



NATO Foundation
Defense College

ARAB GEOPOLITICS AFTER THE CALIPHATE

**HOW TO EXIT
THE FRAGMENTATION TRAP**

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**ARAB GEOPOLITICS
AFTER THE CALIPHATE**

How to exit the fragmentation trap

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HOW TO EXIT
THE FRAGMENTATION TRAP

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INDEX

Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo

Foreword 9

David Pincet

Welcome Remarks 11

Fabio Massimo Castaldo

Welcome Remarks 13

Mahmoud Gebril

Opening Remarks 17

Alessandro Politi

Political Summary 23

Eleonora Ardemagni, Nuray Atmaca, Umberto Profazio

Background Policy Paper 25

Session I

REBUILDING THE ARAB REGION

Nicola de Santis

Regional instability what to do? 33

Ahmad Masa'deh

Ending fragmentation is a matter of the international community
and Arabs together 37

Mohanad Hage Ali

External actors and the challenges of failing states and non-state armed actors 39

Ian Lesser

USA: from a reluctant leadership to a dismissive one? 41

Session II

**SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS AND GAME CHANGERS.
THE ROLE OF ENERGY**

Jamal Mohamed Fakhro

Regional economies and the fight for diversification 47

Adnan Z. Amin

Is the Arab region prepared for energy transition? 49

Abdulaziz Sager

The energy linchpin: the rush for reforms and the brake of rivalry 51

Matteo Codazzi

The Arab unity starts from the electric grids 53

Session III

MAGHREB AND SAHEL: SHAPING THE STRATEGIC DEPTH

Mahmoud Karem

What role for Egypt? And what type of stabilisation for the area? 61

Youssef Cherif

Authoritarian Regimes and Fragmented Powers: Post IS Political Models 65

Giovanni Romani

The challenges of the Maghreb-Sahel area and the policies of NATO
and its partners: the way ahead 69

Ahmed Aboul Gheit

Concluding Remarks 71

Speakers' biographies 75

Programme 84



ALESSANDRO MINUTO-RIZZO

President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

FOREWORD

Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is a pleasure to welcome you to this conference dedicated to the Arab Region. Welcome to everybody, to those who have traveled from abroad, to such a good group of speakers and moderators and to this distinguished audience.

We are honored by the presence of H.E. Aboul Gheit, Secretary General of the Arab League, a leader of clarity and vision.

The Foundation has the established tradition and priority to regularly devote an event to this part of the world. And every time we publish a book giving a complete information about the discussion and we see that our rankings in search engines on the subject “Arab Geopolitics” are consequently between the global first and sixth position according to the size of the engine.

The title of today’s conference suggests that fragmentation seems to be a general feature in the region. We advance the idea that this is a trap and that the Arab people and their friends should work for a positive exit.

The arc of crisis that we witnessed in recent years has to be transformed into an arc of opportunities. The so-called Caliphate has lost its territorial dimension but other threats are looming at the horizon, or perhaps the same organisation in a different dimension.

There is a wealth of humanity that deserves our best wishes and that we cannot forget. We face a great world in flux, which requires us to take a long view, toward a new horizon in our history. These historical developments remain in the hands of peoples who must take their own choices. It is for the Arabs to take their destiny in their hands and for them only.

It is clear in our mind that the vast historical Arab region has an enormous positive potential, its future is critical, especially for the Europeans and for countries like Italy, sharing the same waters and skies, perhaps also the same dreams.

Our democracies, however, cannot be only spectators in a complicated world. The key question that we have in our mind is that we want to help. But how? What should we do, in a concrete and friendly manner?

Perhaps a bottom up approach made of projects that use the tools of the civil society? How to be a real support without interfering? We hope that the discussion of today will help to find some answers.

An essential way to advance international governance is by dialogue; in this context we like to use the key concept of “cooperative security”. It should be a priority and tireless pursued.

It is also logical and evident that in today’s environment we need an in-depth reading of facts and a wise analysis. Another evidence is that we cannot divide the issues at stake according to tradition and diplomatic practice. Problems as well as solutions are interconnected in an unprecedented way. The actors can be also very different as the emergence of non – state organisation is showing.

The philosophy of our Foundation is to give voice as much as possible to women and men of the countries concerned. They know better than anybody else about their needs, what is in their hearts and minds.

We know that we have in front of us a vast universe that it is impossible to resume in simplistic formulas. Therefore we did our best to provide a good framework for an honest and high level discussion.

Today we have convened here the best possible expertise we can think of. I thank everybody who has accepted our invitation to come to Rome, a natural place to discuss about the larger Mediterranean.

Our philosophy is to encourage dialogue that often has different points of view but always in respect and recognition of the other. Diversity is an asset and not a liability.

I thank very much the Political and Security Division, a cornerstone of NATO, for its generosity. Special thanks go to Philip Morris International for its invaluable and well placed support. I thank everybody who has helped to prepare such an event starting with the personnel of the Foundation.

Finally, I am grateful to the Secretary General of the Arab League. I wish him the best in his important responsibilities and we are honored by his friendship.



DAVID PINCET

Head, Academic Operations Division, NATO Defense College, Rome

WELCOME REMARKS

The theme of today, “Arab Geopolitics after the Caliphate and how to exit the fragmentation trap” is already a challenge by itself and generates many questions. Is the Arab world really in a post-Caliphate phase today? How do we define the Arab world? Is it limited to the Middle East and North Africa? Defeating troops on the ground and regaining territories was a great achievement? Is it enough today?

From the borders of Afghanistan and Pakistan to the West Sahel in Mauritania, even in Far East Asia, the Caliphate still resonates. It is probably possible to identify a trend of continuity as radicalised extremist groups are present along this arc of instability, but the roots, the reasons for this instability and insecurity are different. The objectives of those groups, whether they are called Freedom Fighters or terrorists are to some extent also different. Al-Qaida, Daesh, Ansar ad-Dine, Boko Haram, Moro Liberation Front have some commonalities and pretend to share common roots, but they also are in direct rivalry or confrontation when seeking for local power or influence. Some are fighting for what they call a just cause, some have economic interests but, at the end, hundreds of thousands of families are living in insecurity, and are not able to plan their future and to work to build a better life for their children.

As a consequence, millions are fleeing wars, oppression or poverty as refugees or migrants. As human beings, as a nation or as an international organisation, we should ask ourselves, what can we do to improve the situation of those persons and families, how to relief NOW the pain that they suffer and how to tackle the roots of these situations? There is, of course, not one solution as each region of this arc of instability has its own dynamics and challenges. Does the international community have the right understanding of the situation?

As the international community, are we able to set common goals to have a concerted, co-ordinated approach and course of action? The solutions have to come first from inside the region, inside the countries, with the appropriate support

from the international community. However the current reality is that many external actors also play their own cards and national interests. China, EU, France, Iran, Israel, Italy, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, the UN and the USA, to name a just a few.

The politisation of the radicalisation of religion is one of the important factors but it is not the only one: let us keep in mind that also in Europe, during the Middle Ages and the Modern Age, religion has been used for political reasons, such as crusades, inquisition, colonisation, interference. There are also enduring ethnic tensions and situation still unsolved: Houthis, Kurds, Palestinians, Yazidis and many others. Peoples' expectations and priorities are different from one region to the other: security, freedom, democracy, rule of law, basic services, jobs, education.

The pressure of mass migration is a potentially destabilising factor for neighbouring countries, with side effects also far from countries of departure, if you consider the expansion of populism in Western Europe. I do hope that dialogue and consultation, which are at the core of UN, EU and NATO *modus operandi*, will allow a better understanding of how to address those challenges. Very modestly, the NDC is supporting this effort.

The principal objectives of our two main courses, the Senior Course and the NATO Regional Cooperation Course is, as our founder Gen. Eisenhower wrote in 1951: *"There is high priority requirement to develop individuals, both on the military and on the civilian side, who will have a thorough grasp of the main complicated factors which are involved in the problem of creating an adequate defence posture. We must constantly be on the lookout for individuals who are capable of adapting themselves to this new environment and who find it possible in a reasonably short time to broaden their outlook and to grasp the essentials of this challenging problem sufficiently to shoulder the responsibilities inherent in this new field"*.

Over the past ten years the NDC hosted 1.200 participants from broader MENA region to promote exchanges, mutual understanding through consultation and dialogue amongst persons with different cultures, history and background in order to develop a network of friends and officials in the 29 NATO nations and about 15 broader MENA Partner nations.



FABIO MASSIMO CASTALDO
Vicepresident of the European Parliament, Brussels

WELCOME REMARKS

It is an honour for me to address such a High-Level Conference organised by the NATO Defense College Foundation (NDCF). NDCF has a long tradition of successful conferences where decision-makers, politicians, and other actors have been able to exchange ideas in high-level panels.

When I got the invitation for this High-Level Conference I enthusiastically accepted the honour of addressing such an important audience. However, unfortunately, I cannot be present today due to my role as Chief Observer of the EU electoral mission in Tunisia. As Vicepresident of the European Parliament and as a member of the Foreign Affairs Committee, since the beginning of my mandate, I focused my attention on the Mediterranean region and its evolutions: I have been several times in Tunisia in electoral missions and now as Chief observer. As you perfectly know, the European Union is paying great attention to the elections in Tunisia. Therefore, according to my role, I had to stay there to carefully follow the whole procedure.

I apologise for not being present today with you but I hope that President Minuto-Rizzo, whom I thank again for this idea and his kind invitation, can extend my warmest greetings to all the authorities, speakers and guests of the conference.

When NATO was established in 1949 the Arab world was far from being a priority of the Alliance, while the EU was still a dream. During the Cold War, the Middle East has been a proxy battlefield between the US and the Soviet Union, but the main focus of the Alliance remained the Iron Curtain. 1979 changed the face of Iran; in 1989 the Soviet Union retreated from Afghanistan and then collapsed. The Gulf War at the beginning of the '90s was intended as a collective effort to maintain peace, but it was ephemeral; the end of the 90s saw the engagement of NATO in the Balkans. In 2010-2011, the Arab Spring triggered a sudden change in the whole region; many old regimes fell, some states resisted, some other collapsed due to civil wars and sectarian clashes. For NATO and other organisations, these events opened new challenges for security in the area.

Today we have been called on giving some thoughts on post-Caliphate geopolitics, on an Arab world without ISIS. But I wonder if this is the case.

Are we in a post-Caliphate phase? ISIS has been reduced geographically, the territory it controls is not wide as it was some years go. But can we say ISIS has been completely defeated? I believe that the challenge posed by the Caliphate is still quite open, and it is going to take place far from where ISIS was born. The problem is not anymore the territorial conquer, but the spread of the Caliphate's message and ideas, facilitated by the weakening of some states, sectarian tensions and social unrest caused by poor economic conditions.

Have we addressed and eliminated the roots of the Caliphate? I think that an honest answer should be quite negative. ISIS geographical extension has been shrunk by military operations, but the Caliphate has not been fully defeated. Let's enlarge our view: Libya, Sahel, Burkina Faso, maybe even in Europe we can have some sleeping cells of "foreign fighters", European citizens who served in ISIS' ranks in the Middle East. It sounds like a paradox, but today the Caliphate may be less strong in military terms but it has moved even closer to us, or between us, in our communities. There are dozens of pro-ISIS groups around the world, spreading from Far East Asia to Africa, and several of them have already delivered terrorist attacks. On the ground, the recent Turkish decision to challenge Kurdish units could be an assist to the remaining ISIS units. The Kurds have a long tradition of resisting ISIS' offensives, therefore weakening their position could represent an assist to the Caliphate, an assist that does not help the stabilization of the region.

The Caliphate and a series of groups, factions or even lone wolfs inspired by ISIS' ideology will continue to be present and eventually act in several areas of the world. This means that they will continue to influence our security and our perception of it. The geographical range of the confrontation has enlarged: the Middle East is just one of the areas where ISIS or pro-ISIS groups are active. There is the case of Libya, where it is no secret that pro-ISIS groups are consolidating their position on the ground^[1]. Then there is the case of the Sahel, where several states have been penetrated by ISIS sympathizers; we cannot mention here the case of Far East Asia, where already existing terrorist groups have decided to "join" the struggle of the Caliphate. This means that areas that were once considered "far" from Europe and NATO or just unable to influence our security, now represent a new frontline for us all. The security perimeter of NATO and the EU has enlarged: limiting our approach to the northern side of Africa or the Middle East would be a mistake, and it will not provide the answers that many of our citizens are asking. The previous picture with different crises related to different areas (Syria-Iraq; Libya; Sub-Saharan Africa; the Persian Gulf) has now changed, and these crises are more intertwined than ever, while several states, today, are weaker

1 Trauthig I.K., Assessing the Islamic State in Libya, Europol, 2019

than before. This “liquid” context could be a perfect breeding ground for future terrorists, extremists or just criminal groups.

Besides the Caliphate threat, a reflection on Arab geopolitics cannot overlook the tensions in the Gulf. In many Western media, the Saudi Arabia-Iran rivalry seems to be the main issue, but we should also mention the tragic consequences of the war in Yemen, where, unfortunately, some European companies are also involved with their weapons.

So, in such a highly volatile context, where the EU and NATO should look for? Can we fully rely on traditional alliances? Can we count on the support of the US in our neighbourhood? Can the EU, for instance, just ignore what is happening in its backyard, delegating a third part to guarantee the security of its southern flank?

I have always insisted on a strong synergy between NATO and the EU and several topics that will be discussed in these days are a perfect area of cooperation between our organisations. The era of NATO as an anti-Soviet Union alliance has long gone. We cannot overlook anymore our southern flank as a source of opportunities but also of threats. The Southern flank, therefore, is a challenge for NATO but also the EU; during the hearing of the new EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, Mr Borrell, who expressed a clear position on these issues. The EU has several tools to contribute to the support and the stabilisation of the area; NATO has several other assets, mainly focused on the security side. Stronger coordination of these tools could be beneficial for both organisations. During this term, 2019-2024, EU-NATO relations will be at the core of our reflections on the security and defense dimensions, and a strategic area like the Mediterranean must be at the center of our attention. Nonetheless, EU and NATO efforts will not be enough if the Member States will not find some common positions and then policies to implement it.

For the European Union, this is the main challenge: I hope that also the contribution of the European Parliament could push other Institutions and the Member States not to postpone anymore a series of concrete actions to help internal security, stabilisation, economic recovery, promotion of justice, state-building and reforms in our neighbourhood. EU and NATO cooperation in the future can show that multilateral approaches, instead of unilateral solutions, can be more politically and economically feasible, and my hope - and what I will try to support in the European Parliament - is a stronger synergy between NATO and the EU in the Mediterranean theatre.



MAHMOUD GEBRIL
Former Prime Minister of Libya

OPENING REMARKS

What I will share with you are just a few ideas that are subjected to criticism and modification because they are still in the process of being conceived. I would argue, at the very beginning, that most of the problems that policy makers and strategists face derive from the fact that people do not differentiate between drivers of history and strategic trends: this is a very serious mistake. When we talk about drivers of history, for instance, we talk about population, we talk about this eternal marriage between technology and capital, which has resulted in what is called the ultra-symbolic economy; virtual economy with bonds and stock markets are the names of the game.

Most of the futurists – I claim to be one of them – are trying hard to call the attention of every decision maker in our beloved area, the Arab world, on the fact that we are facing a new world and that our usual tools and structures of conceiving those changes are not relevant anymore. I would say that what we have inherited after World War II, namely the United Nations, is talking about states and nations but not about individuals and groups. The international law does not talk about the individual person but, since late 80s of the past century until this very specific moment, societies started to take a predominance over the state, and as you can see, the states are striking back, sometimes under the “banner” of nationalism or, as Mr Trump puts it, “patriotism” vis-à-vis globalisation. Globalisation, whether we like it or not, is siding with the individuals and groups. Just a moment ago, we have been hearing about the Houthi, Dahesh, Al-Qaeda, Osama bin Laden: those are the big headlines in our news and in our newspapers. It is the new world, but we did not develop any new thinking that can grasp and deal with this new world and take part in shaping it.

Having said that, we cannot talk, for instance, about illegal immigration or international organised crime without talking about this exponential increase of African population that by 2050 is going to be exceeding 2 billion people. No less than 360 million young people will be marching north looking for jobs. This is the

crux of the matter, but to deal with it you have to count your bullets here because you will not have enough bullets by year 2050.

Therefore, it is a new type of thinking, to talk about state and society and the so-called “Arab Spring” which took place since late 2010 and early 2011 is just the symptom of those new drivers of history. We did not look at the underlying causes. Why this took place during those times? Why it did not take place in the 50s, in the 60s or in the earlier 70s? It took place because a new type of generation exists, a new generation connected to different parts of the world, that no borders, no ideology, no police can prevent from connecting.

The core issues today are connectivity and the ultra-symbolic economy: 45% of world economies, especially industrial economies, have shifted to service economies. Why? Because it is a very, fast effective pay-off in terms of profit, and an individual became so empowered that by pushing a button he can transfer from one stock market to another without the intermediation of banks. That is why I am saying that all the structures have to be revisited. Do we need new structures? Do we need a new thinking about this new world that I do not know whether we are shaping it or it is shaping us?

Let me take Libya as an example. I would argue that after World War II most Arab countries have built regimes, not states, with a few exceptions here and there. Therefore, in the case of Libya, there was a regime but not a state. When the regime fell down, we turned into a “stateless society”, as Gaddafi, with his extreme attitude, managed to dismantle every institution created before 2011 and everything was totally related to him and to his will. In October 2011, before my resignation, I said to NATO officials not to leave Lybia, otherwise it would become a stateless society with no institutions. Unfortunately, Mr Rasmussen answered “*mission accomplished*”.

Tribal society, lots of money, weapons all over the place; the risk of a civil war was there from day one and we did not pay attention to it. Even the successive attempts by the UN to find a political solution were governed by the Western literature, because, through the UN vocabulary we assumed that there was a state. So, we started developing government structures, by talking about the State Council, the HOR (House of Representatives), the GNA (Government Nation Accord). This is a government structure for a state that does not exist.

A huge dichotomy between power and authority emerged in Libya. We have lots of authorities, such as GNA, HOR and State Council, but power lays outside them. Power is with those who carry arms on their shoulders, whether you call them “army” or you call “militia”. Power is with those who own the media and shape the public opinion and society. The authorities are helpless and, unfortunately, the representatives and envoys of the UN keep talking to those authorities about creating a new government, a government of national unity. How to do that, without having the tools to govern? That is the real issue.

It was natural to have a fragmentation after those Arab Springs happened, sim-

ply because the national integration process which should be the main function of any regime after War World II was not accomplished. So, when the regime fell down in the country, those small entities came out as a frame of reference: tribes, cities and everybody is using it to get the share of the wealth because that is the crux of the matter in the country. Do not forget that Libya is the only oil producing country in the five ones which have witnessed an Arab Spring or uprisings. I do not know if its strategic location, with this immense amount of wealth, is a blessing or a curse. With a stateless society, we have different countries having their own interests in Libya and the national security of some of them is tied to what is taking place there.

Nevertheless, we always look at Libya as if there is a state and we are dealing with it. Our real job is to create the state first, by consensual process among those real players on the ground, and then we can create a government structure for it. It is important not to consider the “artificial” players, some of them created by what is called “international legitimacy” or the legitimacy of the international community, but without legitimate base inside: no political, military or social base even as a tribe or something else. To find a solution, the first step is to look at the balance of power on the ground. Unfortunately, we did not look at it; we looked at the direction we wanted to look at. I would argue that, because of this changing world, too many competing forces will continue to fight against each other.

First of all, when we talk about the end of the Caliphate, we have to differentiate between political Islam regimes and political Islam movements. A regime might fall down, like in Egypt, like the diminishing power of Ennahda in Tunisia (the last electoral results are completely different from 2011 and 2014: 89 seats, then 69 and now 46). But the movement is still there and it is penetrating the society, so it is not right to say they are now out of power, because they are out of power but they are still within the society.

The real issue is not only to have guns to kill people, but also trying to feed them and give them knowledge, because in the future you might not need bullets to kill those people. Until this moment we did not develop a model of a modern state that is inclusive and democratic enough for its people, under the rule of law, where everybody can find his vested interest to protect that state. That is a job for the Arabs and, as my friend Ambassador Minuto-Rizzo said in the opening statement, it is in the hands of the Arabs, not in the hands of anybody else. As one Sufi philosopher Shams-i-Tabrizi once said: “How on earth can a little seed comprehend and know that it carries within itself a huge tree?”. We have a huge tree within ourselves but we do not recognise it.

Unfortunately, in the Libyan case, we became totally dependent on foreign players. We did not have the chance to listen to ourselves as Libyans. We listened about ourselves from others: stereotypes and images against each other. We have been classified between seculars, non-believers, Muslims, liberals. Before 2011, there was no political stream of thought, there were no parties. When this hap-

pened, it is after 2011. These are just challenges for foreign penetration and it is on us, as Libyans, to take things in our hands. I cannot blame any foreign player to intervene in Libya because, as Martin Luther King said: “*Nobody can’t ride your back unless it is bent*”. We have bent down so badly.

If we could help coming up with specific propositions to minimise the fragmentation in the future, assuming that this conflict will come to an end, I would suggest two things: first, for those foreign players, why do not they have mega-joint projects in Libya, with the partnership of the main regional power? Why ENI and Total do not have joint-ventures with Egypt, Algeria, Morocco and Libya? So they have a joint vested interest in Libya, instead of fighting each other as ENI or Total on Libyan soil. Why can’t we have mega projects with European technology and Libyan money to create the biggest transformation training hub in the history of mankind on Libyan soil to recycle those young Africans and provide them with skills and knowledge according to the needs of the European economy till the year 2035? I presented this project to Lady Ashton in 2009 and she liked it very much, she was very willing to go for it but, unfortunately, Gaddafi turned it down.

That is how you can deal with illegal immigration: you should give an economic alternative. For us, in Libya, to achieve more unity and fight fragmentation, we suggest to have what we call cross-tribes, cross-cities mega projects, where the sons of victims from both tribes, from both cities are shareholders in these new projects. So, you can expect that the continuous “tic-tac-toe” between state and society in this area is not going to end soon.

Terrorism is not going to end soon and might take new forms. Do not rule out that after terrorists are done with their “incubators” such as Libya and Syria, they are going to move on European soil, and there the indicator is France. So, having “fortress countries”, as Mr Trump said, is not going to serve you.

It is by realising and recognising that this is a new world and that we have to deal with it differently by more inclusiveness, participation and development for those countries, that the level of poverty can be reduced. Last year, 821 million of people were under the line of poverty, and this runs against the 2030 vision of the United Nations.

To conclude, I would say that it is essential to acquire more knowledge, openness, participation for the young people, building new economies compatible with this new global economy, especially in our countries and in the region, to position our economy within the regional and the global economy, and discover the competitive edge first.

Do not start building before discovering your competitive edge in a comparative manner, because the moment you discover your competitive edge, then the identity of your economy is defined. At that point, you can decide the type of education your students have to acquire, so they can sustain the competitiveness and the sustainability of growth of that economy. You know where to build cities, you know where to pave roads. This is how economies are built, but we are moving in

a circle since 1945 and from time to time we sit among ourselves as Arabs and we wonder: “Why Singapore and South Korea managed to cross to the new world and we did not?” Because we did not take the right first step. We just started moving in a certain road and, in the middle of it, we discovered that we were on the wrong direction, and we had to start all over again.

So, it is about time to end this fragmentation, to have common interests in the future by building those projects. Talking about identity in a tribal society, in a stateless society is a baseless argument. We have to take the first step by building common interests before talking about national identity, because national identity until now has just the function of passport and ID. Indeed, real citizenship is a matter of building a new culture, a new education, a new economy when everybody has vested interests in it. Then, at that moment, any citizen, any party, any city, any Arab country will be able to feel that it is its own responsibility to defend the nation. This is a ultimate objective that will take a 1000 mile road but we should start not just with one step, but with the correct step.



ALESSANDRO POLITI

Director, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

POLITICAL SUMMARY

If one looks at a map depicting the four ongoing crises in North Africa, Levant and the Gulf, with their underlying political and social fractures, beyond the quickly changing tapestry of militias, one sees clearly that four countries are disintegrated, near disintegration or narrowly may have escaped that fate (Libya, Syria, Iraq and Yemen). In a twist of history, the majority of these states were part of previously attempted confederations or unions in the past century: the Union of Arab States (Egypt, Syria, Yemen from 1958 to 1961) or the Federation of Arab Republics (Libya, Egypt and Syria in the period 1972-1977).

The conference has effectively highlighted five relevant points for policy makers. The first being that fragmentation is not only regional, but global. It is not by chance that one geopolitical vision floated in Russia sees a global future of multiple and distinct heartlands (North American, European/Populist, Russian, etc.), once the isolationism apparently prevailing in the USA has curtailed the US naval power. The old Middle East would be split between an Arab Heartland and an Islamic/Ottoman/Persian one.

Part and parcel of this global fragmentation is a US leadership that cannot be taken for granted or predictable not only for the policies of the present administration, but for a general disillusionment of the American elite vis-à-vis the older Middle East as a whole, not to speak about the nationalism and unilateralism that hampers the coherence of the “West”, entailing a transatlantic fragmentation. China and Russia obviously take into account this handicap. This is evident when one considers that Gulf powers “pivoted to East” since the 2010s, in terms of energy export, trade and market routes, investments, and infrastructures.

The second relevant aspect is that several countries collapsed because their elites and societies were on the one hand unable/unwilling to accomplish a national integration process (Iraq, Syria, Libya, Yemen) or are still painfully building it up (Lebanon). It should be borne in mind that the symptoms of this type of crisis were first visible in Somalia (January 1991) and Yugoslavia (June 1991), but were

dismissed as tribal resurgences affecting backward regions. Today's proliferation of separatisms in Europe should caution against such simplistic evaluations.

On the other hand, governments or regimes were set up in these and other countries, but not states, insofar that a state represents a guarantee of essential rights for all its citizens, irrespective of religion, family, gender, race. The international institutions, according to some speakers, should fully acknowledge this reality, avoiding to assume that there are government structures when they do not exist or labelling factions (e.g. seculars, non-believers, Muslims, liberals, moderate Islamists etc.) in a way that ends in distorting policy-making. In the end the international community should understand that it is essential to talk with all factions (as Italians do routinely and Russians did in Syria) and that legitimacy is not bestowed from above if it does not exist on the ground.

The third issue on a practical policy level is represented by three priorities well known by Arab policy makers: ending the war in Syria and restoring the country; ending the rise of pseudo-religious extremism and ending the denial of Palestinian statehood.

The fourth point revolves around energy and energy transition. While theories about peak oil appear less convincing than before, the prospect of a peak demand in fossil sources is quite real due to the massive development of renewables. This is a serious risk for the economic and political transition of energy producers; such a transition inevitably needs to be managed together by producers and consumers, if one wants to avoid further turmoil and war.

Finally, some speakers pointed out at policies to reduce or to set on a solution course one or more regional crises. Politically the old regimes should evolve into less brutal authoritarianisms and more real participatory governances at least, if they want to avoid the continuation of the "Caliphate" dystopia. In terms of energy policies, the interconnection of electric grids between Maghreb and Gulf countries would be a serious incentive to foster common regional interests and a push towards a gradual decarbonisation. Economically the reconstruction of war-torn countries should favour projects across existing divides, creating vested interests for every actor.



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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 re-

surge 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.

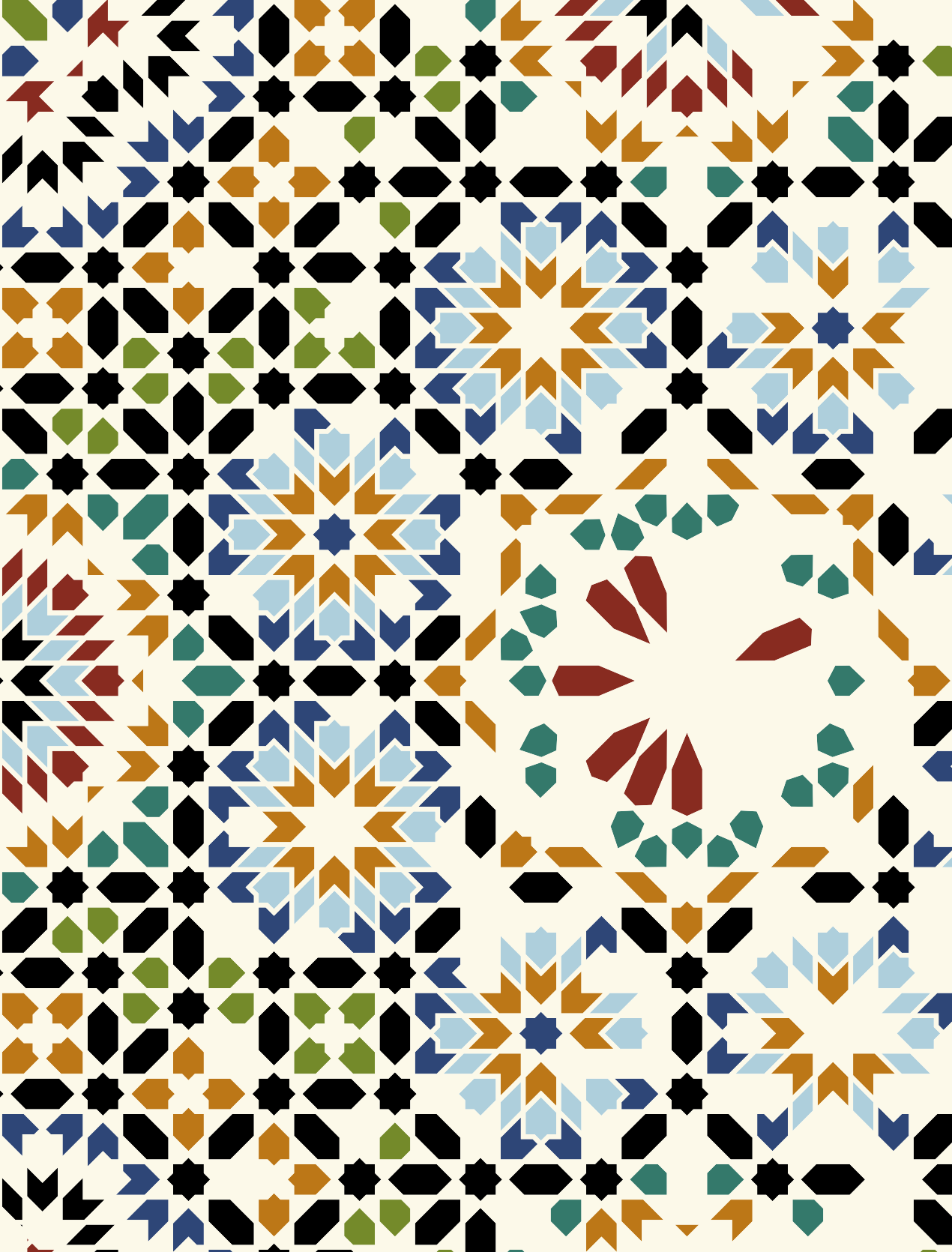
Beyond the antagonism between Saudi Arabia and Iran, the Gulf security is undermined by the intra Gulf Cooperation Council's rifts, highlighted also by the latest developments in the Horn of Africa. Moreover, personal and political fissures have been triggering unprecedented nationalist bursts, especially 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

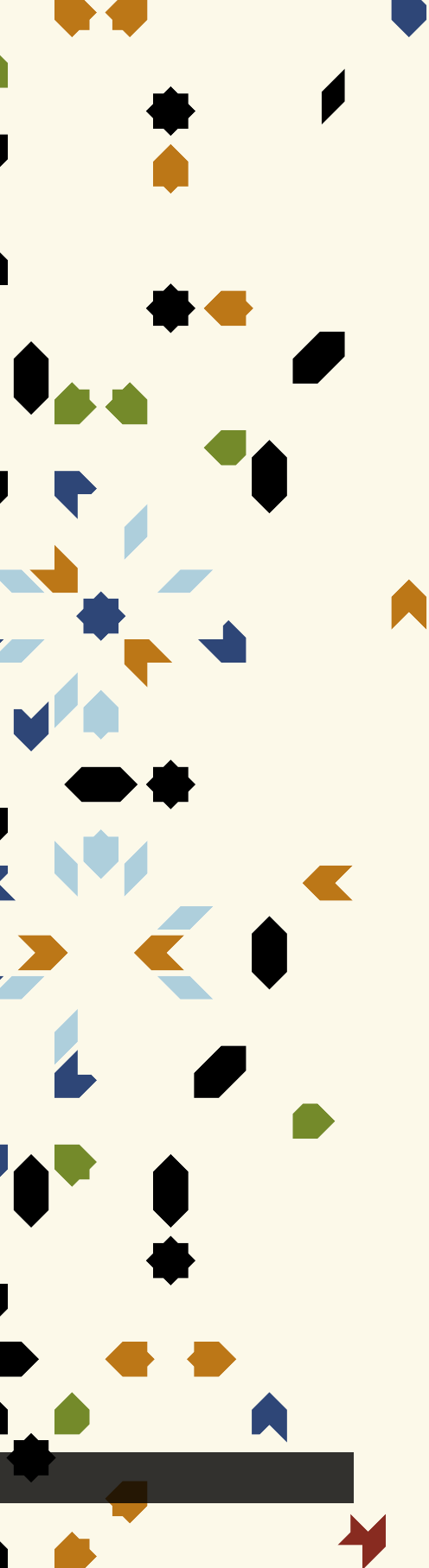
avoid the multiple fragmentation traps. NATO in particular can offer support to address the asymmetric and non-conventional threats, also through the selected inclusion of hybrid actors in a comprehensive state-rebuilding frame, featuring institutional decentralisation, rent re-distribution and Security 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.

Session I

REBUILDING THE ARAB REGION



"Disintegration Template", abstract mosaic.





NICOLA DE SANTIS

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REGIONAL INSTABILITY WHAT TO DO?

T*he region continues to be devastated by challenges and instabilities. What is the role of international institutions, such as the UN, NATO and the EU in addressing these challenges, to allow the rebuilding of the countries of the region? How can NATO contribute to regional security through its existing partnerships?*

I would like to isolate three aspects. The first one is that the Caliphate has gone in the sense that the attempt to build a state has gone. A state that would not be either Islamic, nor would be able to impose itself to the region. However, the ideology behind this attempt is still there. Thus, we need to look at this dimension because this is a generational challenge, which has to do with education and with the correct interpretation of Islam that we, on the other side of the Mediterranean, cannot address, it must be addressed by the Muslim countries of the region, in order to avoid that a beautiful religion is hijacked by people that, as it already happened throughout history, have tried to misuse religion to pursue political purposes in our region, in the Mediterranean. This challenge is still there and therefore we have to deal with it. And it involves different aspects: from education to thwarting radicalism and the ideology of hate, to disrupting the finances of terrorist groups. The educational dimension is particularly crucial, especially looking at today's information technologies and the impact of Artificial Intelligence and hybrid warfare.

The second aspect is represented by the social and economic imbalances. I believe that the major sources of instability, at least in the area that goes from the Maghreb to the Mashrek, are: low economic growth, high-level of unemployment, younger generations that want more jobs and aspire to live like the rest of the people of the world lives, as they see it through satellite television and ask why they cannot enjoy the same quality of life. These demands triggered the Arab revolutions: people wanted to have the same rights, dignity and opportunities that others had.

The third aspect is the question: "What we do about it?". From Libya to Syria to Iraq, the problem is today that the major actors of the international community on

a multilateral level, have not been able to help moving from crisis management to crisis resolution. These crises need to be solved because they affect us all. This is a fundamental aspect which has to do with multilateral, transnational cooperation. And here we have to look at the role of the international community: at the role of the United Nations, of the European Union, of NATO. Firstly, I believe that we need a complementarity of efforts between all of these international institutions. Secondly, we need a cooperative approach to security, through the development and strengthening of regional partnerships.

In 1991, at the Rome Summit, NATO launched the concept of cooperative security which has been developed during the last twenty five years. This year we are celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Mediterranean Dialogue, which has developed security cooperation between NATO and seven countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia) and we are celebrating, as well, the 15th Anniversary of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative with the countries in the Arab Gulf (Bahrain, Kuwait, UAE and Qatar). These are major achievements, because through these two partnerships NATO has developed regular political dialogue and practical cooperation with the participating countries, assisting them in strengthening their own defense and security institutions. Sharing knowledge, experience and expertise in the defense and security sector is NATO's real added value.

Institutions building, where institutions do not exist, such as for example in Libya, while strengthening the resilience of those institutions that already exist in other countries but are fragile because of conflict spill-over, or because of the domestic causes of their fragility, is a fundamental aspect of this security equation. And each institution, the United Nations, the League of the Arab States, the European Union can play a role in its own field. The EU, for example, offering a major contribution in addressing the socio-economic imbalances.

NATO has played and can continue to play its role in the security field, for example through defence institutions building and defence capacity building, promoting not only the interoperability of the armed forces but also the interoperability of minds. There is, indeed, always a cultural dimension to consider. What we have been able to do, for over two decades, has been to create a new culture of cooperation in the security field between NATO and the countries in the Arab world and also with Israel, countries which are part of the Mediterranean Dialogue. A culture of cooperation in the security sphere, which was not a given that we would have been successful in developing, when NATO launched the Mediterranean Dialogue 25 years ago and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative 15 years ago. Furthermore, since 2006, NATO has developed individualised programmes of cooperation with twelve countries taking part in these two partnerships.

Finally, I would like to clarify one aspect that was raised during his intervention by the former Interim Prime Minister of Libya Dr. Mahmoud Jibril, when he referred to his conversations with then NATO Secretary General of NATO Anders

Fog Rasmussen at the time of the Libyan crisis. During NATO's Operation Unified Protector, I was in regular contact with Dr Jibril and also after the Operation. It is true what Dr Jibril mentioned, that NATO Secretary General Rasmussen at some point, at the end of the mandate given by the United Nations to the Alliance, at that time said: "We cannot proceed any further". NATO had intervened in Libya on the basis of two UN Security Council Resolutions; 1970 and 1973. These Resolutions gave a mandate to NATO to do three things: to enforce an arms embargo at sea, to enforce a No-Fly-Zone over Libya and take all necessary measures for the protection of the civilian population and of civilian populated areas. These two UN Resolutions did not give NATO a mandate to deploy a stabilisation force on the ground in Libya, unlike what had happened in Bosnia when NATO after the enforcement of No-Fly-Zone received a mandate by the UN to deploy, firstly the Implementation Force and subsequently the Stabilisation Force. Many at that time believed that like in Bosnia, after the NATO air campaign an international military presence on the ground was needed to stabilise Libya. To this end, I would like to highlight that each time I accompanied the Secretary General Rasmussen to the different meetings of the "Friends of Libya", which were convened during the crisis, at the level of Foreign Ministers, Defense Ministers or even at the level of Heads of State and Government level, the issue of the "Day After", of the end of the NATO operation was regularly evoked. However, it should also be recalled that the League of Arab States had supported the two UN Security Council Resolutions 1970 and 1973 but had clearly stated that it would not favour "boots on the ground in Libya". NATO's positive response to the UN request had been based on three principles: a demonstrable need that a military action was needed to help the civilians being targeted by Gaddafi, a legal mandate which was given by the two UN Security Council Resolutions and a regional support that was given firstly by the decision of the Foreign Ministers of the Gulf Cooperation Council and secondly by the decision of the Foreign Ministers of the League of Arab States to support the UN Security Council Resolutions giving a mandate to NATO to act. NATO Secretary General Rasmussen did discuss the issue of "the Day After" during the "Friends of Libya" meetings he attended at different levels. But NATO officials are international civil servants. The Secretary General is the highest level NATO international civil servant. NATO is an inter-governmental organisation where decisions are taken by consensus by the representatives of the governments of its member countries. There was no political will among the governments of the Alliance to deploy forces on the ground in Libya, especially absent regional support following the decision of the League of Arab States. Now, some could argue that this was an alibi for not intervening on the grounds. But the fact is that, in addition to the lack of regional support, NATO did not receive a legal mandate from the UN to deploy military forces on the ground in Libya.



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ENDING FRAGMENTATION IS A MATTER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND ARABS TOGETHER

I think the title of the conference represents a very complex question and I am not sure if we have concrete answers for such a question but let me show you my thoughts about what are the issues that need to be addressed about the region in order to make the Arab countries move on.

The main elements you will always hear from Arab politicians and diplomats are three: the Levant, ending the crisis, with the integrity of that state and the going back of refugees to their homeland; the end of extremism, which is falsely labelled with Islam, when maybe we need to examine it in a wider context of a racist extremism and Islamophobia and, finally the “elephant in the room” that is the denial of a Palestinian statehood. We really need to end the Israeli-Palestinian crisis on a two state solution because the alternative, a bi-national state, is unthinkable, undemocratic and would lead to different human rights degrees. The two-state solution should be built on the line of the 4th of June 1967¹ with East Jerusalem as capital of the Palestinians.

The actions we have seen over these seven years, by flaunting international law and UN Resolutions, to build walls and grab lands show that we are not going or moving anywhere. It only proves that the international community, the EU, NATO and other organisations really need to be serious about it. It is the only area in the globe which has a crisis where nobody is doing any serious effort about ending it. We have other crises, mushrooming here and there: Iraq, Libya, Yemen. The question that NATO Defense College Foundation has always been asked over the past five or six years is a doable and comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and the answer is affirmative. Actually, it is not just doable, it is necessary these days and it must be done.

¹ The line of the 4th of June 1967 was the armistice line between Israel and Syria on the day before the outbreak of the Six Days War (June 1967). It derives directly from the armistice agreement that traced the Armistice Line the 20th of July 1949, which was modified in the 4th of June line after Israeli forces penetrated the 1949 DMZ (demilitarised zone) before and during the Suez crisis 1956 (Second Arab Israeli war).

If I put these three elements aside, in my humble opinion, our issues in the Arab world have become much more complicated and deep than even if we manage to sort these main issues, I am doubtful that we will be able to move on from fragmentation to building states or unity. I am talking about consolidated deep issues we have structured in our countries and nations over the past five decades and that have mushroomed and exploded in the wake of the so-called Arab Springs: the lack of freedom, democracy, human rights, rule of law and regional economic cooperation. We do not have them, and these are the issues that now we really need to think of and address.

When I refer to regional economic cooperation, I do not want to use the expression "Arab unity" because I do not think that it has actually any value now. Although His Excellency Aboul-Gheit is doing a great job, I know from my previous assignment as Secretary General at the Union for the Mediterranean that building on models like the European Coal and Steel Community in the 50s of the last century is impossible if member states are not at the same frequency level. We need to think also at new models of economic cooperation in the region, not just between the Arabs, but also with neighbours: Iran, Turkey, the EU, Israel (assuming that we have peace with it).

Under those headings, there are other headings that we need to examine: education, the definition (or re-definition) of the relationship between the government and those who are governed, the relation between the state and the people, the true concept of citizenship and the separation of religion from power.

What can the international community do? I don't think that the Arabs can do it on their own. We have been doing this for the last seventy or eighty years. I think the international community has to put its money where its mouth is. They need to help, to share with us their experiences on how they got out of their own fragmentation, crises and disasters they had after all the wars and be serious about addressing these issues that the Arab communities now have.

It needs two to tango: sincere international players and national, local, regional leaders.



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EXTERNAL ACTORS AND THE CHALLENGES OF FAILING STATES AND NON-STATE ARMED ACTORS

When we think about the role of external actors, we have to diagnose the major trends in the region. I can speak of two major regional trends or challenges. The first one is the ailing and expired social contract between the states, the governments and the people. The second is the rising role of armed non-state actors across.

Concerning the first trend, after 2010–2011 uprisings in the region, the symptoms were identified as follows: rising unemployment and rising inequality among the society, with the poorest sections of society reaching about 40–50%, living with two or three dollars per day. Moreover there is the limitation to the freedom of speech in the political expression, as well as a number of other indicators such as the youth bulge: more than 60% of the population is composed by young people entering every year the job market and finding little jobs in the public and private sectors. All of this was putting more and more strain on the social contract.

Before the Arab Springs, the social contract was basically: we provide subsidies, basic services, also subsidies in the form of maintaining constant the currency pegs, which could be very costly for the Treasury and by this giving jobs to the unemployed. In return for that you give us your political rights, your rights of expression. You hush in regards to your rights and the participation in the political system.

All of these indicators are now getting worse; for example, the unemployment rates increased by 5% median. The same happens with the inequality gap and other indicators and also the public sector in all of these n all of these of these states is facing a grim reality because all of them have to deal with the ballooning of the public sector. They have to shrink it by leaving the subsidies and removing the currency pegs. All of this means that the social contracts are expired. There will be more and more pressure for change and I think in this particular challenge what external actors can do is to support the already existing transition models that we have in Tunisia or in Sudan.

The region lacks a viable model that could ensure the transition from authoritarian system (that was not working, is not working and will continue to fail) into a more shared space in which different sectors of society have the opportunity to participate and express their voice, in which you can commit to major reforms in the state, in the economy, in the way the state looks, in the prospects for the economy and commit the population to it.

Governments must be held accountable and I think NATO and other international actors are not doing enough in supporting this transition. Look at the money spent by the counter-revolutionary forces. The amount spent on that side is unfortunately much bigger than all the investment which is happening to support the transition into a success.

Concerning the second trend, the non-state armed actors, they have been spreading fast across the area over the past decades. In Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Libya, Yemen, armed non state actors are becoming the major players. They are mushrooming but at the same time they are ballooning, assuming state functions. For instance, Hezbollah in Lebanon has representatives anywhere that act as embassies with offices that sometimes dwarf the Lebanese embassies in their work. The same applies to other groups across the region.

Nowadays we are seeing these non-state armed groups claiming they want to build an Air Force with drones, being supplied on a regular basis, advancing their capability on that front. This will put more and more strain on the state functioning properly, especially in challenging contexts such as Lebanon, Iraq, Syria, Libya and Yemen. Non-state actors are an intrinsic part of this regional struggle, which is poisoning the political fields and increasing polarisation in the area.

I believe that, in this case, external actors can work on pushing the regional dialogue and understand how to control non-state actors and restrain support for them. This should be done at the regional level, an international imposed solution will not work. Going back to the core problem, we need a model in this region and I think without a successful model without a light at the end of the tunnel, people will not commit the change and transition. They have to see it. If we have that, this would be one of the solutions contributing to the long-term effort leading to the constraint of this thing.



IAN LESSER

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USA: FROM A RELUCTANT LEADERSHIP TO A DISMISSIVE ONE?

I bring a slightly different perspective, in the sense that I am an American living in Brussels, and although I have deep interest in the region, I do not presume to talk about the internal social and political dynamics in the same way as people who actually live and experience them every day. I will make three points. The first point is that fragmentation is not just regional but also global and this is very meaningful when you come to think about the solutions.

We tend to think of Libya or Syria as crisis management problems, but it is not just a question of crisis resolution, as nice as that would be. I think in some cases we must accept that we are going to be living with sustained chaos. It is not a very optimistic assessment, but I think it is a realistic one and it requires different kinds of management and approaches. We may be living with some of the problems we are debating for a very long time to come with a great deal of instability. The growing nationalism and unilateralism in the “West” – or in the North – makes it much more difficult to have the West as a coherent partner. This is a problem on our side, and it is not going away any time soon.

Iran was mentioned. Turkey is becoming an extraordinarily active actor in the region in all sorts of ways and this is opening the door for further challenges when we come to think of Turkey as a partner. For instance, the Turkish intervention in Syria obviously touches American and European interests quite directly.

It is misleading to talk about the region simply in terms of post-Caliphate, post-Isis, post Al-Qaeda, post-PKK, etc. I could well imagine, out of this new sort of front that has been opened, new kinds of transnational security risks with which we will all have to deal.

The second point I would make is about the global context. It seems to me it is less and less possible to talk about the region in isolation, if it ever was. You cannot take traditional security relationships for granted, you cannot take American policy for granted. But we are still present, and I disagree profoundly with comments you hear about the United States disengaging and getting out of the area. We are

present in a very direct way: diplomatically, militarily, commercially – but are we there as a predictable actor? Are we there in the same way we had been before? Perhaps not. This question goes beyond the vagaries of the current administration, which I will not talk about. In the American strategic class, I think there is a kind of disillusionment toward the Arab region and the Middle East as a whole, based on what happened after the Arab revolutions, the changing energy picture, but above all on a certain distraction driven by developments elsewhere, not least in Asia.

Years ago, for the American strategic class, the Middle East was at the centre; even when we were talking on our relationships with Russia during the Cold War, it was often about the Middle East. Nowadays, it is very hard to get the attention of policy makers on the Middle East. There are big issues on our horizon: increasingly competitive relationships with Russia and especially with China. The debate in Washington these days is all about China and where it will be in the next decade with its Belt and Road Initiative. It will clearly bring the country into a closer connection with the Middle East.

But it also means that China will become a stakeholder in the region, exposed to the kinds of problems that Europe and United States have been trying to deal with for some time.

We also have to talk about the state of the global economy and mounting risks on this front. The weak economies in the Middle East and North Africa are arguably more exposed than many others to that kind of uncertainty, to the risks flowing from financial and trade disruptions.

Finally, what can be done? Here I come back to the question with some recommendations for my own side of the world – the West (or the North). Frankly, we first have to deal with transatlantic fragmentation. We are less and less united and cohesive in our strategy. Transatlantic fragmentation makes it even more difficult to mobilise the attention of people to what is happening across the Middle East. It also makes it harder to produce the investments necessary in terms of diplomatic energy but also money per se.

Today, unfortunately our policy seems to be reduced to a limited set of politically compelling elements: how to deal with Iran and migration. This is a very flimsy base on which to build a broader policy towards the region and its diverse societies in the future.

Session II

SUSTAINABLE ECONOMICS
AND GAME CHANGERS.
THE ROLE OF ENERGY



Handcrafted bowl with Arabic/Turkish/Persian inscriptions.





JAMAL MOHAMED FAKHRO
Managing Partner, KPMG, Manama

REGIONAL ECONOMIES AND THE FIGHT FOR DIVERSIFICATION

I am convinced that we in the Middle East are running a risk of being strongly dependent on the oil and gas revenues and we have seen the impact of this over the past years.

I believe that unless we work on the diversification of the economy, we will not be able to achieve a sustainable growth in our part of the world. Statistics suggest that, in the Arab world, the percentage of oil and gas on the GDP ranges from 20% to 40% and in certain countries this amount goes up to 60%, with Iraq and Kuwait being the highest among the region; while in others, such as in Bahrain, oil and gas only cover 13% of the GDP. This will not definitely bring a considerable level of sustainability. If we look at trends all over the world, we can see, for instance, that the United States, today the largest producer of oil, depends on oil and gas for only 7,5% of their GDP. I think we need to move into that range by introducing a new business model.

We need to think of what kind of businesses we want to enter and, in the short term, it might be those that depend on oil as a raw material. In due time this also needs to be changed by moving into transformation industries. We need to go into new knowledge-based industries, we need to move towards artificial intelligence applications. Statistics suggest that in the Arab world by 2030 artificial intelligence might represent 12% of the total GDP. If we accept this premise, then the first point we need to address is education.

If we want to make any changes in the way we think and want to bring stability to our region and growth to our economy, the first point we need to discuss is education. It is unfortunate that, despite what the ministers of education say in our part of the world, education is not really matching the requirements of all the changes that are taking place today. Education, training, development, investing in human beings is the name of the game going forward.

The second bet is that we need to think seriously on how to ease Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) to our part of the world. Today certain countries are receiving

more while others are not, and we are having lots of problems in attracting those FDI.

The third thing we need to take into account is that governments in our region depend a lot on oil and gas to finance their budget, one aspect that we must consider, if we are serious about diversifying our economy, is to think about the possibility of introducing taxes. In our part of the world taxes, especially in the GCC countries, are very low and therefore the governments are running deficit and the impact of this deficit will be high going forward on the people and therefore we are not sustaining the growth for the new generation.

Today I was just reading the news for Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia introduced a VAT (Value Added Tax) last January and today they said that in the last 18 months the total increase in Saudi's tax revenue was 89%. This was done only by introducing a 5% VAT in the country. Yes, it is harsh, but we need to do that because we cannot depend on the oil and gas to finance our budgets and we cannot depend on oil and gas to enlarge our economy.



ADNAN Z. AMIN

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IS THE ARAB REGION PREPARED FOR ENERGY TRANSITION?

In the last five or six decades, the political, social, economic and security structures in the Arab region have been built on the back of the hydrocarbon economy.

This on the one hand has favoured a lot of progress; while on the other it has led to a lot of problems, some of security and military nature, others related to the dependency from hydrocarbons. In the region we have states which are fairly advanced but have high levels of fragility because they are basically states that have not been able to diversify their economies yet in order to deal with a post hydrocarbon age. This constitutes a massive risk today.

I was struck by the point Prime Minister Gebril made earlier when he said that everything is interconnected and nothing more so than the global energy market. If you look at the global energy market today you have a massive push for decarbonisation, energy efficiency is making inroads and renewables are generating power. In the power sector, which accounts for about 22% of energy, the future is going to be renewable and energy is going to be increasingly electricity.

We are generating power at \$0,2 cents a kilowatt/hour from wind and from solar in more and more parts of the world, while the lowest cost for gas generation is about \$0,7-0,8 cents. This means that from an economic prospective change is coming. This change is also permeating new sectors, the advent of electric mobility is around the corner, the cost of batteries is falling, grid stability with different renewables is real a possibility.

What happens in this scenario, in terms of hydrocarbons, there is an increasing discussion among analysts in the energy field. Building scenarios about the future, they are looking a peak demand for oil by early to mid-2020s. Peak demand means the point at which future demands begins to decline and this element is starting to be a factor in lot of decisions. We are already seeing that many financial institutions are pricing risk for investment in exploration and production for hydrocarbons in a completely different way than they did only 5 years ago.

The cost of exploration and production is going up and we are seeing middle size oil producing companies that are scaling back in exploration and production. The larger ones are continuing and there are still investments going in it but when this change comes it will tend to move very fast. We now have new technologies, artificial intelligence, blockchain trading, machine learning and systems that manage electricity and power in totally different ways.

In this context when the global demand hits the hydrocarbon sector is going to hit the region very hard, so the question we must ask ourselves is, are we prepared?

If we look around there are a few countries that are prepared. Morocco is probably one of the leaders: it has a target of 52% renewables by 2030. Egypt has very ambitious plans for renewables, I had the pleasure of meeting president al-Sisi on two occasions and the important thing he made clear was that decarbonisation is not his main issue. In Egypt you have a million young people coming into the job market every single year. What President al-Sisi is pursuing, in his renewable's investment, is a way to find points of growth and industrialisation in order to absorb that kind of youth unemployment because otherwise you have a ticking time bomb on the streets of Cairo once again.

There is a similar reckoning in more and more places and the more enlightened oil producers are beginning to act on this need. Even though they all understand that diversification must happen, there are countries such as the United Arab Emirates that are in a leading position. They have a new energy strategy with a 70% decarbonisation target and a 40-45% renewables target by 2050.

I think everybody sees this happening and, when this disruption comes, those economies that are not prepared will be in great difficulty. The price of oil today is not even enough to serve the fiscal needs of some of the oil producing countries, they are running a fiscal deficit and cannot even cover the national debt. In this context, the effects on countries that are not prepared might be extremely disruptive because the potential to create unemployment, deindustrialisation, economic shocks and, later on, further instability, is very evident.

I think that there needs to be a far more enlightened approach to energy policies that are at the heart of economic policies in the Middle East. We are seeing signs where this is already happening with more and more countries talking about producing large amounts of renewable electricity that can be exported. The GCC grid is already interconnected and there is a policy for the interconnection of the grid and the trade in electricity in the GCC region. If the plans in Saudi Arabia are realised (they are talking about 40-50 gigawatts of power generation from renewables), then you will see exponential change.

My real fear in all this is that I have seen ambitious plans in my eight years as Director General of IRENA, but I have neither seen yet governance capabilities, technical implementation capacity nor the political will to make this change happen. This kind of change is not easy, it is painful but it needs to happen for the security of the region and for the future.



ABDULAZIZ SAGER

Chairman and Founder, Gulf Research Center, Jeddah

THE ENERGY LINCHPIN: THE RUSH FOR REFORMS AND THE BRAKE OF RIVALRY

I would like to give myself a little credit because in 2002 I was one of the early ones that came up with the idea of a cooperation between NATO and the Gulf countries. That meeting was held in Doha and the discussion we had at that time resulted in 2004 to the ICI, the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

I will start my intervention from a different perspective. In 2004, I participated in Bulgaria in a very interesting workshop addressing how the world is going to look like in the next 50 years. We came up with four main possible scenarios.

The first is the continuing of American hegemony. The second is the rising of other powers to offset American power, be it China, Europe or India. Third, of course, a fragmentation within states that would bring us back to an old history like in the Middle Ages. Fourth is the rise of the violent non-state actors.

I personally gave a lot of focus on violent non-state actors. In 2006, when Hezbollah decided to kidnap Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier, we ended up having a war that costed to the Lebanese economy 20 billion dollars. On that occasion I asked myself what are the communalities between all the different violent non-state actors?

First of all we found out that they all have an ideology and they all have an outside access. If you think of the time when Ghaddafi wanted to support the Irish rebels, this means that they need an external link. In addition, they all build their own independent economic system. Finally, they always grow within very weak central governments and usually try to create a linkage among each other.

With that I am going to move to the 14th of September, date of the attacks on the ARAMCO facilities, because it changed the dynamics of the game in the region regarding energy supplies. The markets responded 5 minutes before the Asian market opened when US president Trump said that America had enough reserves and was willing to supply the market. The price of the oil barrel went up to 71\$ and suddenly dropped to 60\$ and currently we are at a level of 58\$.

This happens either because the market had already discounted the possibility of

having a war in the region, or, because the market believed that there are enough and sufficient quantities of oil: the US became a net exporter and by 2021 they will reach 5 million barrel to be exported.

In Saudi Arabia the four major buyers are Asian countries. For instance, China buys 1.5 million barrel a day and Japan 1.2 million, which means that almost 65% of Saudi oil is sold to China, Japan, India and Korea. But the market did not respond in the way people would have expected. If this would have happened 10 years ago, the price of oil would have gone up to 200\$ but this did not happen either because there is enough quantity or because other exporters are taking the benefit and compensating for the loss.

Where are we today?

Today the region is living in a geopolitical Tsunami. In Algeria there is an unstable situation and we do not know what will happen to the young population that every Friday is demonstrating on the streets. Then we have the situation in Libya as well as Iraq, where social media are having a prominent role in organising the demonstrations. In Yemen a 5-year war is being fought because of regional powers are supporting a violent non-state actor and militia groups.

Lately I was very impressed by the speech that President Rouhani held in New York. He said that we need to have two pillars of regional security and they should be non-interventionism and non-aggression. We indeed need those two elements, but we also need to act by them. We need a guarantee in order to implement such a policy. Today we are suffering exactly because of the interventionist and expansionist policies that have been implemented throughout the region in the past years. It would be great if we had a real guarantee that permits us to enact the policies that President Rouhani referred to in New York.

Going back to energy, I think the regional countries, particularly in the Gulf, are trying to stay away from a total dependency on fossil energy. Each country in the region is starting to develop its own plans for 2030, 2040, 2050 and I'm sure that the aim is to reduce the dependency on fossil fuels by developing different alternatives.



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

THE ARAB UNITY STARTS FROM THE ELECTRIC GRIDS

The transition to a decarbonised world is at the same time an opportunity and a threat.

A threat for the stability in the region, of course, because the Middle East is a powerhouse in terms of energy, but we must remember that those natural resources, those common natural resources, are very much located in the Gulf area. Indeed, if we look at northern Africa it is just Algeria and Libya that are mainly rich in those kinds of assets.

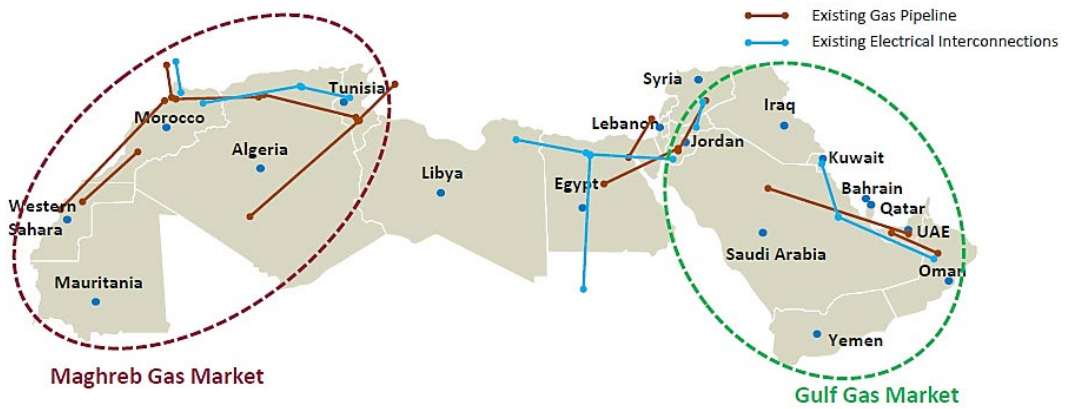
An opportunity because there is a lot of renewable potential in terms of solar and wind energy and this is much more evenly spread across the region. This is applicable also to countries such as Lebanon, Morocco and Jordan - just to mention a few - that today are 90% dependent from the import of primary energy resources. This is something that is not very well known, so there is a huge opportunity for bringing the renewables to the table.

The important issue that must be considered in this context is that renewable energies need markets and infrastructures, interconnections and grids. We tend to think of the Middle East, in terms of energy production, as a giant, but, in reality, if we look at the energy distribution side, all these countries are really dwarfs. Electricity is usually of poor quality, it is costly when not subsidised and the grid, perhaps with the exception of the GCC countries, is mostly fragmented and not interconnected.

We have been talking of fragmentation on the political side but, if we look at the electricity side of the business, there is no common market, there is a very low exchange of electricity, very low interconnection and basically there is a big hole between the Maghreb area and the GCC countries.

The Maghreb gas market is relatively well developed but, because of the hole you can see in the middle with Libya and Egypt, electricity cannot flow from one side to the other. We need to promote a single market of electricity in order to foster the economic development of those countries, taking into consideration the fact

While gas infrastructure is developed, electrical interconnections are still far from being fully exploited



- The NG market is developed at regional level with strong international exchanges
- The electricity market is scarcely interconnected and developed (partially) only at regional level

that electricity is perhaps the most essential facility and the most essential infrastructure capable of fostering economic development.

Manufacturing plants need electricity and it must be cheap and of very good quality; the same applies to services, hospitals and schools.

A few years ago, we (CESI) did a very interesting project for the Arab League studying the possibility of an infrastructure that could interconnect the Arab World. It was a project that took two years, headquartered in Cairo and involved all the utilities of the various Arab League countries. It turned out that there is a potential for interconnecting the whole region from East to West, implying a capital expenditure of approximately 270 billion dollars, dedicated investments on regional power and gas systems.

I personally think that this is a huge opportunity to promote and build additional electrical and gas interconnections from one country to the other. Based on the study that we have carried out, such an infrastructure would promote an exchange of electricity of approximately 300 terawatt/hours per year. This means exchanging the same amount of electricity that Italy produces in one year.

Trading electricity from one country to the other could lower the cost and that could mean, as it has been estimated, in a saving of approximately 50 billion euros per year.

In this context there is a final issue that has to be highlighted. It regards the fact that once we have a single market and a single exchange of electricity across the Middle East, there will be other opportunities that might be developed by interconnecting that part of the world, that is very rich in natural and renewable

resources, with Europe. That could create an additional export of energy of approximately 10 billion euros per year.

Therefore, these interconnection projects have a huge potential. The main problem is not the technical side, nor even the amount of the money that needs to be invested, but it is essentially about regulations. The problem lies in the political willingness to promote those opportunities. I just want to conclude with what an American economist said “When goods don’t cross borders, soldiers will”¹; we might say that when energy is crossing borders, refugees are not crossing borders.

¹ Quote generally attributed to the French economist Frederic Bastiat, but belonging instead to Otto T. Mallery, an American economist.

Session III

MAGHREB AND SAHEL: SHAPING THE STRATEGIC DEPTH



Dubai skyline.





MAHMOUD KAREM

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

WHAT ROLE FOR EGYPT? AND WHAT TYPE OF STABILISATION FOR THE AREA?

I will address today a rather sensitive issue that needs international cooperation. We are fighting the same enemy, we are fighting the same ideology, we have soldiers with boots on the ground fighting terrorists and yet we cannot agree amongst ourselves on something so crucial; namely “what constitutes terrorism”, and what is the “proper definition of terrorism”.

This is very important, Ladies and Gentlemen, since this schism continues to create a huge controversy in our diplomatic world. This is the topic of my intervention.

There is a conflict, a definitional disagreement, an altercation between allies who are fighting the same war, a war that is not yet over.

Funding, ideology, rehabilitation, regeneration, relocation, internet proficiency, healing the terrorists wounded, arms acquisition and training are still continuing unabated. Moreover, there remains a doomsday scenario, which is the possible acquisition of a crude weapon of mass destruction either chemical, biological or radiological by a terrorist group.

Terrorist groups have also moved into an advanced process of smuggling of Improvised Explosive Devices, while increasing their capabilities of luring youths and enticing children fighters in Europe to join their cause.

Youth induction and indoctrination by brain washing, the addition of members unknown by security forces makes detection very difficult in all our countries because these so called “new terrorist additions”, have no records in our security files.

Finally, and most importantly, the ideology remains strong and this remains the mother of all threats. Their tactics remain unchanged: embrace a new member, lure him through well-organized schooling or charity organisations, gift them with general social education and health-care services. These services and benefits extended to new potential members, range from free education fees, to finding new apartments in housing facilities to arranged marriages by helping them find a wife.

Afterwards comes the process of isolating the suspect from the society, ensuring his full obedience by dichotomizing the world into the righteous we, against the infidels, or as Bernard Lewis explained many years ago, *Dar al Harb* against *Dar al Silm* [also *Dar al Salaam* – the land of war vs the land of peace, note of the Editor].

In this context, obedience and allegiance to the emir is crucial. Then comes the process of graduating the suspect to embrace a strategy of working through clandestine and underground cluster cells that adopt a death culture. All this happens with a very sinister interpretation of the Quran and of the Hadiths, which is the narrative that must be addressed, or what I label the mother of all root causes of terrorism.

Now comes the big problem, the definition of terrorism. Instead of unifying our approach and efforts, especially on the definition of terrorism, we are facing a conceptual dilemma hampered by the complications of a transnational dispute among all key players. We can see this dilemma in the United Nations, in conferences, and we can see these definitional disputes in many other organisations involving all our parties.

So, in essence instead of carrying out a successful campaign against terror that ensures our full cooperation, we are making ourselves victims of a conceptual dilemma that makes our practical job on the ground more and more difficult. To elucidate, let me give you some examples of what we hear in international diplomacy around the world. For instance, when a terrorist attempt occurs and instead of getting denunciations and words of sympathy and support for the stricken country – what we expect in our part of the world – you hear phrases such as: “*Well, this is not really a terrorist attack, this is an **insurgency***”. This, Ladies and Gentlemen, is very strange. Insurgency in this context, is a definition that absolves terrorists from their horror attacks and inhumane deeds. It means a rebellion against an autocratic rule or authority. It carries the implications that the plight of the perpetrator is just and legitimate, while the state is the culprit and not the victim.

Another example, “*This is **violent extremism***” which avoids labelling terror acts as terrorism by using a softer description in order to absolve them.

The third example is to label them as “**Jihadist**” which means that they are soldiers of God on a sacred mission, while this is not the case. Any pious believer in Islam, would know that when we use the term Jihad, it means that this is a struggle against our own sins as it happens during the holy month of Ramadan, when we abstain from food and drink from sunrise till sunset. During that month, we consider ourselves in Jihad against cravings, hunger, human thirst, desires and many lusts. Jihad is not a sacred mission or a licence to kill, but only in the perverted interpretation of our holy Quran performed by some ISIS members.

The last example used often to describe acts of terror in our region is: “**Popular uprising or insurrection**” and this is one of the most seditious ways of interpreting acts of terror because violence here is seen as legitimate to face the brutality of government.

Ladies and Gentlemen, there should be no excuse for not denouncing and deploing in the strongest of terms any attack against innocent lives and peaceful civilians by terrorist groups. I say this in anger referring to what we all read in statements by some after the brutal attack on the Rawda mosque in November 2017, in Northern Sinai, when all innocent defenceless worshippers (approx. 340), where all killed as they were praying. These same four definitions mentioned above were all used to describe this incident, instead of a clear-cut unequivocal denunciation of this heinous act.

This is what the diplomatic world is witnessing today in actual negotiation processes. This is a very serious matter that has to be addressed by both the diplomatic world and all negotiating parties. If we continue on this divided course, we will lose vision, target, and ultimately lose faith in the vitality and primacy of our collective work.

Before I conclude, I must state that there is a primary responsibility of the state in upholding the principles and values of human rights in its war on terror. The societal approach, civil society and NGO contribution must work in tandem with government efforts. Any government must encourage and solicit the support of civil society to face the aftermath and serious consequences left behind by a terror attack.

Finally, we have a legal edifice by the Security Council comprising three Security Council resolutions¹. This edifice has to be respected and its principles and provisions must be fully implemented. States must be held accountable if they buy oil from ISIS, if they treat medically, heal and send back their wounded, if they supply them with arms or money, or if they transfer them to other locations to spread chaos and death.

Isn't it time for the International system to uphold this legal edifice?

1 UN Security Council Resolution 23/54, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts*, S/RES/23/54 (24 May 2017) available at: <https://bit.ly/2DDY6iL>; UN Security Council Resolution 23/70, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts - Preventing terrorists from acquiring weapons*, S/RES/23/70 (2 August 2017), available at: <https://bit.ly/2OFKZUQ>; UN Security Council Resolution 23/96, *Threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts*, S/RES/23/96 (21 December 2017) available at: <https://bit.ly/386usAW>.



YOUSSEF CHERIF

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AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND FRAGMENTED POWERS: POST IS POLITICAL MODELS

The Middle East and North Africa region is a fragmented and volatile region. It suffers from the Sunni-Shia split, the moderate vs. radical divide, pro and anti-Western groups, etc. But there is one division that is often neglected, between two distinct groups: one of authoritarian regimes and another of fragmented power systems. The regions and countries emerging after the collapse of the Islamic State Caliphate will identify according to this classification, and democratising them might be a solution for a constructive future.

AUTHORITARIAN REGIMES AND FRAGMENTED POWERS

The first group is a geographic line that starts from the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Oman, UAE, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, minus Kuwait), then continues to Egypt and Eastern Libya; it represents what could be described as “authoritarian regimes” with strongmen on top. Syria, whose regime is now recovering, is part of this block, although aligned differently in its foreign policy. Yemen is a collateral victim of the leading countries in this group.

Then there is another cluster of “fragmented powers” where the ruler is sharing his prerogatives with various forces, and where criticism of the ruling elites is somewhat possible. Almost all Maghreb countries belong to this group: Tunisia, Western Libya and, to some extent, Morocco. Algeria and Sudan seem to be moving in this direction. Iraq, Lebanon, Kuwait and Palestine can be added to this group. We could add Jordan as well, even though its foreign policy is closer to the first group. Qatar, while being an authoritarian regime belonging to the first group, is closer to the second one in its foreign policy. But this is not necessarily a democratic club, as shown by the militia-led order in Western Libya or the excessive presence of militias and non-state actors in Iraq, Lebanon, Palestine and Sudan.

Mauritania, although of little influence in Arab politics, had a peaceful transition of power in Summer and represents an exception to the two models. Actually, the foreign policy of this impoverished country follows the Saudi/Emirati axis. Its transition, which keeps the military/security-led authoritarian regime in place, might be the example that Riyadh and Abu Dhabi would want to see emerging elsewhere.

ALGERIA, SUDAN, IRAQ AND TUNISIA

The fragmented power group is larger, growing year after year, and it is within its components that democratic experiences could grow. The cases of Algeria and Sudan, where protests pushed the regimes to some sort of reform, may lead to regional democratic transformations if they succeed. Iraq, however, failed in keeping its fragile peace and might become a showcase for the failure of democratisation. Tunisia, on the other hand, remains the most successful case and a proof that democracy can work in this part of the world.

ALGERIA

In Algeria, demonstrators with different political orientations are out every week, denouncing an aging political/military leadership, and calling for structural transformations of the political system. This struggle may or may not lead to a peaceful political (and democratic) transition. Indeed, although it is ongoing for several months, the army seems to be in control. It is worth noting, however, that for a country as big as Algeria, that is facing multiple internal and external challenges, the army and security forces opted basically for no repression. Most arrests are limited, punctual. Furthermore, due to Algeria's drastic isolationist policies and its relative wealth, the current movement is little "contaminated" from outside. The possibility of having an autochthonous democratic movement emerging in Algeria is real, and because of Algeria's size and importance, it could send democratic shock waves across the region. But the possibility of ending-up with a failed democratisation attempt and status-quo, or consolidated authoritarianism, exists as well.

SUDAN

The situation is quite different in Sudan. This is a poor and indebted country whose armed forces suffer from deep divisions and corruption. In the period between Omar al-Bashir's fall (April 2019) and the formation of a semi-civilian cabinet (August 2019), tens of Sudanese protesters were killed by the same people who are now part of the government. There is little accountability, and the balance of power is not on the side of the civilian movement that toppled Bashir, but rath-

er on the militaries. Furthermore, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, the advocates of authoritarianism in the region, cheered for the transition and are openly backing it also for geopolitical reasons, which may lead to an outcome rather different from what is expected in a democratic transition.

IRAQ

However, the fragmented powers' model does not necessarily lead to democracy. During the George W. Bush Administration (2001-2009), Iraq was said to be the first democracy in the Arab World. Yet the way Iraqi forces crushed demonstrators in October 2019 showed a different aspect. This repression, which resulted in tens of deaths and hundreds of injured, is a reminder that the brutal police state that was in place before 2003 did not really disappear in local political culture. The foreign-led nation-building process, be it in Iraq or Afghanistan, has its shortcomings. Iraq is today a weaker country than what it was in the second half of the 20th century: internally divided, suffering from terrorism and corruption, and a victim of massive foreign intervention and interference (Iran, US, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, etc.). The example of Iraq continues to be used by the local advocates of authoritarianism to discourage democracy activists.

TUNISIA

Among the countries where a fragmented power exists, Tunisia is the one faring the best. The country is going through a series of hardships, not least because of the dire economic situation: it is highly indebted internally and externally, facing growing unemployment, shunned by local and foreign investors unwilling to take risks, etc. But in the fall of 2019, it went through its fourth round of free and fair elections since the 2011 uprising, under peaceful circumstances. It has been almost a decade since democracy took root in the country, and a new generation is emerging, more connected to the international world and at the same time integrated in its own society.

CONCLUSION

The Islamic State Caliphate, even if it was a virtual utopia in most of the lands it claimed to contain, should be a wake-up call to the political and military groups in charge of the MENA region. If such a criminal and destructive ideology can take lands and win support, it means that something is wrong in the way they run their countries. Democracy, or at least less brutal authoritarianism and more real participatory governance, could be the best alternative to the current regimes, and the one that can offer their youth hope and dignity.



GIOVANNI ROMANI

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

THE CHALLENGES OF THE MAGHREB-SAHEL AREA AND THE POLICIES OF NATO AND ITS PARTNERS: THE WAY AHEAD

NATO has a Framework for the South that is a crosscutting element of the Alliance's posture and I will mention four elements of it.

First, to improve NATO regional understanding and situational awareness in response to crises, also through the Hub for the South that we recently established in Naples.

Second, improving NATO preparedness to conduct expeditions and operations.

Third, contributing to the stability of the south through regional partnerships, and I will expand later on this, for example with capacity building activities.

Fourth, is NATO's role in the fight against terrorism. For example, NATO has been part of the coalition against ISIS and has a number of activities in supporting partners in training on counterterrorism and related capacities, including Afghanistan, Iraq and a lot of countries in North Africa.

I want to move on and explain how we do this. The main elements are the cooperation programmes NATO has developed through the years. There is the Mediterranean Dialogue, that is 25 years old. We also have a second cooperation programme that is in the Gulf and is called Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

The MD is a framework that, despite sustained threats and challenges over 25 years, has been not only very resilient, but also an invaluable tool in order to have discussions among seven countries, in different formats with or without Israel. It is something pretty unique that allows NATO's ambassadors to have this regional engagement. It is based on two pillars, the first is political dialogue and the second is practical cooperation. This second aspect is where I would like to expand and give you some samples and a glimpse of what NATO is doing.

The first example is Egypt. What we have been doing in the country is helping with land mine clearing. There are a lot of mines still in the desert since the II WW and successive conflicts and NATO has been helping through the introduction of new detection technologies, by equipping a platoon with mine detectors and by training operators and maintenance engineers.

The second example is with Jordan where we have lots of activities. I just want to cite here, for example, service women's development and assistance in identifying and eliminating explosive remnants of war in the territory of Jordan. I will move to another country, namely Mauritania. In Mauritania most of the activities are about ammunition safety, so we are helping them building ammunition depots because they have some problems with obsolete ammunition. We also support them with the destruction of this obsolete ammunition, that was no longer usable and was actually pretty dangerous.

Then there is Tunisia. In Tunisia we are supporting the country in both counter-terrorism activities and in cyber-defense. Cyber was mentioned before and there are a number of nations that are approaching NATO and asking for support on cyber-security and cyber-defence.

I will now move to the relation between NATO and the EU, because another panellist talked about this and there are actually a number of activities that we can coordinate and find a synergy with the European Union. For some of them we are at a good stage concerning counterterrorism, maritime security and hybrid threats. Others which we are actively working on, like military mobility, resilience to CBRN (chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear related risks) and promoting women, peace and security. Tunisia is a very relevant case of NATO-EU cooperation because we have an activity together with the European Union in Tunisia and we hope to expand this to other countries in the area. Now let's go to the Sahel which is the main theme of this panel.

There are several stakeholders in the Sahel and what probably is necessary here is more coordination. You can see there are several international organisations such as the G5 Sahel, the EU and also very important stakeholders from outside the European or African regions such as China, countries of the Gulf and Russia.

Now if you look at NATO's indirect engagement, we do very few things, we help with Mediterranean Dialogue partners which, with the exception of Mauritania, are on the periphery of the Sahel. We have also been engaging in staff-to-staff talks with the G5 Sahel Secretariat. We also have a military mission to the African Union, meaning we have a military to military cooperation with it. Surely there is room for improvement.



AHMED ABOUL GHEIT
Secretary-General of the Arab League, Cairo

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The title of this conference is *Arab Geopolitics after the Caliphate*. Yes, the caliphate as territorial project has come to an end but, the caliphate, as everybody has been saying all along this afternoon, is still there in the minds of so many of the millions of people who have been raised in such a manner. First, to hate the West and their own government; second, to Islamise you. I read books and articles and they say, speaking about the UK: we hope that in 20 years the majority will be Muslims. We need to confront DAESH, Al Qaeda and all their affiliates, and you have to understand that one of them is the Muslim Brotherhood. That is also a fact.

I have a few points to make on the geopolitical environment we are living in the Middle East and in the Arab world after the disaster of 2011. I do not call it “the spring”, I call it disaster. Why is it a disaster? Because Arab economies lost between 800 to 900 billion dollars. In Syria alone 500.000 lost their lives. We have now in the Arab world 17 million refugees and displaced, so what else is a disaster if that is that is not a disaster? This does not mean that change was not needed, and change is still needed today but not in this way, not through what one of my colleagues kept defining as the political and social engineering of the Middle East.

This political and social engineering has been tried blindly without any knowledge of the ramifications and consequences of what had happened. The result is a sad story because we are still living in the aftermath of 2011 and I think it will last with us a generation or two. You can see that I am very spirited when I speak about 2011 because I have seen my region and my country almost in shambles. I live in the Nile Delta and in 2011 I could not venture out of my apartment. If I thought of going out, I would have a pistol in my pocket, why is it so? Because they would stop me and drag me out of my car as they did with many thousands of Egyptians. It was insecurity, full insecurity.

We lived in that spring and will be living in that spring for two decades or two generations to come. There has not been a new order, there has not been a new

Arab order nor a new middle eastern order like people thought it might emerge. There has been a lot of Helsinki process, there has been lot about Westphalia.

Today a certain gentleman addressed a young lady here asking why don't you organize an OSCE arrangement. It cannot be done. It was done in '75 because then the cold war was coming to an end and it was 30 years after the end of the Second World War. Moreover, there is Israel and there is the hostility between the Arab states and Israel. How would you allow Israel to be part and parcel, like East and West Europe after '75? Such an agreement would not work before there is a settlement of the Palestinian question. Another gentleman today says that he thinks, after visiting the West Bank, that the feelings of the Palestinians are very hard towards the Israelis. They are occupiers, they are usurping their land, they are taking away their land, they are penalizing them every moment of the day, so their feelings have to be strong. It is only natural, if you were subjected to that kind of treatment, God forbid, you would feel the same way.

I want to add that in the aftermaths of this chaos, thank God, the nation state survived. The feelings of belonging to a nation state live weather in Syria, in Iraq and even in Libya. In Libya with that level of fragmentation, you will see that Libyans seek a united country, a new a nation state. The nation state lives though it has been tremendously weakened.

In the heart of the Arab world, the el-Mashreq, nation states have also been weakened. The Arab League itself, the organization that I head, has been weakened because of the division and of what had happened as if it was done by design. Of course, there is no mind so elaborate in thinking, and so deep in planning to perceive the possibility of such weakening everywhere. This been said, we must recognise that there was some kind of design.

Now the region is subject to militias and terrorist groups and they will sadly last with us for an extended period of time. I do not perceive for how long, but they have to be defeated.

We have mainly three regional problems, Libya, and I attended one week at e 74th UN General Assembly where there were people talking about opportunities, possibilities, possible breakthroughs, and a sense of optimism. However, Libya is not moving, and sadly it might not move soon.

Yemen is a major problem that will find its settlement in the Iranian issue. If we could settle the Iranian behaviour, then consequently also Yemen would be settled.

Then comes Syria, before coming to have this talk with you I saw on BBC that Turkey has started the invasion. This is something that will complicate beyond anything the possibilities for Syria. Despite the fact that, when we were in New York on the 20th and 21st of September, the parts have agreed on the composition of the constitutional committee and everybody was positive about it. I am claiming that we might have a standstill situation in relation to the three issues I have just exposed, and this is a very sad reporting but it is the way I see it.

Back on the issue of the interventions of the neighbouring states such as Iran

and Turkey. They are intervening thinking that they are defending their own interests and again the sad thing is that they are intervening in other people's affairs and in other people's territories. That is a very dangerous act that might lead to hostility and enmity in the region, for a generation or two to come. This is also a very gloomy reporting.

An issue related to all of what is happening: the fragmentation, the revolutionaries, the springs, the chaos is the demographic development since 70% of the population in the region today is below the age of 30. They need jobs, they need to marry, to have their families and to enjoy life. The region cannot offer this, it is a poor region. I flew over the horn of Africa going to Djibouti, passing by Somalia, it was just desert and rocks, it is a poor, poor region.

In Egypt, despite the fertility of the land, the Egyptians, a hundred million people are living on 5% of the land; relying on one river that Ethiopia is trying to deny them. The Egyptians get 50 billion cubing meters of water a year from the Nile. The Ethiopians decided to build a dam that will deny the Egyptians between 15 to 20 billion cubic meters a year for 4 or 5 years. Then they will die, or they will go to war. That is something you have to focus on, especially Italy with its responsibility *vis a vis* the Horn of Africa and its relationship with Egypt. Be careful, I am warning you, there is something wrong happening when it comes not only to demographics but also to water, and this is not limited to Egypt. In Palestine the Israeli are taking all the water for themselves. Iraq lost 30% of the two rivers because of the Turkish actions; and Syria too.

You must be aware of the ramifications of what happened in 2011. As I was foreign minister, I saw possibly 15-20 European and western foreign ministers coming to visit in Cairo and going to Tahir square. I spoke to them saying be careful because it will be the fundamentalists that will take over and if it is a fundamentalist you will pay a price. I am not defending my position because today I am 77 years old and, at the time I was 69, coming to the end of my career and I made a career. I was Foreign Minister, I was Permanent Representative to the United Nations, I was ambassador to this beautiful great country called the Roman Empire, Italy, the great Italy, you should be proud of yourselves as Italians you are a great country with great people.

What should be done? First, please stop interfering politically and applying social and political engineering. Be careful, that is one.

Two, the neighbours should bring to an end their actions. I understand, often I try to understand Turkish political and military behaviour. However the decisions Turkey took and adopted in 2011 led directly to what Turkey is facing today, they should have been more careful. Iran is a revolution claiming to be a revolution since '79; it has trying its best to export its revolution and to create situations, starting from 2006 and 2008/9, in Lebanon with Hezbollah and in Gaza through Hamas. This has to come to end or at least we have to find a *modus operandi* with those who are intervening as

neighbours in the region. In order to do this the Palestinian settlement has to be concluded.

The third problem is that you think that Palestine is being put aside; the Israelis are claiming that. If we are establishing relations with Arab Countries and with Gulf Countries, they will forget about Palestine. I insist, looking into your eyes, that no Arab will forget Palestine, ever, ever, ever. We need to really and truly settle the Palestinian question. The Palestinians are angry? Yes, they are angry, they have been denied a state citizenship, land and water, their children are not even allowed to go to school and they are taught at home. Bear with us please, Palestine needs a state and they are not asking for much, they are asking for only the 20% remaining of historical Palestine which was under the British mandate between the river and the Mediterranean.

We have to confront terrorism and we need cooperation between Arab nation states and European or Western states, and, in this regard, the sky is the limit. Economically, a Marshall Plan must be provided, we need 50 billion or 100 billion projects destined to the poor Arab countries that were subject to the political social engineering.

The final issue is the world of Islam. We have to work on reforming the message and the teaching. I often venture in a bold statement: the Muslim world today is passing through times where it might be needing a Muslim Martin Luther to reform. That reform will never come from the Islamic Cooperation Organization, no. It will come from al-Azhar, the core of Islam.

To end, please, I appeal to all of you before taking issue and discussing and reaching conclusions and heating or loving, try to go deeper and to understand what it is all about in the region. The region has been subject since 1947 to a great injustice, Palestine. Settle Palestine and do not forget about Palestine whatever you are told. There are 7 million Palestinians living in Palestine between Israel and Palestine and there are 7 million Israelis. Would you like to have two states or one state where we are all equals, I leave this idea for you to reflect.

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

WELCOME REMARKS

Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo

President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

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 EEC from 1981 to 1986. In the next years, his career focussed 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, Amb. 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* (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 French Air Force Academy in September 1982. As a pilot, he had many operational tours in Chad, Saudi Arabia and Turkey for the Northern Iraq/Kurdish surveillance missions. Among his numerous missions and commands, LtCol Pincet was appointed in 2002 Deputy Commander of the MultiNational 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 Di-

rector of the Academic Operations Division (DAO) at NATO Defense College in Rome. 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 from 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 focussed on southern Europe. In the academic years 2007/08 and 2008/09 she has been 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 University.

Fabio Massimo Castaldo

Vicepresident, European Parliament, Brussels

Fabio Massimo Castaldo is an Italian politician who serves in the European Parliament since 2014. He obtained a double degree *summa cum laude* in Italian and French law, with a master's degree in law at the Tor Vergata University of Rome and an M1 in international and European law at Paris-Est University, Créteil. From 2013 to 2014 he worked as a parliamentary assistant at the Italian Senate. On the 15th of November 2017, he was elected Vicepresident of the European Parliament, becoming the youngest Vice President ever. In July 2019 he was re-elected Vice President of the European Parliament where he is also a member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs (AFET), the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (AFCO) as well as the Subcommittee on Security and Defence (SEDE). He is in the Delegation for relations with the Maghreb countries and the Arab Maghreb Union, including the EU-Morocco, EU-Tunisia and EU-Algeria Joint Parliamentary Committees.

OPENING REMARKS

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). He served as Prime Minister of Libya ad interim and at the same time as Head of In-

ternational 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.

POLITICAL SUMMARY

Alessandro Politi

Director, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

Alessandro Politi is the director of the NATO Defense College Foundation, the only NATO-affiliated NGO think tank. A political and strategic analyst with 30 years of experience, he was political advisor of two KFOR Commanders. He was senior researcher for the Italian MoD (CeMiSS-Centre for Military and Strategic Studies) responsible for 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). He has contributed to the Italian Defence White Paper. 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. He has been acting director of the School of Intelligence Analysis at a private establishment 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 37 books on strategic and security matters. His most recent publications are on the Belt and Road Initiative. His most recent book is the NDCF Shaping Security Horizons - Strategic Trends 2012-2019 volume, a global predictive analysis tailored to the needs of decision shapers.

Umberto Profazio

NDCF Maghreb Analyst

Maghreb Analyst for the NATO Defense College Foundation (NDCF), Umberto Profazio holds a Ph.D. in History of International Relations from the University of Rome 'Sapienza', with a thesis on Libya after independence. He is the author of *Lo Stato Islamico. Origini e sviluppi*, published in 2015 for emuse. Previously Libya Analyst for the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), he authored the Libya chapter of 2019 issue of the Armed Conflict Survey (ACS). His articles have appeared on the websites of several think tanks and magazines including IISS, NDCF, NATO Defense College (NDC), IAI, ISPI, Limes. He

gave frequent interviews to several press agencies, newspapers, radios and tv such as RFI, TRT, La Stampa, Radio Rai 3, Agenzia Nova.

Nuray Atmaca

NDCF Levant & Eastern Mediterranean Analyst

Nuray Atmaca is a political scientist with specialization on the Middle East and North Africa and Turkish foreign policy. Since her graduation in 2015 she has focused on security policy and consultancy. Between 2015- 2016 she was Fellow at the Geneva Centre for Security Policy (GCSP). Later on, she worked as Foreign Area Specialist for the German Federal Armed Forces Center for Operational Communication where she was Advisor to the Director NATO Advisory and Liaison Team at the headquarters of the Kosovo Force in Pristina, Kosovo. Currently Nuray is working as Consultant at BwConsulting – the inhouse consultancy of the German Armed Forces and advises the Ministry of Defence.

Eleonora Ardemagni

NDCF Gulf Analyst

Eleonora Ardemagni is a Teaching Assistant at the Catholic University of Milan and an Associate Research Fellow at the Italian Institute for International and Political Studies (ISPI). She is also a Gulf Analyst for the NATO Defense College Foundation. Her research analysis focuses on foreign and security issues in Yemen and the Gulf monarchies, and on Arab military forces. On Yemen, she has recently published *Yemen's nested conflict(s): Layers, geographies and feuds*, ORIENT-German Journal for Politics, Economics and Culture of the Middle East, No. 2, 2019 and *The Persian Gulf Rimland: Federalism, Geostrategy and Patronage in Contemporary Southern Yemen*, International Studies Journal 56, Vol. 14 No. 4, Spring 2018.

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 Arab 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 and 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 focusses on refugees, women and children life conditions in war-torn areas. Ms Azzam participated in many conferences as a moderator and wrote several political and social articles that have been published on the 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 NATO Headquarters in Brussels. In this capacity, he was responsible for developing and promoting NATO policy, political relations, individual practical cooperation programmes and a 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 seventh 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, Communications and Fellow, Carnegie Middle East Center, Beirut

Mohanad Hage Ali is an academic, political journalist and journalism trainer. He holds 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 the NOW Arabic website, and a political editor/reporter at the 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 programmes 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

Karim El Aynaoui 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 economist at the World Bank. He is a board member of the OCP Foundation, a global member of the Trilateral Commission and 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 Four" 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 the KPMG Middle East and South Asia (MESA) Board, and member of the KPMG Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMA) Regional Board until 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 the 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 commentator on major international media channels such as Al Arabiya, France 24 and BBC. Dr Sager holds a PhD in Politics and International Relations from Lancaster University, a MA from the University of Kent 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* (GRC, 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 this 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 the 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, he 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 honours from 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; 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. He was appointed as Head of Mission of Egypt to the European Communities and as Permanent Representative of Egypt to NATO from 2005 to 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 to represent 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 specialised 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 Busi-

ness Managers (IACE), the UN, The Carter Center in Tunisia, etc. Cherif holds a Chevening MA in International Relations from the Department of War Studies of King's College London and a Fulbright MA 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 for 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 U.S. Navy 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 at the NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division.

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, Cyprus. 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.



Inauguration of the NATO-ICI



اجتماع مجلس شمال الأطلسي
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NAC - ICI Meeting
24 January 2017 ٢٤ يناير ٢٠١٧



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NATO AT 70

ARAB GEOPOLITICS AFTER THE CALIPHATE

HOW TO EXIT THE FRAGMENTATION TRAP

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

High-Level Conference

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

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 channelled into the reconstruction effort?

- 14,30-15,45 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, 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

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. Energy: from rivalry leverage to lynchpin of stability.

16,15 -17,30 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

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 is 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.

17,30 -18,45 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; 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 HQ, Brussels

Q&A

18,45-19,00 **Concluding Remarks**

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



Muslim Mosque representing Islamic traditional religious ornaments.



The end of the Islamic State territorial dimension did not represent a turning point in rediscussing regional dynamics. The Arab world is still affected by rivalries and internal political turmoil. The current fragmentation is exacerbated by the link between ongoing civil wars (Libya, Syria and Yemen), socio-economic and demographic pressures, the role of non-state actors and criminal activities, taking place in grey zones of instability.

This volume, through the contributions of experts and policy-makers gathered by the Foundation, aims at providing a solid understanding of how both state and non-state actors are trying to exploit the current geopolitical situation. In particular, the main aspects taken into account are: the role of external actors, the dynamics of fragmentation and of a possible regional recomposition, and the opportunities offered by the energy sector that could be a vehicle for economic integration and sustainable development.

Despite such a complex situation, it is crucial for the international community to understand the general framework, in order to contribute to a possible redefinition of the regional political and social patterns. In this regard, NATO, with its well-established partnerships in the area (Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative) and its expertise in the Security Sector Reform and capacity-building, can play a central role by assisting countries in restoring their sovereignty. The Alliance must, of course, intensify these partnerships, following concretely a 360° security paradigm.



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