In November 2007, the Center for International and Regional Studies published an occasional paper entitled “Iraqi Refugees: Seeking Stability in Syria and Jordan.” The study was published in collaboration with Georgetown University’s Institute for the Study of International Migration (ISIM), one of whose senior researchers, Patricia Fagen, served as the primary author. This study is the first in a series of Occasional Papers to be published by CIRS this year.

The report sheds light on Iraqi refugees, an important but often-ignored phenomenon in today’s Middle East. Relying extensively on primary sources, field interviews and on-site observations, Dr. Fagen presents a concise and piercing study of one of the most massive population displacements the world has seen in recent decades. In addition to scholars and the larger academic community, the analyses and recommendations contained in this Occasional Paper will be greatly beneficial to the many governments involved as well as to international aid agencies and NGOs in the field.

The ISIM-CIRS study examines the conditions of the Iraqi refugees, in Syria and Jordan and also analyzes their impact on each host country’s social, political, and economic structures. In specific, the study examines the various strategies and policies used by the host countries to accommodate, absorb, or expel incoming refugees.

The paper ponders the questions: Once settled in the host countries, what are the conditions in which the refugees are likely to find themselves? And, apart from geographic proximity, what factors have resulted in a disproportionate number of refugees finding their way to either Jordan or Syria as opposed to other countries neighboring Iraq?

The report is free and can be downloaded from the CIRS website. Requests can also be sent to cirsevents@georgetown.edu.
Note from the Director

CIRS has completed another highly successful semester in which significant accomplishments were made. We have made considerable progress in all four areas of concentration — research and scholarship, events and conferences, publications, and outreach — and along the way we have greatly benefited from the assistance and efforts of numerous colleagues, students, and community members inside and outside of Education City.

In the process, we have emphasized both the depth and the quality of our initiative and the range and scope of our activities. These initiatives have ranged from a timely study of the Iraqi refugee phenomenon in Syria and Jordan to a highly productive conference on U.S.-Middle East relations, work on global environmental politics and environmental issues in Qatar, and lectures on such diverse topics as British diplomatic history, the lives of Egyptian women, Palestinian historiography, and the study of Islam in France.

We hope to be just as busy in the coming months, with our Model United Nations conference in January, our cultural programming, and our conference on “Innovation in Islam” in April. Along the way, we also plan on hosting a number of distinguished lectures on topics of local and international significance.

Ultimately, our success is measured by the degree to which we can become an active and productive member of our community. In this respect, we have been tremendously fortunate to find ourselves in a community that values what we do, and we look forward to many years of fruitful engagement with community members as we move ahead.

Sincerely,

Mehran Kamrava
Director, CIRS
Dr. Mehran Kamrava joined the Center for International and Regional Studies as Director in June 2007. He is also a Visiting Professor of Government at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. He received his PhD in Social and Political Sciences from the University of Cambridge. His specialties include political development, comparative politics, and Middle Eastern Studies.

About CIRS

The Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University’s School of Foreign Service in Qatar is guided by the principles of academic excellence, forward vision, and community engagement.

The Center’s mission revolves around five principal goals:

- To provide a forum for scholarship and research on international and regional affairs;
- To encourage in-depth examination and exchange of ideas;
- To foster thoughtful dialogue among students, scholars, and practitioners of international affairs;
- To facilitate the free flow of ideas and knowledge through publishing the products of its research, sponsoring conferences and seminars, and holding workshops designed to explore the complexities of the twenty-first century;
- To engage in outreach activities with a wide range of local, regional, and international partners.

CIRS to exhibit at ISA

International Studies Association Annual Conference
San Francisco
March 26-29, 2008

On November 12, 2007, the Center for International and Regional Studies at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar hosted an Education City campus-wide panel discussion centered on environmental issues. This was the first time that all five Education City universities came together to collaborate on a single project. The importance and urgency of the issue saw experts from varied fields pool their knowledge in order to discuss the dangers of increased environmental degradation due to industrialization and destructive human activities.

The event featured a panel of five speakers: Timothy Beach from the Center for the Environment at Georgetown University; Deborah Lange from Carnegie Mellon University; Patrick Linke from Texas A&M University at Qatar; Peter Martin from Virginia Commonwealth University School of the Arts in Qatar; and Renee Richer from Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar.

Timothy Beach’s presentation, “Global Climate Change: Peace Prizes and International Policy,” highlighted the political aspects that the environmental debate has engendered and how solutions to environmental degradation must not only be addressed by incorporating a specific political agenda. Beach described how the earth’s climate tends to follow short cycles of warm weather followed by longer periods of colder weather. According to Beach, these cycles explain the desertion of the Mayan people, as well as settlement of people along the Nile river valley.

Deborah Lange spoke from an environmental educational perspective and shared her views on how better to educate the public about finite resources and their preservation, starting with learning how to safeguard one’s own direct surroundings. Lange gave examples of how Carnegie Mellon University is a pioneer of environmental conservation through interdisciplinary research into, and communicating the need for, sustainable development.

Patrick Linke’s talk, “Water Resource Issues from an Industrial Use Perspective,” focused on the strain that increased industrialization is putting on water capacity and quality in and around Qatar. Linke suggested that it would be possible to reduce water waste through large-scale water recycling programs where the “waste water of one user may be useful to another.”

Renee Richer’s talk was entitled “Biodiversity Conservation in Qatar in the Light of Increasing Industrialization.” Richer focused on the richness of Qatar’s desert life-forms despite the harshness of the arid climate. She warned that such biodiversity would cease to exist if industrialization in Qatar increased at its current rate. Richer said that there was very little biological research in Qatar and too much focus on industrial development. This rapid degradation is devastating for the local biosphere as there are many endangered species that reside in Qatar as well as others that have not yet been identified and could become extinct without ever having been known to science.

CIRS distributed six packs of Council for Historical Organization on November 12 to symbolize a first step in environmental conservation and care. (Photo by: John Samples)

Education City Campus-Wide Panel on the Future of the Environment in the Gulf

Panel Entitled “Environmental Degradation and Conservation: Challenges and Prospects” a First Step for Qatar

Panelists Tim Beach of Georgetown, Patrick Linke of TAMU-Q, Deborah Lange of Carnegie Mellon, Peter Martin of VCU-Q, and Renee Richer of Weill Cornell prepare for the event in the VCU-Q atrium. (Photo by: John Samples)

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October 24, 2007, saw an entourage of international policymakers arrive in Doha in order to debate the state of the relationship between the Middle East and the United States at the end of the Bush Presidency.

CIRS organized the conference entitled “America and the Middle East after the Bush Presidency: The View from the Outside,” which took place in the Al Sharq Village. The conference featured local and international speakers ranging from policymakers and seasoned diplomats to current ambassadors and United Nations officials. Panelists included Steven Wright of Qatar University, Eldad Pardo of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, and Jaafar Abbas of Al Jazeera Satellite Channel.

The conference’s aim was to provide a forum for experts and scholars of international policy and diplomacy to envision the political climate that will ensue after the Bush Administration leaves office. The presentations focused on the legacy of the Bush Administration and the effects that the Iraq war and current U.S. policies would have on the already strained relations between the United States and many countries in the Middle East.

The keynote speech was given by Ambassador Thomas Pickering, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, as well as Russia, India, Israel and Jordan, among others. Pickering is a retired member of the executive council for Boeing Corporation, and currently serves as co-chair of the International Crisis Group and Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Institute for the Study of Diplomacy at Georgetown University.

Pickering spoke of the need for diplomacy and cultural understanding in order to offset any potential problems that may arise after the Bush Administration has stepped down, taking its hard-line policies regarding the Middle East with it. He noted the discrepancy between the power of the United States and its commitments to global leadership, maintaining political stability and promoting democratic ideals. Pickering also expressed his interest in seeing successful conclusions to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The public conference was preceded by a closed-door session, in which international policy leaders and experts met to review the draft “America’s Role in the World” report, a project of ISD. The participants stressed the importance of the United States’s relationship with its allies and suggested future paths that the U.S. diplomatic corps may wish to consider in order to regain standing in the eyes of the world.

### Innovation in Islam

**A two day conference featuring some of the most prominent scholars of Islamic thought, culture and history**

**April 5-6, 2008**

Four Seasons Hotel, Doha

**Keynote Address by Adonis**

“Innovation in Islam: New Directions for Humanity”

**April 5, 2008 at 6:00 pm**

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Dr. Sherene Seikaly Speaks on Vibrant Palestinian Capitalism from 1939-1948

Palestine had a vibrant and diverse economic culture during the British mandate, according to Dr. Sherene Seikaly, who is the 2007-2008 Qatar Post-Doctoral Fellow at Georgetown University’s Center for Contemporary Arab Studies in Washington, DC. On December 10, 2007, Seikaly spoke to a local audience in Doha on “A Public Good? Palestinian Businessmen and the British Colonial State 1939-1948.”

Seikaly said that contrary to popular belief, Palestinian businessmen conceived of post-colonial Palestine as a state where Jews and Palestinian Arabs could co-exist as equitable citizens, both contributing to the market. From 1939 to 1944, under British mobilization for the war effort, Palestinian exports doubled and the money supply grew sevenfold. While intense rationing and a newly developed income tax hampered many Palestinians’ daily lives, Palestinian entrepreneurs remained actively involved in the economy, petitioning the British with concerns and participating in newly developed income tax hampered many Palestinians’ daily lives. Palestinian entrepreneurs remained actively involved in the economy, petitioning the British with concerns and participating in new chambers of commerce. In fact, there were many instances of joint Jewish and Palestinian Arab chambers of commerce, including Haifa until 1921 and Jerusalem until 1936. Even after 1936 the Jerusalem chamber of commerce remained diverse, including Christians, Muslims, Armenians and many other minorities. Seikaly encouraged the audience to avoid generalized thinking about either Palestinian Arabs or Jews.

Seikaly lectured earlier in the day to students and faculty at Qatar University. She received her Ph.D. from New York University in 2007 in the fields of History and Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies. She is also the co-editor of the Arab Studies Journal.

SFSQ International Relations Club Travels to Oxford Model UN Conference

Nine SFSQ students participated in the Oxford International Model United Nations in a trip sponsored by CIRS and the Student Affairs Department at Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. From November 2-4, 2007, the students acted as delegates from Germany and Sierra Leone in the MUN conference hosted by students of Oxford University. Nicholas Nassar (SFS ’11) won the best delegate award in the African Union committee staff, the OxIMUN-trained students will act as leaders for all the Georgetown students running the conference.

The Oxford trip participants have hosted an “MUN Training Day” on Saturday November 10 in order to share their knowledge with SFSQ and high school students. In attendance were the Academic Bridge Program, Doha College, Gulf English School, as well as students from Georgetown, who used the day to hone their MUN skills.

Gary Wasserman Speaks on U.S. 2008 Elections and the Race for the White House

On October 5, 2007, CIRS hosted a luncheon at the Four Seasons Hotel in Doha in which Dr. Gary Wasserman discussed the 2008 presidential elections in the United States. Wasserman, professor of Governance at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, spoke before a small audience of Doha-based diplomats and business leaders. The event was moderated by CIRS Director Mehran Kamrava.

Dr. Wasserman began by asserting that the next presidential election will depend on the moderate and swing voters and not so much on the traditional core Republican or Democratic bases. He explained that in the last election, the Bush campaign was able to secure core Republican votes through issues such as those of terrorism and social conservatism, and ignoring those appealing to moderate voters.

The next election is likely to focus on what may be called “marginals.” These, according to Wasserman, are brief, key phrases and sound-bites that are fed to the public, by the media, the opposition or the candidates themselves, in order to the voters to have an idea of the candidate’s political agenda or personality. In other words, “moments” dispense with the need for a member of the public to have to understand an entire political doctrine from start to finish. Wasserman explained that the general public has daily concerns other than those pertaining to politics. Therefore, it is in need of these “briefs” in order to be able to keep abreast of the political situation and to understand each candidate’s general narrative, without having to follow too closely every move in the long electoral process.

Wasserman also noted that because today’s media-driven climate is “politically correct,” the public does not tolerate outright criticism of women and racial and ethnic minorities. There are, instead, particular “code-words” that are used by campaigners in order to compress an entire history of stereotypes into a single word or phrase without being directly confrontational and offensive. For example, Republicans discuss Hillary Clinton as a woman in order to reinforce traditional stereotypes of weakness and ineffective policy.

Also important to consider, according to Wasserman, is the changing nature of demographics, especially in terms of minority voters, and how this has dramatic effects on traditional political stances. These minority voters are being paid attention to and are now being campaigned to in a way that has not happened before in political history. He discussed the significant rise of the under-30 youth vote and how this meant that traditional politics will have to find new and inventive ways to accommodate this growing constituency.

As for predictions on the election’s outcome, Wasserman said he would like to see a shift in politics towards discussing the larger questions about the role of the United States in the world in broader, more encompassing terms, instead of the current focus towards targeting specific populations and the use of advertising techniques. One such crucial issue is the question of climate change and the stance regarding energy consumption and expenditure. Wasserman was optimistic about future policies regarding the environment and was confident that the public is positioning itself ahead of its politicians. He pointed out the positive changes that certain state and local governments in the United States have made with regards to legislating in favor of energy efficiency, of which building codes and environmentally-friendly mass transportation systems are prime examples.

The campaign of both candidates has been overshadowed by the current economic crisis, and how this will continue to be so for the rest of the campaign and beyond. Wasserman also emphasized the importance of how climate change will shape future US foreign policy, and how this will affect the Middle East. Wasserman also discussed the possible outcomes for November 2008.
Spotlight on Faculty: Amira Sonbol Researches “Cairo Women of the Darb”

On October 30, 2007, CIRS hosted its inaugural Monthly Dialogue Series event with a presentation by Dr. Amira Sonbol, Professor of Islamic History, Law, and Society at Georgetown University who discussed her research on Cairo women’s lives with an audience of over fifty guests, who ranged from Education City students and faculty to ambassadors and other diplomats posted in Doha.

In speaking about Cairo women of the darb—Arabic for small alley or quarter—Sonbol stressed that we must stop viewing women as a symbol of oppression in the Islamic world. On the contrary, women have been a vibrant part of life in Cairo for centuries. Only recently did the modern state’s formation begin to exclude women from professions such as medicine, manual labor, and factories. “Women worked every job you can imagine,” Sonbol said. “They had to work, at least in the darb.”

To prove this thesis, Sonbol has spent years analyzing records in Egypt, Jordan, Palestine, Turkey, and the Gulf. “Text is the product of a living society, not a dead society,” Sonbol said.

Using fatwā (judgments made in Islamic courts) and court records, Sonbol demonstrated women’s active participation in society and, for instance, the ease with which they could get a divorce in the Egyptian courts. She has also seen considerable proof of the maneuverability of women within the social hierarchy of the time, evidenced by the wealth of premarital agreements where women made very specific demands of their husbands. If these agreements were violated, the woman could easily secure a divorce in court.

Sonbol then traced the changes in laws since the British takeover and the arrival of the “modern age.” The many public setbacks that women faced during this period disproved the commonly-held belief in progress—that as time advances, human society necessarily improves. The centralization of the state in the modern era actually relegated women to the private sphere.

“Women are now blocked from jobs they could do before,” Sonbol noted. Additionally, at the beginning of the 19th century women held 40 percent of the property in Egypt; by the end they held only ten percent. She claimed.

In 1827, Muhamad Ali Pasha opened a hospital in Cairo and many women were specialized doctors. It was not until the 1893 British takeover of Egyptian schools that women were excluded from this profession. Only now are women in the Middle East regaining ground that they lost at the beginning of the modern age.

One of the results of British rule was the 1920s passage of “personal status law,” which illegalized women seeking divorce and women holding property. While many outsiders claim that women’s disadvantages stem from Islam, a deconstruction of the personal status law demonstrates that these laws were the real culprit. Only in the modern age did women come to be viewed as dependents of their husbands, and not as individuals, in the legal system.

Sonbol relayed how she first became interested in women’s history as she researched the clergy of Al Azhar. As she worked in the Egyptian archives, she discovered many documents demonstrating women’s active role in history—she began to realize that the image she held of women in the past was the wrong one.

Currently, Sonbol is working with students to collect a history of women in the Gulf. While it initially appeared that this would be constructing a history out of nothing, Sonbol has found that the scholarly study of the question of “women” needed to be reformed. Looking for women’s history was a narrow, modern approach; instead, the group is using a wider variety of sources and has found rich material, especially in Oman.

On November 8, 2007, CIRS hosted a lecture by Ambassador Stephen Day, career diplomat and former ambassador from the United Kingdom to Tunisia and Qatar. Day delivered a lecture to students in the International Relations Club on the evolution of British diplomacy since the end of the First World War, focusing on the underlying dynamics that continue to characterize the basis of British policy, globally and in relation to the Middle East.

Day has devoted much of his career to service in and study of the Middle East, and, in his current capacity as the Director of Claremont Associates, he continues to be actively involved in consulting and giving strategic advice on political and economic issues related to the region.

On December 17, 2007, the Symposium on Global Development and Faith-Inspired Organizations in the Muslim World was held at the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar. The symposium, geared toward practitioners across the Muslim world, was a consultation event co-sponsored by CIRS and the Berkley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, and the Henry R. Luce Foundation. The symposium focused on institutions; relationships among public, private, and religiously inspired actors; financing issues; and other issues such as children, education, health, and gender. The event ended with a public lecture by Dr. Hany El Banna, co-founder and president of Islamic Relief Worldwide; and Dr. Shariati Ahmad of the Islamic Development Bank.

Symposium participants included Mehran Kamrava, Director of CIRS; Salman Shaikh, Director for Policy and Research at the Office of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned; Hady Amr, Director of Brookings, Qatar; and Omnia Nou, Director of Reach Out to Asia, among other distinguished international guests.

The symposium is part of an ongoing joint Luce/School of Foreign Service multi-year research project focusing on institutions inspired by and linked to faith.

Kamrava, Director of CIRS, said that the symposium’s program “will be fully integrated into the Georgetown University curriculum and the students will benefit greatly from engaging directly with the research results and actively participating in the creation of a database concerning faith-related organizations, both governmental and non-governmental.”

According to Kamrava, the initiative is testimony to the commitment by Georgetown University and CIRS to encourage in-depth scholarship and also to provide a forum for dialogue and exchange of ideas.

The research takes place over three years; the first of which focused on the United States and concluded with a conference debating issues of faith-inspired institutions. The current year is the second stage of the investigation, which focuses on the Muslim world and the role of global Muslim-inspired institutions such as Islamic Relief, the Red Crescent Society, and the Aga Khan Network. Further phases will focus on European faith-inspired institutions in Latin America, Africa, and Asia.

The project will be completed in 2009 and the results will be published as a book.
On November 28, 2007, forty invited guests gathered in the quiet of the Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar library to listen to Professor Patrick Laude speak about “The Ambassadors of Inner Islam and the Encounter of Religions.” Laude explained how these three Ambassadors of Islam emphasized the importance of a spiritual “congeniality” with or “sympathy” toward the object of religious studies, a re-evaluation of the hermeneutic in Corbin’s works, and fully articulated in Schoon and the perennialist school, is not found in the literal sense of scholasticism but resides in the encompassing and inclusive nature of the spiritual and the philosophical understanding of the religious phenomenon.

Central to Schoon’s work is his recognition of the necessity of the multiplicity of spiritual traditions. The unity of religions espoused, to varying degrees, by these scholars, in a way that is more implicit and Christ-centered in Massignon, more representative of a broader spiritual and philosophical understanding. In fact Massignon was a foremost expositor of Shiitic theosophy, while Schuon has been recognized as the foremost exponent of the perennial philosophy based upon the principle of the “transcendent union of religions.”

Further to being representatives of Islam in the West, these thinkers represented a marginalized and forgotten aspect of Islam; they revived its spiritual and intellectual heritage. These scholars had a profound influence on some sectors of the Islamic intelligentsia especially in Turkey, South East Asia and Iran.

Laude explained how these three Ambassadors of Islam emphasized the importance of a spiritual “congeniality” with or “sympathy” toward the object of religious studies, a re-evaluation of the centrality of the poetic and the imaginative in approaching spiritual traditions, and above all the commonality and transcendent character of a universal horizon of spirituality beyond the formal differences that separate religions. As such, they saw Sufism as an embodiment of the spiritual fulfillment of Islam from a law into a spiritual way of being open to other faiths.

All three scholars’ legacy is some measure of recognition in a spiritual and metaphysical sense than all the great religious, an essential commonality that is in no way contradictory with the formal, theological, and ritual diversity that characterizes the religious world. Therefore, one lesson that can be learned from these thinkers is not only the recognition of others’ religions but also the understanding of the metaphysical and anthropological necessity of the multiplicity of spiritual traditions. The unity of religions espoused, to varying degrees, by these scholars, in a way that is more implicit and Christ-centered in Massignon, more representative of a broader spiritual and philosophical understanding.

Laude explained, the main tenets of his current research, which focuses on the contributions of three eminent European Islamic Studies scholars to Islamic and inter-religious studies. Louis Massignon (1883-1962), Henry Corbin (1903-1978) and Frithjof Schuon (1907-1998) set themselves apart from Orientalist research and the abstract detachment that was a prerequisite for scientific objectivity by demonstrating the forgotten but fertile connection between faith and scholarship. Laude explained that the spiritual realm that these scholars were interested in is one that cannot be reduced to the prevalent social or political concerns.

The mainpoints of Laude’s talk consisted of him giving a brief account of his own relationship with the subject; explaining what makes these particular scholars worthy of being named ambassadors of Islam; and explaining what lessons could be learned in relation to the co-existence of religions. All three scholars, although studying the same topic, came from different intellectual paradigms ranging from the Christian and mystical to the phenomenological and the perennialist.

The title “Ambassadors of Islam,” Laude explained, is meant to give the sense that these scholars introduced the West to Islamic ideas found in the realm of a broader spiritual and philosophical understanding. In fact Massignon was a Catholic scholar and priest who devoted his life to the study of Islam and Arabic, as he believed this language to be the language of transcendence. He was able to partake in a spirituality that extended beyond strict religious boundaries while being grounded in the Christian mysteries of faith. Corbin was steeped in German philosophy and Protestant theology, and became the prominent European expert in Shiite theosophy, while Schoon has been recognized as the foremost expositor of the perennial philosophy based upon the principle of the “transcendent union of religions.”
Spring 2008 CIRS Events

Jan 24-Jan 27  Third Annual Model United Nations Conference, Marriott Hotel, Doha

February 11  **Monthly Dialogue**: Dr. Victoria Pedrick “A Hunger for Trees: Myths of Desecration in Nature,” SFSQ Library

February 17  **Distinguished Lecture**: Dr. John Esposito, Diplomatic Club, Doha

March 3  **Monthly Dialogue**: Dr. Elzbieta Gozdziak “Child Trafficking to the United States,” SFSQ Library

April 5-6  **Conference**: “Innovation in Islam” Four Seasons Hotel, Doha

April 13-14  **Cultural Program**: Screening of Documentary “Promises”

For all event inquiries, please e-mail cirsevents@georgetown.edu.

Research Opportunities

**Visiting Scholar and Post-Doctoral Fellowship**

*CIRS offers opportunities for scholars and recent PhD recipients in all disciplines working on the area of the Middle East with priority to those working on the Gulf. For more information, please contact Naila Sherman at nhs2@georgetown.edu or visit our website.*

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CIRS values student involvement and input. Above, SFSQ students listen to Professor Amira Sonbol discuss Cairo women of the darb on October 30, 2007.