



2005 U.S.–Islamic World Forum

Doha, Qatar
April 10–12, 2005

The Brookings Project on
U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World



وزارة الخارجية





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at BROOKINGS



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The Forum's purpose is to promote a better understanding of the problems involved in U.S. relations with the Islamic world through the creation of an ongoing and collaborative dialogue between Muslim and American leaders.



Note from the Forum Organizers



THE BROOKINGS PROJECT ON U.S. POLICY TOWARDS THE Islamic World was launched in the wake of the September 11 attacks. Its goal is to develop research and outreach programs designed to improve U.S. relations with Muslim states and movements. A particular challenge in this time of great tension, frustration, suspicion, and misperception between the United States and the Islamic world is the virtual absence of dialogue between leaders from both sides.

With the generous support of the Government of Qatar, the Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World launched the **U.S.–Islamic World Forum**. The Forum’s purpose is to promote a better understanding of the problems involved in U.S. relations with the Islamic world, through the creation of an ongoing and collaborative dialogue between Muslim and American leaders. The Doha meetings are thus a unique gathering, bringing together leaders from the United States and the Muslim world for an intensive dialogue aimed at building bridges across the divide that developed after the September 11 terrorist attacks.

The 2005 Forum built on the success of the inaugural conference in January 2004, at which former President Clinton spoke. That meeting not only fostered serious dialogue amongst policymakers and opinion-shapers, but also generated human development initiatives in the Middle East, the formation of a Muslim-American foreign policy caucus, and the initiation of “track two” diplomatic talks for certain conflict zones.

Opened by His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani, the emir of the State of Qatar, the 2005 Forum brought together some 160 leaders from the United States and 35 Muslim countries, extending from Senegal to Indonesia. It was a diverse and distinguished group, with the attendees ranging from ministers of governments and CEOs of corporations to deans of universities and editors of newspapers. It was the type of meeting where investment bankers mingled with Islamist leaders and civil society leaders shared meals with government ministers. In addition to the established leaders, participants were enthralled by the chance to hear new voices and meet emerging leaders, ranging from the national security advisor of the new Iraq to the first female president of the Muslim Students Association of the USA and Canada (a former Brookings intern, notably). One journalist opined that simply “...to hang around in the lobbies is to have a chance to meet some astonishing people.”

These luminaries from the fields of politics, business, civil society, academia, science, and the news media participated in sessions which assessed the state of U.S.–Islamic world relations, the Middle East peace process, progress in political and economic reform, the impact of elections, security, good governance, human development, and the role of the press and public opinion. In addition, special leader seminars were convened on science and technology issues (in partnership with Lawrence Livermore National Laboratories) and business and economic concerns.

In Doha, these leaders engaged in three days of discussion, debate, and dialogue. We were all honored by and grateful for their participation. Their involve-



ment in the Forum was an important demonstration of their personal leadership. True leaders move past complaining about problems and become personally engaged in solving them.

The meetings comprised both public plenary sessions and private working group discussions. Each session began with opening presentations by participants from both the muslim world and the United States. These were followed by a general discussion among all the attendees. The discussions consistently continued into the breaks and over ensuing meals and free time, illustrating the importance of the issues and the high activity level of the leaders.

The meetings were often intense, but always fruitful. The topics covered the full range of issues, including thematic and functional concerns in the political, economic, religious, security, scientific, and social realms. In many sessions, specific policy recommendations were agreed upon and joint agendas for action developed. In others, no clear lines of agreement could be found, but valuable concerns and perspectives were raised, leaving each participant more informed and able to move forward.

In addition to the dialogue and debate, new programs and endeavors were sparked by the convening of so many dynamic leaders from around the globe. Agreements for linkages of cooperation between American and Arab universities were established. The group of American and Muslim world science and technology leaders agreed to a series of joint actions (inspired in part by an analysis paper that Brookings had published for the occasion), ranging from exchange programs to research cooperation; and a conference of 1,000 Arab scientists was announced, scheduled for later in the year in Cairo. A series of human development initiatives were also established in South Asia.

The Forum was also significant on a number of other levels. The press coverage was extensive, with reporting about the event on an array of television, radio, and print outlets across the globe. In the weeks following the meeting, columns and articles by participants discussing their experiences and lessons learned proliferated, extending from Washington to Beirut. In this way, the Forum provides demonstrable evidence that the dialogue between the United States and the Muslim world is not one of pure negativity and can be wrested away from extremists.

Besides opening a critical nexus of communication and action between the United States and the Islamic world, the meeting also brought together leaders from Muslim communities across the globe, who often have no contact with one another. It thus opened a valuable space for intra-Islamic world dialogue on their differing experiences and perspectives, but often shared challenges.

The Forum's annual leaders meeting provides the foundation for a range of complementary activities designed to enhance the effectiveness of the dialogue. Additional plans include collaborative media, education, and youth-centered programs. One example is the youth outreach program at the Forum established in partnership with the Soliya organization. This joint venture helped create a cooperative network of leading American and Arab universities, where the students



shared on-line resources and worked together on projects. The Forum's multimedia website (www.us-islamicworldforum.org) carries video downloads of the various public sessions and speeches for use by the public and the students, as well as on-line student interviews with many conference attendees. It provides an opportunity for direct connection between leaders and students available in no other locale.

Given ongoing events, this meeting could not have come at a more timely and necessary juncture. We would like to express our deep appreciation to His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, for making it possible to convene this assemblage of leaders from across the Islamic world and the United States. He is also to be commended for his personal participation in the meeting. We are also appreciative of the support and participation of Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr al-Thani, the first Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, and the rest of the Foreign Ministry of Qatar. Mohammed Abdullah al-Rumaihi, Assistant to the Minister for Follow Up Affairs, Abdullah Rahman Fakroo, Executive Director of the Committee for Conferences, and Bader al-Dafa, Ambassador to the United States, merit special thanks for their roles in ensuring the successful planning and operation of the meeting.

We are also appreciative of the generosity of the Carnegie Corporation, the Ford Foundation, the Education for Employment Foundation, the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, the United States Institute of Peace, Haim Saban, and the Brookings Institution for their support of the project's activities. We would finally like to thank the hard work of our support staff of Rabab Fayad, Sara Gamay, Garner Gollatz, Ellen McHugh, Ariel Kastner, Hayden Morel, Jamal Najjab, Casey Noga, Elina Noor, and Sarah Yerkes.

The dialogue we opened in Doha was critical, but clearly just a beginning. Future activities include the convening of expert task forces that will research and develop agendas for action on critical challenges and the convening of regional conferences that will take the meetings into other parts of the Muslim world.

In sum, our continuing goal is to expand upon and institutionalize this important effort to build understanding and promote positive relations between the United States and the Islamic world.

Kindest regards,

PROFESSOR STEPHEN P. COHEN
Project Co-Convenor

AMBASSADOR MARTIN INDYK
Project Co-Convenor

DR. PETER W. SINGER
Project Director

PROFESSOR SHIBLEY TELHAMI
Project Co-Convenor





Program of Events

** indicates open to media*

Saturday, April 9, 2005

14:00 Press Brief: Goals of the U.S.–Islamic World Forum*

Peter W. Singer, Director, Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World

Mohammed al-Rumaihi, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar

What does the Forum hope to accomplish?

Who will be attending?

What will be discussed?

Sunday, April 10, 2005

9:00 Registration and Task Force Sign Up

17:00 Welcome Reception

18:30 Opening Session*

OPENING ADDRESS: H.H. Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani, Emir of the State of Qatar

INTRODUCTION: Martin Indyk, Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution

Followed by Leaders Roundtable 1: The State of U.S.–Islamic World Relations

CHAIRMAN: James Steinberg, Vice President and Director of Foreign Policy Studies, Brookings Institution; former Deputy National Security Advisor

Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Director, Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies

Shibley Telhami, Professor, University of Maryland; Senior Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution

Sadig al-Mahdi, President, National Umma Party; former Prime Minister of Sudan

Where do relations between the United States and the broader Muslim world stand at present?

What forces are shaping relations for better and for worse?

What are the primary challenges in the years ahead?

20:30 Dinner for Sponsors and Attendees

Followed by Leaders Roundtable 2: The Search for Peace: Third Party Roles in the Middle East Peace Process*

Hosted by H.E. Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar

MODERATOR: Martin Indyk, Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution

Richard Holbrooke, Vice Chairman, Perseus LLC; former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations

Mohammad Dahlan, Minister of Civil Affairs, Palestinian Authority

What are the roles and responsibilities of outside parties in aiding the peace process?

What are the challenges outside parties face?

How best might they coordinate their efforts?

Program of Events (CONTINUED)

Monday, April 11, 2005

9:00 Task Force Session 1

A) Conflict and Security Task Force

CO-CHAIRS:

Martin Indyk, Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution

Rami Khouri, Editor-at-Large, *The Daily Star*

B) Human Development Task Force

CO-CHAIRS:

Sherry Rehman, Member, Pakistan National Assembly; Editor, *The Herald*

Stephen Cohen, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

C) Governance and Reform Task Force

CO-CHAIRS:

Saad Eddin Ibrahim, Director, Ibn Khaldun Center for Development Studies

Shibley Telhami, Professor, University of Maryland; Senior Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution

10:30 Coffee and Pastries Break

11:00 Task Force Session 2

12:30 Lunch

Followed by Leaders Keynote Session: Elections and Their Consequences*

MODERATOR: James Steinberg, Director of Foreign Policy Studies, Brookings Institution

Anwar Ibrahim, Senior Associate, St. Antony's College, Oxford University

RESPONDENT: J. Scott Carpenter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor

What are the causes and implications of the recent wave of elections across the Muslim world (Malaysia, Afghanistan, Palestine, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, etc.)?

How might we compare the current approaches to democratization, including the benefits of top-down vs. bottom-up processes and the role of opposition parties?

What should the role of the United States be in fostering democratic institutions?

14:40 Leader Seminars

Science and Technology Leaders Seminar

CO-CHAIRS:

George Atkinson, Science Advisor, U.S. Department of State

Mohamed H.A. Hassan, Director, Third World Academy of Science

What are the needs and opportunities for enhanced science and technology cooperation between the United States and the broader Muslim world?

How might science and technology cooperation assist in dealing with socio-economic and political concerns?

What can be done to stimulate such cooperation? What should the roles played by the United States and the Islamic world states be?

Economic Leaders Seminar

CO-CHAIRS:

Djoomart Otorbaev, Head of the Secretariat on Foreign Investments; former Deputy Prime Minister of Kyrgyzstan

M. Osman Siddique, former U.S. Ambassador to Fiji

How might leaders best encourage economic reform, foreign investment, etc.?



What can be done to stimulate a positive role of business in dealing with joint socio-economic and political concerns?

What are the lessons learned from the countries and contexts represented that may be applied elsewhere?

16:00 Coffee Break

16:30 Workshops continued

19:00 Leaders Roundtable 3: Public Attitudes and the Role of the Media*

MODERATOR: Shibley Telhami, Professor, University of Maryland; Senior Fellow, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution

Faisal al-Qasim, Host, *al-Jazeera*

Mustapha Hamarneh, Director, Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan

Steven Kull, Director, Program on International Policy Attitudes

John Zogby, President, Zogby International

What is the latest polling data on public opinion in the United States and the Islamic world?

How do publics on either side view each other?

What are their perceptions on key issues in relations? Are there any misconceptions or myths?

What role are the media playing in relations between the United States and the Islamic world?

20:30 Social Dinner

Tuesday, April 12, 2005

9:00 Task Force Session 3

10:10 Coffee and Pastries Break

10:30 Task Force Session 4

11:30 Task Force Conclusions

MODERATOR: Stephen Cohen, Senior Fellow, Brookings Institution

Musa Hitam, Chairman, Kumpulan Guthrie

M.J. Akbar, Editor-in-Chief, *The Asian Age*

Rami Khouri, Editor-at-Large, *The Daily Star*

What were the primary conclusions of the dialogue?

What were the principal areas of agreement and disagreement?

What were the recommendations for action?

13:00 Lunch

Followed by Closing Session*

Hosted by H.E. Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim Bin Jabr al-Thani, First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar

Followed by Leaders Roundtable 4: Where Do We Go From Here?*

MODERATOR: Martin Indyk, Director, Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution

Hossam Badrawi, Chairman, Education and Scientific Research Committee, People's Assembly, Arab Republic of Egypt

Robert Blackwill, President, Barbour Griffith & Rogers International

Surin Pitsuwan, former Foreign Minister of Thailand

What forces will shape the future of U.S.–Islamic world relations?

What can be done to promote more positive relations?

What should the U.S.–Islamic World Forum's agenda be?



In our wide Islamic world, we follow the guiding words of our gracious Prophet, that “wisdom is the goal of persistent search of the believer, who takes it from whomever he hears it and does not care from which source it came out.”

H.H. Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa al-Thani *The Emir of the State of Qatar*



In the Name of God,
The Most Compassionate, The Most Merciful

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Honorable Audience,

It gives me pleasure to meet with you today in Doha to which you have come to participate in an important meeting, which provides an opportunity for each of its two parties to present its viewpoint to the other party and listen to the other view to find out that half of its point of view lies with the other partner in the dialogue and both parties would realize that whenever they meet they have to seek the truth and look for the meaning of “friend” in the other.

Your meeting is an occasion which Qatar is proud to host for the third time. It brings near to one another two sides that discovered after September 11 there are obstacles that cannot be ignored nor taken lightly if they want the connections between them to grow and progress. Besides, some of the relations between them are still hostage to distorted impressions and rigid ideas which have to be discarded and be replaced by a new, daring understanding that does not feel too haughty to admit being in the wrong or find the volume of work to be achieved too large, or succumb to those who try to plant despair in the future of a strategic relation that has before it wide horizons that must be explored.

If the participants in the previous rounds of this dialogue had tried to monitor the progress of the relations between the two sides and were struck by the challenges it had faced, your meeting this year has to build on previous work and look this time for the keys of change which the two parties—the American and the Islamic—have to use if they want their relations to enter through a wide gate into a secure future shaded by a mutual desire for cooperation and where agreement on a common scale of priorities prevails.

One of the keys of change has to attend to the method of the dialogue itself, where the two parties have to be concerned with the form as much as with the content. Haughtiness on the one party or indifference on the other may lead to frustration or despair of those who rely on this dialogue for the development of the U.S. relations with the Islamic world.

I believe that the heritage of each of us constantly urges for promoting and advancing the dialogue in support of constructive communication with the other. Our Arab tradition advocates leniency and flexibility in dialogue, for leniency leads to affection. In our wide Islamic world, we follow the guiding words of our gracious Prophet, that “wisdom is the goal of persistent search of the believer, who takes it from whomever he hears it and does not care from which source it came out.” We find that this call establishes the principles of sound dialogue and opens the way for taking from the others what is good, without apprehension or sensitivity. That is why it is necessary that the two parties strive to conduct their dialogue in an understanding spirit so that the arrangement of priorities proposed by one party should not be seen to be instructions, or the explanations presented by the other party as an attempt to repudiate some commitments.



Ladies and Gentlemen,

The keys of the most vital change in the course of relations between the United States and the Islamic world are subject to the progress in the common issues between the two parties.

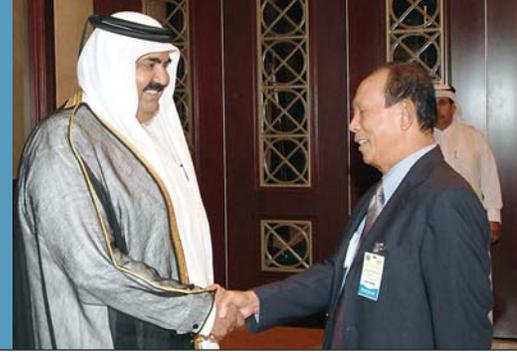
Although democracy has begun after more than 60 years to occupy its place on the list of topics between the two parties, and we find countries in our Islamic world moving at different degrees towards the application of democracy, a final approach to be agreed upon by the two parties on this issue has not yet been crystallized. There are still some clouds looming over the subject which need to be dispersed by shedding more light on them by this dialogue.

The Islamic world sees the American attention to democracy after being affected by the September 11 events, it wonders in some of its parts whether this interest is an expression of a stance by an administration or whether it embodies complete change in the position of a state. Perhaps this is the question why the reform efforts in those parts of the Islamic world are still slack, and had to start after September 11, and are still betting on the time factor, and that some slight changes could do for the time being. This requires of the United States and the Islamic countries to arrive, through dialogue, at a point of transparency where any obscurity is clarified regarding the future of an unprecedented experience for political transformation that has begun and must be completed, so that the Muslim peoples, who are the prime persons concerned with reform can be assured that their hopes will not be betrayed due to changes that might take place in the balance of interests, and that their wide expectations can no longer be rewarded with some limited cosmetic changes.

Honorable Audience,

The dialogue between the two parties on democracy needs to be an issue of agreement and not contention, an issue that binds and not divides, especially when in a number of experiences of democratic transformation in our Islamic world, from Afghanistan to Palestine and Iraq, the sound of weapons got mixed with the votes of electors in varying degrees to the extent of leaving a gap in assessments not only between the American and the Islamic sides, but also within each one of them, regarding the ideal way the outside world could help in democracy building. If there is a minority in the Islamic world who would like to urge the outside world to strongly put the pressure for democracy, and others who are averse to the outside world and eschew democracy itself, there are large, enlightened masses who realize that they have to make the way to democracy by themselves, but without refusing contact with whomever comes forward to help them complete the course.

There is another issue of no less importance, ladies and gentlemen, which if tackled, would produce a significant leap in relations between the two parties. An observer of the Islamic world, in its heart or peripheries, can see burning hotbeds of tension, and acute problems that affect the national security and territorial integrity of a number of its countries, the regional and international complica-



tions of which have often gone beyond those narrow boundaries where those problems started.

The stability and prosperity of the Islamic world, which constitutes a huge block of land where about 27 percent of the world's population lives, and which has abundant resources, must mean a lot to the world. That is why I think that part of the American-Islamic dialogue must be directed to finding means of easing the tension in those hotbeds and helping Muslim countries, the preservation of whose national integration represents a corner-stone in regional stability in more than one place, especially since the United States had in the last few years either entered or got near to the core of the most complicated developments in them.

Honorable Audience,

In its dialogue with the United States, the Islamic world is aware that it is a dialogue of a special kind, conducted with one of the international actors who is most involved in its problems throughout more than half a century. This dialogue expands to include tens of issues such as regional conflicts, the transfer of technology, enhancing democracy, free trade, economic reforms, upgrading education, the war against terrorism, work for the freedom of information and other questions which have become so many that they knit the Muslims and the Americans in a strong fabric that cannot be easily broken for years to come.

I think that the United States, from which symbols of economics, thought and politics have come to this dialogue, and with whom we are proud to deliberate, has on its part realized that its dialogue with the Islamic world is a special addition. After having seemed to be during the cold war years as an arena for international competition and world conflict, the Islamic world has come to look with its aspirations and problems and its history and future, as a partner with who dialogue is indispensable at a time when the United States is looking very attentively into the future.

The need of both parties for each other places on the Qatar-Brookings project, which was formed last year as a sponsor of a permanent American-Islamic dialogue, the responsibility of enhancing this dialogue and coming up with practicable recommendations that boost the seriousness of both parties to work together, a responsibility for which I wish success, as I also wish your conference every success.

May the peace, the mercy and blessings of God be upon you.



Failure to pursue active engagement only serves to fortify the prophecies of soothsayers of impending doom. It is also a wanton dereliction of moral responsibility to our future generations.



Anwar Ibrahim

Former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia



I don't claim to have much expertise on this issue of elections, although I come from a country, Malaysia, where they have had elections from the time of independence, but I'm not too sure whether it's at all free or fair.

My former second boss, the former deputy prime minister, is also here. I'm not sure whether he concurs with me on that, but certainly it is a long way to go before we can conduct free and fair elections.

The winds of change from autocracy to democracy have been blowing across various parts of the Muslim world for some time now. The Iraq war, though still mired in controversy, has yielded the country's first democratic elections.

In this regard, I must say that, though I remain opposed to the war in principle, I must concede that the voices of freedom in Iraq are finding expression after decades of oppression and being forced into silence. I dare say that given half a chance, Muslim societies, not just in Iraq, but throughout the world, will seize the opportunity to enjoy democracy.

But a major concern in our deliberations is whether the mere phenomenon of elections means that democracy is being practiced the way it is being preached or are there still certain fundamental issues yet to be resolved?

I think it is obvious that among the first will be that elections must be free, fair, and transparent. Free, as in free from interference from all extraneous factors in the determination of the electoral process. Candidates, of course, have to be elected and those elected must be the choice of their own electorate. And this would include equal access to a free media, open debates, and the conduct of elections that can stand up to international scrutiny.

It is not enough just to have civil liberties guaranteed in a document, which represents the seal of the people's will. The other basic institutions of a civil society must be in place.

Therefore, elections have to be seen as a process toward the establishment of a meaningful democracy. There must be an independent judiciary that will function as an effective check and balance against the powers of the executive and the legislative branches of government.

Essentially, the judiciary must be the bulwark of fundamental liberties. Complementing this, the position of the state prosecutor should be protected by constitutional guarantees.

You can see my penchant for the rule of law and the rule of the prosecutor is probably more profound than yours after being given a long vacation for six years. But that is relatively short.

When I met Mandela, two months back in Johannesburg, he was, of course, very concerned, very sympathetic, and felt bad about the way I was treated. But I told him that we have an unfinished agenda, and mine was a short walk to freedom. The long walk is towards democracy.

The argument that encouraging democracy in the Muslim world would only create instability is, therefore, clearly untenable. Already significant progress has been made in the area of civil liberties and I see in Qatar's new constitution, for example. And undoubtedly the Doha Declaration for Democracy and Reform



resonates well for the prospects of political reform in the region. But I believe that a vibrant democracy needs a vibrant opposition. The Pandora's Box syndrome that is being raised runs counter to the fostering of a true democracy.

Civil liberties entrenched in the constitution become pious platitudes when the voices of dissent are not allowed to be heard. This forum could not have come at a more opportune time and I pray it will pave the way for more concrete and direct ways of engagement. None of us from the Muslim world can honestly say that America has not left a lasting imprint on us. Conversely, America will be equally dishonest if it fails to acknowledge the vast impact made by the Muslim world.

It is true that recent events have widened the chasm—all the more reason then to heed the call for dialogue and active engagement. Why can't we give more due to the ties that bind us rather than those which separate us? Why then should we lend our ears to those who continue to beat the drums of discord? But Muslims are prone to pride themselves as being the followers of a religion where the principles of justice equality, fair dealing, and tolerance are paramount. I hear this ad nauseam, in all forums that Muslim leaders, Muslim scholars articulate these issues convincingly, yet between the idea and the reality falls the shadow.

The reality is that the contradictions are shockingly glaring, for isn't it true that Muslim leaders are among the greatest perpetrators of injustice. Can we in all honesty deny that Muslim regimes are, in fact, among the most blatant violators of human rights and that their leaders have the dubious distinction of being the most corrupt and having the most tenacious grip on power?

And when confronted with these issues, these same self-made leaders are not adverse to citing, chapter and verses from the Qur'an, to justify why changes can only be brought about gradually; that Muslim societies can only take democracy in small doses, and that freedom will bring about anarchy. And with the war on terror, it is indeed ironic and even tragic for the cause of democracy that these regimes are allowed to persist in their errant ways with impunity.

Allow me to elaborate. It is said that the underlying causes of the current progress of political reform in the Muslim world is to be found in the aggressive foreign policy initiatives embarked upon by the Bush administration.

I'm not going to be engrossed in the liberals' and the neocons' debate. And I think other than the engagement between Muslims and the United States, there should also be a proposal that we organize a conference in Washington about engagement among the liberals and the neocons.

This is the policy that was launched following the tragic events of 9/11, a policy marked by a so-called forward strategy of freedom. To my mind, while it cannot be denied that the pro-reform initiatives under this policy have indeed contributed positively to current developments, sometimes the rhetoric may be more convincing than the reality. For certain countries, this policy is marked by what I would characterize as a strategy of selective ambivalence.

In reality, this strategy of selective ambivalence means constructively aiding certain countries to resist the type of reform by a process of omission rather than commission. Prompted, no doubt, by the dictates of expediency, this policy has



meant turning a blind eye to blatant human rights violations and other kinds of abuses which clearly fly in the face of this forward strategy of freedom. In return for this support to the United States in the war against terror, these countries are conferred the status of strategic partners.

To my mind, this is a case of conditionality working backwards. It is a case of allowing repressive regimes to don the cloak of legitimacy simply because they raise the specter of terror.

Indonesia, the largest Muslim nation in the world, stands out as the single most significant political development in the history of democracy in modern times. Unfortunately, this is not being highlighted. We gloat and pride ourselves over the success of the elections in Iraq and Palestine.

When the East Asian financial crisis broke out, Indonesia underwent a major socio-political upheaval, and I was sent to jail. But Indonesia emerged from the storm and evolved itself into a new emerging nation. In place of oppression and dictatorship, Indonesia is now secure by freedom and democracy. The press there is free, and the fairness in the conduct of elections is unsurpassed. Florida is now a province of Indonesia.

The phenomenal changes brought about through Reformasi should provide an enduring lesson on peaceful transition from autocracy to democracy. But if we go beyond the rhetoric, it would not be as an exaggeration to say that for the last two centuries, the Islamic world has been dazzled by the wealth, power, and the technological prowess of the West.

Under the bondage of colonialism, Muslim nations developed a deep-rooted sense of self-resentment and inferiority and the natural upshot was an almost total erosion of confidence in their own traditions. Confronted with centuries of traditional thinking and submissiveness to the past, [inaudible] arguably the foremost contemporary Arab ... denies his roots in the following verses: "My gospel is rejection and my map a land without a creator."

The point is that it is just as reckless for the Muslim world to generalize that Americans are the best example of a morally depraved nation as it is for America to label the Muslim world a civilization full of menacing fundamentalists.

We must also learn to break free from the anxiety of historical influence and not succumb to the lure of [inaudible] and [inaudible] chanting wherever they may issue from in whatever shape or form.

Ladies and gentlemen, the challenge before us is enormous. And I believe the dialogue and the discourse are essential. It is not going to resolve matters fast. But it will certainly generate a lot of interest and resonate among the population, Muslims in particular, on the assumption that the media in Muslim countries and societies are free.

We know that the war in Iraq rages on with increasing ferocity. Suicide bombers continue to blow themselves up, murdering innocent people. Just three weeks ago, this nation was the victim of such an outrage. As for America, to many in the Muslim and the Arab worlds, it still carries the tag of arrogant power and Machiavellian machinations. To merely dismiss this, as a manifestation of hatred

of modernity or envy of technological progress is to miss the point entirely.

That there should be a war against terror is not in dispute. But this military war must be subsumed under a war of ideas. To my mind, the issues of modernity and democracy, fundamentalism and autocracy, will loom large across the battle horizon.

Even as America has not understood Islam, Muslims have also failed to grasp the spirit of America. Where are the Muslim de Tocquevilles? America has countless centers for Christian and Muslim understanding. Can we say the same about Muslim countries? Why is the Muslim world so reluctant to reach out and learn more about the Christian and the Jewish faiths?

I believe that active engagement, through sustained dialogue, will not only help us erase our mutual prejudices, born of ignorance, but will also help us to rediscover this universal dignity and common humanity hidden by deep seated fear and distrust.

Failure to pursue active engagement only serves to fortify the prophecies of soothsayers of impending doom. It is also a wanton dereliction of moral responsibility to our future generations.

In the words of Robert Penn Warren: "We shall come back no doubt to walk down the road, but that will be a long time from now. And soon we shall go out of the house and go into the convulsion of the world, out of history, into history, and the awful responsibility of time."

Thank you.





I have to say that in terms of what we've just heard here, I think that it is critical to point out that there has been an evolution in American policy, and it's clear, and that the evolution was given an accelerating boost from the events of 9/11.

Scott Carpenter
*Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Democracy,
 Human Rights and Labor*



Before I came here, I was in Beirut where I spent about five days talking with folks there about their aspirations for an election to take place there before the end of May when they're required constitutionally. And what I was struck by was that the people in Lebanon are not going to wait for the United States, they're not going to wait for any external power to push them forward in their desire and drive for democracy.

They want to see elections take place there. And it's the responsibility and requirement of the international community, including the United States, to help them achieve and realize their own aspirations.

I landed in Washington and was asked to turn around and come out here to have the opportunity to share a bit about the President's agenda for the region.

This was not expected. Assistant Secretary David Welch was supposed to be here. And I'm privileged to be filling in for him.

But this was something that I needed to explain to my seven-year-old son. So my wife said, "Well, honey he's going off to give a speech." And my seven-year-old son said, "Like the 'I Have A Dream Speech' of Dr. Martin Luther King."

And I hadn't thought of that, but in a way I am echoing an "I Have A Dream Speech" of the President, which is that he has a dream that there would be freedom throughout the entire world and that opportunities would be given to every one to be able to express their views in a free way, free of oppression, free of repression.

And that's what it is that I think we're talking about.

I have to say that in terms of what we've just heard here, I think that it is critical to point out that there has been an evolution in American policy, and it's clear, and that the evolution was given an accelerating boost from the events of 9/11.

The President recently has been very clear that in the past our policy as Americans was mistaken, that we were prepared to tolerate, look the other way, this selective ambivalence that Mr. Ibrahim mentioned as a way of preserving stability in the region.

We wanted certain things, and provided we got them, we were prepared to accept the fact that the governments in the region would have free reign in their own countries.

We have now changed that policy. And we recognize that we have a credibility gap, because in the past our policies have been expressed in such a way as to create the sense that we're not serious.

When I was in, for instance, Lebanon, what I heard from the Lebanese was, "You know, we're hearing from you the same thing today that many Shiites heard in 1991 after the first Gulf War. Are you going to be there for us?"

And as I travel around the region in places like Cairo and Tunis, I hear the same things, "You're talking a good game, but is the United States going to be there for us?"

And I think the answer resoundingly is yes.

How? I think that what we have done is we have made clear to our partners in the regions, and they're partners—these are not enemies—we're working with governments, we're working with civil society across the region. And our message is that we want to help support change, managing a very difficult transition from



a more autocratic form of government to a more democratic form of government.

This is not something that will take place overnight. It will not be easy. It will not be linear. There will be forward steps and there will be backward steps. But we are committed to this.

And the governments in the region have found this also difficult to understand, difficult to hear. Their reactions have been trying to figure out what the United States wants now. Should we reach out to Israel? Will that help them get off our backs on this political reform issue? Should we help in Iraq? Will that get them off of our backs on this reform issue? Should we continue to help in the peace process?

And our answer to the governments in the region these days is, look, all of those things are important and all of those things are in your best interest. That's what we believe. But we also believe that it's critical that political reform begin and it begin now.

Now the point about elections, I think Ambassador Holbrooke mentioned this last night, a very important point. Elections are not the be-all and end-all of democracy. They are not.

Institutions have to also be there. There has to be rule of law. There have to be institutions that can check and limit one another. You cannot have—I think Saad Eddin in today's task force session mentioned the fact that you cannot have one person in power for 20 years with no votes. As opposed to the concept of one person one vote one time, you have somebody there for 20 years.

There have to be credible checks on executive power.

All of that said though, we can't wait for all of those institutions to be perfect before democracy comes and before elections come. The question of why are elections taking place in the Arab Middle East, I think we have to be honest with ourselves.

If you look at the elections in Iraq, they happened because the regime was toppled and the Iraqis have been given the space by the international community to express their will.

Those elections were very difficult. They were challenging, but Iraqis risked their lives to go to the polls and demonstrate to the rest of the Arab world that elections were possible.

And what's increasingly happening around the region is people are asking themselves, thanks to *al-Jazeera* and others, why not here? Why not here?

And so, the answer to the question, why not here, has to come from within the region. No question about that.

But we, the United States, played a critical part in creating the status quo. So we cannot sit back now and pretend like we had nothing to do with it.

We have to put our arms around the leaders that we have coddled, and we have to be able to say to them, change is in the air, change has to come, and we want to help you do it.

We're recognizing that this is something that will take some time. When we say reform, we really don't mean regime change every time we utter the "R" word, that the United States can be a credible partner both with the governments of the region, but also with civil society.



Now one of the major questions about this policy, and it's been raised in the task force meeting, and I think it will continue to be the leitmotif for our discussions over the rest of the afternoon and tomorrow, is, is the United States, are the governments of the West prepared to accept the consequences of democracy?

Which is to say, are we prepared to accept the fact that all members of every society will be able to participate in free and fair democratic elections?

And the answer to that question is, yes, we are prepared to accept the implications of this. We have to work out the modalities. And again, we're not talking about overnight change. But we have to be inherently, internally consistent and coherent about our policy.

When the President talks about the ability of everyone to express their views in the media or through the ballot box, he's talking about everyone, not some subsection of people.

I brought up here as a prop, and I hate to use that word, but here it is. This is the Arab Human Development Report of 2004, which, thanks to this trip, I had plenty of time on the airplane to read.

And what's critical about this report is that peoples of the region are recognizing that their own states or what they refer to as a black hole, the executive is sucking everything into it and needs to change.

They are expressing a way forward. They expressed three scenarios in this. They express a scenario which they say is the worst case scenario. The worst case scenario is the status quo and to that the United States says, "we agree."

A recent term in the neocon world back home has been expressed, characterizing the United States policy as constructive instability. Perhaps that's true.

The second scenario they paint is one of the ideal scenario in which the people of the region reform themselves. Somehow Mubarak wakes up tomorrow and says, "you know, I know what I need to do. I need to have free and fair elections. I really have to have an open and competitive space. I need to lift the emergency laws, revise the NGO law. I need to do all of these things because I want democracy in my country because it's best for my people."

And somehow that is going to come. There is no first mover here. It's just an ideal. They say it's an ideal scenario.

The third and most likely they say is this will be a partnership of external actors and the peoples themselves.

That is their view. I believe that that is our view as well, is that change will come, democracy will come. There is an irreversible process underway.

In my own view, the end of the Cold War and the winds that were blowing throughout the region, through most of the world, have finally reached the Arab Middle East.

And rhetoric is important. We heard in the Task Force meeting this morning that increasingly the governments of the region are adopting the language of reform, or stealing it in a way, misappropriating it from civil society.

To that I say, "It's important though. Rhetoric is important."

The international community and the peoples themselves need to keep their



governments accountable to the rhetoric.

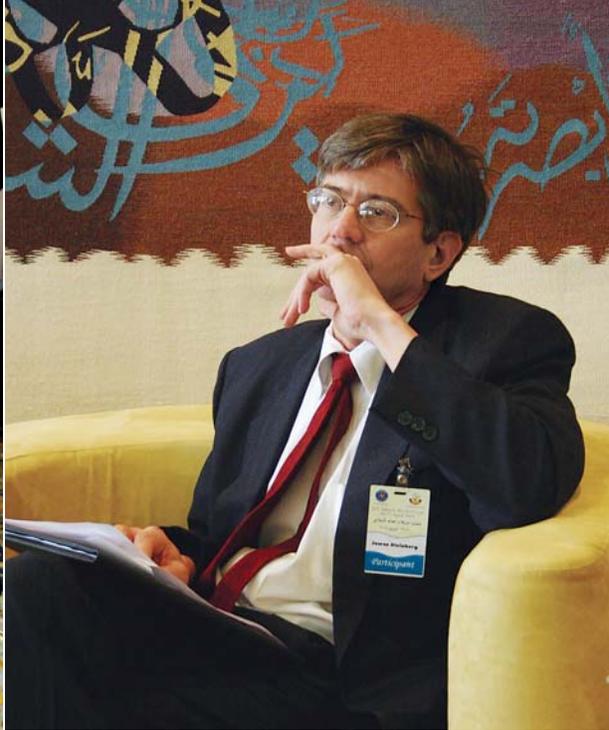
So while we hope to see free and fair elections across the Arab Middle East as soon as possible, we recognize that this is a challenge, and this is something for Arabs themselves and the Muslim world to inculcate.

What I do believe, though, is that the change is coming and that the United States can be a partner. And we're eager to listen to how best we can help and support the process.

And so with that, I'll close.

Thank you very much.









I think if the West, if the United States would deal with this force of moderation, percolating out there in North Africa, in Central Asia, in East Asia, in Southeast Asia, I think we will come up with something new, something that would be valuable, something that would be useful for all of us facing modernity together.



The first question always occurs, and I get asked this question often in western capitals, including Washington and other European cities. What we have seen in recent months, the election in Palestine, the election in Iraq, the elections idea in Saudi, the uprising in Lebanon, the attempts and protests in Egypt, are these the beginning of a spring of freedom? Or could it be one of those desert mirages that the Middle East is known for?

The State of U.S.–Islamic World Relations



Roundtable Summary

CHAIRMAN STEINBERG:

Thank you very much Martin, and let me join Martin in welcoming all the distinguished guests and participants on behalf of the Saban Center and the Brookings Institution to this very important meeting that we're going to be having over the next several days. I want to express special thanks along with Martin to Your Highness Sheikh Hamad for both setting an excellent tone for our discussions in your opening address, and for the generosity and support that you and your government have given us in making this meeting and a whole series of very important activities possible, and we look forward to our continued collaboration in the years ahead.

Our annual gathering gives us an opportunity to take stock of relations between the United States and countries and the peoples of the Islamic world, to assess the trends and developments since our last meeting, and to explore both opportunities and dangers that face us in the years ahead.

It's very appropriate that we begin our discussions with the first panel, "The State of U.S-Islamic World Relations," by a diagnosis of the health of these relationships because without understanding where we are, it will be impossible to make prescriptions about what needs to be done on all sides. This is particularly true during periods of great flux, as we are experiencing throughout the Islamic world and in the United States as well.

A great deal has happened since we met last time, a time then when U.S.-Muslim world relations were deeply troubled following the U.S. intervention in Iraq and the stalemate between Israelis and Palestinians, the issues that dominated our discussions last year. The events of this past year are well known to all of us here, but I want to take just a minute before we turn to our panel to help frame our discussion this evening.

In the United States since we last met we have seen the reelection of President Bush and a reshuffling of his cabinet. While most of the names are familiar and the same, the realignment of positions may foretell some changes in the U.S. approach if not our goals.

President Bush began his second term with a powerful call in his inaugural address for democratic change around the world, linking America's security to in his words, "the success of liberty in other lands," in announcing that it is the policy of the United States to seek and support the growth of democratic movements and institutions in every nation and culture with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world. He also said that success in our relations with other governments require the decent treatment of their own people.

In his State of the Union address, President Bush singled out two of the United States' most important friends in the Islamic world, Egypt and Saudi Arabia, as countries that, in his words, "should demonstrate leadership by expanding the role of its people in determining their future and showing the way toward democracy in the Middle East."

CHAIRMAN

JAMES STEINBERG
Vice President and Director
of Foreign Policy Studies,
Brookings Institution;
former Deputy National
Security Advisor

OPENING SPEAKERS

SAAD EDDIN IBRAHIM
Chairman, Ibn Khaldun Center
for Development Studies

SHIBLEY TELHAMI

Professor, University of
Maryland; Senior Fellow,
Saban Center for
Middle East Policy at the
Brookings Institution

SADIG AL-MAHDI

President, National Umma
Party; former Prime Minister
of Sudan



The new U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice began her tenure with a goodwill trip that included a short trip to the Middle East, and followed that with a trip to Asia that included visits to India and Pakistan.

In an intriguing signal that the administration has grown increasingly sensitive to negative perceptions of the United States globally, and particularly in the Islamic world, the President chose his close confidante Karen Hughes to join the State Department as under secretary of state for public diplomacy.

At the same time, he chose the architect of the U.S. intervention in Iraq, Paul Wolfowitz, to head the World Bank, an organization that plays a critical role in so many of the countries represented here today. Paul, as I'm sure you know, served as the U.S. Ambassador to Indonesia and therefore has had his own very direct experiences with some of the challenges in a relationship between the United States and the Islamic world and has spoken out repeatedly about the importance of U.S. support for, what he terms, "moderate Islamic countries."

The sense of U.S. global isolation has been lessened in recent months by at least a temporary rapprochement between the United States and Europe on a symbolic level by the President's trip to Europe, and perhaps on a substantive one by a greater convergence at least on the tactical level between the United States and Europe over how to address Iran's nuclear program.

At home and abroad there remains considerable controversy about how the administration has handled the war on terror particularly in its civil liberties dimensions. The Supreme Court has already questioned aspects of the handling of terrorist suspects in the United States, and the reauthorization of parts of the Patriot Act have attracted criticism from both right and left. The resolution of these issues and others such as U.S. visa policies could have an important impact on the U.S. image abroad in the years to come.

We're fortunate tonight in having with us Shibley Telhami, our colleague at Brookings, and one of the leading U.S. experts on perceptions of the United States in the Islamic world, to help us interpret how these developments have affected perceptions abroad and what we might expect in the future.

Events in the Islamic world have been equally dramatic and, of course, are well known to all of us. In Iraq, after a difficult and turbulent period under the CPA, Iraqis held their first election demonstrating a strong commitment in the face of violent threats to seize their own destiny. But important segments of Iraqi society did not participate, and the difficult challenges of building a sustainable government and effective security forces have only just begun.

Although some have speculated that the administration might seek an early exit for U.S. forces following the Iraqi election, there is little sign yet that that is going to happen which means that the United States is going to be deeply involved in Iraq for some time to come.

The elections in Iraq of course followed the elections last October in Afghanistan with wide participation throughout that country. Palestinians too have elected a new leader who is now welcome in the White House after a period of



freeze. But the future of the peace process remains a source of deep contention even as we meet tonight on the eve of Prime Minister Sharon's visit to Crawford, Texas.

Local elections have been held in Saudi Arabia and political reforms announced in Egypt, but questions remain about the depth and the extent of the commitment to change. Lebanese citizens have taken to the streets to protest outside interference in their political affairs, and the tide of discontent has reached even remote Kyrgyzstan where the government was toppled following flawed elections.

The debate has already begun as to what influence, if any, U.S. policy has played in triggering these developments and to what extent they might alter perceptions of the United States in the Islamic world. We are fortunate tonight to have two influential voices well known to all of you, Saad Eddin Ibrahim, and former Prime Minister Sadig al-Mahdi who will share their perceptions of what is taking place and how these developments may influence attitudes toward and relations with the United States.

We look forward to our panelists' thoughts which will help set the stage for a very productive set of discussions over the next three days, and I'd like to invite Saad Ibrahim to begin our talks.

MR. IBRAHIM:

Good evening. Thank you for hosting this meeting.

What many of my American colleagues probably do not realize is that you have hosted similar meetings. And I want to note especially that a year ago, a year and a week ago exactly, Your Highness was here, along with guests of the State of Qatar, Arab democrats. We dreamt last year, and we put out dreams in a declaration called [inaudible] declaration. We never thought at the time that events were looking as clear and progressing at the speed they did.

So when the history of this transformation is written, Your Highness, your own words in the opening last year around this time, will always resonate as an early, as an early omen, good omen, for things to come. Things came and will continue to come. And I hope Qatar will always remain the lighthouse for this reason.

Ladies and gentlemen, my colleagues outlined some of the recent developments. And they're all known to you. What I'd like to do in my 10 minute intervention is to answer 3 questions.

The first question always occurs, and I get asked this question often in western capitals, including Washington and other European cities. What we have seen in recent months, the election in Palestine, the election in Iraq, the elections idea in Saudi Arabia, the uprising in Lebanon, the attempts and protests in Egypt, are these the beginning of a spring of freedom? Or could it be one of those desert mirages that the Middle East is known for?

The question that I'd like to ask your indulgence on, I'll answer it during my intervention. But let me say whether it will become a mirage, whether it will turn out to be a mirage or a spring will depend on three things that we have to address here and in the relations between the United States and the Muslim world.

The first question has to do with the outworn proposition about Islam and



democracy. And let me assert that today out of the 1.4 billion Muslims in the world, two-thirds are living under democratically elected governments. Two-thirds of the Muslims in the world today are living in democratically elected governments. The statistics—that is hardly cited in western capitals. And they keep reiterating the question mark about Islam and democracy.

Do these two-thirds of Muslims who are living under democratically elected governments, is it western-administered democracy, is it an ideal democracy? No, it's not. But it is better than anything that we have had before and hopefully it will continue to improve.

Therefore, that question has to rest for much of the Muslim world.

However, there is part of the Muslim world and I'm sorry to say, it is the Arab part of the Muslim world that is still battling. And the development that we have seen in the last four months tells us that something is happening.

However, for it to materialize, I say that we have to ask ourselves, are there enough democratic forces in the Arab world to be able to take over from dictatorial, autocratic regimes? That is the question we have to deal with in the next two days.

And I have my own assessment of that. But let me move on to the second challenge, which is related. And the second challenge is, what is the role of Islamic forces, those so-called Islamists who use Islam as part of their political agenda? What is their place in any democratic government?

And this is the challenge that we all have to face frankly, candidly, and we have to draw the attention of our western colleagues to deal with it open mindedly. We have three or four important political Islamic forces in the region.

One of them is Hizballah in Lebanon. Another is Hamas in Palestine. A third is the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt. And unless the West comes to grips with these Islamic forces, any talk about the future of democracy will remain a big question mark.

And again, I have my own assessment. And I'm calling for full inclusion of everybody who accepts the role of democracy whether it is Hamas, whether it's Hizballah, whether it's the Muslim Brotherhood, or any other Islamic group so long as they pledge respect for the democratic game.

The third question, and that's my conclusion, is the role of the United States and other western democracies. Therefore, I want to hear from my American colleagues in this dialogue, and here I say we need to get rid, we need from our American colleagues to get rid of the stereotypes and the out-worn [inaudible] disposition and to be open-minded about the future and to give us full respect and dignity and reciprocity in dealing with us.

And therefore, whether it is a scarab, it is a mirage, or a freedom spring, freedom will depend on how we deal with these three challenges.

And I say there is a good opportunity that we can do so successfully. And I hope that this dialogue will continue to bring us closer to resolving the three challenges successfully.

And my last words, I assure you that it is not a mirage, but is it a full-fledged spring? I'm not sure. But definitely the old long cold winter of autocracy and dictatorship is coming to an end.



That I feel in my bones. Three years ago I was in a cell, in a prison cell, and my colleague Mr. Anwar was also in a prison cell. But here we are today. We are free. And I think the spring is here. And I hope you can help us make it true.

Thank you.

MR. TELHAMI:

If you look at the immediate theory after 9/11, it was clear that our leaders in the United States, including President Bush, congressional leaders, both Democratic and Republican, as well as Arab and Muslim leaders, took it as a very quick position that what we were witnessing was not a clash of civilization, that al-Qa'ida did not represent Islam, that we both had to work hard to make sure that neither society interprets that clash as a clash of civilizations.

If you look at that early period, and the discourse in the Arab and Muslim countries, as well as in the United States, you would be struck by the extent to which leaders did emphasize this point.

And yet, over the following months, we did have a public discourse and a public perception that moved increasingly into seeing the conflict as a clash of civilization.

We have seen that in the nature of the conversations and the debates in parts of the United States and part of the Muslim countries. And we certainly have seen it in the evolution of public opinion in both the United States and Arab countries.

In public opinion polls in the United States, increasingly a larger number of Americans began to believe that Islam is part of the problem; it's not just al-Qa'ida. And in the Arab world, increasingly Arabs and really in other parts of the Muslim world, began to believe that the United States was specifically targeting Muslims.

In fact, in my surveys in the Arab world with Zogby International, we found that the elevation of this attributed intent of the United States, that is that the United States really is seeking to weaken the Muslim world, became the equal—in the thinking of the public—with the protection of oil and helping Israel in the minds of many people.

And we also found in those surveys that there has been a collapse of trust in the United States.

If you look actually over the period of the last four years, if you look at the evolution of Arab public opinion toward the United States, what is very important in that evolution is not so much that people oppose the United States and have a negative view of the United States. We have had that in the past, but if you polled people in 2000 as some people did in the United States, you found that many people in the Arab and Muslim countries expressed confidence in the United States even as they opposed the United States.

What we have seen in the past four years is a collapse of trust in the intentions of the United States.

In fact, when we asked people, do you believe that the United States is trying to spread democracy in the Middle East, a majority of people *say*, no.

They didn't believe really that that's what we're trying to do no matter what



we say. There has been no faith in our stated intentions regarding our policy toward the Middle East.

More importantly, I think, one can also argue there has been a rise of a nationalist Islamic sentiment in Arab countries that is juxtaposed with a sense that the United States is aiming to weaken Muslims. In part we see that.

As I asked in my surveys a question pertaining to the extent to which people identify themselves as Muslim first or Arab first or Egyptian first or Jordanian first. And we found over the past two years, the elevation of the importance of the Islamic identity.

But we also found that that elevation of Islamic identity is a manifestation of a nationalist sentiment, not so much a religious rise, and certainly not a support for bin Ladenism.

In fact, juxtaposed to that, we found that you had an increase in the number of people who seemed to want to see women work outside the house. When you asked them questions on social issues, the majority of Arabs in every country that we tested said, they want women to work outside the house.

This is not the Taliban's world that people envision.

Moreover, when we asked them about leaders that they admire most around the world, it is interesting to see that the most mentioned leaders are historic figures or current figures that are secular.

Nasser is still the most popular man in some Arab countries.

Jacques Chirac is the second most popular man in the Arab world. And both of these can be understood as essentially anti-imperialist, anti-western, anti-U.S. sentiment as juxtaposed to that.

So we have in a way a manifestation of something in the Arab world that captures the rise of Islamic nationalism that is in the minds of the public related to American foreign policy.

What we have seen in the past few months is a reduction in the tension and a beginning of a redefinition of that relationship.

Now let me say what the events are and then make a little bit of an assessment of whether this is a temporary change or whether there is a real profound change in the view of each other.

First, there has been the reduction in the tension on the Arab-Israeli issue that has certainly helped reduce the tension between the United States and Arab and Muslim countries.

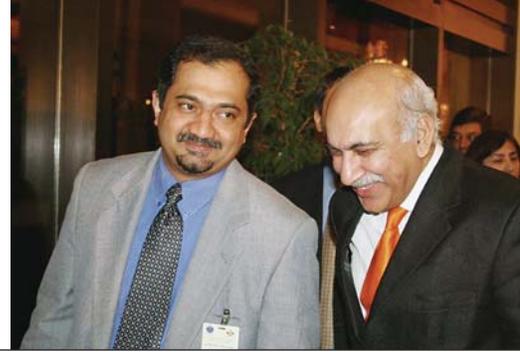
Second, the election in Iraq, which has somewhat shifted the debate away from the U.S. presence in Iraq at the moment.

And third, there has been a focus of the discourse and the debates on the issue of democracy in the Arab world, which again, has shifted the debate away from the broader American foreign policy.

The real question is, how are these issues likely to evolve in the coming months and years in a way that would affect the relationship between the United States and the Muslim world?

Let me go over these one by one by asking questions.





First, the Arab-Israeli issue, most certainly the Arab-Israeli issue is not the core of the problem that the Middle East faces, certainly not on the issue of the reform, economic development, social issues that have to be addressed regardless of the Arab-Israeli issue.

But I firmly believe that the Arab-Israeli issue is the prism through which Arabs and many Muslims see the United States, that is what I call the prism of pain. It is the prism through which Arabs and many Muslims evaluate American foreign policy. And it is impossible in my judgment, to envision a strongly positive relationship between the United States and Arab and Muslim countries without progress on this issue.

Certainly, it's impossible while that issue is—you have an active conflict on that issue. And the question is whether we have now a profound change that makes us believe that a solution is on the way.

And I would like just to say that I'm uncertain at the moment. There are questions whether what we see in terms of Palestinian-Israeli cooperation, American active diplomacy and other parties in the Arab world and Europe cooperating in that process, whether that is a short-term overlap of interest at least through the Israeli withdrawal from Gaza, or whether it is a profound change that ushers a new era of peace between the two parties.

I have a fear deep down that there is a huge gap of expectations between what the Palestinians and Arabs expect the process to lead to in the foreseeable future and what the Israelis expect the process to lead to. That is the Palestinians and, I think, most Arabs expect a final settlement in a relatively short order, and I think the Israelis expect more of a transitional settlement and a postponement of final settlement issues.

That gap of expectations could be troublesome down the road, not only for the Arab-Israeli issue, but also for American relations with Arab and Muslims countries.

And I raise that only as a question, because certainly this is one that we will be discussing in the coming days.

Clearly, the Iraq issue remains uncertain. We all know the extent to which the situation in Iraq remains in flux and the extent to which we do not know whether there will be stability or not.

And certainly, any outcome in Iraq that doesn't address in the end American presence or even if you have stability that does not address the interest of the Arab Sunnis in Iraq, that is going to lead to trouble in the relationship between the United States and Arab and Muslim countries.

In Arab public opinion at least, there is still skepticism about the extent to which the United States means what it says about the advocacy of democracy. And clearly, the record historically has been not very helpful in that regard, particularly when we've seen episodes of advocacy that were reversed in the past.

But I think many people believe that this is a little bit different and this is a question that we have to ask a question about, namely, what makes this advocacy of the United States different from previous times? And I think that is the issue that we have to address.

And let me broach two things that I think are consequential. First, there has been an indirect benefit and perhaps some unexpected benefit in the highlighting of the issue of democracy in the American discourse, in the public discourse in the United States, but also in the region. It has overshadowed the clash of civilization argument in America. Don't underestimate that.

The many people, particularly on the right, who are supporting the Bush administration policy and supporting the war in Iraq and people on the right who are in essence framing the relations with Arab and Muslim countries in a clash of civilization terms, suddenly are framing the Arab world as a normal part of the world, framing the problem as authoritarianism, not Islam and not Arab culture, framing the Arabs as like anybody else. We're talking of an Arab spring, of a Lebanon spring, of a Cairo spring.

That is a talk not of a clash of civilizations. And for now, it has had the helpful benefit of overshadowing the clash of civilization argument. It's a short-term but a very important kind of a change in the discourse in America that I've been noticing. And I think ultimately it could be very important.

But there are people even in America who are not sure whether the administration means what it says about democracy, including some who accused the administration of essentially trying to divert attention from the Iraq issue by seeing benefits in democracy, which obviously was not the primary reason why the administration went to war in Iraq.

But there is, I think, an important change in our public discourse in the United States about democracy. More and more people believe that the spread of democracy is connected with national security, that the more democracy you have the less terrorism you have, that 9/11 is in part a function of the absence of democracy.

There is that belief among our political elites. That's helpful in the short term in elevating the issue of democracy to a top priority.

And it is helpful because in a way governments become hostage to what they say, so they have to follow through with it. The public tests them on what they can accomplish. And they have to show something in that regard.

But it is also problematic, because if you frame it in instrumental terms and then you turn out to be wrong, you are going to have the same reversal that you've had in the past, and the consequences will be high.

And I am not persuaded—nobody has proven analytically that there is a direct connection in the short and intermediate term between democracy and terrorism.

And I think analysts are divided. There are some who believe it, some who don't. What happens if it turns out we have more violence in the coming months or we have Iraq descending into civil war or trouble in Lebanon? Will we have the same faith in the advocacy of democracy?

I'll leave that as a question for us to discuss in the next three days.

Thank you very much.





MR. AL-MAHDI:

I salute Qatar for becoming a virtual caller now to wake up in many ways and also the Brookings Institution for being a bastion of intellectual curiosity.

I think the issue we're invited to address is of vital importance to both sides. By way of analysis and prescription, I am going to navigate with you over five points.

The first point is the observation that today U.S. policy in much of the Arab and Muslim world is demonized. Why? I think there are three basic factors. One, that the policies are perceived as unilateral and exploitative; two, as being supportive of regional force; three, as being allied to national tyrants.

The perceptions have been articulated by activist, extremist forces in the region who have been helped along by three factors, the successful Afghan jihad experience, the globalization techniques which made it possible for finances to be transferred and information to be communicated, thirdly, the lack of viable alternative advocates. The extremists found themselves perhaps the only articulate advocates for legitimate causes.

Second, the regions we live in have prepared the ground for this type of hijack for three reasons. Intellectual and cultural stagnation—which we may explain if we go through the developments that led to this stagnation—political morbidity to oppression, and the failure of modern stratagems to deliver.

The third point, the 11th of September, 2001, has been a landmark in this whole predicament. The main landmark impact is that it has made it necessary or possible to realize that the national crisis in our region will be internationalized, will be exported through terrorism and all other factors, that the targets of oppression or of this particular kind of activity will respond and even exploit it in terms of policies of world hegemony. So the stage is set for inevitable dark age-type confrontation.

My fourth point is that there is an alternative to this dark age scenario because this alternative is necessary for world peace and development. The viability of this alternative requires on the side of the United States a general positive attitude to other civilizations, the realization that world universality requires also the recognition of the legitimacy of diversity, that others in the world are subjects and not mere objects, and more specifically, that the adoption of democratic initiatives which the Bush administration has responded to through the crisis is very good news, but there are three catches.

The first catch is the possibility of it being simple public relations for antiterrorism, or that it is another form of unilateralism, or that it is simply another outsider manipulating the area. The need is for this attitude to be convincing, to be multilateral and to be owned by the insiders in a way that will make for a complementary relationship between the influences because it is also quite clear that without some type of leverage from outside, the stagnation will not be shaken.

The Forum for the Future is another step in the right direction, but it is not enough. The Forum for the Future is at this point marginalizing civil society, marginalizing democratic forces, in terms of a kind of coalition between the states and the G8. This is not enough.

In fact, there is a great deal of marginalization of an already assertive civil society in this part of the world. When Secretary of State Colin Powell visited my country, although he came following the crisis in Darfur, he saw no reason to meet with members of civil society or political parties, only confined his contacts with officials.

There is now a specific assertive program in civil society. The declaration called Second Independence, which was issued in March 2004, is a landmark and there is a need now to move from mere blessings of democratization to a specific program that would speak in terms of the constitutional reform needed for the area. As far as the national reformist strategy is concerned, we need the cultural change, which will become a cultural reformation that needs to be effected, political reform which is already being accepted by many segments of society, the Islamists, the Arabists, the liberals, even the communists, there is now a general realization of the need for reform.



There are three challenges in front of these forces to assert themselves to find viable formulae to deal with the regimes so that it is not confrontational, to find also a viable formula to deal with the expatriate international leaders.

My final and fifth point is that conferences have been very useful, but I think that conferences now have reached the end of their tether in creating the realization, mobilizing opinion, and raising expectations. What we need next for this conference is to look into mechanisms for cooperation between democratic forces and genuine civil society groups, mechanisms for cooperation between them and international forces, and what I describe as fourth-track deep plowed reform in the form of institutes, an institute for cultural reform which is necessarily and must be autonomous to the area, but an institute for social reform with three departments, political, economic, education and others.

I think we need now to move into this new area of the establishment of institutions or institutes that will produce actual stratagems for the changes coming, and I think that it is now time we move from the mobilization, the awareness raised by the conference that we have gone through to a next step, and that is how to plan the change and to realize that that change can only be effective in terms of cooperation between the assertive political and civil society, the states and the international community. Thank you.





For it's one thing to complain about a lack of attention to this problem. It's another thing, entirely, to take on responsibility for trying to help resolve it, and there are responsibilities on all parties that care about the Palestinian issue.

The Search for Peace: Third Party Roles in the Middle East Peace Process



Roundtable Summary

MODERATOR INDYK:

Sheikh Hamad has very kindly decided to join us for this session. We're very honored, Your Highness.

This is a session which is going to discuss the role of third parties in resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The reason that we decided to do this in a plenary session was because in previous times, the Palestinian issue played a very big role in our deliberations and we thought it would be best to address it in this way, in this plenary session at the beginning of our conference.

But since the last U.S.–Islamic dialogue, a lot of the heat has gone out of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as a result of a combination of a number of factors. I think the exhaustion of both sides, after 4 years of bloody conflict, with over 3,000 Palestinian deaths and over 1,000 Israeli deaths. The passing of Yassir Arafat and the election of Abu Mazen with a mandate to pursue a peaceful resolution of Palestinian grievances, and the formation, in Israel, by Prime Minister Sharon of a coalition government of the Likud and Labor Parties, that provides a stable coalition for the implementation of the disengagement from Gaza, which will take place over the next 3 to 4 months and lead to the evacuation of all of the 19 Israeli settlements in Gaza, as well as some in the northern West Bank, and the evacuation of the Israeli army and, in effect, the end of the occupation of Gaza, which should be completed by the fall of this year.

The combination of these circumstances has created a new sense of opportunity for peace making.

And with that sense of opportunity, President Bush, in his second term, has made a personal commitment to be involved in seizing this opportunity, as has his secretary of state, new Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, making her first visit to Israel and Ramallah, just after she was confirmed as secretary of state, and reiterating that she too was personally committed to seeing this process move forward.

It is, however, a fragile opportunity by the Secretary of State's own admission, and therefore, tonight, we wanted to focus on what outside parties could do to help ensure that this new moment of opportunity is not missed.

For it's one thing to complain about a lack of attention to this problem. It's another thing, entirely, to take on responsibility for trying to help resolve it, and there are responsibilities on all parties that care about the Palestinian issue.

So with that in mind, we've invited three people to speak to this question tonight.

First of all, Mohammad Dahlan, we're very grateful to him for joining us tonight, is going to give the Palestinian view of what is needed from outside parties in order to achieve a settlement of the conflict with Israel.

Mohammad Dahlan is now the minister for civil affairs in the Palestinian Authority and he therefore has responsibility, on the Palestinian side for coordinating the Gaza disengagement process.

Previously, he served as head of the Palestinian General Security Services in Gaza. He's also served for a short time as minister of interior, when Abu Mazen

HOST

H.E. HAMAD BIN JASSIM
BIN JABR AL-THANI
First Deputy Prime Minister
and Foreign Minister of the
State of Qatar

MODERATOR

MARTIN INDYK
Director, Saban Center for
Middle East Policy at the
Brookings Institution

OPENING SPEAKERS

RICHARD HOLBROOKE
Vice Chairman, Perseus LLC;
former U.S. Ambassador to
the United Nations

MOHAMMAD DAHLAN
Minister of Civil Affairs,
Palestinian Authority



was prime minister, and he has been, through all of the Oslo years, a leading figure in all of the negotiations that took place and the agreements that were struck during that time.

He will be followed by Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassim al-Thani, the foreign minister of Qatar and Qatar's first deputy prime minister, a man who has played a leadership role, on the Arab side, in promoting a resolution of the conflict. He is one of the unsung heroes of this effort. I can attest to that personally, because time and time again, in the Clinton years, when we needed help on the peace process, we could go to Sheikh Hamad, and of course His Highness, the Emir, and we could always rely on them to come forward, whether it was to host the Middle East/North Africa conferences here, in Doha, or through quiet diplomacy and secret diplomacy, to encourage the process forward, or in Qatar's support for the Palestinians and its pioneering role in normalizing relations with Israel as well.

And Sheikh Hamad will speak about the Arab role in the settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

And then we'll turn to Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, who fortunately for him, hasn't had to be involved in this part of the world, in terms of resolving it. Unfortunately, for us, because if he had been, I'm sure we would have done much better.

After all, Richard Holbrooke has a very big feather in his cap. He is the architect of the Dayton peace accords which laid the basis for resolving the Bosnian conflict, and he was also President Clinton's special representative on Kosovo.

And he has served with great distinction as America's ambassador at the United Nations as well. So he is deeply experienced in the role that the United States can play in resolving conflicts, and we thought it would be useful to draw on his experience and perspective to talk about what the United States can do in these circumstances.

So without further ado, I'll call on Mohammad Dahlan, minister of civil affairs in the Palestinian Authority to address us.

MR. DAHLAN [through interpreter]:

The role of the United States in the Arab-Israeli conflict was always the present one and the absent one, as at any time, was there hope to reach an agreement without having a third party. Even the Oslo agreement and accord which started in Norway, which started as a sponsor of such a matter, was not of a political nature until the United States came and shouldered a leading role in that. It made strenuous efforts in order to reach agreement in what is called the "Clinton parameters" and through which there were very strenuous efforts by which we have reached some understandings, and in some other parts have been postponed, until the whole situation exploded after the visit of Sharon to the al-Haram.

Then came the boycott between the United States and Israel on one hand, and President Arafat, God bless his soul. The international community did not agree that the greatest stumbling block was President Arafat, and that is why you had negative accumulations along the past years, in which we lost a lot of victims, whether they were Palestinian ones or Israeli civilians.

This hope was renewed following the democratic elections which took place



and in which our brother, Abu Mazen, has been elected as president of the Palestinian Authority. I don't want to dwell much on the political matters of brother Abu Mazen, but I will just confine myself to an item, namely his desire to go back to the peace process and to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict by peaceful ways and means.

We were not surprised with this stance which has stood firm since the very start. But I don't think that the Israeli stance on severing relations between Palestine and Israel, and postponing this process of peace was due to President Arafat. I am fully convinced that Sharon's thoughts are based on three principles, the first of which is that he will never record for himself that he will build an independent Palestinian state, and secondly, to keep the settlements in the West Bank and deepen the settlement and colonization there, and thirdly, to just confine himself to what the American administration will tell him after withdrawing from the Gaza Strip as he considered this to be an end to the peace process.

There are very serious and discouraging indices. Maybe we could be wrong. But he has not taken any action until this very moment in order to help those who always made his demand of peace, that is Abu Mazen. We started the political dialogue, and that is why I think that we need a third party, an effective and serious party, which would deal with the process of peace, with a new concept and understanding, and not an understanding which has been dealt with during the past years.

For this understanding, new understanding, it is incumbent on the American administration to decide, do they want a peace process or peace? What has taken place under the very present moment, from my own point of view, is a process of peace, a continuous process of peace which is endless, and the evidence is ample that 10 years or 12 years are being held for negotiations.

The importance of the American administration taking a decision will affect the nature of administering and bringing about solutions to this conflict. We, as well as the Israelis pay a price for this continuous process, which is an endless one since the start of 1993 until the present time.

We want an essential international intervention led by the United States, which will exert efforts to bring an international solidarity to combat terrorism and to help the process of peace.

If the whole matter is just confined to the United States, it can use all its efforts whether political, military or materialistic in order to reach what it wants, and we very much agree with that. But the whole process should be carried out with the same logic vis-à-vis the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, because administering the matter in the same pattern it has been going on during the past years, all this would mean just more bloodshed for the Palestinians, particularly since Sharon interprets every step to his own favor because he's the strongest side (and I will use the term used by the American administration given to Sharon a year ago, and we've been told that they are just explanatory/exploratory matters and has no value for the Israeli government).

But Sharon did interpret all these guarantees in his own way, and so he



expanded settlements, and he isolated Jerusalem, al-Quds, and now he's trying to apply what we call [inaudible], and he wants to bring a continuity and bring about the greatest [inaudible], and isolated from the West Bank in order not to find anything on which we can negotiate. He has taken guarantees that he has—the refugees have no right to go back to the land, their land, and that the settlements will be annexed to the Israeli land. So there is only Jerusalem or al-Quds remaining and then the whole process now is to expand the settlements of Maale Adumim and then that is why we have found after one month or five months, we did not find what we should be negotiating upon. That is why we have requested the United States give us the same guarantees, which it did present to Israel, in a way which does not jeopardize the commitment with every party. Because in negotiations of the final solution, if one Palestinian would come and would not see that Palestinian agreement has been reached, has been represented in unanimity, in one way or the other, from the Palestinian resistance factions, and due to very strenuous efforts by Abu Mazen to bring about calm to the area, no one Palestinian would be able to have a [inaudible], much less from what has been agreed in the Beirut summit and Algiers summit, is to have East Jerusalem and al-Quds as a capital for the Palestinian state according to the—and here we shall find what is being said in using, on the—finding a solution according to the UN resolutions.

Until now, I feel that the American administration has had no strategy for the management of a political process or to bring about peace between us and the Israelis. So there was a unilateral idea by Sharon to withdraw from Gaza, and this did not come as a coincidence but as a result of a controversy in the Israeli military on how they can return the political initiative to Sharon.

And so that emanated this idea. At the outset the American administration was totally against this initiative and his plan. But we, the Palestinians, and the Arabs as well, have gotten used to the pattern that any idea coming from the Israeli prime minister is to be adopted by the United States, which then starts to map out its mechanisms and use its economic and political strength to implement it.

That was a year ago, this idea of unilateral withdrawal, and now the United States has requested Israel coordinate this withdrawal with the Palestinian Authority. But the United States, the American administration, was not able to give us an answer on how it can give us guarantees and what would follow following the success if we, the Palestinians, would coordinate with the Israelis on the withdrawal from Gaza. What would be the future of peace and the peace process, if we aid in completing the withdrawal in a genuine and serious way?

At this very moment, we do not have any responses to all these matters. That is why I think that withdrawal from Gaza, from my own point of view, is a very positive matter, and it's positive because it comes unilaterally, not as a result of negotiations but withdrawing from Gaza can be the start of the process of peace, if you would provide for it these three elements.

First, it should be part of the political process or part of the vision of President Bush, or part of the road map. It should be a leap for the process of peace, with a link between the West Bank and Gaza, because you cannot live



without having a geographical link with the West Bank.

Secondly, the Israeli withdrawal should be comprehensive. [We] should be allowed to build an airport and a port, and there should be a continuity and a link between this desert part, which is not more than 360 square kilometers in which you have 1 million and 3 million Palestinians.

And finally, it should have a link with the outside world, and then the international community would reconstruct and bring back hope to the Palestinian people in order to feel the importance of this process.

The other option is that Israel would stop this peace process and close the Gaza Strip, and bring it back to be a sort of prison. This would result in a new intifada and a new struggle, and—escalation of violence. We, as Palestinians, we reject that. We do not want to have it and we will not be ambushed by Sharon in order to bring, pull our leg into it.

That is why there is Palestinian activity and an Arab activity, which aims to bring about the whole picture before the third party, which is the United States. And if the United States would like to do anything in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it can do so. This traditional lie, that Israel is the one ruling the United States, this is not true. President Clinton and Mr. Martin Indyk, when he wanted to force Netanyahu to arrive at an understanding at Wye River, although it was very difficult for Netanyahu and would bring about his downfall, he still did it, and I don't want to go into details about this matter because he did it during a long ten days.

That is why we feel that we are alone. The role of the third party is now just to work under the slogan of, "Let us wait to see what we can do." This is the slogan which I have always heard from all the representatives and officials from America a long ten years.

This is not what we should be doing. Let's see what we can do when we reach agreement, stop regressing from application, and then coverage from the third part comes out to...[inaudible]. I hope a review would be done to that on what we should be doing—what can we do and what we should be doing? And, we hope that the United States would act promptly. What brother Abu Mazen did was not dreamt of by the United States, and Israel never expected that we would stand courageously and say, "I want to take another course and another path."

Much has been done. He [Abu Mazen] did what the world was unable to do in a long three months. What we heard, and still hear now, from Israel is that he's a weak man. If he's a weak man and a partner in the process of peace, then they should extend help to him, in order to go out from this weakness. If the United States is incapable of giving, what can give strength to brother Abu Mazen? And here, by support, we mean facilities, facilities to be given to the Palestinians and to bring back the process of peace to its proper and sound venture.

And here I hope that this would be carried out very shortly, because brother Abu Mazen, and the leadership which has been elected, does not have enough time or adequate time in order to prove once more to the Palestinian people that it will be doing this or that. The Palestinian people have reached the end of the



road; they have elected brother Abu Mazen to bring hope to them and not to bring just promises. That is why now the ball is in the court of the United States and international arena, and here I mean the United States because it is the one which owns the veto, and thus either allows or deprives.

And here I'm not trying to demean the role of our people from the Islamic world or the Arab world. I hope that the traditional slogan should be changed, that what the Palestinians would accept, we will accept it. We want your intervention in our affairs.

We want the Arab countries to intervene in our matters in a positive way. But we see that this understanding and this concept means to give political strength and shoulder responsibilities, as the Arabs and Muslims do say that the Palestinians have no right to give the al-Quds issue, they should be our partners. And in the recent summit there was a decision by the leaders and heads of states and kings to bring about a new dynamism and mechanism to move the Arab initiative and the political matter, and we hope this will be carried out in an untraditional way, more successfully than it used to be in the past.

Another point: We await support for the elected Palestinian Authority from our Arab brothers and the Islamic world, which took on its shoulders the task of strengthening Palestinian institutions.

Third point: We hope that all the Arab countries and the Islamic world would foster the political participation of all the Palestinian factions, and here I direct my thanks, and the thanks of brother Abu Mazen to His Highness, the Emir, for all work he's exerting in this domain. I don't want to go into details in this matter. Then we should urge all these factions to come together—and this is what took place in Egypt, to agree on the participation and to have the support of the Arab world and the Islamic world to help these factions instead of having opposite ideas which would not be in our favor. By this, we can bring about a proper Palestinian strategy, by which we can take away any pretext from the hands of Sharon. I think he hates calmness as he hates many other things. He always likes and revives chaos and problems, because it does keep him away from historical concessions.

What we want from the United States is the slogan President Bush raised at an address. He said, "I want to see a Palestinian state living in peace, side by side with the State of Israel." We want him to map out a mechanism to apply this slogan. But leaving the slogan—just for Sharon to build more settlements—this is not reasonable.

Additionally, help from the United States is needed in rebuilding the Authority, because President Abu Mazen did inherit very damaged mechanisms and institutions. Help us in building up the infrastructure which has been damaged by the colonial occupation authorities in the past 50 years. Finally, [the United States should] guarantee and see the withdrawal from Gaza, and its reconstruction, to give a new hope to the Palestinian people.

There are two other matters. I don't want to dwell more on these matters. It pertains to the Arab and Islamic world, and their commitment with President Abu Mazen and the elected Palestinian Authority to implement their commit-



ments. These countries should contribute to reconstructing what has been damaged by the occupation authorities and the sufferings of the Palestinian people, because if not, brother Abu Mazen and the Palestinian Authority would be left as the case is now, the same way as when he was a prime minister. I believe that the key now is in the hands of the United States and the door is the Palestinian people and Israel, and the Arab world and the Islamic world can present many things in this connection, but they cannot do that unless the United States would move and start to do what is asked of it. Thank you.

AMBASSADOR INDYK:

Thank you very much, Mohammad. I'm going to turn to Sheikh Hamad now, and perhaps I could ask you, Sheikh Hamad, to start by just telling us a little bit about what happened at Algiers and what you can expect, what we can expect from the Arab states in terms of the kind of agenda that Mohammad Dahlan has just laid out.

SHEIKH HAMAD:

Thank you, Martin.

Well, in Algeria, nothing happened, as usual. That's my short answer for this. I think it's a very important—I will speak in Arabic better, to express myself better.

[Through interpreter]: That is why we would ask the mediator, which is the United States at this time. Of course we cannot ask the Arab countries because to play a clear-cut role because we know that there were quite a number of Arab initiatives. The Fahd initiative in the peace process, this initiative was made and a number of initiatives followed, the last of which is the Beirut initiative.

We find that the Arab countries did not agree on these initiatives, nor in Madrid, when they came to discuss the peace process with a strong will, with the American presence, including Syria, when they were at the same table with the Israelis, and following that, in Oslo. I do not want to delve in the Palestinian question because Dahlan knows more than I do, as a matter of fact, and so far as this is concerned.

So an Arab position, at the minimum level, perhaps is not there. The reasons for that are economic, political, internal conditions which perhaps impede. Some countries now say that we have to follow a peaceful process, and there are also calls on that matter.

The problem is that there is a resolution by the Security Council 242 and the [inaudible] process, and also Oslo, which caused a further withdrawal from the territories occupied in '67.

All the Israeli administrations and governments have not wanted to give back the territories occupied in '67.

Sharon wants to make a discount, in other words, I'm going to give you '67 but I'm going to make a buffer zone here and a buffer zone here. In other words, I will cut down and cut off about 40 percent of the land which is Palestinian land, even with withdrawal, which Dahlan said, there is a problem with regard to the withdrawal from Gaza.

There is a group that says that it is not worthwhile, as a matter of fact.



So the concept is the Israelis will withdraw from Gaza and we will ask the Palestinians to return to Gaza, and when the Palestinians are all right in Gaza, and when they do well in Gaza, perhaps we shall negotiate at a later stage with them, and perhaps when we say that there should be a cease-fire and there should be a cessation of any killing, I'm afraid there is no response at all.

We cannot really prevent anything from taking place, in any place of the world, even in Qatar. That is why requests to Palestinians that they prepare their own front is perhaps rather impossible and not feasible, because as we know, they have no political potentialities or military or any other potentialities, or even the conviction that they will have their lands restored to them. There is no logic in that, as a matter of fact.

Every government administration, and the United States, they come and they claim that they are going to do something good, they are going to go for peace, and I don't think that any of them have been serious in so far as this is concerned. But my question, why is it so—why?

We understand now, there is the high voice of democracy and reform in the Arab world. This is repeated everywhere—that, as a matter of fact, we are afraid of this high voice of democracy and reform in the Arab world. What would be our position? Our position will not be fair with regard to the Palestinians, and I ask the Palestinian to tell them that you do not really need an Arab position but you need a Palestinian position, in the first place.

I'm afraid, I'm not credible in that, in so far as—that is why I would say that what you need is a Palestinian voice in the first position, in the first place, and the question is if they want peace, and if they want 100 percent cease-fire, and the cessation of what takes place inside Israel, I believe that this is perhaps a pretext which is taken up by all the Israeli governments, because if any event takes place they seize the negotiations.

That is why I believe that there is no good intent in order to gauge peace. As a matter of fact yesterday there were some operations that have taken place on the Israeli as well as on the Palestinian side.

And Sharon is going to visit the United States, and if Sharon says that I cannot go forward because there is killing on the land, we will get into the vicious circle which has been going on for so many years. Perhaps if it comes, then the next year, and the year after that will be the elections. Everybody will be so busy and the whole thing would come to a freeze. That is why perhaps the American side is very much busy with the elections that will occur in the years to come.

With regard to the peace initiative, I don't believe that we need a peace initiative. We all know the nature of 242, Madrid as well as Oslo, and the investigation of the occupied territories, which have been occupied since '67.

Of course with regard to Jerusalem, it is a matter which is very much close to the heart of all Muslims, but still the question of Jerusalem needs a vision as well as a will. So that we can really arrive at a solution which will be satisfactory to all parties, because we know that there are Jews and we know there are Christians, as well as Muslims in this city.



How can we be able to bring them together in a satisfactory solution, so that each will be satisfied with the solution reached?

With regard to rehabilitation as well as to reconstruction, I believe that the Arabs should give a lot of assistance in order to facilitate the rehabilitation and the reconstruction needed.

But it is not possible that the whole international community would stand still. The three billion on the part of the Europeans and billions on the part of the United States—so why do we leave Israel, which is the cause for all the destruction? Why do they destroy the airport of Gaza? So if they are the source of destruction and if they did the destruction, so they have to do the building and the rebuilding, so if it is—how can we guarantee in the future, that this destruction shall not take place again?

Is it Israel? If you allocate some money on the part of the Arabs and on the part of the others, and all this money is to be used in the reconstruction, who will guarantee that this will not be demolished by Israel? I have listened to the Europeans with all bitterness. They have been working as a catalyst, dreaming all that time in order to establish hospitals and an infrastructure, and what Israel did is they came and they destroyed all that.

So I would like to put an end to my statement and say one unified Palestinian position is a very important matter, and a fair will on the part of the United States is very important, and the Arab position should be complementary, that there shall be no violations or deviations, and should be pooled towards the support of the Palestinian question, and of course when you know that there is a problem between us, I usually go to the United States and try to find a solution for that.

So all I need to say, is that there should be some kind of fairness on the part of the United States with regards to this matter. Thank you very much.

MR. INDYK:

Thank you, Sheikh Hamad, very much. I'd like to come back to the question of how democracy and the peace process interact with each other. But first a word from Ambassador Holbrooke. Please.

AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE:

Thank you, Martin, and thank you, Your Highness, for hosting this great conference. I particularly enjoyed tonight's session because I really didn't realize, until tonight, when I listened to my friend, Mohammad Dahlan, how really powerful Ambassador Indyk was, and he's going to have a lot to answer for.

I think we can all agree that the situation in regard to the problem we're addressing tonight is much better than it was when we met here, in Doha, a year ago. You can see it in the mood in the room but you can particularly see it in the events, some of which Martin has already mentioned. A new coalition government in Israel, the new verbal commitment of the United States government to engage, the elections in Iraq and the resulting easing of many of the tensions surrounding America's involvement in Iraq during the disastrous CPA



period, and above all, the election of Abu Mazen, are all dramatic steps forward.

Abu Mazen did something very dramatic during his campaign for the presidency of Palestine and Mohammad Dahlan and I talked about it yesterday.

He stated flatly, and honestly, to the Palestinian people, that he thought the violence and terrorism directed against civilians in Israel was not justified and did not contribute to the interests of Palestinians.

This was a remarkable thing to say. To believe it is one thing, and that he believed it was widely suspected by Americans who had worked with him, and by Israelis. But to say it flat out, as part of his campaign commitment, had an enormously important political effect. It meant that when he was elected, he was elected with a mandate on that issue.

Nobody could ever accuse him of having tricked the Palestinian people because he made his position clear during the campaign, and nothing he did in the last six months was as courageous, as politically far-sighted, and as important as being honest with the Palestinian people and the world on this one issue.

Now I must say, Your Highness, that while my hat is off to you for holding this conference, it is the best conference I have attended in many years, and the most important for me, because instead of Americans talking to Americans about how to talk to Muslims, we're here sitting and talking to Muslims from all over the world, from Nigeria to Indonesia, and I love this conference, and I'm honored to be here, and my hat is off to you for your vision in hosting it.

It's good because it focuses on our common ground and building bridges between the United States and the Islamic world, but this session which I've been put on is the exception to this and the one I least wanted to participate in, because we're now focused on the most difficult issue between the United States and the Muslim world.

And therefore it was not what I wanted to participate in but I'm glad we're having it, and I hope that after it we will resume focusing, as the first session this evening did, with such brilliant talks as the three or four we heard, including your own, Your Highness, on the common issues.

No one can expect a session like this, even if there was an Israeli present, and unfortunately there is not. No one can expect a session like this to make any progress. Each interlocutor has to say what he has to say, and there will be no change in positions here, and if any side has flexibility, they're not going to display it.

First of all, I have never been an optimist about this negotiation because it is so fragile and it's so easy for extremists, on both sides, to break it up.

Still, when the United States was fully engaged in the negotiation, there was occasionally signs of progress and frequently, limits on the level of violence.

The American engagement began, really, in 1973 with Kissinger and Nixon, and it continued, continuously, under every president through to the last day of the Clinton administration.

Some presidents were more successful than others. Some secretaries of state were more successful than others. And it is fair to argue that, at times, the United States made miscalculations as to the intentions of one or both of the parties.



But the continual American engagement was, in my view, a positive fact because it showed that we were involved.

In the beginning of the first term of the Bush administration, the United States visibly and palpably disengaged in a very dramatic manner, when Dennis Ross retired, as he had long said he would. He was not replaced. When he was replaced, it was briefly, with a Marine general who, after one trip to the area, and never being received by the American president, disappeared.

The secretary of state had no appetite for the process, and while President Bush made some extremely important statements, notably his extraordinary speech which Mohammad Dahlan has already mentioned, there was no follow-up, and the signal to the region was that the United States would back off in the face of escalating violence on both sides.

I have always believed this was a tremendous mistake but it happened, and the question now is whether we're about to enter a third phase of American engagement. The first was 1973 to 2000, as I said. The second was 2001 to the end of last year, and now Secretary Rice and President Bush have indicated a readiness to reengage, and I deeply hope that this will so be.

And given the many other changes that we're seeing in American foreign policy in the first two and a half months of the second term, almost all of which I think are significant improvements on the previous four years, I'm hopeful that this too will take place, and it's my understanding that Secretary Rice does intend to spend much more time on this issue than her predecessor.

Now even with American involvement, we cannot resolve the problem, and although we've heard again tonight a very standard statement about the enormous influence of America on politics in Israel, the fact is that there are very real limits on what the United States can deliver and even those limits are additionally constrained by what is available from the other side.

Still I want to stress the value of engagement, but I also need to stress the fact that conflicts cannot be resolved by mediators unless the parties wish to resolve them [inaudible] mentioned in the Dayton peace agreement.

The fact is that we did something in order to get to Dayton, which is not available to the United States in the Middle East. We bombed the hell out of the Bosnian Serbs. That was a nice way to get their attention, get them to the table. The grand mufti from Bosnia is here tonight and he can attest to the fact that bombing certainly concentrated on the Serbs.

But that option is not available in this part of the world, although many people might enjoy having it, and absent that extraordinary use of force, which the United States did twice under President Clinton, again in 1999, in Kosovo, you have very real limits on our persuasive power.

In many negotiations we've been involved in, Cyprus, Ireland, our ineffective efforts to be involved in Kashmir because the Indians simply do not wish an external international involvement, and many other problems, international mediation does not succeed. It does not succeed because one or both parties are just not ready to do it.



And I need to stress that it is a mixed blessing for Americans to be considered omnipotent with the ability to make these extraordinary interventions successfully.

It is true we succeeded in ending the war in Bosnia. It's true that we succeeded in ending the occupation by the Serbs, the oppression of the Albanians in Kosovo. It's true that we brought Saddam Hussein down.

But in all three cases we used force. It's true we got the Taliban out of Afghanistan, but again, we used force, and those circumstances are unusual and very difficult, and they will not occur in the region we are now talking about.

Still I emphasize, I strongly support American engagement, even when it doesn't succeed, and what we've just heard suggests that some of the current optimism is misplaced, that it's going to be a longer and tougher road, if I understand my friend, Mohammad Dahlan correctly, it will be a longer and tougher road than many Americans now think.

Even when we don't succeed, we must be involved, and that's why I welcome the early signs that the second term will be involved.

Finally, enforcement mechanisms. Agreements fall apart unless they have enforcement mechanisms. Very little thought has been given, especially in public, to the question of enforcement mechanisms in regard to any peace arrangements in this area.

Occasionally an editorial writer talks about an international peacekeeping force. There are some precedents like the MFO in the Sinai, but that's a small unarmed force, and it would really not work in Palestine. But attention must be paid to an enforcement mechanism which may involve security guarantees and may involve outside troops.

For those of you in this room who are not from the United States, you should know that the United States Congress has to approve any such arrangements by funding them and approving them in various legislation, and historically, the Congress has been very reluctant to do so.

Congressional opposition is one of the underlying reasons it was so hard for President Clinton to intervene in Bosnia, in Kosovo. It's one of the reasons we had a catastrophe in Rwanda. It contributed mightily to the tragedy in Somalia and it was only after 9/11 that President Bush was able to mobilize public support for action in Afghanistan, which was quite easy compared to a great controversy in Iraq.

So I would hope that there will be an enforcement mechanism, if there's an agreement. I believe the United States must be involved in it, I would personally support it, but there's been far too little discussion of it, and I would particularly welcome Mohammad Dahlan's views on whether or not an international force authorized by the Security Council, which wouldn't be hard, but using forces from a variety of countries, under either a blue helmet arrangement or a multinational force arrangement, that's a technicality, would be a desirable element in a peace agreement.





I think what we have seen in the past several years is a new interest in Arab public interest. And on the assumption that, despite the fact that you have authoritarianism in the Middle East, there is an increasingly independent public opinion in the Arab world that is in part a function of the new media that is not entirely controlled by any single government that therefore, permits views to cross the boundaries in the Arab world.

Public Attitudes and the Role of the Media



Roundtable Summary

MR. TELHAMI:

Good evening. It is my pleasure to moderate this panel on public opinion and the role of the media.

It is an issue that has certainly been an important one in the United States, in American democracy where there has always been almost an obsession with measuring public opinion and changes in public opinion and connected them to both media and the political process.

But measuring public opinion in the Arab world, in particular, is relatively new. Certainly on political issues it is relatively new in part because many of the countries did not allow this space for meaningful assessment of public opinion.

I think what we have seen in the past several years is a new interest in Arab public interest. And on the assumption that, despite the fact that you have authoritarianism in the Middle East, there is an increasingly independent public opinion in the Arab world that is in part a function of the new media that is not entirely controlled by any single government that therefore, permits views to cross the boundaries in the Arab world.

In fact, what is most interesting in the surveys that I have been conducting about the media, particularly the satellite media in the Middle East, is that when we ask—and I've conducted these surveys with John Zogby, who is one of the guests on this platform—when we ask people, where do you get your news, which station do you go to first for news, in fact in every single country now, most people go for their news outside their own boundaries. That is, from stations that are not broadcast within their own country.

And that tells you something about the relative independence of this public opinion at least from any particular government to shape that public opinion.

So what I'd like to do today by asking my guests to speak is to address where this public opinion is, American public opinion particularly toward the Middle East, and Arab public opinion on social and political issues, but also attitudes toward the United States and the extent to which there is a relationship between the media, particularly the new satellite television phenomenon and what people believe in their views.

In fact, I have been doing a long project trying to study the impact of the media on political attitudes and also on identity.

And some of the results are surprising, because on some issues, especially American policy, attitudes toward the United States, the data show no discernible statistical relationship between what people watch and their attitudes towards the United States.

It is a remarkable finding given the discourse that focuses largely on blaming the media, particularly on the question of attitudes towards the United States.

So what I would like to ask our guests to do is number one, to give a summary of what they're doing and the recent opinions that they have measured. And number two, to address the question of what explains those public opinions; what are the factors that go into shaping this public opinion and whether the

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OPENING SPEAKERS

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Host, *al Jazeera*

MUSTAPHA HAMARNEH

Director, Center for Strategic Studies, University of Jordan

STEVEN KULL

Director, Program on International Policy Attitudes

JOHN ZOGBY

President, Zogby International



media play a role on some issues but not others. And we know in some instances we've seen a shift in the United States of public opinion. Depending on media in other instances, we've seen no shift at all.

And I think Steve will probably address that in part.

Let me introduce the speakers, really people who are pioneers, I think, in particular in the area of measuring public opinion in the Middle East and in the media in the Middle East.

Let me just begin to my left with John Zogby, one of the leading pollsters in the United States. He's been doing polling in the United States, has been extremely accurate over the years in predicting the American elections and American public opinion and has been a pioneer in measuring public opinion in the Arab world.

He has been one of the first to track significant political opinions in the Arab world. And has very interesting data, particularly over the past four or five years that can tell us about trends.

Next to him is Dr. Mustapha Hamarneh who is the director of the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan, one of the most respected Arab analysts, and certainly Jordanian analysts, of politics in the region broadly. But Dr. Hamarneh himself has been engaged through his center in conducting public opinion surveys in the Arab world and has recently conducted a fascinating one with some interesting results, I think, that you would like to hear about.

To my right is Steve Kull. Steve is the director of the Program on International Policy Attitudes connected with my own university, the University of Maryland, a very prominent pollster and an analyst of polls himself, who has done surveys in the United States as well as international surveys, not only in the Middle East, but a variety of places, and recently especially on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Middle East.

And finally, someone who is certainly very well known in this region, Faisal al-Qasim, a distinguished host of *al-Jazeera*, the host of one of the most influential and watched programs, "The Opposite Direction," which has been innovative in the sense that it has tackled issues that have been taboo in this region and has not shied away from bringing controversial people to audiences, sometimes infuriating people, sometimes just thrilling them.

And he certainly has been in this new era of the media from the beginning. And I would love to hear not only what he has to say about his reading of the role of the media and public opinion, but also in explaining the strategy that he pursues when he puts out some controversial issues like the issue of the beheading that took place in Iraq and having people who oppose it very strongly and people who support it very strongly.

What's the strategy behind it, and does he think it has a consequence for what transpires in public opinion?

I'm going to begin first with John Zogby.

MR. ZOGBY:

Thank you, Shibley. I want to underscore everything that you said and begin by

saying that in our field, the process has been just as important as the content, that we first dipped our toes in the region as you said five or six years ago and were very careful with the kinds of questions that we asked. We have discovered that over those five or six years that every time we go into the field including the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait, in Egypt as well, we are able to ask more and more sophisticated questions, questions pertaining to religion, the role of clerics in government and politics, and the proper role of government in people's lives. So reform is clearly in the air, I think, when we can do the kind of work that we do with an increasing level of sophistication.

Another point about the process is that in the Arab world as well as anywhere else that we've polled around the world, we found that public opinion is nuanced, complex, layered and is never one-dimensional, and that's very important. It's never predictable.

In early-2002, like everyone else in the West, I opened up a copy of *USA Today* and the headline blared "They Hate Us." It was a multinational poll conducted by one of our colleagues all across the world, and the conclusion was that the president of the United States was correct, that Muslims, Arabs, hated our values, hated our culture, hated our freedom and democracy and so on. Those of us at Zogby International just found that very difficult to believe.

So we launched a 10-nation survey in February 2002. We polled five Arab countries, Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, UAE and Kuwait, three Muslim non-Arab countries, Iran, Pakistan and Indonesia, and then we threw in France and Venezuela, partly for control and partly for laughs.

You can tell right now which of the countries was most negative towards the United States on everything.

But what we did was we parsed the attitudes towards the United States. So what we did was we asked whether views were favorable or unfavorable towards American science and technology, American freedom and democracy, the American people, American movies and television, American-made products and the American educational system. Then we asked about attitudes towards U.S. policy towards the Arab nations and then towards Israel and the Palestinians.

What we discovered I think was somewhat predictable, that actually they liked us, they didn't like our policy. The numbers were fascinating. On every one of those topics, non-policy topics, the numbers favorable were anywhere from the high-40s into the 70s in every nation except Iran. We happened to catch Iran a few days after the President's "Axis of Evil" speech and the Iran numbers were just contrary to anything we had ever done in Iran before. They were increasingly negative. Funny how people are. They react to being linked as an axis of evil and that generated some powerful nationalistic feelings.

But in any event, we then moved on to policy and we found that the favorable attitudes towards U.S. policies were anywhere from 4 percent favorable, to 10 percent favorable. The 10 percent was in Kuwait.

We issued a warning. We went around and spoke to various State Department groups, Department of Defense groups, the intelligence agencies and





so on, and we issued a warning. Warning number one was that policy can drive negative feelings, that in fact, if the policies continued, if there was no change in policies, that in fact the aspects that they liked about us could indeed suffer.

The other thing that we were deeply concerned about was that contrary to anything else that I had read or had experienced, the most favorable attitudes towards the United States right across the board in every country were among those 30 years of age and younger. We ran the risk then of alienating a group that we actually could indeed nurture. We also found correlations between satellite television use and favorable attitudes, and also Internet access and favorable attitudes.

We repeated the same survey in five of the Arab countries in 2003, and we found, not surprisingly, that the run-up to the war in Iraq and the beginning of the war in Iraq showed that we were losing support, that every one of those qualities and characteristics of American life and culture had suffered, had dropped dramatically, and had dropped even more dramatically among that target group of citizens 30 years of age and younger.

We saw clearly across the board in the Arab world that the war in Iraq was seen as a hostile act, that it was seen more for imperialism and oil, and that there was a belief that American involvement would lead actually to less democracy than to more democracy.

So we went back in the field in late-June and July 2004, and we saw some rebounding of public opinion. But as Shibley points out, in analyzing a couple of aspects of that public opinion, we found really no appreciable differences in terms of what people were watching or choosing for their news and their attitudes. But we did find something that I thought was particularly interesting and dramatic, and I'd like to share just a couple of slides with you.

These are the attitudes that people had towards American science and technology, and I hope that you can see. Underneath are a series of questions that we asked only in 2004: Have you ever visited the United States? Yes or no. Would you like to visit the United States? Yes or no. Do you have friends or family who have visited the United States? Yes or no. Do you know any Americans? Yes or no. Would you like to know more about the United States? Yes or no. Would you like to meet Americans? Yes or no.

Look at the numbers here just in their attitudes towards American science and technology. On those who had visited the United States, you had a 16-point differential more favorable; 22-point more favorable, those who would like to visit the United States; 24 points more favorable among those who had friends or family who had visited the United States. Let me just underscore it because it's really across the board. What about your attitudes American freedom and democracy? Among those who had visited the United States, 70 percent were favorable towards American freedom and democracy compared with 44 percent. These are aggregated numbers. This is a sample of about 3,400 Arabs in those 5 countries.

Would you like to visit the United States? Look, it's 63 versus 37, yes versus no. And across the board again the big bars are the yes answers, and the smaller bars in every instance are the no answers.



Then just one more, How about the American people? Among those who had visited the United States, 70 percent were favorable to the American people. Those who had not visited the United States, 44 percent were favorable. Among those who would like to visit, 61 versus 39 among those who had not. Friends or family in the United States, 60 percent favorable towards the American people versus those who did not, 36 percent. And again across the board, American-made products, it's the same thing.

So I have some clear recommendations. We need in terms of U.S.-Arab relations, U.S.-Islamic relations, in addition to serious policy changes, people to people initiatives. We need an expansion and not a contraction of student visas. We need an expansion and not a contraction of work visas. We need business internships. We need cultural exchanges and programs. We need athletic programs. We need satellite TV experiences and chat-room discussions.

I'm working with a group now called Business for Diplomatic Action and one of our recommendations to American corporations doing business multinationally is that we need to empower whole villages with hardware so that people can have satellite access. We also need to work closely with those who are doing cultural exchanges already, and that includes companies and corporations like Sony and MTV and the fashion industry, the Discovery Channel, and so on. Very simply, familiarity doesn't breed contempt, it clearly breeds familiarity, and familiarity is a positive thing. Thanks.

MR. HAMARNEH:

Thank you very much, Shibley. I don't have much to say after what John had said because our data show almost exactly the same positive and negative attitudes.

Our journey with polling in Jordan began some years ago in 1993, and ever since every poll we conduct we break the law in the country because the laws on the books don't allow independent organizations to conduct polls. We have to ask permission from the Department of Statistics and we never do, so this has brought us into a collision course with the governments continuously, but every time they backed down and we hit the field and conduct our polls.

We started going regional with the Jordanian-Palestinian relations. We linked up with [Khalil] Shikaki's center in Nablus and we did a series of polls on Jordanian-Palestinian relations. We wanted to measure the perceptions on both sides concerning future relations, how the Palestinians perceived themselves in Jordan or whether they felt there was political discrimination against them, how the Jordanians felt about the Palestinian presence, and what were the obstacles for integration between the two communities.

This was a very explosive survey. Unfortunately, the debate that ensued later was not one that was conducive to improving the relationship between the two communities. But at least we were able to break that taboo, and we were the first group of people, community of researchers, to put on paper how both communities saw each other and the possibilities for future integration rather than continuing on the path of disintegration.



We were the first institution in the country to declare that the majority of Palestinians inside the country view themselves as lesser citizens and they feel that there is political discrimination against them. They also felt that in Jordan and also in the Palestinian territories and possibly in other Arab countries there are two streets, actually. There is a national sample. It's a very wide street with a very low voice, but we have another very narrow street but with an extremely boisterous and loud voice, and that is the community of the elite, the professional associations, the political party leadership, government officials, members of parliament and so on. You can see sometimes 20 percentage points in differences between these 2 groups, their attitudes towards very important issues concerning the country and the region.

We also introduced very political polls, and that is measuring the attitudes towards governments in Jordan, and this really brought us into direct conflict with several governments. I lost my job once in part because of that, almost lost it again also because of that, and every prime minister that left office with a big bang—except for Faisal because he left just two weeks before we conducted a poll on his performance in the government for a year and a half—accused us of bringing the government down.

This latest poll is a regional poll, again, exactly like what John had said. We wanted to discover for ourselves why does this state of animosity exist between us and the Americans, and we saw the headlines that John saw and we read what the others were saying in the States that the Arabs do hate us for who we are and not for what we do. So we were intrigued by that and we wanted to really investigate what lies at the heart of this state of animosity between us and the West.

We chose five countries, Palestine, Lebanon, Jordan, Syria and Egypt, being until now before it moved to the Gulf, the heart of the Arab world. We had a sample of 9,700 people in these 5 countries, 1,200 in each national sample who were randomly selected. We had 500 university students above and beyond in each country, 120 members of the business community for obvious reasons, and also 120 members of the media community in each country.

Very briefly now I'll go to the findings. We were very pleasantly surprised actually by the findings. The number one finding was that Islam is not at the heart of animosity. We don't see the West in terms of crusaders and Jews out there coming to get us. The response to the West was, especially the United States of America, again we chose America for obvious reasons, and France and Britain for their colonial past in these five countries.

People hold very coherent notions of what constitutes the values of western and Arab societies. They associate the West with values of individual liberty and accumulation of wealth, while they view their own societal values as placing emphasis upon religion and family. And the perceptions of these western values did not determine the attitude towards western foreign policy at all. America was seen as a country out there to get our oil and to defend the security of the state of Israel, although the majorities do not at all reject the professed goals of western foreign policies towards the Arab world, specifically America. When America declares



that they want to put in more democracy, freedom and liberty, these goals are not rejected by the populations that we polled. In fact, they enjoy a lot of support as John had said, but people do not like the actual policies on the ground.

Of course, there are serious disagreements and fundamental ones on definitions of terrorism and policies towards the Arab-Israeli conflict and Iraq. Hizballah was seen as a legitimate resistance organization; so was Hamas and Jihad Islami. Al-Qa'ida is a little bit more problematic, but across the board there was no support for civilian killings and these acts.

But despite all this, actually there is a desire in the region for improved bilateral relations with the United States. Maybe not on the political level, but economically and culturally. American continues to be a very important destination for people who want to seek higher education, medical treatment. France beats America when it comes to culture and tourism.

France came out looking much better than both the United States and Great Britain. Great Britain really was nothing but a subsidiary of America in this sense. The French, we were in the field compiling the data during the *hijab* controversy, and it had no impact on perceptions of the French policy in the region which again I think is significant and again leads us to conclude that really it's more politics that are rooted in the region rather than outside the region.

Another very disturbing finding similar to what John discovered is that the new generation is more conservative than the older generation. The university students were more conservative. Of course, for us that meant that the universities don't mold students, and we definitely need education reform and we need to start exposing university students, as John said, to the Internet and also to other media outlets in the United States and Europe.

Another major finding is the impact of satellite stations. Although satellite stations did have a major role in breaking the monopoly of western media outfits, we found no correlation to anti-Americanism and exposure to satellite stations at all. In fact, of the countries in the area least exposed to satellite stations, Egypt has the most anti-American public opinion. And Lebanon, the country that is most exposed to satellite stations, really is the country that has more positive attitudes towards the United States.

One of the major findings is that the assumption in the United States of America is that if democracy takes hold in the region and reform takes place as a process, this will improve American national security, we don't think so. We think that they're two different things. To improve America's national security, serious policies need to be changed, and when we talk about serious policies that need to be changed, the reference here is to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Just to compare Iran, for example, we did some surveys with our friends at the University of Tehran's Department of Sociology. Although the Iranians subjectively don't see themselves as very religious compared to Egyptians and Jordanians, they are least involved in anti-American politics in the region. Specifically, if you talk about what the Arabs, especially the elite in the Arab world, the media component of it in Egypt and other countries when they talk



about detrimental western cultural penetration in the Arab world, you don't see that at all in Iran.

Also in examining people's attitudes towards the IMF and the World Bank, we found no massive trace of that animosity on the level of the populace as you hear in Arab elite quarters. Even in a country like Egypt, the majority of Egyptians did not object to a relationship with the World Bank and the IMF.

So this was a very pleasant surprise to us. There is no clash of civilizations here at all. The Arab response despite the dominance of an Islamist or an extreme discourse on the airwaves, this has no impact on the level of the street. It's minor. People's responses to our open-ended questions were quite secular. America was an imperial state, it was not a Christian or Jewish state, and America was here not against Islam or Arabism, America was here to take our oil and to defend the State of Israel.

So I think the recommendations that John suggested, the time has come for people to sit down based on this set of data and discuss ways and means to improve the relationship. In the United States, the continuous denial of the importance of the Arab-Israeli conflict in this is really an act of ideology. Thank you very much.

MR. KULL:

There is quite a lot of polling on U.S. attitudes on the Middle East.

When Americans look at the Middle East they don't have a clear and simple response. The conflict they see bewilders them. They see these competing groups. They don't identify with one. They don't say there's our team. And they're not inclined to take sides either.

They're not even sure that it's a good idea for the United States to get deeply involved. Not because they don't care, but because they're not sure there is anything the United States can do or should do that will do much good.

At the same time, the 9/11 experience has certainly stirred them up. They do see a threat emanating from the region, and if they saw a clear target for reducing the threat of terrorism, they might support going after it, but they're always very reluctant to act unilaterally. They think the United States tends to play the role of world policeman too much in the general world and in the Middle East.

In the run-up to the Iraq war, though they believed Iraq posed a threat, they resisted the idea of the United States acting on its own. They didn't really think that the United States had the right to intervene without UN approval. But when the United States did act without UN approval, a majority did close ranks behind them as they generally do at times of war. They did not expect to be greeted as liberators in Iraq, and they're not really surprised by the difficulties that they're encountering.

On balance, a majority think that the costs of the intervention have outweighed the benefits, and now in the most recent polling, 53 percent say they think that going to war with Iraq was a mistake. Not surprisingly, they're looking forward to getting out of Iraq, but only about 30 percent think that the United



States can pull out immediately. But if the new Iraqi government asks the United States to withdraw, 73 percent say the United States should do so.

They're not interested in leaving behind any permanent military bases, two-thirds take that position, though about half think that's probably what the United States government is up to.

When it comes to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they're once again bewildered. They're not sure what the United States can or should do. The most popular principle, the one that they really hold closely to, is that the United States should be even-handed. In a poll question that's been asked repeatedly over the years, about seven in ten consistently say the United States should not take sides in the conflict. Only about two in ten say the United States should take Israel's side. At the same time, 57 percent in one poll said they think this is not happening, that the United States does favor Israel.

When you ask Americans, "Which side do you feel more sympathy for?" they are more likely to say the Israelis than the Palestinians by about a three to one ratio, but almost half actually refuse to answer the question, and when given the opportunity to be even-handed, clear majorities go for that position. For example, when they were asked who they blame for the conflict, only 24 percent said they blamed the Palestinians more; 6 percent said they blamed the Israelis more; while 65 percent said that they blamed both sides equally.

Some people have tried to elicit support for Israel by framing Israel's conflict with the Palestinians as part of the war on terror; after all, terrorist acts have been performed, but the public does not see it that way. When asked how they would characterize the conflict, only 14 percent said they saw it as part of the war on terror. Most of them saw it as a conflict between two groups over a piece of land.

Consistent with this desire to be even-handed, majorities do express a readiness to put pressure on Israel as well as the Palestinians. In a poll that was taken around the time that the Roadmap plan first came out, they were asked what the United States should do if Israel does not take steps called for in the Roadmap, and 65 percent favored holding back military aid, 63 percent holding economic aid, 60 percent holding back spare parts for advanced weapons. Likewise, when asked what the United States should do if the Palestinians refused to take the steps as part of the Roadmap, 74 percent favored holding back economic aid, 62 percent favored pressuring other countries to stop aiding the Palestinians, and 53 percent favored telling the Palestinian leadership that they would no longer deal with them.

Also 60 percent favored putting pressure on the Arab states to do their part in the Roadmap. Then there was a follow-up question that said, "What about the states that provide oil to the United States?" and it only dropped down a little from 60 percent to 56 percent.

At the same time though, Americans again show very little confidence that the U.S. effort will make much of a difference. They do not perceive that either side is motivated to take the necessary steps, and they express pessimism that the parties will ever reach agreement.



The idea of the United States taking a major initiative, spelling out the terms of a final agreement and then trying to impose that on the parties is only endorsed by 37 percent. And even recently with the improvements in the region, there is not strong support for some major renewed U.S. initiative.

The kind of approach that Americans like the most is one that involves other countries. Even if that means that the United States will have less control, this is a recurring theme that you encounter all the time in this support for multilateralism. For example, in a poll question that asked about the United States working through the Quartet, only one in four endorsed the argument that this is a bad thing because the United States will not have as much control over the process leading to pressures on the United States to make compromises that could be harmful to Israel. Rather, 64 percent endorsed the argument that working through the Quartet would be a good thing because it means that the United States will not have to bear all of the political and economic costs on its own, and that with the help of others success is more likely.

Now about the U.S. military presence in the Middle East. Americans show uncertainty about whether the United States should have any military presence there. Even before it was proposed in 2003, 2 out of 3 Americans favored the United States pulling its military forces out of Saudi Arabia. Americans are very responsive to the idea that the United States should not be in the region if it is not welcome. In a poll that was conducted last October, 62 percent said that if the majority of the people in the Middle East want the United States to completely remove their military forces, then the United States should do so. And even without such pressure, 65 percent say that over the next 5 to 10 years the United States should significantly reduce its presence there.

Americans do see oil as critical to the economy, and under some circumstances a modest majority said they would consider using force to ensure access to oil. But again, it's hard to convince them that this means it's necessary for the United States to be involved militarily in the Middle East. Even in the run-up to the Gulf War, the argument that the war was necessary to preserve United States access to oil just didn't cut it with the public. It was really tried and it just didn't go over.

The argument that did persuade them was that Iraq had violated the international law against cross-border aggression and now the United States and the United Nations are working together to reverse that aggression. That argument went over very well.

In closing, I'll say a few words about how Americans feel about Islam per se. Again attitudes are somewhat complex, somewhat uncertain. There is some wariness. There is a perception that in the Islamic world, attitudes toward the United States have gotten worse. And a growing number, but not a majority, most recently a plurality, but again it's growing, a plurality of 43 percent said that Islam does not teach respect for the beliefs of non-Muslims, and a plurality of 46 percent said that Islam is more likely than other religions to encourage violence among its believers. I don't want to overemphasize that, that's not a majority view, but there is a kind of division about it that suggests a kind of general uncertainty.

As to how they feel about Islam per se, they actually lean in a positive direction, not strongly, but more say favorable than unfavorable. When asked about the Muslim people, their views are warmer. Less than a third say they have an unfavorable view of Muslims, about half say they have a favorable view, others are not sure. Asked if Muslims can go to heaven, only 12 percent said that they cannot, 50 percent said they can, and 24 said they don't believe in heaven. It would be interesting to find out what Muslims' view of Christians would be on that question.

But perhaps most important, there is a rejection of the idea that there is an inevitable clash of civilizations between Islam and the West. Remember that the belief that people of different cultures can get along one way or another is a kind of cornerstone of American culture, split the difference and things like that.

A recent poll presented the argument that because Islamic religious and social traditions are intolerant and fundamentally incompatible with western culture, violent conflict is bound to keep happening. Only 36 percent agreed. However, as Shibley referred to yesterday, that has risen a bit. A year before, it was 26 percent.

Rather, 60 percent agreed with the statement that is one that probably most of us here would also agree with and on which I will end my remarks. Though there are some fanatics in the Islamic world, most people there have needs and wants like those of people everywhere, so it is possible for us to find common ground.

MR. AL-QASIM:

Thank you very much indeed. Actually I would like to start with a joke. A journalist once asked an Arab guy, "What is your opinion about antisestablishmentarianism?" So the Arab said, "I know the long word, but what do you mean by opinion?"

So actually it is really true that the question or the term public opinion is very novel in our culture. We don't know anything like public opinion because you can't really do a poll in the Arab world even about the consumption of parsley or potatoes because if you go in the street to ask people about such things, five minutes later you would be taken by the *Mukhabarat* or intelligence services because you are endangering social security, even if you are talking about parsley. This is one thing, actually, and I agree with Dr. Telhami when he says that it's really difficult to do such things.

The other thing is that for the past 50 years or so, the Arab people used to listen to the BBC, Monte Carlo, Voice of America, Israeli Radio and so on and so forth. So for that reason, we couldn't talk about public opinion as such. But the phenomenon of Arab public opinion, if you like, started to emerge slightly with the advent of satellite television. For the first time ever, we could talk about some kind of public opinion. I don't want to sing the praises of *al-Jazeera*, but *al-Jazeera*, for instance, has become the national channel for all Arabs, from Mauritania to Jordan. So for the first time ever we can talk about such things.

But at the end of the day actually if we look at the outcome of this public opinion, from my own experience we come to the conclusion that the new media





or the semi-independent media have given voice to, if you like, Islamic and nationalist feelings. If I take my program as an example, if I do something about the United States, if I do something about the United States or about the West, at the end of the day I find that the majority of people who took part in the Internet polls, disagree with the guy who defends the American point of view. So in a way, nationalism and Islamism are on the rise.

But this is not because *al-Jazeera* or others are trying to fan nationalist or Muslim feelings. There is an interesting theory actually propagated by thinkers like, for instance, Munir Shafiq. He says that successful channels in the Arab world have not become popular because they came up with something new, but simply because they are catering to already existing feelings, be they nationalist or Muslim, if you like. That I think gives credence to what Dr. Hamarneh said, that they found no relation to stations, I don't know if that's the right thing to say or not. So that's the summary which I can say. I've got many ideas actually, but I don't want to waste your time. Thank you.





I think looking at the young people across Muslim countries is extremely important. We should not ignore the fact that this is the major force framing the future of all Islamic countries and the relationship.



Where Do We Go From Here?

Roundtable Summary

MODERATOR INDYK:

We are in the concluding session of our conference, our dialogue, and what we wanted to do in this session is focus on the future and to answer the question: Where do we go from here?

This is in a sense a two-part question. Where do we go from here in terms of relations between the United States and the Islamic world, what is the agenda for the future, what do we see as the future of the relationship, and then the particular question of where do we, the U.S.–Islamic World Forum, go in terms of an agenda, a particular agenda for our future. To lead off our discussion we have three very distinguished participants in our deliberations over the last couple of days. First, there is Hossam Badrawi. He is the chairman of the People’s Assembly Education and Scientific Committee for the Arab Republic of Egypt. Second, will be Robert Blackwill, who is president of Barbour Griffith and Rogers International and the former deputy national security advisor to President Bush, and finally Surin Pitsuwan the very distinguished former foreign minister of Thailand.

MR. HOSSAM BADRAWI:

Thank you, Martin.

Well, I should start by saying thank you very much and thank you to the Qatari government for such an interesting, important meeting. I’ll try to be brief to open up for more discussion from the floor and to link what I say to the posed questions, that I think we all should think about, and I start by the forces shaping the future of the United States and the Islamic world, and end up with some suggestions as to what we should do as a conference for the future.

Definitely, the existing ruling system in the Islamic countries has to be considered as one of the stakeholders, and as we talk to each other, as civil society, we have to consider who makes decisions are other people in the Islamic world.

Second, within each Islamic country there are waves of reform and representatives of these reform activities have to be present with us and I think they should be part of our dialogue.

Third, what about the Islamists and the fundamentalists? Should we include them? We’re talking about governance, and Dr. Saad was talking about, should we include them in the democratic process. They are one of the powers that exist and they are one of the stakeholders that should be talked to too. We want to listen to them. We want to understand how they think.

So representatives of this group should also be around, some way or another. Definitely, the existing ruling system in the Islamic countries has to be considered as one of the stakeholders, and as we talk to each other as a civil society, we have to consider that those who make decisions are other people in the Islamic world.

It is most important to recognize that Muslims are not the same everywhere. Muslims, in Islamic countries, in the Arab world and Muslims in the periphery constitute the majority of Muslims in the world. There are also Muslims living in

MODERATOR

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OPENING SPEAKERS

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People’s Assembly,
Arab Republic of Egypt

ROBERT BLACKWILL

President, Barbour Griffith
& Rogers International

SURIN PITSUWAN

Former Foreign Minister
of Thailand



the United States and in Europe. I think the three sectors have different views and different perspectives of the future relationship between the Islamic countries and the United States and within the Islamic countries themselves.

And I think talking about education reform in my country, looking for, or promoting decentralization, I think we should do the same thing as between us as Islamic countries.

I think Muslims and Islamic countries at the periphery, or not in the center, need to take a more important role than they take now. I think what happened in Indonesia and Malaysia and Thailand, and other countries, is as important, maybe more, because they have different experiences than what happens in Arab countries, and I think we should share more, of those experiences.

But the most important force shaping the future relationship is the young people within Islamic countries. These are the majority and they will be the ruling platform in the future, and what affects the young people, children and youth, constituting more than 65 percent of the population of this part of the world. In Egypt, there are 42 million out of 70 million. Working on education is the major, most important issue that we have to concentrate on for the future of this relationship, and for the future of reform within the Muslim countries.

How do we frame that? Should we agree on some issues together? Should we create some international curriculum for basic education and we work together in creating that?

I think looking at the young people across Muslim countries is extremely important. We should not ignore the fact that this is the major force framing the future of all Islamic countries and the relationship.

But let's agree on the fact that with this conference we should think of how to sustain that effort and how to make it more fruitful. I don't believe waiting for a year to come and meet again mostly the same people talking to each other will create the momentum that we would like to have.

I would suggest that every group from each country should go back and create a local platform, a similar one, and get attached to more stakeholders within different countries, so when we come next year, we come carrying ideas from different people, and sharing ideas from different places.

And I believe the networking that happened here, and I'm proud that one of the successes that I have achieved myself, last year, is to get to know some American friends from Bruder and the group of EFE, Education For Employment, in Washington, D.C., and we've created a platform of cooperation, creating a project for education involving both the United States and Egypt. This is coming out of that conference.

And I believe many other things have happened, we have to document that, because this is a credit to the gathering. And this time I have worked with Dr. Nagar and the Arab Science and Technology Forum, to gather more than a thousand Arab scientists in Alexandria next year. This is coming out of the networking and we talked to Mayis Ragadine in Alexandria about having some Nobel Prize winners to attend. So maybe everyone of us who has achieved



through his networking project should report that we have accumulated this energy to be transmitted to the others.

And I believe one of our colleagues in the meeting suggested that we think of coming up with a report on the Islamic countries similar to what happened with the human development report in the Arab countries. It's a good idea.

Are there any ideas about research to be done? I have heard so many people talking about shari'a and effect of shari'a in the rule of law, and I am sure, I'm damn sure that if we ask everyone; what do you mean by *shari'a*? They will say different things. The effect of that on the Islamic world, we need some definitions to agree upon.

I think we should invite more people next year, representing different sectors of the society.

I will end by agreeing, or asking you to agree with me, that part of our success is to engage in ongoing initiatives internationally. When we were discussing poverty and dignity, we spread ourselves and came up with nothing, although great minds were present in the room. But there is an initiative, there is an international initiative about poverty alleviation that has been announced, agreed upon by different countries.

I think we should link ourselves to some of these initiatives and have them as our platform. This goes with poverty, this goes with education for all, this goes with some of the UNESCO initiatives in higher education. This goes with European Bologna process, for example. So we don't have to invent the wheel every time we speak about certain issues.

The second thing is our access to our communities should be the human rights advocates, because human rights will cover the rule of law, the democracy, the governance, the transparency, the anti-corruption. So many things can come under that umbrella, which I think is accepted everywhere.

And this will include more women's empowerment, children's rights and other aspects, that I think working on will create a more viable Islamic society that can deal with the changes and the tolerance needed in the future.

But the most important, and I end my comments, is education. It is the most crucial part of all our efforts, because this is the entrance for human development in Islamic countries and I believe part of our activities should be focused on that.

Thank you very much.

MR. ROBERT BLACKWILL:

Thank you, Martin.

Henry Kissinger got me started in this business and as my most important mentor once said, "you can't go wrong if you're pessimistic about the future of the Middle East." And certainly as we look toward the future, there are many things to worry about, and they were reflected in our discussions here at this important conference.

Let me just go through them quickly with a sentence on each.

First, there's a slow-motion Cuban missile crisis occurring between the United States and Iran, and my own view is that well before this conference meets



again next year, the EU Three initiative will fail decisively, with trying to persuade the Iranian government to suspend, indefinitely, its full fuel cycle.

Then that issue, the Europeans and the Americans have agreed, will go to the Security Council. The Iranians could, at that point, withdraw from the NPT, and we will be in a full-fledged international crisis, which is extremely dangerous.

Second, violence and bloodshed continues in Iraq. There are very big challenges ahead of that country, especially in the political process, the role of the Sunnis, whether the Shi'a and Kurds can work out, over the longer term, their differences, especially on Kirkuk, and so forth.

The Israeli-Palestinian issue, as we discussed at length, is extremely difficult, if not intractable, and we all know how tough the issues are. The borders, the settlements, Jerusalem, the right of return. Each one of those poses a very great diplomatic challenge.

The Taliban retains a foothold in Afghanistan. Al-Qa'ida and its allies continue to amount attacks against moderate Arab regimes in this region. Hizballah and Hamas go on using terrorism as a political instrument.

Pakistan remains a fragile nation-state with nuclear weapons, dozens of nuclear weapons, and existing internal infrastructure of terrorism. There is too little pluralism in the Arab states, tied closely to education I think.

And then finally, of course, there's, as we've heard again and again at this conference, there is very widespread Muslim mistrust of the United States.

One of the very valuable things for me, at least at this conference, was having the opportunity to have our Muslim colleagues express from their minds and hearts, how they see the United States, even if it was sometimes painful for me to hear.

But another of my bosses, George Shultz, once said that asking questions and listening carefully to the answers is an underrated means to acquire knowledge, and I must say it was very, very helpful to me to listen. And the catalog could go on longer.

But let me tell you that I think that the trend lines with one very big exception in this region are largely positive, and much improved from a year ago.

As I discussed at length in task force A, the situation in Iraq, in my opinion, is structurally going in the right direction. I think 2005 will be a good year for Iraq, and the insurgency will be well on its way to defeat by the end of the year.

With respect to the Palestinian-Israeli issue, the president of the United States is fully engaged in the peace process, as we saw as recently as yesterday, when he met Prime Minister Sharon in Crawford, Texas. With Yasir Arafat now gone, and Abu Mazen, a man of peace and vision, leading the Palestinians, I think that that is a dramatically different and positive element.

For the first time in a few months we'll see the total Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian territory, which has never happened before, since the '67 war. Both Israelis and Palestinians, their publics I think are deeply, deeply sick of the violence, and want a final resolution to this tragic confrontation.

And Afghanistan, there will be democratic parliamentary elections this year, President Karzai has significantly weakened the power of the warlords and the Taliban fragments are on the run.



Moderate Arab regimes today fully realize the dangers, it seems to me, of Islamic extremism, the dangers that Islamic extremism poses for them, and I think that's a substantial change from the past, and progress is being made. One only has to look towards Saudi Arabia to find an impressive case of progress against al-Qa'ida.

It appears possible that Hizballah and Hamas may, may be slowly moving to join the political process, and if that were to be the case, if they were willing to put aside terror as an instrument of their policies, this would be a major change in the calculations and prospects for Middle East peace.

Relations between India and Pakistan are better than in 20 years, and we remember that as recently as 2002, we almost had the first war in human history between two nuclear weapon states.

And next—and again this was referred to by my colleague—pluralism and democracy is stirring across the Middle East, there's no doubt about it, and again, more positive. So what I would argue, as I get close to the finish line here, is that with all the negative worrisome things in my first list, the situation is significantly improved from a year ago.

Let me, in conclusion, however, say the final remark. First of all, Iran, that's my exception, and obviously, if there's a major crisis between the United States and Iran, it will affect every other issue that I mentioned. So we all need to worry about that and do what we can to try to avoid it.

Second, it seems to me that relations between the United States and the Islamic world will be closely tied to whether these positive trends continue, and if they do, I would expect relations between America and the Muslim world to also continue—also improve.

Could I say that the menu that I have described positively will require us to keep the momentum going on the part of the United States, and of course the United States is far from the only actor—but will require an extraordinary display of sustained diplomatic skill.

Because these are issues with multiple dimensions, and which are interactive with one another, and perhaps not in many years has the secretary of state faced such an enormously complex set of challenges with respect to American diplomacy.

The good news is that the secretary of state has an extraordinary relationship with the president, which in our system has always been key to American diplomatic accomplishment, and surges of originality, and she's put together a first-rate team at the State Department. But this is going to be an extraordinary challenge for them at the State Department, across the administration, and for the president and the vice president.

And then finally, chairman, I would note, perhaps for next year, a subject that one might want to discuss as you push out the timeline further than I have, what is the role of India and China in this region, because for those of you who happen to have the chance to have a look at the communiqué signed yesterday between Chinese Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and Indian Prime Minister Singh in New Delhi, you will be struck, if you haven't seen it, by the emphasis on energy,

security, and this part of the world, and I can tell you those folks, a billion in each of those countries, hungry, hungry, hungry for energy, are heading your way.

Thank you, Chairman.

MR. SURIN PITSUWAN:

Thank you very much, Martin.

Some of you may be wondering, because Martin hasn't told you, why Surin Pitsuwan, former foreign minister of Thailand, should be up here talking about the Muslim world and the United States.

I happen to be a Muslim. My name is Abu Halim Balismaine [ph]. I was born in a madrasa, educated in a madrasa. My father spent 16 years in the central mosque of Mecca, my mother 9. So some say I have a split personality, some say I am schizophrenic, but I do have a dual personality.

When you ask me, where should we go from here? We have been so well-fed, so comfortable, so stimulated, I don't think we need to go anywhere.

But, really, I was involved in the first session of this forum. Last year I missed the forum because of some politics in Thailand. This year is my second attendance and I can assure you it has moved forward so far.

The first time, there was so much anger, so much bitterness, so much frustration, and so much mutual, what you call acrimony.

I think it was suitable because it was very soon after September 11. But this time, it's time for reflection, time for meditation, and time for really serious contemplation on the issues that are facing us and we are looking forward into the future.

I think there are a few issues that the forum can do, can anticipate, and the United States can help, can support, and certainly the Muslim world itself, ourselves, can contemplate and think about.

I think the issue of how to deal with the force of moderation, bubbling up, percolating in the Muslim world, as you have seen during the past three days; sometimes in the form of new ideas, sometimes in the form of frustration, sometime in the forms of anxiety and anger.

But anxiety, according to psychologists, is good, because it certainly puts us on our toes. It certainly encourages us to move forward and look for a way to resolve that anxiety or contradiction that we are facing.

I have heard so much of the, what I would call personal genuine engagement in our own tradition, in our own interpretation, of our own history, and I think it is extremely productive, extremely encouraging.

In Thailand, as a small D democrat, I have to go around and convince my own people that look, you have a personal way of getting into the spirit of the Qur'an, of the *hadith*, of the holy text. Of course it is an open society. Of course it is pluralistic. So you have to fight, you have to survive, and you have to somehow win the hearts and minds of the people.

So I told them the verse, 'Be loyal, or be respectful, or follow the words of God, of the Prophet, and those who are in position of responsibility among you.' Now there is an interpretation going around, interpreting as those who have been





appointed to lead among you, but in an open society like Thailand, when I go around and convince the people that hey, this time, you have the opportunity to choose. Who would be the people of responsibility among yourselves?

This is a democracy. This is an open system.

What I'm telling you is we can go back to the text, draw inspiration from the text, and try to weave the message in the inspiration into the problems that we are facing or the challenges that we are trying to manage right now in the modern world.

Force of moderation is happening everywhere. It's how to open up the space for more of that kind of initiative, that kind of interpretation, that kind of innovation. Brother Badrawi mentioned the phrase the central part of the Islamic world and the periphery. I can assure you, there are so many things exciting and interesting happening out there in the periphery.

Brother Musa Hitam is here, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia. He would attest to you, that there are so many experiments, so many innovations in the framework of Islam, going on in Malaysia, and their brothers here from Indonesia. My point is Muslims in the periphery have been forced through the ages to adapt, to adopt, to innovate, to come up with something new facing the challenges very alien to them in those societies.

While Muslims in the heartland, there's nothing wrong, but this is the product of history. A lot of people in the heartland have no hand, the experiences or the opportunities to adapt, adopt, innovative, be flexible, because no pressure has ever been put upon these area. Wealth came, everything is endowed. We had to struggle. Nothing much has to be done here. It is an environment of comfort. Therefore, there is no need to adjust, no need to adapt, no need to be flexible.

I can tell you from my personal experience, my mother spent nine years studying the Qur'an in Mecca. When she came back, she had to sit behind the door with the curtain down, with the door closed, listening to the boys reading the Qur'an.

Five years later, I went back to visit. The door was open; the curtain was still down. Ten years later, I went back. Both the door and the curtain were open. She was sitting right in the middle of the boys. It was a necessity. It is "dharurah," we have to innovate, we have to experiment, we have to adapt, we have to adopt.

So I think if the West, if the United States would deal with this force of moderation, percolating out there in North Africa, in Central Asia, in East Asia, in Southeast Asia, I think we will come up with something new, something that would be valuable, something that would be useful for all of us facing modernity together.

I agree with brother Badrawi and I agree with Mr. Blackwill, of all the lists, but the future belongs to the youth. The future belongs to the younger generation. Their place and their plight in the world will be very decisive, how we are going to live together into the future.

When I say place and plight, I mean their place of employment, their place in their life, their frustration, their anxiety, their bitterness.



There was this argument right after September 11, that most of those pilots, most of those hijackers came from well-to-do families anyway. So there is no relationship between poverty and terrorism and violence.

But I think if we think a bit more comprehensively, more carefully, these are the peoples who have been exposed to what is possible out there. To wealth, to opportunities, to modernity. They come back home, they carry the guilt, the frustration, the anxiety, the bitterness back with them, and they are powerless to help, to change, to transform, to bring their people out of that abject poverty that they are in.

So yes, they themselves may not be living in poverty but they themselves are carrying the guilt, trying to resolve the problem. They have no way out. Of course violence is a short-cut.

So I think the place and the plight of the younger generation, which will come to technology, which will come to training, which will come to science, which will come to modern education.

I have said, since September 11, the urge for getting even may have come after September 11. From now onward, we have to think rationally, we have to think cooperatively, and we have to think positively, and I think the youth, I think the future of the youth, I think the place of the youth. Try to integrate them with the force of moderation that is already going on.

The world can help. The United States can help. The West can help. The entire international community can help. Let me drop this last observation for your consideration.

Muslims are extremely proud of their past, extremely frustrated about the present situation that we are in, very much inspired by the vision of the future.

The mix of the three could be very explosive. We don't want the vision of the future to inspire those misled souls too much, too heavily, so that they would find a short-cut to the future, and that would hurt everyone, that would affect everyone.

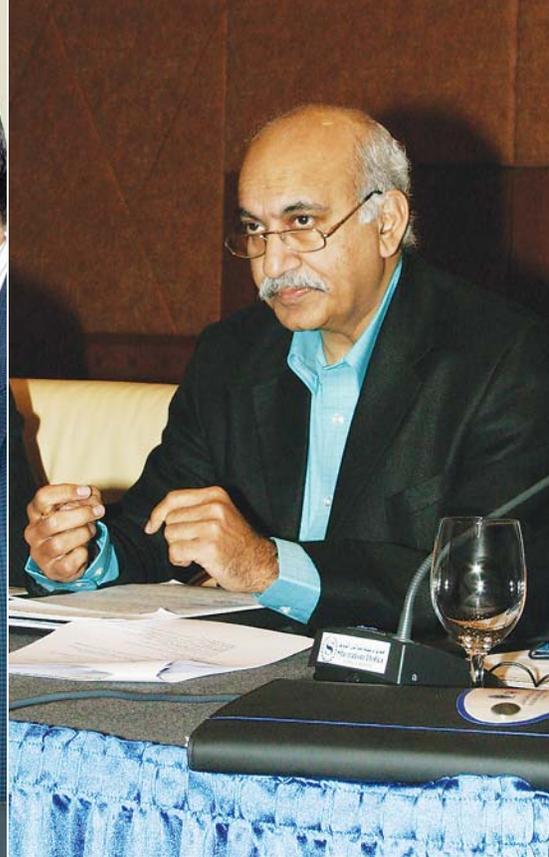
In the past, Muslim scholars have done research, translation, writing, interpreting, rewriting the wisdom of the Greeks, and pass on those wisdoms to the church fathers of medieval Europe in the Dark Ages.

That wisdom came back to the Muslim world in the form of colonialism, after being transformed, after being developed in various forms, the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution. It came back to the Muslim world in the form of colonialism.

My plea is let us sit together in this kind of forum, try to complete the loop of the transfer of knowledge.

We have to think about how, together, we can encourage, help, and cooperate, so that Muslims, in the wider world a Muslim can also attain their own smaller—Renaissance. And I think a dialogue like this should not be limited, here, in the Gulf, in the heartland. I think it should move to the periphery, much like the World Economic Forum has been doing, from Europe, to America, to the Far East, to Southeast Asia, to Central Asia, to the Middle East, to North Africa.

I think the U.S.–Islamic World Forum should also be moving around to cover the extent of the Muslim world. Thank you very much.



Conflict and Security

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Session 1: The Future of Iraq

While Iraq has figured prominently in international affairs in the past two years, developments have raised questions about its outlook and the continued presence of the United States. While on the one hand, it is clear that the nation has taken fledgling steps towards democracy by holding its first elections since the fall of Saddam Hussein, it is also evident from the daily ongoing violence that there is strong resistance against such a transition. The task force brought leading practitioners to discuss the present state of Iraq and its implications for the future.

Chaired by Martin Indyk, director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, this session explored the divergent perspectives surrounding Iraq and sought not only to clarify those differences but also to achieve a middle ground from which to proceed in terms of policy recommendations. The session also attempted to assess the present state of affairs in Iraq: the challenges to, and opportunities for, Iraq's democratic outlook; as well as the United States' role in fostering peace and stability in Iraq.

Both Robert Blackwill, former deputy national security advisor for strategic planning and deputy assistant to the president, and Mowaffak al-Rubaie, national security advisor of Iraq, offered a positive outlook for Iraq based on varying matrices. Among those cited were the paradigmatic shift of the recently-concluded elections, which has imbued the country with a new sense of the rule of law, and the budding independence of the Iraqi judiciary. There was also optimism expressed for the guarantee of the individual citizen as the first and last unit of government in Iraq through the finalized version of the written constitution. Concerns about Iraq, however, included rising violence and terrorism, attributable to security, political, religious and tribal elements. There was emphasis that Iraqis should spearhead the anti-terrorism campaign in their own country by addressing unemployment and focusing on education rather than leaving the effort to Westerners, particularly the United States.

A different set of metrics was advanced in parallel as a measure of confidence in Iraq in 2005. These were the assertions that (1) President Bush would not waver and the United States would finish its Iraqi mission; (2) even if every Sunni Arab of any age joined the insurgency, it could not swell beyond 20 percent of Iraq's total population; (3) the Iraqi government is steadily increasing its control over territory, such as large parts of the Shi'a south; (4) the January 30 elections were an extraordinary success, urged on by Shi'a Grand Ayatollah Sistani and Kurdish leaders Massoud Barzani and Jalal Talabani; (5) the Iraqi government has a political-economic-military strategy regarding the Sunni Arabs; (6) the Iraqi Army is beginning to fight; (7) the overall Iraqi economy is recovering rapidly from its condition just after the war, fueled in large part by U.S. and international reconstruction aid; and (8) international help for Iraq is on the upswing.

The speakers asserted that any uncertainty about the nature of Iraq's future was quelled when it was affirmed that despite present difficulties, democracy would take root and succeed in Iraq. Iraq would maintain amicable commercial, economic and social ties with its neighbors and lacked any intention of

“What is happening in Iraq is not a sectarian war. It is a fight for democracy.”

“There is a strong tendency towards building a new Iraq based on citizenship rather than on differences in nationality, sect, and religion.”



impressing a democratic imprint upon its neighbors. Relations would be conducted on a level of mutual interest with full respect for sovereignty. As to whether a new Iraq would resemble the Shi'a state of Iran, the session was reminded that there still remained outstanding issues from the eight-year war between both countries. As such, the likelihood of Iran influencing or dominating a new Iraqi government was predicted to be slim.

A persistent theme in the ensuing discussion that was raised in various forms was troop presence and withdrawal. It was emphatically suggested that the United States would withdraw troops only when (1) Iraqi and coalition troops inform the United States that Iraqi forces have gained sufficient capacity and capability, themselves, and (2) the insurgency has been sufficiently weakened, or (3) the Iraqi government specifically requests for a graduated withdrawal of U.S. troops. Calls for an international presence in Iraq under the UN flag seem unlikely to materialize because of member-states' reluctance to participate. Further, given the overwhelming number of U.S. troops in Iraq, it seems highly doubtful that the United States would concede to seconding its troops under the UN flag.

There was slight disagreement about the role played by Iraq's Arab neighbors, with questions about their sincerity in unifying Iraq and preparing it for a more peaceful and stable future.

Session 2: Terrorism and Weapons of Mass Destruction

Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction, and the possibility of a conflation between the two have figured more prominently in global affairs particularly since the September 11 attacks, the exposé of the A.Q. Khan network, and the United States' invasion of Iraq. More recently, the nuclear threat has loomed larger with news of North Korean and Iranian efforts at enriching uranium. The task force met to consider the sources of radicalism, strategies to undermine and counter terrorism as well as the threat of weapons of mass destruction proliferation.

This session was chaired by Rami Khouri, Editor-at-Large of *The Daily Star* in Lebanon. The opening speakers were Rand Beers, President of the Coalition for American Leadership and Security and former Senior Director for Counterterrorism, National Security Council; Mahmud Durrani, strategic expert and retired Major-General from Pakistan, James Rubin, Vice-Chairman of the Atlantic Partnership and former Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs; and Mostafa Zahrani, Director of the Institute for Political and International Studies from the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Whether deliberately or not, the issues of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction were considered separately in the speakers' opening remarks as well as in the general discussion, an approach that was criticized much later in the session. Areas that were highlighted within the issue of terrorism included the need to understand the sources and nature of radicalism as well as the role of globalization in terrorism's borderless reach. Anti-terrorism measures had to comprise of (1) use of force to inflict crippling casualties among terrorists, to reduce their



space for maneuvering and to deny them sanction; (2) disruption of recruiting, communication facilities, funding and safe havens for training; (3) an understanding and removal of underlying causes, including national and international efforts to develop literacy, promote liberal education, provide economic opportunities and ensure effective governance; and (4) a battle for ideas.

Al-Qa'ida and "other jihadist movements" were identified as having several commonalities, in particular, an anti-Western and anti-United States stand, and the absence of a need for central leadership or coordination in planning and executing attacks. The insurgency led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi in Iraq was described as both an evolutionary and "throw-back" movement. It is evolutionary in its tactics, which have been more reminiscent of attacks in Israel in contrast to the grand-scale attacks which have been the hallmark of al-Qa'ida. At the same time, the insurgency has been a throw-back to the Afghan and Bosnian models when "mujahideen" from other countries arrived to expel what in their view were foreign occupiers. It was also cautioned that western Europe may well be the area of greatest vulnerability mainly because of its large population of Muslim migrants who have not found an adequate sense of integration into, and participation in, the larger community. This has created extremely fertile ground for disaffection.

Iran was singled out in relation to the nuclear issue because of its significance in current affairs, American foreign policy, and American-European policy. While International Atomic Energy Agency on-site inspections have yielded evidence of Iran enriching uranium, it was conceded that Iran does indeed have a right to produce nuclear energy for their domestic consumption; that what, in fact, the United States and the international community are trying to do is ask Iran to go beyond its existing obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty. In order to succeed, Iran has to be offered a set of incentives and disincentives which matter. 'Sticks' could include sanctions whereas "carrots" could consist of a conditional World Trade Organization membership offer and the possible transfer of oil technology.

The session's general discussion primarily revolved around Iran and the nuclear issue. It was asserted that from Iran's point of view, any decision to pursue the nuclear option would be a rational one because of the belief that the United States has an interest in isolating Iran. In general, it was suggested that countries typically try to acquire nuclear weapons for two reasons: (1) to raise regional and international standing; and (2) because of perceived security threats. Bearing this and the assumption that the Iranian government's national security focus is in fact the country's economy, the international community should offer Iran meaningful incentives to discourage it from pursuing a nuclear weapon.

On terrorism, the session was reminded that a small Muslim minority had hijacked Islam. It was important to make a careful distinction between such radicals and the Muslim community, in general, and that just as it is very important to have an inter-cultural debate so it is to have an intra-cultural dialogue among Muslims, as well. Doubt was expressed about the allegation of Israeli occupation as a continued cause of terrorism, while others expressed that third parties—in

"We can reasonably expect that many of the future terrorists who have already learned to operate outside of the Muslim world can be easily or more easily recruited from Western Europe as a future cadre for the continuation of al-Qa'ida and the jihadist movements' efforts to disrupt and destroy the United States and the West."

"The idea that (Iran) doesn't need nuclear energy because they're an oil-producing country is, in my opinion, simply not logical."



“Terrorism...is almost existential while the nuclear issue... we should be practical about. If it's true that Iran cares more about its economic viability then let's make that a price for doing something.”

“What is the common denominator among Palestine, Lebanon and Egypt? A generation of abuse... 25-30 years of Israeli occupation, Egyptian autocracy and Syrian presence in Lebanon. You cannot abuse people for more than a generation and expect them to sit down and accept it...the United States should see that it has partners in these movements.”

particular, Iran—should not be blamed as sponsors of terrorism and asserted that the problem lay with Israeli treatment of Palestinians.

Session 3: Regional Conflicts and Domestic Politics

The rise and integration into the political process of groups such as Hamas in Palestine and Hizballah in Lebanon, has raised numerous questions, including their future standing as legitimate political parties and the surrender of their arms upon acceptance into the democratic process. The session convened to discuss these issues and their implications, as well as the role of the United States—and the Europeans—in these developments in the Middle East.

The session was chaired by Martin Indyk, director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. Rami Khouri, editor-at-large of *The Daily Star* in Lebanon, Ziad Abu Amr, president of the Palestine Council on Foreign Relations and member of the Palestinian Legislative Council, as well as Ammar Abdulhamid, publisher of *DarEmar*, and founder of the Tharwa Project in Syria all contributed their comments as opening speakers.

Central to the speakers' remarks was the significance of Hamas' and Hizballah's integration into the political process of Palestine and Lebanon, respectively. Over the last 10 years, Hamas' objection to participation in the Palestinian Authority (PA) had begun to diminish. In recent months, two developments signaled a shift in its policy towards political participation and integration with the PA: (1) its relative success in the municipal elections, particularly in Gaza, and its subsequent declaration of intention to participate in legislative elections; and (2) its agreement to sign a truce, reflecting its desire to move towards political negotiations and away from violent struggle. Hamas' performance in the municipal elections, however, may have disconcerted the PA. If the PA obstructs the next wave of municipal—and even legislative—elections, it will lose more popularity than it already has. On the other hand, if it decides to go ahead with the elections, it may lose to Hamas. For Hamas, the shift from opposition to that of the incumbent may recall the experience of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. Integrating into the political process also meant a demystification of their aura. Hamas' worry may be its reduction from idealistic, corruption-free resistance movement to mere political party.

The present dominant issue in Syrian politics was cited to be sectarian relations, especially Sunni-Allawite relations after the assassination of Rafiq Hariri and Syria's pullout from Lebanon. Growing Sunni influence and religiosity within the political elite has become increasingly troubling to the general Allawite population and threatens to strain intercommunity relations. However, although Salafi and Wahhabi elements have become more vociferous with the passing of the grand mufti, they remain too disorganized to proceed with their own agenda. Additionally, President Assad will have to manage fissures within the Allawite regime. Specifically, he will have to address the perception that he is too dependent on his immediate family and friends for political advice, and the feeling of marginalization among his Allawite generals.



The session was reminded that the creation of Hamas and Hizballah was borne of Israeli occupation. Hizballah was labeled the only real political party in the whole of the Middle East with the kind of organizational strength, legitimacy and impact to be able to service the needs and grouses of its support base. The power of Hizballah lies more in its political element (Hizb) than its religious one (Allah), that is, its ability to represent and respond to its political constituency. The question for Hizballah to consider is how much more politically engaged it should become. Hizballah is trying to build on its legitimacy while trying to integrate deeper into the Lebanese political system and balance its relationship with external players, such as Iran.

In discussion, a set of identifying criteria were offered to characterize radical parties. This included (1) ideology—radical movements usually have a very narrow interpretation of Islam; (2) rigidity of views; (3) an expanding agenda; and (4) a difference in the motivation of these parties' leadership from the motivation of their rank and file. Four approaches were proposed to deal with these groups: (1) engagement; (2) rejection of armed parties; (3) support for the majority; and (4) political defeat of such parties through strengthened democracy and education, as well as the reduction of poverty. In acknowledging the context in which radical parties operate—specifically, the crises of statehood, citizenship, political legitimacy, identity and basic human needs—it was emphatically urged that there be increased dialogue between Americans, Muslims and Arabs at a higher intellectual degree. The issues in play need to be analyzed in the totality of their reality and not according to preconceived ideas, concerns and notions of ideology. It was also observed that so long as the Jordanian model was followed, the integration of armed groups into the political process should be viewed as a benign one, especially since the views of such groups would become moderated as a result of contamination by power.

“We have suffered for the last 50 years. We have had tough regimes but they were reproductions of the West, after all. There is a religious Islamic awakening that is growing daily all over the Islamic world. We have to strengthen this democracy before having just peace in the region... There must be a real understanding of our reality and vision, and of the Arab street.”

Human Development Task Force

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Session 1: Challenges and Opportunities

This session explored how to tackle the problems of education in the Islamic world. The first speaker, M. Osman Farruk, Minister for Education for the government of Bangladesh, cited the experience of Bangladesh as an example of how Bangladesh achieved complete gender parity in basic and secondary education. Bangladesh achieved this by offering free tuition, subsidies, and books for girls, thus giving poor families a financial incentive to educate their girls as well as boys. The result has been a substantial rise in enrollment for girls—a success the government is now trying to reproduce at the university level. The experience of Bangladesh shows that the main barrier to women’s education is poverty, not religion.

How can the United States help Muslim countries improve their educational systems? First, reform is impossible without an adequate investment in books, teacher training, and other resources. The United States and other industrialized countries must uphold and expand their financial commitments to support education in the Islamic world. Second, Washington needs to adapt a realistic policy toward reforming the religious schools, or *madrasas*. Rather than seeking to eliminate madrasas, the United States should be aiding efforts to modernize them, as Bangladesh has done by introducing science and computers and modernizing the core curriculum.

The second speaker, Hossam Badrawi, chairman of the People’s Assembly Education/Scientific Research Committee of Egypt, emphasized a different facet of educational reform. He criticized the tendency of governments to evaluate their own efforts by inputs—levels of spending or numbers of new school facilities being built. Rather, the crucial measure of performance is outputs: are the schools producing graduates who have the skills they need for the job market and for life? In this respect, education policy in most Muslim countries is failing. Basic and secondary education may be “free,” but families still must meet many expenses out of pocket, resulting in high dropout rates in poor families. Budgets are rarely based on a thorough evaluation of needs or performance. Students, their families, and the private sector have little or no role in decision making, and most education has little relevance to workplace needs.

How can these problems be fixed in basic and secondary education? First, decision-making needs to be decentralized, with budgets placed in the hands of schools, rather than with a centralized government ministry. Second, education must be reoriented toward the workplace, with a greater emphasis placed on vocational training. The educational system must become more flexible and responsive to the needs of stakeholders, with a continuous effort put on improving curricula and testing. Finally, the methods of teaching must also change, moving away from memorization and rote learning to emphasizing creativity and critical thinking.

In higher education, Muslim countries must seek to expand access for their growing numbers of young people—yet this is impossible without relaxing state control over higher education. Universities must be given more freedom and independence. At the same time, there is a need for clear standards to measure performance; in most countries, there is no independent accreditation system.

“If you do not decentralize and empower people at the periphery to be part of the decision taking and participate in running their schools and education, it is almost impossible to have a viable way of running schools at the periphery of large countries.”



“Are we really teaching diversity, tolerance? Are we giving room for creativity in our schools? We have to face that challenge.”

“We have to open up and see what happens in other countries, what happens in Malaysia, in Iran, in Bangladesh, etc. We can learn a lot from each other.”

Finally, Badrawi emphasized the need for higher standards in scientific training and research. Curricula must be in line with international standards, and training in research skills must be built into the education system. In the realm of research and development, governments need to begin evaluating their efforts by actual outcomes: the number of new inventions and scientific publications in quality journals, rather than the number of research institutes or scientists.

The ensuing discussion highlighted a number of themes raised by the speakers. Most participants appeared to agree with the basic principles: the need for more critical thinking and “inquiry-based” education, as well as more monitoring, decentralization, and a closing of the gap between inputs and outputs. Some participants pointed out that the basic failure was not simply one of education, but of basic governance. In some cases, for instance, there are “ghost schools” that exist on paper but not in reality. Such examples suggest that education reform can only be one aspect of a larger effort to introduce democratic accountability and improved government.

The issue of reforming religious education prompted a vigorous debate. Some participants argued that madrasas play an essentially negative role, inculcating students with an Islamist world view and demonizing the West. In this view, attempts to “modernize” madrasas are misguided, diverting U.S. aid to institutions that remain radically opposed to modernity and democracy. On the other hand, other participants argued that madrasas have played a long and constructive role in Muslim history and cannot simply be discarded. They advocated pushing ahead with efforts to modernize madrasa education. Some participants said that too much of the concern over madrasas is driven by American fears of terrorism, not necessarily by the reality of madrasa education. Others pointed out the importance of local differences: for instance, madrasa education does not necessarily play the same role in Pakistan as in Bangladesh or Indonesia.

Finally, several participants expressed a shared sense that education held possibilities for greater international and cross-cultural cooperation. For example, there is already international cooperation between the United States and such countries as China, Chile, and France in developing primary education; such efforts could be expanded to include more participation from the Islamic world.

Pervading the conversation was the concern that failures of education were contributing to the dangerous rift in perceptions between Americans and the Islamic world. This failure is not only on the Muslim side: the U.S. educational system was roundly criticized for teaching its own students little or nothing not just about Islam, but about the rest of the world in general. There was a clear interest in finding ways to overcome this gap through student exchange programs, and perhaps even a joint project to build a common curriculum that would examine the diversity of civilizations in the world.

Session 2: Poverty and Dignity

L. Michael Hager, president of the Education for Employment Foundation, began the discussion by pointing out the crucial link between poverty, employ-



ment, and education. Much more important than poverty itself in assaulting the dignity of the poor is the lack of jobs. The lack of work is devastating to personal identity and self-esteem—especially for the growing numbers of young people who leave schools and universities to find that there are no jobs waiting for them. Hager emphasized the importance of formal education as preparation for the workforce: schools should be evaluated on whether their graduates are finding jobs and whether students are being prepared for future careers.

Although there are no “silver bullets,” the speaker presented two general ideas for reducing poverty in Muslim countries. First, the global information revolution has opened up new possibilities for employing the poor. Despite the end of the dot-com boom in America, the expansion of the Internet has created new opportunities for entrepreneurship and job creation in the developing world, even in isolated, rural areas. Valuable skills in traditional communities—such as weaving, pottery making, and craft making—can now be made available to the global market or incorporated into the global production process.

Second, Dr. Hager cited the need for a new dynamism in vocational education. Like the panelists in the previous session, he emphasized the need to move away from a “supplier-driven” model of education toward one driven by demand. The private sector must be involved in the process: businesses should be full stakeholders, playing an active role in identifying marketable skills, developing curricula, and devising certification standards for graduates. In Egypt, private hospitals have invested in a program to recruit unemployed university science graduates as potential nurses, providing them with training and helping them find jobs. In the United States, “career college” education has become a booming industry focused on giving people desirable skills for the job market. These are the kinds of trends that must be encouraged in developing countries and the Islamic world.

Responding to the speaker’s remarks, Alia al-Dalli, team leader of Poverty and Human Development, UNDP-Iraq, drew on her own experience with the UNDP mission in Iraq, where soaring population growth has produced a very young population that has grown up in an era of war and deteriorating living standards. Like Hager, she viewed education as playing a key role in offering these young people a future out of poverty. She supported the call for more work-oriented education, but also highlighted the need to provide people with “life skills” while educating them for employment—skills in conflict resolution, teamwork, leadership and analytical thinking. Most educational systems in the Muslim world do not instill such attitudes and skills, which are crucial to encouraging entrepreneurship and preparing students for success in the workforce.

Thus, participants viewed education as a crucial component in efforts to reduce poverty. Other participants echoed these remarks, including the need to exploit the possibilities offered by information technology and to teach both vocational and life skills. Two possible models for such efforts are Kofi Annan’s Youth Employment Network and the Basic Education Coalition in Washington, D.C. Participants also noted that distance learning can be a useful way of

“Poverty is the norm for too many people on this planet. The problem is a global challenge—it is not limited to any single region of the world.”



“Human development means the realization of human rights for all. This should be the main topic of this task force—how to realize human rights education, how to sensitize people to their rights and fundamental freedoms.”

“One F-16 to be sold by the United States to Pakistan will cost the equivalent of five district hospitals.”

imparting useful skills to adults—not just basic literacy, but also skills that will help them obtain jobs.

More broadly, participants saw “growth with equity” as the single greatest factor in reducing poverty. China and India are the two most prominent examples of countries that have reduced poverty simply through high rates of economic growth—yet China has had more success than India, as its economy has generated more broad-based growth and has created jobs for larger numbers of people. Meanwhile, existing policies supposedly aimed at social equality in many Muslim countries were criticized for failing the poor. Universal benefits that are distributed among rich and poor alike do little to help the poor: free higher education, for instance, subsidizes the rich at the expense of the poor who are better served with basic education. Such policies need to be reexamined, even as efforts are made to help the poor share in the benefits of economic growth through investments in education, health services, and rural and housing development.

Within the Islamic world, there is also the need to take regional differences into account in combating poverty. In the oil-producing Arab countries, a comprehensive welfare state has helped to alleviate the problem of poverty; yet this social safety net is now coming under threat from fiscal, economic and domestic pressures. Besides issues of liberalization and democracy, this problem raises the question of how to shift from rentier to tax-based economies without worsening poverty. By contrast, one of the most difficult problems in both India and Pakistan is the high level of public debt, which diverts economic resources that could otherwise go to address social needs.

Another issue which needs to be addressed is the role of violent conflict in creating and perpetuating poverty. According to the Millennium Development Report, 22 out of the more than 30 countries least able to attain their development goals were either in or emerging from conflict. Many of these countries are in the Islamic world. Thus, some participants saw the need to integrate strategies for conflict prevention and management into economic planning and programming.

Throughout the discussion, a number of participants cited the need for a much more active U.S. commitment in helping the Islamic world to address the problem of poverty. More than once, it was pointed out that the U.S. financial commitment to poverty alleviation around the world has gone down in recent years. Meanwhile, some participants alleged, U.S. actions are actually worsening the problem in some cases: for example, U.S. arms sales to Muslim countries were blamed for siphoning funds away from poverty alleviation and social needs. In sum, there was a widespread view that it would be difficult to address the problem of poverty in the absence of more effective U.S. leadership.

Session 3: Cultural Liberty and Autonomy

In this session, Hadia Mubarak, president of the Muslim Students Association of the United States and Canada, spoke on the priorities for women’s rights in the Islamic world, and Rafiq Zakaria, a journalist, scholar, author and former Indian ambassador to the United Nations, addressed the issue of minority rights as well



as the broader relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Both presentations raised broader questions about religious reform and the relationship between religious and secular power, which were reflected in the ensuing discussion.

Mubarak focused on the need to ground debates about women's rights in the religious and cultural context of Islam. As she pointed out, the topic of gender equality in Muslim countries invariably raises debates about cultural authenticity and fears of Western cultural domination. Rather than framing their arguments in the old terms of Western superiority and Muslim inferiority, feminists in Muslim countries have achieved their greatest successes in recent years through a different kind of discourse, focusing on the compatibility of reform with Islamic religious principles and culture. It is important, she said, to advocate reforms in such terms in order to convince Muslims of their religious legitimacy. She called for an effort to engage religious values and restore the lost pluralism of the Islamic legal tradition, using the tool of *ijtihad* and including religious scholars and women from more conservative backgrounds in the debate.

Mubarak pointed out three areas where supporters of gender reform should concentrate their efforts. First, there is the need to reform family law, which in many areas of the Muslim world is the last bastion of *shari'ah*, or Islamic law. Women need greater access to courts, the right to choose marriage partners without a guardian's permission, and the right to divorce. Second, women must be given stronger political representation, if necessary through quotas in national parliaments and other institutions. Finally, there must be an effort to change the unfair nationality laws in most Muslim countries, which prevent mothers from passing their nationality on to their children.

Above all, Mubarak said, reformers in Muslim countries need to be consistent in their principles. For example, women should have the right to dress however they choose, with individuals deciding for themselves whether or not to wear the veil, or *hijab*. Yet this principle is violated not only in countries such as Saudi Arabia, but also in strongly secular countries such as Turkey, which discriminates against women who wear the veil. In such cases, reformers need to show consistency in supporting individual rights, not enforcement of one cultural norm over another.

Speaking on the topic of minority rights, Rafiq Zakaria noted that the fundamental issue involved is the relationship of Muslims to non-Muslims. Especially since the events of September 11, 2001, this issue lies at the root of the crisis now facing Muslims throughout the world. Drawing on the Qur'an and the sayings of the Prophet Muhammad, Zakaria argued that Islam is very clear on this issue: Muslims are to coexist in peace and harmony with non-Muslims. Some Muslim rulers have used religion as a pretext to wage aggressive war on their non-Muslim neighbors and persecute non-Muslim minorities—yet the historical record shows that such rulers have usually acted out of personal greed or ambition rather than religious faith.

Turning to the present day, Zakaria portrayed minority rights as a key indicator of the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims. Formal assurances of minority rights are often hollow: just because a constitution grants certain

“Discourse is very important, and the way we advocate for gender reform will have a deep impact on the effectiveness of the campaign. By depoliticizing the debate on gender, we can begin to address real and legitimate issues.”



“The fundamental question for Muslims everywhere should be, do we want our young people to live under control and under pressure, or do we want them to live in an environment of freedom and liberty, so that they have their own choices?”

rights does not mean that they will really be respected. Furthermore, democracy is not always a boon for minorities. Rulers can all too easily misuse the idea of majority rule to persecute minorities, just as they misuse the idea of religion. In closing, Zakaria underscored the need to speak out against the misrepresentation of Islam both in the Western and the Islamic worlds. The demonization of Islam in the West must end, but Muslim attitudes must also change. In particular, he blamed terrorist groups for promoting violence in the name of Islam and promoting a false view of religion.

During the ensuing discussion, participants echoed some aspects of the speakers' presentations, while amending or challenging others. Some participants questioned the notion of women's rights based purely on individual choice, saying it did not reflect the reality in Muslim countries. For example, given the social pressures on women to conform in a social environment ruled by men, it is impossible to speak of the veil as something that women choose for themselves—even when it is not imposed by law. Some participants also challenged the legitimacy of *shari'ah* as a mere political and intellectual construct. In this view, framing reforms in the language of Islamic law only reinforces conservative norms and makes it more difficult to promote a more open and inclusive cultural identity.

In general, most participants seemed to see little hope of comprehensive gains in women's or minority rights absent a broader movement of religious reform. Yet they doubted whether this could be achieved under current conditions. Part of the problem is a lack of human capital. Several participants expressed frustration with the low intellectual and academic standards among the existing class of religious scholars. The best and brightest students today choose modern professions such as medicine or business, and the ranks of qualified religious scholars have dwindled.

Many, if not most, participants appeared to believe that any project of religious renewal and reform depends on a revival of Islam's human capital. Some argued that what is needed is a new wave of scholars who are both modern in outlook and well grounded in religion. Their answer was to invest not less, but more in religious education, establish alternative educational institutions focused on promoting *ijtihad*, and to challenge old customs. Another suggestion was for Muslim reformers to organize a global network of NGOs and think tanks to promote moderate perspectives on Islam. Thus, for many participants, the fundamental challenge appeared once again to be one of education; in this way, the conversation came full circle.



Governance and Reform Task Force

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Session 1: Nature, Pace, and Sequence of Reform

The issue of governance and reform has become a hot topic in the Islamic world. As Muslim countries, particularly those in the Arab world, embark on the path of political and economic reform, many questions begin to arise as to the best way to promote such reform efforts and what role Islam has to play in that process. The task force on governance and reform convened to discuss the overall need for reform throughout the Islamic world as well as to define the role of Islamists and outside parties such as the United States in the reform process. The first session of the task force focused on the nature, pace, and sequence of reform.

The governance and reform task force was co-chaired by Saad Eddin Ibrahim, chairman of the Ibn Khaldun Center for Development and Studies, and Shibley Telhami, Anwar Sadat Professor at the University of Maryland and a non-resident senior fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution. Each of the two speakers stressed the need for reform and the danger of the status quo but approached these topics from different angles.

Sadig al-Mahdi, president of the National Umma Party in Sudan, emphasized the need for a synthesis of civil society and the state based on one strategy of development and reform. Boutheina Cheriet, a professor at the University of Algiers and former Minister of Women's Affairs of Algeria, spoke of the importance of addressing the rights of all citizens, including marginalized groups such as minorities and women, when discussing reform. She advocated looking at reform in a more philosophical way by using the old generation of Arab thinkers as role models. Tamara Wittes, a fellow at the Saban Center at Brookings, focused her remarks on the idea of risk management and the interdependence of the four arenas of reform (educational, cultural, economic, and political).

Several themes emerged during the discussion. Regarding the role of outside parties, participants agreed that reform will not occur if the West attempts to impose it on the Muslim world. Discussants from within the Muslim world expressed a fear of being "imperialized" by the West if the reform process does not move forward on their own terms. Furthermore, most agreed that reform must come as a call from the people, not imposed top-down by governments or regimes.

Participants also agreed on the need to institutionalize reform in a way that cannot be corrupted, such as in the tangible form of a bill of rights or constitution. There was also an emphasis on the need to be able to chart the reform process and hold states accountable for their successes and failures along the way. This tangible reform document could also provide some legitimacy to democratic regimes, an issue about which participants felt strongly. Legitimacy, many argued, is the key to reform.

The role of Islamists was touched on briefly, with the point made by some participants that the question of Islam and Islamist groups cannot be ignored when discussing reform. There was a sense that currently many Muslim societies are going through a process of Islamization (as opposed to secularization) and this period should be embraced as a chance to re-claim Islam from the radicals.

"Unless there is cultural reform, political reform will not take off. We must address the fact that there is a debate between those reactionaries who want to preserve the past and those modernizers who only seek to adjust to the future. We need to have loyalty that has a future or a future that is based on loyalty."

"Inadequate reform will not simply fail to achieve our goals and aspirations, but it is my view that inadequate reform will in fact strengthen radicalism by increasing public resentment and by preserving a lack of political alternatives to the status quo."

“To become an authentically internalized practice, reform should be metamorphosed into a bolder societal aspiration for basic human rights, and all human rights without exception, especially the one of enfranchisement of civil society, i.e. of all its actors, as free and autonomous agents of social change.”

“However deep or pervasive the Islamist sentiment, however autocratic the regime and repressive its tactics, change cannot be avoided. Reform cannot be halted. The forces of political transformation can’t be controlled.”

On the topic of risk, participants recognized that even the smallest reform effort will be seen by the regimes in power as a threat to the status quo. Reform could thus lead to instability and provide an opening for extremists to make a bid for power. Therefore, if one is trying to preserve stability, reforms must address basic human needs and aspirations. At the same time, reforms should be designed to create a political culture that preserves social stability in the short term while aiming to create an environment suitable for democracy in the long term. Furthermore, reforms that open up political competition must have clear rules.

One point of contention was the issue of reform in the Arab world versus reform in the larger Muslim world. Non-Arab participants argued that they do not face the same need for reform as those in the Arab world. Thus, several participants advocated culturally sensitive reform, specifically tailored to a state’s needs.

Overall, speakers and discussants agreed that the reform issue is no longer a question of “if,” but a question of “when.” There are several risks that states will face when taking steps to reform, but the danger of maintaining the status quo is outweighed by the potential benefits of reform.

Session 2: The Role of Islamist Groups

In any discussion on the topic of governance and reform in the Muslim world, the role of Islamists is bound to be a major point of contention. The Muslim world saw a reversal in the push for democracy during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s because of a fear of that extremist groups would use the process to take power. This session of the governance and reform task force addressed how to deal with Islamist groups and whether or not conditions in Islamic countries have changed for the better or worse for these groups.

Gamal al-Banna of the Fawziyya & Gamal al-Banna Foundation in Egypt argued that any reform effort that excludes the Islamists will be seen by the public as illegitimate and outlined why the Islamists pose a threat to the existing regimes and the West. Khurshid Ahmad, chairman of the Institute of Policy Studies in Pakistan, disputed the claim that Islam and democracy are incompatible, arguing that true democratization and Islamization are correlates, and that in order for reform to succeed it must be internal and rooted in Islamic history and culture. Robin Wright of *The Washington Post* spoke about the case of Iran as an example of an Islamist government. Wright outlined four stages in U.S. foreign policy towards Islamist groups—a period of silence, a collision of civilizations, a period of missed opportunities, and a coalescing of civilizations.

One of the main themes of the discussion was the role of external influence. Co-chair Saad Eddin Ibrahim postulated that every major change in the Arab and Muslim world in the last 200 years has been jolted by an external shock. Several participants disagreed with this idea, arguing instead that change cannot be catalyzed either by force or by peaceful means from the outside; rather it must be the result of internal debate.

Discussants emphasized the importance of maintaining a dialogue with moderate Islamists in order to isolate or dilute extremist forces. One participant



pointed out that the United States government has a very difficult time dealing with religion in any sense. This means that moderates and reformers are most often equated with secularists in American discourse, thereby eliminating the chance for a U.S.-moderate Islamist dialogue.

The issue of legitimacy was also discussed, with most participants agreeing that in order for a political reform to be legitimate it must be open to all sectors of society, including Islamists.

The Algeria example was cited as the catalyst for change in the U.S. relationship with Islamist groups; however, the previous outlook has since evolved and today many in the West are willing to deal with Islamist groups to a limited extent. Khurshid Ahmad called on participants to abandon the use of the Algeria cliché altogether. Robin Wright concluded the session by emphasizing that the United States is now at a point where it is ready to engage Islamists as long as they renounce terrorism, an opportunity she believes should be seized.

Session 3: The Role of Outside Parties

Following September 11, 2001 the United States and other western powers have taken on the role of ‘democracy-promoter’ in the Muslim world. However, many U.S. efforts have been rejected purely because of their source. This session of the governance and reform task force convened to discuss what role, if any, outside parties should play in promoting political, economic, educational, and cultural reform in the Muslim world.

The speakers for this session approached the topic with considerable experiential knowledge. Scott Carpenter, deputy assistant secretary of state for democracy, human rights, and labor, government of the United States, argued that the United States has an important role to play in the reform process in the Muslim world. However, while the United States should promote political, economic, and educational reform, as well as women’s empowerment, it should not try to alter Islam. Anwar Ibrahim, former Deputy Prime Minister of Malaysia and senior associate at St. Antony’s College at Oxford University, argued that Washington should be encouraged to do more in regard to reform, but only under the auspices of adherence to universal human rights and freedom. Jackson Diehl, deputy editorial page editor of *The Washington Post*, looked at lessons from the democratization experiences of Latin American and Eastern Europe and argued that the United States played a crucial role in both regions.

Most participants agreed that the United States has a role to play in promoting reform, but there was disagreement as to what that role should be. Generally, participants agreed that the United States should not focus its efforts on government-to-government initiatives, but rather focus on building partnerships with civil society groups and other non-state actors. One participant also acknowledged the importance of the role of the media as another potential U.S. partner. However, some participants brought up the power of conditionality as a U.S. tool to promote reform, and therefore did not want to dismiss outright the role of the United States vis-à-vis governments in the Muslim world.

“The suitable and direct way [for the United States to promote democracy] is to address peoples who strive for democracy and freedom and are even willing to hail the U.S. call for religious reform, but who are aware that there must be an affinity between means and goals, that noble goals cannot be achieved by vile means.”

“Reform has to be genuine. Not pseudo-reform, not reform which is being tutored to fulfill certain Western interests within and without. That reform will never take off.”

“The question for the United States is how do we maximize the desire to help without hurting at the same time.”

“There is a contradiction between those who have strong reservations against some of the policies of the United States but are also looking up to the United States when it comes to issues of freedom, democracy, and human rights. I would still opt for a policy to encourage Washington to do more, but purely on matters of universally agreed principles of justice, human rights, and freedom.”

“We are in consensus that change in the region, whether it is in the Arab-Israeli conflict or whether it is political, requires a certain partnership between outsiders and insiders.”

The discussion also touched on how to identify other outside parties, besides the United States, who could play a positive role in promoting reform. One participant expressed concern over relying solely on the United States and advocated using other states such as India and Turkey, states within the region with considerable influence. Another participant brought up the Muslim diaspora in the West as an untapped resource. Both of these ideas can help circumvent the issues associated with U.S. intervention, such as credibility problems and the general feelings of mistrust between the United States and the Muslim world at present.

Participants also agreed that although the Muslim world as a whole is unique and each country is unique, many lessons can be learned from the U.S. role in Eastern Europe and Latin America. In the case of Latin America, an important lesson was the success of the United States in maintaining a security relationship with autocrats while at the same time encouraging civil society and funding human rights groups and independent media.

Of the many topics this task force discussed, the role of the United States in the reform process was the most contentious issue. American participants generally advocated a stronger U.S. role and Muslim world participants argued the contrary. There were some points of consensus, mostly relating to the need for further dialogue on this subject and a re-evaluation of the U.S. government in its role as democracy promoter in the region.



Science and Technology Leaders Seminar

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ORGANIZED BY THE BROOKINGS INSTITUTION, WITH THE support of Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, and hosted by the Government of Qatar, the Science and Technology Leaders Seminar brought together governmental science policy-makers, non-governmental science and education policy developers and advocates, research scientists, and educators, as well as many others with an interest in how science and technology can contribute to strengthening the U.S. relationship with the Islamic world and aiding the development of individual societies within it.

The issues addressed could be divided into four broad topics, with a certain degree of overlap. The first dealt with the role of science in education up to secondary level, as well as the public understanding of science. The second focused on science education at the undergraduate and graduate levels, and science research. The third considered the issues of innovation, development and how to maximize the transfer of science and technology for societal benefit. The fourth looked generally at the role of international collaborations in developing science and technology in the Islamic world.

It was noted that science and technology are essential to the U.S.–Islamic world relationship. Since they promote some of the most basic aspects of civil society—meritocracy, transparency, and mutual respect—they can strengthen the moderate elements in societies. Technological progress must enhance both the consumption and production sides of technology; the Islamic world lags particularly in the latter aspect.

It was pointed out that there is great variance across the states and communities in the Islamic world, and that, importantly, the understanding of science in the Islamic world is different from that in the West (even in the vocabulary used). Thus, it was emphasized that one must be careful not to oversimplify the problem of science and technology cooperation, and not fail to take account of its regional, national and cultural contexts. As a practical point, it was noted that the World Bank is a source of information, advice, and possibly funds for initiatives to foster collaboration with the Islamic world, and a strategy for such collaboration might involve starting with modest targets, exceeding them, and then expanding them. In all fields of activity, success stories should be highlighted as they can have a positive effect on other countries. Simply spending more money will not help unless it is spent in the right way, and on the correct timescale.

Science in education up to secondary level and the public understanding of science

The current situation in terms of science education was addressed first. It was noted that countries in the Muslim world tend to rank poorly in international science and mathematics surveys and exams. An educational trend towards the use of madrasas for schooling, in which the emphasis on science is generally low, was also identified. The demographic bulge in the young population of many countries of the Islamic world presents an unprecedented societal challenge, to which it is necessary to respond urgently and with determination; elementary education has a particularly

“Science is an agent for global transformation.”

“Science and technology represent some of the most important aspects of our age, and can make a real impact in people’s lives.”

“It is necessary to mobilize the scientific community; science will deliver if it is supported.”



“Elementary education is essential.”

important role to play in equipping this upcoming generation to contribute to a stable society. A scientific grounding is a prerequisite for many technical jobs and therefore, science education has an important role to play in tackling youth unemployment. The view was expressed that the educational system in many states in the Islamic world is not particularly weak (though nevertheless in need of improvement) but that the societal system does not allow education to be translated into research and developmental excellence. It was also pointed out that science can be an agent for social progress and transformation. To aid cooperative progress, the West must recognize that Islam does not, as is sometimes claimed, constitute a ‘non-absorptive culture’, but is open to new knowledge and innovation.

In seeking to improve science education, reform of both the structures and the curriculum is necessary. More modern schools could be established, in which the teaching of science is integral and to which students are exposed at an early stage. Another, possibly more feasible, option is to work within the existing structures and introduce science to the curriculum in madrasas. Either way, the educational reform must be carried out sensitively; role models of successful educational institutions can be helpful. Improvements in education should be approached systematically and scientifically, recognizing that it takes time and care to develop good educational material. Translation and adaptation of the best material, wherever it comes from, will therefore be useful. At the moment, science is often taught in a way that is divorced from the spirit of scientific enquiry; this both deters students and prepares them poorly for more advanced science research. Rectifying this inadequacy need not require great resources, but resources (textbooks, facilities, etc.) do need to be enhanced if science is to be promoted as well as possible. The Internet can have an important role to play in facilitating the use of more modern teaching resources, but the cost of internet access can be prohibitive for many schools in the developing world. Financial and logistical support will therefore be necessary to make access possible in these areas.

“Strengthening education that leads to job creation is vital.”

Training of the teachers themselves is also vital. Academies for training teachers, which could be regionally based, would teach them modern methods and provide educators with internationally recognized certification, conforming to various benchmarks. Developed countries have associations of teachers that have great expertise and could therefore help in establishing these training academies and programs.

Science education and research at the undergraduate and graduate level

The question of science education at the tertiary and graduate levels is bound up with that of academic research, since both activities are generally carried out in universities. It was agreed that scholars outside the developed world constitute a resource of great potential, and it was noted that students appreciate the ambitious goals of science and are keen to participate in them. However, 22 of the countries in the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) are among the least developed in the world, and only 0.2 percent of the OIC’s GDP is spent on research and development. Thus, the overall OIC contribution to research is less than that of relatively small countries such as Switzerland or Israel. Its member



countries are characterized by a small fraction of engineers, few universities, which are of low quality, and, in many cases, great gender inequalities. It was noted that there is no culture of lifelong learning in Muslim world countries, and this is a new approach to which they will need to adapt in order to allow continual progress in a modern setting.

Quality research must be enhanced in two ways: human expertise and facilities. Reform and upgrading of universities, some of which used to be strong, is urgent, and there is a need to enhance research output. Bodies to support research on a competitive basis should be established, and organizations such as the Kuwait Fund for the Advancement of Science (KFAS) might be a model.

There is great scope for cooperation to enhance advanced scientific education and research. Cooperation in joint degrees and joint grants is productive, as has already been demonstrated by the cooperation between the Gulf Cooperation Council and the European Union. In order to foster and institutionalize cooperation as much as possible, regional networks of universities, in which there is U.S. involvement, are required. A possible system in such a framework would allow doctoral research students to perform part of their thesis work outside their home country. Internships in U.S. universities, government laboratories, and industry could be valuable, as well as scholarships to allow students from countries in the Islamic world to study in the United States. Identification of common problems or areas of interest would help to foster links and joint approaches. Possible areas of research collaboration include water resources, energy, infectious diseases, and dust storm forecasting. It might be advisable to organize international conferences to reach agreement on the most important topics for this cooperative research, e.g., to identify which infectious diseases should be focused on, and to develop a strategy to tackle them. Integration of scientists from the Islamic world and the developed world should take place on a merit basis, and excellence should have an absolute priority. The view was offered that it is necessary to establish research centers, and at least one world-class university, in the Islamic world. The desirability of having a competitive university research system with which the United States can collaborate was also underlined.

Qatar provides an interesting model of university cooperation between the United States and the Islamic world. Offshoots of various world-class U.S. universities have been set up in 'Education City,' but developing a research strategy has proved difficult. When choosing research areas, it is important to select those that will support the teaching effort by entailing the recruitment of staff who are suitably qualified to teach. One should also select research areas that take advantage of benefits resulting from the location of the university. In Qatar's case, these unique local benefits might include explorations of the genetic makeup of the populace, or studies on the high water salinity. The major challenge in this model is to determine how a small institution can carry out important research. The model of U.S. universities that have close links with their communities, such as Land Grant Institutions, was cited as possibly being applicable to countries in the Islamic world; it also helps to define the research priorities.

"Integrating Muslim and developed world scientists must be merit-based."

"We need networks of universities."



“Research excellence should have absolute priority.”

Further, earlier remarks on the potential impact of the Internet in elementary and secondary education noted that the Internet can facilitate access to higher education. The specific example of the availability of teaching material online from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology was cited. It was pointed out, however, that use of this material alone does not constitute a full course, and person-to-person contact is essential to the educational process. Further, most communities in developing countries do not have access to broadband Internet, which makes bandwidth-hungry applications (such as streaming video) impossible. A ‘chatroom’ approach might be feasible, but even this can be expensive for those relying only on dialup access.

It was remarked that good universities could become world class if more students have the opportunity to attend them. Scholarships could help in broadening this access.

Innovation, development, and the transfer of science and technology for societal benefit

The developing world needs to participate at the forefront of innovation, or else it will always be in the position of merely buying the latest technology. It was noted that the particular history of the Islamic world in scientific achievement means that it should be regarded separately from the rest of the developing world when considering the issues of science and technology. There is a need to identify those areas of innovation that can be of the greatest mutual benefit to the United States and its Islamic world partners. Regional organizations such as the Arab Science and Technology Foundation (ASTF) can help in promoting science and technology for society’s benefit.

“If you don’t let the developing world into the technology conversation, they’ll always be buying the last one.”

Most research and development in the West takes place in the private sector, and this should be encouraged in the Islamic world. There are Arab investors who are adopting a Western approach to technology development, and this should be highlighted to encourage others. In considering innovation and enterprise, a salutary statistic is that even in the United States only 1 in 100 start-ups succeeds, so the availability of capital and a banking system that facilitates entrepreneurship are areas that must be improved. A good system for protecting intellectual property is also required, but the political will to implement these changes is currently lacking. Government intervention in the process of innovation is best targeted at those areas which are not immediately profitable; the private sector will readily get involved in those areas which are profitable. It was noted that there exist philanthropic organizations and endowments in the Islamic world which are currently involved in the building of mosques, hospitals, and schools and which could, in principle, invest in science and technology projects. This possibility should be explored. The multilateral science centers established in cooperation with the U.S. Department of State and based in Russia and Ukraine, were cited as a model worthy of exploration and potential emulation in the Islamic world. A wide range of civilian research takes place in the centers and commercial viability is the bottom line; venture capital is available for development.

In fostering technology transfer, one challenge that must be addressed is the current gap between the scientific and developmental communities. It was commented that twinning between international science and technology organizations would speed up the transfer of knowledge and experience. It was also noted that both the U.S. government and Islamic world states support international development to achieve the 10 broad goals outlined by John H. Marburger, director of the U.S. Office of Science and Technology Policy, in his January 5, 2005 address at the Brookings Institution.

The process of innovation development is currently too expensive and complicated for countries at an early developmental stage to carry out. It may, however, be possible for them to innovate in those technologies that are appropriate to their circumstances. To allow foreign direct investment, which leads eventually to local capacities for innovation and enterprise and should therefore be encouraged, it is necessary to have political stability, a well-educated, technically aware workforce, the necessary infrastructure, and a growing domestic market. The experience and potential model of India in reaping the benefit of long-term support of education was emphasized. It was noted that the Bush administration is presently negotiating free trade agreements with a number of Middle Eastern countries. Since the FTA with Jordan was signed in 2000, the rate of job creation in Jordan has increased four-fold and its annual exports have increased from \$31 million to \$1.1 billion.

International cooperation

Science and technology can promote links even when there are political differences; thus, cooperation, as well as exchange, is important. In research collaboration, the emphasis must be on quality research, so that the United States can also benefit from the enterprise; this also makes it easier to justify the cooperation to an American audience. Since multilateral approaches are dealt with at a different governmental level from bilateral ones (where there are pre-existing policies, diplomatic positions, etc. to consider), they may offer a route for new initiatives. They are also less prone to corruption than bilateral initiatives, which, it was commented, have not actually achieved a great deal. The obstacles to regional approaches, and the current lack of success, were noted, and it was recognized that there needs to be will on both sides for cooperation to be a success.

A useful means of facilitating cooperation could be high-level visits under the auspices of national scientific academies. Academies of science in the Islamic world have great potential but they need to be strengthened and rejuvenated. They could be vehicles for collaboration to address shared problems, but are currently ineffective. It was pointed out that current multilateral entities do not involve the United States, and therefore U.S. engagement in such bodies in the future would represent a significant improvement on the status quo. The location of regional cooperation bodies, which must be neutral, and the mechanisms of interaction are crucial. Indeed, with some countries in the Islamic world it may

“Initial inward investment is the beginning of a process.”

“We need to identify those areas of innovation that can have the greatest mutual benefit for U.S. and Islamic world partners.”



“Science and technology can promote links even when there are political differences.”

be necessary for collaboration and meetings to take place in a neutral venue in order to allow the United States to participate.

Science which does not contribute to a country's GDP is sometimes described as a luxury. Science and technology are a low priority in most Islamic world countries because they are not seen as having potential benefits; more basic concerns take precedence. OIC governments are, however, usually willing to spend money if they are sure that it will, in turn, be spent within their borders. This makes the regional cooperation model feasible if managed correctly. There is current funding for research in many Arab countries, even though there is not enough, and universities should be encouraged to spend this money on productive projects. The multilateral approach can help to ensure that this money is better spent. A greater realization at the governmental level of the benefits that accrue from supporting science would also be most beneficial.

The Islamic world diaspora is an important but relatively untapped resource in developing international collaboration, and it can also lead to the establishment of mirror research groups. Diaspora scientists are also more likely to enter into cooperation with scientists based in their ancestral home. Information dissemination is critical to allowing cooperation to flourish: information about existing collaborations, leading institutions in the Islamic world, and Islamic world diasporas could be made available. This would help students and professors, and could lead to further collaboration. In this context it would also be helpful to identify U.S. institutions with which collaboration could take place. Current U.S. programs which encourage a “brain drain” of talent to the United States, albeit inadvertently, should be adjusted so as to deter this. Given that most of the Islamic world is poor, it may be necessary to use grants in order to entice students who have studied in the developed world to return to their home countries.

There currently appears to be no overarching U.S. strategy to foster science and technology cooperation with the Islamic world, and it was commented that current problems in the U.S. relationship with the Arab world could spread to other parts of the Islamic world if action is not taken. Projects in the science and technology sector can be implemented in phases if a long-term strategy is adopted. For cooperation involving technology transfer and innovation, there needs to be a strategy to achieve near-term success with a product that can be readily commercialized. A cooperative plan of action will require significant loosening of visa requirements, and the starting of scholarships and internships. In addition, U.S.-led research centers involving Islamic world states should be promoted. It was noted that it would not be wise to assume that the United States will change its visa policy, even though it was recognized that this would be helpful.

The meeting ended with the finding that strengthening cooperative relationships within a strategic American approach to science and technology in the Islamic world would be of wide and lasting benefit.



Economic Leaders Seminar

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THE ECONOMIC LEADERS ROUNDTABLE BROUGHT together entrepreneurs, governmental policymakers, researchers, and civil society leaders to diagnose the economic ailments of the Islamic world, prescribe potential remedies and outline areas for U.S. involvement and assistance.

Forum participants discussed the importance of FDI and GDP growth and other factors to economic development, the need for increased transparency and accountability, the costs and benefits of WTO membership, FTAs, and FDI, and potential domestic sources of development.

Summary of Findings

The Islamic world faces a series of economic challenges that serve as roadblocks for stability and prosperity. These challenges include the presence of state-dominated economies, low levels of foreign direct investment (FDI), high levels of political instability, and bureaucratic and corporate corruption and inefficiency.

No single factor can determine the economic success of a country; however, economic freedom, political stability, strong financial and judicial institutions, elite leadership and commitment, and investment in human capital are instrumental in reaching this goal.

Key priorities for sustainable economic growth include: the integration of regional markets; promotion of free trade agreements (FTAs); reducing conflict and political instability; strengthening institutions and reducing administrative barriers; developing a work force with skills matching industry needs; keeping private capital in the region and attracting new FDI; and strengthening financial sectors, especially stock markets and banking.

The free-market economic experiences of the Southeast Asian ‘tigers’ and the emirate of Dubai can provide an array of lessons for the developing economies of the Islamic world. The economic problems of the Islamic world, though numerable, can be solved by a commitment to reform by countries in the region and the support of developed economies and international institutions.

FDI and GDP Growth

Despite its population size and geopolitical significance, the Middle East accounted for only 0.7 percent of global FDI during the 1990s, close to the FDI in Sweden. Most of the investment was in the energy sector. The low level of FDI has been caused by a number of factors, including political instability and high administrative barriers. Free trade agreements—such as the one between the U.S. and Jordan—cutting administrative red tape, reducing conflict and instability, and strengthening financial institutions and non-energy sectors can all serve to increase FDI.

FDI: The Good and the Bad

FDI was identified as the potential basis for further economic and political reforms in the region, as creating a suitable business climate often requires major structural adjustments over time. It was emphasized that human and economic

“Transparency and accountability are keys to fighting corruption and abuse of power, which are major obstacles both to economic development and the creation of business climates conducive to attracting FDI.”

“Despite its population size and geopolitical significance, the Middle East accounted for only 0.7 percent of global FDI during the 1990s, close to the FDI in Sweden.”



development are long-term structural issues, and the creation of an entrepreneurial middle class was listed as a critical priority. Participants shared information about experiences with FDI and government investment activities in Azerbaijan and Saudi Arabia. Several participants raised concerns about companies and governments—foreign and domestic—trying to use investment as a political tool for securing influence.

While FDI is critical to GDP growth, the residents of the region also play an instrumental role. Regional markets should be integrated, institutional changes should be made to encourage local private capital to remain in the region, and a work force with skills matching industry needs should be developed.

Factors Beyond FDI and GDP Growth

Parameters other than FDI and GDP growth are also critical in setting targets for reform and economic development. For example, access to education and health services, ensuring pension payments, and tackling infant and maternal mortality rates are also important priorities. Also crucial are adequate institutional frameworks to support FDI, deregulation and economic liberalization, general support for entrepreneurship, the establishment of small and medium size businesses (SMEs), and sustained, serious support for economic reform programs. It was suggested that economic freedom inevitably leads to political expression and that governments should be prepared to accept this if they wanted economic development to continue.

The Need for Transparency and Accountability

Transparency and accountability are key in fighting corruption and abuse of power, which are major obstacles both to economic development and the creation of business climates conducive to attracting FDI. Civil society can help foster private initiatives to stimulate business and economic development. Microfinance programs in Bangladesh were highlighted as models of such work. However, participants also noted the difficulties of promoting such initiatives as they would meet resistance from governments and major private entrepreneurs that enjoy the government's favor. Algeria was cited as a case in which the government and government-backed private sector were reluctant to attract FDI, even from other Arab countries.

The Costs and Benefits of Economic Liberalization

The issue of Muslim countries' membership in international trade and economic organizations, such as the WTO, was also raised. The recent experiences of India and China demonstrate the benefits of WTO membership, however, participants also noted through the case of Kyrgyzstan that too rapid an entry into the WTO could be damaging. Accession to the WTO should be a well thought-through process, and it was suggested that a degree of protectionism for domestic industries is necessary in the early stages of market integration for countries pursuing economic reform and deregulation.

“The recent experiences of India and China demonstrate the benefits of WTO membership, however...the case of Kyrgyzstan demonstrates that too rapid an entry into the WTO could also be damaging.”



Concluding FTAs with major economic powers like the United States can be difficult given the glaring political and economic asymmetry. Local companies in many developing countries with FTAs with the United States often find it difficult, if not impossible, to access U.S. markets. It was pointed out that countries often face significant challenges when opening their markets to FTA partners, and FTAs are unlikely to be always mutually beneficial given the fact that investors are rarely “benevolent.” Foreign investors usually look for opportunities that are more profitable, looking at competing proposals and calculating their risks rather than undertaking a public service. Social responsibility often means very different things for governments and private investors.

“Concluding FTAs with major economic powers like the United States can be difficult given the glaring political and economic asymmetry.”

The discussion touched upon other challenges that governments face when trying to reap benefits from increased exports and investment, including the difficulty of ensuring revenue distribution and the diversification of income sources for export-dependent countries.

Domestic Sources of Development

Participants also pointed to untapped domestic sources for economic development, such as tourism and alternative means of generating investment capital. Malaysia’s special Hajj investment fund, in which villagers make deposits to save for the pilgrimage costs, was discussed. It was noted that the fund has amassed billions of dollars and has become one of the largest sources of revenue that have been used for investment in Malaysia and other Muslim countries. It was suggested that similar pilgrimage funds could be set up elsewhere with the necessary institutional defenses against corruption and other potential problems.

The session concluded with an emphasis on the absence of a single determinant for economic success. Economic freedom is necessary for progress to be made, but other factors, such as political stability, strong institutions, elite leadership and commitment, and investment in human capital are also critical.



Soliya Interactive

U.S. & Muslim World Leaders Answer Student Questions



PAUSED 0:00:00.000

Connection speed: Broadband Dial-up

| | | |
|---|--|---|
|  Asha Qatar University Play ? |  Peter Virginia Commonwealth Play ? |  Remi A.U. of Beirut Play ? |
|  Jen U. Maine-Machias Play ? |  Abed Al Quds University Play ? |  Alex Harvard University Play ? |

Please click on the **Play** buttons above to see the students' questions. Then drag a **?** onto a participant from the US-Islamic World Forum below to see his/her answer to that particular question. Slide the **←→** below to see more participants.

| | | | |
|--|--|--|---|
|  Bio |  Bio |  Bio |  Bi |
| Muna AbuSulayman Executive Manager Kingdom Holdings Saudi Arabia | Abdul Gheffar Aziz Director, Foreign Affairs Jammal-i-Islami Pakistan | Hossam Badrawi Chairman Education/Scientific Research People's Assembly - Egypt | Malik Dahlan Foreign Legal Consulta White & Case Saudi Arabia |

←→

The initiative provided a multi-media interface through which students in the Muslim world and the West were able to ask questions to a number of leaders that attended the Forum.



Linking Students with U.S.–Islamic World Leaders

A HIGHLIGHT OF THE 2005 U.S.–ISLAMIC WORLD FORUM was its multi-media youth outreach program.

The outreach element was developed in partnership with Soliya Interactive, a nonprofit organization that uses media technology to connect university students in the United States, Europe, and predominantly Muslim countries for cross-cultural dialogue and learning. A local film crew of students from Qatar University assisted with the on-site operation and taping.

The initiative provided a multi-media interface through which students in the Muslim world and the West were able to ask questions to a number of leaders that attended the Forum. Videos of these questions and answers were then made available on-line to the students, university classes, and the wider public. This enabled a unique discussion between leaders and students across the United States and the Muslim world.

The participants consisted of a diverse set of Soliya students from al-Quds University, American University in Beirut, Harvard University, University of Maine-Machias, Qatar University, and Virginia Commonwealth University. Their questions were posed to 25 Forum attendees. These participants included such notables as Anwar Ibrahim, former deputy prime minister of Malaysia; Richard Holbrooke, former U.S. ambassador to the United Nations; Abdul Ghaffar Aziz, director of foreign affairs for the Jamaat-e-Islami of Pakistan; Martin Indyk, director of the Saban Center for Middle East Policy; Saad Eddin Ibrahim, chairman of the Ibn Khaldun Center; Rami Khouri, editor of the *Daily Star*; Judea Pearl, father of the slain Wall Street Journal reporter Daniel Pearl; and Anne Marie Slaughter, dean of the Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs at Princeton University.

Via video, the attendees were questioned by the students on a series of issues about which the students were most concerned. Their questions ranged from whether the United States considers Islam a threat, and vice versa, to the nature of media coverage in the United States and the Muslim world. Interestingly, the multimedia set-up allowed the same set of student questions to be asked to each individual participant. Thus, the result enabled a unique compilation of viewpoints, allowing those on-line to compare and contrast the views of the leaders and discover both common themes and key areas of discord.

In sum, the proceedings enabled the leaders who help shape relations between the United States and the Islamic world to interact with a group of concerned students, who will help shape these relations in the future. It expanded the dialogue to include the younger generation. Video archives are available at the website of the U.S.–Islamic World Forum: www.us-islamicworldforum.org.

Press Coverage of the 2005 U.S.–Islamic World Forum

Media Outlets that Covered the 2005 U.S.–Islamic World Forum

al-Ahram (Egypt)
al-Hayat (United Kingdom)
al-Jazeera (Qatar)
al-Rayah (Qatar)
al-Riyadh Television (United Arab Emirates)
al-Sharq (Qatar)
al-Watan (Qatar)
Asian Age (India)
The Associated Press (United States)
Bangladesh Journal (Bangladesh)
Channel News Asia (Singapore)
CNN Turkey (Turkey)
CNBC (United States)
The Daily Star (Lebanon)
Detroit Free Press (United States)
Deutsche Welle TV (Germany)
GTU Currents (United States)
Gulf Times (Qatar)
Gulf in the Media (United Arab Emirates)
Gulf News (United Arab Emirates)
Harakah Daily (Malaysia)
IslamOnline.net
Jerusalem Post (Israel)
Khaleej Times (United Arab Emirates)
Knight Ridder Newspapers (United States)
Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) (Kuwait)
MPAC News (United States)
National Public Radio (NPR) (United States)
The News Sentinel (United States)
The Peninsula (Qatar)
Public Broadcasting Service (PBS-TV)
(United States)
Philadelphia Inquirer (United States)
Qatar Television (Qatar)
Sand Box (United States)
Slate (United States)
Tecuman Gazetesi (Turkey)
Tempo (Indonesia)
The Times (Pakistan)
Walf Fasdjri (Senegal)
Washington Post (United States)
Yahoo News (United States)

Notable Press Quotes About the 2005 U.S.–Islamic World Forum

“Specialists from around the world gathered at the Brookings Institution’s Forum, from Azerbaijan, the Sultanate of Oman, Indonesia, Morocco and from across the Atlantic Ocean... The dialogue maintained a dominant context around political reform, economic and social reform and talk of science and technology. Participants spoke a language of more progress, shining and humanity...”

AL-AHRAM

“The three-day forum...explored the prospects of creating a better and healthier environment for future relations between the United States and the Islamic world. The forum discussed issues such as the peace process in the Middle East in addition to security, stability and development, reforms and technology and the role of the media in raising awareness.”

AL-JAZEERA

“The U.S.–Islamic World Forum brought together 150 people who represent the most prestigious decision makers, political academics and researchers.”

AL-RAYAH

“The participants from the United States and 35 Islamic countries or communities represented the broad spectrum of opinion that defines the center and mild right and left of their societies, without hard-line representatives ...This spring seems to have clarified core ideological values and even some political middle ground where American and Islamic societies can meet and perhaps even work together for shared goals.”

THE DAILY STAR



“If today’s world didn’t have the “U.S.–Islamic World Forum,” it would have to be invented. Merely by existing, the conference provides a safe and creative space for world leaders to address our common problems...It will no doubt become the “Davos” for engagement between the United States and Muslim countries.”

GLOBAL HORIZONS

“In a world where there are still many prejudices, the Doha Forums are a practical expression of the desire of the great majority who wish to live in peace, harmony and mutual understanding with the rest of humanity.”

GULF TIMES

“... Despite the different approaches to the questions posed by the U.S.–Islamic World Forum that ended on here on Tuesday, participants achieved a common stand in their assessments. They said that despite mutual skepticism the two worlds have averted a clash of civilizations and are rebuilding their strained ties.”

GULF NEWS

“During the three-day event, 160 delegates from 35 countries exchanged views on political, social and academic topics with the aim of bolstering understanding and dialogue between the two sides...The speakers at the forum described the forum as a useful platform to search and discuss vital issues of interest to the United States and the Muslim world in order to reach a common ground, engage in dialogue and build constructive understanding.”

ISLAM ONLINE

“The “U.S.–Islamic World Forum” in Doha, Qatar broke new ground ... as it tackled the issue of democratization in the Muslim World. The three-day event was the third annual conference sponsored by the Brookings Institution and hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Qatar. Several comments throughout the Forum represented a significant public shift in U.S. engagement with the Muslim world.

MPAC NEWS

“...The forum had gone far ahead... removing the misunderstandings between the two parties. Anger and frustration have given way to serious discussion and contemplation.”

THE PENINSULA

“...To hang around the lobbies is to have a chance to meet some astonishing people.”

SLATE

“...[the] U.S.–Islamic conference I attended in Doha, Qatar, sponsored by the Qatari government and Washington’s Brookings Institution, brought together government officials, political activists and thinkers. They described autocracies working to mend a ruptured status quo at minimal cost to themselves, but also populations genuinely divided over the direction of change. Some also reported the beginnings of a turnaround in attitudes toward the United States, which were at rock-bottom a year ago...”

WASHINGTON POST



List of Participants

Algeria

BOUTHEINA CHERIET

Professor,
University of Algiers;
Former Minister of Women's Affairs

SLIM OTHMANI

General Manager,
NCA-Rouiba

ADEL SI-BOUEKAZ

Partner,
Nomad Capital Group

Australia

PETER KHALIL

Visiting Fellow,
Saban Center for Middle East
Policy at the Brookings Institution

Azerbaijan

ELIN SULEYMANOV

Senior Counselor (Policy Planning),
Azerbaijan Presidential Administration

Bahrain

MOHAMED BIN MUBARAK

AL-KHALIFA

Deputy Prime Minister and
Minister of Foreign Affairs,
Government of Bahrain

Bangladesh

M. OSMAN FARRUK

Minister for Education,
Government of Bangladesh

IFTEKHAR ZAMAN

Executive Director,
Transparency International
Bangladesh (TIB)

Bosnia

MUSTAFA CERIC

Grand Mufti

Egypt

GAMAL AL-BANNA

Islamic Thinker,
Fawziyya & Gamal El-Banna
Foundation for Islamic Culture
and Information

HOSSAM BADRAWI

Chairman,
People's Assembly
Education/Scientific Research
Committee

OSAMA EL-BAZ

Political Advisor to the President,
Government of Egypt

EZZAT IBRAHIM

Deputy Head of Foreign Desk,
al-Ahram

SAAD EDDIN IBRAHIM

Chairman,
Ibn Khaldun Center

MOHAMED KAMAL

Professor,
Cairo University

Great Britain

DANA ALLIN

Editor,
Survival,
The International Institute
for Strategic Study

FARHAN NIZAMI

Director,
Oxford Center for Islamic Studies

India

M.J. AKBAR

Editor-in-Chief,
The Asian Age

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Observer Research Foundation

SYEDA IMAM

Executive Creative Director,
JWT Central Asia

FATMA ZAKARIA

Chairman,
Maulana Azad Education Society;
Editor,
Taj Magazine

RAFIQ ZAKARIA

Journalist/Scholar/Author

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National Assembly;
Former National Security Advisor

HUSSAIN AL-SHAHRISTANI

President,
Iraqi National Academy of Science

TAKI ALMOUSAWI

President,
al-Mustansirya University

NAWAL HUSSAIN

Women's Rights Activist;
Human Rights Activist

AHMED SAMERAI

Intern,
Ingram Events

Iran

HAMID BAIDI NEJAD

REZA ESLAMI SOMEA
UNESCO Chair for Human
Rights, Peace and Democracy;
Assistant Professor,
Faculty of Law,
Shahid Beheshti University



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MAHMOOD SARIOLGHALAM

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MUSTAPHA HAMARNEH

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LINA HUNDAILEH

President, Young Entrepreneurs Association

Kazakhstan

KUANISHBEK SAZANOV

Director, Economic Policy Institute

Kuwait

AHMAD BISHARA

Founder, National Democratic Movement; President, Arabdar Consultants

Kyrgyzstan

DJOMMART OTORBAEV

Former Deputy Prime Minister

Lebanon

PIERRE DAHER

CEO, Lebanese Broadcasting Corporation and *al Hayat*

SAOUD EL-MAWLA

Plowshares Visiting Professor of Peace and Global Studies, Earlham College

RAMI KHOURI

Editor-at-Large, *Daily Star*

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Director, Institute for Policy Research

MUSA HITAM

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ANWAR IBRAHIM

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Minister of Foreign Affairs, Government of Morocco

MOKHTAR LAMANI

Former Ambassador, Permanent Observer, Organization of the Islamic Conference to the U.N.

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The U.S.–Islamic World Forum, organized by the Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, is designed to bring together key leaders in the worlds of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society from across the Islamic world (including Muslim communities in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East) and the United States.

About The U.S.–Islamic World Forum

ONE OF THE GREATEST CHALLENGES IN GLOBAL POLITICS today is the dangerous tension growing between the United States and the world's Muslim states and communities. Relations between the world's community of 1.4 billion Muslim believers and the world's leading state power are at a historic low point, to the benefit of neither. This deepening divide is not just tragic, but is also a critical impediment to cooperation on a breadth of vital issues, ranging from dealing with terrorism and radicalism to supporting human development and freedom.

The U.S.-Islamic World Forum, organized by the Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy, is designed to bring together key leaders in the worlds of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society from across the Islamic world (including Muslim communities in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Middle East) and the United States. Such an institutionalized dialogue between leaders and opinion-shapers is an urgent necessity, in order to help prevent a fault line from forming between the West and the Islamic world.

The Forum is designed to serve as both a convening body and catalyst for positive action. Therefore, its focus is not on dialogue just for dialogue's sake, but on developing actionable programs for government, civil society, and the private sector. The Forum's annual conferences are targeted to become the foremost meeting for positive cross-cultural engagement among leaders from the United States and the Islamic world. The meetings also provide the foundation for a range of complementary activities designed to enhance the effectiveness of the dialogue. These include a follow-up regional conference series, which would run parallel conferences within other Muslim regions, the assembling of task forces of policymakers and experts, and associated outreach, research, and publications. Collaborative media, education, and youth-centered programs help expand its impact.

The first meeting of the Forum was in January 2004. Over 165 leaders from the U.S. and 37 states in the Muslim world met over the course of 3 days. The meeting discussions included a wide variety of topics: the peace process, Iraq, human development, education, the role of the private sector, the new media, etc. The leaders in attendance ranged from government ministers and CEOs to deans of universities and news editors. Former U.S. President Bill Clinton and Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of Qatar, delivered the keynote addresses. In addition to the dialogue and debate, among the most heartening aspects of the meeting were the various networks and endeavors that were sparked by convening so many dynamic leaders. These included the construction of a series of schools and human development initiatives in the region, the formation of a Muslim American foreign policy caucus, and the initiation of “track two” diplomatic talks for certain conflict zones. A summary of the Forum, including all its programs can be found at www.us-islamicworldforum.org.



The underlying aim of the Project is to continue the Brookings Institution's original mandate to serve as a bridge between scholarship and public policy.

About the Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World

The *Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World* is a major research program, housed under the auspices of the *Saban Center for Middle East Policy*. It is designed to respond to some of the profound questions that the terrorist attacks of September 11 have raised for U.S. policy. In particular, it seeks to examine how the United States can reconcile its need to eliminate terrorism and reduce the appeal of extremist movements with its need to build more positive relations with Muslim states and communities.

The Project has several interlocking components:

- The U.S.–Islamic World Forum, which brings together American and Muslim world leaders from the fields of politics, business, media, academia, and civil society, for much-needed discussion and dialogue,
- A Washington Task Force made up of specialists in Islamic, regional, and foreign policy issues (emphasizing diversity in viewpoint and geographic expertise), as well as U.S. government policymakers, which meets on a regular basis to discuss, analyze, and share information on relevant trends and issues,
- A Visiting Fellows program that brings distinguished experts from the Islamic world to spend time at Brookings, both assisting them in their own research, as well as informing the work ongoing in the Project and the wider DC policymaking community,
- A series of Brookings Analysis Papers and Monographs that provide needed analysis of the vital issues of joint concern between the U.S. and the Islamic world,
- An Education and Economic Outreach Initiative, which will explore the issues of education reform and economic development towards the Islamic world, in particular the potential role of the private sector,
- A Science and Technology Policy Initiative, which looks at the role that cooperative science and technology programs involving the U.S. and Muslim world can play in responding to regional development and education needs, and in fostering positive relations, and
- A Brookings Institution Press Book Series, which will explore U.S. policy options towards the Islamic world. The aim of the book series is to synthesize the project's findings for public dissemination.

The underlying aim of the Project is to continue the Brookings Institution's original mandate to serve as a bridge between scholarship and public policy. It seeks to bring new knowledge to the attention of decision-makers and opinion-leaders, as well as afford scholars, analysts, and the public a better insight into public policy issues. The Project convenors are Professor Stephen Cohen, Ambassador Martin Indyk, and Professor Shibley Telhami. Dr. Peter W. Singer serves as the Project Director. For further information: www.brook.edu/fp/research/projects/islam/islam.htm

About The Saban Center for Middle East Policy at Brookings

THE SABAN CENTER FOR MIDDLE EAST POLICY WAS ESTABLISHED on May 13th, 2002 with an inaugural address by His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan. The creation of the Saban Center reflects the Brookings Institution's commitment to expand dramatically its research and analysis of Middle East policy issues at a time when the region has come to dominate the U.S. foreign policy agenda.

The Saban Center provides Washington policymakers with balanced, objective, in-depth and timely research and policy analysis from experienced and knowledgeable scholars who can bring fresh perspectives to bear on the critical problems of the Middle East. The center upholds the Brookings tradition of being open to a broad range of views. The Saban Center's central objective is to advance understanding of developments in the Middle East through policy-relevant scholarship and debate.

The center's foundation was made possible by a generous grant from Haim and Cheryl Saban of Los Angeles. Ambassador Martin S. Indyk, Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy Studies, is the director of the Saban Center. Kenneth M. Pollack is the center's director of research. Joining them is a core group of Middle East experts who conduct original research and develop innovative programs to promote a better understanding of the policy choices facing American decision makers in the Middle East. They include Tamara Cofman Wittes, who is a specialist on political reform in the Arab world; Shibley Telhami, who holds the Sadat Chair at the University of Maryland; Shaul Bakhash, an expert on Iranian politics from George Mason University; Daniel Byman, a Middle East terrorism expert from Georgetown University, and Flynt Leverett, a former senior CIA analyst and senior director at the National Security Council, who is a specialist on Syria and Lebanon. The center is located in the Foreign Policy Studies Program at Brookings, led by James B. Steinberg, director and Brookings' vice president.

The Saban Center is undertaking path breaking research in five areas: the implications of regime change in Iraq, including post-war nation-building and Gulf security; the dynamics of Iranian domestic politics and the threat of nuclear proliferation; mechanisms and requirements for a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict; policy for the war against terrorism, including the continuing challenge of state-sponsorship of terrorism; and political and economic change in the Arab world, in particular in Syria and Lebanon, and the methods required to promote democratization.

The center also houses the ongoing Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World which is directed by Brookings' Senior Fellow Peter W. Singer. The project focuses on analyzing the problems in the relationship between the United States and the Islamic world with the objective of developing effective policy responses. The Islamic World Project includes a task force of experts, an annual dialogue between American and Muslim intellectuals, a visiting fellows program for specialists from the Islamic world, and a monograph series.





The Brookings Project on U.S. Policy Towards the Islamic World



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