

Can democracy spread around the globe under the given assumption of an anarchic order on the level of the world's nation states, which are understood as the primary actors in international affairs? Or: does the world's system have to be reformed in order to steer the remaining non-democracies towards democratic reforms?

But is it valid to label the world's system as non-democratic or even anarchic? Can we identify an absence of any form of political authority or social hierarchy above the level of nation states? Does political disorder and confusion persist? Are there no cohesive principles, such as common standards or purposes, on the level of nation states?

Measured against these core elements of the term "anarchic", our world is obviously not anarchic. 191 nations are currently members of the United Nations, and even though the UN falls short of turning the world's system into a democratic one, it aims at uniting nations under common standards and purposes, whether it are the noble ideas of disarmament, migration issues, humanitarian aid or many others. At least theoretically, the UN is supposed to be part of a global system of checks and balances. Parts of the UN, such as the General Assembly, are perfectly democratic with one vote per country, others, such as the more powerful UN Security Council, have a very limited number of members and thus less democratic. Sadly, but justified, the UN is heavily criticised for failing to carry out its resolutions or being powerless if a political bully, such as the USA ahead of the latest invasion of Iraq, decides to ignore it.

But would we have more democracies worldwide if the United Nations or any other institution governing above the level of nation-states would be more democratic? Could one not argue quite provokingly that the forceful, yet currently unsuccessful, democratic transformation of Afghanistan or Iraq increases the global quantity of democracies? UN recommendations might have been ignored, at least in the case of Iraq, which casts a dark cloud over the actual power of the world's most democratic, supranational institution, but given a few years and a currently unpredictable outcome, wouldn't it be possible that democratic thought has a spill-over-effect on neighbouring nations? Don't the foreign policies of the US prove that the system is indeed inherently anarchic? Does this hinder democratic reforms that would otherwise occur on their own, for example in the remaining two countries of the famous axis of evil?

And if the world is indeed anarchic, doesn't the fact that the number of true democratic societies has grown from 44 in 1985 to 82 in 2000 (United Nations, 2002) proof that it does not matter? That rational thought on the level of each nation-state will prevail, given sufficient time? Does a democratic, global community have the legitimacy to spread democracy by force?

If democracy is an antidote to war, as many scholars argue within the context of the democratic peace proposition, wouldn't it be safe to assume that most countries identify the benefits of liberal internationalism as a "final form of human government" on terms with their own, realist quest for survival? Can remaining authoritarian and unrepresentative elites hold on to their undemocratic status quo forever? Does a change in policies have to be forced from the outside, or will every nation, in the pursuit of lasting peace and prosperity, pressure its leaders towards democratic changes at some point of time?

What is required for democratic reforms within a nation? Would a tribal country such as Afghanistan benefit from global world governance? How could lasting, democratic reforms be introduced to a nation that has a long way to go in its process of nation-building, the most important prerequisite for a working democracy on the national level? If we assume that this is not possible without outside help in underdeveloped countries without national identities, how do we approach the task? Do we have any legitimacy to do so? Would it be morally sound if a democratic world government would decide to educate "poor Afghans" out of their "tribal misery" against their will?

Obviously, a single page does not even allow to portray all the further questions surrounding the original topic of this briefing paper. Nevertheless, a conclusion shall follow:

The global spread of democracy cannot be halted, which does not mean that the whole world will become democratic on its own. The prospect of peace and the spirit of commerce continuously push the world's majority towards democratisation, as democratic societies, in which civil liberties are as protected as market relations prevail, can have a global analogue: a peaceful global order. Some parts of the world might not follow the western route towards political modernisation, but the idea of limited power seems to spread and might serve as a stepping stone towards further democratic reforms, at least in partially developed areas of the globe. A truly democratic world order could fasten the spread of democracy via a "tyranny of the majority" approach to global reform. The end results could be much more efficient than the contemporary "terror of the emperor" policies (Chomsky), which try to spread democracy via cruise missiles, bombs and culturally insufficiently trained personal. Acting together with a rationally driven coalition of the willing and in hope of an enlarged pacific federation, the motives are purely controlled by a realist interpretation of the world.

Without a doubt, a democratic world, leading by example and recognition of natural law, would be a preferable marketing tool towards democratisation. Nevertheless, the rational decision to opt for a democratic form of government can spread worldwide even without a democratic world system. The absence of global democratic governance does not change the fact that a globalized world with an increasingly neo-liberalistic economy requires internationalistic state-leading and stable political conditions, which can be best achieved by the implementation of a system Winston Churchill once described as "the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time": democracy.