

**An Arab Marshall Plan:
A Partnership and Cooperation
for the Future of the Middle East
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Serail Bikfaya
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Rapport**

Session II: Beyond Turbulence: The Region's Future

Beyond Turbulence: The Region's Future

Mustafa al-Ani

Representative of Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center

Representative of Abdulaziz Sager, Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, **Mustafa al-Ani** joined the conference via Skype call.

From a GCC point of view, and amidst the post-Arab spring hectic regional situation, the urgency for the Gulf States was to avert its repercussions and impact. And to a certain extent, it succeeded in this endeavor due to a series of economic, social and political conditions. However, today the Gulf States have to deal with the repercussions of the Arab spring in Yemen. This is a challenge and a fundamental problem for us, but “I take it that the Arab Spring is no longer a threat for the GCC regimes because we were able to contain it and deal with it”, he added.

Talking about the US foreign policy, US President Barack Obama wants to avoid any confrontation or engagement and to cut losses during his remaining term in office. Today we are paying the price of US policy mistakes, and we are still dealing with the consequences of the US invasion of Iraq. American wrong politic is responsible for a large part of our current problems, starting with the George W. Bush administration irrational policy and excessive use of unjustified force, to the blurred, ineffective and negative Obama administration policy towards the region. The Obama policy in the Middle East is based on the “Too little too late” strategy.

Amid this US “disengagement” policy many questions could be raised: “Why ISIL intervention in Syria is seen as a crime and an external interference, while the intervention of the Lebanese Hezbollah, Iraqi militias and Iran’s Revolutionary Guard are not seen as such?” “Why does the US policy tolerate Hezbollah interference in Syria? Why is ISIL sectarianism rejected, while the US has

supported Nouri Maliki's sectarian policies for eight years, pushing the country towards the edge of the abyss? Why does Iranian General Soleimani move freely in Iraq and Syria's cities, without being tracked down by the US aircrafts?"

There is a major trust issue in the "US lax indecisive foreign policy," especially with Iran's policy of expansion in the Arab world, stressing that Stressing that the US position towards Iran's expansionist and interventionist policy will define the commitment and ability of the Gulf States to cope with a Sunni extremist groups and terrorism. We cannot fight the ISIL's expansion at the same time of Iran's expansion, especially with the US light-handed policy towards Iran's expansionist ambition.

We urge the US to fight against the Sunni and Shia terrorism on equal footing, away from the policy of selectivity.

The GCC believes that the only solution to the Iranian nuclear issue is the political and diplomatic solution that inhibits Iran's military nuclear ambition, otherwise, any other agreement would set the wheel of nuclear weapons in motion in the region.

He concluded that the post-Obama era will usher a new form of bilateral relations between the US and the GCC, and will see the emergence of an independent policy less committed to protect American interests in the region.