

**SARAH ELISABETH YERKES**  
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**EDUCATION**

**GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY**

*Ph.D.*, Government

*Dissertation*: “Pluralism, Co-optation and Capture: Navigating the Civil Society Arena in the Arab World”

**HARVARD UNIVERSITY**

*A.M.*, Middle Eastern Studies, 2003

**EMORY UNIVERSITY**

*B.A.*, *high honors*, International Studies (Political Science) and Middle Eastern Studies, 2001

**EXPERIENCE**

**Visiting Fellow, Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, 2015-2016**

Conducted original research and analysis on the Middle East with a focus on Tunisia, Egypt, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Completed a long-form research project on youth political participation in Tunisia to be published February 2017. Participated in Brookings and external roundtables. Wrote short-form opinion and analysis pieces. Provided analysis on demand for external American and international media (print, television, radio, podcast).

**Member, Policy Planning Staff, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of State, 2014-2015**

Developed and coordinated U.S. policy toward North Africa (Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia). Provided independent policy analysis and advice for the Secretary of State on regional issues related to the Middle East and North Africa and functional issues related to civil society and democratic transitions. Identified policy gaps and initiated policy planning and formulation to fill these gaps. Provided recommendations and alternative courses of action to the Secretary of State. Acted as a liaison with nongovernmental organizations, the academic community, think tanks, and others to exchange expert views on matters relevant to U.S. policy towards North Africa and to ensure that broad public opinion informs the policy formulation process.

**Foreign Affairs Officer, Office of Israeli and Palestinian Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 2012-2015**

Lead action officer for civil society, human rights, religious freedom, trafficking-in-persons, incitement to violence, and public diplomacy. Developed and coordinated comprehensive USG strategy to monitor and combat incitement to violence. Worked with key offices and agencies to increase senior level engagement with civil society and domestic outreach to key constituencies. Drafted, edited, and cleared on public remarks including talking points, press guidance, and press releases for senior Department of State officials, including the Secretary, Deputy Secretaries, and others. Built relationships with relevant individuals outside of the U.S. Government and solicited feedback from the academic, think tank, and NGO communities on U.S. policy toward Israel and the Palestinians.

**Geopolitical Research Analyst, U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Staff Strategic Plans and Policy Directorate (J5), 2013**

Conducted analysis and made recommendations via memos, white papers, and oral briefings on highly complex and abstract issues of DoD strategy, U.S. foreign policy, and national

security goals and objectives. Analyzed intelligence and open source media to identify dissenting and contrarian views and provided policy options and alternatives to help forecast, initiate and respond to strategic-level analysis. Coordinated and executed Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Strategic Seminars including vetting outside scholars, preparing read ahead materials, briefing CJCS prior to the seminar, and writing/circulating a readout. Prepared Joint Staff principals for high-level interagency meetings (DCs and PCs) including writing strategy papers, drafting read ahead materials, briefing principals (Vice Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff, Director J5, Vice Director J5). Worked with interagency colleagues at NSS, OSD, State, and USAID in developing the Joint Staff input to the National Security Strategy.

**Research Assistant to Dr. Daniel Byman, Georgetown University and the Brookings Institution, January 2004-2010**

Conducted comprehensive research for Dr. Byman on terrorism and counter-terrorism. Assisted in Dr. Byman's academic and policy publications as well as in preparation for his graduate and undergraduate courses. Conducted background research and editing for *A High Price: The Triumphs and Failures of Israeli Counterterrorism*. Conducted research and created tables and charts for *Deadly Connections: States that Sponsor Terrorism*. Edited *The Five Front War: The Better Way to Fight Global Jihad*.

**Research Analyst, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, 2004-2006**

Conducted research on Arab political and economic reform for Dr. Tamara Wittes. Analyzed U.S. foreign assistance to the Middle East. Created the first comprehensive database of U.S. spending on democracy promotion in the Middle East. Presented analysis to USAID, U.S. Department of State, and Congress. Assisted Saban Center Director Ambassador Martin Indyk with research on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Organized and reported on policy briefings and Track Two diplomacy efforts to negotiate Israeli-Palestinian peace. Orchestrated the Brookings Research Fellowship program. Oversaw the Saban internship program. Edited all Saban Center publications.

**FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS AND AWARDS**

2015	Council on Foreign Relations International Affairs Fellowship (IAF)
2014	Truman National Security Fellowship
2012	Presidential Management Fellowship (PMF)
2011	Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Doctoral Fellowship
2011	Harry S. Truman Good Neighbor Award Foundation Fellowship (to conduct dissertation field research in Egypt)
2011	Association for Research on Nonprofit and Voluntary Action (ARNOVA) Emerging Scholar Award Grant
2009	Project on Middle East Democracy 2009 Leader for Democracy Award
2008	David L. Boren National Security Education Fellowship (to study intensive advanced Arabic at the Arabic Language Institute in Fez and conduct dissertation field research throughout Morocco)
2007-2012	Graduate Fellowship, Department of Government, Georgetown University
2002	Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowship (to study intensive Arabic at the American University in Cairo)
1999	Dorot Foundation Travel Fellowship (for study abroad in Israel and Jordan)

## **SELECTED PUBLICATIONS**

### ***Book Chapters***

“Morocco: The Model for Reform?” in *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press: Washington, DC, 2011.

“Making Reform Real: The Critical Piece of the Puzzle” (with Stephen Grand, Shadi Hamid and Kenneth M. Pollack) in *The Arab Awakening: America and the Transformation of the Middle East*. Brookings Institution Press: Washington, DC, 2011.

### ***Journal Articles and Monographs***

“Where Have all the Revolutionaries Gone?” *Brookings Analysis Paper*. Forthcoming February 2017.

“State-Society Relations in the Arab World: New Rulers, Same Rules.” *Democracy and Society* 9, Issue 2 (June 2012).

“The Middle East Freedom Agenda: An Update.” (with Tamara Cofman Wittes) *Current History* 106 (January 2007): 31-38.

“What Price Freedom? Assessing the Bush Administration's Freedom Agenda.” (With Tamara Cofman Wittes) *Saban Center Analysis* 10, the Saban Center at Brookings (September 2006).

“The Middle East Partnership Initiative: Progress, Problems, and Prospects.” (With Tamara Cofman Wittes) *Middle East Memo* 5, the Saban Center at Brookings (November 29, 2004).

“Preparing Leaders,” *Middle East Insight* (September-October 2000).

### ***Book Reviews***

Review of *Political Participation in the Middle East*. Ellen Lust-Okar and Saloua Zerhouni, eds. (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2008). *Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa (ASMEA) Book Notes*.

### ***Op-Eds***

“Is a peace deal possible if Israelis and Palestinians simply don’t trust each other?” with Joel Braunold. *Brookings Markaz*. January 3, 2017. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2017/01/03/is-a-peace-deal-possible-if-israelis-and-palestinians-simply-dont-trust-each-other/>

“With Trump coming to the White House, what’s Obama’s exit calculus on the peace process?” *Brookings Markaz*. November 16, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/11/16/with-trump-coming-to-the-white-house-whats-obamas-exit-calculus-on-the-peace-process/>

“Youth voting: What a new democracy can teach us about an old one.” *Brookings Markaz*. November 6, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/11/06/youth-voting-what-a-new-democracy-can-teach-us-about-an-old-one/>

- “Why Morocco’s protests won’t usher in another Arab Spring.” *Brookings Markaz*. November 2, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/11/02/why-moroccos-protests-wont-usher-in-another-arab-spring/>
- “What to watch when Moroccans go to the polls.” *Brookings Markaz*. October 7, 2016. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/markaz/2016/10/07/what-to-watch-when-moroccans-go-to-the-polls/>
- “Tunisia’s Parliament Reshuffle: A Fresh Start or False Hope?” *Foreign Affairs.com*. August 10, 2016. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/tunisia/2016-08-10/tunisias-parliament-reshuffle>
- “Can Tunisia's New Prime Minister Overcome the Trust Deficit?” *Lawfare*. August 10, 2016. <https://lawfareblog.com/can-tunisias-new-prime-minister-overcome-trust-deficit>
- “Obama’s exit calculus on the peace process.” *Matzav*. July 27, 2016. <http://www.matzavblog.com/2016/07/obamas-exiting-calculus-on-the-peace-process/>
- “One year after Sousse, it’s the economy—not security—that worries Tunisians.” *Brookings Markaz*. June 30, 2016. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/06/30-sousse-tunisian-worries-yerkes>
- “What Egypt under Sissi is really like for Coptic Christians.” *Brookings Markaz*. June 20, 2016. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/06/20-egypt-coptic-christians-yerkes>
- “What NGOs think about Israel matters.” Israel Policy Forum *Matzav*. May 3, 2016. <http://www.matzavblog.com/2016/05/what-ngos-think-about-israel-matters/>
- “Could the latest blunder by Egypt’s Sissi be the nail in his coffin?” *Brookings Markaz*. April 25, 2016. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/04/25-egypt-protests-sissi-yerkes>
- “Fixing Tunisia’s terror problem should begin at home.” *Brookings Markaz*. March 15, 2016. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/03/15-tunisia-terror-attack-yerkes>
- “Why an Italian student’s murder in Egypt could spell big trouble for the Sissi regime.” *Brookings Markaz*. February 24, 2016. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2016/02/24-giulio-regeni-murder-egypt-yerkes>
- “The unintended consequences of media crackdowns in the Middle East and North Africa.” *Lawfare*. November 8, 2015. <https://lawfareblog.com/unintended-consequences-media-crackdowns-middle-east-and-north-africa>
- “America Still Needs To Invest In Tunisia's Future.” *The National Interest*. October 23, 2015. <http://www.nationalinterest.org/feature/america-still-needs-invest-tunisias-future-14151>
- “Can we expect real political reform in the Maghreb any time soon?” *Brookings Markaz*. October 22, 2015. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/10/22-political-reform-maghreb-yerkes>
- “Tunisia Must Seize the Nobel Moment.” *Brookings Markaz*. October 13, 2015. <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/10/13-tunisia-nobel-moment-yerkes>

“Don’t Forget About the People.” *Brookings Markaz*. September 28, 2015.

<http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/09/28-israeli-palestinian-mistrust-yerkes>

“Egypt’s SCAF: A Wolf in Wolf’s Clothing.” *Muftah.org*. June 23, 2012. <http://muftah.org/egypts-scaf-a-wolf-in-wolfs-clothing/>

“Egypt’s Civil Society Crackdown: A Test for US-Egyptian Relations.” *London School of Economics IDEAS* 3 Feb 2012. <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/ideas/2012/02/egypts-civil-society-crackdown-a-test-for-us-egyptian-relations/>

“Morocco’s Parliamentary Elections: More of the Same.” *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs* 1 Dec 2011. <http://journal.georgetown.edu/2011/12/01/morocco%E2%80%99s-parliamentary-elections-more-of-the-same/>.

### **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**Georgetown University**, Security Studies Program, School of Foreign Service

- Security in North Africa, Spring 2018

**George Washington University**, Department of Political Science

- PSc2476: The Arab-Israeli Conflict, Fall 2010, Fall 2011
- PSc2377 Government and Politics of the Middle East, Spring 2011, Spring 2012

**University of Maryland Baltimore County**, Department of Political Science

- Politics of Contemporary Sub-Saharan Africa, Summer 2010