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# GLOBAL CHALLENGES AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE MIDDLE EAST

*INSIGHTS FROM THE CONFERENCE ON  
"EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST: A NEW ERA  
IN INSTITUTIONAL MANAGEMENT OF PEACE,  
SECURITY, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT"*

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# FOREWORD

DR. ERNST STETTER

SECRETARY GENERAL, FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN  
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES

This is the third annual conference that we have organised in Israel and the second at the INSS, and I would like to state that the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) is very pleased that it was possible to set up such a wonderful conference in Israel with the active and valuable support of:

The Macro Center for Political Economics and its Director General Roby Nathanson; our hosts, the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS); and, of course, two of the most active members of FEPS, the Karl Renner Institute represented by its President the former Chancellor of Austria, Alfred Gusenbauer, and the Fondation Jean Jaurès, which was represented by Mr. Laurent Cohen, who is the Foundation's Deputy Director General. Let me also express my warm welcome to Massimo D'Alema, the former Italian Prime Minister and our FEPS President for the last 8 years.

We have gathered in Tel Aviv to focus on a very important topic - that of managing peace, security and economic development through an institutional perspective during the troubled times our world is going through at the moment.

Before starting our deliberations allow me to convey to you warm greetings from the former prime minister of France, Jean Marc Ayrault. He regrets not being with us today due to a personal issue, which happened in Bangkok and forced him to remain there. But he asked me to convey to you three points which he

**First**, coming from Europe, it is important to note that the continent and the EU in particular have not overcome their internal problems. We still have:

- A lingering economic malaise;
- A web of increasing inequalities that, despite not appearing on the front-page of our newspapers, still profoundly impacts our societies;
- Brexit and the rise of independence movements in some member states, high levels of disenchantment with the European project;
- The lack of substantive solidarity in the Union which can react and act collectively concerning today's complex challenges, such as dealing with the migration issue;
- A shifting internal political landscape characterised by many centrifugal forces, as well as by the rise of populism and the re-emergence of nationalism (Austria, Germany).

A **second** point is that, at the same time, the Middle East remains the region of intense instability and tumult.

- The continuing devastation of the war in Syria, and the unprecedented drama that it has caused;
- The ongoing fight against Daesh and the distorting, illiberal and horrifying view of Islam this represents;
- The intensification of regional patterns of enmity, based on religious divides;
- The instability in certain countries following the high hopes of the Arab Spring;

Anything we can achieve we cannot achieve through isolationism or nationalism. A progressive agenda for the future has to recognise that. And progressive voices and forces should do more, should work even more passionately to make this their top priority.

I also hope that this conference did not represent an end in itself, but is rather the starting point of a much-needed process of reflection and dialogue, in which all participants will constructively engage with each other in order to foster that unique opportunity for change in which FEPS will remain engaged.

ation rather than competition. The reason why states choose to cooperate has contested viewpoints as many argue that states join intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) only if they have something to gain from them.

The concept of global governance can be traced back to a 1989 World Bank Report and is defined as a collective effort to address global challenges in a cooperative way. With cooperative and not hierarchical relations between the members, international organizations are able to provide larger groups of people and states with horizontal forms of regulation and policy development in various sectors like economics, politics, environment and security.

To promote global governance and the use of intergovernmental organizations, the institutions provide states with collective, inclusive and dynamic ways of cooperation.

International organizations have both a varied scope of action, from undertaking global health policy to inspecting the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs), and diverse scales of organization, from the European Union to the International Monetary Fund (IMF). However, the international community is facing several regional and global challenges that the international arena has not been able to solve. This paper will examine two topics in particular: first, the role of international institutions in the development and economic growth of both Europe and the Middle East. Second, it will analyse the capacity of international institutions in promoting processes of peace management and conflict resolution.

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is described as the information era and international organizations are considered information clearing houses collecting data, conducting comparative studies and disseminating information. But for international institutions to be effective, the global and holistic vision of providing states with information and

bility. By bringing together states, IOs, multilateral public agencies, and civil society, the world economy is one of the main stages on which cooperative leadership, the relationship between government and the international economy, is developed. Globalization is defined by some as an aid for international economic development, as it increases global wealth and promises future trade negotiations between various countries and even entire regions. Some scholars argue that a more expanded and diverse market brings more competitiveness and therefore more prosperity to all.

Nevertheless, trade and finance are contentious factors; their effects are not straightforward and usually produce both winners and losers. Global economic governance faces problems such as inefficiency, lack of coherence and consistency. The lack of coherence is present due to the various approaches to trade and finance, such as liberalism, Marxism and mercantilism. It was not until after World War II that the United States led the creation of international trade regimes designed to facilitate cooperation in the world economy. Initially, it was created to rebuild Europe and to avoid another great depression. Three main institutions emerged from the Bretton Woods negotiations (1944): the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in charge of monetary cooperation, the World Bank (WB) responsible for development loans, and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), permanently replaced by the World Trade Organization (WTO), which manages trade liberalizations. These intergovernmental organizations are present in the three main phases of trade, which are planning, trade policy development and policy implementation. Membership in these intergovernmental institutions is voluntary and broad; most UN member states are part of these three organizations.

The United Nations too has a special organ and a specific conference for the development of trade and finance. Economic development and growth is the main topic in the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) which organizes the

In addition to the cooperation and presence in international economic organizations, the region comprises several specialized institutions which help the continent develop its own trade and finance. Institutions like the European Investment Bank (EIB), owned by EU member states and used to support European integration, and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), an institution that uses investment to help build market economies. Nowadays, as the policies of the European Union are becoming more autarchic, experts fear the European Union is receding into protectionism. With Brexit and the increased influence of national economic policies over regional ones, European institutions face several challenges not present since the establishment of the Treaty of Rome which urged European member states to regard their economic policies as a matter of common concern.

### **b) On Regional level: a prosperous Middle East**

Since the end of World War II, many attempts have been made to promote economic integration in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Under the assumption that regional economic integration provides member states with economic gains, increased collective welfare and the preservation of security and prevention of conflict, it is believed that a policy shift is needed to deploy its substantial human, natural, and financial assets more efficiently through adopting economic and social policies that lead to more rapid and inclusive economic growth in the region. Long-term regional integration is crucial for states in the region to reduce their economic losses incurred as a result of poor economic management and conflicts requiring massive military outlays. Thinking in particular of regional infrastructure projects in energy, water and transport, economies in the region are in the process of expansion in intra-regional and world-wide trade.

Although the Middle East has the lowest percentage of intra-region-

economic aid and assistance, intervene militarily and call for legal conventions. To broker and oversee agreements, it can use either diplomacy and mediation or peacekeeping missions. To provide aid and assistance, it can offer food, weapons or strategic assistance. Regarding military intervention, peace enforcement missions can be approved. However, past experience shows that the effectiveness of such tasks may be limited, as in the cases of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) in Rwanda, Srebrenica and Darfur. These cases, among others, have led the international community to a constant debate about the limit of the tools the international community holds to solve conflict and security dilemmas.

#### **a) Regional case: a confident European Union**

The European Union promotes peace and acts to guarantee the security of its citizens and territory. Internal and external security is becoming ever more intertwined in the region; policymakers believe that the security of European states depends on peace beyond their borders. Commitments to mutual assistance include addressing challenges from both an internal and external perspective, such as terrorism, hybrid threats, cyber and energy security, organised crime and external border management. For instance, Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) missions and operations work alongside the European Border and Coast Guard and EU specialised agencies to enhance border protection and maritime security in order to save more lives, fight cross-border crime and disrupt smuggling networks. When it comes to collective defence, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) remains the primary framework for most Member States. Most European states are committed to deepen cooperation with the North Atlantic Alliance in complementarity, synergy, and with full respect for the institutional framework of the two.

In addition to the EU and NATO, most European member states are

There is a significant relationship between regime stability and regional security in the Middle East. On an individual state basis, revolutionary political changes in the region affect their conflict behaviour and therefore their trust or mistrust in other neighbouring states. Political instability in the region not only increases the likelihood of conflict but also decreases the presence of regional intergovernmental institutions and their ability to solve problems of cooperation and security. While some structural enmities in the region appear on their way to resolution, others are as persistent as ever. The accumulation of weapons in the Middle East, as well as the presence and influence of outside military and economic powers in the region has made the Middle East, according to several studies, a more dangerous place. To date, none of the regional institutions established were capable of effectively resolving conflicts through peaceful means or instituting a system of collective security.

## **Conclusion**

International organizations help states coordinate on superior equilibria and reduce transaction costs. By enabling its members to enforce norms, have a community representative, share and promote legitimacy and even launder dirty politics, these organizations are effective and powerful as long as states grant them the trust and the authority to be so. Both centralized and independent, the influence and capability of international organizations in Europe and the Middle East is being questioned. In regard to the influence of intergovernmental organizations in terms of cooperation, security and economics, the world is seeing a decrease in the belief that international organizations are either necessary or effective. The reality is that many of these institutions deal with dilemmas and problems that are common to a majority of states in the world. To strengthen the governance of those global interactions, international institutions should rationalize the relationships among sovereign states, update and renew the existing

# KEYNOTE SPEECH

MASSIMO D'ALEMA

FORMER PRIME MINISTER OF ITALY

In my introductory remarks I would like to illustrate the main foreign policy concerns and the most crucial choices made by the European Union vis-à-vis the Middle Eastern region, in order to compare them with the choices Israel is making and find major concurrences, where possible, and main disagreements.

We are living in a moment of confused and confrontational multilateralism, in which international institutions and multilateral agreements are facing growing difficulties. For the European Union, which considers multilateralism, the respect of the United Nations system, and international laws as the cornerstones of its activity on the global scene, this is a reason for apprehension.

On the one hand, there is President Trump's nationalism, which is calling into question fundamental international agreements, from the Paris Agreement to the Iran Nuclear Deal, from the transatlantic trade partnership to NAFTA, and has so far maintained an approach in the management of the North Korean crisis that many observers in the United States consider imprudent.

On the other hand, the weight of Russian nationalism and of Mr Putin's power politics is steadily growing. Moscow is again playing a significant role in this region, not least because of the mistakes made by the Western countries. The prevailing feeling in the European leadership is that of a growing concern and of a deep aversion towards these trends.

Never, since the end of the Cold War, have Europe's relations

Europe aims for a solution of the Kurdish question that, while guaranteeing the Kurds' autonomy and rights, would not call into question national borders. This also represents an important concurrence between Iran and Turkey, which might significantly change the regional balance.

Europe also considers essential a peaceful and negotiated solution of the conflict in Yemen. The US Administration's decision to conclude a huge arms deal with Saudi Arabia has raised deep concerns in the European Union, which has also widely criticised the massive violation of human rights and the killing of civilians in Yemen by the Saudis and their allies.

I have hereby summed up not my personal opinions, but the European Union's official positions. Eventual agreements or disagreements, in some cases deep disagreements, between the European positions and those of the Trump Administration are plain to all. So too are often the points of convergence between the US positions and those of the current Israeli government.

Against this backdrop, I would like to conclude with few brief reflections about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and the Palestinian question. Once again I am not going to express personal opinions, but I will only quote the EU's official statements.

The EU considers the peaceful solution of the Palestinian questions and the birth of a Palestinian state, within secure and recognised borders based on the withdrawal from the territories occupied in 1967, as an essential part of the process of stabilisation and reconciliation of the whole region. This is a process that, as I mentioned earlier, is vitally important for the Union.

The European Union has repeatedly expressed its deep concerns in respect to the Israeli settlement expansion in East Jerusalem and in the West Bank, including the forced transfers of Bedouin

East, the Palestinian issue has become secondary and no longer visible for public opinion. That is what follows upon Netanyahu's conviction that Israel has a free hand and can proceed unilaterally while aggravating the sense of humiliation and frustration of the Palestinians. I believe, many of us believe, it is a mistake, a short term vision. The price to be paid later could be high.

For this reason, the collaboration between the European and Israeli progressive forces is essential not only to overcome differences and misunderstanding, but to promote the prospects of peace and cooperation.

Palestinian conflict is the main cause for the regional instability are mistaken, since there is no connection whatsoever between this conflict and the ongoing civil war in Syria, the situation in Iraq, Libya, Yemen, etc.

The main struggle in the region is between three radical Islamic movements striving for regional hegemony:

### **1. Iran - striving to export the Islamic revolution**

For Israel and the Sunni Arab regimes, Iran is the main threat and the main generator and instigator of instability in the Middle East. Due to Western weakness, the Iranian regime enjoys hegemony and influence outside of Iran: in Iraq through a Shiite government, in Lebanon through Hezbollah as its main strategic proxy against Israel, in Yemen through the Houthis, and in Syria. Regarding the nuclear deal, although it is a very bad one, I do not recommend opening the deal at the moment. Nevertheless, there are enough reasons to impose sanctions on the Iranian regime - due to its violations of the Security Council's resolutions on arms proliferation, support for terror organizations, the missile project, attempts to undermine the Sunni Arab regimes in the area, and severe violation of human rights. This can and should be done without abrogating the deal. In the long run, a situation in which Iran attains nuclear capabilities should and must be stopped.

### **2. The Sunni Jihadists (Wahhabis/Salafists) in the Middle East**

Even though ISIS and similar elements are going to be defeated on the ground by the coalitions fighting against them, they will not disappear and will keep challenging the area in Sinai, Libya, Syria, etc. Furthermore, they will continue with their terror activity all over the world, especially in Europe. This is not a major threat for Israel, but from time to time we are also challenged by

# THE CURRENT ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE ISRAELI-PALESTINE CONFLICT

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One of the most difficult problems in the negotiation process between Israel and the Palestinians relates specifically to the nature of the negotiations and not to the negotiations' content. Since the initiation of the Oslo process in 1992, the process has been based on a binary paradigm - simultaneous negotiations on all core issues including Jerusalem, borders and refugees. The negotiators' motto in every round of the talks was "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed".

The sad outcome is known. Not only were the two sides left without an agreement, but on the main issues the gaps between the two sides have been deepening. In fact, both sides, for internal political reasons, prefer the "comfort zone" where they are now – a state of absence of negotiations, when each side accuses the other of causing the stagnation. Under those circumstances, and because it is clear that in the absence of any political process, there is a real danger of an outbreak of hostilities, it would be better and preferable to try a new paradigm. Unlike the past, both sides could agree to negotiate on various issues and reach agreements even if on other issues no agreement has been reached. The goal of the whole process remains the same - the establishment of a Palestinian State alongside the State of Israel. But both sides should agree to attain this gradually, in stages, and through a series of partial agreements that could be implemented even if no agreement has been reached on the question of Jerusalem, for example.



The American and European policy of reducing the level of political investment in the region, each for their own reasons, creates a certain vacuum in the sphere of political-economic involvement that accompanied the Middle East in the post-war era. Russia and China are trying to penetrate this space, each with interests some of which are identical and partly characterized by their different focuses.

Russia is largely returning to the pattern of action of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. The new player in the region is China, whose conduct in the Middle East is dictated by the desire to turn China into an international political, economic and military power. In East Asia, China operates in these three components of power with great intensity, while in the more distant circles, it operates primarily on the economic level, while leveraging it to the extent possible for political needs. Economic activity in the Middle East is integrated into the strategy of increasing China's economic competitiveness in the world's leading economies, among other things, by improving the efficiency of Chinese exports. The Middle East is an essential part of the Chinese maritime transport route and hence the importance of the Chinese peat in the region.

The second Chinese interest in the region and its stability is related to the main source of energy that drives the production lines in China. The Chinese interests and the strategy for achieving them are accompanied by an unprecedented financing capability. This enables them to enter into infrastructure projects and acquire knowledge and assets that the Chinese leadership seems to be striving to realize as part of the national strategy. Investments in areas that require regional observation, such as increasing water supply or utilizing natural gas, can be integrated into China's strategy and financial capabilities.

These are aspects that both Europe and Israel should consider, and they highlight the serious lack of strategic dialogue between them.

Drawing on the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy, the Global Strategy launched in June 2016 presents an ambitious vision for the EU's foreign and security policy to tackle the many international challenges we face - from migration and terrorism to a global economic slow-down.

The relations between the European Union and Israel remain solid. We are friends who share the same values, culture and at times painful history. Europe is strongly committed to the fight against anti-Semitism and to peace and stability in the Middle East. And we are also the kind of friends who can handle our differences and disagreements in a productive and respectful manner.

The Arab Spring did not bring about the changes in the region that both Israel and Europe would like to see. Instead the Arab Spring has been replaced by armed conflicts and repercussions like migration and terrorism that can be felt in places far away from the region. It is my strong belief that Israel and Europe – because we share the same values – would like to see the same resolutions to these conflicts and repercussions, but also that we sometimes differ in our approaches as to how to achieve these resolutions.

One example is Syria, where we all would like to see a peaceful resolution very soon. EU's approach is to stay engaged in the diplomatic efforts – however gloomy the prospects might seem from time to time. And we are also engaged as a “soft-power super-power” by providing humanitarian aid to the many refugees from Syria scattered in the region. The EU has spent more than 9 billion Euros on Syria-related humanitarian aid. Without this aid, countries like Lebanon and Jordan might be on the verge of breakdown, which would seriously threaten the security of Israel.

Another example is Iran. The EU facilitated the successful negotiation of the JCPOA, which has at least postponed, if not ended the

# **DIFFERENTIATION, ALLIANCES, SECURITY AND BORDERS**

DR. ALFRED GUSENBAUER

FORMER CHANCELLOR OF AUSTRIA AND  
PRESIDENT OF THE KARL RENNER INSTITUTE

Nowadays, Europe is experiencing an atmosphere of depression. The trend of differentiation that is taking place is a matter of academic and political debate. I try to think of Europe and the world as a laboratory in which experiments are made, problems are discovered, and solutions must be considered. Nevertheless, I am always sceptical about final or absolute solutions. No matter how we understand the solutions or what we do about them, they will always remain intermediate solutions relevant only until a new problem arises that requires an alternative solution.

If we examine the situation in Europe after the great economic crisis of 2007-2008, although the situation is not paradise, growth in Europe returned, unemployment dropped in most countries and the banks were saved. Of course, there are also drawbacks, such as the rise of right-wing extremist movements, the refugee crisis, and more. But, in general, I am pleased with the way Europe survived, although it did so in a different way from what many had expected.

In the institutional context, the European Commission worked as the main force in Europe's economic rescue from the crisis and the second key institution, the European Central Bank, has become as important as the Federal Reserve Bank. Eventually, during this

in involvement in the Middle East. I do not know what President Trump's ideas about the Middle East are, but I assume that he prefers a strong coalition of moderate states with Israel and the Palestinian Authority, while confronting Iran and its allies. However, in order for this to work, there is a need for progress in Israeli-Palestinian relations. It may significantly improve Israel's image, but this is not the main reason. This is of supreme interest for Israel and an American interest that wants to see improvement.

In such a situation, Europe's role will become more significant. For example, with the American withdrawal from Syria and the radicalization in Iran, Europe can play an important role as it did with the nuclear deal. Europe cannot afford to abandon the arena to Russia and China, which can precipitate conflict.

Israel has come closer not only to India and China, but also to Russia, and it is a positive thing all in all, because the more it has good relations with strong players with interests in the region, the better. However, it needs to make wise political decisions. Kurdistan, for example, was in a state of momentum and enjoyed enormous international support and even reached achievements, until the referendum on independence, which, since then, has only caused deterioration and loss of territories that were in their possession. The approach that Israel must take in order to ensure its future as a strong and prosperous state is a minimalist and more modest approach.

to sabotage the rules of the game. Because of this, they are unlikely to make the compromises that are necessary to participate in coalition governments in parliamentary democracies. In such systems they are likely to remain in opposition, even if they are electorally successful. In contrast, presidential democracies or first-past-the-post electoral systems, not to mention authoritarian regimes, enable the populists to govern with less compromise, if they are able to achieve the necessary majority.

Centring a populist party on a single figurehead with excellent communication skills, tends to simplify decision-making in the party, minimize conflicting messages from different party officials, and increases its electoral appeal. Since the information war and the personality of the leader are crucial to the success of populist parties, and since having a workable program to carry out in government is not, populists make little preparation for their time in office. Unlike revolutionary political movements, they do not have clear ideas about the institutions they would like to establish in place of those to be demolished. They can count on few serious experts, since those are suspected of belonging to the hated establishment. The result is not merely a somewhat chaotic transition when populists win power, but general state dysfunction, to the detriment of the aggregate good.

## **Right-wing populism in Europe and Israel**

For the purposes of the conference, and given that in Western democracies populist techniques have recently been observed mostly on the political right, the following discussion characterizes Israeli right-wing populism, and compares it with European populism.

One major difference is that Israeli society has been shaped by large immigration waves, much larger in relative terms than the immigration to Europe since World War II. Crucially, unlike Europe,



divide between those who feel that they have benefited from integration and those who do not recognize this, often divided along the lines of income and education.

- Within the public – between more or less liberal, more or less open-minded groups and individuals;
- And among elites, along similar lines and particularly regarding the future path of integration.

Conclusions to be drawn from this level of disunity:

The many lines of division and the diversity of ideas, go beyond simple binaries:

1. North vs. South / West vs. East – I agree with Ivan Krastev,<sup>2</sup> that there is not so much a “crisis of solidarity” but a “clash of solidarities” in Europe, between and within regions, countries, and societies.
2. More vs. less: not all who feel they have benefitted from integration, and who deeply support cooperation in Europe, including the author of these lines, are necessarily in favour of transferring more powers to Europe.
3. A Europe of various speeds / concentric circles provides only partial answers. We need to be more imaginative, more flexible, and more tailor-made.

## **2. External and Security Policies**

General comment:

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2. After Europe. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017, p.43.

developments that Europe was unable to influence, due to its limited political, financial and military means, but also due to ill-considered features of the neighbourhood policy.

The results are that Eastern Europe and the MENA region are deeply fractured, and that the strategic interests of many of the ruling elites in Europe's neighbourhood do not necessarily coincide with those of Europe (as the 2015 ENP Review put it: "not all partners aspire to EU rules and standards..."<sup>3</sup>) – it is a lesson that the EU could have learned a long time ago.

What is needed is more differentiation, transactional-type relations between neighbouring countries, which start not from the imagined attractiveness of the EU, not from overall partnerships (a largely rhetorical instrument, without much distinguishing relevance), but from a realistic interpretation of EU interests and shared interests, wherever and whenever they can be identified.

#### **4. Relations with Russia**

The most important (traditional) security issue is the Ukrainian crisis and the relationship with Russia. It impacts on the future of:

- A. The security order in Europe
- B. EU-US relations
- C. Unity / division within the EU

Some observations on the nature of Europe's relationship with Russia:

1. Who do we confront: Russia or Russia's current leadership?

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3. Review of the European Neighbourhood Policy, Brussels, November 18, 2015, p. 2.

sanctions regime (initiated by the United States), and for the first time in its history, it formed a unified front against Russia. The level of unity was unprecedented, and despite serious cracks and fissures, it still holds.

3. About the future of sanctions: the sanctions may have had a moderate economic impact on Russia but did not generate politically relevant consequences. The costs imposed on Russia were too marginal; Russia could easily afford non-compliance. Once sanctions are in place, they become a policy instrument, no longer a policy goal. The EU has manoeuvred itself into a tupik, a dead-end street: lifting the sanctions would imply loss of faith, keeping the sanctions becomes increasingly difficult (internally) and lacks effect (externally).

What EH Carr wrote about Germany during the 1930s in his *The Twenty Years' Crisis, 1919-1939* seems to at least partially apply to Russia in the 2000s: there can be no stability (Carr: peace) in Europe unless Russia (Carr: Germany) can find a secure place within it.

and coherence within the EU, hampering the Union's capacity to act confidently with one voice.

Nonetheless, despite these challenges, one area where things seem to be moving concretely both fast and forward is the issue of security and defence.

An area long considered a taboo for European integration, being only within the remit of Member States, we have seen over the last couple of years a proliferation of initiatives and concrete measures taken so as to enhance the capacity of the Union to act in a confident and coherent way in this policy domain.

The progress achieved in the last two years alone is often considered to be superior to the progress achieved in all the previous decades of the Union's existence, combined.

This development has been based on a growing realisation on the part of Europe of how dire the need is for the Union to take on more responsibility. This involves, not only providing better security for our own citizens, but also continuing to uphold international law, peace, and openness, while rejecting isolationism or nationalism, in our world that is undergoing dramatic geopolitical changes.

For this reason under the stewardship of High Representative/ Vice-President Federica Mogherini, we have seen the European Commission accompanying and supporting the determination of Member States in pushing forward this agenda.

Undoubtedly, one of the landmarks in this process has been the release of the EU's Global Strategy (EUGS) document late in June last year, a document that I believe was urgently needed and which provides real strategic guidance for the Union on how to steer through the murky waters of today and tomorrow.

developments, Trump, Russia, the Middle East, and so on - and for this, I am glad we were joined by an excellent panel which helped us understand and unpack some of the complexities involved in this process.

and the Palestinians lies with Palestinian rejectionism, stubbornness, internal fragmentation and their continuing violence and incitement. We cannot peacefully resolve the conflict on our own. But Europe, and especially its leading powers, wants to see at least that we are serious about reaching a solution to the conflict, whether gradually, or through an intensive effort.

The problem is, the ones paying the price for the stalemate in our relations with Europe are first and foremost the citizens of Israel. We need to enter into a far-reaching dialogue with Europe. The EU faces unprecedented challenges in an unstable and unpredictable international environment. Against that backdrop, we have a lot to offer, and a huge amount to gain.

With many European economies struggling with low growth and high unemployment, Israel's dynamic and entrepreneurial economy makes for an attractive partner. With Europe facing unprecedented internal and external security threats, Israel can contribute highly valued technological, security and intelligence knowhow. With Europe's stability directly affected by the turbulent events in the Middle East, Israel is an important strategic ally. We even offer an invaluable alternative energy source – in the form of natural gas – for a continent keen to diversify its energy sources. Now more than ever, the chaos in our region, which is felt directly in Europe, underlines the values we share with the West.

This, therefore, is exactly the right moment for a responsible and clear-sighted Israeli leadership to enter into an intensive dialogue with EU leaders aimed at broadening our cooperation and deepening European political support for Israel.

The agenda for upgrading our relations with Europe will necessarily contain a long and significant list of issues, including blocking anti-Israel moves by the Palestinians at the UN, developing a joint strategy to dismantle the BDS movement and securing European



# A NEW ERA OF THREATS AND SECURITY

SVEN-ERIC SÖDER

DIRECTOR GENERAL, THE FOLKE BERNADOTTE ACADEMY

The subject of this roundtable conference is very timely. Institutional management of peace, security and economic development is crucial for success. There can be no sustainable peace and security without functioning institutions.

I think it is highly appropriate to discuss this subject here in Israel. The Jewish people know from history, maybe better than any of us, what a lack of security means and what the consequences can be.

My own government agency – the Folke Bernadotte Academy – is named after a man who provided thousands of prisoners with safe haven from the Nazi death camps at the end of World War II, when he headed the so called White Buses Expedition into Germany in April 1945. The expedition rescued Jews and Scandinavian resistance fighters from the notorious death camp in Ravensbrück – among them many female Jews.

Before I elaborate a bit on Russia, the US and the EU as three important security actors, I would like to draw your attention to two more general observations:

i. **First:** Threats and security needs are of course different today compared to what we experienced only a couple of decades ago. As the title of this conference indicates, we are living in A New Era. The end of the Cold War implied, in many respects, a para-

in extensive shady Internet activities around the world. We have probably only seen the beginning of the current revelations.

I think we in the West have one fundamental lesson to learn in relation to the Russian development of the last decades:

We cannot afford the luxury of being naïve. We need to see the world as it is. It was naïve to think the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War was “The End of History”, the triumph of liberal democracy and the arrival of a post-ideological world as Francis Fukuyama wrote in 1992.

If Russia, given her resources, in some aspects is moving her positions forward, we can hardly say the same **about the US**. What is happening under the current US administration is a chapter in itself. However, American interventionism in some cases and lack of action in others during the last two decades cannot be described as anything other than failure. 16 years of war in Afghanistan did not put an end to the Afghan conflict. The second Gulf war resulted in a turmoil which we are still suffering from. US and UK actions in Iraq can at best be described as naïve – but what we saw was in reality a policy based on a lack of knowledge and ability of historical dimensions. The combination of the last decade’s failures and mistakes, and the present uncertainty about the US’s direction, is a challenge for all of us.

What does all this mean for **Europe and the EU**?

The EU is nearby. The distance between Tel Aviv and Athens is even smaller than it is between Stockholm and Brussels. It is impossible to neglect the EU. On this I fully agree with Mr. Herzog. The EU plays and will continue to play an important role in the future as well. Not least because the EU is the second biggest market in the world and the #1 international development actor and donor.



have been good and strong ever since the Swedish recognition of Israel in 1950, or even before that – Sweden was one of the UN member states that voted in favour of the UN Partition Plan for Palestine in 1947.

Swedish-Israeli ties and connections in areas such as trade, culture, science and innovation continue to be strong. And our hope is that these ties will develop and grow even stronger, to the benefit of both our peoples, countries and regions.

We do not believe in the isolation of Israel. On the contrary, my government believes and strives for strengthened relations. We believe in more and stronger trade and cultural exchange, more dialogue and exchange, not less.

However, the diplomatic relations between our two countries may leave a few things that could be improved. Political differences and differing opinions on a number of topics must not stand in the way of serious dialogue. We are strong believers in constructive dialogue, even if it, at times, can become uncomfortable.

Sweden is a strong supporter of Israel and Israel's right to live in stable and predictable security within defined secure borders. This includes strong condemnation of any acts of violence, terror or incitement. We believe that it must be our common goal to find ways out of the current impasse in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict – a situation that could be described as “status quo”, or as a prolonged occupation with questionable legal grounds in International Law.

We believe that it is of critical importance that Palestine develops in the right direction into a united, democratic, open society with peaceful relations with its neighbours.

We believe in the two-state solution where the two states, Israel

very well be living in dangerous times, without seriously giving this due consideration.

We might very well have reached a point in history when it is high time to consider a somewhat different regional or global perspective on the possible solutions or ways forward in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

It could be fair to say that the last quarter of a century has seen a sequence of missed opportunities as regards reaching a durable solution to the conflict. Without going into details I will mention some possible factors:

No Partner, No Trust, A strong belief in Conflict Management; A mutual build-up of deep distrust, and a continuous slippage of language and definitions. This has created a climate not conducive to peace talks or even dialogue.

The quest for a durable peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict must not be a zero-sum game. Any durable solution for the future must be built on a certain degree, or vision, of win-win. This requires mutual trust. This requires constructive dialogue built on realistic assumptions. This pertains to the relations between the two parties involved, and naturally also the region as a whole, but possibly even to a wider circle of stakeholders.

The principles of the Arab Peace Initiative show the possible way forward – and the possibilities that potentially could open up. Without directly claiming that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the “Mother of All Conflicts” – there are indeed some other conflicts in the region – I nevertheless believe that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict needs to be seen, and possibly addressed, in a regional perspective.

Everyone stands to gain from a solid regional solution, not least

all know, includes listening and trying to understand the narrative, the arguments and the concerns of the other parties. We have to think and act out of the box, yet at the same time be mindful that principled pragmatism does not become synonymous with cynical self-interest.

This will not be easy – but it is a prerequisite for building a solid future for the Middle East and Europe.

cal frontier to defend. The legacy of successive empires, wars and migrations is intermingling and the challenge for Europe now is to define citizenship in inclusive terms and contain the exclusivist forces of nationalism. The embrace of globalization has peaked.

Meanwhile, now that ISIS has been rolled back in Iraq and Syria, attention is turning to “what next”? There is discussion in Europe about the nature of the endgame. That endgame cannot be the death of all ISIS fighters. For every fighter killed, more will volunteer, if for no other reason than revenge. ISIS could morph into a new entity, just as Al Qaeda did, more fragmented but still deadly when it strikes. That said, I do not believe ISIS or Al Qaeda poses an existential threat to Europe.

How the EU defends its citizens from terrorism, however, does have implications for the maintenance of European values. Defence of “us” from “them” cannot be an end in itself – either “we” uphold our values and have something worth defending or we are no better than “them”.

The quest is to balance interests and values as opposed to arguing they are the same. Democracy is not the recipe for stability – as demonstrated in the Arab Spring – and Europe is no longer advocating the spread of democracy to the Neighbourhood. However, at the same time, the potential for democratic values to erode inside Europe – in the face of populist nationalism and Islamophobia cannot be taken lightly.

The Israeli-Palestinian issue does warrant concern in Europe because of historical and religious links to the Middle East going back to Biblical times. And today human rights groups, religious and ethnic groups in Europe, define themselves in part in relation to the conflict. Governments even use the positions of people on the conflict as a potential indicator of radicalisation.

the Jean-Jaurès Foundation and the Karl Renner Institute, in order to explore the real impact the current policies of the various international institutions have on Israel, conflict resolution and regional cooperation with its neighbours, and the particular impact on the EU and its member states and the role they have in respect of EU-Israeli relations.

Approximately 20 distinguished politicians, public officials and other decision makers, diplomats, academic scholars and high-ranking experts from leading think tanks participated in the seminar and contributed to a series of very interesting sessions.

This chapter will briefly review the main contributions of the respected figures who participated in the conference, focusing on the participants whose complete inputs do not appear in the previous chapters of this book.

## **Kick-Off Dinner**

The opening dinner, on November 4th 2017, moderated by **Dr. Roby Nathanson**, Director General of the Macro Center for Political Economics, was aimed at introducing the main themes to be touched upon during the conference to the distinguished participants of the event. The keynote speakers focused on the wider perspective regarding a number of international and regional developments.

Participants were greeted by **Dr. Oded Eran**, Senior Researcher and Head of the European Program at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS).

The keynote speech of **Massimo D'Alema**, Former Prime Minister of Italy, focused on the main foreign policy concerns and the most crucial choices made by the European Union vis-à-vis the Middle Eastern region, in order to compare them with the choices Israel

presence in Israel is more important and stronger than ever - from the tightening of economic relations in various fields to the treatment of anti-Semitic incidents.

**Dr. Oded Eran**, head of the European Program at the INSS, referred to the recent events in Lebanon and Saudi Arabia and stressed the extent to which the Middle East is unstable and changes are taking place on a daily basis. In this context, he raised the question of whether arrangements such as a permanent settlement between Israel and the Palestinians are possible, and whether partial arrangements should be made towards the goal of two states for two peoples.

### **First Session: A changing European Union: steering through the new political and economic landscape**

**Chair: Dr. Roby Nathanson**, Director General, Macro Center for Political Economics

This first session was aimed at providing a tour d' horizon of what the role of the European Union as an institution could be in the emergent international landscape amidst the plethora of its own problems. Dealing with lingering economic problems, the migration issue, Brexit and the rise of independence movements in some member states, high levels of disenchantment with the European project, the right-wing populist and anti-establishment surge, and the ascendant nationalist sentiment in many member states, as well as the vagaries of domestic politics in several national contexts, forms only part of this very complicated picture. What is the EU required to do in order to better tackle all these challenges? What can be its international role in the political and economic domain against this backdrop, especially vis-à-vis the new US administration, Russia and the Middle East?

**Dr. Roby Nathanson** spoke about the role of international insti-

includes proposing solutions, it is weak and thus dangerous. The wave of populism in Europe, characterized by a lack of structured policy and the cancellation of decisions by veto power, is not strong enough to reduce the status of the EU. For Israel and the Palestinians, Sadeh argues that the conflict has become an institution in itself. He stressed that both sides have a common interest in preserving the conflict, since it has become a component of identity for both sides, and for them a situation of non-violence means an adequate form of peace.

**Prof. André Gerrits**, Professor of International Politics at the University of Leiden, stressed the presence of Russia in the region as a surprising factor that Europe must address in defining its new strategic policy. The situations in the Crimea and in Ukraine are examples of areas in which the EU is unable to respond. In his opinion, it does not matter who heads Russia, because there is a more basic clash between the European Union and Russia at the level of European norms and a clash in the desire to have more influence in the Middle East.

At the end of the first session, **Maj. Gen. (ret.) Amos Yadlin**, the Executive Director of the INSS, welcomed the conference participants and presented Israel's national security balance at the end of 2017. This was a very positive balance, one of the best in the country's 70 years. He stated that there is no existential threat to Israel. Israel exists as an island of relative solidity in a violent, stormy and unstable Middle East. The world has understood that the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was not the source of the problems of the Middle East. Israel has signed peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan, and recently it seems that there are many common interests with Saudi Arabia and the moderate Sunni world. In terms of Israel-US relations, President Trump is considered a president friendly to Israel, Russia is not an enemy, Israel's interests in Syria are understood by the Russians, Israel's relations with India and China continue to develop, and Israel maintains positive bilat-



**Dr. Oded Eran** believes that it is possible to separate economic issues and political issues in the Middle East. Topics such as water and environmental issues are not related to the issue of Jerusalem. Israel, the Palestinians, and the international community must define the goals that can certainly be achieved in the near future, as against treating distant future goals.

Regarding the rehabilitation of the Middle East, Dr. Eran referred to the EU's lack of action. The EU does not want or cannot invest the huge sums needed to bring the Middle East back to the situation it was five years ago. That leaves the Middle East with one sponsor - China. With huge projects and a lot of money, China is financing the Middle East and the question arises: Is this neo-colonialism positive? Economic investment always comes with a political agenda.

At the end of his input, Dr. Eran addressed the issue of gas on the shores of the Mediterranean, saying that the exploitation of gas on the Gaza coast could strengthen the Palestinian economy but requires political oversight. The EU can help in achieving this goal and therefore Europe should focus more on issues of regional cooperation.

### **Third Session: A more confident European Union: managing security cooperation in a new geopolitical environment**

**Chair: Dr. Ernst Stetter, Secretary General, FEPS**

Building on the discussions of the first two sessions that focused more on the political and economic aspects, the third session shifted the spotlight to the security domain. Amid a landscape of changing international and regional political dynamics, how can Europe act in a united way and with a common voice in promoting its foreign and security policies? In what ways can the EU address the increasing influence of Russia, not least in the Middle East,

the EU's assessments of Russia's goals and capabilities should not be underestimated. As a backup, he said, Russia's invasion of the Crimea and its malicious actions in the global cyber space should be considered.

**Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo**, former NATO deputy Secretary General, said that EU foreign policy on defence was the latest element in EU policy, although it had been discussed in the past in Chirac's time. Until the Treaty of Lisbon, delegations outside the EU were very limited in terms of manpower and resources. However, in recent months, or more precisely after the French elections, things have changed even more, and Macron, in his opinion, is following in Chirac's footsteps when he talks about building a European military force. However, NATO has added value beyond being a military alliance, carrying out pinpoint operations relatively simply and efficiently, while the EU has much more complex issues to deal with.

**Massimo D'Alema**, former Prime Minister of Italy, thinks it is time to strengthen political ties between Israel and the European Union. Due to the rise of nationalism and populism, many Europeans perceive the European role in the Middle East as sponsors rather than as an active actor – PAYERS rather than PLAYERS.

#### **Fourth Session: A more stable Middle East: forming new regional security arrangements**

##### **Chair: MK Ksenia Svetlova, Zionist Camp Party**

The fourth session was aimed at providing a security-centred discussion of the current status quo and of the future dynamics in the Middle East. In what ways could the cooperation between the moderate Sunni world and Israel foster the creation of new regional security arrangements? How can moves in this direction affect the stalling Middle East peace process? Is it conceivable that the

and the commitment to international law is important. He does not accept statements about the existence of an “obsession” with international law. He argues that a good and functioning international system is essential to maintaining world order, especially in the period in which we now live when international institutions are undergoing repeated attacks.

Regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, he believes that by looking at it from a regional perspective, everyone has something to gain from a solution. He believes that through a dialogue that includes recognition of the narrative, concerns and fears of all sides, a common basis can be found and common ground will be reached. Now that the economic and geopolitical situation in Israel is relatively good, it is time to look ahead rather than deal with fear.

**Prof. Rosemary Hollis**, Professor of International Politics at City University of London, was concerned that Israel is exporting to Europe, among other things, expertise in fighting terrorism. She is troubled by the fact that Israel today teaches the Europeans various methods of fighting terror, which include, aside from “legitimate” means, also some shady practices such as torture of terrorists as a means of extracting information from them. This claim led to a response by MK Svetlova that this is not true, and there are clear voices in the Knesset calling for condemnation of any method of counter-terrorism that is contrary to Israel’s being a democratic state that protects human rights.

**Elias Zananiri**, deputy chairman of the Palestinian Committee for Interaction with Israeli Society, said that it is important to characterize who we are, because we are all victims of the problem. He added that the Israelis are pushing to strengthen diplomatic ties with various countries, but the Palestinians cannot maintain diplomatic relations with Israel until Israel stops occupying Palestinian territories.

## CONTRIBUTORS



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**Massimo D'Alema** is a former Prime Minister of Italy. He was in office from October 1998 until April 2000. He was the President of the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) from 2010 and held this post until June 2017. In 2004 he became a Member of the European Parliament and Chair of the EP Delegation for relations between the EU and the Mercosur. On 2006 he was appointed deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in Italy. In 2008 he was elected MP for Apulia representing the Democratic Party. He has been the President of the "Fondazione di cultura politica Italianieuropei" Political Foundation since 2000.

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**Dr. Alfred Gusenbauer** Former President of the Karl Renner Institute. He was Austria's 11th Federal Chancellor, serving between 2007 and 2008 and the leader of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) from 2000 to 2008. Since then he has pursued a career as a consultant and lecturer, and as a member of supervisory boards. He studied political science, philosophy and law at the University of Vienna, where he obtained a PhD in political science. He holds an honorary doctorate from the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya (Israel) and is an Honorary



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**Amb. Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo** was the NATO Deputy Secretary General from 2001 to 2007. In this capacity he focused on strategic outlook and negotiations in complex issues, high level contacts and negotiations with Governments and International Organizations with special attention on Partners, Mediterranean and Gulf countries. Prior to this position he was Ambassador of Italy to the Western European Union and to the Committee for Policy and Security of the European Union. He was also Diplomatic Counsellor to the Minister of Defence from 1997 to 2000.



**Dr. Roby Nathanson** is the Director General of the Macro Center for Political Economics. He served as Director of the Histadrut's (Labour Federation) Institute for Economic and Social Research and has been active in preparing programmes aimed at socio-economic structural reform. He has taken part in negotiations

Hammarskjöld Foundation and of UNITAR's Board of Trustees.



**Dr. Tal Sadeh** is senior lecturer at the Department of Political Science at Tel Aviv University and ex-Co-President of the Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration (IASI). He holds a PhD in International Relations and an MA degree cum laude in Economics, both from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research and teaching interests include international political economics, and the political economy of the EU, in particular the single currency and EU-Israeli relations, as well as international institutions and governance structures.



**Sven-Eric Söder** has been Director General of the Folke Bernadotte Academy since 2012. He previously held positions as State Secretary in the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs and Ministry for Trade. In the former he was responsible for aid to Central and Eastern Europe, in addition to managing the Baltic Co-operation and Nordic affairs. From the mid-1990s to early 2000s he participated in the group that facilitated the Stockholm talks between Israeli and Palestinian representatives. He has also worked as a Political Advisor and Press Officer in the Swedish Ministry of Defence.



**Ricard Torrell** is Partner at STHAL Partners LLP. He was Secretary-General of the International Union of Socialist Youth (IUSY) between 1988-1993, President of the European Youth Forum (EYF) between 1993-1995, Member of the leadership of the Socialist Party of Catalonia (PSC) between 1993-1996, Coordinator of the International Department of the Socialists Workers' Party of Spain (PSOE) between 1996-2001, Manager of Nodus Barberá Business Centre between 2001-2004 and Head of the President of the European Parliament's Personal Office between 2004-2007.



**Lt. Gen (Ret.) Moshe (Bogie) Ya'alon** is the former Defense Minister of Israel. He was in office from March 2013 until May 2017. He served in the Knesset between 2009 and 2016 and has provided a lifetime of public service for the State of Israel. He was appointed in 2009 as Minister for Strategic Affairs and vice Prime Minister. He has served in numerous key positions in the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF), such as commanding the distinguished special forces unit Sayeret Matkal, continued to climb in rank, and from 2002 until 2005, he served as Israel's Chief of General Staff (head of the IDF).



**General (ret.) Amos Yadlin** has been the Executive Director of the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) Since 2011. Following a term as head of Military Intelligence, he retired in 2010 from the IDF after more than forty years of service. Among his previous positions, he served as deputy commander of the Israel





The international conference on the subject of Europe and the Middle East: a New Era in Institutional Management of Peace, Security, and Economic Development, which took place on November 5th, 2017 in Tel Aviv, Israel, was jointly organized, for the second consecutive year, by the Foundation for European Progressive Studies, the Institute for National Security Studies and the Macro Center for Political Economics, in collaboration with the Jean-Jaurès Foundation and the Karl Renner Institute.

We had the privilege of debating with distinguished decision makers and experts regarding the impact the current policies of the various international institutions have on Israel, the conflict resolution and regional cooperation with its neighbours, the particular impact on the EU and its member states and the prospects of EU-Israeli relations.

This book contains the speeches delivered by several key participants, as well as enriching concepts and important conclusions which arose from the conference.

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