



Arab geopolitics from turmoil towards balances, stability and regional order

ROME, 5th – 6th October 2017



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*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 NATO
Political Affairs and Security Policy Division*

ROME, 5th – 6th October 2017

Venue: Rome, Auditorium via Veneto, Via Vittorio Veneto, 89

The Agenda

THURSDAY, 5TH OCTOBER 2017

14,00-15,00 Arrival of participants - Registration

15,00 Welcome remarks

- **Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo,**
President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

Opening speech

- **Ahmad Aboul Gheit,**
Secretary-General of the Arab League, Cairo

SESSION 1

STATE DISINTEGRATION AND RE-INTEGRATION

The deep crisis affecting the regional political and strategic landscape makes even more necessary to act towards concrete solutions. The actual debate in the governments of the region tends to overlook the seriousness of medium and long-term implications of state disintegration and non-state actors disruptive power. Security partnerships would be also valuable, when disintegration and centrifugal forces continue to represent a threat to the state. Indeed, NATO is active in that direction. Post Isis is also a serious issue not yet addressed. The panel should analyze this complex state of affairs and suggest alternative strategies.

Chair: **Ahmad Masa'deh,**

former Secretary General, the Union for the Mediterranean, Amman

- **Abdulaziz Sager,**
Chairman, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah
- **Samir Rifai,**
Former Prime Minister and Vice-President of the Senate, Jordan
- **Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck,**
El Erian Fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut
- **Mahmoud Gebril,**
former Prime Minister, Tripoli

General Discussion

17,00-17,30 Coffee/Tea break

SESSION 2
SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS AND GAME CHANGERS.
THE ROLE OF ENERGY

The realities of conflict tend to obscure economic dynamics that underpin both stability and wars. Although some countries try to diversify their economy, seeking solutions for a more sustainable development, growth has visibly slowed in the area and illegal trafficking is one of the main causes of the economic output reduction. Economic growth could be too low to foster job creation, resulting in a non-bearable pressure on fiscal systems, welfare and refugee assistance.

Chair: **Marco Arcelli,**

Director of Development, EPH Energeticky a Prumislovny Holding,
Prague

- **Rabah Arezki,**
Senior Fellow, Harvard's Kennedy School, Cambridge
- **Oded Eran,**
Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv
- **Giacomo Luciani,**
Scientific Advisor, Master in International Energy, SciencesPo, Paris
- **Abdallah Al Dardari,**
Senior Advisor, Reconstruction for the Middle East and North Africa Region, World Bank, Washington D.C.

General Discussion

10,00-11,30

SESSION 3
**FOSTERING VIABLE POLITICS: FROM TURMOIL TO CO-OPERATIVE
SECURITY**

The Arab region is undergoing a fundamental upheaval that poses extremely serious problems to influent actors, both distant and near the theatre of operations. Syria, Iraq and Libya have both an international and a regional dimension, that applies also to other cases. It requires an important step towards “game changers”, as the crisis is revealing an underlying structural fragility. Cooperative security must be the goal. It is clear that some kind of stability and order needs to be established, at the same time it is necessary to assist successfully these countries in their post crisis efforts aimed at re-building their institutional structures. How to reconcile the present diverging policies? Is it possible to promote some kind of “concert among different national and international actors”? How to exit the present diverging policies? is it possible to promote some kind of “concert of nations”?

Chair: **Nabil Elaraby,**

former Secretary-General of the Arab League, Cairo

- ❑ **Mustafa Alani,**
Director, National Security and Terrorism Studies Department, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah
- ❑ **Mahmoud Karem,**
Professor British University and former Ambassador to NATO and the EU and Commissioner Human Rights Council, Cairo
- ❑ **Ebtesam Al Ketbi,**
President, Emirates Policy Center, Abu Dhabi
- ❑ **Nicola de Santis,**
Head, Middle East and North Africa Section, NATO Headquarters, Brussels

General Discussion

11,30-12,00 Coffee/Tea break

12,00-12,15

Special intervention

Mahboub Edmond Hashem,
Professor Mass Communication, American University of
Sharjah, United Arab Emirates



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SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Alessandro Minuto Rizzo

President of the NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

A strong focus on strategic outlook in complex issues. High level contacts and negotiations. Special attention on countries of strategic relevance i.e. the Gulf region. Frequent Public Diplomacy activities to discuss policies and open issues. He held the position of Deputy Secretary General of the Atlantic Alliance, between 2001 and 2007. His mandate was mostly carried out in the strategic- political-industrial area, in relations with sensitive countries such as those in the Gulf and the Southern Mediterranean. He is the author of the books: “The road to Kabul”, publisher Il Mulino-Arel (2009) and “A political journey without maps, diversity and future in the Greater Middle East”. (Rubbettino 2013).

Ahmed Aboul Gheit

Secretary-General of the Arab League, Cairo

H.E. Ahmed Aboul Gheit has been Secretary General of the League of Arab States since July 2016. From 2004 to 2011 he served as Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Egypt. Prior to this position, he was Permanent Representative of Egypt to the United Nations in New York (1999-2004). He started his diplomatic career as Third Secretary at the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Nicosia. Subsequently he was First Secretary for Egypt's Ambassador to the United Nations, Political Consultant at the Egyptian Embassy in the Soviet Union and Ambassador of Egypt to Italy. From 1996 to 1999 he took office as Assistant Foreign Minister and Chief of Cabinet of the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Ahmad Khalaf Masa'deh

Former Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean, Amman

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. Between 2006 and 2010, Dr 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. In January 2010, Ahmad Masa'deh was elected Secretary General of the Union for the Mediterranean. From 2000 to 2005 he was an Assistant Professor of International Business Law at the University of Jordan where he also held the position as Assistant Dean for Development.

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

Founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, Jeddah

Dr. Abdulaziz Bin Sager is chairman and founder of the Gulf Research Center. 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).

Samir Al-Rifa'i

Prime Minister and Vice-President of the Senate, Amman

Samir Al-Rifa'i is currently the Vice President of the Senate of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Before serving in the Senate, he held office as the 38th Prime Minister of Jordan (2009-2011). Prior to his appointment as Vice President of the Senate, he was the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee (2013-2015). H.E. Al-Rifa'i was the founding CEO of Jordan Dubai Capital (JDC), established in 2005. In the year 2000 he was appointed as advisor to His Majesty King Abdullah II and General Secretary of the Royal Hashemite Court. He therefore took office as Director of King Abdullah's Communications and Public Relations. In 2003, H.E. Al-Rifa'i was appointed Minister of the Royal Hashemite Court acting as principal coordinator between His Majesty the King and the Government.

Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck

El Erian Fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut

Dalia Ghanem-Yazbeck is an expert on political violence, Islamism, and the radicalisation process, with a focus on Jihadism. She focuses as well on Algeria. Dr. Ghanem-Yazbeck was a research assistant at the Center for Political Analysis and Regulation at the University of Versailles (France), and she also served as a teaching associate at Williams College (United States) prior to joining Carnegie. She has published on political and extremist violence, including on Islamism in Algeria, the Islamic State organisation and the participation of women in jihadi groups. She has been a regular commentator on such issues in different Arab and international print and audio-visual media.

Mahmoud Gebril,

Former Prime Minister of Libya

When the Libyan uprising began in February 2011, Mahmoud Gebril helped starting what is now known as the National Transitional Council (NTC). Mr. Gebril served as the interim prime minister of Libya during that time and also served as head of international affairs, playing a leading role in securing the recognition of the international community. Prior to the revolution, in 2007, he was appointed the security general of the National Planning Council in Libya. During that period, he also led the National Economic Development Board.

Marco Arcelli

Director of Development of EPH Energeticky a Prumislovy Holding, Prague

Marco Arcelli is currently the Director of Development at EPH Energeticky a Prumislovy Holding in Prague. He was previously Executive Director of Oil&Gas at Enel, overseeing investments in Algeria, Egypt and Russia. Previously, Head of Business Development, M&A and Operations Support in the International Division; General Director and Vice Chairman of Slovénské Elektrárne; President and CEO of Enel North America; Executive Assistant of the Enel Group CEO. He held several positions in project and construction management, dispute resolution, sales and business development for large infrastructure projects in energy, airports, transport systems. Dr Arcelli is also an

Advisory Board Member of King's College London's European Center for Energy Security.

Rabah Arezki

Senior Fellow at Harvard's Kennedy School, Cambridge

Mr. Arezki is a senior fellow at the John F. Kennedy School of Government. He was the Chief of the Commodities Unit in the Research Department at the International Monetary Fund. He is the author and co-author of numerous academic and non-academic publications. Mr. Arezki received his M.S. from the École Nationale de la Statistique et de l'Administration Economique in Paris, M.A. from the University of Paris-1 Pantheon-Sorbonne and Ph.D. in Economics from the European University Institute, Florence. He is also a non-resident fellow at the Brookings Institution, an external research associate at the University of Oxford, a resource person for the African Economic Research Consortium, and a research fellow at the Economic Research Forum.

Oded Eran

Senior Researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv

Mr. Eran is Currently Researcher at the Institute for National Security Studies and previously its Director (2008-2011). From 2002 to 2007 he was appointed as Israeli Ambassador to the European Union and NATO. Prior to this prestigious position, he held the office of Head of Israel's Team of Negotiations with the Palestinians (1999-2000). He therefore served as Israel's Ambassador to Jordan (1997-2000), Deputy Director- General, Ministry of Israeli Foreign Affairs (1992-1997), Deputy Chief of Mission at the Israeli Embassy in Washington (1986-1990) and Secretary General for the Knesset Committee on Defense and Foreign Affairs.

Giacomo Luciani

Advisor, Master in International Energy, Sciences Po, Paris

In addition to his role as adjunct professor, Giacomo Luciani is co-director of the Executive Master in Oil and Gas Leadership at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. He is also Scientific Director of the Master in International Energy of the Paris School of International Affairs at Sciences Po and a Princeton University Global Scholar. Professor Luciani is therefore Senior Advisor to the Gulf Research Center and from 2007 to 2010 he was the Director of the Gulf Research Center Foundation in Geneva. In 1997-2010, he was Adjunct Professor of International Relations at the SAIS Johns Hopkins University -Bologna Centre. From 2000-06, he was Professor of Political Economy and co-director of

the Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute.

Abdallah Al Dardari

Senior Advisor on Reconstruction for the Middle East and North Africa Region at the World Bank, Washington D.C.

Dr. Abdallah Al Dardari, Senior Advisor on Reconstruction, Office of the Vice President, Middle East and North Africa Region in The World Bank since February 2017. In 2011 he joined the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) as Chief Economist and Director of the Economic Development and Globalization Division while, in 2014 he assumed the role of the organization's Deputy Executive Secretary. Dr. Al Dardari also served as Syria's Deputy Prime Minister for Economic Affairs from 2005 to 2011.

Nabil Elaraby

Former Secretary-General of the Arab League, Cairo

Dr. Nabil Elaraby is currently Chairman of the Board of Trustees at the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration. From 2011 to 2016 he served as Secretary General of the League of Arab States and prior to this position, he was appointed Egyptian Minister of Foreign Affairs in (2011). Dr Elaraby served moreover as director of the Cairo Regional Centre for International Commercial Arbitration and as Judge at the International Court of Justice (2001-2006). Among his prestigious roles, he was appointed as the Permanent Representative to the UN in New York from (1991-1999); member of the International Law Commission of the United Nations from (1994-2001); President of the Security Council in 1996; the Permanent Representative to the UN Office at Geneva from (1987-1991); Legal Adviser and Director in the Legal and Treaties Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs from (1983-1987); Ambassador to India (1981-1983).

Mustafa Alani

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

Mustafa Alani is Senior Advisor and the Director of the National Security and Terrorism Studies Department at the Gulf Research Center (GRC). Before assuming his position, Dr Alani worked as Consultant on Middle East Security and Fellow at the Middle East Security Programme, Royal United Services Institute for Defence and Security Studies (RUSI), Whitehall, London. Educated at the Department of Politics, University of Baghdad and later at the Department of

International Relations at Keele University. He received his doctorate from the University of Exeter in England. Frequent lecturer in the fields of political and security developments in the Middle East region in general, with special focus on the Gulf states security and political developments (the GCC , Iraq , Yemen, and Iran).

Mahmoud Karem

Professor at the British University and former Ambassador to NATO and the EU and Commissioner Human Rights Council, Cairo

Dr. Karem currently teaches at the British University in Egypt. He also holds the title of Special advisor to the President of the University for International Relations and heads its Egypt and Middle East Centre (CEMES). He 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 therefore member of the Advisory Board of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Disarmament Matters. From 2010 to 2012 he was nominated for three consecutive times to the post of Secretary General of the Egyptian National Council for Human Rights (NCHR). In July 2017 the Foreign Minister of Japan announced the establishment for group of eminent persons for substantive advancement of Nuclear disarmament, Ambassador Karem was chosen from the Middle East.

Ebtesam Al-Ketbi

President of the Emirates Policy Center, Abu Dhabi

She is the founder and president of the Emirates Policy Center and the first Arab woman to lead a think tank. She is also professor of Political Science at UAE University and a member of Consultative Body of GCC Council. Dr Al-Ketbi served as a Secretary General of Gulf Development Forum and Board member of Association of Political Sciences. She served as a member of Consultative committee of the UAE Center for Strategic Studies, and Member of core team of Arabic Human Development Report 2006. She is a founding member of the Emirates Human Rights Association.

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. In this capacity he is responsible for developing and promoting NATO policy, political relations, individual practical cooperation programs and better public understanding with Middle Eastern and North African countries, especially those participating in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). He also ensures coordination with all other Divisions of NATO's International Staff, International Military Staff and relevant NATO Military Authorities for all aspects of NATO's cooperation with countries in the Middle East and in North Africa. Prior to that, he was the Head of the MD and ICI Countries Section in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division.

Mahboub Edmond Hashem

Professor of Mass Communication, American University of Sharjah, United Arab Emirates

Mahboub E. Hashem is a professor of communication at the American University of Sharjah (AUS). He was also the Founder and Executive Editor of the Global Media Journal-Arabian Edition. Prior to that, he chaired the Department of English, Mass Communication, and Translation at the same university. Dr Hashem also served as Vice President and President of the Kansas Speech Communication Association, Chair of Administrative Affairs of the College of Communication and Documentation at the Lebanese University, and Chair to numerous committees and programs at international, national, regional, and local conventions. In addition, he served on the GMJ Advisory Board and took office as a Director of Graduate Studies of the Department of Communication at Fort Hays State University in Kansas, USA.



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BACKGROUND POLICY PAPER

After the turmoil of the post-Arab spring period and the swift rise and rapid fall of the so-called Islamic State, a new order is in the making in the Middle East. This new era is characterized by two main factors: the decline of the political Islam in the region, following its unsuccessful record in power; and a return to the authoritarian rule, which in some cases reversed the gains of the revolutionary period.

However, many “question marks” remain with respect to the final outcome of this long transition, looking at mutable power relations and quick inter-states realignments. Syria is politically crumbled among regional spheres of influence; confrontational politics shakes the Gulf and Maghreb is still suffering from the persisting instability in its peripheries. The old, consolidated Middle Eastern order collapsed, paving the way for sovereignty erosion, the primacy of micro-identities and the rise of non-state actors. Uncertainty is going to last at a regional level, since *metamorphosis* is still ongoing and will likely become the essence of the new order. This triggers demanding challenges for NATO.

Regional trends are clear. The *crisis of the Arab state* constantly erodes states legitimacy, challenged not only by sub/trans-national actors, but also weakened by persisting states’ ineffectiveness. Intra-regional struggles foster *polarization and*

sectarianism: identity politics has systemically become a tool of power politics. *Transnational loyalties* (based on ethnicity, religion, language and tribe) and *threats* (insurgencies and jihadi terrorism) grow as states weaken, leaving room for informal actors and alternative security providers' proliferation. Patron-client relations are now able to spin regional events on a transnational basis.

In this framework, the role of energy and the nature of security undergo a deep transformation. The regional turmoil was also exacerbated by the *economic crisis* resulting from the oil slump, so displaying the frailty of rentier states' social pacts. Policies of economic diversification can't be paused or delayed, but they require a conducive environment to attract foreign investments. The inability to reverse the downward trend in oil prices revealed how much OPEC has lost the pivotal and regulatory role in the oil market.

Security has no more the meaning it used to have a decade ago. On the other hand, the *regionalization of security* is a rising dynamic: Middle Eastern powers enhance efforts to exert/impose their own security agenda on neighboring territories, so fuelling counter-alignments, arms race and intra-regional conflict. In such a volatile context, Arab states shift towards a *patchwork security* pattern: not only the fragmentation of many states favors locally-based security agreements and not overall, national frameworks, but competing security providers also multiply on the territory, as cases of coexistence/cooperation between armies and armed non-state actors (as occurs in Lebanon, Iraq and Yemen).

While regional alignments and alliances are still in the making, NATO can't wait for the creation of well-defined balances of power. It must cope with Middle Eastern *metamorphosis* now, building security partnerships in the Arab world as the only way

to increase shared resilience, especially in the security field (with a special eye on Arab armies' current transformation).

Eleonora Ardemagni – NDCF Senior Advisor

Analyst of the Middle East, focused on foreign policy and security issues of Yemen and the GCC region. External researcher (Mediterranean and Middle East Program) at the Italian Institute for International Political Studies and regular contributor for the Aspen Institute Italy.

Umberto Profazio – NDCF Senior Advisor

Holds a PhD in History of International Relations from the University of Rome Sapienza. 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 the United Kingdom.



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CONCEPT

Non-state actors have significantly increased the risk of disintegration of countries in the Arab region, while regional hegemonic competitions complicate an already volatile situation. In this difficult context there is a clear need to understand how internal and external powers interests can be reconciled.

How to find a way ahead towards balances, some kind of regional order and increased stability. Security partnerships would be also valuable, when disintegration and centrifugal forces continue to represent a threat. Indeed, NATO is active in that direction. Post Isis is also a serious issue not yet addressed.

In addition, the realities of conflict tend to obscure economic dynamics that underpin both stability and wars. Although some countries try to diversify their economy, seeking solutions for a more sustainable development, growth has visibly slowed in the area and illegal trafficking is one of the main causes of the economic output reduction.

Economic growth could be too low to foster job creation, resulting in a non-bearable pressure on fiscal systems, welfare and refugee assistance.

The conference aims at a high-quality added-value interaction; contributing to an in depth analysis and also to draw a sense of direction for security providers.

The NATO Foundation

The NATO Defense College Foundation was established in 2011. It grew out from a common intuition of the President Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo and the NATO Defense College top decision makers who understood the value of a non-profit NGO that could work beyond usual and institutional outreach, training, communication and scientific research activities.

While the tradition of stability and well-being is embodied by the principles of the Washington charter, the triple upheavals of the fall of the Soviet Union, the global economic crisis and the Arab Revolutions required a more focussed, agile and innovative approach.

Therefore the NDCF strives at considering relevant issues not just in a descriptive or prescriptive way, but by catching the sense of events and the essential vectors of future developments. In a word: Charting ahead.

Contacts:

web: www.natofoundation.org

email: info@natofoundation.org

twitter: @NATOFoundation

facebook: NATO College Foundation

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Partners



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Notes