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RAGHIDA DERGHAM With:

HE Reem El Hashemy;
HE Shivshankar Menon;
HE Richard Haass;
HE Richard Grenell;

Youtube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzk23uyHfno>

Raghida Dergham: Good morning New York, my city, where Richard Haass is and good evening New Delhi and that's where Shivshankar Menon is joining me, and good early evening from Abu Dhabi and my adopted city and that is where Reem El Hashemy is coming from and I think we finally got Richard Grenell with us, thank God, and good very early morning to you Richard Grenell, where are you in California?

HE Richard Grenell: I'm in Los Angeles, on my way to Salt Lake City.

Raghida Dergham: Well I could assume we all know why, we'll talk about that when we have our conversation. Thank you all for joining me for episode number 17 of e-Policy Circles that have been generated by the Beirut Institute Summit in Abu Dhabi. This summit was supposed to be held in its fourth edition in June under the theme of 'Stability redefined: Who offers the future?' Unfortunately COVID-19 prevented that, but we are praying and hoping that we will have it early next year maybe in March, and if not we'll have it later on in October, not October because that's probably the month for EXPO2020 which is where we are going to start this conversation today and I will give the floor to Reem El Heshemy for four minutes to go ahead and kindly give us your take on what's happening and where would you leave us with in order to learn what's going on in your country, not only with EXPO, but also foreign policy globally and regionally. Please four minutes to you, Reem El Hashemy.

HE Reem El Hashemy: Thank you very much, thank you also to all the panelists, it's a pleasure to be with you and it's a real honor to be part of the Beirut Institute e-Policy Circles. For sure, 2020 was not the year we anticipated, it's certainly not the year I anticipated, we were gearing up to host the world exposition in Dubai but plans have changed for everybody actually around the world and COVID-19 hit us in in different ways, whether locally, regionally, globally, I think it certainly underscored our common humanity and definitely our common plight and the need for us to truly work together as a global community.

As you may know, I'm also the Minister for International Cooperation here in the cabinet of the United Arab Emirates so really what we do and what we have done vis-à-vis COVID sits heart and center of the UAE's conviction about extending a hand to those in need and as such we've sent around 1400 tons of PPE gears, of PCR tests and other forms of medical equipment to assist frontline workers, we sent it to about 50 countries all around the world and continue to do so in many countries multiple times. We've also joined the Covax facility, which the Europeans have been spearheading, which is really more than a European initiative, it's truly a global initiative that looks at how we can ensure once vaccines come into play that these vaccines are distributed in an efficient, but also in an equitable manner. And so here again multilateralism, international cooperation, certainly sit at the heart of that.

And as we try to imagine what a post-COVID world would look like, I bring myself to sort of a nexus between where we are as a region, both in the gulf but also the Arab world, if you will, and the EXPO 2020 which inshallah by next year the UAE will be at the eve of its golden jubilee as a nation, a country as young as we are to have been able to not only play a pivotal role in the region, but also to host a world exposition, brings with it enormous responsibility but also enormous opportunity.

And it's in that spirit that I wanted to share with you some of the core tenets of how we view the future, and we certainly see I as one that we can shape, and not simply one that we've just inherited, so there really isn't a defeatist approach in how the UAE conducts itself. We're looking very keenly as we have signing the Abrahamic Accords in trying to reshape what that future looks like for ourselves, but also for the larger region. And truly, I think as we've looked at tenets such as, tolerance, multiculturalism, entrepreneurship, a focus of young people and also focus on SME development, you see some of that spirit embedded in some of the initiatives we've put forward, whether it's our Hope Probe to Mars which we launched earlier in the year, or it's the appointment of our Minister of Youth Shamma Al Mazrui, there's truly a commitment from our side to, again as I said earlier, shape what that future looks like as opposed to just assume it'll shape itself. And here I kind of segue into - shall I pause for a second Raghida?

Raghida Dergham: Well you're close to finishing your four minutes, we'll give you if you need...

HE Reem El Hashemy: Then I close off with EXPO, very quickly. So with EXPO, it's 'Connecting Minds, Creating the Future' which is our main theme, which sits again at the heart of everything I just described which is international cooperation and by having countries from all around the world come together for six months, we're hopeful that we can continue this tradition of openness and engagement with countries of the region but certainly with countries beyond it. Thank you again for the opportunity to speak.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much, we're going to engage you in a larger conversation about international cooperation and global politics and challenges, and the UAE has been a leader in shaping the future as you have said, not only in terms of innovation and the right to happiness as you enjoy it and as citizens of your own country, but also in terms of regional brave steps that you have taken. We'll talk about those but for now I will turn to Shivshankar Menon to give me your four minutes and I have a pretty good feeling of what you're going to say because India's challenges are quite obvious and I'm sure you're going to give us a forward-looking account of that, thank you, four minutes to you.

HE Shivshankar Menon: Thank you very much for asking me, it seems to me that sitting where we are, looking at it from New Delhi, we're in the middle of a complete churn of geopolitics, of the economics. But what the pandemic has done is really to accelerate existing trends. If we look at Asia, the balance of power has shifted, and it's not just the rise of China, it's the rise of other countries as well across the region, all the way across into west Asia, and the UAE's role is a good example and the activism that we see now. But equally, the economy, the global economy, is not just crash but is actually slowing and fragmenting. And unfortunately, what we're seeing now is a sort of two, three, four speed recovery in different places. The only country which is showing some positive growth is China, East Asia seems to have controlled the pandemic. So, you might be getting the creation of little bubbles around the world. This was already happening with the RCP in Asia, with the USMCA in north America, with the EU, already we were breaking down into trade blocs and that frankly, from an Indian point of view, is not a very good sign.

India is one of the greatest beneficiaries of the decades of globalization and we're well out of, we pulled something like 140 million people out of poverty in 10 years between 2001-2011 during the glory years of globalization and frankly we have a lot more to do at home. So, we need stability, but instead what we see is that all the hot spots are around us wherever we look. Asia is now the center of great power contention, our border with China is now live again and that's going to have consequential effects of course we've seen one reaction to the rise of China has been the US pushback, has been a strengthening of India and US relations and the US relations have never been better frankly. And it seems to me they're going to go that way, no matter what happens in November in the elections because we've managed to transform that relationship over 20 years because it's been bipartisan on both sides, because

all the political parties have actually fed into it so in India at least, there isn't the kind of anxiety about the election that we hear expressed in other places.

What does this situation that I described mean for India and the Gulf? Frankly, the Gulf is in our DNA, I mean there's no other way to describe this, we have seven million Indians who live and work in the Gulf with their brothers and sisters there. We depend on the Gulf for critical raw materials, our energy security depends on the Gulf today, and so it seems to me that when we talk now of a much more active involvement, that's going to continue but it's still going to be an attempt by India to stay out of everyone's internal affairs, or out of local differences, because frankly we want to be a good neighbor but a good neighbor who's part of the life of the Gulf. And I think that's doable I think the record of the last 70 years shows that we can actually do so, keep good relations with all the regional parts and actually build that relationship. So, I'm an optimist, all told I think we can actually manage it, I have faith in people frankly and ultimately diplomacy and politics is about people, and if we put our minds to it I think we can fix this.

Raghida Dergham: Well I think, thank you very much Shivshankar Menon, I think Richard Haass has a couple of words of advice to India on what to do about China and what to do about its relationship with Pakistan and it's a Muslim minority, we'll get to that in the debate, I do not want to preempt Richard, but we will really, we'll have to discuss this particularly in light of the shape of the relationship between the US and China nowadays. For now, I'll give Richard Haass, four minutes please.

HE Richard Haass: Thank you. Good morning everyone, or afternoon, or evening. The world after or during, now we're not after COVID, we're still during COVID, in many ways is very similar, resembles the world before COVID, the difference is capacities to deal with it are diminished. But one of the principal trends in the world before COVID was the revival of geopolitics between the United States and Russia, we've seen this for now a decade, increasingly between the United States and a more assertive, a more repressive China, we have seen on that North Korean nuclear missile capabilities were growing and have continued to grow. Iran continues to pose a threat of stability to the Middle East and so forth.

So the first thing I'd say is that 30 years ago, those who predicted the end of history got it wrong, and what we're seeing is the return of history, that's the first thing to say. Secondly, what is different about this period and it was true before COVID, it's true now, is the large gap that has grown up between any number of global challenges and global responses. We're seeing it most acutely on global health, with infectious disease, but it's just as true about climate change, it is true about the digital space where there's essentially no rules, no regulation, no discipline. We're seeing the breakdown of a global trading order much more as Shiv said, much more of an original approach. So in every case what I would say is you're seeing a growing gap between global challenge and global responses, and I think that is one of the hallmark characteristics of this year and constitutes a major challenge to stability, this was true before COVID, it's true now.

Let me say one or two things about the United States, rumor has it we're having an election in just under four weeks now. That's the rumor, sometimes rumors are true, it is true in this case. What I just said is true, that's a reality. You can't choose your international inbox that will face whoever wins this election, whether Mr Trump is reelected or Mr Biden gets elected, that will be there to greet him. And in some areas, I think there will be some similarities, I think there'll be a difficult US-China relationship regardless of what happens, I think there'll be a closer US-Indian relationship regardless, but I think there'll be two big differences in foreign policy. One will be, I believe Mr Biden will have an allies-first foreign policy, much more to base America's approach to the world collectively with allies in Europe and Asia partners, including India, Mr Trump clearly does not, and Mr Biden is a believer in multilateralism, would rejoin certain agreements, certain institutions. Mr Trump is on many things but above all, he's a disrupter and does not value much of the post-World War II inheritance that he has. So now, yeah, there'll be differences not to say the least. I think though what the two individuals again, no matter who wins, and I'll just speak for 30 more seconds on this, is going to be a very divided country. And I don't know how divided will be in particular over the question of electoral outcomes, legitimacy, perceptions of it, and the rest, but we still face COVID-19, by then there'll be over 250 000 Americans who have lost their lives, you will face millions of Americans out of work, you will face a country divided by politics, divided by race, with poor infrastructure, poor public schools, a broken immigration policy in the rest, and the real question then

is given all that, how much bandwidth, how much support will any president have to focus on the world given the pressures he will have to deal with what is ailing us at home.

Raghida Dergham: Well thank you very much Richard Haass, I think one of the closest people to President Donald Trump who might be able to give us some of the answers to the questions you have posed is Ric Grenell, Richard Grenell, I'm going to give you four minutes and then we we're going to have a have loads of questions for you about the elections but I'll give you the formulas to lay on the table what you want us to hear from you, then we'll engage in the debate. Four minutes to Ric Grenell.

HE Richard Grenell: Yeah, well thank you Raghida, thank you for the Beirut Institute, this is such a great idea, I know you started it, you had a vision and through your contacts you've really been able to develop this into something that is a force of nature. I love it and I would applaud you to keep moving so having these opportunities are really a good idea.

Let me start by saying, you know, to all those affected by COVID, we certainly are thinking of all the individual families, the individuals that have been impacted by this pandemic. One thing that I think that is lost and I think that we have to remember here, for 17 US intelligence agencies to come and to come to an agreement on an analysis and a statement is pretty difficult. I can tell you as the former acting Director of National Intelligence, we have 17 agencies that think very differently, and have very different priorities. They're all very good, but they certainly have different priorities that they're concentrating on. We were able to get 17 US intelligence agencies to issue a very very rare statement of agreement and in that agreement early on US intelligence agreed that this COVID-19 virus started in Wuhan China and that it spread because communist China had secret ways and plans, they were not transparent. That is something that my friends on the left in Washington, and the globalists many times forget about. I can tell you through my conversations with all of my friends in Europe, the Europeans have not forgotten about that, they have a very clear private statement that the Chinese secret ways are really impacting the world. And while they may not say it as publicly as the Trump administration says it, our European friends are making moves every single day to adjust the supply chain, to make adjustments to the fact that the Chinese have not engaged in a way that we thought that they would when we asked them to join the WTO. That decision has turned out to be a disaster. I'm all for the idea of engagement and trying to find ways to engage. I think that President Trump has demonstrated to the Washington establishment that he is not a typical Republican, he's not a typical politician he's engaged with North Korea to the screams and hollers of all of my friends in Washington who run think tanks, and NGOs who said 'ah you never can do that', many republicans attacked President Trump for engaging with the North Koreans. I think we can argue that we are on a better path with North Korea because of President Trump's ability to engage. He's also said the same thing about Iran, that he would sit down with this current regime. I believe that what's developing is a Trump doctrine of two phases. One is very tough sanctions: we have the toughest sanctions ever on North Korea, we have the toughest sanctions ever on Iran, we have the toughest sanctions ever on Russia. But also what we have is the ability to talk to these countries and to have an exit plan which is, we will engage with you, we will talk with you if the behavior changes, then we will adjust our us government sanctions, policies or leverage. I love that Trump doctrine, because I think it's not only realistic, but it provides hope for countries that need to change their behavior and we hold them to account.

I have to go back to the fact that the Arab spring, and I would say many other movements in the United States are all similar in that there is a distrust of capitals, there's a distrust of the establishment and politicians who run our capitals. And the people have been demanding for a very long time that we have a very different policy and so I'm thankful and I hope that we can get into that a little bit more, but I'm thankful that Donald Trump is recognizing that the fight is not between Republicans and Democrats or Conservatives and Liberals. It really is a fight between those who want to make decisions for the people, and the people.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much Ric Grenell, and where do we start? I mean there's so much to talk about. Let's start with the elections a little bit, stay with Ric Grenell, you are somebody who is very involved with the campaign of Donald Trump and I guess you are part of the team that prepares for the debates. Do you think one of the next two debates between President Trump and Vice President Biden

would focus on foreign policy as it normally does? And in which case do you think that he will carry, Trump would carry his successes, from the point of view of others that there may not be successes of foreign policy in the Middle East in particular to the debating table? Ric Grenell.

HE Richard Grenell: Well one of one of my favorite questions from smart people like you Raghida is always the 'well traditionally the second debate is about foreign policy', I mean, this is kind of a fun thing to me as we have these traditions that all of the politicians and reporters are supposed to go along with. I don't really think that's set in stone, I think that that this is the comfort level of Washington DC types who just want to, you know, have this process that they are really comfortable with. Look it's a US domestic election, to the to the extent that that international relations and leadership come into the question of whether or not Americans in Ohio or Pennsylvania or Wisconsin or Florida are interested in some of these issues, I think yeah it will come up. But I want to bifurcate this idea that um that somehow what Washington DC says are the issues that Americans care about or some poll, I don't think is true. Look I have been traveling non-stop in Pennsylvania, Ohio, Florida and Wisconsin, I know exactly what people are asking on a daily basis and it is about domestic spending, it's about whether or not the government is going to pay attention to them. It is not about the Middle East. But one thing I can say is we're very proud of the Abraham Accords and the Kosovo-Serbia agreement. These are things that I think a realist President like Donald Trump has been able to bring to our allies and it's great successes.

Raghida Dergham: Let me go to Reem El Hashemy, do you feel with the American elections coming up, as the UAE, do you feel that one president will be better than the other? Is continuity better for the UAE through President Donald Trump or a change is better, given the fact that it has been a good relationship with this administration versus the worries the Gulf countries have had during the Obama administration because of its embrace of Iran? There has been a reset during the Trump administration, are you afraid that president Biden, if he is to be president would bring back Obama two? Reem El Hashemy.

HE Reem El Hashemy: Thank you Raghida, and thank you for the commentary also from Ric. The United Arab Emirates has been able to enjoy very strong strategic ties with the United States, with all different kinds of administrations, Democratic or Republican, and that's because we actually have shared values and shared interests with the United States. So I would say that independent of which president comes into power the UAE has strong ties with both and has been able to work through issues that exist with both. *Vis-à-vis* Iran as you mentioned, we continue to want to have a good and strong and stable relationship in the region and beyond. And so like I said, whether it's a Biden administration or a Trump administration, these are subject matters that often come up and will likely continue to come up as well.

Raghida Dergham: And do you think Reem El Hashemy the issue of Iran is going to be approached differently if president Biden come, if Mr Biden becomes president, and of course, rather than if president Trump remains president in the sense that one says 'I'm going on with sanctions until they engage and they sit down at the table', and you think Mr. Biden will just say 'I'm going to go back to the JCPOA, revive it and then lift sanctions', how would that impact the region? I'm not asking you to expect what they do, I'm going to take this question to Richard Haass, but how would that impact the UAE and the region actually?

HE Reem El Hashemy: Well [?] to me to try to determine what either President would say, so thank you for that caveat. I think the issue of Iran's role in the region will continue to be a subject matter that both Republican and Democratic will actually end up addressing. And in both cases, there has to be a way of coexisting in a peaceful and a stable manner. They may end up taking different approaches to it, they likely would, but that doesn't change the end outcome, which is a mechanism in which we can all coexist in a manner that is also supportive of the region's ambitions, of the young people and where they want to see their future livelihood.

Raghida Dergham: Richard Haass, what do you feel the elections are going to produce? Is the United States going to be in a perpetual fight over the results of the elections? That's number one and number two, do you think it's going to be Biden equals Obama the second? And Trump, you said, you wrote

somewhere, or you said somewhere it's going to be Trump plus one. Can you explain what you mean Richard Haass?

HE Richard Haass: Well again it's, you know, as a famous baseball once player once said it's very hard to make predictions, particularly about the future. You know, I can look at the polls, I think what we've learned is the polls aren't always exactly accurate. If the election were today, I think it's pretty clear Vice President Biden would be the 46th president, but the election isn't today, the election is still roughly four weeks away. So, we have a Vice Presidential debate tonight, we could have two more presidential debates, so we'll know. Look I think it's a clear victory by Vice President Biden that I don't think we'll have a disputed election. I think there's two issues. One is the ability of Americans to vote, and the question is whether there will be voter suppression, voter intimidation by the Republicans, by various groups possibly, I hope not. And second of all, obviously there's the question of the accounting and different states have different policies, as odd as this sounds for non-Americans, this is not a national policy, it's a state by state policy in terms of ballots and counting rules, and so forth.

So, I think the potential is there particularly in a close-run election that you will have an already divided country, being that much more divided, and then there's extraordinarily complex and arcane rules under our constitution and on the various statutes pursuant to the constitution as to how that would get sorted out. I hope we do not get there. A pro-period of political division with the United States, one would be a terrible distraction, but two it's hard enough to govern the United States now under the best of circumstances to have major questions of legitimacy held by 40 to 45 percent of the American people I think would be extraordinarily unfortunate given all the things whoever wins the election is going to have to contend with.

Raghida Dergham: Biden equals the return of Obama, Obama two, or different? Somebody said actually in one of the e-Policy Circles that a Biden presidency would be a continuation of the Trump presidency in effect. Do you agree with that Richard Haass?

HE Richard Haass: I agree with neither, I think again I'm not real comfortable making predictions, we don't know who the personnel will be. The only thing we know is the inbox, we don't know who's going to be the cabinet, we don't know what are going to be the policies, the only thing you can't choose is your inbox. And we know it's going to be an extraordinarily demanding, international and domestic inbox. It's going to be different, you know, four years have passed since President Obama, it's a different country, it's a different world, so anyone who says it would be Obama's third term, is wrong. Different country, different world, different people. I said I think there's going to be tremendous pressures to focus on repairing the home front politically, economically, dealing with public health. And just think about it Raghida, you already raised the Iran agreement, and we and so forth we've talked about climate change, just for a second. I would simply say that all these global mechanisms are inadequate even if you back into the Iran agreement, the JCPOA, already this October the first condition about conventional arms expires, and then in five years the first of the nuclear conditions expires. Even if you went back into Paris, the Paris agreement is woefully inadequate for dealing with climate change. Even if you went back into the World Health Organization, which we should do, that itself is not a solution. The World Health Organization is a flawed instrument. So we can't talk about simply going back to the Obama era. This is a very different world.

Raghida Dergham: I will go into a further discussion regarding Iran, but I want to give Shivshankar Menon the chance to tell me, has India's lot become better off with the Trump administration given the fact that, you know, you have almost if you want to call it an enemy, but it's not an enemy of putting it in quotation, China as a challenge to both India and the US. Has the relationship grown closer during the Trump administration, would it then be the same if Biden becomes president, or you'd wish, your secret wish, is that President Trump remains for second term? Shivshankar Menon.

HE Shivshankar Menon: Well it's clear that Prime Minister Modi and President Trump have a great relationship, a great personal relationship, you've seen it in the recent past. But as far as India US relations is concerned, there's more to this than just China. And yes I think we should be grateful to China for having helped us to improve the relationship, but that's not all. I mean there's much more congruence

here in terms of for instance simple things, maritime security throughout the Indo-pacific, serves both our interests. We can't transform India develop India without the US, the US is an essential partner. We have bonds now, well almost 4 million Indian Americans if you look at the US is our biggest trading partner and if you look at what we do together, whether it's all the way from agriculture, to education, to space, you know, there's much more that we do than just worry about China. China maybe is the gem that maybe helps, you know, some strategic parts of the relationship but I think there's more to this congruence.

And this is why I'm a great believer in the future of the relationship. But one other thing I do want to mention, you know, I think post-election there's no going back because you look at the economic situation, you look, TPP is not going to be revived. I don't see sentiment being there for that, not the way it was. There could be a new TPP, we have an opportunity in all this destruction around us to make the destruction creative and to start building a new multilateralism, to start looking at these instruments again. But I hope we actually take that opportunity after the election, rather than going back to what we had which, and we've ended up where we are today, which I don't think anybody is happy with.

Raghida Dergham: I mentioned a little earlier that Richard Haass has written or has given an interview I can't remember which because I've read a couple of things he said, but he's sort of given India one of four choices if you will, as an advice. And that to either take the appeasement with China as an option, or you take confrontation with China and as another option, or you admit that they're the bigger guy in the neighborhood and you just adjust to that. And I don't remember the fourth one, but in a nutshell he also said that, you know, take care of your other problems if you're going to address that China problem. you know the Muslims in in India, the state of the Muslims in India, your problem with Pakistan sort of clear the deck in order to talk China. Forgive me Richard if I am paraphrasing what you said in any wrong way but I'm projecting my own views here. Have you thought about that, what is best for India to do and grow its relations with the United States?

HE Shivshankar Menon: Well I think frankly if India managed her own affairs well, that would in itself be a huge contribution to managing China, to the other relationships to the world basically[...]. And certainly there are elements that of self-strengthening, traditionally the Indian response to a situation like we have with China is to both balance and [?] at the same time. Yeah I know purists think you can't do both, but we do and we have before and that's exactly what you're seeing. You're seeing the quad just met in Tokyo yesterday and you're seeing an informal sort of quad plus where the foreign ministers actually went themselves despite COVID. So there's a whole set of things happening, I think there's many moving parts here. So I don't think it's an either or situation here. [inaudible] the informal coalitions of the willing [inaudible] based, but you know, I mean that's the way it works, you have different partners for different issues.

Raghida Dergham: Okay thank you, thank you very much Shivshankar Menon. Ric Grenell, here in the region some people are dismissing the importance of the pact between China and Iran. They signed a 25 year-old pact and some are saying A, it's not only in the region, actually James Jeffrey last week said on the 16th e-Policy Circle that he just thought it's a knee-jerk reaction that, you know China is taking its pact with Iran, it's nothing to take seriously. He thought that China would be strong and threatening in the south seas, but it doesn't have the elements to be of a threat here in the region. But when you put China and Iran, do you subscribe to that view? I mean isn't that something that is strengthening Iran and giving a foothold of China in this region beyond what it was? And given the fact that already Russia has had a very strong foothold through of course through Syria that it didn't have before that JCPOA, so can you address this? Is there a strategy that you are thinking of, how to challenge China on its pact with Iran or giving them advice?

HE Richard Grenell: What I would say is that our strategy is very aggressive about challenging China in a variety of ways, whether it's through technology, like TicToc, or Huawei, or facial recognition issues, we are focused on making sure that the United States will never be in a position again where we are beholden to the supply chain of China and what we have seen, little by little, and I can't get into it too much but little by little where China has tried to leverage the control of PPE with many US politicians and we share that concern with the Europeans as I've indicated. I've never seen a bipartisan issue like

bringing home the supply chain from China like I do in the United States, and I've never seen a transatlantic issue so focused together on focusing on making sure that China doesn't put us in this situation ever again. And so I do think that that's going to affect the Belt and Road, I think it's going to affect the relationship with Iran, we're very concerned about that. I think we've got a lot of friends in the region and in the Arab world that are also focused on making sure that Iran and China do not form some sort of a partnership that gets out of control. I want to pick up on one thing that I think was a very important point from my Indian friend. When we talk about having different partners for different issues, I couldn't agree more and one of the things that we've really seen in Washington in the eight years of the Obama administration which I think was just a real bad road for America to go down was this belief in institutions like the UN, or the Paris Accord, or the JCPOA, to believe in consensus first and consensus only, and the inability to fight for American policy. I spent eight years at the UN, and I can tell you that there's only one country in the world that gets in trouble when we fight for what we want, and that's the United States. Every single country comes to a diplomatic meeting, I've been in tens of thousands of them and there's, I've never been in one where the other side doesn't bring a list of things that they want us to do. And when we bring our list, sometimes we get into trouble to say 'oh why is the US doing this?' The Trump administration believes completely differently and I think that for those around the world that are locked into this Democrat or Republican idea of global affairs, it's been a shock and so the Trump administration, let me just be very clear, is an administration that says 'we are going to let countries decide their internal affairs, we're not going to have to be controlling of every single institution, but when we have an idea that is good for American national security, we're going to form a coalition of support, and that may not be exactly at the UN, but it certainly is going to be with lots of our friends who believe the same way', and I think the Abrahamic Accords is just one example.

Raghida Dergham: Ric Grenell, you've been in the region recently, who is going to be next joining the Abraham Accords, by the way, because since you mentioned that right now, what signs do you have? Can you tell us the countries that are likely to either reinvigorate their own relationship with Israel, or to become to take the course that the UAE and Bahrain took recently?

HE Richard Grenell: You know, I don't want to give any names because I think then it might give away some of our strategies or inflame opposition against it, so but let me just say that there are three or four countries that are eager to do this, that are that we are talking to. I think that you will see more, and we have to thank the Obama administration for having such a close relationship with Iran and giving, you know, hundreds of millions of dollars to Iran, the Washington types who have tried to normalize this relationship with Iran. That has given us the Abraham Accords and a whole bunch of allies in the region who say 'thank God we've got an America who is willing to stand up, and say to the Arab world that Iran cannot be, the current regime, cannot be our friend'.

Raghid Dergham: I just I hear that it's possibly Oman, Sudan, and let's see, who do I have here, I've written it down, because I have Morocco, is this correct? Am I on the right track? You don't have to [answer]... But Oman, Sudan Morocco are next?

HE Richard Grenell: I would never challenge your incredibly smart brain of trying to predict strategy, so I will not correct you.

Raghida Dergham: All right, thank you very much. I'm going to engage with Richard Haass in a very , and actually to oppose most likely what Ric Grenell just said, but I want first to go to Reem El Hashemy and ask you Reem El Hashemy, are you like really the only country that can manage all these difficulties really because you have China and India at each other's legs, and there you have China and the US as well. Iran in your neighborhood, and you are friends with all, not Iran as much, and I should correct myself, but you have great economic relations with India, with Russia, with China, and great cooperation. Whereas China is in a pact with Iran and, you know, giving them money and encouraging that encroachment probably in places like Lebanon, [...] they're saying that they are turning east to China. Do you think it's time that you have a nice little conversation with China, and you say you can't have it both ways, you can't have your cake and eat it to be in fact helping Hezbollah, helping Iran and at the same time, you know, becoming a partner with us, economic partner of the same level like India? Can you shed light on how you deal with this? Is it time that you should be more strong with both Russia and China in

terms of the relationship with Iran given that they have a very strong relationship that is almost alliance on the ground? Reem El Hashemy.

HE Reem El Hashemy: So when we look at our overall relationship with partners and friends from around the world, we see that there's really diversity in the way that the UAE approaches itself and conducts itself. And here I'd really echo what Shivshankar was saying that there isn't a purest, ideological streak here, there's a true belief that dialogue and collaboration is important. We have tough conversations with everybody because we also are very keen on ensuring that our own national and strategic interests are met in a win-win setup, and a win-win situation. And here I would say that if you look at our relationship with China, our relationship with India, our relationship with the United States, you'll see that it's a very open, and frank, and strong relationship. And if you add to the mix many of the other countries that were described earlier, I would echo what Ric said as well, you have different partners for different causes and your ability to speak through debate dialogue, disagree, agree, is actually a strength of your also foreign policy. And we certainly have a really strong strategic tie with China, certainly a very strategic one also with India, and are going to be launching our strategic dialogue with the United States in a couple of weeks and all of this sort of comes together in a way in which the UAE tries to delicately navigate so that we can continue to find opportunities as opposed to get stumped by the obstacles. There are opportunities, we're very result-driven, we're very solution-driven. And there are ways to try to find mechanisms that work for all the parties involved.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you Reem El Hashemy, Richard Haass, I know you want to say probably answer to some of the points that Ric Grenell put to the table but I also want to hear from you when you get the chance after you answer that on Lebanon, because you said you described it that once upon a time it was an amazing country and now it's a failed state. And, you know, some in Lebanon think that it's a failed state not only because of the corruption by all of the politicians, but necessarily because of the Iran control of a party in Lebanon Hezbollah supplying them with arms, and sort of digging encouraging their further divide if you will in the country. And as a result, I mean again this is where the sort of argument with Iran is, it's about its paramilitary forces outside its own borders, not about its rightful place to be an important country within its own borders in the region. Richard Haass, to you please.

HE Richard Haass: Why don't we quickly start with Lebanon, and then I'll mention a few other things that have been brought up. Look I first went to Lebanon in the 70s, and as you said, it was glorious before the civil war, and you had the ravages of civil war, and now we have the reality that Lebanon on a map is a single country, but in reality it's not. And it hasn't been for decades, the central government of Lebanon has not exercised sovereign authority throughout the territory of Lebanon for decades now. Whether it's groups like Hezbollah and so forth, then you have the corruption, then you have the political division, so we can argue whether Lebanon is a failed state or a failing state, thank God it's not as bad as Yemen, or Syria, or Libya but Lebanon is not anywhere near where it should be and it won't until you have a government that has the capacity to assert its authority throughout its territory, and given groups like Hezbollah and given Iran's rule, that's not going to happen anytime soon. That's just the sad fact of life for the for the Lebanese.

In the [region], let me say two or three things, I think you know the breakthrough between both Bahrain and the UAE and Israel is welcomed, obviously that kind of normalization is welcomed, but I was never particularly worried by the threat posed by either the UAE or Bahrain to Israel, let's be serious here that the biggest challenge to Israel's future as a democratic Jewish state is the Palestinian issue and what was done does not affect that. So I still think the challenge is for Palestinians to come up with the unified leadership that's willing to negotiate with Israel, and I think it's with Israel to have a serious national conversation about what compromise it is prepared to make in order to see its future as both Jewish and Democratic. But where it is now? It is on a trajectory that it will have to choose between being Jewish or being Democratic and that's a choice that no friend of Israel should ever want Israel to have to make.

In terms of Iran, I would simply say I think the administration has accomplished quite extraordinary feat of isolating the United States more than Iran, and however flawed the JCPOA was and is, the fact is that Iran is today closer to putting together the prerequisites of a nuclear program than it was three and a half

years ago. That is just simply a fact of life, and I think what we should be doing is working in particular with our European allies, with the French, the British, and the Germans for thinking about a successor agreement, what I would call JCPOA 2.0 that dramatically extends the constraints on Iran's nuclear program years, if not decades, if not permanently into the future. That ought to be the goal of American foreign policy. Regime change to me is not a serious option for US policy towards Iran or towards China for that matter. I think the United States needs to have mysterious diplomatic approaches to countries that pose serious challenges. Can I speak for a second on China before I have that or not? Up to you.

Raghida Dergham: Yeah yeah China and China pact with Iran.

HE Richard Haass: Well look, **China is going to want to be close to Iran, it's consistent with Belt and Road, it's consistent with China's desire to create connections to countries that produce oil and gas. I think we have to understand that China in many cases is not in any way a geostrategic, geopolitical partner of the United States. That's why we've got to work more closely in this case with European partners, because they do agree with us that Iran should never be allowed to get close, much less – possess - a nuclear weapons capability, that is the French, the Germans and the British are all robust on that point.**

Raghida Dergham: Richard Haass, JCPOA one of the big problems for us in the region here, we have with the JCPOA. It's not about the nuclear. It's actually about the regional. It's about the fact that by the very agreement of the five permanent members [inaudible] Germany to turn a blind eye on Iran's behavior in the region. It almost, it was like take you know just turn it down.

HW Richard Haass: Let me disagree with you and again I was critical...

Raghida Dergham: Let me just finish the point, what happened ever since, because they were hoping, even president Obama said 'we're hoping it will impact the behavior of Iran'. And in fact, it did the opposite, it enabled Iran's behavior. Look again at Syria where it's the disaster for the Obama administration. Look at what's happening in Lebanon and I will give, you know, the chance to answer but this JCPOA #2 as you're calling it, I thought this is what the Trump administration was calling for. Am I wrong on that Richard Haass?

HE Richard Haass: Well I'll let Ambassador Grenell talk about that. If they do want a better JCPOA, I don't think they've gone down the path to get there. Look, take the US - Soviet relationship as a comparison, we had arms-controlled agreements with the Soviet Union that dealt with the nuclear challenge, that dealt with certain types of conventional military challenges. We turned to other policies and other tools to deal with other parts of the Soviet challenges. You don't need to have one approach that deals with everything. So, I think in principle it was perfectly legitimate to have an agreement with Iran that dealt with the nuclear challenge. Again, I would have negotiated a different agreement. In principle, the approach was okay and then there were other things we needed to do to push back against Iran on human rights, and to push back against Iran in the region. So, the Obama administration made a mistake with the so-called red line and Syrian chemicals. This administration, the Trump administration, I would argue, made a major mistake in abandoning the Kurds, who were the best partner the United States had in Syria dealing with the challenges there. But the answer is not to think you could ever negotiate an omnibus deal with Iran. You negotiate where you can, sometimes though you have to use other instruments, be it sanctions or military force.

Raghida Dergham: Okay, thank you. I'm going to have to have Richard Grenell answer to the several points but Ric at one point, tell me if the Trump administration cares at all about Lebanon, and what happens in Lebanon. I am in Lebanon, I need to ask the Lebanon-question,

so address that at one point... And I want you all to be mindful that I have to be wrapping up. So kindly, Ric Grenell.

HE Richard Grenell: So, let me let me try to be quick. First of all, of course we care about Lebanon. I think it's a difficult situation because of Hezbollah. And we have tried, and I tried specifically, to get the Europeans very much to make a clear distinction about Hezbollah as a terrorist organization, not to bifurcate it into a phony designation between two, because Hezbollah doesn't even do that. And I think we made tremendous progress with the Germans on this. We helped write a German law. We gave our input, we gave a lot of ideas on how to do it under the German law, and then we took it to Brussels, and we are still making progress. So, I think that's one example of working with the Europeans to further. But let me just respond on Iran, the idea that somehow, as Richard Haass, says that the JCPOA – the falling of the JCPOA – the situation now is worse that Iran is getting closer to a nuclear weapon, the idea that that is somehow the Trump administration's fault is laughable. It was the Obama administration who gave them hundreds – billions – of dollars, they gave the regime in Iran who pushes gay people off buildings and has systemic human rights abuses, hundreds of millions and yet billions of dollars. The idea that somehow they're closer to a nuclear weapon with all of that money because of the Trump Administration stopping them from collecting more money is just one of those Washington things that people are stuck in this idea of doing the same old same old. What we did is freeze their money, they have way fewer dollars to get there and so if you say that they're closer to a nuclear weapon now, they would have already had it, if we did not freeze their funding under the Trump administration.

Raghida Dergham: Ric Grenell, I'm going to go in reverse. I'm going to start with you, for one minute closing statement or anything that you want to highlight before you leave us. I know you have to take a flight, but I'd love it if you tell us what do you think is going to happen in the debates, and how is President Trump since you see him and is he ... can you tell us?

HE Richard Grenell: I talked to him. I talked to the president yesterday, he's in great spirits. We don't believe the polls just like we didn't believe the polls when they said Hillary Clinton was absolutely going to be president. Washington DC types constantly believe the polls, but we don't. And I would just say very quickly that I appreciate every single person taking the time here. We need more conversations about issues, but we in the Trump administration absolutely respect each country doing their own internal decisions. We don't want to tell them what to do. We will only speak up when US National Security is at stake and when we feel that it's really important for our people's security.

Raghida Dergham: Ric Grenell, thank you very much. Stay with us. Do not leave. I'll let you leave on the dot, at the top of the hour. Richard Hass, one minute to you, and then I'm going to go to Menon and then to Reem El Hashemy. Please one minute to you Richard Haass.

HE Richard Haass: Look every country around the world obviously has to make sovereign decisions as it sees fit. But I think we also have to understand that we live in an era where no country on its own can protect its own interests better than it can by working with others, be it against climate change, or infectious disease, or terrorism, or proliferation. I think that's just a fact of life. And second of all, I don't believe that sovereignty allows you to do things like harbor terrorists, or destroy the rain forest, or massacre your own people and put them in internment camps, or commit genocide. So, I think what we have to start also thinking about is a world in which sovereignty still remains the basic principle of international issue but it can't be so

absolute that governments have impunity to do things within their own territory that massacres citizens or pose a threat to other countries, in this case including the United States.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much Richard Haass, Shivshankar Menon, 45 seconds to you please if you try to wrap it up. I can't hear you, unmute.

HE Shivshankar Menon: I think we have an opportunity today in the world because of the destruction that we've seen. We're in a poorer, meaner, smaller world but this is the time when all our threats are transnational whether it's proliferation, whether it's terrorism, whether it's climate change. This is the time to build a new multilateralism of our own. As I said, my mantra is simple, issue-based coalitions of the willing, but let's deal with the issues.

Raghida Dergham: i you, thank you very much Shivshankar Menon. Reem El Hashemy.

HE Reem Al Hashimi: 20 seconds Raghida, 20 seconds. What we're all seeing now, is completely unprecedented and we certainly need a step change in how we work and how well we work with one another and this type of forum is a step in that direction, and I hope these conversations always continue.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you so much. I'm so afraid that electricity will get cut off. For next Wednesday, e-Policy Circle 18 of Beirut Institute Summit in Abu Dhabi, we will have the millennials changing the status quo. This is a conversation would be amongst the millennials. We have Wafa Ben Hassine from Tunisia, Ayla Majid from Pakistan, Zakary Dychtwald from the United States, an expert on China actually and Jon Nash – not that Jon Nash – but Jon Nash also smart enough, from the UK. Thank you so much for joining me, you honor me and thank you for the wonderful words you said about Beirut Institute. Lots of love to everyone. Bye for now.