The Challenges of Transformation
Visions and Revisions of the Middle East and North Africa

International Conference
December 12-14, 2007
The Challenges of Transformation
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The states and societies of the Middle East and North Africa are confronted with many challenges emanating from local, regional and global dynamics. The effects of demographic change, the spread of the internet and satellite TV, controversial gender issues, public debates about the role of Islam in a modernizing world, the effects of migration and life in the American or European diaspora are high on the agenda. Economically, the challenges of sustainable development of rentier states are unmet as are the challenges of transforming the authoritarian states of the region.

At the same time the international relations of the Middle East underwent heavy militarization and securitization since the “war against terror” started in 2001. Thus, peaceful conflict transformation under conditions of escalating violence, occupation and external intervention remains a major challenge. In an increasingly interdependent world, these developments have their reverberations in Europe and the US where questions of Islam, migration and integration provoke heated debates.

This conference contributes to critical visions and re-visions of the Middle East and Middle Eastern Studies and innovative answers to some of the most urgent challenges in these fields:
- The Future of the State in the Middle East
- The Challenge of Social Transformation in the Middle East
- Transformations of Peace and Conflict in the Middle East
- The Challenges of Dependency and Autonomy in the Middle East
- The Challenges of Dialogue between Europe and the Middle East

Wednesday, 12-12-2007
8-10 p.m. The Challenges of Transformation - A Constructive Role for Europe in the Middle East? (Round Table)
- Chair: Layla Al-Zubaidi, Heinrich Böll Foundation, Beirut
- Rami G. Khouri, American University of Beirut
- Kerstin Müller, BÜNDNIS 90/GRÜNE*
- Andreas Michaelis, Ambassador, German Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Public Event at Berlin-Brandenburgische Akademie der Wissenschaften

Thursday, 13-12-2007
8.45 a.m. Opening
- Cilja Harders, Freie Universität Berlin

9 a.m. The Future of the State in the Middle East
- Chair: Cilja Harders, Freie Universität Berlin
- Nader Fergany, Al-Mishkat Research Centre Cairo
- Towards Freedom and Good Governance in the Arab Region
- Rami G. Khouri, American University of Beirut
- Transformation and Globalization

10.45 a.m. Coffee break

11 a.m. Contesting the State – Visions and Revisions
- Chair: Friedemann Büttrn, Freie Universität Berlin
- Oliver Schiumberge, German Development Institute Bonn
- Challenging Authoritarianism – Who and How?
- Salwa Zerrouni, Mohammed V University Rabat
- Nahed Ezzeldeen, Cairo University
- Business Groups in Egypt - Political or Economic Actors?
- Sherif Younis, Helwan University Cairo
- Transformations in the Ideological Field in Egypt After 9/11

1 p.m. Lunch break

2.30 p.m. Transformations of Societies in the Middle East
- Chair: Gudrun Krämer, Freie Universität Berlin
- Asaf Bayat, ISIM/Leiden University
- Transformation through ‘Non-Movements’ - Collective Agency under Authoritarian Rules
- Raoufa Hassan Alsharki, Sana’a University
- Gender, Islam, Transformation

4.15 p.m. Coffee break

4.45 p.m. Visions and Re-Visions of Arab Societies
- Chair: Ute Luig, Freie Universität Berlin
- Albrecht Hofheinz, University of Oslo
- The Internet, the Quest for Democracy, and the Role of the Individual in the Arab World

Friday, 14-12-2007
9 a.m. The Challenges of Iraq - Conflict, Democracy, Gender

- Chair: Tanja Börzel, Freie Universität Berlin
- Nadje al-Ali, SOAS London
- Challenging Violence and Conflict
- Reinoud Leenders, University of Amsterdam
- When Do Refugees Bring Trouble? - The Political Implications and Dimensions of the Iraqi Exodus Following the Samara Bombing

10.45 a.m. Coffee break

11 a.m. The Transformations of Conflict in the Middle East
- Chair: Ulrike Freitag, Zentrum Moderner Orient Berlin
- Muriel Asseburg, SWP Berlin
- European Approaches to Conflict Transformation in the Arab-Israeli Conflict
- Mouin Rabbani, International Crisis Group Amman
- The Challenge of Escalation and De-escalation - Conflict about Territories and Resources
- Armen Balian, Lebanese Center for Policy Studies* Conflict Transformation through NGOs - Lebanon and Morocco
- Sabine Hofmann, Freie Universität Berlin
- The Challenges of Conflict Management in the Middle East

1 p.m. Lunch break

*to be confirmed