Center for Middle East Studies
YEAR IN REVIEW, 2014-2015
A Note From the Director

Three years have passed since the launch of our center, and it continues to grow by leaps and bounds, primarily due to the hard work of our staff and faculty. Our presence has been felt at the local, national and international levels as reflected in the media attention we have received—from PBS, the BBC, Al Jazeera, CNN, the CBC (Canada), POLITICO, the New York Review of Books, and the Times Literary Supplement (just to name a few).

The start of our third year coincided with the dramatic rise and expansion of ISIS. Given the importance of this topic both for the politics of the Middle East and for US foreign policy, it became a focus of our center’s work during the past year in several ways. We began in September 2014 with a standing-room-only panel discussion on the ISIS crisis with Ambassador Christopher Hill, Professor Deborah Avant and myself. We taught a special evening mini-course on the topic as part of the University of Denver’s Enrichment Program (every seat was filled and there were more questions than we could answer). We also launched a special roundtable initiative geared to exploring “The Many Manifestations of the ISIS Crisis.” The work of two friends of our center, Judith Judd and Jocelyn Childs, made this initiative possible. My colleague Danny Postel and I gave dozens of lectures and media interviews on the ISIS crisis and its implications for the region.

Year three of our center was also marked by the visitors that we hosted. It was an honor and a privilege to host six Visiting Scholars from the Arab world. This was made possible by a grant from the Carnegie Corporation that we were awarded in 2013. Each of our visitors delivered a lecture, spoke with students in classes, and found time to work on their own intellectual projects. Collectively they enriched the intellectual life of our center and our school.

We also made a special effort to help students with internships in the Middle East and with travel to the region. Our first faculty-student trip took 12 Korbel students to Turkey, where they met with a cross-section of civil society leaders, political parties and religious communities, along with touring the key historical and cultural sights that Turkey has to offer. Their arrival in Istanbul on the day of Turkey’s parliamentary elections in June made this trip especially memorable. I would like to thank CMES Associate Director Danny Postel, Professor Alan Gilbert and Ismail Akbultan of the Mosaic Foundation for making this trip a success.

A final word about an important staff change. Doug Garrison, our Administrative and Research Assistant, has moved on to greener pastures. He will be missed. Doug was with us from day one and played an important role in building our center from scratch. He has been replaced by Tiffany Wilk, who recently completed her undergraduate degree at DU in International Studies and Political Science. We are thrilled to have her as part of our team.

Nader Hashemi
Director, Center for Middle East Studies
Associate Professor, Middle East & Islamic Politics
Josef Korbel School of International Studies
University of Denver
CMES Publications 2014-2015

Journal Articles & Book Reviews

CMES Director Nader Hashemi and CMES Associate Director Danny Postel both published articles and book reviews throughout the 2014-15 academic year. In July Professor Hashemi published “How a Nuclear Deal Helps Democracy in Iran” in The Cairo Review of Global Affairs and also a shorter op-ed titled “Nuclear Deal Could Transform Iran” on CNN.com. Postel published “Iranian Dissidents Explain Why They Support the Nuclear Deal” on In These Times. In August the Denver Post published a lengthy interview with Hashemi and Postel on “Deciphering the Iran nuclear deal.”

Postel published two articles on ISIS: “The War on ISIS: Views From Syrian Activists and Intellectuals” appeared on the blog of Dissent and was one of the magazine’s most read articles of 2014. “Should We Oppose the Intervention Against ISIS?” appeared in the magazine In These Times.

Postel’s review of Muhammad Idrees Ahmad’s book The Road to Iraq: The Making of a Neoconservative War appeared in the quarterly magazine The Drouth. Professor Hashemi’s review of Khaled Abou El Fadl’s book Reasoning With God was published in the Spring 2015 issue of the journal Critical Muslim.

All of these can be found on our website at: du.edu/korbel/middleeast/publications/index.html

We also continued our series of Occasional Papers with the publication of “The Holocaust and the Arab-Israeli War of Narratives: Critical Dialogues with Gilbert Achar” in November of 2014.

CMES Research Assistant and Communications Coordinator Douglas Garrison wrote regularly for the online magazine Muftah. His pieces included: “The Tragedy & Farce of Sisi’s Call to ‘Religious Revolution’” and “On Charlie Hebdo and the Question of an ‘Islamic Reformation’.”
CMES Events
Fall Quarter 2014

Videos of all events at: du.edu/korbel/middleeast/videos/
September 3 – Gaza: A Nurse’s Account of Working with Doctors Without Borders / Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) – A Presentation by Sarah Woznick

CMES partnered with the Global Health Affairs Program at the Josef Korbel School in hosting Sarah Woznick, an intensive care nurse who left the University of Colorado Hospital in January 2014 to work with Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in Gaza. Israel's Operation Protective Edge began on July 8, one day before what was to be the final day of her assignment. She decided to stay to support the MSF team during the Israeli military campaign. Her presentation focused on her experiences working with the MSF team in response to the humanitarian crisis.

September 8 – The ISIS Crisis: What Should the U.S. Do about the 'Islamic State'?

Our second event of the Fall Quarter was a timely panel discussion on the rise of the 'Islamic State' in Syria and Iraq. Featuring Christopher Hill, Dean of the Josef Korbel School and former ambassador to Iraq, Deborah Avant, Director of the Sié Chéou-Kang Center for International Security & Diplomacy at the Josef Korbel School, and CMES Director Nader Hashemi, the event was standing-room-only and drew three local television news teams to cover it. The discussion was moderated by CMES Associate Director Danny Postel and co-sponsored by the Sié Chéou-Kang Center for International Security & Diplomacy.
On September 12, CMES brought some of the leading Egypt scholars in the world to the University of Denver for a daylong conference titled What Went Wrong? Egypt’s Failed Democratic Transition. Sessions examined “The Role of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt’s Transition,” “Islamism, Liberalism, and Democratic Theory—Lessons from Egypt’s Failed Transition,” and “Ideology, Mass Media, Popular Culture, and the Public Sphere in Egypt.” The conference concluded with a screening of the Oscar-nominated documentary The Square, which tells the story of the 2011 Egyptian uprising and its aftermath through the eyes of six very different protesters, followed by a spirited panel discussion in which five of the conference participants critically reflected on the film.

The interdisciplinary conference featured historians, political scientists, media scholars, and policy experts, including Shadi Hamid of the Brookings Institution, Mohammad Fadel of the University of Toronto, Emad Shahin of Georgetown University, Andrew March of Yale University, the independent scholar Mona El-Ghobashy, Ellis Goldberg of the University of Washington, Daniel Brumberg of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), Joel Gordon of the University of Arkansas, Mohamad Elmasry of the University of North Alabama, Joshua Stacher of Kent State University, Micheline Ishay of the University of Denver’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies, and Abdullah Al-Arian of Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar.
October 1 – Sectarianization: ISIS, the Syrian Conflict & the Future of the Middle East

CMES hosted this intellectually robust forum co-sponsored by the Aspen Institute's Middle East Programs and DU's Conflict Resolution Institute, featuring three of the leading Syria scholars in the world: Joshua Landis, Director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Oklahoma, Steven Heydemann, (then) Vice President of Applied Research on Conflict at the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), and Marwa Daoudy, Assistant Professor at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service.

October 2 – Liberalism for an Age of Globalization: A Lecture by Stephen Holmes

CMES teamed up with the Political Theory Forum at the Josef Korbel School for this event with Stephen Holmes, Professor of Law at New York University (NYU) Law School and the author of The Anatomy of Antiliberalism, Passions and Constraint: On the Theory of Liberal Democracy, and The Matador's Cape: America's Reckless Response to Terror. Associate Director Danny Postel also interviewed Holmes for our CMES Conversations video series.

October 29 – Islamist Movements and the Arab Spring: A Talk by Abdullah Al-Arian

Abdullah Al-Arian, Assistant Professor of History at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar, was a Carnegie Centennial Visiting Scholar of our Center for Middle East Studies from August to December. He is the author of Answering the Call: Popular Islamic Activism in Sadat's Egypt (Oxford University Press) and he co-edits Jadaliyya's ‘Critical Currents in Islam’ page. This lecture was based partly on Al-Arian’s chapter in the new book Beyond the Arab Spring: The Evolving Ruling Bargain in the Middle East, edited by Mehran Kamrava (a volume in which CMES Director Nader Hashemi also has a chapter).
November 11 – The ISIS Crisis, Iran’s Policy Towards Iraq and Syria, and the Iranian-Saudi Rivalry: A Lecture by Mohsen Milani

On November 11, CMES hosted a packed lecture covering a wide range of interconnected issues by Mohsen Milani, Executive Director of the Center for Strategic & Diplomatic Studies and Professor of Politics at the University of South Florida. His book *The Making of Iran’s Islamic Revolution: From Monarchy to Islamic Republic* is taught in universities in North America, Europe, Japan, and Iran. He is currently writing a book about Iranian foreign policy. Ambassador Christopher Hill, Dean of the Josef Korbel School of International Studies, served as discussant.

November 22 – Special Q&A Following *Rosewater* Film Screening

CMES ended the Fall 2014 Quarter by participating in a special talk-back session following a screening of the film *Rosewater*, directed by Jon Stewart of *The Daily Show*, at the Century Theater in Boulder, Colorado. The film, which is based on the Iranian-Canadian journalist Maziar Bahari’s book *Then They Came for Me: A Family’s Story of Love, Captivity, and Survival*, tells the true story of Bahari’s arrest and brutal interrogation while covering Iran’s controversial 2009 presidential elections.

The spirited discussion following the film was led by CMES Associate Director Danny Postel (author of *Reading “Legitimation Crisis” in Tehran: Iran and the Future of Liberalism* and co-editor of *The People Reloaded: The Green Movement and the Struggle for Iran’s Future*) and the cultural critic Safa Samiezade-Yazd.
To inaugurate the Winter 2015 Quarter, CMES hosted two presentations by Professor Shafeeq Ghabra of Kuwait University, who was a Carnegie Centennial Visiting Scholar with CMES for the month of January. Ghabra was the founding president of the American University of Kuwait and is the former director of the Center for Strategic & Future Studies at Kuwait University. He is the author of *Palestinians in Kuwait: The Family and the Politics of Survival* and *Israel and the Arabs: From the Conflict of Issues to the Peace of Interests*, among other books. His columns are syndicated throughout the Middle East.

**January 12 – The Arab World Between Revolution & Counter-Revolution: A Balance Sheet**

In these timely meditations, Professor Ghabra tackled the big-picture questions that bedevil the Middle East today, placing the region’s key challenges in historical and geopolitical context.

**January 21 – Returning to Palestine: Personal Reflections on Exile, Memory and Reconciliation**

Shafeeq Ghabra was born in Kuwait in 1953 to a Palestinian family displaced in 1948 during the creation of Israel, and had his first chance ever to return to the land that shaped his entire life in 2012. He wanted to assess and understand the extent of the Palestinian tragedy. Was this just another memory of injustice, or an ongoing process of dispossession and rising new wounds? Ghabra’s visit was like a dream. He was able to visit the house of his grandfather, and came face to face with the building where his father, a doctor, worked in Haifa until 1948. He went to Khaleel (Hebron), Jerusalem, and visited refugee camps, small towns and big cities all over Palestine. During his visit Ghabra witnessed how fresh wounds deepen old ones. He discovered Palestine under Occupation, in its lost lands, around Israeli settlements and destroyed Palestinian villages. In this presentation, Ghabra shared what he experienced during his haunting visit to Palestine through a slide show that resulted from a journey to a land with a people in a traumatic condition.
January 21 – Adam Rovner Discusses His Book *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands Before Israel*

From the late 19th century through the post-Holocaust era, the world was divided between countries that tried to expel their Jewish populations and those that refused to let them in. The plight of these traumatized refugees inspired numerous proposals for Jewish states. Jews and Christians, authors and adventurers, politicians and playwrights, and rabbis and revolutionaries all worked to carve out autonomous Jewish territories in remote and often hostile locations across the globe. But only Israel emerged from dream to reality. *In the Shadow of Zion* brings to life the amazing true stories of six exotic visions of a Jewish national home outside of the biblical land of Israel. It is the only book to detail the connections between these schemes, which in turn explain the trajectory of modern Zionism. Adam Rovner is Associate Professor of English and Jewish Literature at DU.


The horrific attacks on the French satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and a kosher market in Paris sent shock waves across Europe and the West. An anti-Muslim backlash is growing, with acts of violence and vandalism against Muslims on the rise. These events have reignited smoldering cultural tensions and re-opened talk of a civilization war between Islam and the West. But this is only the most recent episode in a sequence of events stretching back over a decade. Is there an unbridgeable chasm between Islamic and liberal values? Does liberalism offer a useful framework for making sense of these issues, or is it collapsing under the weight of its internal contradictions? In this forum co-sponsored by the Center for Middle East Studies and the Center for the Study of Europe and the World, five professors from DU’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies—Micheline Ishay, Martin Rhodes, Nader Hashemi, Tom Farer, and Alan Gilbert—offered contending perspectives on these and other questions in an open, conversational format moderated by CMES Associate Director Danny Postel.
March 9 – Where is the Muslim Ghandi? A Conversation of Violence and Nonviolence in the Islamic World

CMES was honored to host the Iranian-Canadian political philosopher Ramin Jahanbegloo for this critical dialogue on one of the most vexing questions of our time. Jahanbegloo is the York-Noor Visiting Chair in Islamic Studies and Associate Professor of Political Science at York University in Toronto. His many books include *Time Will Say Nothing: A Philosopher Survives an Iranian Prison, The Clash of Intolerances, The Gandhian Moment, and Beyond Violence: Principles for an Open Century*. This event was co-sponsored by the Political Theory Forum at the Josef Korbel School & the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Denver.

Jahanbegloo also gave a talk at the University of Colorado Boulder on “**Nonviolence and the Struggle for Democracy in Iran in the Era of Nuclear Negotiations,**” which CMES co-sponsored with CU Boulder’s Department of Asian Languages and Civilizations, and sat down for an interview with Associate Director Danny Postel for the CMES Conversations video series.

February 5 – ISIS, Assad, Obama and Iraq War III: A Presentation by Journalist Reese Elrich

In early February, CMES hosted award-winning journalist and author Reese Erlich, whose most recent book is *Inside Syria: The Backstory of Their Civil War and What the World Can Expect*. “Few journalists combine history, analysis, and on-the-ground reporting quite as effectively as Reese Erlich, and he brings all three to this very important and well-written book,” wrote one reviewer. Erlich also sat down for a spirited exchange with Danny Postel for the CMES Conversations video series.
April 6 – Lebanon’s Fragile Political Balance in Jeopardy: A Lecture by George Irani

To kick off our Spring Quarter programming, CMES hosted a talk by George Irani, Associate Professor of International Relations at The American University of Kuwait, on the volatile situation in his native Lebanon amid the multiple conflicts in the region. The discussant was Andrea Stanton, Assistant Professor in DU’s Department of Religious Studies and an affiliate faculty member of the Center for Middle East Studies. This event was co-sponsored by the Conflict Resolution Institute & the Center on Rights Development at DU’s Josef Korbel School of International Studies.


For this event, CMES brought together two Syria experts, Ambassador Frederic C. Hof and Rafif Jouejati. They critically examines the international fight against ISIS and what it portends for the future of Syria.

Hof is a Resident Senior Fellow with the Atlantic Council's Rafik Hariri Center for the Middle East. Previously he was Special Advisor to President Obama on Syria and Special Coordinator for Regional Affairs in the US Department of State's Office of the Special Envoy for Middle East Peace.

Rafif Jouejati is Director of the Foundation to Restore Equality and Education in Syria (FREE-Syria) and the English-language spokesperson for the Local Coordinating Committees of Syria. She is a contributor to the book *The Syria Dilemma*, edited by Nader Hashemi and Danny Postel.

Both Ambassador Hof and Jouejati sat down for interviews for the CMES Conversations video series, and they participated in a forum on the Syrian crisis at the Colorado School of Mines, which the Center for Middle East Studies was pleased to co-sponsor.
April 10 – What Does the P5+1 Nuclear Agreement Mean for the Struggle for Democracy in Iran? A Conversation between Mehdi Noorbaksh & Nader Hashemi

Most of the discussion about the framework for a nuclear agreement that Iran and the P5+1 have signed has focused on its geopolitical implications, but what does it mean for internal Iranian politics—specifically for the country's democratic struggle? CMES was honored to host Mehdi Noorbaksh, Professor of International Affairs and Business at the Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, whose research focuses on international politics, global health, Islamic reform and democratic movements in the Middle East.

April 30 – Understanding Sectarianism: The History & Future of the Middle East’s Gordian Knot

CMES was thrilled to host this stimulating and wide-ranging lecture by Ussama Makdisi, Professor of History and Chair of Arab Studies at Rice University, whose books include The Culture of Sectarianism: Community, History, and Violence in 19th-Century Ottoman Lebanon and Faith Misplaced: the Broken Promise of U.S.-Arab Relations, 1820-2001.

May 22 – Orwellian Times in Egypt: Emad Shahin Discusses his Death Sentence, the Sisi Regime and US Policy Towards Egypt

To wrap up a busy and fruitful year of programming, CMES was honored to host Emad Shahin, on leave from his position as Professor of Public Policy at the American University in Cairo (AUC), currently living in exile in Washington, where he is Visiting Professor of Political Science at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service. Just days before this event, Shahin was sentenced to death by an Egyptian court (in absentia). Shahin provided us with a bracing perspective on his death sentence, the broader state of political repression in Egypt today, and the prospects for change in his country.
Community Outreach & Education

New Resource Pages on the CMES Website
In line with our efforts at public outreach and education, CMES has added several resource pages to our website. These pages can be reached via our homepage (du.edu/korbel/middleeast) and are divided into multiple subject areas: Islam, Liberalism & Tolerance, ISIS Resources, Sectarianism Resources, Syria Resources, Egypt Resources, and Turkey Resources. Each page features the best articles and scholarly research from the most prominent scholars and journalists on these issues, and are consistently being updated with the most relevant information.

Donation to Special Collections at the University of Denver Library
Enayat Behbehani Collection on Post-Islamic Revolution Iran
Enayat Behbehani is a former head of Tehran’s Chamber of Commerce, a former Member of Iran’s Parliament, and one of Tehran’s captains of industry. Throughout his life, Mr. Behbehani collected newspaper reports and journal articles relating to all aspects of the Iranian Revolution and its aftermath. After Mr. Behbehani’s passing, his family graciously donated this assemblage of archived materials, consisting of some 15 letter-sized boxes of meticulously compiled sources relating to the Iranian Revolution, to be a Special Collection at the University of Denver. This donation was facilitated by the historian Ali Gheissari and made possible by the generosity of the Behbehani family. It will help build our collections, archives and resources.

University College Public Enrichment Course
To complement its mission to enrich the intellectual life of the DU and Denver communities, CMES offered a collaborative 2-week enrichment course through DU’s University College. Geared toward community members, the course, co-taught by CMES Director Nader Hashemi and Associate Director Danny Postel, focused on the timely issue of the ISIS Crisis. It had the highest enrollment of any University College course that quarter, with over 90 students.
CMES BEYOND DENVER
Engagements around the U.S. & the World

A key part of our center’s mission is to engage in national and international debate on critical issues gripping the Middle East. This last year, Professor Hashemi travelled the globe giving lectures, delivering testimony, giving media interviews, and engaging the global public square.

September 27-29 – Malaysia
• Professor Hashemi delivered the keynote lecture at the Symposium on Islam, Secularism and Democracy in Malaysia, met with civil society activists in Kuala Lumpur, and gave a radio interview on the “Crisis of State and Society in the Middle East”

October 24, 2014 – Kuwait
• Professor Hashemi gave a presentation on “The Broken Politics of the Middle East and the ISIS Crisis” sponsored by the Rai Institute

November 19-20, 2014 – Ireland
Professor Hashemi had several engagements:
• Irish Parliament: Testimony on Syria & the ISIS Crisis in front of the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and International Trade
• University College Dublin: Debate on Syria and the Future of the Middle East – sponsored by Clinton Institute for American Studies
• The Institute for International & European Affairs: Lecture titled “The Menace of the ISIS: How Should the World Respond?”
• Trinity College, Dublin: Lecture on the ISIS Crisis, sponsored by the Society for International Affairs
March 16, 2015 – Spain
- Professor Hashemi spoke at a seminar on the Arab Spring, Four Years Later sponsored by Casa Arabe and Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

September 18, 2014 – San Diego
- Professor Hashemi delivered a lecture titled “Is Rouhani another Gorbachev? The Islamic Republic and the US Nuclear Crisis” at San Diego State University

February 19, 2015 – Washington, D.C.
- Professor Hashemi gave a talk on Islam and Secularism at George Washington University

March 13-14, 2015 – Kingston, Ontario
- Professor Hashemi spoke at a conference on Islamism and Post-Islamism in Muslim Societies hosted by Queen’s University

March 27-28, 2015 – New York
- Professor Hashemi spoke at a conference on Tunisia in Comparative Perspective at Columbia University

May 1-3, 2015 – Chicago
Professor Hashemi delivered 3 separate lectures at the KAM Isaiah Israel Congregation:
- “The Legacy of Colonialism and the Rise of the Modern Middle East State”
- “From the Arab Spring to the ISIS Crisis: Reflections on the Struggle for Democracy and the Persistence of Authoritarianism in the Middle East”
- “A Conversation with Rami Nashashibi on the Israel-Palestine Conflict”
In 2014, the Center for Middle East Studies launched CMES Conversations, a series of video interviews with our guest speakers and visiting scholars, with the aim of reaching a wider online audience. We sit down with some of the leading Middle East scholars, writers and activists and discuss the key issues of our time in an accessible, conversational format. Professor Hashemi and Associate Director Postel conducted 16 interviews over the last academic year, all featured online at du.edu/korbel/middleeast/videos/CMESconversations.

The last year brought stellar success for this series, with over 73,000 new views of these videos, 830 new subscribers on YouTube, and growing social media traction.

The CMES Conversations series is a great way for our visiting speakers to speak on particular issues that they are interested in, as well as a great way for our viewers to get bite sized information on complex topics related to Middle Eastern politics.

Interview with Rafif Jouejati on South Africa and the Syrian Freedom Charter

Danny Postel in conversation with George Irani about Lebanon and the state of the Middle East

Nader Hashemi in dialogue with Shafeeq Ghabra about the Arab world between revolution and counter-revolution
CMES actively cultivates relationships with other programs, departments and faculty at the University of Denver. The university’s new M.A. certificate in Religion & International Affairs is a case in point. This new program, which will official launch in the Winter 2016 Quarter, will be co-directed by Andrea Stanton, Assistant Professor in DU’s Department of Religious Studies, and CMES Director Nader Hashemi. The M.A. Certificate in Religion and International Affairs will provide students pursuing M.A. degrees in the Department of Religious Studies or the Josef Korbel School of International Studies with the opportunity to enhance their home program through interdisciplinary studies to develop specific expertise in the scholarly and professional field of religion and international affairs. We are excited to launch this program, and to begin accepting applications. For any questions on this program, please contact Professor Stanton at andrea.stanton@du.edu.

Partnership with World Denver

CMES is pleased to have formed a partnership with WorldDenver, an organization dedicated to advancing a deep understanding of global affairs. Thanks to a grant from the Global Peace and Development Charitable Trust, CMES and WorldDenver are collaborating to bring a series of high-profile speakers to Denver to address some of the critical issues of our time.

On June 9 Ambassador Robert Gallucci gave a talk titled From Iran to Pakistan to North Korea: Nuclear Weapons are Back. In early September, we brought the award-winning journalist and author Robin Wright to discuss the Iran nuclear deal. Wright is a Contributing Writer for The New Yorker and a joint fellow with the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP).
Student Support

A large part of our mission at CMES is to cultivate educational and growth opportunities for students in relation to their study of the Middle East. This past academic year, we began two initiatives to work towards that goal. The first initiative was to support more student travel to the region. Based on applications received, we were happy to support two students to do an internship and a language program abroad. We also began a Best Student Paper Award for outstanding academic achievement in the area of Middle East Studies.

Abby Harms with Syria Direct

Korbel M.A. student Abby Harms spent the summer of 2015 working in Amman, Jordan with Syria Direct, a non-profit journalism organization. Syria Direct is committed to providing timely, accurate coverage on the conflict in Syria, while simultaneously training Syrian and American journalists for work in the media industry in the Middle East. Abby’s role primarily involved financial planning. She worked as a grant-writer. She also began the practice of financial tracking and planning for the organization, helping it to run more cost-effectively. She also helped bring in funding from new sources for the organization, contributing to its long-term stability.

Best Student Paper Award

CMES has established a Best Student Paper Award to recognize, celebrate and encourage the accomplishments of students at the University of Denver who have written an outstanding paper or thesis in the area of Middle East studies. The 2014-2015 recipient of this award was David Lunde, who graduated with honors in June 2015. His thesis, “Constitutions and Democratic Consolidation: Comparing Egypt and Tunisia,” is an incisive and highly illuminating examination of a key dimension of the Arab Spring, a comparative study of the democratic transitions in Tunisia and Egypt with a focus on the constitution-writing processes in the two countries. David has written a first-rate piece of work that deserves special recognition. We will publish all winners of the Best Student Paper Award on the CMES website. David's can be found at: du.edu/korbel/media/documents/lunde-david-thesis.pdf
In June, the Center for Middle East Studies took a group of 12 graduate students from the Josef Korbel School of International Studies on a timely and eventful tour of Turkey. We arrived on June 7, the day of the country’s parliamentary elections, whose dramatic results were hailed as a watershed moment for Turkish democracy.

“The Center for Middle East Studies and the Mosaic Foundation provided a wonderful opportunity for students to learn about Turkish politics and culture. The programing was insightful and intense. This trip was fully loaded, well executed, and accommodating.”

Joan-Margaret Hodge, Korbel M.A. student

In partnership with the Multicultural Mosaic Foundation, over the next 11 days we visited Istanbul, Izmir, Ankara, Konya, Nigde, and Cappadocia, meeting with scholars, political leaders, newspaper editors, civil society activists, and members of ethnic and religious minorities (among them Armenians, Alevis, Syrians, Kurds, and Jews).

“The trip was very fast-paced, but introduced me to a variety of groups within Turkey with which I otherwise would not have interacted.”

Dan Nevins, Korbel M.A. student


Carnegie Centennial Visiting Scholars

Our Visiting Scholar position is made possible by a generous grant from the Carnegie Corporation of New York. The foundation’s Fellowships and Arab Region Programs established this grant to support social scientists from the Arab world and allow them to engage with leading American universities and work in cutting-edge research centers. We were honored that our Center for Middle East Studies here at the University of Denver was selected as one of those cutting-edge research centers. This past year our Carnegie visiting scholars contributed vibrantly to the life of our Center for Middle East Studies, through their writing, lecturing, and dynamic interactions with DU faculty and students.

Abdullah Al-Arian

Our first Visiting Scholar of the academic year, Abdullah Al-Arian, stayed with CMES between August and December of 2014. He came to us from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in Qatar, where he is Assistant Professor of History. During his sojourn with us, Abdullah wrote several articles, participated in conferences and delivered lectures at DU, the George Washington University, the annual meeting of the Middle East Studies Association (MESA), and the International Peace Institute in Vienna, Austria. He also sat down for a CMES Conversations interview with Nader Hashemi.

Shafeeq Ghabra

Shafeeq Ghabra, an Associate Professor of Political Science at Kuwait University, joined CMES for the month of January 2015. During his time with us, he gave two unique and fascinating public lectures. The first, “The Arab World Between Revolution and Counter-Revolution,” tackled the big-picture questions that bedevil the Middle East today, placing the region’s key challenges in historical and geopolitical context. The second, “Returning to Palestine: Personal Reflections on Exile, Memory and Reconciliation,” took the audience on a powerful journey through Palestinian history. Professor Ghabra also participated in our CMES Conversations series, sitting down for an interview with CMES Director Nader Hashemi.
Abdelfattah Mady
Abdelfattah Mady joined CMES for January of 2015. Mady is Assistant Professor of Political Science at Alexandria University in Egypt. He is the author and editor of several books, as well as numerous articles appearing in Democratization, the Arab Journal of Political Science, Contemporary Arab Affairs, among others. We were happy to have him join our center for a month.

Ahmed Abd Rabou
We are pleased to have Ahmed Abd Rabou, an assistant professor of comparative politics at both Cairo University and the American University in Cairo (AUC), with us throughout 2015. In his time at DU, Professor Abd Rabou has published a book, A Comparative Study of Civil-Military Relations in Egypt and Turkey (Arab Reform Initiative), articles on “The Absence of the Legislative Body and the Future of Politics in Egypt,” “The Institutionalization of Academic Freedom Violations in Egypt,” and “Decision Making in Egypt: What Has Changed Since Mubarak?” as well as a weekly column (in Arabic) for the Egyptian newspaper Elshrouk.

Professor Abd Rabou has also given multiple lectures around the country—at Yale University, Columbia University, and the Tahrir Institute for Middle East Policy in Washington. As well, he has given several media interviews, including one to Foreign Policy magazine. He has been a guest speaker in several classes in the Josef Korbel School, and will be teaching an undergraduate course in Fall 2015 on Arab Transformations. In November we will celebrate the publication of his book by hosting a lecture by Professor Abd Rabou. His year as a Carnegie Centennial Visiting Scholar with CMES has been a treat for our students and faculty.
Emad Shahin
CMES had the pleasure of hosting Emad Shahin twice in 2015, once in May and again in July. He is on leave from his position as Professor of Public Policy at the American University in Cairo (AUC) and is currently living in exile in Washington, where he is Visiting Professor of Political Science at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service Just days before he arrived in Denver, Emad was sentenced to death (in absentia) by an Egyptian court. We were honored to have him on our campus for a public dialogue about the broader state of repression in Egypt today and the prospects for change. He is the author of Political Ascent: Contemporary Islamic Movements in North Africa and editor-in-chief of the Oxford Encyclopedia of Islam and Politics.

George Irani
Georgi Irani, Associate Professor of International Relations at the American University of Kuwait, came to us as a Carnegie Centennial Visiting Scholar in April of 2015. He is the author of The Papacy and the Middle East: The Role of the Holy See in the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1962-1984 and co-editor of Regional and Ethnic Conflicts: Perspectives from the Front Lines. During his stay with us, Professor Irani gave a lecture on “Lebanon’s Fragile Political Balance in Jeopardy,” was a guest speaker in a Conflict Resolution class, and sat down for a wide-ranging interview with Danny Postel for our CMES Conversations series.
Fall 2015 Event Schedule

September 11 at 11:00 a.m.
The Iran Deal & US Foreign Policy – A Conversation with New Yorker Writer Robin Wright
Anderson Academic Commons – Special Events Room
co-sponsor: WorldDenver

September 22 at 12:00 p.m.
Denver Dialogues in Peace and Security –
A Conversation with Wendy Pearlman
Joy Burns Center Ballroom – Fritz Knoebel School of Hospitality Management
co-sponsor: Sie Cheou-Kang Center for International Security and Diplomacy

September 23 at 12:00 p.m.
Identity and Protest in the Syrian Uprising – A Lecture by Wendy Pearlman
SIE CHEOU-KANG Room 150 – Ben Cherrington Hall – Josef Korbel School

October 20 at 12:00 p.m.
How Regional Powers & Social Forces are Reconfiguring a Fractured Middle East – A Conversation Between Rami Khouri & Nader Hashemi
Anderson Academic Commons – Special Events Room

November 4 at 12:00
Democracy as Civilian Control: Civil-Military Relations in Egypt and Turkey – Carnie Centennial Lecture by Ahmed Abd Rabou
SIE CHEOU-KANG Room 150 – Ben Cherrington Hall – Josef Korbel School

November 19 at 7:00 p.m.
Buttressing the Twin Pillars: The Future of US Relations with Saudi Arabia and Iran – A Talk by Toby Matthiesen
Denver Country Club (1700 E. 1st Ave.)
co-sponsor: Denver Council on Foreign Relations.
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