

Mehdi Hasan

Award-winning Journalist, Broadcaster, and Author;
Editor-in-Chief and Founder of Zeteo



Mehdi Hasan is the Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Zeteo, a media company dedicated to independent journalism and unfiltered news. He hosts Head to Head on Al Jazeera English, writes as a columnist for The Guardian, and hosts Mehdi Unfiltered on Zeteo. Previously, he hosted The Mehdi Hasan Show on MSNBC, was a Senior Contributor at The Intercept, presented the Al Jazeera program UpFront, and served as a Political Director at The Huffington Post UK.

Hasan is the author of Win Every Argument: The Art of Debating, Persuading, and Public Speaking (2023) and Ed: The Milibands and the Making of a Labour Leader (2012). He received the Services to Media Award at the British Muslim Awards (2014), was named one of the 100 most influential Britons on X, and is included in The Muslim 500: The World's Most Influential Muslims. He earned a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy, Politics, and Economics (PPE) from Christ Church, University of Oxford.

Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr.

Retired American Diplomat and Foreign Service Officer; Writer; Former Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs; Former US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia



Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr. (retired) is a distinguished American diplomat, defense official, and author whose career spanned more than three decades of public service, followed by leadership roles in academia, policy institutes, and the private sector. Known for his expertise in the Middle East and China, and for his candid assessments of U.S. foreign policy, Freeman remains one of the most respected voices in American diplomacy.

From 1993 to 1994, Freeman served as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, where he helped shape post-Cold War security arrangements in Europe, advanced defense relations with China, and oversaw policy on regional security in the Middle East and Asia. From 1989 to 1992, he was the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, leading the embassy through the Persian Gulf War and managing one of America's largest overseas missions. He previously served as Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires in Beijing (1981-1984) and Bangkok (1984-1986). In 1972, he served as the principal American interpreter during President Richard Nixon's historic visit to China.

Since 1995, Ambassador Freeman has served as Chairman of the Board of Projects International, Inc., a Washington-based business development firm. He also served as Co-Chair of the United States China Policy Foundation, President of the Middle East Policy Council, and Vice Chair of the Atlantic Council of the United States. More recently, he served as a Senior Fellow and Visiting Scholar at Brown University's Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs.

Freeman earned his B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School. He is the author of several influential works, including *The Diplomat's Dictionary*, *Arts of Power: Statecraft and Diplomacy*, *America's Misadventures in the Middle East*, *Interesting Times: China, America, and the Shifting Balance of Prestige*, and *America's Continuing Misadventures in the Middle East*.

His achievements have been recognized with the Department of Defense Distinguished Public Service Award (1994), election to the American Academy of Diplomacy (1995), and nomination to chair the National Intelligence Council (2009). A linguist fluent in Chinese, Spanish, and French, with working knowledge of Arabic, Freeman is widely regarded as both a practitioner of diplomacy and a critic of U.S. foreign policy.

Noura Erakat

Human Rights Attorney and Legal Scholar; Professor in the Department of Africana Studies and the Program in Criminal Justice, Rutgers University

X @4noura



Noura Erakat is a human rights attorney and Professor at Rutgers University in the Department of Africana Studies and the Program in Criminal Justice. She is a Co-Founding Editor of *Jadaliyya* and an Editorial Committee member of the *Journal of Palestine Studies*. Erakat is the author of *Justice for Some: Law and the Question of Palestine* (Stanford University Press, 2019), which received the Palestine Book Award and the Independent Publishers Book Award's Bronze Medal in Current Events/Foreign Affairs. She earned her J.D. and B.A. from the University of California, Berkeley, an LLM in National Security from Georgetown Law School and a LLM in Legal Education from Temple Beaseley School of Law. In 2022, the Marguarite Casey Foundation selected her as a Freedom Scholar and she was awarded the Amnesty International Chair from the University of Ghent in 2023.

Jasmine El-Gamal

Founder and Director, Mindwork Strategies; Creator and Host, *The View From Here* Podcast; Former Pentagon Middle East Advisor; National Security and Middle East Expert

X @jasmineelgamal



Jasmine El-Gamal is the Founder of Mindwork Strategies, a consulting firm that applies human-centered approaches to policy and communications. She previously served as a Middle East Policy Advisor at the Pentagon, Acting Chief of Staff for the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Middle East Policy, Senior Fellow at the Atlantic Council, Visiting Fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations, and as a consultant to the United Nations and European Union. El-Gamal hosts the podcast *The View From Here*. She has been recognized with several awards for her contributions to U.S. foreign policy. She earned a master's degree in International Relations from Georgetown University.

Nader Hashemi

Director of the Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding and an Associate Professor of Middle East and Islamic Politics at the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University

X @naderalhashemi



Nader Hashemi is Director of the Alwaleed Center for Muslim-Christian Understanding and Associate Professor of Middle East and Islamic Politics at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service. He was previously the founding Director of the Center for Middle East Studies at the University of Denver, a Visiting Scholar at the University of Cambridge, and a Visiting Assistant Professor at the University of California, Los Angeles. Hashemi is the author of *Islam, Secularism, and Liberal Democracy: Toward a Democratic Theory for Muslim Societies* (Oxford University Press) and co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook on Islam and Secularism* (Oxford University Press). He earned a Master's in International Affairs from Carleton University and a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University of Toronto.

Khalil E. Jahshan

Executive Director, Arab Center Washington DC

X @KhalilEJahshan



Khalil E. Jahshan is a Palestinian American political analyst and media commentator. He serves as Executive Director of Arab Center Washington DC. Between 2004 and 2013, he was a Lecturer in International Studies and Languages at Pepperdine University and Executive Director of Pepperdine's Seaver College Washington DC Internship Program. Previously, Jahshan served as Executive Vice President of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC) and Director of its government affairs affiliate, National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA)-ADC.

Throughout his career, he held numerous leadership positions in Arab American organizations, including Vice President of the American Committee on Jerusalem, President of the National Association of Arab Americans, National Director of the Association of Arab-American University Graduates, Assistant Director of the Palestine Research and Educational Center, and Lecturer in Arabic at the University of Chicago Extension and at Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois. Jahshan also served on boards of directors and advisory boards of several Middle East-oriented organizations including ANERA, MIFTAH, and Search for Common Ground. He appears regularly as a political commentator on Arab and American media outlets.

Patricia Karam

Non-resident Fellow, Arab Center Washington DC



X @PatriciaJKaram

Patricia Karam is a Non-resident Fellow at Arab Center Washington DC. She held multiple senior managerial positions in nongovernmental organizations over the past 20 years, working at the nexus of problem analysis, policy formulation, and impactful program implementation aimed at social and policy change in a range of complex, conflict-ridden settings across the globe. Most recently, Karam was Middle East North Africa (MENA) Regional Director at the International Republican Institute, where she was responsible for the strategic oversight and leadership of a multimillion-dollar portfolio of programs focused on citizen-responsive governance, political party development, legislative strengthening, and civil society capacity-building.

Prior to that, as MENA Director at the Natural Resource Governance Institute, Karam was responsible for research, advocacy, grant-making, and technical assistance projects aimed at improving natural resource governance managed through country offices she established in Lebanon, Iraq, Tunisia, and Libya. As a deputy director at the International Center for Transitional Justice, she oversaw educational transitional justice programs and spearheaded the expansion of a Documentation Affinity Group, a global network of action-oriented and grassroots documentation-focused human rights groups. She also held a combination of senior management, fundraising, and grant-making roles at the US Institute of Peace, Iraq Foundation, the Iraqi Embassy, and New York University's Trauma Studies Program.

Karam's research expertise covers political party development, conflict-mitigation, peacebuilding and transitions, good governance and anti-corruption, natural resource management, transitional justice and human rights, and gender/women's rights and empowerment. She has published widely on the politics of Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran, and North Africa, as well as on great power competition and the dynamics of authoritarianism and conflict in the broader Middle East region. She holds a dual Political Science/Religious Studies BA from Brown University and an MSFS degree with an Arab Studies concentration from Georgetown University. Her PhD work at New York University revolved around identity politics in the Western Sahara.

Tamara Kharroub

Deputy Executive Director and Senior Fellow,
Arab Center Washington DC

X @tamarakharroub1



Tamara Kharroub is the Deputy Executive Director and Senior Fellow at Arab Center Washington DC. Her research work focuses on the intersection of technology and human rights in the Middle East and North Africa and on US policy toward Palestine/Israel. She publishes research and policy analysis papers and editorials exploring the role of media and communication technology in the political process including issues of digital authoritarianism, disinformation, cyber power, and AI-assisted warfare. She also works on research focusing on Palestine/Israel, human rights, identity politics, women's rights, and US foreign policy in the Middle East and North Africa. Kharroub has published chapters and papers in several books and academic journals, contributed analyses to various media outlets, and spoke at international conferences (such as at the UN), on issues related to Palestine, technology, and human rights. Kharroub holds a PhD from Indiana University Bloomington and an MA from the University of Westminster, and is the recipient of several awards and fellowships.

Laurie King

Member of the Board of Directors, Arab Center Washington DC

X @Zinjabeelah



Laurie King, PhD, is a cultural anthropologist and human rights advocate focusing on Palestine and Lebanon. She is a Teaching Professor in Georgetown University's Department of Anthropology. King conducted her doctoral fieldwork on a Fulbright grant in Nazareth (1991–1993), examining political identity, urban governance, and affect among Palestinian citizens of Israel. From 1993–1998, she lived in Beirut, researching post-war reconciliation, human rights, and urban reconstruction while writing as a journalist. She later served as editor-in-chief of Middle East Report (1998–2001), taught at the University of Victoria, and was managing editor of the Journal of Palestine Studies (2007–2009). A co-founder of The Electronic Intifada, she also coordinated media and outreach for the International Committee for the Victims of Sabra and Shatila during the legal effort in Belgium to prosecute those responsible for the 1982 massacres. King is completing a book, *Universal Jurisdiction for Humanitarian Crimes: A Retrospective Ethnography of Belgium's Legal Experiment*, an ethnographic account of the Sabra and Shatila survivors' case (2000–2003).

Josh Paul

Co-Founder and Director, A New Policy; Former Director in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs, US Department of State

X @anewpolicyorg



Josh Paul is the Co-Founder of A New Policy, an organization dedicated to transforming American foreign policy toward Israel/Palestine to reflect American values and foundational principles of liberty, equality, democracy, and human rights. He resigned from the U.S. Department of State in 2023 after more than a decade as a Director in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs. His prior work includes security sector reform in Iraq and the West Bank, positions with the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the U.S. Army Staff, and service as a Military Legislative Assistant for a Member of the House Armed Services Committee. He holds master's degrees from Georgetown University and the University of St Andrews.

George R. Salem

Member of the Board of Directors, Arab Center Washington DC



A highly regarded and well-respected legal expert on labor and Middle East issues, George Salem has had a long career working in government and the private sector. He has served on numerous nonprofit boards and commissions. On behalf of the Bush Administration, Mr. Salem was an official observer to the Palestinian elections held in February 2005; he also served as President George W. Bush's representative to the funeral of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat. In 1992 Mr. Salem received the Ellis Island Medal of Honor. The award is presented annually to Americans of diverse origins for their outstanding contributions to their own ethnic groups and to American society. In November 2005 he entered into a relationship as Strategic Advisor with DLA Piper, where he focuses on assisting in the development of the firm's Middle East work and US Department of Labor practices.

Shibley Telhami

Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development and Director of the Critical Issues Poll, University of Maryland; Member of the Academic Advisory Board, Arab Center Washington DC

X @ShibleyTelhami



Shibley Telhami is the Anwar Sadat Professor for Peace and Development, the Director of the University of Maryland's Critical Issues Poll, and a Distinguished Scholar-Teacher. He is also a Nonresident Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. Before coming to the University of Maryland, he taught at several universities, including the University of California at Berkeley, where he received his doctorate in political science. He has authored and edited numerous books, including one forthcoming book: *Peace Derailed: Obama, Trump, Biden, and the Decline of Diplomacy on Israel/Palestine, 2011-2024* (co-authored). His most recent book is a co-edited with contributions volume, *The One State Reality: What is Israel/Palestine?* which was published in March 2023 with Cornell University Press. He has advised every U.S. administration from George H.W. Bush to Barack Obama. Telhami was selected by the Carnegie Corporation of New York along with the New York Times as one of the "Great Immigrants" for 2013 and the Washingtonian Magazine listed him as one of the "Most Influential People on Foreign Affairs" in both 2022 and 2023. He is also the recipient of many awards including the University of Maryland's Distinguished Service Award and the University of Maryland's Honors College Outstanding Faculty Award.

Ishaan Tharoor

Foreign Affairs Columnist and Anchor of Today's WorldView Column, The Washington Post

X @ishaantharoor



Ishaan Tharoor is a foreign affairs columnist and anchor of Today's WorldView at The Washington Post. He previously served as a senior editor and correspondent at TIME magazine, where he covered international affairs from Hong Kong and New York. Tharoor has also taught a seminar on "Global Affairs in the Digital Age" at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service. He received the 2021 Arthur Ross Media Award in Commentary from the American Academy of Diplomacy and the 2024 Ted Sorensen Prize for Global Leadership from Network 20/20. He earned his Bachelor of Arts in History and Ethnicity, Race, and Migration from Yale University.