

CONFERENCE  
BOOKLET

asian  
security  
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Emerging Trends in West Asia:  
Regional and Global Implications

# *15<sup>th</sup> Asian Security Conference*

**Emerging Trends in West Asia:  
Regional and Global Implications**

**(February 13-15, 2013)**

**Organised by**

idsa

INSTITUTE FOR DEFENCE  
STUDIES & ANALYSES



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## ABOUT IDSA

The Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) is a non-partisan, autonomous body dedicated to objective research and policy relevant studies on all aspects of defence and security. Since its inception, IDSA has served as a forum to debate important aspects of national and international security. Its mission is to promote national and international security through the generation and dissemination of knowledge on defence and security-related issues.

IDSA was established as a registered society in New Delhi on November 11, 1965. The initiative for setting up the Institute came from then Defence Minister Shri Yeshwantrao Chavan, who was one of the Institute's founding members. Over the last forty-plus years, IDSA has played a crucial role in shaping India's foreign and security policies, including with respect to nuclear weapons, military expenditure, and conventional and non-conventional threats to India.

IDSA has a well-qualified multi-disciplinary research faculty drawn from academia, defence forces and the civil services, and which represent a diversity of views. Research at the Institute is driven by a comprehensive agenda and by the need to provide impartial analyses and policy recommendations. IDSA's journals, monographs, briefs, and books are the principal mediums through which these analyses and policy recommendations are disseminated.

The IDSA website offers in depth insight into the working of the Institute with a user friendly interface. Regular updates on the events at IDSA can be found in the Media Briefs and IDSA News pages.

## **Research Centres**

- East Asia
- South Asia
- Eurasia & West Asia
- North America
- Southeast Asia and Oceania
- Africa, Latin America, Caribbean & UN
- Military Affairs
- Internal Security
- Strategic Technologies
- Non-Traditional Security
- Nuclear and Arms Control
- Defence Economics & Industry

## CONCEPT NOTE

West Asia is in the midst of tumultuous changes which presage the emergence of a new and different set of security and economic challenges and new patterns of relationships, both within the region and with countries having major stakes and interests in the region.

Though the region has witnessed turbulence for several decades, there was, perhaps surprisingly, considerable domestic stability within individual countries mainly due to the relatively unchallengeable control that regimes exercised over their populations. However, quite unexpectedly, there has been an unprecedented popular upsurge against the ruling regimes in many countries in the Arab world during the last few years, leading to regime changes in certain cases. Characterised by outside observers as the “Arab Spring”, some regional commentators have expressed their concerns about the developments, terming these as the “Arab Turmoil”. The essence of the socio-political tumult sweeping the region has been such that the people at large have overcome their fear of the existing regimes and called for drastic and fundamental political transformation, including regime change. This has led to dramatic changes in domestic political environments in most of the countries of the region.

Another major consequence is that the sectarian divide, which has long been an issue within the Islamic world and particularly in the Gulf region, has flared up acutely between the Gulf Arab States and Iran over the past two years. The fallout of this growing confrontation is reflected throughout West Asia and in Syria in particular. Intervention by non-regional powers has only compounded problems. The Gulf region has, therefore, become the primary hub of attention and concern in West Asia.

The most emblematic feature of the global scenario of the past three decades has been the fact that Asia is in the process of displacing the West as the fulcrum of the global economy, and China and India are its leading locomotives. The major Asian economies, both developed and still developing, have collectively become the largest purchasers of hydrocarbons from the Gulf region. Their demands are projected to keep

increasing substantially. The Gulf region's role as an energy supplier for Asia will, therefore, continue to enlarge incrementally for the foreseeable future, even as America's and Europe's requirements of oil and gas from the Gulf region are projected to diminish dramatically. Indeed, even beyond the hydrocarbons factor, other links of trade, investment and huge migrations of people, albeit temporary, between the Gulf region and the rest of Asia have been growing rapidly; and all this suggest that Asia's overall economic relationship between the Gulf region is also poised to overtake that with the Western world.

The net result is that stronger strategic synergies in the fields of energy, economic and people-to-people relations among the Asian countries and countries of the Gulf region are making the latter an integral part of the unfolding Asian growth story. Therefore, on the one hand, the significance of its connections with the rest of Asia is a strategic factor of growing importance for the Gulf region; on the other, peace and stability in the Gulf region are becoming factors of increasing strategic, and even existential, significance for the major Asian countries.

Against this backdrop, the 15th annual Asian Security Conference (ASC) held at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, will deliberate on the major economic, socio-political and strategic trends which are unfolding in the West Asian region in general, and its Gulf region in particular, in the context of their security and economic implications both for the region and for Asian countries. Given Asia's increasing interest and involvement with the region, the security and stability of West Asia has become a vital imperative for Asian countries. Therefore, the special theme of the 15th ASC would be to explore the possibilities of the involvement of Asian countries in the changing and evolving security dynamics and architecture of the Gulf region.

The conference will address these issues under eight sessions as listed below.

### **I: Political Transformation in West Asia: Prospects for Peace, Stability and Prosperity**

The session intends to address the following questions:

- What are the root causes of political transformation in West Asia?

- What are the economic, political, religious/sectarian, social, foreign policy-related, etc., factors responsible for the popular protests against the rulers?
- How can we analyse current domestic scenarios, including the outcomes till date, explaining the unique features of recent events in Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen?

## **II: Future of Political Transformation in West Asia**

This session is expected to address the prospects for democracy, the role of political Islam, the consequences of the sectarian divide, the requirements for nation building, etc., in specific domestic contexts as well as their impact on inter-state relations in West Asia. In this context, the session will deliberate on the following:

- Are further regime changes likely?
- What will be the impact of the rise of Islamists to power on the region and beyond?
- What are the new challenges before the countries/people under the new regimes in place?

Though Egypt, Syria and Yemen would be specifically considered here, the potential impact in the energy-rich Gulf Kingdoms will also be examined, as it would have enormous implications for the world at large, thus meriting particular focus.

## **III & IV: West Asia's Security Dynamics-I: Role of Extra - Regional Powers; West Asia's Security Dynamics II: Role of Regional Powers**

This session would discuss the security implications of evolving events from the perspectives of Iran and Saudi Arabia, the two pre-eminent regional players, bearing in mind the current security architecture in the region. Interests and roles of major powers and other non-regional countries would also be the focus of deliberations during this session. It will address, in particular, the roles of the US, Russia, China, Turkey, Egypt and Israel. Some important questions addressed during this session would include:

- What are the interests and stakes of these powers in the region?

- How would their actions and likely policies affect the evolution of the geopolitical contours of West Asia, bearing in mind the current security architecture in the region?

## **V: India and the Gulf:**

India shares with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries cultural commonalities and compatibilities, geographical proximity and 5,000 years of continuous, close and unbroken interaction. Furthermore, in contrast to most world powers, India has never sought domination or influence, either politically or territorially, or with respect to economic and natural resources in this region. It may also be pertinent to note here that India has the world's third-largest Muslim population.

The GCC countries constitute India's largest socio-economic partner, as manifested by five sets of facts: (1) almost 6.5 million people from India live and work in the GCC countries and constitute about 35 per cent of the total expatriate population, making them the foreign nationality of first preference in this region overall as well as in each GCC country, and the largest chunk of Indian nationals in any region abroad. (2) About \$32 billion were sent home as remittances last year, the largest from any part of the world. (3) The GCC countries are India's largest trade partner with trade in 2011-12 being about \$120 billion, far outstripping the financial volumes of such ties with any other region of the world. (4) They supply 63 per cent of India's hydrocarbon imports. (5) Over 50 per cent of flight connections between India and the world are between India and the GCC countries.

The past decade has seen an explosion of high-level political interaction and the emergence of strategically significant relationships. No major country has an even remotely comparable basket of linkages with the GCC countries; this simply cannot be matched by any major power in the world.

Moving beyond dwelling on these aspects alone, this session would explore:

- How can India further strengthen its relations with the Gulf region?
- What are the possible pitfalls?
- What are the expectations of the countries of the region

from India and vice versa, and are there any divergences in mutual expectations?

- How can India and the countries of the region forge strategies of cooperation in new areas of mutual concern such as defence and security?

## **VI: Nuclear Issues in West Asia**

One of the major international security concerns over the past decade has been about the Iranian nuclear programme and responses to it by countries like the US and Israel. While Iranian engagement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Permanent 5+1 in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) continues, no mutually acceptable formula has yet been arrived at to address these concerns. The future contours of developments relating to the issue will have major repercussions on regional strategic stability. The responses of Iran's neighbours as well as major powers like the US will be crucial, given the extant security and trust deficits. The Iran issue as well as Israeli nuclear capabilities adds to the complexities in progressing towards a Weapons of Mass Destruction Free Zone (WMDFZ) in West Asia. The session will seek to explore dynamics related to these issues in an area of critical importance to India's economic and strategic well-being. Some of the questions that will be explored include those discussed below.

- What is the status of Iranian engagement with the international community over its suspected nuclear programme, including at the IAEA, UNSC, P5+1, and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), among others?
- What have been the policy responses of Iran's neighbourhood to its suspected nuclear programme?
- What is the possibility of success of efforts geared towards establishing a Middle East WMDFZ?
- What have been the repercussions for India as a result of the developments relating to the Iranian nuclear issue? And, what will be the likely challenges in the foreseeable future?

## **VII: Round Table: Role of Asia in Evolving Security Dynamics and Architecture of the Gulf Region**

The session will explore possibilities of involvement of Asian countries in the changing and evolving security dynamics and architecture of the Gulf region.

## **VIII: Panel Discussion on Way Ahead**

The region is in unprecedented flux; it could witness considerably more churning and yet more regime changes. In this context, this session will explore the possible impact of these uncertainties, including drawing up alternative plausible scenarios on India's future relationships with the Gulf region.

Some important questions that would be considered are:

- What could be possible options of enhancing the strategic engagement of Asian countries with this strategically important region in future?
- Should India remain content with a strong economic relationship with the region, or should it play a more proactive role?
- What are the major trends in the Gulf security situation?
- What is the current level of engagement/involvement of regional and extra-regional powers in the West Asian region?
- How is the Iranian nuclear programme going to impact the security dynamics of the region?
- What will be the response of regional and extra-regional players in future?
- Will there be new set of re-alignments among regional partners?
- Will US, Russia and China cooperate in future or engage in escalating confrontation?
- Will regional security paradigms change? What would be the likely changes?
- What will be the security implications of the changing energy scenario – fluctuating oil prices, the phenomenon of shale oil, among others?

## CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

### DAY 1: Wednesday, February 13, 2013

0900h-0930h:	Registration & Tea
<b>0930h-1030h:</b>	<b>Inaugural Session</b>
Welcome Remarks	Dr. Arvind Gupta, DG, IDSA
Key Note Address	Shri A.K. Antony, Hon'ble Raksha Mantri
Vote of Thanks	Brig. (Retd.) Rumel Dahiya, Deputy Director General, IDSA
1030h-1100h:	High Tea
<b>1100h-1300h:</b>	<b>Session I</b>
	<i>Political Transformation in West Asia: Prospects for Peace, Stability and Prosperity</i>
<b>Chairperson:</b>	<b>Amb. Chinmaya Gharekhan</b>
Amb. Talmiz Ahmad (India)	Islamist Discourse and Politics in the Aftermath of the Arab Spring
Dr. Ahmed Salem Saleh Al-Wahishi (Yemen)	West Asia in Transitional Period of International Order
Dr. Hadi Soleimanpour (Iran)	Political Transformation in West Asia: An Iranian Perspective
Prof. Timothy C. Niblock (UK)	The Future of Political Transformation in West Asia
1300h-1400h:	Lunch
<b>1400h-1600h:</b>	<b>Session II</b>
	<i>Future of Political Transformation in West Asia</i>
<b>Chairperson:</b>	<b>Prof. Gulshan Dietl</b>
Dr. Muhammad Abdul Ghaffar (Bahrain)	Potential Strategic Cooperation among Pivotal States in Western Asia
Mr. Atul Aneja (India)	Silencing Alternative Media: Soft Power and the Arab Spring

Dr. Ahmed A Saif (Yemen) Emerging Trends in West Asia: Regional and Global Implications

Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla (UAE) Impact of the Arab Spring on the Arab Gulf States

Prof. Amin Saikal (Australia) The Changing Political and Strategic Environment in West Asia

1600h-1630h: Tea

**1630h-1830h: Session III**

*West Asia's Security Dynamics-I: Role of Extra-Regional Powers*

**Chairperson: Amb. Rajendra Madhukar Abhyankar**

Mr. Fyodor Lukyanov (Russia) Russia and 'Arab spring': What's at Stake?

Dr. Julie E. Taylor (USA) US Foreign Policy in the Middle East: Combatting the Realist Resurgence

Prof. Yang Guang (China) West Asia's Security Dynamics: A Chinese Perspective

Dr. Waiel Awwad (Syria) The New Great Power Game Plan in West Asia

Mr. M. Ashraf Azim (Pakistan) Stabilizing West Asia

Prof. P.R. Kumaraswamy (India) Realpolitik of the 'Self-Appointed Frontrunner' for the UNSC

1930h: Dinner

**DAY 2: Thursday, February 14, 2013**

0930h-1000h: Tea

1000h-1030h: Special Address by Mr. Faleh Al Fayed, National Security Advisor, Iraq (tbc)

1030h-1045h: Tea

**1045h-1330h: Session IV**

*West Asia's Security Dynamics-II: Role of Regional Powers*

**Chairperson: Amb. Ranjit Gupta**

Prof. Efraim Inbar (Israel) The 2011 Arab Uprisings and Israel's National Security

Prof. Mohammad Hassan Khani (Iran)	Arab Spring as National Revolutions with Regional Dimensions and Global Impacts: An Iranian Perspective
Dr. Serhat Güvenç (Turkey)	Role of Turkey in West Asia's Security Dynamics
Dr. Adel Soliman (Egypt)	Dynamic Security in West Asia and the Role of Regional Powers: An Egyptian Perspective

1330h-1430h: Lunch

**1430h-1630h: Session V**

*India and the Gulf*

**Chairperson: Amb. Ishrat Aziz**

Prof. Girijesh Pant (India) Premising India-Gulf Relation in the Context of the Arab Uprising

Ms. Shebonti Ray Dadwal (India) Impact of 'Arab Spring' on Energy Markets

Dr. Sami Alfaraj (Kuwait) India and the GCC

Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla (UAE) India and the Gulf: A Perspective from UAE

1630h-1645h: Tea

**1645h-1830h: Session VI**

*Nuclear Issues in West Asia*

**Chairperson: Air Commodore Jasjit Singh**

Dr. Mahmoud Karem (Egypt) Nuclear Issues in West Asia: Egyptian Perspective

Prof. Rajesh Rajagopalan (India) Nuclear Issues in West Asia: An Indian Perspective

Dr. Ephraim Kam (Israel) The Iranian Nuclear Threat

Prof. Mohammad Hassan Khani (Iran) Iranian Nuclear Issue: Different Views, Scenarios, and Consequences

1930h: Dinner

### DAY 3: Friday, February 15, 2013

0930h-1000h: Tea

1000h-1030h: Special Address by Shri Shivshankar Menon, National Security Adviser, Government of India

1030h-1045h: Tea

#### **1045h-1245h: Session VII**

*Roundtable on Role of Asia in Evolving Security Dynamics and Architecture of the Gulf Region*

**Chairperson: Shri Sanjay Singh**

Prof. Timothy C. Niblock (UK) The Role of Asia in the Evolving Security Dynamics and Architecture of the Gulf Region

Amb. Ranjit Gupta (India) Role of Asia in the Evolving Security Dynamics of the Gulf Region

Amb. Talmiz Ahmad (India)

1245h-1330h: Lunch

#### **1330h-1530h: Session VIII**

*Panel Discussion on Way Ahead*

**Chairperson: Dr. Arvind Gupta**

#### **Panellists:**

- Shri Rajeev Shahare
- Shri A.R. Ghanashyam
- Brig. Rumel Dahiya
- Amb. Ishrat Aziz
- Prof. Mohammad Hassan Khani
- Dr. Sami Alfaraj
- Amb. Talmiz Ahmad
- Dr. Adel Soliman
- Amb. Prakash Shah

#### **1530h: Vote of Thanks**

Dr. Meena Singh Roy

*Profiles of Participants*  
&  
*Abstracts*



## *Key Note Address*

**SHRI A.K. ANTONY**

Hon'ble Raksha Mantri



Shri A.K. Antony, Union Minister of Defence of India and President, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, has held several important positions. An advocate by profession, Shri Antony started his political career as a Student Activist of the Kerala Students Union. He has held many important political assignments: President, Kerala Pradesh Youth Congress Committee, President and General Secretary of Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee, General Secretary of All India Congress Committee and Member, Congress Working Committee. He was first elected to the Kerala Legislative Assembly in 1970 and was the Chief Minister of Kerala thrice during 1977-78, 1995-96 and 2001-2004. He was also Leader of the Opposition in Kerala Legislative Assembly during 1996-2001. Shri Antony was Member Rajya Sabha twice from 1985-1991 and 1991-95. He was Union Minister for Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs and Public Distribution during 1994-95. He was elected to the Rajya Sabha in May 2005 from Kerala.

Shri Antony edited a Malayalam Weekly *Kalasala* during 1964-66 and later a Malayalam Daily *Veekshanam* from 1978-1982.

## *Special Address*

### **SHRI SHIVSHANKAR MENON**

National Security Adviser, Government  
of India



Shivshankar Menon is National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister of India since 23 January 2010. Menon was previously Foreign Secretary of India from October 2006 to August 2009. He has served as Ambassador and High Commissioner of India to Israel (1995-97), Sri Lanka (1997-2000), China (2000-03) and Pakistan (2003-06). He was also a member of the Atomic Energy Commission in 2008-09.

A career diplomat, he served in China (thrice), in Japan, and in Austria in the Embassy and the Mission to the IAEA and UN. He was seconded to the Department of Atomic Energy in the early 1980s. His professional experience included India's relations with her neighbours, atomic energy and disarmament issues, and India's relations with the major powers.

Menon speaks Chinese and some German. He has an MA in ancient history from Delhi University.

## *Welcome Address*

### **DR. ARVIND GUPTA**

Director General  
Institute for Defence Studies and  
Analyses, New Delhi



Dr. Arvind Gupta assumed charge as Director General of the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA), New Delhi on 5 January 2012. He belongs to the 1979 batch of the Indian Foreign Service and currently holds the rank of Additional Secretary to the Government of India. He has worked in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in different capacities and served in diplomatic missions in Moscow, London and Ankara. He is on deputation to IDSA and before assuming charge as Director General, he held the Lal Bahadur Shastri Chair on National Security at IDSA from 2008 to 2011.

Prior to joining IDSA, Dr. Gupta was Joint Secretary at the National Security Council (NSC) Secretariat from 1999 to 2007. During his tenure at the NSCS, he dealt with a wide range of international and national security issues and participated in the various working groups and task forces set up by the NSC. He also worked with the Kargil Review Committee. At IDSA, Dr. Gupta headed the South Asia and Internal Security Clusters and edits the Institute's flagship bi-monthly journal, *Strategic Analysis*. His current interests include the impact of globalization on India's security, foreign policy, diplomatic challenges before India; energy security, climate change, India's neighbours; and internal security and technology and security issues.

He has three books, several edited books and a number of academic publications to his credit. He has been a member of several task forces on issues such as space security, climate change, cyber security, and nuclear disarmament, among others.

## **BRIG. (RETD.) RUMEL DAHIYA**

Deputy Director General  
Institute for Defence Studies and  
Analyses, New Delhi



Brig. Rumel Dahiya, SM retired from Net Assessment Directorate at Integrated Defence Staff of the Indian Armed Forces in 2009 after 32 years of service in the Indian Army. He is presently Deputy Director General at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

He has had extensive command and staff experience during his military career, including that in counter-insurgency situations and has also served as Defence Attaché to Turkey, Syria and Lebanon, and with the Indian Military Training Team in Bhutan. He also served with Military Operations Directorate of the Indian Army.

He is a graduate of the National Defence College and Defence Services Staff College. He was awarded the Sword of Honour and Gold Medal from Indian Military Academy at his commissioning.

# *Session I*

## *Political Transformation in West Asia: Prospects for Peace, Stability and Prosperity*

*Wednesday, February 13, 2013*

*1100h-1300h*



## *Chairperson*

**AMB. CHINMAYA GHAREKHAN**



Ambassador Gharekhan has had a long and distinguished career in the Indian Foreign Service as well as in the United Nations (UN). He was Chairman of International Commission for Supervision and Control in Laos and India's Ambassador in Vietnam from 1973-76. He served as India's Permanent Representative to the UN Offices in Geneva from 1977-80. Ambassador Gharekhan was foreign affairs advisor to Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi between 1981 and 1986. Thereafter, he became India's Ambassador to the UN in New York from 1986-92. During that period, he represented India on the UN Security Council where he served twice as President. He was appointed Under Secretary General and Senior Advisor to the Secretary General in January 1993, and served as his personal representative to the Security Council. Ambassador Gharekhan lived in Gaza city for two years from 1997-99 as UN Special Coordinator for Occupied Territories. He served as Special Envoy of India for West Asia from 2005-09. He is the author of the widely acclaimed book *The Horseshoe Table: An Inside View of the UN Security Council*. He comments regularly on foreign policy issues in the Indian and international media.

## AMB. TALMIZ AHMAD



Ambassador Talmiz Ahmad joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1974 and served as Indian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia (2000-03; 2010-11), Oman (2003-04), and the United Arab Emirates (2007-10). He was also Additional Secretary for International Cooperation in the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas from 2004-06. In July 2011, the Saudi Government conferred on him the King Abdul Aziz Medal First Class for his contribution to the promotion of Indo-Saudi relations. After retirement from the Foreign Service, he is working with an energy company in Dubai. He has published two books *Reform in the Arab World: External Influences and Regional Debates* (2005) and *Children of Abraham at War: The Clash of Messianic Militarisms* (2010). He writes and lectures frequently on Political Islam, the politics of West Asia and energy security issues.

## ISLAMIST DISCOURSE AND POLITICS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ARAB SPRING

*Talmiz Ahmad*

Since the Arab Spring, the West Asia-North Africa (WANA) region has been experiencing an inter-play between the various strands of Islamism and the national and regional political scenarios, set in an environment of robust competition and even conflict. While the contentions between the Islamists and secular/liberal elements in different countries have received considerable international attention, the principal competition at present is between the different streams of political Islam. Over the last century, Islamism has manifested itself in three broad strands: the quietest Salafism of Wahhabiya in Saudi Arabia; the activist tradition of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, and the radical strand mainly represented by Al Qaeda and its affiliate organizations. None of these strands of Islamism is monolithic nor are any of their organizational structures or even belief-systems cast in stone. At present, all of these are witnessing considerable internal debate and dissent as Islamists prepare themselves, for the first time in recent history, to take responsibility for democratic governance after their long experience of oppositional politics. Since this is an entirely novel situation both for the countries concerned and the parties competing for political advantage, the scenario in each of the countries exhibits considerable domestic discord.

Obviously, governance is not made any easier by pressures on the mainstream parties from the more hardline Salafi groups and, beyond them, the radicals linked to a resurgent Al Qaeda. This is set in the backdrop of significant upheaval at the regional level: Saudi-Iranian confrontation and aspirations to regional leadership; proliferation of Al Qaeda-affiliated entities that are taking advantage of the absence of effective central authority and security apparatus in failed or failing states to mobilize local support, and embarking on a campaign of violence against “strategic” targets that include government entities and Western individuals and institutions. Thus, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, almost every country in WANA is facing pressure for reform.

**DR. AHMED SALEM SALEH  
AL-WAHISHI**

Director, Yemen Centre of International  
Affairs and former Arab League  
Ambassador to India



Ambassador (Retd.) Ahmed Salem Saleh Al-Wahishi is currently serving as Executive Director of the Yemen Centre of International Affairs. He has conducted research work on political, economic, environmental, and international law issues in the Middle East as well as on issues related to peace, security, disarmament and sustainable development. He has served as Chief Representative of the League of Arab States in New Delhi and was earlier appointed as Ambassador of Yemen to Indonesia, Singapore and Brunei Darussalam. He has also served as Head of Mission in Dubai and Tokyo (1990 onwards) and as a member of teaching staff at Aden University since 1977. Ambassador Al-Wahishi spearheaded several initiatives to strengthen ties between North Africa and South Asia by working in synergy with various global partners and associations. He remains committed to fostering regional cooperation and enhancing peace and security through his dedicated participation in various programmes and continuous engagement in the exchange of ideas and dialogue at the international level. He has been actively participating in Track II meetings all over the world. Ambassador Al-Wahishi earned his Doctorate (PhD) in Economics from Czech Republic in 1988 and a BSc (Chemistry) from Kuwait University in 1977. He holds a Diploma in International Law from Moscow University (1991) and a Fellowship in International Law from UNITAR, Geneva (1999).

## WEST ASIA IN TRANSITIONAL PERIOD OF INTERNATIONAL ORDER

*Ahmed Salem Saleh Al-Wahishi*

The sweeping effects of Arab turmoil have been felt all over West Asia and North Africa. While there are many reasons for these developments, “regime failure” is one of the important factors that gave legitimate reason for the people to demand for change with the aim of reversing the unbearable conditions. The Middle East has entered a phase of transition with governments crumbling, new social forces emerging, and international tensions. While the non-transitional countries’ surroundings are predominated by this great turmoil, they are to some extent, stable and secure, thanks to the continual investments of their governments in infrastructure and security. The Gulf States are encountering challenges; yet despite these challenges, and including the use of their vast resources, they help their neighbours facing the current difficult conditions.

The Gulf remains focused on the difficult realities such as the strife in Yemen. The “Failed State Index” of the “Fund for Peace” ranks Yemen as 13th of 177 states in 2011. Due to inefficiency, underdeveloped state institutions and corruption, the state lacks the power to fulfill its key tasks: providing security, an effective civil administration, basic services for the people, and the rule of law. As such, the Republic of Yemen faces various political challenges putting its stability in danger. The Yemeni experience in the face of recent developments represents a political solution that saved the country from civil war, damage and created change based on the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) initiative for the stepping down of its former President in order to have a peaceful transitional phase, solve issues such as the issue of South Yemen through national dialogue, and for increasing international and regional support, which includes the developmental support in addition to the political and security ones.

## DR. HADI SOLEIMANPOUR

Chairman, Centre for International  
Research and Education (CIRE), Tehran



Hadi Soleimanpour is currently Executive Director of the Centre for International Research and Education (CIRE), affiliated to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, Iran. He is also a professor of International Environment and Development at the School of International Relations and obtained his PhD in the same subject from Durham University in the United Kingdom. He is a committed environmentalist with outstanding experience in international affairs as a career diplomat. He has been the Iranian Ambassador to Spain (1984-88), Paraguay and Argentina (1990-94), to the United Nations Office at Geneva (as DPR in charge of the UN Specialized Agencies [1995-99]), and Deputy Head of Iran's Department of Environment for Natural Environment and Biodiversity (2002-04). He has also been Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs for Africa (2009-10) and a scientific member of the High Council of Environment of Iran (2005 to present). Dr Soleimanpour's research interests include international environmental issues, regional development and cooperation, and international relations. His affiliation to CIRE and its research branch Institute for Political and International Studies (IPIS) has led him to be engaged with think tanks and participated in Track II diplomacy. He has authored several books and articles in English and Farsi, including *Nature-based Tourism: A Draft International Covenant* (Commission on Environmental, Economic and Social Policy, IUCN, 2006); *Framework of Indicators for Ecotourism Development in Iran* (Azad University and Center for Strategic Studies, Tehran, 2009); and *International Environmental Governance: Global Trends and National Priorities* (CIRE, 2012), among others.

## PROF. TIMOTHY C. NIBLOCK

Emeritus Professor, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter, Exeter, UK



Timothy C. Niblock is Emeritus Professor, Chair of the Management Board of the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies (2008-11), and Special Adviser to the Vice-Chancellor on the Middle East, University of Exeter (2008-present). He was previously Professor Arab Gulf Studies (1999-2008) at the University of Exeter, and Director of the Institute for Arab and Islamic Studies (1999-2005), and Professor of Middle Eastern Studies, and Director of the Centre for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, University of Durham (1993-99; as Director till August 1998). He received a DPhil in International Relations from the University of Sussex and a Bachelors degree in Politics, Philosophy and Economics from the University of Oxford (New College). He has taught at the Universities of Reading and Khartoum as well as the University of Exeter.

His research interests include the political economy of Arab and Islamic states; the international relations of Middle Eastern states; Islam and the state; and legitimacy, civil society and political power in the Arab World. Some of his publications include 'China's Growing Involvement in the Gulf', and 'China's Intensifying Relationship with Saudi Arabia' (with Norafidah Ismail), in S. Shen and J.M. Blanchard (ed.), *Multidimensional Diplomacy of Contemporary China* (Lexington Books, 2010); *The Political Economy of Saudi Arabia* (with Monica Malik, Routledge 2007); *Saudi Arabia: Power, Legitimacy and Survival* (Routledge, London, 2006); a six-volume collection of articles was jointly edited with Rodney Wilson, *The Political Economy of the Middle East* (Edward Elgar 2000); *'Pariah States' and Sanctions in the Middle East: Iraq, Libya and Sudan* (Lynne Rienner, 2001); and *Muslim Communities in the New Europe* (co-edited with Gerd Nonneman and Bogdan Szajkowski, 1996).

## THE FUTURE OF POLITICAL TRANSFORMATION IN WEST ASIA

*Timothy C. Niblock*

At the beginning of the Arab uprisings, outside observers (at least in the Western world) saw the development in positive terms. The Arab Spring was placed within the context of a global march towards democracy. It was assumed that the uprisings constituted democratic revolutions similar to those which had changed the face of Eastern Europe after 1989, that the weaknesses of authoritarianism had been exposed, and that those authoritarian regimes which remained in the region were doomed (in the medium term if not the short term). It was, furthermore, assumed that liberal democratic regimes in the region could and would provide a framework for resolving the social and economic problems of the Arab world.

In the course of 2012, the same outside observers have become progressively pessimistic, to the extent that many now talk of an “Arab Winter” and the “failure of the Arab Spring”. A number of perceptions have shaped this view. First, the uprisings have often led to intense civil conflict and destruction, with no easy or predictable outcome in sight (the case of Syria at the time of writing being particularly pertinent). Second, where uprisings have led to elections, the general trend has been for Islamist movements to gain political ascendancy, and critical observers see this as likely to lead to the pursuit of socially-restrictive policies, and to embody a long-term threat to democratic practice. Third, most of the regimes of the Arabian Peninsula (Yemen being a notable exception) seem to have been remarkably adept at remaining in power and indeed have generally reinforced their control of their own societies. And finally, the new governments which have come to power are seen as failing to address effectively the social and economic problems facing their societies.

The contention of this paper is that both the initial optimism and later pessimism, reflect faulty assumptions about the

social, political and cultural forces which are at work in the region. An accurate assessment of the political transformation which is occurring in West Asia needs to be based on realistic assumptions. The paper puts forward four points which the author considers critical to making an accurate realistic assessment. First, putting the uprisings into pre-conceived categories (“democratic revolutions”, or more recently “Islamist revolutions”) is misleading, creating distorted expectations and understandings. At present, we do not know what kind of revolutions they are or may be. Second, while there are some common features covering the countries of West Asia, there are also substantial differences in their political, economic and social dynamics. The elements of differentiation need to be recognised as well as the elements of commonality. Third, ideological positions should not be regarded as fixed and unchangeable. When exposed to competitive politics, practical realities, and the need to gather international and domestic support, ideological positions can prove malleable. Fourth, the extent of social and economic inequality in West Asia has been, and remains, an unstable basis on which to build participative and representative political systems. This dimension will continue to affect the kind of political transformation which can and will occur.



*Session II*  
*Future of Political*  
*Transformation in*  
*West Asia*

*Wednesday, February 13, 2013*

*1400h-1600h*



## *Chairperson*

### **PROF. (RETD.) GULSHAN DIETL**

Senior Fellow, Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi



Professor Gulshan Dietl is currently Senior Fellow (ICSSR) at the Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi. She retired as Professor from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi. She has served as the Chairperson, Centre for West Asian and African Studies and Director, the Gulf Studies Programme at JNU. Her areas of teaching, research and research guidance are domestic developments, foreign policies and security issues in the Gulf and West Asia. She has been a Fulbright Scholar-in-Residence at the Mount Saint Mary College, Newburgh, New York (1993-94), Guest Research Fellow at the Copenhagen Peace Research Institute (1998-99), Visiting Professor at the University of Kashmir (2004), Visiting Professor at the Fondation de la Maison des Sciences de l'Homme, Paris (2008), and Visiting Professor at the University of Southern Denmark (2010).

She has authored/edited a number of publications, including *The Dulles Era: America Enters West Asia* (Lancer International, 1985); *Through Two Wars and Beyond: A Study of the Gulf Cooperation Council* (Lancer Books, 1991); *Saudi Arabia: People, Politics and Policies* (National Book Trust, 2006); *Contemporary Saudi Arabia and the Emerging Indo-Saudi Relations* (co-edited, Shipra Publications, 2007); and *Democracy and Democratization in the Gulf* (edited, Shipra Publications, 2010). She has contributed chapters to many edited volumes and published articles in international journals, newspapers and magazines in both the national and international media.

## **DR. MUHAMMAD ABDUL GHAFFAR**

Chairman, Board of Trustees, Bahrain Centre for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (DERASAT), Manama



Prior to his appointment as Advisor to H.M. the King of Bahrain for Diplomatic Affairs and Chairman of the Board of Trustees for Derasat, H.E. Dr. Abdul Ghaffar served as Ambassador of the Kingdom of Bahrain to the European Union and as the non-resident Ambassador to Luxemburg. He has been a Member of Cabinet, where he held the portfolios of Minister of Information and Minister of State for Foreign Affairs. He has also held the posts of Ambassador of Bahrain to the United States of America in addition to being non-resident Ambassador to Canada and Argentina. Dr. Abdul Ghaffar has also served as Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Bahrain to the United Nations. He obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Political Science from the University of Pune in India, a Master's Degree in Political Science from the New School for Social Research in New York, and a PhD in Political Science from the State University of New York, Binghamton.

# POTENTIAL STRATEGIC COOPERATION AMONG PIVOTAL STATES IN WESTERN ASIA IN LIGHT OF CURRENT REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CHANGES

*Muhammad Abdul Ghaffar*

Western Asia constitutes a vital strategic region including pivotal states, i.e., Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries as a collective regional organization and other countries such as India, Iran and Pakistan. Cooperation among them can forge a new geo-strategic reality that is more positive than the currently prevailing regional climate. This paper examines first the concept of pivotal states in Western Asia—that is, countries enjoying regional and international political, economic and strategic influence. They are also countries seeking to reinforce security and stability in Western Asia and worldwide. It then examines the pillars of cooperation among these pivotal states, setting it in the historical and current geo-strategic context and international scenario. It further examines the areas of cooperation among these pivotal states and the changes taking place within these states as well as at the regional level. Finally, the paper look at the future of cooperation among these pivotal states in the region. The future of Western Asia relies on building a strong economic structure by placing regional foundations for economic and commercial cooperation. But the Western Asian countries will not be able to build regional cooperation mechanisms without solving the region's problems. It is thus necessary for the pivotal states to reach consensus on essential, internationally-accepted principles such as non-intervention in the internal affairs of countries and not using religion as an engine of extremism.

## MR. ATUL ANEJA

West Asia/ Middle East Correspondent,  
*The Hindu*



Atul Aneja is currently the West Asia/Middle East correspondent for *The Hindu* newspaper and is based in Dubai. He has reported extensively on West Asia from the region for the last 10 years. He has extensively covered the Arab Spring from Cairo, Benghazi and Tunis, and earlier covered the Lebanon war of July/August 2006 from Beirut, Sidon and Damascus. He has visited Iran several times as well as covered the 2009 presidential elections in the country. Prior to his arrival in West Asia in 2002, he had covered the Kargil War (1999) from Kashmir and the situation in Afghanistan as it appeared from Kabul soon after the 9/11 attacks.

Mr. Aneja has an MPhil degree in International Relations from the Centre for West Asian and African studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Prior to joining *The Hindu* as a defence and diplomatic correspondent, he worked briefly at the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.

## SILENCING ALTERNATIVE MEDIA: SOFT POWER AND THE ARAB SPRING

*Atul Aneja*

Mainstream media in all its formats—print, television and the internet—has become a vital instrument for the deployment of soft power, which is used by its practitioners to impose their collective will on a mass target audience, without the use of force. The emergence of satellite television and the Internet, including social media networks, have greatly enhanced the value of the media in influencing hearts and minds. After the end of the Cold War, media, in all its multiple dimensions, has been fully exploited to enforce the dominance of a unipolar world led by the US. Media as an instrument of soft power has been extensively used to promote a package of “values” of democracy and human rights as well as for foisting a neo-liberal economic agenda. Conversely, the media has become a key instrument for smothering resistance to an interventionist agenda led by the West. Concepts such as human rights and “humanitarian interventions” have been systematically promoted, through the media, over principles of national sovereignty and political autonomy. The media was most systematically exploited and carefully fine-tuned during the run up to the break-up of the former Yugoslavia and in demonising the Serbian government. By the time the Arab Spring took root, the role of media in advancing a “revolutionary” agenda which, in Libya and Syria, was, in the end, nothing more than a project to bring about “regime change”. Thus Al Jazeera backed by Qatar has been extensively used to support the Muslim Brotherhood and a cluster of Islamists in Libya and Syria. Interestingly, an alternative discourse to mainstream media also acquired some maturity by the time the Arab Spring became perceptible. For instance, Iran’s Press TV and Russia Today emerged as an influential voice and a powerful platform that began to dent the mainstream narrative. Militant groups like Hizbollah in Lebanon have floated their own channels such as Al Manar, as has the Palestinian Hamas. Consequently, an intense media war, tied to a larger political tussle, is currently raging in West Asia. This has come by the way of denial of satellite feeds or simply in the form of physical attacks on journalists.

**DR. AHMED A. SAIF**

Executive Director, Sheba Centre for  
Strategic Studies, Sanaá, Yemen



Dr. Ahmed A. Saif is the director of the Sheba Centre for Strategic Studies. Dr Saif received his PhD (2000) in Politics from the University of Exeter, UK. He taught at Exeter, AUS and Sanaá universities. He has authored a number of books and articles, the most recent being: *Yemen: Politics and Society*; “Misperception and Mistrust Relationships: Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and UAE vis-à-vis Iran”; “Citizenship Prospects in Post-Revolutionary Traditional and Multi-Fragmented Yemen”; “Void vs Presence: The In-betweenness of State and Society in Yemen”; “Deconstructing before Building: Perspectives on Democracy in Qatar”; “Rethinking the Arab Spring: Potential Scenarios”; and “Paradox of Regional and International Intervention in the Democratic Transformation Countries”.

## EMERGING TRENDS IN WEST ASIA: REGIONAL AND GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

*Ahmed A. Saif*

The Arab region has remained the least democratically changing area in the world since the third democratic wave took place in 1989. However, since December 2010, a number of the Arab countries have witnessed unprecedented popular uprisings to call for not only reforms, transparency and the enforcement of law, but also regime change. The parameters of the Middle East's regional order have undergone profound changes on a scale not seen in contemporary Arab history. In Tunisia and Egypt, revolutions have paved the way for democratically-elected governments. On the Arabian Peninsula and in Syria, the Arab Spring has seen authoritarian governments using either cooption or widespread violence to prevent similar transformative changes. What is evident in all cases is their capacity to reshape relations between major state and non-state actors in the region as well as the influence of outside actors in a way that will be felt for decades to come.

Imitative uprisings have so far resulted in widespread violence, regime retrenchments and even foreign interventions, although prospects for positive outcomes remain. The region is definitely in political ferment, but whether that presages transition to democracy remains to be seen. Although the Arab Spring has spread throughout the region, its manifestations within the various countries are significantly different and have veered between revolution, repression, evolution and maintenance of the status quo. If the Arab Spring fails to set the stage for the evolution of a genuine democracy, then the whole region will suffer remarkable sectarian and ethnic fragmentation that will allow the three emerging power centers of the region—Israel, Turkey and Iran—to administer the region. Yet, the evident drama of these events makes it difficult for us to discern superficial and transient changes from far-reaching and long-lasting ones. Thus, this paper examines various potential scenarios and trends in the region and analyses their regional and global impact.

## DR. ABDULKHALEQ ABDULLA

Professor of Political Science, UAE  
University, UAE



Dr. Abdulkhaleq Abdulla is a professor of Political Science and currently chairman of the cultural committee at the Dubai Cultural and Scientific Association, member of the Global Agenda Council on Population Growth, and member of the International Advisory Panel of the Middle East Institute, Singapore. He was a member of the Dubai Cultural Council, the General Coordinator of the Gulf Development Forum, director of the research center at *Al Khaleej* newspaper, editor of the *Gulf Strategic Report*, editor of the *Journal of Social Affairs*, and the lead author of the *Arab Knowledge Report 2008*. He is the recipient of the Cultural Personality of the Year 2005 Award and Taryam Omran Intellectual Pioneer 2010 Award.

Professor Abdulla holds a PhD in Political Science from Georgetown University and an MA from the American University in Washington DC. He was a Fulbright Scholar and a visiting professor at the Center for Contemporary Arab Studies, Georgetown University. He is also a frequent commentator in the media on current Arab and Gulf affairs and writes a monthly op-ed for the daily *Gulf News*.

His research interests include issues of political changes in the Gulf and the Arab World, Gulf Security, contemporary issues of Arab Gulf States and international relations. Professor Abdulla is the author of several books, including *Narrative of Politics* (2006) and *The Gulf Regional System* (2006). He has published more than 40 articles, the latest being "Sociopolitical Issues of the Arab Gulf Moment" (London School of Economics 2010) and the "Arab Spring: A View from the Arab Gulf States 2011".

## IMPACT OF THE ARAB SPRING ON THE ARAB GULF STATES

*Abdulkhaleq Abdulla*

Ever since the Arab Spring of 2011, certain questions have arisen with regard to the six Arab Gulf States (AGS) : Do they need a “Spring” of their own? Are these small and resource rich Gulf monarchies immune to winds of change? What impact, if any, did the Arab Spring have on the AGS, Gulf security, and the balance of power in the region?

Two diametrically opposed perspectives have emerged in the literature on the AGS with regard to the impact of the Arab Spring on the longevity of the Gulf Monarchies. The first argues that AGS are different and unique from the states affected by the Arab Spring. They are highly immune from winds of change and because of the deep rooted legitimacy do not need a Spring of their own. However, a second school cogently argues that the AGS are not any different and are far from being immune to the current strong winds of change. These oil-rich states need urgent political reform just as much as the rest of the Arab states. Indeed, failure to do so will lead to their imminent demise.

This paper argues that there is some merit to both arguments. Hence, the short answer to the question whether the Arabs Spring had an impact on the AGS is both “yes” and “no”. The paper divides the AGS into three categories in terms of impact: the most, the partial, and the least impact cases. It also deals with the various impact of the Arab Spring on the Gulf Cooperation Council and the issue of Gulf security.

## PROF. AMIN SAIKAL

Director, Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia



Amin Saikal is Professor of Political Science and Director of the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (the Middle East and Central Asia) at the Australian National University, Canberra, Australia. Professor Saikal has been a visiting fellow at Princeton University, Cambridge University, and the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex as well as a Rockefeller Foundation Fellow in International Relations (1983-88). He was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (AM) in January 2006 for his services to the international community and education as well as an advisor and author. He is the author of numerous works on the Middle East, Central Asia, and Russia. His latest publications include *American Democracy Promotion in the Middle East: From Bush to Obama* (as co-editor; Routledge, 2013); *Modern Afghanistan: A History of Struggle and Survival* (I.B. Tauris, 2012); "Islamism, the Iranian Revolution and the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan" in *The Cambridge History of the Cold War* (Cambridge University Press, 2010); *The Rise and Fall of the Shah: Iran from Autocracy to Religious Rule* (Princeton University Press 2009); and *Islam and the West: Conflict or Cooperation?* (Palgrave, 2003). He has also published numerous scholarly articles in international journals as well as contributed chapters in edited volumes. Professor Saikal has published many op-ed pieces in a number of national and international dailies, including *The International Herald Tribune*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *The New York Times* and *The Guardian*, and is a frequent commentator on issues related to the Middle East and Central Asia on radio and television.

## THE CHANGING POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT IN WEST ASIA

*Amin Saikal*

West Asia—the oil-rich region stretching from Afghanistan to the Gulf and Turkey—is in the grip of an evolving strategic environment. The old regional order and correlation of forces that until recently exemplified the remnants of the Cold War era, despite the US-led interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan to alter that order, is now vulnerable to more strategic shifts than ever before. At this stage, one cannot be certain about the depth, intensity and consequences of the emerging environment in the short run. A host of inter-connected variables are at work in shaping it. However, by examining the most salient of these variables in the context of parallel or conflicting ideological and realpolitik objectives, interests and capabilities, it is possible to gain some reasonable insights into what direction the regional political and strategic environment may take in the medium to long run. As the situation stands, the main indicators point to a West Asia that would be dominated by more political pluralism and accountability than authoritarianism, more Ijtihadi or reformist (stressing the value of a creative interpretation and application of Islam, based on independent human reasoning) rather than Jihadi or combative Islamism; yet more political and sectarian splits and Saudi-Iranian rivalry than across-the-board political and social reconciliation; a festering Palestinian problem; and serious economic concerns, with regional actors and outside powers scrambling for leverage to influence the strategic shifts in their favour in one way or another.



# *Session III*

## *West Asia's Security Dynamics-I: Role of Extra-Regional Powers*

*Wednesday, February 13, 2013*

*1630h-1830h*

