

PROJECT ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND THE ARAB SPRING (POMEAS)

Project on the Middle East and the Arab Spring (POMEAS) arose in response to the upheavals that began in 2011 throughout the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as well as the subsequent developments of an unfolding regional process that mixed disappointments with opportunities. To take note of the initial promise and hopes, and to underline our continuing commitment to realize the democratic potential of the original movements against abusive authoritarian rule, we refer to this dynamic as the 'Arab Spring.'

Our intention is to initiate a forum that is open and accessible to people throughout the Middle East, as appropriate beyond. POMEAS aims to provide an open forum for reflecting and analyzing the various dimensions of the Arab Spring, both those embodying the whole range of revolutionary promises and those that embody and express a counter-revolutionary backlash. To carry out this project, we plan to sponsor research, hold conferences of invited experts, and have a publications program that includes scholarly monographs, policy briefs, and opinion editorials. We seek to have impacts on both the discourse of experts and the climate of public opinion.

POMEAS takes into account both the specific national circumstances and the global, regional, and sub-regional dimensions of the unfolding reality in the Middle East as a result of the Arab Spring. The project is also concerned with disturbing developments that challenge the authority of elections as the foundation of governmental legitimacy. Such a challenge resorts to fear tactics, street politics, and destabilization to create a crisis of legitimacy that sets the stage for a military

coup and an associated repudiation of democratically elected governments. We hope in this project to clarify the distinctions between majoritarian and republican forms of constitutional democracy, and to demonstrate the advantages for the citizenry of republicanism.

Above all, we seek to promote democratic values and humane forms of governance that are sensitive to individual and collective human rights, and seek forms of economic, social, and political development that are both equitable and respectful of the rule of law. POMEAS will also diagnose regional trends as interactive with relevant global trends, sensitive to the cyber habitat in this era of intensifying globalization. The global dangers such as climate change, water and food security, and the role of women in the Middle East inform many recent regional developments, and are often not adequately reflected in political analysis.

We believe that the processes of academic inquiry, debate, and public discussion can contribute to the emergence of a democratic political culture. We also believe that listening attentively to the voices of academics, writers, youth, women, and the general public is closely related to achieving benevolent forms of political, economic, social, and cultural development within the region. We will use our geographical site to establish a meeting point in Istanbul and but also engage with other cities in the MENA region. It is our view that culture and religion are principally responsible for whether a society evolves in an inclusive and pluralist manner, and should be reflected in political diagnosis and the assessment of policy options.

See more at: <http://www.pomeas.org/>