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# Palestinian Rights Activist Hanan Ashrawi to Lecture at Inaugural Ceremony for UCSB Middle East Center

Formed last summer with a three-year grant of $1 million from the U.S. Department of Education, UC Santa Barbara's Center for Middle East Studies will be formally inaugurated Sunday, April 8 with ceremonies highlighted by a lecture by Palestinian peace seeker and human rights advocate Hanan Ashrawi.

Dr. Ashrawi's lecture, titled "Palestine:

The Dual Challenge of Nation Building and Making Peace," will be held at 2 p.m. in Campbell Hall on the campus.

The talk will be preceded by remarks by UCSB Chancellor Henry T. Yang and UCSB historian and Middle East expert R. Stephen Humphreys, holder of the King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud Chair in Islamic Studies.

The UCSB center is one of 12 elite National Resource Centers in Middle East studies funded by the Department of Education and has a mission to increase understanding of the Middle East through scholarship, research, and public outreach.

It has just begun a three-year project to study relationships between the Middle East and South Asia that will bring scholars to UCSB for annual conferences.

And it plans to bring at least one prominent speaker to campus each year.

Other federally funded Middle East centers are located at Georgetown, Harvard, New York and Princeton universities; University of California campuses at Berkeley and Los Angeles; and the universities of Chicago, Pennsylvania, Texas, Utah and Washington.

The importance of the center is underscored by the preeminence of its inaugural speaker.

At a time when most Palestinians and Israelis find themselves polarized by politics and self-interest, Ashrawi has shown a rare ability to see all sides of the conflict with clarity and compassion.

"She is one of those brave people who dares to be a moderate in a region where being a moderate is a radical and sometimes dangerous thing," said Dwight Reynolds, director of the UCSB center and a professor in the Department of Religious Studies.

A professor of English literature and a former dean of the Faculty of Arts at Birzeit University in the West Bank, Ashrawi is a leading advocate for human rights, not just for women or Palestinians, but for all peoples.

She has served on the Diplomatic Committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was an elected representative to the Palestine Legislative Council for the Jerusalem District and served two years as the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research in President Yasser Arafat's cabinet.

Frustrated with the dearth of progress in peace negotiations and alleged corruption in the Palestinian Authority, she resigned her post in the Arafat cabinet in 1997 to form her own organization, the Palestinian Initiative for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy.

She is known to Americans from her frequent appearances on television news programs and through her book, This Side of Peace.

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## About UC Santa Barbara

The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.