



# MEI Bulletin

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## MEI Focuses on Elections in the Middle East

The focus of this issue of the *MEI Bulletin* is elections. There are eight democratic elections set to take place this year in the Middle East: Afghanistan, Algeria, Iran, Israel, Kuwait, Lebanon, Mauritania, and Tunisia will, or already have, gone to the polls. In this issue's feature article, all eight elections are addressed in a series of short essays from MEI Scholars. Each Scholar draws upon years of firsthand regional experience to explain the wide variety of circumstances and policies that will govern these events. Also included is an interview with *MEJ* author Lisa Blaydes, who builds upon her upcoming article in the *Journal* and discusses the political participation of women in past Egyptian elections.

will spearhead the development of programs and research that pay particular attention to the development of Pakistan and its more than 170 million people. Dr. Ashraf is hopeful that he will be able to actively engage the Pakistani-American community in this regard. The launch of the Center for Turkish Studies is also well underway, and I will make two trips to Turkey in the coming month to support this effort.

Life around the Institute has been busy in all other ways as well. The Department of Languages and Regional Studies received excellent news in early May when it was reaccredited through 2011 by ACCET,



A man examines a candidate list for Iran's Majlis elections in 2008 (L), and a villager displays his ink-stained finger after voting in Afghanistan's 2005 parliamentary elections (R). Photos by Flickr user Amir Farshad Ebrahimi (L) and US Army (R).

The analysis of Lebanon's complex elections slated for this month was written by MEI's newest staff member, Kate Seelye. Kate lived for many years in the Middle East, most recently in Beirut, and worked extensively as a journalist in the region. MEI is fortunate to have her with us as the Vice President of Communications and Programs. Her years of experience in the region and fresh perspective will prove invaluable as MEI continues to develop original programs and publications.

It being a month for new staff, we also welcome Dr. Nasim Ashraf, the Executive Director of the new Center for Pakistan Studies at MEI. Dr. Ashraf

the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training. Congratulations to our hardworking staff!

Many of our recent events have received impressive media coverage, including Vice Admiral (ret.) Kevin Cosgriff's presentation about Somali piracy, which was aired multiple times on C-SPAN. The Scholars were also active, speaking at conferences in Virginia, California, Colorado, Illinois, Great Britain, Austria, and Qatar, while also appearing on NPR, PBS, and Al-Jazeera, as well as in the *Boston Globe* and the Associated Press, just to highlight a small sample. I testified before the House Subcommittee on National

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## Middle East Institute

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Security and Foreign Affairs in order to offer recommendations about engaging regional stakeholders in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

We are currently planning our annual Summer Garden Series, which brings in hundreds of new faces to the Institute during the summer months. We are particularly excited about “Mess-O-Po-Trivia,” a trivia event in which interns from think tanks around DC will match wits over Middle East culture, history, geography, and current events. I don’t mean to brag, but I expect big things from our own amazing interns!

There is no shortage of exciting, new activity taking place at MEI this summer. I hope you will be able to join us in our Boardman Room and beautiful garden, but I encourage you to continue turning to our website for event coverage, original publications, including our Special Edition *Viewpoints* series commemorating the lasting repercussions of the events of 1979, and a wealth of research materials in the George Camp Keiser Library and online edition of *The Middle East Journal*. If you are not already a member, please consider joining us and supporting these and our many other efforts.

—Wendy Chamberlin

## Analyzing Elections across the Middle East

As elections take place across the region, we asked our Adjunct Scholars to offer brief analyses of what’s at stake at the ballot box. Their commentaries provide a dynamic picture of the state of democracy in the Middle East and examine the ways in which 2009’s elections will be harbingers for change — or renewals of the *status quo*.

### Afghanistan

The upcoming Afghan elections to be held on August 21 are an important milestone for the country’s nascent democracy. It is therefore paramount that this election be both fair and free and, more importantly, that the outcome is deemed legitimate by the Afghan people. However, giving the Afghan people an honest, fair, and free election will be challenging. The US and the international community are concerned about their ability to provide adequate security for the voting. It remains to be seen how seriously the Taliban will endeavor to keep people from the polls; an extremely low turnout could undermine the election’s credibility. There are numerous accusations of pre-election rigging in favor of President Hamid Karzai, including the appointment of local officials and other forms of patronage designed to help the President gain control of the election machinery. The now completed registration system has produced many inexplicable registration figures that point to bogus voting come Election Day. Karzai also has made controversial political alliances that underscore his determination to win at any cost. He chose Mohammad Qasim Fahim, an ethnic Tajik, as one of his two Vice Presidents. General Fahim has been associated with war crimes committed during the civil war of the 1990s and drug trafficking in more recent years. Currently, with some 44 candidates vying for the presidency, Karzai stands a good chance of being reelected, despite his steeply declining popularity nationally. A severely tainted election could bring instability and undermine the new counter-insurgency strategies that the Obama Administration is hoping to put into effect over the next several months.

— Marvin Weinbaum



Afghan President Hamid Karzai at his 2004 inauguration ceremony in Kabul. (Photo: Department of Defense)

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## Algeria

On April 9, Algerians re-elected President Abdelaziz Bouteflika to his third five-year term. He received a reported, and unsurprising, 90% of the votes cast. To achieve this “victory,” Bouteflika had the Parliament amend the Constitution last November to remove a clause that had limited the President to two five-year terms. He also had effectively hobbled any credible opposition from the Islamist parties to prevent a recurrence of the 1992 debacle, when the army stepped in to void a victory by the Islamic Salvation Front. That move sparked a decade-long civil war that cost over 150,000 lives. The Salvation Front was outlawed and its leader banished to Qatar. Now, parties based on religious or ethnic identity are prohibited. In fact, the greatest problem Bouteflika faced in this election was trying to get a few credible candidates into the race in order to validate his reelection. One credible possibility, Islamist leader Abdallah Djaballah of the Reform Party, said he decided not to run because the incumbent already had effectively won. So for all of Bouteflika’s efforts, there was no popular opposition candidate. And perhaps no candidate with grassroots stature was willing to contest the election because it was understood that they would not have had a remote chance of winning.



Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika. (Photo: Agência Brasil)

The people are tired of civil war and were exhausted by their 1992 experiment with popular democracy. Thus, whether this was just another “Arab” election is not clear, because in Algeria, a majority of people just want to see stability, an end to terrorism, and economic growth, all of which seemed best served for now by Bouteflika’s reelection.

— Edward S. Walker, Jr.

## Iran

On June 12, 2009, Iran will hold its tenth presidential election. Although most Western observers hope that its rabblorous President, Mahmud Ahmadinejad, fails in his re-election bid for a second four-year term, his chances look fairly good because the opposing reformist camp suffers from deep internal division. Altogether, some 475 individuals have registered as candidates, representing a 50% drop from the total in 2005. The two most important reformist challengers are former Prime Minister (1981-1989) Mir-Hoseyn Mussavi and former Speaker of Parliament (2000-2004) Mehdi Karoubi. Although they are likely to split the reformist vote, there is no indication yet that either of them is willing to quit the race and support the other. Ahmadinejad does not face a serious conservative rival as the challenge from former Revolutionary Guard Commander (1981-1997) Mohsen Rezaei does not appear to be formidable.



Supporters rally on behalf of Iranian presidential candidate Mir-Hoseyn Mussavi. (Photo: Wikipedia user Mardetanha)

Given that past elections involving an incumbent President have drawn a relatively small turnout, I expect that slightly more than 50% of eligible voters will take part. Low turnouts have traditionally favored the conservative camp because of its organized and mobilized constituency. Hence, the most hopeful scenario for the reformists would be for the election to enter a second round wherein the two highest vote-getters will go head-to-head.

— Mehrzad Boroujerdi

## Israel

No country seems to vote so often — and decide so little — as Israel. February's ballot was the fifth national election in the past decade, and the man who emerged as Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, was voted out of the same office back in 1999 after a disappointing tenure.

No one disputes the robust nature of Israel's freewheeling democracy. Yet the frequent elections keep generating the same outcome — unwieldy coalition governments that have limited room to maneuver and collapse after two or three years.

There is no Israeli consensus on how to engage the Palestinians after more than eight years of violence and relentless friction, and the voting offered no real guidance. The centrist Kadima party, which favors negotiations, got the most votes. Netanyahu's conservative Likud Party, which is deeply skeptical of full-fledged peace talks, placed a close second, but found enough partners to stitch together a governing coalition.

Netanyahu was a reluctant negotiator during his first term as Prime Minister (1996-99) and has consistently refused to endorse a two-state solution to the conflict. The Obama Administration is expected to push for renewed Israeli-Palestinian talks, but Netanyahu has spoken only of an "economic peace" between the Israelis and Palestinians.

Netanyahu did help guide Israel out of recession when he became Finance Minister in 2003, and he's expected to devote much of his energy to an economy that is hurting from the global downturn. The Palestinian economy has been in shambles since the launch of the al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, and the misery is particularly acute in the Gaza Strip. There is hope that a degree of normalcy can be restored to Palestinian economic life, at least in the West Bank. But there is near universal pessimism for the prospects of a major breakthrough on the peace front.

— Greg Myre

## Kuwait

The suspension of the Kuwaiti Parliament in March and the May 16 election are the result of a long crisis between Parliament and the Kuwaiti cabinet, led by Prime Minister Nasir Muhammad Al Sabah. The crisis has already produced two elections within a year and five governments since 2006, each led by the same Prime Minister. At the center of the dispute is the increasing role that Parliament wants to play in public life and the degree of control that the ruling Al Sabah family will allow it to have over government.

Parliament is demanding the right to question members of the cabinet, including the Prime Minister. Some members of the cabinet have reluctantly agreed, but the Prime Minister has repeatedly refused, choosing to resign instead. The Prime Minister is always a member of the ruling Al Sabah family, and such a step by the Parliament would be a first in Kuwait and in the GCC. Some are interpreting this round of challenges as an attempt by Parliament to turn Kuwait into a constitutional monarchy.

However, this potentially positive development has its downsides. The legislative body has hardly been reformist. It was the Kuwaiti cabinet, with the support of the ruling family, that finally compelled the conservative-minded Parliament to give women the right to vote in 2005. In recent years, Kuwaiti Parliaments have been



US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton meets with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in March 2009. (Photo: Department of State)



Election posters line a street in Kuwait prior to the country's 2006 parliamentary elections. (Photo: Flickr user Mink)

dominated by Islamists, nationalists, and tribal leaders who have been unable to compromise or organize, raising the question of whether it is up to the task of legislating at all.

Although voter turnout on May 16 was down (58% compared to 65% in 2008), Kuwaitis voted for change. They gave women a historic triumph by putting four women in Parliament, 25% of those who ran. Voters also punished the ever argumentative Sunni Islamic groups, reducing their representation from seven to three seats. In all, Kuwaitis voted for 21 new faces in a 50 seat legislature.

The key question remains as to whether the Amir will choose a new member of the ruling family to serve as Prime Minister. Kuwait faces urgent economic issues driven by the global recession and a long list of projected laws that await passage. Unless some kind of functioning relationship between Parliament and the cabinet is reached, this portends a continuing political crisis.

— Louay Bahry

## Lebanon

Lebanese voters head to the polls on June 7 in a contest that pits Lebanon's ruling pro-Western alliance, known as the March 14<sup>th</sup> coalition, against the March 8<sup>th</sup> group headed by the Iranian-backed Shi'ite militant group, Hizbullah.

The parliamentary race is expected to be close with the potential for a serious political shake-up. March 14<sup>th</sup> politicians won the 2005 elections with a resounding majority, riding a wave of popular sympathy following the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri and their demand for the withdrawal of occupying Syrian troops.

But four years later, Hizbullah and its allies, which include the Shi'ite Amal party, headed by Nabih Berri and the Christian retired General Michel Aoun, could well win the majority of Lebanon's 128 seats and the privilege of forming Lebanon's next government.

Should that be the case, the US administration may face some tough decisions. The Bush Administration was a major backer of the March 14<sup>th</sup> government, praising Lebanon as a model Arab democracy and rewarding it with more than one billion dollars in aid between 2005 and 2008, almost half of which went to support Lebanon's army.

But a March 8<sup>th</sup> victory raises the possibility of increased Iranian and Syrian influence in Lebanon, and in response, Washington may be inclined to isolate the next Beirut government and reduce aid. In a recent interview with a Lebanese paper, US Ambassador to Lebanon Michele Sison warned that American relations with Lebanon — and future US aid — would “be evaluated in the context of the new government's policies and statements.”

Regardless of the outcome, most Lebanese are concerned about how the victorious and losing blocs choose to cooperate with each other — or not. The previous four years were marked by disputes between the two sides, which led to violence and deaths — a scenario that could easily repeat itself.

— Kate Seelye



Hizbullah posters on display in Lebanon.  
(Photo: Flickr user Ben Piven)

## Mauritania

Mauritania will hold a presidential election on June 6. Ironically, it is likely to see the election of the man who overthrew the country's first democratically elected government in August of 2008. As a result, the election is likely to ratify the *status quo*, legitimizing the coup of last year, rather than advancing the country's delicate, emerging multi-party system.

There are four candidates running, compared with the 20 who ran in the widely praised 2007 election. Most observers are treating as a foregone conclusion the election of General Muhammad Ould Abdel Aziz, the former head of the Presidential Security Battalion and leader of the August coup, which deposed President Sidi Ould Cheikh Abdullahi, who was elected in 2007.

Although Ould Abdel Aziz had appointed another figure, Ba Mamadou Mbaré, as Acting President after the coup, he has been the dominant figure in the ruling junta. While he has officially stepped down from military office in order to run as a civilian for the presidency, he is clearly the choice of the military.

Both the United States and the European Union have declined to send observers to the election, since it is merely ratifying the coup which overthrew a legitimately elected government.

— Michael Collins Dunn



Mauritanian presidential candidate General Muhammad Ould Abdel Aziz. (Photo:VOA)

## Tunisia

Five years ago, Tunisia held a presidential election in which there were three challengers to President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Ben Ali won with a reported 94.5% of the vote. He is running again this year, in elections scheduled for October, and it seems reasonable to anticipate a similar result. Tunisia will elect a new Parliament at the same time.

What makes the election somewhat interesting despite its certain results is the fact that under the Constitution, as currently written, this will be Ben Ali's last term if re-elected this fall. Ben Ali will turn 73 this year and would be 78 after another five-year term. He himself came to power by deposing the decrepit Habib Bourguiba (officially 84 when deposed, but possibly older), and initially pledged that there would be no further "Presidents for Life." The constitutional amendments introduced when Ben Ali came to power limited the President to three five-year terms and set a maximum age of 70, and Ben Ali was duly elected in 1989, 1994, and 1999. But in 2002, Ben Ali (who had introduced the term limit in the first place) held a referendum which lifted it, allowing him to run again. The constitutional revision allowed multiple terms, but set the upper age limit at 75. Thus Ben Ali was free to run in the 2004 elections and again this year, but unless the Constitution is amended again, in 2014 he will be too old to run. There is no clearly favored successor, and some hope that Ben Ali might allow a more realistic election result this time in order to encourage greater democracy in 2014.



Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali.

Other than that point, there is no real suspense about Tunisia's presidential elections.

— Michael Collins Dunn

## MEJ Author Lisa Blaydes on Egyptian Elections, Women, and the Muslim Brotherhood

Lisa Blaydes is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at Stanford University and an Academy Scholar at the Harvard Academy for International and Area Studies. Blaydes received a BA and MA in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University and a PhD in Political Science from the University of California, Los Angeles. She is currently working on a book-length manuscript entitled *Competition without Democracy: Elections and Distributive Politics in Mubarak's Egypt*. The Spring issue of *The Middle East Journal* will feature her article, "Women's Electoral Participation in Egypt: The Implications of Gender for Voter Recruitment and Mobilization," co-written with Safinaz El Tarouty of the British University in Egypt.

*Your article details women's electoral participation and their role in Egypt's 2005 election. From your analysis, it is clear that women play an important part in electoral politics in Egypt. Women's representation in Parliament, however, has been rather low recently, especially after the repeal of Law 188, which had reserved 30 parliamentary seats for women. Do you see the number of women in Parliament fluctuating at all from its current levels, particularly in light of changes to Article 62 of the Constitution which are intended to increase female representation in Parliament?*

There is no question that women are tremendously underrepresented in the Egyptian Parliament. In 2005, for example, only four women were elected to Egypt's lower house, the People's Assembly. Egypt's upper house, the Shura Council, currently has just 22 members who are women, only one of whom was elected.



A Muslim Brotherhood candidate campaigns during Egypt's Shura Council elections in 2007. (Photo: Flickr user madmonk)

The constitutional amendments introduced in 2007 provide an opportunity for a reconfiguration of the electoral system with an eye toward increasing the number of women in Parliament. The details regarding how to achieve higher levels of female representation have not been specified, however. One possibility under discussion would be to increase the size of the People's Assembly by 56 so that each of Egypt's 28 governorates would have two additional seats designated for women. There is little doubt that whatever mechanism is selected to distribute these seats will favor Egypt's hegemonic party, the National Democratic Party.

A more important question is whether or not female representation in Parliament actually makes a meaningful difference in terms of policies concerning women. Egypt's Parliament has an extremely limited policymaking role, as most changes to existing policy are initiated by the executive. If female representation in Parliament is to have a positive impact, it is unlikely to be in the policy arena and more likely to occur as a result of increasing the visibility of women in positions of political authority. Female deputies will have the opportunity to participate in parliamentary debate and to initiate legislative oversight mechanisms, like parliamentary interpellations. As parliamentary proceedings are covered by both print and televised media, the presence of women in Parliament may help to empower a younger generation of Egyptian women to become active in public affairs.

*In your article you explore the relative success that the Muslim Brotherhood has enjoyed in mobilizing a large number of women voters and activists. Have other parties, in particular the ruling NDP, largely failed to effectively court women voters? If so, what accounts for this failure? How might the NDP succeed in attracting a large number of women voters to its candidates in future elections?*

The National Democratic Party is an umbrella organization that has incorporated a variety of societal groups and interests with only minimal advocacy of a particular platform or ideology. Individuals who vote for the NDP tend not to have very strong party identification but rather turn out in support of NDP or NDP-affiliated candidates for reasons related to patronage rather than programmatic interests.

There is an important distinction to be made with regard to female voters versus female supporters of the NDP and the regime more broadly. Women who vote for NDP-affiliated candidates tend to do so for reasons related to either short- or long-term expectations of clientelist benefit. There are also women, who may or may not be voters, who support the NDP because it is seen as a bulwark against Islamism and the possibility of

Islamist government. In particular, some have argued that secular feminists have struck a kind of patriarchal bargain with the state whereby these elite women have come to enjoy a particular political niche in exchange for accepting the basic authoritarian structures of society. Moderate Islamist organizations, like the Muslim Brotherhood, have given an uncertain signal to these women about what type of political and economic opportunities they might enjoy under Brotherhood leadership.

*One of the major elements of Egypt's recent moves towards freer elections has been the success of Muslim Brotherhood candidates — despite the party being illegal. In your view, what accounts for the Brotherhood's success, in particular among women voters?*

There are no doubt a number of factors that are at work here, both related to long-term changes in Egyptian society as well as particular tactics and strategies of the Muslim Brotherhood. We know that political debate in Egypt has shifted from a largely secular frame of reference in the 1950s and 1960s to focusing increasingly on the role of Islam in political life in more recent years. This change in discourse has paralleled the rise of what has been called the “mosque movement.” Activists associated with the mosque movement seek to imbue daily life with a greater religious sensibility. And while there is not a direct political link between participation in Islamic studies groups, for example, and support for Muslim Brotherhood candidates, women associated with the mosque movement provide a ready base for Brotherhood candidates.

In addition to the larger societal forces at work, the Brotherhood also engages in a number of particular tactics aimed at recruiting female voters. In particular, the use of door-to-door canvassing appears to be a very effective tool for voter recruitment.

— Interview by Michael Collins Dunn

### *The Middle East Journal*

The Summer 2009 issue of *The Middle East Journal* will feature two articles dealing with electoral issues and three dealing with various themes relating to Qatar. The articles are:

- Lisa Blaydes of Stanford University and Safinaz El Tarouty of the British University in Egypt: “Women’s Electoral Participation in Egypt: The Implications of Gender for Voter Recruitment and Mobilization.” An examination of women’s participation in recent Egyptian election campaigns.
- James N. Sater of the American University in Sharjah, “Parliamentary Elections and Authoritarian Rule in Morocco.” Discusses the evolution of parliamentary elections in Morocco and argues that they have become a key element in Royal power, analyzing them in terms of political theory.
- Mehran Kamrava of Georgetown’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar, “Royal Factionalism and Political Liberalization in Qatar.” Examines how the internal dynamics of the ruling family have affected the country’s political liberalization.
- Claude Berrebi, Francisco Martorell, and Jeffery C. Tanner, all of RAND, “Qatar Labor Markets at a Crucial Crossroad.” Looks at the implications of the reliance upon foreign laborers for Qatar’s future.
- Uzi Rabi of Tel Aviv University, “Qatar’s Relations with Israel: Changing Arab and Gulf Norms.” A look at Qatar’s sub-diplomatic ties with Israel and their history in the greater regional context.
- For the Book Review Article, Mona Yacoubian of the US Institute for Peace will review Juan Cole’s *Engaging Islam* and other books on similar themes.

— Michael Collins Dunn



Banners promoting candidates during Egypt's 2005 election. (Photo: Flickr user Here's Kate)

## Meet the Scholars: Nasim Ashraf

Dr. Nasim Ashraf recently came to MEI as the Executive Director of the new Center for Pakistan Studies. After completing his medical studies at Peshawar University in 1973, Dr. Ashraf spent nearly 30 years in the United States as an active member of the Pakistani-American community. As a prominent advocate for health and development issues, Dr. Ashraf founded numerous nongovernmental organizations including APPNA SEHAT (“Our Health”), the Pakistani American Public Affairs Committee, Americans for Peace and Justice in South Asia, and the Human Development Foundation of North America. In 2001, he returned to Pakistan to lead President Pervez Musharraf’s Task Force for Human Development, and served as cabinet minister and chair of the National Commission for Human Development from 2002-2008. Dr. Ashraf has had a long involvement with Pakistani cricket, playing for the Peshawar Cricket Association and the national under-21 team, and chairing the Pakistan Cricket Board from 2006-2007.

### **Given your medical training, how did you make the transition into development work?**

Actually, ever since I came to the United States after graduating from medical school, my heart has really been in development work. Although I was a practicing doctor here, my main interests were really in how we could improve education and health services at a grassroots level in Pakistan — to be of some help to the people, more than just academically. Through the Association of Pakistani Physicians of North America, a professional organization of doctors of Pakistani origin, I helped initiate several programs on the ground in Pakistan. In 1988, we started APPNA SEHAT (“Our Health”), which was a basic primary health care project. We started in one village, and today the project is still serving over 120 villages, and over 250,000 people, with door-to-door primary healthcare services. It has reduced infant mortality by 50% and reduced maternal mortality by 70% in those villages. After starting with APPNA SEHAT, gradually that led to more work.



Dr. Nasim Ashraf

In 1997, I was the co-founder and co-chair of an organization called the Human Development Foundation of North America, on the occasion of Pakistan’s 50th anniversary, or birthday so to speak. It expanded the APPNA SEHAT project from concentrating purely on healthcare issues to an integrated approach for primary education, women’s literacy, microfinance, and health concerns, and was primarily funded by the Pakistani-American diaspora. In 2001, I had an opportunity to discuss our projects with then-President Musharraf, and he invited a proposal as to how this could be taken to scale in order to address the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) in Pakistan. So that’s why in 2001 I went back to Pakistan. Initially I headed a task force on human development, and then a permanent federal statutory organization was set up.

That National Commission for Human Development essentially reached out to every one of the 115 districts of Pakistan, providing primary healthcare and basic literacy services. In these six years we enrolled over seven million children between the ages of five and nine as part of the MDG project for universal primary education. We opened 19,000 primary schools where no government schools existed, and these are still functioning today. We set up over 120,000 adult literacy centers for women in the remotest areas, through which five million were made literate in this period. In health care, the biggest project was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and trained women to make oral rehydration at home a solution for child mortality. Fourteen million mothers were trained in the most remote, far-flung villages, which would annually save the lives of about 30,000 children under the age of ten who otherwise would be dying from diarrhea. So essentially, this has been like a development practitioner’s kind of work.

### **During your development career in the United States, did you ever anticipate that you would return to Pakistan to work in government and have an official role in setting policy? Did it come as a surprise?**

No, I really did not foresee this because we had been doing this work as ordinary citizens. When the opportunity came in 2001 to actually take the project to scale because the government wanted to partner, that is what really convinced me to leave and go back to Pakistan. It was perhaps the most rewarding experience in my life.

**What are the major issues facing human development in Pakistan, and what areas should policymakers and NGOs in Washington and in Islamabad prioritize?**

I think whatever solution comes must be one that has broad community participation. There has to be a thorough effort on education and basic health care, because, unless we provide some decent form of education there or in any country, we really cannot grow the country or make progress. As a country of 170 million people, it involves a lot of work, so there have to be additional resources. The government's political will is the most important thing. Policymakers and NGOs need to realize that ultimately it is the public sector delivery systems that have to be strengthened and that will deliver. Community participation and doing things from the bottom up, rather than top down — that must be our policy whatever policy formulation you come up with.

**As someone who has lived in both the United States and Pakistan for substantial amounts of time, how would you characterize the relationship between the two countries? How do average people see the other country?**

That is a very good question, and I think it is extremely timely. Pakistan and the United States have had a very long friendship, ever since Pakistan came into existence in 1947. It was the United States that was the first country to recognize Pakistan. When I was growing up in Pakistan and going to school and university, the level of mutual affection between the people of the United States and of Pakistan was absolutely tremendous. However, this relationship has had some bumps along the way. Lately, the relationship seems to have become increasingly unidimensional, regarding the threat of al-Qa'ida and the Taliban. This started in Afghanistan, and spilled over into Pakistan after 9/11, when Taliban fighters and al-Qa'ida fled across the border.

Generally speaking, the United States and Pakistan always have aligned strategic goals in the region. Pakistan is a country that always has allied itself with the free world and the West. The sacrifices of the Pakistani people were instrumental in defeating the Soviets in Afghanistan, which many claim ultimately lead to the breakup of the Soviet Union and the demise of the Cold War. Pakistan always has been a frontline state, and has had to pay a heavy price in many ways, one of which is Talibanization and extremism. This emerged in the 1980s, when jihadis were supported and fanned by many of us, the United States included.

Currently the need is to greatly enhance people-to-people interaction and contacts, which will help clear away many of these misperceptions on both sides. This can't be facilitated only through policy papers and high-level meetings, but needs direct interaction between the two peoples. Mutual visits, scholarships, enhanced support for education, and on the ground help for everyday people will renew the close partnership between the United States and Pakistan.

**How did you start playing cricket, and what has the game meant to you?**

I've always been a very passionate cricket lover ever since I was a child because of my family. My grandfather was a pioneer of cricket in the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP). He played for India in those days, helped introduce cricket to the area, and was a member of the first Pakistan Cricket Governing Board in 1948. From that point on, the game was in our family. It was an everyday thing: you go to school, you come back, and in the afternoon, you play cricket. As I grew up, I was fortunate to be able to play at the first class level in Pakistan, and remained involved later on.

However, the challenge that had been given to me in heading the Pakistan Cricket Board was one entirely of management, and running an entity which is a very large, commercial enterprise. I am happy to say that, modestly, in the two years that I was head of the Board, we introduced a real working constitution that the Board did not have for many, many years. In addition, we brought an enhanced focus on professionalism and discipline, players' welfare, and helping cricket grow at the grassroots level by putting in money for schools, cricket infrastructure, and grounds. In the end, it was really like managing any other company.

**Is there a fourth generation of Ashraf cricketers?**

Unfortunately not, because my son was born and raised here, going to school at the University of Maryland,

and is essentially a basketball fan.

### **What brought you to the Middle East Institute and what are your hopes for the new Pakistan Studies Center?**

During the 30 years I lived in the States before going back to Pakistan, the last seven or eight in Washington, the Middle East Institute always had the reputation of being an institution that would try to be objective and balanced. Last year, when I left government after six years, I wanted to link the experience of a practitioner in the field with policy work and research. By chance, I ran into Ambassador Chamberlin in Washington a few months back and she invited me to come to MEI to pursue this. Her vision for the Center for Pakistan Studies was not just to do a couple of research studies, but to actively inform the American public about Pakistani issues and help to strengthen and rebuild the relationship between the people of both countries.

I hope that this Center will be able to achieve these goals. By doing research on issues relating to human security and human development in Pakistan, we will try to create a global virtual taskforce made up of experts and thought leaders. At the same time, I want to mobilize and involve the young generations: the second and third generation of Pakistani-Americans and young people from Pakistan. Hopefully, MEI's Center for Pakistan Studies will be practical as well as academic, and will become a forum for cultural exchanges that bring artists and others from Pakistan to share our culture with the American people.

— Interview by Hobie Kropp and Jacob Passel

## **The George Camp Keiser Library**

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The following is a sample of recent acquisitions to the George Camp Keiser Library:

Books marked by an asterisk (\*) have been reviewed or annotated in the Spring 2009 edition of *The Middle East Journal*.

*The Chaldeans: A Contemporary Portrait of One of Civilization's Oldest Cultures* / Byron Perry (2009)

*Christian Criticisms, Islamic Proofs: Rashid Rida's Modernist Defense of Islam* / Muhammad Rashid Rida; Simon Wood, ed. and translator (2008)

*Democracy in Islam* / Sayed Khatab and Gary D. Bouma (2007)\*

*The Eckstein Shahnama: An Ottoman Book of Kings* / Will Kwiatkowski (2005)

*Engaging the Muslim World* / Juan Cole (2009)

*The Ethical Soundscape: Cassette Sermons And Islamic Counterpublics* / Charles Hirschkind (2006)

*Grass: Untold Stories* / Bahman Maghsoudlou (2008)

*Iraq: A Political History from Independence to Occupation* / Adeed Dawisha (2009)

*Islam in the Baltic: Europe's Early Muslim Community* / Harry T. Norris (2009)

*Israeli Culture Between the Two Intifadas: A Brief Romance* / Yaron Peleg (2008)\*

*Kemalism in Turkish Politics: The Republican People's Party, Secularism and Nationalism* / Sinan Ciddi (2008)\*

*The Lion of Jordan: The Life of King Hussein in War and Peace* / Avi Shlaim (2008)

*Radical Reform: Islamic Ethics and Liberation* / Tariq Ramadan (2009)

*Off the Wall: Political Posters Of The Lebanese Civil War* / Zeina Maasri (2009)

*Secularism and Muslim Democracy in Turkey* / M. Hakan Yavuz (2009)

*Seeds of Terror: How Heroin Is Bankrolling the Taliban and Al Qaeda* / Gretchen Peters (2009)

*Sowing Crisis: The Cold War And American Dominance In The Middle East* / Rashid Khalidi (2009)

*The Sufi Journey of Baba Rexheb* / Frances Trix (2009)

*The Meeting of Civilizations: Muslim, Christian and Jewish* / Moshe Ma'oz, ed. (2009)\*

*Yearbook of Islamic and Middle Eastern Law 2006-2007* / Eugene Cotran and Martin Lau, eds. (2009)

— Simon Braune

Books in Brief: *Beyond the Façade: Political Reform in the Arab World*  
Marina Ottaway and Julia Choucair-Vizoso, eds.

The increased interest in political reform and democratization in the Middle East among Western governments and intellectuals following September 11, and the ensuing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, have produced a flurry of activity and intellectual output. The Bush Administration's Freedom Agenda, increasing foreign aid and NGO activity in the region, and a host of books dedicated to what democracy means in the region are all signs of what these processes mean to the United States. Yet, how are we to assess whether American efforts and the reforms of individual Arab states are leading to successful democratization? What are genuine and effective changes versus cosmetic and rhetorical ones?

*Beyond the Façade's* authors attempt to construct a framework through which political reform can be meaningfully described as democratizing or not, and then apply this framework to ten Arab countries that have experienced seemingly significant political reforms in the last two decades. For Ottaway, the three important variables are time, breadth, and intentionality. Will a given set of state-sponsored reforms create an immanent impact? Are the reforms self-sustaining, or do they require a sequence of events to alter the fundamental democratic structure? Are they actually designed to create this kind of fundamental alteration, or do they accidentally do so?

It is through this rubric that the contributing authors assess political reforms in ten countries from Morocco to the Gulf; moreover, it is from the conclusions this rubric arrives at that the collection gets its title. Thus, the Sana'a, Alexandria, and Beirut Declarations, for example, do not constitute real democratizing reforms as they only *discussed* reform. The politically liberalizing 2004 laws of Egyptian President Husni Mubarak have not, thus far, created an increase in democracy, because they are stacked in favor of the ruling NDP party, and are paired with extra-legal repression of the Muslim Brotherhood allowed by the 20-year-long Emergency Rule.

One of the major conclusions that arises from this study is that many political reforms are in fact designed explicitly *not* to move the political structures in the direction of democracy. Rather, in the face of economic stagnation and rising unemployment, political reforms are often designed only to create a more efficient version of the same semi-authoritarian system. In almost all cases, except Lebanon, the most meaningful reform would be to increase power-sharing institutions that loosen power from the executive and decentralize authority.

However, these authors emphasize more than just the failures of democratization. Following a brief history of recent political reform, each chapter presents the areas of government and civil society that have the greatest potential for positive democratizing change and what external actors can do to effect this change.

Though the picture *Beyond the Façade* presents is far from positive, its theories on democratization and its conclusions offer an honest and realistic appraisal of Arab democracies. They are particularly relevant to influential external actors who must decide whether they are content to conscience undemocratic regimes that resist pressure to change — with the rhetoric that they are 'in the process' — or whether apparent stability needs to be risked for the sake of meaningful democracy.

— Matthew Bresnahan

## Beyond the Beltway

### MEI in the News

Over the past three months, events held at the Middle East Institute received a great deal of media attention. MEI hosted Pervez Musharraf in March and was subsequently mentioned in a Steve Coll article in the *New Yorker* about the former Pakistani President. Remarks given by Syrian Ambassador to the United States Imad Moustapha during his May 1 public event at MEI drew criticism from Mark Lynch on the *Foreign Policy* blog. Vice Admiral Kevin Cosgriff (ret.) made his second appearance in the Boardman Room to discuss strategies for dealing with Somali pirates just a day after the rescue of the *Maersk Alabama's* captain. The event was aired on C-SPAN and covered by Fox Business News, CNN, NPR, *Foreign Policy Magazine*, *Defense News*, and others.

Georgetown University professor John Brown wrote in the *Huffington Post* in favor of nominating MEI Adjunct Scholar Ambassador **William Rugh** as US Under Secretary of Public Diplomacy. This came just days after Ambassador Rugh published an op-ed with Lawrence Pintak in the *Daily Star Lebanon* with their recommendations for that position, which was entitled “A New Murrow for US Public Diplomacy.”

Adjunct Scholar **Greg Myre's** book review of *Kill Khalid: The Failed Mosad Assassination of Khalid Mishal and the Rise of Hamas* was published in the *Washington Post*. The book's author, Paul McGeough, was featured in an MEI event co-sponsored with the Foundation for Middle East Peace just days later.

Also during these past three months, **Tom Lippman**, **Marvin Weinbaum**, and **Wendy Chamberlin** were guests on NPR. Lippman discussed his recent book *Arabian Knight* on “Morning Edition.” Weinbaum covered the growth of the Taliban in Pakistan on “The Diane Rehm Show” and Ambassador Chamberlin appeared on “Tell Me More” to discuss that group's move into Buner Province.

### Beyond the Beltway

Wendy Chamberlin traveled with Scholars **Richard Murphy** and **Molly Williamson** to Doha, Qatar to participate in the May 3–5 Doha Forum. Ambassador Chamberlin moderated a panel on democracy, while Murphy and Williamson participated in a panel about development. Amb. Chamberlin traveled again, this time with **Phil Wilcox**, to speak at the University of Colorado at Boulder's 61<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference on World Affairs, which took place on April 6–8. The topics of Ambassador Chamberlin's panels ranged from global women's leadership to refugees and the situations in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Adjunct Scholar **Aamir Rehman** was in Dubai at the Cass School of Business and at the Jacob Fleming Gulf Conference, discussing Islamic finance and Dubai banking, while **Herman Franssen** spoke on oil markets and energy policy at the Aspen Institute, at an OPEC seminar in Vienna, as well as in the UK and France.

The Christopher Wren Association of Williamsburg, Virginia hosted nine MEI Scholars as participants in their conference, “What is Going On in the Middle East?” Wendy Chamberlin, **David Mack**, **Allen Keiswetter**, Molly Williamson, **Zubair Iqbal**, Greg Myre, **Tom Lippman**, Phil Wilcox, and **Elizabeth McKune** of the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center spoke to a capacity crowd of 200 in the conference center of the Williamsburg Lodge. The panels covered the Arab-Israeli peace process, Islam's relations with the West, and the economic and political situation in the Gulf. Iraqi Ambassador to the United States Samir Sumaida'ie also participated as the luncheon speaker.

### Around Town

The House Subcommittee on National Security and Foreign Affairs called Ambassador Chamberlin to testify on March 31 about engaging regional stakeholders in Afghanistan and Pakistan. In March, David Mack evaluated national security strategy exercises at National Defense University and also participated in a roundtable with a group of Iraq experts held at the US Institute of Peace. Adjunct Scholar **Mishkat Al-Moumin** was a panelist



David Mack and Elizabeth McKune between sessions at the Christopher Wren Association of Williamsburg, Virginia.

in an event sponsored by Booz Allen Hamilton focusing on “Women as Change in the Middle East.”

MEI Scholars finished a nine-week lecture series with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute at American University. Nine scholars covered topics ranging from the Sunni-Shia divide to the status of the peace process. The speakers included: **David Newton**, **Andrea Rugh**, **Michael Ryan**, **Alex Vatanka**, **Graeme Bannerman**, Allen Keiswetter, Phil Wilcox, Molly Williamson, and Marvin Weinbaum.

— Stephanie Swierczek

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