



NATO Foundation  
*Defense College*

# ARAB GEOPOLITICS 2021

**HOW AND WITH WHOM?  
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

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

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## **ARAB GEOPOLITICS 2021**

**How and with whom?**

### **Challenges and Opportunities**

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CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

*Conference organised by*  
THE NATO DEFENSE COLLEGE FOUNDATION

*in co-operation with*  
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ALESSANDRO MINUTO-RIZZO  
*President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome*

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## FOREWORD

The Foundation is 10 years old and this is the seventh time that we have an event dedicated to this region. And of course, we are happy that this time we can have a public in presence. In other words, we have taken the habit of holding every year a project dedicated to the Arab Region and we like to continue the tradition. Since the beginning the NATO Defense College Foundation has a strong focus on Arab affairs that we try to assess in the best possible way. We also think that Rome is an ideal place for this kind of discussion being at the centre of the Mediterranean. It is a difficult set of subjects but also a central one for international security and even more.

As I said in other occasions our objective is that we would like to see the region transformed in an arc of opportunities using in a positive way its potential. It is impossible to resume such a vast area in simple formulas and each country has its own history and expectations and deserves a special attention. What can we say this year in respect to the last conference? A fresh look is necessary because we see a mix of old factors and new movements. We like to think that those movements go in the direction of stability and more regional cooperation. We know by experience that regional cooperation is one of traditional basic problems. Now, major changes include a new government in Israel, the welcome recomposition of the Gulf Cooperation Council, the so-called Abraham agreements among various players and perhaps a pattern of reconciliation among old adversaries. The basic fragmentation remains but at the same time we see a convergence on a more co-operative attitude. And we wish to extend a friendly hand in good faith in order to offer support and advice.

NATO has started to established partnerships in the region since 1994 with the main wish of projecting security and supporting, where it is possible, the efforts of local governments. It is a quiet strategy and I have been personally involved in its inception. Today we are going to direct our attention on what we call deep Maghreb. By that we mean the vast strategic region south of the Mediterranean,

down to the Atlantic and the Sahara, that includes the Sahel dimension. At the east Libya is contiguous and is in permanent turmoil since 2011.

The situation in this area that comprises a number of weak and poor countries is worsening since some time already. A deadly combination of illegal trafficking of all kinds, from cigarettes to narcotics, and organised crime. Is affecting the region in a serious way. This combination includes terrorist labels that sometimes is also a cover for illegal activities. Such an unrest and disorder represent a major threat to stability and well-being. Dangerous connections with Libya and its hinterland complete this worrying scenario. The International community, the European Union, and NATO in perspective, are engaged in difficult choices to confront a political situation that cannot be tackled in traditional ways. Various initiatives are underway; it is clear that a major investment is needed covering various aspects.

The third subject today is energy its complexity and the implications in the region. We have been able to have here today a number of very distinguished speakers and moderators coming from a number of countries and I thank all of them for having accepted our invitation. In our tradition, we wish to provide a good framework for a high-level scientific conversation in a spirit of respect and mutual understanding, even coming from different perspectives. Our objective is to connect with a larger audience on strategic issues. In our own way we complement the work of the College. We live in very engaging times where a clever analysis and a better understanding of events is more important than ever to ensure peace, security and well-being. And information is at the basis of everything.

I wish to thank the small but very able staff of the Foundation for their hard work and preparation of this conference, which I repeat is the first time this is legally presence, which requires a special effort. Special thanks, very warmly, go to those friends who supported us with generosity. Philip Morris International first, the NATO Political and Security Division, la Compagnia di San Paolo. And our partners The Policy Center for the New South and of course the College. My sincere thanks go also to our traditional media partners Formiche and Airpress.





OLIVIER RITTIMANN

*Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome*

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## WELCOME REMARKS

The College is always delighted to support NDCF efforts to promote debates and disseminate knowledge about topics of primary interest for NATO. With that respect, I consider the Foundation's initiatives complementary to NDC educational and research activities. My particular thanks to Ambassador Minuto-Rizzo and his team for arranging such important events, managing to gather such a distinguished audience of practitioners, academics and decision-makers around issues of importance for the transatlantic security.

In times of high uncertainties, it is critical to share perspectives and experiences and try to identify, candidly, some lessons from our past engagements to be prepared to face future challenges. In the light of the withdrawal from Afghanistan, it is more than even necessary to assess the strategic impacts of NATO's crisis management initiatives.

Assessing the Alliance's endeavours in that country over the last 20 years should not lead Allies to disengage from the broad MENA region. On the contrary, the Middle-East, North Africa and the Sahel regions remain deeply affected by various forms of instability. One decade after the Arab Spring, the region has not witnessed the expected socio-economic and political reforms claimed by the popular movements of 2011. The so-called Arab Spring has paved the way to an overall worsening of the security situation in NATO's South: countries like Libya, Syria, Yemen have fallen into civil wars, facing major humanitarian crises; Iraq and Lebanon struggle with major socio-economic troubles, constantly threatened by bankruptcy and sectarian tensions; legitimacy of governments and leaderships are regularly contested in Algeria, Tunisia and Egypt.

Even in the GCC countries, political stability and social cohesion were put at stake by the need for economic diversification and the COVID-19 crisis impact, in a regional context polarized by rivalries with Iran and the American disengagement. At the same time, the recent war in Gaza has recalled the « explosive » potential of status quo. Despite the prospects for rapprochement and cooperation

created by the normalization agreements between Israel and its Arab neighbours, the Palestinian cause keeps its importance for public opinions all over the region.

The hardening of the situation in Sahel, aggravated by the internationalization and fragmentation in Libya, reflects the growing role of non-state actors in violence dynamics in the south. Everywhere in the Sahel region, governance discrepancies, community grievances and marginalization, have provided a breeding ground for the development of Violent Extremist Organizations and illegal trafficking activities, with the tragic humanitarian consequences we all know. In that fragile context, the climate change raises new challenges, and might increase the pressures on natural resources available.

NATO's South is affected by multiple drivers of instability that have serious security implications for the Alliance security as illustrated by the growing tensions in the Mediterranean Basin. The strengthened influence of Russia and China in the MENA region and in Africa – through arms deals, expanding military and economic footprint to name a few – as well as the presence of new actors such as the Gulf countries, have put NATO Allies' interests in the region at risk.

All these developments pledge for a renewed attention of the NATO community to the South, monitoring main trends and analysing their implications for the Alliance and its partners in the region. With that in mind, speakers and participants will have the opportunity today to: firstly, evaluate the changes that occurred in the region over the last years, trying to identify how regional actors and global powers are shifting and re-organising their alliances.

Then, we will take some time to examine the new challenges posed by the evolution of energy markets and resources. Finally, our second and last panel will focus on dynamics in the “deep Maghreb”, this regional ensemble that links the Maghreb countries of the Mediterranean with the sand sea of Sahel across several trafficking routes controlled by organised crime and other non-state actors. What resources, forces and strategies should be employed to avoid a major regional collapse in the Maghreb/Sahel region or prevent further exacerbation of rivalries in the Middle-East – as instability in both regions have direct consequences for the Alliance security. Revealing and discussing how we might meet these challenges is our task today. Let me extend the warmest possible welcome to all participants and again, a heartfelt thanks to the Foundation, and to Mr. Russo Perez from the Compagnia di San Paolo, for this wonderful opportunity to discuss and learn.



NICOLÒ RUSSO PEREZ  
*Head, International Affairs, Compagnia di San Paolo,  
Turin*

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## WELCOME REMARKS

I have the pleasure of representing the Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo in this event. I would like to stress the importance of this cooperation between the Compagnia and the NATO Defense College Foundation, which lasts over time. NATO is in a process of important transformation and adaptation within the NATO 2030 process. And therefore, I think that there is a huge opportunity for think tanks and for the scientific and academic community to contribute to the design of the NATO for the future.

The so-called southern flank, namely Sahel and North Africa, represents an increasingly contested regional security complex, where we see the growing influence of external powers like Russia and China. These regions are deeply connected with the greater Middle East, which remains plugged by rivalries among various states involved in ongoing conflicts and crises, from Libya to Afghanistan, through Syria, Iraq and Yemen. I guess this backdrop and the multiple linkages between local, national and regional actors are becoming more complex and multifaceted with a direct impact on the character of warfare.

On the one hand, given the involvement of regional powers in proxy wars and although the region has seen a normalization between some Gulf Cooperation Council states and Israel, an escalation is possible both through the spectrum of conflict and across various operational theatres, both land and maritime. On the other hand, terrorist groups and militias can access robust military capabilities, financial resources, and logistical support, which enable them to challenge the security forces of NATO partners. Easily accessible and relatively inexpensive technologies strongly amplify the possibilities of local and regional actors from unmanned areas system to access information and communication technologies used for training, intelligence, propaganda, and also, fundraising. Such situation presents several implications for NATO and its partners in the region, including those that are part of the Mediterranean dialogue and of the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative.

The Alliance has to deal with the geopolitical approaches of relevant actors in the region, as well as with the different postures of NATO Allies. The current US administration may help in this regard, given that it seems to support more regional balance and cooperation, which could pave the way for further coordination and coordinated efforts by Europeans, be through NATO, the EU or a combination of both and ad-hoc groupings.

I conclude my remarks and I look forward to understand more from the internationally renewed experts that are joining us today. This is an event that the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, a private sector player, considers of strategic importance in order to foster a better understanding of the geopolitical context in which all our societies are embedded.



ALESSANDRO POLITI

Director, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome

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## POLITICAL SUMMARY

Arab strategic issues tend to be shaped by two vectors: the geopolitics of conflict and geoeconomics of energy. Evidently energy revenues are used to finance armies and feed conflicts, but, if one looks closer, the two aspects are much more distinct than it is presumed. In fact, energy is generally not “weaponised” by the producing countries, if we set aside the two main OPEC oil embargoes of 1973 and 1979, plus the Algerian energy cut off vis-à-vis Morocco in 2021 and some other minor instances.

Why? Because on the one hand the two major embargoes were spectacular, but counterproductive, and on the other because price manipulations, production cuts and discounts are much more effective means to a secure geoeconomics relevance that translates into profits. *C'est l'argent qui fait la guerre*, but regional wars in the Gulf and the Levant were about geopolitical dominance and not oil (including Operation Iraqi Freedom in 2003).

The conference highlighted very clearly the substantial change in regional geoeconomics through the paradigm of the “energy trilemma” (World Energy Council): conventional resources remain still key for decades, but the struggle reducing the carbon footprint has started and at the same time the use of renewables will improve and increase. It is a matter of countries’ security of supply and sustainability: financial (i.e., social and political) and environmental. Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait have relatively more problems being oil dependent, while gas producers may have some advantage because gas is considered a bridge fuel., but only those with more diversified economies have a more consistent lead.

The green revolution is still very uncertain: who pays for it? how are job losses in the conventional sector compensated and resorbed? is it sustainable and is the local governance ready for it within the 2040 deadline? Everybody would like to see the region transformed in an arc of opportunities using in a positive way its potential and energy is an important means.

On the geopolitical side regional wars for supremacy are still raging evidently

in Yemen and Libya and, with much less media attention, in Syria (an unaccomplished Russian mission and perhaps an opportunity for Arab/Western re-engagement) and in Iraq, where stability is far from being achieved. On the background hangs over the very serious problem of Sahel, where the existing regional fragile balances are collapsing in a chaos of trafficking networks, organised criminal groups, terrorist formation and coups d'état.

The whole Arab region is influenced by the USA as absentee superpower, a European Union still lacking the will, resources and military means to step in and the Chinese great power that has no intention to fill the vacuum, with an exception for Iran due to the Belt and Road Initiative. Iran is again at the centre of renewed negotiations not only for the nuclear issue, but bilaterally for Saudi and Emirati national interests connected with their intervention in Yemen. The normalisation accords with Israel may thus risk to lose some momentum, especially without ar-Riyad formally joining them.

In the “deep Maghreb”, this regional ensemble that links the Maghreb countries of the Mediterranean with the sand sea of Sahel across several trafficking routes controlled by organised crime and other non-state actors, several dynamics are at work at different speeds. Crime convergence between criminal groups and terrorist entities is still limited and opportunistic, while crime displacement happens continuously wherever military or law enforcement units are strong in a specific area: criminals continue elsewhere their activities.

The most problematic development stems from the Taleban victory in Afghanistan: a new brand of soft jihadism, legitimised by the de facto recognition of the Islamic Emirate in Kabul, is trying to shape societies both in the Arab world and the Sahel, promising the future resurgence of an Islamic state.

NATO's role is dynamic but constrained. It is continuing its activities in the Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative, providing support in Tunisia, Jordan and Iraq while improving partnerships in Mauritania and engaging with the G5 Sahel. Yet consensus and conditions are not reunited to engage directly in the Libyan crisis. In the meantime, the Alliance is leveraging every single Allied contribution and coordinating as much as possible with the UN, but also the EU, the African Union - and other regional organisations, as the GCC, G5 Sahel and ECOWAS.

# BACKGROUND POLICY PAPER



UMBERTO PROFAZIO  
*Chief Maghreb Analyst,  
NDC Foundation*



FABIO NICOLUCCI  
*Analyst, NDC Foundation*

The end of the Trump years, which were characterised by the resurgence of power politics in the Middle East and North Africa and the adoption of dangerous brinkmanship policies by regional powers and global players, is shedding light on the structural changes and new paradigms that are shaping the new geopolitics of the Arab region. Undoubtedly, the transactional approach associated with the former US President has greatly contributed to this transformation, accelerating pre-existing trends that are gradually coming to the surface.

Highlighting shared interests and converging views between several Gulf States and Israel, the Abraham Accords have inaugurated the age of normalisation. Facilitated by the change of the administration in Washington, diplomacy has gained momentum in the region. Among the most visible symptoms of a turning tide that could potentially bring to an end the decade of chaos that followed the Arab Spring, there are: the al-Ula summit and the end of the Gulf crisis; negotiations in Vienna to revive the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action; exploratory talks between Egypt and Turkey to de-escalate tensions in the East Med and Libya; the push by several Arab states to normalise relations with a Syrian regime ostracised during the brutal civil war; and more recently direct talks between Iran and Saudi Arabia.

Nevertheless, structural factors still undermine any attempt to reach a comprehensive regional settlement. The May 2021 flare up confirmed the resilience of the Israel-Palestine conflict to these changing regional dynamics, which have also gone unnoticed in Yemen. More in general, the US' disengagement from the region, raise questions over Washington's commitment to its regional partners, with inevitable consequences on the renewed great power competition. Using hybrid means or relying on a soft power strategy, China and Russia have already started filling the vacuum, contributing to a wider regional realignment also promoted by endogenous factors.

Indeed, the decline of the Political Islam, suggested by Ennahda's identity crisis

in front of President Kais Saïed's power consolidation in Tunisia and confirmed by the debacle of the Islamist *Parti de la justice et du développement* (PJD) in the latest elections in Morocco, is paving the way for a new regional divide, this time grounded on the normalisation process. The recent diplomatic row between Algeria and Morocco is the most visible example of this new trend that has reopened old wounds, returning frozen conflicts such as the dispute over the Western Sahara to the centre stage, but also reverberating on the relations between the northern and the southern shore of the Mediterranean Sea, raising concerns on the gas supply to Europe during an unprecedented energy crisis.

Recent geopolitical shifts have also had an impact in the Deep Maghreb, where the jihadist threat and political instability continue to grow. The case of Mali serves as an example. More in general, the Western-African relationship that stemmed from and stood upon the offer of economic and military support to local governments in return for their commitment to the path of state-building has lost value. The paradigm based on conditionality and value-driven demands pledging a sovereign state is failing almost everywhere outside the West. New hegemonic forces, alternative and opposed to the Western aid model, are rising and gaining ground: China, with its offer of loans and resources in exchange for zero political conditionality; Russia, which is dusting off a neo-imperial activism supporting authoritarian leaders in return for a logistical and political presence in international relations; regional powers (including Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Turkey and the UAE), all competing against each other while backing illiberal governments and promoting Islamic identity and welfare.

However, it is worth noting that authoritarianism-oriented thrusts in the Sahel are first of all endogenous: the latest crisis in Mali, the recent coup in neighbouring Guinea, the growing tensions in Burkina Faso, or the violent change of power in Chad are just some examples. Besides, this looming African populism does not hold out authoritarianism as a fallback or second best, but simply as a solution. Not only it claims its effectiveness precisely in response to the crisis of the state (of which jihadism and war are both symptoms and causes), but it presents itself as a new, more valid counter-insurgency strategy. Once agreed on the endogenous blueprint of this African populist paradigm, it is easily understandable how it is also the one creating the demand for Russian or Turkish interference, and not vice versa. All is not lost for Europe, though. The West has some cards left to play. If it leaves old colonial reflections behind and invests more in multilateralism and federalism (also considering the successful case of ECOWAS), it could actually lay the foundation for a new path of partnership with Sub-Saharan African countries. A path that could mould an alternative political identity built upon Europe's soft power, as well as renew the approach to state-building and counterterrorism refocusing the balance between hard and soft power on a regional basis. It is either this, or to end up suffering a hostile presence with increasingly less say, destined to eventually leave the ground for good and out of spite.



# Session 1

## CHANGING TRENDS IN THE REGION





Water Fountain Mausoleum Of Mohammed V near Hassan Tower in the city of Rabat, Morocco











MARCO CARNELOS  
*President, MC Geopolitics, Rome*

## CHANGES AND CONTINUITY IN US POLICIES IN THE REGION. A VIEW FROM WASHINGTON

**A**nalysing the current situation from the Washington perspective, I would like to enumerate a couple of factors quite positive for American interests, namely the rift among GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council) members that is now overcome thanks to the contribution of the US leadership, and the recent Iraqi elections that gave a severe blow to the pro-Iranian parties.

Furthermore, the new Israeli leadership seems not willing to disruptively play the Iranian nuclear file within the American politics as assertively as the previous one. Recently, some US military assets moved to Jordan to find a better and more secure location far away from Iran, which runs the risk of further isolation, also due to a new more hawkish president.

Of course, it is also necessary to assess the recent American withdrawal from Afghanistan within this rosy picture: is this simply the end of a long, painful, and hopeless conflict? Or is the first step of a major US disengagement from the Western Asia to focus on the Indo-Pacific? I would say that, while it is evident that Washington is dedicating increasing attention to China and East Asia, I do not believe that the Middle East – all of a sudden – will become of secondary importance, stemming from these two new acronyms QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue - India, Japan, Australia and United States) and AUKUS submarine (Australia, United Kingdom, and United States).

On my view, while United States is giving priority to China, to remain in the Middle East which is currently the major energy supplier of China, could be an added value and potential leverage. At the same time, it is important not to forget that the future of the Biden administration is not hanging on Arab or Middle Eastern politics, but rather on the two major pieces of legislation on infrastructure, welfare and green economy that are stuck in the American Congress, also due to two recalcitrant Democratic senators.

However, Washington needs to consider another important factor. In January 2020, Donald Trump proudly claimed the elimination of the Iranian main strat-

egist, Qasem Soleimani, and later on, the Abraham Accords were perceived as a new beginning between Israel and some Arab states, while Iran was constantly isolated. Today, the new president Joe Biden has other priorities. Therefore, I would say that the Abraham Accords could lose some momentum, especially without Saudi Arabia formally joining them. Meanwhile, UAE and Saudi Arabia are starting a significant bilateral dialogue with Iran. Moreover, Iran seems to be dangerously close to have enough enriched uranium for a nuclear device, while its proxies are maintaining or reinforcing their grip in Lebanon, Syria, and Yemen. With respect to Iraq, the electoral results suggest that votes are not only counted but also weighted, and that post-elections political arrangements are definitely more important than people's will. As a result, it is important to assess whether and how this factor will play a role in the expected American withdrawal.

Iran will continue to be the main driver of the US policy in the region, which also remains the primary interest of Israel and some Arab states. The main objective remains resuming nuclear talks in Vienna, and it is probable that Iran on a nuclear threshold state is going to affect future negotiations, giving extreme leverage to its leadership. Moreover, even in the case of Iran re-joining the talks, negotiations will be difficult because of the mutual distrust among the parties.

The only realistic and available option is going back to the original JCPOA (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action), even though for many, including Israel, it would be not enough. For this reason, a B plan, namely, a military attack on the Iranian facility, is also taken into consideration, even though it is impossible to know whether Israel has the capability to do so, if there will be the American consent and what will be the impact of the Washington-Jerusalem dynamic. However, while the outcome of a military strike is uncertain, what is certain is that it could not change the evolving strategic landscape.

Before the JCPOA was signed, Russia and China were concurring with the sanctions, while today, since the only remaining sanctions on Iran are the American ones, I have the feeling that Moscow and Beijing are not ready to throw Iran under the bus now. At the same time, Iran has joined the Shanghai Cooperation Agreement and is redirecting its trade in the Eurasian region. On the whole, it seems that Iran is not believing that the sanctions will have an effect, but rather, the maximum pressure applied by the Americans has been so far effectively countered by Iran maximum resistance. US withdrawal from Afghanistan and Iran on the nuclear threshold are negatively affecting the whole political perception.

To conclude, never as in this moment, it is necessary that Washington, NATO, together with other Western and regional capitals, read the tea leaves correctly to better define the challenges and to outline a sound strategic vision ahead. This is the only way to devise effective policies, and to reach a modicum of stability in a highly volatile region. A second requirement will be that all the actors refrain from the zero-sum games they have conducted for too much time, which have been mainly detrimental for the people in the region.



AHMAD MASA'DEH

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

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## THE DIFFICULT INTERNATIONAL RECOMPOSITION OF THE REGION AND ITS PERSISTENT FRAGILITIES

It is a pleasure to be here again after two years of stoppage. I would like to extend my thanks again to our dear friend Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo for always showing his courteous, generous behaviour towards all of us, and hopefully, leaving a legacy in the region for this foundation and for whoever is interested in forging economic and political good ties between the two sides of the Mediterranean Sea.

Indeed, I was asked to speak about the difficult international recomposition of the region and its persistent fragilities. In order not to be repetitive, I refer to the booklet of the dossier of the NATO Foundation and of some notes that I mentioned, they are encrypted there at page 81<sup>1</sup>.

I believe that in order to move forward with the inherited fragilities of our region, we have to always look at three cornerstone elements. First of all, democracy needs to be our ultimate objective. Then, we have to focus on human rights as the core of social systems in the Middle East, while always (and this is the third cornerstone) thinking about jobs, industry science, and innovation for our youth.

I continue to believe that these are the cornerstones which we need to focus on in order to overcome the fragilities of the region, but I would also like to add two more elements in light of what happened over the last two years. Indeed, I believe that we need to be more pragmatic and practical, and we have to engage more on reconciliation through diplomacy. In terms of pragmatism, we can consider the example of Syria after 10 years of conflict or Civil War; may be we should re-engage the Syrian regime. I am not by any means overlooking whatever values have been violated over the past 10 years by the Syrian regime in that country. But I believe that, in order for us to move forward, Syria has to be brought back to the Arab league, and Syria has to be involved again in regional geopolitics. You may also notice that now the focus is placed on the gas pipeline that is stemming from

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1 Beyond the Arab Risings – *What kind of future?* NATO Defense College Foundation, October 2021

Egypt, going through Jordan to Syria, and obviously to Lebanon which is currently facing serious electricity and energy problems. Bringing back reconciliation between these countries on economic terms will probably lead to more geopolitical and political reconciliation and inclusion.

Iraq should also be within our sight. We see that there are positive signs coming from the country, such as for instance the outcome of the elections and that the Iranian political power is receding in that country. On this point, I believe that the regional powers and the international community should lend a hand and should support the Iraqi government in augmenting such processes. Of course, this will lead to confronting the Iranian hegemony in the region.

Obviously, it seems to me that the international community looks at our region through the lens of the Iranian-Israeli conflict, which, with all due respect, is a mistake. I believe that the international community, especially the Americans, should also focus on the inherited problems of our countries. I mean that the region is not just about the Iranian presence, whether it was in Lebanon, in Syria or in Yemen, but there are other problems that we currently face in our region. The Palestinian matter and arriving at an independent Palestinian state within the pretext of UN resolutions is essentially important.

Furthermore, taking the case of Tunisia, we see that the political Islam is receiving negative shocks from the communities, is not doing well in elections in Morocco, is fragmented in Tunisia, hence it is necessary to look at this from a social perspective and analyse it carefully. It seems that people and political structures in the region are coming to terms with the reality in which we really need to separate religion from the state structures, which is very important. I do believe that President Kaïs Saïed's efforts need to be supported. I am not at all arguing for overtaking democracy or human rights, but I do believe that we need to safeguard what Tunisia has done so far and that we need to invest more in that country.

Thus, I will finish by saying that with respect to international recomposition, the efforts exerted by the international community in the past 20 or 30 years proved to be futile. Now, we probably have to think about reconciliation and efforts from the region itself, inside the region and the grassroots. For instance, we noticed how the maximum pressure placed by President Trump on the region, especially in terms of the peace process, did not bring any positive effect. While now, the US has gone back to its best tool in the region, namely diplomacy. The US must engage again with its diplomatic weight in order to favour reconciliation in the region. However, I guess that such reconciliation must start and end with regional power in our region.





MAHMOUD KAREM

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## A LOOK FROM WITHIN: HOW DOES THE ARAB WORLD SEE MATTERS NOW

I will address three main subjects. Namely, a look from within our region, a view from the Arab world, and, finally, how do we see the world.

The first point concerns the political attention that has been given to the Arab world, especially to the Palestinian problem. However, attention has been directed more to external actors and challenges, such as China, COVID-19 and climate change.

We feel that our Arab world is a stage for wars by proxy and that the fate of the region is not in our hands. This has been said clearly by the Secretary General of the League of Arab States (LAS), Mr. Aboul Gheit, in the recent conference that took place in Sharjah (United Arab Emirates) on the 26<sup>th</sup> of September 2021, when he stated that “the Arab world is still suffering a great deal from the ramifications of the Arab Spring, which destroyed the will and statehood of many Arab countries”.

Moreover, lessons from Afghanistan are reverberating on our part of the world. As the situation is being further worsened by the US withdrawal of Patriot missiles from countries in the Gulf and its \$130 million cut on military aids to Egypt right in the middle of the war on terror, the Arab public opinion and press are questioning how can we rely on such allies. Allies that failed to impose their Western values in a country whose President fled at the height of crisis and whose army – 300.000 Afghani troops on whom Washington spent millions of dollars and hours in training - collapsed in a couple of hours. It has been a failure of assessment and a breakdown of intelligence.

As written in *Foreign Affairs* by Jessica T. Matthews: “Washington’s policies on democracy promotion need a thorough reappraisal. Far too often, the United States act as though democracy is, in the words of former US Ambassador Chas Freeman, the *default political system*. To the contrary it is the most demanding of political systems, requiring a literate, relatively cohesive population and a bedrock of institutions that can take a century or more to build. Laying a foundation for

it can require a commitment of many decades, as the United Kingdom made in India and the United States made in South Korea. [...] It should not be necessary to add that democracy cannot be delivered by force - although the United States keeps trying”<sup>1</sup>.

At the same time, when we look at Europe and the transatlantic relationship, we can see worrying signs of a rift. With regards to some keywords pronounced by EU Ministers of Defence in their informal meeting in Kranj (Slovenia) on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of September 2021 (i.e., “a credible joint rapid deployment force”, “a response force”, “strategic authority”), I personally cannot understand who will fund these EU forces; whether they will conflict with NATO or not; and ultimately, what is the place of the MENA region in such statements and positions. We urge other countries to give the Arab world the chance to decide for itself.

Coming back to Afghanistan, Arabs’ questions and fears also revolve around whether carrot-and-stick policies presented as pledges of economic assistance to the Taliban will succeed in changing them and whether the world will look to the other side about Afghan women in exchange for further cooperation with the group.

Besides, as the US withdrawal from Afghanistan paved the way to a jihadist “pilgrimage” that did not respect the Doha Agreements, thus handing over a wider operational space to ISIS, what is of the utmost importance is the establishment of a more extensive and coordinated intelligence network that should involve key Arab countries to properly monitor the situation and share information. By all means, the mistakes occurred in Iran should not be repeated: in that case, talks were shrouded in secrecy and both GCC countries and major Arab States were excluded from the state of play.

The potential return of the nexus between illicit trade (drugs, small arms and light weapons, but also weapons of mass destruction) and international terrorism very much worries the Arab world. Nobody among us wants Afghanistan to become a safe haven for international terrorists or a base for exporting terrorism by taking advantage of the money gained from opium. Another important connection is between terrorism and refugee camps: a number of refugee-hosting countries have indeed the potential of becoming a hatchery for raising new young terrorists, and this, together with illegal immigration to Europe, may turn out to create a very serious problem.

Finally, with regard to future options for the Arab world, it is necessary to strengthen the central role of the Arab State: a failed state is a safe haven for terrorists and jihadist groups, as shown by Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Libya (which alone counts around 30 known militias, 1.600 factions and countless foreign terrorist fighters). At the same time, one should not forget to mention also the subject of

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1 *American Power After Afghanistan - How to Rightsize the Country's Global Role*, *Foreign Affairs*, Jessica T. Mathews, September 17, 2021

political Islam, whose failure is evident and proven by the losses of the Muslim Brotherhood in Sudan, Egypt, Morocco and Tunisia. In this respect, the resignation of more than 100 eminent leaders from the country's Islamist party, Ennahda, is a significant development.

The Arab world should diversify its options and dedicate greater attention to issues like military hardware, sustainable development and digital commerce, also in order to increase foreign direct investments. Likewise, it should increase and promote cooperation in renewable and clean energy projects, solar and wind energy generation, electrical grid interconnection, green energy, hydrogen economy to reduce heat emissions and blue economy to improve the environment and reduce climate change. All of this, always taking into account good governance and respect for the objectives of fundamental human rights are.

As far as the Abrahams Accords are concerned, the onus is also on Israel to make them succeed. Every time a brutal attack happens against Al-Aqsa Mosque or in Gaza, Arab governments have to confront their own public opinion. These accords must become a vehicle to move negotiations and solve once and for all the Palestinian problem.

Talking about Iran, at the geopolitical level the country is currently behaving as its Foreign Minister did at the Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership (August 28th, 2021): while all attendees were posing for the official group picture, he unexpectedly joined the front row reserved to Heads of States. Indeed, Iranian drones, war by proxy, factionalism and nuclear program are all challenges faced by the Arab world because Iran goes beyond internationally established norms.

On its side, Israel should move positively on the establishment of a zone free of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East to send positive messages and to interdict Iranian attempts. Any nuclear accord with Iran should take into consideration GCC apprehensions and security concerns which should deal also with Iran's disruptive policies in Yemen, Syria, Lebanon, etc.

As last remark, stronger cooperation between NATO and the United Nations is fundamental to cope with global challenges, including climate change, current disruptive technologies, as well as women's rights, peace and security, which are all essential for the upcoming period.

Concluding, I would like to mention Egypt's next priorities: since it is a neighbouring state facing direct border threats coming from Libya, Cairo will focus on the withdrawal of all foreign forces, mercenaries and foreign terrorist fighters from the Libyan soil and on a stronger cooperation with Italy - as far as this country is concerned. Moreover, a political settlement over the over the Renaissance Dam dispute between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia - a matter of life for 105 million Egyptians - needs to be reached.





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## REGIONAL DYNAMICS AND EXTERNAL POWERS: HOW MUCH AND HOW THEY INFLUENCE ONE ANOTHER, ESPECIALLY AFTER A NEW ISRAELI GOVERNMENT?

I find the tradition established by Ambassador Minuto-Rizzo of conducting this annual meeting about the Middle East issues very important and useful. Now, I want to continue the pessimistic prognosis or description that the Commandant of the NATO Defense College has started with, and to share his views and analysis.

Looking at the economic situation is already sufficient to have an idea of the situation, especially by reading the recent analysis about the MENA region produced at the beginning of this month by the World Bank. The situation is very bleak, even though it is formulated in diplomatic terms, and the prognosis indicates a very slow exit from COVID-19 and various implications. Maybe some countries will see a greater growth than 2% but other neighbouring countries, such as Jordan, a country next to Israel, will hardly grow at 2% in the next couple of years, and this is not very promising. If I look at the report concerning the analysis of unemployment in several countries, the young generation's rate is at 25% and in several Arab countries it reaches 40% while in Israel, the 25% of young people is under the poverty line.

Another important issue concerns France which is a powder-keg that is going to explode on our faces sooner or later, and it does not show any sign of improvement, which is a top-one concern.

The second one is the climate revolution. It is a noble goal to move to renewable sources of energy, instead of the foresight resources that we are using. And I think that this is very noble and important for our future existence on this planet. However, given that various dangers are present, I do not know how to mitigate them or to deal with them, but the window is very short. We are talking about moving to the green deal or the green environment within 20 years, or even less.

With respect to the oil producing countries in the region, I am not so sure that they can cope with the expected revolution. Some of them yes, because they have invested in renewable sources and they are doing a very good job, but I am not so

sure whether they can keep the flow of income that they are enjoying today from renewables. Even without looking at today's prices but rather at the prices they had three months ago, I am not so sure that they can maintain them with the green revolution.

Secondly, my colleagues from Egypt and from Jordan know very well that their remittances coming from working in the oil producing countries of the Gulf are a very important source of income at national and family levels. So, I am not sure that the same number of workers employed today for the drilling, extraction, refinement and transportation of oil will be necessary after the transition towards a green energy production. One of the adverse effects of the green revolution is that most of them will not be necessary anymore. The same is true if you think about others, as for example, pipeline mentioned by my colleague from Jordan and what is going to happen with gas in Egypt, Jordan, Syria and Lebanon.

Number one, who is going to pay for it? Number two, if we take the green revolution seriously, this project is very costly and it needs to be kicked before 2040, so in a very short period of time. I am not so sure whether the income will cover the investment. So, we are dealing with some issues with a regional impact that are not necessarily compatible with the principle of the Paris Agreements, namely the one of moving to green revolution in the very near future.

The third element was already mentioned, and it is what I call the absentee superpower in the region. I think that we all agree that the United States has decided to move away or to reduce its presence. I am not so sure that now we can see someone else in terms of external powers stepping in this vacuum and I am not so sure that Europe has the willingness, the financial resources or the decisional power to step into the region, at least in economic terms.

With regards to talks about the Chinese stepping in the region, I think that most of them are unfounded. China is looking at this region or subregion as a very interesting proposition and, politically speaking, certain countries are very important to China and the Belt and Road Initiative, like Iran. But I do not see enough investments coming to Lebanon, Syria, Jordan or Egypt, or at least, I do not see them as sufficient to bring change.

Thus, for the time being, the power of the region is insufficient to replace the vacuum that was created. I am not that naïve to believe that regional cooperation to increase the availability of water supply for the Palestinians, Jordanians and Egyptians is present. For the time being, gas is the only available resource in southern Egypt, southern Israel and Lebanon, and if each of them had conducted its own business and government autonomously, they would have produced the same quantity of gas of Egypt did 10 years ago.

In a window of 20 years, we could somehow improve the situation, as far as water, energy cooperation, and operation in the environment are concerned. They are not particular to any state in the region, but they are rather regional issues. From that point of view, the Abraham Accords are a positive development. In my view,

they certainly did not come at the expense of the Palestinian-Israeli economy.

Today, there is a new government in Israel and its immediate political target is the approval of the national budget in the next two months. I think that this will happen and maybe we will also see a more constructive policy on the Palestinian issue, but I admit that I do not expect this political issue to be solved in a comprehensive way. The two governments, the one in Jerusalem, and the one in Ramallah are incapable, politically speaking, to reach a comprehensive solution. What they can and should do is to build the road towards the two-state solution. I do not want to use the term CBM (confidence building measures), but certain projects and solutions are part of a two-state comprehensive solution.





# Interview

## THE ENERGY DILEMMA. TRADITIONAL SOURCES VERSUS RENEWABLES



View of a typical oil pump jack from an oil field in Bahrain







# THE ENERGY DILEMMA. TRADITIONAL SOURCE VERSUS RENEWABLES



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## **Mayssoun Azzam (MA)**

Welcome to this discussion entitled Energy Dilemma, basically traditional sources versus the renewables. Most of the recent reports I went through conclude that energy transition is technically feasible, and economically beneficial, and the socio-economic footprint is obvious. And that made me think, if this is the case, why are we still with an energy dilemma? What is hindering us from moving forward along the sustainable pathway at a quicker pace? These are the questions we will try to answer with our distinguished guests here.

I will start with an introductory question basically regarding the title of the present discussion: what do you understand by the expression energy dilemma? And I will add here also the end of the sentence, which is traditional sources versus renewables, because you have your own view about it. How do you interpret that?

## **Marco Piredda (MP)**

First of all, let me say that I would use the word trilemma instead of dilemma. I will explain this afterwards, but let me first focus on this, let us say, alternative between the conventional sources and the renewables. Well, I do not see a real one versus the other, because even today in the very real time we are living, we understand that we will need and use for the next decades also conventional resources,

which will be key for development, for reducing energy poverty, for living, for our lives. And on the other hand, we will be struggling for reducing the carbon footprint of these conventional resources. And at the same time, a process that has already started, we will improve and increase the use of renewables.

Renewables are not the only answer to the transition. Of course, it is the easiest way of talking about transition, and this is normal in a media world. But then when we talk about carbon neutrality, for example, which is one of the key words of this debate, well, carbon neutrality does not mean that by 2050 or 2060, we will have zero emissions. We will have some remaining amounts of emissions, which are not possible, let us say as of today, to be put to zero, but we will be carbon neutral, because together with these remaining amount of emissions, we will have some negative emissions. That is to say some contributions to take out of the environment the carbon that we have emitted. For example, this is CCUS (Carbon dioxide Capture & Utilization or Storage). This is forestry.

**MA**

Just a clarification, when you say we, you mean the whole world? The Arab region? Middle East, or what? Does it apply everywhere or no?

**MP**

Very good point. The short answer is the whole world, but with different contributions. Many countries of the Arab region have very good assets to put in place in this struggle, in this effort. Let me just explain the trilemma and then stop with my answer. Trilemma is a key word, we can thank the World Energy Council for this. It is trying to combine the sustainability in the environmental dimension, the sustainability in terms of social dimension, the fact that you have enough energy to live and to work and to produce, and then the security of supply. This is the trilemma that I would better use to describe the very difficult situation we are in.

**MA**

That is really interesting. And I would like to see the interpretation of Dr Fakhro before we dig deep in what you just said. Dr Fakhro, do you agree?.

**Jamal Fakhro (JF)**

I think the dilemma is there in the Arab world, simply because we are oil producers. The issue is, it might not be a dilemma for the users, for the consumers, but it is definitely an issue for the producers because we are living out of that. So the minute we reduce the quantity of our oil production, which we are selling today on the international market, we will have a big impact on the revenue of those governments who are living on it.

Today most of the Arab countries' funding and financing comes from oil and gas selling. In countries like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, UAE, Iraq, Libya,. up to 75%

- 85% of the government budget comes from that. So it will definitely have an impact on the oil producing countries, a negative one. But it will have a positive impact on the non-oil producing countries where they will go really to meet the world agenda. So I think we cannot have one single answer. It will be an answer dependent on each country.

**MA**

Okay. That is interesting. But still we have one common thing amongst all of us, which is the pandemic. How hard was it on all the countries?

**JF**

The pandemic definitely had a huge impact, and I think it did not hit only the Arab world, it hit the whole world. We in the Arab world definitely have been hit a lot, simply because of the readiness of our health systems, the readiness of our companies and our governments in relation to such a pandemic. We were not prepared, nobody was expecting anything and it had definitely a big impact on our ability to invest or to re-spend in our markets. When it comes to energy and to the renewable energy, it was a fantastic headline in the past 10 years. But as Dr Piredda said, we did very little on that.

**MA**

Was the pace slow?

**JF**

The pace was slow. I do not believe the Arab countries took that subject seriously. I do not believe they did.

**MA**

Do you agree Dr Piredda?

**MP**

I would single out some differences but, overall, I would agree. There are differences between those Arab countries, a minority of them, which have been able to start a real differentiation in their economies, and also to start a real effort in energy transition, because they have some assets, while others were not able to do so.

But then as it was mentioned before, the majority is still too much dependent on oil and gas, and dependency on oil and gas makes by itself a difference, because those countries such as Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, that are dependent more on oil, let us say, have additional problems.

Since gas is still considered a bridge fuel, or a solution for at least domestic energy use, with different, much lower emissions. So the gas-focused producers have some advantage. In my view, we shall classify in oil dependent, gas dependent,

and the most differentiated economies that are already starting the path for renewables, towards other solutions.

**MA**

Can you pinpoint on the areas where the transition has started or concentrated more in the region?

**MP**

Probably there is an intangible asset which is the key, which is good governance of energy. We can see from Qatar to the United Arab Emirates, to Oman, also trying to build important renewable projects or important alliances with other countries and areas. Without talking always about renewables, trying to reduce the footprint of gas, for example, because this makes a huge difference.

There is a big difference if you sell an LNG (Liquified Natural Gas) cargo by a conventional way, or if you sell an LNG cargo which is carbon neutral. This means a cargo that brings with it the titles of its environmental impact offset by certain environmental activities, for example, forestry, etc. This is something that we will hear about more and more in the next few months, about reducing the impact of conventional resources, not just cancelling them.

**MA**

But in a slow pace, according to what you said, as far as I understand, Mr. Fakhro. Who is responsible and who is to blame, perhaps governments?

**JF**

Of course. Yes. Who will take the leadership in any country? It is the executive. It is the government. And as I said, seriously, I did not see a clear item in the agendas of most of the governments in the Arab world to talk about reducing the cap on impact of the capital.

**MA**

Do you mean Saudi Arabia and all the green initiative?

**JF**

Yes. Saudi Arabia and UAE, are the only two countries which have taken this seriously. Maybe Oman did it, but really not on a big scale, number one. Number two, we are starting from almost a zero level. We are not like European countries who have been doing this for the last decades. Germany, I think, if I am not mistaken, today produces about 25% - 30% of its energy from renewables. Could you tell me which country in the Arab world produces 5% of its energy requirements from renewables? None. My country, Bahrain, plans to have 5% by 2025. Will we be able to meet it? I have my doubts about that.



**MA**

Why?

**JF**

Simply because we do not focus on it. We still depend on the normal energy and we still believe that we have got time to do that. We do not have enough deep money to invest in the renewables, because this requires lots of money. Most of the countries in the region, although they are cash rich, they have huge deficits in their budgets. So they cannot really, again, go and meet it because they have so many requirements, also social requirements in their communities. We would need some time to see the impact of those policies. Saudi Arabia has started, UAE has started, others have started. Today you will see countries, because of the need: Lebanon is an example, because of the shortage of energy, people started to invest. Not government but individuals go to invest in the renewables. But how big this will be? 2%, 3%, 4%? Still it is a long way to go. I am very negative about that but I think this is a reality.

**MA**

Let us talk about money and access to funds. Is it easy when we talk about renewables?

**MP**

It is relatively very easy to finance pure renewable projects, then depending on where you are and the size of the projects, but it is relatively easy because there is a lot of money around. The problem is that you need to face the problems that have been mentioned before, you need not only to invest in renewables, but take the energy that you invest, for example, in Northern Africa, all around the world. Let me just give you an example: imagine a strong path of transition in Northern Africa and Middle East, then you have a huge potential of renewables there. What do you do with these electrons? Because when we talk about renewables, we are talking mostly, and let us say more likely, about electrons.

The easy answer is you should take those electrons and bring them where are the real markets, the huge markets in Europe or elsewhere. This is not that easy. We have some hints of developments, this is a debate that has been lasting for two decades and I think about the powerlines from Northern Africa to Europe, etc. The only thing I would like to mention to give a hint of optimism is that just two days ago, there was an agreement between Egypt, Greece, and Cyprus, a double parallel agreement to think about a power line to connect the renewable production in Egypt or in Northern Africa with consumption markets in the northern shore of the Mediterranean. So this is just a signal that we should look at carefully, but talking about investments, you need to be sure for those who are building these pipelines that renewables will be produced at a certain cost, with governments

which are reliable, and with certain agreements and contractual models that are not very easy to build with such different players at stake.

**MA**

As far as the private sector is concerned, when you say governments have to be reliable, what do you mean by that? What guarantees are needed?

**MP**

What everybody should be, also private actors, of course. I mentioned before the intangible asset. Well, I am sure that in all the area in the Arab region, the key issue about energy transition, but also for moving to the wider economic development, is governance, more than everything else. There is a huge potential in terms of transforming the conventional energy world, investing and combining in renewables with other sectors of the economy that were mentioned, for example, by ambassador Eran. But governance is key and on average is still lacking for most of the situations.

In this respect the European Union, apart from a weak political role, or an evolving political role, certainly has the capabilities in terms of regulatory models, governance of the energy sectors, and should be one of the pillars of the cooperation in my view.

**MA**

Now I would like to ask to Dr Fakhro, what laws are needed or missing in our countries to be able to fulfil what is needed?

**JF**

Well, laws without the will do not work. We cannot draft many laws and write them. There should be a will from the government or leadership meaning that we want to change and we are able to change. Writing a white paper or converting into whatever green paper then, would not make a change. But let us talk about what is happening in the whole world and the impact of that, and how the changes in the globe are impacting us. The green funding is becoming really a major way to fund businesses. Certain banks in the whole world today say: "I would not finance you if you are developing your conventional oil and gas, but I will do finance you when you go to renewables." That is one of the ways where the globe can really impose the change and make the difference.

**MA**

It has to be forced?

**JF**

Sometimes you have to force it. Exactly like when you sign the Paris agreement,

countries go and sign it. They have to go to enforce it through parliament and so on. Again, here, the global market is participating in enforcing the renewables. I will tell you, even companies today. I just mentioned something about my firm, KPMG, we have agreed two weeks ago to spend \$2.5 billion on helping our client's producing system to move to implement the ESG policies (Environmental, Social, Governance). As Dr Piredda said, the governance is a very important part of it beside the social and beside the environment.

So even the companies are moving that way. Today, even companies would not deal with others if they do not get certain parts of their energy from renewables.

And I can talk to you, again, about Bahrain, where we had one of the large companies come into Bahrain, insisting that 5% of their energy comes from renewable, and we are helping them with that. So the global market is pushing, countries who want to receive FDI (Foreign Direct Investments) have to do that. So it will happen, but it will not happen easily.

**MA**

Because of lots of challenges, including security in the region in general. Instability, how does it affect your work in the region, Dr Piredda ?

**MP**

Let me first complete the reasoning on financing the transition, because we are talking about the region, but in the transition and in the investment again, and green finance, etc. I think that international oil companies as Eni, but also let us say producing countries in the region are game takers. The game - we are on the Eve of the COP26 meetings - will be decided globally in terms of, first of all, carbon pricing solutions and carbon leakage. All this is a bigger game than the region by itself, very important, crucial for energy production but, in this respect, it will not decide the rules of the energy financing for the future.

Sorry for diverting from your question, which was on political instability. When I was listening to the previous panel, I was thinking: politics is really complicated, much more complicated than energy is. And I am working on both. So, combining energy and politics, I would say that political instability is of course affecting a company like Eni, exposed to all comparable risks, but in the end, nobody would imagine that Eni would have stayed for 10 years in Libya after the civil war, or in other regions with many reasons of concern.

**MA**

You are saying that investment will go on no matter what, this is what you are saying?

**MP**

Of course we consider the political stability, but we have also some knowledge

and experience for more than 60 years in the region to deal with those issues. Of course, we stay far from open conflicts, but let me say that, unfortunately, the conflicts coming from the Arab Spring and all the related developments are in my view, except maybe for Yemen, slowly reducing their intensity.

I would not be more optimistic than that, but let us also recognize that we have lived even much harder times. And let me also add that, because we tend to forget things that we thought just one year ago, we are on the 18th month of COVID-19 pandemic. I remember, the very first days of the pandemic, people were considering scenarios of conflicts arising from the pandemic. Do you see any conflict that arose from the pandemic? I do not.

**MA**

I see financial burdens that changed the priorities in governments.

**MP**

But I tend to see also what did not go wrong. And as an observer, it could be worse than this.

**MA**

Yeah, I know. And maybe Dr Fakhro has a point about the positive side of the pandemic, what lessons were learned?

**JF**

Yeah. Well, I mean, before we go to the positive sides of the pandemic, I would just want to say that I agree that politics and economics go together. When there is stability there will be growth of FDIs, when there is instability, nobody will come to invest, or very few will come to invest. These are the opportunists and the high risk-takers. And of these high risk-takers, their number is reducing in the market because of the difficulties they are facing. We have seen an example with shield gas, 10 years ago, 50 years ago, large companies went and invested. Today they do not. There are only the risk-takers who will go to invest because they want to have a quick opportunity. On the pandemic, no. I think on the positive side we are saving lots of wasted time in the past. If we believe there is a value for time, we are saving lots of time from the commuting. Just imagine, you used to spend an hour to commute from your house to your office, and an hour from your office to your house, with the usage of the gas for your car, for the transportation, and so on. Today, you do your work from home. Exactly you start, if you start at eight o'clock, you wake up at 7:15, 7:30, you are already sat on your desk at 8 o'clock and you start to work. In the past you had to leave home at seven to reach your office at 8. So all that is a saving. Use of technology. I think the pandemic has forced us to change our mindset: we do not need to be in our offices to be productive. We can be productive from home.

**MA**

This is really interesting. But that does not hide the fact that the financial burden on governments and even on private sector affected them. And the priority now changed. Let us talk about the governments: their priority now is health. So when renewables come we will talk about it. And when it comes to private sector, with the financial pressure that many companies have, is it easy now to strike a balance between being good and doing good at the same time, Dr Piredda ?

**MP**

Well, first of all, the good news is that the reaction on the pandemic, at least in the northern world was combined with awareness of the climate change. So for example, the European Union, but also with different flavours, the United States, built their programs, huge public financing programs, focusing on energy transition. At least one third of these programs in Europe is about energy transition and technology developments, combined in terms, for example, of energy efficiency. Then, in general terms, the fact that the pandemic will cause public deficits, shrinking public finances, especially in the developing world, in certain countries, well, this is an issue. And let me say that the only solution is global co-operation. I mean, I do not see other solutions. There is an ongoing debate moving from the Washington Consensus to the so-called New Cornwall Consensus, which is more about solidarity. Having the understanding that we depend on each other. For example, the pledges on vaccines reached about two billions vaccines to be donated. You wonder how many have been really donated? 300 million, about 10%, which is astonishing. Then we know that if the pandemic would remain in the developing countries, we will continue to have this problem and we will have effects on our economies. So talking about finances, we need to put money, I mean those countries that have money, in the sound development of the other countries. But I am referring not only to European countries, but also to wealthy Arab countries of course.

**JF**

I just want to say one thing, here. I think what Dr Piredda said about the global cooperation is real. We have seen how the world was really moving away from cooperation that was built since the Second World War, especially in the last 5, 10 years. With the pandemic, we see much more cooperation. Okay, there might be some political agenda here.

**MA**

And also the distribution of vaccines, but I want to ask you a quick question Dr Fakhro. Did you sense the financial burden on the spreadsheets of the private sector and the governments after the pandemic?

**JF**

Yes. Very hard. We will see in the coming few months huge liquidations of companies.

**MA**

Thank you very much to Dr Jamal Fakhro and to Dr Marco Piredda. I hope you enjoyed the interview.

# Session 2

## THE BATTLE IN THE DEEP MAGHREB





Mud houses in the street of desert city Agadez in Niger











BAKARY SAMBE

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## THE EVOLUTION OF THE JIHADIST THREAT AND ITS TRAFFICKING NETWORKS IN THE SAHEL

I think this is a fair reparation for the longstanding mistakes made by contemporary geopolitics which believed in a divide between the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa, contrary to historical and cultural realities.

The Sahel means, above all in Arabic, the river, the other side of the great desert. The Sahara Desert has never been an impassable barrier, but a real inland sea that has always invited people to move from one shore to another during centuries. Until President Nicolas Sarkozy and his attempt to set up a union for the Mediterranean, the dominant geopolitical thinking focused only on the link with the Northern shores of the Mediterranean, while one Arab in three is an African and three quarter of the Arab world's territories are on the African continent. The first mistake was made when terrorist groups appeared in North African societies, because it was possible to expect that they would have spread in the South of the Sahara on the ground of historical and geopolitical continuum. The outbreak of the Libyan conflict was the wakeup call that showed the need of analysing regional problems in view of the larger picture.

I come here with three questions. The first one is, how can the Western Partners make up for 40 years of delay? Mainly, in comparison to the network we try to combat there. The second question is, what did we miss together? And the last one is, what can we co-construct?

I want to mention the effect of the drought in the 1970s and the inability of international partners to assist drought affected Sahelian countries, while Western Partners themselves were at the same time hit by the financial and oil crises. That time saw the rise of the oil producing countries and the Sahel strategy based on two pillars, *darwa* and *ighatha*, namely preaching and humanitarian aid. At that time, there was a substitution of the State in the provision of basic social services in a large-scale preaching campaign. Here, the international community had its first misjudgement. The international community did not understand the stake of such a rupture, and by structural adjustment policies on Sahelian and other

African countries, they further weakened States that could no longer provide basic social services. As a first result, the Sahel strategy of oil producing countries with *dawa* and *ighatha* was in a strong position in the educational and social fields, to the point of competing strongly with the States, because that situation favoured the State competitor. Religious actors were identified as privileged interlocutors because they had the monopoly of the religious discourse whose impact on the population was meaningful, in comparison to democracy, human rights and other issues. Thus, they took advantage from the weaknesses of the State that was facing challenges related to national deficit.

Secondly, what did we miss together? It is time, to give the dignity of solutions to indigenous possibility and strategies. The Sahelian settlement that is currently emerging from the all-military option is coupled with a dilemma. This new Sahelian dilemma lies in the difficult position of the States in the region and their international partners. In the solution proposed to fight terrorism, we have almost lost our sense of priority. We have reached a point where we are faced with profound questions, between the imperative of managing security emergencies, and the need for a change in the main paradigm, facing the obvious failure of the all-military approach.

In the meantime, when we talk about what has happened in Afghanistan, the Afghan laboratory has produced a new Taliban variant and a new concept, namely, soft jihadism. Now, I want to convey the perception of the local populations in the Sahel about what happened in Afghanistan. The victory of the Taliban represents the birth of a new narrative, as an aspiring and mobilising storytelling about the possibility of establishing an internationally recognised Islamic State in the 21st century. This is both a psychological and political achievement that will galvanise the Sahelian Islamic movement, far from the valley of Afghanistan and the Arab world, despite all the debate about the reproduction of the African scenario. The tacit Western recognition gives it even more brilliance.

The media resonance of this takeover, as well as the surge of solidarity that accompanied it in the Muslim world, were reinforced by the pragmatic shift of the same West that had succumbed to the Syrians to diplomatic realism, while allowing the Taliban to be *de facto* internationally acceptable.

The Western powers are in the logic of never wanting to seed the ground of new friendship with the Kabul regime, as the Chinese or the Russian rivals. By contrast, the idea of soft jihadism is now a fact, and by producing the new Taliban variant, the Afghan laboratory seems to have succeeded in its ideological facelift, by allowing it to forge all forms of alliance in the West, as well as in the Muslim world that will follow the irreversible movement of normalisation. However, beyond this observation, enormous questions arise about the credibility in the Sahel among our people, as in the rest of the world, as for the fight of extremism and terrorism, since the values that underpin it are now sacrificed on the altar of strategic and immediate interests.

Now, what can we co-construct? The solution for the Sahel will necessarily be co-constructed, or it will not be found soon. In view of the failure of solitary military initiatives such as the Operations Serval and Barkhane, more synergy is needed. NATO should initiate this collective reflection in view of the issues at stake, since they are transforming the Sahel into a new area for the great game to come. The combination of these new factors will further complicate the Sahelian question, while Libya is far from finding peace, because of the Russian influence, Chinese ambitions, and the emergence of new power, such as Turkey, in addition to the Moroccan-Algerian rivalry.

The Sahel needs everyone but only together. First of all, what we can do together. I think that it is necessary to work on the country narrative, especially on the de-construction of jihadism in the *Salafist format* on which the United Arab Emirates and Egypt are quite ahead, alongside Morocco which has developed a vast training program for Imams. The same is true for Saudi Arabia which could have some legitimacy on the issue, and also for Algeria, because of its experience in fighting against terrorist groups and its leadership within the African Union. Then, NATO must improve its weight and capacity to build more legitimate synergies, in comparison to the solitary initiatives of classic partners that have always faced difficulties in managing both emergency and history.

Once again, it is necessary to break with the idea of putting intermediaries between Partners such as NATO, the Gulf States, and indigenous initiatives in the Sahel. Yes, we can be the Deep Maghreb, but we are also the Sahel, and we need to take into account strategies developed in the Sahel, especially because they are rarely highlighted.

In conclusion, as much as we are looking for partners, tutelage will not help us to move forward on the route to peace.







CLAUDIA GAZZINI

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## THE IRRADIATION OF INSECURITY FROM THE LIBYAN CIVIL WAR AND ITS REGIONAL EFFECTS

Exactly a year ago, rival Libyan factions that were at war signed a ceasefire agreement. The parties at war, and I am talking about the Haftar led, Libya National Army, with its backers, Egypt, the UAE, Russia, and to a certain and partial degree, France, and on the other side, the Tripoli based authorities, at the time led by Fayez Sarraj, with its international backers, mainly Turkey, and Qatar, signed a ceasefire agreement that officially ended a war that *de facto* had ended several months before. And it was supposed to pave the way to unifying the country's military institutions and unifying the country. Forcing the departure of foreign forces and mercenaries that had taken part in this war.

In a certain respect, there was hope that what would follow in the following months and following years, we would see an end of the battle for Libya, that battle between regional States that had been using Libya as a proxy terrain.

What I want to tell you now is probably something obvious, but it is that that battle for Libya has never ended. Yes, we have no longer a war, and since I work for a conflict prevention organisation, this is good news, but the battle for influence on Libya's future is in full stream, completely underway. We are still seeing, and what do I mean by the battle for Libya? Those regional powers and foreign stakeholders, that had actively been part of the war for the control of Tripoli in 2019 and early 2020, are still indirectly trying to influence the course of events. By influencing the political roadmap, by pursuing, to a certain sense, a unilateral security strategy in Libya and business and economic deals.

But unlike during the war, it was a very bipolar situation. You had a pro Haftar coalition, mainly of Arab capitals, and then you had a pro Tripoli coalition with Turkey at its helm, because they intervened militarily, on the ground, officially to help Tripoli and Qatar.

Now, it is less bipolar, this rivalry for the battle and the control of Libya. It is no longer a tug of war, it is more like a Gordian Knot, where you have several ropes stemming out of it, and powers that are pulling in different directions. Yes,

you still have Egypt/UAE/Gulf axis, that is trying to influence Libya's future by pushing and supporting unilateral election laws, that would enable and favour a political outcome. If indeed Libya goes to elections at the end of this year or the beginning of next year, that would see the coming to power of a strong, centralised president, which is very much an aspiration of Cairo, and other Gulf countries that like this figure, this idea of a strong figurehead for the country.

On the other side, you still have a pro Turkey coalition, which is more silent in influencing the course of political events. It is not manoeuvring to have legislation come out in one way or another, but it is still very much present on the ground with military deals and it is actively training military forces.

Likewise, Egypt continues to have bilateral ties in supporting Haftar led forces. Russia is the third rope: officially during the war, part of the pro Haftar coalition, but now Russia's strategy in Libya is to consolidate its presence, refuse the removal of its private security contractors that are present in Libya. I think the big novelty is that before Russia was denying having an official role in the deployment of Wagner, and now it is taking credit for it. And therefore it is proposing itself as an official stakeholder, that has to be dealt with when talking about the removal of foreign forces.

You have the U.S., that is the most vocal in trying to pursue elections, and the mantra of U.S. officials is, "We need elections, because only through elections we will have a new legitimate government. A new legitimate government that can then pursue military unification, economic unification, and have its own standing vis-a-vis the world."

The U.S. has relatively speaking less credibility given what has happened in Afghanistan. So they talk the talk, but the question that Libyans have, is do they walk the walk as well?

As part of this U.S. policy group, I would place most European countries as well. The Sahel and African countries are nowhere to be seen. So it is really not a battle for the Deep Maghreb, or of the Sahel countries in Libya. The AU has always been trying to claim a role in the Libya peace process and has been nowhere, it does not have the capacity. And there are Arab countries that are pushing the AU out, saying: "This is an Arab country. Libya is our brother. We do not want the Africans to deal with Libya."

And Libya is still at the centre of this very strong power struggle, and we are at a moment where things could go very much wrong, if we do not have a resolution to this political roadmap that is supposed to culminate with the elections. So far what has kept the country at bay, meaning not an inactive voice, the fact that there is very little regional appetite to go back to war, but the tensions are resurfacing.

To conclude, where does this leave NATO? NATO is nowhere, to be honest. NATO is absolutely nowhere in Libya. It was there in 2011, very much so, very forcefully. But when you ask, what has NATO done in these last few years? At best, it could offer a security evacuation plan for UN from Tripoli, should prob-

lems arise. At best, it is a place Libyan officials in successive Libyan governments have gone to, to talk about security corporation, but NATO is nowhere at the moment. So if NATO wants to help resolve or cut the Gordian Knot of these tensions that are still lingering and the battle for Libya, it needs to do some soul searching, which will not be easy because of the French-Turkish tensions, but it is there to be resolved.





ERNESTO SAVONA  
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## DISPLACEMENT AND CONVERGENCE OF ILLICIT FLOWS IN NORTH AFRICA

What I am trying to do is answering to the main question of the conference, what strategies, resources and forces should be employed, to avoid a major regional collapse in Sahel. Using the results of a recent research project flows<sup>1</sup>, funded by PMI Impact (Philip Morris International), we have delivered on the end of July. I will try to explain what we have done, and how this could be relevant for the discussion we do have today about illicit trade in North Africa and Sahel. We have been using two key words, displacement and convergence of crime. Displacement means when crimes go from one side to the other because of an intervention done by police or legislation. Human smuggling, it is a case. You intervene in an area and they move to another area. Drugs are also a good example.

And when we speak about Sahel, where we have 11 countries, this is the real good example. It offers relationships between the fragility of the State, and the development of illicit trade and organised crime, which means when you go and look to the situation, which is quite different from country to country, you see that the more illicit trade you have, more fragility it provokes. More fragility you have, more illicit trade you have. So the two things come circular one with the other. And this is very relevant, because you need to know from where you have to intervene to stop. You increase the institutions, or you combat illicit trade, both how, when, in which territories?

But let me explain these two key concepts: a) crime displacement. There are many psychologies of crime displacement: this means you move crime from one place to the other. Many regulators or legislators try to move the crime from one place to the other. b) Crime convergence, what does it mean? When two forms of crime converge one with the other. That means the territory has been abandoned

<sup>1</sup> *Displacement and Convergence of Illicit Flows in North Africa*, Project Flows by PMI Impact, Transcrime and Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 2021

and is in the hands of criminals, so you have a lot of opportunities for criminals. Let me go there, what are the main findings of these projects? We have pointed out 12 main findings.

The first is asymmetries: this is really relevant in terms of crime displacement. When you have a country which is intervening on a topic, and the other country do not do that. For example, Egypt is the only north African country which has developed some legislation against human smuggling, controlling human smuggling. The other countries do not do that. What happens? We have measured the effects of this legislation from Egypt, moving human smuggling to Morocco and Spain, because of the legislation. So in some ways, this legislation could be negative if it is producing loopholes where criminals come.

It could be very positive, if this is calling other countries to carry out the same kind of interventions. So it explains to you what displacement means, and this opens the door to what could be supranational interventions. There are many other kinds of displacement in the report. The same example I have done for Egypt, it is possible about Italy for the enforcement policy about human smuggling. You can measure the effects as we have done in the report. From one month to the other, when the Italian Government has been intervening about human smuggling. Closing the door, opening the door, what happens in the territories? You can see in all these maps which is the displacement effect and the human smuggling in the Egypt, and in many other countries, in Libya and Morocco included.

Of course, also enforcement policies are very relevant for enforcing. If you have more police in an area, police is enforcing, more people move from one place to the other. The same thing happened in Libya and many other countries. If you put on a line all those interventions that has been done in the last five years, you see how they move because of these interventions. Which means it is a very good suggestion to policymakers. Do not intervene alone, but make an agreement in intervening together, because it could be extremely dangerous if you are alone. The research report explains there is not much convergence. Convergence is in those territories where there is a lot of illicit trade. Here, it is very random. There is convergence between human smuggling. There is convergence between human smuggling and drug trafficking, between human smuggling, drug trafficking, and illicit cigarettes trade.

And also oil. There are a lot of things, but all these things happen because the criminals have quite a good know-how how to treat these illicit trades. So there is no really mature convergence between these kind of crimes. And you can see, that enforcement is a very key role, in provoking and/or reducing the convergence between different crimes. Of course we must remember the fragility of the State. Lack of institutions, lack of crime control, are in favour of creating opportunities for illicit trade. And these are the key concepts, which come with some relevant policy implications outlined in the report. We need better data, international co-ordination, in order to reduce the asymmetries, and just because we have been



speaking about human smuggling strategies, this is really important to open some legal track for human smuggling, which will reduce the amount of crime. And enforcement operations should be done supernationally.

This is the methodology we have been using: open data platform. There are not many data available in the area, so we have been capturing a lot of data coming from different elements. This is the methodology we have been using for those people who are very familiar with open source data and methodology. The final result of the project is the book that will come out in the next Spring (2022).





CHLOE BERGER

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## WHAT KIND OF STRATEGIES FOR EURO-ATLANTIC INSTITUTIONS IN A FRAMEWORK OF INSTABILITY/ INSURGENCY?

As I have been asked to examine NATO Allies' and the Alliance's responses to instability and/or insurgency situations, I would like to link this important question to the reflection initiated within the NATO community about the Sahelian crisis. Why is that important for NATO to look at what is currently happening in the Sahel? The communiqué of the last NATO summit is echoing these concerns, directing the NATO Command structure to reflect on NATO's possible contribution to the stabilisation of the Sahel.

Dr Gazzini has well explained the connection between what happened in Libya and the instability that plagues the Sahel region. One can easily understand why the growing insecurity in the Sahel is a matter of concern for NATO and NATO Allies, I would say at least since a decade. A number of Allies have developed cultural, politico-military and economic ties with Sahelian countries. But more importantly, the continuous deterioration of the situation in the Sahel has direct implications for the security of the Alliance, and first and foremost in the Mediterranean Basin.

Illegal migration flows, and the misery and vulnerability that are linked to them, provide a breeding ground for the development of criminal activities and illegal traffics; not even mentioning the exploitation of these terrible situations by terrorist groups. Local armed militancy and tensions among Sahelian communities have also been instrumental in the international terrorist groups' efforts to anchor their influence in the region. However, malign non state actors are not the only ones to benefit from this instability. The current fragmentation has allowed a Russian expansion in the MED. Russia is trying, but it is not the only country, to use the Libyan springboard to penetrate the Sahel. All these factors threaten Allies' presence and interests in the region.

How can NATO address the Sahelian dynamics and their Mediterranean implications? First of all, everyone understood that all the dimensions are interconnected. Migration flows are not security issues per se. They have root-causes linked

to governance issues, poverty, demographics and climate change impact, just to name a few. Some issues relate to the North African socio-economic fabrics and political situation, but a large number of them are rooted into the Sahel environment, and sometimes further South in Sub-Saharan Africa. These areas are affected by significant lack of governance. Non-addressed grievances, sometimes inherited from the post-colonial period, have created a breeding ground for the development of jihadist groups.

How to address this complexity? The international community has tried and implemented many initiatives: most of them are following the same pattern, which is a security/development approach; a comprehensive approach quite similar to the one that has been implemented in Afghanistan. And there are obviously a lot of lessons to be learned about the comprehensive approach, or the Western approach to crisis management.

Mainly driven by Western priorities, these stabilisation initiatives are not necessarily connected with local populations' aspirations and their main problems. When speaking about governance, it is probably more urgent for Sahelian people to address socio-economic imbalances, education and poverty issues, and our colleagues said it, than fighting terrorism. This disconnection needs to be solved out, urgently, if the West wants to remain relevant in these regions. Beyond that, and from a strict security-military point of view, operations are conducted with limited forces and resources, and cannot cover the entire region. We are speaking of a ratio of one man for more than 1000 square kilometres, without almost any surveillance or air support. Mobility is a considerable challenge in these vast deserts.

Of course forces are conducting precise strikes, thus cleaning areas controlled by jihadists; however the problem remains unresolved if the State does not have the capability to deploy personnel. The vacuum will be easily filled by local actors, but also international actors; and this is an important point. Last dimension worthy to mention is Sahelian States' resources, political and socio-economic, to engage communities that have been marginalised for years. While facing communities torn by internal divisions and hostages of regional conflicts, the State appear unable to provide arbitrage mechanism or law enforcement to build trust and confidence with its population. This is a huge problem; nevertheless most of the international community initiatives focus on delivering assistance or infrastructure. The (re)-building of the relationship between the population and the State is often left aside.

Then what could be done? NATO could only have a supporting role, not a leading one. NATO is not equipped to address the root causes of these crises. EU is much more suited to address governance issues, the UN and the African Union too. The key question is to ensure the participation of local partners and regional actors, an involvement critical for the legitimacy of these efforts.

What can be NATO's role in the Sahel? Obviously supporting and fostering the interoperability of Sahelian armed forces and security forces. For instance, NATO

can provide defence capacity building packages, including professional military education components. Then, it is necessary to build on what is already there, especially on existing Allies' operations and programs.

Now the question is: how do you interconnect NATO, EU and AU? Let's leave aside the political constraints, on the tactical or on the technical level, we can do things. If we were able to align, for example, trust funds, it would be a good starting point. For instance, when a NATO could secure the necessary funds to take over. The Sahel offers a lot of opportunities for NATO and EU to align and cooperate. The next NATO summit, to be held in Madrid in June 2022, should provide the NATO-EU Partnership with a new impetus. In that context, the Sahel must be regarded as an opportunity to develop tangible steps towards a rapprochement between both organisations.





# Concluding Remarks





GIOVANNI ROMANI  
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## CONCLUDING REMARKS

Nowadays there is a widening array of security threats, challenges and factors at stake in the MENA region. Just to mention a few: aggressive dis-information campaigns; conflict spillovers from fragile and failing states; instability in the Sahel and Iraq; multiplication of transnational terrorist cells belonging to Daesh and Al-Qaeda; illegal trafficking; the role of Russia, China, Iran.

These are not only factors affecting nations in the area and individual lives, but they ultimately affect NATO as an organisation. One of the elements of NATO's success over its life, over 70 years, is that it adapts when the world changes.

Discussions among Allies on sensitive topics, including on the complex issues concerning our region of discussion, are part of NATO's DNA and there is no shying away from it. Our Partners are involved in these discussions as well, and we try to engage as much as possible other international and regional organisations and initiatives.

Where NATO has some direct experience is, for example, in building knowledge on the threat posed by Russia, which on the 18<sup>th</sup> of October 2021 announced the suspension of activities of its permanent mission to NATO.

The Alliance regrets this decision, considering that it does not promote dialogue and mutual understanding. In this regard, the policy of NATO remains consistent: we commit to staying open to dialogue with Russia, including through the NATO-Russia Council, while at the same time continuing to assess how we can further strengthen our deterrence with regard to Moscow. In the MENA region as well, both Russia and China - but also Iran - are strategic competitors of NATO.

NATO's approach to the Middle East and North Africa is part of its wider cooperative security architecture: alongside collective defence and crisis management, Cooperative Security is indeed one of the Alliance's three core tasks and it also fits into the objectives of NATO Secretary General's 2030 agenda. In fact, being essentially aimed at keeping NATO strong militarily in order to make it stronger politically, one of the initiative's main goals is for the Alliance to under-

take an ever more global approach.

When it comes to the South, we are not starting from scratch and NATO 2030 builds on significant achievements: for example, our long-standing Partnership with Mediterranean Dialogue countries (27 years), and the Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (17 years) – in the establishment of which Ambassador Minuto-Rizzo was on the driving seat, and we are grateful to him for this.

This all helped NATO to better understand the regional security environment and thus face together with its Partners the challenges described. We are currently committed to drawing a more tailored approach for individual countries that will help us tackle these challenges even better.

At the 2021 Brussels Summit, held last June, leaders agreed on strengthening political dialogue and practical cooperation with our MD and ICI Partners, on contributing to building stronger security and defence institutions and capacities, and on collaborating on countering terrorism.

NATO is continuously improving the quality of its cooperation, training and education activities: for example, facilitating interoperability of respective forces and providing better support to defence and capacity-building initiatives in Tunisia and in Jordan, while also enhancing its efforts in Iraq, where it has a mission focused on advice and training. Besides, we further leveraged the NATO Istanbul Cooperation Initiative's Regional Centre in Kuwait, a hub for education, training and diplomacy activities, where more than a thousand officers from all six GCC countries have so far taken part in courses and projects.

At the same time, NATO is seeking to expand its public diplomacy activities in the MENA region: it is critical for us to reach out to the audiences of these countries, particularly the young ones, and communicate NATO's values, objectives and role in the area. There are other structures supporting our work. Let me mention two: the NATO Defence College, with its consistent MENA engagement, and the NATO Strategic Direction South (NSD-S) Hub, established in 2017, which contributes to promoting the Alliance's strategic awareness in Northern and Sub-Saharan Africa. Moreover, as far as the fight against terrorism is concerned, NATO is also part of the Global Coalition against Daesh, contributing through several means that span from providing analyses and enhancing preparedness and responsiveness to terrorist threats, to working on its own capabilities, partnerships and operations. We also offer information exchange and crucial support in border security to our main Partners. Terrorism is one of the most pressing security challenges of our times.

In Iraq we currently have a training mission (NATO Mission Iraq – NMI), which is a substantial effort to partner with the country in the fight against terrorism. The aim is to strengthen Iraqi security forces and institutions in order to prevent the return of Daesh and stabilise the country. It is a non-combat mission and fully integrates civil and military personnel, working closely with other international actors on the ground. Contrarily to what has been often reported by

the media, NATO's mission in Iraq has been looking into expanding as well: an expansion that is demand-driven, incremental, scalable and based both on conditions on the ground and on the government's requests.

About the African continent, the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel, widespread terrorist threats and the destabilisation of several nations affect the transatlantic security as well. For the very first time, the Declaration issued after the June Summit includes a paragraph on the Sahel: NATO will continue to engage in dialogue concerning the Sahel with Partners as well as with international and regional organisations such as the African Union, the UN, the EU, and in particular, the G5 Sahel.

A question may arise: would NATO be welcomed in the Sahel? For the moment, our focus is to improve and leverage our 27-year-old partnership with Mauritania, as well as to engage with the G5 Sahel. This is the initial approach.

Climate change: this is a growing field of cooperation. The Secretary General has repeatedly underlined the impact of climate change on security, and that is the angle we are looking at from a NATO perspective. This is particularly important for the countries in the MENA region: a couple of years ago we were looking at climate change primarily from the perspective of a new passage opened in the North, rather than the global geopolitical implications of desertification and resource scarcity. Our discussion with MENA Partners on this subject has already started and is currently underway: it will be another topic to be tackled together.

Finally, let me address the two elephants in the room: Libya and Afghanistan. Both very sensitive matters to NATO. As we all can see, the crisis in Libya and the presence of global powers in the country have direct implications for regional stability, but also for the security of all Allies, and are thus a key concern to NATO. Our stance is clear: we welcome the progress achieved in Libya in the last few months and support a Libyan-led, Libyan-owned political process, aimed at promoting national reconciliation as well as unifying and strengthening state institutions. NATO Allies called on the Libyan authorities and institutions to implement the Libyan Political Dialogue Forum roadmap, and to make the necessary preparations for free, fair, inclusive presidential and parliamentary elections.

Yet, NATO is not in Libya. It is a political decision that Allies deem to require the appropriate conditions, which are currently not in place. If one reads the Summit communiqué, there is a paragraph on Libya that basically explains this point. Engagement among Allies may restart once we have an elected government, and at that point NATO will look concretely into what is feasible. Thus, we, NATO staff, are looking into this, but more through the eyes of how could the Alliance add value, with the aim to eventually present options to the member states. The local political situation is not yet mature for more than that.

Another question that could be raised is: will NATO be working with Libya? Yes, upon request, we remain committed to providing advice to Libya in the areas of defence, security and institution-building, taking into account political and se-

curity conditions. Indeed, in the 2018 Summit Declaration, NATO had already taken such position: we did not implement it because of the security and political conditions on the ground. Coming to Afghanistan, what happened in recent months is first of all a tragedy for the Afghan people, and is heart breaking for all of us who have been engaged, as we were hoping for amore positive outcome. NATO went to Afghanistan about twenty years ago to prevent the country from serving as a safe haven for terrorists who could threaten our own nations. Over the past two decades, no terrorist attack against NATO countries has been organised from Afghanistan.

We will not forget our Afghan friends and this last August NATO Allies organised, in extremely difficult and dangerous circumstances, one of the largest airlifts in history evacuating more than 120,000 people from the Kabul Airport. Together with the rest of the international community, we must and will continue to bring to safety other Afghan people who helped us during our time there.

We make clear that the Taliban must live up to their obligations, including safe passage, human rights, and terrorism. We do have still leverage, including financial and economic tools and the power to isolate the Taliban diplomatically. In other words, the world is watching and will judge the Taliban by their actions.

What happened in Afghanistan is something that deserves a very in-depth reflection. There is an ongoing assessment about the lessons learned. Actually, it might lead to reviewing the way we conduct out-of-area operations. Nowadays there are a number of additional elements at play, and let me mention the main ones. Besides the reflection on Afghanistan, Allies have recently decided to develop a new Strategic Concept. The current one was adopted in 2010, before the invasion of Crimea, before Afghanistan – just to name a few things. Considering that the Concept is the second most important document driving NATO's activities, it is a shared belief that in order to be able to shape the Alliance's future for the next 10 or 15 years, it needs to be refreshed.

Not only: we have NATO 2030, which is a reflection process. It brings along new objectives and resources related to the future goals NATO wants to pursue. And, last but not least, the 2022 Madrid Summit is approaching: it is a Summit where we will also look South, expecting a certain political push and drive for deliverables associated to the MENA region and to Africa.

With all these things coming together, a renewed NATO is in sight: an organisation that will have adapted and, hopefully, with a new approach to the MENA area, but also to partnerships in general. A new direction, a new path, which will take into account the outcomes of all the processes described.

A key, recurring point in all these processes is a way of assessing challenges, threats and so on: the Alliance will to take into account what every single Ally is doing, and act to the maximum extent in coordination with international organisations - primarily the UN, but also the EU, the African Union - and other regional organisations, as the GCC, G5 Sahel and ECOWAS.



# SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHIES

## FOREWORD

### **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, Ambassador Minuto-Rizzo worked as Head of the External Relations Office of the EEC. In the following years, his career focused on Europe and Space Policy. In 1997 he was appointed Diplomatic Counsellor of the Minister of Defence Beniamino Andreatta, then of his successors Carlo Scognamiglio and Sergio Mattarella. In 2000, Minuto-Rizzo held the position of Italian Ambassador to the Western European Union and to the Political and Security Committee of the EU, of which he was among the founding members. He was Deputy Secretary General of the Atlantic Alliance between 2001 and 2007. His mandate was mostly carried out in the strategic-political industrial area and in the relations with sensitive countries such as those in the Gulf and the Southern Mediterranean. His most recent book is “NATO and the Middle East: The Making of a Partnership” (New Academia Publishing, 2018).

## WELCOME REMARKS

### **Olivier Rittimann**

*Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome*

Since July 2020, Lieutenant-General Rittimann is the Commandant of the NATO Defense College in Rome. After graduating from the Military Academy of Saint Cyr and the Army Engineer School, he chose to serve with the Foreign Legion and he took part to operations in Chad, Mayotte, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iraq. After an operational tour at the NATO-led Stabilization Force in

Bosnia and Herzegovina (SFOR) in 1997, he was assigned to the Allied Forces North Headquarters in Brunssum in 1998. Then, he was posted to the Joint Staff in Paris, as Chief of the NATO branch. Promoted Brigadier General in 2010, he was deployed in the International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) from January 2011 to January 2012 as Chief of Operations and assigned as French Deputy Military Representative (MILREP) to NATO Headquarters. After that, Rittmann became the French National Military Representative to NATO's Allied Command Operations in Mons (Belgium).

### **Nicolò Russo Perez**

*Head, International Affairs, Compagnia di San Paolo, Turin*

Dr Russo Perez is the Head of the International Affairs Program at the Compagnia di San Paolo Foundation, based in Turin (Italy). In this capacity, he is in charge of several grant-making and operational activities promoted by the Foundation in the field of international relations, covering transatlantic, and European studies, as well as Mediterranean and emerging countries affairs. Previously, he worked at the European Commission, at the International Labour Organization and was a Senior Associate Fellow at the EUISS in Paris. A council member of the European Council on Foreign Relations, Dr Russo Perez is currently also in the Scientific Board of the NATO Defense College Foundation in Rome. He is also a member of the Strategic Reflection Group on European affairs set up by the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

## **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 NATO 2021: Rebuilding the consensus for a new era 93 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. Born in Germany, lives in Rome. He has published as author or co-author 39 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.

#### BACKGROUND POLICY PAPER

##### **Umberto Profazio**

*Chief Maghreb Analyst, NDC Foundation*

Maghreb and Gulf Chief Analyst for the NATO Defense College Foundation, he was previously Libya Analyst for the Conflict, Security and Development Programme at the IISS and regularly publishes on issues such as political developments, security and terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa region.

##### **Fabio Nicolucci**

*Analyst, NDC Foundation*

Fabio Nicolucci is a senior analyst and communication professional with over 20 years of international experience in politics, security, media and research. He has dealt with international relations, middle eastern and sub-saharan politics, jihadism, conflict, governance and Italian internal and international affairs. He has published a widely recognised book on Israeli-Western European relations and a new one will follow on “Terrorism and the West”.

#### SESSION 1

#### CHANGING TRENDS IN THE REGION

##### **Marco Carnelos**

*President, MC Geopolity, Rome*

Ambassador Carnelos spent twenty-five years in the Italian Foreign Service, with postings in Somalia, Australia, UN (New York) and Iraq. He also spent almost ten years in the Italian Prime Minister Office covering different positions as foreign policy adviser with three different Prime Ministers (Lamberto Dini, Romano Prodi and Silvio Berlusconi), in charge for special dossiers such as Middle East and North Africa, Russia, Afghanistan, and Terrorism. He has also been Special Envoy for the Middle East Peace Process and the Syrian Crisis for the Italian Government. He left the Italian Foreign Service at the end of 2017 and he founded his own consultancy company, MC Geopolity. He is currently Board Member of the Scientific Committee of the IGS (Institute of Global Studies) and Board Member of ISMAA (Mediterranean Institute for Asia and Africa), in Rome. He

is a regular columnist for the Middle East Eye magazine and collaborates also with Limes.

### **Ahmad Masa'deh**

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

Dr Masa'deh served as Minister, Ambassador, and chief of an international organisation. Today he 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 the Jordanian Representative to NATO. In January 2010, he 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.

### **Mahmoud Karem**

*Professor, British University; former Ambassador to NATO and the EU, 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) in Cairo. He served as Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Belgium, and Luxembourg; Head of Mission of Egypt to the European Communities; and Permanent Representative of Egypt to NATO, from 2005 till 2010. He was also a member of the Advisory Board of the Secretary General of the United Nations for Disarmament Matters. In July 2017, the Foreign Minister of Japan announced the establishment of a group of eminent persons for substantive advancement in nuclear disarmament and Ambassador Karem was chosen from the Middle East.

### **Oded Eran**

*Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Studies; former Ambassador to the EU and NATO, Tel Aviv*

Ambassador Eran is currently Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) in Tel Aviv, and served as Director of INSS from July 2008 to November 2011, following a long career in Israel's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other government positions. Before joining INSS, he served as Secretary General of the Israel branch of the World Jewish Congress. From 2002 to 2007, he was Israel's Ambassador to the European Union, covering NATO as well. Prior to that, Dr Eran was Israeli Ambassador to Jordan, and head of Israel's negotiations team with the Palestinians. Among his previous positions: Deputy Director General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Deputy Chief of the Is-

raeli Embassy in Washington. Between 2007 and 2013, Ambassador Eran served as an advisor to the Knesset sub-committee on Foreign Affairs.

#### INTERVIEW

#### THE ENERGY DILEMMA. TRADITIONAL SOURCES VERSUS RENEWABLES

##### **Mayssoun Azzam**

*News Presenter, Al Arabiya, 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, Ms 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. She participated in many conferences as a moderator, and wrote several political and social articles that have been published on the Al Arabiya.net website.

##### **Marco Piredda**

*Head, Political Scenarios and Institutional Support for Business Development, Eni, Rome*

Dr Piredda is a Senior Manager of Eni - the Italian global energy company - where he works in the Public Affairs and International Relations Department. He worked for six years for the Italian Government, in the Financial and Banking Directorate of the Italian Department of Treasury, as Director of the Unit in charge of Legal International Cooperation. In this assignment, Dr Piredda managed several EU-funded projects on economic regulation, mainly with Eastern European countries. He joined Eni in 2008 to work in the External Relations and Communication Department. Then, he worked in the Legal and Regulatory Affairs Department and in the Public Affairs Department. In 2017, Dr Piredda was assigned the position of Head of Analyses and International Relations for the development of Eni's oil and gas businesses. In June 2019, he was appointed Head of Political Scenarios and Institutional Support for Business Development in the MENA, Americas, and the Asia Pacific.

##### **Jamal Mohamed Fakhro**

*Managing Partner, KPMG, Manama*

Dr Fakhro is a veteran Bahraini legislator, business advisor and a member of Shura Council, the Bahraini upper house of Parliament. He is the Managing Partner of KPMG (one of the Global Big 4 professional services firms) in Bahrain. Dr

Fakhro was the first Arab ever to be appointed as a member of the KPMG Global Board and Global Council. He was Chairman of KPMG Middle East and South Asia (MESA) Board, and member of KPMG Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMA) Regional Board till October 2014. Having served as Managing Partner since 1987, he has an extensive experience in the field of Audit, Tax and Advisory services in the region, especially for government sector, banking, oil & 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.

## SESSION 2

### THE BATTLE IN THE DEEP MAGHREB

#### **Bakary Sambe**

*Director, Timbuktu Institute - African Center for Peace Studies, Dakar*

Dr Sambe is Director of the Timbuktu Institute-African Center for Peace Studies, in Dakar. Founder of the Observatory of Religious Radicalisms and Conflicts in Africa, he is an Assistant Professor at Gaston Berger University, in Saint-Louis, Senegal. His current work focuses on endogenous strategies, cross-border dynamics and the experimentation of agile approaches in crisis zones. As an expert for the UN, the EU, and the AU, etc., Dr Sambe has notably designed and led the advocacy for the implementation of the G5 Sahel regional unit for preventing and combating radicalisation (CELLRAD), accompanied the process of developing national strategies in Niger, Burkina Faso and the Central African Republic, and produced the first manual of good resilience practices. In addition to numerous articles, Dr Sambe has published several books: "Islam and diplomacy, Morocco's African policy" (2010-11), "Boko Haram, from a Nigerian problem to regional threat" (2015), "Contestations islamisées. Le Sénégal entre diplomatie d'influence et islam politique" (2018).

#### **Claudia Gazzini**

*Senior Libya Analyst, International Crisis Group, Tripoli*

Dr Gazzini is the International Crisis Group's Senior Analyst for Libya since 2012. Between October 2017 and March 2018, she also served as policy advisor to Ghassan Salamé, Special Representative and Head of the UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). Dr Gazzini researches and produces reports on security, politics and economic governance of Libya, including its oil sector. She travels regularly throughout Libya. Prior to joining the International Crisis Group, Dr Gazzini worked for the Associated Press in Rome and for Reuters in Jakarta. She was Max Weber fellow at the European University Institute in Fiesole (Florence) and Visiting Fellow at the Program of African Studies at Northwestern University (IL). Dr Gazzini did her post-graduate studies in Middle Eastern History at Princeton University and Oxford University.



### **Ernesto Savona**

*Director, Transcrime, Università Cattolica, Milan*

Dr Savona is Director of Transcrime and, since 2003, Professor of Criminology at the Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore in Milan. Today, he is member of the EU Commission expert group on “Policy needs for data on crime. Dr Savona is part of the Academic Board of the SOCTA report (Europol). He was also nominated President of the European Society of Criminology for the years 2003-2004. He has been a consultant to the United Nations, the Council of Europe (where he was appointed one of the seven members of the Scientific and Criminological Council in 1996), the European Union and various national governments. In June 2011, Dr Savona was appointed Chair for the term 2011-2012 of the Global Agenda Council on Organized Crime of the World Economic Forum. From 2016 to 2019 he has been the coordinator of the project PROTON (Modelling the PRocesses leading to Organised crime and TerrOrist Networks), awarded in January 2016 to Università Cattolica-Transcrime under the EU Horizon 2020 programme.

### **Chloe Berger**

*Faculty Adviser and Researcher, NATO Defense College, Rome*

Dr Berger is Faculty Adviser and Researcher at the NATO Defense College. As a Researcher, her work focuses mainly on the broader MENA region and NATO's Agenda for the South (Projecting Stability, partnerships, etc.). As a Faculty Adviser, she oversees the Curriculum Planning of the NATO Regional Cooperation Course and the Senior Executive Regional Conference. Before joining the College, Dr Berger held different positions in French educational institutions, public and private, in Syria and Egypt. She worked as a consultant for risks analysis and strategic monitoring on Middle-Eastern issues (Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine). Dr Berger is a graduate from the Political Studies Institute of Paris (Sciences-Po Paris), and she received a Ph.D in Political Sciences from Paris II 13 – Panthéon-Assas University.

## **CONCLUDING REMARKS**

### **Giovanni Romani**

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

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



NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg visits NATO's training facilities in Besmaya, Iraq (March 2018).  
Source: [www.nato.int](http://www.nato.int)





Fondazione  
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di San Paolo



# ARAB GEOPOLITICS 2021

## HOW AND WITH WHOM? CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

HIGH-LEVEL CONFERENCE

*Organised by the NATO Defense College Foundation*

*In co-operation with the NATO Political Affairs and Security Policy Division,  
the Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo, the Policy Center for the New South,  
and the NATO Defense College*

ROME, THE 21<sup>ST</sup> OF OCTOBER 2021

Venue: Parco dei Principi Grand Hotel & Spa, Via Gerolamo Frescobaldi, 5, 00198 Roma

14,30-14,45

**Welcome Remarks**

- Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo, President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome
- Olivier Rittimann, Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome
- Nicolò Russo Perez, Head, International Affairs, Compagnia di San Paolo, Turin (Virtual)

**Session I - CHANGING TRENDS IN THE REGION**

*A fresh look at the region is necessary. Fragmentations is ongoing, while traditional governments persist as well as low regional cooperation. At the same time the wave of normalisation accords and the recomposition of the Gulf Cooperation Council, together with a new Israeli government, are signs of change. Also, great powers show different alignments with the USA reducing direct engagement and trying to avail itself more of NATO, while Beijing continues its economic expansion.*

14,45 - 16,05

Chair: Claire Spencer, Visiting Senior Research Fellow, King's College, London

- Marco Carnelos, President, MC Geopolicy, Rome
- Ahmad Masa'deh, Former Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean, Amman
- Mahmoud Karem, Professor, British University; former Ambassador to the EU and NATO, Cairo
- Oded Eran, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Studies; former Ambassador to the EU and NATO, Tel Aviv (Virtual)

**Q&A**

THURSDAY 21<sup>ST</sup> OF OCTOBER 2021

Interview - THE ENERGY DILEMMA. TRADITIONAL  
SOURCES VERSUS RENEWABLES

*Local producers and consumers are engaged into a race against time towards diversified economies, sustainable energy mixes and sensible water management.*

16,05 - 16,35 Moderator: Mayssoun Azzam, News Presenter, Al Arabiya,  
Dubai

- Jamal Mohamed Fakhro, Managing Partner, Manama
- Marco Piredda, Head, Political Scenarios and Institutional Support for Business Development, Eni, Rome



## Session II - THE BATTLE IN THE DEEP MAGHREB

*The Deep Maghreb is the geopolitical space linking the Mediterranean to the whole area of the Sahel. Illegal trafficking and organised crime are fuelling, often behind terrorist labels, this major regional dislocation. The increasing fragmentation, unrest and disorder, together with climate-driven humanitarian catastrophes, represent a clear threat for the peace and well-being of this area, as shown by the dangerous connections between Libya and its wider African Hinterland. What strategies, resources and forces should be employed to avoid a major regional collapse? Is the Sahel an Afghanistan in the making?*

17,10 -18,30      Chair: Robert Watkins, Research Fellow, Centre on Conflict, Development, and Peacebuilding, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva

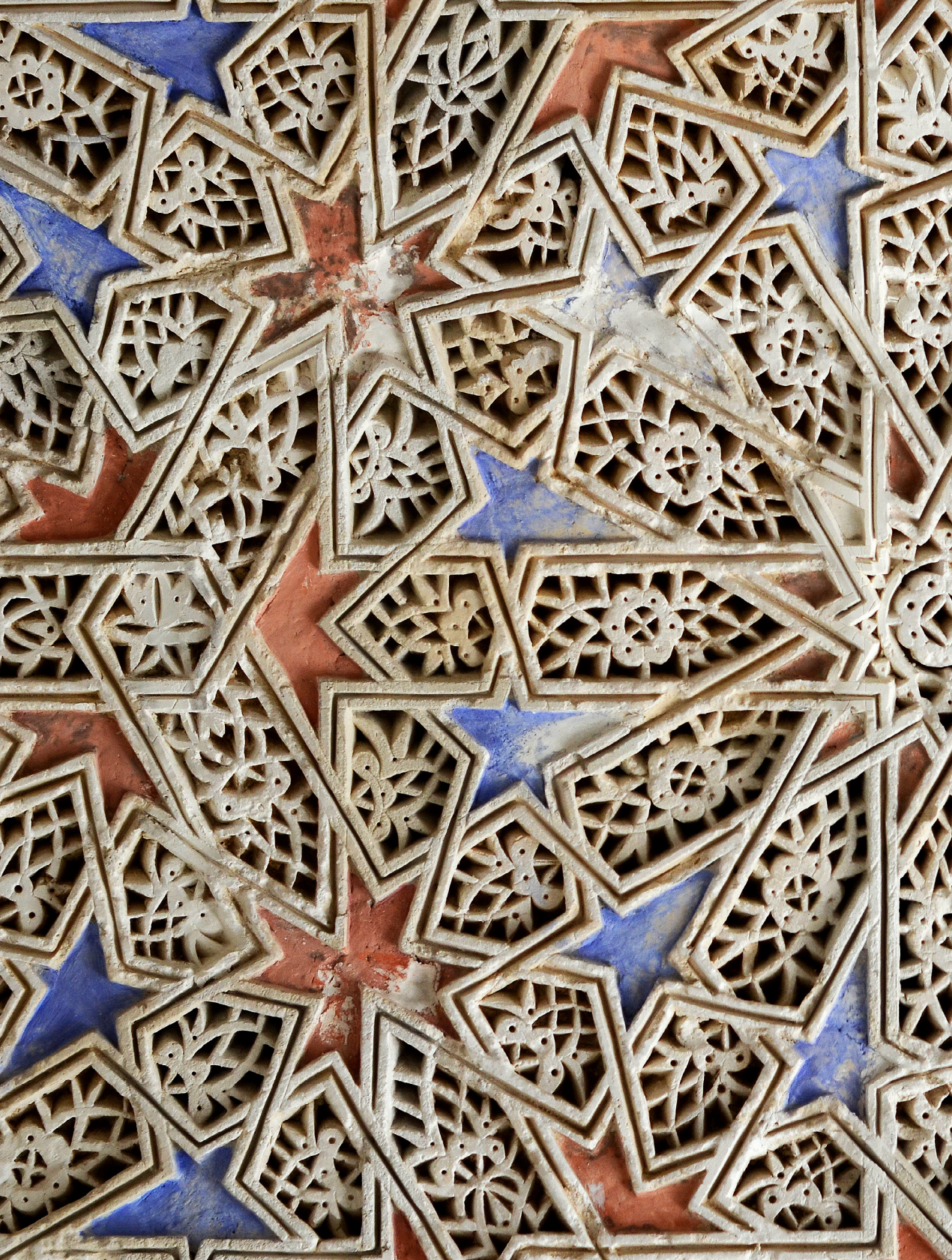
- Bakary Sambe, Director, Timbuktu Institute - African Center for Peace Studies, Dakar
- Claudia Gazzini, Senior Libya Analyst, International Crisis Group, Tripoli
- Ernesto Savona, Director, Transcrime, Università Cattolica, Milan
- Chloe Berger, Faculty Adviser and Researcher, NATO Defense College, Rome

## Q&A

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

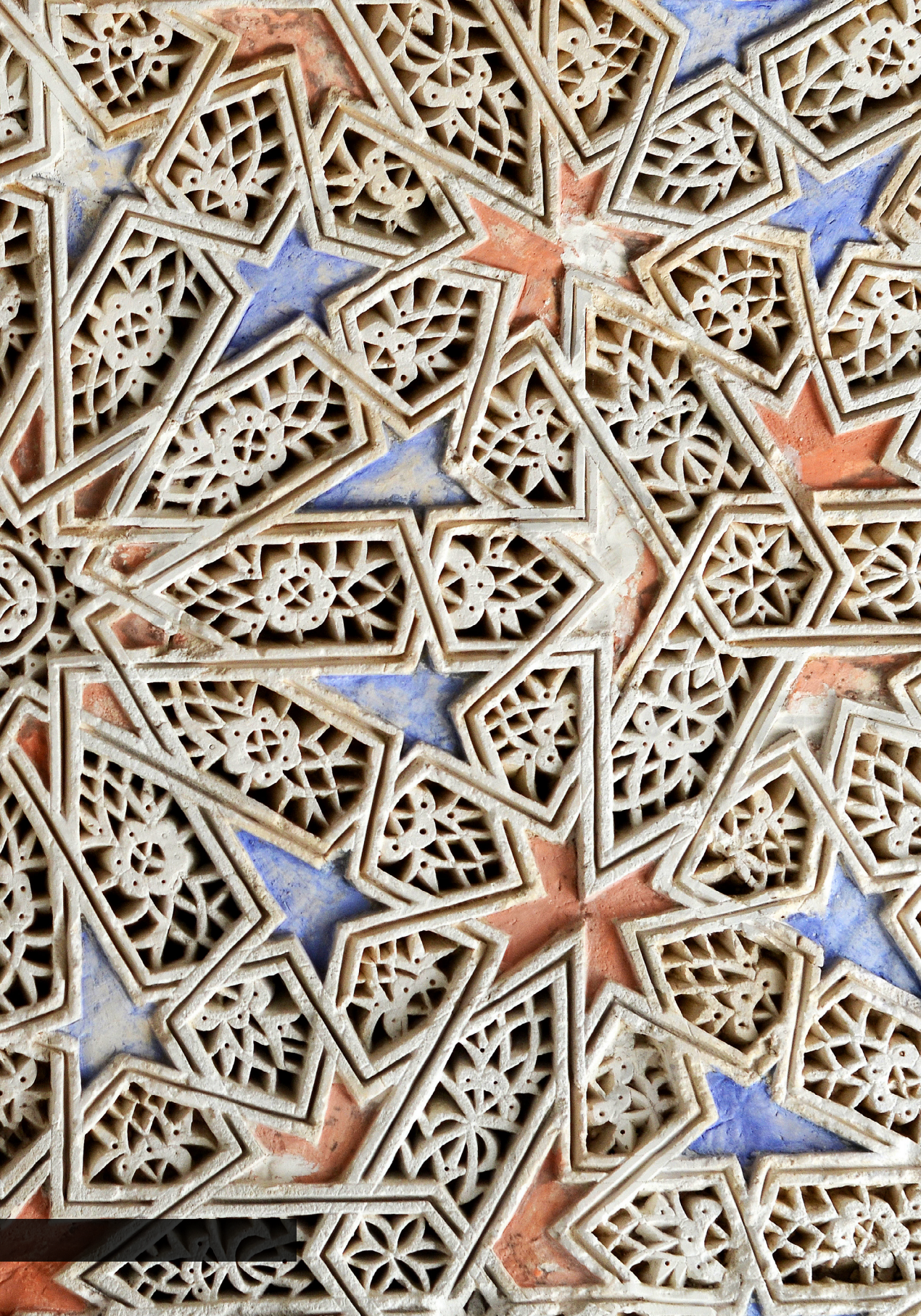
18,35 - 18,45      Giovanni Romani, Head, Middle East and North Africa Section, Political Affairs and Security Policy Division, NATO HQ, Brussels





Mosaic detail in Bardo Museum, Tunisia













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