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“Millennials Challenging the Status-quo”

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Youtube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7wxLROmOjY&t=1164s>

Raghida Dergham: Good morning Washington DC, where my Tunisian friend is coming from, Wafa Ben Hassine, and then I have a good morning also for Baja Mexico (not Baja California), where my American guest who is an Expert on China is coming from, and that is Zak Dychtwald is coming from. And then I have a good afternoon from London, hello London where my daughter lives, love London for that, and that is where Jon Nash is coming from, and he is British coming from London. And then I have a good evening to Islamabad, where I have Ayla coming from and she is from Pakistan. Welcome, this is an amazing group, because I want to understand what the millennials are thinking and how are they challenging the status-quo. It is Beirut Institute Summit, e-Policy Circle number 18, I believe, I have lost track, but it is a summit that happens in Abu Dhabi, and many of you have been, well two of you actually, have been there. Zak has come to the second edition, and then Wafa came for the third edition, and we hope to have the fourth edition in 2021 because we could not have it in 2020 for obvious reasons. This is going to be an amazing conversation. Each of the young people who are with me has got an expertise which we will learn from. I certainly learnt a lot from all of you when I read your talking points. So I am going to start off by giving just each of you four minutes, then everyone will learn about what you're thinking, how would you plan to challenge the status-quo, what do you feel about it. Four minutes given to each of you, and I start with Wafa Ben Hassine. Please, the floor is yours Wafa.

Wafa Ben Hassine: Thank you so much Raghida and I am really happy to be with this group. So, I wanted to preface by saying I hope everybody is doing and keeping safe in these times. I just wanted to go over a few of the trends that we're seeing with the quote – end quote “millennials”, you know, it's always a little difficult to talk about the youth without falling into a trap of stereotypes and generalizations. And so, what we can do however is look at the data and the polls, global polls from all over the world and the United States, which is where I

am based now and what we see is, first and foremost, the role of internet has changed everything. People are more connected nowadays, young, old, middle, everybody is more connected. This allows for a very significant digital fluency in the way millennials use technology, it allows also an outwards-looking vision, so whereas before, we had, perhaps we looked more at what's going on in our own countries – and we still do – but we have more of an outwards-looking vision because of these technological advancement, we look beyond borders. And this makes us more globally connected as well, including having more favorable views of foreign influencers or foreign powers, foreign governments compared to older generations and the data shows this. We also have a more, and I say 'we', but it's really actually even the generation younger than I am, but there is an accessibility of having a social justice mindset that is more prevalent than before. Millennials and Gen Z are really more tuned into social justice issues, exhausted from age old politics, whether it's in the Middle East, North Africa, or North America, or what appears rather never-ending issues, right, just political topics that have been going on for generations and generations.

There's a greater emphasis on climate change, which is a welcomed development. It seems that younger people are more aware of the dangers of climate extremities. And then finally, I mean, I think this also ties into COVID-19 and how we're all kind of changing and adapting to what this new life means for all of us, but the 9 to 5 is over. Our changing work habits have really upended the regular routine, regular schedule. Work from home really started a few years back, maybe even eight, nine years ago, but the continuation of it is currently being reinforced, obviously with the coronavirus. We also work multiple jobs at once – the so-called 'Gig economy' – where individuals are just trying to make ends meet by, you know, driving Uber, driving Lyft and trying to pay their rent.

And one last thing is that the perception of education, the value of education is also shifting. And this is especially in countries where education is very expensive like the United States, so more individuals are starting to look to vocational training, to other types of professional activities that do not necessarily include having a master's or having a bachelor's degree. So I'll end it right there and give the floor to the rest of the panelists, but these are some of the general changes that we're seeing and I think it's really important to keep in mind the thread that connects all of these habits, which is having new technological developments namely instant communication through the internet and access to information in that sense.

Raghida Dergham: Yeah, but I want to follow up with you on a couple of things. Why is this generation exhausted from age-old politics? Is it because it's failed, or because you have something else to offer? Because I'm not so sure your

generation has something new to offer. I know that you are exhausted, and understandably so. Shed some light on that for me.

Wafa Ben Hassine: It seems that it's more as a result of the former that you just mentioned, that individuals are more connected to other people from around the globe, and so they're connected to some of the issues that unites everybody, so lack of access to health care, not being able to have the freedoms that you want to have, and so, as a result, they end up having this world view that is essentially: we're fighting the same battle. And whether you're in China, or whether you're in the US, or Mexico, or wherever you may be located, there are certain uniting factors that keep everybody connected in that sense, and before that did not exist with the older generations.

Raghida Dergham: Are you satisfied with your involvement, with your engagement, or are you just into yourselves only?

Wafa Ben Hassine: That's a stereotype that I would hope I could help break. There is a stereotype about millennials being entitled. In fact, that's not true at all. Millennials are suffering, and the world is getting more expensive, and this is why a lot of us are working multiple jobs, a lot of us are trying to make ends meet. And frankly, I think they have higher expectations of what society should offer them, and I think that's a good thing and not a bad thing, as long as people keep working for that as well.

Raghida Dergham: Interesting. One last thing before I leave you, 'Gig economy', is this, you know, flamboyant or is this, you know, something to stay? 'Gig economy', explain that.

Wafa Ben Hassine: From the trends we see so far, it is something to say but it needs to be vastly reformed, I mean individuals who work with certain companies that, you know, they work maybe five hours a day, maybe three days a week, do not have the regular protections and securities that they usually have in a regular stable job. And the 'Gig economy' is here to stay, which means that corporations need to make a bigger effort and redefining the type of contract that people work under...

Raghida Dergham: ...because you don't have one job, because you're trained to have several multiple jobs?

Wafa Ben Hassine: Right, and not only that but I think contracts need to be done, working contracts need to be more dynamic and recognize that fact exactly that you may have more than one job and work together to provide different kinds

of benefits that make the individual or the employee feel more secure, and I think this is going to be a very big topic moving forward.

Raghida Dergham: That's fascinating. You know I need to tell everyone who doesn't know that I am involved with the millennials because my daughter is the same age, I mean she is 30 years old so I think I'm always curious to learn and I am familiar with the suffering and I am familiar with the fact that you guys work very hard, and it's true you really work hard-er maybe than we did when we were thirty. I don't know, I worked out all my life, but anyway let me move on. Thank you very much Wafa Ben Hassine, Ayla Majid from Pakistan, you are both on energy and finance, and by the way, Wafa before I forget, you know who introduced us at the [WEF?] in Jordan, it was Malak Akiely, who is a very dear friend of both you and Ayla and who was a guest, and I'm sure she's listening, she is brilliant as you all are.

Ayla, I'm going to give you four minutes, to you please.

Ayla Majid: Alright, thank you Raghida, absolutely lovely to be joining all of you here. So, like you said in my intro, I work with sectors including energy to sort of, just to sort of first give a little bit of background with regards to my thought on millennials and how they are thinking. I think millennials and the younger generation, they are absolutely aware, and with awareness comes, with the privilege of awareness comes a lot of responsibility and having a lot of diverse interests...

Raghida Dergham: I think you froze somewhere, I don't know if it's your internet or mine, it's yours. Ayla, if your internet froze, are you back?

Ayla Majid: Yes, I'm back yes.

Raghida Dergham: And by the way, before you go on, you guys please tolerate us, because we have sometimes interruption of electricity. Don't go away it comes back, so we, you know, we are in Lebanon, unfortunately it is in the state, I apologize to you Ayla please go on.

Ayla Majid: And apologies from my end as well, for some reason the internet is acting up quite a bit today, so sorry for the interruption. Yeah so, I was talking about like millennials and the younger generation being absolutely aware. So with this privilege of awareness, and with this privilege of having a voice, there comes a responsibility as well and the younger generation is absolutely sort of aware about issues of inequality, the entire world not having access to health and education, and they're also looking from the lens of where sustainability is and how we need to sort of move towards that climate change, diversity,

and inclusion. Those are sort of very important areas that the millennials, and the younger generation rightly is concerned about and that has sort of led a lot of stakeholders, including corporates to sort of realign because that is the future, that is the way going forward. So the companies that I work with at the governance level as well, whether it's energy, whether it's many different other sectors now, they are slowly and gradually shifting their thought process, their strategies and also sort of on the education side, obviously what the education, what was relevant about two decades ago, the world has really really changed so the skill set of the future, the need of the future and like Wafa said that people are now doing two, three jobs and also because of having diverse interests, so the education is changing and with the digital platforms, the platforms of delivery. So we are talking about a very different world, where a lot of us had been working from home in the past few months, I think going forward, education will really change as well it is perhaps not going to be just going to full-time school, it's going to be pick and choose and it's going to be getting equipped and learning and getting familiar with multiple skill sets and that is what I feel that a number of these things are really shaping the world.

Raghida Dergham: Ayla, education is changing so much to the extent that it's almost in some cases you guys are homeschooled after you had, after we spent quite a good amount of money on schooling you properly, we the parents, so how is that going to impact the evolution of your professionalism if you will, of your specialty, Ayla, because you have multiple specialties I ask you that.

Ayla Majid: Yes, so Raghida, the world is changing, the world is so dynamic, and businesses, corporations, the demands of the world, they are changing, so nobody can remain in a static zone. So, to stay relevant, it is extremely important to sort of upskill. So today people are learning about sustainable cities, sustainable infrastructure, so about two decades ago nobody was thinking about that, what is artificial intelligence or how do we sort of do data analytics, etc. So there is a continuous process. Learning is a continuous process for everyone, not just for millennials but sort of like people the older generation as well, like my parents' generation they learn to sort of use the internet, the computer, from not being familiar with all these tools. So yes just to stay relevant, and to contribute, and to innovate, it's important.

Raghida Dergham: Okay, I want to get at one point to speak to all of you about, honestly, something that's dear to my heart, it's the actual relationship with our generation and most of your parents are my age and I'd like to discuss that because I'm very lucky with my relationship with my daughter, but I'd like to know what difficulties do you have with us, I mean what do you worry about when it comes to us, but that's later on. Jon Nash, you live with a grand name and you're a father actually, you're the only one amongst this group who had just had a baby

less than a year ago, or maybe a year ago, so I don't want to dwell on the parents with my weak points so I'm going to give you four minutes to tell me what you want us to learn from you, Jon Nash.

Jon Nash: Thank you Raghida, it's great to be here. I thought I'd use this opportunity to give you a little preview of something that I've been working on for quite a while and that we'll be publishing in a few weeks. So, I work at Demos, we're an independent cross-party think tank, and this project really began with a recognition that around the world there's enormous demand for progress for change in every sector, from health care, to climate, to corporate taxation, to corruption. And at the same time, there's great potential in among citizens, and think tanks, and educational institutes, community groups. And so, when you look at that problem, what you realize is the restraint, the constriction, is in our processes and our systems of law making, of decision making. So that was really our focus with this, and what we realized was that methods of decision making haven't really changed, to use an English example, haven't changed in 900 years. If you go back to sort of the 13th century, you had the king would want to invade France and he'd ask the barons and the barons would vote yes or no. Fast forward to today, you still have laws put forward that are voted on yes or no by a group of politicians. And the argument that came out of this was that the problems we face today in a technically advanced, politically complex, ethnically diverse world cannot be solved one act of parliament at a time. So, the question was, how can we update our methods of law making to reflect those challenges?

And so, what we are proposing is a concept called 'Combined Choice'. The argument there is that we can, instead of representing the law as a series of acts, we can represent it in its entirety as a whole by basically bundling everything together, taking ever all active legislation and putting it in the same place. Now that's something we can do because we have digitized information, and if anyone in the software sectors, it sounds familiar because it's kind of how an operating system works. And what that then allows us to do is have a have a system of politics where instead of voting on individual bills, what politicians are doing is putting forward their version of this bundle of legislation, their version of how the country should be run, and then you enforce the one with the most support. So this is the sort of bare bones of what we're talking about.

Now that that achieves a few things, it's more transparent, you know exactly what every representative does and doesn't support; they're accountable, if something's the law, you know it's because these representatives support it; and most importantly, it's sort of open and flexible, you're not telling representatives that they have to use this 300 year old process that involves doing this and doing, that they can develop this stuff in new ways, working with communities,

expert groups, community organizations. So, we're at an interesting stage where we're starting to test this concept in the UK, we have a pilot coming up with a with a housing estate in east London and then into next year we'll be trying this with local authorities. And we're pretty exciting, it's an area that's overlooked and we want to see whether we can shake things up.

Raghida Dergham: You know what Jon, I need you to explain it more to me, what is the 'Combined Choice'? I know you were trying to say this in brief, but go ahead take another minute and explain to me the alternative model please.

Jon Nash: So if we were all members of parliament in a legislature, we would be engaging in a slow process of voting on individual motions and we'd only be looking at those one motions, sorry *that individual motion*. And if you take a problem like climate change that is so multifaceted and multi-dimensional, you need to be able to think of that problem in across lots of different elements, and when you have a decision-making process that's slow and narrow, you get a bottleneck and you get very narrow legislation, so the point is to enable elected representatives to approach lawmaking in new ways, effectively empower them to solve problems using whichever tools are best for the job, to get to that result which is what we all want, better legislation, better governance, a better society, quicker, faster, easier, with more people involved.

Raghida Dergham: Okay, Wafa I'm going to let you get to talk about this later in the conversation because I'm interested in the Tunisian experiment and experience with that, but I'm going to go to Zak first, and then I'd like to discuss what Jon is proposing for how it could be applicable to Pakistan, to Tunisia, to the United States even. But first, let me go to Zak because I have to give him four minutes and he's got to cover the world as he is an American going to China via Mexico. Zac, four minutes to you.

Zakary Dychtwald: Thank you, and it's an absolute privilege to be able to take part in this in this panel. So Chinese millennials, just to set the stage a little bit here, I'm going to make three points. But first, so we know what we're talking about, there's around 417 million millennials in China, compared to 80 million millennials in the United States, where I'm from, so there's five times more young people in China than there are in the United States. There's actually more millennials in China than there are in north America, the middle east and Europe, combined. So, it's a large population in China, and quite impactful. So on to the three points.

The first point, and this is something that as Americans, we often overestimate and that is that for this young generation in China, modernization has not meant westernization. The expectation was that increased wealth and increased

exposure, particularly to western systems of governance as well as society, will lead to an appreciation to the way we do this here. And unfortunately, we've seen the opposite happen. There's the young generation whose older generations have told them a lot about the United States in particular as a city on a hill. And as one-third of all study abroad students in the United States are coming from China, and two-thirds of all passport holders in China are under the age of 40, this young generation has interacted with the rest of the world more than any other generation in the past and they've actually found, for the most part, that our system is more flawed than what they had heard about, when they were younger, we don't look as good from up close. So, modernization has not meant westernization for this young generation.

Second, what's unique about the millennial generation in China is that they're actually the largest economic factor in the entire country, they push markets. So similar to the baby boomers in the west who redefined every single market they touched, this young generation in China is doing the same and that's partly because of demographics. We know because of the one child policy that there are fewer young people than older people. And so if you can imagine demography as an upside down pyramid, a lot of resources in China work as a downward funnel and so this young generation at the bottom of that are able to spend and impact the global economy in a way that has companies all over the world salivating towards this high growth market. 66% of all luxury growth, for instance, is expected to come from China between now and 2025, and 79% of all luxury spend is done by those, again, under the age of 40. Massively impactful.

And the third point here, and just to be a little bit provocative before I lose my time – if China had a vote in this election, United States election, we hope that they don't but there is precedent for foreign powers being involved in elections from all sides of the map, they would vote for Trump. Now I want to just explain this strictly from the point of view of perception of young people, because this is massively important. The biggest threat to the to the Chinese Communist party's hold on power is not necessarily what they do internally, but an enviable, admirable, high-functioning and high-minded alternative and this is one of the things, you know, as my role in between the US and China that I've seen over the last four years, and you could actually argue over the last 10 years, and that's the reputation of democracy, the reputation of our system again through increased interaction, but especially even these last six months, is in decline, it's being eroded. And for China, it's extraordinarily useful for the government and for young people. I worry that the perception of democracy could be taking a fatal blow right now, at this critical inflection point.

Raghida Dergham: You said that you describe what you're saying as provocative, let me answer you as somebody who's provoked by what you said

but also you provoked my curiosity, because everybody knows that China, as a country, as the communist party, as the government, they really are very much invested in bringing down Donald Trump and voting if you will you know for Biden. It is not, it's scientific, I mean everybody who is a sort of a policy maker, a geopolitical expert, knows and says that and points to actually an engagement by China to make sure that Trump does not win. You're telling me now, you are telling me that all those people are wrong, or are you telling me that only the 400 million plus millennials think otherwise?

Zakary Dychtwald: So, within the IR community, there is less critical thought, there's the perception that Trump is difficult on China; from within China, there's the perception that Trump is playing half the board. So equal market access, the trade war, and of course, intellectual property, which are priorities for the Trump administration are important and they are difficult on China. But China has two metrics for understanding its own power, wealth and power. When you talk about what the United States has been doing, and what Trump has been doing, he's attacking China's short-term wealth. But what he's allowing through essentially, a power void in the area, in the Asia pacific extended, he's allowing China to transition from relatively fragile world power, to one that's more entrenched on top of that. And this is the young person part by the way, if Biden wins, it suggests to young people throughout China that the democratic systems particularly gather, particularly the right to protest, and of course the ability to vote, that those...

Raghida Dergham: Wait, is the United States absolutely suddenly became a place where you cannot protest? You cannot vote? What are you saying Zak? This is not...

Zakary Dychtwald: What I'm saying is that it absolutely is a place where you can do that and if young people are watching those systems work, if young people in China are watching those systems work in the United States, it actually gives credit to the democratic system in a way that a Trump victory would not. So it would show that these democratic systems could actually provoke the sort of change that they are really created to be able to do.

Raghida Dergham: Jon Jon come in on this, help me out here, what does that mean?

Jon Nash: Well it's interesting because there's a line I always think of that we have two visions of how you run a country, you've got a highly efficient authoritarian regime, and you've got a highly inefficient democratic regime, you end up in one of those two binaries. Now our hope is that we can end up with a highly efficient democracy, but I could see why if you're growing up in a country

that's experienced massive explosion in wealth and stature and standing in the world that you would, in terms of the sort of social contract, feel a degree of fondness for your authoritarian leader. Now whether in the next few decades, if things aren't going so well, that's when people start to want to get their voice in. We don't complain if there are no potholes in front of our house, right? We become involved when there are potholes in front of our house and so Zak I wonder what you think the next few decades look like.

Raghida Dergham: Quickly Zak, answer that before I go to... Zak I'll give you just a quick opportunity to answer this and then I'll go back...

Zakary Dychtwald: So, Jon's exactly right. We are at a point where there's a perception within China that leadership is pretty good and leadership outside, of different systems, particularly the American system is not. And so when you're comparing them, China appears favorable right now to a lot of young people who are already prone to liking that system. Ten years down the line, particularly with the way that the Chinese constitution has been undermined with the elimination of term limits, China is wide open for a leader who abuses that position of authoritarianism in a way that Xi Jinping frankly has he's been inspirational to a lot of young people in achieving a sense of power and stature on the world stage, despite the fairly heinous failure of the initial COVID response.

Raghida Dergham: Well you can't pass by that like this slightly, we'll get back to that because it is huge, and it is causing [a lot of problems]. Okay but you know you cannot just say well despite that as if it's small happening. Anyway we'll get back, we'll give you the chance to get back to that, but I need to go to Ayla Majid, and maybe her own, I don't know if she wants to speak only about China, but you have the chance to do so, but in fact, Pakistan is also involved in these alliances and, you know, since you're an energy expert, you know about those, so if you have China and India at each other's necks and you have China and Pakistan coming closer with each other with the US watching. Do you feel like talking about that, or do you want to just go to, I don't want to impose a political discussion on you guys, but go ahead Ayla Majid.

Ayla Majid: Actually, that's a very interesting point. So, China and Pakistan have always had very good relations, and there are sort of collaborations on all sort of fronts. Of course, there can be political dimensions as well, but this part of the world has been underdeveloped. Pakistan is an emerging country, it's a developing country and the needs are absolutely huge, whether it is energy, whether it is infrastructure, whether it is education, whether it is health. So, in terms of sort of, China has always been sort of [constant] and there has been a space or there has...

Raghida Dergham: We're having a hard time... Try again, we had a difficult time with you, try again.

Ayla Majid: All right, so what I'm saying is that China and Pakistan have always had good relations...

Raghida Dergham: Ayla I'm having a hard time, I am going to go to Wafa while you fix your, either go back to the laptop, or just try to... maybe you want to re-dial in, you know it's not looking good from your phone, so try again or otherwise shift, you know, twist your phone around otherwise. Let me go to Wafa and then get back to you Ayla. Wafa Ben Hassine, you are from Tunisia and you've had a very interesting experience, you are having that. Address your own issue from that conversation, in light of the conversation, the exchange that we just witnessed between Zak and Jon. Go ahead.

Wafa Ben Hassine: Thank you. Thank you Jon, and Zak, and Ayla for your insights because I find them very interesting. I'm also, similar to Zak, I'm balancing between two countries so I'm Tunisian American, I have, you know, a view of both of them in light also of different policy perspectives but there are certainly plenty of policy experts on Tunisian politics, more than I am, my area of expertise is more about technology and internet. But I will say something though, Tunisia represents a sort of island in some cases, in the region just because of, as you know Raghida, from a lot of these changes over the past 10 years, from the revolution, which you know, there was a line that has been drawn when it comes to freedom of expression and that's something that cannot be taken away. But I will say that there is a very heavy sense of where are we going, is our economy ever going to get better? And with COVID-19 that just came and just made things even worse, you know. And it's interesting how the younger generation is perceiving that because these are the people who went on the streets asking for freedom of expression and for a better livelihood, and not just freedom of expression, I focus on that a lot because that's my area but it was also very economic, people wanted to have a decent livelihood without having to pay for bribes everywhere they go, you know [speaks Arabic], you know [speaks Arabic], it means work, liberty and national dignity. And when you don't have that still...

Raghida Dergham: But then you got into a situation where your fight now is against a very important and strong political party which is the Muslim Brotherhood, so I again if you don't feel being dragged into a political conversation, but on the other hand, you know, you said in what you shared with me that because "this generation has an outwards looking vision, it's more globally connected including having more favorite views of foreign governments compared to older generations." Is this happening in Tunisia, or is there more

outcry about what is happening internally because you guys...and how active are the millennials? Which generation is fighting for new Tunisia?

Wafa Ben Hassine: Very very active, but I will say that it seems that the millennial generation is more outwards looking in terms of culture, in terms of trends, but very much inwards looking when it comes to politics. And just a tweak to what you said I don't think the fight is against the MB, I think it's the fight against the whole ruling elite. And this is especially true for younger individuals and also individuals who are just cognizant of what's happening, they see economic lobbies being continued from the 80s, from the 70s, from the 60s, until today and those are the very same groups of people that are benefiting from a regime that essentially works like a mafia and it pains me to say this, but in Tunisia, that's still very much the case. In fact, perhaps it's even worse with corruption obviously. And some people I hear they say 'yeah no maybe you don't like the revolution', no, the revolution is sacred to me, I mean I was one of the people who was out and talking about things. But it's not that, I think it's it just these things take a long time. It can't happen between, you know, one night. It has to take a very long time to actually see, especially economic development, I mean that that doesn't happen immediately, you know. And again, when I when I mentioned earlier in my very first part when I spoke is it's just kind of this this, you know this old politics, you know getting wary of old politics, getting wary of the old regime. It's still the same people, you know, you take them out in one election, they come back in another election. It's just it's just recycling, you know?

Raghida Dergham: Maybe this is because there hasn't been qualified younger people coming in.

Wafa Ben Hassine: That's the problem!

Raghida Dergham: Yeah but why? Jon Nash, why?

Jon Nash: Why haven't there been younger people coming in? I think...

Raghida Dergham: Why aren't there enough qualified people to come in, and say and change course? I mean, you spoke of hybrid of almost a hybrid approach to law and how to apply the law making, but you know, why is it that we don't see young generations except when they're on the streets saying you know down with up with, why haven't they been able to play a real fundamental or in big numbers, I'm sure exceptionally there are quite a few. Why is there a shortage when it comes to younger generation, the millennials even, shaping the future of their own countries?

Jon Nash: I think, the US, you know, you had under Obama, he had a majority in the house and senate, he was able to do healthcare which also sort of didn't really do healthcare, you know, so these people have seen inspirational leaders who've really made no progress, like gun reform, there was no gun reform, there was no real progress on health care and so I think young people latch on to issues where they think they can make progress and canceling someone on twitter, going after someone who they perceive as being racist has an effect. And so, I think of the old definition of madness, right, we've been trying the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result which is why I think that, you know, the focus needs to be honest...

Raghida Dergham: Jon Nash, talk about policy making, not only going on Twitter and just, you know, saying I feel this or people in the social media thinking that they've become the substitute to journalists and they just think that they can report without accountability. Talk about real policymaking, real engagement in changing the course of government.

Jon Nash: I see about as much of it as it sounds like you do. I think people are drawn to areas where they think they can make a difference, and when the, you know, most powerful man in the world can't fix the healthcare system, that doesn't bode well for them. So, I think that I'm not surprised that young people are drawn to some of the things that Wafa describes, and it saddens me because these are meaningful problems that people should be working on. But it sort of becomes like banging your head against a brick wall.

Raghida Dergham: Describe to me, Jon Nash, before I go to Zak Dychtwald, describe to me the scene in the UK, with your problems of Brexit, no well the Brexit debate is over, the young people wanted otherwise, did the older generation win because it was more equipped for this fight, or was it because there was a bit of laziness and nonchalance amongst the younger generation?

Jon Nash: I think we saw it a little in the Corbyn moment, where you had a younger generation a very London-central generation that elevated this leader to the top of a party with a historic amount of party support, but then along comes a general election and he suffered one of the worst defeats in history. So, there is a disconnect between that younger generation, the online generation, very left generation, and then people in this country who just want like stuff to work, you know. So, I do think that either young people need to care more about the mechanics of running a country or old people need to care more about social justice, but the two sides need to come together somehow, and yeah I know which of those I'd prefer.

Raghida Dergham: Scientifically, do you have a model like you are working on these things, are you thinking about it, Jon Nash, on how on how to do this? I mean, you know because I think there is that need at one point, I just think that there has to be an intergenerational approach personally, like in Beirut Institute, this is one of the main points that we try to push always an intergenerational approach so that the younger people don't think 'hey you're too old for it I know better' or the older generation says 'oh you're too young to understand'. So, I think somebody, all of you, you and us, have got to work together at one point to make this happen. Zak you want to say something about this before I ask you about what does young China really want? Because up to now you have not told me, you have what do they feel about westernization, well you know, you didn't tell me how they feel about their own government, authoritarian as it is, do they really not care? They just like don't want their freedom? They want to live under authoritarian regime?

Zakary Dychtwald: So, I want to be clear here, there's what I would want for them, and there's what I think I want for myself, and there's what I think how things transpire during COVID, and on, and on, and on...

Raghida Dergham: [inaudible], go for it.

Zakary Dychtwald: And then there's what people are perceiving within China. And so what people are perceiving within China, and there's actually memes of this, especially recently so I can talk about this just in COVID, there's broad recognition, I mean I have never seen more fury towards the government from within China than in January and February, absolute vitriol, people howling in the streets.

Raghida Dergham: How did that manifest itself?

Zakary Dychtwald: Online, all over the internet, I mean there's this sense that China is censored but it's not nearly to the extent that it actually is. There is massive amounts of upset in every nook and cranny of the internet, it's more upset than I've seen in the last decade without any exception, nothing even comes close. But we saw the worst of the Chinese government and then we saw what is perceived to be the best, and again it's this relativity thing. So unfortunately, COVID has been a sort of morbid scoreboard for which country, which system can ultimately keep their populace safe and get them back to their normal lives, unfortunately, it shouldn't be this way but it has. And so even though the initial failure was obviously that of China's, that China has already been back to work for three months has given this young generation confidence that the trade-off between freedoms and the life that they get is increasingly worth it.

Raghida Dergham: In the sense is that COVID is over or not?

Zakary Dychtwald: In the sense that is that COVID is controlled. So within essentially a China-sized NBA bubble if you will, because there's not freedom of movement from outside inside Chinese borders, there's a sense that they are being protected, and that – especially right now – is extraordinarily useful. I mean similar with this anti-China rhetoric coming from the United States, we forget that this sort of rhetoric just in the way that it's a binding agent for Trump's constituents in the United States, it's also a binding agent within China, at a time where frankly the government needs that sense of unity after that most fragile moment between the people and the government.

Raghida Dergham: Okay two? You said you have one, two, three points, quickly give me the other couple of points.

Zakary Dychtwald: So, what does this young generation want? Broadly speaking, they want to be able to be themselves in the world.

Raghida Dergham: How do they plan to impact the future? Because you know, I'm asking this question for all of you, how does your generation plan to impact the future? You as an American tell me how, you as a China – young China expert – tell me how, as briefly as you can, Ayla is back, I want to give her the chance to speak.

Zakary Dychtwald: So American hat, I think that America is in a bit of an identity crisis right now and my hope is that young people, frankly I see it more from Gen Z, but young people can help steward a new version of...

Raghida Dergham: Gen Z you mean the younger generation, go ahead

Zakary Dychtwald: The younger generation than us, can help steward a new version of America on the world stage that lives up to the ideal version of us. And from the China hat, so from what we're seeing through the interviews that we're doing, this young generation, and this is going to be unsatisfying, is really only beginning to think about how they want to impact the world right now. The past in China has been trying to figure out you know if you're imagining Maslow's hierarchy of needs, moving from subsistence to an existence that that is comfortable, they are now at the identity stage answering the questions 'who am I? What do I want for myself, my family, my government?' Those questions, what does China, what's the identity of China in the modern world, are being defined right now in real time – which is why, frankly, it's such an exciting moment.

Raghida Dergham: Fascinating, of course, it is fascinating.

Ayla, is this going on in Pakistan, is that notion going on amongst either the generation the millennials or generation Z? Ayla we want you with us! In the meantime, I'm going to go to Wafa Ben Hassine, the same question to you. I'm sorry Ayla, we really were excited to have you, try to come back.

Wafa Ben Hassine: The reason in Tunis, I would say, in Tunisia why a lot of millennials are probably not being as involved in politics as they should be is primarily because a lot of them are leaving the country. There are better economic opportunities elsewhere to the extent that they can and to the extent that they can't. Some migrate legally, some illegally and undocumented as we're all well aware, which is causing a big crisis also between Europe and north Africa so far as migrant deaths in the Mediterranean shores. And so, it's become a big problem I would say, I mean, in addition to what I said at the beginning about the internet being a connecting technology, it is also a technology that really allows individuals to see what's out there in the world, and for the younger generation that means that they would like to be able to define their own government, and their own country on their own terms. It's difficult to say because, I mean, personally I've just come back from Tunisia, and I see it as very sometimes difficult to penetrate that bubble of politicking especially because there's so many different factions and parties and you know the government has changed hands so many times since the uprising. And I mean it's also important to be a realist about these things. Once again, a revolution doesn't happen overnight, and it's not just about a revolution, it's about having a society and a democracy built on very strong concrete pillars and that takes time.

Raghida Dergham: You speak about sustainability of development and that sort of thing, which is important, but what about the sustainability of interests by the millennials or even [inaudible], so what about that? I think there is a lack of sustainability there because I think, is it because you guys want to go out and look after your own lives and build a life? I mean is this – quickly Wafa, and then I'm going to ask Jon.

Wafa Ben Hassine: So, you said sustainability of interests?

Raghida Dergham: Yes, of course.

Wafa Ben Hassine: Yes, exactly. And I think and once again things are very instant when you have instant communications, and similar to what Zak was speaking about with Chinese youth as well, there's this sense of efficiency, we need efficiency, we need our lives to work, why does it take so long to get a piece of paper signed at the municipality, things like that. And I think in a country

like Tunisia, those things are changing. We slowly have regulations being shifted, and changed, and amended in order to allow for these new technologies to actually be functional, such as digital payments, and so slowly it is going in that direction.

Raghida Dergham: But I'm talking about the tough neighborhood you're living in, you're not only [inaudible], you have you know Tunisians who went to fight with Al Qaeda, you have Tunisians coming back from Syria with their, you know ideology, you have that next door in Libya, that's what I'm talking about, the young generation being involved in shaping its own interests in the future, rather than only their own jobs. Am I wrong?

Wafa Ben Hassine: No, you're not wrong. And you know what's interesting is that it has been the younger generation that has mostly been pushing for institutional solutions to those problems, such as having a supreme court, a constitutional court in Tunisia, that's been delayed time, and time, and time again, for political reasons by the older generation. And so, it's really interesting watching this kind of rift and this tension between an older generation and the younger one which is pushing for solutions that actually match their ideals of democratic reform, and not addressing these things in a very short-sighted, hasty, way. As you mentioned the neighborhood, is quite volatile sometimes.

Raghida Dergham: Indeed, it is. Ayla, I hope that you can, you could take four minutes to speak because you really haven't had the chance. Tell me everything you want to tell me before the internet takes you away, go ahead. The question is about millennials in face of authoritarianism, for change, the sustainability of your role, where do you make a difference, how do you, you know, do you have a road map, do you have a strategy or is it just an outburst on the internet and on social media and only that? Ayla Majid.

Ayla Majid: Thank you so much, am I audible now? Just to confirm before I speak further.

Raghida Dergham: Yes.

Ayla Majid: All right, good, yes. So you see, these are the kind of challenges of developing countries where we still don't have the best of technology, and we still don't have the digital and physical infrastructure, so these are the demands of the younger generation and this is what the younger generation wants, a good ecosystem where everyone can thrive and everyone can sort of realize their dreams. So, I'll just talk a little bit about where I got cut off as to China's role in this part of the world and how the youth looks at it. The youth would look at it as a partner that is giving us, sort of, helping us along the way, whether it was

cycling forward, whether it was building infrastructure, whether it was giving some kind of strategic leverage or providing finance.

Raghida Dergham: So regardless if it is an authoritarian or democratic, you don't care.

Ayla Majid: You know, there's a very fine line between democracy per se, the world is excellent, but one needs to look at that, is democracy really in spirit there? So many many countries in the name of democracy have actually had very bad leaders, those who have not addressed or those who are the issues or those who have left huge voids. So yes, democracy is a concern, people's welfare is a concern, and to address all problems that are there, the inequality being one of them, having freedom of speech the other and many like these but I think at the end of the day, people are looking for collaboration. There is less sort of belief, or there's hardly any belief of the younger generation that we need to go to war with other countries, or other regions, or just to sort of stay relevant, we need to create some [care?] in other parts of the world.

Raghida Dergham: Okay, so but I mean again, lots of countries have got their problems, that age-old problems, whether it's Kashmir in your case, or relations with India, or together, but what I'm trying to get out and here I'm going to give two minutes for each of you to really like wrap up what you want me to think about when I leave this e-Policy Circle, each of you what do you want me, as someone who is your parent's age – probably older – what do you want me to think about in order to understand you better? Because I'm little confused, quite honestly, I don't see coherence, I see millennials all over the place and probably a lack of interest in politics, and maybe rightly so. But I think, you know, the issue of what do you want for your countries? What service system? What sort of, where is your contribution? The sustainable role you would play? So I'm going to go in reverse, I'm going to go to Zak first, just strictly two minutes Zak because the electricity is going to get cut off. And then Jon, and then Ayla, and then I'm going to end with Wafa. Zak, try to cover both US, not only China but, you know, you can do both.

Zakary Dychtwald: Sure. So the question I would pose, and what I would want people to walk away with is 'what example are we giving the world, including young people in China, but also young people in Pakistan, young people in Egypt, young people in Kenya, young people in Nigeria? Sort of globally, of what democracy looks like, how it ought to be functioning, and whether or not it's something that they want.' Because if China is representative of these sorts of, I mean not it's not on the cusp at all, but it's a young generation who we hoped to shape through interaction with democracy and they have been shaped, but there's a perception of moral parity increasingly between China and the United

States, which is troubling. So, Jon said before that what makes democracy great is you're sure it could be not very efficient, but it's high-minded. A lot of the high-mindedness of what we have grown up with loving about democracy, a lot of people outside of these systems aren't necessarily appearing to feel that. So, what I would like as a young American is, and I said this before, is through engagement, through voting, through really taking advantage of these freedoms, which we talk about over and over and really hold as the greatest ideals of democracy, to use those to create the sort of change, to be an example globally, a true example globally.

Raghida Dergham: Great, thank you very much Zak. Anything you want from my generation, from your parents? Three seconds.

Jon Nash: Well I thought we saw something interesting...

Raghida Dergham: Jon one second, Zak, okay go ahead, two seconds, what do you want from your parents, what do you want from us?

Zakary Dychtwald: I want you to invite us on the panels with other generations as well. So, this intergenerational conversation works only if it's a conversation. And I don't know how many decision makers are watching this panel, but we can definitely get them to listen if Wafa, Jon or Ayla get to go head-to-head with them.

Raghida Dergham: All right, deal come to the summit and you'll have it, Jon Nash.

Jon Nash: Thank you. The recent protests in the US revealed something really interesting in terms of this question you're asking, because the cultural power of a protest movement in the US was so big we had protests erupting in the next the days that followed in the UK. And so, to your point our definition of community has completely changed. There are people in the UK who feel far closer with minorities in the US than with their neighbors, and so that makes things difficult, like I'm probably much closer with my Instagram followers than I am with, you know, what would traditionally have been my community. And so, I think there's a real misdiagnosis as well that happens here like something's broken in the mechanics, something's broken in the mechanics. And if you're on the left, you blame the rich, you blame the big corporations, and if you're on the right, you blame the immigrants and the unemployed. But I would like to see attention, especially in the older generations, directed towards fixing the system. Doing the thing that does all the other things, right, and so that that's my ask.

Raghida Dergham: And again, what is it that you would like your parents, and me, to think about in order to work together, for your future really, and us in it.

Jon Nash: I think you become an incumbent, you become you become a beneficiary of property, and of wealth, and of power. And so, I think seeing that it's in your interest as well to improve the way things work, and it's not a zero-sum game.

Raghida Dergham: Okay, thank you very much Jon Nash. Ayla Majid, two minutes to you.

Ayla Majid: Yes, so the younger generation is thinking more in terms of not having physical borders. And digitally, we are all connected, so I think this needs to come in the narrative as well. So that is one very key area and the younger generation is, of course, always looking at from the diversity, inclusion and sustainability lens. And for that, to bring all of that into every conversation, and to bring younger generations' perspective, I think it is high time now corporations create board seats for young people as well, to have their voice as well because this is where the future is. And in terms of sort of creating the 'intergenerational conversation', I think that's very important to have that dialogue ongoing, because it's very unnatural that only one generation is leading the world, it has to be, again, done in a collaborative manner. There are learnings on both sides, there are great experience sharing of perspectives on both sides. So, I think that is extremely important.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much, Ayla Majid. I need one minute from you Wafa, because I need to announce the next policy e-Policy Circle.

Wafa Ben Hassine: Sure sure sure. I am very happy that Jon, Zak and Ayla, all of you mentioned the internet, because honestly that is the one thing that is the missing puzzle piece in this. We see at a time when digital infrastructure has become so important to our everyday lives, the reason why Jon is closer to his Instagram followers than, you know, his neighbor next door is probably because these companies gather massive amounts of data about him and what he likes, and what his preferences are, and they generate power and revenue through that and it's really really important that we rethink our critical systems today, political, economic, social, etc. to match the reality of having an important role the digital infrastructure has come to have in our lives, and I think that lack of parallelism, or the lack of match between those two systems is giving us our problems today. And I think we need to rethink those systems, immediately.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much Wafa Ben Hassine, let me, thank you all of you for being my guests. Let me tell you who we're going to have, well my generation, coming up for the next e-Policy Circle. We have Their Excellencies **Carl Bildt**, he's Former Prime Minister & Former Foreign Minister of Sweden. He currently co-chairs the European Council on Foreign Relations. We have **Paula Dobriansky**, she is Former Under Secretary of State for Democracy and Global Affairs. She is now a Senior Fellow at the Harvard University John F. Kennedy School of Government's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs. We have **Michael Gfoeller**, Former Political Advisor and Regional Coordinator for South Central Iraq in the Coalition Provisional Authority and was Deputy Chief of Mission and Chargé d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. He is currently an independent consultant on foreign affairs, international security, and international economics. We have **Dr. Dmitri Trenin**, Director of the Carnegie Moscow Center, former Senior Research Fellow at the Institute of Europe in Moscow, and former Research Fellow at the NATO Defense College.

And I cannot believe it that the electricity is not cut off. I want to thank you all. What a pleasure to have you, you know, I am somebody who is in love with this generation, obviously, I am a mom of your generation and so. Love you guys, stay strong, stay engaged, do not go to the social media and disappear in the surfing, we need your brains, we need your engagement, we need you to stay the course. Be well, and be safe, and lots of love. Take care, goodbye everyone!

Ayla Majid, Wafa Ben Hassine, Jon Nash and Zakary Dychtwald: Goodbye!