



**Albert Shanker Institute**

**THE CHALLENGES FOR DEMOCRACY IN THE MIDDLE EAST:**

**THE ART OF THE POSSIBLE**

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**PRESENTERS/MODERATORS**

**Antonia Cortese**

Toni Cortese, executive vice president of the American Federation of Teachers, is a former officer of the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT). She was elected NYSUT second vice president in 1973, a position she held until 1985, when she was elected first vice president. Among her many professional activities, Cortese has served on the AFT executive committee and as a member of the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which develops and administers assessments leading to the certification of accomplished teachers. She has served as an appointee of the U.S. Department of Education to the National Assessment Governing Board which is responsible for the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP). A vice president of the national AFT for many years, she also serves as an AFT representative to the Learning First Alliance, a national coalition of major education organizations.

**David N. Dorn**

David Dorn is International Affairs Director at the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) where he has supervised the expansion of AFT international work on behalf of human and teachers' union rights and its support for the development of democratic teachers unions in emerging democracies in Eastern and Central Europe, Russia and Central America. He has overall responsibility for the development and implementation of *Education for Democracy/International (ED/I)* projects which promote educational activities that improve the teaching of democracy and civics throughout the world

**Heba F. El-Shazli**

Heba El-Shazli is the Regional Program Director for the Middle East and North Africa programs at the Solidarity Center, AFL-CIO since September 2004. El-Shazli was the deputy regional director for the Middle East and North Africa at the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) from 2001 until 2004. During her tenure at NDI, she served as NDI's resident representative in Beirut, Lebanon where she implemented programs to help develop and empower civil society organizations in Lebanon and in the region. El-Shazli has 25 years experience implementing a wide spectrum of civic and union-oriented international programs.

**Carl Gershman**

Carl Gershman is President of the National Endowment for Democracy, whose mission is to strengthen democratic institutions around the world through nongovernmental efforts, with programs in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union and Latin America. He has overseen the creation of the quarterly *Journal of Democracy*, International Forum for Democratic Studies, the Reagan-Fascell Democracy Fellows Program and took the lead in launching the World Movement for Democracy, a global network of democracy practitioners and scholars. Previously Gershman was Senior Counselor to the U.S. Representative to the United Nations, lead consultant to the National Bipartisan Commission on Central America, a Resident Scholar at Freedom House and Executive Director of Social Democrats, USA. Gershman has lectured extensively and written articles and reviews for numerous publications and received numerous orders and medals.

**Walid Hamdan**

Walid Hamdan is the senior specialist for the workers activities programs of the International Labor Organization's Regional Office for the Arab States, located in Beirut, Lebanon.

**Azza Karam**

Dr. Azza Karam serves as the Senior Policy Research Advisor at the United Nations Development Program, in the Regional Bureau for Arab States, where she co-Coordinates the Arab Human Development Report and holds the Youth, ICT, and Knowledge portfolios. As a Program Manager at the Centre for the Study of Ethnic Conflict, at the Queens University of Belfast, Karam was a consultant and trainer to various international organizations in Yemen, Uzbekistan and Northern Ireland. She has authored and published several books and articles, her books include *Transnational Political Islam; Islamisms, Women and the State; Women in Parliament: Beyond Numbers; Islam in a non-pillarized Society*; and a *Woman's Place: Religions Women as Public Actors*.

**Eugenia Kemble**

Eugenia Kemble is Executive Director of the Albert Shanker Institute, a non-profit organization endowed by the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and dedicated to publishing reports and fostering candid exchange on education, labor and democracy issues. During the course of a long career in the labor movement, Ms. Kemble served as special assistant to the late Albert Shanker, a director of the AFT's Educational Issues Dept., Executive Director of the AFL-CIO's Free Trade Union Institute (FTUI), which supported unions struggling for democracy around the world, most notably Solidarity in Poland. Leading up to her service with FTUI, she was AFL-CIO's representative with the Democracy Program, a coalition effort including the Republican Party, Democratic Party, U.S. Chambers of Commerce and the AFL-CIO, that recommended the creation of the National Endowment for Democracy. In 1998-99 she organized the start-up of the Albert Shanker Institute.

**Laith Kubba**

Laith Kubba is the Senior Director for the Middle East and North Africa at the National Endowment of Democracy. Throughout 2005, he was a senior advisor to the Iraqi P.M Jaffari and a spokesman for the Iraqi government. For the period 1993 until 1998, he was the Director of International Relations at the Al Khoei Foundation in London. Kubba had extensive involvement in Iraqi politics. In 1992, he coordinated the INC meeting in Vienna, was its spokesman and served on its first executive committee. He also served on the boards of regional institutions including the Iraq Foundation and the Arab Organization for Human Rights. He has a Bachelors degree from the University of Baghdad 1976 and a Ph.D. from the University of Wales in the United Kingdom.

**Herb Magidson**

Recently retired from his position as vice president of the American Federation of Teachers for 20 years, Herb Magidson began union work as a high school chapter chairman in the United Federation of Teachers in New York City. In 1969, he moved on to become an assistant to then UFT president, Albert Shanker. Since that time, his union career has spanned officerships of the New York State United Teachers, the New York State AFL-CIO, and pension and health insurance plans servicing union members.

**Radwan A. Masmoudi**

Dr. Radwan Masmoudi is the Founder, member of the Board, and President of the Center of the Study of Islam & Democracy, a Washington-based non-profit think tank. He is also the Editor-in-Chief of the Center's quarterly publication, *Muslim Democrat*. He has written and published several papers on the topics of democracy, diversity, human rights, and tolerance in Islam. Dr. Masmoudi was a Founding Member and President of the Tunisian Scientific Society. Masmoudi has a Ph.D. degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in robotics, automation, and control and worked for eight years as

a research engineer, senior research engineer, and advanced control engineer. In 1999, he won the prestigious George Olmsted Award.

### **Edward J. McElroy**

Edward McElroy was elected president of the American Federation of Teachers in 2004, having served as the secretary-treasurer since 1992 and as an AFT vice president since 1974, the same year Albert Shanker became the union's president. First as president of the Warwick Teachers Union and later as a state president of the Rhode Island AFL-CIO, he has been a leader in cementing teacher union ties to others within the labor movement. Having served as Al Shanker's right hand during the 1990s, McElroy is also an expert on educational and health care issues, as well as the fundamentals of labor organization and finance. He sits on numerous boards, councils and committees, among them the AFL-CIO's Executive Council. He is Chairman of the General Board of the AFL-CIO's Department of Professional Employees.

### **Dennis Ross**

Ambassador Dennis Ross is currently The Washington Institute's counselor and Ziegler distinguished fellow. Ross was U.S. point man on the peace process in both the George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton administrations and was instrumental in assisting Israelis and Palestinians to reach the 1995 Interim Agreement; successfully brokered the 1997 Hebron Accord, facilitated the 1994 Israel-Jordan peace treaty, and intensively worked to bring Israel and Syria together. Prior to his service as special Middle East coordinator, Ross served as director of the State Department's Policy Planning Staff where he played a prominent role in U.S. policy toward the former Soviet Union, the unification of Germany and its integration into NATO, arms control negotiations, and the 1991 Gulf War coalition. During the Reagan administration, he served as director of Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council staff and deputy director of the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment. Ross has published extensively on the former Soviet Union, arms control, and the greater Middle East, contributing numerous chapters to anthologies. His book *The Missing Peace: The Inside Story of the Fight for Middle East Peace* offers comprehensive analytical and personal insight into the Middle East peace process.

### **Tamara Cofman Wittes**

Tamara Cofman Wittes is Research Fellow and directs the Saban Center's new Project on Arab Democracy and Development at the Brookings Institution, which researches U.S. policy toward the challenge of Middle Eastern economic and political reform. Previously, she was Director of Programs at the Middle East Institute and Middle East Specialist at the United States Institute of Peace. She is the editor of and a contributor to *How Israelis and Palestinians Negotiate: A Cross Cultural Analysis of the Oslo Peace Process* (2005). Her forthcoming book is entitled *Freedom's Unsteady March: America's Role in Building Arab Democracy*.