

A SABAN CENTER AT BROOKINGS-UNITED STATES  
CENTRAL COMMAND CONFERENCE



# Beyond the Arab Awakening: A Strategic Assessment of the Middle East

August 28-29, 2012

Washington, D.C.



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## A LETTER FROM TAMARA COFMAN WITTES

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On August 28-29, 2012, the Saban Center at Brookings and the United States Central Command brought together analysts, officers, and policymakers to discuss the new and enduring challenges facing the United States in the Middle East. The conference, *Beyond the Arab Awakening: A Strategic Assessment of the Middle East*, explored security developments in key countries of the region, focusing on those issues where the risks and opportunities for the United States are the greatest.

General James N. Mattis, then CENTCOM's commander, delivered opening remarks, and we were delighted to have the Honorable Michèle Flournoy, formerly the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, deliver a keynote address. The conference also featured experts from the Middle East as well as senior American analysts and officials. Together, the speakers and conference participants offered insights that went well beyond conventional Washington wisdom and provided valuable lessons and ideas for the U.S. military and policy community.

The conference featured six panels on topics vital to U.S. security, though the conversations often ranged much further. We began with a discussion of Syria, where civil war and the Asad regime's brutal crackdown have left tens of thousands dead and millions displaced. Iran, fearing the loss of its closest Arab ally, is doubling down on Asad's regime, while the violence risks spreading to Iraq, Lebanon, and other neighbors. No easy policy option emerged from our discussion, but all the speakers suggested ideas for better protecting U.S. interests. The next two panels focused on Iran. Iran's nuclear program was the focus of the first panel, which addressed the risks and effectiveness of sanctions, military force, negotiations, and other policy choices available to the United States. The panel that followed provided context for the nuclear issue and for the U.S.-Iran relationship in general, explaining Iran's fractious domestic politics and discussing its impact on foreign policy. The fourth panel examined the changes wrought by the Arab Awakening, still underway. In Egypt, long a close U.S. security partner, the hopes that followed the initial uprisings have not yet been met—the economy remains in crisis and the political trajectory is both rocky and uncertain. The fifth panel turned to Iraq. Once the focus of U.S. policy in the region, several speakers argued that the United States is not now devoting sufficient attention to Iraq, where violence and the Maliki government's power grabs risk spinning out of control and igniting broader unrest. The final panel brought the themes of the conference together, highlighting risks to U.S. goals and suggesting ways that U.S. diplomacy and military power could more effectively promote U.S. interests.

The pages that follow include summaries of the sessions involved as well as the full text of Dr. Flournoy's keynote address. Except for the keynote address, the conference was held under the Chatham House Rule, so no remarks are attributed to any particular speaker.

I am sincerely grateful to our partners at CENTCOM, and the staff at the Saban Center, for their efforts in producing the conference and these proceedings. Particular thanks go to Major General Beydler for the long hours he committed to working with us in our successful annual collaboration. Special thanks also go to General Mattis for his guidance, support, and contributions during the conference.

Tamara Cofman Wittes  
*Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy  
at Brookings*

# CONFERENCE AGENDA

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## DAY ONE: AUGUST 28, 2012

### **Welcome**

Tamara C. Wittes, Director, Saban Center at Brookings

### **Opening Remarks**

General James N. Mattis, Commander, U.S. Central Command

### **Keynote Address**

Michèle A. Flournoy, Former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy

### **Panel One: The Syria Crisis**

MODERATOR: Daniel L. Byman, Research Director and Senior Fellow, Saban Center at Brookings

### **Panel Two: Iran's Nuclear Ambitions**

MODERATOR: Steven Pifer, Senior Fellow, Foreign Policy at Brookings

### **Panel Three: Looking Inside Iran**

MODERATOR: Suzanne Maloney, Senior Fellow, Saban Center at Brookings

### **Dinner Remarks**

David Sanger, Chief Washington Correspondent, *The New York Times*

## DAY TWO: AUGUST 29, 2012

### **Panel Four: The Shifting Political Landscape**

MODERATOR: Tamara C. Wittes, Director, Saban Center at Brookings

### **Panel Five: Security and Politics in Iraq**

MODERATOR: Daniel L. Byman, Research Director and Senior Fellow, Saban Center at Brookings

### **Panel Six: U.S. Strategy in the Middle East**

MODERATOR: Michael Doran, Roger Hertog Senior Fellow, Saban Center at Brookings

### **Closing Remarks**

Tamara C. Wittes, Director, Saban Center at Brookings

## SUMMARIES OF CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS

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### Panel One: The Syria Crisis

In the opening session of the Saban Center at Brookings-U.S. Central Command conference, the speakers discussed the evolving Syrian crisis as the Asad family's forty-two-year grip on power in Syria is coming to an end. The moderator began by saying that the developments in Syria presented both challenges and opportunities for the United States. Syria may prove to be the country that exerts the greatest influence on the Middle East and the overall balance of power in the region.

Underscoring the intricate dynamic of the Syrian conflict, the first panelist argued that defining a clear multilateral strategy was imperative in order to address effectively the crisis in Syria. According to the speaker, the international community's response to the Syrian crisis will have implications for politics and security in the broader Middle East, especially at a time of increasing social awareness. As a result of the Arab Spring, citizens across the region have voiced their grievances, demanding government accountability, transparency, and protection of human rights and civil liberties. The speaker observed that the protests in Syria began as appeals for social, economic, and political reforms, rather than demands for a regime change. In his view, President Bashar al-Asad's intransigence, together with his government's unwillingness to implement reform, convinced the Syrian opposition that peaceful change was impossible. As a result, civilian protest evolved into armed resistance after the Syrian military and security forces brutally suppressed the demonstrations.

The speaker posited that the removal of President Asad would result in a complete collapse of the Syrian regime. In light of such eventuality, the Syrian National Council (SNC), a coalition of Syrian opposition groups with headquarters in Turkey, began consolidating its forces and preparing for the challenges of governing a fractured post-Asad Syria. The speaker cited several SNC documents that laid out the foundations of a new Syria and the common objectives of the Syrian people. He said that even though the Syrian opposition has not

reached a full unification, it has achieved consensus on a number of issues. Foremost, the opposition has developed a common vision for a secular democratic Syria.

The speaker encouraged U.S. policymakers to view the Syrian crisis in the broader regional context, pointing out the links between the Syrian civil war, the confrontation between the West and Iran, and the future of militant groups like Hizballah. He said that the United States and other international actors should not eschew active involvement in resolving the Syrian crisis. Invoking the successful international interventions in the Balkans and Libya, the speaker urged the international community to assist the Syrian people in establishing a foundation upon which they could build their own democracy.

The second panelist discussed the tactical aspects of the Syrian civil war. He observed that several months ago the Free Syrian Army (FSA), the main armed opposition group, struggled to hold territory and launch military operations against the government's armed forces. More recently, the FSA has demonstrated improved military effectiveness and ability to control strategically important terrain. In response, the Syrian military has intensified the use of lethal force against both the armed opposition and unarmed civilians. The speaker posited that while the Asad regime continues to intimidate the FSA—by displaying its capability to project power and by carrying out occasional mass killings—the Syrian military's ability to continue offensive operations and to control the countryside has declined considerably. In consequence, the regime is concentrating its effort on holding vital urban centers like Damascus, Homs, and Idlib. Still, the Syrian regime is stretched but not broken.

The speaker identified two distinct factors that threaten stability in a post-Asad Syria: the fragmented Syrian opposition and the structure of the Syrian military. He affirmed that the emergence of new rebel groups challenges the opposition's ability to build a unified command-and-control system. Although the provin-

cial military councils operate under the umbrella of the FSA, these units make autonomous operational decisions. Moreover, some rebel groups include Salafi elements pursuing extremist agendas. With respect to the military, the speaker said that preserving the Syrian army's integrity was the key to fostering stability in the aftermath of the regime's downfall. Yet, the Syrian military was built in such a way that it would likely dissolve if the Asad government collapsed. Specifically, the Asad regime paired Sunni-dominated units with Alawite-dominated forces to ensure oversight and preclude potential maneuvering against the regime. Additionally, the Syrian government maintains sectarian paramilitary forces loyal to the Alawites, the sect of the Asad family. Hence, the removal of President Asad could produce a new formidable insurgency inside Syria, with the former Syrian army forming its core.

The third panelist examined the implications of the Syrian conflict for Lebanon and Hizballah. A society that accommodates multiple ethnic and sectarian groups, Lebanon does not speak with one voice. Some Lebanese communities are sympathetic to the Asad regime, whereas others support the Syrian rebels. The speaker pointed out that these divided loyalties make the country susceptible to a violent spillover from the Syrian conflict. He said that the growing number of tit-for-tat kidnappings and isolated armed clashes in Lebanon threaten to shake the country's fragile stability. Compounding the situation are the Sunni fighters who seek sanctuary in Lebanon's Sunni communities and use the Lebanese territory to launch cross-border attacks. Their presence militarizes Lebanon's Sunni population and raises fears among the country's Shi'a communities. According to the speaker, armed clashes occur regularly between the Sunni and Shi'a residents in north Lebanon and the potential for escalation remains high.

The speaker said that although Hizballah is a potent political and military force in Lebanon, the organization has been struggling with an array of internal and external threats. Internally, Hizballah has to deal with the growing discontent among its main Shi'a constituency that is becoming increasingly intolerant of the government's inability to provide services. Externally, if the Syrian government collapses and a Sunni-dominated

regime replaces it, Hizballah's position in Syria will inevitably decline; its connection to Iran through Syria will be severed; and its ability to replenish its military arsenal will diminish, leaving the group vulnerable to an attack from Israel. The speaker concluded by asserting that despite these challenges, Hizballah will remain a strong force in Lebanon in the short run.

## Panel Two: Iran's Nuclear Ambitions

The second panel of the conference focused on Iran's nuclear program. The panelists discussed the prospects for a diplomatic solution to the standoff between the Islamic Republic and the West, proposed additional avenues to increase international pressure on Iran, and analyzed the outcomes of a potential Israeli or U.S. military strike on Iran. The panel revealed a number of fundamental misconceptions and differences of opinion between American policymakers and their Iranian counterparts, all of which continue to deepen the rifts between the two countries.

One panelist said that the Iranian officials are skeptical about the purpose of the economic sanctions imposed on Iran by the United States and its European allies. In particular, the Iranian officials believe that the current political and economic isolation of Iran is not intended to halt the country's nuclear progress. Instead, the Iranian government is convinced that the international community exploits the nuclear issue as a pretense to decimate Iran's economy and instigate regime change.

The speaker suggested that Tehran's skepticism about the utility of negotiating with Washington is further reinforced by the prevalent misperception among the Iranians that Israel's national interests drive U.S. policy toward the Islamic Republic. He emphasized the difficulty of defusing tensions between Tehran and Washington through a single agreement on the nuclear issue, arguing that a genuine effort to overcome the Iran-U.S. stalemate should involve comprehensive accords addressing the multiple issues of contention between the two nations.

The speaker argued that a workable agreement between Iran and the United States can be reached within the

framework of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). According to the speaker, the NPT comprises legally binding nonproliferation commitments as well as sufficient oversight and enforcement mechanisms to prevent the member states, including the Islamic Republic, from acquiring nuclear weapons. And Iran seeks to exercise its legitimate right under the treaty. The speaker contended that the Iranian government's anger at the United States stems from its perception of being discriminated against: the Iranians feel that the international community has implemented harsher measures against the Islamic Republic than against the other NPT signatories. Hence, the Iranian government views the economic sanctions as a politically motivated effort to strip Iran of its rights to enrich uranium under the NPT.

The speaker concluded by stating that the Iranian government has made several attempts to open negotiations with the United States. He stated that the U.S. officials have repeatedly dismissed these attempts or set preconditions unacceptable to Tehran, such as the requirement to suspend uranium enrichment indefinitely. One participant, though, countered this argument by pointing out that the Iranian officials have failed to clarify whether the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei approved explicitly the Iranian government's attempts to open negotiations with the United States. He said that the Iranian government cannot make autonomous decisions without the Supreme Leader's authorization.

The second panelist stressed the unresolvable uncertainty about Iran's intentions. He said that although the Iranian government may not be pursuing nuclear weapons, the uncertainty over Tehran's intentions was sufficient to alarm Washington. In assessing the advantages and disadvantages of a military strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, the speaker argued that the U.S. administration must base its decision about the use of force against Iran on an unbiased analysis and rigorous net assessment. Foremost, the United States must indentify, in robust terms, the objectives of a military strike and answer a number of critical questions: would a military strike eliminate entirely Iran's capacity to build a nuclear weapon? What are the observable metrics of successful military action?

The participant pointed out that the U.S. military has the capacity to identify the targets of a strike with precision, but the repercussions of a military attack are unpredictable. Iran's ability to absorb a military strike and its retaliatory capabilities are unknown. Likewise, it is difficult to predict the reaction of ordinary Iranians: will the people take advantage of foreign military action and mobilize against the regime, or will the Iranians rally around the flag, thus opening an opportunity for the hardliners to further consolidate their defiant position? The speaker also underscored the importance of assessing if a successful military strike against Iran's nuclear facilities would delay the nuclear program. In his view, a military strike by Israel would achieve limited results and set back Iran's nuclear program by one to two years. In contrast, an attack by the United States could be more debilitating and delay Iran's nuclear progress by three to four year.

The third panelist argued that a robust analysis of the Iran-U.S. standoff should take into account the Iranian perspective. He observed that if the United States were in Iran's position and were surrounded by regional powers possessing nuclear arsenals, the U.S. government would seek to develop nuclear weapons to bolster the country's national security. In a similar vein, Iran is pursuing a nuclear program to strengthen its own national security.

The speaker concluded by emphasizing that the U.S. administration should consider adopting a policy of containment if Iran obtains nuclear weapons. Dismissing containment as a U.S. policy option risks encouraging Iran to accelerate the nuclear weapons program: it creates impression in Tehran that once Iran has obtained nuclear weapons, it will be accepted as another nuclear power on the world stage. The speaker advised that the U.S. administration discuss containment openly and send an unequivocal signal to Tehran that the international community will treat a nuclear Iran as a pariah. Further political and economic isolation of Iran will only make the regime more vulnerable to domestic upheavals.

### Panel Three: Looking Inside Iran

The third panel of the conference focused on the domestic politics of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The panelists analyzed the state of the Iranian government, Iran's internal security structure, and the effects of the international economic sanctions on Iran's economy.

The first panelist refuted the growing speculation that the domestic balance of power in Iran has shifted and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) has surpassed the authority of the Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in national decision-making. The speaker pointed out that the IRGC's senior leadership regularly mounts criticism against various Iranian officials, including the incumbent President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and the former president Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, but the IRGC consistently refrains from challenging the authority of the Supreme Leader. In the speaker's view, the fact that a number of IRGC veterans have strengthened their positions by accumulating political power and economic resources does not mean that the authority of the Supreme Leader has declined.

The speaker acknowledged that the 2013 presidential race in Iran poses a challenge to the Supreme Leader. Ayatollah Khamenei must propose a candidate who has nationwide legitimacy and simultaneously meets the Supreme Leader's criteria. In concrete terms, such a candidate would demonstrate popular appeal, obedience to the Supreme Leader, and competence in economic and foreign affairs. The speaker said that President Ahmadinejad is popular but he lacks the other required attributes. In contrast, other potential candidates, like Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Salehi and the mayor of Tehran Muhammad Qalibaf, are competent and loyal to the Supreme Leader, but they lack charisma. Thus, the emergence of a strong independent candidate shortly before the elections can present a challenge to the Supreme Leader.

The panelist rejected the proposition that Iran was ripe for political change, noting that Iranian public has become increasingly indifferent toward politics over the past several years. The regime's brutal suppression of popular protest in 2009 and the protracted violent

conflict in Syria have convinced many Iranians that reform is unattainable. This popular apathy undermines the moderate reformers who participate in electoral politics but who are unable to mobilize popular support. Historically speaking, the panelist pointed out that many revolutions throughout the Middle East—including the Islamic Revolution of 1979—have been directed at overthrowing a corrupt, unpopular leader or dynasty. Seen in this light, Iranian public does perceive Ayatollah Khamenei as a corrupt leader. In sum, popular attitudes alone are unlikely to precipitate change in Iran.

The second panelist discussed the IRGC's role in national security. He emphasized that the IRGC seeks to strengthen its grip on both Iranian society and the regular army in order to thwart popular unrest and a potential coup d'état. In addition to maintaining domestic order, the IRGC is responsible for defending the Islamic Republic against external threats. The IRGC deploys overseas its special unit, the Qods Force, to conduct extraterritorial preemptive operations. The IRGC's activities are supported by the Basij, a paramilitary force that provides internal security as well as social services. The objective of the Basij is twofold: to crowd out civil society organizations that may foster anti-government attitudes and to generate grass-roots support for the regime.

The third panelist focused his remarks on Iran's economy. He posited that international sanctions have weakened the country's economy to a significant degree. However, the regime has circumvented adeptly some of the most stringent sanctions. For instance, when western sanctions on the Central Bank of Iran led to the drastic depreciation of Iran's national currency, the rial, the regime introduced a tiered exchange rate system to purchase different classes of imports. The Iranian government provided dollars at the official rate to import basic goods and used dollars purchased at the lower free-market rate to import luxury goods. The Iranian government has also enabled smuggling in order to mitigate the economic deterioration.

The speaker concluded by stating that in spite of the government's maneuvers, Iran will not be able to avoid an economic crisis. Since June 2012, oil exports from



Iran have dropped to between 1.2 million barrels per day (bpd) and 1.3 million bpd. Combined with the depreciating currency, the declining Iranian oil exports have led to the curtailment of Iran's subsidy reform program and an increasing budget deficit. The speaker suggested that such outcomes engender economic as well as social and political repercussions. Most important, an average Iranian middle-class family has experienced sudden and dramatic hardship. As Iran's middle class gradually disappears, so does the hope for change through reform or revolution.

#### Panel Four: The Shifting Political Landscape

The fourth panel of the conference examined the actual and potential effects of the Arab Spring on U.S. relations with key regional partners, including Israel, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia. The speakers also discussed regional perspectives on the Middle East's ongoing transformation.

Focusing on Egypt, the first panelist said that the Muslim Brotherhood, Egypt's largest Islamist party, understands democracy in a strictly majoritarian sense. In June 2012, Muslim Brotherhood candidate Mohamed Morsi became Egypt's new president. This victory has emboldened the Muslim Brotherhood: having won a legitimate mandate, the Muslim Brotherhood believes that it can disregard the views of rival political parties. The speaker described President Morsi as an unimpressive and combative individual and added that confidence and paranoia drive his actions. For instance, shortly after assuming power, President Morsi forced the retirement of Egypt's defense minister, the army chief of staff, and other senior generals in a preemptive move aimed at obstructing a perceived military coup d'état.

The speaker stressed that political participation is unlikely to moderate Egypt's religious parties, especially the Salafi groups. Egypt is clearly moving toward greater conservatism. Citing polling data, the speaker observed that the Egyptian people assign a prominent role to Islam in public life and manifest little support for secularism. These popular attitudes have prompted competition among the political parties in Egypt to establish strong religious credentials.

With regard to Egypt's foreign policy, the speaker said that the new Egyptian government seeks to align with the United States and simultaneously assert Egypt's sovereignty. The speaker observed that by supporting Egypt's Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) during the revolution, the United States lost the trust of the other political actors in the country. Consequently, U.S. leverage over the Egyptian government has diminished, despite the considerable U.S. aid to Egypt. The speaker characterized this outcome as a failure of U.S. diplomacy.

The second speaker focused his remarks on the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, one of the oldest absolute monarchies in the world. He stressed the value of the United States' partnership with Saudi Arabia in light of the Arab Spring and declining U.S. legitimacy in the Middle East. However, the two governments' policies align on some issues and clash on others. On the one hand, the Saudi and U.S. officials supported regime change in Libya. Similarly, both governments have been sympathetic to the Syrian opposition's effort to overthrow President Bashar al-Asad.

On the other hand, the United States and Saudi Arabia have wound up on the opposite sides of the Arab Spring. While the United States has generally supported change and democratization, Saudi Arabia has remained the staunch proponent of the counter-revolution. The speaker drew parallels between Saudi Arabia's foreign policy and the Brezhnev Doctrine, pointing out that like the former Soviet regime, the government of Saudi Arabia would not tolerate any fundamental reform in its sphere of influence. The Saudi regime fears that change can trigger a cascade effect and alter the regional status quo in profound ways. The speaker identified the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as another stumbling block in U.S.-Saudi relations and predicted that the issue will become increasingly divisive, as Arab public opinion becomes more vocal in decision-making throughout the Middle East.

The speaker concluded by saying that the ongoing transformation of the Middle East has important implications for Saudi Arabia. Once a pillar of the regional order, Saudi Arabia may no longer be able to maintain

domestic stability. A number of external factors, such as the Shi'a unrest in Bahrain and Iran's capacity to perpetrate instability, can destabilize Saudi Arabia. On the domestic front, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, which has deep roots in Saudi Arabian society, remains a major threat to the country's security. Potential social unrest also imperils the country's stability: although the Saudi regime has implemented several minor reforms, it has failed to mitigate the rising unemployment. Of greater consequence, succession crisis seems imminent in Saudi Arabia ruled by a group of old frail princes.

The third speaker began by giving an overview of the issues that have dominated Israel's national security policy in the wake of the Arab Spring. He discussed the Israeli government's anxiety over Iran's nuclear program; the sustainability of the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel; the rupture in the Israeli-Turkish alliance; and the tensions between Israel and the United States. The speaker observed that these relatively new issues have overshadowed the perennial Israeli-Palestinian conflict that has long occupied a central place in Israel's national security policy.

The speaker noted that the prospect of Iran acquiring nuclear weapons concerns Israel's government. Israeli officials' vociferous expressions of alarm, however, are counterproductive, because they put in question Israel's nuclear deterrent capability. The fall of President Hosni Mubarak shook relations between Egypt and Israel, opening a period of uncertainty. The Sinai Peninsula, which has served as a buffer between the two countries, has become a scene of terror and violence, threatening the peace that has held between Egypt and Israel since 1979.

The speaker said that the declining defense and trade relations between Israel and Turkey have compounded Israel's problems stemming from the Arab Spring. The relations between the two countries have deteriorated since the confrontation over a Gaza-bound flotilla in May 2010. In the speaker's view, domestic developments in both countries—such as the rise of Islamist parties in Turkey and the divisions in the Israeli government over offering an apology to Ankara for the flotilla incident—make a rapprochement between the former allies increasingly difficult.

The speaker concluded by pointing out that relations with the United States preoccupy the Israeli government in spite of the alarming regional events. Although military cooperation between the two countries has grown in the past few years, the diplomatic tension between the long-standing allies has deepened. Most notably, the United States and Israel diverge over their approaches to Iran's nuclear proliferation. Israel has been advocating a preemptive military strike against Iran, whereas the Obama administration has pursued an increasingly tough sanctions path. The speaker detailed another cleavage between the Israeli and U.S. administrations: their perspectives on the Arab Spring. While the U.S. has been supportive of the democratic movements in the region, Israel is concerned that the Arab Spring may produce a few quasi-democratic governments and many more unfriendly Islamist regimes.

#### **Panel Five: Security and Politics in Iraq**

The fifth panel of the conference addressed Iraq. The speakers analyzed Iraq's security, relations between Baghdad and Erbil, Iran's interference in Iraq's domestic politics, and the impact of the regional unrest on Iraq's stability.

The first panelist argued that though Iraq no longer occupies a central position in U.S. foreign policy, the developments in Iraq have implications for U.S. strategic interests in the Middle East. Because of its geopolitical position, Iraq influences and is influenced by the events in the region. In view of this, the speaker discussed Iraq's domestic politics. He said that Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki has exploited adeptly ambiguities in the Iraqi constitution and practiced nepotism to accumulate political power. Maliki has repeatedly appointed senior military, security, and intelligence officials without the approval of the Iraqi parliament and refused to implement power-sharing agreements. By marginalizing and intimidating his political rivals, Maliki has strengthened his grip on the country.

In the speaker's view, this centralization of executive power threatens Iraq's democracy. In particular, if Maliki wins the elections in 2014, he will

seek to cling to power and retain the premiership indefinitely. Such an outcome will fundamentally undermine U.S. policy of promoting democracy in the Middle East. With regard to Iraq's security, the speaker said that Iraq does not face imminent external threats. But the country remains vulnerable to internal threats emanating from various militant groups active throughout Iraq. In addition, regional events, such as the civil war in Syria and a potential confrontation between Iran and the United States could destabilize Iraq.

The speaker observed that despite the country's susceptibility to external interference, Iran's influence in Iraq is limited. He underscored the Iraqis' acute sense of nationalism, their resentment of the Persian influence, and Ankara's counterbalancing role in Iraq. The speaker argued that the United States should not take punitive measures to neutralize Iran's influence in Iraq. Instead, the U.S. administration should treat Iraq as a sovereign nation, rather than as an Iranian proxy, and allow Iraqis to deal with Iran themselves.

The second panelist felt that some criticism of Maliki has been ill-placed and that Iraq has made limited democratic progress. She pointed out that occasionally rival Iraqi factions settle their disputes in the parliament. In the speaker's view, the Iraqi opposition's inability to remove Prime Minister Maliki by a vote of no confidence was not the failure of democracy. Instead, it was the failure of the opposition to mobilize sufficient votes to oust the prime minister through a parliamentary motion.

Regarding Iraq's security, the speaker expressed concern over the increasing number of violent incidents across the country and questioned the government's ability to maintain security. She said that although efforts by Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) to reignite sectarian violence between Iraq's Sunni Arab and Shi'a Arab communities have thus far failed, the Iraqi military and security forces were not prepared to contain violence in the event of a large-scale conflict. The speaker suggested that

AQI's attacks reinforce Iraqis' fears that the civil war in Syria, which has evolved into a sectarian conflict, could spill over the border and incite Sunni-Shi'a violence in Iraq. Citing Iraq's fragility, the speaker said that the United States made a serious misstep by failing to renew a Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) with the Iraqi government.

According to the speaker, the attempts by Saudi Arabia and Qatar to undermine Iraq's Shi'a-dominated government are short-sighted and lack a true understanding of the role that Iraq could play in the Gulf region. Similarly, Turkey's alliance with the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan's tirades directed at Prime Minister Maliki demonstrate a misunderstanding of the delicate balance between Baghdad and Erbil. The speaker argued that Iraq has the potential of becoming a constructive Shi'a force in the region. Therefore, the regional states' attempts to destabilize Iraq are myopic.

When asked about Baghdad-Erbil relations, one panelist said that the Kurds ultimately seek statehood. The deeper Iraq's political instability, the more the Kurds will want to insulate themselves from Baghdad. The speaker said that the timing and conditions must be conducive to declaring independence. In reality, Kurdish independence will mean exchanging the dependency on Baghdad for the dependency on Ankara. In another panelist's view, the KRG is misinterpreting the signals from Washington. Likewise, the Kurds are missing the warnings signs in their discussions with the Turks. As a result, the KRG may make serious miscalculations about independence.

With respect to U.S. policy toward Iraq, one panelist said that developing a pragmatic and nuanced policy toward Iraq should not be a partisan effort. Instead, it should be an American effort. The speaker concluded by asserting that Washington still has considerable leverage over the Iraqi government and American policymakers should use it to help build a stable Iraq.

## Panel Six: Change and Continuity: U.S. Strategy in the Middle East

The final panel of the conference addressed the enduring and shifting priorities in U.S. policy toward the Middle East. Within that framework, the panelists discussed specific issues in the region and provided big-picture analyses.

The moderator asked the panelists if Iran should occupy a central position in U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East. The first panelist said that although Iran has been at the forefront of U.S. policy toward the region because of its role in nuclear affairs and Sunni-Shi'a politics, a number of old and new challenges—such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Arab Spring—pose strategic dilemmas for the United States. For instance, containing Iran's hegemonic ambitions and ensuring the free flow of energy resources demand a sizable U.S. forward presence and strong U.S. relations with the states in the Gulf region. At the same time, such a strategy increases U.S. dependence on the authoritarian regimes when parts of the Middle East are democratizing. Similarly, an effective counterterrorism strategy requires that the United States maintain operational presence in the region and forge partnerships with the Gulf states. However, this posture is counterproductive, because U.S. presence tends to provide propaganda and recruitment opportunities for terrorist organizations.

The speaker observed that U.S. policy toward Israel was equally problematic. Aligning with Israel in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process reassures the Israeli government of the U.S. commitment to Israel's security. Simultaneously, this policy damages U.S. credibility in the eyes of Arab public. Analogously, the U.S. emphasis on political reform risks alienating key autocratic partners in the region. The speaker acknowledged the difficulty of maximizing all U.S. goals in the Middle East and said that achieving each goal would entail consequential trade-offs.

The second panelist said that the United States should not focus excessively on Iran. Instead, American policymakers must try to maintain a balance among U.S. policies toward the peace process, Syria, terrorism, nonproliferation, and democratization in the Middle East. The speaker felt that identifying Iran as the foremost priority in U.S. foreign policy and classifying it as a greater threat to the United States than the rise of China or global terrorism risked emboldening the Iranian government and reinforcing its relevance.

Acknowledging the inherent contradictions in U.S. foreign policy, the speaker advised that American policymakers be cognizant of these inconsistencies and try to deal with them effectively. With respect to the disjuncture in U.S. policy toward Iran, the speaker noted that, on the one hand, the economic sanctions imposed on Tehran have weakened Iran's economy. On the other hand, the sanctions have failed to stop Iran from pursuing a nuclear program. Indeed, the sanctions may have encouraged Iran to accelerate and expand its nuclear research. The speaker said that U.S. policymakers could mitigate this disjuncture by presenting to Iran clear red lines on what kind of nuclear program the United States is prepared to accept.

The moderator asked the panelists under what conditions the United States should consider using military force against Iran. One panelist stressed that military action against Iran should remain among the potential U.S. policy options. Taking into account the high risks and costs associated with a military strike, he laid out the conditions that would justify the use of armed force. The United States should attack Iran only if all diplomatic options have been exhausted; Iran has made a clear progress toward weaponization; a military strike would considerably set back Iran's nuclear program; and an international coalition would be available to manage the consequences of the strike.

The moderator asked the panelists to comment on how the United States should deal with the Syrian

crisis. One panelist advised that U.S. policymakers view the Syrian crisis in the broader regional context and assess the potential effects of the conflict on various state and nonstate actors, such as Israel, Iran, and Jordan, as well as Hizballah and Hamas. Another panelist said that a muscular U.S. policy toward Syria would signal to Iran the United States' resolve to use force. He cautioned, though, that a military approach could distract the U.S. Central Command from preparing for contingencies in Iran.

The moderator concluded with raising the issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. He said that the current impasse makes a meaningful agreement between the Israelis and the Palestinian improbable in the short run. Therefore, the United States should not make the peace process a foreign policy priority. One speaker agreed that the United States should mediate only when there is a realistic opportunity to hold substantive negotiations and achieve tangible outcomes. He stressed that the peace process may have become stagnant, but it has not become irrelevant.

Another speaker felt that Israel's rapidly changing demography and the spreading upheavals in the region bring urgency to the Israeli-Palestinian issue. In particular, since the right-leaning population in Israel is growing, achieving peace with the Palestinians will become increasingly difficult in the future. Furthermore, inspired by the Arab Spring, the Palestinians could abandon a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and adopt a revolutionary course.

A participant asked if the developments in the region have created an opportunity to advance reconciliation between Hamas and Fatah. One speaker pointed out that Hamas is internally divided over a number of issues, including on how to respond to the Arab Spring. Some Hamas members are content with the rise of Islam in the region and think that inaction is in their best interest. Others believe that the Arab Spring has opened a window of opportunity for Hamas to act and, if necessary, make limited concessions to boost its legitimacy in the transforming Middle East.

The session concluded with one speaker explicating at what juncture the United States would perceive the threat from Iran as imminent and thus launch a preemptive military attack. The speaker asserted that the Obama administration would use force if vital U.S. security interests were threatened. Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons will pose a vital threat to U.S. national security. The speaker deemed misguided the argument that Iran's nuclear weapons capability should be the threshold for a military strike. Nuclear weapons capability is a function of expertise, and Iran already has the capability to develop nuclear weapons. The Obama administration has stated that it will prevent Iran from building nuclear weapons. Therefore, American policymakers should decide at what point between acquiring nuclear capability and building actual nuclear weapons the President of the United States must make a decision to launch a military strike against Iran.

## SUMMARIES OF CONFERENCE DISCUSSIONS

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### Transcript of the Keynote Address

*Michèle A. Flournoy,  
former Under Secretary of Defense for Policy*

I am delighted to be here today, and what I am going to talk to you about this morning, I just want to clarify, I am on the record, but this is only my personal views. As General Mattis said, we are seeing dramatic changes, like the Arab revolutions, in the critical Middle East region. We are also seeing serious threats, like Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons. And all of this has increased the level of anxiety about the region, and I think has raised questions about U.S. strategy and U.S. long-term objectives there.

But most recent events of the Arab Awakening have to be seen as the first chapter in what is going to be a very long book. This story is likely to unfold over decades, if not generations, so we have to take a long view, a strategic view, and do so in the face of extraordinary complexity and profound uncertainty. I think our approach to policymaking has to be informed by a certain sense of humility. And so it is with a sense of humility that I am going to attempt to grapple with the task that General Mattis gave me, which is, to take a long-term look at this critical region of the Middle East and U.S. strategy toward it.

It would really be impossible in the time I have this morning to give you a comprehensive or in depth country-by-country analysis and recommendations, so I am not going to try to do that. Instead, I am going to take a different approach. First, I am going to start by debunking what I call some conventional wisdom myths that have emerged to color many of your discussions about the U.S. role in the region. Then, I am going to briefly reexamine our interests and objectives. Third, I will try to articulate some key elements of what I think a long-term U.S. strategy for the region should be going forward. And finally, I want to highlight for our discussion some of the really tough policy dilemmas that we face, as we implement our strategy in this dynamic region.

So, first let's start with what I call the myths. The first myth: given the rise of other powers, the U.S. budget crisis, and our domestic political paralysis at the moment, the United States has entered a period of decline. We are a country that is going to turn inward and we are going to be less willing and able to lead on the world stage. I feel compelled here to paraphrase Mark Twain and say, look, reports of our untimely demise are grossly exaggerated. I think the U.S. economy is still the world's largest and most dynamic. The foundations of the world's best higher education system, innovation, and resilience; those are all still intact. I believe that Congress is going to avoid a "Thelma and Louise" moment. We are going to avoid a "Thelma and Louise" moment for the nation and reach a budget deal at some point, and this will create the predictability that the private sector needs to unlock investment and jobs growth in the country.

In addition, on the military front, I don't think anybody questions that our military is unrivaled, or that we have the best fighting force in the world. Our soft power, the influence of our values, and our culture, as well as our democratic, free-market, and educational systems, are all strong influences. So, in sum, I think it is way too early to count the United States down or out. We still have a unique global leadership role to play and a responsibility to play that role, particularly in the Middle East.

Second myth: with the announcement of the new U.S. strategy, the strategic rebalancing towards Asia-Pacific, this means that somehow the United States is going to abandon the Middle East. The strategic rebalancing to Asia, which was described by President Obama and also in the latest Department of Defense (DOD) strategic guidance, is a logical reallocation of senior leaders' focus and of resources, as we near the end of more than a decade of counterinsurgency wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Asia is a region of tremendous economic opportunity, much of our future prosperity will be driven by trade with Asia. It is also home to rising powers like China

and India, and key allies like Japan, Australia, and South Korea. Both the DOD strategic guidance and the President have been very clear on this point: even as we increase our focus in Asia, we must sustain our focus on the Middle East, given the vital interests we have in the region, given the amount of turmoil and uncertainty, and given the stakes involved in the long run. So, do not expect a rush for the exits or any diminution of American engagement in the Middle East.

The third myth: the U.S. somehow lacks a clear and coherent strategy for the Middle East in the wake of the Arab revolutions. To the contrary, I think the U.S. has adopted a very principled and pragmatic approach that is informed by both our interests and our values. It is based on the belief that no one size fits all. Each country has its individual circumstances and our policy is taking that into account. Each country's situation is different and while we are certainly informed by a common set of principles, we must tailor our approach to the unique conditions in each case.

But I want to talk about some of the principles that are underlying our policy across the board. The first is something that General Mattis referred to: that the only path to stability is through reform. We cannot turn back the clock. The only way forward to a new equilibrium and a new stability is through continued political reform. Second, outcomes in the region should be negotiated, not imposed by force. Third, we should insist, as the United States, on the protection of minority rights and particularly women's rights in many of these countries. A principled policy of inclusion will serve us well. Fourth, we should hold governments responsible and accountable to the international agreements that they have made, even as governments change. And finally, the United States really does have a unique leadership role to play in catalyzing concerted action on the part of our regional partners and the broader international community. But we also need to recognize the limits of our ability to control events. We can support Arab populations in writing their own new narratives, but they have the pen, not we.

So, having challenged some of the myths, I want to turn now to an articulation of U.S. interests and

objectives in the Middle East. In some ways, these are very familiar to all of us, but I think it is worth in this time of change to reiterate these as a sort of touchstone. Do we have it right in terms of articulating what we are trying to do in the region?

In my view, the United States has a number of enduring national interests in the Middle East. First and foremost, is protecting the U.S. homeland, our allies, and our interests overseas from any kind of threat emanating from the region, whether it is the threat of terrorism or of weapons of mass destruction. Second, ensuring the free flow of commerce and the free flow of energy resources is essential to the health of the U.S. economy as well as the global economy. Ensuring the survival of the state of Israel has been and remains a long-term interest of the United States. But here I would add a new one, and some of you may want to debate this, but I believe we also have an enduring national interest in helping the people of the region achieve security, prosperity, dignity, and their version of liberty, life, and happiness. I actually think that is a core U.S. interest at this point. So, this is a familiar list of our goals and objectives, but I would encourage all in discussion to ask the question of whether it needs to be modified in any way.

The United States has multiple objectives in the Middle East: disrupting, dismantling, and defeating Al Qaeda and denying it safe haven in the region; promoting regional stability; pursuing Arab-Israeli peace; preventing Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons and potentially triggering further proliferation in the region; countering Iran's hegemonic ambitions and its destabilizing activities; keeping all of our sea and air lines of communication open; ensuring sufficient access so that our forces can operate with freedom in the region; and promoting development reform and good governance. With these objectives in mind, what should be the key elements of our strategy going forward? And here I want to talk about two different pieces of our strategy. There are a set of foundational activities that, I believe, are activities that we should undertake on an ongoing basis with many countries across the region to protect and advance our interests. Then, there are priority areas that we need to identify

and focus substantial amount of leadership, attention, and resources over the coming years. So, let me start with the foundational activities.

First, these should include counterterrorism efforts to defeat Al Qaeda and combat violent extremism more broadly. Think of our broad intelligence and counterterrorism coordination with a number of regional partners, and particularly our efforts to build partner capacity so that they can deal with terrorist threats on their own soil. Think of Yemen as an example. The second key foundational activity is support for democratic reform, civil society, and accountable institutions. We want to be able to provide support in places like Egypt, Libya, Iraq, and Tunisia to consolidate the democratic transitions that are under way. We also want to support reform in willing states like Morocco and Jordan. The third key element is support for economic reform and development. This is particularly important in Egypt, a central state in the region. The fourth key element is defense cooperation to deter and, if necessary, be able to respond in partnership with our friends in the region to shared threats, with an emphasis on building partner capacity and developing the defense capabilities of our most critical allies and partners in the region. Here, I would point to our strategic partnerships with Saudi Arabia, with the United Arab Emirates, Turkey, and others. Finally, I think we want to be pursuing—and this was referred to by General Mattis when he talked about his perception of the Gulf Cooperation Council—we want to be pursuing greater regional integration, whether it is reintegrating countries like Iraq more fully into the region, or whether it is building regional capabilities and architecture, like ballistic missile defenses.

So, these are the foundational activities that should be ongoing and broad across the region. I want to highlight five key priorities for the coming decade that we want to pay particular attention to and put particular investment into. These are not in a priority order. First, preventing Iran's acquisition of nuclear weapons and countering its destabilizing activities in the region. I think, you know, there has been a big debate over what our goals should be: prevention versus containment. I think the President has been very clear that we must

prevent Iran from acquiring nuclear weapons because to fail to do so could risk a slew of proliferation in the region. It could also embolden Iran's destabilizing behavior in a number of countries. So, prevention has got to be the goal.

I think our current policy is to pursue that prevention through a combination of sanctions and diplomacy. We are now witnessing the toughest sanctions regime ever put in place. In July 2012, the screws were turned another few rounds and I think we need to give this some time to see how this latest round of sanctions actually affects the regime in Tehran. That said, the President has been very clear that all options are on the table, including the military option. And I think having spent a lot of time working on this issue in the Pentagon, I can assure you that that is actually true. But, again, I think that right now we need to give the sanctions time to bite. We need to keep the door open to negotiations that could evolve to put a more comprehensive deal on the table.

We are acting with urgency. We should act with urgency as the United States, but there is still time before any decision on military action needs to be made. The threat of military action does need to be credible, and it needs to be on the table to back up our diplomacy. But premature and unilateral military action by any party would undermine the international consensus that is needed to support a long-term campaign against Iran's nuclear acquisition, and that campaign would need to continue the day after. Ultimately, in the mid- to longer-term, we want to see an Iran with a democratic regime that's more responsive to the needs of its population.

The second key, a big bet or priority, is Egypt, supporting Egypt's political transition and economic development. Egypt, as you know, is home to 90 million people. It is a political and cultural center in the region. It is a historical bellwether for the region. Remarkable changes have occurred in the last months, but, you know, the future remains very uncertain. How Egypt's democratic transition plays out and how it postures itself vis-à-vis its neighbor and the neighbors in the region, will have strategic impact for all of us.



The U.S. must work closely with the international community to help Egypt develop a longer-term plan to address its core political, economic, and security objectives, and I think particular priority needs to be given to completing the current political transition emphasizing the principle of inclusion and the principle of protecting minority rights.

We need to focus on revitalizing and reforming Egypt's economy and also helping to maintain internal stability and peace with its neighbor. And here, I think, continued observance of the Camp David Accords is absolutely critical. So, in terms of U.S. diplomacy, this means we need to continue to broaden our outreach to the full range of Egyptian interlocutors. When you go to Cairo today, almost on a daily basis, there is a new political party, a new civic group that is emerging. We need to be fully engaging across the spectrum with our Egyptian counterparts. We need to be supporting development of Egyptian civil society, political parties, and democratic institutions. But here is a challenge: the challenge is doing so in a way that does not provoke a nationalist backlash as we saw in the recent NGO crisis.

We also need to find ways to engage the Egyptian people directly, whether it is through e-diplomacy, university and student exchanges, private sector exchanges, track two dialogues, and so forth. The Egyptian economy is in dire straits. One of our top priorities has to be working with Egypt and the international community, particularly the international financial institutions, on an economic strategy that will first meet Egypt's most immediate needs. And then in the long term, support the Egyptians in defining a national vision for long-term economic reform and growth. The challenge here, again, is that the kind of structural changes that are needed in Egypt's economy to make it successful are going to be very painful, and in a democratic context, probably very unpopular.

On the security assistance front, I think we need to continue our support in keeping with our commitments under the Camp David Accords. But I think we want to use that support to encourage Egypt to pay more attention to the threats emanating from the Sinai, to build its capabilities to be more relevant in dealing with

those threats, and also to press Egypt to fully coordinate with Israel what it does in the Sinai. We want to encourage more: the development of more robust crisis management mechanisms between Egypt and Israel and to ensure that any kind of tactical engagement that occurs does not escalate into a conflict there.

The third big bet, as General Mattis mentioned, is supporting renewed efforts toward a negotiated peace between Israel and the Palestinians. It is critical, in the long term, to put a two-state solution in place, given the demographics and given the dynamics of the area. Here, Egypt has a potentially important role to play. And I think engaging Egypt as a key partner in pushing forward the process, starting with a positive role it can play in the reconciliation between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, is very important. I think whoever the next U.S. president is, he needs, as an early priority, to be working with and pressing both Israel and the Palestinians to return to the table to begin negotiations based on the very well-known outlines of a two-state solution. Again, it has to be a priority for the next president. American leadership is certainly not sufficient, but it is very much necessary, particularly when the sides are so far apart and divided.

The fourth key priority is avoiding a wider sectarian conflict in the region, whether it is triggered by events inside Syria or Iraq or elsewhere. We have to do whatever we can to prevent a wider Sunni-Shi'a war in the region. In Syria, I think we need to build on the steps that we have taken so far, accelerating our efforts to build a more unified and cross-sectarian opposition, an opposition that could actually be the seed or the kernel of an alternative government. We need to continue to provide and increase our non-lethal assistance to the rebels and help them vet those who are receiving lethal assistance from Arab and European states. We need to continue to make common cause with regional actors in the area to represent a united front and united support. And we need to be sending a very clear message to the Syrian people that we support their efforts to get rid of President Bashar al-Asad, and that minorities, the business communities, members of the military, can all have a place in the new Syria if they renounce their support for Asad.

Finally, I think we need to draw a very clear red line, as the United States has, on the movement or use of chemical or biological weapons in Syria. It is in our interest, it is absolutely critical that we try to do what we can to bring this to a conclusion sooner rather than later. The longer this drags on, the more radicalized the elements of the opposition are likely to become, and the more empowered jihadist elements will become. Much is at stake. The strategic axis between Syria and Iran is something that we have a strong interest in seeing broken, and we have a very strong interest in avoiding any further spillover from this conflict that could destabilize neighboring countries like Lebanon, Turkey, or others.

The fifth priority that I would highlight is the importance of the United States in supporting reform and stability in the monarchies of the region: Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Jordan. We need to work with these governments to encourage more political reform on an accelerated timeline. They will need greater openness to prevent more destabilizing waves of change from coming their way. We need to emphasize the policies and principles of inclusion, protection of minority rights, and so forth. And here I would say that the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is critical to actually making efforts to lead in this area and create political space for others. We need to encourage them to build on the efforts, the king's efforts with regard to education and other efforts to open up society. We need to engage the next generation of leaders in these countries to encourage them to think in new terms about their long-term future.

So, let me close now by just highlighting a few policy implications and policy dilemmas that this approach puts on the table for the United States. First of all, I think this approach underlines the importance of continued U.S. military presence and engagement in the region to deter threats, to reassure allies, and to

support partner capacity building. It also underscores the importance of heightened U.S. leadership and diplomacy to build international coalitions for concerted action in the region. And it means, I think, a greater focus on our economic diplomacy: engaging host nations, international financial institutions, regional banks, private sector companies, and NGOs to support economic reform and development in the region. Most importantly, areas of focus should include employment, education for employment, education reform, housing, rule of law, and transparency measures.

But there are some dilemmas. The first is that you have all seen the polling, the views of the United States, or I should say U.S. policy, are about as low as they have been in many years. How do we remake the image of the United States? How do we rebuild the leverage of the United States in the region? How do we support democratic reform without provoking nationalist backlash? How do we encourage structural economic reforms, those reforms that are necessary for private sector and foreign investment and growth, when such reforms are likely to be very painful and very unpopular in newly democratic states? And are there circumstances under which we need to think about making our aid conditional to certain countries, or does that conditionality breed the very distrust that undermines our effectiveness?

In sum, the Middle East remains an absolutely critical region. In a period of great change and uncertainty it is imperative that we keep our eye not only on today's challenges and the crisis of the moment, but that we try, as difficult as it is, to look over the horizon to the future of the region and how U.S. engagement and leadership can shape that future. So, let me stop there. I would welcome the chance to open it up for a discussion, and at this point I would like to take it off the record, so that we can have a more frank discussion. Thank you.

# THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY

*Charting the path to a Middle East at peace with itself and the world*

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Founded in 2002, the Saban Center for Middle East Policy brings together the most expert, experienced policy minds working on the region, and provides policymakers and the public with objective, in-depth and timely research and analysis. Our mission is to chart the path—political, economic, and social—to a Middle East at peace with itself and the world.

The Saban Center was established on May 13, 2002 with an inaugural address by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. The Center was made possible by a generous grant from Haim and Cheryl Saban of Los Angeles, and is part of the Foreign Policy Studies Program at Brookings, led by Ambassador Martin Indyk. The Center upholds the Brookings values of Quality, Independence, and Impact.

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Daniel Byman, *Director of Research*  
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Suzanne Maloney  
Kenneth M. Pollack  
Natan Sachs  
Salman Shaikh, *Brookings Doha Center*  
Bruce Riedel

## **Non-resident Fellows:**

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MJ Akbar, *India*  
Saad Eddin Ibrahim, *Cairo*  
Stephen R. Grand, *Washington*  
Hisham Hellyer, *Cairo*  
Mirette Mabrouk, *Cairo*  
Peter Mandaville, *George Mason University*  
Alisa Rubin Peled, *InterDisciplinary Center, Herzliya*  
Itamar Rabinovich, *Tel Aviv University*  
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