



Gulf Research Center Foundation
Knowledge for All



Arab geopolitics in turmoil Perceptions, unknowns and policies

*Conference organised by
the NATO Defense College Foundation
in cooperation with
the Gulf Research Center Foundation, the NATO Science for Peace and Security Programme, the NATO
Defense College and the University of Jordan.*

ROME, 25-26th of February 2016

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

Draft Agenda

THURSDAY, 25TH OF FEBRUARY

- 14,30-15,00 Arrival of participants - Registration
- 15,00 Welcome remarks
- ❑ **Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo**, President, NATO Defense College Foundation, Rome *
 - ❑ **Janusz Bojarski**, Commandant, NATO Defense College, Rome *
- 15,30-17,00

SESSION 1

NON-STATE ACTORS AND THE RISKS OF DISINTEGRATION

States and ruling elites are not uncontested players, on the contrary they have to face risks and threats emanating from terrorism and regional divides created by religious and sectarian fault lines. After Lebanon, at least four other Middle Eastern countries are risking disintegration due to ISIL and other

centrifugal forces. The panel has to explore the situation beyond mainstream consensus and suggest alternative strategies.

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

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

General discussion

17,00-17,30 Coffee/Tea break

17,30-19,00

SESSION 2 FOSTERING VIABLE POLITICS: THE EVOLUTION IN THE ARAB REGION

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

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

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

General Discussion

FRIDAY, 26TH OF FEBRUARY

9,30 Opening remarks

9,45-11,15

SESSION 3 SENSIBLE PARTNERSHIPS AND CO-OPERATIVE SECURITY

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

Chair: **H.E. Amre M. Moussa**, former Secretary General, League of Arab States, Cairo *

- ❑ **Dr Ebtesam Al-Ketbi**, President, Emirates Policy Center, Abu Dhabi *
- ❑ **Nicola de Santis**, Head, Middle East and North Africa Section, NATO Headquarters, Brussels *
- ❑ **Oded Eran**, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for National Security Studies, Tel-Aviv *
- ❑ **Claude Salhani**, Opinion Page Editor, The Arab Weekly, Washington D.C. *

General Discussion

11,15-11,45 Coffee/Tea break

11,45-13,15

SESSION 4 REGIONAL HEGEMONIES: RECONCILING THE EXTERNAL POWERS

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

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

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

General Discussion

CONCLUDING REMARKS

H.E. Sheikh Thamer Ali Al-Sabah, Head of the National Security Bureau, Kuwait City *;
Hon Paolo Gentiloni, Foreign Minister of Italy, Rome



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