



## HIGHLIGHTS FROM SESSIONS

### SESSION

#### *A Conversation with Wisdom*

An intergenerational discussion between three former Secretary-Generals of the League of Arab States and the Gulf Cooperation Council with two young leaders for tomorrow.

**Date-** Monday | October 14, 2019

#### **Moderators:**

- Chaker Khazaal, Best-selling Author and Journalist
- Shady Qubaty, Founder and President of the Yale MENA Students Association

#### **Panelists:**

- H.E. Abdullah Bishara, Former Secretary-General of Gulf Cooperation Council
- H.E. Nabil Elaraby, Former Secretary-General of the Arab League
- H.E. Amr Moussa, Former Secretary-General of Arab League

#### **H.E. Abdullah Bishara, Former Secretary-General of Gulf Cooperation Council:**

I want you and your generation to remove and abolish the disappointments that were lived by people like me. Because I am originally from Kuwait and was appointed Secretary General and Ambassador at the United Nations and I always voiced my principle of 'leadership of efficiency'. But honestly, I was not able to impose this because of a cast rule that limited me. There was also meddling to please people and I would like you and your generation to go on a different path to overcome such a way of handling matters and to be really empowered. I honestly would tell you that in my society, the Gulf society, didn't develop sufficiently in order to lead or impose the rule of leadership by efficiency.

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We believe in the courage of the Arab youth. We need to reinforce this, even among our employees in the GCC, we should work to reinforce courage and to combat hesitation, timidity and fear of taking an initiative because we can touch this fear of initiating matters.



Your generation will be able to avoid this timidity and will be able to treat, through technology and other means, this Palestinian cause, because you are the ones who are more equipped and well skilled because the Arab world in the past tried to treat the Palestinian cause by traditional old means that weren't up to the challenges of this cause. Therefore, I see [in] Palestine, Yemen and Kuwait, many coffee shops which we call of inspiration or talent where talented youth will gather, brainstorm and come up with ideas. I am sure you will be able to overcome those fears with your courage.

**H.E. Nabil Elaraby, Former Secretary-General of the Arab League:**

I am from Egypt and from a different age and generation. My advice is that the new generation should get better education and should know its past and history but should be empowered through education, modern education based on modern technology. Getting skilled and equipped and having ability to master new technologies is the way forward for the new generation, it's the orientation and recipe for success of the new generation.

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All international organizations do work on the basis of voting. You have to have the majority of votes to approve any decision to take a step towards a project in a country for reconstruction. I will use the example of Syria in 2011 and 2012, there was a great divergence of opinions and it was difficult to achieve a consensus in the Arab League. The only case that everyone agrees on is the Palestinian cause but what will follow after that? Unfortunately, all Arab countries are unable to enforce these decisions, they attempted many times but failed.

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The international organizations, the UN and Arab countries failed to create a change on the ground but were able to lay solid rules. There were many valid resolutions of the UN and international communities that are enforceable of the right of return of refugees, of the withdrawal of occupation and others that are existent but not enforced. The general rules are there and if the situation will allow on the ground, then they can probably be enforced in the future.

**H.E. Amr Moussa, Former Secretary-General of Arab League:**

I am Egyptian and a citizen of the Arab world and I believe the world is geared towards globalization. It is an effect that will touch all of us in Arab countries – Palestine, Yemen, Syria or Egypt, even those living in the US are also subject to globalization. There is at the



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same time national pride and recognition of citizenship, patriotism and belonging where national identity is important in each of the countries. This is valid for youth living in their original countries and even those living in the countries they immigrated to because they bring with them their heritage and their beliefs.

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I have three important points: 1- The new generation of immigrants from the Arab world that decided to live abroad in their age have to live in their 21st century, not in the 20th century. They need to live in the age of technology with advancement and enjoy that life. But if we talk about youth specifically, they shouldn't forget their heritage and roots, but at the same time live proudly where you are in that age. 2- Don't believe in anything else than success, you must succeed there is no other option. 3- The greatest challenge is the need to succeed and you must re-invest in your home country.

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The history of the Arab League is not all failure. There are economic and cultural [movements] of people and trade, tourism, all these elements of mutual cooperation between the Arab League member countries resulted in many successes and laid many foundations. There are many development funds that were established allowing many projects to materialize. Through the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab League was facing those challenges and the propaganda of failure. We cannot deny the support of international organizations, you can see the UN also had some failures but many success stories.

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The first thing to think about as president is to fill the gap and request the Palestinian unity. As much as the Israeli occupation hurt the Palestinian cause, this division among Palestinian did the same to them and to the cause. Therefore, you have to lead a new trend, be brave and courageous, and this courage has its own role which affects others, which is to fight this division among Palestinians.

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There are many Arab causes, but we have to put our finger on the idea of division and listening to the ideas coming from others. We have to take into account to establish that Arab structure once again. In the past, we failed for many reasons. When we believe we can succeed by sound thinking and leading, it can apply.



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