



Middle East Political Reform Initiative

MEPRI

Carnegie Endowment
for International Peace

The Middle East Political Reform Initiative (MEPRI) at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace brings top analytic insight and practical experience to bear on whether and how political reform will occur in the Arab world and how the United States and other external actors can best encourage such change. No other program unites the breadth of expertise on the political life of Middle Eastern countries found among the Endowment's scholars with an unsurpassed network of scholars, journalists, and institutions within the region and around the globe.

GOALS

MEPRI's goals are to:

- Improve U.S. efforts to promote political reform in the Middle East, through deepening understanding in the U.S. policy community and the public about the challenges of such efforts
- Help people in the Arab world better understand and interact with Western policies and programs aimed at promoting political change
- Add a comparative dimension to debates and analyses (both in the Arab world and in the United States and Europe) about Arab political reform.

A core element of MEPRI's work is incisive writing by Carnegie researchers in formats designed for many audiences—policy briefs, opinion editorials, working papers, and journal articles. These are distributed in the United States, the Middle East, and Europe to key individuals, including policy makers, experts, aid practitioners, journalists, and scholars. They also are available more widely through Carnegie's web site at www.ceip.org and electronic newsletter, e-News.

The Initiative also organizes meetings, ranging from small working groups to symposia and larger conferences, to bring together key actors for debate and discussion. Carnegie scholars give frequent public presentations and have extensive contacts with the media.

Complementing MEPRI's core program is the Endowment's unique vehicle for communicating to a broader audience—the award-winning FOREIGN POLICY (FP) magazine. Since February 2003, an Arabic language edition of FP, based in Kuwait, has been distributed throughout the region, expanding the Endowment's Middle East contacts and informing them of MEPRI's activities.

To fill the need for a comprehensive, timely, and objectively written overview of the state of political reform in the Arab world, MEPRI launched a monthly electronic publication, *Arab Reform Bulletin*. Feedback from the region and Western policymakers has been overwhelmingly positive. After just three issues, the subscriber list had doubled.

UNIQUE OFFERINGS

Several distinctive elements characterize MEPRI's work. Rather than repeating well-rehearsed debates over the changing role of the United States in the Middle East, the program concentrates on the crucial analytic issues of how political change in the Arab world can actually occur and what the United States can and cannot do to promote it. MEPRI makes extensive use of comparative insights from the experience of political change in other regions of the world, thereby avoiding the "Arab exceptionalism" arguments that stifle many other analyses of the region.

MEPRI brings regional viewpoints to U.S. policy debates and reaches out to institutions and audiences in the Middle East to hear their perspectives and understand their views. Its work is nonpartisan and is not shaped by any pre-set stance on regional security issues. Finally, MEPRI combines scholarly rigor on the issue of political change with a very practical focus on what effects U.S. policies and programs have on Arab political systems. Together, these attributes account for the program's remarkable success in its first year.

In addition to its core work, MEPRI includes five special components:

Arab Reform Bulletin

Distributed electronically to a growing list of subscribers in many countries, the new *Arab Reform Bulletin* is a monthly analytic digest, providing an incisive assessment of the nature and significance of political reform developments in the Arab world. No other publication covers this field with regular news and analysis. The *Bulletin* fills an information need that is growing increasingly critical, as pressures for and interest in political reform in the Arab world build.

Regional Partnerships

MEPRI is organizing and co-sponsoring regional activities in partnership with Arab policy institutes and universities, ranging from presentations in the region by Carnegie researchers to international conferences and workshops, leading to the publication of reports, working papers, and policy briefs.

Visiting Scholars

To add first-hand knowledge to U.S. policy debates, MEPRI hosts visiting scholars from the region. These scholars join Carnegie for two to five months to carry out research and writing, give presentations at Carnegie and elsewhere, and speak to U.S. journalists.

Junior Fellows

A position for a new college graduate with native-level skills in written and spoken Arabic will be added to Carnegie's renowned, long-established, and competitive Junior Fellows Program. This will increase our ability to monitor Arab press and publications from the Middle East and to develop partnerships with regional institutions, while providing an unparalleled opportunity for young college graduates from the region to participate in the world of international policymaking and be mentored by senior Endowment staff.

United States and Iran

U.S.-Iranian relations have entered an unusually volatile and dangerous period. Making use of Carnegie's notable staff expertise on Iran and of visiting scholars, MEPRI is addressing the complex link between domestic political reform in Iran and U.S. policy toward that country. Activities will feature a variety of Iranian perspectives whenever possible, and will include a series of workshops in Washington, D.C. and writings on the policy choices for the United States.

Thomas Carothers, senior associate, is the founder and director of the Carnegie Endowment's Democracy and Rule of Law Project. He is a leading authority on democracy promotion and democratization worldwide and the author of *Aiding Democracy Abroad: The Learning Curve* (Carnegie Endowment, 1999). Prior to joining the Endowment, he practiced international and financial law at Arnold & Porter and served in the Office of the Legal Advisor of the U.S. Department of State. He has been a guest scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and an International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. He holds an A.B. from Harvard College, an M.Sc. from the London School of Economics, and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Marina S. Ottaway, senior associate, is an analyst of democracy and democracy promotion, with expertise in the Middle East and Africa and the challenges of post-conflict state reconstruction. She also is a lecturer in African Studies at The Paul H. Nitze School for Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University. She has conducted research and taught in Egypt, Ethiopia, South Africa, and Zambia. Her most recent book is *Democracy Challenged: The Rise of Semi-Authoritarianism* (Carnegie Endowment, 2003), a comparative study of semi-authoritarian regimes in Africa, the Caucasus, Latin America, and the Middle East. She studied at the University of Pavia, Italy, and earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University.

Daniel Brumberg, senior associate, is an expert on political and social change in the Middle East and the wider Islamic world. He is also an associate professor of government at Georgetown University. Brumberg is currently conducting a comparative study of Algeria, Kuwait, and Indonesia. He is the author of *Reinventing Khomeini: The Struggle for Reform in Iran* (University of Chicago, 2001). Previously, he was a Randolph Peace Fellow at the U.S. Institute of Peace and has conducted research and taught at Emory University, the Carter Center, and the University of Chicago. Brumberg is on the editorial board of the *Journal of Democracy* and the advisory board of the International Forum on Democratic Studies, and chairs the board of the Foundation on Democratization and Political Change in the Middle East. He holds a B.A. from Indiana University and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago.

Amy Hawthorne, associate, is a Middle East specialist with expertise in domestic political change, political liberalization, and human rights in the Arab world. Prior to joining the Endowment, she was a research fellow in Arab politics at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and served as a senior program officer for the Middle East at the International Foundation for Election Systems. She has studied as a Fulbright scholar in Cairo, where she also worked with the American embassy. She holds a B.A. from Yale University and an M.A. from the University of Michigan.

Washington, D.C. remains isolated from the new debates in the Arab world over political reform. Discussions here regularly misconstrue the debates, for the sake of domestic political agendas. To strengthen the presence of well-informed, thoughtful Arab perspectives, MEPRI brings talented scholars from the region to join the Endowment for two to five months.



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ACTIVITIES 2002–2003

Visiting Scholars

- Mustapha Kamel Al-Sayyid, Professor of Political Science, Cairo University, Egypt, 2002
- Khalid Al-Dakhil, Professor of Political Science, King Saud University, Saudi Arabia, 2003–2004
- Hadi Semati, Professor of Political Science, University of Tehran, Iran, 2003–2004

Publications

MEPRI staff regularly publish articles, chapters, and opinion editorials on political change in the Middle East in a wide range of books, journals, and newspapers such as *Foreign Policy*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Journal of Democracy*, *Washington Post*, *International Herald Tribune*, *Current History*, *Boston Globe*, and *Chicago Tribune*.

Recent Carnegie publications—available in full-text at www.ceip.org/pubs—include:

- Marina Ottaway, Daniel Brumberg, Thomas Carothers, and Amy Hawthorne, *Democratic Mirage in the Middle East*, Carnegie Policy Brief No. 20, 2002
- Mustapha Kamel Al-Sayyid, *The Other Face of the Islamist Movement*, Carnegie Working Paper No. 33
- Daniel Brumberg, *Liberalization versus Democratization: Understanding Arab Political Reform*, Carnegie Endowment Working Paper No. 37, 2003
- Daniel Brumberg, *End of a Brief Affair? The United States and Iran*, Carnegie Policy Brief No. 14, 2002
- Thomas Carothers, *Is Gradualism Possible? Choosing a Strategy for Promoting Democracy in the Middle East*, Carnegie Working Paper No. 39, 2003
- Thomas Carothers, *Promoting the Rule of Law Abroad: The Problem of Knowledge*, Carnegie Working Paper No. 34, 2003
- Marina Ottaway, *Promoting Democracy in the Middle East: The Problem of U.S. Credibility*, Carnegie Working Paper No. 35, 2003
- Marina Ottaway and Judith Yaphe, *Political Reconstruction in Iraq: A Reality Check*, Carnegie Web Policy Paper, 2003

The current issue of MEPRI's e-monthly, *Arab Reform Bulletin*, is available at www.ceip.org/ArabReform. To subscribe, visit www.ceip.org/signup.

Meetings

MEPRI convened a policy working group on democracy promotion in the Middle East. It has sponsored a series of symposia on Palestinian reform and held meetings on Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Iran, and related topics. Meeting summaries, participants, and other background are available at www.ceip.org/democracy.

Public Presentations

MEPRI staff have given presentations on political change in the Middle East at institutions in Washington, D.C., New York, Cairo, Algiers, Doha, London, Stockholm, Paris, Rome, Ramallah, Jerusalem, Ann Arbor, and Budapest.

Media Appearances

MEPRI staff make frequent appearances on national and international television and radio, including on the three U.S. networks, as well as PBS, BBC, CNN, NPR, PRI, and VOA. Staff are also cited regularly in the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Financial Times*, and other top print publications.