



## THE FUTURE OF EGYPT

\*A Panel Discussion

On April 6, 2006, the U.S. Department of State's International Information Programs in Washington D.C., the Public Affairs Office at the U.S. Embassy in Israel, and the Global Research in International Affairs (GLORIA) Center jointly held an international videoconference seminar focusing on the current political and economic state of Egypt, the regime and opposition, and Egyptian foreign policy.

Brief biographies of the participants can be found at the end of the article. This seminar is part of the GLORIA Center's Experts Forum series

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**Ambassador Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** The two elections which have taken place in Egypt over the last year—one for the president and one for parliament—do not have a significant short-term impact but it may be a longer term impact. The most striking element of the election was the victory of many candidates associated with the Muslim Brotherhood. I am quite sure that the government knew that a number of the Brotherhood's candidates would succeed. I think maybe they underestimated the strength of the party and may have been very concerned about the number elected, but it works to the advantage of President Hosni Mubarak to show to his constituencies and to the United States that the alternative might not be so attractive if he is out of power. I think that there was a certain amount of complicity in allowing the Muslim Brotherhood to campaign so visibly and identify itself as a group running candidates.

The results did not lead to a revolution. Absolutely critical here is the fact that there is such a large base of constituents for Mubarak and for the status quo that will resist

change. There isn't a strong constituency for reform or democratic reform. For example, the entire military and security structure could easily lose its privileges, its special treatment, its informal retirement benefits, and so on with a genuine democratic government and political reform.

There is also a huge bureaucracy which does not want to see major changes. In fact, they are happy to go along as they have been for the last 25 or 30 years. They are deeply concerned that a major change in structure would eliminate their jobs because there is so much duplication in jobs, so much inefficiency, and that means a genuinely efficient, effective government might well limit the bureaucracy and they would lose out. There are also many workers for state companies who would feel that change threatens them. I think the vast majority of people, particularly the ones that the government can round up to go to the polls, still will resist any significant democratic change in that country, and I think we're going to see a continuation of the status quo for some time to come.

Working against this situation are some of the reforms that have been put in place. The constitutional reform gave those who favored change some incentive to go forward, though it's a little hard to see at this point how much incentive or impact that will have in the longer run. The mere fact that you take away the idea that the president automatically gets elected or reelected, that is a significant cultural change, and that may have long term implications. I think that if you put the president up to a completely free vote today, he would win, but what they cannot tell is how fast and how far the Muslim Brotherhood will be able to increase its power. It has a base that no other group has since there are no real political parties in Egypt, at least in the Western sense. The Muslim Brotherhood is the closest to a party. It has developed over many years through the development of social services for the people, through the mosques, and other means. It will continue to grow and to take a more aggressive stand in joining in the political structure. In the longer term that may even be a force for democratization. It may not be the threat that certainly the Egyptian government would like us to believe today and that many people in Egypt believe, particularly in the economic structure there.

On the economic side of things, Egypt is doing very well. The new government in recent years has done an excellent job in trying to make Egypt more business- and investor-friendly. Egypt is benefiting from the general rise in the economies in the region based on the high price of oil. I would expect that the picture in Egypt will be increasingly positive through the economy and that may also have an impact in the longer term on the question of democracy and its development.

**Arie Gus:** Egypt still faces terrible and enormous social and economic problems—illiteracy (female illiteracy is about 46.9 percent), standard of living, etc. But the main point is that Egypt doesn't face any outside threats now, and this is a main factor in Egyptian politics. It doesn't prevent Egypt from rearming and creating a very strong army, sometimes it causes alarm and suspicions in Israel, but Egypt perceives itself as not facing attack by any other state in the region and not seeking to attack anyone else either.

On the election results, I agree with Ambassador Walker. The overall result was expected, but the Muslim Brotherhood did better than expected, obtaining 70 members of parliament compared to only 17 before. It is reasonable to think President Mubarak wanted the Muslim Brotherhood to succeed in these elections, but not to that extent. He wanted to show the Americans that it is either my rule, my way of ruling Egypt, or a wave of Islamist radicalism and anti-American rule in Egypt.

Egypt's main issue in the near future is not democracy but a question of succession. President Mubarak is 78 years and is ill. But is his son, Gamal Mubarak, going to succeed him? Will he be able to rule Egypt? Will he be able to keep the rise in the standard of living? Those are questions that we should think about.

I said that Egypt doesn't face any threats. I include here the Muslim Brotherhood. The government in Egypt crushed the Islamic Jihad and the Islamic group. They are not any threat at present. Of course, there might be a personal assassination, like President Sadat, but Egypt has proven to be very stable in two transitions: one after President Nasser and one after President Sadat. For the longer run, I think that Egypt will maintain its stability.

If Gamal Mubarak will come into power he would receive the help and support of other politicians in Egypt who are also afraid of instability.

**Ayellet Yehiav:** In my opinion, the real problem of Egypt right now is the fact that there are growing gaps in all the situations we have been discussing. In the political arena this means the gap between the lack of government reforms after the elections and growing support for the reformers. In the economy there is a huge and growing gap between the haves and the have-nots, which is easy to see in Cairo. Even if the government cannot find a solution it needs to ease the pains as much as it can.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** Another thing worth discussing is the status of education, illiteracy, and so on. The fact that the population has been educated in a system largely designed to enhance authority is a powerful factor reinforcing the status quo. In its tendency on repetition the system is designed to teach young people how not necessarily to think for themselves. This is really a system that helps keep a person like Mubarak in power. So, I agree with the problem areas you cite but I still think that the majority of the people are not really constituents for change at this point, they may become so in the future.

**Arie Gus:** Of course, because the rate of participation in the elections was only 35 percent officially speaking—they say that the unofficial number was about 20 percent—

that doesn't prove there is a big interest in politics.

**Amy Hawthorne:** I spent last autumn living in Egypt and interacting with all different kinds of Egyptians and discussing how they feel about the future of their country. First, it is true that the current economic team has done a very good job on the macro level and that certain people are benefiting very much from these policies, but there is definitely, as Ayellet said, a growing sense of a widening gap between haves and have-nots, and most notably, I would say, between what we might call in Egypt the middle-class and the upper middle-class. I had many discussions with friends and contacts who are middle-class Egyptians and they spoke of their intensifying frustration about the deterioration of their standard of living and quality of life, while they are surrounded by this economic boom that seems to benefit mostly people associated with Gamal Mubarak and his affiliates. It is hard to know what the political implications of that are in the short-run, but one feels it in the atmosphere.

A second point is there are growing sectarian tensions, and we have seen how this has manifested itself in the outbreak of violence between Muslims and Copts in Alexandria this fall. There is a lot just beneath the surface. This is nothing new in Egyptian politics and social life, but my interlocutors stressed that they feel it growing sharper, that they are becoming concerned about Egyptian society's traditional tolerance and moderate nature becoming a bit frayed around the edges. Then you can add all this

against the backdrop of an impending leadership succession—one way or another there will be a new leader of Egypt at some point in the coming period—and all of this is creating an overall sense of anxiety in the country.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** There is a joke going around Egypt about a news broadcast many years in the future. The first item is Sierra Leone bails the United States out with a five hundred million dollar loan and the second item on the news is, “Husni Mubarak is reelected.”

**Prof. Barry Rubin:** Well, if I may extend the automobile joke. I asked myself what would be the next generation of that joke about Sadat and I think it would be Gamal Mubarak says, “Let’s buy a beautiful, expensive new car with a lot of comfortable features, but only I can drive it.” That is an interpretation of his concept of the “Chinese model,” that Egypt will have economic reforms but no political change.

When discussing Egypt, it is important to remember how long people have been saying similar things. I remember very distinctly giving a briefing in 1981 just after Sadat’s assassination explaining that Egypt is a pretty stable system and will be able to continue for many years in the future. There is certainly protest and unhappiness, and Iran, for example, taught us not to be complacent about dramatic regime change from within. I still believe in the regime’s stability. Of course, the critical variable is that if the regime starts to appear weak and crumbling, you are more likely see an upheaval as opposed to simply continuity. Nevertheless, while always being ready to reexamine assumptions, the basic analysis of Egypt for

the last thirty years, despite nuances and changes, still applies.

**Dr. Israel Elad-Altman:** I’ll start from the point that Ambassador Walker talked about, the military-security establishment as an agent of status quo. I think historically in Egypt you had change coming from two agents: the military and the Islamists. At the present time, the military establishment, bureaucracy, and security are pro status quo. So if change is to come, it could come from the Islamists, primarily from the Muslim Brotherhood. So far, the Muslim Brotherhood was not successful as an agent of change and it was not interested in instituting immediate change. The question is if, when, and in which direction they can become an agent of change. The Egyptian parliamentary elections and the Hamas victory were important in the sense that they made the Muslim Brotherhood think about where they are now and how they are going to move ahead in relation to their basic concepts.

Without going too much into the Brotherhood’s theory, the concept established by Hasan al-Banna eighty years ago is that in order to establish the Islamic state leading to the creation of the caliphate, you have to go through stages, each built on the previous one. You start by forming the Muslim individual, then by forming the Muslim family, and next Muslim society. Once the Muslim society is ripe and prepared to accept the vision of Islam, then you can start implementing Islam and shari’ah as a way of life in state and society through political methods. This means that, as long as you are still working on forming, educating, and *da’wa*—spreading the word—you are focusing on organizing, recruiting, teaching, and not on active work in politics. The question is: When does one decide that the

time has come to move from focusing on da'wa and proselytizing into getting actively and massively involved in politics, and trying to actively implement Islamic precepts in the state and society by taking over political power.

After the electoral achievements of the Egyptian Brotherhood and of Hamas in the Palestinian elections, we begin to hear members of the Brotherhood asking, are we not now in a stage where we have to move to implement our vision, because so many segments of society are now accepting our vision? Should we not now become a political party seeking power? There is a debate on this question: Such a move would require the movement to replace its general slogans and vague formulas with specific positions on matters of public policy, which could lose the Brotherhood some of its public support; and it could risk getting into conflict with the authorities, losing what has been achieved by the da'wa, and damaging the organization. But, on the other hand, how long can you keep on doing da'wa without trying to implement your vision in real life? It appears that the dominant view is that conditions are not ripe for the movement to make that shift, and to try to reach for power. So the ability to bring about change is limited.

An example is the Brotherhood's position on Mubarak's succession. There are members who say that the Brotherhood cannot accept Mubarak passing on power to his son Gamal, because this goes against its principles, and if it supports it or remains neutral it will lose its credibility among the Egyptian public. Others say that the succession will be passed

regardless of the movement's position, and besides it is not its business, since it is not going to compete for the presidency for the coming years, because it is not yet prepared or in the stage of moving fully to politics; so the movement should try to use the government's need for its neutrality to extract concessions from the government on issues that interest the Brotherhood, like easing the emergency laws, changing the election law, changing the clause 76 of the constitution, and so on. If this latter approach works, then the movement will have brought about change. But will it work?

Again, it appears that the dominant view is that the Brotherhood is not yet ready to try to take over power or get into conflict with the authorities. Most activists and thinkers believe that they still have to invest a lot in preparing the society, in spreading the word.

Their time table could be influenced by the economic situation. The macro economy is indeed successful; IMF and U.S. government recommendations have been implemented. But on the micro level, I agree about the feeling of stress and alienation. Although we are not used to frequent eruptions of massive popular protests in Egypt, they could take place. The more the misery, the more the Muslim Brotherhood will have to choose if it can still be neutral and develop the da'wa, or to have to take sides and do something about it.

Regarding the Brotherhood's future direction one shouldn't ignore the radicalization of the religious establishment, al-Azhar for example. Only a few days ago we heard about this new fatwa by the chief mufti of Egypt, which prescribes any statues.

Muhammad Abduh, the Islamist reformer, 100 years ago, allowed statues. The whole tourist industry of Egypt is based on statues of the old Pharaonic culture. One can expect radical Islamists now trying to demolish the beauties of ancient Egypt.

The Muslim Brotherhood tends to accommodate as many views as possible in order to widen its public appeal. But if al-Azhar radicalizes, and the movement is attacked from the right—from al-Qa’ida and similar trends—on the ground that it is too moderate, cooperating too much with the authorities—it could be constrained to adopt more radical positions. So if the economic situation is not improving, and if the religious milieu continues to radicalize, then the Brotherhood could be more radical than it is now.

The Muslim Brotherhood watches the Hamas experience, to see to what extent Hamas is able to work with Fatah, and how Hamas is seen around the world, to what extent the West is open to accept Hamas. The Brotherhood wants to see if events legitimize Hamas as a model that can be pursued in the future, of an Islamist movement coming to power in a sort of coexistence with another power. Not long ago “the Turkish model” was seen by Egyptian Muslim Brothers as being irrelevant to Egypt and Arab societies in general, but now some speak of it in a less critical way. Maybe in the longer term one can think of some sort of cohabitation with the present regime, and Gamal could be a good candidate. In this scenario, the Brotherhood will avoid opposing his succession, and get in return all sorts of concessions and legitimization. In the longer run it can believe in its ability to outdo this partner in power.

I think this is going to be their direction, focusing on the presidential elections—not

the next ones, but eventually—trying to change the rules of the game so that they can also run their own candidate, trying to abrogate the emergency laws, not targeting the regime immediately, not getting into clashes with it. But this is not going to be easy, especially since the succession is probably going to take place during the next two years. Two years is the time to which the elections for the local councils were postponed, in order to deny the Brotherhood the chance to run their own candidates for the local councils: Had those elections taken place in April 2006 as scheduled, the movement would have gotten closer to having a sufficient number of elected public officials for it to be able, under clause 76 of the constitution, to have its own candidate contest the next presidential elections. During the coming two years we could have this test of succession with Gamal, and this will be the test of how the Brotherhood will operate on the ground.

The Brotherhood is a very hierarchal organization, from the level of the family up to the office of guidance and it has a state-like structure, in which the “president” is the general guide, Muhammad Mahdi Akef, who represents the older generation. He joined the Brotherhood in 1948, shortly before Hasan al-Banna was assassinated, and he spent some time in jail under Nasser. He was the first head of the Munich Center of the Muslim Brotherhood, which established its international outreach. He represents the traditional approach of focusing on da’wa and on proselytizing, and is reserved about attacking the regime, collaborating with other parties, etc.

Then you have the second generation, those brought up as students in the 1970s in al-Gama’ah al-Islamiyyah, the Islamic Group. They are different types. They

represent a generation which did not experience the suffering under Nasser. They have been in and out of jail since, but it was not the same type of repression as under Nasser. They are much more willing to say, “We are already beyond the stage of da’wa, we are already in the stage of politics, we should move and start cooperating with other parties, we should attack the regime on special issues.” A leading representative of this trend is Isam al-Aryan, who is now the head of the political bureau. Al-Aryan is highly outspoken and is considered moderate, though he is not so when he talks or writes about America or Israel in Arabic.

Another outspoken figure in the “second generation” group of leaders is Abd al-Mun’im Abu al-Futuh. He is the one who a year ago organized the Brotherhood’s alliance with other opposition groups to boycott the presidential elections. Eventually what happened was that the regime arrested 3,000 members. The deal was that if the government released the members, the Brotherhood would not boycott the elections. This is what eventually happened.

Now we have a similar thing going on concerning the extension of the emergency law. There was a series of arrests in March of activists, some attacks by the government on the Brotherhood’s economic interests, and so on. One can connect these last waves of suppression also to the succession issue, because the highest-level Brotherhood figure who was arrested, Muhammad Rashad al-Bayyumi, a member of the Guidance Bureau, had written an article in a Brotherhood publication opposing Gamal’s succession. He was arrested and the publication was closed

by the authorities. So this was the message: if you take us on succession we will arrest you.

**Amy Hawthorne:** I find myself very much in agreement with all the comments that Dr. Elad-Altman made about the Brotherhood, and I would just add that the Brotherhood—despite the significant political and generational tensions within the organization—seems to be brimming with self-confidence at the moment. This was true even before the Hamas victory in January. I think the Brotherhood leadership felt vindicated by their performance in the Egyptian elections. Watching this up close, it was clear to me how impressive were the political and mobilization skills that the Brotherhood political leadership demonstrated in the elections. And I believe that they will be very successful in using their presence in parliament if they don’t make any significant missteps—which is always possible—and bring the wrath of the powers that be upon them. I think they will be very successful using their presence in parliament, at a minimum, to enhance their social base.

How they achieve their political agenda is a separate question, but because their mobilization skills and their link to supporters are so strong, having this very large number of members in parliament who can channel services to their constituencies can only help them for their next round of elections. So I think that they are feeling in a position of strength, and the election of the Hamas just enhanced their feeling of self-confidence.

Regarding the non-Islamist opposition—secular, liberal, leftist, what have you—I do

not believe it is yet significant politically. There is no powerful non-Islamist opposition *movement*. What does exist now, and what may prove important in the long-run, are brave and assertive individuals and small groups of people who are becoming increasingly outspoken and assertive on the political scene and challenging the regime rhetorically and through small, organized demonstrations for democratic change. This is something new in recent years. It is a sharp contrast to the dead period of most of the 1990s when most of the people were not very active and many people were afraid to cross rhetorical red-lines.

Opposition political parties are incredibly weak. I would even describe them as being in crisis and the recent “Wafd party incident”—in which two party factions fought a gun battle over control of the headquarters—is just the latest manifestation of the crisis these parties are in. People in Cairo I’ve talked to about that incident are feeling a sense of despair over it and feel that it illustrates the disarray and the problems within the non-Islamist opposition. And of course we know that the performance of the candidates fielded by these parties in last fall’s elections was extremely poor, not only because of regime pressure and repression. So they are in a sense of crisis. It is causing some soul-searching. There are some people who believe that out of this crisis and the sort of all the problems with the Wafd that this is the opening needed to rejuvenate these movements and bring in a new generation of leadership. Maybe, but I don’t yet see any clear signs of this.

A couple of bright spots I would mention. The first is the media. I don’t want to put too much emphasis on this, but I think this is something to watch. One of the more interesting developments in Egypt are these

new non-Islamist, I would even say to a certain extent liberal, media outlets—*al-Masry al-Yowm* being the most interesting. These reach only a very small elite audience, but that audience is growing, and they are a very new platform that didn’t exist before for expressing critiques of the status quo, criticizing the government in very direct terms, and for debate. This “new media” is very fledging and doesn’t reach a large number of people, but it is a new outlet, and individuals who believe in a democratic future for Egypt are able to use this as a platform.

The second relative bright spot is the judges, the so-called judicial independence movement. To be sure, the group of judges pushing for reform centered around the Judges’ Club has had some major political failures. They did not succeed in convincing the regime to agree to their demands for the elections, for example, and they have not yet achieved a new judicial independence law. But what they have been able to do is begin to link long-standing demands for reforms within the judiciary with a broader political agenda shared by many people within the Brotherhood and other opposition groups as well as among civil society. A political agenda includes abrogating the emergency law, expanding civil liberties, reforming election administration, and so forth. They have been able to link the specific demands of their own sector with these more widely-shared political demands. They have a constituency within the judiciary, support of different opposition groups within Egypt, and the sympathy of the public. Some of the judges leading this reform push from the Judges Club are becoming increasingly outspoken toward the executive branch and toward their own hierarchy within the Ministry of Justice in particular. This is

something quite new. There is a growing sense of tension and confrontation between these judges and the regime.

Questions that arise are 1) How much active support do these reformist judges leading the movement have among the rank-and-file judiciary: Will a critical mass of ordinary judges mobilize behind them and stand up for reform? 2) Will the government get tired of the judges' assertiveness and crack down in a more significant way than they've done? 3) And will the reformist leaders be able to mobilize active support—not just sympathy—for their agenda? They have passive support, but can they actually turn themselves into a political force?

There are many judges who, while wanting reform, feel very uncomfortable with the notion of judges being outspoken political actors. As one person put it to me, "We are now the horse driving the cart, and we should maybe be on the cart, but it is not necessarily appropriate for us to be driving it, because as judges we are supposed to be neutral, to be impartial. This is our role in the system." There are also many judges who are uncomfortable with the Islamist sympathies that some in the leadership of the reformist movement exhibit. So I would put a big question mark next to the judges. But it is something very interesting to watch.

**Dr. Israel Elad-Altman:** I agree absolutely about the judges. If they turn themselves into a political party, they will lose their position as a neutral power. But the main point I wanted to make is in regards to the self-assertiveness of the Muslim Brotherhood. You mentioned that they feel strong after the

elections. This is dangerous: For so many years the government had this policy that the Muslim Brotherhood can operate, but within certain limits, some red lines: It should not attack government institutions and shouldn't openly challenge the government on the street by force. This is why the Brotherhood only very hesitantly joined last year's demonstrations. They were pushed to join Kifaya and all the other groups by their own rank and file, because how can you stay out when all these people are demonstrating? They are very cautious not to antagonize the government. If they try to score points on the question of succession, and if the military and security sense that they are going to go to the streets, to demonstrate, to mobilize support against succession, they could risk everything. There could be a military intervention in case massive riots erupt against Gamal's succession, and then everything would go back to square one. So the Brotherhood said, "We are against succession by referendum," but they didn't say, "We are against succession by election." So succession by elections will reduce the risk of massive public protest.

**Arie Gus:** Just a comment to follow Dr. Elad-Altman, there is a certain amount of exaggeration in assessing the Muslim Brotherhood's actual power, because we know that they have a large and huge amount of respect in the Egyptian street, but as long as they are not in power they won't be able to increase their efforts to Islamize Egypt. As far as we know, they have no military organization or substructure in Egypt. So their only hope now is seizing the power by

political means. They are not going to do it because they are dependent on the government, on the laws, they won't be able to increase their number in parliament beyond a certain amount as long as they are not an official party, that means a Muslim Brotherhood party, and it is obvious that the government is not going to let them do it. So in my opinion, they have learned the lesson of other Muslim groups; they will avoid at any price any direct clash or confrontation with the government, and I think that to a certain degree, they have reached their maximum power in the parliament.

**Ayellet Yehiav:** Amy, you referred before to the middle class. I think that this is one of the elements of the changing Egypt or whatever is changed in Egypt. If we take a look at the Mubarak regime throughout its 24 years, then we can point to the fact there is a phenomenon of disappearance of the middle class. There is almost nothing such as a middle class. If one takes a look at periodicals such as *Democratiyya* (and they choose to deal with this issue because it is so painful), they state that what is considered in democracies as an agent of change, the middle class, no longer exists as such in Egypt. There is no understanding that people who belong to that group can do something to transform Egypt. If we put together the fact that there is a growing Islamization in the lower classes then there is definitely a major risk in this factor.

I wanted to mention a petition that was signed about a month ago by 100 political figures, university lecturers, journalists, union activists, and left party members. They were demanding pretty much the same demands the Kifayah movement made: releasing prisoners, abolishing emergency law, and so on. What is interesting in this

petition is that among the people signing we could find liberals, such as Hisham Kasem, alongside Isam al-Arian of the Brotherhood. In fact, most of the people who signed the petition were Islamists representing all the factions within the Muslim Brotherhood and even people who are members of the al-Amal party which is prohibited by law. That demonstrates that in the current situation of the opposition in Egypt, there are people who do agitate for liberal, non-Islamist reforms, but eventually those actually pave the way for the Islamists to enlarge their support.

Regarding the Islamists, look at Isam al-Arian who apparently feels safe enough to express his true colors regarding the future of Egypt. He dared to mention to *al-Sharq al-Awsat* the goals of the Muslim Brotherhood, as he said it up front, "We go for a Muslim country." In that risk, so to speak, there is a hidden chance for any other opposition in Egypt, since the clearer the message of the Muslim Brotherhood will be, the more people who voted for them in the election as an alternative for the regime will understand that they are facing a point in which they need to decide. I do doubt if even a small minority of the people who voted for the Brotherhood actually want an Islamic state in Egypt. This brings us to the question of what model the regime will choose in order to handle or to engage with the Muslim Brotherhood, and, in my opinion, it seems the regime is not going for the Turkish model, or any other existing model. The regime would like to shape a unique model in which there is one way to treat, so to speak, the Muslim representatives within the parliament and another way to deal with the Muslim Brotherhood outside the parliament.

I would like to make one last comment in pointing at the media. I think that one phenomenon worth mentioning is the

blossom of blogs in Egypt. Up till several years ago, we referred to Egypt as a country in which internet was not common. Suddenly there are blogs blossoming all over. I do know that they are not that popular and that people don't view them as much as they view the Egyptian television or Al-Jazeera for that matter. Still it is a novelty.

**Amy Hawthorne:** The legal or "secular" opposition parties are a product of the environment in which they exist. The Wafd is a bit of a special case, because it has such a long and important history in Egyptian politics and because it played such a key role before the 1952 revolution, whereas the other opposition parties that are legal are a much more recent phenomenon. The fact that these parties were allowed to exist by the regime's fiat and that they have existed in a very repressive environment for a long time has absolutely affected their internal organizational structure in a very negative way. It has made their leadership often more interested in maintaining good relations with the regime, receiving favors and patronage from it, and manipulating their position for their own benefit, than with building their party as a true opposition force. These are not real political parties in the sense that they exist in democracies. They serve a different purpose.

So the leadership structure that has become so ossified within these parties—the Wafd is one example and Tagammu is another where there is a simmering leadership crisis. These leaders have been in their positions for a long time and have stayed there with the regime's acquiescence

and in some cases its encouragement. That has created a certain amount of cynicism within the rank and file. So until they can transform themselves from within and find mechanisms to rejuvenate their leadership structure and bring new people to lead these parties, I think they will continue to be weak and very easily manipulated by the government.

Al-Ghad unfortunately is another example of how easy it is for the powers that be to manipulate and weaken opposition parties. Al-Ghad was basically divided or ripped apart from within with some very skillful injections from the outside, with the result that the most promising new party figure to emerge on the scene, Ayman Nour, is in prison. They are pretty much out of the political game. Even though as a very new party, al-Ghad doesn't suffer the same problems of having leaders that have stayed in power forever, it is still very weak and able to be manipulated from the outside. So I am very pessimistic about all of these parties.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** I don't think that the parties that exist are going to be the future in Egypt. I agree with you that they not only lack power, but they lack any appeal to broader constituents. Some of these are still socialist or communist parties, they have been discredited over many years, they have been sellouts for many years. The Wafd hasn't stood for anything in years. Most parties have become vehicles for personalities to get benefits or visibility. Ayman Nour couldn't have been elected dog catcher before his arrest if you had a free election with a large number of candidates.

He was not popular and it showed in his figures. I have no idea why the government decided to make him into a martyr by throwing him into prison. Maybe he was just an example.

**Amy Hawthorne:** As regards Ayman Nour I would differ with you slightly on that. I think he doesn't have a large popular following, that is for sure, but he does have a lot of charisma and a lot of political skills. He bungled certain things, but he did other things—being frank about the regime, building a popular constituency—very well. The way that I read the situation is that he was enough of threat and he couldn't be manipulated so easily, so he had to be removed from the scene.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** I think they also saw him as an example to others. But I have one other question. We seem to have assumed that Gamal will be the next president of Egypt. I am not sure I assume that.

**Amy Hawthorne:** I don't assume that, no.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** Because there are a lot of other factors involved in the presidency and constituencies that have to be satisfied.

**Dr. Israel Elad-Altman:** On Gamal, certainly nothing is decided yet, things are being tested to see how people react. It could be someone else from the administration, could be a military figure. It is not certain, but it is quite likely that Gamal will be the successor.

About the parties, one shouldn't be mistaken, the significance of the small civilian secular parties is not in how many supporters they have, or organizational

branches, but in their "soft power" outside Egypt, because what plays in Egyptian politics is not only Egyptian parties, but the outside constituencies, the Washington constituency, for example. If the U.S. Congress does not approve the new trade agreement because of the postponement of the local council elections, this is the power of these parties. This is why it was so important to have all these demonstrations last year, with all the media coming to watch. This is when the regime removed security forces from the scene, allowing them to demonstrate for the first time, because television was there. This soft power is more important than the military organization that they don't have.

This brings me to the next question. The concept of focusing on enabling or empowering the Islamists to take power is not going to solve the problems very soon, and there is a need to solve problems such as the economic and gap problem very soon. Maybe the direction should be to try to explain to the new economic leadership, the people around Gamal, all of his ministers trained in America, that there should be a better way to spread wealth, to let wealth filter much wider and much lower than so far. Privatization does not create many more new businesses; it creates a very small number of huge businesses, concentration of economic power, not spreading it all over. So I think the more the population has the feeling that the new economic reforms benefit the individual peasant or the individual small business initiative, in the small town—not only the sons of the rich people or the big monopolies—the better. This is going to bring more advantages than waiting for the Islamists to take over and for them to decide which way they are going to go.

**Ayellet Yehiav:** If I could just make a comment regarding the parties. Amy mentioned the institutions and the political figures within the parties. I think that there is one additional factor which plays a very important role, meaning no party actually suggests any vision or alternative in ideology to the existing regime and its policies. When one thousand passengers of a Red Sea ferry drowned one night, Egypt faced a crisis which suddenly exposed the extent of the corruption within the government. The government didn't perform any better when the country was hit by the Avian flu. I think that whoever comes into the political arena right now and presents a vision other than that of the Mubarak regime will definitely gain the support of the whole scope of opposition.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** If we are looking at Egyptian foreign policy, it seems to me that they have two primary focuses, quite different, and in some ways contrary to one another. The first focus is the United States. The Egyptian economy, Egyptian military assistance—the long-term relationship with the United States is very important to the leadership, important to Mubarak, very important to the military. Military cooperation is the most important thing from their perspective. So they have to try with their foreign policy to appease the United States, that is the best way I can put it, in order to sustain this. And they are facing problems with the administration.

The second factor, however, is that Egypt is expected to be a leader in the Arab and non-aligned worlds. People's memories go

back to the Nasser period. They have a nostalgia, forgetting all of the horrible things that happened in that period, and they expect Mubarak to be that kind of leader, that he can make Egypt a primary factor in international affairs. That often puts him into problems with United States.

The third element is that they really have to keep looking at their base and what people want. So they are going to be careful about how they manage the Palestinian issue, because it is a very popular issue in Egypt. That is one area where they have been able to successfully appease the United States, deal with the Palestinian issue, and appeal to the Egyptian public. Can they do that now with Hamas? That is another huge question that is out there. I think the relationship with the United States has fallen into hard times; they are certainly concerned about it. The position of the Bush Administration on the question of democracy, the constant reminder that Condi Rice puts in place going to Egypt and calling for international election inspectors; it is a challenge to the credibility of Egypt and its own sovereignty, and it was almost a forgone conclusion that she would be denied. The same applies to the case of Ayman Nur's imprisonment. Mubarak never turns back once he makes these decisions.

However, the U.S. military is a major advocate for Egypt because of its importance for our logistic supply line to the Gulf, Iraq, and so on. So I think we are going to see a continuation of this kind of pulling and tugging with the United States, frustration on both sides with each other's behavior, but a marriage which neither can afford, at this

point in history, to break, because we both gain from that marriage.

**Barry Rubin:** Let me start out with a provocative statement. I think that our basic view of Egypt domestically holds firm, but I think we really need serious rethinking of our view of Egypt in foreign policy. Ambassador Walker has correctly represented two angles and I have to say that in real terms I think that the U.S. angle is more important than the Arab leadership angle, not that anyone in Egypt is going to talk that way, but there are real ongoing issues that Egypt has with the United States. I would not, however, think that Egypt in any real way “appeases” the United States. Rather, I would say that Egypt manages and manipulates the United States while only giving it a minimum of what it wants.

Meanwhile, Egypt’s role in the Arab world and region is in deep decline. Moreover, the next leader—whether or not it is Gamal—is going to be someone with less international experience and Arab-world presence than Mubarak, not somebody who is going to be charismatic. This weakness is going to be even more pronounced. So Egypt may want to keep the United States happy but it does so by rendering lip service on several issues while showing its domestic audience that it is standing up to America and even using anti-Americanism to mobilize support for itself.

Let’s talk about Egyptian policy in the Arab world. What is the Egyptian role on Iraq? Virtually nothing. Egypt is of no real importance to the future of Iraq. What is the Egyptian position on Iran? It is of no real importance. What is the Egyptian position in having any real influence on Syria, on Lebanon, on the Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon, the Egyptian relationship with

Saudi Arabia, and even on the Palestinians? These are things which aren’t really very important and don’t have much effect on events, although the image of Egypt as Arab leader may still exist. We have to pull ourselves out of the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, and say things are very different. We know Egyptian ambitions are less; the Egyptians are a bit fed up with what they feel to be other Arabs’ ingratitude. They may want to think of themselves as Arab leaders but they are not ready to pay a real price for such a status.

Now, let me add two aspects to this. Number one is the duality of Egyptian policy written broadly, which can be called having its cake and eating it too. Egypt has a generally good relationship with the United States and gets benefits from that relationship. But at the same time it plays to its domestic audience through the media, officially sponsored clerics, and the educational system. The regime blames all its shortcomings on imperialism, Zionism, the West, and the United States and use that to build domestic support. Elie Podeh points out that Egyptian textbooks still claim that the American Air Force attacked Egypt in 1967. Egypt plays this game very well. They really get away with it with virtually no cost in terms of U.S. or Western relations and to a large extent—not completely—their audience still accepts it. It is a brilliant, well-handled maneuver. But in practical terms, therefore in policy in the Middle East is just not very important, it is not going to have a big impact.

If we look at the Palestinian issue, even here we have seen the Egyptian influence is limited. They were clearly very frustrated with Arafat, even before the year 2000. I think Mubarak realized he wasn’t going to have influence. And the Hamas victory

makes things worse for Egypt. They are not happy but don't want to get into a confrontation with it. We will continue to read articles about Egypt attempting to influence Hamas, work out a ceasefire, but in practical terms I think the Egyptian role is pretty close to zero.

All of this really requires us to rethink the way we have thought about these things historically. Obviously domestic and economic issues, internal stability, dealing with the opposition, dealing with the United States, these are all the issues that occupy Egyptian leaders and I think this is even going to be truer in the future. So whatever pretense is going on, let us see that as a secondary and not as main substance.

**Arie Gus:** Many people tend to think that Egypt is no longer any regional power, and they would agree. But I personally think that they still have a certain measure of influence. Speaking of Israel, I remember very much on October 6, 1981, when President Sadat was assassinated. I flew into Egypt that same evening and President Mubarak's men were frantically looking for Israeli journalists to convince them that the Egyptian attitude to Israel is going to be maintained. I met Mr. Boutros Ghali who was the foreign minister and he reiterated this statement and tried urgently to convince us that they were going to pursue and continue peace relations with Israel, and they have done it ever since despite some traumatic events. Let us remember the bombing of the nuclear reactor in Iraq, the Lebanon War, and the two intifadas which strained the relations between the two states to the maximum.

I think that Egypt was shocked by the Hamas victory in the elections. We can see that Egyptian commanders in the field and even Mr. Mubarak himself didn't know what to do when the Gaza Strip-Egypt border was breached by thousands of Palestinians. It took them several days to block this area and to start to keep their dominance on all the borders between Israel and Egypt, not with very much success.

Now, we know that since the very beginning President Mubarak tried to keep a status of political mentor for the Palestinian problem. I still remember the 1994 interim agreement ceremony in Cairo where Arafat refused to sign the agreement and President Mubarak took him aside. He told Arafat, "You dog, you will sign the agreement," and since then he was keeping pressure on the Palestinians. His leverage of the Hamas people is much weaker. I think that for the near future, Egypt will count on Abu Mazin to keep its influence in the Gaza Strip and to a lesser measure in the West Bank by controlling the security organization, by channeling or blocking funds to the Palestinian Authority. And if they fail or, for example, if Abu Mazin gives up then Hamas finds themselves much more in power, then I think that Egypt will assert much more pressure on the Palestinian Authority, on the Hamas authority.

**Dr. Israel Elad-Altman:** On the Egyptian attitude towards Palestine, of course I agree with the general view that Egypt's regional role has decreased considerably. On Palestine and Gaza the Egyptian dilemma is such that it is difficult to see how Egypt is going to

get out of it. On one side, Egypt would like to see Palestine and Gaza stabilize, the economic problem solved, the new government holding, surviving so that the Gaza problems do not spill over to Egypt. The last thing they need now is to become the caretakers responsible for what happens in Gaza. But does it mean that they want Hamas to succeed in government?

If Hamas succeeds in government, this is a nightmare for the Egyptian regime, because this will serve as a model: If it can work in Palestine, and obviously it worked in Turkey, why shouldn't it be tried in Egypt? So how to help the Palestinian Hamas government stabilize the situation without having this image of Hamas as a successful model?

As for the Muslim Brotherhood's approach to Hamas and the Palestinians, the Muslim Brotherhood would like to see Hamas successful, again, because it would become a model. From the start, the Muslim Brotherhood has seen this as its own victory. Immediately after the Palestinian elections, it said that the Muslim Brotherhood won power in Palestine. But it is worried that Hamas came to power too early, before being strong enough to be in power without paying too much in concessions. For example, Hamas should have first taken control of the PLO, which would have put it in a much better position competing with Abu Mazin and facing the international community, because the PLO is recognized internationally as the sole representative, and so on. Not being strong enough, Hamas could be forced to give concessions and might moderate too much for the Muslim Brotherhood to accept, so already the Muslim Brotherhood gives Hamas red lines, what it can accept and what it cannot accept. It must not accept Israel; it must not negotiate with Israel; what it should shoot at is a single democratic Palestinian

Arab Islamic state, in which Jews can live as citizens.

**Ayellet Yehiav:** I would like to refer to Egyptian-Israeli relations. For various reasons there has been an improvement in the bilateral relations in the last two or so years. We have just commemorated 27 years to the signing of the peace accords. But we also have to bear in mind that after 58 or so years of repeated slogans of commitment to the Palestinian issue as the heart of the Arab world, if there is such a thing at all, Egypt is the first Arab state which shares a common border with a Palestinian entity with sovereign features, if not a state or state to be. That brings up worries and concerns in Egypt, not only because of the spillover that you mentioned, but also because it amplifies that the relations with Israel are indeed an asset but at the same time, especially when the regime has to face an opposition of the Muslim Brotherhood which is very loud and clear about its positions towards Israel and the whole concept of peace with Israel.

The question is to what degree those loud opposing voices will have any impact on future improvement of the relations with Israel, especially on the economic level. People who are now eager to cooperate with Israel economically might feel at least that they have to take into consideration whatever the political environment is implying to them and that would definitely halt any anticipated advancement in the relationship. It doesn't mean that the peace as such would be affected in any way, but definitely the volume of cooperation would unfortunately, as I sense it, be affected.

**Barry Rubin:** I'd like to go back to Egyptian relations with the Arab world and to highlight it by saying what could we expect in the past

and what we are missing now. Let's look at four issues very quickly.

First of all, and I thought it was very interesting the remark made about who are the great powers in the Middle East. Iran is becoming more powerful, Iran is striving for nuclear weapons, it is gaining influence in Iraq. Historically one would expect that Egypt would play an active role in mobilizing and uniting the Arab states to challenge this, to see this as a threat, to try to deal with this issue. If we go back to the 1980s, the time of the Iran-Iraq war, it is not there, there is no Egyptian role.

The second place where we would expect to see a very energetic Egyptian role, but don't, is on the issue of Iraq and the future of Iraq. At a minimum, you would think that Egypt would be playing the role as the patron, that Egypt is going to decide when the new Iraqi government is admitted into the Arab world and on what terms. Egypt might also be expected to ensure that the gap between Iraq and other states would not become too wide. Of course they have a problem with the Shi'a issue. But, again, there is no major Egyptian role on this. There is no coordinated effort for "readmitting" Iraq to the Arab world. Therefore, they are losing Iraq to a greater extent than would have to be true, and Iraq is moving to a Shi'a direction towards at least a close relationship with Iran. There is no alternative because not only are the Iraqi authorities not being offered anything, but Syria is supporting the insurgency, Jordanians are fighting, and the Saudi people are funding it. So again, there is an amazing vacuum in terms of Egypt.

A third issue is Syria. I remember well when Mubarak took a flight with Hafiz al-Asad over the Sinai in the 1990s and told him he should make peace to get back all the land lost in 1967, as Egypt had done, and took him down to Sharm al-Shaykh and showed him what Egypt got back. Today, however, there is no patron role being played with Bashar, no Egyptian mentor teaching the young man how to behave. It is not happening. This, too, is a vacuum.

And finally, there is the overall picture, including the lack of an Egyptian-Saudi axis to direct Arab policies. There is no sense of coordination or a common view, there is no major Egyptian leadership for how Arab states define their view vis-à-vis democratization, or regarding the issue of terrorism and the threat of bin Ladin. Nothing.

When you go down the list, it is really quite shocking how little Egypt has played a leading role—even as a "first among equals"—on any issue facing Arabs and Arab states.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** I think the problem for the Egyptians is that the Americans are out in front on all of these issues. And what the Americans are potentially going to do in Iraq, Iran, or Syria is extremely unpopular in Egypt, and it really goes to the heart of the stability of the regime if it starts to engage itself. Regarding Iraq, the Egyptians that I have talked to are scared to death to get in middle of that civil war. They would be the losers, because they would be the targets even more than we would.

**Barry Rubin:** You are absolutely right, and the answer would be that the Egyptians could come up with alternative views, for example, we are going to set the bar for Iraq, what an Arab state need to be, or reacting to how Iraqis wrote the constitution. They don't have to be the instrument or enemy of the United States, but they can put forth an alternative view. And they are not doing so.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** Yes, but this administration doesn't accept outside views, and this is part of the protection of the U.S.-Egyptian relationship.

**Barry Rubin:** Yes, but they don't have to do something to make the administration accept it. They could act, as Mr. Gus said, as independent players, and they are not. I agree with you that there are difficulties, but I am saying they have not even met the minimum.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** I would agree with you that they are certainly not what they used to be, but they still do have a very active political capability. They still take a lead in the United Nations and among the Arab states, but it is certainly not the same world it was when they were exercising it.

**Barry Rubin:** I mean something like high-level Egyptian delegations inviting Bashar to Cairo, telling him how to behave, and getting him to avoid acting in a way that would give the United States a pretext for attacking. It is really astonishing how minimal the Egyptian role has been.

My broader point though, which I'd like to make absolutely clear, is in no way do I expect Egypt to support American policy, quite the contrary. What they want to do is to develop an alternative approach. Now because of the way a number of things have happened, for example the invasion of Iraq,

that ground wasn't really there for them, but it is their job to try to hew out some sort of position, and on some issues like the issue of Syria, the issue of coordinating with Saudi Arabia, the issue of persuading the Iraqi government that it wants to get into the good graces of the Arab League, how they have to do it, they have failed given the opportunities they have had.

**Dr. Israel Elad-Altman:** One aspect of foreign policy is public diplomacy, mainly how you try to influence populations. The American ambassador travels around Egypt giving money to open up small businesses, and America invests a lot in the Egyptian economy, but what the grassroots get about America is not what the ambassador says to the governor of the province, but what they get in the meetings and writings of the Muslim Brotherhood and their like. This is what is going to mold Egyptian public opinion for the coming generation. If you follow the Muslim Brotherhood's attitude towards the United States and what it stands for, it is clear that the Muslim Brotherhood tries to be a leading anti-American, anti-globalization Third-World movement worldwide, not only in the Muslim and Arab world. They are opposed to "the American project," claiming America is trying to dominate the Muslim world and the entire world, and they claim to seek to stop it.

This anti-American line is vindicated in the Muslim Brotherhood's view by what is written and said in American campuses and publications about how America is responsible and guilty for everything that goes on in the world.

Part of the anti-Americanism is practical: They need to show that their electoral achievements are not the result of America's intervening for them, claiming that if the

Americans press for elections to be fairer than is their business, we are not working with them. Also they face criticism from more radical trends, jihadists and al-Qa'ida, for having joined the elections in the first place. But there is also a deep ideological, psychological, cultural animosity towards America, which goes back to motives that Sayyid Qutb elaborated on in the past, and which are repeated today, like "The Americans have no more values, how could you listen to such a society that has no religion, not one of them is religious, how can you deal with them?"

It is an animosity that they build into the education of future generations, and one has to cope with it now by making them understand that this is not the way to go forward if you want to have any dialogue. And it is clear to them that the Americans want to have a dialogue with them. This cultural and educational policy of the Brotherhood will in the long-term undermine everything the United States tries to do in the region, not only in Egypt, but all around.

With the Iranians there is a competition about who is more anti-American, who leads the Islamic, Third World anti-American wave. The same goes for their attitude of intolerance toward secularist Arab trends. If Taha Hussein were alive today, he would have been attacked by the Brotherhood as a *kafir*. The same is true when they attack Palestinian secular thinkers like Samir Darwish and others. They ask, how can you be a Palestinian and not be an Islamist?

**Arie Gus:** I would like to add to this discussion Egypt's war against terrorism.

Contrary to anti-Western, anti-American, anti-Israeli rhetoric, I have the impression that Egypt is cooperating with all Western agencies and bodies in the war against terrorism. It was President Mubarak who already in the 1990s warned especially Great Britain against the radical Islamist activity in London. If he would have been listened to then, I think that we wouldn't have had the 9/11 incidents. Egypt is afraid that the Egyptian terrorists will eventually return to Egypt and act against the regime there. They have been casing Muslim radicals all over the world, demanding the Egyptian terrorists be sent back to Egypt.

One more point in regards to Israel, rumor has it that Israel has warned President Mubarak several times against assassination attempts on his life, but Egypt is not holding back Hamas terrorists, though this is another story.

**Amy Hawthorne:** I would like to make a quick concluding comment and also pose a question. The question follows on what Ambassador Walker talked about in terms of the U.S.-Egyptian relationship. It will be very interesting to see what happens in the congressional debate about Egypt's aid package, and I am wondering how important this aid package is to the Egyptians. In the past I believe U.S. aid was extremely important both materially and for prestige, and the Egyptians felt it was a sacred part of the U.S.-Egypt relationship. Recently, some Egyptian officials with whom I have spoken have said, "Well, if the Congress wants to cut and slash our aid because they don't think we are democratic enough and because of

Ayman Nour, we don't care, so be it." To me this would be a remarkable development in U.S.- Egyptian relations and I am wondering if Ambassador Walker could say a word on what he thinks about that and how the Egyptians will respond to the growing criticism of Egypt in the U.S. Congress.

My concluding remark would be to come back to the issue of succession, which I think is incredibly important in the future of Egypt. It is true that Egypt has had very smooth leadership successions in the recent past and it is also true that the Egyptian political system is very stable and well-rooted to a large extent. On the other hand it is now a different environment inside the country and a different environment internationally than when Hosni Mubarak came to power, and it is a different situation in terms of its relationship with the United States. *How* the new leader of Egypt comes to power is important to the United States now. Five or ten years ago, I don't think that would have mattered to the United States if Mubarak's successor came into power in an undemocratic fashion. I believe that it is not a forgone conclusion that Gamal Mubarak will be the next leader of Egypt. I think the fact that there is uncertainty about this, intentional uncertainty, is a factor that is shaping the Egyptian political environment. So I think that is a critical issue that we all need to watch, how the succession happens, in addition to who succeeds for the future of Egypt.

**Edward S. Walker, Jr.:** I want to come to this U.S.-Egyptian relationship, because I think even though there are very strong ties in the security field, particularly terrorism, I was involved in many of these conversations with Husni Mubarak about the British problem, and certainly we didn't do enough at that

time to persuade the British to deal with them. That kind of cooperation has been very intimate ever since the 1990s and it continues today. But it is under the table, it is not visible, and the Egyptians don't want it visible and neither does the CIA. When it gets visible, we get into trouble.

The relationships between our militaries and the importance of the logistics, training, using the canal, and so on, is not something that grabs the Senate or the House, and so we have a risk of miscalculation in our relationship with Egypt, and allowing issues which the Egyptians should be working out on their own to override the good sense of what American immediate interests are. I am great proponent for democracy, but I am also a firm believer that we cannot impose it, and that it ought to be up to the Egyptians.

The more we interfere, the harder it is for them. We have this real religious commitment to democracy, which we have to constrain if we are going to have substantial relations with these countries and if they are going to be able to get on with the problem of generating democracy from within.

**Barry Rubin:** I think it has to be acceptable for people to respect the importance in the future role of democracy while still looking at national interests approach in a realistic manner, and unfortunately, now the debate in the United States has gotten so passionate that it is harder for such a balanced view to emerge on either side.

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#### **PARTICIPANT BIOGRAPHIES**

**Dr. Israel Elad-Altman-** Dr. Elad-Altman is a Middle Eastern affairs analyst. He served in various positions in the Israeli government. He was also a lecturer at Tel

Aviv University and a research fellow specializing in Middle Eastern issues, and Director of Studies at the Institute for Policy and Strategy, the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya.

**Mr. Arie Gus** - veteran "Kol Israel" (Israel State Radio) journalist, reporting on the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Arab Affairs. Reported and analyzed Middle East Affairs, hosting a weekly program, "The Middle East and Beyond." Upon retirement from Kol Israel in 2005, became a Research Fellow at the Institute for Counter-Terrorism, IDC, Herzliya. Hosts a daily news hour on "All for Peace Radio," a joint Israeli-Palestinian radio station. Mr. Gus studied Arabic and Middle Eastern History at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem.

**Prof. Barry Rubin** - is director of the Global Research for International Affairs Center (GLORIA) at the Interdisciplinary Center (IDC) Herzliya. He is editor of the *Middle East Review of International Affairs (MERIA) Journal* and of *Turkish Studies Journal*. Prof. Rubin has authored nearly twenty books on the region, including *Islamic Fundamentalism in Egyptian Politics*, *The Tragedy of the Middle East*, and *The Long War for Freedom: The Arab Struggle for Democracy in the Middle East*. (Prof. Rubin will participate in the discussion from the Washington studio).

**Ms. Ayellet Yehiav** - Director of Department at the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) Center for Political Research. A former spokesperson to the Israeli Embassy

in Cairo (1998-2002), after working as an analyst specializing in Egypt and inter-Arab affairs in the CPA, since joining the MFA in 1995. A Haifa University M.A. graduate in Middle Eastern Studies, Ms. Yehiav's studies focused on Egypt, the Arab Press, and Contemporary Islam.

**Ms. Amy Hawthorne** - In January 2006, Ms. Hawthorne became the founding director of the Hollings Center, a new NGO dedicated to dialogue between the United States and Muslim countries. She was previously at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where she served as founding editor of the *Arab Reform Bulletin*. She holds a B.A. in History with honors from Yale University and an M.A. in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Michigan. She was a Fulbright Scholar in Cairo, and is a term member of the Council on Foreign Relations.

**Ambassador Edward S. Walker, Jr.** - has served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Middle East Institute since 2001, following a distinguished diplomatic career which included: Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs (1999-2001), U.S. Ambassador to Israel (1997-99), the Arab Republic of Egypt (1994-97), and the United Arab Emirates (1989-92). He received a B.A. from Hamilton College and an M.A. from Boston University.