INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Introduction: You're listening to the Middle East Institute's podcast series. To support MEI's programs and podcasts, please donate at www.MEI.edu. Thank you for your support.

Wendy Chamberlin: Good morning. I'm Wendy Chamberlin. I'm president of the Middle East institute and I'm something else. I'm delighted to be able to welcome all of you here today for the Middle East Institute's conference on securing Egypt's future. We're honored to have so many distinguished guests. I mean, the list of people who've registered is impressive indeed, but let me recognize a few of the ambassadors from the region who will be planning, who are here and who are planning on coming here throughout the day. Ambassador Youssef Al Otaiba, of the UAE, Ambassador Hunaina Al-Mughairy of Oman, Ambassador Mohammed Al Rumaihi of Gutter, Ambassador Mohammed Al-Sharif of the Arab League. Ambassador Hudu Nuno of Bahrain, and many other diplomats from embassies in the region, officials from the U.S. government, many press people and media people, members of the Middle East Institute and guests, and for those guests who are not yet members we know you soon will be when you see the value of the programs that we're able to produce for you.

You know, it's always a little risky to hold a conference in the midst of fast changing events on a given subject, and indeed, what has happened over the last few weeks and couple of months in Egypt has changed dramatically since we began work on putting together this conference four months ago. But changes on the ground in Egypt highlight the great need for a conference like this. It's necessary as things are changing and as people are grappling to understand what those changes mean, to have discussions, to drill in and explore the key factors of what is going on. So the Middle East Institute believes that there is great value in bringing people from Cairo who are involved in what's going on, the players, activists, the commentators, who are very much involved in what's happening and bring them here, in a neutral place, where we can have face-to-face discussions. Sometimes it might be a little bit difficult to do so in Cairo at this time given everything that's been going on. So welcome. That's what we hope to accomplish today.

For those of you in the audience, however, it's a lot more than just listening. You've got a job to do today and that is during the question and answer period we're looking not you to ask provocative questions. We want to keep this a very interactive discussion today as we look to the future and how to fix Egypt in the future. We're handing the discussion… the panelists will not be given set pieces, no ten minute speeches, but rather we're handing over the panelists to four masterful moderators who will evoke and interactive discussion from each panel. And you will… I'll introduce our first moderator in a moment, but first let me tell you a little bit about what's coming up in the Middle East Institute. In addition to the weekly programs that our vice president for programs, Kate Seelye, organizes and is tracking more and

more audience every single week, we're planning the 67th Middle East Institute annual banquet and conference on November 14 and 15. Put that on your schedule. You can put it right into your smart phones right now. I think you'll find that the conference is, again, another star studded group of panelists like the one today, but at the banquet the night before, on the 14th, we will be honoring two Arabs who've made a substantial and significant impact in the world: Kuwaiti humanitarian Abdlatif Al-Hamad, who is Director General of the Arab Fund for Social and Economic Development. We will be honoring him with the Middle East Institute's Visionary Award for his work in poverty alleviation throughout the Middle East and Africa. And we will be honoring architect, Iraqi born Zaha Hadid, who is the first Muslim and the first woman to ever win one of architecture's most coveted award, The Pritzker Prize. So I think you will not want to miss that.

End of introduction