

Duquesne University

Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Hallowed Secularism

The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian
Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly
Excellence and Professor of Law

4-28-2013

April 28, 2013: We Don't Need Secularists, We Need Democrats

Bruce Ledewitz

Duquesne University, ledewitz@duq.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism>



Part of the [Constitutional Law Commons](#), and the [Law and Philosophy Commons](#)

Repository Citation

Ledewitz, B. (2013). April 28, 2013: We Don't Need Secularists, We Need Democrats. Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/ledewitz-hallowedsecularism/740>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the The Collective Works of Bruce Ledewitz, Adrian Van Kaam C.S.Sp. Endowed Chair in Scholarly Excellence and Professor of Law at Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Hallowed Secularism by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact beharyr@duq.edu.

Title: We Don't Need Secularists, We Need Democrats

Date: 2013-04-28T23:01:00.001-04:00

4/28/2013 – – A story today on the front page of the New York Times illustrates how unrealistic and out of touch our foreign policy has become in the Middle East. The story explains that the orientation of all the rebels in Syria toward Islam was making life difficult for the United States and reducing its influence. The United States has been looking for a secular opposition to the Assad regime. But in the end there was no secular opposition. All of the opposition represented the Sunni majority seeking a more Islam friendly Syria. This fruitless search for secularists in a conservative, highly religious region, is doomed to failure. Obviously in this context a genuinely popular movement is going to be religious in some sense. We have made this mistake now in Egypt and Iraq and Afghanistan and most recently in Syria. More significantly, the problem is not just that secularist popular movements don't exist, but that the United States has no reason to be concerned about them. We should have one policy in the Middle East and elsewhere – – that policy should be the promotion of democracy. In the long run, only democracy will bring both public legitimacy and peace. It is true that in the short run genuinely popular movements are going to be more anti-Israel and anti-American than the autocratic regimes we have been supporting. But that will only be true in the short run. In the long run, a democratic regime is going to seek peace with Israel because such a peace will be in the long-term interests of its people. There is an issue about Islam and democracy. Morsi in Egypt is not yet reassuring about whether democracy can survive an Islamically oriented government. But that is the question, not the fruitless search for secularists. The United States should be busy selling democracy among the rebels in Syria, not secularism.