



MIDEAST PROGRAM OVERVIEW

◆ 2016 ◆

Foreign Policy Research Institute's

Program on the Middle East

FPRI

FOREIGN POLICY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

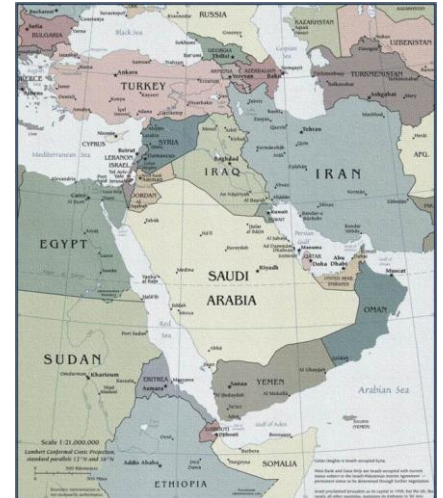


PROGRAM ON THE MIDDLE EAST

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Director: Tally Helfont

Despite the clamor for America's foreign policy to pivot toward Asia and away from the Middle East, events in the region over the past several years require sustained American attention. The region has become more complicated. The days of state power being held in a single hand, or iron fist depending on the locale, are fading. The internal political chaos which now consumes Middle Eastern capitals from Damascus to Sanaa will likely be with us for some time. The stakes remain high for the United States and therefore necessitate sustained engagement based on new thinking. The challenges at hand are many, including Iran's regional destabilizing ambitions, the rise of the greatest terrorist threat this world has seen in the form of ISIS, the ostensible collapse of the old state order in the Greater Middle East, and ever entrenched conflict between Israelis and Palestinians and among Syrians themselves that continues to claim the lives and the futures of generations.



FPRI's Middle East program is uniquely positioned to provide the kind of strategic thinking and thoughtful analysis required to heed this call. FPRI has been known for its focus on geopolitics since its founder Robert Strausz-Hupé popularized the term for Americans in the mid-20th century. This geopolitical outlook has served the Institute well for over a half century. Following in that tradition, the Program on the Middle East brings together both established and emerging scholars from the academic, military, and policy worlds in an effort to develop a new cadre of strategic policy thinkers, versed in the geography, history, culture, and politics of the region. This geopolitical outlook is particularly important when analyzing the Middle East. In fact, the term "Middle East" was coined in 1902 by one of America's great devotees of geopolitics – U.S. Navy Captain, Alfred T. Mahan. For Captain Mahan in the early 20th century, the region's importance was rooted in its geopolitics. As fleeting intellectual fads have come and gone in Western capitals, the geopolitical bedrock of geography, history, and culture continue to shape Middle Eastern politics. These factors do not transform with every street demonstration and even in these fast changing times, they continue to frame some of the most prudent analysis of the American interest in the region.

Accordingly, FPRI's Program on the Middle East offers context, content, and policy recommendations based on a holistic view of American strategic interests in the region. Its analysis transcends headlines and catch phrases. Throughout its research, publications, and educational outreach, the program focuses on key themes such as authoritarianism and reform; the aftermath of the Arab Uprisings; radicalism and regional threats; sectarian divisions; and the Arab-Israeli conflict and peace efforts. FPRI's Program on the Middle East is dedicated to ensuring that its vital and time-tested geopolitical approach continues to bear fruit. Therefore, the Program seeks to provide its particular brand of informed analysis on regional developments to policymakers, academics, journalists, educators, and others interested in the Middle East. It also seeks to build relationships with like-minded institutions and individuals from the region, in an effort to both enrich the Program's perspectives and to provide a platform for indigenous analyses and critiques from within the Middle East itself.

POME SCHOLARS



FPRI's Middle East Program is comprised of 20 accomplished scholars, based locally, nationally, and globally. Meet the Team:

Director



Tally Helfont is the Director of FPRI's Program on the Middle East. Her current research focuses on regional balance of power, the Levant and the GCC, and U.S. policy therein. She is also a Contributing Analyst for Wikistrat's Middle East Desk, a crowd-sourcing consultancy. Ms. Helfont has instructed training courses in Civil Information Management to U.S. Military Civil Affairs Units and Human Terrain Teams assigned to Iraq and Afghanistan. Her writings have appeared in English, Hebrew, and Arabic in publication such as *Orbis* (US), *The American Interest* (US), *INSS Insight* (IL), *al-Mesbar* (UAE), and *al Majalla* (UK/KSA), as well as in FPRI's *E-Notes* and *Geopoliticus* blog. She holds an M.A. in

Middle East Studies from Tel Aviv University, and is proficient at various levels in Hebrew, Arabic, and French.

Senior Fellows



Joseph Braude is a Middle East scholar, broadcaster, and author whose research appears in print and on air, in Arabic as well as English. He studied in the departments of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Yale and Near Eastern Studies at Princeton. He developed his Arabic to broadcast quality through years of living and working in the Gulf states and North Africa, and added fluency in Farsi to his knowledge of Persian literature as a graduate student at the University of Tehran.



Sarah Bush is an Assistant Professor of political science at Temple University. Her research focuses primarily on democracy promotion, non-state actors in world politics, and gender and human rights policy in the developing world. Her first book, *The Taming of Democracy Assistance* is out now. Other work has been published or is forthcoming in *International Organization* and *International Studies Quarterly*. She has held fellowships at Harvard's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs and the Miller Center for Public Affairs at the University of Virginia. Dr. Bush earned a Ph.D. in politics from Princeton University (2011).



Brandon Friedman, is a Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. Brandon is also the Managing Editor of *Bustan: The Middle East Book Review*, which is published by Penn State University Press. Dr. Friedman teaches modern Middle Eastern history in Tel Aviv University's International programs. His research focuses on the political history of the Arabian Peninsula and Persian Gulf States. Prior to beginning his academic career in Israel, Brandon spent seven years working for a risk advisory consulting firm in the U.S.



Frank R. Gunter is an Associate Professor of Economics at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. Frank's primary area of research is economic development in conflict and post-conflict states, though he also focuses on the economics of corruption, capital flight, and microfinance. Having served 35 years on active and reserve duty, Frank retired as a Colonel from the U.S. Marine Corps Reserves in 2008. He holds his Ph.D. in Political Economy from John Hopkins University.



Bruce Maddy-Weitzman is the Marcia Israel Principal Research Fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies at Tel Aviv University. Maddy-Weitzman's research focuses on contemporary Middle Eastern history, inter-Arab relations, and the modern Maghrib. He is the author of *The Berber Identity Movement and the Challenge to North African States* (University of Texas Press, 2011), which was awarded the L. Carl Brown Prize by the American Institute for Maghrib Studies in 2013.



Barak Mendelsohn is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Haverford College, where he teaches courses on Jihadi movements and on the Middle East. His research interests include terrorism and counter-terrorism; radical Islamic movements; hegemony and interstate cooperation; and the politics of the Middle East. He is author of *The al-Qaeda Franchise: The Expansion of al-Qaeda and Its Consequences* (Oxford University Press, 2016) and *Combating Jihadism: American Hegemony and International Cooperation in the War on Terrorism* (University of Chicago Press, 2009). He received his Ph.D. in Government from Cornell University.



Michael A. Reynolds is an Associate Professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University. His Research focuses on Ottoman and Russian empires and their successor states as well as contemporary issues related to Turkey, the Kurds, Azerbaijan, and the North Caucasus. He is the author of *Shattering Empires: The Clash and Collapse of the Ottoman and Russian Empires* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), co-winner of the American Historical Association's George Louis Beer Prize, a Financial Times book of the summer, and a Choice outstanding title. He holds a Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from Princeton University.



Abdallah Schleifer is Professor Emeritus and Senior Fellow at the Kamal Adham Center for Television Journalism - which he founded and served as first director (1985-2005) at The American University in Cairo. Schleifer is also chief editor of *The Muslim 500*; Adjunct Scholar at the Middle East Institute; member of the Board of Trustees of the Center for the Study of Islam and Democracy (USA), and Senior Fellow at the Royal Aal Al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (Amman.).



Amin Tarzi is the Director of Middle East Studies at the Marine Corps University (MCU) in Quantico, Virginia. His prior experience includes holding the post of Political Advisor to the Saudi Arabian Mission to the United Nations dealing with the conflicts in Iraq, Afghanistan, the Balkans and Somalia; the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty extension; Iranian behavior in the United Nations; and Security Council expansion. Tarzi served as an Iranian affairs analyst at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research in Abu Dhabi.



Lorenzo Vidino is the Director of the Program on Extremism at George Washington University's Center for Cyber & Homeland Security. His research focuses on Islamism in Europe and North America; the mobilization dynamics of jihadist networks in the West; and governmental counter-radicalization policies. He has held positions at Harvard University's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, the U.S. Institute of Peace, the RAND Corporation, among others. The author of several books and numerous articles, Dr. Vidino's most prominent work is *The New Muslim Brotherhood in the West* (Columbia University Press, 2010). Vidino holds a law degree from the University of Milan Law School and a Ph.D. in international relations from the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy.



Sean L. Yom is an Associate Professor of Political Science (Comparative Politics) at Temple University. His research broadly focuses on authoritarianism and development, and he is now finishing his first book on state-building and political order in the post-colonial Middle East. His other current research interests concern the future of democratic reforms in the Arab world, patterns of transnational hierarchy between sovereign states, and contemporary methods of comparative-historical analysis. He received his Ph.D. at Harvard University.

Fellows



Andrew Spath is an Instructor at American University's School of International Service. He is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Political Science at Rutgers University, where he has taught courses on authoritarian regimes, Middle East politics and security, and Model United Nations. His current research examines the effects of leadership succession on the relationship between government and society in Jordan and Syria. Spath was awarded both a Fulbright fellowship and a David L. Boren fellowship for 2012-13.



Eric Trager is the Esther K. Wagner Fellow at The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, focusing on Egyptian politics and the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. His writings have appeared in numerous publications, including the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Affairs*, the *Atlantic*, and the *New Republic*. Dr. Trager is an adjunct professor at the University of Pennsylvania, where his doctoral research focused on Egyptian opposition parties. From 2006-2007, he lived in Egypt as an Islamic Civilizations Fulbright Fellow.

Associate Scholars



Justin Scott Finkelstein is Associate Scholar in FPRI's Program on the Middle East, and the inaugural Harvey Sicherman Scholar in 2013. His research focuses on issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict, Israeli and Palestinian public opinion on the two-state solution, and Israeli domestic politics. Finkelstein received a Master's degree in Near Eastern Studies from New York University, where he was awarded a Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship to study Arabic at the Middlebury Arabic School.



Tamar Friedman is currently working as the Marketing Associate at the Taub Center for Social Policy Studies in Israel. Her research focuses on electoral politics in the Middle East. She is a recent graduate of the University of Pennsylvania, where she earned her B.A. in Political Science, with a minor in Modern Middle Eastern Studies. She completed her senior thesis under the direction of Dr. Brendan O'Leary entitled "Negotiating Identities: The Strategic Adoption of Gender Quotas but not Ethnic Quotas in Post-Conflict Iraq and Afghanistan."

FPRI NAMES 5 ROBERT A. FOX FELLOWS

FPRI is proud to announce that it has **named five Robert A. Fox Fellows, who will spend the year writing and speaking on a wide range of issues related to the Middle East and North Africa, and U.S. policy therein.** Sponsored by Robert A. Fox, these Fellows have been chosen on the basis of their erudite scholarly contributions, and their ability to respond to contemporary developments in the region in a sound and timely fashion, based on FPRI's focus on geopolitical analysis. This mark the second year (2016-2017) of the fellowship, which is being awarded to two new scholars and renewed for an additional year for three existing Robert A. Fox Fellows. They are:

Robert A. Fox Fellows (2016-2017)



Benedetta Berti is a Fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), a TED Senior Fellow, and an independent human security consultant. Her work focuses on human security and internal conflicts, on post-conflict stabilization and peacebuilding. Dr. Berti is the author of three books, including *Armed Political Organizations: From Conflict to Integration* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013) and her work has appeared, among others, in *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign Policy*, and *Al-Jazeera*. In 2015, the Italian government awarded her the Order of the Star of Italy (order of Knighthood).



Adam Garfinkle is a founding editor of *The American Interest*. Before founding *The American Interest* in 2005, he served in 2003-05 as principal speechwriter to the Secretary of State (S/P, Policy Planning). He has also been editor of *The National Interest* and has taught at the School for Advanced International Studies (SAIS), the Johns Hopkins University, the University of Pennsylvania, Haverford College and other institutions of higher learning.



Samuel Helfont is a post-doctoral lecturer of International Relations at the University of Pennsylvania. He wrote his dissertation on Saddam Hussein's use of religion to entrench his authoritarian regime, based on captured Ba'th Party and Iraqi state records. Helfont is the author of *Yusuf Al-Qaradawi: Islam and Modernity* (The Moshe Dayan Center/Tel Aviv University Press, 2009) and has written widely in publications such as *The Middle East Journal*, *Foreign Affairs*, *Orbis*, *The New Republic*, and *The Jewish Review of Book*, among others.



Vish Sakthivel is a doctoral candidate in Modern Middle East Studies at Oxford University, where she is writing her dissertation on Islamist politics in Algeria and Morocco. She is also a nonresident adjunct fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy (WINEP), and is the author of the WINEP monograph, "Al-Adl wal-Ihsan: Inside Morocco's Islamist Challenge." Her work has appeared in *Foreign Affairs*, *World Politics Review*, *Al Monitor*, the *Oxford University Press Islamic Encyclopedia*, among other outlets.



Clint Watts is the President of Miburo Solutions, Inc. His research focuses on analyzing transnational threat groups operating in local environments on a global scale. Before starting Miburo Solutions, he served as a U.S. Army infantry officer, a FBI Special Agent on a Joint Terrorism Task Force, and as the Executive Officer of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (CTC). He is also the editor of the SelectedWisdom.com blog and a frequent contributor to FPRI's blog, *Geopolitiicus*.

MID-YEAR PROGRAM UPDATE

PRODUCTIVITY

In the first half of 2016, FPRI's Middle East program was extremely active. The Middle East program scholars published regularly on critical developments and trends in the Middle East, and hosted diverse [Middle East-related programming](#), bringing renowned experts to FPRI forums to speak to professionals and engaged citizens about regional subjects that bear upon American foreign policy.

FPRI's Middle East Program scholars and trustees have written, spoken, been cited or published **+160 times** in **+70 distinct, reputable internal and external publications and media outlets** spanning **+10 countries**.

SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS IN EXTERNAL OUTLETS

<p>+130 Scholarly Contribution +60 External Outlets +10 countries</p>	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  WROTE </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  SPOKE </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  CITED & QUOTED </div> <div style="text-align: center;">  INTERVIEWED (TV, Radio, Podcast, VideoCast) </div> </div>
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SCHOLARLY CONTRIBUTIONS IN INTERNAL FPRI OUTLETS

+30 Scholarly Contributions
9 Internal Outlets
5 Distinct Venues



WROTE



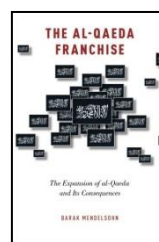
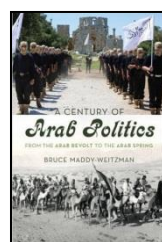
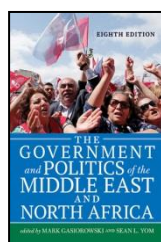
SPOKE



PRODUCED
(Infographic,
Podcast, VideoCast)



NEW BOOKS BY PROGRAM SCHOLARS



- Senior Fellow **Barak Mendelsohn** published *The al Qaeda Franchise: The Expansion of al-Qaeda and Its Consequences* through Oxford University Press to great acclaim.
- Senior Fellow **Bruce Maddy-Weitzman** published *A Century of Arab Politics: From the Arab Revolt to the Arab Spring* through Rowman & Littlefield, which will likely become a staple in university classrooms dealing with these tumultuous political events and their ripple effects.
- Senior Fellow **Sean L. Yom** published *The Government and Politics of the Middle East and North Africa* with co-editor Mark Gasiorowski through Westview Press, offering comprehensive and current examination of the domestic politics and foreign policies of this crucial region.

SELECTED PUBLICATIONS

Samuel Helfont, “Homage to Kurdistan,” *The American Review of Books, Blogs, and Bull*, April, 2016

Joseph Braude & Tyler Jiang, “Djibouti is Jumping,” *FPRI E-Notes*, March, 2016.

Ann M. Lesch, “Parliament without Politics: The Effort to Consolidate Authoritarian Rule,” *The Philadelphia Papers*, February 2016.

Michael A. Reynolds, “Turkey, Russia, and NATO Enter the Danger Zone,” *FPRI E-Notes*, December 2015.

Benedetta Berti, “The Syrian Civil War and its Consequences for Hezbollah,” *FPRI E-Notes*, December 2015.

Tally Helfont, “America and Its Allies in the Middle East: Bungling Toward Strategic Cooperation,” *Orbis* (Fall 2015).

Adam Garfinkle, “Iran: The Big Sell,” *FPRI E-Notes*, August 2015.

John R. Haines, “Iran, DAESH & the Rising Specter of Radiological Warfare in the Middle East,” *FPRI E-Notes*, July 2015.

Frank R. Gunter, “ISIL Revenues: Grow or Die” *FPRI E-Notes*, June 2015

Lorenzo Vidino, “How to Stop ISIS from Recruiting American Teens,” *The Washington Post*, June 2015.

Joseph Braude, “A Campaign in Saudi Arabia Challenges Young People to Rethink Their Biases,” *FPRI E-Notes*, June 2015.

Clint Watts, “How About Some Unconventional Warfare? Thoughts on Countering ISIL” *War on the Rocks Blog*, October 20, 2014.

Brahim Saïdy, “The Gulf Cooperation Council’s Unified Military Command” *FPRI E-Book*, October 2014.

Andrew Spath, “Jordan: Between Stability and Spillover” *FPRI E-Notes*, August 2014.

Justin Scott Finkelstein, “An Opening for Peace: Israelis, Palestinians, and the Two State Solution” *FPRI E-Notes*, February 2014.

Brandon Friedman, “Alternatives to U.S. Hard Power: The Saudi Response to U.S. Tactics in the Middle East” *FPRI E-Notes*, January 2014.

Samuel Helfont, “The Geopolitics of the Sunni Shi’i Divide in the Middle East” *Footnotes*, December 2013.

Sean L. Yom, “Understanding the Resilience of Monarchy During the Arab Spring” *FPRI E-Notes*, April 2012.

“Military actions against terrorist groups such as airstrikes make martyrs of jihadi leaders. . . . But truly eroding [the Islamic State’s] appeal will come by turning [its leaders’] image. . . from martyrs to villains.”

— an excerpt from **Clint Watts’** 2014 article on “How About Some Unconventional Warfare? Thoughts on Countering ISIL”

SELECTED EVENTS

The Two-State Solution: Dream or Delusion? *Stanley and Arlene Ginsburg Lecture Series*, **Shai Feldman**, June 07, 2016.

The Middle East and the Geopolitics of Oil, *Main Line Breakfast Briefings*, **Frank R. Gunter**, March 09, 2016.

From Resilience to Revolution: How Foreign Interventions Destabilize the Middle East, *Geopolitics with Granieri Featuring Sean L. Yom*, January 12, 2016.

Erasing Borders and Exporting Terror: The Middle East in the Age of the Islamic State, *Stanley and Arlene Ginsburg Lecture Series Featuring Samuel Helfont, Tally Helfont, Andrew Spath, and Ronald J. Granieri*, December 15, 2015.

Is ISIS Stoppable?, *Princeton Committee of FPRI Featuring Clint Watts*, November 19, 2015.

The Threat from Within: Israel's Extremist Dilemma, *FPRI Briefing Featuring Barak Mendelsohn*, August 12, 2015.

Islam in the West, *Butcher History Institute for Secondary School Teachers with Princeton University's Program in Near Eastern Studies*, May 2, 2015.

Afghanistan: The New Realities, *Princeton Committee of FPRI Featuring Amin Tarzi*, March 26, 2015.

Teaching About Israel and Palestine, *Butcher History Institute for Secondary School Teachers*, October 25-26, 2014.

Bullets vs. Ballots: Militants and Movements in Contemporary Islamism, *Foreign Policy Round Table Featuring Lorenzo Vidino*, June 11, 2014.

The Role of Women in Politics in the New Middle East, *Geopolitics with Granieri Featuring Sarah Bush*, March 4, 2014.

Israel and Palestine: Does the Two-State Solution Have a Future? *Princeton Committee of FPRI Featuring Amb. Daniel C. Kurtzer*, October 10, 2013.

The Political Economy of Iraq: Restoring Balance In A Post-Conflict Society, *Geopolitics with Granieri Featuring Frank R. Gunter*, April 9, 2013.

Turkey: Friend or Foe? *Stanley and Arlene Ginsburg Lecture Series Featuring Michael A. Reynolds*, December 4, 2012.

The Muslim Brotherhood, the Salafists and the Future of Egypt, *Stanley and Arlene Ginsburg Lecture Series, Templeton Lecture on Religion and World Affairs Featuring Eric Trager*, November 20, 2012.

“It is interesting but not entirely surprising that the upheavals of the “Arab Spring” began in two such military-bureaucratic states—Tunisia and Egypt. As the upheavals proceeded to roil other Arab states, the social basis of conflict took on very different characteristics. They did so in Libya, where tribal/regional divisions are acute; in Syria, which is heterogeneous along sectarian and to some extent ethno-linguistic lines; in Iraq, which is similarly heterogeneous but which also suffered a highly disorienting external convulsion in advance of the “Arab Spring”; in Bahrain, whose heterogeneity is starkly sectarian and only very modestly ethno-linguistic; and in Yemen, whose social complications simply defy brief summary.”

– **Adam Garfinkle** on the Arab Uprisings of 2011



FACT SHEET

ABOUT FPRI

The Foreign Policy Research Institute is dedicated to bringing the insights of scholarship to bear on the foreign policy and national security challenges facing the United States. It seeks to educate the public, teach teachers, train students, and offer ideas to advance U.S. national interests based on a nonpartisan, geopolitical perspective that illuminates contemporary international affairs through the lens of history, geography, and culture.

INFORMING

Informing the American Public – When FPRI founder Robert Strausz-Hupé penned his classic book *Protracted Conflict* in the 1950s, he envisaged the Cold War as taking place over several decades and was concerned that a democratic polity would not have the wherewithal to stick it out for the long haul unless it understood the nature of the conflict. Hence, from its inception, FPRI has placed a premium on educating the American people because, without an educated citizenry, the US would not be able to conduct a coherent foreign policy.

VETTING

Where Great Minds Meet – FPRI is fortunate to be located in the vicinity of over 60 institutions of higher learning, and we are happy to be the neutral meeting place for some of the finest minds in the country – from UPenn, Princeton, Haverford, Swarthmore, Temple, and Rutgers, among others. But we are not limited to our vicinity, as we maintain relationships with scholars and think tanks throughout the nation and the world.

MENTORING

Teaching the Teachers – Alone among think tanks, FPRI offers professional development for high school teachers through its [History Institutes](#), a series of intensive, weekend-long conferences on selected topics in US and world history, and international relations.

Training the Next Generation - At FPRI, we are proud to have played a role in providing students – whether in high school, college, or graduate school – with a start in the fields of international relations, policy analysis, and public service. Summer interns – and interns throughout the year - gain experience in research, editing, writing, public speaking, and critical thinking.

Foreign Policy Research Institute

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