



# MEI Bulletin

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"MEI aims to stand above and apart from other organizations and websites as a reliable and trustworthy source of accurate and balanced expert information and analysis on Middle East issues."

Wendy Chamberlin

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## MEI Focuses on North Africa

Activity at the Middle East Institute has been moving at a fast pace since the last issue of the *MEI Bulletin*.

The Department of Languages and Regional Studies was awarded a STARTALK grant from the National Foreign Language Center to fund an accelerated program for the training of teachers in Arabic and Persian. MEI will conduct a pilot project beginning this summer. Our ambition is to attract funding so that we can grow the language teacher-credentialing program. Congratulations to Dr. Shukri Abed and his staff for this latest success!

we had more than 300 individuals join us on that rainy Friday for a full day of debate. Full transcripts and audio are available on our website, [www.mideasti.org](http://www.mideasti.org), and I encourage you to make use of them. While you're there, please consider upgrading your membership to that of "Contributing Member" in order to gain access to similar exclusive events in the future. We are planning other exciting conferences that you will not want to miss.

Another new MEI initiative is an upcoming outreach trip to the United Arab Emirates. Seven university Presidents, Provosts and Deans will tour Abu Dha-



An archway in Ghadames, Libya. (Photo W.Tochtermann, UNESCO)

MEI held a conference on February 1<sup>st</sup> entitled "Iran on the Horizon," which was the first of a series of conferences scheduled for 2008. US-Iran relations and the Iranian nuclear weapons program is a hot topic and therefore a conference theme that was much in demand. MEI uniquely enriched the current dialogue by inviting scholars from Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the UAE, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria to join panel discussions with leading American experts. French Ambassador Pierre Vimont gave the keynote luncheon address. This "authentic voices" approach generated so much interest that we had to limit the number of invitations, and even within those constraints

bi, Dubai and Sharjah in a four-day trip under the guidance of MEI Adjunct Scholar Allen L. Keiswetter. The trip is intended to broaden understanding of the educational and economic reforms taking place in this dynamic country and encourage these schools to further develop their international studies programs. Each of the four days will be spent meeting with education and government officials, touring universities and experiencing local culture.

Our outreach program is picking up pace at a break-neck speed. Since the last issue of the *Bulletin*, MEI scholars have traveled to Milwaukee, Seattle, Pullman, Los Angeles, Sarasota, Raleigh, Philadelphia,

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Richmond and Edmonton, Canada on multi-faceted outreach trips that include public lectures, private meetings and media appearances. MEI is swamped with requests from reporters and other media for interviews — over 150 since the last issue. We also continue to grow and expand the MEI website. You will find many innovations and a great deal of new content; be sure to visit and take a look for yourself.

To continue our trend of themed *MEI Bulletins*, we turn our attention to North Africa. With President Bush touring the continent and Secretary of State Rice continuing to hint at a formal visit to Tripoli, we felt that focusing our attention on the Maghreb was more than warranted. We asked MEI Adjunct Scholar Herman Franssen to delve more deeply into the issues of oil and the global economy, since oil reserves throughout the area have such a profound impact on the politics of the region. MEI Scholar David Mack offers his unique insights by taking a close look at Libya in his *Commentary*, “Bringing Libya in from the Cold,” published here for the first time. While highlighting the steps their government has recently taken to mend ties with the West, he wisely reminds us that American diplomacy should by definition work to overcome old animosities with traditional adversaries, for the sake of creating stability in a volatile world.

—Wendy Chamberlin

## Energy, the US and the Middle East: A Conversation with Dr. Herman Franssen

The days of filling up the car at \$1.50 a gallon seem ages ago to many Americans, who may not have given a second thought to phrases such as “fuel efficiency” or “alternative energy” at the time. But with the price of oil hovering around the \$100 per barrel mark, all signs are pointing to a major change in the oil markets — one likely to have a significant impact on American life.

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“We are seeing a huge increase in the demand for oil since 2004, in part related to the strength of the global economy,” says Dr. Herman Franssen, an Adjunct Scholar at the Middle East Institute and an energy consultant.

Franssen says that 2004-2005 marked a major turning point in the world oil market for several reasons. Hurricanes Katrina and Rita hurt America’s production significantly, while poor production levels also hurt the North Sea. The US invasion of Iraq led to a large reduction in petroleum output that has yet to be remedied. Franssen adds that production among non-OPEC nations reached a plateau, so even if growth occurs in nations such as Russia or Canada, it is balanced by shrinking capacity in, among other areas, the North Sea. All of these factors combine to produce a significant shortage in supply.

Demand also was rising sharply as the world’s most populous nations were reaching an important point in their development. The two factors combined to create an upsurge in demand and a reduction in supply, significantly raising the price of oil.

“Before 2004, we were looking at a kind of a bottom price at which the global oil market could continue to flourish, somewhere around \$20 a barrel,” Franssen says. “Now, we’re looking at a floor price of \$60, whereas before, that was a ridiculously high price.”

This rise in the floor price for oil stems from the rising price of steel, Franssen explains. The \$60 price is an optimistic one, though, and countries without the riches of Saudi Arabia, for example, are finding their costs somewhat higher.



(AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

Franssen sees that same economic gap posing a threat to future Middle Eastern stability. “[The oil-rich Gulf states] are surrounded by very poor Yemenis, very poor Iraqis, very ambitious Iranians who want to expand their reach over the Gulf area, and very poor Egyptians.” He finds the widening gap between the haves and the have-nots troubling in an area upon which much of the world depends for its fuel supply.

That fuel supply, he says, may be hitting its limit sooner than many people think. A study published by the French Petroleum Institute stated that the world’s oil supply would hit a plateau midway through the 2020s with no hindering factors (such as lack of expertise or equipment, political issues and lack of investments). Franssen adds that those factors have an all too real influence on the oil market, and a plateau will likely be reached sometime in the next decade. Indeed, solutions to the economic problem are difficult, he says, because of the slow pace of fuel efficiency and alternative energy improvements.

In 2005, Franssen wrote in the *Middle East Economic Survey*<sup>1</sup> that changes in the oil markets were likely structural rather than cyclical. Solutions that work towards bringing down the price, he wrote, would not be successful. Instead, America would have to solve the problem by replacing oil or using less of it.

A possible answer, he says, would include re-evaluating biofuels, which would require more research. Under the current system, the government is working to bring America’s ethanol production from corn up to 900,000 barrels per day early in the next decade. To do this, the government offers larger subsidies to farmers who grow corn.

This policy has a negative effect elsewhere in American markets. Corn prices go up because less of the output is being used for food. As a result, anything that relies on corn also experiences a rise in price — any product using corn syrup as a sweetener, for instance, or any livestock that rely on corn for food. Farmers will begin switching their crops away from wheat or soybeans because corn earns larger subsidies, raising the price on those crops too. “The only way [to solve that problem], in the end, is to move away from this kind of production, which is basically an agricultural subsidy to an energy program,” Franssen says.

1. “The End of Cheap Oil: Cyclical or Structural Change in the Global Oil Market?” *Middle East Economic Survey*, Vol. 48, No. 6 (February 2005), <http://www.mees.com/postedarticles/oped/v48n06-5OD01.htm>.

Franssen also suggests that Americans could “become more European” in their lifestyle. That would mean using more efficient vehicles, shortening their commutes to work by using more diesel fuel and wearing an extra sweater at home.

“You go to a British home, in wintertime, people wear sweaters in the house,” he says. “Why? To put the thermostat down because energy is more costly.”



An oil refinery north of Baghdad.  
(Photo: Department of Defense)

Franssen expects the oil markets to somewhat stabilize by the end of the decade, barring unforeseen geopolitical upheaval. But the world’s heavy reliance on an unstable region for so much of its energy will remain a growing concern for years to come.

“At the moment, there are no silver bullets,” Franssen says. “There’s no [one thing] really that we can say, *that’s* going to solve the situation. That is something that I think we will have to work on. It’s going to be a very lengthy process.”

— Zachary Kineke

## Meet the Scholars: David Newton

MEI Adjunct Scholar David Newton's 36-year career in the US Foreign Service includes postings as the Ambassador to Yemen (1994-1997) and Iraq (1984-1988), where he was the first ambassador following the resumption of diplomatic relations that broke off in 1967. He also served as an advisor to the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the 1991 Gulf War. After retiring from the Foreign Service, Newton served from 1998-2004 in Prague as the first director of Radio Free Iraq.

**MEI: You've been working in the Middle East for quite some time now, but what got you so interested in the region to start with, and what made you decide to join the Foreign Service?**

I got interested as a kid. I was about 10 years old when my father took my sister and me to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts to see the Egyptology collection. That started me off and within a year I read all the books on Egyptology. Then, I went to college and majored in anthropology, although I got more interested in cultural anthropology than archaeology. My last year in college, I took a full year of courses from one of the great Orientalists of the day, Sir Hamilton Gibb, on medieval Near East and Islamic theories, and I became more interested in that.

When I graduated, I went off to the army for three years. Looking ahead, I decided I wanted to join the Foreign Service, an attractive profession and a way I could become specialized in the Near East. I applied to study Arabic and studied in Beirut. I had no intention of staying in the army. I was an artillery lieutenant in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Armored Division in Germany. I really enjoyed my time in the army and liked the idea of being in a profession that was competitive and challenging in which you were rated and got ahead based on your performance. The Foreign Service seemed to combine both that competitive situation with the intellectual attractions of academia, especially if you were going to specialize in one part of the world.

**MEI: What was it like being the first US ambassador back in Baghdad after 17 years?**

Well, the average Iraqis were extremely happy that there was a relationship; they hoped that this was a step by their own government towards moderation, and that they could get back to leading a more normal kind of life, that the government would become less repressive. Of course, the great fear of the majority was their being four years into this endless war with the Iranians; they hoped that somehow this new relationship would help to speed and end the war. We

were trying to force the Iranians to give up the war by applying diplomatic pressure and by trying to prevent arms deals to Iran by other countries.

The government, I think, saw that we were never going to be close friends because of the nature of their regime, but they saw this as a way to be truly non-aligned. They were worried about Soviet influence and about American influence and they saw this as a way of balancing one against the other. And I think, at that point, like a lot of dictators who had used a lot of deplorable means, Saddam was looking for respectability. His ambition was to be the next Nasser, the new leader of the Arab world. And he no longer wanted to be seen as a bomb-thrower and a terrorist. But in the end, he couldn't restrain his instinct.



David Newton with fellow Adjunct Scholars Ned Walker (left) and Graeme Bannerman (center)

One thing in the end that really hurt us was the Iran-Contra Affair; not only was it stupid diplomacy, but quite immoral to encourage the war to continue. It really did affect the idea of the relationship — not that the Iraqis trusted us, because they wouldn't trust anyone — but they thought they could look at our interests and predict our behavior. Then we behaved in a way that seemed to be completely at odds with most of our interests. We'll never know how much of a factor that played in Saddam's decision to give up the idea of being respectable and to go after Kuwait.

**MEI: You now have a connection to the Western part of the Arab world with a son-in-law from Morocco. What would you say are the greatest differences between the Maghreb and Near East that you've seen, after being in both?**

Morocco is at the very far extent of the Maghreb, and has strong ties to Europe, especially to France. One of the things that's striking in the country is the fact that the king is the only one in the Muslim world who holds the title of "Commander of the Faithful," which carries a great deal of weight among the population. He's been on the throne nine years and there seems to be a great effort to modernize the country and get the

economy going, but there remain significant problems in population and in raising the educational and health standards. Being at the far end of the Arab world, it's much less affected by problems in the eastern Arab world. Iraq has some emotional relevance perhaps, but I don't think the Moroccans are focusing heavily on Iraq.

The country is developing tourism and thriving pretty successfully. The main draw is the old cities, especially Fez and Marrakech. They've developed music festivals, and Marrakech has become a fashionable international destination. It's convenient to Europe, but I think the unique attraction it has is cultural, especially for French speakers. It also has a reputation as a politically moderate nation; although King Hassan II certainly was a repressive ruler, he practiced political moderation through contacts with Israel and treated their small Jewish community well — Moroccan Jews still come back from Europe and visit.

— Interview by Zachary Kineke

## Traditional Art, International Reach: Henna in North Africa and the Middle East

One of the oldest and richest traditions of the Middle East is the use of henna. Since the late Bronze Age (3-4<sup>th</sup> millennia BC) the peoples of the Maghreb, the Gulf and South Asia have used henna to celebrate holidays, weddings and births to bring joy and luck to these events. These ancient traditions, usually preserved by women, are gaining momentum again as immigrants and their children spread their cultures across the globe.

Henna is a small tree that grows in the hot arid climate of the Middle East and parts of Africa and South Asia. Its leaves, when crushed and mixed with an acidic substance like lemon juice, release a red dye molecule that will stain skin, hair, fabric — basically anything porous. The mud mixture can be applied in intricate designs to decorate skin for special occasions or applied liberally to hair for dyeing. North Africa is known for its complex designs and leather goods decorated with henna stains. Many cultures even dyed the coats, manes and hooves of their horses to achieve the beautiful red hue. Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Christians and Zoroastrians all have celebrated marriages by adorning the bride, and sometimes the groom, with henna the night before a wedding. This tradition of a “Night of the Henna” is found all across North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia.

After it is applied, henna is usually left on overnight and exposed to heat. Henna will dye a range of orange and red — never black. When faced with a “black henna tattoo” at the beach or overseas don't let it get anywhere near your skin! Many of these vendors have mixed their henna with a harmful chemical called para-phenylenediamine (PPD) which is found in conventional cosmetics and is known to cause serious burns and allergic reactions.

Henna's significance is illustrated not only through its role during celebrations but also by its positive effect on health. With its antifungal properties, ability to delouse and cure dandruff, strengthen hair and nails and serve as a mild sunscreen, it fulfilled multiple purposes in the ancient world. Now, when dyeing one's hair or beard (as many men still do in the region) it serves as an all-natural alternative to the harsh and often toxic chemicals employed by the beauty industry. In the past, “henna” was a word put on many products that had little or nothing to do with the actual plant. It was often mixed with heavy mineral powders like lead acetate and silver nitrate to stretch the mix but the effect was frizzy hair, irritated skin and a bad reputation for henna.

Many are rediscovering the beauty and fun behind this ancient tradition, and new methods and communities are growing around the world. Henna trade also can affect the region positively; the plants possess the ability to curb desertification while creating more jobs for the women who already heavily populate the industry.

— Carmel Clavin



Henna artist Keltoum Azar's “handiwork” at MEI's al-Andalus event in the Summer of 2007

## “Iran on the Horizon” Conference

“Iran on the Horizon,” a special one-day conference of leading regional experts and Iran analysts, explored Iran’s potential threat to the region and how the US should approach it. Academic and governmental officials from the US, France, Kuwait, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon analyzed Iran’s shifting internal power centers, Iran’s relations with its neighbors in the Gulf and the Levant and the future of US policy towards Iran. In addition to the four distinguished panels, Pierre Vimont, Ambassador of France to the US, gave the keynote luncheon address. Summaries, transcripts and podcasts of “Iran on the Horizon” are available on our website.

“Iran on the Horizon” was an exclusive conference for MEI Contributing Members. To learn more about becoming a Contributing Member and gaining access to exclusive events and other benefits, please visit our website and sign up today.



A packed house at the Iran conference.  
(Photos © Suzanne Mazer)



Judith Harik, Murhaf Jouejati, Fares Braizat and Trita Parsi participate in the “Iran and the Levant” panel.



Ray Takeyh speaking during the “Iran:What Does the US Do Now?” panel.



French Ambassador to the US Pierre Vimont delivers the Keynote Address.



Sami al-Faraj speaking during the “Iran and the Gulf” panel.



The head table at the conference luncheon.

## Excerpt of an Interview with Iran Conference Panelist Ibtisam al-Kitbi

*A member of the “Iran and the Gulf” panel at MEI’s “Iran on the Horizon” conference, Dr. Ibtisam Al-Kitbi is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at UAE University. She serves on the boards of the UAE Society for Human Rights and the Arabic Organization for Transparency, and is also a member of the Editorial Board of Journal of Social Affairs — UAE. She has been on the Consultative committee for both the UAE Center for Strategic Studies and the UAE’s Federal National Council. Al-Kitbi holds a doctorate in political science from Cairo University. The rest of the interview can be found at <http://www.mideasti.org/encounter/interview-iran-conference-panelist-ibtisam-al-kitbi>*



**MEI: Dr. Al-Kitbi, you’ve written and spoken on political and social reforms like education and democratization in the UAE. To what degree are the Emirati people being impacted on the ground by these changes?**

**Al-Kitbi:** The Emirates was the last country in the GCC to conduct elections. In elections, if you look at it, the people ask for more political rights. But you don’t find this here actually; maybe because of the economic situation. It’s not like Bahrain or Saudi Arabia in the UAE. For one, the population (of native Emiratis) is very small; its only 20% of the total population. Another difference is that the Emir-

ates have not had any type of violent incident; when you compare it to Saudi Arabia, there is nothing. There are none of those violent Islamic groups in the Emirates like in Saudi Arabia. So, you cannot say that there is pressure from the inside towards democratization except from some people, like me. We express ourselves in interviews, on local TV stations like al-Jazeera or al-Arabiya, and by writing articles or in newspapers or through conferences, both outside and inside the Emirates. But more than that, there is nothing. No other pressure. And then of course, there is not much pressure coming from outside but maybe you find people who define themselves as fine when they compare themselves to other countries like Egypt and India, because at least they have jobs. They have good economic situations. Since the mid- 1970s, GCC states have had a lot of money to buy off the people. At that time, a lot of money was being spent on things like education and health and social services and the Emirates became a welfare state. But at that time, people exchanged their political rights for economic benefits so — like most of the GCC — nobody bothered with political rights because they had free services like education, housing, jobs, health services, etc.

**MEI: How have these changes impacted you individually as a woman?**

**Al-Kitbi:** Actually, maybe because I didn’t study in UAE — I studied abroad in Cairo — maybe that has a greater impact on me. I won’t say that Egypt is a democratic country but at least you socialize with many people. We had the chance to attend symposiums or conferences or mix with the other students. I think that had an impact on my way of life and my way of thinking. So, I consider myself a liberal mind. And, I choose my meaning of freedom. There are many boundaries, but I don’t care. And if you don’t react to your criticism based on personal things, people can understand and they respect you.

When you don’t have that kind of hidden agenda, also they respect you. If you don’t chant your position all the time, they respect you. They will not like you — I’m talking about the government — you won’t be subservient to them but we have some mutual respect.

— Interview by Naomi Stone



Ibtisam al-Kitbi, Sami al-Faraj and Wahid Hashim on “Iran & The Gulf” panel. (Photos © Suzanne Mazer)

## MEJ Author Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer on Libya's Nuclear Rollback

Målfrid Braut-Hegghammer is the author of “Libya’s Nuclear Turnaround: Perspectives from Tripoli,” which appeared in the Winter 2008 issue of *The Middle East Journal* (Volume 62, No. 1). Based largely on interviews conducted in Libya, it deals with the thinking behind Libya’s decision to abandon nuclear and other weapons of mass destruction. Braut-Hegghammer is a Research Fellow at the Norwegian Institute for Defence Studies and a PhD candidate at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Her recent publications include “Rebel Without a Cause? Explaining Iraq’s response to Resolution 1441,” in *The Nonproliferation Review*, March 2006 (Vol. 13, No. 1) and “Libya’s Nuclear Turnaround: What Lies Beneath” in *The RUSI Journal* (Royal United Services Institute), December 2006. She discussed her article with *The Middle East Journal* in the following exchange.

**MEJ:** Can you summarize the considerations that went into Libya’s decision to abandon its nuclear program?

**Braut-Hegghammer:** Libya’s decision was motivated by three sets of concerns. First, the growing risks nuclear proliferation entailed for the al-Qadhafi regime’s standing and, ultimately, survival in the post-9/11 world. This, combined with the indirect costs of the endeavor for the regime’s domestic standing, was perceived to make nuclear proliferation counterproductive in terms of security. Second, the nuclear proliferation issue became seen as a useful means of improving Libyan relations with the United States and the United Kingdom, which in turn would rehabilitate Libya’s standing in the international community. Pursuing nuclear weapons did not fit with Libya’s revamped image. Third, the strategic appeal of nuclear weapons was greatly reduced as a result of the détente in Libya’s relations with the United States in particular.

**MEJ:** Does the Libyan case have anything to teach us in regard to Iran’s alleged nuclear program? Or are the circumstances simply too different?

**Braut-Hegghammer:** Libya seems to be a rare example of successful coercive diplomacy, and a key question is whether this “success story” may be replicated elsewhere. The circumstances in Iran compared with what was the case in Libya are indeed very different, both in terms of the domestic nuclear

infrastructures and the types of issues standing in the way of full international rehabilitation. However, the Libyan case seems to offer a key lesson, namely the value of *quid pro quo* engagement with isolated regimes as a key ingredient in devising successful coercive diplomacy.

**MEJ:** Does the Libyan turnaround give support to those who supported sanctions? Does it imply that sanctions and isolation actually work?

**Braut-Hegghammer:** The Libyan case demonstrated that while sanctions are effective, it is difficult to predict what kind of effects they will have and how to use those effects in changing a regime’s behavior in the short term. Sanctions were an important element in persuading key actors in the Libyan regime that radical policies, including the pursuit of nuclear weapons, were no longer in their interest. However, Libya’s isolation appears to have motivated the continuation of the pursuit of nuclear weapons during the 1990s. In other words, while sanctions motivated the regime to change course in the longer term, isolation made it difficult for Libya to see how this could be achieved and also appears to have bolstered the type of radical policies (in the case of nuclear proliferation) they sought to discourage in the short term.

**MEJ:** You appear to have persuaded a number of senior, though unidentified, Libyan officials to talk about this sensitive matter. Did this surprise you, or is it part of the general opening up of Libya to the West in the past few years? Or a deliberate attempt to get their version of events out?

**Braut-Hegghammer:** I was very surprised by the openness demonstrated by Libyan officials and academics on this sensitive topic. I am not sure to what extent my interviews were perceived as an opportunity to get their version of events out or as an opportunity to voice some private thoughts on a delicate issue, but the outspokenness was a very welcome surprise. I believe it reflects that the Libyan regime is more accepting of internal debate on a set of issues than one tends to assume. Furthermore, it reflects the desire on the part of these individuals (and factions in the Libyan regime) to open up to the West and leave the past behind in that process. There was a tangible sense of disappointment with how the Libyan turnaround had been presented as a result of the invasion of Iraq rather than as a determined policy shift that was long in the making.

**MEJ:** Libya finally resolved the so-called “Bulgarian

nurses” affair — the accusations about spreading HIV — last year. Do you think that resolution was in direct response to international pressure as well?

**Braut-Hegghammer:** The issue of the Bulgarian nurses was more complex in many ways than Libya’s nuclear turnaround due to the linkage of key foreign policy challenges (i.e. resolving a key obstacle to full international rehabilitation) with domestic policy challenges (an issue that roused popular emotion, particularly in a region [Benghazi] which has been a challenge for the Libyan regime for decades). The Libyan regime faced a combination of international pressure and domestic pressure and had to strike a balance between the two. The international pressure was key in leading to a resolution of this particular issue, but the Libyan regime skilfully used these negotiations to their advantage. In this respect, lessons drawn from the process by which the regime resolved the Lockerbie and WMD issue are likely to have informed their approach.

— Michael Collins Dunn

### MEI Scholar Has New Book on Arabic Language and Culture

Dr. Shukri Abed’s new book, *The Arabic Language and Culture Amid the Demands of Globalization* (Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2007) deals with the impact of globalization on development of the Arabic language and Arab culture. Abed’s earlier book, *Focus on Contemporary Arabic* (Yale University, 2006) reflects the views of native speakers of Arabic on issues ranging from personal concerns to globalization and Arab-American relations. The Harvard-educated linguist and intellectual historian has published six books dealing with Arab language and political theory. Abed has directed the Middle East Institute’s Department of Languages and Regional Studies since 1996.

### Department of Languages and Regional Studies

The MEI Department of Languages and Regional Studies has been awarded a STARTALK grant by the National Foreign Language Center to fund an Accelerated Program for the Training of Teachers of Arabic and Persian. This is a pilot program implemented with the eventual goal of establishing a center to improve the quality of language instruction for teachers of Arabic and Persian nationwide and to prepare them for certification in their respective states of residence. STARTALK is a project of the National Security Language Initiative, a multi-agency effort to expand foreign language education in under-taught critical languages by funding new and existing programs. MEI recognized the urgent need for a basic training and development program for K–16 teachers that does not require an additional university degree to meet the increasing demand for well qualified Arabic and Persian instructors.

The most recent MLA survey (2006) shows that Arabic language enrollments have increased by 126% since 2002 to over 20,000. Language instructors are in high demand and the program at MEI hopes to eventually provide the participants with nationally recognized certificates in language instruction. The program will consist of an accelerated workshop, in-residence training and distance learning, and it will be directed by Professor Mahdi Alesh, Associate Professor of Arabic and Applied Linguistics and Associate Dean for International Affairs at the US Military Academy. Dr. Shukri Abed, Chairman of MEI’s Department of Languages and Regional Studies, called on Professor Alesh to join him in this endeavor, given his reputation as an outstanding and well-respected expert in the field of training teachers of Middle Eastern languages. This is a wonderful opportunity for MEI to fill a much-needed demand for well-trained Arabic and Persian instructors while continuing to provide high quality education in Middle Eastern languages.

MEI’s Winter 2008 quarter is successfully underway and registration for spring classes will open February 25, 2008. Please visit [www.mei.edu/learn](http://www.mei.edu/learn) for more information.

— Shukri Abed

## Commentary: Bringing Libya in from the Cold

The process of restoring full and normal US-Libyan relations has been slow and painful. The official visit of Libyan Foreign Minister Abdurrahman Shalgham in January was long anticipated. He had met with Secretary Condoleezza Rice twice and was hoping for news about a long awaited visit by Rice to Libya. This did not happen, despite previous public statements that she wanted to visit Tripoli. The reasons are unclear, but they doubtless range from problems stemming from the Secretary's crowded schedule to continued obstacles in the Congress to a normal US diplomatic presence in Tripoli, something that US allies in Europe and other major countries have enjoyed for years.

Various members of Congress have promoted legislation that would tie normalization to full satisfaction of claims against Libya by US victims of terrorism. This remains the case despite the Libyan willingness to deal with such matters through legal channels, including the payment of \$8 million each to the families of those who died in the destruction of Pan Am Flight 103.



Libyan President Muammar Qadhafi meets with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Sirte, Libya in 2007. (UN Photo/Evan Schneider)

Passage of a defense authorization bill that encourages US plaintiffs to attach Libyan assets in the United States has led the Libyan government to halt considering investments of any part of its financial reserves in US capital markets. Many private US companies view the legislation as a clear threat to interests they may hold now or in the future in partnership with Libyan state companies or other entities.

Unlike their foreign competitors, only a small number of US companies have returned to Libya after the lifting of economic sanctions. They complain of limited US visa services available to Libya and other

handicaps in competing for Libyan business with the companies of countries whose governments provide full diplomatic facilities and high-level support. US companies stand to benefit from a rapidly growing market fueled by high oil prices and Libya's development projects, which are aimed at ending Libya's isolation from globalization and repairing a neglected infrastructure. But they are hesitant to take on any risks while official relations continue to seem fragile.



President Qadhafi at the Assembly of the African Union in 2005. (UN Photo/Evan Schneider)

US-Libyan relations have been marked by conflict starting at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century; followed by US engagement in the development of Libya's oil wealth and human resources in the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century; followed by Libyan terrorism and US military retaliation, followed by economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, and long periods of either neglect or animosity.

Starting in 1992, Libya took initiatives for secret talks with Britain and the US to improve relations. By December 2003, all three parties were ready to go public with results that formalized changes in Libyan behavior and opened up the prospect of a new era of mutually beneficial ties in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The Libyan government took steps to end support for terrorism and announced it would give up its chemical and nuclear weapons programs.

The international community, including the UN and the US, responded with step-by-step measures to reward good Libyan behavior and take advantage of the possibilities for resumed economic ties and new forms of security cooperation. The incentive for Libya has been full normalization of relations with all of the governments of Europe and other major governments around the world. That happened rather quickly after the suspension of UN sanctions in the late 1990s, with the sole exception of the US.

Muammar Qadhafi's highly personal and difficult-to-predict leadership is reason for caution. For sev-

eral years, however, his directives have been the most reality-based and promising of his more than three decades in power. Internationally, he seeks acceptance by the West and integration into the global system. He is moving his country toward global economic integration and buying or attracting private companies representing the best in modern technology and management.

Qadhafi also responded to the new international realities of September 2001. Libya was among the first Muslim governments to condemn the attacks of September 11 and to offer assistance to the American people. Intelligence exchanges on matters of mutual interest regarding Islamist terrorist groups gained new impetus. Libyan officials claim they were ahead of the US in drawing attention to the dangers posed by Usama Bin Ladin. Libyan policies toward Africa, which were very troubling in the past, are generally more positive in both the economic and political spheres.

US oil companies returned to the market after sanctions were lifted a year ago and are now in a position to share in the oil and gas developments of a country with considerable potential for growth. But, no US cabinet official has visited Libya. Influential members of Congress are blocking the assignment to Libya of a full US ambassador. Legislation threatens to interrupt the promising but still nascent cooperation between US firms and the Libyan government.

There is no denying that Libya is ruled by a dictator given to often startling announcements, despite his more prudent and predictable behavior recently. But the principal reason for diplomatic relations is not to celebrate our friendships with ideal democracies with free market economies. The more beneficial diplomatic challenge is to transform countries from adversaries to partners in dealing with a world of global threats to all of us.

— David Mack

## Welcome to Dr. Michael Ryan, MEI's New Vice President

Dr. Ryan joined MEI as Vice President on January 2 after serving in the federal government for over 29 years. Before joining MEI, Dr. Ryan served as the Vice President for Administration and Finance in the Millennium Challenge corporation where he transformed MCC's financial and information technology from start-up entities to high performing organizations.



In joining MEI, Dr. Ryan returns to the focus of his earlier career and education. After earning a PhD in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, he worked for ten years, as a political military analyst specializing in the Middle East and North Africa for the Department of Defense. During this period, Ryan made numerous high-level presentations on regional security issues to NATO and, on a bilateral basis, to European allies and high-level government officials in the Middle East and North Africa. While serving in the Office of the Secretary of Defense, Dr. Ryan led the first delegation to Central Europe to offer International Military Education and Training assistance to countries emerging from Soviet dominance. Ryan published a number of articles on US military assistance to the Middle

East and received the Defense Intelligence Agency's highest civilian award for his analysis during the Iran-Iraq war.

During his tenure at the US Department of State, Ryan served as Executive Director and Controller of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs and acted as Deputy Assistant Secretary. He later joined the Environment Protection Agency, where he served as Controller, Deputy Chief Financial Officer. While at State and EPA, he received numerous awards including EPA's Distinguished Career Award.

Ryan received his BA from St. John's College in Annapolis and his PhD from Harvard University. He studied for three years in Egypt on fellowships from The Center for Arabic Study Abroad at the American University of

## The George Camp Keiser Library

The George Camp Keiser Library is pleased to announce that it now offers an online reference service. Patrons may submit questions in realtime chat to the librarian during regular library hours. This exciting new feature may be accessed through the library's webpage or by going directly to the following url: <http://www.mideasti.org/library/chat>

The following is a sample of recent library acquisitions:

Books marked by an asterisk (\*) have been reviewed in the Winter 2008 edition of *The Middle East Journal*.

*Arguing the Just War in Islam* / John Kelsay (2007)

*Censorship in the Arab World: An Annotated Bibliography* / Mona A. Nsouli and Lokman I. Meho (2006) \*

*The Cinema of North Africa and the Middle East* / Edited by Gonul Donmez-Colin (2007) \*

*The City's Pleasures: Istanbul in the Eighteenth Century* / Shirine Hamadeh (2008)

*Darfur's Sorrow: A History of Destruction and Genocide* / M.W. Daly (2007) \*

*Dark Hope: Working for Peace in Israel and Palestine* / David Dean Shulman (2007)

*How We Missed the Story: Osama bin Laden, the Taliban, and the Hijacking of Afghanistan* / Roy Gutman (2008)

*Innocence Lost: Islamism and the Battle Over Values and World Order* / Lars Erslev Anderson (2007) \*

*Islamic Art and Archaeology of Palestine* / Myriam Rosen-Ayalon (2006) \*

*Islamophobia: Making Muslims the Enemy* / Peter Gottschalk and Gabriel Greenberg (2008) \*

*Kurdish Identity: Human Rights and Political Status* / Edited by Carole O'Leary (2007) \*

*Makran, Oman, and Zanzibar: Three-Terminal Cultural Corridor in the Western Indian Ocean, 1799-1856* / Beatrice Nicolini (2004)

*Oil, Profits, and Peace: Does Business have a Role in Peacemaking?* / Jill Shankleman (2006) \*

*The Oil and the Glory: The Pursuit of Empire and For-*

*tune on the Caspian Sea* / Steve Levine (2007) \*

*Rumi: Swallowing the Sun: Poems translated from the Persian* / Translated by Franklin Lewis (2008)

*Secularism Confronts Islam* / Olivier Roy (2007) \*

*The State and the Subaltern: Modernisation, Society and the State in Turkey and Iran* / Touraj Atabaki (2007) \*

### Latest DVDs

*Hamoun* / Dariush Mehrjui [Persian] (2004)

*Sira'fi al-Nil (Struggle on the Nile)* / Atif Salem [Arabic] (2006)

— Simon Braune

### Selected Works on North Africa

*Ali Zaouza: Prince of the Streets* / Nabil Ayouch [Arabic with English subtitles] (DVD)

The captivating story of the challenges four boys encounter while growing up on the streets of Casablanca.

*Daughters of Tunis: Women, Family and Networks in a Muslim City* / Paula Eber-Holmes (2003)

An ethnography that follows the daily lives of four Tunisian women, presenting their personal stories as well as statistical analysis.

*The Emergence of Classes in Algeria: a Study of Colonialism and Socio-political Change* / Marina Lazreg (1976)

Lazreg analyzes how colonialism influenced the restructuring of societal groups and class structure in post-colonial Algeria, and how this class structure impacts the national political climate.

*Historical Dictionary of Morocco* / Thomas K. Park and Aomar Boum (2006)

A comprehensive guide to Morocco's past and present, which references political leaders, key events and significant locations, among other topics.

*A History of Modern Tunisia* / Kenneth J. Perkins (2004)

A chronicle of Tunisian history from French coloni-

zation through the building of the modern Tunisian state following independence.

*Islam, Democracy, and the State in Northern Africa* / John P. Entelis (1997)

A collection of essays that analyze how Islam and culture influence political change, economic development and human rights in Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia.

*Lockerbie and Libya* / Khaili I. Matar and Robert W. Thabit (2004)

The authors address the consequences, indictments and diplomatic negotiations that followed the 1988 Pan Am Flight 103 bombing over Lockerbie.

*“Pariah States” and Sanctions in the Middle East: Iraq, Libya, Sudan* / Tim Niblock (2001)

Niblock presents a case study of the political and economic consequences of US and UN sanctions against Libya and the Libyan response.

*Uncle Sam in Barbary: A Diplomatic History* / Richard B. Parker (2004)

This book portrays early American diplomacy in Algiers, Tripoli, Tunis and Morocco, primarily emphasizing America’s first hostage crisis in 1785 in Algiers, described by the author as America’s first challenge from the Muslim world. The final chapter discusses how these historic relations are relevant today.

*Western Sahara: Anatomy of a Stalemate* / Erik Jensen (2005)

A firsthand account of the complex web of factors that hinder determining the status of Western Sahara. The author, who served as head of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara from 1994-1998, emphasizes the problems encountered by the UN and regional governments, especially in the case of Morocco.

#### **Books in Brief: Social Bonds and Geopolitical Issues in Morocco and Western Sahara**

Determining the status of Western Sahara — to whom the territory rightfully belongs, and who its people should be governed by, or if they should be given the right to self-determination — is an issue that has preoccupied the Maghreb since European colonization in the early 1900s. In *Morocco and the*

*Sahara: Social Bonds and Geopolitical Issues*, Mohammed Cherkaoui presents a sociological analysis of Morocco and Western Sahara and adopts an integrationist perspective. He considers economic, sociological and demographic aspects of the lives of the Moroccan and Saharawi people that are sometimes overlooked when making political decisions, including the demarcation of boundaries. Cherkaoui contends that there is a high level of economic and social integration between the Moroccan people, particularly those living in the southern Saharan region of the country, and the Saharawi people of Western Sahara. He concludes: “decreeing a border between Western Sahara and the other provinces would be sociologically absurd” (p. 148). Other factors Cherkaoui touches on throughout the study include the balance of power in the Maghreb, the risk of balkanization of the region and the threat of terrorism, which has produced increasing US interest in the region.

The majority of Cherkaoui’s study draws attention to human and social development with a particular focus on literacy rates, school enrollment and poverty levels. Statistical data indicates that there has been a noteworthy decline in illiteracy in Western Sahara within the last four decades. Declining illiteracy is accompanied by an increase in school enrollment and declining poverty in Western Sahara, especially in comparison to other regions of Morocco. Cherkaoui refers to these trends as a policy of positive discrimination through which the Moroccan government is attempting to recompense the Saharawi people for the neglect they experienced under Spanish rule.

According to Cherkaoui, the most compelling argument for the economic and social integration of the two peoples is that “this social bond has been patiently woven by individual wills” (p. 152). The author consulted marriage contracts found in Adoulian registers spanning almost four decades (from the 1960s to 2007) and found that intermarriage between Moroccans and Saharawis has risen significantly. He argues that creating two separate political entities of Morocco and Western Sahara would divide families, denying them the right to live together. Ultimately, Cherkaoui offers an incisive look and particular perspective on a complex and continuing struggle.

— Marice Fernando

## Beyond the Beltway

Interview requests for MEI Scholars continued to increase this winter as political developments have sparked up around the region. Scholars shared their knowledge and insight on a variety of television and radio programs as well as in newspapers, magazines and online articles. Following is a brief selection of their contributions.

### MEI in the News

No Middle East-related story drew more press coverage in recent months than the assassination of former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, who spoke at MEI in September — just weeks before her return to Pakistan. In the 72 hours following the tragedy, the Middle East Institute received over 50 separate media requests. Frequently quoted in the media were MEI President and former Ambassador to Pakistan **Wendy Chamberlin** and Scholar-in-Residence **Marvin Weinbaum**, who together collaborated on an op-ed in *The Washington Post* describing Ms. Bhutto as having been Pakistan's best chance for democracy, but asserting their optimism about future leadership. Their op-ed is now available on the MEI website (<http://www.mideasti.org/commentary/pakistans-best-chance>). Ambassador Chamberlin appeared on several major news networks and was interviewed for *USA Today*, *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post*, while Dr. Weinbaum spoke to BBC-TV and CBC TV as well as *Newsweek* and *The Boston Globe*. Analysis of the assassination by Adjunct Scholar **Sayed Farooq Hasnat** also appeared in the *Christian Science Monitor*.

President Bush's mid-January trip to the Middle East caught headlines and several MEI scholars were interviewed on a variety of issues brought up during the visit. **Paul Scham**, **Graeme Bannerman**, **Thomas Lippman**, **Edward Walker** and **Murhaf Jouejati** were all quoted in stories and articles related to his visit, discussing topics from Saudi Arabia and oil, to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process to cooling relations with Egypt. After the trip, retired MEI Vice President **David Mack** spoke with *The Washington Times* to give a graded evaluation of the visit.

January ended with a new crisis in the Middle East as thousands of Palestinians poured across the Gaza-Egypt border into Egypt for supplies, following the breach of the border wall. Adjunct Scholar **Phil Wilcox** was interviewed on KCRW's "To The Point" with Warren Olney the day it occurred. Looking at Iraq, Adjunct Scholar **Mishkat Al Moumin** appeared in

several Canadian news sources including the *Ottawa Citizen* and *The Vancouver Sun*.

### Around Town

Marvin Weinbaum gave several lectures on Pakistan in January to the National Defense University, the US Institute of Peace and Georgetown University. He spoke again at NDU, this time discussing Afghanistan. Thomas Lippman gave a presentation on Saudi Arabia at the Center for National Policy, which was covered by C-SPAN.



Lively debate at the bi-monthly MEI Scholars breakfast.

The highlight of the winter season at the Middle East Institute was the "Iran on the Horizon" conference hosted by MEI at the Ritz-Carlton on February 1. Over 200 people came to hear speakers and experts from the US, the Levant and the Gulf, including MEI Adjunct Scholar Murhaf Jouejati. The lunchtime keynote address featured Pierre Vimont, French Ambassador to the US, who spoke on sanctions against Iran.

As expected, the event was covered heavily in domestic and foreign media. Ambassador Vimont's speech in particular was the subject of articles for newspapers and online media in America, France, Britain, Hong Kong, the Netherlands and the Middle East. Reuters' Sue Fleming wrote a widely-used article regarding sanctions in Iran hitting a snag in the UN Security Council. *The Arab Times* in Kuwait also gave an overview of the conference in an article discussing the growing rocket program in Iran. Other mentions of the conference were found in *Guardian*, *Reuters UK*, *Morning Star*, *The Daily Star* and *Middle East Online*.

### Beyond the Beltway

Adjunct Scholar **Alex Vatanka** spoke to members

of the American military in both Philadelphia and Florida, while David Mack gave a series of speeches in Florida. He discussed Iraq in Sarasota, and spoke in Venice on the US, the Arabian Peninsula and the global economy. He also addressed the World Affairs Council in Richmond on Iraq. Adjunct Scholar **George Harris** gave several talks about developments in Turkey in North Carolina in January, traveling between the International Affairs Council of North Carolina, North Carolina State University and Meredith College.



Adjunct Scholar George Harris talks to a World History class at Meredith College in Raleigh.

Wendy Chamberlin's speeches on upcoming elections in Pakistan in Washington State also drew media attention. Marvin Weinbaum spoke to students at the University of Indiana on Pakistan, and twice briefed Canadian military units on Pakistan while in Edmonton and Brandon. Phil Wilcox spoke in January at the University of Maryland and **Roby Barrett** briefed the 304<sup>th</sup> Civil Affairs Brigade, while **Andrea Rugh** talked to a high school in California.

Marvin Weinbaum traveled to Pakistan for several days as an election monitor for the delayed parliamentary polls. Originally scheduled for early January, the electoral commission postponed elections until February 18 following former prime minister Bhutto's assassination.

MEI scholars remain active in Middle East issues of today and are engaged in a busy schedule for speaking engagements and conference participation beyond the Beltway through the spring and summer.

— Zachary Kineke

## The Middle East Journal

The spring issue of *The Middle East Journal* will have two articles dealing with Iranian subjects, two dealing with aspects of Jordanian society and one on Iraq, as well as a Book Review article dealing with education and educational reform in the Middle East.

The scheduled articles are:

Adeed Dawisha, "Whither Iraq: Ethnosectarian Preferences and State Performance in Historical Perspective." Dawisha, at Miami University in Ohio, looks at the reasons for the growth of ethnosectarian conflict since 2003 and contrasts it with the pre-invasion period when state power was sufficient to keep such conflict in check. This will be the concluding chapter of his next book, due out in 2009.

Z'ev Maghen, "Occultation in Perpetuum: Shi'ite Messianism and the Policies of the Islamic Republic." In a well-documented assault on conventional wisdom, Maghen, of Bar-Ilan University, argues that far from trying to bring about the return of the Mahdi, messianic expectations actually have played little role in the ideology of the Iranian revolution. He seeks to demonstrate that the alarmism expressed by Bernard Lewis and others is not justified.

Mark Katz, "Russian-Iranian Relations in the Ahmadienejad Era." Mark Katz of George Mason University has long been an avid Russia-watcher on the Middle East and he explores many areas of relations between Moscow and Tehran in recent years.

Anne Marie Baylouny, "Military Welfare: Neo-Liberalism and the Jordanian Regime." Baylouny, at the Naval Postgraduate School, offers a detailed analysis of Jordan's welfare/social support system in the wake of economic structural reform, drawing conclusions about the fundamental structure of the state as well. A critique, but an informed one.

Jonas Blume, Markus Loewe and Johanna Speer, "How Favoritism Affects the Business Climate: Empirical Evidence from Jordan." A study, based on field research and interviews by a team of German researchers, of the effect of *wasta*, or influence on business in Jordan; the article has application, of course, to other countries in the region.

The book review article, by André Mazawi, will deal with education and educational reform in the Arab world.

— Michael Collins Dunn

## Cultural Wanderings: A Collection of Poems on the Jews on Djerba, Tunisia



Festival of Purim in Djerba. (Photo N. Stone)

*Stranger's Notebook*, forthcoming in September 2008 (Tri-Quarterly Books, Northwestern University Press) is inspired by *Middle East Journal* Assistant Editor Naomi Stone's encounter with perhaps the last cohesive, traditional Jewish community in the Middle East and North Africa. This diminishing pocket of Jews lives, largely peacefully, in the midst of the Arab world. According to the community's story of origin, a handful of exiles arrived on the island of Djerba, Tunisia in 586 BC, carrying a single stone from the destroyed Temple in Jerusalem. Stone's poems are about the daily lives and deeper cosmos of the Jews of Djerba as well as the Muslims next door. In 2002, al-Qa'ida bombed the synagogue (killing 18 European visitors and causing some structural damage) and this remote Jewish community was briefly

thrust into Western consciousness. Stone lived in the community (initially on its peripheries and eventually in the center of the town) during the winter and spring of 2004 on a Fulbright scholarship. *Stranger's Notebook* is written from the edge of that sacred circle. Following are four poems excerpted from *Stranger's Notebook*.

### **The Stranger, Preparing for a Long Journey, 2003**

Bring your yellow backpack, your blank books, enough to remind you of yourself. There will be thickets of honeysuckle; tourists; people who stayed. You have never seen this island. But it is like an itch. A whiff. Someone else's memory came in.

### **The Girls**

They drop a mandarin and a banana in your bag, waiting for you at the door of the school house. The girls are sixteen and not yet married. They giggle their questions. "Whose daughter are you?" "Why aren't you married yet?" They know some words in your language; now and then they say them. When you say words in theirs, they peer at you and laugh and let you fumble until you extract the right one, shining like a bone they left for you many centuries ago in the sand.

### **The Fall of the First Temple, 586 BC, Jerusalem**

The priests buzzed around the nothing that was left there, inspecting it with itching fingers. One threw the useless keys into the everything above. Now, they must learn to make a meadow a temple, an act or an absence of an act, a temple. They weep. They become their altar.

### **Parable**

They want to know if I know Tom Cruise and I want to know how to ask if they are upset that a girl may not speak to a boy until he makes her a woman.

The sun is glowing hard on dusty streets and whiter homes. The fox asked the fish, why not live on land if you fear the fisherman? In this example, they are the fish. Their holy book, water.

## MEI: The Early Years

The year is 1958. Gamal 'Abd al-Nasser has been nominated as president of the newly formed United Arab Republic. Revolution in Iraq has overthrown the Hashemite monarchy and brought Brigadier General Abdul Karim Qasim to power. A French military coup in Algiers has just failed, while thousands of US marines poured into Lebanon to protect the pro-Western government. The Middle East was undergoing a metamorphosis of sorts and Arabists and academics alike were taking notice. For a young Palestinian-American research director at the Middle East Institute, there had never been a more advantageous time to be in Washington researching Middle Eastern affairs.

A Quaker who had graduated from the Ramallah Friends Boys School, Dr. Fahim I. Qubain moved to the United States in 1946. After enrolling in Guilford College in Greensboro, North Carolina where he was welcomed with a full scholarship, Qubain went on to receive his Ph.D. in political science at the University of Wisconsin. His life took an interesting turn when he moved to Washington, DC after graduation.

Dr. Qubain had initial contact with the Middle East Institute as early as the 1950s but became officially associated with MEI when he took the title of director of research in 1958. Although it was an unpaid position, it allowed Dr. Qubain an office and the staff support that he would require in order to publish his book, *Education and Science in the Arab World*. The book project was funded by the National Science Foundation. Through Qubain's relationships with a number of other US government agencies, he secured funding for MEI to conduct at least three more research projects. MEI consequently published a series of studies and became a more visible presence on the DC scene.

While at MEI, Dr. Qubain met his future wife, Nancy, at the office of her boss Dr. Halford Hoskins — a friend of Dr. Qubain's, who was then Senior Specialist on International Relations at the Legislative Reference Service (now called Congressional Research) at the Library of Congress. Nancy had just graduated from Harvard with an MA degree in Middle East studies, and was Hoskins' assistant. Nancy and Fahim were married a few months later and have been married for 44 years.

In those days, according to Qubain, while interest for all things Middle East related was high, funding was

not. Times were lean, and payroll not always reliable. Yet, MEI was committed to printing the premier, peer-reviewed *Middle East Journal*, which focused on relevant issues of the day, many of which remain just as critical in 2008.



Among those celebrating the publication of Fahim Qubain's *Education and Science in the Arab World* are: Fahim Qubain (far left), Raymond Hare (former Assistant Secretary of State and president of MEI, second from left), and Nancy Qubain (second from right). (Photo: Fahim Qubain)

At 83 years old, Dr. Qubain pooh-poohs the idea of retirement. He and his wife Nancy remain engaged activists on Middle East issues and in 2000 they established the Hope Fund, a 501 (c)(3) public charity. The Hope Fund's mission is to uplift the lives of the poorest and most vulnerable in Palestinian society through higher education. They started with two students, Khaled and Hanan, who grew up in refugee camps in Lebanon. Through the Hope Fund's assistance, Khaled and Hanan both graduated Cum Laude from Roanoke College in 2005 and are now graduates in engineering and biochemistry Ph.D. programs. Today there are 12 students from the West Bank, Gaza, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria at different US colleges on full, four-year scholarships.

In Dr. Qubain's own words, "I regard the Hope Fund as the crowning and most satisfying achievement of my life. Nothing I have done throughout my life can compare with this humane undertaking — to salvage, even in a small way, the lives of young people with brilliant minds from being wasted into the garbage dumps of refugee camps and enable them to dream of a better life for themselves and their families."

— Kelly Davies

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