



Center for Middle East and Global Order (CMEG)

The Center for Middle East and Global Order (CMEG)

is a Berlin-headquartered independent transnational think-tank devoted to exploring transformations in Iran, the Middle East, and the world order.

Our **mission** is to provide cutting-edge analyses toward better understanding these ongoing geopolitical and internal power shifts and their dynamics, while promoting sustainable peace and development for the Middle East through a new foreign policy that reconciles interests and values.





CMEG's *raison d'être*

Exploring Transformations – in Iran, the Middle East, and the World Order

The Middle East (West Asia and North Africa) is facing both *major socio-political and geopolitical transformations*. Most recently, Iran has been engulfed in a revolutionary process, harboring the potential for historic change in the country, which will have wider regional and international implications, in terms of security, diplomacy, political economy, and inter-state and sub-state interactions. This is reminiscent of, if not necessarily congruent with, the developments in the Arab region (“Arab Spring” uprisings). In both contexts, popular protests have been triggered and sustained by structural socio-economic and political grievances, which continue to imperil the dominance of authoritarian rule. This presents a formidable challenge to the long-held view that “authoritarian stability” underpins order in the Middle East, an assumption which has been the key paradigm of Western foreign policy toward the region.

Geopolitically, in an arguably non-American-dominated Middle East, *new alignments* in the region’s multipolar politics are slowly but surely forming. These new alignments can have far-reaching consequences for the post-U.S.-dominated order. Meanwhile, the region remains the world’s hydrocarbon lifeline, which places it in the eye of the storm of global power shifts.

As a result, these arguably epochal transformations in the Middle East with their *long-term revolutionary potential* are massively impacting the region’s very stability, amid geopolitical volatility and re-alignments as the U.S. is relatively shifting attention away to great-power competition with China.

On the global stage, the post-unipolar world has seen a rebalancing of U.S. global power and the (re-)emergence of non-Western great-powers. Russia’s aggression against Ukraine following the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the pace of great-power rivalries and competition in a post-unipolar world order that is shaped by ongoing geo-economic and geopolitical power shifts.

So far, this global power shift has been characterized by the economic center of gravity moving from the Atlantic to the Pacific. But the resulting redistribution of geopolitical power is less linear and more complex. Also in this context, the rationale for a new Western foreign-policy strategy toward autocratic powers has emerged. Rising criticism of the West’s “authoritarian stability” approach has led some governments to proclaim a human-rights-centered or feminist foreign policy, the implementation of which requires reconciling values with interests.

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Iran, on its part, remains key not only to reducing regional geopolitical tensions but also to opening the doors to positive regional transformation after a decade of stagnation. Iran and its regional peers by the same token are also key participants in the drama of global power shifts that is witnessing the return of major Asian powers to the Middle East regional system. The novel protests in Iran in 2022/23, building on mass dissent in 2009, 2018 and 2019, arguably reflect an *Iranian long-term revolutionary process*, which can potentially rewrite the rules of state–society relations for the wider region.

Externally, Iran's ever closer non-transparent long-term partnerships with China and Russia will not only affect the evolution of global order, the place of the U.S. and the EU within it, and the country's own development trajectory, but is also raising tremendous societal concerns over Tehran's dealings with Beijing and Moscow.

Combining these threads, CMEG looks into the very nature of ties, interactions, and dynamics between on the one hand the Middle East in general and Iran in particular, and on the other, Western (the U.S. and the EU) as well as non-Western (China and Russia) great-powers. In brief, ***how are transformations in the strategically significant Middle East region shaping a world order in transition?***

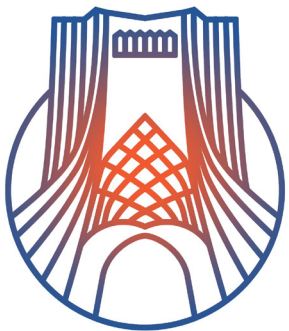


#IranFutures Program: CMEG's flagship

#IranFutures – An Unparalleled Program on a Global Scale

Since fall 2022, Iran has witnessed the revolutionary “woman, life, freedom” movement calling for regime change, engulfing the country in a revolutionary process against the backdrop of more frequent and radical nationwide protests over the last half a decade.

In an unparalleled way, CMEG is best positioned to provide independent high-quality assessments over a number of key internal and external developments that weigh on this *revolutionary process and the country's trajectory* more generally. CMEG's core team has a strong Iran expertise focus, spanning all relevant areas of concern: foreign policy and geopolitics (regional and global), the nuclear issue, domestic politics and popular protests, socio-economic development, ecological sustainability as well as civil society and human rights.



Iran
Futures
Program

CMEG
#IranFutures

Whom are we addressing?

! Political decision-makers

who need to understand the mid- and long-term challenges and opportunities to devise adequate and sustainable policies that remain effective “beyond the day.”

! Private businesses

which need to be provided with honest and reliable assessments over the risks and challenges affecting their trade and investments in the mid- and long-term.

! The media

which need independent expert opinion and analysis in an otherwise too politically motivated environment.

! International non-governmental organizations

which are increasingly playing an important developmental and humanitarian role in the Middle East, and which need accurate assessments of their interventions, especially those that have a political aim, and independent expert analysis that can support them in designing more effective programs.

! Publications and public events

through its publications and public events, CMEG aims at engaging the wider public with unbiased analysis of key topics and events.

! Middle Eastern audiences

through select publications in Persian and Arabic.



What do we offer?

- ! Regular analyses on key developments as well as instant commentary on unfolding events - published on the CMEG website (as »CMEG Brief« or »CMEG Paper«) & on *The Middle East and Global Review*, a CMEG publication platform hosted on the website of the Global Policy Journal – a world-leading outlet ensuring extraordinary visibility of CMEG's work.
- ! A number of regularly published CMEG strategic bulletins and risk assessments, which cover central areas of concern for and specifically tailored to the needs of policymakers, businesses, and the general public. The topics range from examining Iran's revolutionary process and internal developments all the way to Middle East geopolitics and Tehran's dealings with non-Western great powers, as well as strategic foresights for Iran and the Middle East.
- ! Regular public events and webinars with experts discussing new developments – in English, German, and occasionally Persian.
- ! Tailor-made risk assessments and consultancies, based on comprehensive and deep analyses, including program evaluations, strategic forecasts, sectoral economic analysis, and conflict mitigation and management services.
- ! Coaching and training tailored for foreign-service staff, international organizations, and civil-society actors.



Our unique international network. Informing sustainable foreign policy.

Our work is squarely situated at the intersection of academia and policy. Relying on a unique international network of renowned senior and junior experts, who span various language and disciplinary borders, CMEG's mission is to produce academically grounded policy-relevant research with an analytic focus on regional and global geopolitics, states' political economy, socio-economic parameters, and domestic political dynamics "from below."

Most significantly, it aims to pursue capacity-building through becoming a second home to young scholars and policy analysts from the Middle East, whether they are based there or abroad, who are familiar with the Western or global policy terrain and at the same time deeply knowledgeable about the region and are proficient in navigating the intricacies of its culture and language

We believe that only truly independent specialists can provide informed and unbiased analytical expertise that deserves its name and opens new pathways for tailored, effective, and sustainable policy-making that reconciles interests and values – and thus adheres to the ideals of a human rights-based or feminist



Why independence and sustainability are at the core of our mission.

Independent, reliable, sustainable – these are the core values and qualities that steer CMEG’s work with academic and policy institutions, governments, businesses, the media, and international non-governmental organizations.

Particularly, the field of Middle East expert opinion is saturated with pundits whose independence from governments and other vested interests can barely be assured. Hence, their analyses are often a mere reflection of views held by powerful and special interest groups and factions, and therefore stop short of addressing deeply rooted and structural problems that sit uncomfortably with those groups’ narrow interests. As a case in point, the Arab uprisings of 2010/11 as well as the recent Iran protests took the bulk of observers and experts by surprise, particularly those who shared the long-held paradigm of authoritarian stability. In contrast, those observers who had devoted their attention to the multitude of structural malaise affecting the countries in question had conceived the outbreak of popular revolts to be only a matter of time.

Consequently, there is a strong likelihood that effective policies cannot be envisioned, if they rely on such selective takes. Understanding the challenges and opportunities related to the ongoing transformations on the Middle East and the world order levels requires a fresh and candid lens.

Therefore, CMEG aims to provide first-class analysis on dynamics, structural processes, and developments that define the Middle East’s fate – rather than merely focusing on political figures and institutions that, as we have seen with the Arab uprisings, can undergo unexpected and swift changes. Such an approach is all the more necessary if one is to identify continuity and change within the region upon which any effective foreign and development policies can be designed.

We believe that only truly independent specialists can provide informed and unbiased analytical expertise that deserves its name and opens new pathways for tailored, effective, and sustainable policy-making that reconciles interests and values – and thus adheres to the ideals of a human rights-based or feminist foreign policy as proclaimed by a growing number of Western and non-Western governments.

Our philosophy is that ideas must continuously be questioned and challenged, which crucially involves speaking truth to power.

CMEG's twin pillars

| Sustainable Development in Iran and the Middle East: The Fate of “Authoritarian Stability”

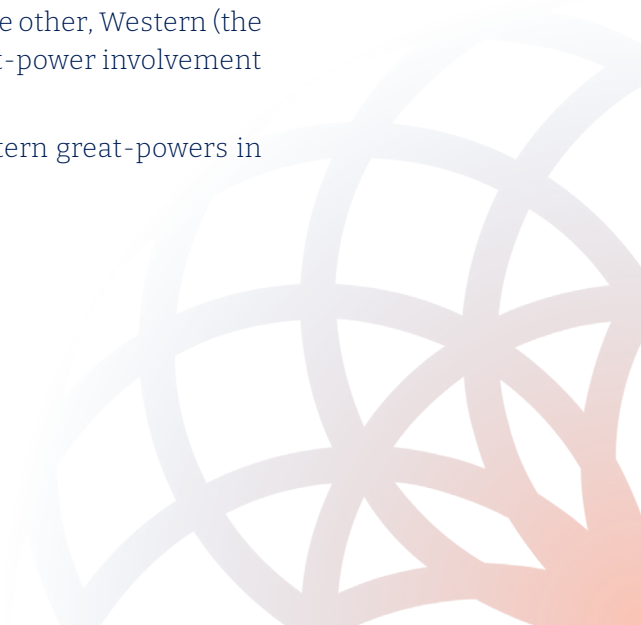
Given its strategic significance, the Middle East continues to invite great-power involvement, both from the West and the East. As such, experiences and lessons from these interactions can inform current debates on the emerging new world order and the nature of great-power involvement in the Middle East against the backdrop of heightened great-power rivalry. These insights shall also contribute to a better understanding of the post-unipolar world, its functioning and dynamics.

CMEG's first pillar of inquiry looks into the state of and potentials for sustainable development in the Middle East, with a focus on Iran, and its key components, namely economic, social, and ecological. By doing so, it also sheds light on the state of “authoritarian stability” in this crucial region, based upon the realization of the intimate connection that exists between developmental issues and political stability, as witnessed with the long-term revolutionary processes in Iran and the Arab world (the “Arab Spring” uprisings).

| The Changing Geography of Global Power – and the Role of the Middle East

CMEG's second pillar of inquiry explores the interconnection between, on one hand, the Middle East and, on the other, Western (the U.S. and the EU) as well as non-Western great-powers (China, Russia, and India). It specifically examines great-power involvement in the Middle East, inter-regional linkages and dependencies between the region and those great-powers.

Moreover, it looks at debates within the Middle East's state–society complexes about the role of non-Western great-powers in their countries.



Who are we?

Founder & Director

Dr. Ali Fathollah-Nejad (Berlin)

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Darius Regenhardt (Munich/Dubai)

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Distinguished Fellows

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Prof. Anoush Ehteshami (Professor of International Relations & Nasser al-Mohammad al-Sabah Chair in International Relations, Durham University, UK)

Prof. Azadeh Kian (Distinguished Professor of Sociology & Director, Center for Gender and Feminist Studies and Research, Université Paris Cité)

Dr. David Motadel (Associate Professor of International History, LSE & Fellow, Royal Historical Society)

Prof. em. Nayereh Tohidi (Professor, Department of Gender and Women's Studies & Founding Director, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, California State University, Northridge)

Senior Associate Fellows (*selection*)

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Dr. Amro Ali (Cairo)

Dr. Sara Bazoobandi (Hamburg)

Dr. Dr. Joseph Daher (Lausanne & Florence)

Dr. Georges Fahmi (Cairo & Florence)

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Dr. Andreas Krieg (London)

Dr. Siavash Saffari (Seoul)

Dr. Veli Yadirgi (London)

Prof. Vivienne Matthies-Boon (Nijmegen, NL)

Dr. Tareq Sydiq (Marburg / Berlin)

Who are we?

Advisory Board

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Marc Navarro (Co-Founder, Instituto Symposium, Berlin)

Ann Cathrin Riedel (Chair, LOAD e.V. – Association for Liberal Internet Policy, Berlin)

Julia Scheerer (Project Manager, Program Shaping Sustainable Economies, Bertelsmann Stiftung, Germany)

Christoph Lanz (Trustee, Thomson Foundation, UK & Head of Board, Thomson Media, Germany & fmr. longtime editor-in-chief, Deutsche Welle [DW] Berlin)

In memoriam

† Dr. Ahmed Badawi (FU Berlin)

Co-Initiator of CMEG



Exploring Transformations & Promoting
a Foreign Policy that Reconciles
Interests and Values.

Dedicated to Sustainable Peace
and Development.



CMEG

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Middle East and
Global Order



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