

Al Urdun Al Jadid
Research Center (UJRC)

“U.S. Democracy Strategy: An American-Jordanian Dialogue”

April 19-21, 2007
Amman, Jordan

Conference Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 19-21, 2007, 42 young Americans and Jordanians (ages 18-28) gathered to examine U.S. democratization initiatives in Jordan and to develop strategies of how to more effectively enable Jordanians to work for democratic change. Over these three days, the participants discussed U.S. democratization strategy with 18 American, Jordanian and European experts, as well as with their peers in small group discussions. Among themselves, the participants developed 42 draft policy recommendations for the U.S. and Jordanian governments, of which they ultimately ratified 26.

The conference provided an open forum for the American and Jordanian participants to directly engage each other about U.S. democracy strategy and about Jordanians’ hopes and ambitions for political reform in the Kingdom. Conference workshops also trained participants on how to hold follow-up events on their own campuses and in their own communities to discuss what they had learned. But perhaps most importantly, by developing policy recommendations in small groups and then debating, amending and ratifying those recommendations in general session, the participants used democratic processes to arrive at specific and concrete outcomes: policy recommendations that they can use as a foundation for future events on their campuses and in their communities.

The conference was co-sponsored by Americans for Informed Democracy (AID), the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED), and Jordanian partner al-Urdun al-Jadid (New Jordan) Research Center (UJRC). It was planned, organized and conducted by a joint American-Jordanian conference planning committee consisting of four American Fulbright fellows and two young Jordanian leaders. The conference was patterned upon AID’s successful “Bringing the World Home” conference model.



Conference participants with Prince Hassan.

PARTICIPANTS

Of the 42 official conference participants, 18 were Jordanians and 24 were Americans between the ages of 18-28.

American participants included students at Oklahoma State University, the University of Missouri-Columbia, and Ohio University; recent graduates of Duke University, Emory University, Tufts University, the University of Alabama, and Villanova University; a social studies teacher at Edward R. Murrow High School in Brooklyn, New York; and Fulbright fellows conducting research in Israel, Jordan, Syria, and the United Arab Emirates. The American participants traveled at their own expense from Slovenia, Brussels, Spain, the United Arab Emirates, Cairo, Damascus, and Jerusalem (among other places) to attend the conference. The American participants included 11 women and 13 men.

Jordanian participants included current students at Jordan University, Amman University, and Al al-Beit University, as well as employees of the Aqaba Development Corporation, a lawyer with International Business Legal Associates, a youth relations officer for the Fastlink cellular phone company, an employee of the al-Salt municipality, an employee of the Earth Association for International Development, an international affairs researcher in Queen Rania's office, and a Jordanian Fulbright fellow who will be conducting his research in the U.S. in 2007-2008. The Jordanian participants included 11 women and 7 men.



Participants discussing a recently completed panel during a coffee break.

Participants each paid a registration fee of JD 35 (\$50) to attend the conference and they all covered their own transportation costs. The registration fee included three meals each day, two nights of lodging, and simultaneous Arabic-English and English-Arabic translation.

OPENING REMARKS

Jordanian member of the conference organizing committee Sami Hourani welcomed the speakers, participants and guests, and he described the conference's goals and objectives. He was followed by Dr. May al-Taher, of the al-Urdun al-Jadid ("New Jordan") Research Center, who discussed the importance of dialogue between young Americans and Jordanians in the current climate of skepticism regarding the sincerity of American claims to support democracy.

The conference's opening keynote address was given by His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal. In his remarks, Prince Hassan focused on the universality of democracy as well as the importance of civil society. In front of the participants as well as several other distinguished guests including former

United Nations Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Prince Hassan stated, “Democracy cannot exist without civil society. Civil society cannot exist without a population that has the will and capacity to act in defense of its values and institutions. We need to create a society of stakeholders....We must create the institutions and structures needed to transform the values of democracy into processes.”



Prince Hassan speaks with former United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali before delivering his opening remarks.

Prince Hassan also emphasized the need for international cooperation in dealing with many of the world’s common problems, such as curing the AIDS crisis, and the need for public freedoms to be guaranteed throughout the Middle East. Prince Hassan spent time with the participants afterwards for informal discussions and photo opportunities, and he later invited a group of the participants and the organizers for a private meeting on Sunday, April 22.

PANEL ONE: MEASURING DEMOCRACY

The first panel discussion, on “Measuring Democracy,” featured:

- Mohammad Arslan, Member of Parliament, Zarqa
- Muna Darwish, Consultant, Arab Civic Education Network (Arab Civitas)
- Mara Galaty, Democracy Officer, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)
- Ali Bibi, Director of Planning and Initiatives and Director of the Office of the Minister, Ministry of Political Development
- Her Excellency Laila Sharaf, member of the Upper House of Parliament

Muna Darwish described some of the programs run by the Arab Civic Education Network (Arab Civitas), and some of the obstacles and questions they face operating U.S.-designed programs in a Middle Eastern context. Arab Civitas includes programs to foster citizen involvement in politics and to boost citizens’ capacity for change. Darwish described Civitas’s partnership with the overall Civitas organization based in California, and she admitted that there is some apprehension and caution about how the U.S.-designed Civitas programs are translated into Arabic and how they will work in Jordan.

Mara Galaty described four “pillars of democracy”: participation, accountability, transparency, and peaceful change. Several of the participants’ small groups adopted her framework and pillars as the foundation for their analysis of how political reform should be evaluated. She described USAID’s programs, which will invest \$70 million over the next five years into reform-related efforts in Jordan, including legal education, electronic voting systems, mediation and computer programs. USAID has only been working on democracy in Jordan since 2004, Galaty said, and the Jordanian government has been moving quickly on reform so it is difficult to do more.

Ali Bibi, the Director of Planning and Initiatives in Jordan's Ministry of Political Development, described the government's efforts to develop a homegrown version of democracy. He described the government's initiative to create a "Freedom Square," a physical space where freedom of speech and expression would be guaranteed.

Mohammad Arslan, a member of parliament from Zarqa, noted that definitions of freedom differ from region to region. Most Western politicians do not understand the overlapping issues that exist in Jordan, he said, of which the Palestinian cause is the basic issue.

Senator **Laila Sharaf** described American successes in promoting democracy in the Middle East, such as a changed international discourse, increased rights of women, more open sources of information, and socioeconomic development; and she also discussed shortcomings and failures of U.S. programs, including an American focus almost exclusively on elections, allowing countries to fake democracy; American inconsistency in claiming to support democracy yet refusing to engage a Hamas government; and American human rights abuses in Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib.



Members of the "Measuring Democracy" panel, from left: Laila Sharaf, Ali Bibi, Mohammad Arslan.

PANEL TWO: ENGAGING POLITICAL ISLAM

The second panel, on "Engaging Political Islam," featured remarks from:

- Marwan al-Fa'ouri, President of the Centrist Forum for Thought and Culture
- Ahmed Shannaq, Secretary-General, National Constitutional Party
- Mohamed Masalha, Fmr. Chair of the Department of Political Science, University of Jordan; President, Jordan Environmental Society; President, Damia Center for Parliamentary Studies (moderator)

Ahmed Shannaq, the Secretary-General of the National Constitutional Party, stressed that people must differentiate between Islamic groups that are participatory and others that divide the world into belief and unbelief. Islamic groups that participate in elections by definition believe in the state, as elections are a modern state function, he said.

Shannaq noted that some regimes resist political Islam by making it appear as though they are fighting terrorism. The U.S. must open a dialogue with Islamic groups open to multiplicity and participation, so it can be clear that moderate Islam is far different from extremism. He added that the Palestinian cause will remain a fuel for extremism, and that the term Islamo-fascism carries the idea that Islam itself is the enemy of democracy. Ruling regimes must accept political Islam and stop monopolizing power and exiling these groups.

Marwan al-Fa'ouri said that the salvation of the Middle East lies in democracy and political reform. Democracy is a principle of Islam, the *shura* principle, and democracy in the region must reflect

Islamic principles. He added that most Islamic countries cannot elect their leaders currently, and the U.S. creates animosity by supporting these leaders and opposing moderate movements. American policies like these are examples of America's arrogance and extremism. On the other hand Islamic extremism, he said, gives the U.S. a pretext to occupy the Middle East.

Moderator **Mohamed Masalha** of the University of Jordan commented on the panelists' remarks, noting the importance of political reform in the Jordanian context and the ways that it can be best pursued.

Zaki Bani-Irshaid, the Secretary-General of the Islamic Action Front (IAF), had confirmed that he would attend the panel, but cancelled two hours ahead of it. He offered to send IAF parliamentary deputy Ja'far al-Hourani to speak instead. The conference organizing committee declined the offer because Ja'far al-Hourani was one of the IAF parliamentarians who chose to attend the funeral of terrorist Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. We support the freedom of expression and we seek to engage a wide range of voices, but the organizing committee was not comfortable hosting a figure who made that political choice.



The "Engaging Political Islam" panel, from left: Ahmed Shannaq, Mohamed Masalha, Marwan al-Fa'ouri.

PANEL THREE: WOMEN'S DEMOCRATIC PARTICIPATION

Participants praised the third panel as one of the highlights of the conference thus far. The panel included a diverse range of voices on women's democratic participation, including:

- Ibtesam Al-Atiyat, Program Officer, United Nations University International Leadership Institute
- Roula Attar, Resident Country Director for Jordan, National Democratic Institute
- Arwa Kaylani, President of the Women's Branch and member of the Shura Council, Islamic Action Front
- Her Excellency Asma Khader, Secretary-General, Jordanian National Commission for Women

Roula Attar gave a detailed presentation about the National Democratic Institute's programs in Jordan, stressing the goal of encouraging women's campaigning in Jordan. She began by giving a brief overview of the history of Jordanian women's involvement in politics, from 1955 when women gained the right to vote, to 2003, which she described as a breakout year in which six women were elected to Jordan's parliament through a quota. Attar said Jordanian women continue to be marginalized in the political arena today, noting that only one of Jordan's 27 ministers is a woman, seven senators out of 55 are women, and only 1% of the parliamentary candidates in the last elections were women. She described three challenges that men and women political candidates share in Jordan – influence of tribalism, the weak role of political parties, and limited access to the media – alongside three additional challenges that women's candidates specifically face, including society's prejudice

against women, public prejudice against women's political empowerment, and women's weak economic status and lack of resources.

Attar said that the upcoming 2007 elections in Jordan are an important and unique opportunity to empower women in politics. She described NDI's programs in this field, including a women parliamentary candidates' training program, a network of activists entitled "Women Helping Women," and a media program that seeks to empower women candidates. She described the programs' long-term goal as a situation in which it is unremarkable that women candidates would run for office and occupy political positions, where society would view women candidates as any other candidate, and opportunities for success would be equally available to both men and women.

Asma Khader suggested that some of the groups most interested in democratic reform are those who are excluded by the current system. The electoral system may also be to blame for the low number of women in parliament, she said, because under the current system voters is more likely to use their single vote for a male candidate, whereas in a system where voters have as many votes as seats in their district, women would have a better chance to pick up votes. In promoting democracy in the Middle East, Khader suggested, the U.S. must not act as if it owns democracy, or promotes it by tanks and bombs; the U.S. must instead be credible, avoid a culture of superiority, and respect people's right to self-determination.

Ibtisam al-Atiyat described several of the advancements women have made in Jordanian politics, especially in the realm of civil society. She noted that women's organizations have increased in size, and women have been appointed to judgeships in civil courts (but not yet in *shari'a* courts). Al-Atiyat also mentioned that some women in Egypt and Malaysia are attempting to reinterpret women's issues in the context of Islam, which is known as "Islamic feminism."

Arwa Kaylani of the Islamic Action Front (IAF) strongly supported women taking a more active role in politics and in their party governance, quoting the Qur'anic verse that God will change nothing if people do not change themselves. She described the IAF's Islamist framework, saying that authority (*al-sulta*) is to the people, while governance (*al-hakimiyya*) is for God. There are certain rules that cannot be changed or eliminated, she said – for instance, adultery cannot be allowed. But within this framework, she said, people should choose their own political representatives.

Kaylani described her efforts to foster greater women's political participation in the Islamic Action Front. She described many women who were willing to vote for the IAF, but not to become a member of it. Though women took part in establishing the IAF, she said, the number of women members does not exceed 10% of the members – though she said she feels optimistic because 70% of the IAF's voters are women.

She called for freedom and fairness in the electoral law, citing the involvement of the security services and bribery as negative aspects of the current situation. She mentioned the IAF's calls for elections to be overseen by an independent election commission, rather than the Interior Ministry, and for political parties to be supervised by the Ministry of Political Development, rather than by the Interior Ministry. Kaylani also criticized the current women's quota as a system with a flawed implementation, and recommended proportional representation instead.

PANEL FOUR: REGIONAL IMPACTS ON REFORM

The fourth panel included

- Mohamed Abu Rumman, Columnist, *Al-Ghad*
- Paul McCarthy, Resident Country Director for Jordan, International Republican Institute
- Gregor Meiering, Middle East and North Africa Coordinator, Open Society Institute
- Sabri Sumaira, former Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Jordan

Mohamed Abu Rumman argued that there is no American strategy to pursue democracy in the Middle East. The situation in Iraq, he said, has provided a perfect pretext for authoritarian Arab regimes to avoid moving toward democracy. Compared to the chaos in Iraq, he argued, current regimes look more legitimate to their people than they might otherwise. It helps that the alternatives to the current regimes are Islamists, which the U.S. is not eager to see empowered. Considering the various current crises, Abu Rumman said, the U.S. needs Arab friends and is finding it necessary to renew its authoritarian bargains with current governments – signaling the death of the reform process.

Paul McCarthy of the International Republican Institute presented an extended Powerpoint presentation on the International Republican Institute’s most recent polling results. McCarthy argued that although Jordanians are very concerned about regional developments, what is uppermost in most citizens’ minds are actually internal issues. He cited as evidence poll results showing that when asked an open-ended question about the “most important problem facing Jordan today,” almost all of the participants have consistently answered in economic terms: inflation, unemployment, and poverty. But when asked an open-ended question about what the most important “political problem” faces the Jordanian government today, almost 60% of the respondents say there are no political problems or that they do not know. About 12.5% mentioned the Palestinian problem as the largest problem, the largest group that chose a specific category.

Among other issues, McCarthy noted that more than half of Jordanians believe that the freedom to criticize the government’s decisions is not guaranteed, that 75% of Jordanians do not believe that terrorist attacks should be a reason to slow down political reform efforts, and that most Jordanians prefer using the current electoral law over any other alternatives. In terms of the upcoming election, he noted that more than 70% of Jordanians said they would not vote for a political party candidate, but that among those who would, over half planned to vote for the Islamic Action Front.

Sabri Sumaira argued that true democratization and reform is the solution to the many internal and external problems that the Middle East faces, but that simultaneously many of these challenges make it difficult for reform to take place. It is in everyone’s interest, he said, – America’s interest, Middle Easterners’ interest, the ruling regimes’ interest, and Israel’s interest – for reform to happen, because leaders accountable to the people are less likely to lead their people into war. He argued that this process is already happening to Hamas, causing it to moderate its behavior.

Sumaira argued that U.S. policy toward the Middle East is characterized by inconsistency and double standards. The U.S. says it cares about the Middle East’s people, Samirah said, but the U.S. support the regimes by giving them money, information, intelligence, training, etc. America is siding with the totalitarian regimes against the people, he concluded. In order for America to protect its interests in

the region, including protecting its allies, open markets, and the flow of oil, the U.S. must focus on achieving true stability in the region, which cannot be present in the absence of democracy and justice.

Gregor Meiering said that though there was a U.S. democracy strategy at one point, it has been replaced by a policy focused on results. Now, he said, the U.S. will not foster reform-oriented processes if it believes it cannot achieve certain results.

Meiering noted that instability, rather than stability, has often been associated with reform impulses in the region. He cited the example of the late 1980s in Jordan as a political opening sparked by instability but rapidly closed once it appeared to jeopardize King Hussein's plans for peace with Israel. He noted that stability in Saudi Arabia and Tunisia has brought little or no reform, whereas a nation like India, beset with security threats and instability, has succeeded as a functioning democracy.

Meiering said that, as rentier states, most of the countries of the region are more closely tied to petroleum or gas companies, or to other governments that provide military or financial aid, than they are to their own people. Since the population's views do not really matter to the governments, Meiering argued, the people have a very limited opportunity to impact public policy. In Jordan, he said, the process goes one step further – though Jordan does have a more liberal economy than others in the region, the aim of its liberalization programs is to maintain the status quo, rather than to foster genuine reform that might endanger the government's position. He pointed to Jordan's qualifying industrial zones as an example of economic "reform" that is boosting economic statistics beautifully through rising exports to the U.S., but since the QIZs use mostly foreign capital and foreign labor, they have little positive impact for Jordanians.

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS

After each panel discussion, the participants broke down into six groups of approximately seven people each to discuss the panelists' remarks and to develop draft policy recommendations.

The groups each elected two reporters, one Jordanian and one American, to facilitate the discussion and to record the draft recommendations. The reporters then met as a group each evening with the conference organizing committee to review the day's discussions. The reporters played a key role in developing and refining the procedures by which conference recommendations were ultimately approved, including deciding upon a secret ballot as the method of voting, and deciding that to be adopted, a recommendation must be approved by a majority of Americans and by a majority of Jordanians.



Members of Group III discuss the panelists' remarks.

The small groups' in-depth discussions and innovative recommendations were inspiring. Because the small groups were not only debating the issues but were tasked with crafting specific and actionable recommendations, the small group discussions were focused and productive. 93% of the participants

rated the small group discussions between “good” and “excellent” on the conference evaluation. One participant wrote that “We had very interesting discussions that forced me to pick my brain and ask myself tough questions.” Several participants said that they wished more time had been available for the group discussions.

Each group crafted multiple policy recommendations, for a total of 42 draft recommendations overall. Some of the groups, purely on their own initiative, drafted detailed rationales for their recommendations and detailed strategies for implementing them. For example, Group IV designed an action plan with objectives, projects, deliverables and a timeline for each of its recommendations on women’s democratic participation and the regional impacts on reform.

Several panelists generously stayed after their panel had finished and joined the participants in the group discussions, including Mara Galaty of USAID, Roula Attar of the National Democratic Institute, Arwa Kaylani of the Islamic Action Front, Sabri Samirah formerly of the University of Jordan, and Gregor Meiering of the Open Society Institute. Christopher Henzel of the U.S. Embassy arrived early and ate lunch with the participants before he delivered his closing remarks.

CONFERENCE RECOMMENDATIONS

On the final day of the conference, the participants assembled in open session at 10 a.m. to debate, amend and ratify the recommendations. The 42 draft recommendations were presented, one by one, on an overhead screen. After one speaker in favor of the recommendation and one speaker against, the floor was opened for amendments. Due to time constraints, there was a limit of 2 proposed amendments per recommendation. After the debate on amendments had finished, the participants listened to a last speaker in favor of the recommendation, and a last speaker opposed. The participants then voted by secret ballot on each recommendation.

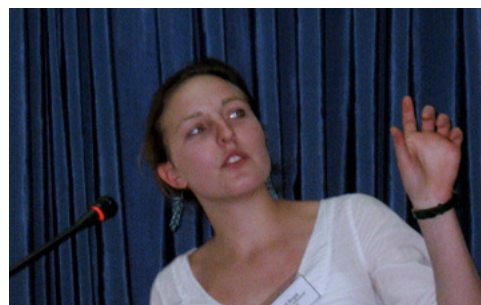


Members of Group II formulate policy recommendations.

The conference was scheduled to close at 3 p.m., but due to the large volume of recommendations and their desire to fully debate the issues, the participants elected to stay later. There was some discussion of eliminating amendments to the recommendations in order to save time, but one Jordanian participant swayed the group to continue allowing amendments, saying “This is the future of my country, and I’ll stay here as long as it takes.” The same participant’s parents dropped by later to drive her home to Aqaba, 4 hours south of Amman; she insisted on staying in Amman an extra day in order to finish the voting. The last vote was taken at 6 p.m. The ballots were counted that evening, and 26 recommendations were approved.

The approved recommendations call upon Jordan to clarify and apply consistently its laws regarding freedom of speech and assembly, remove or diminish limits on the number of people who can meet to discuss politics without a permit, create a culture of participatory democracy in its schools, and avoid

penalizing university students for their political affiliations. The recommendations call upon the U.S. to avoid stigmatizing Islamists in official American rhetoric, to consider the ways in which its policy toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict hinders democratization, and to invest in initiatives that train women in campaign strategy, fundraising, and media relations. A full list of the approved recommendations is attached as an appendix to this report.



Laurel Rapp of Americans for Informed Democracy conducts a workshop.

CONFERENCE WORKSHOPS

Laurel Rapp from Americans for Informed Democracy gave two skills workshops for the participants. These workshops were based on AID materials from the “Bringing the World Home” model, telling young Americans how to bring back the knowledge they have learned about the world to their home campuses or communities.

The first workshop, “Talking About Global Issues with Your Peers,” reviewed the best strategies for talking about global issues with non-expert audiences, using the approach of the highly acclaimed *U.S. in the World* guide. This workshop enabled participants to analyze and speak about global issues more effectively with friends, family, and the broader public. Supplemental material was provided to facilitate the conception and execution of events.

The second workshop was entitled “Organizing an International Discussion.” This workshop prepared participants with the tools to organize an international discussion between their community and the Middle East. The workshop focused on strategies to identify a community’s relationship to global issues and directed the participants to detailed methods of carrying out the discussion (i.e. a comprehensive videoconferencing toolkit).

CLOSING REMARKS

Christopher Henzel, the political attaché at the U.S. Embassy, delivered the conference’s closing keynote address. Henzel said that democratization is in America’s national interest, and that though the U.S. was still perfecting its own democracy, it is dedicated to supporting democracy in the Middle East. The U.S. does not seek to promote democracy unilaterally, Henzel said, and the U.S. does not seek to replicate its own model of democracy in the region. The U.S. role is limited to encouragement and support, Henzel stressed, and he mentioned that there are important constituencies for democracy outside of governments. Henzel praised the Jordanian government’s strong commitment to broaden civic participation.



U.S. Embassy Counselor for Political Affairs Christopher Henzel talks with two participants over lunch.

IMPLEMENTATION AND FOLLOWUP

Following the conference, His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal asked for a follow-up meeting with the conference participants. The conference reporters and the organizers met with Prince Hassan on Sunday, April 22 for about two hours at the Royal Scientific Society and presented him with a copy of the recently finalized recommendations. Prince Hassan gave his thoughts on several of the recommendations, his suggestions of organizations and initiatives that share our mission and vision, and his advice on how to follow up and implement the recommendations. He then took several questions from the conference reporters, one of them a courageous question from an American Fulbright fellow asking how young Jordanians could be politically active and engaged considering the suffocating fear of Jordan's security services.

The conference recommendations have been sent to officials in both the American and the Jordanian governments, as well as to all of the speakers at the conference. An e-mail list-serve and internet group have been launched for the participants to continue to discuss U.S. democracy strategy-related issues as they arise over the next year. Americans for Informed Democracy is available to assist any of the participants who desire to hold follow-up events to discuss and publicize the recommendations on their own campuses or in their own communities in the coming year.

PRESS COVERAGE

The conference was covered in all of Jordan's daily newspapers on Friday, April 20, including:

- *The Jordan Times*: http://www.mfa.gov.jo/events_details.php?id=18179
- *Al-Dustour*: http://www.addustour.com/PDF_Daily/2007_4/4_15430_1_2.pdf (bottom left)
- *Al-Ghad*: <http://www.alghad.jo/?news=168295>
- *Al-Rai*: http://www.alrai.com/pages.php?news_id=152904
- *Al-Arab al-Yawm*

A follow-up article about the conference, including quotes from organizers Sami Hourani and Ariella Viehe and participants Kathleen Keiser, Lina Ejeilat, Andrew Goodhart, and Matthew MacLean, was published in *Al-Dustour* newspaper on Saturday, April 28:

- http://www.addustour.com/PDF_Daily/2007_4/4_15438_1_20.pdf (bottom)

The conference received international coverage through Radio Sawa. Amman-based correspondent Mahmoud Zawawi broadcast two news bulletins, the first of which included remarks by Mohammad Arslan, and the second with remarks by Mara Galaty.

Amman-based Luxury magazine will include an article about the conference in its May issue. The conference was also covered by Petra, Jordan's official news agency.



An article describing the conference's first day, in the Jordanian daily newspaper *al-Dustour*.

CONFERENCE PLANNING COMMITTEE

Mehdi Kanan Alhassani is a Program Coordinator for the Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED). He is currently a Fulbright Fellow in Amman, Jordan researching the social and economic repercussions of the Iraqi migration on Jordan. He has also served as a Citizen Ambassador representing the U.S. State Department in a series of dialogues with government officials and civil society leaders in Germany, Holland and Denmark focusing on Muslim integration issues in Western societies. Alhassani has interned in the White House, the State Department, and the Department of Labor. At the White House, Alhassani researched and prepared talking points on key political issues for Deputy Senior Advisor to the President Barry Jackson. Alhassani graduated Magna Cum Laude from the Honors Program at the Elliott School of International Affairs, George Washington University with a degree in International Affairs. He speaks Arabic and is conversational in French.

Bashar al-Baghdadi is a computer information systems major at al-Zeituna University. He was a participant in Jordan's "Kolna al-Urdun" conference and he volunteers with a variety of other organizations, including the Konrad Adenauer Foundation, the King Abdullah Fund for Development, the al-Haya Culture Center, and Partners for Democratic Change. He represented Jordan at Model United Nations in 2007.

David M. DeBartolo is Chair of the Project on Middle East Democracy. As a Fulbright Fellow for 2006-7 in Jordan, he is conducting research on political reform and the rule of law. DeBartolo is a joint J.D. / M.A. in Arab Studies candidate at Georgetown University, where in 2005 he received the Oxtoby Prize. After graduating in 2003 from Harvard University, where he was editorial chair of *The Harvard Crimson*, DeBartolo worked on Palestinian political party development in East Jerusalem and Ramallah for the National Democratic Institute. He also worked for Amideast, teaching English to Palestinian scholarship recipients, as well as for Dr. Marwan Awartani of Birzeit University. In 2002, he attended the Anti-Defamation League's Finkelstein Memorial Study Mission to Israel for college journalists, and he later spoke at the ADL's national convention. As a recipient of a Weissman grant, DeBartolo also worked for Fraser Kemp MP in the British Parliament.

Sami H. Hourani is a third-year medical student at the University of Jordan. He was a participant in Jordan's "Kolna al-Urdun" conference and the "Kolna al-Urdun" youth conference. He won first prize in web design in a pan Arab world competition in 2004, for an English/Arabic website that facilitates tourism to the Arab world. Hourani is the designer and instructor for a youth leadership course on politics, sociology and leadership entitled "Leadership and Life," supported by the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative. He attended the Institute on American Studies and Leadership at Purdue University in summer 2004, and he represented Jordan for the first time at the Harvard World Model United Nations in 2007.

Ali S. Ishaq is a 2006-7 Fulbright Fellow to Jordan, where he is conducting research on the Islamic concept of *ijtihad* and democratization. He volunteers at the Mizan – Law Group for Human Rights, where he teaches grant-writing and English classes. Prior to this Fulbright Fellowship, Ishaq spent two years working as a banker and then a financial analyst for Wells Fargo where he received the Service Star Award (2006) for his community involvement and work on diversity issues. Ishaq graduated in 2004 with a B.A. in International Relations from Boise State University, where he was Student Body President (2004). He is a recipient of the Hewlett Packard Leadership and Diversity in Human Rights

Award and Scholarship (2004) and the United Vision of Idaho Youth Activist of the Year award (2004).

Ariella Viehe is a Fulbright Fellow in Amman, Jordan investigating the role of the Jordanian media in coverage of the Iraq War. Prior to the Fulbright grant, Viehe was a consultant with BearingPoint, Inc. at the U.S. Department of State, serving at the Iraq desk and at U.S. Embassy Baghdad. In this capacity she was the lead on economic initiatives for the Maliki government and coordinator for the foreign assistance budget. Before joining BearingPoint, Ms. Viehe worked at IDS International as a consultant on U.S. defense issues for the U.S. Army and several defense contracting firms. Viehe is a magna cum laude graduate of the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University, where she served for three years on the planning board of the North American Invitation Model United Nations Conference as well as conference coordinator for the Students for Middle East Peace.

SPONSORING ORGANIZATIONS, THANKS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Americans for Informed Democracy (AID) is a non-partisan 501(c)(3) organization that brings the world home through programming on more than 500 U.S. university campuses and in more than 10 countries. AID fulfills its mission by coordinating town hall meetings on America's role in the world, hosting leadership retreats, and publishing opinion pieces and reports on issues of global importance. Through these efforts, AID seeks to build a new generation of globally conscious leaders who can shape an American foreign policy appropriate for our increasingly interdependent world.

AID is supported by the CarEth Foundation, Connect US Fund, DarMac Foundation, Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation, Ford Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, MacArthur Foundation, Open Society Institute, Planethood Foundation, Ploughshares Fund, Rockefeller Brothers Fund, Stanley Foundation, United Nations Foundation and its many participating universities.

The conference will follow AID's successful "Bringing the World Home" conferences in Europe in 2004-2006. Americans for Informed Democracy has a strong track record of working with students who travel abroad to help raise global awareness and understanding after they return to their home communities. AID is a pioneer in what it calls "reverse public diplomacy" – using the knowledge and passion of young students who have been abroad to raise awareness in their home communities of other cultures and political and economic systems. AID has conducted successful events on this scale in the past. AID held "Bringing the World Home" conferences over a six-week period in spring 2005 in Berlin, London, Oxford, Madrid, Prague and Barcelona, bringing together hundreds of participants to discuss America's role in the world. Already in 2006, AID has held similar conferences in London, Berlin, and Madrid.

The Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization dedicated to examining the impact of American policy on political reform and democratization in the Middle East. Through dialogue, policy analysis, and advocacy, we hope to promote understanding of how genuine, authentic democracies can develop in the Middle East and how the U.S. can best support that process.

POMED has organized and sponsored seven panel discussions in Washington, D.C. since spring 2005 on America's impact on Middle East political reform.

Al-Urdun Al-Jadid (“New Jordan”) Research Center (UJRC) is an independent non-governmental organization working for sustainable development in Jordan and the Arab World through developing scientific research, administering discussions and dialogues, organizing conferences and workshops, and exchanging expertise and experience with other regional and international organizations.

UJRC pursues its objectives through forums for dialogue and discussion, especially on issues of democratic development, and by developing general policies and legislations, through workshops, brainstorming sessions, conferences, and seminars. The Center also publishes the proceedings of these activities, including research papers sponsored or prepared by the Center, in a wide-ranging series of publications.

The conference organizing committee gives special thanks to Americans for Informed Democracy for its financial support of the conference; to Alain McNamara and the Binational Fulbright Commission in Jordan for their advice and logistical assistance; to Dr. Reem Sartawy and her staff for their skilled translation; to Hani Hourani, Hussein Abu Rumman and May al-Taher at UJRC for their assistance; to the Amman House for Youth (Beit Shabab Amman) for an excellent venue and for facilitating logistical issues; to Dr. Sabri Sumaira for his advice in conceptualizing the conference; and to Dr. Mohamed Masalha and the Damia Parliamentary Studies Center for his assistance in planning the conference.