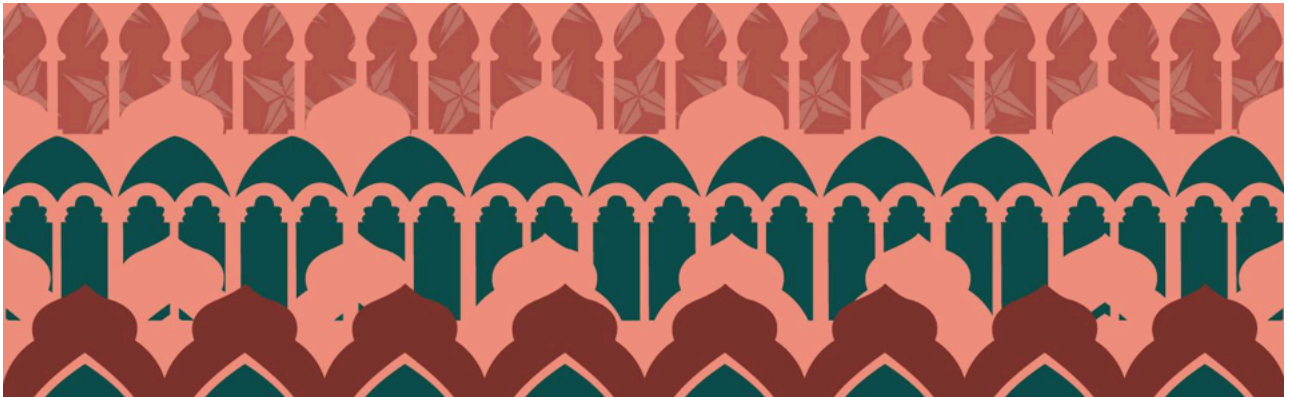




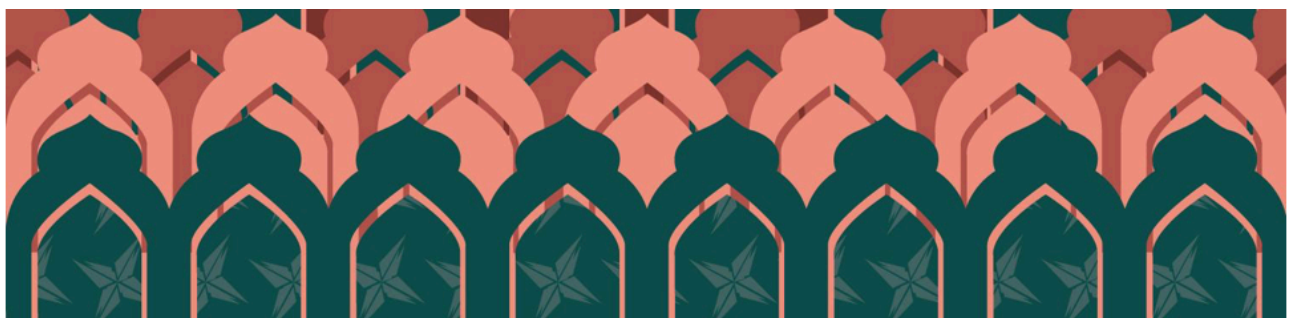
NATO Foundation  
*Defense College*



# ARAB GEOPOLITICS AFTER THE CALIPHATE

*How to exit the fragmentation trap*

Rome, the 9th of October 2019

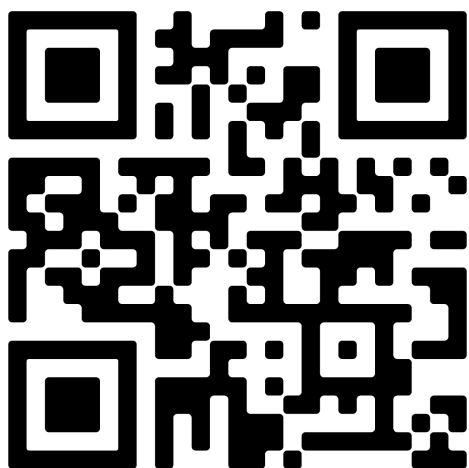


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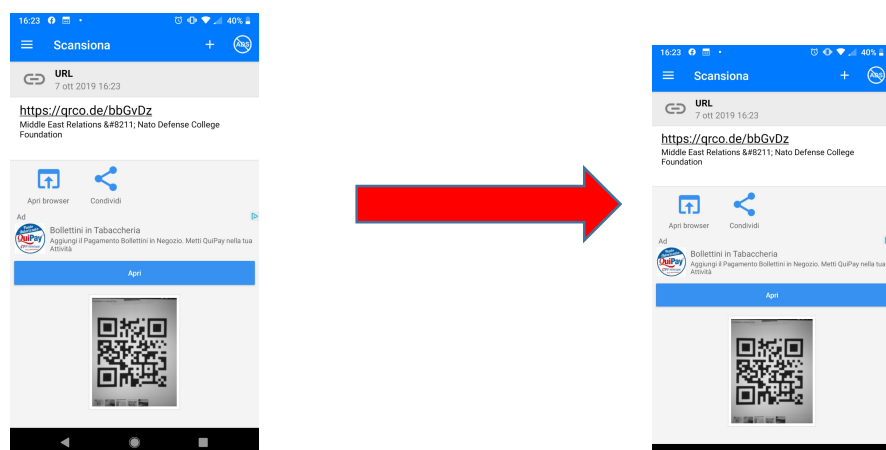


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# ARAB GEOPOLITICS AFTER THE CALIPHATE

## *How to exit the fragmentation trap*

*High-Level Conference*

*Organised by the NATO Defense College Foundation*  
*In co-operation with the NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division*  
*and the NATO Defense College*

**Rome, the 9th of October 2019**

**Venue:** *Luiss - Aula Magna Mario Arcelli, Viale Pola 12, Rome*

13,15 – 14,00 Arrival of participants – Registration

14,00 Welcome Remarks

- ◇ **Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo**, President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome
- ◇ **David Pincet**, Head, Academic Operations Division, NATO Defense College, Rome
- ◇ **Maria Elena Cavallaro**, Associate Professor, History of International Relations, Luiss Guido Carli, Rome

*Opening Remarks*

**Mahmoud Gebril**, Former Prime Minister of Libya

14,30 – 15,45

## Session I REBUILDING THE ARAB REGION

*The ongoing turmoil has deeply shaped regional and global geopolitics, leaving a slew of internecine wars, inter-sectarian tensions and harsh inter-state rivalries. The ensuing fragmentation has favoured corruption, organised crime, illegal trafficking and terrorism. How can external actors and the international community (including the UN, NATO and the EU) provide useful platforms allowing the region to escape long-term fragmentation? How can the overarching interests of global and regional actors be channeled into the reconstruction efforts?*

Chair: **Mayssoun Azzam**, News Presenter, Al Arabiya Channel, Dubai

- ◇ **Nicola de Santis**, Head, Engagements Section, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO Headquarters, Brussels
- ◇ **Ahmad Masa'deh**, Former Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean, Amman
- ◇ **Mohanad Hage Ali**, Director of Communications and Fellow, Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut
- ◇ **Ian Lesser**, Vice President; Executive Director, Transatlantic Center, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels

Q&A

15,45 – 16,15 Coffee/Tea Break

16,15 – 17,30

## Session II SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS AND GAME CHANGERS. THE ROLE OF ENERGY

*Local producers and consumers are engaged into a race against time towards diversified economies, sustainable energy mixes and sensible water management. Together with the reconstruction, these needs can be the foundation to underpin a regional confidence dynamic. The discussion will consider energy: from rivalry leverage to lynchpin of stability.*

Chair: **Karim El Aynaoui**, President, Policy Center for the New South, Rabat

- ◇ **Jamal Mohamed Fakhro**, Managing Partner, KPMG, Manama
- ◇ **Abdulaziz Sager**, Chairman and Founder, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah
- ◇ **Adnan Z. Amin**, Director-General Emeritus, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi
- ◇ **Matteo Codazzi**, Chief Executive Officer, Centro Elettrotecnico Sperimentale Italiano, Milan

Q&A

17,30 – 18,45

### Session III MAGHREB AND SAHEL: SHAPING THE STRATEGIC DEPTH

*Today Maghreb has acquired a new strategic security depth in the Sahara sand sea across the Sahel region. It has become an essential contributor to international security. The region lies between the Mediterranean, open to commerce, energy and financial flows, and the desert which is increasingly insecure due to organised crime, smuggling, terrorism and illegal migrations.*

Chair: **Hafida Benchehida**, Former Senator of the Parliament of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Algiers

- ◇ **Mahmoud Karem**, Professor, British University; former Ambassador to NATO and the EU, and Commissioner, Human Rights Council, Cairo
- ◇ **Youssef Cherif**, Deputy Director, Columbia Global Centers, Tunis
- ◇ **Giovanni Romani**, Head, Middle East and North Africa Section, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, NATO Headquarters, Brussels

Q&A

18,45 – 19,00

### Concluding Remarks

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

END OF THE WORKING DAY

*Special Thanks to Philip Morris International*

*We are grateful for the support of NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division*

*With the kind participation of CESI Spa*

**#WEARENATO**



## ARAB GEOPOLITICS AFTER THE CALIPHATE

### *How to exit the fragmentation trap*

#### Speakers Biographies

##### WELCOME REMARKS

##### **Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo**

*President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome*

He started his diplomatic career in 1969 at the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, within the Directorate of Cultural Affairs. After having served at the Italian Embassy in Washington, D.C. and as Commercial Counsellor at the Embassy of Italy in Prague, Amb. Minuto-Rizzo worked as Head of the External Relations Office of the CEE from 1981 to 1986. In the next years, his career focused on Europe and Space Policy. In 1997 he was appointed Diplomatic Counsellor of the Minister of Defence Nino Andreatta, then of his successors Carlo Scognamiglio and Sergio Mattarella. In 2000, Minuto-Rizzo held the position of Italian Ambassador to the Western European Union and to the Political and Security Committee of the EU, of which he was among the founding members. He was 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); "A political journey without maps, diversity and future in the Greater Middle East". (Rubbettino 2013), and "NATO and the Middle East: The Making of a Partnership" (New Academia Publishing, 2018).

##### **David Pincet**

*Head, Academic Operations Division, NATO Defense College, Rome*

Brigadier General David Pincet joined the France Air Force Academy in September 1982. As a pilot, he had many operational tours in Chad, Saudi Arabia and Turkey for Northern Iraq / Kurdish surveillance. Among his numerous missions and commands, Lt.Col. Pincet was appointed in 2002 Deputy Commander of the Multi-National Movement Coordination Center to coordinate the deployment of ISAF1 in Kabul. From June to October 2006, he was the DCOS OPS of the EUFOR RD Congo mission in Kinshasa where he played a key role in the preparation and establishment of the Force. Since July 2017 he is the Director of the Academic Operations (DAO) Division at NATO Defense College in Rome, Italy. The DAO has direct responsibility for

the Faculty Advisors Group, the Academic Programmes Branch, the Academic Field Studies Branch, and the Linguistic Services Section.

**Maria Elena Cavallaro**

*Associate Professor, History of International Relations, Luiss Guido Carli, Rome*

Maria Elena Cavallaro received in 2005 a PhD at the University of Bologna in Comparative Political History of the 19th and 20th centuries, with a thesis entitled: The role of European integration in Spain from Francoism to democratic transition (1950-1979). In 2005 she obtained a research grant at the IMT Alti Studi of Lucca with the project The European revival after the failure of the Ced (1954-1957). Since the 2006/07 academic year, she has been involved in a collective research project on the role of leadership in the 1980s, with a study on the role of political leadership in the 1980s in southern Europe. In the academic years 2007/08 and 2008/09 he is a lecturer in History of European Political Systems at the Faculty of Political Science of Luiss Guido Carli, Rome. She teaches History of European Integration for the Master in Parliamentary Disciplines of the Luiss Guido Carli.

**OPENING REMARKS**

**Mahmoud Gebril**

*Former Prime Minister of the State of Libya*

When the Libyan uprising began in February 2011, Mahmoud Gebril helped starting what is now known as the National Transitional Council (NTC). He served as Prime Minister of Libya ad interim and at the same time 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 Secretary of the National Planning Council in Libya. During that period, he also led the National Economic Development Board.

**SESSION I**

**Mayssoun Azzam**

*News Presenter, Al Arabiya Channel, Dubai*

Working as a news anchor, interviewer and lecturer with the Dubai-based Al-Arabiya news channel, Ms Azzam is one of the most prominent media figures in the Arabic world. She interviewed high-profile guests, such as Mahmoud Abbas, Bill Gates, Tony Blair, and Salam Fayyad. She taught at the Mohammed Bin Rashid School for Communication, at the American University of Dubai. Currently, Mayssoun Azzam has oriented her work on humanitarian issues. She is the main anchor of a successful special one-hour daily news bulletin that focuses on refugees, women and children living conditions in war-torn areas. Ms Azzam participated in many conferences as a moderator and wrote a number of political and social articles that have been published on Al Arabiya.net website.

**Nicola de Santis**

*Head, Engagements Section, Public Diplomacy Division, NATO Headquarters, Brussels*

Nicola de Santis was the former Head of Middle East and North Africa Section in the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division at the NATO Headquarters in Brussels. In this capacity, he was responsible for developing and promoting NATO policy, political relations, individual practical cooperation programs and better public understanding in Middle Eastern and North African countries - especially those participating in NATO's Mediterranean Dialogue (MD) and in the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI). He also ensured the coordination with all the other Divisions of NATO's International Staff, International Military Staff and relevant NATO Military Authorities for all aspects of the Alliance 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 within the Political Affairs and Security Policy Division.

**Ahmad Masa'deh**

*Former Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean, Amman*

He served as Minister, ambassador and chief of an international organisation. 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 at 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 Assistant Professor of International Business Law at the University of Jordan where he also held the position of Assistant Dean for Development.

**Mohanad Hage Ali**

*Director of Communications and Fellow, Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut*

Mohanad Hage Ali is an academic, political journalist and journalism trainer. He has a PhD and Msc in Comparative Politics from the London School of Economics and Political Science. He is currently the Director of Communications and Fellow at the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut. He was a managing editor of NOW Arabic website, and a political editor/reporter at al-Hayat newspaper in Beirut and London, where his work focused mostly on Iraq and militant Islam. He also worked as a freelance journalist for news outlets such as the Guardian, the Washington Post, CNN and NBC. He teaches politics and journalism at the American University of Beirut.

**Ian Lesser**

*Vice President, Executive Director, Transatlantic Center, the German Marshall Fund of the United States, Brussels*

Ian Lesser is Vice President at The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) and a member of GMF's executive team, managing programs across the organisation. He also serves as Executive director of the



Transatlantic Center, the Brussels office of GMF, and leads the GMF's work on the Mediterranean, Turkey, and the wider Atlantic. Prior to joining GMF, Dr Lesser was a public policy scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, as well as vice President and Director of studies at the Pacific Council on International Policy. He spent over a decade as a senior analyst and research manager for RAND Corporation. From 1994 to 1995, he was a member of the Secretary's Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. Department of State, responsible for Turkey, Southern Europe, North Africa, and the multilateral track of the Middle East peace process. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Institute for Strategic Studies, and the Pacific Council on International Policy. He serves on the advisory boards of the Delphi Economic Forum, the Atlantic Dialogues, the NATO Defense College Foundation, and Turkish Policy Quarterly.

## SESSION II

### **Karim El Aynaoui**

*President, Policy Center for the New South, Rabat*

He is President of the Policy Center for the New South and Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences of the Mohammed VI Polytechnic University. He also serves as advisor to the CEO and Chairman of the OCP Group. From 2005 to 2012, he worked at the Central Bank of Morocco, as Director of Economics and International Relations. Prior to this, he served as an economist at the World Bank. He is a board member of the OCP Foundation, a global member of the Trilateral Commission, and member of IFRI Strategic Advisory, the Malabo Montpellier Panel and the Scientific Council of the Moroccan Capital Market Authority. He holds a PhD in Economics from the University of Bordeaux.

### **Jamal Mohamed Fakhro**

*Managing Partner, KPMG, Manama*

Jamal Mohamed Al-Fakhro is a veteran Bahraini legislator, business advisor and a member of Shura Council, the Bahraini upper house of parliament. He is the Managing Partner of KPMG (one of the Global Big 4 professional services firms) in Bahrain. Mr. Fakhro was the first Arab ever to be appointed as a member of the KPMG Global Board and Global Council. He was Chairman of KPMG Middle East and South Asia (MESA) Board, and member of KPMG Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMA) Regional Board till October 2014. Having served as Managing Partner since 1987, he has an extensive experience in the field of Audit, Tax and Advisory services in the region, especially for government sector, banking, oil and gas industry, and financial services companies. His key areas of expertise include financial services strategic planning and investments, GCC and emerging markets insights, corporate governance and family governance.

**Abdulaziz Sager**

*Chairman and Founder, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah*

A Saudi expert on Gulf politics and strategic issues, Dr Abdulaziz Sager is the founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center (GRC), a global think tank based in Jeddah with a well-established worldwide network of partners and offices in both the Gulf region and Europe. Dr Sager frequently contributes as a commentator on major international media channels such as Al Arabiya, France 24 and BBC. Dr. Sager holds a Ph.D in Politics and International Relations from Lancaster University, a MA from the University of Kent, United Kingdom, and a BA from the Faculty of Economics and Administration of King Abdulaziz University. 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), Energy Shapes new Gulf Security Architecture, Journal of Middle Eastern Geopolitics (2006).

**Adnan Z. Amin**

*Director-General Emeritus, International Renewable Energy Agency, Abu Dhabi*

Adnan Z. Amin is a Kenyan diplomat and economist with a specialisation in sustainable development. He served as the first Director-General of the Abu Dhabi-based intergovernmental organisation, the International Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA). Prior to his appointment, he worked in a variety of senior positions within the United Nations system in areas relating to renewable energy, sustainable development and environmental policy. He served as the Director of the New York Office of United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Special Representative of UNEP Executive Director. Shortly after the end of his mandate as Director-General of IRENA in April 2019, Amin became a Distinguished Fellow at the Atlantic Council in Washington, D.C. and Honorary Professor of Practice at the University of Sussex.

**Matteo Codazzi**

*Chief Executive Officer, Centro Elettrotecnico Sperimentale Italiano, Milan*

Matteo Codazzi has been appointed CEO of CESI in May 2009. CESI is a world-leading consulting and engineering company in the field of technology and innovation for the electric power sector with more than 60 years of experience. Prior to this, Mr. Codazzi served as CEO and Country Manager of Enel in Romania. After joining Enel, in 1999, Mr. Codazzi held several positions within the group, including Senior Executive Vice President of the Italian Electricity Market Business and Chief Financial Officer of the Market division. Mr Codazzi graduated with honors from the LUISS Guido Carli University in Rome with a Msc in Economics and Business. He completed the Senior Executive Advanced Management Program at the Columbia Business School.

### SESSION III

#### **Hafida Benchehida**

*Former Senator of the Parliament of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria, Algiers*

Hafida Benchehida is a former Senator of the Algerian Parliament and served in the Foreign Affairs Committee. Throughout her career as an international interpreter and consultant for international seminars, she has attended major regional summits and workshops. She is part of the Network of Mediterranean Women Mediators, a founding member of the Arab Women Parliamentarians group and a member of the International Civil Action Network (ICAN) against violent extremism.

#### **Mahmoud Karem**

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

Ambassador 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 leads the Egypt and Middle East Centre (CEMES). He served as 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 also a 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 of a group of eminent persons for substantive advancement in Nuclear disarmament: Ambassador Karem was chosen from the Middle East. This group held its fifth meeting in July 2019.

#### **Youssef Cherif**

*Deputy Director, Columbia Global Centers, Tunis*

Youssef Cherif is a political analyst who specialises in North African affairs. He is member of Carnegie's Civic Research Network and is contributing to a number of think tanks. He was previously Al-Maidan Libya Project Manager at the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), and an expert affiliated to the Tunisian Institute for Strategic Studies (ITES). He consulted for the Arab Institute for Business Managers (IACE), the UN, The Carter Center in Tunisia, etc. Cherif holds a Chevening Master of Arts in International Relations from the Department of War Studies of King's College London, and a Fulbright Master of Arts in Classical Studies from Columbia University, where he first came as a Visiting Scholar. He comments and writes regularly for several media outlets, including Al Jazeera English, France 24, BBC, Fanack and think tanks such as DGAP, IEMed and the Atlantic Council.

**Giovanni Romani**

*Head, Middle East and North Africa Section, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, NATO Headquarters, Brussels*

Giovanni Romani is a former Italian navy officer. He has been on active duty from 1985 to 2006. He served as combat operations, electronic warfare and intelligence officer on several Italian and US ships, also taking part in the “Sharp Guard” and “Sharp Fence” operations in the Former Republic of Yugoslavia. In March 2006, he was appointed Head of the Naval Armament Unit at NATO. From April 2012 to December 2017, he led the Land and Maritime Capabilities Section within the NATO Defence Investment Division. He is currently Head of NATO Middle East and North Africa Section.

**CONCLUDING REMARKS****Ahmed Aboul Gheit**

*Secretary-General of the Arab League, Cairo*

Ahmed Aboul Gheit was appointed in July 2016 Secretary General of the Arab League. 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.



## ARAB GEOPOLITICS AFTER THE CALIPHATE

### *How to exit the fragmentation trap*

#### **Background Policy Paper**

Two years after the fall of the Caliphate the Arab world has still been unable to express a stable regional order built upon the material and political/moral ruins left. The end of the territorial dimension of the Islamic State (also known as ISIS or ISIL) could have represented a turning point to re-discuss and re-arrange a new concert of powers in the region. On the other hand, a distorted paradigm of the civilian-military relationship, the role of external actors and the rise of asymmetrical threats are all factors fuelling a new cycle of fragmentation that is threatening the stability of the region once again.

The end of the Caliphate has led to the de-structuration of ISIS, which is rolling back from a transnational phenomenon towards a local threat, in which each national or regional wilaya (province) enjoys a high degree of independence from the weakened core. A consequence of ISIS' territorial regression has also been the re-emergence of the main paradox of the post-2013 Arab world: the illusory trade-off between security and democracy (once again), reflected in the uneasy relation between civilian authorities and the military. At the beginning of 2019 this distorted perception has been shattered by the start of the protest movement in Algeria that highlighted the return of social and political grievances that were muted after the beginning of the post-Arab Spring era. Protests in Algeria and Sudan (and the most recent demonstrations in Egypt) are extending North Africa's grey zone of instability, where the face-off between the protesters and the military will be crucial to redefine a new balance of power, test the resilience of the regimes and eventually address the demands of the populations.

In the meanwhile, intractable conflicts continue to represent a source of instability. In Libya General Khalifa Haftar's offensive on Tripoli resulted in a deadly stalemate in which meddling powers with different agendas doubled down their efforts to support their proxies. The active role of Turkey is an example of how low and medium-intensity conflicts are allowing non-Arab powers to extend their influence. The Levant has not been spared also, experiencing the geopolitical resurgence of the Iranian-Shiite alliances. The fostering of sectarian identity politics in combination with the re-establishment of territorial rule, indicate a momentum for continuity of the current Syrian state order, at least in the medium term.

Within this highly polarised geopolitical context, fragile states lacking legitimacy and faced with socio-economic and demographic pressures, will continue to exploit the 'sectarianisation' of regional politics to pursue national interests beyond national borders.

This strategy uses sectarian norms to empower non-state actors as proxies, but combining them also with sovereignty norms to enhance state institutions. For the international community and NATO, grasping and disarticulating the ambiguity of this hybrid strategy is pivotal to play a constructive role for regional security and stability.

At the backdrop of this fragmented environment, the discovery of energy resources in the Eastern Mediterranean introduces a new dynamic to regional maritime energy security. The discovery of energy reserves bears the potential to trigger partial regional economic integration, yet underlying ideological and political animosities risk to turn this window of opportunity again into a scene for hegemonic regional rivalry. Within this framework, multiple smaller multilateral alliances with conflicting interests are emerging. The strategic refocus of the great powers on the region adds another layer to the already complex security environment. Concomitantly, the Eastern Mediterranean evolves to become the centre of gravity of the heightened US-Iranian confrontation in the Middle East.

The protection of energy resources and critical infrastructures are also crucial in the Persian Gulf, where the rise of asymmetric and non-conventional aerial and maritime warfare is concerning. In this region, much will depend on the current confrontation between Iran and the petro-monarchies, supported by external actors whose unpredictable choices could push the Gulf on the brink of a full-fledged conflict.

At the same time, the risk of an unmanageable loose-loose scenario can still offer unexpected de-escalation measures for mitigating the crisis and build pragmatic initiatives in subjects of shared interest.

The Saudi-Iranian rivalry has also destabilising effects in Iraq and Yemen, where local agencies must be supported by international stakeholders, in order to break, or more realistically downplay, the local-foreign connection that multiplies disorder.

Beyond the antagonism between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the Gulf security is undermined by the intra Gulf Cooperation Council's rifts, highlighted also by the latest developments in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, personal and political fissures have been triggering unprecedented nationalist bursts, especially among the youth, thus undermining common threats perception and the value of the Arab Gulf states shared identity.

International organisations can play a more incisive role in helping Arab states avoid the multiple fragmentation traps. NATO in particular can offer support to address the asymmetric and non-conventional threats, also through the selected inclusion of hybrid actors in a comprehensive state-rebuilding frame, featuring institutional decentralisation, rent re-distribution and Security Sector Reform (SSR). More in general, NATO's expertise in SSR and capacity-building can be crucial in most conflict-ridden countries, allowing the central state to gradually restore its monopoly of the use of force, thus exercising a positive influence in the long term.

**Eleonora Ardemagni**, *NDCF Gulf Analyst*

**Nuray Atmaca**, *NDCF Levant & Eastern Mediterranean Analyst*

**Umberto Profazio**, *NDCF Maghreb Analyst* (Scientific Coordinator)



## ARAB GEOPOLITICS AFTER THE CALIPHATE

### *How to exit the fragmentation trap*

#### CONCEPT

The territorial defeat of the Caliphate has ended a major subversive factor in the Arab region, but the geopolitics of the area is still largely affected by internal and international fragmentation. The political turmoil in turn favours the further entrenchment of a grey zone of instability across the Mediterranean, the Sahel, the Levant and the Gulf, where the flow of arms, drugs, smuggled wares and migrants fuels multiple low and medium intensity internal conflicts often characterised by proxy interference.

Syria is still at the epicentre of strong regional divisions and competitions. Libya, the other on-going civil war, is in an even worse predicament. The security repercussions are direct on Egypt and Tunisia, indirect on the whole Maghreb and Sahel and felt also on the northern side of the Mediterranean.

Yemen appears to be forgotten, but it is a festering conflict destabilising at the same time the Arabian Peninsula and the Horn of Africa, due to the risks posed to the freedom of navigation through the Bab el-Mandeb choke point, and the circulation of terrorist fighters and traffickers in the area. Energy security looms persistently as a crucial issue for the area and its global customers.

All these and other issues will be discussed in-depth through the three sessions of the conference.

The first session will address the geopolitical turmoil affecting the region with the aim to define the role of external actors and the engagement of the international community to help the region exit its fragmentation. The second one will focus on energy as a key element of the economy towards the achievement of regional reconstruction and sustainable development. The third session will explore the new security environment in the Maghreb and in the Sahel, increasingly insecure due to organised crime, smuggling, terrorism and illegal migrations.



## THE NATO FOUNDATION

The NATO Defense College Foundation, the only existing think-tank bearing the name of the Alliance, was established in Rome 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.

The principles stated in the preamble to the Washington Treaty of 1949 are our heritage.

Our mission is to promote the culture of stability and well-being in the North Atlantic area and in NATO partner nations.

Our aim is to meet the highest standards in contributing to public debate and future deliberations on strategic, security and geopolitical issues.

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](http://www.natofoundation.org)

Email: [info@natofoundation.org](mailto:info@natofoundation.org)

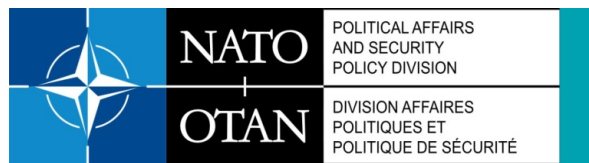
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*Special Thanks to Philip Morris International*

## NOTES

## NOTES

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