



NATO Foundation
Defense College

ARAB GEOPOLITICS IN TURMOIL

PERCEPTIONS, UNKNOWN AND POLICIES

Traditionally the Middle East is considered a region so complex that it does not allow a clear political narrative on its political and strategic priorities: it is an explication but also an excuse for short sighted crisis management and inaction. This conference, where the NATO Defense College Foundation has brought together an exceptional array of regional practitioners in a very critical period of the region, has dispelled this and other myths.

Firstly it has demonstrated that co-operation is possible in such a diverse and fragmented environment because the different cultures and components of the area have never ceased to reflect in a very critical way about the past and the present. Political short-term interests can be divergent, but there is a common understanding that has been accelerated by the jolt of the Arab Revolutions: change is necessary, inevitable and even manageable despite serious obstacles.

Secondly, cultural distinctions, often portrayed as unsurmountable and unintelligible religious gaps, have once more being revealed as very concrete power and political differences. As often since a century, war, in its different and changing facets, has been deemed as the great problem-solver, and yet the conference proceedings show that there is a strong opportunity and advantage in pursuing negotiated solutions. Thirdly, all participants sensed that the age of the great, all-encompassing and almost never-ending interventions is over. All actors understand that the best contribution to regional stability is supporting endogenous and consensual change in a sensible way. NATO's co-operative security can offer useful tools in a meaningful way to the entire region.

Arab geopolitics in turmoil
Perceptions, unknowns and policies
Copyright © 2016
NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE FOUNDATION

NATO Defense College Foundation
Via Alessandro Serpieri, 8
Roma 00197
www.ndc-foundation.org/

Edito da A.G.R.A. srl
via Nomentana 257
00161 Roma
tel +39 0644254205
fax +39 0644254239
e-mail info@agraeditrice.com
www.agraeditrice.com

Finito di stampare
nel mese di maggio 2016

Realizzazione editoriale: Agra srl
Progetto grafico: Rosa Schiavello
Copertina: Shutterstock
Stampa: CSR – Roma

Gruppo di Lavoro
Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo
Alessandro Politi (editor)
Federica Lollo
Emma Ferrero
Matteo Marsini

Special thanks to the
NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme
and the NATO Defense College for the support
and Radio Radicale for the media partnership

Tutti i diritti sono riservati a NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE FOUNDATION. Nessuna parte di questo libro può essere riprodotta o utilizzata in alcun modo, escluso le citazioni giornalistiche, senza l'autorizzazione scritta di NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE FOUNDATION, né per mezzi elettronici né meccanici, incluse fotocopie, registrazione o riproduzione attraverso qualsiasi sistema di elaborazione dati.

ARAB GEOPOLITICS IN TURMOIL

PERCEPTIONS, UNKNOWN AND POLICIES

Conference organised by the
NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE FOUNDATION

in cooperation with
THE GULF RESEARCH CENTER FOUNDATION,
THE NATO SCIENCE FOR PEACE AND SECURITY PROGRAMME,
THE NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE AND THE UNIVERSITY OF JORDAN



NDCF CONFERENCE "ARAB GEOPOLITICS IN TURMOIL", ROME



INDICE

AMBASSADOR ALESSANDRO MINUTO-RIZZO, PRESIDENT NDCF	
Foreword	17
ALESSANDRO POLITI	
Political Summary	19
ELEONORA ARDEMAGNI, CINZIA BIANCO, UMBERTO PROFAZIO	
Background Paper	23
STEVEN ERLANGER	
Keynote speech: the unexpected consequences of revolutions	27
ABDULAZIZ SAGER	
What kind of way to resolve today's conflicts?	31
 Session 1	
NON-STATE ACTORS AND THE RISKS OF DISINTEGRATION	
MAHMOUD GEBRIL	
Causes and possible remedies to the Libyan chaos	39
ABDULLAH BIN HAMAD AL-BADI	
Yemen: out of the conflict	41
MUSTAFA ALANI	
The non-state building actors paradox	45
JEAN-LOUP SAMAAAN	
The long-term issues of non-state actors	47

Session 2

FOSTERING VIABLE POLITICS: THE EVOLUTION IN THE ARAB REGION

MAHMOUD KAREM

**Rebuilding political consensus and social development:
The Egyptian case** 53

SARKIS NAHOUM

The Lebanese failure and the regional contradictions 63

AHMAD MASA'DEH

Pluralism is the recipe for Arab unity 67

ABDOULI TOUHAMI

Learning and unlearning from the Tunisian revolution 69

Session 3

SENSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS AND CO-OPERATIVE SECURITY

EBTESAM AL-KETBI

The Gulf needs a real Istanbul Cooperation Initiative Plus 77

NICOLA DE SANTIS

NATO: the will and the need to do more 81

ODED ERAN

Middle East: shaping instead of intervening 85

CLAUDE SALHANI

Unaddressed root causes and denied citizenship 87

Session 4

REGIONAL HEGEMONIES: RECONCILING THE EXTERNAL POWERS

RICHARD D. HOOKER

USA and the demerits of intervention 95

RASHAD AL-ALIMI

Saudi Arabia and multiple conflicts management 99

PIOTR DUTKIEWICZ

Russia's Middle Eastern strategies 109

PEJMAN ABDOLMOHAMMADI

The Persian factor 115

The Chairs' perspective	119
CHRISTIAN KOCH	
H.E. AMRE M. MOUSSA	
H.E. SHEIKH THAMER ALI AL-SABAH	
Concluding remarks	127
Speakers' Biographies	131
Conference Programme	149



Allied aerial strike on Kobane (Orlok / Shutterstock.com)





Yemeni soldier at a checkpoint (Dmitry Chulov / Shutterstock.com)





Iraq, Dukan Dam and desert (fulya atalay / Shutterstock.com)





AMBASSADOR ALESSANDRO MINUTO-RIZZO
President NDCF

FOREWORD

Every season has its own opportunities and challenges and we cannot choose. Complexity and volatility are the keys of entry into our time.

Today we cannot divide issues according to a traditional scheme, where diplomacy, security, economics and finance were independent worlds. The cross-cutting nature of present problems, their interconnection is a challenge. Volatility has many faces but in the first place it is due to the vastly increased number of actors. While a century ago only a few countries were dominant, today it is impossible to identify an international order with a proper centre of gravity.

Who is dominant? Is a balance of powers desirable, and attainable?

Some scholars say that we live in a no one's world, meaning that no country can dictate the rules to the others. At the same time it is an everybody's world where nobody wants to be left behind and where there are more and more voices that wish to be heard.

There is an additional proviso to keep in mind: national governments are no more the only actors. Pressure groups, non-state actors are performing loudly on the scene. The Arab region is no exception, on the contrary.

This unprecedented diffusion of power does not help to achieve stability and at the same time makes difficult to take decisions. For those good reasons it becomes necessary to have a good reading of facts, a clever interpretation, a well based decision making.

This was the purpose for establishing our Foundation five years ago, with the additional ambition of dealing with such problems for a larger audience, not only for the specialists.

Why a conference on the Arab region? What is burning in the hearts and minds of over 300 million people is too important to be discussed in a traditional descriptive way. First thing we want to give voice to the people from the region. As much as possible, because they can tell us what is their heart better than anybody.

We also want to address the burning evidence coming from the region in a con-

cise way, but going at the centre of the problems. Combining the two things is ambitious but necessary.

I feel a passionate commitment for this cause. It is personal because I worked for years with many Arab governments as Deputy Secretary General of the Atlantic Alliance, tasked by the Alliance to establish a viable partnership.

For me it has been a special time which is always in my memory and I keep an affectionate respect for this part of the world, so rich in humanity and in history and so close to us.

A main point of this conference is the indispensable role that is played by co-operative security and sound partnerships. With the aim of sharing different experiences and analysing scenarios together with people coming from different backgrounds.

We live in a fragmented and multi-layered reality asking a special effort from us. We need to go beyond traditional practices to face an unprecedented level of complexity. We all share the same planet and live under the same sky, it means that we have an obligation to do everything possible to live in peace and prosperity.

Undeniably it is for the Arabs to take their destiny in their hands and to decide about their own future. At the same time it is our duty to extend a friendly hand in good faith to offer support.

I thank all those who have contributed to the success of this conference. This book represents an extraordinary compendium. A special thanks goes to Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah, an old friend representing Kuwait in an outstanding way

Thanks also to Abdulaziz Sager, a man of vision, for being our partner in this project with the Gulf Research Center. Finally I say thank you to my old friends at NATO, who are now running the Science for Peace and Security Program.



ALESSANDRO POLITI

POLITICAL SUMMARY

Traditionally the Middle East is considered a region so complex that it does not allow a clear political narrative on its political and strategic priorities: it is an explanation but also an excuse for short sighted crisis management and inaction. Today this region cannot be considered in strategic terms like the old Middle East of the Cold War: a vast region extending from Mauretania to Iran with multiple interconnections that hamper any solution. This area nowadays has clearly disintegrated into three distinct areas: North Africa, Levant and Gulf.

On the one hand North Africa gravitates much more around the rest Africa and its links to a pan-Arab landscape are much more tenuous. On the other hand the Mashreq area has been split up by contrasting geopolitical spheres of influence (US, Russia, China) and by a fierce regional competition blurring de facto existing boundaries. Last but not least, for the time being the Islamic State (Dawla) has radically jeopardised two existing entities by pursuing a universalistic “caliphate” project. Thus now we have a Levant zone, stretching from Syria to Gaza, that is one of the stages of the ongoing tragedy and a Gulf region that, since the Second Gulf War (1991) is the real stake of geopolitical competition and the epicentre of future balances.

Each of these areas needs tailored solutions, but all have in common three levels of leverage (national, regional and international) that actors can use in order to influence a different outcome than the usual cycle of violence and ceasefires.

At national level governments and societies need to embrace the twin paradigm of the rule of law and the acceptance of the other (be it at political, social and cultural level), if they desire to recover a much desired and more solid stability than in the past. A broad discourse about democracy makes no sense without these two very basic starting points that can be successfully adopted also by non-democratic regimes. It is possible to have citizenship without democratic freedoms, but one cannot escape the “great families trap” without law and tolerance and cannot de-

velop a substantial democracy without them. This is something that all regional governments, none excepted, need to consider in a practical way.

At regional level the actual GCC-Iran competition risks to be a serious liability, offering in the best case a Pyrrhic victory. War is being fuelled on several fronts, promising quick victories and resulting in multiple quagmires. Only regional governments can acknowledge the costs of this Fourth Gulf War by proxy and withdraw from the abyss of irreversible economic and social erosion.

In due time these governments and societies need to address the recovery from the consequences of the Sykes-Picot agreement (1916). Already one century ago it was recognised unviable by practitioners who knew deeply the Middle East and the present developments have certified this failure. The essential point, already upheld since 1991 by the UN, is the consensual and negotiated change of borders, something that Dawla and other actors are refusing by imposing an unacceptable price to local populations.

At international level it is necessary to take into account five essential prerequisites:

Controlled chaos is a costly option that will be regularly paid by relatively richer and more prosperous “Western” countries in terms of terrorism, migrations, organised crime and increased security expenditures: a burden that with the ongoing global crisis is politically and socially unsustainable.

Terrorism requires an immediate intervention within European countries in terms of social and political action to neutralise local clusters of jihadism nurtured by substantial exclusion from a decent spiritual and material life perspective. Security and judiciary bodies are already working, but the social and targeted communication activities to defuse jihadist tendencies are lacking underfunded and/or unfocussed.

Military intervention cannot be used as a political expedient to show some action, because in the best case it has limited results vis-à-vis a painful financial expenditure as even the short Russian intervention demonstrated. This is a tool whose use is sensible only if it strengthens co-operative security and sound partnerships in the region.

Co-operative security and sound partnerships are the twin track that NATO, like in the Harmel Report, should follow in order to assist national and regional political and diplomatic efforts. NATO’s security space is one and needs tailored but coherent and “coupling” solutions for challenges emerging from the South and East of the Alliance. Substantial work in training, assisting, capacity building and rebuilding, militias (a widespread plague in the region) demobilising and decommissioning assistance, logistic robustness and overall sustainability may not be spectacular but that all these activities are the sinews of a functioning state.

Finally migrations and peace require concrete and substantial economic investment that no single state or coalition can successfully undertake. The end of wars and the rebuilding of societies need an economic vision: the New Silk Road is one

has to be complemented by a “Medi-Gulf Plan” internationally supported by traditional and Islamic finance.

The political consequences of conference’s debate seem particularly engaging and challenging, but a century of half-measures that ignored local realities has brought to the present situation. Few, incisive and practical initiatives may pave the way for more stability and thus for comprehensive peace arrangements.



ELEONORA ARDEMAGNI



CINZIA BIANCO



UMBERTO PROFAZIO

BACKGROUND PAPER

The turmoil of the Arab geopolitical system defies definitively traditional paradigms both in terms of regional dynamics and states' behaviours, putting forward some key questions. In a region where conflict has become the most recurrent feature, how do we define security today? What is the relation between security and stability?

In today's broader Middle East, long-term causes of conflicts can be found at the interplay of four levels: the renewed posture of the United States in the region (global level), the subsequent competition for hegemony between regional powers (regional level), political and economic inequalities (domestic level) and rivalries based on sect and/or ethnicity (intermestic level).

Indeed, as the United States partially disengaged from specific operations in the region, a chaotic reshuffle in the traditional architecture of power in the Gulf has inevitably taken place. Consequently, the endorsement of a nuclear deal with Iran, which shored up Tehran's regional position, definitely unleashed a rush for enlarging spheres of influence among regional powers.

This double transition in balances of power within and around governments has taken place in the destabilising environment of a collapsing regional system as regimes implode, brought down by domestic inequalities and intermestic rivalries. Moreover the three Gulf wars (1980-88 Iran-Iraq, 1990 Kuwait, 2003 Iraq) have highlighted the failure of all existing ideologies, political models and governances inhibiting the creation of alternative ones.

This has paved the way for a regional (dis)order which could empower Iran and jihadi Islamism as a valid alternative political ideology. The primary political outcomes have been state fragmentation, socio-political polarization and sectarianism. While the latter is a powerful rhetoric tool for power politics, state fragmentation bolsters instead the privatisation of violence, localisms, border permeability and uncontrolled migration flows: the long-standing consequences of the wrecked Arab uprisings.

The outcomes of the 2011 Arab uprisings have been very varied, ranging from transition (Tunisia), restoration (Egypt), a narrow reformation (Bahrain) to civil war (Syria, Libya, Yemen). However, some common trends can be isolated, both in the revolted than in the unrevolted countries. Firstly, all élites have high threat perception levels, in some cases consolidating patterns of competitive authoritarian policies. Secondly, national security is still equated to regime security and security is the yardstick of internal and external relations. Finally, at a strategic level, three regional security subsets have emerged: the Eastern Mediterranean (the Levant, Cyprus, Turkey and Greece), North Africa (Libya, Tunisia, the Sinai peninsula and the Sahel belt) and Aden (Yemen, Somalia and Southern Arabia).

The relationship between Arab armed forces and non-state actors remains critical. Because of a chronically weak governance, the legitimacy and sovereignty of the Arab states has often been weakened: states' monopoly of violence is increasingly contested by militias and jihadi groups, such as the so-called Caliphate and Al-Qaeda's branches.

Starting from the Arab uprisings, this period of instability can be divided into two phases. The 2011-2014 phase saw the rise of militias and non-state actors, in some cases formed spontaneously around ideologies competing within the existing establishment, in some others supported by regional powers to gain leverage and achieve new geopolitical balances.

During the second one (2014 till 2016) governments have retaken initiative with open military means. Currently, Arab states have realized that non-state actors are necessary but not sufficient to definitely shape more favourable outcomes, so deciding to engage their armies against guerrilla warfare: a "paradox of force", since they have reversed the tactics to pursue the same hegemonic strategy.

In general, security issues have overshadowed the Arab debate on economic policies: decision-makers are attempting to deal with the effects of the uprisings (insecurity), rather than with their roots (inequalities). Economic stagnation and the drop in oil prices have sharpened contradictions, impacting negatively on already fragile Arab economic structures, while the cut of subsidies and the volatility of food prices sow again the seeds of internal unrest.

The medium-term regional scenario envisages two complementary directions: at a macro-level, the persistence of the pattern of external penetration in the Greater Middle Eastern inter-state system; at a micro-level, the resilience and most likely the strengthening of competing local and ethno-sectarian identities, tribal belongings and neo-patrimonial networks. These centrifugal forces will put even more pressure than today on Arab institutions, on this double level.

Looking at the external powers, Russia will endeavour to intensify its influence on some Middle Eastern actors (e.g. Iraq, Iran, Egypt, or the Kurdish galaxy), while China and India will further try to prop up their financial and economic status in the region. The uncertain political and economic condition of the European Union will probably continue to favour its inward-looking attitude and a Middle

Eastern policy based on domestic priorities. The US 'wait and see' posture is set to endure. Finally, in the security domain, the Middle East risks to remain entrapped in an apparent "defence sectarianisation", reflecting a strategically contested and increasingly polarised regional system. Such a divisive, conflictual scenario could dilute NATO's efforts towards a sorely-needed regional architecture based on co-operative security.



STEVEN ERLANGER

KEYNOTE SPEECH: THE UNEXPECTED CONSEQUENCES OF REVOLUTIONS

I found today's panels very interesting because they expressed a reflection on the confusion and shock which are now reigning in the Arab world. Whenever I think about what it is going on in the Arab region, it reminds me of the French Revolution and the words that were spent on it and its aftermath.

There is a famous poem by William Wordsworth about that revolution (1805) which says "Upon ours side, we who were strong in love! Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, But to be young was very heaven! [...] What temper at the prospect did not wake, To happiness unthought of? The inert were roused, and lively natures rapt away!". That has been considered to be the spirit of the revolution and that has been spirit of the Arab Spring.

However, Wordsworth was one of the first to understand that revolutionary fervour can quickly change and initial enthusiasm can bring with itself the risks of early judgements that unfortunately are often so wrong. Indeed, as we all have learnt, no one can live in a permanent state of revolution, not even China and Mao; soon the revolutionary project develops further stages, which we all have been now experiencing, of fatigue, terror and counter-revolution. This is an evidence of the fact that sometimes progress may offer both possibilities and retrenchments.

However, the comprehension of our time's challenges is sometimes undermined by all our 'distractors', the media prime among them. Of course we have understood that the world changed after 9/11, but at that time our media's main concerns were biological weapons, dirty bombs. Our main enemy became the miscomprehension of the current events and it seemed that we did not understand very well what Bin Laden told us about his project to wipe away the Arab nations thrown up and supported by the West, especially in the Holy Land, with the aim at creating another Islamic Caliphate.

It seems to me that we forgot about his plan and after Bin Laden's death this very same NATO concentrated on challenges relating to climate change,

cyber-security and piracy. This shows that we are not very good at thinking ahead, and I have the feeling that the Arab spring events were built on what Bin Laden started with his desire for a Caliphate.

What was the Arab revolution in the media? It was represented by the images of Tahrir Square, freedom, cable TV, democracy. This is how the Arab spring has been covered by the western media, focusing on the mastery of young people, anger and democracy, corruption and justice. And, years after, what has this turned into? It has turned into a Muslim war; a sectarian war between Sunni and Shia inside countries and among them. The experience that impressed me the most was being in Iraq, where you could find one form of Muslim blowing up another form of Muslim in mosques.

This means that something terrible has gone wrong, and I think we have not solved the problem yet. Everything has turned dark and more complicated and, of course, none of us is very good at paying attention to complications. That is why we did not find what we thought was going to happen and we had suppressions in Bahrain, Tunisia suddenly at risk and the mess in Libya.

In Libya, as in Kosovo, we thought we could break something, which would somehow cure itself. Undoubtedly, this was the assumption we used referring to Syria, thinking that at some point Assad would disappear somehow like smoke, without any kind of intervention.

I remember asking a friend in Washington, at the National Security Council: "Why did you think that Assad was going to disappear? After all, Gaddafi would have won in Libya without NATO intervention, so why did you think Assad would lose if you did nothing?" His answer was: 'He just looked like he was going to go'. This was probably the worst mistake we have done in the face of the Arab crisis and this resulted in a great blow to our credibility in the region.

There are people here from the Gulf and Saudi Arabia who think we have betrayed Mubarak, that we have not been good friends with the Sunni regimes, and certainly when you look at what it is going on in Syria now, you can see Putin working on the same assumption.

Thus, the Americans perhaps four years ago could have done something to force the Turks to create a no-fly zone and refugee camps along Turkey's borders to be used to train and equip military forces and send them back and forth to Syria, but we decided to do nothing of that, and partly because the Turks did not want it. If you remember, one of the Turks' misjudgement was that Assad could handle this himself but, as time goes by, we think with shame of Syria. How do we live with Syria? How do the international powers live with Syria?

Take into consideration Russia; it does not really care about Assad, but first of all it has to safeguard its reputation. Russia defends its allies, which the United states is not doing. Russia has showed new missiles, planes and a kind of brutality, reminding everyone that it is back.

Thus, in some way, the impact of Syria has become more dramatic than the situation in Syria itself. An example is what it has done to Russia's reputation and to the reputation of the European Union, which has fumbled its way through a horrible summer of migrants and asylum seekers without any order or solidarity from its member states. Greece has suffered quite a lot, Schengen has fallen apart, Britain started thinking of leaving.

For all these reasons, this can be conceived as an existential moment that Syria has created.

As a state Syria is gone and I do not think it will be ever the same as before. But this is an existential moment for the European Union itself and a terrific challenge to the European self-image as nice people. If they are not going to get control over the migrants' issue, they are going to learn how difficult it can be to hold together.

I could go on with all these issues for a long time, but probably I have said enough. To conclude, I would have two more remarks. Given our topic. One is about proxy wars. One of the things that impressed me most today was the idea that states can set up proxy wars and control them. The second thing is that even if the war against ISIS is going pretty well, what is worrying is how we can defeat the idea of ISIS, which is not linked to a particular territory, but it is the belief of creating a pure Muslim state not infected by the West.

This is similar to the old idea of Communism, of creating a new world and a new society, that will be hard to fight. Some fighters in Syria remind me of Rosa Luxemburg; young and brave Communists who think that the world could be better and now you have people that devoted themselves to creating a new Muslim world.

No doubt, revolutions are exiting when you are in the middle of them, but there is always a moment when revolutions are more revolutionary than we imagine and change less than we would expect.



ABDULAZIZ SAGER

WHAT KIND OF WAY TO RESOLVE TODAY'S CONFLICTS?

Presently, the Arab world is facing an ever deteriorating situation. After the First World War, we have witnessed many challenges in the economic, political, defence and security fields. The traditional ways of solving conflicts, through diplomatic, political, economic and defensive strategies, appear to be no longer applicable; therefore, one has to ask oneself: "What is the way to resolve these conflicts today"?

To start, I will refer to the situation in Iraq. Thirteen years after the American intervention in Iraq and the end of the Saddam regime, the country is still paying the price for this external intervention and the need to fill the security vacuum that the Western occupation created has not been filled. A similar scenario is now being played out in Syria, where the traditional instruments of conflict resolution are no longer appropriate. However, the debate concerning different forms of intervention cannot be taken further without considering the United Nations and its current role on the international scene. The question clearly is: are the United Nations doing what they are supposed to do? Against this background, I am listing what I consider to be the significant issues in the world today that are affecting the Arab world, in particular.

1. CIVIL WARS

There are ongoing civil wars in Syria, Iraq, Yemen, and Libya. Civil wars are destroying the assets of these countries as well as creating an unprecedented security vacuum.

2. NON-STATE ACTORS

In Syria and Libya, we are witnessing the growth of non-state actors whose purpose it is to impose their agenda on the governments in these countries. In Yemen,

they have become strong enough to overthrow a legitimate government. In Lebanon and Iraq, their role is such that a decision about their country's future cannot be taken without them. In addition, we have the Islamic state (IS) that is threatening the entire Arab world and beyond.

3. SECTARIAN CONFLICTS

The rise of sectarian conflicts in the Arab world has been caused by the Iran's interventionist policy. The sectarian phenomenon has affected, in particular, Iraq, Lebanon, and Syria.

4. EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Some countries, such as Tunisia, Egypt, and Jordan are suffering from the turmoil in the wider regional context. After the Arab Spring, Tunisia was considered by the international community as a good example of state-building but many problems remain. Meanwhile, the conflict in Libya and the emergence of ISIS (Islamic state of Iraq and Syria) are destabilising these countries that also impacting on Tunisian stability as well as the economy and security of Egypt and Jordan.

5. EXTERNAL POWERS

The US and Russia, the most important external powers, are trying to manage their dialogue in light of the tremendous turmoil in the Middle East. This, however, is not proving to be an easy task given wider considerations at play between the two powers.

6. REGIONAL POWERS

Regional powers have used the current situation to expand their sphere of influence. For instance, when the war in Yemen started, some Iranian officials said that Yemen was the fourth Arab capital to fall under Iranian influence. Such statements have raised fears about further Iranian intentions.

7. FALLING OIL PRICE

When the Arab Spring started, a number of countries where revolutions took place received significant financial contributions from the GCC (Gulf Co-operation Council) states to the tune of \$67 billion. Today, oil prices are falling and despite the instability faced by Egypt, Jordan, and Tunisia, it is becoming more problematic for the GCC countries to continue to lend such financial support to solve their internal turmoil.

8. EXPORT OF VIOLENCE FROM TERRORIST GROUPS

Terrorist activities are being exported into Europe drawing the European continent into the turmoil of the Middle East. European security is now tied more than ever to the security situation in the Middle East.

9. AMBIGUITY OF THE US POLITICAL STRATEGY IN THE REGION

When President Barack Obama visited Istanbul and Cairo, at the beginning of his presidency, in order to strengthen relations with the Arab world, the move was widely welcomed. Nevertheless, his decision to withdraw the US military from Iraq before the completion of state reconstruction and the policy of non-intervention in Syria are evidence of the failure of his Middle East strategy. US non-intervention has led to the return of Russia in the region in support of dictatorships, encouraged Iran to expand its sectarian conflict, and allowed for the rise of non-state actors in the form of terror groups.

10. RUSSIAN ROLE

Russia seems to have reverted to its Cold War posture. Its attitude has a huge impact on the countries of the region. Russian president Vladimir Putin is supporting the government of Syria with the aim of fighting against terrorism, although President Bashar Al-Assad is a dictator.

11. US INTERVENTION IN THE REGION

The previous US interventions in the region, in Iraq and Libya, were based on the total destruction of state institutions in order to re-build capacities on new foundations. Whether such an approach is an appropriate strategy in the Arab region begs a serious answer.



Lebanese woman mourning on a grave (Sadik Gulec / Shutterstock.com)



Session 1

NON-STATE ACTORS AND THE RISKS OF DISINTEGRATION



MAHMOUD GEBRIL

CAUSES AND POSSIBLE REMEDIES TO THE LIBYAN CHAOS

The topic we are discussing during this conference is very common nowadays. People in Asia, Europe, the United States the Latin America and Africa, are bewildered and confused of what is happening, not only in the Middle East, but in the world after the basic arrangements that emerged from the Second World War.

The new world, product of the modern international structure and institutions, has begun to materialise at the end of the 1980s with the beginning of globalisation. Connectivity is the key word of the international structure and, unfortunately, in the Arab world it means that while civil societies have established new contacts with the international community, governments are still dealing in terms of systems and structures with tools forged during the industrial age.

This gap is widening because the Arab societies have wider expectations. In these societies two thirds of the population are between 15 and 40 years old, representing the working force. This new working force, well connected to the world, has new global values; the force of risk, the force of saying no. Nonetheless, the national governments are not able to recognise these expectations as it is required.

I would say that Arab regimes, which have been built after the Second World War, are the main culprits for the current situation in the region. They have miserably failed in two aspects. The first failure is related to the development of civil society, the second to the national integration process which should result in the sense of citizenship.

Some of these regimes discovered that keeping Arab societies fragmented, in terms of sects, tribes and ethnicity, was a valuable tool to protect themselves. If the society's factions fought against each other, less attention was paid to the actions of the regime. Now, we are paying a very high price for all this and when regimes failed, as in case of Yemen and Libya, we discovered that there

were several sub-nations now at the centre of the international game.

For example, in Libya we have the right recipe for fanning a civil war: the disintegration of the political structure, a lot of money and the distribution of weapons all over the national territory. There are around more than 27 million weapons that are enough to arm more than seven African countries.

We want to remind our European friends that they did not listen to our pleas to intervene in Libya before it crumbled into a stateless country. Nowadays, Europeans are much more worried of the situation in Libya than Libyans are. We in Libya became accustomed to the misery and the agony of our condition, but the Europeans started to feel the heat and are rushing for the creation of a national unity government which, I would say, will be used as an umbrella for the military intervention.

In my opinion, if the international community wants to fight terrorism in Libya, why it does not empower Libyans themselves to fight, instead of trying to promote an external intervention?

Terrorism in Libyan soil is a Libyan matter, the international community could provide us with logistical, military and political support, but an international intervention would be turned into a crusade against all the Muslim community, leading to more attacks against the European Community.

Today, I would like to convey a few messages. The Arab Spring will continue because the deep structural problems that characterised the Arab regimes have not been sorted yet. Those who think that the violence which broke out from the revolts could be used as a deterrent in the future are wrong. Demography will be the main factors in the next ten or fifteen years, Africa is expanding and no less than 360 million young African are marching towards the North before the end of the year 2050, looking for jobs and better life conditions.

For these reasons, Europe has to rethink at its priorities. The current problem of Europe is that it is considering the migration issue in term of national affairs, excluding a global approach to it. This nationalist approach could bring to the raise of new forms of Fascism and Nazism that are scarier than illegal immigration, or, refugees problems and could result in the disintegration of the European community in a few years.



ABDULLAH BIN HAMAD AL-BADI

YEMEN: OUT OF THE CONFLICT

First of all, I want to start from the domestic roots of the conflict. In 2011, after the uprisings during the Arab Spring, in Yemen the transition was not impossible. The Gulf Cooperation Council's initiative in Yemen could aim at a positive change in the country. On 23rd of November 2011, Yemen's president Ali Abdullah Saleh resigned and was replaced by his vice president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi, who was confirmed by a popular mandate with the elections in February 2012.

After the setting up of a national unity government, the international community was united in the support of the Gulf Cooperation Council initiative providing a two-year clear and straightforward road map in order to reach the expected transition. After that, the UN-led process for a national conciliation set up an agenda for: constitutional reforms, constitutional draft, referendum, elections and their preparation.

Despite the valuable GCC initiative and the UN-led process, Yemen lost the potential momentum to reach real changes in the country. During the transition and, in particular, after the National Dialogue Conference in early 2014, the political momentum was lost because of the deepening of the economic crisis, the increasing corruption and the civil war still going on in the north of the country.

The Yemeni Army played an important role during the uprisings because it remained divided and fragmented. Yemen is one of the most armed countries worldwide. The state's army still coexists with several militant groups distributed all over the territory. These militant groups are often connected to political parties and, to avoid this ominous coupling, the UN agenda formulated security reforms that never really took place.

In September 2014, a national unity government was created reaching a compromise in the framework of the Peace and Partnership Agreement. Less than two months later it was forced to resign. Regaining the power in January 2015, president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi resigned on 25th March of the same year.

THE REGIONAL ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT

The intervention of Saudi Arabia in the conflict has been pushed by the threat of an Iranian involvement in the region, as well as by the civil war in northern Yemen. This conflict, that sees Houthis fighting against their adversaries, has increased the attacks at the border with Saudi Arabia. Moreover these border conflicts entail several threats related to arms and drugs trafficking and the movements of terrorist groups, such as Al-Qaeda. The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) considers Iran's alleged involvement in Yemen as a national security threat. KSA also was worried that Houthis would control the region on its southern border.

Currently, the conflict threatens the region, with the Houthi increasing cross-border attacks into Saudi Arabia. The border security is also a concern regarding. Weapons, drug smuggling, trans-border movement of militants (e.g. AQAP – Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) are among the recurring problems.

Who is who?

Ex-president Saleh

The Ex-president Saleh has been able, through his personal network and his financial resources, to influence part of the army forces and tribes. Now, he is temporarily allied with the Houthis for his convenience.

Government of Yemen

First in exile in Riyadh, it is now led by president Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and vice president Khaled Bahah.

Houthis

Led by Abdul-Malik al-Houthi, this movement is now operating from the Yemeni capital Sana'a. They are looking for power and resource sharing.

Southern Movement (Hiraak)

This movement is in favour of the federalisation, or even the political separation of Yemen. Hiraak is supported by its own armed military groups.

Opposition Parties

The Islamic parties, such as Al-Islah and the Muslim Brotherhood.

KSA-led coalition

This coalition acts upon request of the president against Houthis. The Security Council Resolution 2216 of April 2015 urged the parties to end this conflict.

What is happening in Yemen?

The balance of power on the ground is very difficult to assess. On the 14th of July 2015, the Saudis achieved a victory against the Houthis in Aden and forced them to retreat in the north of Yemen, stifling momentarily their arms traffic. Due to the above-mentioned circumstances, the humanitarian emergency is becoming acute at a very fast pace. In the midst of the country civilians are facing several deprivations and the situation is made more difficult by the appearance of non-state actors that are gaining power in the north.

What are the possible outcomes?

Ceasefire

Immediate resumption of the political track through the 'Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)' roadmap, drafted by the last UN-led conference on national conciliation in Magglingen (Bienne, Switzerland, 15-20 December 2015). This means the implementation of confidence building measures, followed by: agreements on security, administrative and political arrangements during the transition period, the finalising of the constitution and elections. The CBMs include the necessary international community support to Yemen with the aim of rebuilding, developing and rehabilitating the state's functions at central and local level. In this case, the state will be able to support regions and address internal security challenges and extremist groups.

If the abovementioned does not happen, we will face three scenarios:

- War continues bringing to a deterioration of the humanitarian crisis and the expansion of non-state actors.
- War stops – the political process resumes with parties that agree to make progress and implement the Security Council Resolution 2216. In this scenario, institutions restart functioning and aid development projects can be finally implemented. This means in the end: the resumption of transition; an international plan for reconstruction and development assistance and the restoration of state functions.
- War stops but – the political process resumes but the state disintegrates further due to sectarian and revenge killings, a growing resources competition and the absence of institutions for power and resource sharing.



MUSTAFA ALANI

THE NON-STATE BUILDING ACTORS PARADOX

My speech will begin with a strange episode which happened in June 2014 when the city of Mosul, in the north of Iraq, was occupied by ISIS. In this circumstance, the first action of the legitimate government of Iraq was the establishment of Al Jaysh al Sha'abi (Iraqi Popular Army), a non-state actor, in order to fight against ISIS, another non-state actor. In so doing, the Iraqi government immediately realised that it had no capabilities on the ground to tackle with the jihadists. It understood that to combat against a non-state actor it was necessary to create another one, financed by the state. This example wants to give you an idea of how security strategies have changed and the need to reshape them.

In my discourse, I want to go against the assumption that the aim of non-state actors is to disintegrate the state. We have two types of non-state actors: some financed by the state, like the Iranian practise of financing non-state actors for regional hegemony, and others that are independent, such as ISIS and Daesh. If it is not a secret that from 1983 Iran gives financial support to Hezbollah which owns more than 80.0000 between rockets and missiles, I would rather challenge you to find evidence that ISIS (or Daesh) is supported by state actors. The main point is that Hezbollah is not trying to disintegrate Lebanon, as their aim is not to rule just on a part of the country, but on its whole. Although at the beginning Hezbollah was supporting the separation movement in the south of Lebanon, when it came into power it understood the necessity to rule on the country in its entirety. Even ISIS has a unification project and to prove this, it has removed the border between Iraq and Syria and is calling for a unique Islamic state extended from the Mediterranean to the Arab Sea.

The secret of the success of ISIS corresponds to the failure of Al-Qaeda, which never had such an emotional project. While ISIS wants to create an Islamic Empire, the purpose of Al-Qaeda's actions was to punish the United States, which is not a real objective. For these reasons, I would not speak of disintegration because all the actors in this game want to reach the control of the entire state's territory.

Indeed, the mushrooming of non-state actors can be easily explained. They are very cheap, effective and can fight a proxy war to control the state apparatus. To this extent, the best strategy is the Iranian one in Lebanon. Financing Hezbollah for an amount of \$100 million a year, Iran does not need to occupy the Lebanese territory, but can control the strategic political process. Nowadays, there is no strategic decision in Iraq, Lebanon and Syria that is taken without knocking at Iran's doors.

These are the reasons, I do not see a decline in the phenomenon of non-state actors and, on the contrary, I think we will see more of them as successful experiences. The intervention of Saudi Arabia in Yemen could be read with these lenses; Saudi Arabia has the need to intervene in Yemen to avoid that Iran could repeat the same scenario than in Lebanon.

However, most of the non-state actors are self-financed and ISIS is an example of this. It is very complicate to deal with the current situation. First, I suggest we should deal with non-state actors financed by the state, but who will convince Iran to abandon Hezbollah? If I sat in Teheran, I would never do that.

Nevertheless, there are some lessons that we can learn from non-state actors. At the military level, they developed a new form of fight, that is terrorism, and they acquired very quickly the capacity to constitute functional state structures. This combination allows non-state actors to survive. This is the case of Iraq. Although the Iraqi government is very loyal to Iran, if I were Iran, I would never trust the government. Iran needs an entity external to the government to put pressure on it. As member of the international community, Iraq must respect the international law; the same obligation that is not applicable to a non-state actor.

For all these reasons, we will not witness the disintegration of the state, but how non-state actors will gain control over the region through state institutions. To change this situation is firstly necessary to get rid of non-state actors that are supported by states, before they could become an accepted reality in the Arab region.



JEAN-LOUP SAMAN

THE LONG-TERM ISSUES OF NON-STATE ACTORS

I would like to point out three essential elements, regarding the topic of non-state actors and the risk of disintegration. The first point is that we are witnessing an unprecedented period in the Arab region that consists in the diffusion of non-state actors, because of their number, their strength and their impact. We have been discussing the number of non-state actors, whose inflation is the product of the states' collapse.

During this Syrian war, several militias were created and trained both by the Iranian generals and by Hezbollah. Among the examples of non-state actors that my previous colleagues have quoted, we could include HAMAS (Ḥarakat al-Muqāwamah al-'Islāmiyyah – Islamic Resistance Movement). Especially in Europe, people tend to see HAMAS as the main actor that rules over Gaza, but if we look closely, there are more than 50 militias of lower level which are trying to compete with it in search of power. This gives you a complex picture because it shows how several different strategies are competing over a very small portion of territory.

To illustrate my argument, I would use the example of the Golan area. For a long time after the end of the war in 1973, the Golan was considered to be a stable area. Today if we go to the Golan area, we find on one side the Israeli Army, the UN observation missions, the forces of the Assad regime and, on the other, Hezbollah, the Syrian Liberation Army and Daesh. All these actors have their own agenda with competing strategies and are facing a daily struggle.

The second point concerns the unprecedented strength of non-state actors. Their strength is linked to the phenomenon of foreign fighters who, according to the Interpol data, amount to a total of 5.000 in the Arab region. In the 1980s the phenomenon of foreign fighters, already existing during the Afghan war, did not affect Western countries' security. Nowadays instead they are trained to carry out terroristic attacks in the European capitals. This change goes hand in hand with the financial possibilities that ISIS develops through drugs smuggling, the taxation

system they have established in the territories of Syria and Iraq under their control, bank robberies and private donations.

However, I think that in the Middle East the main non-state actor is not Daesh but still Hezbollah. Hezbollah has been fighting for five years a complex war in Syria supported by Iran and Russia. In the long-term period we should consider the expertise that Hezbollah is acquiring fighting at the Syrian borders, together with the political control of the Lebanese government.

The third point is the impact of non-state actors in shaping Middle East political strategies. The problem is to measure the real strength of non-state actors. Some years ago, we overestimated the powerfulness of the Syrian Liberation Army and we were thinking that the Assad regime was next to the collapse. In the end, the Syrian Liberation Army was not able to hold the ground and, on the contrary, we underestimated the military effectiveness of other groups, such as Daesh. Created in 2007 in Iraq, Daesh has been considered for a long time a non-effective military group that tried for several times to attack some Iraqi urban centres but always failing.

My conclusion is that beyond the military challenges, we have three long-term objectives: what we are going to do with the weapons and the military know-how flows in the region? How to deal with the exacerbation of cultural identities versus national identities? How do we prepare the integration of non-state actors into states after a civil war?

These circumstances will pose two principal challenges. An intelligence challenge to define the military effectiveness of non-state actors and to depict the geo-political consequences in the region. And a challenge related to the partnership in the Arab region to build effective capacities in order to avoid a greater security vacuum.

The main question is how to strengthen the capabilities of states to fight against non-state actors if they have been infiltrated by non-state actors themselves?





Street in Hebron (Sadik Gulec / Shutterstock.com)

Session 2

FOSTERING VIABLE POLITICS: THE EVOLUTION IN THE ARAB REGION



MAHMOUD KAREM

REBUILDING POLITICAL CONSENSUS AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE EGYPTIAN CASE

In all frankness let me state the following: I accepted to speak on this abrasive topic with the proviso that I too shall be transparent, abrasive, and candid. However, there is a background relevant to my presentation that must be placed upfront.

FACT ONE

A Conceptual Dilemma

We have a serious fundamental conceptual problem with some people in the West, tantamount to a gross misinterpretation of our two revolutions in 2011 and 2013. We read daily from papers, some research institutes in Washington and London, argumentative and narrative articles, op-eds, claiming that removing Mubarak was legitimate, while removing the “legitimately, democratically elected President Morsi”, was not. They add that Egypt is divided, polarized and that the inclusion of the Moslem Brotherhood (MB), in the political process is an a priori prerequisite for Egypt¹.

These pens also argue that there is no proof that violence in Egypt is the product of the MB, forgetting the historical axiom that the MB movement is the mother of all fundamentalist thinking in our region since 1928. They also ignore that after failing in ruling Egypt, the MB turned to publically inciting the killing of judges, officers, Christians, civilians and remains the mastermind in shipping thousands of migrants into Europe, capitalising on their humanitarian ordeal².

1 A former Egyptian Parliamentarian, writing a joint paper with a famous US figure, requested to repeat the parliamentary elections, attested by foreign observers to have been transparent and fair, just to re-state the MB into the parliament.

2 Two present members of the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights Moukhtar Nouh and Kamal Helbawy, former top officials in the hierarchy of the Moslem Brotherhood worldwide, have declared that in their testimonies in courts in alleged cases of trials of MB defendants with blowing

Once again I return to those who write almost daily on Egypt in the west and urge them not to see Egypt myopically. I call on them to go back to the drawing or study board. Do not over or under estimate the size of Islamists in the Egyptian political scene. Statistics should be respected. All political forces in Egypt should uphold the state, which has been an edifice in existence in Egypt for thousands of years.

Egypt cannot neglect nor tolerate atrocities to Christians Copts in Egypt, our partners in citizenship. I quote late Pope Shenouda who rightly asserted that Egypt "is not a country we live in, but a nation that lives in us". Loyalty, therefore, should be for the state and not for the group or the clan.

I conclude this section by stating that singling out deficiencies, putting first human rights, democracy and good governance, three important pillars for any nation, should be a means to cooperate with Egypt, to address and rectify, not a means to defame Egypt. This is what we do at the National Council for Human Rights. (Please read attachment one on NCHR activities in the past few months, which carried demands and proposed legislations on a new NGO law, a new law for peaceful demonstrations...etc.).

There are two ways to address these challenges. The first is to give up on trying to reason with those pens, since whatever we do will never be accepted. Even if we build a new Suez Canal from our own money and dedicate it to future world trade, or if we successfully conclude the political road map starting with a historic constitution, the election of a president, and finally electing a new parliament.

The second is to take the painful route of trying to explain our region and history hoping that they will understand. In many cases we fail. Only when terrorism hit Europe, regrettably confirming what we were trying to warn against all along, do they say: "Ah! Egypt was right".

This milieu of bad judgments creates a credibility deficit with some in the West, and forces Egypt to move East, very reminiscent of the situation before the Czechoslovak arms deal in the September 1955. It seems we have not learned from past experiences.³ To those people we say: let Egyptians decide for themselves.

FACT TWO

The Conclusion of the Political Road Map in Egypt in 2015

I confess building consensus at this stage is difficult. The nation has undergone

hotels, attacking tourists, electricity pylons, attacks on police stations, the defendants confessed proudly to their brutal acts saying that this was part of their Jihad.

³ In September 1955 Egypt, after having repeatedly denied from the USA, Great Britain and France through the Tripartite Declaration the possibility to buy significant quantities of armaments that could be used also against Israel, announced an agreement with the United Socialist Soviet Republics (USSR) for a massive delivery of armaments through Czechoslovakia. The deal ushered the swing of Nasser's Egypt from West to East and the beginning of Soviet influence in the country. Note of the Editor.

two revolutions in three years; the human rights agenda needs a lot of work; the economy is suffering from a stagnation in tourism accompanied by a drop in revenues, a foreign currency and budget deficit, plus inflation; unemployment is beyond 13% with a growth rate of only 3%, hoping to reach 8 or 9%; a huge population explosion; foreign reserve and hard currency problems; and now a water problem looming on our future. This has forced columnists such as Michael Hanna to state: 'Egypt may remain on a course of sustainable insecurity rather than sustainable development'.

Despite these challenges Egypt remains rich and attractive for many sectors and investment including European solar and wind farms energy projects. The unique geographic location, plus trained labour, and access to regional markets, adds to Egypt's assets. In the field of energy new investment opportunities exist, and Egypt's renewal of many power generation stations in record time in the past two years set an example.

However, as we criticize we must also give credit where credit is due. The road map started in difficult times with the important step of drafting a solid constitution suitable for a modern civil nation in the new millennium. A constitution that allocated a whole section for rights and freedoms⁴, paved the road for a democratic Egypt, balanced between the executive, legislative and judicial branches of government, prevented the emergence of any new dictator by making everyone accountable. May I remind you of a presidential decree on November 22, 2012, after only four months in office by president Morsi instating himself as an imperial dictatorial president with all powers consolidated in his own hands?

This new constitution also stressed fundamental human rights in more than 41 articles, underscored cyberspace safeguards, intellectual property, protection of the Nile, forced displacement, sanctity of places of worship...etc. This constitution also reflected the wide experience and international capabilities of the head of the 50-member drafting committee.

Now let me turn to a statistical overview, which can also help explain the political representation ratios in the new Egyptian parliament, which met for the first time in early 2016.

The new parliament has a total number of 596 deputies, the number of elected deputies is 568, including 325 independent deputies and 243 party-affiliated ones, representing 19 political parties.

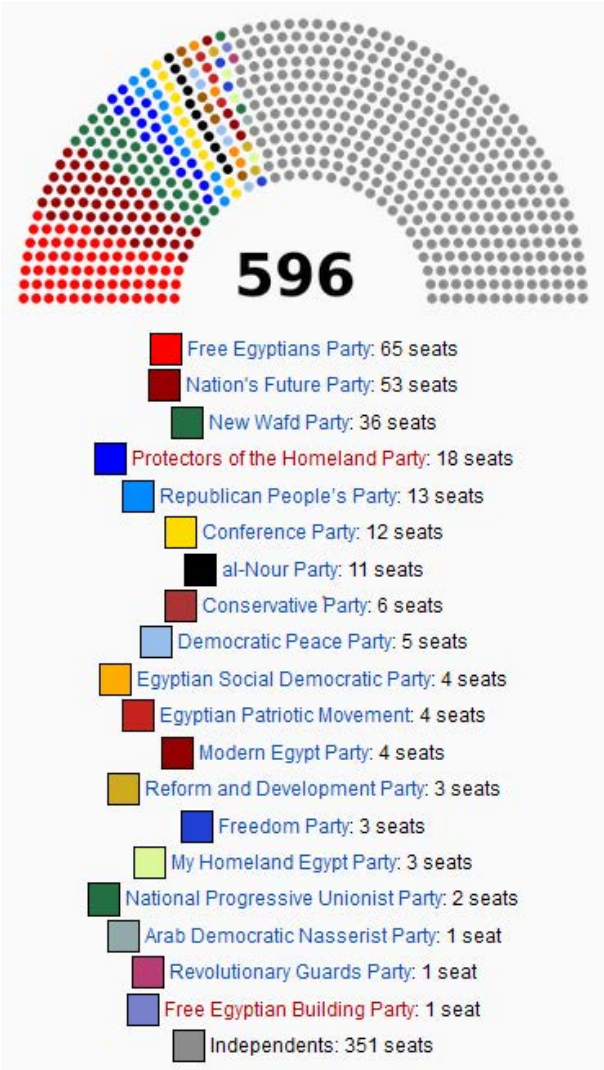
28 deputies have been appointed by a presidential decree, 14 women, 14 men.

The proportion of youth in the parliament is: 60 elected members under the age of 35 years; 125 between the age of 36 to 45 years, bringing the total number of youth under the dome of the House of Representatives to 185 deputies, constituting 32,6%, almost one-third of the total. The percentage of women's representa-

⁴ Please note that the previous constitution of 2012 paved the way for Egypt to be ruled by dictum or "Welayet El Faqih", or blind obedience, as the core.

tion in the House of Representatives is 14,9%, or the equivalent of 89 deputies (75 elected and 14 appointed). In addition to that we have: 9 special needs [disabled N.o.E.] members, 39 Copts, 119 businessmen and 54 academics. Just as a reminder, a Copt won exclusively running individually in a voting district. Finally, 85% of present members are new to Parliament, bringing new actors to the political scene, not as before when old powerful faces won continuously.

There are 19 parties in parliament, as one can see from the following scheme.



Source: Wikipedia

Coalition building in parliamentary politics has already started and democracy is

working. The largest party portrayed to be a government supporter suffered heavy losses and withdrawals, and the parliament in its entirety voted against a government-backed law on civil services sending it back for redrafting.

FACT THREE

A divided and conflicting interpretation of how to deal with political Islam, and how to instil a vibrant political life

Some consider that alienating these forces from the political scene will result in polarization, societal division and more violence. Others believe that the experience of Egypt, which democratically brought a political Islam regime in 2012, failed, because this regime did not believe in any other elements of democracy such as alternation of power, checks and balances or power sharing. The 2012 MB regimes' decision-making process was not contingent upon a democracy 'for the people, by the people'. On the contrary, it relied on an ordained dictum, top-down.

Political sociologists describe this as formalism, or the rule of the 'Supreme Guidance'. This created a societal milieu, which gradually incubated fundamentalist thinking and jihadist actors. Their resort now to violence and these terrorist acts makes reconciliation more and more difficult. It also signifies the cardinal topicality of the June 30th revolution in Egypt, which brought 33 million Egyptians to the streets in defence of their 7.000 years' heritage and of an identity believing in peaceful coexistence.

At present we cannot ignore the fact that Egypt needs a building process of what Huntington described as 'strong institutionalization'. We must confess that the political scene needs strong political parties and not the monopoly of one single party. Today we have more than 100 parties; most of them are weak, lack a strong platform and a sound socio-economic and political agenda. The four main political forces in the society are: the socialists, who have strong roots due to their program of social justice, Nasserite nationalists, liberals and the Islamists.

The youth, a formidable force, remains aloof from the political process except for one party mainly dominated by youth, and therefore remains either engulfed in their needs for a decent life and sound jobs, or choose to remain distant from political referendums. They continue, however, to be a vibrant factor in Egyptian society, since the future of Egypt depends on them.

In some cases, we see a generation gap where the old lean to stability and safety, and a youth population with a broader, rigorous agenda. This brings us to the majority, which is either in a state of 'revolution fatigue', wants work and productivity, or remains fearsome of a new wave of violence. As for the military it is important to state salient factors. Firstly, the military establishment stood against rule by inheritance and protected the January 2011 revolution. Unlike Syria for example, the military stood for the removal of one of its own leaders.

Secondly, the complete decay, collapse of the state following 2011, with prison break-outs and prisoners being freed in bloody scenes, whisked through tunnels to reappear in Gaza and Hezbollah television stations in Lebanon or on Aljazeera TV, just six hours after their escape, forced the army to become responsible for everything. Internal security was one obligation, but distributing bread, clean potable water, providing for housing, supplying electricity, and protecting political life; suddenly it became the military's task to save the 90 million+ population from ruin. During these developments some mistakes happened, but the overall result revealed that Egypt was above any other motivation for the military.

Finally, it exists in Egyptian history a steadfast relationship of kinship and association between the people and their army. The image of young officers igniting one of the most historic revolutions in third world history in 1952 remains alive in our ethos. Historians even claim that this nexus between the people and the army dates back to the Battle of Qadesh (1274 BC), which took place between the forces of Egypt and the Hittites. I quote from the English Wikipedia: "the Egyptian Empire under Ramses II and the Hittite Empire under Muwatalli II at the city of Qadesh on the Orontes River, just upstream of Lake Homs near the modern Syrian-Lebanese border. The battle is generally dated to 1274 BC of the conventional Egyptian chronology, and is the earliest battle in recorded history for which details of tactics and formations are known. It was probably the largest chariot battle ever fought, involving perhaps 5,000-6,000 chariots". Such a battle had had involved a significant part of the Egyptian population and the heroism of the soldiers defending the encircled pharaoh may symbolise this early link between nation and military.

FACT FOUR

A New Chart for Democracy for our region

The future of our region depends on fundamental human rights and a democratic transition. But the best course should rely on our innate transformation, as well as the gradual establishment of the necessary tools. Just as a reminder, the international edifice of democracy is not a simple western style election process, or a one-model-fits-all democracy. It is much deeper than that. It includes, inter alia, pluralism, institutional building, and alternation of power, rule of law, integrity of elections, political participation, accountability, and citizen empowerment.

This is a process that needs the full realization of all elements of democracy including the right for development, education, health, employment, housing...etc., in a stable and transparent milieu. Between the present and that lofty objective there will be ups and downs, serious work must be done to reform legislations and bring national plans in tandem with UN treaties and OHCHR standards. Take for instance the need to work with the 2015-2030 sustainable development goals.

We must confess that in the Middle East the road is bumpy and the experience is young. But we must ask ourselves how many years, and how many bloody wars did it take Europe to instil the democracy we see today?

Our partners must understand our predicament, which is not all our doing. We complain to them that instead of working with us, shepherding cooperation plans, twinning capacity building projects, training our staff, and equipping our polling stations with new advanced election monitoring equipment, we receive policies of “more for more”, or denouncing reports especially on independent rulings by the judiciary in a system that should honour the integrity of the judiciary and the principle of separation of power.

FACT FIVE

A War on Terror on all fronts

Non-state actors in our part of the world, by default, display an endemic irreconcilable cleavage with the West. Today the threat is growing on the ground in North Africa: its supply with weapons, intelligence information, training and funding should be interdicted. Foreign fighters from Boko Haram are uniting with ISIS in Libya.

This is what we are facing.

Egypt is in a costly war on terror on all of its borders and shores extending thousands of miles west, east, north and south. The world should acknowledge the cost Egypt is paying in human sacrifices, fighting with boots on the ground, achieving results, and taking losses.

Egypt forewarned on three matters in dire need for international attention and collective corrective measure:

- How to mop up funding sources for terrorism;
- How to cramp Internet access for terrorists
- And how to salvage and rectify the religious discourse from primary school curricula onwards.

But most importantly, all efforts should be exerted to interdict any possibility that non-state actors may resort to or acquire a crude weapon of mass destruction, or a ‘bomb in a suitcase’. This demands international cooperation with key moderate regional actors such as Jordan and Egypt.

As someone who has worked with you in the Mediterranean Dialogue for peace building in the Middle East, I remain deeply worried. We are witnessing a conflict exacerbated by factionalism, sectarianism, and religious confrontation, not only between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, but also amongst Sunni and Shi’ite Muslims.

Ruthless beheading or ethnic cleansing is not related to Islam. Our religion is

based on moderation, forgiveness and compassion. However, sociologists should explain to us why such a phenomenon is appealing to western youth who are travelling in the thousands to join ISIS.⁵ Side-lining our genuine security concerns by marginalizing them, as “conspiracy theories” is not correct. Please do not insult our intelligence.

Egypt lives in a war torn region that has turned populations to refugees, witnessed the collapse of state and central authority, has become a haven for foreign fighters with conflicting agendas, witnesses daily killings and massacres in the name of a twisted interpretation of Islam. The region is so consumed in its own maladies that we have side-lined the most important cause of all ages, which is the resolution of the Palestinian problem.

Additionally, terrorism levies an even bigger toll on full democratic transformation by forcing nations to strike a balance between political/civic rights and the want for security and safety. May I remind all that living securely is an undisputed and fundamental human rights value underscored in all Human Rights Covenants?

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The Way Ahead

In conclusion reconciliation in Egypt has prerequisites, one of them is the desire by all political forces for inclusion within the fabric of the society by upholding national and societal imperatives at a higher level than the interest of just one group or cult.

Forces in the society which have abandoned this axiom, lost public sentiments, appeal and credence. Their lack of transparency, reliance on sleeping cells, opaqueness with party membership, unwillingness to acknowledge sources of funding, reliance on militias and thugs, as well as bullying from abroad for external legitimacy. Rather than gaining intra or domestic societal acceptability, they have created a schism within their own society.

Above all, reconciliation will not succeed if violence remains the motto of these groups. Reliance on an armed opposition is contrary to all fundamentals of democracy. The mother organization in Egypt of the MB should rescind violence, accept inclusion in the society and call on their followers to resort to dialogue. May I draw your attention to the fact that the branches of the mother organization in

5 Conversely speaking to, recruiting and raising jihadists is another phenomenon that deserves study. Building allegiance transcends teachings in madrassas, it starts from adopting the individual from childhood. Here the mother organization spends on education, healthcare, and even arranges marriages with living quarters. The organization replaces the state and offers services and privileges. Another matter is the religious rhetoric, rulings and teachings that breed jihadists. Egypt's president has requested Al Azhar to work to rectify and face those twisted teachings. The third matter is funding usually arranged from donations, contributions from salaries in the name of religion. The use of the Internet too needs special scrutiny to ensure preventing diversion to terrorism.

the Arab world have started to distance themselves from the mother organization in Egypt?

We have seen this in Tunisia, Algeria, Morocco, and lately in Jordan, where Said Hamam, the Grand Imam of the group in Jordan, declared that they have passed new regulations “amending their statute abolishing the subordination of the Jordan chapter to the mother organization in Egypt”⁶.

Yesterday in Washington DC on Capitol Hill the House Judiciary committee approved by 17/10 votes the: “Muslim Brotherhood terrorist designation Act of 2015 H.R. 3892”. I urge to read what Chairman Bob Goodlatte stated yesterday. The State department now will receive this “Act”, to protect US national security.

Recently in the NYT an article entitled “How to save Egypt” was written by a former Egyptian parliamentarian placing all demands and blames on the state authority with no demands what so ever on other forces. This is the typical kind of criticism I mentioned in the beginning, which is one-sided and does not offer a viable solution for all parties.

Let me conclude, Ladies and Gentlemen, by stating that after two revolutions in Egypt the political will for a sound and viable democratic transition is strong and irreversible. The millions who stood up in the streets in two revolutions demanding their rights cannot be silenced. However transitional periods especially in old societies need to be gradual until the proper institutional process is complete. Your literature and writings by Aristotle and Plato informed us that democracy was an evolutionary process.

I Quote the Foreign Minister of Egypt who stated this month in Washington that as much as we look at the negative we should also look at the positive side, citing examples of Egyptian medias operating perhaps with excessive freedoms, a civil society that soon will have a new NGO law that will make the establishment of any NGO possible by simple notification and not by state approval. This law will add to the already strong body of almost 5.000 NGOs working in Egypt, along with a press corps of 1.300 free foreign press members.

ATTACHMENT

NCHR Activities in 2016

- Raising the issue of Forced disappearances with the Minister of Interior. Receiving complaints from the public and following them up with the authorities.

⁶ Algeria offers us one model after losing 150.000 victims to terrorism from 1991, in a 13 years' war against terror. The National reconciliation charter however, set stern prerequisites for dialogue and amnesty excluding those committing murder, bomb attacks against public places...etc. In South Africa too the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) was set up by the Government of National Unity to heal crimes of apartheid, excluding those who committed crimes of murder...etc. The conflict during this period resulted in violence and human rights abuses from all sides.

- Defining the difference between arbitrary arrest and forced disappearances, requesting the authorities to desist from both.
- Numerous Prison visits including prisons opened for the NCHR for the first time, elaboration of a set of procedures with the Ministry of Interior for upgraded medical treatment, release of prisoners over age, family visits, release of youth arrested in demonstration.
- Re-modification of the statute of the NCHR.
- Revisiting demonstration law.
- Proposing a new Law for civil service, approved by the new Parliament.
- Proposed laws on Building places of worship, non-discrimination, NGO law, establishment of a Commission for anti-discrimination, anti-terror law, and trial of civilians before military courts.
- Requesting visits to places of detention and police station.
- Denouncing crimes of hatred such as “Hisba” especially against artists and poets.
- Proposing specific legislation against a convoluted interpretation of acts of religious contempt.



SARKIS NAHOUM

THE LEBANESE FAILURE AND THE REGIONAL CONTRADICTIONS

I will be brief and talk about Lebanon because nowadays we are witnessing a proxy war that has been witnessed by the country for at least 15 years from 1975 to 1989. I will consider the lessons that many Lebanese and I have learnt during the proxy war from 1969 until now in the country.

First of all, we cannot build a state if people remain divided either by ethnic or by religion. No state is viable when religious issues prevail; this means that it is not possible to be first Muslim, Christian, Shiite or Sunnite and, after that, Arab and Lebanese. No state can stay alive without justice, equality, freedom and democracy. In this case, we are ready to accept relative democracy. No state is able to pursue its objectives without institutions or with corrupted institutions that make political, religious and sectarian favouritisms.

In the entire Arab world there is the illusion that even a small portion of the population belonging to a sect can make an alliance with big regional or international powers based on mutual respect and support. In Lebanon we pay the price for this illusion because almost every community tries to gain support from the outside, making all the population hostage of this situation. No state can entirely rely on regional or international powers to defend its democracy, dependency and fundamental rights, because these powers are moved only by their own interests.

In Lebanon we talk a lot about national and Arab unity. I do not think that the Arabs are mature enough for their unity because it means annexation but also democracy, freedom, sharing and participation. We cannot trust any government or regime when it asks people to sacrifice their fundamental private and public rights in order to prepare its army to get back a lost or occupied territory.

The Arab populations paid a high price for trusting their governments and the western powers had the impression that the Arab region was stable. Despite all the debates whether these regimes were democratic or authoritarian, the stability that they claimed was not real and this made room for oppression. This appeared

as an evidence during the Arab spring as every population was eager to change the political and economic situation and nobody was able to stop the turmoil.

The Islamic and terroristic direction took by the protests proves that they were not planned by any great powers. Indeed, when the uprisings broke out in Tunisia nobody thought they would move to Egypt. Later on, the same happened in Syria. And for the first time since the Sykes-Picot Agreement, the Arab people were dictating their own future whether this would lead to a success or a failure. For the first time, the great powers cannot sit down drawing the borders between the Arab countries and defining the spheres of influence of United States, Europe, Russia and so on. The map of the Arab region has been drawn by Arab blood and I am afraid that the result will not compensate the sacrifice of the people who decided to die fighting for better life conditions.

I will be frank speaking on what is going on in Lebanon. Lebanon is about to become a failed state because of the vacancy of the presidency, the instability of the government and the closing of the parliament. Eleven months after the beginning of the political crisis, the situation has not reached its end yet and Lebanese people know that nobody is trying to solve it but everybody wants to understand how many profits and investments they can obtain from this circumstance.

In Lebanon, the only solid sector is the banking sector. Without the banking sector the economy would collapse. The other sector still considered strong is the army and the security apparatus. The army is helped by Hezbollah in the Bekaa Valley and against terrorists. Although I am against its intervention in Syria and terroristic attacks outside Lebanon, I cannot deny that Hezbollah has liberated our country from the occupation, while the USA are training the army and providing it with weapons and ammunitions.

The US continue to support the army because it is fighting terrorism; the irony of things is that Hezbollah + the Lebanese army + Assad + Iran + US + Russia and others are 'allies' in fighting ISIS and other terrorist organisations despite their differences, competitions and wars. In this circumstance the army does not know what to do, because, on the one hand, Hezbollah has been included in the list of terroristic organisations; on the other, Hezbollah has been fighting against the jihadist terrorists in Lebanon and the Shia community is represented in the central government.

The last thing I will say is that in Lebanon we have paid three prices because of the Saudis. I am not against the Saudis and I recognise the good they did to our country over the last 40 years. However, in 1989, during the Six-day War, their strategy in Lebanon was defensive, and they simply tried to reach diplomatic agreements with the president of Syria, Hafez al-Assad, without protecting our country from the Syrian expansionist projects. A more incisive Saudi intervention would have avoided the strengthening of Hezbollah in Lebanon. Saudi Arabia is now blaming the United states because they do not have a strategy in the Arab region, but those who should have had a strategy were the Saudis, who now are

taking the lead stating that they will not reach any result without the American support.

During the last years we have witnessed the spread of Islamism in the Arab region but who is guilty for this situation? Firstly, Saudi Arabia and the United states that relied on this kind of Islamism to send people fighting in Afghanistan. Secondly, Turkey that convinced the western powers to ally with the Muslim Brotherhood, believing they were moderate. Thirdly, Iran that financed several small Islamist groups, which later on decided to act independently because the Iranian project was too nationalist and sectarian.



AHMAD MASA'DEH

PLURALISM IS THE RECIPE FOR ARAB UNITY

Two years ago I was invited by the Foundation to a conference to advocate democracy in the Arab world. I changed my mind and, at the moment and for the time being, I will not promote anymore democratic reforms in the region. After the Second World War, Arab societies could not develop a successful pluralistic model because the heritage of colonialism and the previous political culture produce totalitarian regimes. Either the social fabric and the political and economic factors were undemocratic or, to say it in a best way, underdeveloped.

Thus in the Arab world, if we look at the title of this panel 'how to foster viable politics' everyone is to blame: people, NGOs, governments, we are all to blame. The reality is that we failed and we have to take our responsibilities for this failure. The question is: why did we fail? Why our internal politics are not viable? I tell you that about 30 years ago the minister of Economy of Jordan told me the problem was 'the genes', it is something that has to do with the Arab genetics.

Former prime minister of Libya Mahmoud Gebril said that we failed in development and national integration. I agree with this, but I will distance myself from the idea that all the Arabs are the same. I will not criticise the West, talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, blame the Arab totalitarian leaders because I think we need to take the discussion deeper. What is the problem with the Arab? Why our politics are not viable? Over the last two years, I came to the conclusion that if we do not accept the others, we could not establish pluralistic political models. My conclusion leads me to a deeper issue than talking about democracy and governance. To start with, we need doing something to accept the others. The Arab movement, which portrayed itself as the liberation movement of the last century, is not producing a model to accept the others. Therefore, it is not different from the previous regimes, oriented towards nationalistic ideologies.

Basically, if we look at the construction of Arab political factors, we find out that their common denominator is the incapacity to understand the value of pluralism. They are unable to establish a framework where everybody can talk and debate

accepting each other's ideas. Moreover, the continuous state of violence in the Middle East has proved that military measures alone cannot neutralise the extremism spread all over the region. After a generation of fighting against terrorism where are we now? It is hard to acknowledge that our societies are more radicalised than before, our cultural heritage is in decline and our people are suffering more and more in this close-minded environment that does not tolerate changes and progress.

To reverse this trend, we have the urgent need for an effective pluralisation strategy combating extreme beliefs. We need a cultural revolution to advance new political models in order to oppose the traditional 'guardianship attitude', which is deeply radicate in the Arab society, and to combat the backward ideology that brought to the creation of terroristic groups.

The question is from where do we start? My answer is that we should start from education. Extremism and unilateralism have not been created in a vacuum but in our schools and universities. Today if you look at the Arab educational system, it differs from the western system because we do not develop a critical thinking. We just use memorisation that leads to a lack of innovation and creativity.

The result of extremism in our educational system is distrust and hatred in our society, between our own people. Hence, in my opinion we should make our educational system more inventive and dynamic, adapted to the technological progress. In addition, the Arabs need a sense of humanity. This goes hand in hand with 'moderation', so difficult to contextualise in the Arab world. Both the right and the left wing are not moderate because they do not accept the others.

For this reason, I would say that the official doctrine has to be reviewed, especially if used to advance terrorism and sectarianism. In fact, on the basis of the traditional political narrative, some Arab scholars and politicians agree in promoting sectarianism, asserting that coexistence in some Arab countries is not possible to reach. In my view, this will be the recipe towards the catastrophe not just in the Middle East, but also in Europe. Here is where pluralism kicks in, being the ultimate tool to protect Arab nations. Over the years, we fought for Arab unity. It was another failure because we based it on blood relations and ethnicity instead of economic and social values.

This is the only way to reach a modern concept of citizenship to be extended outside a single Arab nation. Although the Arabs have the main responsibility for this situations, the international community has its responsibilities as well. Regrettably, all the UN, European, NATO projects did not produce effective and quantifiable results on the ground; cultural measures have to be implemented to rethink the civilisation project in the Arab world and this would be possible only in terms of pluralism.



ABDOULI TOUHAMI

LEARNING AND UNLEARNING FROM THE TUNISIAN REVOLUTION

I would like to thank those who made it possible for me to be among you today and share with you my analysis resulting from my experience during the revolution in Tunisia. Between 2011 and 2013 I was member of the transitional government. In 2014 I was elected member of the parliament. Then, in 2015 I was again member of the Tunisian government. Before continuing I must emphasize that this revolution is not for exportation. For those who did not make their revolution, I advise them not to move forward with it but that it is better to be reformist.

➤ **Learning from the social consensus; unlearning from the political compromise!**

- The first phase: 'the assurance of the ongoing revolution by compromise'. From the end of December 2010 till December 2011, Tunisian youths affirmed willingly that they are revolutionary beings and moved towards a new era of democracy, as firmly they had been denied, neglected in a climate of confusion.
- Political actors chose the constitutional parliament.
- 2011 elections and troika coalition: government of political compromise.
- The second phase: the 'hijacked revolution'. From December 2011 to January 2014: The assassination of Chokri Belaid, Feb 6. The assassination of Mohamed Brahmi, July 25 ...
- The Troika Political coalition experience was no more than changing **the robe of Ben Ali with the robe of the Islamists**.
- The third phase of the adjustment of the ongoing revolution and political consensus. The year 2014. The "ineptocratic" Islamist government ended by finalising the Constitution and the formation of a government of technocrats.
- The democratic transition was ensured and transparent elections were achieved. Consensus at this phase logically took place.
- The fourth phase 'the political second compromise'. during 2015 and 2016. A new government of coalition was formed by a technocrat as prime minister. This ended the political conflict between the secularists and the Islamists who

pretended to have carried out a disengagement from terrorism. Fragmentation of the majority 'NIDA' party and a new version of the 2016 government, also based on compromise. This phase is characterized by the hazardous patching up of politics.

Deductions

- Revolution genesis: compromise, hijack, adjustment, consensus, compromise.
- **After every compromise there is a crisis but after consensus there is success.**
- Political compromise means concessions and it has never been constructive since it is between two extremes and not for society but for some groups.
- The Social National consensus is a constructive mechanism as it is a **social contract** of a second degree. The Consensus is needed "when regarding a set of national issues or questions there are no real differences between different political positions", but compromise is a settlement of differences by mutual concessions and it can even violate the immutable republican principles in favour of interests settlements".
- Democracy of compromise is always fragile. Thus, we had a fragile government in 2015 and then in 2016 too: we are reproducing the same crisis.
- The fragility caused the fragmentation of the NIDA party. Then, the crisis of this party was transferred to the functioning of the government. Such a partial crisis becomes a state crisis, because Tunisians, in their imagination, are incapable until now to distinguish between party and state.
- At a certain time, amazingly, Tunisians relied on the NIDA to solve the social economic crisis, but unfortunately all the Tunisians now are thinking how to solve the crisis of this party.
- **I recognize that we succeeded in the social consensus but our great failure is the political compromise. Thus, we have to learn from the social consensus and unlearn from the political compromise.**

➤ Learning from unity; unlearning from unity on the Leader!

- Within five years the illusory question was about who would govern Tunisia, in correlation with other questions about political identity, political Islam, secularity, liberalism and so forth.
- The constructive question: How could we govern? It is the question regarding the project. Which project, not which leader or which politician?
- The revolution is not changing the authority from an actor to another, but is achieving the rupture with the rituals and sacred authority.
- We did need a passage from the idiosyncratic state to the Project-state, not halved by ideological horizons or a charismatic leader.

Deductions

- We do need a state of partnership based on applicable standard of unity and integration.
- The process of integration consists on “shifting loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over the pre-existing political parties”
- I recognise that we failed in building up the national project, we are still relying on a charismatic leader. Thus, we have to learn from the national project and unlearn from the oracles of the leader.



Syrian refugees (Thomas Koch / Shutterstock.com)



Session 3

SENSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS AND CO-OPERATIVE SECURITY



EBTESAM AL-KETBI

THE GULF NEEDS A REAL ISTANBUL COOPERATION INITIATIVE PLUS

This paper discusses arguments and opportunities for cementing the strategic partnership between countries of the Cooperation Council for the Arab states of the Gulf (GCC) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). The paper adopts a vision based on the regional and international conditions and shifts happening since the events of the Arab Spring and makes the case for cementing this partnership beyond the level represented by the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI) since 2004.

FIRST: JUSTIFICATIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES TO CEMENT THE GCC-NATO PARTNERSHIP

There has been recently an increase in the sources of threat, especially by militant non-state actors and terrorists. Therefore, leaving GCC-NATO ties hostage to jihadist terrorist organizations and to European far right movements, that increase Islam-phobia, does not serve the best interest of both the West and GCC. It is necessary to establish a new vision for this relationship overcoming shortcomings and weaknesses that have governed and hindered this relationship in the past. Over the past six years, the Arab uprisings have contributed in speeding up the struggle's pace to shape the new regional order. There is a common GCC-NATO interest that the outcome of the evolving order meets the interests and dispels the fears of both sides.

SECOND: SCENARIOS AND OPTIONS

There are three possible scenarios for the GCC-NATO relationship in future:

First Scenario: Settle for Partial and limited Initiatives for Cooperation as Part of ICI

This scenario means that the status quo governing the GCC-NATO ties re-

mains intact without any radical change. This also means to continue working within the framework of ICI, with Saudi Arabia and Oman officially remaining outside. This scenario might be justified on the one hand by the ambiguity surrounding the outcomes of the security and political conditions in the MENA region, and, on the other hand, by the lack of an actual common vision between the NATO and the GCC on the final shape of the political and security arrangements in Syria, Yemen and Libya.

However, the ICI achievements in the past 12 years were not enough promising. This might be due to ICI's structure, which is based on bilateral agreements between NATO and GCC countries instead of a multilateral framework. In turn, this has contributed to the weakness of a collective GCC vision towards a strategic partnership with NATO. Despite cooperation between some GCC countries and NATO to topple the regime of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in 2011, the lack of a solid strategy for the following step has created a strategic vacuum in Libya. This vacuum has been exploited by extremist and terrorist groups, which turned into a threat to neighbouring Arab and European countries. Six years later, Libya still faces a political and security deadlock that requires more serious and active approaches aimed at securing stability and establishing a government capable of running the country and tackling tough issues such as rebuilding, terrorism, oil and border security with Arab, African and European neighbours.

Second Scenario: Forming New Iranian-European Relations at the Expense of GCC Countries

This scenario suggests that after concluding the nuclear deal with Iran, Europe is set for a political and economic openness with Tehran to exploit the window of opportunity the deal might provide based on the Western understanding. According to this scenario, Iran and the West may reach security arrangements for the region, in particular, in Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon and these may include even Turkey and the Kurds. This Western-Iranian rapprochement would come at the expense of the NATO-GCC relations, especially in light of the many unresolved disputes between GCC countries and Iran by virtue of the latter's regional destabilising policies.

In addition, the Western openness towards Iran without Tehran's pledge not to interfere in the internal affairs of its neighbours would send a signal to GCC countries and the rest of the Arab countries that Europe is indifferent to their fears and objections to Iranian policies.

On the other hand, the West's bet on Iranian President Hasan Rouhani and his foreign minister Javad Zarif shows a lack of a deep realization of the nature of the power structure in Iran, centres of power in the country, and the limited role and influence that Rouhani, Zarif and former president Hashmi Rafsanjani

have. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and the Supreme Leader establishment have control over most of the political, security and economic game inside and outside Iran. It is likely that the West will not relinquish its strategic ties with the Arab Gulf countries, while Iran, on its part, is not currently interested in developing joint defence relations with NATO as Tehran is more inclined to develop its military capabilities by seeking a Russian rather than a NATO or Western help (consider the Russian proposals to sell: S-300 air defence systems, Su-30 Flanker multirole fighters, MiG-35 Fulcrum-F multirole and air superiority fighters, T-90 main battle tanks, etc.).

Third Scenario: a New Version of the "Istanbul Cooperation Initiative" to Cement the Strategic Partnership between GCC and NATO

This scenario suggests that defence relations between GCC and NATO have lacked an institutional framework, and consequently, shifts within the regional and international landscape may help promote NATO's role in the Gulf security, especially with the US strategy of shifting focus from the Middle East towards the Asia-Pacific region, and Obama's new approach of less US military interventions overseas. This scenario is based on the premise that involving NATO in the region can be facilitated in light of the European military presence in the Gulf.

One can argue that there are three variables that can enhance NATO's role in the Gulf and help establish a new version of ICI. The first variable is related to the extent of which the signing of the nuclear deal with Iran changes the elements of the Western strategy towards GCC and Iran. Secondly, the outcomes of the military campaign against ISIS will affect NATO's approach to the region. Thirdly, according to some experts, transition of power in Saudi Arabia and Oman may have an impact on the security situation in the Gulf states. It is important that the NATO carefully considers all initiatives and moves already made by GCC countries such as "Storm of Resolve", the new Saudi-led "Islamic Alliance to Fight Terrorism", as well as the possible Saudi and Emirati military ground intervention in Syria and Iraq under US supervision.

According to this scenario, both NATO and GCC can play joint roles, as the nature of this developing relationship between the two sides will determine a possible division of labour. The new version of ICI suggested by this scenario takes into account the fact that Riyadh and Muscat may join this Initiative or Riyadh, at least. Moreover, the fact that Gulf countries have demonstrated autonomous initiatives to defend their regional security and interests can also help in shaping the new version of ICI, which will eventually push for a GCC-NATO partnership in the coming decade with different possible outcomes. While this paper makes the case for adopting this scenario, it is equally important to point out to some obstacles that may hinder its success, such as the lack of consensus

among GCC countries on key strategic issues like the conflicts in Syria, Libya and Yemen, terrorism, and political Islam.

THIRD: RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Start an extensive dialogue between GCC countries and NATO to explore potential areas of defence and security co-operation by developing ICI and establishing a new regional security vision. Such a vision should cover GCC countries, Iran and Turkey with the aim of reducing tensions and chances of proxy wars across the region and avoid the scenario of direct military confrontations either between GCC and Iran or between Turkey and Russia.
2. It is necessary to try to launch a Saudi-Iranian dialogue that can serve as the start of establishing a new regional security vision to reduce tensions and chances of proxy wars across the region. Europe, on its part, can play a crucial role in this regard in co-ordination with regional states, including the UAE. EU countries can employ their relative closeness to Tehran and its partnership with Riyadh to push for this dialogue. The conflict in Yemen, for example, can top the agenda of this dialogue.
3. Establish partnerships between the UAE and NATO in military industries, joint exercises and exchanges of military personnel. This would enhance UAE's ability to play the suggested role of counterbalancing Iran in the region in a manner that keeps regional balance of power through careful deterrence strategy and raising costs associated with military conflicts. This would also enhance the interconnected interests of regional powers within a broader concept of comprehensive and balanced regional security that encompasses Iran and other regional states that can reduce regional rivalries and avoid zero-sum game scenarios.
4. Enhance NATO-GCC joint coordination to support the UN-led political track in Libya that would possibly lead to the deployment of a European peacekeeping force in the country upon the approval of the Libyan parties. This joint coordination will be pursued in other areas such as providing training for the Libyan legitimate forces, combatting terrorism in North Africa, tackling the issue of illegal immigration and protecting oil facilities.



NICOLA DE SANTIS

NATO: THE WILL AND THE NEED TO DO MORE

I will start from what H.E. Amre M. Moussa said that we need to think about the Arab region in the framework of change, and I will present the NATO's perspective on this issue. For twenty years, through i.e. the Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Co-operation Initiative, NATO has been developing partnerships with countries in the Arab region.

It is significant to remind that conflicts in this region continue from 1947 and their number amounts to 67. It almost seems that this territory is condemned to a never-ending spiral of violence, instability and insecurity; nevertheless, I do not think so. The challenges that we are facing in the region are complex because change is usually accompanied by a number of issues, at different dimensions, that in 2011 violently claimed the attention of the international community. This event is known as the Arab spring, but I would like to rename it in 'public awareness of the Arab people.' the regimes did not feel anymore having the right to suppress their liberties and their ambitions towards the future. I agree with you, H.E. Amre M. Moussa, saying that through the media and the satellite television young people realise there are life conditions that differ from theirs: their question is 'why we cannot live like this? Why we have been predestined to this misery?'.

Therefore, those regimes that have violated the social contract between the rulers and the ruled have been subjected to violent protests. According to World Bank data, in North Africa between 15 and 24 years the rate of unemployment is ranging from 30% in 2010 to 40% in 2015. This is the reason why people cannot assure themselves better living standards, send their children to school or even get married as any human being should dream of.

When we talk about conflicts in the region, we need to understand that the border between domestic and international security has now been blurred. By this assumption, we can explain the spread of radicalism and terrorism that fit themselves into the vacuum that regimes have left by not responding adequately to the changes that occurred. How have regimes reacted to changes? In Tunisia the

regime has accommodated them; moderate Islamic forces and secular parties have decided to do something to keep the country united. In Libya, NATO worked hard with the former Prime Minister, Mahmoud Gebril, in support with the Arab people when the previous regime began to kill them. Therefore, thinking about NATO's partnerships in the Arab region, I reflect on how we can give a positive contribution to change and also to guarantee regional security and stability.

There are two main ways to reach this goal: prevention and crisis management. Prevention is our purpose in the Mediterranean Dialogue; when 20 years ago we created the Mediterranean Dialogue, it was unthinkable that NATO and Arab countries could sit together but today, looking at this room. I cannot see other than friends from Tunisia, Jordan, Libya and Egypt. In this room we have built a new culture of cooperation and partnership. Of course NATO is a security organisation and does not directly deal with social and economic unbalances, however, when in 1994 we launched the Mediterranean Dialogue, we insisted on the complementarity with the European regional initiatives in order to deal with the multidimensional changes underway.

Nowadays everybody is worried by migration and I ask, where are the migrants coming from? They come from poverty and conflicts. Thus, why the major economic institutions do not have a Marshall plan for North Africa to tackle with the economic and social problems people are fleeing from? NATO partnership with countries in the region is dealing with security issues, enabling them to develop viable security strategies and institutions and work with other countries at a multi-lateral level. This is the reason why the Tunisian government asked NATO to train its special forces to deal with terroristic attacks.

Regardless of the Arab spring, I have seen all the Arab countries asking NATO to work together to face these challenges.

The Mediterranean Dialogue and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative are based on two pillars: political cooperation and practical cooperation. The aim of practical cooperation is to strengthen countries' defence and security institutions so that they could cope with the current challenges through political dialogue. I want to stress that NATO chose to develop partnership in the Mediterranean and in the Middle East in a context of "two-ways listening". There is no imposition in our partnership because we are genuinely interested in understanding the dynamics in these countries; whether NATO's support could constitute an added value.

In the last 20 years, despite all the changes that occurred in the region, none of the Arab countries abandoned the Mediterranean Dialogue or the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative. On the contrary, they asked NATO to cooperate more in the defence and security fields. NATO stands up for countries that ask for help. An example is Libya where we assist in the set-up of the Ministry of Defence, for instance training the security forces.

To conclude, NATO's partnerships are based on mutual understanding to talk about multilateral security in the Mediterranean. This has led Arab and NATO

member states to work together in Kosovo, in Bosnia and in Libya on behalf of the international community. In the case of Libya, we could discuss whether the international community should have done more for the country after the conflict. However, through this cooperative approach in security, we realised that we share common threats and common aspirations towards peace, security, and stability.



ODED ERAN

MIDDLE EAST: SHAPING INSTEAD OF INTERVENING

I want to combine the three previous presentations, referring to the question if there is a military solution to the current situation concerning Daesh. My answer is that there is not only a military solution to this crisis. In the short run, raising what Mr. Nicola de Santis said, we could have military intelligence, but this will not bring victory in the long run.

There is a possibility of cooperation and this is very important to set preventive measures, for instance cutting the financial means of the non-state actors in the region or fighting the recruitment from Europe and the Arab countries. I wonder if it is possible to deal with the new technologies that some of these organisations have been employing. There is no way I know to block 20 millions of mobile phone users in Saudi Arabia from listening to ISIS programs; and, if this were possible, we would block other kind of freedoms as well.

Therefore, there is always a tension between the values we protect and the instruments used to protect them.

This is not only a philosophical debate, but it becomes practical when we deal with the new generations' ideas; some of them are very constructive, others are very destructive. In my opinion, the issue that was touched by Mr. Claude Salhani is the most important one: how do we think at efficient governments in our region? How do we deal with the image people have of their own government where it is not accountable? How do we create a comprehensive approach, including education, employment and infrastructure?

There is a room for cooperation that has not been tempted yet and, in this respect, I would use my remaining minutes to speak about the role of Europe. You mention, Mr. Chairman, the European initiatives in the region but, in my view all of them were created to "distance" the Arab countries from Europe. They are just "intermediaries"; they are not making us partners with the European Union.

While in NATO's procedures there is an article that states we cannot be part

of the Organisation, and it is fine; on the contrary, in the European Union there is not such an article and the whole philosophy is to distance us from the EU and not making us partners in the efforts to improve both governance and social and economic system. This would not prevent revolutions in the Middle East, but would channel them in a different manner.

In the Mediterranean we share the same environmental problems, from the shortage of water to the unemployment of millions of youths; how we can face these issues together? We could be part of the process. Look at what happened in Tunisia, the country went through a revolution one could dream of, and how do the European countries respond to this? Instead of helping Tunisia in the decision shaping process and understand her needs, their “contribution” was so small!

Eventually, there will be a military solution but how will these countries deal with the vacuum that is being created after pushing out all the destructive forces? Who will take the leading role in managing social and economic problems? This is what the Americans and the Europeans have understood in Afghanistan and Iraq: it is possible to “easily conquer a territory”, but what then?

For these reasons, I understand their reluctance to intervene, and, in the light of their internal societal and economic problems, why would they invest in deploying boots on the ground? If this is not possible, we should expect from them an encouragement to support the positive developments in the region, in Jordan, Egypt and Tunisia.

Therefore, if I could send a message, this would be not to fight for Egypt, Jordan or Tunisia because they will take care of their issues, but make sure that after military victory “there will be a positive continuation”.



CLAUDE SALHANI

UNADDRESSED ROOT CAUSES AND DENIED CITIZENSHIP

The regional turmoil in the Middle East is worsening as the years go by. Last night, as I was thinking about what I was going to speak about in my presentation here this morning, I became very angry. Angry at the situation in the Middle East and the fact that the rest of the world seemed not to care.

Let me start first by disclosing that my attack on the Arab countries is done out of my concern towards them. I am half-Lebanese, I lived in the region for many years; my anger derives from the heart and it is not just a blind attack on this territory. The Middle East is going through very big changes and change brings conflict. Now that can be good or bad, depending on how the changes are accepted or rejected by those concerned. Unfortunately, the conflicts we are witnessing in the Middle East today tend to be rather negative. Have a look at what is happening in Syria. It is unimaginable to allow that a country can be destroyed the way Syria has been destroyed

Today, entire cities are wiped out and a quarter of the population has been forced to flee from the country becoming refugees. More than 270.000 people died during this conflict and the international community is still discussing whether to intervene or not. Europe has been facing the greatest migration and refugee crisis after the Second World War and the international community is still debating whether to put political pressure or not before things go out of hand, such as in Syria, Iraq and Libya.

This change has revolutionised the whole region and it is not going back. When I was watching the revolution of Tahrir Square in Cairo, there was a sign that made me think this was a real change: seeing young people sweeping the city's streets.

I have never seen something like this before in Egypt and these young people showed a sense of ownership of the place; they felt that every inch of Tahrir Square belonged to them. This episode gave me hope. It gave me hope that that things this time would change. That things were different. And for a while

it was. However, as we have seen, the outcome of the Egyptian revolution was far from what we had expected. But the final chapter on Egypt's second revolution remains to be written. Once people have tasted democracy and freedom it becomes very difficult to contain them.

To better understand the Middle East conflict – or any conflict for that matter – when I was studying for my Masters in conflict resolution we often used an exercise called “The helicopter perspective.” This exercise allows you to “hover” over a particular problem, thus giving you some distance between yourself and the problem, and getting a better perspective. I decided some years ago to test out his helicopter perspective on the Middle East crisis. However, instead of putting space between the problem and I chose instead to use time.

I elected to look at the Arab-Israeli dispute over the seven decades that this conflict has plagued the region, looking at it in increments of ten years, since 1948.

What became obvious right away was that unless a root issue or a root cause of the conflict was addressed, every war fought in the Middle East since 1948 has created more problems, producing greater fundamentalism and more violent forms of terrorism.

Israel's war of independence in 1948 set the tone for the decades to come and laid the groundwork for the animosity or rather augmented the animosity between Jews and Arabs in the Holy Land. The 1956 Suez campaign resulted in raising mistrust of the former colonial powers in the region. The war of June 1967, known as the Six-Day War, gave rise to a new form of violence by the Palestinian resistance groups.

The October 1973 war was one of the rare times when part of the root problem was addressed in the form of leading to a peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, but left so much hanging. The 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, intended to distance the Palestine Liberation Organization from Israel, resulted in the birth of Hezbollah, who are more radical than the Palestinian resistance. In the years that followed the Palestinians launched a disobedience campaign, the intifada. That in turn gave birth to the more radical group, HAMAS.

What followed next expanded the theatres of operations and brought the conflict to other parts of the Middle East. The US invasion of Iraq produced what we have now, ISIS or the Islamic state and with it a form of violence and terrorism that has been unprecedented in the region.

As can be seen without a carefully studied plan to help take care of the root problems in the Arab world – sort of a Marshall Plan to help eradicate the root causes of the conflict – we are only going to repeat the mistakes of the past.

In my view, it is so obvious that we will not solve these kinds of conflicts through wars alone. Nowadays, the world is still in a ‘teenager’ stage that makes very hard for it to get things right.

It has still to decide to take its own responsibilities to establish an environ-

ment that helps people to feel protected and concerned for each other's security; this feeling would not involve just countries' citizens but also guest workers.

There are a lot of Egyptian workers travelling to Iraq and Libya to find jobs. What rights do they have? Migrant workers all around the region do not have any saying in their community of residence. The Arab countries should look at Europe, where ALL EU residents are allowed within the European Union other members' borders to have the right to vote in local elections and feel that they belong to a specific place.

Making these changes is the responsibility of the Arab countries; they have to stop blaming the West, imperialism, colonialism, capitalism and so forth and look at the future in the light of new generations' aspirations.



Russian strike aircraft Sukhoi Su-25 Grach (Artyom Anikeev / Shutterstock.com)



Session 4

REGIONAL HEGEMONIES: RECONCILING THE EXTERNAL POWERS



RICHARD D. HOOKER

USA AND THE DEMERITS OF INTERVENTION

I would like to start with a general overview of how I see our senior leaders' strategic view of the region. I would like to clarify that these are my views and not those of the United States Government or the Department of the Defense. In the United States' approach to the Arab crisis I would consider two dimensions: the domestic dimension and the geopolitical dimension.

To begin with the domestic setting, I think it is very important to underline that over time in the United States we have been experiencing political polarisation, looking back to the Vietnam war that divided American society. Before Vietnam, within the American politics there was a tradition that can be described with the expression 'politics stops at the water's edge'. This means that we formerly we tried to achieve consensus in foreign and national security policies.

However, it is clearly no longer the case, and effective co-operation between our branches of government has been problematic for some time now. I think that the current political elections' cycle has manifested the very unusual political season we are going through right now; at the same time, this can be understood in terms of anger of the electorate for the traditional political system's inability to make effective decisions in our governance.

In the field of candidates that are competing for the two major parties, in no one case, except for Hillary Clinton, will you see a candidate who has significant experience at the national level or in the international relations or national defence sectors. Thus, if you work in the security field, as I did for many years, you might worry about the future. In recent cases of Presidents who lacked a national security background, this has played out in our performance in national security and international relations during the most difficult period of our history.

Concerning the geopolitical setting, it is equally important that the involvement of the United States in the Arab region has very deep roots, which go back

to the XIX century when the United States' Navy operated inside the Mediterranean to try to control piracy. Of course, since the Second World War we had a major military presence in the Gulf; for instance, the headquarters of what then became the Fifth Fleet base has been there for forty-five years.

Then, there is a long story of events, many of them very painful, which should be known by all of you and were very negative for Americans: the taking of our hostages in the embassy in Teheran in 1979, the bombing of the US Marines' barracks in Lebanon in 1983, the 'Tanker War' between 1984 and 1988 (Persian Gulf, part of the Iraq-Iran war) and the Gulf War in 1991, many years of no-fly zones, the embassy bombings (Kenya and Tanzania) in the late 1990s and the shocking event of 9/11.

This latter event is very important for understanding American behaviour in the last 15 years; it has been very dramatic because, for the first time in their history, Americans felt they could be vulnerable in their homeland. Following 9/11, the campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq were very long and painful. In this regard, I was asked, with a group of experts, to take a year to identify the major lessons that could be learned from these two campaigns.

The results of our research were very sobering: the financial costs amount to between 1 and 3 trillion dollars, thousands of people died or were wounded and there are hundreds of thousands dealing with psychological trauma of their war experiences. In particular, 120.000 civilians were killed inside Iraq, most not by coalition forces but we might say 'on our watch'.

This is a long catalogue of the United States most painful and negative experiences in a region which has been problematic and difficult for us for a long, long time. I think when American policy-makers look at the Arab region today, they see several frozen conflicts, an unsolved Sunni-Shia divide, failed governance all over the region, and an alarming demographic issue to address. In the near future thousands of young people will leave their countries looking for new opportunities. These trends are alarming.

I think we can look at American engagement in the Middle East after the presidential election in two ways. The most likely course of action for the American administration is probably a continuation of what you are seeing right now. Thus, despite the tragedy that is happening in Syria, there are reasons why the United States decided not to intervene more directly in the crisis.

First is the experience we had in Iraq and Afghanistan, which has not produced fruitful or positive results. To be honest, there is no appetite from the American public to send our army back into the Middle East. This tendency is very strong with our public, as well as in our bureaucratic and military spheres.

There is no consensus in the United Nations' Security Council for any such large-scale intervention, nor there is in the North Atlantic Council among our closest alliances. The reason is that there is no clear path or prospect that a large-scale military intervention might lead to more positive results than we experienced in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Of course, these are pretty strong arguments against a large-scale intervention; nevertheless, it must be said that there is a wide range of options between doing nothing and invading Syria with the entire US Army. I think it is fair to ask why the United States did not explore the options in between these two poles more than it did. One factor that is underreported in the academic and policy circles has to do with the ability of our system to focus on more than one major policy crisis at the time.

Working on the National Security Council a couple of times, I was very impressed at the small circle of decision-makers in the United States, composed of 4 or 6 people, who are working on multiple crisis at the same time. Therefore, we find it very difficult to pay attention to Iraq, Afghanistan and the rest of the world after the decade of 9/11. However, it is fair to say that there were other things that could have been done earlier in Syria that could have perhaps shaped the crisis in different ways.

Certainly, we bear a measure of the responsibility because in 2011 we encouraged the opposition to the Assad regime, as we thought it was peaceful. Unfortunately, when the regime fought the opposition, it turned out to be more violent than expected and we have witnessed the proliferation of various extremist groups all around the region. For some decades, these extremist organisations benefited from regional policies; for example, immediately after 9/11, we charted some 21 or 22 terrorist organisations, chief among them al-Qaeda.

So, this is a very complicated and difficult landscape we look at, and it is not clear if we have a good understanding of the facts progression. In the United States some of our leaders call for an intervention in the Middle East, but most think that we tried this before and, in the end, it did more harm than good. For these reasons, I think we will see a continuation of the current policies of advising, assistance, equipping and training the Arab states. As long as ISIL remains the major threat in the region, you are going to see special operations forces, the use of airpower in conjunction with our partners in the region, and a tendency to fund other groups and states contending against ISIL in the Middle East. Will these policies be decisive in the current context?

It is very hard to say, and my personal opinion is perhaps yes and perhaps not. We probably need to wait for a game changing event or a correlation of forces to cause a major shift in what is going on right now to require for a large-scale American intervention. In my view, these 'trigger' or 'threshold' events could be the following:

Another major attack against the United States on the scale of 9/11. If we see another mass casualty terrorist event at the United States, I think you will see a rapid reassessment of our posture and the possibility of a large-scale military intervention will go up rapidly.

The destabilisation of the monarchy in Jordan, which is under great stress because of the refugee problem. Jordan is seen in Washington as a strategic anchor

point in the region; obviously if the state is destabilised or collapses or is partitioned, then this will put Israel in a different situation that is difficult to foresee.

The armed confrontation between Turkey and Russia in the north of Syria, which can come deliberately or not. For instance, Russian operations against the Turkmen in the north could provoke a Turkish reaction, war planes flying along the border which can cause a strong response. We have to be aware of the fact that Turkey is a NATO ally and this could cause a problematic situation for the Alliance.

There are probably some other trigger events which I did not address that might modify the American intervention in the Middle East. Nonetheless, with this kind of background, I leave the floor to my colleagues, thank you for the attention.



RASHAD AL-ALIMI

SAUDI ARABIA AND MULTIPLE CONFLICTS MANAGEMENT

The failure of the project of Arab renaissance has yielded two things, one at the internal and one at the external level. At the internal level, the territorial states have not been able to form one common national country that is founded on a social unity among all factions of the society which goes beyond the argument among Arab scholars about the relation between politics and religion and about the concept of democracy, political participation, the economic system, and the role of women. This is accompanied by the failure of the development process in its various dimensions, which in turn has aggravated the internal political, sectarian, denominational and congregational controversies.

The consequences of all this became clearly apparent in the rise of extremist movements and groups of different types, the most prominent being Al-Qaeda, Daesh in Syria and Iraq, Hezbollah in Lebanon and the Houthis in Yemen. The people uprisings, dubbed 'Arab Spring', were a result of the failed development process with its various dimensions in the Arab world.

The second consequence, however, is connected to the external level. Disintegration and internal conflicts caused strong effects of numerous forms of political, economic and sometimes military interference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries by international institutions and organisations that are mostly controlled by the great powers, and occasional interference via the support for political parties and sectarian or denominational groups.

Globalisation as a capitalist concept has provoked evolution of the laws that organise international relations. The most significant of its results is perhaps the overcoming of the principle of national sovereignty, including the use of military and economic power in international relations on the basis of concepts designed by international neo-liberalism after the fall of the socialist bloc, and, as Kissinger described it, the transition from ideological conflict to geo-political challenges.

The Arab (Middle East) region, with its paramount economic and strategic importance, was the first priority in the strategy of the great powers. This struggle

was stirred up when Russia and China joined the capitalist market and thus affected international politics, which opened up new areas of tension and conflict in the region.

Within these dimensions, an international, regional and local crisscross has clearly evolved in the conflicts of the Arab region, with devastating tendencies for the future and development of these countries and their relations with their regional and international environment.

I) SOURCES OF INTERNAL CONFLICTS IN THE ARAB REGION

- Ideological sources and sectarian disputes
- The Palestinian issue
- The failure of the regimes to achieve their development objectives
- Emergence and development of terrorist groups
- Despotism and popular uprisings (the Arab Spring for example)
- Regional interference and attempts to broaden influence (the Iranian model)

Ideological sources and sectarian disputes

In correspondence with the social theory that every social phenomenon has its historic roots and conditions of emergence and development, we cannot understand the conflicts and internal disintegration of the Arab region unless we take the historic roots of such conflicts and the very recent historic developments, not those of the remote past, into consideration.

The Arab enlightenment movement at the beginning of the last century attempted to answer many questions about the relation between Islam and modern Western civilisation and the interaction between the past and the incoming modern developments. This interaction or conflict with the new phenomena unleashed the first birth of political Islam in modern times with the formation of the Muslim Brotherhood in 1928. This was the beginning of the framing of political Islam in party structures at the international level and their ramifications in the form of numerous groups in the Islamic world that ensued from this radical trend of political Islam.

The second stage of this phase of development was what the Islamic jihad in Afghanistan unleashed against the Soviet Union and the accompanying idea or concept of 'al-Takfir wa al-Hijra' and the foundation of the state of Taliban in Afghanistan as a springboard of the concept of a worldwide Islamic state. This was followed by the emergence of Al-Qaeda, "Daesh", Ansar al-Sharia and other such names that, however, have the same ideas and theoretical foundations. However, the most significant development in the roots and evolution of the conflict was the victory of the Khomeini revolution in Iran, which interlinked the concepts of the authority of the faqih (Muslim scholar) and the export of the revolution. The

result of these two concepts became apparent in the Iran-Iraq war and its implications, from the invasion of Kuwait through to the fall of Saddam in 2003, Iran's ruling of Iraq, and the foundation of political parties and groups from Hezbollah in Lebanon through to the Houthis in Yemen and other groups in the Gulf and Arab regions; and the utilisation of these parties and groups as Iranian instruments of power and influence in the region under the fig-leaf of historic oppressiveness. These activities encroached on other regions in Asia and Africa. The prominent role in Iran's interference in Syria is perhaps the most influential one in the region, not to mention its breeding and nurturing of sectarian discord, even sometimes creating it, as occurred in Yemen.

The Palestinian issue

The Palestinian issue, or what has been called the Arab-Israeli conflict, has been one of the major sources of conflict in the region. It has been used by ruling regimes, political parties and extremist groups of various Shiite and Sunni forms as an instrument to gain the support of the public opinion and, sometimes, to deceive it, and to recruit young people for such organisations. The Palestinian issue is the result of the blatant injustice the Palestinians have been suffering in the face of their just cause.

The failure of the regimes to achieve their development objectives

The impotence of the subsequent regimes in the Arab region in achieving their development objectives had catastrophic results. The most striking ones are, perhaps, increasing poverty and unemployment rates in the Arab world, and, beyond this, the failure to implement political participation and to activate the role of women. The practice of depriving individuals of their right of expression, among others, created an environment susceptible to extremism and rebellion against the regimes and attempts to topple them.

Emergence and development of terrorist groups

The emergence and development of terrorist groups in the Arab region is linked to the historic roots of the concept of the ruling regime adopted by the political-Islam groups of various denominations, like Al-Qaeda, Ansar al-Sharia, Daesh in Syria and Iraq, Ansar Beit al-Muqadas in Egypt, and the attempts to establish the nucleus of the state of the Islamic caliphate at a time when the idea of exporting the Khomeini revolution resulted in the creation of Hezbollah in Lebanon and al-Shabab al-Momen (Believing Youth - related to the Houthis) in Yemen, in addition to the Badr Brigade in Iraq and Jaysh al-Hussein (al-Hussein's Army) and 'Asa'ib Ahl al-Haqq (League of the Righteous), and later the Popular Mobilization

Forces. The sectarian conflict adopted by these extremist groups caused their expansion and spread due to the nurturing of the sectarian conflict, particularly in Iraq and Syria, and the attempt to develop the Houthi movement in order to adopt the idea of the twelfth Imam in Yemen in the womb of the Zaidi denomination, which is definitely separate from it and in a state of disharmony with the Twelver denomination throughout Islamic history.

Despotism and popular uprisings (the Arab Spring for example)

The popular uprisings in the Arab world stirred up great hopes among many scholars in regard to the future of the Arab world. The most optimistic media person was the American journalist Friedman who went so far as to say that the Arab world would flourish and be democratic after the "Spring". After about a year, however, he turned to the opinion that the Arab world was heading toward wars similar to Europe's religious Thirty Years War. During his visit to Yemen in 2013, I asked him why he had changed his view of the Arab world's future after the Arab Spring. At the time, his answer was vague, but it now seems clearer and more realistic.

Regional Interference and Attempts to Broaden Influence (the Iranian Model)

Kissinger goes so far as to say that today the Middle East is confronted by four major risks. The most prominent is Iran's regional ambitions and their eagerness to broaden their influence in the attempt to revive the Persian Empire. Many political observers think that the Iranian interventions in the Arab region resulted in fuelling the sectarian conflict in the Islamic world, and not only in the Arab region.

Since the foundation of Hezbollah in Lebanon in 1980, the Shiites in Lebanon have been hijacked for the Iranian project of control and influence. This coincided with the training of Yemeni cells whose members had gone to Iran after the victorious Khomeini revolution there. They returned to Sanaa in 1983, where they planned a number of attacks with bombs and light weapons on some institutions (Bilquis Cinema), in which a guard was killed. Furthermore, they staged assaults against unveiled women in public places, acting on the authority of fatwas announced by Iranian mullahs. At the time, Iran viewed the Yemeni (North Yemen) government as a supporter of the regime of Saddam Hussein, since the Yemeni army, with symbolic units, had joined the Iraqi forces in the Iran-Iraq war.

In 1992, the Believing Youth Forum was founded, with Hussein Badr Al-Din al-Houthi acting as its chairman. The Believing Youth movement split into those who decided to adopt the Jaafari denomination (the Twelver school, which is loyal to Iran) and those who adhered to the idea of establishing the Believing Youth movement, which upholds the Zaidi school, when faced with the expansion and spread of Muslim Brotherhood groups. When the unity of Yemen was achieved in 1990, the formation of political parties has been clearly stated in the new constitu-

tion of united Yemen. The founders of the Believing Youth joined Al-Haqq Party and took part in the elections in 1993, and Hussein al-Houthi became a member of the Parliament. The little influence of the al-Haqq Party in the Parliament was obvious in the three seats it only won, which consequently urged Hussein Badr Al-Houthi to visit Iran and finally leave Al-Haqq Party. Supported by Iran, he started to establish his group in the Maran area of the Saada governorate by sending students to Qom in Iran and training youngsters in South Lebanese Hezbollah camps. The chargé d'affaires of the Iranian embassy repeatedly visited the region. These developments of the course of the movement and its activities, which aimed at controlling vast mountainous areas of Saada governorate, and Hussein Badr al-Houthi's efforts to arm and train his followers and to build fortifications, pushed the government to wage a war on the movement, in which Hussein Badr al-Houthi, by whose name the movement began to be referred, was killed.

The armed conflict, however, continued in the governorate. It even extended to some areas of the neighbouring 'Amran governorate. During the popular uprising against the regime of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh in 2011, the Houthi movement joined the people's protest movement and later the National Dialogue Conference initiated by Gulf countries, whereas the Iranian project incited the Houthi movement to attack the state and its institutions. On 21 September 2014, fighters of the Houthi militants took control of the power centres of the state, e.g. the presidential palace, and besieged the president and the prime minister in their houses. Then the Houthi fighters, in alliance with former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, started to take control of the governorates up to Aden and Bab el-Mandeb, which gave the pro-Iran Houthis control over the most important waterways. The Iranian activities manifested in the landing of Iranian airplanes at Yemeni airports and the signing of an agreement with Iran that provided for the opening of some airports for aviation. In addition, during the visit of a Houthi delegation to Iran, Saleh al-Samad, a member of the movement's Political Bureau, announced the signing of further agreements with the country in which the Houthis undermined the political roadmap drawn up by the Gulf initiative. This occurred after a constitution, that was supposed to form the basis for presidential and then parliamentary elections, had been drafted and was about to be presented for referendum. It became apparent that Iran's prime goal was to take control of Yemen with its strategic position at Bab el-Mandeb, the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea and the southern border of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in order to encircle the Gulf region at its southern flank after having encircled it in the north in Iraq and Syria.

International Intervention and the Intersection of the Great Powers' Interests (the Syrian Model)

The expansion of capitalism due to the collapse of the socialist system yielded a change in the theoretical and political concepts of international relations that

triggered regional and international developments in the Middle East and the resulting alliances after the popular rebellions in the Arab countries, along with their reflections in the foreign policies of the great powers. The popular uprising against Assad in Syria, and its consequences for the situation inside Syria and at the regional and international levels is exemplary of the patterns of the local, regional and international conflicts.

The turmoil into which Syria, Iraq, Libya and Yemen were thrown and to which the events in Syria have contributed are examples of the conflict in the region. The majority of the Syrian people rose up against the autocratic regime, while Iran, bluntly interfering there with the aid of Hezbollah from Lebanon and the Iranian Revolutionary Guards, prevented the overthrow of the regime when the United States and the West did not take action for the sake of the fall of this regime. This was due to many complex reasons connected to Israel and the emergence of a leading role of the Islamist groups as an alternative to the Assad regime, and later the formation of Daesh which imposed itself as an alternative on wide areas in Syria and Iraq.

The vacuum that resulted from the hesitant American strategy led to a geopolitical vacuum that has been filled by Russia through its direct intervention against Daesh and its support for the Assad regime, along with the Iranian influence on Syria and the region.

Kissinger believes that the Russian troops will remain there for four decades and thus challenge the American policy in the Middle East. Some analysts think that America's nuclear deal with Iran gives rise to a number of questions on America's role in the region and the traditional strategic alliance between the United States and its allies in the Middle East. Some even go so far as to say that the elimination of Daesh ought to be the work of moderate forces from inside Syria or external military forces others than the Shiite jihadists backed by Iran.

II) REGIONAL MECHANISMS OF SETTLING INTERNAL CONFLICTS

The Arab League

The ineffectiveness of the Arab League in solving the Arabs' internal conflicts has become a prominent headline in its attempts to solve Arab issues. It has remained a speakers' forum for the presentation of different and sometimes even contradictory positions. This was connected to the dominant role of Arab states and their influence on its course of action. It was also a cover for the Arab consensus to pass international resolutions. Despite the attempts of some politicians to activate the League's role, most of such efforts were thwarted by the intentions and policies of some Arab states. This, however, does not override the role that had been assumed by the Arab League in containing Arab-Arab conflicts and the unification of the positions of the Arabs crucial issues like the Palestinian cause,

the invasion of Kuwait and the Iranian interference in the internal affairs of the Arab countries.

The Arab League, for example, issued a declaration in response to the arson attack against the Saudi embassy in Tehran and called on the Iranian government not to confuse the concept of exporting the revolution with that of dominance and Iranian-Persian expansionism and with the concept of the representation of the Shiites in the Arab world, it also urged Iran to abide by the good-neighbour principle and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries.

Gulf Cooperation Council: Gulf Initiative, 2011, Operation Decisive Storm, 2015

Since its foundation in 1981, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) has formed an important regional gathering and has met many challenges. The most dangerous of them was Saddam Hussein's regime's invasion of Kuwait in 1990. The GCC has overcome these challenges for many reasons, most important the homogeneity of the systems of power in these countries, their economic abundance due to revenues from the export of oil and gas at high prices throughout the past twenty years, in addition to the strong strategic relations with the USA and the West. The GCC's most important interventions to solve conflicts were perhaps the Gulf Initiative to solve the crisis in Yemen in 2011, as well as the military intervention in Bahrain in 2011 and Operation Decisive Storm in 2015.

Gulf Initiative to Solve the Crisis in Yemen

After the protests of the Yemeni people against the regime of former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, the institutions of power, including the army and the security forces, experienced deep splits, which led to the beginning of a civil war. This caused the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia along with the Gulf countries to launch the Gulf initiative. It was the result of ideas that were discussed in order to settle the Yemen crisis within the political environment of the country, as the GCC member states and particularly the KSA were afraid that Yemen, situated at its southern border, could slide into civil war with all the ensuing risks for the security and stability of the region. Thus, these countries launched the Gulf Initiative, which was backed by financial support for Yemen's national budget of the years 2012 and 2013.

The initiative succeeded in postponing the conflict and including the Yemenis in a political dialogue that lasted one year and yielded in the preparation of a draft constitution.

The Houthis, however, utilized the subject of the division of Yemen into regions and other pretexts to overthrow the transitional government, and from 21 September 2014 on, to take control over the government institutions. The collapse of the government was completed by January 2015, when they took the presidential palace and the headquarters of the army and the security forces and besieged the president and the prime minister. This enabled the Houthis, who are part of Iran's

expansionist project, to thwart the Gulf initiative and to stage a complete coup d'état.

Operation Decisive Storm, 2015

After the Houthis had besieged President Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi and his government, the president was able to leave his house secretly and go to Aden, from where he conducted his political activities, while the prime minister and the ministers were further detained in Sanaa. Without allowing president Hadi any time, the Houthis sent their troops to Aden and incited certain groups to blow up the situation there. Then, military airplanes, under Houthis' command, attacked the presidential palace in Aden, which made the president request the intervention of the GCC states, in accordance with his presidential powers.

Earlier, on 12 March 2014, the Houthis had carried out the manoeuvre 'New Yemeni Dawn' in the Saada governorate at the Yemeni-Saudi border, which was incorporated in the messages directed to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf countries and the slogan of the liberation of the Holy cities of Mecca and Medina and then Jerusalem.

Operation Decisive Storm started on 26 March 2015, when the alliance (except Oman) - led by KSA and joined by other Arab countries - launched air raids against all military and security strongholds in the governorates of Yemen. In addition, they supported the people's resistance against the Houthi rebellion in the country's central and southern areas. Although Operation Decisive Storm has evolved into Operation Restoring Hope, military operations are still going on, accompanied by support and relief granted by the King Salman Center.

III) INTERNATIONAL MECHANISMS

Security Council Resolutions – International Law

International Organisations – Aid Organisations – Human Rights Organisations

Since the collapse of the socialist world and the dominance of the capitalist way of life or what we may name globalisation, two new major players have entered the stage of capitalist competition: China and Russia. This conflict and competition has also entered the Security Council; it is a conflict among the Permanent Member states of the Security Council. The interests of these major competitors are at odds, especially in some particular regions, where these contradictory interests manifest in direct interests or the interests of regional allies.

This was reflected in the resolutions of the Security Council and the possibility to implement them, since a number of these states sought to prevent the enforcement of such resolutions for the sake of goals related to the interests of the countries themselves or their allies. This made the Security Council a hotbed of conflict

rather than of solutions in the interest of the countries in the region in question. The Council was successful in managing the controversies among the great powers in order not to allow the transformation of such controversies into military confrontation, which all of them seek to avoid in view of the catastrophes that would be caused by direct armed confrontation. However, the limited proxy-war will be the alternative suitable for managing such conflicts. This causes the concern that such internal conflicts or proxy-wars could heat up sometimes.

UN Organisations

These bodies undertake many humanitarian and legal tasks. However, these international organisations were also used as tools of domination, control and influence. The best examples thereof are reports that do not necessarily reflect the real situation but the desire and objectives of certain members of the Security Council.

IV) MECHANISMS OF REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL COORDINATION

It is impossible to distinguish between the tasks of international mechanisms and those of regional mechanisms for the solution of internal conflicts, but the international and regional alliances affect the coordination of these mechanisms. However, the unanimity of the Security Council's resolutions in the handling of crises forms a basis for their solution. The unanimity of the international and the regional Gulf communities in dealing with the Yemen crisis by supporting the Gulf Initiative and then, after the initiative's collapse, through the unanimity expressed in Security Council Resolution no. 2216 and others, a unanimity that prevented Yemen's transformation into the Syrian pattern. Furthermore, the recognition of the legitimate government and its regional and international backing impeded the formation of armed groups and the emergence of war lords. All of this is thanks to the unanimous international and regional support of the legitimate government and the national army.

The preservation of this international and regional unanimity will be helpful in the elaboration of peaceful and sustainable solutions. The co-ordination of the regional and international positions was essential in dealing with the effects of the people protests in Yemen in 2011. During the fighting between the opposition and the regime in Sanaa, the USA decided to close its embassy in Sanaa, even though the American ambassador, Mr. Gerald M. Feierstein, and his deputy opposed this decision. In the framework of the coordination of action between the USA and the Security Council and later also with the members of the Gulf Cooperation Council, it became possible to overcome the crisis through the implementation of the Gulf initiative.

FINAL OBSERVATIONS

- The internal disputes in the Arab region have historic roots and ideological, religious and sectarian dimensions.
- The internal disputes are linked to the regional conflict and the international competition for dominance and influence in the region.
- If internal disintegration and controversies continue, it will result in the demise of the communities, and it will be a pretext for external interference by one or more regional powers or international alliances. This requires the strengthening of the internal front of the Arab communities within an integrative national state and a national identity based on a participative social unity between all factions of the society which ends the quarrels among contemporary Arab intellectuals on the concept of state and power, and the relationship between religion and state and religion and politics, and other concepts. This is one of the significant bases for the protection of the national state and its sustainability and development.
- Political participation and rule of law will create the appropriate climate for the solution of the various forms of conflict in the region.
- The separation of religion and politics in the Islamic and Arab world in particular will enable the overcoming of the existing controversies based on religious and transcendental fantasies. The essence of religion is coexistence, not conflict.
- The capitalist conflict and competition (in the framework of new globalisation) should not reflect the positions of the great powers regarding the internal conflicts in the region because this will jeopardise international security and peace (Syria is an example).
- The unity of the international community is indispensable.



PIOTR DUTKIEWICZ

RUSSIA'S MIDDLE EASTERN STRATEGIES

Russian attention and regional interests have shifted quite dramatically since 2014. The conflict with Ukraine and the annexation of Crimea resulted in a wave of western economic and political sanctions followed by Russian “counter sanctions”. This mutually destructive process has deeply re-shaped Russian external relations and has influenced Russian’s presence in Syria. For me it is always important to start with an analysis of the ‘position of the other’, it is important to know from where players are coming from and, in this specific case, where Russia is coming from.

Let’s start from two points that will establish my position. The first is to understand that Mr. Putin’s hands – contrary to what media say - are more tightly bound than we think taking into account current Russia’s capabilities (including financial assets) and what (yes!) Russians think about the direction the country is going.

Secondly the economic crisis in Russia has focused the attention of the government to the popular reaction towards its foreign policy more than before 2014 as citizens do not see any adventurous foreign policy as worthy to support in times of hardship (but they did support military intervention in Syria - that is a puzzle that I will try to explain later). During the current crisis (last two years) the GDP of Russia has decreased by 3,8%, this means that Russian capacity to project abroad her power is being limited for a long period of time.

These days, many analysts portray Russia as an ‘opportunistic’ country whose approach is based on a reaction to international events, such as those in Syria, rather than consistently pursuing its strategically chosen goals. I would say that Russia is trying to combine both a strategic and an opportunistic approach to break a ‘strategic deadlock’ as perceived by country elite. I believe this to be one of the key point to understanding Russian foreign policy – the sense that ‘everything in last 25 years’ was working to subordinate Russia, to destroy her global position and her economy and subordinate her to the ‘West’.

In that context I would argue that current state of ‘Russia v. West’ confronta-

tion is more about fundamentals than tactics and thus goes beyond 'Ukrainian crisis' and intervention in Syria. The root cause of the shift is the Russian political elite's perception that after twenty-five years since the collapse of the Soviet Union and formation of the Russian Federation, the country has become trapped by the 'West' in a multifaceted 'deadlock'. Economically, Russia's subordination to WTO rules resulted in developmental constraints for the Russian economy. Politically, Russia became known as an 'international spoiler' that negates international norms and rules (particularly since the Georgian war in 2008) and – finally – security-wise none of Russia's fundamental security problems has been solved (NATO is closer to Russia borders, ABM Treaty has been abrogated and Russia labelled as weak 'Cold War loser' with a limited regional power status).

Russia feels that there is a deadlock in her relation with the international community as it is not well aligned with her interests. What has been occurring since 1991, the year of the collapse of the Berlin Wall, is from the perspective of the Russian political elite a 'lose-lose' situation. Therefore, the intention of Russia is to break this deadlock by almost any costs. Russia perceives the 'deadlock' as follows:

- Economically: WTO rules constrain Russia /same with financial organizations/ dependence on US Dollar/western model of development copied by Russia in 1990s – all taken together make Russia too vulnerable to external influence;
- Security-wise: None of the fundamental security problems had been solved (NATO closer to Russia borders, ABM Treaty abrogated, EU-Russia mostly face saving measures);
- Reputational: Russia as a loser in Cold War confrontation; Crimea/Syria – compensation for the economic weakness;
- Non-equal partner; "negative other", "spoiler"; it shall be attacked while weak.

Let me repeat, the current state of Russia against the West is more about fundamentals than tactics; it is about how the regional and global political order and partnerships should look like and Russia's new role in within this framework.

The Kremlin's actions during last two-three years – evaluated by many analysts as 'opportunistic' or 'responsive' – all have elements of the 'deadlock breaking strategy' with no cut in stone, clear end-goal, no rigid plan of action, but rather a series of a tactical moves that are to bring revisions to the existing regional and global order along Russia's national interests. In this sense Russia is becoming a 'neo-revisionist' state looking at changes in how the regional/global political order should look like and how to secure Russia's new role in it. It is not, however, about adjustment of the "market developmental model", but rather it is about acceptance of civilizational differences and new regional/global power sharing arrangements.

Before addressing the aforementioned, I would like to go through some important points in order to better understand Russian behaviour. Primarily, it is essential to understand whether Russia is a global or a regional actor. In 2014, President Barack Obama said: "Russia is a regional power that is threatening some of its im-

mediate neighbours - not out of strength, but out of weaknesses"; however, others have identified Russia as a global actor "alone among the major global powers, on the offensive and willing to intervene to help its allies", Fox News (2015). Both definitions well describe Russia under Putin's administration, which would like to be global, but it is limited by its own capacities.

To me, Russia is neither a 'regional power' nor a 'global power', due to her size and bordering with four civilizations, she is simultaneously both regional and global and thus being a "multi-regional power".

So, what does Russia strategically want nowadays?

In a nutshell Russia aims at:

- having an influence belt around her,
- keeping China content and friendly,
- keeping NATO at a healthy distance,
- keeping US/EU confrontation at the affordable level,
- become an alternative to other (NATO/US) security umbrellas,
- supporting her own or friendly regional organizations
- and have more say in controlling its own economic and geopolitical destiny even at the high cost. In order to achieve those goals – among other measures – Russia is advancing this project through the securitisation of economy, mass media, identity and natural resources.

Logical next question will be to ask 'who will support Russia's actions along her 'strategic' goals'? For the sake of time, my takes – in points – are the following:

- Those who want to keep open an alternative supply of oil/weapons/vote (international institutions);
- Those who do not need strategic allies that tie their hands but 'real political supporters';
- Those for whom security/stability trumps 'democracy';
- Those who want more traditional, less diluted 'sovereignty';
- Those who are afraid of 'change from outside'.

Whom does Russia need? Or – in other words – who can become 'an ideal partner'? The answer is pretty obvious:

- Those who will not interfere in its domestic affairs (impose 'alien' values);
- Those who will provide market(s);
- Those who can contribute to security.

I heard today from my distinguished colleague from NATO about the organisation's partnerships and agreements in which Russia has been treated as a partner but spoiled the opportunity; when I am in Moscow I hear that what is perceived by NATO as 'serious' for many in Russia was a nice theatre, that both side played well for some time but no more than that. The Russian argument knows that the

international community was playing this game until Russia declined to continue.

I argue that such knot of reasons resulted in Russia becoming a neo-revisionist power; in the sense that Russia is in the process of reviewing certain portions of the international model with the aim to obtain more influence multi-regionally. All that taken together put Russia international behaviour in a different light – and I hope – provide more shades to the usually black and white picture usually painted to justify Russia's actions.

Finally, let me devote my last minutes to addressing Russian intervention in Syria. In this case, the key question is as follows:

“What if Mr. Putin has a point?”

Before intervening militarily in Syria in September of 2015, Russia had two choices: a simple choice and a very bad choice. She knew that the situation in the country was problematic, with violations of human rights, criminal actions by the Syrian army etc.; despite this, Russians were motivated by the following five elements:

- To preserve Syria as a single and - what is important here - a secular state (with or without Assad);
- To avoid the collapse of the regime in order not to repeat the tragic scenario of Libya in which there is a total disintegration of the country, which falls into a 'failed state' condition, governed by multiple regional/local warlords;
- To show the capacity to break US led coalition 'security umbrella' and show its military capacity including some of the most advanced weapons;
- To eliminate as many enemies as possible before the return of the estimated 6-7.000 Russian-born IS fighters that are on the ground in Syria and Iraq;
- and to prevent the Muslim radicalism/IS or similar groups from mushrooming in Central Asia, which is a key territory for Russia and China' future prosperity.

This latter point is important to have a clear vision of Russia behaviour. I think that many people do not appreciate the link between Mr. Putin's decision to intervene in Syria and the combined Russian/Chinese interests in Central Asia (CA). CA is the key for the geopolitical and resources strategy of Russia and China alike. This area risks destabilisation by the spreading of radicalism in Central Asia within what many call 'incomplete states' where institutional destabilisation is fairly easy to achieve.

Many in Russia think that the situation of Syria (radical, religious based uprising) is likely to be repeated in Central Asia (CA) in the foreseeable future and this is not what Mr. Putin would like to see. His approach is to eliminate 'radicals', at any cost, even if the result could be the international condemnation. China and Russia made a strategic deal, establishing that China would provide the Central Asian countries with all the necessary services (common goods such roads, railways etc.) and have access to local markets, while Russia would be responsible for the security umbrella in the region and institutional stabilization of local regimes.

Potential 'radicalisation' of CA populations can create a substantial security problem for which - between China and Russia – the latter will be mostly responsible to solve it.

Concerning the cooperation between Russia and Iran, their divergent interests do not let them to create an alliance; Russia has between 17 and 18 million Sunni in her territory and they are watching very carefully to what extent Moscow is working with Iran. Please note that many of the mosques and madrasas in Russia were built with Saudi support. Moreover, in this period, Russia has been enjoying an extremely good relation with Israel and this makes Teheran quite uncomfortable. Russia made a deal with Israel about Syria, which has been honoured by both sides. At the same time, Iran is not interested in a confrontation between Russia and the West; Iran would like to approach the West after the nuclear deal, but its proximity to Russia is spoiling some of Iran's opportunities to reach this goal.

Very briefly regarding the future of the Russian presence in Syria, Russia has finished the most important military phase – that is to relatively stabilise the Assad regime – and knows that protracting any military operation could be damaging from now on, with a high risk of a clash (even if accidental) with Turkey and the western coalition. The alternative to Russian withdrawal would be a coalition ground offensive – carving Syria into semi-autonomous regions – not so bad for Russia, but generating a high risk of direct clash with coalition forces during the process.

To conclude, in the last few months, Russia has really appreciated Obama's dialogue on Syria but she is worried because the words of the American president on how to engage Russia differs from what the secretary of Defence and the director of CIA. To me, it is clear that the alternative to a hard negotiated peace process is an even more bloody war. Knowing Russian pragmatism, I have some hope for the former.



PEJMAN ABDOLMOHAMMADI

THE PERSIAN FACTOR

My role it is a bit complicated because I have to conciliate my Persian origins with the analysis on the conference's issues we have been discussing till now.

The 1979 has been a turning point in the history of Iran. In fact, before that date our foreign affairs strategy in the region was more complex and the Persian element was perceived as totally different within the Middle East. We could say that from 1979 since a couple of years ago, the Persian element has not been raised anymore in the region.

Therefore, this vacuum of the Persian element in the Middle East opened new spaces for other players in the region, such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia and the Arab states within the territory. Now, for different geopolitical challenges and economic interests, Iran is ready to come back as an active player. In the current circumstances, Iranian reappearance on the regional stage has been receiving a substantial support from the international community, but, at the same time, it is provoking reactions and different comments, both negative and positive, to deal with. However, it is a reality that, at the geopolitical level, the Persian element in the Middle East exists and in the last 35 years has been under-shadowed by the Shiite ideologies.

As an international actor, Iran is playing different roles: in the East, it is very close to India and China, and in the Middle East it supports the Shiite areas but also other major Sunni Arab countries. Undeniably, the Islamic Republic, the political system that has been established in Iran, has its own strategies to adopt, which have been principally focussed on the Shiite element in the Middle East.

We all know that Iran's antagonist is Saudi Arabia, which also has been spreading different ideologies. During the presidency of Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, a couple of years ago, there was more concern on solving in a practical and realistic way the relation between Iran and Saudi Arabia in the Persian Gulf. On the contrary, nowadays there is less interest to defuse this rivalry.

Therefore, I am working on is the identification of the most important points

in order to create more collaboration and less tension, by generating deterrent elements to engage Iran and Saudi Arabia in a closer co-operation in the Middle East. So far, the main thing to do is going beyond the ideological framework and trying to work on common features. This is a very hard task that we, as political analysts, have to encourage.

I would like also to talk about the domestic politics of Iran to help in understanding the relations between the players in the region. Iran has been one of the first countries which brought political Islam all over the region after the revolution of the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. At the same time, it has been probably the first country in the Middle East that in 2009, a year before the Arab spring, had several civil society's uprisings, asking for more freedom and civil and political rights.

These requests have been for most part rejected, but nowadays in Iran there is a sort of revival in secularism and nationalism within the system. Iran is not a monolithic system because there is a great difference between the political and the social elite; this means that the coming back of the Persian element is even limited because the society is restricted by the structure of the political system that does not allow the Persian element to go even further. This is something to work on in order to create a collaborative environment within the region.

A few words have to be spent as well about the global situation of Iran. Certainly, the Islamic Republic of Iran is now allied with China and Russia and not with the United States and the European Union. The opening between Teheran and Washington has been principally based on some short-term policies and on the personal relation between the current United States Secretary of State, John Kerry, and the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mohammad Javad Zarif, and between the President of the United States, Barak Obama, and Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani. Thus, what will happen during the presidential elections in the United States and the parliamentary elections in Iran, will define the future relation between the two countries, and consequently with the regional powers.

In an article on the *British Journal on Middle Eastern Studies*, with some colleagues we have defined Iran as a 'peculiar hybrid regime' which is not completely authoritarian but has different possibilities of hybridisation. Its policies can radically change in accordance with the regime's main actors; for example, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad supported other radical countries, such as Cuba, while President Hassan Rouhani is more open to the West.

Thus, we may say that the system is characterised by a sort of flexibility, although it has defined rules of proceedings that we can find during the presidential and parliamentary elections where we could see a free participation but not a free competition. I am aware of that, but there are some democratic practices concerning the competition between politicians that exist in Iran, and do not exist in the neighbourhood countries, to work on.

Undoubtedly, Iran has interfered in different areas such as Syria and Yemen; but, at the same time, it is an important player which will bring back the Persian

element in the Middle East. For these reasons, I would promote pluralism and acceptance of the others in the region with the aim to encourage cooperation among the Arab countries.

THE CHAIRS' PERSPECTIVE



CHRISTIAN KOCH

The topic of this panel is ‘fostering viable politics’, however before starting we should put a big question mark behind how to define this term. What came out very clearly from the first session was the challenge of solving some of the issues in the Arab region. It is quite apparent that there exist a wide variety of challenges which need to be tackled while at the same time there is little indication of where the capacities to cope with those challenges will come from.

Since in this panel we will talk more about internal political processes, I wish to refer to a very interesting recent survey from the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace . It looks into the answers of 100 experts from the Arab region about different topics, inter alia governmental legitimacy. One the questions asked was if they were satisfied of the relationship between citizens and the government in their own country. Of the 93 responses received, 84 said ‘no’. Obviously, the problem is the widespread dissatisfaction about what the role of the government is. In addition, the survey highlighted that there is a lack of common understanding about the ingredients needed to rejuvenate reforms and governmental legitimacy.

The two other things that stood out were the prioritisation of local consensus and democratic prospects. This latter topic underlines a linkage between the lack of democracy and the rise of extremism. Here we have to spend some time on the definition of governance. Maybe we should get away from the western idea of democracy, which is quite a tainted term, and instead focus more on what governance is.



H.E. AMRE M. MOUSSA

The first element is Change. The Middle East is going through a serious and historical period of change. Change means that the vast majority of people in the Middle East do not want to repeat or to be subjected to a repetition of the same bad governance that led to the failure of many states in the region. Change means that we should recall from the past what is needed to be learnt, negatively and positively, to help us in our endeavours to build a different and a better future.

The second element is the advent of a new generation. The youth forms the majority of the population in the Arab world, which amounts to 350 millions of people. This means demands of the tens of millions of young people to attain their basic rights, to be listened to their visions of the future and their strong will to participate in forming policies and events in our region.

The third element is the twenty-first century mood and spirit. I think this is the most important element because the twenty-first century is the age of technology, progress, fast developments and interactions and this is all reflected in the new social media. Our young people know what is happening in the world and interact with it. They do not intend to be left out or behind. This leads many of us to think that it is time for the Middle East to have a new regional order as the existing one is unsatisfactory and cannot serve the purposes of future generations.

We are now debating... brainstorming here and elsewhere, trying in fact to reach a consensus on what we should do. If we talk about a regional security order we cannot and should not avoid the link between the Middle East and the European Mediterranean countries. Thus, we have to make an understanding with our European partners, and especially the Mediterranean European partners. As you know, in the 1990s all the shores of the Mediterranean agreed to sit together with the aim to build a new Mediterranean order. This led to launching the Mediterranean Forum, the Barcelona process and finally, in 1995, the Barcelona Declaration .

We started to coordinate our economy, policy and security areas until the French Ex-President Nicholas Sarkozy launched the idea of the Union for the Mediterra-

mean that reached less results than we expected and the process has slowed down. However, I am sure that if we sit down together again, we could have more results than before. We can form a new order in this vast region: West Asia, North Africa and Europe... at least the Mediterranean Europe.

The first step of our reflection should be to acknowledge that change in the Middle East was not just within a few countries but it has a regional connotation, which produces the consequences that we witnessed in Iraq, Syria, Yemen, Libya and their further consequences in Europe. Some of the Think -Tanks in Egypt and in the West suggest that the time has come for a re- consideration of the issue.

The role of Egypt is at the centre of their discussion. Some of these Think- Tanks are discussing what should be the role of Egypt. When would Egypt be allowed to get back to its leadership position in the Arab world? Is it possible that Egypt remains isolated from the western and the eastern wings of the Arab region?

In the Egyptian Constitution and in the inaugural speech of the new President Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi it was underlined that the identity of Egypt is Arab, African and Mediterranean. This is an important new definition of the Egyptian identity and it would constitute a new basis of a new policy planning for the region in the first half of the 21st Century.

This was the first time that in an official document and statement Egypt is affirming its Mediterranean identity, along with the Arab and the African one. Therefore, I submit that there will be another strategic battle if some powers will try to isolate Egypt from its multidimensional environment. Undoubtedly, some new players are affirming their role in the region, i.e. Iran and Turkey.

Nonetheless, I strongly believe that the Arab World cannot and will not be led by neither Iran nor Turkey. The Arabs will not listen to instructions from either... Egypt would be the natural leader of the future Arab world.

Thus, in the normal state of affairs and with the consensus of the Arab world's population, Egypt has to come back to affect the balance of power in the region. Now, and under the present circumstances the best option are stations on the road. Egypt and Saudi Arabia are invited to work together in order to establish their leadership in the region and to face the challenges we have witnessed. A regional change is happening and it requires both a new vision and a new regional order and the Egyptian balancing role in the regional development.

There were several calls for new approaches to the situation in the Middle East. Some would consider it immature to talk about unity in our region. In my view, immaturity is the wrong word. The question is whether we could perceive unity as conceived in the western world. We need to constitute an Arab unity based on cooperation and complementarity, which will not involve simply the Arab nation but the whole Arab world.

The Arab world is constituted of Muslims for the vast majority as well as other ethnicities and religions that coexist with us , we have to accept them as our co-citizens, colleagues and brothers on equal footing. Let me remind you that when the

revolution erupted in Tunisia, in a small village called Sidi Bouzid, after minutes –not hours– from the uprising people were on the streets along with protestants in Cairo and Beirut and other Arab cities.

This common feeling of being Arabs has to be consolidated through our common interests in the social and economic development of the Arab world, in order to succeed together. Indeed, many of us think that this is the direction to be followed. In parallel to that, we must have a wider regional approach to cover the areas I mentioned earlier.

To conclude, I would quote Dr Abdouli Touhami, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, who said: 'Bad compromise should be substituted by good consensus.' In this regard, it seems that compromise is bad and consensus is good; however, I would say that compromise sometimes is good and a bad compromise is unworkable. Nevertheless, what we are after in our region is not compromise but consensus ... good consensus based on a new order and thus Dr Abdouli Touhami would be right.



H.E. SHEIKH THAMER ALI AL-SABAH

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Thank you for the opportunity to sit down with these great minds in front of me today in order to discuss and examine such an important topic. It is this kind of meetings that allows us to have a wider view from different angles and explore new ways to tackle our challenges.

Before our meeting comes definitely to an end, let me offer you my personal view on the matters we addressed during this two-day discussion with the aim to encourage further reflections.

The first day, during the first session, I was impressed by the discussion on the threats emanated by non-state actors' impact on the stability of the Arab region; we had four different views on the subjects and how to deal with it. Indeed, to have a better understanding of the situation, we need a comprehension of each country's specificity. This means that there is no more one strategy fits it all. Although in the region we speak the same language and we mainly share the same religion, different historical experiences and cultural traditions have been playing a key role in defining the peculiarity of each Arab country.

Let me remind you of what the former Prime Minister of Libya, Mahmoud Gibril, spoke about during his intervention. He said, and I quote: "In 2011 we told the allies about the 27 million pieces of armament in Libya, but no one listened to us". Thus, who is no one? The allies, all of them. He went on: "the refugee crisis is taking on the European Union and I hope you are listening now".

Mustafa Alani, Director, National Security and Terrorism Studies Department, Gulf Research Center, also made a strong statement on the Arab situation, especially on Iran role in the current crisis. He clearly explained that Iran is interfering in several countries of the Arab world. He stated what is the ideology that Iran is exporting through Hezbollah, Houthis, Al Jaysh al Sha'abi or the populist militia army, just to name a few of them. Jean-Loup Samaan, Researcher, Middle East Faculty, NATO Defense College, on his part mentioned Hamas, the Islamic Brotherhood, al-Qaeda, Daesh, which was an interesting topic to hear about at the end

of this session. On the basis of these reflections, spontaneously came out the following question: how all these entities have been created in this part of the world?

Actually, I was disappointed that no one brought up the Palestinian crisis. This was so frustrating and I do not want to switch on the second panel without talking a bit about Palestine. We were taught that throwing stones in our part of the world is faced by machine guns, artillery and so on and that this is done by bad dictatorships. What about shooting on desperate people and pretending that this is normal in a democracy? Why this difference when all these people ask for dignity and freedom? These were my observations for the first panel; I just want to underline that terrorism affects everyone, both the state and the non-state players.

To give an example, in Kuwait, in 2003, two teenagers carried out a suicidal attack against the US soldiers located in Failaka Island. The reasons of this attack has to be found in the death in Gaza of an eight-year-old Palestinian girl, shot by the Israeli army while she was with her father. Unfortunately, the Kuwaiti population did not have any notice of this fact and the terroristic attack left them completely aghast. This was the trigger point, but based on what? A veto in the United Nations' Security Council? The United states support to Israel? Or, Israel itself? Whatever the answer is, they saw what happened to this girl and perform that attack against the United States' soldiers who were in Kuwait to be trained before entering Iraq.

In the second panel, the speakers offered their views on fostering viable politics to be applied in the evolution of the situation in the Arab region, where a confrontation with the opposition groups would not lead to any successful result. On the contrary, channelling the energies of the different political groups in dialogue and involvement in the political process, would create a balanced system aimed at increasing domestic stability and so on.

Today, I myself will attempt with your aid to do my own studies: 'Who believes that Hezbollah should be put as terrorist group in the EU or in the UN charter?' Quite a few.

Let me try again, after mentioning that in the '80s Kuwait Hezbollah attacked not only its coffee shops but also planes and foreign embassies; in the same period, in Saudi Arabia, Hezbollah blow up several US barracks, as well as in Lebanon. In Bahrain too, there are clear evidences that Hezbollah was involved in some terroristic attacks in the country. It is a fact. Even when now Hezbollah militia crosses the border between Lebanon and Syria nobody has something to say about.

Now, for the people who did not raise their hand, did I change something in your mind? If yes, why do not raise this issue at the United Nations or European Union level? The 80% of our speakers' interventions dealt with Iran, Hezbollah and terrorism. So, I think it is time to take concrete measures to face this issue. In the second session Ahmad Masa'deh, former Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, spoke about the 40 years of wrong education in the Arab world and how to change it.

Excellencies, we were taught that the oppression in the Arab region would never stand, but till now we do not understand why UN resolution 242 on Palestine has not been implemented. I think we were taught right; we should be taught this way.

We learnt that Islam during the Mohammed era called for peace and not for violence; I have read neither that, in the past 1.437 years, war prisoners were set on fire, nor that it is okay to throw people off buildings, and I could continue for hours to explain that what Daesh is doing has nothing in common with Islam. Indeed, it is not Islam that encouraged the creation of Daesh, it is the combination of some forces outside Islam which brought their people together.

The third session reminded us the partnerships that the Arab region has established with NATO. Thanks to these partnerships we are here today and, in addition, before the end of this year, the opening of the NATO Gulf Centre in Kuwait would strengthen and consolidate this cooperation in the region. The opening of the Center could not come in a better time, as we need to work even closer in the area, because we have to face the new and unconventional challenges and turmoil surrounding us.

In this sense, I would like to thank H.E. Amre M. Moussa, former Secretary General of the League of the Arab states, who tried to explain the new geopolitical order in the Middle East and how we should cope with it.

Nicola de Santis, Head, Middle East and North Africa Section, talked about sneakers and no boots, let me underline that we gave an opportunity not only to NATO, but to the allies as we were ready to have slippers on the ground and no one took this chance. Nevertheless, I heard a lot of people complaining over the results of the late intervention in the region.

Claude Salhani, Opinion Page Editor at The Arab Weekly, spoke about the concept of belonging that we hope to engage in dealing through education and many other things. Oded Eran, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Studies, focused on the vacuum created by the withdrawing of the US forces from the region and we hope everything will go better now.

In the fourth session, Richard D. Hooker, Director, Research and Strategic Support; Director, Institute for National Strategic Studies in Washington DC, mentioned the 1 to 3 trillion dollars already spent in Iraq and Afghanistan, the thousands of people who died or were wounded and the hundreds of thousands dealing with psychological trauma of their war experiences. He also named terrorist groups, surprisingly all of them Sunni groups but not a single Iranian one, and I wish this oversight is not a US habit but that he has just forgotten them.

Rashad Al-Alimi, former Deputy Prime Minister of Yemen, talked about the Iranian ideology over the region after 1979 and Prof Pejman Abdolmohammadi, Professor at John Cabot University and Researcher at London School of Economics, elaborated on that issue. However, today it was the first time I heard about the Persian element; what is the Persian element? Are we going back to the Persian empire? Are we willing to accept the Persian empire?

This is something new and I have to discover what it is. My dear Professor, you also stated that Iran was the first state in the region having a political system based on freedom after 1979. However, I want to remind you that in 1962 Kuwait adopted her first Constitution through free elections. Freedom of press was another primacy of Kuwait and Lebanon and I would have appreciated that some Lebanese colleagues had raised their hands asking about clarifications.

Piotr Dutkiewicz, Professor and co-director, Centre for Governance and Public Policy at Carleton University, concentrate on who needs Russia and who Russia needs. We need each other because we are supposed to be in this together. If we stand against each other, this means we are not working together. About 250.000 people were killed by a certain regime and Russia is on its side. I do not know what message you are sending to people here; you said you do not want to make new friends here but I am willing to shake your hand as a friend, because it is this what we have to talk about.

Each country has its own policy and interests in the region; nevertheless, we are facing the same terrorist groups. To put an end to all these sessions, I have a very short remark. Excellences, distinguished ladies and gentlemen, the drastic and endless instability in the Middle East, especially in the recent years - starting with the Arab-Israeli conflict, going through the political vulnerability in Iraq, the political unrest in Tunisia and Egypt, the armed conflicts in Yemen and Lebanon and the humanitarian crisis in Syria - points to one thing.

There is something missing in the way our culture is facing this challenge. Only unity, solidarity and co-operation can make us overcome this battle. Working closely together through education and a common vision of the future, would help us to prevail over this humanitarian crisis, as well as political injustices and to eradicate terrorism in the Middle East.

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Ambassador Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo

President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

He has considerable experience in a number of areas, not just international relations. Including industry, energy, aerospace. A specialist on security affairs worldwide. He is a frequent public speaker. Senior Advisor of several Ministers of Defence, with a strong focus on the various Balkan crisis. In 2000 he has been a founding member of the Political and Security Committee of the European Union with Javier Solana. Deputy Secretary General of the Atlantic Alliance from 2001 to 2007. His mandate was mostly carried out in relations with sensitive countries, such as those in the Gulf, in the Southern Mediterranean, Afghanistan and Pakistan. Chairing the Atlantic Council on several missions.

Senior Strategic Advisor of ENEL from 2008 to 2012. A member of the Board of the Italian Space Agency and later of Finmeccanica in 2013-2014. A teacher of European Security and Defence Policy at the LUISS University, School of Government, Rome. Columnist for "Europa", daily of the Democratic Party of Italy. He is the President and founder of the NATO Defense College Foundation. Author of the books: "The road to Kabul", Il Mulino 2009 and "A political journey without maps. Diversity and future in the greater Middle East", Rubbettino 2013.

Alessandro Politi

Director, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

Alessandro Politi is a global political and strategic analyst with 30 years of experience. Director of the NATO Defense College Foundation, the only NATO-affiliated NGO think tank. He is senior researcher for the Italian MoD (CeMiSS-Centre for Military and Strategic Studies) regarding the strategic monitoring of Latin America. He also created and has led the Global Outlook project within CeMiSS, published in Italian and English (third edition, 2015). WEF Global Shapers facilitator and TEDxLUISS speaker. He has contributed to the Italian Defence White

Paper and currently advises the IT MFA. He has directed the CEMRES research on CBMs in the framework of the 5+5 Defence Initiative, presenting the conclusions to the Ministers in Granada. He teaches geopolitics and intelligence at the SIOI. He teaches conflict management, crisis, peace-making and analysis at different governmental centres. His most recent hearings at the House Foreign and the House Defence Committee were on cyberdefence, future orientations of the Italian foreign policy and European armaments co-operation. He has been acting director of the School of Intelligence Analysis at the LCU in Rome. He has been advisor in Italy and abroad to four Defence ministers (among which the actual President of the Italian Republic, Hon. Mattarella), one National Armaments Director, one Intelligence Co-ordinator, one Chairman of the Oversight Intelligence Committee, one Head of the Italian delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (actually EU HR, on. Federica Mogherini). Born in Germany, lives in Rome. He has published as author or co-author 25 books on strategic and security matters. His most recent book in Italian is about the next possible Israel-Iran war.

Eleonora Ardemagni

NDCF Scientific Advisor

Eleonora Ardemagni is an international relations analyst of the Middle East. Her research analysis focuses on foreign policy and security issues, with particular regard to Yemen and the Gulf monarchies. She is a regular contributor at Affari Internazionali (International Affairs Institute, IAI) Aspen Institute Italy, the Italian Institute for International Political Studies (ISPI), Storia Urbana and Reset-Dialogues on Civilizations. She is Gulf analyst for the NATO Defense College Foundation and commentator at Radio Vaticana. Ardemagni has published on *Afriche e Orienti*, *International Studies Journal*, *LSE Middle East Centre Blog*, *Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington (AGSIW)*, *Limes* and the newspaper *Avvenire*. Master's Degree in International Relations from the Catholic University of Milan, Diploma in European Affairs from ISPI, Master's course in Middle Eastern Studies from ASERI (Postgraduate School of Economics and International Relations).

Cinzia Bianco

NDCF Scientific Advisor

Cinzia Bianco is an Analyst with the "Mediterranean and Gulf" programme at the NATO Defense College Foundation. Previously, she carried on a 6-months-long Research Fellowship in the Gulf region (Oman, Qatar, UAE, Kuwait) with the Istituto Affari Internazionali, for the European Commission's "Sharaka" project, researching on EU-GCC relations. Previously she worked as a Junior Analyst in the London-based think tank "South Asia and Middle East Forum". She represented Italy at the 2011 G8 Youth Summit in the Foreign Affairs Panel, and at the 2012 G20 Youth Summit in the International Trade Commission. She publishes often on several specialized outlets including the Middle East Institute (USA),

Limes (Italy), the Istituto Studi di Politica Internazionale (Italy) and the Euro-Gulf Information Center (Italy). She writes regularly risk analyses and takes part in international consulting projects for Gulf State Analytics. Cinzia obtained a Master's Degree in Middle East and Mediterranean Studies from King's College London. Her research interests and expertise include: EU-GCC relations; International and Domestic Politics of the Gulf Countries; Strategic Balance in the MENA.

Umberto Profazio

NDCF Scientific Advisor

Umberto Profazio holds a Ph.D. in History of International Relations from the University of Rome Sapienza. His thesis examines Libya's foreign policy after independence. Umberto is Maghreb Analyst for the NATO Defense College Foundation and a contributor for the Istituto Affari Internazionali in Rome on issues such as political developments and terrorism in MENA region, in particular in Libya. Since September 2015 he is Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Geopolitics and Security in Realism Studies (CGSRS) in London and a Security Analyst for a consultancy firm based in United Kingdom. His first e-book on the Islamic State terrorist group, "Lo Stato Islamico. Origini e sviluppi", was published in March 2015 by e-muse.

Pejman Adolmohammadi

Professor, John Cabot University and Researcher at London School of Economics, London
Pejman Adolmohammadi joined the MEC as Visiting Fellow in March 2015. He is also Lecturer of Political Science and Middle Eastern Studies at John Cabot University in Rome. His PhD dissertation has been published as a book entitled "La Repubblica Islamica dell'Iran: il pensiero politico dell'Ayatollah Khomeini" (De Ferrari, 2009). His research and teaching activities focus on the politics and history of modern Iran, the intellectual history of Iran, geopolitics of the Persian Gulf, and international relations of the Middle East. As an Iranian-Italian Scholar, Dr Adolmohammadi gives his comments and analyses regarding Middle Eastern issues on the Italian National TV, RAIUNO and BBC Persian. He collaborates as expert on the Middle East, and especially Iranian politics, with the Italian Institute for International Political Studies in Milan (ISPI). In the Fall of 2014, he was Visiting Lecturer in the Department of World Cultures at the University of Helsinki. He was also previously Visiting Researcher, through a DAAD Grant, at the Islamwissenschaft institute of the University of Kiel in Germany. His newest book "Modern Iran: Between Domestic Affairs and International Relations" was published by Mondadori, Italy's leading publisher, in October 2015.

Mustafa Alani

Director, National Security and Terrorism Studies Department, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah

Dr Mustafa Alani is a Senior Advisor at the GRC and Program Director in Security and Terrorism Studies. He is also an Associate Fellow at the Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies in the United Kingdom. His research focuses on security developments in the Gulf region, with particular emphasis on Iraq and Iran, and on Islamist terrorist organizations and fundamentalist groups. Since 1988, Dr Alani has acted as consultant and advisor to numerous official and non-governmental institutions, and has spoken in front of the House of Commons on a number of issues. He is the author of *Operation VANTAGE: British Military Intervention in Kuwait* (London: LAAM, 1990); co-author of 'Saudi Arabia : The Threat from Within,' *Jane's Intelligence Review* (no. 12), of *Jane's Sentinel Annual Report on Saudi Arabia* (1996), and of *The Future of Iraqi Oil* (New Venture Guide) (Robertson Research International, 1998). He has also authored numerous articles and reports on security developments in Iraq, Iran and the GCC. He holds a PhD in Politics from the University of Exeter, an MA in International Relations from Keele University and a BA in Politics from the University of Baghdad.

Rashad Al-Alimi

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Yemen, Sana'a

Rashad Al-Alimi has held different positions including Head of Immigration and Passports Authority, Member of the Saudi-Yemeni Borders Committee; Minister of Interior Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Affairs, and Deputy Prime Minister for Defense and Security Affairs. He has published a number of books and issuances including "Tradition and Modernization in the Yemeni Legal System" and "Tribal Judiciary in the Yemeni Community Context". Rashad Al-Alimi was born in 1954, has a Ph.D. in sociology and is an academic professor.

Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Badi

Former Ambassador of Oman to Yemen, Muscat

A member of the SDS (Strategic Directing Staff) at the National Defense College – Oman (NDC-Oman)

Qualifications

Doctorate Degree in General Law – Tunis al Manar University, Republic of Tunisia 2011.

Master in General Law (International Law) – Faculty of Law University of Aden, Republic of Yemen 2006.

Master in Business Administration (Executive)– University of Lincolnshire & Humberside, U.K. June 2000

Diploma in Diplomatic Studies – University of Oxford, U.K. June 1992.

Bachelor degree in Public Law (International Relations) – Faculty of Legal, Eco-

conomic and Social Sciences of Sidi Mohamed Ben Abdellah University, Fes, Kingdom of Morocco 1986.

High school – UAE 1982

Work Experience

Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of Yemen from 2000 – 2013.

Directing Staff at the National Defense College since 2013 until now. (Current Position)

Participated in many regional and international conventions.

Attended many courses in different fields.

Advocate & Legal Consultant & Arbitrator.

Printed Books

The Role of Omani Missions, Offices And Agents Abroad In Investment, Promotion And Export Development – Published by Al Roya Press & Publishing House - First Published March 2013.

The Demarcation of Land Borders Between Oman and Yemen 2014. (peer – reviewed book).

The Demarcation of Maritime Borders Between Oman and Yemen 2015. (peer – reviewed book).

Janusz Bojarski

Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome

Janusz Bojarski was born in Krasnosielc (Poland) on 24 June 1956. He joined the Polish Armed Forces in 1975. After graduating from the Signal Officers' College in 1979, he served in a variety of posts in the Polish Air Force. In 1991 he was appointed as the senior officer in the Defence Attachés' Bureau of the Polish MoD and in 1993 he began his diplomatic career as the Assistant Defence, Military, Naval and Air Attaché to the Polish Embassy in Paris. After his tour of duty in France, in 1998 he became Chief of the Foreign Relations Office in the Military Intelligence Service. Promoted to Colonel in 1999, he was appointed as Director of the Defence Attachés' Bureau. From 2000 to 2004, Major General Bojarski held the position of Defence and Air Attaché to the Polish Embassy in Washington D.C. During his mission he was instrumental in managing the F-16 programme between the Polish Ministry of National Defence and the US Government. In 2004 he was promoted to the rank of Brigadier General and he served as the Deputy Director of the Military Intelligence Service for intelligence production. In December 2007 he took office as Director of the Personnel Department in the Polish MoD. From September 2010 to May 2014 he served as the Military Representative of Poland to NATO and the European Union (POL MilRep). On 25 July 2014 he became Commandant of the NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. Major General Bojarski holds a Master of Science degree in National Resource Strategy from the National Defense University in Washington D.C. (2007). He also holds a degree in Pedagogy from Warsaw Military Academy (1984). He has completed Journalism and

National Security postgraduate studies at the University of Warsaw. His education also includes the NATO International Intelligence Directors Course at the Defence Intelligence and Security Centre in the UK, the Generals, Flag Officers and Ambassadors' Course at the NDC and the Security Assistance Management Foreign Purchasers Course at the Defence Institute of Security Assistance Management in Ohio, USA. He also received the French Business Language Certificate of the *Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris*. He is the recipient of numerous awards for his professional work: International Award for Security Cooperation and Understanding from the National Defense University Foundation, Legion of Merit from the United States Secretary of Defense and l'Ordre National du Mérite from the President of France. Major General Bojarski is fluent in English, French and conversational Italian and Russian. He is married to Katarzyna, and has two grown up daughters: Aleksandra and Karolina.

Piotr Dutkiewicz

Professor and co-director, Center for Governance and Public Policy, Carleton University, Ottawa

Piotr Dutkiewicz is a professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for Governance and Public Management at Carleton University. He is internationally recognized as a leading expert on Russia's domestic and international affairs. In recognition of his research and contributions to Canada-Russian relations, Dutkiewicz has received the Embassy of Canada in the Russian Federation Award for his distinguished and sustained contributions to Canada-Russia relations (2012), and the Research Excellence Award from Carleton's Faculty of Public Affairs (2014). Recent publications include: "The Social History of Post-Communist Russia", P. Dutkiewicz, V.Kulikov, R. Sakwa (eds.), Routledge, 2016; "Eurasian Integration – The View From Within", Piotr Dutkiewicz and Richard Sakwa (eds.), Routledge 2015; "22 Ideas to Fix the World. Conversations with the World's Foremost Thinkers", New York University Press, 2013; "Democracy versus Modernization, A Dilemma for Russia and for the World", Piotr Dutkiewicz and Vladislav Inozemtsev (eds.), Routledge Publishers, 2012; "Russia - The Challenges of Transformation", Piotr Dutkiewicz & Dmitri Trenin eds., NYUP, 2011; Piotr Dutkiewicz, Alison Keating, Maryana Nikoula, Evgeni Shevchenko, "Juvenile Justice in Russia", AUCC, 2009; "New Europe: The Impact of the First Decade. Variations on the Pattern", Teresa Rakowska-Harmstone, Piotr Dutkiewicz, eds., Polish Academy of Science, 2007, vol.1& 2. He is a member of the Valdai Club since 2003.

Oded Eran

Senior Researcher, Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv

Oded Eran, a senior research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies, served as director of INSS from July 2008 to November 2011, following a long career in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government positions. In

his most recent post before joining INSS, Dr Eran served as the World Jewish Congress Representative in Israel and the Secretary General of the WJC Israel Branch. From 2002-2007, he served as Israel's ambassador to the European Union (covering NATO as well). Prior to that (1997-2000) he was Israel's ambassador to Jordan, and head of Israel's negotiations team with the Palestinians (1999-2000). Other previous positions include deputy director general of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the deputy chief of the Israeli embassy in Washington. Dr Eran serves as an advisor to the Knesset Subcommittee on Foreign Affairs. He holds a Ph.D. from the London School of Economics.

Steven Erlanger

Chief, London Bureau, The New York Times, London

Steven Erlanger became the Jerusalem bureau chief in July 2004. Before that, he was the cultural news editor from December 2002 until June 2004. Previously he served as The New York Times's Berlin bureau chief since August 2001. He was bureau chief for Central Europe and the Balkans, based in Prague, from January 1999 after having served as chief diplomatic correspondent, based in Washington, since January 1996. Before that, he had served nearly four years in the Moscow bureau, first as a correspondent, from March 1992, and then as the bureau chief, from May 1994. To prepare for Moscow, he spent 10 months at St. Antony's College, Oxford University, where he studied Russian. From October 1988 to May 1991, he was the Bangkok bureau chief and Southeast Asia correspondent. He also served as a metropolitan reporter after joining The Times in September 1987. Before coming to The Times, Mr. Erlanger worked for The Boston Globe for 11 years. At The Globe, he was a European correspondent, based in London, from 1983 to 1987, and the deputy national and foreign editor for three years before that. He also served as assistant national editor and assistant foreign editor, and reported from Eastern Europe, Canada and revolutionary Iran. From 1975 to 1983, Mr. Erlanger was a Teaching Fellow at Harvard University, first in the College and then at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. He also was the assistant editor of the Nieman Reports, the journal of Harvard's Nieman Foundation for Journalism in 1975.

Mr. Erlanger received ASNE's 2001 Jesse Laventhol prize for deadline reporting for his work in the former Yugoslavia. He received the German Marshall Fund's Peter Weitz Prize in 2000 for excellence and originality in reporting and analysing European and transatlantic affairs and the Robert Livingston Award for international reporting in 1981 for a series of articles about Eastern Europe. Mr. Erlanger graduated from the Taft School in Watertown, Conn., and received an A.B. degree, magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa, from Harvard College in 1974. He majored in political philosophy in the government department. Mr. Erlanger has published articles in the Economist, the Spectator, the New Statesman, the New Republic, the Financial Times, the Columbia Journalism Review and other publications. He

wrote a monograph, "The Colonial Worker in Boston, 1775," for the Bureau of Labor Statistics in 1975. Mr. Erlanger is married.

Mahmoud Gebril

Former Prime Minister, Tripoli

Mahmoud Gebril el-Warfally is a Libyan politician who served as the interim Prime Minister of Libya for seven and a half months during the Libyan Civil War, chairing the executive board of the National Transitional Council from 5 March to 23 October 2011. He also served as the Head of International Affairs. As of July 2012, Gebril is the head of one of the largest political parties in Libya, National Forces Alliance. Toward the end of the conflict, Gebril was increasingly referred to by foreign governments and in media as the interim prime minister of Libya rather than as the chairman of the executive board, the title used to describe him on the NTC's website, but it was unclear whether this was an official title or simply referred to his position as the provisional council's head of government. Gebril's government was recognized as the "sole legitimate representative" of Libya by the majority of UN states including France, Turkey, the United Kingdom, the United States, Iran, and Qatar. Gebril graduated in Economics and Political Science from Cairo University in 1975, then earned a master's degree in political science in 1980 and a doctorate in political science in 1985, both from the University of Pittsburgh. Gebril led the team who drafted and formed the Unified Arab Training manual. He was also responsible for organizing and administering the first two Training conferences in the Arab world in the years 1987 and 1988. He later took over the management and administration of many of the leadership training programmes for senior management in Arab countries including Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Kuwait, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Tunisia, and the United Arab Emirates.

Richard D. Hooker

Director, Research and Strategic Support and Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Washington D.C.

Dr Richard D. Hooker, Jr. became the NDU Director for Research and Strategic Support and Director, Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) in September 2013. As a member of the Senior Executive Service, he served as Deputy Commandant and Dean of the NATO Defense College in Rome from September 2010-August 2013. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute of Strategic Studies, and the Foreign Policy Research Institute and is a Fellow of the Inter-University Seminar on Armed Forces and Society. A former White House Fellow, Dr Hooker previously taught at the United States Military Academy at West Point and held the Chief of Staff of the Army Chair at the National War College in Washington, D.C. He also served with the Office of National Service, The White House under President George H.W. Bush, with the Arms Control and Defense Directorate, National Security Council during the Clinton

Administration, and with the NSC Office for Iraq and Afghanistan in the administration of George W. Bush.

Dr Hooker graduated with a B.S. from the U.S. Military Academy in 1981 and holds M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in International Relations from the University of Virginia. He is a Distinguished Graduate of the U.S. National War College, where he earned an M.S. in National Security Studies. His publications include more than sixty articles and four books on security and defence-related topics. Dr Hooker has lectured extensively at leading academic and military institutions in the United States and abroad. Prior to his retirement from active duty, Dr Hooker served for 30 years in the United States Army as a parachute infantry officer in the United States and Europe. While on active duty he participated in military operations in Grenada, Somalia, Rwanda, the Sinai, Bosnia, Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan, including command of a parachute brigade in Baghdad from January 2005 to January 2006. His military service also included tours in the offices of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, the Secretary of the Army and the Chief of Staff of the Army. Dr Hooker is a recipient of the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal (3 awards), the Legion of Merit (3 awards), the Bronze Star Medal (2 awards) and the Department of the Army Meritorious Civilian Service Medal.

Amb. Mahmoud Karem

Former Ambassador to NATO and the EU and Commissioner Human Rights Council, Cairo

Education

Dr Mahmoud Karem is a notable Egyptian Politician. He received his degree of Bachelor of Arts (B.A.), Political Science and Government in 1971 from the American University in Cairo. In 1984, he obtained his Doctor of Philosophy (PhD), Government and international studies (GINT), from the University of South Carolina (USC), with seven distinctions bestowed upon him by the academic board of the Department.

Career

Dr Karem Founded the Department for Disarmament and Peaceful uses of Nuclear Energy Affairs in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1992. He remained Director of that newly established Department as Assistant Foreign Minister, till August 1999. In September 1999 he was appointed as Ambassador to Japan till 2003.

Dr Mahmoud Karem served as the Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to the Kingdom of Belgium and the Grand-Duchy of Luxembourg, Head of Mission of Egypt to the European Communities, and Permanent Representative of Egypt to NATO from 2005 till 2010. He was an active contributor to the Mediterranean NAC+7 Dialogue in NATO since 2005. Member of the Advisory Board of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Disarmament Matters for six years ending 2009, as well as member of the International Commission formed by the Director General of the IAEA on the "Nuclear Fuel Cycle", and was appointed by the Sec-

retary General to numerous Group of Experts] in the United Nations on various peace, security, and non-proliferation issues.

Dr Karem served in the Egyptian missions to the United Nations in New York from 1977, was elected rapporteur of the UNDC in 1981, was Deputy Head of Mission to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva from 1988-1992, and headed important negotiations on several items and treaties including the CWC, the resolution on the Application of Agency Safeguards in the Middle East on the agenda of several General Conferences of the IAEA in Vienna.

He was selected as Visiting Professor on International Relation at Takushoku University, Japan, 2002, where he lectured students and the local community on numerous topics such as "Japan and Egypt, Energy Security, the Middle East Peace Process...etc." He has been a steady lecturer and visiting professor in the Political Science Department of the American University in Egypt (AUC), from 1984, Misr International University (MIU), and the Institute of Diplomatic Studies where he lectured visiting diplomats from Africa, CIS and Egyptian young diplomats also from 1984 until today. At present Dr Karem is teaching at the British University in Egypt.

In late spring 2010 after concluding his tour as Ambassador to the EU, Ambassador Karem was elected by acclamation as Secretary General of the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights (NCHR). He was re-elected to the same position in April 2011 after the revolution in Egypt. In September 2012 he was re-elected for the third time by the newly formed Human Rights Council. During his tenure Ambassador Karem rebuild the entire institution after it was burnt and demolished in January 2011. He prepared and presented the credentials of his Human Rights National Institution NCHR to the UN Geneva based OHCHR in the UN reclassification process, achieving an "A" status for his Council twice. He repeatedly argued that such an excellent status bestowed on the Council for Human Rights by the UN is due to its role and mission and the dedication of its researchers working under difficult circumstances. He resigned his position December 2012.

Dr Karem's latest publication was released December 2012 entitled: „The Conference for a ME Zone Free from Weapons of Mass Destruction.“ His chapter dealt with "The role of the League of the Arab States in preparing a WMD free zone Draft Treaty". The book was published by the Geneva Centre for Security studies, and the Arab Institute for strategic studies in Jordan. The same publishers published an additional contribution by the author in November 2014. The title of the Chapter was: "The 2010 NPT ME Conference: A historical recount of its stalled Diplomatic Unfolding; and Final Outcome."

Ambassador Karem is also an elected Board member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs (ECFA) till 2016. In 2013 he was also elected as a Board Member of the NATO Defense College Foundation in Rome and in that capacity attended the Foundation's conferences on Afghanistan in Rome in March 2013 where he delivered a speech on "Egypt in transition". He was also elected as Commissioner,

Board Member, Egyptian National Council for Human Rights in September 2013, and later elected Chairman of the International Committee of the Council.

Dr Ebtesam Al-Ketbi

President, Emirates Policy Center, Abu Dhabi

Ebtesam Al-Ketbi is a founder and president of Emirates Policy Center and a professor of Political Science at UAE University and a member of Consultative Body of GCC Council. She attained her Ph.D. in Political Science at the Faculty of Economics and Political Sciences, Cairo University. and she is a Secretary General of Gulf Development forum and also Board member of Association of political sciences beside she is a trustee's board member of Arab Unity Studies Center and trustees board member of the Arab Organization for Transparency plus a Consultative board Member of Arab Thought Foundation and a trustees board member of Arabic council for social sciences. She served as a member of Consultative committee of the UAE Center for Strategic Studies, director of woman program in Gulf research Center 2005 and Member of core team of Arab Human Development Report 2006. She has published a number of papers including: "The security dimensions of military relations between GCC countries and USA", "The global community and the war on terrorism: threat or opportunity?", "Democratic Transformations in GCC Countries", and "Citizenship concept in the GCC countries".

Christian Koch

Director, Gulf Research Center Foundation, Geneva

Dr Christian Koch is the Director of International Studies at the Gulf Research Center located in Dubai, UAE. Prior to joining the GRC, he worked as Head of the Strategic Studies Section at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi. His work at the Gulf Research Center combines the various international and foreign relations issues of the GCC states with a particular interest in GCC-EU Relations. He currently manages a two-year project named "Al-Jisr" pertaining to GCC-EU Public Diplomacy and Outreach Activities with the support of the European Commission. He is the author of "Politische Entwicklung in einem arabischen Golfstaat: Die Rolle von Interessengruppen im Emirat Kuwait" (Berlin: Klaus Schwarz Verlag, 2000), the editor of six books including "The EU and the GCC: Challenges" under the Swedish EU Presidency (with Leif Stenberg, Dubai, Gulf Research Center, 2010); "Broadening the Horizon: European Union-Gulf Cooperation Council Relations and Security Issues" (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2008, as editor) and "Gulf Security in the Twenty-First Century" (Abu Dhabi: ECSSR, 1997, as co-editor) as well as a contributor to numerous books with the latest on "US-UAE Relations," in Robert Looney, ed., *A Handbook of US-Middle East Relations* (Routledge, 2009). Under the al-Jisr Project, he has authored or co-authored reports on "Exploring Opportunities in the EU-GCC Relationship"; "The EU-GCC Partnership: Security and Policy Challenges"; "Political

Reform in the GCC and its implications for EU policy"; and "Promoting EU-GCC Cooperation in Higher Education". Dr Koch collaborated on the World Economic Forum's Middle East@Risk report in 2007. He regularly writes articles for the international media including the Financial Times, Handelsblatt and Süddeutsche Zeitung. He is also a contributor to Jane's Sentinel Publications on Gulf issues. His media appearances include the BBC, Deutsche Welle, Dubai One, Al-Hurra and Al-Arabiyya television. Dr Koch received his Ph.D. from the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg, Germany with a thesis on the role of voluntary association in the political development of Kuwait. He also studied at the American University in Washington, D.C. and the University of South Carolina. In January 2007, he joined the advisory board of the German Orient Foundation (Deutsche Orient Stiftung).

Ahmad Masa'deh

Former Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Amman

His Excellency Dr Ahmad Khalaf Masa'deh is a Jordanian public figure and a lawyer. He served as a minister, ambassador and chief of an international organization. Today, Ahmad Masa'deh practices law and is the Managing Partner of Khalaf Masa'deh & Partners Ltd. in Amman. He is a frequent speaker in political, international relations and law at regional and international conferences as well as a common guest at regional and international media and TV stations. Ahmad Masa'deh was born in Amman, Jordan on 19 May 1969. After passing the baccalaureate at the French College De La Salle Amman in 1987, he studied law at the University of Jordan, graduating (LL.B. with honours) in 1991. He thereafter pursued higher education, graduating (Diploma in the US Legal System) from Georgetown Law Center in 1991, (Master of Laws LL.M.) from the University of Virginia in Charlottesville USA in 1992, and (PhD) from King's College London in 2000.

As a politician, Ahmad Masa'deh is a progressive centre-left political thinker. Being a liberal-democrat, he believes in the values of the civil state, the empowerment of people, social equality, civil rights and liberties, and political pluralism. He is also a voice for Arab cooperation based on pluralism, democracy and greater interactive economic interests. Ahmad Masa'deh descends from a Jordanian family with an extensive political and legal history.

Ahmad Masa'deh's public career began in 2004 when he held the position of Minister for Public Sector Reform, to become the youngest Jordanian assuming the ministerial position in the reign of King Abdullah II. Assisted by the Government of Denmark in 2005, he was behind the establishment of the Jordanian Ombudsman, which is instrumental today in Jordan's political and administrative reform. Between 2006 and 2010, Ahmad Masa'deh was the 7th Ambassador of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to the European Union, Belgium, Norway and Luxembourg.

He was also the Jordanian Coordinator to the Union for the Mediterranean and Jordan's Representative to NATO. As ambassador, Masa'deh focused on strength-

ening relations between Jordan and the member states of the European Union as well as Jordan-Atlantic relations. He was behind the establishment of the 1st Group of Friends of Jordan at the European Parliament. He was the Jordanian official to firstly initiate dialogue with the EU aiming at allowing Jordan to benefit from an 'advanced status.' He also helped placing Jordan as a trustworthy and active partner in the Union for the Mediterranean. With NATO, he played an instrumental role in negotiating and signing a state of the art Individual Work Program (ICP) which offers the Kingdom a reinforced political and practical relation with the Alliance.

In January 2010, Ahmad Masa'deh was elected Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean to become the first personality to assume this prestigious international post of this organization comprising 43 members of all 27 European Union states and 16 Arab and Mediterranean countries. Despite the political and financial problems which the Union suffered from, Ahmad Masa'deh managed to fulfil his main mandate which was to establish the Secretariat's institutional, human and operational capacities thereby making it ready to assume its mission of identifying and marketing developmental projects in the Mediterranean region. In the quest to benefit the peoples of the Mediterranean region, he also managed to develop a strategic policy for developing this region and managing, executing and financing effective developmental projects in the areas of renewable energy, water, environment, transport, civil protection and higher education.

Apart from his public career, Ahmad Masa'deh has been practicing law since 1993. From 2000 to 2004 he was the Managing Partner of Khalaf Masa'deh & Partners, one of the leading Jordanian law firms, a position which he assumed again in 2011 after finishing his political and diplomatic services. He became recognized as one of the leading business lawyers in the Middle East.

H.E. Amre M. Moussa

Former Secretary General, League of Arab States, Cairo

Mr. Moussa graduated in 1957 from the Faculty of Law, Cairo University, and joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt in 1958. He worked in several Egyptian missions including Egypt's Embassy in Switzerland and the Egyptian Mission to the United Nations from 1958 to 1972. He was appointed advisor to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Egypt in 1974 and served in that post until 1977, then became director of the Department of International Organizations, during the period 1977 to 1981 and successively served as Deputy Permanent Representative to the United Nations in New York from 1981 to 1983. In 1983 he was appointed Ambassador to India where he served until 1986 and returned to Egypt to head the Department of International Organizations until 1990 where he was appointed Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations. Mr. Moussa was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Egypt from 1991 to 2001. In May 2001 he was appointed as Secretary General of the League of Arab States. In 2003 Mr. Moussa served as

a member of the United Nations High Level Panel on Threats, Challenges and Change for International Peace and Security. In the course of his diplomatic career Mr. Moussa received a number of awards including the Grand Cordon of the Nile from the Egyptian government in May 2001, the Order of the Two Niles, first class, from Sudan in 2001, and high decorations from Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina and the German Federation.

Sarkis Nahoum

Senior Columnist, Annahar Newspaper, Beirut

Mr. Nahoum was born in 1946 in North of Lebanon and he was raised and lived in Beirut, keeping his roots. In 1968 he got his license in Political Sciences from the Lebanese University.

Working experience

From 1969 to 1972: Administrative director in Dar Assayad publishing house;

1974 to 1978: reporter in the News National Agency;

1974 until now: Annahar newspaper. Reporter then daily columnist (news analysis) since 1980.

Publications

1992 – the book “Michael Aoun, Dream or Illusion”;

2015 – the book “Al Allamah” a biography of Assayed Mohammad Hussein Fadlallah (Shiite cleric and leader).

He took part to several conferences in Lebanon, other Arab countries, Europe and the USA.

Amb. Tomasz Orłowski

Ambassador of the Republic of Poland to Italy, Rome

Tomasz Orłowski is a previous Under-Secretary of State at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, responsible for development cooperation, the Polish diaspora and Oriental and Asian policy. From 2007 to 2014, he was Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to France and the Principality of Monaco. Before that, from 2005 to 2007, he served as Deputy Director and later as Director of the Office of Protocol. Tomasz Orłowski was appointed Ambassador in 2005. From 2004 to 2005 he was Deputy Director of the Department of the United Nations System and Global Problems. From 2001 to 2004 he served as Secretary General of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO.

H.E. Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah

President of the National Security Bureau, Kuwait City

Education

BS in Administrative Leadership - Arkansas State University, U.S.A. 1999.

Diploma in General Administration – College of Business Studies, Kuwait 1995.

Employment

2013-2015: National Security Bureau- President of the National Security Bureau
2006 – 2013: National Security Bureau – Vice-President of the National Security Bureau, Head of Information, Security, and Research & Studies Sectors.

2002-2006: National Security Bureau – Manager of the Department of the President's Office.

2000-2002: National Security Bureau – Employee.

Relevant experience

Head of The Higher Organizing Committee for Critical Energy Infrastructure Protection, from 2008 until current date.

A member of several committees of the council of ministers.

General Coordinator of the Higher Committee and Chairman of the secretarial and Secretariat Committee for the Conference of NATO held in Kuwait December 2006.

Headed Kuwaiti Delegations in several security and intelligence conferences.

Headed several Delegations in Kuwait and abroad.

Participated to activities in several Strategic Thinking centres in and out of Kuwait.

Headed several Security Delegations to other countries to increase cooperation between NSB and its international counterparts.

Abdulaziz Sager

Chairman, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah

Born in Makkah, Saudi Arabia in 1959, Dr Abdulaziz Sager is chairman and founder of the Gulf Research Center. He is also President of Sager Group Holding in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia which is active in the fields of information technology, aviation services and investments.

In November 2003, Dr Sager was appointed as a member of the Makkah Province Council. In addition, he serves as a member on the advisory board of the Arab Thought Foundation; the Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF); the Faculty of Economics and Administration of King Abdulaziz University; the Ministry of Higher Education, Saudi Arabia; the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP); the German Orient Foundation; and on the advisory group for the 4th Arab Human Development Report for the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

Dr Sager has special research interest in Gulf strategic issues and is a regular contributor and commentator to international and regional media. He also regularly participates in regional and international forums and conferences held on issues relevant to the Gulf region. He is the author of numerous publications including: "Combating Violence & Terrorism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia" (Gulf Research Center, May 2004); "GCC Political & Economic Strategy towards Post-War Iraq" (GRC, April 2004); "Reforms in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and Feasible Solutions" (GRC, September 2003); "Political Reform Measures from a Domestic GCC Perspective," in Constitutional Reform and Political Participation in the Gulf,

Abdulahdi Khalaf and Giacomo Luciani, eds. (Dubai: Gulf Research Center, 2006); "Political Opposition in Saudi Arabia" in *Saudi Arabia in the Balance: Political Economy, Society, Foreign Affairs*, Paul Aarts and Gerd Nonneman, eds. (London: Hurst & Company, 2005); *Energy Shapes new Gulf Security Architecture*, *Journal of Middle Eastern Geopolitics* (2006); and "Why for all its problems, the EU is still a model for the Arab world," *Europe's World*, no. 14, Spring 2010. He has also been the chief editor for the *Gulf Yearbook* (2003 to 2009 editions).

Dr Sager holds a Ph.D. in Politics and International Relations from Lancaster University and an M.A. from the University of Kent, United Kingdom.

Claude Salhani

Opinion Page Editor, The Arab Weekly, Washington D.C.

A journalist, author, political analyst and TV and radio commentator is one of the most knowledgeable voices on the Arab-Israeli issues, the Greater Middle East, Central Asia, terrorism, and political Islam. He has appeared on more than 40 networks including CNN, Fox, BBC, VOA, Al-Hurra (in Arabic), France 24 and Russia Today. His articles have been published in *The New York Times*, the *Middle East Times*, *The Washington Post* and the *Washington Times*, *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Times* (London), *The San Diego Union Tribune*, *Foreign Service Journal*, *Middle East Policy Journal*, *Salon.com*, *The American Conservative*, *The National*, *Khaleej Times* and many others. Books Published: *Black September to Desert Storm*, (1997). *While the Arab World Slept: the impact of the Bush years on the Middle East*, (2009). *Islam Without a Veil*, (2011), contributing author of *The Iraq War*, (2002), and *Inauguration Day*.

Jean-Loup Samaan

Researcher, Middle East Faculty, NATO Defense College, Rome

Dr Jean-Loup Samaan is a researcher for the Middle East Faculty at the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Defense College in Rome, Italy. He is a member of the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the Project on Nuclear Issues of the Center for Strategic and International Affairs. His areas of expertise include Middle East strategic balance and Gulf security diplomacies, as well as cyber defence. He was a policy advisor at the French Ministry of Defence from 2008 to 2011, where he was responsible for several net assessment studies covering transatlantic military affairs. While working for the French Ministry of Defence (MoD), he participated in various French-American strategic foresight exercises with the National Intelligence Council as well as with the U.S. Air Force. From 2009 to 2011, he was also an adjunct lecturer in international security at the French Institute for Political Studies, Sciences Program, and gave lectures to civilian and military audiences in various countries. In 2006, he was a visiting scholar at Duke University, and from 2007 to 2008, he was a researcher at the RAND Corporation in Washington, DC. Dr Samaan has authored three books and several academ-

ic articles for various international journals such as *Survival*, *Orbis*, *Comparative Strategy*, *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, *Politique Etrangère*, and *Internationale Politik*. He is a regular columnist for the *E-magazine*, *Al Monitor*. Dr Samaan is a former student of Arabic at the French Institute of Oriental Languages and the French Institute for the Near East in Beirut, Lebanon. He graduated from the Institute for Political Studies in Grenoble, and holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Paris La Sorbonne.

Nicola De Santis

Head, middle East and North Africa Section, NATO Headquarters, Brussels

Nicola de Santis is the Head of the Middle East and North Africa Section in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division of the NATO Headquarters in Brussels. He is responsible for developing and promoting NATO policy, political relations, practical cooperation and public diplomacy with Middle Eastern and North African countries, especially those participating in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). During his more than two decade career at the Brussels NATO Headquarters, which he joined in November 1991, Mr. de Santis served under seven NATO Secretary Generals, following international competitions, in different policy and communications positions. He has a deep knowledge of NATO and many years of extensive international experience, especially in maintaining high level cooperative relations and managing projects between NATO, its member countries, PfP, Mediterranean and Middle Eastern countries; advising NATO Secretary Generals and Deputy Secretary Generals on political relations with these countries, managing cooperation programmes and conducting high level negotiations with them.

Claire Spencer

Senior Research Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme & Second Century Initiative, Chatham House, London

Dr Claire Spencer is senior research fellow for the Middle East and North Africa Programme and Second Century Initiative at Chatham House. Over the previous decade, she was head of the Middle East and North Africa Programme, which she expanded, having set up the Middle East and Central Asia Policy Unit at the development agency Christian Aid from 2003-05. She previously served as deputy director and head of the Mediterranean Security Programme which she established at the Centre for Defence Studies, King's College, University of London from 1995-2001. She is currently a steering committee member of the EuroMeSCo network of 'Euro-Med' think tanks, and a core group member of the EU-Southern Neighbourhood Civil Society Dialogue initiative. She received her BSc in Politics from Bristol University and PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

Dr Abdouli Touhami

Former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tunis

Touhami Abdouli was born on March 1st, 1969 in Sousse. He is a Professor of Philosophy, who now serves as the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs responsible for European affairs. In 2000, Abdouli received his Doctorate in Philosophy from the University of Mannouba then in 2005; he completed his academic career when he became a Professor in Cultural Anthropology (philosophy) at the Faculty of Arts and Humanities at the University of Sousse. Abdouli is known for his prolific academic contributions in different countries as he served in the senior management team and as a principal advisor to the President of the Euro-Mediterranean University in Slovenia. He was the Director of Academic Promotion until 2007 at Link Campus University in Rome. He has also served as a visiting professor at several institutions around the world including the Institute for Muslim Culture Studies in London, the Faculty of Arts at Damascus University, the Asian Cultures Institute at Sophia University in Tokyo. Abdouli was a member of several research groups such as "Islam Unique, Multiple and Comparative Religions" since 2008, he has belonged to the Jurisprudence and Personal status and Interference of Sciences research groups as well. He has written many publications including: "The Prophet Abraham in the Arab Islamic culture" in 2001; "The crisis of religious knowledge in 2004 and Islam of Kurds", "The interference of tribal, national and religious elements" in 2007. Between 2001 and 2003, he was member of Japan Association for Middle Eastern Studies and he was elected President of The Mediterranean Organization for Promotion and Science (MOPS) in Norway in 2008. During the same year, he founded the "Humanities Association" in Sousse. In June 2009 he became a member of the editorial board of the International Journal of Mediterranean Studies in Slovenia.



NATO Foundation
Defense College



Gulf Research Center Foundation
Knowledge for All



ARAB GEOPOLITICS IN TURMOIL PERCEPTIONS, UNKNOWNNS AND POLICIES

CONFERENCE ORGANISED BY

the NATO Defense College Foundation

IN COOPERATION WITH

*the Gulf Research Center Foundation,
the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme,
the NATO Defense College and the University of Jordan*

ROME, 25-26TH OF FEBRUARY 2016

Venue: Sala Anfiteatro – Auditorium Via Veneto, Via Vittorio Veneto 89



*This workshop
is supported by:*

The NATO Science for Peace
and Security Programme

MEDIA PARTNER



THURSDAY, 25TH OF FEBRUARY

14,30-15,00 Arrival of participants - Registration
15,00 Welcome remarks
 Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo,
 President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome
 Janusz Bojarski,
 Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome

Session 1

NON-STATE ACTORS AND THE RISKS OF DISINTEGRATION

States and ruling elites are not uncontested players, on the contrary they have to face risks and threats emanating from terrorism and regional divides created by religious and sectarian fault lines. After Lebanon, at least four other Middle Eastern countries are risking disintegration due to ISIL and other centrifugal forces. The panel has to explore the situation beyond mainstream consensus and suggest alternative strategies.

15,30-17,00 Chair: **Claire Spencer**, Senior Research Fellow, Middle East and North Africa Programme & Second Century Initiative, Chatham House, London

- **Mahmoud Gebril**, former Prime Minister, Tripoli
- **Abdullah bin Hamad Al-Badi**,
 former Ambassador of Oman to Yemen, Muscat
- **Mustafa Alani**, Director, National Security and Terrorism Studies Department, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah
- **Jean-Loup Samaan**, Researcher, Middle East Faculty, NATO Defense College, Rome

GENERAL DISCUSSION

17,00-17,30 Coffee/Tea break

Session 2

FOSTERING VIABLE POLITICS: THE EVOLUTION IN THE ARAB REGION

Recent experience has shown that stability per se is not a useful paradigm and that solutions must be intimately adapted to local needs and situations. The panel analyses the evolution of domestic politics in the region, taking into account the interplay of different groups (Islamists of various tendencies, military and liberal forces), and explores possible paths of viable internal balances beyond the current internal confrontational courses.

17,30-19,00

Chair: **Christian Koch**, Director, Gulf Research Center
Foundation, Geneva

- **Amb. Mahmoud Karem**, former Ambassador to NATO and the EU and Commissioner Human Rights Council, Cairo
- **Sarkis Nahoum**, Senior Columnist, Annahar Newspaper, Beirut
- **Ahmad Masa'deh**, former Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Amman
- **Dr. Abdouli Touhami**, former Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Tunis

GENERAL DISCUSSION

EVENING

Dinner Speech • **Steven Erlanger**, Chief, London Bureau, The New York Times, London

FRIDAY, 26TH OF FEBRUARY

9,30 Opening remarks

Session 3

SENSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS AND CO-OPERATIVE SECURITY

The deep crisis of the regional political and strategic landscape makes effective political and security partnerships even more necessary. The actual debate in the governments of the MENA region tends more often than not to overlook the seriousness of the present challenges. The panel will see how co-operative security can be structured in a solid narrative and in concrete initiatives, including prevention, capacity building and refugee flows management.

- 9,45-11,15 Chair: **H.E. Amre M. Moussa**, former Secretary General,
League of Arab States, Cairo
- **Dr Ebtesam Al-Ketbi**, President, Emirates Policy Center,
Abu Dhabi
 - **Nicola de Santis**, Head, Middle East and North Africa
Section, NATO Headquarters, Brussels
 - **Oded Eran**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National
Security Studies, Tel-Aviv
 - **Claude Salhani**, Opinion Page Editor, The Arab Weekly,
Washington D.C.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

11,15-11,45 Coffee/Tea break

Session 4

REGIONAL HEGEMONIES: RECONCILING THE EXTERNAL POWERS

As the region is reshaping around new actors and new balances, while new tensions emerge and old arrangements become void, it is necessary to find a new common conceptual and political ground to guarantee security and stability in the region. Co-operative security is a valid concept, but now its needs to be articulated also within volatile political frameworks in order to solve pressing problems.

11,45-13,15

Chair: **Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah**

- **Richard D. Hooker**, Director, Research and Strategic Support and Director, Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defence University, Washington D.C.
- **Rashad Al-Alimi**, former Deputy Prime Minister of Yemen, Sana'a
- **Piotr Dutkiewicz**, Professor and co-director, Center for Governance and Public Policy, Carleton University, Ottawa
- **Prof. Pejman Abdolmohammadi**, Professor, John Cabot University and Researcher at London School of Economics, London

GENERAL DISCUSSION

CONCLUDING REMARKS

- **H.E. Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah**, Head of the National Security Bureau, Kuwait City





The NDCF is a unique think-tank: international by design and based in Rome, due to its association with the NATO Defense College. Its added value lies in the objectives stated by its charter and in its international network.

The charter specifies that the NDCF works with the Member States of the Atlantic Alliance, its partners and the countries that have some form of co-operation with NATO. Through the Foundation the involvement of USA and Canada is more fluid than in other settings.

The Foundation was born five years ago and is rapidly expanding its highly specific and customer-tailored activities, achieving an increasingly higher profile, also through activities dedicated to decision makers and their staffs.

Since it is a body with considerable freedom of action, transnational reach and cultural openness, the Foundation is developing a wider scientific and events programme.

The Arab revolutions, together with the US-Iranian peace overtures and the developments regarding Turkey Syria, Iraq and Yemen, have changed in a significant way the strategic landscape of regional security even in countries where no political upheaval was experienced. In fact these events have shown the importance of pluralism and diversity in Arab societies and media and that political establishments need to take into account the contribution of different political orientations.

Revolutionary processes have quite ramified consequences that include also a number of still unfathomable or partially appraisable factors that need to be considered in order to synergize national and regional responses.

Therefore the conference was structured into four panels in two distinct and intertwining sets: one on soft strategic factors and one on hard security. The first panel takes a look at non-state actors and disintegration risks. The second tries to delineate different scenarios for the rise of viable politics within the Arab region, while the third wants to gauge the scope of sensible partnerships and co-operative security. The fourth panel concentrated its attention on the interaction between regional hegemonic aspirations and the reconciliation among external powers that are intervening.

The conference successfully offered added-value input in order to analyse the context of crucial new security developments in Arab countries which are directly relevant for the Alliance's fundamental security and also for NATO's programmes in the area. This approach was meant to be conducive to a better understanding of some key factors which are relevant also for an in depth assessment of NATO's potential in terms of outreach and concrete initiatives aimed at strengthening its co-operative security interaction with partners of the Region. There is indeed a necessity to overcome short-term political and diplomatic disarray with meaningful policies capable to guarantee the security and sovereignty of all countries of the area.

