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RAGHIDA DERGHAM With:

HE Amr Moussa
The Rt Hon Alistair Burt
Robert Harward
Vitaly Naumkin

Youtube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3DmS0go4uBk&t=2s>

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Good day everyone, wherever you are, in Moscow, in Abu Dhabi, in Egypt, in Cairo, in London and I am in Beirut. I'm Raghida Dergham, I am the Founder and Executive Chairman Beirut Institute and we are doing these wonderful e-Policy Circles with magnificent talent in the international policymaking arena and I am very proud to have with us today His Excellency Amr Moussa, His Excellency Alistair Burt, and we have of course the admiral Bob Harward and Vitaly Naumkin. And I am of course discussing with them the same theme that we have all the time which is 'Stability Redefined' and that is the theme of Beirut Institute Summit in Abu Dhabi that we had to postpone because of the COVID-19. It was supposed to be held June 13 and 14, unfortunately edition IV was unable to be convened on time, however it will be convened God willing, Nchallah in 2021, in March 13 and 14.

Welcome everyone we will have exactly one hour, we will discuss 'Stability Redefined' from geo-political point of view, the difference from one person to another obviously, but also we're not going to forget what it does to people, to the young people, to the future jobs. We're going to jam in as much as possible so I will start with his Excellency Amr Moussa because he is the senior person amongst all of us and I'd like to give you three minutes like I would, four minutes maximum, like I will give everyone to lay the grounds of what you want us to hear from you and I expect that you would want to speak about Egypt, North Africa and the Arab region, so the floor is yours please go ahead.

You've got four minutes at most and then you have a lot of time to go back and forth with this great panel. Please go ahead.

HE Amr Moussa: Thank you very much, hello everybody. Time is short that's why I will just mention three things. Number one: on the international scene, the 'Stability Redefined', what we will have to do with the performance of the multilateral system and I do agree with what the Secretary-General of the UN has affirmed more than once that the threats to international peace and security will have to be redefined. The Security Council will have to seize the opportunity and act within the framework of our action against pandemics even if this requires a certain amendment either to the Charter or to the procedures of the Security Council. This is important, a redefinition of the threats to international peace and security. Second point on the international scene, I believe that we have to think of something like, not exactly the same, *like* the old non-alignment, but without its mistakes and its composition. Now we are on the on the verge of another Cold War, model 21st century between the United States and China and this requires a group of countries, responsible countries, that would do everything possible to prevent this Cold War to go anywhere else in terms of confrontation, international confrontation that do threats international peace and security. On the regional scene I believe that what we have seen is lack of coordination, although countries have a lot of movement of citizens and therefore I believe that the region, the main MENA region and around it, do need a health agency not like the regional agency for health, a regional health agency on the matters of pandemics and how to coordinate and how to promote the resistance to such a pandemics that scientists do affirm that it will be recurrent and even corona itself would repeat, would come back and some other pandemics so we have to be ready on the regional level not only country by country, that's why a regional health agency, a MENA health agency would be very much in order. Third point is about Egypt, I think like all other citizens, that the government is doing a good job. Until now the death list does not exceed five hundred something. There is a kind of commitment by citizens to the restrictions and confinement and stay home etc. Here, I must say that there is something special in the developing nations and in Egypt in particular that the educated class all of them do say yes Sir we do whatever to become safe, but in the middle class and lower middle class and going down people have another philosophy that whatever we do when the age comes to an end it will be it. It is not a question of whether you stay home or stay in the street when you come to die, you will die. So there is some kind of philosophical, you can say religious, but it is a state of mind therefore while the government is doing whatever it can in order to deal with this issue like all other governments all other states but we have a certain philosophy in our society especially in villages in the rural areas that would make it difficult indeed for all of us to be sure that everything is in order and within the restricted framework.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Let me follow up with a quick question about the government of Egypt. Are you suggesting that this government is doing the right thing on the coronavirus but what about the government, the nation of the government of Egypt right now is this a way keeping Egypt on the road of stability? Is stability redefined in Egypt through the current government versus maybe what would have been there say the Muslim Brotherhood?

HE Amr Moussa: We are in a special position, even geographical position to our West Libya, with all the problems in Libya and the presence of malicious foreign militias, etc., and to our right and especially in the mountains of Sinai you will find some of those terrorists coming and performing still the environment the regional environment is so dangerous. That is why a stable government, a powerful government, strong government is needed. We have to decide the priorities. Our priority is to maintain stability in Egypt and stability in Egypt in such a regional environment needs this strong government so I believe it is not the moment it is not the time to discuss this issue but we'll have to be absolutely vigilant about the future and the future has its needs and requirements who will come to that but now yes indeed my answer is yes we need this government and the government is doing fine as you know you are also the daughter of the same environment like me, we know how things are and it is better to maintain stability rather than to enter into some philosophical discussions like your question recommends.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: All right, thank you. We will be getting into the issue of Libya and North Africa altogether with the recent developments in Tunisia.

HE Amr Moussa: May I ask you and in particular Vitaly to discuss the issue of another group of countries like in an alignment in the old century in the last century to deal with that?

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: We will in the exchange. I do want to remind our distinguished listeners that I will be taking questions, written questions, but because it's one hour and very short and very sharp I will benefit from your wisdom but It's not going to be interventions, live interventions. So maybe in the future, if we make it two hours then there will be one but your presence is much, much, much appreciated.

Alistair Burt let me take you to Europe and your agonies in Europe. How does the threat of instability affect your calculations? Is this something that you feel you know "this too shall pass", that COVID-19 will leave you factored safely or

is there a need for stability redefined in the UK and Europe? And go ahead, use this as a way to say whatever you wanted to say I just wanted to see way into giving you the floor.

Rt Hon Alistair Burt: Thank you Raghida, and thank you for the opportunity to speak at this event and indeed I do want to talk a little bit about Europe. I picked three areas that have a relationship with stability one way or another to covering just three or four minutes and then come to a short conclusion. Firstly Europe, this crisis has come at a bad time for Europe, it was already reeling under the problems of the financial crisis of some years ago and the impact on Greece with the Eurozone in trouble, then we had the immigration crisis that did such damage to Mrs. Merkel a couple of years ago that's not gone away there are pressures on Europe now with issues relating to authoritarianism in the Eastern Block countries as they take advantage of COVID-19 to make some changes to their laws and of course Brexit and the threat to the stability of Europe.

So, this crisis has come at a bad time and if stability is to be regained and Europe has been a beacon of stability since 1945 then it's got to find a way out of this and it's going to need real leadership. That's one issue. A second issue when we're thinking about stability for the future would be the hope we have in our young people but my goodness they've been dealt a rough blow as if 2008 when the financial crisis wasn't bad enough in the Western and developed world for young people this is going to make it more difficult we're anticipating unemployment going up a great deal and young people's futures will be very different we already have issues of anxiety and mental health in many societies so if you move away from the UK, what is the future for the emerging populations in the Middle East and in sub-Saharan Africa? Many more young people they need new jobs and they're going to be coming of age at a time when their economies are badly hit and we're all trying to struggle with dealing with the debt so that's a crisis.

On another track about young people, the New York Times had a fascinating article the other day about young people in China and how they have been affected by the crisis and beginning to be much more questioning of their state and their government than they have been in the past because of what's happening is there a light awakening for a different form of politics in China as a result of this. My third comment about stability is about in Middle East not noted for stability and of course looking for a way out of all the crises in the past. Has the crisis given them the chance to look again at their old problems as the UN Secretary-General asked, he asked for a global ceasefire, no sign of it

in the Middle East. Libya goes on, Syria goes on, Yemen there may be a prospect.

And what about the future for Israel and the West Bank and Gaza so what's the prospects for annexation? so is the Middle East taking any opportunity whatsoever to stabilize as in the past or is our things going to get worse?

My conclusion is, firstly it's much too early to talk about where stability will be after the tectonic plates are shifted but my guess would be we're not heading towards a brave new world. The world will be pretty much as it is. Will we have, however, have retreated away from any multilateral sense whatsoever integrating nationalism and if we do if that's if that's a recipe for stability and I'm Moby Dick thanks very much.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Thank you very much. I'm really grateful and appreciate the fact that you brought in the young people because it really breaks our hearts that they are suffering so very much with anxiety with that feeling of instability and we mentioned in Europe never mind what's happening in the Middle East and the Arab region in particular. I don't know what we can do to deal with this issue of unemployment, the issue of anxiety, the issue of well-being and I hope that we can have a discussion about that when we engage collectively further.

I will give the floor now to Vitaly Naumkin.

Vitaly Naumkin, I think Russia normally has its own definition of stability and you are always emphasizing the word stability but my understanding of your use of the word is more of stabilisation rather than stability. Do correct me if I'm wrong. Do tell me kindly how do you see stability redefined in light of what's going on from that COVID-19 to the oil crisis and I'm sorry that you are going through a difficult time in Russia because of COVID-19 and of course everyone in the world in the US and in the UK but do share with us your feeling whether stability needs to be redefined from your point of view and where are the major concern for stability for Russian interests regionally and internationally and Internally.

Vitaly Naumkin: Thank You Raghida, I think that I have some doubts about whether stability should be redefined or not I think there are a lot of importance and roles played by all these old traditional standards but stability is very shaky now in this age of corona virus, it's highlighted by coronavirus the old dichotomies are there like stability versus I don't know

versus probably freedoms or calculations and openness which is needed now versus nationalism professionalism isolationism we see that all. The economic problems like unemployment already has been mentioned here but we can see that one of the consequences of this of coronavirus is inevitably speculation because of the limitations for people's communication and the curtailment of manufacturing activities. There is a general shift in the distribution of resources towards medical care and inside medical care towards treatment of infection of coronavirus. We are facing it here, the United States is facing the same. We can see also recession in the economic activities and it means that there will be a lot of social and economic problems not only unemployment but also lack of activities, damage inflicted on the small businesses, and it will continue because we never know, some people believe that we should think even in the name of this seminar we're speaking about no coronavirus or no pandemic future or with pandemic future.

We don't know to what extent we are going to face the same threats of course we all need preparation but sometimes it's under severe challenges coming to the Middle East I totally agree with Alistair about especially the Palestinians the importance of the Palestinian problem. If Mr. Netanyahu goes on forward with the plans for annexation, I think it will be a total disaster spreading to the region where we have a lot of new challengers to the regional conflicts. I think less optimistic about the possibilities to solve what's happening in this regional conflicts wars in Libya Yemen, Syria, everywhere. So, I think that also the demonization of certain states including Iran, but then going with revisionist plans and so on but still I think there are a lot of these different dichotomies as I said and in the era of coronavirus we have to be together and probably to find the compromises and solutions.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: This is not to follow up with you because you did mention that crisis and demonizing nations, whether it is stabilizing or destabilizing and definitely about the annexation issue which I'm sure Amr Moussa wants to come in during the discussion on that. So, let me just take these issues separately as we engage in a conversation, I've tried to make this interactive but in the meantime, I am going to go to Bob Harward. Defence is your background and there are many challenges in our part of the world that got the American attention and got the involvement of the defence industry. You have your three, four minutes go ahead and then we have an exciting conversation about all of that.

Bob Harward: Well thanks Raghida, you know I have to start because I will talk about some of Alistair's comments but I do see a striking resemblance between him and Moby Dick to start with, but besides that and we're talking about stability in a very uncertain time and I describe it as two black swans flying into each other during the perfect storm you've got this COVID issue which is clear and I'll talk about the Middle East specifically this COVID issue which is just overwhelming everyone. Well, at the same time we've seen this oil war or this realignment of oil resources and both of those are challenging everyone both financially, economically, and to the people that these governments are responsible for and so in that period when you think of this great nation competition and that same time wrong nations with their nefarious activities have gone on a pause. So providing this sort of stability in conflict and other activities while they deal internally to deal with this issues the ones they're challenged by to take care of their people and their economies but the timing of that will be predicated on when they come out so that's temporary stability allows these opportunities to reset or as Alistair talked about, is there the opportunity to reset and get these dialogues on? I think the dilemma for everyone is not knowing how long this will go on and what the reset will look like economically, financially, the attitudes and approach of the people many as he said are very young and challenged economically and just survival this way as well as it also I think that temporary pause is the stability provides some opportunity how we drive that for longer-term real stability will be a challenge, and also noteworthy to see that the great nations and I'm going to call great nations all of them are measuring themselves not only by how they are addressing their own internal problems but how they can help externally and help others and I think this is also really differentiating the nations here in this region and globally how that will be played out, how can that can be leveraged and drive stability over the long term is to be determined but I think the opportunity that presents themselves to all of us.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: That's very interesting that all of you are talking about initiatives for the future in light of COVID-19 and its consequences. I heard Amr Moussa speak of establishing a health agency for the whole Arab region, I hear you saying that governments need to be looking into reforms that are necessary and be held responsible in a different way towards the citizens and I want to just follow up with you before I move into the regional issues, that I talk about. I want to ask you Bob, speaking of stability in the Gulf region where you live you live in the UAE, how do you read the American decision to withdraw the country of missiles from Saudi Arabia we've heard that this was from the Secretary of State that no this is about really organizing or re

deployment of these missiles, others said it's about something more important it's a signal that things are going to be much better between the United States and Iran. So where do you stand on this debate and can you share with us what you know about the background of this decision, and the importance of this decision, its reflection on the issue of stability in the region and the stability of the US relationship with the Arab Gulf states.

Bob Harward: Again, I've heard various stories but I can't verify the cause of this reallocation of assets that's a continual process, be it Patriot ships be it planes. There's always that dialogue with the host nations, the contributing nations and provide those assets to move them summer times it's based on deployment length sometimes it's based on personnel availability there's a host of reasons. But I think what's been steadfast in this situation and for the long haul is this commitment to the partnerships and doing what is necessary to defend and protect our partners and our allies. That commitment is unbounded and always has been and I haven't seen that diminished at all so the actual assets and resources and how they're allocated where they moved or is predicated on a host of reasons I did that for many years I was part of that process so to make a linkage from that to the actual threats, the partnership is really apples and oranges to some extent so I would not read more into that, I would say the commitment is strong, the partnerships are even stronger and I don't see anything that's going to be able to break those bonds.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Well you don't see, you don't read between the lines that there is anything to it in terms of the relationship between the United States and Iran?

Bob Harward: No.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Do you Alistair Burt?

Alistair Burt: I've seen no indication in the past few weeks that there's been any hand extended by one or the other. The United States made an offer of assistance in a manner that Iran wasn't able to accept. Iran kept up its provocations in the Gulf and elsewhere during this period. We are yet to see what the situation will be in Iraq where both the US and Iran believe that they have the ear of the new prime minister, but alas no, the de-escalation of tension between Iran and the United States which we might have seen because of the extent of the Corona virus crisis hasn't been made and that's because neither side has really been willing to make the sort of effort towards each other that would have made a difference. The question is at the end of

this, will the situation simply go back to where it was or will be deepened because this opportunity has been missed, the humanitarian crisis has been in very serious in Iran, if it is only seen as an opportunity for more maximum pressure will it push around further into a box and will Iran prove completely incapable of taking the decisions it needs to take in order to ease the pressure and always believe it is somebody else's fault. I wish I'd seen more progress between the US and Iran but I don't think either has really wanted to do this.

Raghida Dergham So you think we're still in the possibility in the realm of a confrontation?

Alistair Burt: Yeah I think we are because if maximum pressure continues the Iranian economy is affected not just by what's been happening now, they've got people back to work with what they call smart distancing because the economy's in such a difficult state and of course we've had to drop in the oil price and we are heading towards some form of confrontation in October on the arms embargo clause as part of the JCPOA so it's all building up towards some sort of confrontation and one side or another has to make some moves this is going to be de-escalated I don't see the confrontation situation being worse than it was a few weeks ago but the opportunity to ease it on both sides wouldn't appear to have been taken.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: I'm going to go to you Vitaly. But I first need to go to Amr Moussa on this because I have more detailed questions for Vitaly on this issue of Iran and the US and the regional issues that are the playground for this relationship but first I want to go to Amr Moussa and get his assessment on the potential of US-Iranian thaw or confrontation. And in particular in light of what's happened in Iraq you know you've been watching a new government that some have read between the lines that this is you know a sort of a shake with the head between the Iranians and the American and there's a new page possibly being open there, towards more stability hopefully in Iraq. Do you read it the same way? And the same thing in Lebanon do you see any, just take these two examples of Lebanon and Iraq to tell me your view on the issue of US and Iranian relations and then we get to Syria of course.

HE Amr Moussa: Until now I don't see any serious indication that the situation between US and Iran will change but the potential is there, the possibility is there especially in light of what we have seen the American foreign policy can change direction any time according to circumstances, new circumstances or something of that kind. Therefore let us not exclude the possibility of a certain

change in the heated relations between the two countries to lessen that a little bit but until now we don't see that especially we are in an election year in the US, let us see if the president Trump is re-elected then it could be more of the same with some changes here and there, if a Democrat is elected perhaps there will be a change, clear change, in the US position back to the deal, the famous deal in the US and Iran but in conclusion I just want to say that the potential is there, let us not exclude a change in the way the foreign policy.. American foreign policy vis-à-vis Iran would see some changes.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: In last week's e-Policy Circle, Dr. Anwar Gargash, Minister of State for foreign affairs for the United Arab Emirates spoke of de-escalation and he emphasized the need for de-escalation I hear you saying...

Amr Moussa: We are talking, not talking about the need we need of course de-escalation what we are talking about is the actual situation are there signs that there is a change? No, there are no signs so far, but we cannot exclude the possibility of them happening.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Yeah you will never forgive me if I don't give you the floor now before I move on to tell me your views because I've heard from Alistair Burt and Vitaly Naumkin of Israeli annexation of the West Bank. I promised to give you the floor to say something about that, I know you have something to say and then I'll move on to the other matters with Vitaly. Please go ahead, Amr Moussa.

HE Amr Moussa: Okay, thank you. Of course, I agree, with what they both have said. Annexation of the Palestinian territories, immediate annexation and the way Mr. Netanyahu is behaving ~~is~~ in fact give a very, very negative sign and I once more wish to underline the importance of the public opinion in the Arab world, from east to west, from end to end, the Arab being public opinion, the young people, the educated people will not accept such an annexation. Perhaps our friends in the American foreign policy establishment would hear this or that official saying something much quieter but the streets, universities, associations and the rest of the Arab societies, Muslim societies, and in fact in Europe too, all over. The step to annex the territories will raise, I don't want to say hell, but will raise a lot of problems, of protests and unacceptance of such a move. It will render the whole deal, the deal of the century, irrelevant because Israel has gotten 100 percent of what they wanted why should they negotiate? Why should they give anything to concede? This will put an end, both to the deal of the century and to even the small signs of relations of some progress in

the bilateral relations here and there, it would be very difficult to make those relations move on.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Thank you. I'm going to go to Vitaly now. Can I ask you whether you read in what's happening in Yemen because things are calmer in Iraq because there is a government that we thought, that one would have thought that Iran would not have accepted but now it's accepted. I don't know in Syria we are told that maybe there is a bit of you know re-gathering or pulling back a bit of the Iranians in Syria, Iranian troops or Iranian advisers or Iranian militias if you will so what is from your point of view, how do you look at the relationship between the United States and Iran? Are there signs of, maybe a secret or you know, quiet conversation going on between them? Or is escalation still the most likely way that they will go?

Give us your take. You are an expert on these relations, and I would like to know your take and where Russia is on this.

Vitaly Naumkin: No I don't think that there are serious signs of de-escalation but I think that the risks of serious confrontation or just the war or some military plans its exaggerated I think that everybody is quite pragmatic given that the Middle East has been already destabilized even before coronavirus now there are two schools of thought even here in Russia one is saying that coronavirus is helping to come down this occasion in the region another school is saying. No on the contrary it's exacerbating existing rivalries and conflicts because there is a drop in oil prices and all these disasters in the economy, not only the problem of Iran.

Don't forget what's happening with Turkey. Turkey with Qatar supporting one side in Libya and, and on the other side the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, you know the other side and the role of Saudi Arabia, the Muslim Brotherhood...

So, a lot of problems, a lot of problems that the Middle East has been already destabilized and stability is weaker. So, we are all in favour of stability there was a Russian proposal to start negotiations about some collective security arrangements in the Middle East inclusive arrangements. It's too early.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: It's way too early for that. Again, back to last week's e-Policy Circle, it's not time to do this it's time to really take a look at what is more urgent. To discuss this sort of thing is not the time now.

However, I want to stop at, back again to the role of Iran in Syria and the role of Russia in Syria. Does Russia feel that the Iranian role right now is destabilizing what it's trying to do in Syria?

Vitaly Naumkin: You know we care about our triangle: Russia Turkey Iran. Of course, there are differences of course there are different goals but at the same time we are all seeking stability in this region. We are all seeking for helping people not squeezing them. There is less violence in Syria.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: A lot of people would argue that is just not at least what they see so let's try you know try to really look at the situation to help people to be stable by doing an offensive in Idlib from the point of view of some is not really helping people rather you know it's killing people so let us really try to be more on the realistic side with this and tell me where on earth do you see going there is.

What are the needed steps to stabilize Syria for your interests, stabilize your interests in Syria and we know your relationship with Turkey is not in its best, I mean, you have problems with Turkey. So can we know the reality of these relations?

Vitaly Naumkin: Still the process is there. The Astana process is there it's still working despite all differences between the three sides between the three so-called states guarantors. So, in general you know don't forget that Russia is supporting Security Council resolution 2254 so we are working for that we're supporting the revival of Geneva process. I have some hope that it can be done so but of course in the aftermath of this pandemic but what else? we are not seeking anything but stabilizing Syria, and we're not seeking for any sort of domination or interest in the area. What we have we will keep but nothing more but to eliminate the last pockets of the terrorist groups that have been attacking our bases in [inaudible] and anywhere else.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: I want to take it to both Bob and Alistair Burt and then get back to you, to Vitaly, because you mentioned Turkey look what's happening by Turkey right now in Libya look what's going on as far as the accusation that mercenaries are being taken from Syria to Libya, both via Turkish efforts and some via Russian efforts, and the madness of what's going on in Libya is a rather frightening situation not only for the Libyans apparently for the whole of North Africa and particularly for Tunisia.

Let me get Alistair Burt and then I will take Bob Harwood's point of view and then I'll get back to you Vitaly and then to Amr Moussa. Let me give this a couple of minutes for and a more in-depth look at what's going on and where is it going to go and what do you know about it, about where it's going to go. Alistair Burt.

Alistair Burt: Libya suffers from all sorts of ills at the moment firstly there's no UN representative to replace Ghassan Salamé yet because there's been no agreement. It's completely rudderless and into that situation of long-term confrontation between West and East which is made contact in Libya very Difficult. Communities isolated. It's been very difficult to work up a political process as I understand external powers have stepped in and with no other counter force to half task forces. Turkey's intervention has made a significant difference and I think there's a strong that unless the Libyan people are actually involved in making decisions about their own future without external actors will get nowhere. And that means a return to properly conducted negotiations which the UN will have to supervise and the engagement of nations not to put in forces on the ground but to work on the political compromise, the turn back on the half task forces in the last couple of days has been met with some actions that have damaged hospital installations- water installations- and the like this is no good for the future of the Libyan people it's already desperate and as you indicated Raghida. The implications for neighbours are very serious. There's already a huge amount of arms in the area we should all be worried about the Sahel let alone Libya and what's happening there as the next great push so what Libya needs at the moment is external powers not to be backing armed forces but to be backing the negotiations there needs to be an agreement on a new UN representative and ultimately it's the Libyan people who've got to decide and the political process has got to involve them more than it has done up to now.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: With all due respect, easier said than done.

It is absolutely entrenched so it's really not possible to say get the Libyans to do that.

Alistair Burt: I understand that very well but of course you've got to have some sort of plan somewhere if you don't then you are just leaving it to external forces and they'll fight until the last Libyan and where's the future in that the whole point of having a political process and seeking to negotiate is to say ultimately there can be no military success in Libya half-task forces will never

be allowed to take Tripoli without the loss of mass amounts of blood there's no stability after that. So, if you know there's no end of the process where the military will win one way or another it's only the political solution that has got to happen and that's where the UN process has got to be rekindled after all Ghassan Salameh's really strong efforts.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Bob Harward, do you see the light at the end of the tunnel for Libya?

Bob Harward: No. I think Alistair is not exactly right on that. I don't see any light at the end of the tunnel. Unfortunately, what was on governed space has become governed by external forces that don't have the right alignment with the political process or the people who have to make that political process come to bear so I don't know how you align those or enable those and it's exacerbated by now the economic situation, COVID-19, all those not only internally but externally and includes that. So, it's taking a bad situation and made it even worse so no I can't see any light. We're in a very dark tunnel.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: What about If you compare Turkey's role, actually President Erdogan got in because he says he was invited by Mr. Sarraj so where do you get out of this one? How do you do it? And the country is completely divided if we were to imagine stability in Libya and Tunisia? Who's got to do what and give it a priority at this point? Who must do what?

Bob Harward: Well let me just say this, the real tragedy is that so many have an interest and it effects so many not only in North Africa but the rest of the Arab world so there's interest, there's strategic interest by all of them and yet because of the actors we can't align those. So yeah, it's a real quagmire.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Yeah it sure is a quagmire, Amr Moussa, a quagmire at you borders in your left I mean in your back garden.

HE Amr Moussa: Absolutely, absolutely. it is very important what has been said about that we are going through a very dark period very dark tunnel with no end in sight but I have a question, a very simple question: Was it a decision by Mr. Erdogan to go to Libya and to support the government over there and the militias and send the personnel, etc? Meaning that have all of us including the big powers and Europeans etc. woke in the morning, to learn, to hear that Mr. Erdogan has already gone to Libya? I don't think so, I think that Turkey wouldn't have moved this major move without at least a yellow light, or the big powers look the other way to allow him to go and prevent the national

army General Haftar from prevailing. Which means that the idea the policy was that keep the situation in Libya as it is. Don't allow this or that side to prevail until we find a way out that is first step.

Second step are we, I'm afraid, that this policy would move towards enabling the current government in Tripoli to prevail in the situation which means that we go back to the idea of this moderate religious government with [inaudible].

Was it only Mr. Erdogan's decision? Many people in the Middle East do not believe that. They believe that it is much bigger much more important intervention and important political move. The result was or the goal was to keep the situation as it is. There is East, there is West. None of them shall prevail.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Just so that I don't lose you, you're saying that it was Mr. Erdogan's decision alone?

HE Amr Moussa: That was my question.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM Okay, why don't you answer it?

HE Amr Moussa: I really believe knowing how things are being done, I don't think that Mr. Erdogan has done all that without even informing big powers that we are going to do this.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Which Big Powers?

HE Amr Moussa: Big powers are big powers because they're well-known. America, Russia, and Europe. These are the countries involved in this situation.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Vitaly, Amr Moussa is saying that you're in on this, you're one of those powers.

HE Amr Moussa: They might be in, that was a question of mine.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Vitaly Naumkin, are you in on this? Did you get in with Erdogan or are you there to fight with Erdogan in Libya?

Vitaly Naumkin: We're not fighting against anyone in Libya. We have relationships with both sides. There have been a lot of visits from both from the government of Mr. Sarraj from Mr. Haftar and it doesn't mean that we're

supporting either side in this conflict we're in favour of the role of United Nations of reconciliation of the peace process I think that Russia was in particularly satisfied with the plan of Ghassan Salame, unfortunately he left and he retired, but I think that his plans were very very good well done and but I'm very pessimistic about the lack of motivation from both sides. They are now to stop violence and to come to some compromise. We're in favour of compromises that's it.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Okay let me, while I have you Vitaly Naumkin, let me, take a look at what Russia, since I sit in Beirut and if I don't ask about Lebanon I'd be absolutely crucified. So, what does Russia think about what's going on in Lebanon? It's about to collapse it looks like it's really on the verge of collapse. My understanding is that Russia has left Lebanon to Iran. That Iran is the key of stability in Lebanon and as far as the Kremlin is concerned. Is this really the assessment of Russia? That leave it to Iran. Because they are stronger, and they are here and that's because stability is something Russia always says this is what I need what I want to talk about.

Vitaly Naumkin: We could remember the very specific personal relationship between our leaders, our leaders' leadership and Mr. Hariri Rafic Hariri and Saad. There are very special relationships between the Sunni community and all other communities you know we are not giving up Lebanon as one as a very important partner of Russia in the Middle East. Russia supported humanitarily Lebanon in this crisis. We are providing some limited help to Lebanon. I think that economic situation is bad the political situation is bad, but I don't think that we have to blame only Iran on that.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Okay so who do you want to blame and what are you going to do about it? Go ahead blame whom you want!

Vitaly Naumkin: We're not blaming anyone. It's internal crisis, internal crisis the same as in Iraq. Whom can you blame in Iraq for what's happening there? I am a bit optimistic about Kazemi's government, you know, probably he can make something in order to improve situation but the same thing a deeply divided country, the same about Lebanon, the same about this but Lebanon has been surviving through Wars and fifteen years of civil war and all these conflicts but let's let them decide themselves you know what to do let them let us help them humanitarily.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Alistair Burt, is Lebanon left to wither on its own by itself? What's the view from the UK and Europe? What is the way out for Lebanon from the dilemma?

Alistair Burt: I've been closely involved with so many efforts to support the economy in Lebanon over the years the big conferences we held the Cèdre conference in Paris, the initiative we ran in London and everyone has known the truth for years. The economy has been living on fumes for a long time and what was very interesting I thought recently in what emerged on the streets was that young people who have been kept apart by the sectarian nature of politics and the structure of government were rejecting that we're coming together and saying we've been short-changed here by our respective Governments look at the rampant inflation we can't get money out of the banks whoever's to blame it's not our fault and we're not going to be told anymore but we can't make changes to the structure of our government by Hezbollah or by one sector or another because we've had enough now then the virus came along and those protests have been drowned out nobody outside Lebanon wants to see Lebanon go to the wall and everyone has worked immensely hard to try and prevent that but ultimately the solutions have got to be in the hands of those who are governing in Lebanon those who aspire to govern and ultimately the issue of Hezbollah can't be ducked and that's got to be tackled.

Bob Harward: It's a recurring. We've seen this play before we've seen this play over and over. We can't help them more than they can help themselves.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: What does that mean? Translate that for me.

Alistair Burt: Sort out the corruption and get your economy sorted and stop running to other people.

Bob Harward: And who you run to is important also so people want to help people have shown the potential to help people have been involved but at the end of the day they can't drive the solution.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: I get you, so this is a very big warning for Lebanon. Sort it out and because the world is not going to come and help you sort it out because it's not in the cards. I got you, now I've got three minutes left, half a minute for each one, with a fast message, what do you want to say to leave us with I'm sorry it's so fast it doesn't give us too much time but why don't we start with you Bob since you have the floor go ahead tell me in 30 seconds

what is your message for stability in the region or whatever message you want to give.

Bob Harward: It's going to take time we're going to have to see how we come out of these current crises and when we do then we'll know where we stand. I would say one other thing especially on this COVID-19 this issue's going to be with us for another year or two until we get a vaccine that can be globally distributed and testing that verifies we aren't going to know what the future looks like but when we do, I think we will move forward very aggressively and make up for lost time we've had.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Okay great, Alistair Burt, thirty seconds, everybody thirty seconds, we're about to die as they say, thirty seconds please, Alistair Burt.

Alistair Burt: Guard against nationalism. Guard against believing that you can only work out solutions for your own people and the devil take the hindmost be prepared to work together but be prepared to confront now honestly the issues that have been affecting the region and globally for too long and be prepared to take the tough measures to resolve things. Otherwise we will go on with the world politics more or less as it is but much poorer with ~~no~~ people not able to make donations and with a greater sense of building fortresses around ourselves rather than working together. We should guard against all that.

Vitaly Naumkin: I think the main thing is to cooperate and to try to mitigate all these divisions especially the sectarian ones which are you know exploding the situation in the region also fighting corruption and thinking about compromises rather than resorting to this whole the axis of evil approach.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Quick word on the oil crisis and the effect of oil prices on the stability of Russia and the region?

Vitaly Naumkin: There is another important triangle Saudi Arabia, United States and Russia. I think probably for the first time we are trying to work together constructively also there are differences but still I'm hopeful that it can work in order to stabilize the oil market, but lack of demand is what can harm our economies together.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: So American intervention with Saudi Arabia sort of helped correct the relationship between Russia and Saudi Arabia on the oil issue?

Vitaly Naumkin: We've made a lot of compromises, we signed agreement with Saudi Arabia I'm very optimistic about what can happen, but the recession is the main enemy of all of us including the United States.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Unfortunately, you're right, Amr Moussa, thirty seconds.

HE Amr Moussa: I just want to say and to call on all of us to do everything we can, to prevent the annexation of the Palestinian territories. We have to stop that. Friends of Israel have to advise Mr. Netanyahu that this such a step would be so dangerous to the stability today and tomorrow in the Middle East. It will turn into a so sour situation in the region not only the Middle East by the definition, the political definition, but in the Mediterranean in the Red Sea and in the whole area around Israel and Palestine.

RAGHIDA DERGHAM: Vitaly take it to the Kremlin, and please Alistair take it to Europe and Bob do take it to Washington please.

Let me just say thank you to all of you and let me announce the e-Policy Circle number three, who will we have? It's always an honor that we have been attracting such an amazing cast of personalities and thinkers, so let me announce for next week three out of four who will be with us, the fourth we will announce later, we have his excellency Zibari, we have Mr. Walid Jumblatt, and we have Jeffrey Feltman.