenience to encourage her to serve as the US representative to the BMENA Foundation for the Future... Elliott Abrams, Dan Fried, and I believe that a call from you would move her to accept our nomination. Her participation would send an important signal to the BMENA region of our commitment. The lack of a US nominee has held up the formation of the Foundation's board for several weeks, and the other donors are becoming anxious. It's important that we finalize the board in the next two weeks to ensure that the first board meeting occurs in late June, before the region's summer doldrums. (S4)

The Secretary approved this action memo on May 26, 2006. The principals at the State Department realized that "personalities" would be important on the Foundation's Board (E4), and they devoted considerable energy to recruiting Justice O'Connor. In the end, their efforts proved successful, and Justice O'Connor joined the board and served on the Executive Committee.

According to a letter from Secretary Rice in January 2007 to several members of Congress, "We are admirably represented and well served by the American board member, Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who is very active on both the board and its executive committee"(S5). In fact, Justice O'Connor served as a host of the September, '06 Executive Committee meeting, and was instrumental in establishing the Foundation's temporary headquarters in Amman, Jordan.³⁸ A February 2007 cable from the Secretary of State to the US Embassy in Amman described a meeting with board chairman Anwar Ibrahim and US board member Sandra Day O'Connor on

³⁸ The headquarters was originally planned for Beirut, but because of the war in Lebanon in 2006 and the constitutional impasse there, the board chose to establish a temporary headquarters in Jordan.

December 4, 2006, at which Jordanian Foreign Minister Al-Khatib agreed to the Foundation's operating temporarily in Jordan (*E181*). Also, as cited above, in February 2007, during a discussion about the legislative language that required the majority of the FFF board to be US nationals, Justice O'Connor impressed on the State Department "the importance of tracking this legislative fix closely, and she offered to help by calling Senator Biden" (*S6*).

C. Condoleezza Rice

As previously mentioned, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice played a key role in lobbying for the Foundation abroad³⁹ and in the US Congress. She also personally recruited Justice Sandra Day O'Connor for the FFF board and she publicly supported the Foundation at Forum for the Future events. When the Foundation was discussed at the December 2006 Forum for the Future Rice personally and publicly:

[C]ongratulated the board of the Foundation for the Future on its progress... [and] commended the president of the Foundation for the Future. She noted the recognition by Arab experts that the challenges of poverty, violence, and the lack of freedom, combined with a young population, is creating an 'impending disaster scenario,' that the Foundation can help combat... The Secretary cited the Foundation as an achievement of our partnership with reformers in the region, and thanked those working to build this and similar institutions. (*E176*)

In concluding her remarks, Secretary Rice compared her experience growing up in the racially segregated South of the US with some of the problems encountered by excluded groups in the Middle East. She used the comparison to endorse the importance of strong democratic institutions as channels of social change. Presumably, she intended to credit the Foundation for the Future with helping to establish such institutions in the region.

D. Anwar Ibrahim

FFF Board Chairman Anwar Ibrahim was a key figure in the FFF and in Shaha Riza's secondment to the Foundation.⁴⁰ As pointed out by journalist David Corn:

Anwar is a longtime friend of Wolfowitz. One of Asia's most prominent Muslim politicians, Anwar was a former deputy prime minister of Malaysia. He and Wolfowitz met and developed a friendship in the mid-1980s, when Wolfowitz was US ambassador to Indonesia, according to Aasil Ahmad, an adviser to Anwar. In 1998, after addressing a rally protesting the government, Anwar was arrested and subsequently jailed on corruption and sodomy charges. During his years in jail, Wolfowitz was an outspoken champion of Anwar...

³⁹ During the G8 Ministerial Meeting in June 2006, for example, the Secretary of State "urged member countries to make contributions to the Foundation for the Future" (*E166*).

⁴⁰ Ibrahim authored the October 1, 2006 letter to the World Bank requesting Riza's secondment.

When Anwar was released from prison in 2004, Wolfowitz flew to Germany to meet him. The next year, Anwar, a former finance minister for Malaysia, endorsed Wolfowitz's appointment to the Bank, though he noted that he didn't share Wolfowitz's view of the Iraq war. ... While helping to establish the Foundation for the Future at the State Department, Riza had recruited Anwar to serve as its initial adviser, according to Ahmad. The two then went about selecting a board of directors and drawing up the mandate for the group.^{xxxiv}

On June 19, 2006, Mr. Ibrahim gave a Presidential Fellows Lecture at the World Bank on "Accountability and the Future of Freedom." On this occasion, virtually one year before he himself was obliged to resign his post for nepotism, Wolfowitz introduced Ibrahim. He spoke of him as a "colleague, a close associate to the World Bank and the development community, and a personal friend... He's also done some work here for us at the Bank as a consultant working with the World Bank Institute on anticorruption efforts and accountability issues..."^{xxxv} Reports that later appeared on the WorldBankPresident.org blog, showed that Ibrahim received a \$21,000 World Bank contract from January 25 to May 1, 2006 to "enhance demand for good governance." However, according to the blog, "sources at the Bank cannot find any report or 'deliverable'."^{xxxvi} In November 2006, Ibrahim reportedly received an additional speaking contract with the Bank.^{xxxvii}

Less than a month after his speech at the Bank, Ibrahim was elected Chair of the FFF, although he was not from the region, and this geographical prerequisite had been established for governments wishing to nominate candidates for the position. Then, on June 13, 2007, Ibrahim sent a letter to Condoleezza Rice in which he "volunteered to serve as President of the Foundation on a pro bono basis for an interim period until such time that a full-time, permanent candidate is hired."⁴¹ (N198A) Eventually, Ibrahim resigned from the board to "concentrate on being an MP" (a Malaysian member of parliament),^{xxxviii} a post that he assumed in August 2008.^{xxxix}

In April 2010, Former Malaysian PKR youth chief Ezam Mohd Noor claimed that he would soon hand over "files to Parliament, which he alleged contained proof of Opposition Leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's cover-up of a scandal involving former World Bank president Paul Wolfowitz." He claimed that the documents were leaked to him by a Malaysian working in the World Bank^{xl} and show that "Anwar was directly involved in trying to shield Wolfowitz from the fallout of the investigations into Shaha's transfer to the Foundation for the Future."^{xli} However, pictures that have appeared in the media to date show Mr. Mohd Noor holding documents that have already been publicly released, so it is unclear whether or not he will disclose any new information.

⁴¹ The first president (Bakhtiar Amin) resigned from the Foundation in February 2007 for unspecified reasons. The Eurasia Foundation "undertook the tasks required to finalize the president's resignation from the Foundation, which took place at the February [2007] meeting of the Executive Committee. These tasks included consulting legal counsel to determine proper steps, drafting the separation agreement, and paying the remainder of the president's salary." (N86)

E. Shaha Riza

1. Department of Defense Contract

Prior to Wolfowitz's resignation as World Bank president, allegations of irregularities surfaced concerning his previous work with Riza at the US Department of Defense (DoD). In 2003, DoD awarded Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) – a consulting firm focused on defense capabilities and intelligence (including for the CIA and National Security Agency)^{xlii42} – eight contracts. As the Deputy Secretary of Defense, Wolfowitz personally recommended Shaha Riza for one of these sole-sourced contracts to SAIC.⁴³ Riza was then retained for a post-invasion mission to Iraq while she was a World Bank staff member and therefore an international civil servant.⁴⁴ ^{xliii} Under the terms of reference for this contract, she was to advise the 'Coalition of the Willing' on establishing a new government in Iraq. As a non-US national employed at an international organization, it would have been extremely unlikely that Riza had a U.S. security clearance.

A preliminary inquiry issued by the DoD Directorate for Investigations of Senior Officials office in April 2005 detailed the explicitly political role Riza played in post-invasion Iraq.^{xliv} Documents also showed that an unnamed senior official improperly intervened either to secure an expedited security clearance for Riza or to waive the requirement that she have one in order to perform the work specified under the SAIC contract. In addition, documents showed that as early as 2003, Riza was cooperating with Wolfowitz at the US Defense Department and Elizabeth Cheney and Scott Carpenter in her political work in Iraq, despite the fact that her employment at the World Bank barred her from accepting work from any national government.

2. Initial Secondment Agreement

On September 16, 2005, Scott Carpenter sent a letter to Xavier Coll, Vice President for Human Resources at the World Bank, to request the secondment of Shaha Riza to the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the US Department of State. The letter stated that the secondment would be for one year beginning on September 19, 2005, and would be renewable by mutual agreement. The letter, which was issued before the launch of the FFF, stated that Riza would be a "Senior Advisor in charge of establishing a Foundation that will focus on reform in the MENA region." The letter lists her job responsibilities, which included such tasks as: "seek and solidify the engagement of international and regional partners;" "assist in identifying and recruit Chairperson from the region;" and "assist in identifying and recruiting an international Board of Directors."

⁴² According to the organization CorpWatch, SAIC is "'a stealth company. We're everywhere, but almost never seen,' Keith Nightingale, a former Army special ops officer, told the now defunct magazine *Business 2.0*."

⁴³ This contract was in the amount of USD \$235,231.28 to cover the fees and expenses of three 'subject matter experts,' one of whom was Riza. If Riza was the consultant who was paid the least, she appeared to have earned \$17,100, plus expenses, for her Iraq mission and services, performed from April 25-May 31, 2003. Through her attorney, Riza denied being paid anything other than her expenses for her travel to Iraq for SAIC. SAIC, however, said only that Riza was not paid a salary "while in Iraq." If, as her attorney stated publicly, Riza was not paid by SAIC, then SAIC was in violation of its financial obligations with the DoD.

⁴⁴ The SAIC contract is available at http://www.whistleblower.org/storage/documents/Riza_SAIC_contract.pdf.

The letter stated that Riza would remain an employee of the World Bank and would receive her salary and benefits from the Bank. Travel and travel per diem expenses would be paid for by the State Department. According to the letter, Riza was not eligible for a security clearance and would have no access to classified material. This last constraint was consistent with the regulations of the World Bank that prohibit staff members from doing political work for the Bank's shareholding governments.

3. Amended "Agreement"

The World Bank's Ethics Committee released a September 21 letter from Mr. Coll to Mr. Carpenter. In this letter, Coll stated that the Bank would not maintain time and attendance records for Riza. Additionally, Coll wrote that the Bank would not evaluate Riza's performance while she was seconded "either during or at the completion of this assignment."^{xlv} Therefore, it seems that Riza was accountable to no one for her subsequent work at the State Department.

According to an October 5, 2005 letter from Carpenter to Coll released by the Bank, the State Department had no objections to these clarifications. However, Carpenter also wrote: "for our part, I would like to take this opportunity to note that *we do not view Ms. Riza as detailed or seconded to the U.S. government.*" (emphasis added) It is therefore entirely unclear what Riza's status with the State Department was. As Jeff Powell wrote on worldbankpresident.org – a blog that closely followed the Wolfowitz episode – after viewing this letter:^{xlvi}

It looks like Elizabeth Cheney and Wolfowitz cooked up the arrangement with Riza, and at the last minute State's lawyers looked at it and said 'no'. Probably because of tax or visa problems, US appropriations law regarding funding contributions for State, security clearance problems, or some combination of these things. In the papers released by Wolfowitz [to the Ethics Committee of the Board], however, there's no more about this after the 5 October letter from Carpenter. And we know that Riza went to State. So the question becomes: did Wolfowitz & Co. simply ignore the legal problems?

In short, Shaha Riza was assigned to an unsupervised and unevaluated position by the World Bank to promote an overtly political US agenda in the Middle East in violation of conflict of interest regulations at the Bank as well as the national security, tax and visa regulations of the US government.

4. Riza's Activities According to Eurasia Foundation Reports

The State Department required the Eurasia Foundation to submit interim reports documenting its progress in establishing the FFF. The first two reports stated that one of EF's main accomplishments during the first four months of the program included "providing travel and administrative support for Shaha Riza and members of the board selection committee," and that it would continue to provide this service during the next reporting period. (N88A) During the year in which the Eurasia Foundation was responsible for establishing the FFF, Riza appeared to have done relatively little. An activities report for the period between April 1 – June 30, 2006, for example, states that Riza reviewed a translated draft of the FFF bylaws, a memo detailing the

regulatory and political environment of the countries that might house the operational headquarters for the foundation, a translated Business Plan, a PowerPoint presentation of the abridged Business Plan, and a translated policies and procedures manual. She approved all documents with minor modifications (*N87B*). During the fourth reporting quarter, Riza performed similar tasks. In compensation, she was paid a net salary of \$180,000, and the Eurasia Foundation received just over \$920,000. At a cost of \$1.1 million, then, Riza and the Eurasia Foundation selected a board and held a board meeting for the new Foundation for the Future.

5. Secondment to the Foundation for the Future

On October 1, 2006 FFF Board Chairman Anwar Ibrahim sent a memo to Wolfowitz's senior advisor, Robin Cleveland.⁴⁵ In this letter Ibrahim requests the transfer of Riza's secondment from the State Department to the FFF, "which she was in charge of establishing." This letter stated that Riza would be "Senior Advisor to the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors" and that her secondment to the FFF would be subject to the "same arrangements agreed to with the State Department" (*NI*). Her new responsibilities would include such tasks as supervising the opening of the Foundation's offices; supervising the recruitment of the FFF's senior management, staff and consultants and training them; and supervising and assisting in identifying groups that would receive grants from the Foundation.

This secondment letter appears without antecedent, as the State Department documents did not include discussion between the Foundation or Bank with the State Department regarding a change in Riza's secondment status. The absence of such documentation suggests that State Department attorneys prevailed in their contention that Riza could not be seconded to a US government agency, and that, therefore, from October, 2005 until October, 2006, Riza did not officially work anywhere.

6. The State Department's Reaction to the Salary Scandal

The only relevant document that GAP obtained that referred to the scandal involving Riza's World Bank pay raise was an April 13, 2007 email to Thorkelson requesting answers to questions taken from the daily press briefing at State. It appears that Thorkelson did not respond to these questions about the FFF from the press.

The Department's reticence about the scandal and lack of interest in the impact it might have had on the Foundation is unusual. To date, the Department has refused to disclose at least one document that appears to be relevant to this scandal: a cable dated April 24, 2007 that "reports Swiss concerns about the FFF, its independence, financing and management."^{xlvi}

⁴⁵ A copy of this letter appears on <http://online.wsj.com/public/resources/documents/wolfowitz-8-transfer-04132007.pdf>.

7. Administrative Tribunal Decision

In July 2008, the World Bank Administrative Tribunal⁴⁶ reviewed a case filed by an anonymous Middle East & North Africa Region senior communications officer who was sent to the State Department in 2005 due to her relationship with the Bank president. The Applicant, who was clearly Shaha Riza, claimed that “the Bank wrongfully terminated an agreement with her for external service and that it failed to protect her personnel information and reputation”^{xlvi} thereby “causing her humiliation and harm.”^{xlvi} The Tribunal’s decision reveals that Riza’s secondment situation was unprecedented.¹ The decision also reveals what happened to Riza after Wolfowitz’s resignation. After his departure, the Bank:

[I]nformed the Applicant that it wished to terminate the external assignment. The Chairman of the Foundation then wrote to the new Bank President and requested that the Applicant’s services at his Foundation (still paid for by the Bank) be continued for a transition period until the end of 31 December 2007. This request was granted, and acknowledged with appreciation by the Chairman, who expressed his hopes for ‘future collaborations with the Bank.’ The Applicant’s return was subsequently extended to 1 February 2008, and her first day of work was 19 February. She was by agreement given the right to work from home, using telecommunications, for one year – as she continues to do at present.^{li}

Ms. Riza claimed that the Bank breached its Letter of Agreement with her by demanding that she return before the five-year term for external service expired. She also contested that the Bank violated its contract by assigning her a job – Lead Gender Specialist at Level H – that did not make full use of her professional qualifications. She claimed that “at the Foundation she had broader responsibilities than in the current position”^{lii} and that the Bank failed to give her the promised salary increases.^{liii} The decision reveals, however, that Riza did receive “a promotion to level H and special salary increases in both 2005 and 2006,” and that she would continue to benefit from these increases for the rest of her career.^{liv} The Tribunal found no wrongdoing on the part of the Bank and dismissed the case. World Bank sources claim that Riza continues to work for the Bank remotely.

VII. Recent Developments

After Riza left the FFF and a new president replaced Ibrahim, the Foundation struggled on.⁴⁷ As of March 2010, approximately 75 grants had been made, in 15 countries.^{lv} A website, a logo and an office in Amman, Jordan, have been established, and the Foundation publishes an annual report. The report for 2009 is a slick, professionally designed, produced and illustrated publication that features a gardening motif and does not convey much substance.^{lvi} Nevertheless, the report contains a Strategic Framework for 2010-2012, although the parameters of future work are not provided. Nine broad goals are listed, but no specifics in terms of projects, resources, or staffing are described.

⁴⁶ Because of the sovereign immunity of the World Bank, Bank employees have no recourse to national courts for purposes of settling an employment dispute. All such disputes are adjudicated in the Bank’s internal grievance system.

⁴⁷ Mr. Ibrahim was replaced by Nabilia Hamza, who became president of the foundation in February 2008 (*NI05A*).

Currently, the Foundation for the Future claims 23 employees, but it appears that the organization is not operating in a financially sustainable matter. In 2009 it received no contributions and had only \$98,686 in income, the vast majority of which was interest. Its expenses, on the other hand, amounted to \$6,482,619. At this rate of expenditure, the Foundation will be without resources in four years.

Over the past few years, the Foundation suffered from the Bush administration's diminishing interest in promoting democracy in the BMENA region, through small grant-making facilities like the one created by Cheney and Riza. In her final year as Secretary of State, in fact, Condoleezza Rice did not attend the 2008 Forum for the Future meeting,⁴⁸ and her counterparts there interpreted her decision negatively:

U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice has decided to skip the Forum for the Future in Abu Dhabi this weekend, a move that will deepen concerns surrounding the Bush administration's Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative. Although Deputy Secretary John Negroponte will attend the forum – an annual meeting of G-8 and Middle East foreign ministers – Rice's absence will signal waning American interest in the region's political and economic reform, and will probably cause other ministers to stay home. Additionally, her absence may fuel ongoing speculation that the initiative will not survive this administration... The BMENA Initiative has failed to meet its potential, and this year's forum might be the last – an eventuality that few would mourn. Nonetheless, the initiative has demonstrated some utility and provided a unique platform to address many of the region's ills. As such, the next president needs to use it in a way that its creators, including Secretary Rice, never did.^{lvii}

VIII. Conclusion: Questions for U.S. Government Consideration

The Foundation for the Future appears to have been established in a highly irregular manner that failed to conform to the original vision for it. During the presidential campaign in 2004, then candidate John Kerry repeatedly pledged to convene a multilateral effort made up of Middle Eastern governments and provide a forum through which to contribute to political stabilization in the region. Some form of that objective became the Foundation for the Future in 2006, but the organization that materialized was a bowdlerized version of the original idea. Less than half of the \$60 million in initial funding for the Foundation (as envisioned by Elizabeth Cheney) ever materialized, and the major proportion of funding came from the United States, in violation of the spirit of the legislation creating the institution. The “great multilateral effort” (*NII8E*) with BMENA countries devolved into a unilateral US initiative supported only by Jordan and a smattering of European nations. And the organization that was promoted as a “model” and “beacon of inspiration for the democratic development of the societies in which it operates”^{lviii} represented little more than a nest of sinecures for those people closest to the Vice President: his daughter Liz, Wolfowitz's girlfriend Shaha Riza and Wolfowitz's favored friend from Malaysia, Anwar Ibrahim.

⁴⁸ She also did not attend a 2007 Forum meeting in Yemen, as it was cancelled at the last minute due to security concerns.

But despite these disappointing developments, the Bush administration persevered in its attempts to obtain Congressional authorization for a \$21.3 million US contribution to the Foundation. High-level officials in the Bush administration successfully lobbied Congress for changes to US law that then channeled tens of millions of taxpayer dollars to the Foundation for the Future. Persuasive evidence shows that State Department officials knowingly misled Congress about the financial commitments to the Foundation from sources other than the US government, in order to obtain authorization for unjustified “matching” US contributions.

The irony of the manipulative process behind the creation of the Foundation for the Future cannot be ignored. This was an organization that was to promote democracy, transparency and the rule of law on a multilateral basis in the Middle East. Yet the State Department official presiding over the Foundation’s first steps was Elizabeth Cheney, who occupied her position largely because she was the daughter of the Vice President, and directing the selection of board members was the romantic partner of the former Deputy Secretary of Defense. Managing the Foundation was Anwar Ibrahim, a personal friend of Paul Wolfowitz, whose main qualification for his post was the fact that he was a secular Muslim. Serious concerns and questions raised by the government of Yemen were ignored, and numerous expressions of doubt about the multilateral character of the FFF were dismissed by State Department officials as “conspiracy theories.” Funding was spent on travel and meetings, while the Foundation board attempted to determine what the organization should be called and where it would be located.⁴⁹

Even now, the character and antecedents of the Foundation are cloaked in deceptive terms on the website, which portrays the history and actions of the institution in a mildly disingenuous, if not outright fictional light. The answers to the ‘Frequently Asked Questions,’ posted are misleading: the FFF is presented as “an independent, indigenous organization,” which, technically, it is. In a more comprehensive sense, however, the Foundation is the creation of the US Department of State and, although no board member is an active member of any government, the FFF receives the better part of its funding from the US government. This is not a well-kept secret, however. The website and the literature about the Foundation liberally employ the acronyms and terminology of USAID in the region, and descriptions of grants, with references to ‘stakeholders,’ ‘capacity-building,’ ‘and grassroots participation’ reveal the real origins of this venture. In this sense, it is difficult to represent the institution as either independent or indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa.

Long after commitments from many regional governments declined or, as in the case of Qatar, evaporated altogether, the Foundation continues to represent itself as multilateral and portrays its origins as a “response to calls by regionally-based civil society organizations for mechanisms to provide resources to support the expansion of their activities and capacities in order to support regional reform efforts.”^{lix}

The US Congress should investigate whether or not the Department of State purposely violated Section 534(k) of Public Law 109-102. The Inspector General of the State Department should explore the legality and apparent national security breaches involved in Shaha Riza’s security clearance and her “secondment” to the Department of State. In addition, the IRS should investigate if the FFF misrepresented its lobbying activities on its 2006 and 2007 990 forms.

⁴⁹ In the first year of operation, the FFF also managed to hold a competition to select a logo design.

Finally, the present exercise makes clear that a review of the State Department's compliance with the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) is necessary, as detailed in Appendix I. Specific questions that should be explored by the US government include:

- Was the Department of State's representation to Congress of a USD \$10 million matching pledge from Qatar deliberately perpetrated (by the Department or the Foundation for the Future) in order to circumvent requirements in US law regarding contributions to a Middle East Foundation?
- Was US law violated by Shaha Riza's "secondment" to the Department of State? If so, does the US government have adequate rules regarding secondment of employees from international organizations?
- Is future US government support for the Foundation for the Future appropriate, given the findings above?⁵⁰
- Did the Department of State abuse FOIA law by inappropriately classifying documents? If so, what procedures are in place to 1) ensure that State Department documents that were inappropriately classified during the Bush administration are declassified; and 2) prevent such improper classification from occurring again in the future?

⁵⁰ Article 10 of the July 18, 2007 Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the State Department and the FFF provides that the "United States Government reserves the right to make audits, inspections, excerpts, transcriptions, or other examinations as authorized by law of the Foundation's documents and facilities." Moreover, Article 10 gives the Department or Government Accountability Office (GAO) "access to any books, documents, papers, and records written, printed, recorded, produced or reproduced by any mechanical, magnetic, or other process or medium, pertinent to this Award."

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