

“Security amidst Dissolution”
The Challenges of Assuring the Continuity of Security Arrangements
in the Middle East amidst the Reality of the Dissolution of the Regional
Order and the Fragmentation Process it is Witnessing

Maison du Futur, Bikfaya
May 25th and 26th, 2018

Malte Gaier

President Amine Gemayel

Prime Minister Fouad Siniora

Mr. the Minister and Member of Parliament

Your Excellency the German Ambassador Martin Huth,

Dear Ladies and Gentleman,

I am very pleased to welcome you here today in the name of the Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation, to our annual conference organized with our partner Maison du Futur on “Security amidst Dissolution” in collaboration with the Fares Center for Eastern Mediterranean Studies, the Uqam Center, and the Municipality of Bikfaya.

First of all, I would like to warmly welcome and thank all our speakers who will share their ideas and thoughts with us today.

The Konrad-Adenauer-Foundation with its three programs in Beirut (Rule of law for Mena region – Syria Iraq office and Lebanon Office) is closely collaborating with the Maison du Futur and supporting it in its mission.

Since its relaunch, Maison du Futur has become one of our closest partners and we worked together on a multitude of topics, which to this date, resulted in the publication of 17 policy papers and a great number of events. Together with our partners we aim at promoting the principles of democracy and pluralism, to support

dialogue, conflict prevention and peaceful coexistence and to offer a forum for the discussion of important economic and social topics. I'm very much looking forward to continue this fruitful partnership and be assured of the foundation's commitment to carry on the joint work with new projects and events aimed at shaping Lebanon's future.

The topic of this year has been developed for the last three years: in 2016 our annual conference covered The Sykes-Picot Agreement a Century Later and the Middle East's new order. Last year's conference discussed External Interventions and State Systems in the Arab Middle East. This year we are want to focus on the issue of regional security and the various local and regional factors that are necessary for Assuring the Continuity of Security Arrangements for the region and for Lebanon. Linking the dots between the three main conferences seems easy.

The security of the Middle East is and probably will be a topic for years to come, especially for Lebanon which lies at the interface of confessional borders and interest spheres, and is therefore in the middle of the national and international fragmentation of the Middle East. As such the country is entangled in most of the current and most protracted conflicts, be it the sectarian divisions in Lebanon, the opposition between Shia and Sunni and associated conflicts of interest such as the one between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the war in Syria and Hezbollah's involvement, the fight against extremism or the conflict over resources.

Let us hope together that the output of our two-day conference can serve as a starting point of a future of understanding and conflict-resolution. I believe that this event can be a step in the right direction to better understand the conflicts and threats to the region and that Maison du Futur will remain a place to discuss different approaches for the future of Lebanon and the region.

I am very pleased to announce that so many high-level experts with a broad variety of backgrounds and from different countries were following our invitation to contribute to this symposium and offer us their insights and knowledge. I hope that your ideas can help to initiate the debate that is needed to promote the necessary changes.

Again, I would like to extend my utmost gratitude for all guests joining us today and I look forward to our discussion.