



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY
MIDDLE EAST STUDIES
2040 BROADWAY STREET
QUANTICO, VIRGINIA 22134-5067

Middle East Studies at Marine Corps University
MES Lecture Series 2010-2011

“Framing the Iranian Challenge”

Iran will remain a serious United States national security and foreign policy issue for the foreseeable future. The Marine Corps must be ready to deal with the realities of the Iranian threat that affects not only the Gulf region, but Afghanistan, the Levant, and beyond. The United States and its allies must be prepared to address the constant political and diplomatic challenges, including but not limited to Iran’s use of state terrorism and proxies like Hezbollah, its expanding capabilities for asymmetric warfare in the Gulf, its possession of long-range missiles, and its quest for nuclear weapons capabilities. At the same time, if Iran’s internal political dynamics fundamentally change its goals in the region and policies in dealing with the United States, its neighboring countries and Israel, the U.S. may have to pursue a military and diplomatic containment strategy, and it should be recognized that there are no straightforward military options when countering an Iranian threat.

Because of ongoing deployment of U.S. forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as a continued U.S. military presence in the Gulf region for the foreseeable future, there is a greater need to broaden the Marine Corps’ understanding of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and Middle East Studies at Marine Corps University (MES at MCU) has developed a project that aims to contribute towards achieving this need. The project includes three interrelated stages that will contribute to the stated need:

- 1) a lecture series that brings scholars with different areas of expertise to the Marine Corps University in order to expand the Marine Corps knowledge of Iran and the region. These experts would be made available not only for the Middle East Studies lectures or brown-bag events, but also to the various schools with-in MCU and onsite organizations at MCB Quantico for talks or lectures.
- 2) publication of a compilation of essays submitted by the lecture series participants geared for use by operational Marines (and other U.S. or allied forces) as well as for use within U.S. PME institutions.
- 3) dissemination of resources in a wide variety of media formats in order to reach the largest audience possible. Dissemination formats include: audio, and video / DVDs of the lectures as well as occasional papers, journals and newsletter articles, and other publications. These will be made available via the MES at MCU website, mail, and email to ensure greatest accessibility and widest dissemination of resources.

The lecture series would run from October 2010 thru May 2011, with the resulting publication being made available after the conclusion of the series.

The services and products provided by this project will not only provide insight into Iranian political and military structures, social and popular movements, doctrine, and national security strategy to Marines at MCU, but will also give the Marine Corps University and the MES at MCU greater visibility and credibility in the academic community, as well as throughout the armed services.