

CODE '11 Budapest Conference on Democracy and Human Rights

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1. **The Arab Spring is the most significant development in international politics, human development and security since the fall of the Berlin Wall.** The settlement that emerges from this will be as important as the settlement after World War II, and the end of the Cold War. But this is not the way the U.S. or European governments are treating it.
2. **Values are universal.** Freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law, human dignity, economic opportunity, security – these are not merely American values, or European values. They are universal human values. By supporting them, we are not “imposing” our own values, but supporting people in realizing their own values in their own societies. Those who accuse the West of “imposing” values – whether dictators or religious extremists – do so as a smokescreen to hide their own imposition of their own power upon their own population.
3. **Good policy needs to be based on truth.** Too often, governments avoid hard truths for diplomatic or policy reasons. Assad is called a “reformer.” Russia is called a strategic partner. The domestic abuses of dictators allied with the United States are ignored. It is one thing to lie to ourselves for well-calculated reasons. It is another thing to believe the lies. And when policies are crafted based on false premises, the policies themselves are destined to fail.
4. **To the extent we truly believe in our own democratic values – freedom, human rights, rule of law, economic opportunity, security – we have a moral obligation and strategic imperative to stand up for them wherever they are challenged.** Because if we fail to do so, human beings will indeed suffer, and the security of our own freedoms will eventually be challenged.
5. **There is no conflict between our interests and our values.** Our interests are best served when the democratic values we believe in are advanced throughout the world. There is, however, a short-term/long-term dynamic. Because of the dislocations, our interests may be hurt in the short-term by change away from an abusive status quo. And those short-term problems need to be managed. But we will be better off in the long-term to the extent democratic values are implemented throughout the world.
6. **Democracy never progresses in a straight line.** There are ups and downs, quick movements and stagnations. So one should not have unrealistic expectations of rapid, decisive progress. But on the other

hand, one people have a taste of their own freedom and see the prospects building a better society, there is no stopping that progress.

7. **It is essential that those who believe in democratic values work together as allies.** This includes, in a formal sense, the United States, Europe, Japan, Australia, and others. But it also includes building alliances with civil society groups, individuals, reformer inside and outside of government, and more. If those who share democratic values are passive and divided, it allows those who would do not support these greater room to impose their own will upon others.