

Middle East Institute

2009 Annual Report



Mission Statement

*“...to promote
knowledge of
the Middle East
in America
and strengthen
understanding of
the United States
by the peoples
and governments
of the region.”*

Letter from the President

Despite the challenges posed by the ongoing effects of the economic recession, The Middle East Institute forged ahead on its mission to educate and reach out to the public with insightful programs, publications, and information about the Middle East.

Among the highlights of 2009 were:

- Our Annual Conference broke all previous records with more than 700 conference attendees and over 400 present for the banquet. Expanding our reach, the Conference was broadcast on C-SPAN and made available for download via podcast.
- The Institute hosted over 80 events with over 3,000 people in attendance during the year, while our Scholars spoke at 200 events throughout the US and around the world.
- In 2009, someone read an article from the prestigious *Middle East Journal* once every two and a half minutes either through the MEI website or one of multiple electronic subscription services. This represents an increase of over 50% from 2008.
- *MEJ* Editor Michael Collins Dunn launched the “Editor’s Blog,” drawing over 42,000 page views in 2009. Its readership hailed from 130 different countries including every country in the Middle East.
- The Publications Department continued to produce high-quality scholarship via our website, www.mei.edu, available free to the public. All told, we published 1,500 pages of innovative scholarship and expert insights through our web publications.
- The Department of Languages and Regional Studies was re-accredited and expanded its programs of intensive language courses, as well as continuing their tutoring program, making language education more accessible for our students.
- Our Leadership Development program fielded hundreds of applications for 70 highly sought-after internships. 2009’s class was filled with highly qualified students from the US as well as Egypt, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey.
- MEI established the Center for Turkish Studies, dedicated to independent thinking, innovative research, and analysis about Turkey.
- MEI’s Center for Pakistan Studies carved a unique niche for itself as an invaluable source of information on Pakistan by hosting a wide range of high-ranking Pakistani officials and politicians, as well as prominent scholars.

Even in difficult times MEI continues to work to broaden our reach and expand the breadth of our coverage. Our work relies on our commitment to mutual understanding and the continuing support of those who share a belief in our mission.

Wendy Chamberlin
President

MEI's Impact in 2009

MEI's Reach



Los Angeles Times



The New York Times

THE DAILY STAR
LEBANON



Le Monde

Newsweek



THE JERUSALEM POST



The Washington Post



The Miami Herald

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL



Chicago Tribune

For more than 60 years, MEI has pursued its mission and developed a well-deserved reputation for expertise and balanced analysis. The need for what we offer has never been greater — nor has our impact.

- Reporters increasingly turned to MEI's Scholars in 2009 for informed analysis of developments in the region. The 24/7 availability of the Communications Department to field media queries and coordinate our experts' responses has provided added value to MEI's media relations. MEI scholars were cited more than 2,200 times in print, broadcast media, and blogs worldwide — a 57% increase over 2008.

- During the year, MEI and its Scholars were cited in a variety of US and international media outlets, including Al Jazeera, Associated Press, BBC, Bloomberg, *The Boston Globe*, CBC-TV, *The Chicago Tribune*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, CNN, Cox Newspapers, *The Daily Star*, *The Economist*, *The Guardian*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, McClatchy News Service publications, *The National*, *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Newsweek*, NPR, PBS, Reuters, *U.S. News & World Report*, Voice of America, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, and many more. MEI also has made headway in the blogosphere, with citations from Democracy Arsenal, Foreign Policy.com, The Huffington Post, Politico, and more.

- In 2009, every two and a half minutes, someone in the world electronically accessed and read an article from *The Middle East Journal* — a 60% increase in usage over 2008. Online accesses to *MEJ* grew 125% in the last year as well. The *Journal's* online presence expanded even beyond 2008's record setting year, pushing its readership grow to nearly 100,000 (estimated), an over 50% increase since 2008.

- More than 700 language students of all ages came to MEI in 2009 to learn Arabic, Hebrew, Persian, and Turkish. The number of special intensive weekend courses doubled, and an expanded tutoring program continued to offer flexible language study options to students.

- MEI's 63rd annual conference, held in November, set another attendance record, with more than 700 attendees. The event drew coverage from 50 US and international media outlets, including live coverage on C-SPAN.

- *MEJ* Editor Michael Collins Dunn launched the "Editor's Blog," which in its first year garnered over 42,000 page views from 130 countries, including every country in the Middle East.

Facilitate

MEI is a catalyst for dialogue, exposing different communities to diverse ideas.

Conferences and Programs

MEI organized over 80 programs in 2009 to shed light on the complex issues of the region, ranging from panel discussions to policy roundtables to MEI's Annual Conference.



Dr. Ibrahim Kalin speaking on Turkish foreign policy at MEI

- In 2009, MEI's series of noon-time programs focused mainly on timely foreign policy issues, including an examination of elections in Iraq, Lebanon, Kurdistan, and Kuwait, security and economic questions in the Gulf, and the crisis in Pakistan and Afghanistan. More than 3,000 people attended MEI events at the Institute. C-SPAN covered four of those events, as did dozens of other US and international media outlets.

- MEI also hosted numerous private briefings and roundtables for select groups. Former Pakistani Prime Minister Pervez Musharraf was welcomed at an MEI reception for corporate donors and diplomats. Al Jazeera Director General, Wadah Khanfar, one of the Arab world's most influential voices, gave a breakfast briefing about Al Jazeera and the state of Arab media to some 20 guests, including *Foreign Policy* bloggers Marc Lynch and Blake Hounshell. MEI co-hosted a luncheon for the Qatari Deputy Prime Minister with the US-Qatar Business Council. Other lunches organized by MEI included a private briefing by the Algerian Ambassador for ten corporate donors and US officials. Before leaving to begin his assignment in Riyadh, US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia James Smith briefed a select group of MEI supporters at the Ritz Carlton on US-Saudi relations.



MEI's 63rd Annual Conference

- MEI's Annual Conference broke all previous attendance records, drawing 400 banquet attendees and more than 700 conference attendees. Keynote speeches were given by Undersecretary for Political Affairs William Burns and former US Ambassador to Iraq and Afghanistan Zalmay Khalilzad. The theme, "Rewriting the Middle East Agenda," focused

on topics key to regional security, including the nuclear crisis in Iran, developing a Gulf security framework, the future of Iraq, and the internal dynamics of the Arab-Israeli peace process. C-SPAN covered the entire conference, part of it live. Fifty other US and international media outlets also attended the conference.

MEI Scholars

Our experts possess decades of experience in the region and help facilitate dialogue through the media by providing informed and balanced commentary.

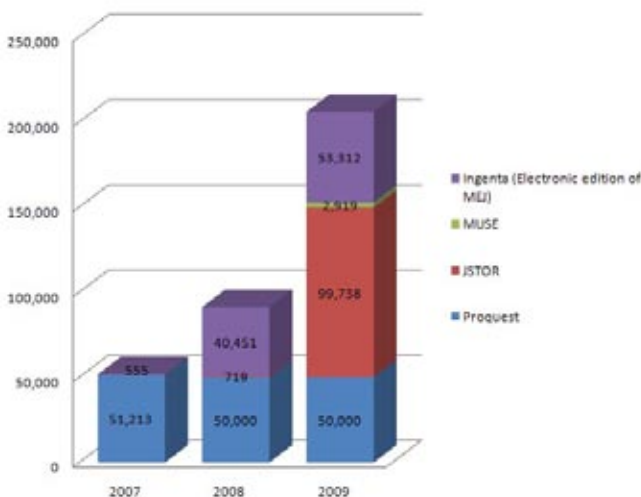
- MEI has 47 Scholars with expertise on countries and issues ranging from Morocco to Central Asia.
- The Scholars were cited over 2,200 times in 2009 in print, broadcast media, and blogs. They spoke at more than 200 events before audiences of policymakers, military officials, analysts, business professionals, students, and others. These events were held around the country and across the world.
- Scholars extend the debate beyond the Washington, DC Beltway by publishing op-eds in newspapers throughout the world. In 2009, the Scholars published 22 op-eds in publications including the *Daily Star* of Lebanon, *McClatchy Tribune*, and *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, among others.

The Middle East Journal

In 2009, the Publications Department greatly expanded the scope, impact, and diversity of its offerings, reaching broad and diverse audiences around the world. *The Middle East Journal* (MEJ) continued to rapidly expand its digital presence while maintaining its well-earned reputation for cutting edge and consistently relevant scholarship. The department also launched a new blog this year, written by the *Journal's* Editor, Michael Collins Dunn, and released a yearlong series of Special Edition *Viewpoints* anthologies

reflecting on the events of 1979, further expanding MEI's web presence and dynamism.

**Total Significant Electronic Accesses of
*The Middle East Journal***



- The year saw a dramatic increase in *MEJ's* online presence, with increasing use of the *Journal's* electronic edition and the first full year of our inclusion in the JSTOR and Project MUSE databases. Electronic-only subscriptions increased 22% over the course of 2009, and usage of the electronic edition shot up 31% in 2009 compared to the previous year. In 2009, *MEJ's* electronic edition had over 53,000 significant accesses. The usage of *MEJ* on JSTOR in 2009, however, was even greater with *MEJ* articles tally-

ing over 99,000 significant accesses. Overall, *MEJ* articles had more than 205,000 significant accesses in 2009, representing a 125% increase over 2008 and a 297% increase over 2007. In 2007, every ten minutes, someone in the world electronically accessed and read an article from the *Journal*. In 2008, this number grew to once every four minutes. And in 2009, this number grew even further to once every two and a half minutes.

- In 2009, we concluded an agreement with Wilson Periodicals, a subscription-based digital journal provider. Along with our previous agreements with JSTOR, Project MUSE, EBSCO, and Proquest, this agreement will further increase the *Journal's* online presence and ensuing royalties.



- As a result of an overhaul of our circulation and subscriptions systems, targeted marketing campaigns, and sustained subscriber outreach, the Publications Department's revenues increased by more than 44% in 2009. Strategies are in place to build on this momentum in 2010 and further augment our revenues.

- In 2009, MEI continued to grow its suite of popular online publications: *Policy Briefs*, *Commentaries*, *Viewpoints*, and *Encounters*. A highlight of this effort was the publication of six Special Editions of *Viewpoints* focusing on the pivotal events of 1979 in the region. These issues, which drew wide acclaim and thousands of visitors to our website, included: "The Iranian Revolution at 30," "The Legacy of Camp David, 1979-2009," "The Islamization of Pakistan, 1979-2009," "The 1979 'Oil Shock': Legacy, Lessons, and Lasting Reverberations," "The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, 1979-2009: Evolution of a Pivotal State," and "Afghanistan, 1979-2009: In the Grip of Conflict." We also published numerous *Policy Briefs* and *Encounters* on a wide range of topics, including an outlook on Iran's contentious 2009 presidential election, Gulf-Asia relations, the Ergenekon controversy in Turkey, and Afghan identity. All told, in 2009 MEI published more than 1,500 pages of innovative scholarship and expert insights through its web publications.



- In 2009, the *Journal* redesigned its look with a more streamlined, readable, and attractive front cover, incorporating shorter titles in larger type and a full-color photograph evoking one of the feature articles in that issue. The *Journal* had, at various times in the past, used stock black and white photos on its cover; the availability in the digital age of a much wider range of photo art in color has allowed for a more dynamic and germane selection of cover

photos.

- *MEJ* Editor Michael Collins Dunn launched the “Editor’s Blog” in late January 2009. With over 850 posts in its first year, the blog fulfilled its mission to provide cultural and historical context for events in the region. The blog quickly gained a sizable readership, garnering over 14,000 visitors and more than 42,000 page views in 2009. Readers hailed from 130 countries around the world, including every country in the Middle East, and all 50 states. The blog received widespread praise, as well as 17 nominations for “Best Mideast and Africa Blog” in the Weblog Awards competition.

Outreach

MEI has expanded its communications strategy to embrace online communities where people exchange ideas and engage in dialogue about the Middle East.

- The Institute has developed its presence in several online networks to promote its events, educational offerings, and the work of its Scholars. MEI now has a Facebook group and fan page as well as a Twitter feed, and all of its events are now podcast on iTunes with video coverage available on YouTube.
- MEI also informed the blogosphere by organizing a workshop for foreign policy bloggers from around the United States. Seven bloggers traveled



Participants in MEI's foreign policy bloggers workshop.

to Washington, DC for a workshop about the Gulf region that included meetings with officials from the Pentagon and State Department, members of Washington's Arab press corps, representatives from the embassies of Oman, the United Arab Emirates, and Yemen, and briefings

from several MEI experts. The workshop led to several favorable blog posts from the participants and has helped enhance their future writing about the Middle East.

MEI: 2009 By The Numbers



Over 2,200

Citations of MEI Scholars in 2009.



Over 700

Record attendance at MEI's 2009 Annual Conference.



Over 700

Students registered for MEI's languages and regional studies classes.



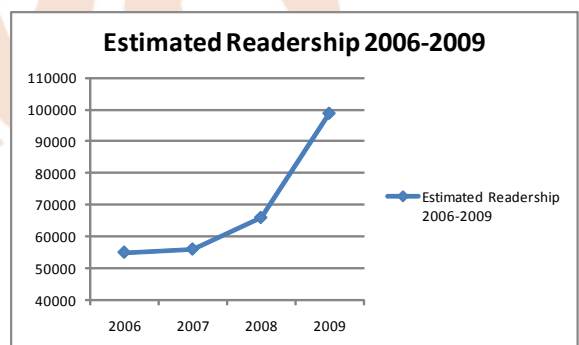
Less than 10%

Percentage of applicants selected for summer internship; more selective than some Ivy League schools.



205,000

Number of significant accesses of the MEJ online.



50%

Estimated growth of *The Middle East Journal's* readership in from 2008 through 2009.

Educate

MEI believes educated citizens will demand constructive policies that build lasting relationships between the United States and the Middle East.

MEI broke new ground in furthering our educational mission both domestically and abroad. In 2009 we offered an increased variety of language programs, set new records with our highly successful internship program, and broke new ground and expanded our reach with the new Center for Pakistan Studies and the Center for Turkish Studies.

Department of Languages and Regional Studies

The Department of Languages and Regional Studies continued to innovate in expanding the variety of programs it offers to reach local students. Through these new avenues, we have been able to reach students not previously able to take advantage of our programs. Offering over 100 different courses to over 700 students, the Department continues to fulfill our educational mission.

- The Department of Languages and Regional Studies was re-accredited by the Accrediting Council for Continuing Education and Training (ACCET).
- Our language programs continued to represent a standard of high quality, as we negotiated licensing agreements with local non-profits and government agencies to establish franchise MEI language programs in their facilities.
- MEI doubled the number of intensive language courses in Arabic and Persian offered on the weekends and hiring additional tutors to meet demand for flexible hours.
- Offering programs such as “Conversations in the Garden,” we attracted both students and local professionals seeking language practice to take advantage of our facilities in a casual, non-classroom setting.

Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center

The Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center (SQCC) continued to expand its activities and outreach. Some major highlights of 2009 include:

- SQCC and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts collaborated to produce an original dance theater production called “OMAN...O Man!,” choreographed and directed by Emmy Award winner Debbie Allen and with an original musical score by Grammy Award winner Arturo Sandoval. “OMAN...O Man!” was the only work commissioned by the Kennedy Center for its “Arabesque: Arts of the Arab World” festival. Bring-



Ahmed Said Amur Al-Hasani and Kyle Jones perform in "OMAN...O Man!"

ing together Omani and American dancers in a story bridging cultural divides, "OMAN...O Man!" played to sold out audiences from March 12-15, 2009. Among the luminaries attending the production was First Lady Michelle Obama, who said that "Every child in America should see it." In its May/June 2009 issue, *Saudi Aramco World* magazine gave "OMAN...O Man!" front page coverage in its story on the Kennedy Center's "Arabesque" festival. On July 7, in his testimony before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, incoming US Ambassador to the Sultanate Richard Schmierer cited OMAN...O Man! as an example of an "important cultural connection between our two countries" that had received "rave reviews."

- SQCC sponsored a series of calligraphy workshops over a two-week period, showcasing visiting Omani calligrapher Abdullah Al Waili. Collaborating with MEI's Department of Languages and Regional Studies, SQCC presented "An Evening of Calligraphy" for all current and former MEI language students. In addition, Al Waili conducted calligraphy workshops for the Smithsonian Institution's Freer and Sackler Galleries of Art, the University of the District of Columbia, and the International Club of DC. MEI's interns were treated to a special workshop session that included a guided tour of the Islamic Gallery at the Freer conducted by the Smithsonian's Chief Curator for Islamic Art.



Participants in the SQCC Salam Summer Arabic Program in Dhofar, Oman.

- SQCC embarked upon its first scholarship program in Oman, the SQCC Summer Arabic Language and Media (SQCC Salam) Program, in partnership with World Learning. From June 16-August 4, 2009, 16 Arabic language students underwent advanced Arabic training at the University of Dhofar, using Arabic media as a basis of instruction. The students, from academic institutions across the US, gave the program extremely high marks in their post-program surveys. The Omani press also covered the program very favorably.

- SQCC worked with the Omani Ministry of Heritage and Culture to present a model of an Omani dhow as a gift to the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) in New York City. This was done in conjunction with AMNH's "Travelling the Silk Road" exhibit which opened in November 2009 and runs until August 15, 2010, and then embarks upon a worldwide tour. Oman was the only Arab country to make such a contribution to the

exhibit. Omani TV noted SQCC's role, and the pan-Arab magazine *Al Majalah* as well as *Al Khaleej* online wrote about the Omani gift.

- SQCC upgraded its "Indian Ocean in World History" website, improving the website's accessibility and ease of use as well as increasing the number of historical entries and images. The Indian Ocean in World History website now receives about 2,500 hits monthly. The Middle East Outreach



MEI staff participating in Omani Cultural Night. From left to right: Mubarak al Busaidi, Farinaz Firouzi, and Chad Hope.

Council, a nationwide network of educators dedicated to disseminating information on the Middle East to K-16 teachers and others, devoted the major portion of its Spring 2009 newsletter to what its President described as "the wonderful website sponsored by the Sultan Qaboos Cultural Center" in her message to readers.

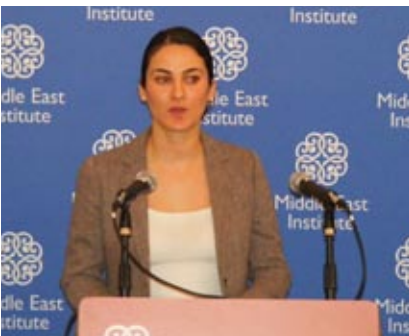
In addition to larger projects, SQCC continued its cultural and educational outreach through visits to schools in the DC area, cultural talks to community groups visiting Washington, participation in the Girl Scouts' Thinking Day events, an Omani Cultural Night, organizing student visits to the Omani Embassy, and more.

The Center for Pakistan Studies

In 2009, MEI launched a Center for Pakistan Studies to work with academics and experts to produce original research on Pakistan and to sponsor speakers and provide briefings to the media and government about the state of affairs in Pakistan. The Center hosted numerous Pakistani officials and politicians to discuss the future of the country. They included Dr. Babar Awan, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, Imran Khan, Head of Pakistan's Movement for Justice Party, and Raja Zulfikar Khan, the President of the Pakistani controlled part of the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir, among others.

In 2009, the Center hosted a series of monthly roundtables on Pakistan to bring together Pakistani-Americans and others for frank discussion about

how to address the country's problems. It also launched an online forum to give users access to daily press related to Pakistan, government briefs, and grant announcements.



Dr. Tol giving a lecture at MEI.

Center for Turkish Studies

In 2009, MEI also launched a Center for Turkish Studies headed by Turkish academic Dr. Gonul Tol. The Center is a non-partisan policy research center dedicated to independent thinking, innovative research, and analysis. Through conferences, programs that attract media coverage, events featur-

ing scholars, dignitaries, and officials from across the political spectrum of Turkey and the US, and academic publications, the Center aims to promote knowledge of Turkey among the broader American public, and specifically among policy and opinion makers.

The Center also hosted several timely talks featuring, among others, Dr. Ibrahim Kalin, the chief advisor to the Prime Minister of Turkey, Dr. Ekmeleddin İhsanoğlu, Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, and Dr. İlter Turan, a professor of political science at Istanbul Bilgi University,



Interns preparing for the “Mess-o-po-trivia” trivia contest at MEI.

The MEI Internship Program

2009 was a record breaking year for MEI’s internship program, with more than 250 applications for the summer session alone — a more than 100% increase over 2008 applications. Indeed, with 250 applications for 22 slots, MEI’s summer internship program had an acceptance rate of less than 10%, making it more selective than some Ivy League universities! Throughout the year, our exceptionally selective group of interns helped to organize and staff a highly successful Annual Conference, wrote research papers with MEI Scholars, provided logistical support for the Institute’s operations, and took a leadership role in planning and implementing a number of highly successful events.

- In 2009, MEI received more than 370 applications and selected 70 for internships, equating to more than five applicants for every intern selected.



Audience members at a screening of “Allah Made Me Funny” at Georgetown University.

This represented significant growth from 2008. Interns came to MEI from all regions of the United States and from several foreign countries, including Egypt, Israel, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan, and Turkey. These interns brought valuable international perspectives to MEI and enriched our internship program.

- Interns participated in MEI’s Intern Development Series, which took them to AMIDEAST, Americans for Near East Refugee Aid, the US Defense Department, and Lockheed Martin for meetings with pro-



Audience members at the panel discussion “Launching Careers in the Middle East.”

professionals working in Middle East-related fields. Interns also held roundtable discussions at MEI with intelligence and foreign policy experts, academics, and diplomats.

- MEI interns organized and hosted a number of youth-oriented events in 2009, including a panel discussion on “Launching Careers in the Middle East” and a massively popular screening of the Muslim comedy film “Allah Made Me Funny” held at Georgetown University in conjunction with Unity Productions Foundation (UPF) and the Prince Alwaleed bin Talal Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding. Interns also

hosted several screenings of and dialogue sessions on UPF films aimed at fostering interfaith understanding and cooperation.

- MEI’s 2009 interns have gone on to launch dynamic careers in Middle East affairs, working in such sectors as international exchange and education, development, and defense and intelligence. MEI’s 2009 intern group is currently well represented in the Middle East itself, with former interns working or studying in such countries as Egypt, Oman, and Turkey.

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December 31, 2009 and 2008

	2009	2008
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Cash and cash equivalent	\$626,780	\$625,458
Board designated cash	63,069	233,898
Total cash and cash equivalents	689,849	859,356
Grants and other receivable	492,366	183,044
Prepaid expenses	29,101	36,120
Total current assets	1,211,316	1,078,520
Property and Equipment		
Property and equipment, net	964,553	1,016,625
Other Assets		
Investments	2,215,293	1,836,854
Security deposit	200	200
Total other assets	2,215,493	1,837,054
Total Assets	<u>\$4,391,362</u>	<u>\$3,932,199</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts payable	\$20,180	\$13,689
Accrued expenses	34,748	102,276
Deferred revenue	139,716	175,930
Total current liabilities	194,644	291,895
Net Assets		
Unrestricted net assets		
Undesignated	1,407,048	1,397,822
Board designated	2,278,362	2,070,752
Total unrestricted net assets	3,685,410	3,468,574
Temporarily restricted net assets	511,308	171,730
Total net assets	4,196,718	3,640,304
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	<u>\$4,391,362</u>	<u>\$3,932,199</u>

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