

The International Program

North Africa and the Near East



Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia

A meeting with Judicial Watch was requested by the Institute of International Education, under the auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP). Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton met with the delegation from North Africa and the Near East on April 30, 2009.

The Project for this visiting delegation was entitled "Promoting Rule of Law and Judicial Reform." The U.S. Department of State outlined specific professional objectives for these visitors to be met through personal meetings with government and judicial officials, as well as non-governmental agencies. Meetings began in the nation's capital and took place in different geographic regions of the United States. The stated objectives for this project were, in part, to:

- Familiarize participants with the principles of judicial independence, the Federal court system, and the structure of state and municipal courts; and
- Underscore the judiciary's role in preserving and strengthening democratic concepts such as government accountability and individual rights.

Judicial Watch was asked to discuss how, as a non-profit and non-partisan organization, it "serves as an ethical and legal 'watchdog' over the U.S. government's legal and judicial system."

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Mr. Fitton discussed Judicial Watch's successes and lessons learned in its fight against government secrecy and corruption, which he believes goes hand-in-hand. Judicial Watch has learned over the years, through its open records litigation, that when politicians and judges know they will be held accountable, they are less likely to engage in corrupt actions.

Mr. Fitton advised the delegates to advocate for laws that require more openness and transparency in government. Accountability, he said, acts as a check against corruption, and less corruption creates a more stable economic environment. The result is a competitive market based on quality, not unjust bargaining, which results in greater wealth creation.

As set forth in its [Mission Statement](#), "through its educational endeavors, Judicial Watch advocates high standards of ethics and morality in our nation's public life and seeks to ensure that political and judicial officials do not abuse the powers entrusted to them by the American people. Judicial Watch fulfills its educational mission through litigation, investigations, and public outreach." [The International Program](#) is an integral part of its educational program.