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FROM TRIBUNAL TO TURBULENCE:

LEBANON AND THE MIDDLE EAST'S MULTIPLE CHALLENGES

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P R O C E E D I N G S

MR. SHAIKH: Good evening. Could I ask you, please, to take your seats? Thank you. And can I just also just say to you that we do have translation at the back, the headphones, so just to the sides, so if you need that.

Thank you.

Good evening, your excellencies, distinguished ambassadors and representatives of the diplomatic community, dear friends of the Brookings Doha Center, and ladies and gentlemen. Let me welcome you to this wonderful setting at the Diplomatic Club for our public policy discussion this evening. It's very exciting to see so many of you here at what is our first event of the season.

Before I formally introduce you to our distinguished speaker, Rami Khouri, allow me, please, to say a few words as the new director of the Brookings Doha Center, having just arrived back in Doha just two weeks ago, and, of course, about the Center itself. In doing so, let me acknowledge in the first instance the

great service that Hady Amr -- and a friend I'm sure of a lot of yours -- as founding director gave to the BDC since its establishment in 2007. We wish him all the best as he starts a challenging new assignment as deputy administrator for the Middle East at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

I'd like to take this opportunity just to tell you that the BDC is changing. On the personnel side, along with my arrival we will soon be joined by Deputy Director Ibrahim Sharqieh, who I look forward to introducing you to at our next meeting. Shadi Hamid, who's just sitting over there who many of you know I'm sure, will continue as our director of research, we do hope -- and we hope active participation en'shallah.

We hope to build on the excellent reputation of Brookings and the platform that the Center has established. We will continue in our mission to produce high-quality research and thought that has real impact. Our aim will be to attract the best speakers and thinkers from the region and internationally and engage in timely, policy-oriented debate through our

public events, our publications, including those of our excellent visiting fellows. We have one here tonight, Senilla, and through such activities as roundtable workshops and meetings of experts just to name a few of those activities.

Moving forward, we would also hope to realize our goal of strengthening partnerships with key relevant institutions in Qatar and the Middle East region more broadly. Let me stress that.

Please come over and introduce yourself to us after the event and get onto our mailing list if you've not already done so. There are also some recent BDC publications just over there to the side, which we'd be happy if you took away with you.

Now, without further ado, it gives me the greatest of pleasure to introduce you to Rami Khouri. He is a member of our advisory council and, fittingly, our first speaker of the season. Let me also say that he is also a very dear personal friend.

Among his many achievements, Rami is editor-at-large and former executive editor of the Beirut-

based *Daily Star* newspaper. He's an internationally syndicated political columnist, as I'm sure many of you know, and a book author. He's earned a very high and well-earned reputation for providing original insights on Middle East issues, which I'm sure we will hear tonight.

Rami is also the first director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs at AUB -- American University of Beirut -- and he's also a research associate at Syracuse University, his alma mater I think, and a fellow of the Palestinian Academy for the Study of International Affairs -- PASIA -- in Jerusalem, and a member of the Leadership Council of the Harvard University Divinity School.

He also serves on the board of the East-West Institute, the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown, and the Jordan National Museum. Previously he was, of course, for seven years the editor-in-chief of the *Jordan Times*. Let me stop there. I could go on actually.

Rami, I don't know how you have the time to

do all of that. And let me please invite you to speak this evening on our very interesting and timely topic, "From Tribunal to Turbulence: Lebanon and the Middle East's Multiple Challenges." Rami, the stage is yours. (Applause)

MR. KHOURI: Thank you, Salman. Thank you all for coming out this evening. It's always a pleasure to come to Doha and to interact with the colleagues of Brookings and many other friends and colleague that I've caught up with here. And it's particularly, I think, heartening for me to see the gradual continued development of the environment in Doha and Qatar in terms of research universities; high-quality education; public policy institutes; research centers; honest, open discussion; think tanks; museums; cultural centers -- the range of developments that we're seeing take place in Qatar and in some other places in the Gulf and the Arab world. But Qatar seems to be most dynamic in this respect and it's very heartening to see this. And this is a responsibility and opportunity that all of us in the Arab world and

friends of the Arab world have to make sure that we exert every possible effort to help drive this process, to continue the process of intellectual research, technical research, open discussion, political dialogue, cultural interaction -- the things that happened in many parts of the Arab world in the ’50s and ’60s and then suddenly slowed down and came to a stop in most of the Arab world in the last 30 years. And then this is a kind of second beginning in the Arab region for serious research, scholarship, education, and public policy discussion.

So, I’m very pleased to be here at this event and to see Salman. The last time I saw him he had just gotten married. Now he has two kids, so he’s becoming an Arab very quickly (Laughter), and I look forward to coming back and meeting more of you and having discussions as much as I can.

Tonight I want to talk maybe just about 20 minutes and then we’ll have question-and-answer. The title of my talk is “From Tribunal to Turbulence: Lebanon and the Middle East’s Multiple Challenges.”

And the basic point I want to make is that the immediate crisis that we have in Lebanon revolving around the expected indictments that are going to come from the international -- the Special Tribunal for Lebanon. The expected indictments have set off a political firestorm in Lebanon and has reached a critical stage and critical proportions and has got people quite worried about what might happen.

But my point is that this is simply a mirror or a reflection of trends throughout the region and that Lebanon is particularly important because it clarifies for us trends and phenomena and realities that you can see all over the Arab world. But they don't come out into the public in most of the Arab world, because the countries on the governance systems on the media, and then the cultural norms are much more closely controlled, but in Lebanon everything is wide open and everything is out in the open.

But I think the key point that I want to make is not so much about the Tribunal and the crisis of the moment but a longer-term trend, which is that what we

can see from this crisis -- if we study the elements and the players, the actors, the forces at play, and the issues being debated and discussed, what we can see is a fascinating and I believe historically important new reality of a configuration of power, a new configuration of power in Lebanon and I think throughout the most of the region in which you have three and a half actors.

The three main actors are the monarchy, the mosque, and the market -- the monarchy, the mosque, and the market -- which is shorthand for the monarchy, the political power; the mosque, meaning cultural, religious, tribal identity, all those identities that are not sort of ideological but identities of the heart; and the market is the free-market economy, civil society, all of those forces that are not government or security powers -- not tribal and religious and ethnic identities but free-market identities. Those three forces -- the monarch, the market, and the mosque -- are now all at play in these societies and forming a very interesting new balance of power.

And the -- I said three and a half. The half is another M word, which is the media. The monarch, the market, and the mosque are complemented by revolutionary new developments in mass media, which open up this whole region to something that it has never experienced in this modern history, which is free expression of personal opinions and the attempt to, by people of the region, to use the mass media, to hold accountable those who exercise power in the monarchy, the market, and the mosque. So, it's a fascinating new development that we have, and Lebanon in many respects reflects all of these realities.

First let me just say Lebanon is a microcosm -- I believe the best microcosm we have of all of the forces at play and that crises and the contentious issues and the contested political and ideological issues at play in this region at the local level, at the regional level -- first of all at the local level within Lebanon; at the regional Arab level; at the regional transnational level, meaning with Israel and the Arabs; and at the global level, which brings in

Iran and the United States.

At all four levels, you have contestation of power and interest, and you can see all those four taking place at the same time in Lebanon. You see the four or five different levels of human and social and political organization all evolving at the same time. And what I mean by that is the citizen, the collective group, you know, tribal group or the family or the religious group -- the collective group that people belong to is evolving; the government, the nature of government; the state, the nature of statehood in this region; regional relations; and global relations between the region and the world. Every one of these six levels of human condition and the exercise of power and identity and interest -- every one of them is evolving simultaneously throughout most of this region. And that sets in motion an extraordinary volatility and dynamism which can be constructive if it's channeled in the right direction and can be very chaotic and disruptive if it's just let loose.

But you see this very clearly in Lebanon at

every level of life. You see the changes in -- this essentially happened after the end of the Cold War when the region -- most of the region opened up and liberalized and you had all kinds of forces that started to compete in public for people's allegiance and for people's support. You had, you know, Islamic religious groups; you had tribal groups, ethnic groups, ideological groups, foreign governments, business groups, transnational corporations, NGOs, professional societies.

Suddenly after 1990, this region -- most of the Arab world -- most of it, because not all the Arab countries opened up -- but most of them were forced to open up because of declining superpower support at the end of the Cold War and because many of them simply ran out of money and couldn't continue to finance the kind of tightly run welfare security states that they had run before and they were forced to open up, and, therefore, all of these forces and identities came out. They're all there, but they're all suppressed, and they sort of came out into the open and started competing

with one another. So, you see that again more clearly, I think, in Lebanon than in any other part of the region.

Then you see particular issues at play in Lebanon. You have the domestic local contestation of power between the various Lebanese groups, and this has been going on since the 1860s and continues to go on in a very peculiar but consistent Lebanese way of negotiating consensus and co-existence in what they call consociational democracy where people actually negotiate relationships and the sharing of power whether through formal institutions like parliament and the cabinet -- also informal institutions.

So, you have the domestic tensions that are -- and then conflicts and negotiations that are always going on. You have Lebanese-Syrian relations, which keep -- you know, sometimes warm, sometimes cold, and constantly evolving. You have the historic conflict between Lebanon and Israel, which again is still an element to be contended with. You have the new element of heightened Iranian involvement in Lebanon, mainly

through Hezbollah, which is relatively new at the political level since the 1980s, and so all of these issues come together and are all now at play at the same time.

There is a tendency in Lebanon also to make brinksmanship a normal operating procedure, that they're constantly going to the edge of crises and pulling back at the last minute. Once in a while they actually fall over the edge and they have some fighting and then they pull back.

What's interesting now is that you've got huge external players that are involved in the process, and we saw this very clearly, what, about two months ago when the Saudi king and the Syrian president came and had lunch with the Lebanese president and met with people. We saw it here two years ago when the Lebanese came to Doha and sat in a hotel for a couple of days and negotiated yet another truce. We saw it a few days ago when people -- everybody went to Riyadh to have talks in Saudi Arabia. So, there's a massive external presence in this local conflict. So, I think we need

to look at Lebanon as reflecting partly local political and ideological conflicts, but mostly I think it is a reflection of regional challenges and regional issues.

The second point I want to make is that if you step back a little bit from the day-to-day conflicts -- and like I said, brinksmanship is a normal operating mode, so there's always something that is being contested politically in Lebanon -- regional stuff, local stuff, religious, finance, voting age, Israel, Hezbollah, Security Council, Iran. There's always something that's causing tensions within Lebanon, and it's easy sometimes to get caught up in the day-to-day immediate conflicts or tensions that are dominating the moment. But if you step back a little bit, which I think is one of the things that institutions like Brookings and Issam Fares Institute, which I direct at the American University of Beirut -- I think part of our job is to step back a little bit and not to get caught up too much on the day-to-day rhetoric but to pull back and say, okay, what's actually going on here? What's the problem? What are

the causes of it, and are there resolutions to these problems?

So, I think if you step back a little bit from Lebanon, you can see that really what is at play here. What is going on, I would say, are five basic issues. One is the -- and this is again where Lebanon reflects problems throughout this whole region, which are different in every country, but throughout most of the Arab world you have these issues to one degree or another. One of them is the question of constitutional power sharing. Under constitutionally configured governments and power and governing systems, how do people share power? Not many people have figured that out in the Arab world to a convincing degree. People are grappling with it, and you -- it has different manifestations in different places.

Second question is a question of identity: individual identity, collective identity, national identity, and state identity. Four levels of identity -- the individual, the group, the state, and the wider transnational -- the nation, the Islamic nation, the

Arab nation, any other nation that you might want to belong to. And that question of identity, combined with constitutional power sharing, remains quite puzzling for most of this region.

The third question is relations between Arab governments, Arab people, and non-Arab governments and people, and there's predominantly three that I have in mind, which are most urgent now: Israel, Iran, and the United States, or the U.S. and some other Western powers. But Israel, Iran, and U.S. are the three big external powers with whom many people in this region and many governments have complex and unclear relationships. You see -- and again you see that very clearly in Lebanon.

The fourth big issue I think that's at play is the illusive quest for stability and sustainable development, sustainable socioeconomic development. Very few countries in the Arab world have been able to put their entire countries on a track of reasonably sustainable development that also has some equity built into it.

And the fifth point is the question of the relationship between the citizen and the state that is cemented or connected by the rule of law. We don't have any really compelling examples in the Arab world of clear citizen-state relationships with the rule of law providing the clarity. Now, there's what are the rights and obligations and responsibilities of an individual citizen? Where is the limit to what the state can do or cannot do? What are the obligations of the state to the individual citizen? These are issues that are still being discussed, and I think these five issues really capture, to me, the real problems or the real challenges or the real opportunities. And I think one of my messages in my talk is that this turbulence and this dynamism and this contestation of power and what may appear to some people as chaos and danger is actually possibly a sign that finally -- finally -- the people in institutions and governments of the Arab world are starting to grapple with these issues in a serious way as they have never done since the 1930s. And if you want to summarize them, I would say that

they are issues of identity, of sovereignty, of legitimacy, of statehood, and of human dignity. Those five issues strike me as capturing what this is all about.

Now, when you look -- again, you go back from the micro-level to bring it back down to the more particular level of what's going on. Today we can see that there are -- there's a whole range of new players on the scene -- new players, new actors, and new forces that are active in our Arab world that weren't there 20 or 30 or 40 years ago.

If you look in terms of national actors, we have four main ones in the region and two main ones outside.

The four main ones in the region are the Arabs, the Iranians, the Israelis, and the Turks with the Turks, the Iranians, and the Israelis, three non-Arab parties, predominantly defining the security architecture of this region. Predominantly. The Arabs are not completely out of the picture but heavily out of the picture, and this is one of the reasons for tension in the rise of groups like Hezbollah and Hamas

and other -- and groups that emerge in society. But the Arabs, the Turks, the Iranians, and the Israelis are the four principal regional actors, and the external actors are predominantly the U.S. and its Western allies, and then the Russians, the Chinese, and other non-Western external allies.

So, you have all of these actors at play now, and all of them correspond to parallel actors or proxy players or colleagues, allies within the region, and you can see every one of these, again, inside Lebanon probably more clearly than you can see anywhere else.

And the result of the dynamism that has evolved, that has defined the region in the last 20 years since the end of the Cold War, the result of this dynamism is -- it's -- now I think we can see that there's a kind of -- that the dust was all up in the air and then it's kind of settled.

And we can see three major focal points of power: the monarchy, which is government, the government, whether it's a monarchy, a republic, or a colonel, or it doesn't matter who it is, but for the

official government that runs, that has state power. The second is -- I call it the mosque, which is the tribal, religious, ethnic identities, social identities. And the market, which is the commercial forces.

Now, as these actors interact with one another, we have something really interesting going on, which I think is quite unprecedented. We have, I think, for the first time in modern Arab history a certain balance of power within our societies that is heavily indigenous -- heavily, not fully indigenous -- because all these actors are supported by people from outside.

But when you look at the different actors -- the tribal groups, the Islamic groups, the government officials, the security intelligence agencies, the private sector, the non-governmental societies -- they're all indigenous and they're all legitimate in the eyes of their own people. They're all indigenous and legitimate actors. Therefore, they have support. They're not easily dismissed.

And we've had situations in several countries -- Lebanon being the most dramatic, but you've also seen it in Palestine, you see it in Yemen, you see it in Somalia, you see it Sudan, you see it in Iraq, you see it in many Arab countries -- unfortunately, where these people, these groups have fought each other militarily. One tries to take over and they can't because they're legitimate and because they represent the real bulk of their population. Therefore, we have for the first time a situation where you have different actors that are contesting power and being forced to find a mechanism to share power in one way or another.

And what I would argue is going on is actually a historic birth: the birth of politics in the Arab world. We're seeing politics being practiced for the first time, I believe, real politics in modern Arab history. In other words, different actors indigenous to society legitimately representing large portions of their own people contesting power. Whether they do it fighting or whether they do it in elections or whether they do it by going to president -- going to

lunch at the president's house and making a deal over *kanafeh*, it doesn't matter how they do it, but they do it. They end up with a deal, and making deals is what politics is all about, making deals through legitimate actors who have legitimacy that they exercise by engaging in political horse trading or confrontations. And usually they do both: they confront and then they negotiate, and then they threaten and they negotiate.

So, I think what we're seeing is the birth of politics in the modern Arab world in a manner that has never happened so clearly and so widely across the region. In countries that are very tightly controlled, security-heavy states with the central government running everything, you don't see these things as much, but they're there. In countries that are wide open, like Lebanon, like Palestine, it's much more clear; and in countries in the middle, like Jordan or Egypt, you see it's clear. So, these forces are -- in all of these countries they're operating and they brought us to this point now where in most places, I believe, countries are facing the opportunity to make a

transition from the government-dominated, security-minded, single-party system of government that has defined most of this region for most of the modern period, say, since the 1950s.

To make a transition from that legacy to a more pluralistic mechanism where you have pluralism -- in other words, different forces, different ideologies, but not necessarily democracy -- you have pluralism, you have the contestation of power, you have negotiations, and you have ultimately power-sharing arrangements. And again, the Lebanese system is probably the most dramatic example of how people who fought it out realized that it doesn't make sense to keep fighting and might as well share power. So, you have the Lebanese government with half of it supported by the U.S., the other half supported by Syria and Iran, a very bizarre combination of (inaudible) American-Iranian joint venture and Arab governance. It's a very strange system, but it works. It works for the Lebanese, and it's something that we should acknowledge with some realism, that this is probably

the best way for Lebanon to run itself.

The problem now, though, is that the international community, through the Security Council, after the murder of Rafiq Hariri and 22 other people, the international community has stepped in and said because the Lebanese themselves were unable to stop the wave of killings and assassinations that have plagued Lebanon for the last 30 or 40 years, the international community for one reason or another stepped in and didn't just step in by saying please, guys, you know, behave nicely. It stepped in decisively with the unanimous Security Council Chapter 7 Resolution basically saying that the Security Council was going to find the killers of Hariri and the other 22 people and put them on trial in a fair court to stop this killing once and for all, to end the impunity of political assassinations that had plagued Lebanon and so many other countries for so many years.

My interpretation and the interpretation of many other people is that some of the members of the Security Council were doing this mainly because they

saw it as a way to hit Syria and Iran and Hezbollah. They saw it as an opportunity legally, with legitimacy, to push back against Hezbollah and Syria and Iran.

Now what's happened with the indictments coming out sometime in the next four to six months, nobody knows, and the expectation that some people who are in or associated with Hezbollah may be indicted. This has created now the great crisis that we're in now, which is if Hezbollah is indicted, Hezbollah has made it clear that it's not going to accept this. It's not going to go along with it and will push back, and already now the political push back has started. It started about two months ago, and the stage we're at now is essentially trying to discredit Hezbollah and the Syrians who have been doing this before, trying to discredit the International Tribunal saying the Israelis did it or that some of the witnesses were false witnesses or now -- I think any day now, Nasrallah is going to come up with a speech talking about how easy it is to manipulate the telephone/cell phone records, which are an important part of the

evidence that their tribunal investigation has. So, they're using quite nuanced political mechanisms to try to discredit the court.

In the Western tradition of the rule of law and courts, you have to prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt. What Hassan Nostrella now is trying to sow the seeds of reasonable doubt, saying that there is a reasonable doubt that the evidence that the tribunal is using to indict people is not credible evidence. It's a very interesting approach, but it's also scared a lot of people, because Hezbollah has said it will not accept the indictments and will push back, and, therefore, people are worried that there might be political tensions, stalemate, or even go back to fighting.

So, now we're at the stage where basically a negotiation is taking shape in -- I mean, it's not a formal negotiation but a negotiation in the way that negotiations happen in many Arab countries, which is through public statements and having lunch and then you go have some more *kanafeh* after lunch and then you make

some more accusations and then you fight in the streets a little bit and then you do, you know, all kinds of things. And this is how Arab political contestation has been done historically, and this is exactly what we're seeing now.

The interesting new element is that the Saudi king and the Syrian president are now the shepherds of this process. It's very interesting to watch -- manifest it with no ambiguity, that this is not essentially a Lebanese problem only. This is a regional problem and it is intimately linked to the question of the links between Iran and Hezbollah, and we saw Ahmadinejad the other day in Lebanon.

So, we've got all of these incredibly complicated factors. They're all now out on the table. There is a problem, because a majority of Lebanese want the indictments to be handed down. They want a trial to be held, then they want the killers of Hariri and the 22 other people to be sent to court. People want justice done. And I think all of us should want justice done to end this impunity of assassinations in

the Arab world.

But the problem is that the cost of that may be to rekindle war in Lebanon or possibly even at a regional level, because you now have the linkage between Israel and Lebanon, Iran and Lebanon, Iran and Israel, the U.S. and Iran. I mean, there's an incredible complex web of contested relationships, people accusing each other, afraid of each other, threatening each other; and these could all be sparked by something that starts in Lebanon. Therefore, I think the basic question in the end is can there be a political accommodation that serves the cause of justice and sends to court, sends to a fair court, the people accused of killing Hariri and the 22 others.

Can we find a balance between doing justice and, at the same time, maintaining a semblance of stability and not letting Lebanon blow up into flames again? The honest answer to that is nobody knows. Nobody knows. And the problem is that I think the majority of Lebanese want to do that, to find that balance, and I think people are willing to make

reasonable compromises about the indictments, et cetera, who's indicted, at what level or whatever, and what kind of punishments will they be subjected to, to make reasonable compromises, but not to push the whole thing aside.

Some Lebanese say, look, if the price of justice is another war in my country, then, you know, let's leave justice for another day; let's preserve stability. The problem with that is it just pushes things under the rug, and, therefore, I'll end by saying that what we have here is the convergence of, I believe, two moments of reckoning or maybe three moments of reckoning. This is a moment of reckoning for the Security Council-instigated investigation and Special Tribunal for Lebanon to identify and hold accountable in a court of law the killers of Rafiq Hariri.

Were now at the moment of reckoning. In the next six months, we should know what's going to happen to this process. And it's not just a local Lebanese process. This is a unanimous Security Council resolution. This

is beyond *kanafeh*. This is beyond *kanafeh*. It cannot be solved by guys sitting down and having luncheon and dessert. So, that's one moment of reckoning.

The second moment of reckoning is about the issues that I mentioned before -- the ability of Arab countries, governments, social forces, political forces to address these issues of sovereignty, of identity, of legitimacy, of governance that keep rearing their heads -- the ability of these -- of our societies to come to terms with these issues and find political governance mechanisms: sharing power, holding people accountable, protecting minority rights while affirming majority rights. Can the Arab world address these issues in a serious way? And I think this crisis is going to help answer some of those.

Then the third moment of reckoning is can there be a political resolution to the three great conflicts that plague our region, which is the Arab-Israeli conflict, the conflict between Iran and some Arab countries, and the conflict between much of the entire region and the United States and other Western

countries? Those three parallel conflicts have all come together today in Lebanon. They've all come together today in Lebanon. And when Ahmadinejad went to South Lebanon a few days ago, that was the most dramatic manifestation of this moment when all three of these conflicts -- Arab-Israeli, Iranian-Arab, and Middle Eastern-Western -- came together. It's a crucial moment that we're passing through. I think the hopeful sign is that many people realize what is at stake now and are working overtime to try to find a political resolution to these issues, and I think we just have to basically wait and see what happens, though I don't think we should just be idle observers. But all of us -- citizens, foreign residents, friends, whatever -- who care about the Arab world should talk about these issues, raise them in public, and try to play our role to find that peaceful resolution, that consensus, that middle ground that has been so elusive.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. SHAIKH: Wow. Thank you very much, Rami. You very -- in a very sophisticated way, you've managed

to drill into some of the micro issues facing Arab societies whilst at the same time putting them into context of the fluid and dynamic regional forces that we've got going on in our environment.

In a minute I'll open it up to questions, but let me take the prerogative first. On the sort of the more macro broader environment and focusing on issues of the balance of power in the region, now it's -- I guess it's become quite orthodoxy to say that U.S. power has declined, new actors have come in particularly pointing to the catalytic impact of the Iraq war as well and the rise and influence of Iran but also Syria.

I wanted to actually ask you about Syria. You did touch on Syria. Some would say that since 2005, which is probably a low point for Bashar Assad. Syria is the main determinant of the balance of power in the region, and nowhere is that more evident than in Lebanon. Would you like to comment a little bit about Syria's role in the region?

MR. KHOURI: Sure. I said the Lebanese play

brinksmanship. The Syrians get the Nobel Prize for brinksmanship. I mean, they are the masters at brinksmanship. And whether you like them or don't like them, whether you agree or disagree with the Syrian government, you have to recognize one thing today, I believe, that Syria is the most important political actor in the Middle East right now in the sense that Syria is the only country in the region that is politically and structurally linked to every single major conflict and every single major player: Iraq, Iran, Turkey, Lebanon, Hezbollah, Hamas, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, the United States. They even negotiate with Israel through the Turks. I mean, they're linked -- Syria is linked to every single conflict and actor in this region. They have proved themselves masters of political engagement in the region.

A lot of people don't like the way they engage. They play hardball. They're tough sometimes. So, whether you like them or don't like them, you have to deal with them. And I believe the Syrians and the Iranians are examples of one of the new phenomena that

the Western countries generally, and the Americans in particular, don't understand and are confused by, which is predominantly Muslim Middle Eastern countries -- and you could almost throw Turkey into this as well -- predominantly Muslim Middle East countries, and you have Turkey and Iran and Syria, three different nationalities. So, this isn't an Arab issue. This isn't a Shiite issue. This is an issue of Muslim-majority countries that stand their ground, take the threats that are issued against them, stand their ground, and reply back to the people threatening them that this is what we believe is right; this is what we believe is our right; this is what we believe needs to be done, and we're prepared to take the risk of getting beaten up, but this is what we are insisting on doing politically.

And the West doesn't know how to deal with that kind of phenomenon, of self-confident, strong in many cases, defiant, resolute, and politically and rhetorically aggressive Muslim-majority Middle Eastern countries. It's a new phenomenon for our time. When

you had countries before, whether Egypt -- Abdel Nasser's Egypt or Saddam Hussein's Iraq or somebody else, they were somehow bought off or beaten up or something. So, I think the Syrian position has to be seen in a wider context.

And there is an element of danger in what Syria is doing, because it could get beaten up. They might get attacked like Iraq was attacked. Who knows? But they're willing to take that chance. I think that the key with Syria is to -- and with Iran -- is to listen carefully to what they're asking for. What are they asking for? Is it reasonable? Is it legitimate? And to respond to their grievances in an accurate and rational way.

Their relationship with Lebanon is more complicated than that because of the historical associations where many people in Syria feel that Lebanon was taken away from the motherland. And the government doesn't say that necessarily, but many Syrians feel this.

But, more importantly, the Syrian government

legitimately has had concerns that Lebanon is itself underbellied. They don't want Lebanon to be used to threaten Syria. And that's a perfectly reasonable position for any country to take. The Syrians understood, I think, when more than half the Lebanese stood up in February and March and April of 2005 and publicly went out onto the streets and said we want the Syrians out. They don't want Syria to control Lebanon. I think the Syrians got the message and they pulled out. And there was Arab consensus and international consensus.

So, Syria I think now is acting in a more sophisticated way to ensure that its national interests and strategic interests are accounted for without going back in and ruling Lebanon directly or dominating it as it did for many years before it left in 2005. I think they're finding that balance, which I think they've done quite well, but it remains a very, very contentious issue inside Lebanon.

But I think that the key to Syria is not to look at Syria primarily in terms of its relations with

Lebanon or Hezbollah. I think the mistake people make, and this is the same mistake that the U.S. and others make with Iran, which is to look at them as a one-issue country. You know, Iran nuclear energy, nuclear industry; Syria-Hezbollah-Lebanon. Syria has many, many other interests, and you have to look at the package deal and negotiate with them on that basis.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. Let me ask you one more, and then I will -- I promise you, I'll open it up.

On the micro side and also the philosophical, you talked about the three moments of reckoning and again linked it very much to what's going on in Arab countries. On the micro side in Lebanon, there's more and more talk about Saad Hariri's government being in peril, that Saad Hariri himself is stuck between a rock and a hard place. He had to back-stand on the tribunal and lose his political credibility internally or -- and the opposition bolts from government.

I wanted to ask you a more broader point linked to that about effective governance.

MR. KHOURI: About?

MR. SHAIKH: Effective governance in Lebanon, because, of course, Lebanon's problems are many in terms of uneven development, in terms of not even having a national budget for the last six years, problems with electricity, water, et cetera. How, within the dynamics that you've explained, can a country like Lebanon come to arrangements whereby which you can get effective governance?

MR. KHOURI: Well, I mean, the key word is "effective." What do you mean by "effective" government? Lebanon operates in a manner that has generated I think some really impressive dimensions of life in the modern Arab world. You know, Lebanon today, despite all of its problems, still has the best universities, the best theater, the most creative cultural life than most serious publishing houses, some of the finest journalists. They have -- they've tapped the best of the human spirit, and they've unleashed the Arab human spirit in a way that no other Arab country has.

And so we have to recognize that Lebanon still provides something incredibly important in the contemporary Arab world, which is human beings who can use all their human faculties. They can talk, they can think, they can speak, they can create, they can enjoy different views, they can debate, they can -- so, this is something incredibly precious, because it's the most advanced, I think, or the most serious expression of that total humanity manifesting itself.

The price, of course, for that is the turbulence, the occasional fighting, the tensions that crop up, because the central government is weak, and, therefore, again it's that balance between pluralism and what Michael Young calls a paradoxical liberalism of Lebanon -- the balance between that and tension and occasional violence in society -- and then other things that come up with this kind of system: corruption, abuse of power, inefficient reuse of resources, inequitable opportunities. And these are problems, but these are problems that we have throughout many Arab countries.

So, I think the question of governance in Lebanon is not directly linked to the government. The government comes and goes; the government stalls. We had a situation three years ago when, you know, Hezbollah pulled out and Hezbollah and (inaudible) and some of their people had lay siege to the prime ministry. The parliament didn't meet. The government stopped working for about a year and a half. And I was living there and, of course, you felt it in some things, but not a lot of things.

So, the formal institutions of government are not the primary purveyors of power sharing, and this is one of the intriguing things about the contemporary Arab world. Power is wielded, negotiated, exercised, shared in informal institutions as well as formal institutions. So, I think the real question is can the key political players in Lebanon reach agreement through their meetings, their quiet meetings at home, and in Riyadh, and maybe they'll come back to Doha and in Syria and in Tehran. That's where the key negotiations take place.

Can those negotiations come up with a new power sharing consensus? My assumption is they will, because they always have. This is the way that governance works in Lebanon. Until the Arab-Israeli conflict is resolved, until the Iranian-Western conflict is resolved, you're always going to have these tensions in Lebanon, and I think they will always overcome them in the ways that they always have.

MR. SHAIKH: All right, thank you. Okay, let me open it up. I just want to stress just some very brief ground rules, and please do identify yourself and your affiliation. It'd be great if you could limit your question to the form of a question, and if you could keep the question to, more or less, a minute tops, that would be great, because it would just allow hopefully many of us to ask the questions.

So, who would like to ask a question?

SPEAKER: Is there a microphone?

MR. SHAIKH: There are microphones. Microphones will just be coming around if you don't mind.

MR. DWALL: Thanks. Rami, what do you -- do you subscribe to --

MR. SHAIKH: Your name and --

MR. DWALL: Right, sorry. Mitri Dwall, Overseas Travel. I sell tickets. (Laughter)

Rami, do you subscribe to the theory that some countries have told President Obama that he has one year to solve the Israeli conflict so they can deal with Iran, Hezbollah, Lebanon, and all these problems?

MR. KHOURI: No, I don't. I don't think the Arab countries are organized and unified enough. I don't think they're bold enough to say anything like that to President Obama. I think you have a real problem of people around the world dealing coherently with many of the Arab governments because of this lack of unity, lack of clarity, and most of all lack of decisiveness. You have individual Arab governments that are confident, that are strong, that say things to Obama privately. But collectively it hasn't worked very well, and this is one of the reasons for our predicament, and this is one of the reasons why you

have all of these new centers of legitimate power emerging to the point where in countries like Lebanon sovereignty is formally instituted in the institutions of government, but real sovereignty is shared with other institutions. And this is a reality in most of our region.

If you had come to the Arab world in the 1950s or ’60s or ’70s, you -- say you were a foreign government or a foreign business person or a journalist. You came and talked to one person, which is the president or the king or the emir or the colonel, whoever’s heading the -- you talked to one person, because power was in the hands of one group, which is the government, and they ran everything. They ran the media, they ran the schools, they ran the private sector, they ran the budget, everything, the security services. Now when you go to many Arab countries, you have to talk to three or four different people, because power is widely diffused in society. So, this is one reason why -- and this is a reaction to the inability of the governments to work together --

the Arab governments to work together to achieve common goals. They couldn't do it on the Arab-Israeli issue. They've been doing nothing serious about Iran. They did some things on Lebanon now and then but not much. It was individual efforts. Whether Qatari or sometimes Sahodi or sometimes Syrian, individual efforts would usually get something done.

MR. SHAIKH: Lady there, please.

SPEAKER: Hi. (inaudible) from UNESCO. You said that the tribunal is beyond *kanafeh*, and I assume what you meant by that is that it has some weight, that the tribunal has some weight.

MR. KHOURI: I can't hear it very well. Hold it further away.

SPEAKER: Sorry. You mentioned that the tribunal is beyond *aafe*, that the tribunal has some weight. But on the issue of -- I think, as far as I know, the tribunal doesn't have its own police force but can arrest people. So, they may very well issue indictments, but without the ability to arrest these people how much weight does this tribunal really have?

MR. KHOURI: If they can't arrest people, how much weight does it have?

MR. SHAIKH: Yes, it doesn't always have a police force.

MR. KHOURI: The tribunal is a reflection of a political consensus in the Security Council. Everybody reacts to that consensus in a different way. They don't have a police force. The only thing they have is the political will of the Security Council that voted for this decision.

And it wasn't just a consensus. If you remember, the foreign ministers of most of these countries went to the Security Council -- Condoleezza Rice and I don't know who -- they went there in person to vote, to make it beyond a doubt, clear beyond a doubt, that the world wanted to find the killers of Hariri and hold them accountable. And now this is one of the practical issues that people are wondering about in Lebanon and Syria and other parts of the Arab world.

The indictment -- if indictments are made and, say, different Arab governments refuse to go along

with the indictments, what do you do then? We've had this case with the Sudanese president who was indicted. So, they're not going to send an army to pick up the indicted individuals I don't think. So, it becomes in the end a political process. It always has been a political process, and political processes are open to negotiations.

So, we just have to wait and see. Depends -- and this is one of the things that people are wondering about. Can they -- can there be a middle ground that allows people to be held accountable, but doesn't bring down entire governments or rekindle war in Lebanon? Is that possible? Nobody knows. It's all speculation.

MR. SHAIKH: That gentleman there.

SPEAKER: I'm (inaudible) from Pakistan. What we experience in Pakistan, that the domestic weaknesses has actually invited outside lives to play their game, so much so that even the outside forces, the military forces, came into this region. What do you say, that unless and until the internal forces, maybe those groups who are in power and not in power,

and the civic society -- unless they are not united and are not sincere towards their own objectives, national objectives, can we depend on outside forces, outside countries? Can we depend on them?

MR. KHOURI: You know, the question of the relationship between the Lebanese different parties, the groups, and the external groups is a fascinating one. It's a bit of a chicken-and-egg argument. And when we don't know, you know, which way -- it's not that the Lebanese have been exploited by aggressive external forces who came in and grabbed them and made them proxy forces for them. The Lebanese in most cases willingly sought outside support historically, and it started in the 1870s. You have cases way back where some Christian groups sought the protection of outside.

So, this isn't a new -- you know, this isn't a modern -- a contemporary phenomenon. This is an old problem in Lebanon, and it gets back to the why did I say in my five points or whatever, five or six points, the issue of statehood and nationhood and sovereignty and legitimacy. All of these issues are still up for

grabs; have never been fully defined in the modern Arab world.

We don't have clear processes by which people define their countries, their ideologies, their systems of power sharing. And Lebanon is the most grievous example of this problem. And when you don't have a strong central government, when you don't have an agreement consensus on what constitutes your country, what is the relationship of the citizen to the central government? What is the relationship of the whole country to bigger forces around it -- Arabism, Islamism, free market capitalism, globalization?

I mean, one of the big struggles now is the struggle in the entire region between Arabism and Islamism on one side and Western individual, capitalistic, republicanism on the other side. The Turks figured it out. The Turks -- you know, I tip my hat to the Turks. They didn't get stuck in the mess that we're in now. The Turks figured it out very quickly. They're Muslim, they're democratic, they're republican, they're constitutional, and they're

economically prosperous, and they're secular, and they don't serve liquor at presidential receptions. They figured it out. They've got this wonderful balance, and they're just plowing ahead into the modern world of democratic prosperity, and we're sitting around, you know, arguing about, you know, little things here and there -- who's going to get overthrown next by a foreign army. It's crazy. But it's part of the incoherence of the modern Arab world. It's not just the lack of good governance. It's the -- I believe it's the lack of clear consensus on statehood and nationhood and citizenship. And this is something that the Arab people are going to have to address, and in many ways they're already addressing it.

As I said when -- I believe that we're witnessing the birth of politics. So, what we can see today which is so important -- and that's why I say this last (inaudible) that I described is, I believe, a positive one; it's a hopeful one, because for the first time ever we know what most people in the Arab world feel. We know it, because fine people like the Gallup

organization does amazing polls all over the region. We know it, because fine journalists write about it and we have Jazeera and other institutions. We know it, because we have elections now and then, and even when the elections are gerrymandered and flip-flopped and -- okay. But still with the elections you get their idea of votes for Islamists and who votes for their cousin, the tribal leader, and who votes for (inaudible), the falafel vendor next door, and who votes for the guy who's going to open a Hummer dealership and give them a job.

And, you know, we can tell now. We know what people feel, so we have an idea for the first time ever in modern Arab history, except for a brief interlude maybe in the 1930s briefly in Syria and Egypt and places. We know what people feel. We know what they believe. And they're starting to organize themselves in these various groups, which I characterize as the monarchy, the market, and the mosque. But they're now expressing themselves and engaging each other.

So, this is, in a way, the beginning of not

just politics, but a process of national self-definition, which has never happened in most Arab countries, self-definition, national self-definition. So, it's very exciting. Hopefully, it'll continue and be institutionalized.

MR. SHAIKH: (inaudible)

MR. FAREEZ: Mr. Fareez. I'm a freelance telecommunication engineer. I wanted to make a notice that in the title you have "Middle East's Multiple Challenges," and I was a little bit surprised that after 45 minutes the world of Palestinian people was not announced. So, the question is don't you think that there was a reason of the Palestinian problem? And I think that a small (inaudible) Israel problems and an Allah-ecided problem, and that resolution and the resolution of the sentiment of (inaudible) regime for Jerusalem would help to decrease attempts in the region and in Lebanon.

MR. KHOURI: Well, you're right. I didn't dwell on that. I just mentioned it, that solving the Arab-Israeli conflict is one of the keys to having --

and in Lebanon -- resolving Lebanese problems. But absolutely, the Lebanese -- the Arab-Israeli problem -- conflict is the oldest, most destabilizing conflict in the region. There's no question about that. But what's different today from 20 or 30 years ago is it's no longer the only or dominant conflict. It is now one of several other major conflicts in the region. The Arab-Israeli conflict of Palestinian nationalism versus Zionist nationalism has been transformed into a conflict between Jewish colonialism and Islamic resistance. And the last two wars that Israel has fought were with Hamas and Hezbollah, and it's major concern now is about Iran.

We're not dealing with an Arab-Israeli conflict. We're dealing with a new focus of tension between groups in the Arab world who continue to insist on fighting Israel. The majority of Palestinian people who continue to insist on their rights, including myself as one of them, and lots of other actors in the region who support the Arab position but are busy doing other things and are more worried about other issues.

So, I think resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict would have huge, positive impact on other conflicts, but wouldn't solve any of the other conflicts by themselves. I think if you looked at the region now, if you had an Iranian-American agreement on the nuclear issue, that would have massive positive implications for other conflicts in the region. It would force Hezbollah, for instance, to reconsider a lot of its positions. It would have major implications for the Syrian position.

So, there are other conflicts now in the region. You have -- most of the tensions within Arab countries are due to internal economic stress, economic stress and political stress because of lack of democratic accountability and because of economic stress.

Let me give you one statistic. I became a journalist, because I wasn't smart enough to do statistics and economics, but I'll give you one statistic which is quite frightening. If you take the entire Arab world and you take the per capita income --

the average income per person per capita gross domestic product, but average per capita income for the entire Arab world at constant 2000 prices, the year 2000 -- in the decade of the 1980s, the average income per each individual Arab was $2,671.

These are World Bank figures from the World Economic Indicators Report. The average per capita income in the 1980s was $2,671. The average per capita income in this decade until 2009 was $2,557. It had dropped in 20 years. If you take away the oil stage, take away Qatar and Kuwait and Saudi Arabia and UAE, and you take Egypt and Jordan and Yemen and Sudan and Morocco, the disparity is much worse. I mean, we're talking about a poor region that has become more poor in the last 20 years.

This massive internal stress has driven the political forces in the region, particularly the Islamist groups but also tribal groups, also other groups, has driven massive immigration of our most educated young people. And so these are the big issues now that are, I think, confronting these countries as

well as the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The Arab-Israeli conflict is an aggravating factor now, whereas in the ’50s and ’60s it was the main factor. So, we need to, I think, keep it in proportion. We need to keep pushing for an equitable resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Absolutely. But it’s no longer the dominant single issue that it used to be.

MR. SHAIKH: Who else would like to ask a question? Please.

SPEAKER: Thank you very much. I am (inaudible) from Palestine. Mr. Rami, can you please a little bit -- elaborate a little bit more about the link between the situation in Lebanon, the tension -- I mean, internal and the tension between (inaudible) Hezbollah on one side and the tension between (inaudible) with the -- be considered the Islamist movements there -- and the situation in Iraq -- I mean, the tension of the conflicts between Iran and the United States own the influence and on the stakes of each own -- in Iraq and on the Gulf States in the area,

I mean, because it seems to me that there is a big link between the two. And we saw that the world, which is (inaudible) on Lebanon 2006, was more a (inaudible) war. It wasn't a real Lebanese-Islam war. It was in another -- an Iranian-American war and (inaudible). So, if you don't mind.

MR. SHAIKH: The link between Lebanon and Iran -- the Iran (inaudible).

MR. KHOURI: I think that much of what is going on in Lebanon now is a proxy battle for the U.S. and Iran. I believe that personally. I don't believe that Hezbollah is run by Iran. I don't think Iran tells Hezbollah what to do. It's a very complex relationship, and there's a great debate about this in Lebanon. People say, oh, no, Hezbollah will do anything Iran tells it to do; other people say, no, I'm among those who think that Hezbollah is a puppet of Iran. Hezbollah is structurally dependent on Iran, I believe, for weapons, for training and money. They've got a lot of money for reconstruction. So, the strategic link with Iran is very, very strong.

The Iranians, I believe, see Hezbollah as their front-line forces in the battle with Israel. The problem for Iran is that I believe most Iranian people don't think they have a problem with Israel. But the government of Iran does. I visited Iran for the first time, and, see, I don't believe that the majority of Iranians want to make war with Israel. I think they support Palestine; they support the Palestinian cause; they want Jerusalem to be free. But I don't think they want to make war with Israel.

So, the question then becomes when we say "Iran," what are we talking about? Are we talking about the government? Are we talking about the Iranian people? And even the government, as you know, is full of different factions in Iran. But the Hezbollah -- I believe Hezbollah is the only foreign policy success of the Islamic revolution. It's the only foreign policy success that the Islamic revolution has achieved, which is to have close strategic ties with this very dynamic, impressive, effective, powerful force. Again, I'm trying to use descriptive words. If you like

Hezbollah, you don't like Hezbollah, that's fine. Everybody has their view, but the Iranians see this as an extremely important link. They see Iran as the front line of deterrence and the front line of reaction I think.

If Israel attacks Iran, I think Iran expects Hezbollah to attack Israel. I'm not sure if Hezbollah would do that or not, and this is Hezbollah's dilemma, that it is a strategic ally of Iran. It is structurally tied to the Wali al-Faqih, and it is a Lebanese institution and major player that is militarily stronger than the Lebanese army.

So, Hezbollah is caught in a real difficult position right now, and this is one of their main challenges right now. How do they react to the different constraints now on them? They're part of the Lebanese government. They're not enemies of the Lebanese government; they're part of the Lebanese government.

But the Lebanese government is taking decisions which they don't like, and if the

International Tribunal takes a decision, how are they going to react? And the biggest problem Hezbollah has in Lebanon, I believe now, is that many people in Lebanon seek out openly critically of Hezbollah. They criticize it in public. This was unheard of six and seven, eight years ago.

But today people are not afraid to openly criticize Hezbollah, and when Ahmadinejad came -- you saw this -- again, there was a moment of great historical importance, because it clarified so many trends that were there kind of lying low, but they all came out into the open, people openly criticizing Hezbollah as an agent of Iran and they want to turn Lebanon into an Islamic republic and Wali al-Faqih and this and that.

So, the question of the Iranian -- Lebanese-Iranian-Hezbollah relationship is a really, really important one, but I think it’s symptomatic of a bigger question, which is the wider confrontation between the Iranian-Syrian-Hezbollah-Hamas-Nationalist-Islamist grouping in the Arab world, and Iran and the Western

world, led by the U.S. in many cases, and Israel and conservative Arab governments.

So, you have these two broad camps now with this new regional confrontation. It's ideological; it's cultural; it's military; it's political. And they fought each other to a draw, and I think that's the bigger problem. Lebanon has again emerged as the most dynamic proxy of this battle, and that's why I said I believe personally that when the resolution came out to 1559 to have the U.N. intervene in Lebanon, I believe it was politically aimed at hitting the Syrians and hitting Hezbollah. That's just my personal opinion based on talking to a lot of people, because the various Western governments saw then that Syria was weak, you know, that the Lebanese had pushed Syria out, and Iraq had already been attacked by the U.S. and its allies, and the Syrians were afraid of being attacked next, and I think many Western governments said this is the time to really hit the Syrians, and Hezbollah is there against the ropes. They're reeling.

So, the extra pressure of the tribunal has

added a new element of complexity to the position of Syria and Hezbollah and Iran, all of whom had formed this strong alliance. And it's fascinating, because if you add the Turks, the Turks are not part of this alliance, but the Turks are part of the new phenomenon of this decade, which is these Middle Eastern Muslim-majority countries that stand up to the West or to Israel. They're not afraid of it. They don't necessarily want to make war, but they're not willing to be scolded or threatened or sanctioned. They stand up and hold their ground. And Iran -- the Iranian-Syrian-Hezbollah-Hamas grouping shatters all of the previous assumptions that people had, because you have here Persians and Arabs; you have Sunnis and Shiites; you have Islamists and secular Baathists all working together, brought together by a certain idea, a certain posture, that we have rights, we're being treated unfairly, we have to hold our ground and fight for what we think is right.

And if you agree with them, you just agree that's, you know, that's your -- everybody's option.

I'm not necessarily saying that I agree with them, but when I step back and I study them and I look at them, I say holy cow, these people are, you know, holding their ground, and they feel that they're winning. And I would argue that of the 450 million or so people, almost 500 million people in Turkey, the Arab world, and Iran, I would say probably 60 percent of them share those views. I would say a majority of people in Turkey, Iran, and the Arab world share this sense of defiance, of standing up to Israel or the U.S., of, you know, just sort of feeling good about themselves, that they're not being pushed around anymore. So, I think this -- the question of the Iran-U.S. battle being fought in Lebanon clearly is one of the things that's going on.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you. Shall we take maybe one more question? Does anybody else -- something -- yes, the lady then, please.

MS. LUSTER: Hi, my name is Iana Luster of Georgetown University, and I just had a question regarding the tribunal. You spoke about providing

justice versus chaos with the civilians and civil war being at risk, so from the way you were talking it seemed that you were more for this justice. If you could just expand on that.

MR. SHAIKH: (inaudible)

MR. KHOURI: That I'm more for justice? Definitely I am for justice, and I think the majority of Lebanese people are, too, and I think the majority of Arabs are. I think people are fed up with assassination, with impunity in the Arab world. Whoever's doing it, if it's Arabs or Israelis or foreigners or whoever's doing the killing, or Iranians or -- we don't know. We honestly don't know. I mean, everybody has accusations they make, so for the first time ever we have a really serious investigation going on and a mechanism to hold accountable those people who will be indicted. So, absolutely, I'm for justice being done. I'm not Lebanese, so it's not for me to say whether people in Lebanon should take the risk of their country slipping into civil war again for the sake of justice. That's for the Lebanese to decide; I

can't tell them. But I think the majority of Lebanese want justice done. There's no doubt about it. And I think what people understand is that this is one of the few times where international legitimacy represented by the consensus of the Security Council actually coincides with the views of ordinary Arabs. And this convergence is rare and, therefore, I think people want to see this process take its course.

But I also believe that some kind of compromise agreement is also possible. I believe that there is a middle ground between absolute justice and full chaos, which is relative justice or attainable justice. I think we can have attainable justice, and this is a question both for lawyers and politicians and philosophers to discuss.

Maybe this is a subject you should have a panel discussion on: attainable justice in a politically imperfect but loveable Arab world. Thank you.

MR. SHAIKH: Thank you for that. (Applause)

MR. KHOURI: Thank you.

MR. SHAIKH: Let me just say a couple of words, Rami. I said at the start that you are somebody who's renown for your incisive insights and your powerful commentary, and you certainly proved that tonight. So, thank you very much.

Particularly thanks for helping to understand the current dynamics that are swirling around the region. And very interesting is the societal changes that are occurring within this particular region to help us to sort out the wood from the trees, what is important, what is less so. I'm fascinated by your belief that we're facing these three moments of reckoning. I'm also impressed by your optimism that the region can emerge positively from these moments based on some of the more positive dynamics that you've pointed to. For the sake of the region, I very much hope you're right.

Well, I wanted to say again a big thank you very much for coming. I'm sure we'd like to show our appreciation again. Thank you, Rami. (Applause)

Also, thank you very much for coming

yourselves. It's been a wonderful occasion for me in my first event to have so many of you here. Please do keep looking out for our publications and other events. We look forward to welcoming you back as friends of the BDC en'shallah.

And, also, thank you very much to the Diplomatic Club and, of course, the BDC team for putting on such a good show. Thank you very much. Goodnight. (Applause)

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I, Carleton J. Anderson, III do hereby certify that the forgoing electronic file when originally transmitted was reduced to text at my direction; that said transcript is a true record of the proceedings therein referenced; that I am neither counsel for, related to, nor employed by any of the parties to the action in which these proceedings were taken; and, furthermore, that I am neither a relative or employee of any attorney or counsel employed by the parties hereto, nor financially or otherwise interested in the outcome of this action.

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