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Sommario/riassunto	The recent ""Arab spring"", with its popular uprisings in many Arab countries, has exposed the ambiguity at the heart of American promotion of democracy in the Middle East. The US invasions of

Afghanistan and Iraq were packaged as democracy promotion, as heralding the beginning of a new phase in the politics of the Middle East when democracy would replace authoritarian regimes. Many of these authoritarian regimes, however, were sustained by US support. The recent popular uprisings threaten to bring democracy without promotion by the US, and threaten to overthrow regimes previously supported
