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MEI Focuses on Syria

The grassroots reform movements sweeping across North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula have initiated extraordinary change in the Middle East and around the world. Protest movements in Tunisia and Egypt toppled the existing order without many casualties, while rebel forces in Libya encountered stiff resistance in the form of military and paramilitary forces loyal to Col. Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi before they were able to take control of the Libyan capital. In this edition of the *MEI Bulletin*, however, we focus on the situation in Syria, where protest move-

Also in this issue of the *Bulletin*, we introduce two scholars new to MEI – Randa Slim and Philip Frayne. Mr. Frayne discusses his long career as a Foreign Service Officer, which has taken him all over the world, from India and Sri Lanka to Egypt, Yemen, Morocco, Jordan, and Iraq. He also suggests useful ways that the United States can nurture fledgling democratic movements in the Middle East. Randa Slim shares her experiences in post-conflict reconciliation and her views on the situations in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.



Thousands of protestors gathered in Al-Assy Square in Hama, Syria on July 22, 2011. (Photo: Flickr user syriana2011)

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ments have been monitored, attacked, and otherwise restrained by government forces, preventing the type of reform seen in other parts of the region. Providing one perspective on this issue, Hande Ayan of MEI's Center for Turkish Studies discusses the increasingly uneasy diplomatic relationship between Syria and Turkey, the role Turkey plays in the current crisis in Syria, and Turkey's policy options vis-à-vis its relations with neighboring countries in the region.

Over the past few months, we have sponsored several events and conferences designed to analyze, contextualize, and make sense of the important events occurring in the Middle East. Most recently, MEI hosted "Syria on the Verge: Implications for a Nation in Revolt" with Syria experts Radwan Ziadeh, Ausama Monajed, Ambassador Theodore Kattouf, and Andrew Tabler who commented on the domestic and international

ramifications of the ongoing violence and political unrest in Syria. The panelists spoke about tenuous US-Syrian relations, the political fragmentation of the opposition, and the international actors invested in the stability of the Syrian state, including Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Iran.

As new and unprecedented events unfold throughout the Middle East, MEI renews its commitment to honest, nonpartisan analysis and debate, and to strengthening the lines of communication between the United States and the people of the Middle East. We hope you will join us in our mission by becoming a member today.

— Wendy Chamberlin

Which Card to Play?: Turkey's Syria Options

When the al-Asad family visited Turkey for vacation in August 2008, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's family greeted them at the airport like any good Turkish host would do. For those who remember the late 1990s, the hostilities and problems between two countries seemed to be magically forgotten almost in a decade. Two countries, which came very close to war in 1998, normalized their relations greatly with the Adana Agreement of October 1998. Syria ceased its official support for the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), expelled its leader, Abdullah Öcalan, from Damascus, and agreed to establish security cooperation with Turkey.

The Adana Agreement put an end to the "securitization" chapter of Turkish-Syrian relations. In response to the changing dynamics of the region after the Cold war, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu's "zero problems with neighbors" policy diversified the focus of relations with Syria through intensive economic, political, and social partnerships.

In 2009, Turkey and Syria waived the visa requirements at their borders in order to enhance trade and tourism. As the 20th largest importer of Turkish goods in 2010,¹ Syria made 50 bilateral agreements in trade, social, and security areas with Turkey only in 2009.² Turkish businessmen have already made as much as \$700 million³ worth of investments in Syria. Even water, a long-lasting dispute between the two countries, has become a matter of cooperation.⁴



Syrian President Bashar al-Asad. (Photo: Wikimedia user Tholme)

However, in March 2011, the Arab Spring finally reached the Syrian people. As Syrian people voiced their demands for political reform more loudly, Bashar al-Asad's government responded to these demands with escalating violence. Even in the holy month of Ramadan, news outlets reported civilian deaths in Syria.

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Over the past six months, Turkish-Syrian relations have downgraded from a close regional partnership to the point of no confidence. Turkey's unproductive engagement with Syria has raised questions about Turkey's neighborhood policy of "zero problems." However, the point of no-confidence, as Turkish President Abdullah Gül stated on August 28,⁵ does not mean that Turkish-Syrian relations will cease immediately, nor it is easy to conclude that Davutoğlu's "zero problem" vision has failed.

In its reactions to Syria, Turkey has argued that the situation in Syria is a "domestic issue," not a foreign policy

1. Data interpreted by the author from the Turkish Statistical Institute.
2. Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. "Joint Statement of the Second Ministerial Meeting of the High Level Strategic Cooperation Council Between the Syrian Arab Republic and the Republic of Turkey, 2-3 October 2010, Lattakia," <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/joint-statement-of-the-second-ministerial-meeting-of-the.en.mfa>.
3. Anatolia News Agency, "Turkey to raise trade volume with Syria," *Hurriyet Daily News*, May 3, 2011, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-to-raise-trade-volume-with-syria-2010-05-03>.
4. Just before the start of uprisings in Syria, Erdoğan and his Syrian counterpart laid the foundation stone for the Friendship Dam on the Orontes River, which flows through Syria and empties into the Mediterranean Sea in Turkey, "Otri, Erdogan Lay Cornerstone of Friendship Dam" *Syrian Arab News Agency*, February 6, 2011, <http://www.sana.sy/eng/21/2011/02/06/330380.htm>.
5. "Gül: We Lost all Trust in the Syrian Regime," *Hurriyet Daily News*, August 28, 2011, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=gul-we-lost-all-trust-in-the-syrian-regime-2011-08-28>.

issue like Libya.⁶ This position is built on a communication framework that stresses close relations and brotherhood between two countries.

Turkey's position reflects myriad concerns arising from its own domestic and regional realities, such as the refugee crisis at its borders, the recently revived PKK insurgency, and Turkey's business circles that heavily invested in Syria. The security cooperation over the PKK between Turkey and Iran also becomes more fragile as the two countries' policies on Syria diverge. Iran's religious leader Ayatollah 'Ali Khomeini has already implicitly threatened Turkey, saying that they would "use all means at its disposal to ensure the failure of plots against Syria."⁷



PKK members in 2008. (Photo:Wikimedia user Tasja)

making its mediator card still available without denouncing Asad. This leaves Turkey with few options. Each option permits very limited room to maneuver around Turkey's interests. As a result, everybody wonders what Turkey will do next.

The first option that was borne out of the refugee crisis is military intervention. Some analysts suggest that Turkey can create a buffer zone at its border with Syria in order to provide refugees with a secure area. Some believe that a NATO intervention with Turkish consent would trigger Turkey's military intervention in Syria. Currently, Turkish military is busy with PKK operations in Northern Iraq, and the forceful removal of Asad might spark a sectarian civil war in Syria, which threatens Turkish security greatly.

Economic sanctions is another card on the table. US and EU leaders proposed a UN resolution to impose stronger economic sanctions on Syria after calling on Asad to step down. Turkey's policies regarding Syria have been in agreement with US and EU so far; however, the pressure coming from business circles that are very active in Syria will also influence the AKP government's last word.

Protecting the status quo in Syria is a third option as Turkey continues to condemn the Asad government and side with the Syrian people while opposing any further action. Employing this option would not only convince the US and EU that Turkey is not a trustworthy ally in the region, but also mar Turkey's leadership bid in the Middle East. According to a recent opinion poll from the Arab-American Institute, Arab people see Turkey as a source of democracy and peace in the Middle East.⁹ Based on a cost-benefit analysis, this option could damage Turkey's long-term interests in the region the most.

6. "PM Erdoğan Warns of Sectarian Clashes in Syria," *Hurriyet Daily News*, May 15, 2011, <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=pm-erdogan-warns-of-sectarian-clashes-in-syria-2011-05-15>.

7. Amir Tehrani, "Syria: Turkey v. Iran," *The New York Post*, August 26, 2011, http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/syria_turkey_iran_siZDGLKZI4b1P64OBttWgO#ixzz1WeVPmmNp.

8. According to the International Crisis Group's report on Syria, some protestors are reported to have guns and to be attacking the security forces. However, the majority of protestors are reported as unarmed civilians. "Popular Protest in North Africa and the Middle East (VII): The Syrian Regime's Slow-motion Suicide," International Crisis Group, July 13, 2011, <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/middle-east-north-africa/iraq-syria-lebanon/syria/109-popular-protest-in-north-africa-and-the-middle-east-vii-the-syrian-regimes-slow-motion-suicide.aspx>.

9. James Zogby, "Arab Attitudes, 2011," Arab American Institute Foundation, July 2011, http://aai.3cdn.net/5d2b8344e3b3b7ef19_xkm6ba4r9.pdf.

Denouncing Asad will destabilize Turkey-Iran relations and block Turkey's last line of dialogue with Syria. It is also clear to Turkey that the Syrian people's movement is getting stronger. Focusing on the Syrian opposition might be a viable option for Turkey in order to maintain meaningful room to maneuver. A recent meeting in August 2011 of the Syrian opposition in Istanbul that formed a National Council to align opposition factions shows that Turkey is leaning toward this option.

At the end of the day, what matters is how much the Syrian people want democracy for their country. Whichever card Turkey plays, Turkey should stand for democracy and human rights in Syria. By doing this, Turkey's long-term interests in the region will benefit the most.

— Hande Ayan

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Meet the Scholars: Philip Frayne

Philip Frayne is on loan to MEI as an adjunct scholar for one year from the State Department, where he is the Director of the Office of Press and Public Diplomacy in the Near Eastern Bureau of the State Department. He previously spent a year in Baghdad as the US Embassy Spokesman. Mr. Frayne is a career diplomat and has been a member of the US Foreign Service for 23 years. He began his career in Calcutta, India, and has served in Morocco, Yemen, Egypt (on two separate occasions), Sri Lanka, and Jordan. The views and opinions given below are Mr. Frayne's personal opinions and do not necessarily reflect those of the State Department.



Philip Frayne

What first sparked your interest in the Middle East?

Nearly 30 years ago, a year out of college, I decided to join the Peace Corps. The Peace Corps administration gave me a choice of going to Tonga or Morocco. Since I couldn't find Tonga on a map, I chose Morocco, and ended up as an English teacher in Fez. Those two years living in Morocco first sparked my interest in the Middle East.

Your most recent assignment was as the Director of Public Diplomacy for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department. Tell us bit about your career and experience as a Foreign Service Officer.

I actually began my career in India as an Assistant Cultural Attache in Calcutta, a great place to begin. From there I went to Cairo and have since served in Egypt, Yemen, Morocco, Washington, Egypt again, Sri Lanka, Jordan, and Iraq. I've been lucky in that I've enjoyed every country I've served in and have always had excellent Ambassadors running the embassy. Practicing public diplomacy, which aims to influence foreign public opinion, has been a huge challenge, though, in a region deeply suspicious of US motives and policies.

What advice would you give to a young policy professional who is looking to join the Foreign Service?

By and large I think the State Department has done a good job in recruiting new officers. I've been very impressed with the caliber of the officers who've joined over the last decade or so. For those looking to join, I'd suggest reading widely on foreign affairs, not just the usual suspects of the daily newspaper or the most famous foreign affairs journal. Look at publications from other countries, look at how foreign newspapers report the news. You'll get a different perspective which would serve you well in a career in the Foreign Service.

Of all the US embassies you have served in, which was the most challenging and why?

I think serving in Baghdad (2009–2010) was the biggest challenge, particularly for a public diplomacy (PD) specialist. Our job is to interact and engage with foreign publics, but the security situation in Baghdad limited our opportunities for doing so. Due to restrictions put in place by our security officers, we could really only get out into the Red Zone a few times a week, and at times those forays were cancelled at the last minute because of a bombing or a new threat. Iraqis would come meet us in the Green Zone, but that option was not as effective as going to their place of work or their homes.

What do you see as the largest policy concerns for the United States resulting from the new political order in the Middle East?

First of all, the new political order is still unfolding, and we really don't know yet what that order will look like a year or two or three from now. So it's hard to say what exactly the largest policy concerns will be. For the moment, the US should try to assist those countries in transition to becoming real democracies. Those countries that become democratic are likely to be more stable in the long run, which would be a positive development for the US and the region. Of course, Iranian support for undemocratic governments or groups, such as in Syria or Lebanon, remains a large concern. The US will also need to pay attention that the current tumult does not lead to greater room for maneuver for al-Qa'ida and other extremists, whether in Yemen or elsewhere.

Do you see America's influence in the Middle East waning as our traditional regional allies are replaced by new governments and these countries seek self-determination free from Western interference and input?

I don't think US influence need wane if the US plays its cards right. If we approach our technical and other assistance the right way, in response to requests from newly formed governments, then there's less of a chance that the majority of the people will view such assistance as interference. And while it's possible that some new governments will see a close partnership with the US as less desirable than their predecessors, others – such as in Tunisia – could actually seek a closer relationship.

From a diplomacy perspective, what are the most effective ways the US can assist the democratic transitions underway in the region?

In all the countries undergoing such a transition, there will be a need for large infusions of financial and technical aid. US diplomacy can work best in marshalling such aid from international stakeholders, as it has done in Yemen and Tunisia. The US can also, of course, strongly encourage – through carrots and sticks – recalcitrant governments to undertake necessary reforms. When they refuse, as in Syria, US diplomacy can work with international partners to impose sanctions or, in the case of Libya, undertake coordinated military action to protect civilians.

You previously served as a Spokesman and Senior Information Officer at the US Embassy in Baghdad. What are the most important policy issues and decisions to be made in the transition out of Iraq?

One thing that is important to remember is that while US military forces are pulling out of Iraq, the American civilian presence there will still be huge, working with Iraqis in many different areas from police training to media professionalization and small business development. How the US, post-2011, continues to assist the Iraqi military in developing their defense and intelligence capabilities is one important issue. The Kurdish-Arab dispute in northern Iraq remains another crucial policy issue, and the US will need to apply its best resources and diplomatic skill in helping Iraqis overcome their differences so Iraq can progress as a stable, unified country.

— Interview by Elisha Meyer

Meet the Scholars: Randa Slim

Randa Slim is an adjunct research fellow at the National Security Studies Program at the New America Foundation. She previously served as Vice President at the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue. She has also held positions at the Rockefeller Brothers Fund, the United States Institute of Peace, and the Kettering Foundation. She earned her PhD at the University of North Carolina and specializes in democratization, post-conflict reconciliation, peacebuilding, and Track II dialogue.



Randa Slim

Tell us a little bit about your background, and how it influenced your chosen career path and trajectory.

I grew up in Lebanon in the midst of the civil war. That experience played a major part in shaping my decision to study the theory and practice of conflict analysis and management and eventually to devote my professional life to the practice of dialogue and in particular Track II dialogues as both a conflict prevention and a conflict management process. My first job was with the Kettering Foundation in 1990. My eight-year stint at the Foundation was a tremendous learning opportunity on so many levels. First, it introduced me to the US foundation community, a sector of US society not well known to many Arabs. Second, I learned from one of the best practices of Track II dialogue. At the time, the Foundation was organizing and managing a senior-level US-Russian Track II dialogue known as the Dartmouth Conference. I joined the Conference's regional conflicts taskforce. That proved to be a great training ground both in terms of participating in a dialogue processes and in giving me the opportunity to work with great policy experts and to learn from them. Third, through its International Civil Society symposia, the Kettering Foundation created a

unique public space for activists from different parts of the world including Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe, to learn from each other about their ongoing efforts in advancing deliberative democracy in their countries. These symposia introduced me to a more nuanced understanding of politics in general, and of political activism in societies that are undergoing structural transformations from authoritarianism toward democracy in particular. In 1992, our Russian colleagues suggested that we organize a joint dialogue initiative to address one of the conflicts that was ongoing in Russia's near abroad region. We decided to work in Tajikistan, which was in the midst of a civil war at the time. For nine years, I was a member of a US-Russian Inter-Tajik Dialogue moderating team, working with representatives of the different conflicting Tajik parties to develop the principles and mechanics of a negotiated peace agreement. Since 2002, I have been working mostly in the Middle East and on US-Arab relations.

You used to be Vice President of the International Institute for Sustained Dialogue. Give us some examples of where Track II diplomacy has worked, and where it hasn't.

The question to address when discussing Track II dialogue is what we mean by success. By their nature, Track II dialogues cannot result in a signed and enforceable peace agreement. The latter is the purview of governments, multilateral organizations, and regional organizations. Track II dialogues can help the protagonists design the elements and mechanics of an agreement but they lack the stick and the carrot that official mediators have at their disposal to push the parties to sign the agreement and/or the power and means to guarantee implementation of the agreement. I will give you two examples from my own Track II experience. The Inter-Tajik Dialogue, referred to above, operated in a complementary fashion to UN-mediated negotiations, with some of the Tajikistani participants taking part in both the Track I and Track II processes. That provided a unique case of complementarity between the two tracks. The Inter-Tajik Dialogue was successful at creating a working level of trust between the conflicting parties thus removing the case often made by hardliners in conflicting groups that the other side could not be trusted. It established a meeting space for the protagonists where none existed previously. It assisted them in identifying the elements of a negotiated agreement and of an implementation process. Many of the ideas that made their way into the peace agreement were first brainstormed and debated in the Track II dialogue space. In that respect, this Track II succeeded in achieving what such a process is best at delivering. However, as in all mediation processes, the political context matters: Tajikistanis were getting tired of their war; regional parties like Russia, Iran, and Uzbekistan saw it in their respective interests to bring the war to an end; and Tajikistani leaders, from both the government and the opposition also saw a negotiated agreement as meeting their interests.



Vahdat Palace, headquarters for the ruling People's Democratic Party, in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. (Photo: US Federal Government)

In 2006, we organized a similar initiative in Iraq focusing on national reconciliation. The moderating team involved US and European members. The Iraqi participants included parliamentarians, tribal leaders, and representatives of the Sunni opposition groups. We spent a good amount of time on the pre-dialogue phase building relationships with the different Iraqi groups and gaining their approval for the dialogue process. Yet after four years, the dialogue got stuck in the same old debate about who did what to whom. It was going nowhere. We made the decision to suspend it. Reflecting back on the initiative, there were three main obstacles to progress in the dialogue process: (1) Iraqi participants in the Track II process were unable to get their respective leaders to endorse the dialogue recommendations; (2) Huge mistrust and utter hatred that existed between the Iraqi parties (the groups who were in power were in no mood to compromise for fear of losing the gains that they garnered and those out of power were unwilling to accommodate the new political realities in Iraq); and (3) the political context (Iraq became a proxy for a regional confrontation between Iran and the US on one hand, and Iran and Saudi Arabia on the other hand). So a variety of factors could impact whether Track II could work or not, some of which were outside the control of the conflicting parties themselves and of the third party team.

Given Lebanon's political fractiousness, why do you think the uprisings of the Arab Spring haven't taken root in Lebanon? Is it only a matter of time before they do?

- A combination of factors have helped keep the tide of Arab uprisings away from Lebanese shores: The Lebanese political system is democratic, albeit a struggling and often a failing one at that. Venues for political participation are available. Elections are held fairly regularly. And the Lebanese state

has never engaged in the type of sustained, repressive measures that are practiced by the Syrian regime, for example. If the Arab uprisings are about the citizen reclaiming his/her political role, the Lebanese citizen has had the opportunity to exercise this role, though, in my opinion, in a fashion that has reinforced the sectarian identities that plague the country.

- Having experienced the ravages of civil war, Lebanese are both cynical and afraid about the prospects of yet another overhaul of their political system. They are cynical about whether the current political class would be changed. As they often put it, “Why bother since it will be more of the same.” They are also afraid of whether an uprising as we are witnessing in Syria would lead to another civil war, a prospect which they all want to avoid.
- Deep sectarian divisions make Lebanon a collection of groups that are living next to each other, mistrustful of and in fear of each other. Collective action requires taking a leap of faith in fellow citizens. Their mutual fears will in the short-term prevent Lebanese from trusting their fellow citizens to engage together in a nation-building project. Instead, they prefer to retreat to the security of their respective sectarian communities. There was a modest attempt to bring the national debate to focus on the source of all ills in Lebanon, i.e. the confessional character of its political system. This attempt failed to rally a critical mass of Lebanese around it.

You are currently completing a book about Hizbullah. What do you believe the organization’s role will be in the new Arab political order, both within Lebanon and in the region as a whole?



Hizbullah Secretary-General Hassan Nasrallah. (Photo: Wikimedia user Black phantom xxx)

This is a very good question. Hizbullah’s *raison d’être* — as the premier resistance movement and defender of the Palestinian cause — will remain the #1 priority for the party as long as the current leadership is in place. All members of the party Shura council are part of the founders group and will remain for the short-to-medium term committed to the founding principles. For now, the party is focused on the developments in Syria. Though these developments represent a serious challenge to Hizbullah, regime change in Syria will not be catastrophic for them; they will adapt to the new circumstances. We should also remember that the Arab publics in general are sympathetic to Hizbullah’s resistance cause, and as long as the party remains faithful to this mission, it will find support in the Arab street whose needs and concerns future Arab governments must be more mindful of. However, the longer the Syrian uprisings continue, the more costly Hizbullah’s pro-regime stance will become in terms of its reputational capital in the Arab region. To date, Hizbullah still believes that Bashar al-Asad will survive this crisis. When they realize that this is not a battle he will be able to win, I expect them to start distancing themselves from the Syrian regime. Hizbullah is a pragmatic political actor and will adapt its Syria policy accordingly.

You recently published a piece in *Foreign Policy* entitled “Where is Syria’s Business Community?” What are your predictions for that country? Will economic sanctions be enough to pressure Asad loyalists in Syria’s business elite to break ranks and join the opposition? Will an unarmed opposition be able to topple Asad’s regime?

The recent statement by the Syrian Local Coordinating Committees (LCC) rejecting the use of violence, and the call for international intervention in Syria is spot on. While I fully understand the frustration and anger of activists on the ground who are growing desperate of overthrowing the Asad regime through peaceful means, the overall political attitudes of the Syrian people would doom a military foreign intervention in Syria to failure. The LCCs were correct in stating that only through peaceful efforts will they be able to bring down the Asad regime. Syrians, especially those who are still sitting on the fence, are growing disgusted with the regime’s violence. As in any revolution, intangible factors are often at play and it is very hard for analysts, especially outsiders, to predict when the conditions for a perfect storm of change will occur. Yet, based on my own informal discussions with Syrians who have a good pulse on the mood of their respective communities, there seems to be a shift in the national mood in favor of regime overthrow. People are not going to the streets *en masse*, especially in Syria’s two largest cities, mainly out of fear for their lives and the lives of their loved ones. Economic sanctions can affect the business community’s political calculus but it will take time for this re-calibration to translate into action on the ground. In the interim, peaceful protests will, in my opinion, remain the best means to rally the fence-sitters around the opposition cause.

If Asad is overthrown, what impact will it have on Hizbullah in Lebanon in light of the Iran connection?

Regarding the Iran-Hizbullah connection, it is a multi-layered relationship that is rooted in bonds of history, religion, and ideology. Since the 1980s, Hizbullah has been and will remain Iran's most trusted ally in the Middle East. Hizbullah has been Iran's most valued investment and I cannot see Iran risking the party's survival for the sake of a weakening Syrian regime. The fall of the Asad regime will not deal Hizbullah the mortal blow that many Western analysts predict. Hizbullah will move to strengthen its hold on power in Lebanon through the "rainbow" political alliance it has successfully put together over the last few years. The question we must also ponder is how the Asad regime will fall and what implications this will have on the region, including Lebanon.

You have also worked on Iraq. Tell us your opinion of the American military drawdown there. Will the country descend back into sectarian violence after the US pulls its troops out?

The failure of the national reconciliation process remains the most important obstacle to a secure and stable Iraq. We have recently seen an uptick in sectarian violence. There remains a significant disenfranchised Sunni insurgency that does not trust the Iraqi leaders. Part of the leadership of this group is currently housed in Syria, protected by the Syrian regime. So what happens next door will also have implications in Iraq. The Iraqi leadership lacks the will to push for a genuine national reconciliation process. Buying off Sunni insurgents as was done with the Sons of Iraq does not lay the ground for a genuine and sustainable reconciliation process. Absent the latter, security in Iraq will remain a struggle.

— Interview by Elisha Meyer



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The Middle East Journal

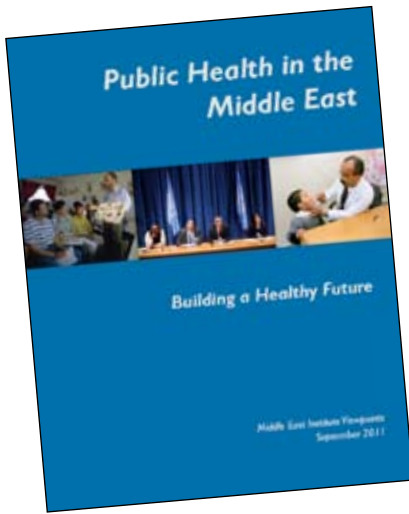
The Autumn 2011 issue of *The Middle East Journal* offers a range of articles covering multiple disciplines and countries. The articles are:

- Mehran Kamrava, "Mediation and Qatari Foreign Policy." An analysis of Qatar's proactive mediation efforts throughout the region over the past few years, looking at motivations and the reasons for its relative success.
- Patrice Flynn, "The Saudi Arabian Labor Force: A Comprehensive Statistical Portrait." Using an analytical model designed by the US Department of Labor, the author proposes a new way of organizing data on the Saudi labor market.
- Clive Jones, "Military Intelligence, Tribes, and Britain's War in Dhofar, 1970-1976." An examination, based on recently available sources, of the role played by military intelligence during the counterinsurgency war in the 1970s in Oman's Dhofar region.
- Maliha Safri, "The Transformation of the Afghan Refugee, 1979-2009." An examination of how the status and perceptions of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and Iran have evolved through the years, from "refugee" to "migrant" and even "terrorist."
- Hasan AlHasan, "The Role of Iran in the Bahrain Unrest of 1981." An examination of Iran's role in the Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain in 1981, based on the movement's own documents.
- This issue's Book Review article was written by MEI scholar-in-residence Dr. Marvin Weinbaum, examining six recent books on Pakistan.

In addition, there will be the usual Chronology section, which has appeared in every issue since 1947. Between issues, follow the MEI Editor's Blog at <http://mideasti.blogspot.com>.

— Michael Collins Dunn

The Middle East Institute presents



**Public Health in the Middle East:
Building a Healthy Future**

This issue of *Viewpoints* is the final edition in the Middle East Institute's "Crossing Borders" series. It focuses on a number of public health issues in the Middle East and is now available on our website at <http://www.mei.edu/Publications.aspx>.

Featuring six leading experts, these essays discuss current physical and mental health concerns and the solutions that are being put into practice by regional and international public health professionals.

Beyond the Beltway

This summer, MEI scholars remained busy with media commentaries and speaking appearances about the ongoing developments in the Middle East, particularly regarding the situations in Syria and Libya.

MEI in the News

In the past two weeks our scholars have been in high demand for their analysis and commentary on the Libyan rebels' victory in Tripoli, the ousting of Col. Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi, and the implications for US foreign policy. Before the fall of Tripoli, **Daniel Serwer** published a timely article on *ForeignPolicy.com* entitled "Planning for Libya 2.0," which addresses preparations for a political transition in Libya. **David Mack** was interviewed on the BBC for a report on coalition strategy towards Libya. He also spoke to Reuters about his personal experiences with Mu'ammār al-Qadhafi. **Graeme Bannerman** was interviewed by CBS News about the situation in Libya.



Graeme Bannerman talking to CBS News

Michael Ryan was interviewed by Voice of America on the current state of affairs and the future of US policy in Libya. **Wayne White** wrote an online commentary about NATO's involvement in the Libya crisis entitled "How Long Can NATO Keep Going in Libya?," which was published by Harvard University's Nieman Foundation for Journalism.

In the wake of Libyan rebels' capture of Tripoli, Daniel Serwer spoke to a number of media outlets including Al-Jazeera, BBC, CNN, China's CCTV, Italy's La Stampa, USA Today, Denmark's Jyllands-Post, Reuters, Bloomberg News, CBC News, WGN Radio Chicago, and the Council on Foreign Relations. He also published an article in *The Atlantic* about the challenges facing a free Libya. **David Newton** spoke to CBS Radio and Colombia's NTN24 television network about the impact of the rebels' march to Tripoli. David Mack discussed Qadhafi's options after abdicating power with NPR and was quoted on his personal experience with Qadhafi by the PBS NewsHour.

The Bashar al-Asad regime's bloody crackdown on protesters in Syria continued throughout the summer with many MEI scholars sharing their insight and analysis with media outlets around the world. MEI Vice President **Kate Seelye** was interviewed by Al-Jazeera English about the unrest in Syria and the weakening Assad regime. **Murhaf Jouejati** was interviewed by Australian radio and appeared in Russia Beyond the Headlines' weekly discussion, "Red Line," to discuss the Syrian unrest. He also appeared on the PBS NewsHour, Al-Jazeera, and CNN International to discuss the next steps available to the Assad regime. **Richard Murphy** was interviewed by BBC Radio regarding developments in Syria. He also appeared on a panel to discuss Syria on the Iranian Arabic Channel and gave several interviews to the BBC about US diplomatic options regarding Syria. Michael Ryan was interviewed by Voice of America South Asia Broadcast about the violence in Syria. In an interview with the *Christian Science Monitor*, Wayne White discussed the attack on the US Embassy in Damascus. **Greg Myre** published an article entitled "In Syria, Hama Residents Document Fierce Crackdown" on NPR.org. **Randa Slim's** article, "Where's Syria's Business Community?" was published on Foreign Policy's Middle East Channel. The article discusses the Syrian business community's role in helping to cripple Assad's regime.



Murhaf Jouejati speaking on Al-Jazeera

MEI scholars also shared their expertise and opinions about President Salih's injury in Yemen. David Newton was interviewed by CNN International with Ralitsa Vasilova regarding the consequences of the rocket attack on President Salih. He also appeared on a panel discussing the consequences of Salih's departure on Al-Jazeera. **Charles Schmitz** wrote two articles in *Foreign Affairs* magazine entitled "Yemen's Tribal Showdown" and "Yemen Without Saleh" published by the Council on Foreign Relations.

MEI scholars were frequently asked to comment on the ongoing wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as the evolving political and diplomatic relationship between the US and Pakistan. **Marvin Weinbaum** was interviewed by Al-Jazeera about a US Senate report on aid to

Afghanistan in which he talked about US-Pakistani relations. He was interviewed by GEO TV of Pakistan, and by the BBC in connection with a forthcoming TV documentary on Afghanistan and Pakistan. He also spoke to Voice of America about the continuing violence in Karachi, Pakistan. MEI President **Wendy Chamberlin** was interviewed by Alhurra and also published an article in *Newsweek Pakistan* entitled “In Search of a New Compact,” which discusses the redefinition of US-Pakistani relations in light of recent tension between the two countries. **Zubair Iqbal** was interviewed by Voice of America about Pakistan’s new budget, the long-term outlook for global food security, the evolving situation in the Arab world, and the economic cost of Afghan refugees in Pakistan. **Syed Farooq Hasnat** published a book, *Global Security Watch — Pakistan*, which addresses specific domestic and international security challenges facing Pakistan. Daniel Serwer published an article entitled “A Political Solution to the Afghanistan War — Analysis” on *TheAtlantic.com*. In the article, he discussed the political future of Afghanistan and the possibility of reconciliation with the Taliban.



Zubair Iqbal in an interview with Voice of America’s Urdu Service

In an interview, David Mack talked to Reuters Baghdad Bureau Chief Patrick Markey about the withdrawal of US forces from Iraq. David Newton was interviewed by the BBC about his personal experience with Saddam Husayn while serving as ambassador to Iraq from 1984 to 1988. Wayne White spoke to Reuters about continued insurgent fighting in Iraq, and was interviewed by Rudaw about Kurdish-Arab tensions in Iraq’s Diyala Governorate. He was also quoted in an article in the *Financial Times* about the violence towards Iranian exile group Mujahedin-e-Khalq (MEK) north of Baghdad. The piece discusses the MEK’s status on the State Department’s Foreign Terrorist Organizations list.

Also, **Ilan Peleg** and Dov Waxman’s new book, *Israel’s Palestinians: The Conflict Within*, was reviewed in an *Economist* article entitled “How to Find a Fairer Solution.” The review was republished by Gulfnews.com. The two also published an op-ed in the *Providence Journal* entitled “New Definition of Israel is Needed.” **Gönül Tol** posted an article on Foreign Policy’s Middle East Channel entitled, “New Hope for Turkey’s Kurds.” **Elisha Meyer**, MEI Director of Programs and Communications, appeared on an episode of Turkish TRT Televizyon’s program *Batı Yakası* to discuss the recent Turkish elections and the direction of the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

Around Town

MEI Scholars also had a number of speaking appearances around the DC metro area this summer. Gönül Tol gave a lecture on Islam in Turkey to Department of Defense officials at George Washington University’s National Security Studies program. She also appeared on a panel at the Rumi Forum to discuss the Turkish election results and their implications for Turkish foreign and domestic politics. The Omani Arabic-language newspaper *Oman* covered the **Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center’s** (SQCC) Omani Cultural Day. The event was held at MEI and attracted a crowd of around 250 people, including students, scholars, dignitaries and several Omanis living in the DC area. Attendees were treated to the smell of frankincense, samplings of Middle Eastern foods, the sound of live oud music, and henna tattoo demonstrations. SQCC also unveiled its brand-new cultural exhibit, which features Oman’s diverse environments, traditional crafts, and dress. David Newton spoke to the US Department of State’s Critical Languages Seminar about the Arabic language.

Wendy Chamberlin spoke at the German Marshall Fund about aid to the Middle East and gave a briefing on Pakistan to the Department of Defense. **Molly Williamson** lectured on the politics of petroleum at the University of Maryland and spoke on the Middle East. She also spoke to Model UN participants at Johns Hopkins University-SAIS’s Osgood Center about international perceptions of the United States. Zubair Iqbal spoke at the US Foreign Service Institute about emerging challenges for South Asian economies. **Michael Dunn**, David Newton, **Philip Wilcox**, and Molly Williamson all spoke at the World Affairs Council of Washington’s 21st Annual Summer Institute on International Affairs for Middle and High School Educators, entitled “The New Middle East? Power Shifts and Global Implications.” Michael Ryan spoke on Capitol Hill at the presentation of the annual report sponsored by the Project on Middle East Democracy



Gönül Tol participating in a panel discussion at Rumi Forum

(POMED) and the Heinrich Boll Foundation. The report was entitled “The Federal Budget and Appropriations for Fiscal Year 2012: Democracy, Governance, and Human Rights In the Middle East.” Dr. Ryan’s talk was on the importance of small programs as cost-effective initiatives that serve United States’ foreign policy and national security interests. All speakers emphasized the special importance and increased demand for these programs in light of the recent Arab uprisings. **Thomas Lippman** delivered a briefing on the subject of Saudi Arabia, the Arab Spring, and terrorism to an audience of US government intelligence analysts.

Beyond the Beltway

MEI scholars also participated in conferences and lectures around the country and overseas over the last three months. **S. Abdallah Schleifer** was the keynote speaker at the United Nations University (UNU)-International Institute of the Alliance of Civilizations conference held in Barcelona. He led the panel for “Media and Communications,” which will be one of the major areas for postgraduate instruction and research at the new UNU Institute. Wendy Chamberlin was a panelist at the OPEN Forum 2011 held in Mountain View, California. She also appeared at the Chautauqua Institution to deliver a lecture entitled “US Aid to Pakistan: Harmful or Helpful?” Marvin Weinbaum addressed the staff of Senator Patty Murray from Washington State about US military strategy in Afghanistan. He also gave a lecture on Pakistan at the US Air Force’s Special Operations School at US Air Force base Hurlburt Field in Florida. Thomas Lippman also visited this base to conduct a class and briefing on Gulf security issues for students who would soon be deployed to the region. Greg Myre discussed his book *This Burning Land*, co-authored with his wife Jennifer Griffin, at the Jewish Community Center in St. Louis, Missouri as part of the St. Louis Jewish Book Festival. It was also selected as book-of-the-month by KMOX Radio in St. Louis. They also gave a speech and answered questions at American University about the book and recent developments in the Middle East. Ilan Peleg gave several talks in Boston at the annual conference of the Association for Israel Studies. David Newton spoke to a gathering of Ashburn, VA residents about the causes of Islamophobia. **William** and **Andrea Rugh** and David Mack gave talks as part of a lecture series called “A Season of Changes in the Middle East” held in Woods Hole, MA. Molly Williamson spoke to the Ohio State University’s John Glenn Fellows about female Foreign Service Officers serving in the Middle East.

— Mike Airosus

New Members of the Middle East Institute Team



Patrick Barbieri joined the Middle East Institute in July as Director of Development. He comes to Washington, DC from Chicago, IL, where he was Director of Communications in the Office of Alumni Affairs and Development at the University of Chicago’s Booth School of Business. Over the course of a decade previously, he held several senior positions in the areas of external and donor relations with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency in the Gaza Strip and West Bank. He subsequently launched and managed a program in Sudan on behalf of the Office of Transition Initiatives, a division of the US Agency for International Development. A fluent speaker of Arabic, he earned his undergraduate degree in Near Eastern Languages and Literature at Yale University and a graduate degree at the Yale School of Management. He was a Fulbright scholar at the University of Damascus in Syria.

Evan Norris is the new Executive and Development Assistant at the Middle East Institute. Before joining MEI, Evan worked as a branch manager at People’s United Bank in Connecticut and as a reporter for the Journal Register Company. He has a MA in History from the University of Maryland and a BA in History from Trinity College. He wrote his master’s thesis on the decline of civil society and opposition parties under Iraqi Ba’thism before the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War.



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