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RAGHIDA DERGHAM with:

HRH Prince Hassan Bin Talal;

HE Boris Ruge;

Mr. Paul Brinkley;

Mr. Fyodor Lukyanov.

YouTube Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hrJM1d-eiHM&t=49s>

Raghida Dergham: Good morning Washington DC and good afternoon Amman, Berlin and Moscow. Welcome to this e-Policy Circle, very special one as always, but particularly with this fantastic group. It's the 22nd e-Policy Circle of Beirut Institute Summit in Abu Dhabi, which we hope next year you will give us the honor of attending.

As usual, the conversation will be global and it will be geopolitical, it will be a lot of fun, and we will learn a lot by the time we finish with it. We'll have to start with introducing His Royal Highness Prince Hassan Bin Talal, and then we have with us Ambassador Boris Ruge, we have Paul Brinkley and Fyodore Lukyanov, you know who they are, that's why you have joined us.

So, I will start by giving His Royal Highness Prince Hassan bin Talal the four minutes, the floor is yours, please begin your Highness.

Prince Hassan Bin Talal: Thank you Raghida. I'd like to remind the panel that when the sustainable development goals were launched in 2015, the slogan went up 'leave no one behind', that among the two hundred indicators of global developers, sustainable developers, and across 17 goals, there was no reference to the word 'refugee'. My small country has quadrupled its population since the 1990s, that is to say our population is governed by a refugee population, by 19 silos United Nations organizations, without any perceived goal to addressing the world refugee and migration systems, of which I am honored to be honoree Chair with Madelaine Albright, Loyd Axworthy and others. We are launching our report on Tuesday next, and hoping to discuss it in a series of webinars, asking for a call for action in terms of refugees. And I'd like to say as an Arab Muslim that 80% of the world's refugees are Muslim. So the reference to our region geopolitically, 1908 by [?] the great geopolitician, was to refer to the Near East as the world's island and this island of course is not only the Levant, which the Levant stability is taken integrally more seriously, there's a meeting as we speak called for by the, I believe, Russian Ministry of Defense in Damascus on the subject of refugees but unfortunately, it has been boycotted by the United States and by

Europe, and by Turkey, Turkey is not attending. Lebanon is expected to attend and that is because of Iranian encouragement, to put it politely.

But I would like to say that the standby framework for disaster risk reduction, displaced communities are regarded as peripheral, rather than a major concern. So if we are going to talk of security today, let me remind you that basic security, of course in terms of mass destruction, which leads us to 'mad', mutually assured destruction, and the current security is 'mas', mutually assured survival', and in that of course, we are told that anti-terrorism is a major issue. But I'd like to point out that human dignity and the enabling and the empowering of the poor for citizenship in our region, and in many regions in the world, has to be taken seriously. You can see agreements between states, between Gulf states and Israel, between regional states and external powers, and even local regional powers and the cases are very clear in both Yemen and Libya, but no one is actually reminding themselves of the proportionality. Libya's population works out the 96% of an Australia, for example. And so, in reality, human dignity and human life is not only very cheap, not only very peripheral, but marginalized to an extreme. And my concern in this region is that we look at the Eastern Mediterranean and the Black Sea and under one side, we see General McKinsey at the Central Command talking about his responsibilities bordering the Russian Federation. But on the same side, of course, many of our countries are so-called 'major non-NATO allies', and I would be interested to know whether he sees his role as a NATO role, or an American role. And in terms of the regional polarities, I think that it's very clear that with the visit of President Sisi to Greece today, saying that he is going to take the side of the Greeks with the confrontation with the Turks, that we're going back to Byzantine politics. The fragmentation within states is very clear, so I would hope that the rallying poll of the future in think tanks is to take time out and to consider speaking plainly to each other, which obviously we can only do up to a certain point in a panel discussion like this, and understand that the corollary of the situation is a right education which is so important, sustainable livelihoods, meaningful participation – we just had elections in Jordan today and we only had a turnout of less than 30%. So, I would say, we would like to participate and to partner with you in waging peace, thank you.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much. Yes definitely, waging peace, 'peace' is a very dangerous word because we wage peace when we are having such a fragmented world, as you said.

Prince Hassan Bin Talal: Not piecemeal I hope.

Raghida Dergham: We don't have peace in a piecemeal approach.

Prince Hassan Bin Talal: Exactly.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you Prince Hassan, I'm going to go to Boris Ruge now, four minutes to you and then we will engage on many of the things that Prince Hassan brought to the table. Please Boris Ruge.

HE Boris Ruge: Many thanks Raghida. Delighted to join you and your very distinguished guests today. Thanks for having me. So, a few thoughts about trans-Atlantic relations after the US elections that we lived through, I could perhaps say, last week. European leaders, as we could see yesterday, are engaging with President-elect Biden. Biden spoke to Emanuel Macron, Angela Merkel, Boris Johnson, and the Prime Minister of Ireland yesterday, and if we look at the agenda that emerges from the redoubts, we can see that, for example, that Merkel and Biden spoke about strengthening trans-Atlantic relations, including through NATO and the EU, working together on the pandemic, working on economic recovery, and addressing climate change. Those were the topics that were highlighted. Obviously, many European leaders were relieved to see Biden elected, not because they prefer Democrats over Republicans, but because they're happy to see a President in the White House who sees Europe as a partner and an ally, rather than as an adversary, which President Trump, I think, frequently articulated as his view of the relationship.

Our key interest in Europe is to have the US by our sides, and keep America engaged on European security, and in order to achieve that, we'll have to do more to look after our own security in Europe, to become more capable of dealing with challenges in the neighborhood, and that also means not always looking to the US to fix things on our behalf.

Importantly, it also means coming into an agreement with the United States on how to deal with China. Across the board, China is now seen, in Washington, as a systemic rival. Europeans I think have evolved in their thinking, increasingly China is seen as a rival, systemic rival, as a competitor, but there's no coherent policy yet. And we'll have to come together with the United States on that. And, of course, there are issues such as climate change and trade that we have to address as well.

One final thought, Donald Trump got 70 million votes in this election, not insignificant I would say. And Republicans are likely to hang on to the majority in the senate, so I think Europeans are well advised to continue to engage with Republicans, and they're well-advised to reflect on the fact that they are 70 million people out there who opted for Donald Trump rather than Joe Biden. Ultimately, we should hope for a US foreign policy that has bipartisan support, also because we're looking for stability, we don't want US foreign policy to oscillate between a Trump view and a Biden view, we want something that's more stable and that would last longer than a four year presidential term. And Joe Biden, I think, is the kind of person who could deliver that, he's somebody who is keen on a bipartisan approach on working across the aisle. So, I'll leave it at that, and back to you.

Raghida Dergham: That's wonderful, listen, I'm going to just ask a question quickly, before I forget to everybody with a Yes or No only. I mean, obviously, Boris Ruge you're suggesting that it's over, the US Elections are over, Biden is President, it doesn't matter what Donald Trump says, is this what everybody feels? It's over, it's done deal? Is that what you meant, there's not any chance to the challenge of the US elections, right?

HE Boris Ruge: I think it's sort of insignificant, but if you have the President of France, the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom, the Chancellor of Germany, engaging with Joe Biden as President-elect, I think that tells you something about how people see the situation. And they have no interest in becoming involved in US domestic politics, but they simply know no scenario where Donald Trump comes back.

Raghida Dergham: Quickly Prince Hassan, on this, you think it's a done deal, that's it, Joe Biden is President no matter what Donald Trump says?

Prince Hassan Bin Talal: It's over but there are unforeseen consequences for Joe Biden.

Raghida Dergham: Okay, Fyodor before I go to Paul Brinkley, on this very same point, Fyodor Lukyanov.

Fyodor Lukyanov: I don't believe it might be changed, I don't know if it was a very fair election, but no doubt that Biden will become the President.

Raghida Dergham: Paul Brinkley, answer this before you go to your four minutes please, same question to you.

Paul Brinkley: I think that it is extremely unlikely at this point that there's a change in the projected outcome.

Raghida Dergham: Then you have four minutes to you Paul Brinkley, enlighten us, go ahead.

Paul Brinkley: Great. So, thank you so much, it's an honor to be here today, it's really an honor to be here with these esteemed colleagues. I want to pick up a couple of the threads that were already up and tie into them, and I want to focus my comments on what I am going to describe as the 'tectonic forces' that have made establishing stability so difficult in this past decade, two decade period, which we associate with 9/11 and the aftermath, and the US reaction or over-reaction, but in reality I think have as much to do with impacts of technology and technology change, and what they're doing to labor markets and financial systems that are creating incredible difficulties to policy-makers as they try to sustain middle-class dynamics with an established economics, or for those in the Middle East, the incredibly difficult effort underway to create middle-class dynamics and stability upon which liberal institutions, and by liberal institutions I don't mean in a political term, but I mean institutions that support and sustain human rights, human wellbeing, and to, His Excellency Prince Hassan's point, human dignity.

I believe that right now, as a bi-product of all of these forces, I'm describing them as tectonic forces, the elimination of cost of labor due to automation, due to technology, has broken a globalization system that enabled the uplift of unskilled workers throughout the world and allowed the establishment, in East Asia of Middle Class economic dimensions, that system, and those abilities to use and to transfer work to

places where unskilled labor could be taken and could be uplifted over time, that system has broken. Automation has made the financial driver of those decisions break down. It has also caused in the West, and in the established economies Europe, the United States, elsewhere, it's creating incredible downward pressure on middle-class economics, on the middle-class. In the United States we see this reflected in a biased and an emerging economic nationalism on the right, and on the left radicalization.

I'll leave comments on Europe to my colleague in Berlin, but to me these are the tectonic forces that make stabilization incredibly difficult today. I spent a good bit of my career in the Middle East, I ran enterprises in the region myself, I never heard anyone who worked for me or my organization express anything different than the aspirations of people I worked with in China or the United States, they wanted a job, they wanted their children to be educated, they wanted opportunity and they wanted safety and security. I also have never found anywhere in human history those things emerging in the absence of a broad-based middle-class economic infrastructure. If we do not establish that and sustain it where it exists, we can't have stability. So when we talk about the election dynamics in the United States, when we talk about Brexit in Europe, when we talk about the challenges – unbelievable challenges – the Prince faces in Jordan, what you're facing in Lebanon, these are all being made much more difficult by these tectonic forces that are buffeting global institutions and national institutions. And so to me, this is the crises of our age: how do we grapple with these technology transitions that are happening in the midst of so much human awareness, again driven by technology of the gap between individual lives, the life I live in Amman Jordan, or the life I live in parts of the EU compared to other people's lives, the frustration it creates in terms of expectations, and demands on national and international leaders to create opportunity.

So, I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this, I think it's a great panel and thank you so much.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much, yes it is a great panel, we will go now to Fyodor Lukyanov and four minutes to you Fyodor and then we engage in this discussion of the many points, fantastic points made so far. Please Fyodor Lukyanov, to you, four minutes.

Fyodor Lukyanov: Thank you very much, this is really a very well-organized discussion, very concise. So, based upon what has been said before, I maybe extend a little bit towards the issue of regional and local conflicts, which are more and more around us. And we see that the pandemic didn't change the international political agenda, so no conflict disappeared, some new appeared. And of course, we are entering another period of international relations. What we experience in 2020 didn't change completely what was before, but many trends which we witnessed, they are now accelerated and catalyzed. So, the speed of general changes in international systems is higher now than before. In this regard, I think that the main event last week, the presidential elections of the United States, which is perceived by many as an opportunity to be back to more traditional leadership on one hand and political guidance and regulations on the other hand, Donald Trump who was a very unconventional

President is over, so the new team will be committed to the traditional way to conduct international politics.

I doubt that this will be possible even if the new President of the United States and his administration will try to do it, because the notion of leadership should be totally re-established and reformulated in the world, which is fragmented already now and seems to be more fragmented in the future. The pandemic sadly confirmed what has been discussed before, that the globalization can be stopped like this, very quickly.

Of course, we will be back to a more globalized environment after this disease will be defeated, but I doubt we will be back to this universalist and globalized consciousness as we enjoyed after the Cold War and until this Spring. Which means that original conflicts that we see everywhere should be addressed in a different way and in this regard, I don't believe that the US leadership, even re-instated will be able to be very instrumental in many of that. Yesterday, we had a surprising development in Nagorno-Karabakh suddenly. A very old conflict with no progress for many many years, now we see that it's settled for a while, of course not finally, but the way how it was settled is completely different from what the people expected. This is much more like great gamble or great game in the nineteenth century between two empires, or former empires, and suddenly it proves to be much more efficient than all multilateral attempts made before. I think, of course it's not settled yet, we will see, but I guess that that might be considered as another example of how different the world will be in the future.

Raghida Dergham: Alright, let me stop here and take up the issue of Nagorno-Karabakh and take it around. I want to do this first, and then I want to do the issue of JCPOA, Iran and the reflection of the post-elections. So you're saying, let me stay with you a little bit Fyodor Lukyanov, you're saying right now that it is Russia and Turkey who have resolved the Azerbaijan Armenia issue and away from the US, and the Minsk approach which had US and France and etc. All of a sudden, we are supposed to put faith in a collaboration or cooperation between Russia and Turkey when there's really bad blood between the two in Syria and in Libya? Figure this one out for me, is this the way to reviving your partnership or is this a one-off? A one-off success?

Fyodor Lukyanov: No it's not a one-off success, it's a very very strange kind of partnership, I would say pretty unprecedented, which is based on something which is not trust at all, which is not coincidence of interest, there's a collusion of interest everywhere, in Libya, in Syria, in Nagorno-Karabakh, everywhere, but there's an understanding that those powers have most of leverage first, and secondly, if they work against each other, be it Middle East, Northern Africa, or Southern Caucasus, both will suffer, neither will be able to achieve what it wants, and that is a very very new phenomenon.

Raghida Dergham: Prince Hassan, the democratic Biden administration coming in, do you think there's going to be an embrace, a re-embrace of the JCPOA, the nuclear deal with Iran without any conditions or...

Prince Hassan bin Talal: I'm of the view that if the nuclear deal can be preserved until the Biden inauguration, there's every justification for re-participation of the United States in the JCPOA, or what is really trans-Atlantic cooperation, that's what we're talking about. So, that is one point. Of course, Iran has to come back into full compliance, it obviously has to be said. But in terms of the front-ending of troops in different countries of the region, as my Russian colleague referred to Syria, and of course Nagorno-Karabakh and Libya, I think that this is supporting the regional players, I mean so long as there an Erdogan and Aliyev, I support the view that has been expressed in writing before me, that it is going to be very difficult to fill a vacuum, so in addition to that, I think it is tone-deaf, and I quote from a brilliant article that is written in front of me in commentary, by Ellie Geranmayeh, who you may know, that it is tone-deaf to suggest the placing of troops who have by nationality a long history in that part of the world maybe, it will be like placing Japanese troops in Korea for example, between north and south.

Raghida Dergham: Prince Hassan, about the JCPOA, the return of the nuclear deal, are you suggesting that it is your view that it is going to be an easy return, clean slate, just opening up again as if nothing has happened, because I thought there were conditions, Prince Hassan forgive me, that were put by the Biden team to say, we need to speak about the missiles, we need to speak about the behavior of Iran. Can you explain? Because you seem to think, unless I misunderstood you, it's going to be like a quick return, no problem.

Prince Hassan Bin Talal: No I think that the return to the agreement is one thing but the package of issues to which you are referring, the profile and character of countries, falling as they do between China on one side, and the trans-Atlantic community on the other side is extremely important. Remember we have 3 countries in the region in nuclear terms already and Iran is not one of them: Israel, Pakistan and India. So when we're talking about nuclear capabilities in this region, I think the question of Iran is still a wannabe nuclear power.

Raghida Dergham: Fyodor Lukyanov, I'll give you a quick word before I go to Boris Ruge, you wanted to come in on this, go ahead Fyodor.

Fyodor Lukyanov: I wanted just to say that from my point of view, there is absolutely no way to be back to the deal as it was signed in 2015. Of course, both US and Iran probably will try to negotiate something new, that's very interesting whether Russia will be invited to participate or not because I don't believe Biden's administration will be very keen to do it.

Raghida Dergham: Are you saying that there's going to be a return to discussing this bilaterally, not 5+1? Or 3+3 as they call the Europeans? Fyodor, I'm still with you.

Fyodor Lukyanov: No bilaterally is difficult to imagine, but certainly some correction of the format is still expected.

Raghida Dergham: Boris Ruge, you know a lot about this issue, so fill us in. I think Fyodor Lukyanov is correct in saying, I mean there's too much going on even in the European position to say, 'we need a new deal', it's not going to be a return to the JCPOA as was. What is your view on this? Where are the Europeans going to go with it? Please Boris Ruge.

HE Boris Ruge: There was an option of course to address concerns that were held not only by Republicans in the US Congress but also by the US Democrats about Iranian behavior in the region, support for terrorism, the missile program and so on. And in 2017 and 18, there was a conversation with the United States, Trump administration on how we could tackle those issues, and at the end of the day the President decided that he wanted to get out of the JCPOA, that was his priority. And so, these conversations came to nothing, and then, on top of that, the US government went ahead and put a great deal of pressure on the European allies to also get out of the deal. And it's remarkable that France, the UK, and Germany resisted this very strongly and did the maximum to keep going, it's very difficult to do that, and we learned that the hard way. Remarkable in particular that London, that is so dependent on a good relationship with the United States after Brexit stood with France and Germany on this. So, the first thing that you could do is, a Biden administration could allow for the E3 to stay in the deal and to give Iran some of the benefits of the deal while engaging with the Europeans on how to tackle those problematic aspects of Iranian behavior which certainly between Berlin, Paris and London, all of us agree.

Raghida Dergham: How do you square with the issue of sanctions? Because right now, it seems to me, and this is a question to all of you actually, it seems to me that the Trump administration is able to go on being a working administration, at least till mid-January, and then can impose sanctions over sanctions on top of sanctions, that are not necessarily nuclear related, that they can be, say for example, on Iran because of its association, its support of terrorism, and that sort of thing, and the issue, of course, of the missiles. So if that happens, Boris Ruge, stay with me on this the sanctions issue, how are you going to square all of this, altogether? I mean, are you going to be... go ahead you answer me.

HE Boris Ruge: I'll be very brief, I think, you know, obviously there's time until the 20th of January for the Trump administration to do all sorts of things, but obviously the clock is ticking and, you know, that means that there's a time limit on this policy, I'm sure that Paul is better placed to understand what exactly the Trump administration can do within those two months.

Raghida Dergham: Go ahead exactly Paul, I have that question in mind for you, please answer it.

Paul Brinkley: Yes, I think, look, I don't believe we're going to see a radical ratcheting up vis-a-vis Iran. I could be wrong, I think what's almost more interesting is that whether we agree with or disagree with what's transpired vis-a-vis the JCPOA over the past four years, where we are today, the nature of the relationship in the regime in Iran vis-à-vis

Europe and the circumstances in Europe and the US and the circumstances in the US are fundamentally different than where we were in 2012 when that process began. And so, to be able to, I certainly believe the new administration will immediately change its tone, there'll be an immediate shift. So many of the leaders coming into the new administration were key involved players in creating the JCPOA, there's a natural sympathy to try to resurrect that. That will take place, but I think the challenge for everyone is going to be when one looks at the effect of the exit of the JCOPA by the United States on the Iranian regime and its behaviors, the unfortunate executions of dissidents in recent years, I mean there's just been an escalating series of unfortunate acts within the regime and strengthening of hardline elements within the regime that are going to make it extremely difficult to turn the clock back. And I think it's going to be some very careful diplomacy required to ensure that the objectives that were set in 2012 to 16 can be achieved in a new framework whether it's multilateral, bilateral, trilateral whatever the structure is, I think it's going to require some objective overview by open-eyed people who can look at the reality of the current situation and not try to resurrect what is unfortunately or fortunately dependent on your point of view, a very broken situation.

Raghida Dergham: How long do you think, Paul Brinkley, it's going to take for the Biden administration to resume, or in any which way, what has been discussed, and again talk to me about the sanctions. Are they able, do they have the means legally to just take off all the sanctions, just like that from of Iran, of Hezbollah, of the revolutionary guards, explain that to me, is a new administration able to just wipe clean all these sanctions? All of them, just like that? Or for example the Magnitsky Act, for example, that's law. Can you explain that to us, Paul Brinkley?

Paul Brinkley: Yeah, so look, in the US, we've seen an incredible acquisition of executive authority through executive order, this goes back to several presidencies, so there are a significant number of things that can be done within the treasury department, within policy around relaxing or strengthening particular sanction regimes and how they're enforced, and then there's statute, legal structure, which cannot be wiped away. So, we have this fuzziness between what's in statute and what's enforced and the liberalization of executive orders in the United States that over again past two or three administrations, have seen an accumulation of power within the executive that creates a lot of opportunity. So the question is, does the political dynamic within the democratic party support a rapid liberalization of how statutes are enforced, that's not clear to me right now. But I do think you'll see an immediate change in the tenor around the issue, the rhetoric which, let's be honest, has been a big – if there's one universal frustration over the past four years, there's policy and then there's rhetoric, and rhetoric has been extremely aggressive over the past four years.

Raghida Dergham: Boris Ruge, you want to comment on this before I go to Prince Hassa, go ahead Boris Ruge.

Boris Ruge: Just a two finger, I think the Biden administration is going to be extremely careful not to be seen as being lenient, as being soft on Iran and the US congress is full

of Democrats who at the time took a very critical view of the JCPOA and didn't necessarily support it. So, I think, they will have a very different approach, but they're not naive about Iran and about Iranian behavior in the region, they know a lot of the democratic senators, congressmen and women, expect them to be tough. So I think, it's going to be a combination of things, maybe there's going to be more space for the Europeans to keep the JCPOA going as the US looks at its options, but at the same time a reaching out to Europeans to address the aspects of Iranian behavior that are so problematic.

Raghida Dergham: Very interesting, Prince Hassan, whose responsibility is it to make sure that the issue of Iranian behavior is brought into this any revival or any new shape of a JCPOA, because in the past, the three plus three, the five permanent members of the Security Council plus Germany agreed to just dismiss that part, do not discuss because they were focused on nuclear and only nuclear. Is it your responsibility as Arab leaders, as Arab thought leaders, to just say 'well wait a minute, we need to discuss that', and how do you do it? Is anywhere, anybody lobbying with the Biden administration on that? And do you think the Biden administration is going to really care? They just want, you know, their priority, it could be, like that 'let's just have an easy and a quick success story and reviving the JCPOA could be', Prince Hassan.

Prince Hassan bin Talal: The gulf region of course has its own context and of course that context is fractured at the moment by their own differences, it is heavily invested in a trans-Atlantic presence which makes it feel safe. But on the other hand, I'd like to say that the hinterland countries of which we are on Syria, Lebanon, the Palestinians and Israel, for that matter geographically a hinterland country, have very little to say in terms of geopolitical realities. And I think that the question of sanctions, which you asked about, should stop being a question of bilateralism, but should be discussed among many other issues in terms of building a conference for security and cooperation in the Middle East region. I'm not as enthusiastic anymore about the weapons of mass destruction, free zone, because nobody will listen but I do think that in terms of this region, and by which I mean the [?] in German, the point of leverage of Afghanistan and Iran falls once again between China on the move with its terrestrial silk roads and its maritime silk routes, and on the other side the trans-Atlantic community, who talk about a good neighborhood policy, but don't take it a step further. Now maybe that that trans-Atlantic link has been restored, Arabs at least like any other nationality in the region will have some kind of an indication of what the security council members are talking about if they take time out in the next couple of months and begin to think together.

Raghida Dergham: Fyodor Lukyanov, I mean, Russia should have a special role in this. Russia is a partner on the ground with Iran in Syria, you know, so you should really be a part of curbing the enthusiasm of Iran on the regional appetite. Do you think it's time that you do that now when you're hopefully re-engaging in a new nuclear discussion or nuclear deal? Fyodor Lukyanov.

Fyodor Lukyanov: So, I think it's still very unclear what will happen and Russian readiness to get engaged in this new revival of renaissance of this nuclear deal might

be in place, so Mr Ryabkov is here to stay and he can help again. The question is whether Iran will be as enthusiastic because I can say that relationship now is pretty, how to say it, multi-dimensional, so not very easy between Russia and Iran and you see that so much happens now simultaneously that the initial efficiency of Astana group for example is now challenged as many other formats. And frankly, I don't know the idea which you can find in Moscow among analysts, for example, today is that Iran might be extremely willing to reach Biden administration and to work with them directly, or almost directly, rather than to use other powers as mediators. What I wanted to ask actually Prince Hassan, and maybe Paul, whatever we think about Jared Kushner's activities in the Middle East, but they changed quite a lot in recent months and we see a different atmosphere between Israel and gulf states, which is based on, primarily, on anti-Iranian sentiment. Can we expect that Biden administration will totally revise it, or they will position themselves to this this series of events and continuation of that maybe?

Raghida Dergham: Great question Prince Hassan, please you go first, and then Paul Brinkley on that.

Prince Hassan Bin Talal: The absence of any cultural affinity with the Palestinians is the big flaw in the 'peace to prosperity' concept. Peace with whom? I mean, it's very clear that after the death of Saeb Erekat yesterday and the outpouring of goodwill from many people, unexpectedly actually in some quarters, particularly the Israeli peace camp, that we have lost a bridge. And of course, Biden has been described as not a man who establishes walls, but a man who can build bridges. So I would hope that the Palestinians, who I think have a great role in being proactive rather than closing embassies may be maintaining their presence and explaining their case to other Arab countries and sympathizers all over the world, is an absolutely essential step forward. But I think the great miscalculation in the peaceful prosperity plan is that nobody can actually fault us for having made peace per se, but on the other hand delineating our brother did not bring about a warm peace, and today to see flights of Israeli and Gulf airlines going backwards and forwards is obviating the importance maybe of the diamond trade for the [?] merchants but it's not actually about developing a complementarity between peoples of the Levant. And let me remind you once again that our population has exploded, our multisectoral rapid needs assessment of the copay at UNICEF, UNHCR, WFP, the situation on the ground is desperate. And I'm sitting in a prefab because my office has been completely closed down because we've all been affected by COVID, we put a good face on everything but it's it is absolutely clear that that middle class which you were referring, Paul, earlier is dwindling is seeking migration to different parts of the world and that poverty and the ideology that it might espouse is on the rise again.

Raghida Dergham: Prince Hassan, you're still in a better place than me because I am sitting in a hotel room because my home was completely destroyed by the bomb, the nitrate explosion that devastated Beirut, the city and also particularly the port of Beirut, so I am totally, I sympathize with you, but my situation is a little worse because it was totally demolished.

Prince Hassan bin Talal: The center of Lebanese studies that we turn to is your Institute of Beirut that we return to, your ability to think, your cogens has not been destroyed and this is what we applaud about the Lebanese. But in terms of sociology we are facing socio-side, in terms of ecology we are facing eco-side. Let us not develop anything other than thought for maybe a Mediterranean center for humanities which I've been trying to do for the last few weeks, to refine this concept, we need that, Greeks, Turks, Israelis, Arabs, the center for humanities.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much Prince Hassan, you still have an outstanding question to you Paul Brinkley, can you just be very brief about it and then I'm going to move on to another very important issue. Please, briefly, go ahead.

Paul Brinkley: Yes happy. So without comment on the Levant, which has its own unique complexities, just thinking about the accelerated movement with the UAE, with Bahrain, potential, you know, a lot of speculation about even Saudia, reaching some agreement with Israel, I think cannot be considered in the absence of the regional expectations of what may be coming vis-a-vis the new administration and the JCPOA and Iran and I think having been embedded in the region during that entire period and I'd never like to project my cultural opinions on to people who are of the region, but I'll offer as, you know, an American who was there for 11 years, we underestimate the level of instability and the rocking, the shaking of cultural deep state, deep social alignments that took place as the JCPOA unfolded, as Iraq and Syria devolved, as these obviously the Sunni-Shia and the Arab-Persian energies were impacted by that. I think that that helps provide a context to explain this accelerated engagement, and I think when we talk about the next 70 days or however long until inauguration of a new presidency, that's an area I really think could be very interesting, is there further acceleration of those kind of connections between the gulf states and Israel?

Raghida Dergham: Boris Ruge, two things to you please, maybe three, because you know it's going to start to run out of time because I want to give each of you a minute and a half or two minutes at the end, so I'm going to have to go quickly with a lot of things that I still want to hear your views on. The EU presidency, how much is it going be a challenge for you with the new administration, what are the priorities? And tell us more, it's very interesting that the world really is sort of focused on one fantastic woman's journey, Angela Merkel will be leaving office how is that going to impact not only Europe, but also diplomacy, European diplomacy? Go ahead Boris Ruge.

HE Boris Ruge: Very quickly, the EU presidency, Germany's EU presidency, I think, is relevant first and foremost for getting the recovery package adopted and on that we made a big step forward yesterday, there was an agreement between the council and the European parliament, so my colleagues negotiating in Brussels with the European parliament made a big step forward, and that's important. It's important to keep the EU together. But that's really the key part. For the rest, I think, we will have Ursula von der Leyen President of the European Commission and Charles Michel President of the European Council, they will be engaging with the president-elect and his people, a much as Angela Merkel has been doing so. On the presidency I think the key thing is

the recovery package. Yesterday made a big step in the right direction. On Angela Merkel, we have an election coming up in September of 2021, so that's whatever 10 months away, and it's going to be a big change in German politics, she's going to step down she's no longer running after then 16 years in office and right now it's not clear who will take her place as leader of the CDU and who will be the conservative candidate for Chancellor in next year's election. So it will be a new landscape. And I think, you know, it will be, she was suited in many ways to this period in Germany's and Europe's history, but it will be interesting because now the challenges are somewhat different, she cultivated very close ties to Chinese leaders over the space of 15 years, and she did very well for Germany's economy but China has developed in a direction that is much more problematic. And in a sense in her own party, and in the social democratic party, and in the green party to name just three, there's many who feel that we need a tougher policy on China. So when she leaves the scene, I think that's part of the dynamic that will unfold in conjunction with the fact that our American friends are going to come knocking on our door with the new Biden administration also asking us to take a tougher line.

Raghida Dergham: Interesting. Fyodor Lukyanov, you said something that I need to go back to, you somehow insinuated that things are not great between Russia and Iran, at least not how they were in the past, can you elaborate a little bit on what you mean here? And are you worried about sort of a private deal between the Iranians and the Americans that will leave everyone behind? Do you think that could happen, as has been the case when there has been secret deals between democratic administrations and Iran? Are you worried about Iran stepping out of your realm?

Fyodor Lukyanov: I'm not that much worried and I actually don't expect a private deal because I don't believe that this deal is implementable and doable now due to many circumstances. What I mentioned was, I said, was that Iranians might be interested to get engaged much closer and much more intensively with the Biden administration, expecting that after Trump just because Biden declared so many times that he will do everything differently than Trump, that the administration will be willing to take a different position. I don't believe that the Biden administration will be able in reality and will be able to do it. And between Russia and Iran, I mean that it's not very much new, the partnership is very troubled. So, if you come to Tehran, you will hear, as Russian, I did it before Covid, so normally I heard plenty of claims that Russia is treating Iran wrongly, and Russia is not that reliable partner and so on. So it's difficult relationship and when there are interests which coincide then Russia and Iran find ways to do it. When it needs to be done with more efforts, not necessarily Iran will be interested, but in general of course we are interconnected in many ways.

I would love to say one thing at the end, you know, I remember that in 2008, that was another very exciting election in the United States, and Europeans were so happy to see George W. Bush going and Barack Obama stepping in because they expected that Obama will be back to this tradition trans-Atlantic everything. Obama was back in terms of rhetoric, he never was back in terms of policy, and I guess that this time it might be similar.

Raghida Dergham: Listen, I'm going to let you give your concluding one minute now Fyodor Lukynabov, but this is interesting because you must be a bit worried about what a Biden administration brings along with it in terms of NATO, in terms of other parts of the world, and in terms of the personal relationship between, or the you know bilateral relationship between the democrats and Russia. So, I'm going to give you your one minute, or one and a half minute to conclude and if you could squeeze in why Russia thinks that it's bound to, you know, stay out of the fight between China and the US, okay but if push comes to shove, you would go that with the way of China. A minute and a half to you please, I'm sorry but...

Fyodor Lukyanov: So first of all about trans-Atlantic relationship, Biden and so on. I don't think we should overestimate the significance of persons. Yes of course, Donald Trump was extremely powerful person, but troubles inside NATO, inside trans-Atlantic relationships started well before Trump and all he said was unpolite but basically the same as Obama said, and Bob Gates said and others. So I don't believe that NATO problems are connected to Trump, Biden or anybody else. This is the problem of identification of the alliance in the new world. As for Russian place in hypothetically growing escalating US-China competition, I think Russia will try to avoid getting involved but certainly having China as the biggest neighbor, Russia has no reason to have bad relationship with China. So I don't believe that anybody's expectations be it Trump or anybody else that Russia can be taken on board of anti-Chinese campaign can come true at any point.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much Fyodor Lukyanov, I'm going go to Prince Hassan bin Talal for his one and a half, two minutes if you don't mind, please your highness, your royal highness.

Prince Hassan bin Talal: Well I would like to conclude by uh thanking you all very much for your comments. I picked up instability in the deep state, and I think we haven't dwelt enough on the fact that countries in the region are being dealt with bilaterally, which means that in terms of favored bilateralism, they are actually encouraged to be more, not less authoritarian and I think that the demise of the Arab spring and the absence of a democratic alternative is a tragedy that cannot be explained other than in the businesses as usual of the polarities of hatred and enmity, antagonisms which have existed for the last 70 years since the beginning of the Truman doctrine. And I think that this has to be taken into consideration if we're going to talk in the future about executive orders, justifying this or that form of action on a unilateral or bilateral plane, or whether we are generally going to speak about stabilizing a region multilaterally with everything that that means. We are a region that imports every single drop of water that we drink, the global risks report of 2020 of the WEF unfortunately makes no mention of existential issues relating between peoples, I mean it is as if someone has said states can cannot afford to be universal citizens. So I think that this concept of universalism is a concept of human cooperation and this is why would hope that the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, which by the way coincides with the 75th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki could actually be an anniversary of re-thinking institutional building. I'm proud

to say that 19 Arabs, largely graduates of the AUB participated in building that UN and I hope that we will be asked to perform our international responsibilities once again. Thank you.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much your royal highness Prince Hassan, I'm going to go to Paul Brinkley a minute and a half for you Paul and then I'm going to go to Boris with the same amount of time. Please Paul Brinkley.

Paul Brinkley: Thank you so much. To pick up on something his Excellency Prince Hassan stated, we are in an era and to reinforce my earlier comment where technology, visibility to extreme personality, we're very tempted to ignore the underpinning forces that are driving so many of these issues we're facing I mentioned earlier, the pressures on middle classes making it difficult to create economic opportunity in an area with youth bulge like we see in the middle east or pressures in the EU, pressures in the United States. We are so focused on the individual personalities in the political leadership and putting our faith in individual human ability to radically alter these tectonic shifts that are happening and if the policy framework can begin to shift to how do we maintain and strengthen and establish middle class economics, that's rarely discussed as an objective. We talk about stability as an objective, we talk about security as an objective, we ignore the foundational underpinning that creates the ability to have those things in our policy discussions and I would argue the same point when we talk about deep societal infrastructural issues and how we address those. It's so tempting to project our hopes and fears and our resentments onto individual political figures which in this era are going to get more and more extreme, more and more bombastic in their nature of their communication and the risk in that is that we don't deal in this time of extremes change that's destabilizing institutions throughout the world, it's difficult to make any progress in that kind of a situation.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much Paul Brinkley and last but not least, Boris Ruge.

HE Boris Ruge: Thanks very much Raghida, thanks for having me in this discussion. Lots of good points I thought, and I entirely agree with Paul and also with his royal highness, that we must not lose sight of these structural underlying developments, absolutely, absolutely true. As for the direction of US foreign policy under President-elect Biden, I think Biden is going to reach out to Europe, you could see that yesterday, it's no coincidence that he spoke to four European heads of state and government in his first outreach. So that's the good news, but China will loom large and a lot of American political capital and, you know, other resources will go into the Indo-pacific and this of course is relevant also for your part of the world Raghida, for the Middle East and North Africa, the Americans will be there, they're not going to leave for sure, but the footprint will be a different one and the willingness to engage and the use of military force, you know, different also based on the experience of the last few years. So, I think we're looking at a different world, and a different US foreign policy.

Raghida Dergham: Thank you very much Boris Ruge, I can't thank you enough for this honor, great honor of having all of you. Stay with me till I tell you who, well we're hosting another wonderful cast, of brilliant people next week. It will be sir John Scarlett, former Chief of the British secret Intelligence Service, former Chair of the Cabinet Office Joint Intelligence Committee, Sir John's current roles include Senior Advisor at Morgan Stanley, and Chairman of the International Advisory Group, it's called Equinor,

And we have Mina Al-Oraibi, she is Editor in Chief of the National Newspaper, woman Editor in Chief, Former Senior Fellow at the Institute for State Effectiveness a Yale World Fellow. She is also the former Assistant Editor-in-Chief of Asharq Alawsat. We have William Richards, seasoned investment professional with over 40 years of experience in the global financial industry. He serves as an Independent Board Director and/or Senior Advisor to a range of organizations, in both the not-for-profit and for-profit arenas. And we have the brilliant Amira Yahyaoui, who is an advisory board member of Beirut Institute, she's an Entrepreneur and the 2016 Young Global Leader at the WEF. She is the founder and CEO of Mos.com and also the founder of Al Bawsala, a multi-award-winning NGO in Tunisia that fights for government transparency and accountability.

How honored I am to have you, how grateful I am to you, and stay connected and we'll have you again with your permission and thank you so much. Your Royal Highness, really it's a special treat. Thank you very much, thank you everybody. Good bye!