

# FORUM FOR REFORM AND CHANGE

**The Second Conference  
The Shifting Global Order and its  
Repercussions for Al Sharq Region**

**3-4 June 2023 – Istanbul**

**الشرق**  
للأبحاث الاستراتيجية

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## ABOUT AL SHARQ STRATEGIC RESEARCH

A think tank that looks to undertake impartial, rigorous research to promote the ideals of democratic participation, an informed citizenry, multi-stakeholder dialogue and social justice.

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*SharqStrategic*

## **Concept Paper**

The global order has been going through a significant transformative phase as a result of many drastic developments. The non-western global powers, China and Russia, are deepening their clout in their zones of influence, albeit through different strategies. Moreover, the Covid-19 pandemic-induced political and economic problems have been compounded by the Ukraine War. These dramatic changes are expected to yield a multipolar if not nonpolar, world order.

The intensified confrontation between global powers is reshaping regional politics in many ways. On the one hand, a number of countries in the Al Sharq region are in a quest to increase their influence and regional hegemony, capitalizing on the vacuum resulting from global powers' competition. On the other hand, as world politics approaches a Cold War-like polarization, keeping an independent path has become very challenging for Al Sharq regional powers, which have become under mounting pressure to take sides in this confrontation.

Therefore, today more than ever, Al Sharq Region countries are in need of charting their future amidst many threats and ambiguities. In a region with remarkable geopolitical significance, maintaining political stability and economic development will not be an easy endeavor. Hence, Al Sharq Strategic Research invites experts, scholars, and policymakers to contribute to discussions on the themes seen below.

### **Theme 1: Making Sense of the Shifting Global Order**

At a time when Ukraine becomes an area of settling scores between Russia and the West, the political and economic consequences of the Covid pandemic are still unfolding, and the debates regarding the demise of the post-Cold War system come to the fore, it is of significance to

have a realistic assessment concerning the repercussions of the shifting global order on Al Sharq Region.

This theme aims at making sense of the shifting global order by addressing the very nature of these transformations and the continuity and rupture between the post-Cold War order and the emerging one. Additionally, it sets sight on discussing what principles should guide Al Sharq Region countries while determining their political alignments amidst numerous uncertainties emanating from the aftershocks of the shifting global order.

### **Theme 2: The Delicate Balance of Multipolarity in the Middle East**

The Middle East is currently one of the hottest spots of international powers competition, given its geopolitical significance and its irreplaceable contribution to the global energy market. This competition has altered political dynamics in the region and forced regional powers to reconsider their strategic alliances.

For instance, President Joe Biden's electoral victory and US withdrawal from Afghanistan as a manifestation of the US retrenchment in the Middle East to focus on Asia-Pacific led the Gulf countries to hedge their bets by diversifying their international allies. As a consequence, Russia becomes able to increase its footprint in the Gulf countries by offering to be a security provider. Likewise, China is currently emerging as a significant regional actor by amplifying its clout in the regional economy through massive investments and technology agreements in the Gulf region.

From their side, Turkey and Iran have been showing their assertive intention of becoming regional hegemons. Both countries, specifically after the outbreak of the Arab Spring, amplified their regional agency

by involving in different conflicts such as Syria, Libya, and Yemen. Over the years, Turkey, due to numerous disagreements, fell out with the US administrations and came closer to Russia and China to an extent that led some Western circles to question its position in the Transatlantic Alliance and the Western Bloc. Similarly, Iran's overt support to Russia in the Ukraine War and its domestic problems have further strained its relationship with the West.

This theme intends to investigate the autonomy quest of Iran, Turkey, and the Gulf countries in a volatile region grappling with chronic problems. Moreover, the theme aims at delving into to what extent Turkey and the Gulf Countries can maintain a delicate balance between the US, Russia, and China. Lastly, the theme targets to look into the challenges and opportunities that the current transitioning period provides for regional cooperation.

### **Theme 3: The Great Power Competition and its Implications on North Africa**

For almost a decade, North African countries have been plagued with instability and regional rivalries. Starting with Libya, which, since the demise of Muammar Gaddafi, has been passing through a turbulent transition with the hopes for political transformation were replaced by the despair of the civil war and ensuing territorial fragmentation. Furthermore, the intervention of regional and global powers such as Russia, France, UAE, Egypt, and Turkey, threw the country into political limbo to become an area for the struggle between competing influences. Libya's eastern neighbor, Egypt, nowadays, not only suffers from the practices of a highly autocratic regime but also faces an intense economic crisis compounded by the economic recession worldwide.

All of this happens when the systemic rupture brought about by the Russian Invasion of Ukraine is entirely on display, populism, and nationalist sentiments are on the rise in Europe, and the demand for liberal governance practices is in decline.

In the westernmost part of the Arab geography, the level of tension between Morocco and Algeria is escalating due to their disagreements on the Western Saharan conflict as well as the Moroccan-Israeli normalization move. This theme aims at focusing on how the changing global order has had an impact on North African geopolitics thus far. It also intends to present a general overview of whether there is a change in the approaches of global powers towards North Africa and, if so, how these changes affect North African rivalries.

#### **Theme 4: South Asian Dilemma in a Changing Global Order**

Given its geopolitical location, South and Southeast Asia become a primary battlefield where the competition between the US and China intensifies. Pakistan is one of the prominent examples of the South Asian countries' dilemma in the current moment. On the one hand, China is dramatically increasing its influence in the country through investments and loans. On the other hand, the Pakistani military, which has an enormous impact on the country's political scene, sends cordial messages concerning its good ties to the US. Imran Khan's loss of power as a result of the tension he experienced with the military and the rise of his rival Shehbaz Sharif to power, makes the Pakistani experience a noteworthy area of focus in the debates for the shifting global.

Malaysia, also, is another noteworthy example. A few months before his rise to power, Anwar Ibrahim emphasized that he wanted to see a neutral Malaysia in the great power competition intensifying in the

Asia-Pacific. Now, as he assumed the premiership, it is worth delving to see if Malaysia will be able to chart its independent way. The position of Indonesia, the country with the largest Muslim population in the world, in the struggle of great powers, is also an essential topic of discussion. This theme aims to examine the strategic choices made by Pakistan, Malaysia, and Indonesia in order to adapt to the new challenges and uncertainties.

### Program

Saturday 3 June 2023	
<b>Opening Speech: Wadah Khanfar</b>	10:00 – 10:30
<b>Session 1: Making Sense of the Shifting Global Order</b> Main Presenters: Yassin Al-Saadi – Hasan Aourid Commentator: Hassan Nafaa Moderator: Sami Zeidan	10:30 – 12:30
Coffee Break	12:00 – 12:30
<b>Session 2: Global Economic Crisis: Causes and Consequences</b> Main Presenters: Tarik M. Yousef - Rafe Haneef Commentator: Mehmet Asutay Moderator: Ahmed ZekrAllah	12:30 – 14:30
Lunch Break	14:30 – 15:30
<b>Session 3: The Regional Powers in the Middle East: Toward a New Balance?</b> Main Presenters: Amr Darrag – Abdullah Al-Ghailani Commentator: Amer Larayedh Moderator: Resul Serdar Ataş	14:30 – 17:30



### Sunday 4 June 2023

<b>Session 4: Transformation of the International and Regional Order and its Impact on Israel</b> Main Presenters: Muhannad Mustafa - Ahmed Al Gendy Commentator: Ahmed Atawnah Moderator: Hassan Obaid	10:00 – 12:00
Coffee Break	12:00 – 12:30
<b>Session 5: The Great Power Competition and its Implications on Africa</b> Main Presenters: Ammar Fayed – Mohammed Jameel Mansour Commentator: Salah Eddin El Zein Moderator: Mohammad Affan	12:30 – 14:30
Lunch Break	14:30 – 15:30
<b>Session 6: South Asian Dilemma in a Changing Global Order</b> Main Presenters: Ahmad Badri Abdullah – Md. Nazmul Islam Commentator: Faisal Devji - Syed Azman Nawawi Moderator: Ahsan Shafiq	15:30 – 17:30

**Abstracts****Session 1: Making Sense of the Shifting Global Order****Transformation of the International Order and its Repercussions on the Arab Region - Hassan Aourid**

The Russian-Ukrainian war concluded what was known as the strategic holiday. It also ended the era that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, characterized by the emergence of concepts such as the end of history, globalization, and nation-states. The period from 1989 to 2022 is comparable to that extending from 1918 to 1939. The world, with its poles, is witnessing a global conflict rather than a global war.

The end of an era opens new horizons. The post-World War I period was catastrophic for the Arabs because it resulted in the British hegemony over the Arab world, which was divided into spheres of influence to impede its unification and control its wealth. The United States followed the same path after the second world war, with the Pax Americana. After the fall of the Berlin Wall and Operation Desert Storm, the Arab region witnessed a second major 'fitna' (sedition). This paved the way for attempts to implement inappropriate visions under the new global order.

Can the upcoming era bring better conditions for the region? Can it bear the hope of a civilizational uprising? Hope is possible.

**Realizing the Changes in the World Order - Yassin Al-Saadi**

In response to the sudden rise of totalitarianism in Europe in the thirties of the last century, Antonio Gramsci came out with a saying that describes the world the way it is rather than the way we want it or wish for it to be: "The old world is dying, and the new world struggles to be born; now is the time of monsters."

Wars may redraw geographic borders. They may also result in geopolitical changes and alter global paradigms, concepts, and standards.

The Russian-Ukrainian conflict has not transformed into a classical 'World War.' However, since its onset, instead of being a regional conflict with a limited impact, it has become internationalized. As such, it could change the global balance of power.

This conflict takes us back to World War I, which is considered the founding stone and the birthplace of all conflicts and wars that have taken place until today. Without dwelling on its causes nor detailing its results, World War I was a prelude to major transformations. The first of such transformations was the emergence of the American role, which indicated the clinical death of the ancient world. The treaties that ended the war - such as the Treaty of Versailles, the Treaty of Lausanne, the secret agreement of Sykes-Picot, and the Treaty of Sevres - resulted in the fragmentation of imperial regimes in Europe, the end of the domination of aristocratic families, the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, and the emergence of new states and entities.

The humiliating financial and military restrictions, as well as border arrangements imposed on the defeated countries, turned them into fertile ground for the rise of extremist nationalist movements and parties that engendered totalitarian regimes, such as Nazi Germany. Demeaning peace treaties fueled the disastrous World War II, which ended with the use of nuclear weapons in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. A new world order was born, which resulted in the Cold War, or a condition in which the superpowers were neither in a state of peace nor war. Accordingly, the world was divided between a liberal-democratic Western camp militarily represented by NATO, which the United States leads, and a socialist eastern bloc under the auspices of the Soviet-dominated Warsaw Pact.

Despite ideological differences and the emergence of armed conflicts - such as the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and the Cuban missile crisis - the Cold War did not escalate to a world war for fear of triggering a nuclear conflict, rather than on account of the wisdom of politicians. The two world wars balkanized the East, from Jakarta to Tangier. Moreover, they directly resulted in the creation of a hybrid entity in the Middle East, a situation that was unprecedented in modern history. Thus, the region lived in perpetual conflict, and Muslim countries remained at the mercy of the great powers.

Since the Yalta Conference, which resulted in the destruction of the ancient world order, and after the Malta Conference, which announced a new world order that is yet to be born, the world has become a reflection of Gramsci's vision. Ever since the two conferences, the world has been fluctuating between armed conflicts and fragile peace treaties, of which the Sharq Region shares the heaviest burden.

The world today stands in the same position as between the two World Wars. Just like the Germans wanted to take revenge for their defeat during the First World War, Russia is currently seeking to retaliate for its loss in the Cold War.

Regardless of the results of the Russian-Ukrainian war on the ground, the conflict has caused a considerable decline in American influence in the Sharq Region. For instance, Turkey, which is a member of NATO, has adopted a balanced policy between both parties, in line with its geopolitical and economic interests in the short and the medium term. Moreover, Saudi Arabia has resorted to the Chinese giant for the first time and accepted its mediation with Iran. Meanwhile, Riyadh has developed a special relationship with Putin and the UAE. The latter has also drifted from the American position.

Today, the global system has become multipolar, as the Covid crisis has demonstrated the fragility and selfishness of the different global actors. Accordingly, America and the West are no longer controlling the balance of power. China, Russia, India, Brazil, and South Africa have created a bloc that the countries of the Sharq region can rely on to readjust their relations with the global powers.

### **Guiding Questions for Further Discussion**

- What are the salient features of the new era in world politics? Is a new world order really in the making or it is an exaggeration and wishful thinking?
- After more than a year, to what extent the Ukraine war reshapes world politics? Is it a founding event for a new order, or it just turns into a chronic destabilizing crisis in the international system?
- Between the competing global powers, the EU seems divided, confused, and weakened by its contradictions. What roles can the EU play in the foundation of the new global order?
- Does China finally give up its self-restraint strategy and seek to be a global hegemon or it just aims at expanding its regional influence?
- How should the Sharq region countries benefit from the change in the global order? Do the Ukraine crisis and great power competition provide the Al Sharq region countries an opportunity to amplify their political agency?

## Session 2: Global Economic Crisis: Causes and Consequences

### The International Economic Crisis and Its Regional Repercussions - Rafe Haneef

The current global economic slowdown with high and persistent inflation is triggered by several factors, including:

(i) pandemic-driven supply shortages; (ii) supply shortages due to Ukraine War and geopolitical tensions; (iii) supply shortages due to climate change; (iv) profiteering by corporations; and (v) increased demand caused by pandemic-induced expansionary fiscal and monetary policy.

Is the high inflationary environment caused by supply-side versus demand-side factors? Is raising the interest rate the right response? Raising interest rates leads to fewer borrowers and less money creation by private banks. Less money in circulation leads to less consumption, less investment in the economy, and higher unemployment. This will reduce people's purchasing power and reduce inflation.

But, if the inflation is due to supply-side factors, will raising interest rates fuel a cost-of-living crisis?

What alternatives do the Sharq Countries have?

Some short-term solutions for deliberation:

(i) Are temporary subsidies and higher minimum wages more effective to control inflation instead of raising interest rates?

(ii) Should there be temporary price controls and windfall taxes to curb corporate profiteering?

(iii) Should Central Banks increase the Cash Reserve Ratio or reduce the Loan to Deposit Ratio to reduce borrowing, lower money supply, and decrease demand?

(iv) Should there be caps on foreign portfolio investments to help reduce

currency devaluation during sudden foreign portfolio investment outflows?

(v) Should firms with local currency revenues be allowed to borrow in foreign currencies?

Some long-term solutions for deliberation:

(i) Should more effort be carried out to deepen the domestic bond and stock markets?

(ii) Should governments invest more in research & development to shift the economy from over-reliance on exports of primary commodities to create more productivity and export more manufactured goods and value-added products?

(iii) Should higher productivity infant industries be developed and protected to promote exports and improve current account balance?

(iv) Should there be more focus on friend-shoring economic opportunities?

(v) Should renewable energy and the agriculture industry for food security be prioritized?

### **Title: Crisis, Politics and the Future of the International Economic System -Tarik M. Yousef**

Growing strains on the international political order from the war in Ukraine and the confrontation between the US and China are taking place against the backdrop of mounting economic shocks, political polarization, and challenges to globalization. As with previous reconfigurations of the international systems, these trends will give rise to divergent responses from developing countries including in the Sharq region, driven by opportunities, constraints, geography, history and political trajectories.

## **Guiding Questions for Further Discussion**

- What are the main factors that contributed to the current economic crisis? And how does it impact the Al Sharq countries?
- With the gloomy economic forecasts, what choices do the Al Sharq countries have to cope with the global economic recession?
- How is the nexus between regional reset, the new economic nationalism, and the imperative for regional economic cooperation evolving in the Al Sharq region?
- How do the Ukraine war and China's growing interference in MENA politics impact the global energy markets?
- How does the current global food crisis, caused by supply chain disruptions and geopolitical tensions affect the economic and political stability in the Al Sharq region?

## **Session 3: The Regional Powers in the Middle East: Toward a New Balance?**

### **Global Transformations and their Impact on Regional Rivalry in the Middle East - Amr Darrag**

In this paper, which will be presented during the Conference, we will summarize our vision for the future of the Middle East in the coming years, in line with the main transformations that the world and the Middle East are witnessing. We will try to answer a major question: Will the Middle East region encounter stability or experience more chaos?

#### **Factors**

We will describe the factors that have resulted in the current situation in the Middle East, which are the Arab revolutions and counter-revolutions. We will present the American role, and whether it is expected to lead to stability or chaos. We will also address potential plans for the region in the framework of the coming new world order.



### **Non-Arab Regional Powers**

We will reveal the significantly growing role of Iran, Turkey, and Israel that followed the decline of the hegemony of traditional Arab powers represented by Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, as well as the conflict of interests between these three regional powers and its impact on the perpetuation of chaos and conflicts in the region.

We will also discuss the fundamental challenges that each of these countries is facing, which may jeopardize their national security and affect their stability as well as that of the region.

### **Gulf Arab Powers**

The strategic leadership of the region has shifted from the traditional Arab powers to three Gulf countries, namely Saudi Arabia and the UAE, and a lesser extent, Qatar. We will examine the roles of these countries. Moreover, we will address their differences and their impact on regional stability.

### **Other Arab Countries in the Middle East**

We will present the situation of other Arab countries in the Middle East and the impact of the changes they are experiencing on the region's stability or instability.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the analysis, we will conclude whether we believe that the region will become relatively stable in the coming years or whether it will become unstable.

### **Gulf Foreign Policy Considering International Transformations - Abdullah Al-Ghailani**

We cannot objectively speak of a 'Gulf foreign policy' because Gulf countries do not share a common foreign policy. Each country of

the Gulf Cooperation Council has its own approaches to regional and international issues, as dictated by its geostrategic visions, supreme interests, and regional and international strategic alliances. The lack of a 'common Gulf foreign policy' reflects one of the major failures of the Gulf Cooperation Council at the strategic level. It stems from the inexistence of a common conceptual framework on regional security, which has been reflected in all regional issues. This was manifested by (1) the position vis-à-vis Iran, (2) the approach to the Yemeni crisis, and (3) the diverging positions on the Arab revolutions of 2011.

The foreign policy of Gulf countries changes according to the shifts in the balance of power that result from regional and international conflicts. The Russian-Ukrainian war led to partial transformations in the international system because of the indirect conflict between the United States and its European allies with Russia, a major nuclear power, to reduce its geopolitical weight.

These shifts in the balance of power enabled China to expand its geostrategic presence and role in the Gulf, allowing it to extend its political influence and optimize its economic partnerships, especially with Saudi Arabia, which is the largest political and economic power in the region. The global transformations and their impact on the international system led to a relative shift in the foreign policies of the Gulf countries, which can be summarized as follows:

- President Joe Biden's administration is no longer hostile to Saudi Arabia, and Washington was forced to reconcile with Riyadh.
- The Gulf-Chinese rapprochement was underlined by the Gulf-Chinese summit hosted by Saudi Arabia in Riyadh (December 9, 2022) and China's mediation that resulted in Saudi-Iranian reconciliation, which culminated in the revival of diplomatic relations between Riyadh and Tehran.

- The Gulf countries, except for Qatar, led the efforts that resulted in bringing the Syrian regime back to the Arab League, against the will of the Americans.
- The Gulf countries remained neutral regarding the Russian-Ukrainian war and did not adopt the Western position. On the contrary, they reinforced their agreements with Russia on oil prices and production levels, against the American will.
- The Yemeni crisis took a strategic turn; after a series of negotiations in Muscat between Riyadh and the Houthis, the two parties met in Sanaa (April 2023), under the Omani sponsorship, and agreed on points that could lead to wider understandings. However, they did not agree on a drastic solution to the crisis. This development comes as a result of the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement, which, in turn, was caused by the partial transformation in the global system.

At this stage, there are no fundamental shifts related to the geostrategic approaches of the Gulf countries. Nonetheless, there are initial indicators that suggest that transformations are happening and that the American grip is getting looser due to Washington's role in the Ukrainian crisis and the intensification of the conflict with Iran, which has developed stronger ties with Russia. All of these developments have provided Washington's partners in the Gulf with a wider margin for maneuver and given them broader geostrategic options.

### **Guiding Questions for Further Discussion**

- Do the ongoing regional normalization attempts herald a new period in Middle Eastern regional politics? More precisely, is there a new regional order in the making? If so, what are the features of this order? If not, then what are the prospects?

- Is the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement a strategic shift in the relationship between Riyadh and Tehran? Or is it a temporary pause in their rivalry? How does the Saudi-Iranian rapprochement manifest in other countries such as Yemen, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq?
- What does China's growing appetite to engage in Middle East rivalries and conflicts mean for the great power competition in the region?
- How does the war in Ukraine affect Russia's place in the Middle East and the region's relations with international powers in general?
- How are the strategies of the major players in the Eastern Mediterranean conflict affected by the current changes in world politics?

#### **Session 4: Transformation of the International and Regional Order and its Impact on Israel**

##### **The Future of Arab-Israeli Relations Considering the Current Regional and International Transformations – Ahmed Al Gendy**

Over the past decades, Israel has succeeded in developing its ties with Arab countries to levels it could not have dreamed of when it was first founded. Arab-Israeli relations have almost reached the ceiling of Israeli expectations. However, Arab-Israeli relations are dynamic; they are influenced by internal and external factors that result in political fluctuations in the Middle East. For instance, when some countries suffer from internal political crises, they focus less on their foreign policy.

Since the government of Netanyahu came to power in December 2022, Israel has been facing internal instability because of the conflict between the ruling coalition and the opposition. This has created a state of internal tension and unprecedented societal division that emerged following the Israeli government's move towards implementing the so-called reforms of the judicial legislation that are meant to control the relationship

between the executive, legislative, and judicial authorities and achieve a balance between them. Strategic researchers believe that this situation has negatively reflected on Israel, which was forced to overlook its external national security. This was manifested in the restoration of Saudi-Iranian relations, the Emirati-Bahraini rapprochement with Iran, the potential agreement on the Yemeni issue between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis, and Saudi Arabia's hosting of a Hamas delegation during the past weeks.

In terms of foreign policy, since Netanyahu came to power, Israeli-American relations have witnessed frequent tensions, especially with democratic administrations. This concurs with the decreased American interest in the region, given its changing priorities. Moreover, the Biden administration did not build on the Trump administration's accomplishments, such as the Abraham Accords. This may be due to conflicts between the Biden administration and Arab leaders, and issues that arose between Washington and the government of Netanyahu – given the latter's alliance with the religious parties that constitute almost half of the ruling coalition in Israel. Finally, Washington may have concluded that Israel is no longer surrounded by a hostile environment like in the past.

Considering those mentioned earlier, we can question the extent to which Israel can further cement its ties with the countries of the region or promote popular normalization. We can also question the available options considering the regional changes.

## **Global Transformations and their Impact on Israeli Domestic Politics**

### **- Muhannad Mustafa**

To analyze the repercussions of the current changes that the international system is witnessing on domestic politics in Israel, we should pinpoint the transformations that have occurred, the most important of which is the rise of right-wing populism in Europe and the United States. Right-wing populism has promoted and boosted the confidence of such discourse in Israel. This became evident in the positioning of the right-wing populist discourse in Israel, which is perceived as a legitimate and influential discourse on Israeli domestic politics.

One of the important shifts in the international system in the last decade, according to the international 'freedom scale', is the global decline in democracy and the transition of some countries from democratic regimes to semi-democratic regimes. This was reflected in the attempt to weaken the 'democratic' political institutions in Israel within the framework of the global weakening of democracy.

The conflict between international powers, especially between China and the United States, has contributed to the decline of the Chinese role in the Israeli economy. The international status of the United States as an influential power is still the central factor influencing Israeli domestic politics. Relations with the United States are considered one of the components of the Israeli national consensus, influencing domestic politics. So far, the fact that the American administration has not invited Netanyahu to the United States suggests that the Israeli government and its president have lesser importance for the American administration. In the last decade, American hegemony was challenged at the global level. This explains why Israeli officials have contested American policies in the past years. However, maintaining the alliance

with the United States remains at the core of the Israeli strategy. The conflict between Russia and the United States represents another aspect of the global strife. In this context, Israel has opted for a neutral position and has not given in to international pressure that calls for adopting an active position regarding Ukraine. This is considered a clear Israeli challenge to the United States on the one hand and to Europe on the other.

### **Guiding Questions for Further Discussion**

- The Hebrew state was established with the support of Western governments to serve strategic goals, to what extent will the current changes in the international order affect the strategic position and significance of Israel for the United States and the West?
- For years, Israel sought to normalize its relations with a number of Arab countries and Turkey. What are the prospects of its endeavors for normalization in light of the rise of the extreme right in Israel and the increase of racism towards Arabs and Palestinians?
- In the past few months, the internal crisis in Israel has reached unprecedented levels. What is its real impact on Israeli society? Is this an early sign of the Zionist project disintegration or Israel can overcome its crises?

### **Session 5: The Great Power Competition and its Implications on Africa International Rivalry and the Horn of Africa - Ammar Fayed**

The international rivalry between the United States and China has intensified and may warn that the world is on the brink of a new cold war. Meanwhile, the strife between the West and Russia has intensified following the Ukraine war. Amidst this raging international stampede, the

Horn of Africa is witnessing a geopolitical race as international powers attempt to reinforce their military, financial, and diplomatic influence. Global powers are not only seeking to control the Bab al-Mandab Strait, which is vital for international trade but Washington and its allies on the one hand and Beijing on the other are fighting over the control of the Indian and Pacific oceans. Moreover, the region is witnessing rivalry between regional powers - such as Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Israel.

The international powers have benefited from the Horn of Africa's pursuit of cash inflows and its need to develop its strategic infrastructure, especially that related to ports and transportation. Nonetheless, the countries of the region have yet to determine their long-term interests in this international conflict, as they have not consciously chosen the positioning that best serves their national interests. In this context, the international rivalry has increased the threat to the security of the countries of the region, particularly because the use of international military bases in the Horn of Africa to carry out operations against other countries could create future enemies for the host countries. Additionally, some countries have unintentionally taken a stance with or against international powers in a conflict they are not involved in, which could magnify internal tensions and local divisions. With increased international polarization, the countries of the region will face more pressures and enticements, which will limit their ability in the future to adopt balanced policies between the competing poles.

### **Interconnection Between Africa and Global Developments -**

**Mohammed Jameel Mansour**

Africa is not the first region that comes to mind when examining the



impact of global developments. However, it is the first geographical area to be affected by such events. Nonetheless, this is insufficient to analyze the African scene and its relationship with global developments and fluctuations. Rather, we should highlight the importance of Africa as a continent and the growing global interest in and competition over it, as well as how global events impact it.

### **Guiding Questions for Further Discussion**

- How do the North African countries adapt to the shifting global order? How do they benefit from the drastic changes taking place?
- How does regional and international competition affect the stability of the Horn of Africa?
- Which regional/International powers are benefiting from the declining French influence in North and West Africa?

### **Session 6: South Asian Dilemma in a Changing Global Order**

#### **Malaysia's Strategic Diplomacy: Navigating Global Powers and Regional Challenges under Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim - Ahmad Badri Abdullah**

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Malaysia is poised to strategically navigate its foreign relations with superpowers amidst the shifting global order. Anwar Ibrahim brings with him a wealth of experience and diplomatic finesse, which will prove instrumental in steering Malaysia's foreign policy in a dynamic international landscape. Recognizing the importance of establishing mutually beneficial partnerships, Malaysia will strive to strike a delicate balance between major powers such as the United States, China, and regional players. Malaysia faces strategic challenges, including the disputed claims over

the South China Sea, particularly by China, and the enhanced trilateral security partnership between Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States of America, known as AUKUS. Anwar Ibrahim understands that these issues require careful and strategic handling. Malaysia will aim to maintain a constructive approach, engaging with major powers while safeguarding its national interests and the stability of the region. The disputed claims in the South China Sea will be addressed through diplomatic channels, advocating for peaceful resolutions based on international law and promoting dialogue among concerned parties. Moreover, Anwar Ibrahim's vision extends beyond mere stabilization of the region amid the present economic flux, as he also sees the establishment of an Asian Monetary Fund as a strategic initiative as far as major powers are concerned. Anwar Ibrahim's pragmatic approach emphasizes Malaysia's commitment to the region's peace and stability, seeking mutually beneficial cooperation while navigating the complex dynamics of the major powers involved. With Anwar Ibrahim at the helm, Malaysia is well-positioned to strategically deal with these challenges, ensuring its interests are safeguarded while contributing to a peaceful and prosperous global order.

### **China's CPEC vs. the USA's Indo-Pacific Strategy (IPS): The Return of Great Power Rivalry in Pakistan - Md. Nazmul Islam**

In the dynamic landscape of global geopolitics, the Indo-Pacific region has emerged as a crucial hub of power and intense competition between major players. On the one hand, China is actively working towards strengthening cooperative relationships and connectivity within the region through initiatives like the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), with a particular focus on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). The United States, on the other hand, is determined to uphold its global authority by increasing its presence in the Indo-Pacific and fostering strategic cooperation among

the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD) countries, namely Japan, Australia, and India. The evolving Indo-Pacific strategies, such as the Obama administration's "Rebalancing" efforts, the Trump administration's "America First" doctrine, and Xi Jinping's vision of a "Harmonious Society" and "Peaceful Rise" under the banner of the "China Dream" via BRI, provide critical geopolitical perspectives to examine the resurgence of great power rivalry in the region. For understanding the geopolitical competition, this paper adopts Organski's (1958) "power transition theory" to shed light on China's actions and the USA's reactions in the region. In doing so, it delves into Pakistan's pursuit of a balance in the context of CPEC and the Indo-Pacific strategy (IPS), aiming to comprehend the geopolitical, geostrategic, and security implications of this great power rivalry. By exploring the historical background, objectives, and future trajectory of the IPS, this paper focuses on how this strategic framework influences Pakistan's behavior and considers the options available to Pakistan for rebalancing power dynamics in the region.

### **Guiding Questions for Further Discussion**

- How does the great power competition impact the political power dynamics in South Asia in times of uncertainty? How do South Asia countries adapt and should adapt to the changes in the global order?
- How are countries in Southeast Asia navigating their relationship with major regional and international powers, such as the United States, China, Japan, and India, amidst changing geopolitical dynamics, and what are the opportunities and challenges in these relationships?
- How are regional organizations, such as ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), adapting to the changing global politics, and what are their strategies for promoting regional stability and cooperation?

**Main Speakers****Wadah Khanfar**

The founding president of Al Sharq Forum and the Common Action Forum. He served as the Director-General of Al Jazeera Network from 2003 to 2011.

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A Moroccan politician, thinker, and novelist. He worked as a diplomat and served as an official spokesperson for the Royal Palace, and then, the historian of the Moroccan state. Currently, he works as a professor of political science at Mohammed V University in Rabat.

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An award-winning journalist who, for more than a decade, has anchored, reported, and executive produced with some of the biggest names in television: CNN, CNBC, NBC, and Al Jazeera.

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A senior fellow and the director of the Middle East Council on Global Affairs. Prior, he served as senior fellow and director of the Brookings Doha Center and was a nonresident senior fellow in the Foreign Policy program at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC.

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