



**United States Department of State
and the Broadcasting Board of Governors
Office of Inspector General**

**Review of Middle East Partnership Initiative
Coordination and Implementation**

This review assessed program coordination and implementation of the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) since MEPI's 2002 inception. MEPI funds projects that address its objectives of promoting political, economic, and educational reform and women's empowerment. At the macro level, MEPI works and is a useful tool for diplomats. MEPI's programs support overarching, strategic U.S. policy objectives such as the Administration's freedom strategy of promoting reform and democracy in the Middle East and North Africa and addressing Islamic extremism.

This review found there had been persistent communications problems between the Office of the Middle East Partnership Initiative in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs (NEA/PI) and embassies having MEPI programs. NEA/PI is aware of areas in the MEPI program needing improvement and is diligently working to make those improvements.

MEPI programs encourage reform-minded elements of the civil society through targeted large- and small-grant projects involving nongovernmental groups and local citizens.

MEPI has funded over 350 projects, and is directed toward 17 target countries, plus the West Bank and Gaza. In addition, its regionally based programs provide opportunities for reformers across the region to develop linkages and synergies. In some cases, host governments must permit MEPI programs to operate. As a result, MEPI projects are not started with equal ease in all MEPI target areas, and projects for MEPI's four objectives do not enjoy an equal welcome, even in countries that permit MEPI projects.

In June 2003, NEA established NEA/PI, which manages MEPI programs. NEA/PI has regional offices in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, and Tunis, Tunisia, and a staff of 27. It has received \$391.9 million in funding since its inception, including \$29 million in FY 2002 reprogrammed Department funds. (Congress provided additional funding of \$100 million in FY 2003, \$89.5 million more in FY 2004, \$74.4 million in FY 2005, and an additional \$99 million in FY 2006.)

March 22, 2006

OIG Report ISP-I-06-18, Review of Middle East Partnership Initiative Coordination and Implementation

This review was conducted by the Office of Inspections. This is an unclassified summary of a full report, which receives limited official distribution. Both the report summary and the full report reflect the conditions reviewed during the fieldwork.

Office of Inspector General

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