Western Policy and the Crisis in the Middle East and North Africa

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23

9:00-9:30: Introductions and Opening Remarks
John Harriss
Hugh Roberts Western Policy in Question: Perspectives for a Critical Review

9:30-11:00 Panel I: Indices of human insecurity: Iraq and Syria (Chair: Ambassador Ronald Neumann)

John Tirman The Human Cost of War in the Middle East

The wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Yemen, Syria and elsewhere have taken an enormous human toll—civilian mortality, injuries, impoverishment, and displacement. The Iraq War has taken 600,000 lives or more since 2003; sanctions from 1990 to 2003 took hundreds of thousands as well. Five million people were displaced. The numbers for the other armed conflicts are not as egregious, though Syria is now nearing or surpassing such totals. International relations theorists and practitioners tend to discount these costs as proximate causes of further conflict. Consider, however, Iraq: the sanctions and wars fragmented security, exacerbated mistrust and sectarian conflict, boosted religious factions and institutions, and devastated social and economic infrastructure. These disruptions—not merely the absence of “political will” or rule of law—have been social, psychological, and emotional, i.e., human insecurity at its most basic. The rise of militias and the persistence of dysfunctional social and political relations are the enabling conditions under which ISIS and other factions have thrived. Similar dynamics obtain in other countries in the region.

Dawn Chatty The Syrian Humanitarian Disaster: Sustainability of Containment in the Conflict Region

The speed with which Syria disintegrated into extreme violence and armed conflict shocked the world and left the humanitarian aid regime in turmoil as agencies struggled to respond to the growing displacement crisis on Syria’s borders. It also left the neighbouring states of Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan in a quandary as to how to effectively provide protection for these people seeking refuge. None have granted the displaced refugee status; each has established temporary measures to deal with this crisis. In many cases the displaced and the host communities have not been consulted and thus tensions have quickly emerged among host communities, displaced Syrians and humanitarian policy-makers and practitioners. This presentation seeks to explore the viability of the policy of containment in
neighbouring host countries which Europe has attempted to impose upon refugees from Syria despite the ever growing burden of immobility, impoverishment and active conflict in the region.

11:15-11:30 Break

11:30-1:00 Panel II: Problems of Western Policy in the Syrian Civil War  
(Chair: Graham Fuller)

Robert Ford  Several Assumptions that Proved Wrong on Syria

Western policy towards the Syrian crisis has been informed by a number of several key assumptions. The first was that Iran's main concern in Syria (and Iraq) was and is containing Sunni extremists; the second, that Russia would not intervene directly in Syria in a big way; the third, that there could be no military solution to the Assad-opposition struggle; the fourth, that there is a military solution to the Islamic State challenge. These assumptions have turned out to be mistaken, and my presentation will make the case for this assessment and consider its implications.

Mouin Rabbani  Fail Better: the United Nations and Syria

The Syria conflict represents one of the most difficult challenges the United Nations has faced in recent decades. This paper will provide a critical examination of the world body's attempts to respond to this challenge and the reasons for its inability to produce a resolution of it. It in particular examines this question from the vantage point of the three areas of focus the United Nations identified as priorities in 2014-2015: a strategic reduction of violence; an increase in the provision of humanitarian aid; and establishing the building blocks of a meaningful political process. Each of these is analyzed against the background of not only the UN's own actions but also the broader regional and international dynamics that have increasingly dominated the Syrian conflict.

2:15-4.00 Panel III: Problems of Western Policy in the Maghreb (Chair: Hugh Roberts)

Francis Ghiles  The Tunisian Exception

Of all the revolts which swept across the Arab lands in 2011, only one, the first, has opened the door of democracy. Elsewhere bloody mayhem has followed. Tunisia was lucky in that its revolution occurred "in" the system and was not "off" the system - there were no outside actors and the Islamist party played no role in bringing down Ben Ali. Since then, outside interests, be they European, Arab or American, have coincided: no one wants the experiment to fail. The challenge this democracy in the making faces are however daunting. Security threats are threefold - national, regional and international - and they each pose their own set of problems. A flat economy hard hit by a sharp decline in tourist receipts and the very low production of phosphates and fertilizers have meant fewer jobs and a declining standard of living for many. The government is weak and dares not take bold economic reforms. That said, the geostrategic interests of Tunisia, its neighbour Algeria, which acts as the de facto guarantor of Tunisia's stability, the US and the EU coincide, for the first time in 60 years. This should encourage a serious security partnership based on dialogue and respect, something the broader Middle East has not seen from the West in two centuries.
Amr Hamzawy  
Between the war on freedom and the war against terrorism:  
the state of Egypt

In today’s Egypt, four grand illusions are propagated to repress the idea of democracy and to put it cognitively, normatively, intellectually and politically under siege. The first is the claim that the path towards democracy must obey a sequencing in which it can open up only after the prior achievement of socio-economic development rates capable of overcoming the crises resulting from underdevelopment, unemployment, poverty and illiteracy as well as the huge gaps existing at the level of incomes. The second illusion is jointly propagated by the ruling establishments and various economic, financial, bureaucratic, and political elites to suppress democratization—the thesis of ‘exceptional conditions’, which has been invoked to refer, successively, to the Arab-Israeli conflict in the 1950s and 1960s, the challenge of economic liberalization in the 1970s, and the problem of fostering economic development in the last decades. Today ‘exceptionalism’ is invoked in relation to the “war on terrorism” that Egypt is fighting in Sinai and elsewhere, and to the regional situation in the Middle East shaken by terrorism, civil wars, and sectarian strife. The third illusory claim besieging the democratic cause in Egypt is the notion of ‘national necessity’ promoted by the regime and allied elites to legitimize the current autocratic course and the human rights violations this entails and to silence individuals and groups peacefully opposing these. Finally, confusing religion and politics has systematically tended to ensure undemocratic outcomes in Egypt. Politicizing religion and theologizing politics represent the two sides of an illusion that ruling establishments, allied elites, and opposition elites alike have been employing to control citizens throughout the last decades in Egypt, and it has been renewed in multiple ways since 2011, sustaining the hegemony of successive ruling establishments, military-based and religious wing oriented alike, and undermining the prospects of democracy in the process. Egypt’s democratic transition has come to a halt. These four grand illusions must be dismantled and swept away from Egypt’s public space if the principles of democracy are to have a future.

Bernard Avishai  
Israel-Palestine: the Two-State Solution: Must It—Can It—Work?

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict has roiled the Middle East for generations. The notion that the Syrian crisis and other wars have diminished the importance of the Palestine issue is misguided. Its atmospherics continue to fuel radicalism. If the violence in Israel/Palestine grows strong and persistent, Jordan will be severely destabilized. Yet the two-state solution as we’ve understood it since before Oslo has proven impossible. There is still no alternative to two, distinct national entities in a space the size of Los Angeles, and two sovereign negotiators, but new thinking is imperative. Regional cooperation by Sunni-Arab states, along the lines of the Arab Peace Initiative can help. But geographically, and demographically, a two-state solution will also require a common security apparatus to take joint responsibility for terror; and many confederal institutions to manage a common urban infrastructure and business ecosystem, including tourism. We also need fresh thinking
about how to handle the refugee problem and the large number of settlers. Both the US and
the EU are finally coming around to the need for “separation” along the green line—just as
this is becoming irrelevant.

THURSDAY, MARCH 24

9:30-11:00 Panel V: The Islamic State and Western Responses (Chair: Dawn Chatty)

Patrick Cockburn The Islamic State at Bay

The war in Syria and Iraq is reaching a decisive stage. Islamic State still controls an area
the size of Great Britain. It is under attack from its numerous but divided enemies. They
have captured some IS-held territory with the aid of US and Russian air power, but they do
not have enough soldiers to secure their gains and the jihadis are reverting to guerrilla
warfare. Cities retaken like Ramadi, Sinjar and Kobani are in ruins and largely
uninhabitable. But the political and military landscape is changing, primarily because of
Russian military intervention last year. This guaranteed that Assad would not be defeated
and the Syrian army has been making progress against opposition of all kinds though this
does not mean that it can win a decisive victory. Only the military intervention of Turkey
would reverse this. Western policy in 2011 was to dispose of regimes it disliked by a
strange mixture of revolution and counter-revolution. There were popular uprisings against
police states in Syria, Libya, Yemen, Egypt, Bahrain and Tunisia, but the West only
intervened wholeheartedly against Gaddafi and Assad in alliance with the Sunni theocratic
autocracies of the Gulf. The results, as with the invasion of Iraq in 2003, were largely
disastrous from a Western point of view and for the inhabitants of the countries affected.
States did not fail but were destroyed and not replaced, probably because it appeared in
Washington, London and Paris that it did not much matter who took over in Baghdad,
Tripoli or Damascus. It was only slowly that the dangers of what might be termed the
"Somalianisation" of so many countries in the Middle East and North Africa became
apparent as the political and military vacuums led to the explosive growth of IS and similar
jihadi movements. Millions of migrants fleeing war and economic ruin headed for Europe.
The migrant crisis of the summer of 2015 and the Paris massacre by IS in November
showed the extent to which the general crisis in the Middle East and North Africa is now
affecting the rest of the world.

Graham Fuller Unpacking ISIS: Constituent Elements of the ISIS
Phenomenon and the Challenge for Western policy

This discussion will attempt to box and characterize ISIS with particular attention to the
following issues. What are the elements that have led to the emergence of ISIS? What are
the antecedents of the ISIS phenomenon within political Islam, the geopolitical impact of
the US invasion of Iraq, the civil war in Syria, the role and impact of contending regional
and international powers, the nature, role and significance of popular support to ISIS from
the international Muslim community, the longer range viability of the ISIS as a “state,” the
revolutionary (or traditional) character of ISIS as a socio-political phenomenon, the
prognosis for ISIS in the coming year, and its ability to metastasize outside its present area
of control. The answers to these questions have important implications for Western policy
and the paper will examine these and suggest how these should be approached
In Europe, waves of immigrants – some political refugees fleeing wars; others fleeing a system that assumes a migration of capital without bodies -- have renewed feelings of resentment towards people perceived as “outsiders.” Such political and economic uncertainty has led some politicians on a search for scapegoats in traditionally ostracized communities, like the Roma and Jews, as well as immigrants. Extremist voices are gaining political power, inspiring white Europeans to take to the streets to “claim back” their place in Europe. As a result, millions of people in Europe are feeling like strangers at home.

The goal of *Strangers at Home* – a nine segment “anthology documentary” produced by the Global Reporting Centre – challenges the traditional content by spearheading a new method of reporting. By working with a multiplicity of storytellers across different geographical, social, political and professional locations, *Strangers at Home* problematizes the simple narrative and embraces the complexity and nuance of this troubling trend. Through journalists, cartoonists, neo-fascists and every-day-youth, *Strangers at Home* provides a new means of reporting on these unfolding and multilayered issues. How is the rise of the right manifesting in different countries? Who is cast aside as “the stranger?” What does one need to do, or be, to prove loyalty and to whom? Just as importantly – why is this happening? And how is this affecting, and affected, by the majority populations in these countries?

Unlike the alarmist and reductionist international coverage -- it is not just “1938 all over again” – there are different politics and different realities. People in various European countries are responding locally to international policy: two wars in Iraq, an invasion of Afghanistan and Libya, increasingly neo-liberal economic policy coupled with the European Union’s failure to create a harmonized immigration policy. Politics is cultural and too often culture is used to explain away politics (Mamdani, 2004). The desire for a simple, digestible narrative, in the form of global news is not only inaccurate but can have real, dangerous affects on subsequent, policy discussions as can be seen most recently in response to the sexual assaults in Germany this new years eve.

The premise of *Strangers at Home* is to highlight the unfolding truths about the rise of the right in Europe through stories of those living in messy realities (Adiche, 2009; King, 2003). The project is in process and the presentation at this conference will involve highlighting pieces that best illustrate the interrelation between foreign policy in the Middle East and the current realities in Europe.

The disarray of the European Union in the face of the massive influx of Syrian refugees has thrown into relief the weakness of the EU as a collective actoer in international affairs, while President Obama’s recent reference to the United Kingdom and France as “free riders” has focused attention on the question of the role of London and Paris in the Western alliance. In this presentation I shall put forward hypotheses to explain UK policy and
French policy respectively and will argue that neither has served the European interest, quite the contrary. Three important differences between them should be noted. The first is that French policy is grounded in France’s interest as a nation-state, whereas the United Kingdom is not a nation-state and the foreign policy of its government since the end of the Cold War cannot be convincingly explained by reference to a putative national interest. The second is that a constant of French foreign policy is its concern to defend its pré-carré, that is to preserve as much as possible of its stake in and influence on its former colonies in West and North Africa, the core countries of la Francophonie, whereas the ‘British Commonwealth’ is no longer a strategic priority and preoccupation of UK governments. The third is that these two states have had different attitudes towards, and strategies for dealing with, the United States as the dominant Western power. Where France has had a strategy of negotiation, which has not precluded explicit differences (as in 2003), the United Kingdom has pursued a strategy - made possible by the common language and sanctified by invocations of the ‘special relationship’ - of investing in the American policy formation process, a strategy which precludes the explicit articulation of important differences and inhibits serious policy debate in both countries. I will argue that Western policy towards the MENA region has been profoundly vitiated by these realities.

2:00-3:30  **Panel VII: Problems of Policy Formation and Democratic Oversight**  
*(Chair: John Tirman)*

Amb. Ronald Neumann  
**Policy Implementation: Why So Difficult to Comprehend?**

There is a gap, perhaps gulf might be more descriptive, between politicians and practitioners on the one hand and academics on the other. The former speak too often to tactics and means without addressing ends; e.g. force in Syria to defeat ISIS without any concept for peace and stability in Syria. The latter, at the risk of some generalization, are far too prone to talk of ends and goals with no attention to how these are to be achieved. Realistic policy has to address both goals and means with a good deal of focus on whether the means will be politically possible and realistically adequate to the goal. Ambassador Neumann will suggest some ways that each side might help the other.

Steve Weissman  
**The Dysfunctional American Congress and U.S. Policy Towards Libya and Syria**

At a crucial moment, in September 2013, Congressional resistance helped divert the Obama administration from proposed air strikes in Syria towards a diplomatic deal to dispose of Syrian chemical weapons. Two years earlier, Congress was absent or ineffective during the entire seven month U.S. and NATO military intervention in Libya. Yet in a longer perspective, Congress as a democratic institution has suffered from the same deficiencies in policy making towards both countries. These have included: (1) a reluctance to conduct timely public debates and hold votes, (2) a willingness to parcel out significant elements of public policy to the Intelligence Committees which act in secrecy, (3) the failure of the House and Senate Foreign Affairs Committees to use their tools to establish independent perspectives on the issues, and (4) the overall decline of these Committees as resources for promoting and shaping congressional debate and monitoring implementation of any relevant legislation. In these circumstances, the Executive Branch has used its ample resources (including even its power to deceive) to render Congress largely irrelevant.
3:30-4:00  Refreshment break

4:00-5:30  Panel VIII Perspectives for Future Policy: a Panel Discussion and Debate (Moderator: John Harriss)
Participant Biographies

Bernard Avishai is an Adjunct Professor of Business at Hebrew University of Jerusalem. He lives in Jerusalem and the United States. He has taught at Duke University, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), and Dartmouth College, and was director of the Zell Entrepreneurship Program at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya in Israel. From 1998 to 2001 he was International Director of Intellectual Capital at KPMG LLP. Before this he headed product development at Monitor Group, with which he is still associated. From 1986 to 1991 he was technology editor of Harvard Business Review. A Guggenheim Fellow, Avishai holds a doctorate in political economy from the University of Toronto.

Dawn Chatty is Emeritus University Professor in Anthropology and Forced Migration and former Director of the Refugee Studies Centre, Department of International Development, University of Oxford, UK. Her research interests include coping strategies and resilience of refugee youth, tribes and tribalism, mobile pastoralism and conservation, gender and development, health, illness and culture. Her most recent books include: Dispossession and Displacement in the Modern Middle East, Cambridge University Press, 2010; Dispossession and Forced Migration in the Middle East and North Africa (eds. With Bill Finlayson), Oxford University Press, 2010. She is currently researching Syrian refugee perceptions and aspirations in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan with a grant from the British Academy.

Patrick Cockburn is an Irish journalist who has been a Middle East correspondent for the Financial Times and, since 1991, The Independent. He has also worked as a correspondent in Moscow and Washington and is a frequent contributor to the London Review of Books. He has written three books on Iraq's recent history. He won the Martha Gellhorn Prize in 2005, the James Cameron Prize in 2006, the Orwell Prize for Journalism in 2009, Foreign Commentator of the Year (Editorial Intelligence Comment Awards 2013), Foreign Affairs Journalist of the Year (British Journalism Awards 2014), Foreign Reporter of the Year (The Press Awards For 2014).

Robert Ford finished a thirty year career with the Peace Corps and the U.S. Department of State in April 2014 and now is a senior fellow at the Middle East Institute in Washington where he writes and speaks about Syria, Iraq and North Africa. He was the U.S. Ambassador to Syria 2011-2014, receiving wide recognition for his work defending Syrians' human rights in the face of the Bashar Asad regime's repression. He received the annual Profile in Courage award in 2012 from the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston for his human rights work and a Presidential Honor award in 2012 for his stewardship of the American Embassy in Damascus during a crisis period. Ford was the U.S. Ambassador in Algeria 2006-2008, boosting bilateral cooperation in education and the rule of law. Ford also served five years in Iraq helping the Iraqis establish their permanent government through three rounds of elections and preparation of a new constitution. He received from Secretary of State John Kerry in March 2014 the Distinguished Service award, the State Department's highest award. Ford has taught at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore and is a devoted fan of the Baltimore Orioles.

Graham E. Fuller is currently an independent writer, analyst, Adjunct Professor of History at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver and at Quest University in Squamish. He is a former Vice-Chairman of the National Intelligence Council at CIA, responsible for all national level strategic forecasting. He has lived and worked in the Middle East and Asia for nearly two decades. He is the author of numerous books about Middle East politics and Islamic movements including his recent “Turkey and the Arab Spring:

Francis Ghilès is senior research fellow at the Barcelona Centre for International Affairs (Cidob). He was the Financial Times’s north Africa correspondent from 1981-95, and now contributes to newspapers such as the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, Le Monde, El Pais and La Vanguardia. He is a specialist in emerging energy markets and their relationship to political trends, and has advised western governments and corporations working in North Africa.

Amr Hamzawy was a research director and senior associate at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut. His research interests include the changing dynamics of political participation in the Arab world and the role of Islamist movements in Arab politics. He is co-author, with Nathan J. Brown, of Between Religion and Politics, published in 2010, and the author of The Arab Future—Contemporary Debates on Democracy, Political Islam, and Resistance, published in 2010 (in Arabic). Hamzawy serves on the Middle East Advisory Council of Human Rights Watch, and the boards of Crisis International and the Arab Council for Social Science. He regularly contributes articles in Arabic and English to various academic journals and writes a bi-monthly op-ed for the leading Arab daily al-Hayat.

John Harriss is a social anthropologist, and Professor and Director of the School for International Studies at SFU.

Former Minister Hedi Larbi is a Visiting Scholar and researcher at the Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University. He most recently served as Advisor to the MENA Vice President at the World Bank, and from January 2014 to February 2015 served as the Minister of Economic Infrastructure and Sustainable Development in Tunisia. Mr. Larbi has over 35 years of professional experience in economic and social development as both a policy advisor and policy maker, with more than two decades of high level position in the World Bank Group. Mr. Larbi also has substantial expertise in the areas of public policy, economic and sectoral development strategies, private sector development, infrastructure services, social policies and human capital development, public finance and macroeconomic management, infrastructure (transport, water, energy, and urban services), social sectors (education, health, social protection), and more. He has developed, negotiated and supervised major economic and institutional development programs, and public and private investment operations in various social and economic sectors including major infrastructure projects and economic reforms. Mr. Larbi has an excellent knowledge of the economic, institutional, political and social challenges of the MENA region as well as of many Sub-Saharan countries. To a lesser extent, his regional experience extends to Latin American Countries and East and Central European Countries in the context of cross-support and policy advice to governments and World Bank teams. Mr. Larbi holds an MSc in Civil Engineering from the Ecole des Mines de Paris, and an Executive MBA from Harvard Business School.

Ronald E. Neumann is the President of the American Academy of Diplomacy, an organization of former senior US diplomats dedicated to improving American diplomacy. Ambassador Neumann was Ambassador to Algeria (1994-97), Bahrain (2001-04), and Afghanistan (2005-07) as well as a Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the Middle East and a senior officer in Iraq (2004-2005). Earlier he served in Senegal, the Gambia, Iran, Yemen, and the United Arab Emirates. He has returned frequently to Afghanistan since his retirement in 2007. He is the author of The Other War; Winning and Losing in Afghanistan as well as numerous articles and book chapters. He was an infantry officer in Vietnam. Awards include the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal, Army Outstanding Civilian Service Medal and State Department Superior and Meritorious medals. Ambassador Neumann holds a BA in History and MA in Political Science from the University of California at Riverside.
Shayna Plaut is the Simons Research Fellow for International Law and Human Security at the School for International Studies at Simon Fraser University. Her work focuses on how people represent themselves in their own media to create social, political and cultural change-- with a particular interest in Peoples who do not fit neatly within the traditional notions of the nation-state. Shayna has researched and worked with Romani media and refugee/immigrant (“migrant”) media since 2001. She has worked extensively in the Balkans (especially Macedonia) and Hungary as well as with Saami journalists in Sapmi. Shayna’s works spans academia, journalism and advocacy; her academic work has been published by numerous academic journals focused on human rights, journalism studies as well as regional specific issues. In addition, Shayna works within journalistic and creative mediums including serving as a senior research associate with the Global Reporting Centre.

Mouin Rabbani is a researcher and analyst specializing in the contemporary Middle East. He has previously served as Principal Political Affairs Officer with the Office of the UN Special Envoy for Syria, Head of Middle East with Crisis Management Initiative/Martti Ahtisaari Centre, and Senior Middle East Analyst and Special Advisor on Israel-Palestine with the International Crisis Group. He is Senior Fellow with the Institute for Palestine Studies, Co-Editor of Jadaliyya, Contributing Editor of Middle East Report, Associate Fellow of the European Council on Foreign Relations, and Policy Advisor to Al-Shabaka - The Palestinian Policy Network. He is also a member of the UN Mediation Roster. Rabbani has published, presented, and commented widely on Middle East issues, including for most major global media.

Dr. Hugh Roberts is the Edward Keller Professor of North African and Middle Eastern History at Tufts University, Medford, Massachusetts, USA and a specialist on North African history and politics. He took up his post at Tufts in January 2012. For academic year 2015-2016 he is also the Simons Visiting Professor in Dialogue on International Law and Human Security at Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, Canada. Between 1976 and 1997 he lectured in the School of Development Studies at the University of East Anglia, the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex, the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Berkeley and the Department of History at the School of Oriental and African Studies in the University of London. From 1997 to 2002 he was a Senior Research Fellow of the Development Studies Institute at the London School of Economics and Political Science. He has also worked outside academia, as an independent scholar and consultant on North African affairs and as Director of the International Crisis Group’s North Africa Project, based in Cairo, from 2002 to 2007 and again from February to July 2011. He is the author of The Battlefield: Algeria 1988-2002. Studies in a broken polity (Verso, 2003); Berber Government: the Kabyle polity in pre-colonial Algeria (I.B. Tauris, 2014) and Algérie-Kabylie: Études et interventions de Hugh Roberts (Algiers, Éditions Barzakh, 2014).

John Tirman is the Executive Director and a Principal Research Scientist at MIT’s Center for International Studies. Tirman is author, or coauthor and editor, of twelve books on international affairs, including, most recently, The Deaths of Others: The Fate of Civilians in America’s Wars (Oxford University Press, 2011). Earlier work includes The Fallacy of Star Wars (1984), the first important critique of strategic defense, and Spoils of War: The Human Cost of America's Arms Trade (1997). In addition, he has published more than 100 articles in periodicals such as the The Nation, Boston Globe, New York Times, Washington Post, Esquire, Wall Street Journal, and Boston Review. (For a list and archive of articles and CV, see www.johntirman.com.) Before coming to MIT in 2004, he was program director of the Social Science Research Council. From 1986 to 1999, Tirman was executive director of the Winston Foundation for World Peace, a leading funder of work to prevent nuclear war and promote non-violent resolution of conflict. In 1999-2000, Tirman was Fulbright Senior Scholar in Cyprus and produced an educational Web site on the conflict. He is a trustee of the Institute for War & Peace Reporting, and chair of the International Civil Society Action Network.
Stephen R. Weissman is an independent political scientist. He is former staff associate and director of the U.S. House of Representatives’ Subcommittee on Africa (1979-91) and Senior Governance Adviser to USAID (1995-96). He is the author of American Foreign Policy in the Congo 1960-1964 (Cornell University Press) and A Culture of Deference: Congress’s Failure of Leadership in Foreign Policy (Basic Books). Weissman has written on recent U.S. policies towards Libya, Syria, Afghanistan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo for Foreign Affairs, Intelligence and National Security, In These Times, Roll Call, Politico, The Hill and Stars and Stripes. He has taught at Fordham University, the Universite Libre du Congo, and the University of Texas at Dallas.