



UNIVERSITY OF CENTRAL FLORIDA
PRINCE MOHAMMAD BIN FAHD PROGRAM FOR
STRATEGIC RESEARCH AND STUDIES



Owen Kirby is an international political consultant with two decades of experience, specializing in political party development, public opinion polling and elections. Currently working with clients and partners in the Middle East region, Kirby served in the U.S. Department of State as a Senior Adviser in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, 2004-2009, and as a Senior Governance Advisor in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, 2009-2010. Most recently, he has advised leaders in Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority. A former Director at the International Republican Institute (IRI) in Washington, D.C., Kirby oversaw the creation of IRI's MENA Division in 2001, opening the Institute's first regional offices in Amman, Baghdad, Casablanca, Kabul, and Qatar. Kirby worked previously at the U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C. and with the American Business Councils of the Gulf Countries on trade promotion issues, and was a contributor to the publication U.S.-Arab Tradeline. Articles by him on regional affairs have also appeared in the Middle East Quarterly, Washington Times, Chicago Tribune, Providence Journal Bulletin, Pittsburgh Tribune-Review, Jerusalem Post, and Middle East Insight. A graduate of Trinity College Dublin and the University of Limerick in Ireland, Kirby has lived in Jordan, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Syria. A Newport, RI native, he currently lives in Bethesda, MD with his wife and two daughters. In May 2006, he was awarded the Ghazi Mir Bacha Khan Medal by President Hamid Karzai and the late King Zaher Shah for services to Afghanistan. He is also a recipient of the U.S. Department of State's Expeditionary Service and Superior Service Awards.