

## **Middle East and North Africa Democratization Seminar Fall 2015**

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Marine Corps University

### INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

SPEAKER: BRIGIDIER GENERAL HELEN G. PRATT, MARINE CORPS UNIVERSITY

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BGEN PRATT: Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'd like to take this opportunity to welcome you to the Middle East and North Africa Democratization Seminar, co-hosted by the Middle East Studies at the Marine Corps University and the Marine Corps University Foundation.

The seminar forms part of the Diplomacy and Statecraft instructional block at the Marine Corps War College. As a valued participant in this seminar, you join colleagues from the joint interagency, international, nongovernmental, media, academic and private-sector communities.

You have my sincere thanks for your interest and participation in this timely event.

I'd like to take this opportunity to remind our panelists and audience that this seminar is attributable. It is being recorded, and we do have the media present with us today.

This seminar builds upon the theme of the Academic Year 2014 Marine Corps University Middle East Studies lecture series. It brings together policymakers, military and civilian subject matter experts and scholars with different areas of expertise in the MENA region.

Our panelists will be discussing issues including but not limited to United States' expectations from the expansion of democratic norms and its institutions in the MENA, differences in perceptions and policies about democracy among U.S. policymakers and regional actors, and the evolution of the concept of and practice of democracy in the region, especially since 9/11.

Throughout this event, panelists from both the operational and academic spectra will provide their own unique perspectives on democratization and democracy promotion efforts in the MENA.

The wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, the effects of the popular uprising across the MENA on Egypt, and the current crisis in Syria, Iraq and Yemen have reshaped and continue to change the political and social landscape of the region.

The popular uprisings, commonly referred to as the Arab Spring, brought the hope of a new age of democracy throughout the region. However, that new age has not materialized, and the United States' enthusiasm for democracy promotion has waned.

Our panelists were selected based on their expertise, knowledge, reputation and recent experience. I am certain, as they share their observation and experiences, that they will be insightful

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and enlightening. I hope you gain from their perspectives, and I encourage you to enrich the discussion with your questions.

To our panelists, each of you bring unique experiences and expertise critical to the success of the seminar. I am grateful to each of you for coming to share your insights with us today. I especially acknowledge those of you who have traveled great distances to be here today.

Working together, we will explore our perspectives and experiences with democratization and democracy promotion in the MENA.

I thank each and every one of you for choosing to spend this day with us.

And now, I have the pleasure and the honor to introduce our guest speaker this morning, Dr. Jon Alterman.

Dr. Alterman is a senior vice president of the Center for Strategic and International Studies. He holds a Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy and is the director of the Center's Middle East program.

Prior to joining the Center for Strategic and International Studies in 2002, he served as a member of the policy-planning staff at the U.S. Department of State and as a special assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs.

He is a member of the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel and served as an expert advisor to the Iraq Study Group, also known as the Baker-Hamilton Commission.

In addition to his policy work, he teaches Middle Eastern studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. From 1993 to 1997, Dr. Alterman was the award-winning teacher at Harvard University, where he received his PhD in history. He also worked as a legislative aide to Senator Moynihan, who was responsible for foreign policy and defense.

Dr. Alterman has lectured in more than 30 countries on five continents on subjects related to the Middle East and U.S. policy. An author and editor, he received his A.B. from the Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Jon Alterman.

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