For many centuries, enlightened people have argued that democracy was the key to social progress. But today, that contention is in dispute. The sad fact...is that nearly 40% of UN member nations are now classified not merely as failed states, but as “failed democracies.” Too often, democracy is understood to be only about elections - momentary majorities. But effective governance is much more than that. What happens before and after elections? ... How is decision-making shared - so that leaders of different backgrounds can interactively govern - rather than small cliques who rule autocratically? [1]

Often, the more democratic governments [have been] the more effective and responsible. But this was not consistently true - and I have recently found it to be decreasingly true. [5] Our challenge is not to find alternatives to democracy, but to find more and better ways to make democracy work.... I would like to make ... four suggestions for addressing our democratic disappointments and advancing our democratic hopes. [F]irst, the need for greater flexibility in defining the paths to democracy; secondly, the need for greater diversity in the institutions which participate in democratic life; thirdly, the need to expand the public’s capacity for democracy; and finally, the need to strengthen public integrity - on which democracy rests. [4]

The failure of democracy is not specific to the Islamic world.... About 55% of the population in South American states said that they would prefer to live under a paternalistic dictatorship instead of an incompetent or corrupt democracy that is not improving their living condition. [3]

We think that every young educated person has to have a basic understanding of the methodologies of human governance. [Y]ou have a referendum on a constitution, you consult a population that has no knowledge whatsoever about the choices of constitutional government ... and you ask them to vote. Intellectually, what is the credibility of that? [2]

[1] 10th Annual LaFontaine-Baldwin Lecture, Institute for Canadian Citizenship (Toronto, Canada) 15 October 2010
[6] Neue Ruhr Zeitung (NRZ) Interview, Peter Hahne, ‘Islam has nothing to do with terrorism’ (Essen, Germany) 5 October 2005
[7] Deutsche Welle Interview, Günter Knabe, ‘There’s No Conflict Between Islam and Democracy’ (Berlin, Germany) 12 September 2004

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