



## **HIGHLIGHTS FROM SESSIONS**

### **Panel Discussion:**

***The Future of the Gulf from Escalation to Maritime Security: Is Transformation Sustainable Amid Volatility?***

***Moderator: Fadila el Soussi, Senior News Anchor at Sky News Arabia***

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With the Gulf region lingering on the brink, can the ambitious plans for reform be realized? Will visions and conflicts coexist or is another clash inevitable? What is the impact of geopolitical dynamics on the future of the GCC countries?

- HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal, Co-chair of Beirut Institute Summit in Abu Dhabi Edition III, Chairman of King Faisal Foundation's Center for Research and Islamic Studies
- H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Secretary- General of the Gulf Cooperation Council
- Ambassador Robert Blackwill, Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations
- H.E. Dr. May Chidiac, Lebanese Minister of State for Administrative Development, President and Founder of the May Chidiac Foundation
- H.E. Andrei Fedorov, Chairman of the Fund for Political Research and Consulting
- Dr. Mahmood Sariolghalam, Professor of International Relations at the National University of Iran

### **Highlights:**

***HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal, Co-chair of Beirut Institute Summit in Abu Dhabi Edition III, Chairman of King Faisal Foundation's Center for Research and Islamic Studies***



If Iran wants to play a role in the region, it needs to follow constructive procedures and policies. We know there are common interests for us and Iran in the region. There is a bright future ahead of us.

What happened recently, cannot be considered as a positive or constructive activity in the region. Iran needs to visit its policy and attitude in the region.

We all are united by one aim and we all aim for the good. But if one element is distracting the positive course, we need to correct this course, because we are united by one common interest.

On connecting with the deep state in Iran, it is not an issue that is exclusive to us. How to handle with Iran? The state? The revolution? Is the president the representative of the will of the nation? What about the religious head in Iran who wants to topple the regime and the King in Saudi Arabia? How can we deal then? What is the route that we can use to connect with an individual who wants to eradicate you, this is a question that Iranians should answer us but they did not until now?

The GCC has sent Iran a few suggestions to deal with Iran to resolve any issues between the GCC and Iran, nobody answered from Iran. This is an unfortunate issue. We are perplexed: Who represents Iran? And is that the person who is an enemy to the countries in the region, then how can we connect?

On hope; honestly, I ask how can we communicate with a regime that publicly and clearly through its supreme leader that he is our enemy.

How can Iran be more dangerous in the future, what is more dangerous than bombing oil barrels in Saudi Arabia or killing the Syrian people in support to the president.



***H.E. Dr. Abdullatif bin Rashid Al-Zayani, Secretary- General of the Gulf Cooperation Council***

When I thought about quantum computing can be destructive, but it can be for the good, I can apply on this within the region. There are causes that are deprived of education in the Arab world and we ask ourselves until when this is going to happen.

Leadership and opportunity and facing without fear to turn our region into success.

GCC countries were always frank with Iran but Iran is insisting on exporting the revolution and it wants to play to appear as a responsible citizen of this region.

We all want to live in peace, while respecting the differences that we have.

I do believe that Iran has the opportunity to rethink the nuclear deal, rethink their policy towards the meddling in the affairs of other countries. The superpowers can play a major in contributing towards a solution in this region.

When the situation becomes very tense, whenever the situation for diplomacy, we always notice that they initiate in meddling in the affairs of the Arab countries. We must respect the charter of the United Nations.

We as a responsible people, strategic thinkers, need to agree on a vision of this region. There must be a complete picture to solve the issues.

In order to reach that phase [a dialogue with Iran] we need to study when and where it can be a deterrent. The ultimate goal is to reach solution within diplomacy.

***Ambassador Robert Blackwill, Henry A. Kissinger Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations***

Remember that war occurs because diplomacy fails and in this part of the world, there is not enough diplomacy. The USA and Iran, which are not systematically talking to reduce their difference. The same thing with the GCC, which is an example of exporting stability in this region.



America is not withdrawing from the Middle East. Any American president will be involved in the region because of our vital national interest.

I am worried that this region will get worse before it gets even worse. I believe that we are at a hinge point. We need to do everything possible diplomatically to reduce the likelihood of conflict, unless diplomacy becomes more important than military action.

There is a high premium for the United States and its partners in the gulf to be united in various threats by Iran. That's necessary in order to try to deter further Iranian disruptive activity of Iran.

I want diplomacy with Iran. It is in my judgement in diplomacy that one has an opportunity to lessen the likelihood for conflict.

A war would be devastating, not only for Iran but for the region. So the question is, what is your diplomatic strategy for avoiding war in the region. I don't always get persuasive answer.

Negotiation with Iran should only take place in the context of reaction with Iranian misbehaviour. I do not know how to deter Iran but not to respond forcefully if they act forcefully.

If they won't negotiate but that should be their negative decision. I hope that they will have bilateral discussions beginning with this question that Henry Kissinger asked China, how does China see the world? I think a conversation with Iran begins with that question, how does Iran see the world?

***H.E. Dr. May Chidiac, Lebanese Minister of State for Administrative Development, President and Founder of the May Chidiac Foundation***

Iran has an opportunity. They think they are the dominant force in the region and Lebanon is one of the constituents that Iran managed to reach. Everybody knows that the long hand here of Iran, strongest instruments, is Hezbollah- who is working and doing the impossible to



dominant and contribute the constituents of Lebanon. They are extending within the administration and nation in Lebanon.

The situation in Lebanon, there is a voice of resistance. We do the impossible in order to make our voice audible. We do tell that we are against to have one team to control the status of sovereignty of Lebanon.

We always see the Iranian Foreign Minister has an impact on the audience. The beautiful image that agrees with the western image is not what the revolutionary guards' image.

They used their instruments in other nations that rely on Schism. The problem is not sectarian in the essence but the mask of the Persian empire, the expansion at the cost of others, reaching to the level of defying the west. They have succeeded up till this moment.

These economic sanctions on Iran despite the fact that they were not successful, that's not true, they rely on other sources of income. The parallel economy by Hezbollah is one of the rings that Iran uses in the region.

I do not understand how the international community did not respond on targeting the oil in Saudi Arabia. So what sort of message we sent to Iran by not responding. We should use a policy that is more studied. If we communicate the wrong message to Iran that it can do whatever it wishes without responses, Iran then will think it can do whatever it wants.

***H.E. Andrei Fedorov, Chairman of the Fund for Political Research and Consulting***

Gulf problems are so complicated, for Russia, there is a possibility to influence but this influence should not be over exaggerated.

Mr. Rouhani is not willing to listen to Russia. He is going on his way. Iran will never accept the ideas of being locked, ideologically. Iran is trying to use the current situation to increase influence.

Iran is not willing to have a diplomatic dialogue. Iran plays on contradictions and it's in the interest of Iran to play contradictions instead of a direct diplomacy.



What is best for all of us? Hostile but stable Iran, or Iran in turmoil.

Iran will turn into force action, as a reaction to consolidate Iranian nation.

***Dr. Mahmood Sariolghalam, Professor of International Relations at the National University of Iran***

Two different worlds are in Iran.

The UAE/Saudi Arabia wants to be in the economic global. Iran is different.

I do not see in the near future any conflict resolutions between Iran and its neighbours. What we need is conflict management.

Be close to their friends but closer to their enemies.

Perhaps the Arab countries should develop with Iran deep states; not the government structure. The next step is to engage in a cognitive relationship. It may be difficult or uncomfortable but necessary. The Russian and Chinese have connection with the deep state in Iran- the ones that are really making the decision.

Iran's reach in the region is a reflection of its own identity. It is not a reflection of the early days of revolution but rather the national security doctrine. The regional activity so that its national security doctrine will be realized.

I think we need to keep in mind that the ultimate conflict of Iran is with the USA. There is a historical standoff between Iran and the US. My understanding of the foundation of the confrontation is the Iranian stance on Israel. 80 percent of that conflict has to do with Iranian approach towards Israel. It has become part of the inertia in the Iranian deep state.

If Iranian can manage 100million barrels a day it can sustain the economy that has.



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The size, the population, the access to its neighbors it maybe possible for Iran to sustain itself economically, on short term. The strategies are short to medium terms.

The hope would be a change in the White House in 2020. That might open an opportunity for Iran. It is a short-term strategy to sustain the economy.