alternative to some independent systems that perpetuate intolerance and fundamentalism.[20]

The development of indigenous democracy could also counter notions that democracy is a threat to diversity and tradition. A strong civil society is also needed to support democratic institutions from the inside.[21] Western policy makers must also recognize that democratic institutions require time to become firmly rooted in any society, regardless of culture or religion.

Other sources from "within" that could contribute to democratization include "strong states," literacy, and economic development.[22] Weak governance and a lack of support for democracy among political elites can also be seen as a key institutional obstacle to democratization in many Muslim countries.

External (in particular, Western) support for repressive regimes has also been cited as an important cause of the lack of democratic development in Muslim states. Cases in which the West is seen to be complicit with authoritarian and anti-democratic regimes

requires further consideration. To this end, substantive changes are needed to counter notions that the West is opposed to democracy in other regions of the world. This perceived lack of support for democracy for other societies has contributed to resentment (against the West) and alienation in many Muslim communities. It is also undermining efforts to democratize from within.[23] As a result, rather than suppressing popular Islamist sentiments, efforts must be made to include expressions of "civil Islam" in democratic and democratizing polities. This could be done by encouraging all political parties to openly participate in elections.[24] The dangers of supporting autocracy has also been echoed by some American commentators:

...if the United States government could be persuaded to be just a little less enthusiastic in its support of autocratic regimes in Arabic states, and more cognizant of the long run costs of such support, one important obstacle to democracy in the Arab world would be diminished in its impact.[25]

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20 See summary of remarks from Karen Armstrong (2002), available at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development website, www.cfp-pec.gc.ca. Karen Armstrong's presentation to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade is also available in online video at the same website location. See also Benjamin Barber, keynote presentation for Thinkers' Retreat: Clash of Civilizations? (2002) "Can Democracy Survive the War Against Terrorism?", available in online video at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development website (www.cfp-pec.gc.ca).

21 Benjamin Barber, keynote presentation for Thinkers' Retreat: Clash of Civilizations? (2002) "Can Democracy Survive the War Against Terrorism?", available in online video at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development website (www.cfp-pec.gc.ca).

22 Manus Midlarsky, interview in online video for Thinkers' Retreat: Clash of Civilizations? (2002), available at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development website (www.cfp-pec.gc.ca).

23 Sumit Ganguly, interview in online video for Thinkers' Retreat: Clash of Civilizations? (2002), available at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development website (www.cfp-pec.gc.ca); see also summary of remarks from Karen Armstrong (2002), available at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development website, www.cfp-pec.gc.ca. Karen Armstrong's presentation to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade is also available in online video at the same website location.

24 Narendra Subramanian, interview in online video for Thinkers' Retreat: Clash of Civilizations? (2002), available at the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development website (www.cfp-pec.gc.ca).

25 James Lee Ray, "Discussion Paper for Thinkers' Retreat: Clash of Civilizations? (2002): Democracy Versus Clash of Civilizations," available online at: http://www.ecommons.net/ccfpd-thinkers2002/main.phtml?section= ottawa&show=ray.