



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE

2021 GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM:

COOPERATION OR COMPETITION? CHANGING DYNAMICS OF GLOBAL SECURITY

As states vie for power and resources in a rapidly evolving geopolitical climate, the 2021 Global Security Forum convened government officials with experts and practitioners in Doha, Qatar

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(New York, NY – October 25, 2021) The 2021 Global Security Forum (GSF) took place from October 12-14, 2021, in Doha, Qatar and adopted a hybrid approach to include virtual participants. As states vie for power and resources in a rapidly evolving geopolitical climate, conversations focused on the theme '[Cooperation or Competition? Changing Dynamics of Global Security](#).' Over the three days, the discussions stressed the need for the international community to recognize the breadth of issues which are best addressed through cooperation, including the ongoing global pandemic, climate crisis, humanitarian crises, the protection of human rights, and transnational security challenges. The crisis in Afghanistan, potential recognition of the Taliban, and the need for a collective and consistent approach to counter-terrorism were themes repeatedly raised over the series of discussions.

2021's compounding geopolitical crisis landscape

The 2021 Global Security Forum commenced with an opening ceremony attended by [H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Khalifa Bin Abdulaziz Al Thani](#), Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, State of Qatar. [Michael Masters](#), President of The Soufan Center's Board of Directors, welcomed participants and extended thanks to the government of Qatar "for their support in fostering a space for the open and honest exchange of ideas." [H.E. Paul Kagame](#), President of the Republic of Rwanda, opened the conversations with a "fireside chat" focused on cooperation and development in Africa. "External forces can create the safety and political space for new forms of consensus-based leadership within a society to gain the upper hand. But it can't be forced or imposed," he stressed acknowledging that international cooperation was predicated on the backing of local populations and governments.

[H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani](#), Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar, stressed the importance of communicating with any government in Afghanistan as a must for global and regional stability. "Engagement is required with whoever is governing Afghanistan because abandoning Afghanistan would be a big mistake," Qatar's Foreign Minister continued. Qatar would continue to play the role of a neutral mediator, he stressed. [Hon. Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas](#), Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security of the United States, discussed the accumulation of factors compounding the domestic and international geopolitical security landscape, including the rise in irregular migration, the COVID-19 pandemic, the increased domestic terrorism threat in the U.S., the challenges of delivering humanitarian relief, and the global economic downturn.

In his remarks, Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security [Teo Chee Hean](#) of Singapore noted that the international community seems to be "lurching from crisis to crisis." He pointed to the "lack of global cooperation and multilateralism" and the "great need for us to deal with these issues in a more comprehensive way." Building on a similar theme, [H.E. Kostas Tsiasaras](#), Minister of Justice of Greece, touched upon the need for greater judicial cooperation and multilateralism to tackle a range of issues

including organized crime and human trafficking. The [Rt Hon. Damian Hinds MP](#), Minister of State, Minister for Security and Borders of the United Kingdom, highlighted challenges of transnational terrorism and reaffirmed the need for international cooperation. [Michèle Coninx](#), Assistant Secretary-General of the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), discussed the role of the UN in fostering such cooperation among states and partners on counterterrorism efforts to address the broad ideological spectrum of terrorism and violent extremism.

“While we as sovereign nations may be tempted to focus on maximizing our self-interests, as global stakeholders we must be cautious of the far-reaching impacts of our actions,” encouraged [Hon. Sheikh Imran Abdulla](#), Minister of Home Affairs of the Republic of Maldives. [H.E. Geraldine Byrne Nason](#), Ireland’s Permanent Representative to the UN, reflected on the impact of Security Council Resolution 1373 and the stressed the importance of prevention, human rights, and addressing drivers of conflict when addressing terrorism. [Karim A. A. Khan QC](#), the newly appointed Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), underscored the critical importance of accountability for war crimes that include genocide and sexual violence in conflict, and need for the international community to stand with Afghan women and girls in support of their rights to education. “This is the religion of Islam that is completely against people who say that women should not be educated, who target or persecute women for no other reason than their gender,” he stressed.

A distinguished set of journalists and experts served as moderators for many sessions, including: *The Hill’s* Steve Clemons, *NBC’s* Ali Velshi and Richard Engel, *Bloomberg’s* Bobby Ghosh, *CNN* Analyst Peter Bergen, *Defense One’s* Kevin Baron, *The New Yorker’s* Dexter Filkins, Lawrence Wright, and Robin Wright, *New York Times’* Mark Mazetti, *Politico’s* Bryan Bender, *The Telegraph’s* Josie Ensor, and *Yahoo News’* Michael Isikoff. Senior experts and academics moderating sessions also included Michael Masters (President of the Board, The Soufan Center), Colin P. Clarke (Director of Policy and Research, The Soufan Group), Bruce Hoffman (Professor, Georgetown University), Karen Greenberg (Professor, Fordham University), and Mark Power (UK Deputy Ambassador to Israel).

Changing dynamics of global security

Conversations over the three days covered a range of pressing challenges: humanitarian missions, security and development, terrorism, public health, geopolitical competition, justice and accountability, disinformation and a weaponized information space, and online harms. Among the government and expert participants were representatives from the United Nations, Qatar, the United States, the United Kingdom, Singapore, Ireland, and several non-governmental and private sector organizations, including the Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism (GIFCT), Citizen Lab, Fuuse Media, Limbik, and Facebook, among many others.

At the 2021 Global Security Forum’s conclusion, [Senator Joseph Donnelly](#), Chairman of the Board for The Soufan Center, stressed the need for international collaboration on the themes and issues raised over the three days: “No one government, company, or individual has the capacity to fight extremist groups, the spread of infectious diseases, or disinformation. Success in tackling these issues requires cooperation, not a go-it-alone approach.” Wrapping up, [Amanda Schmitt](#), Program and Communications Officer at The Soufan Center, expressed thanks on behalf of the hosts and strategic partners to those who joined in-person in Doha and to the thousands of participants who joined virtually.

About the Global Security Forum:

The Global Security Forum is organized by The Soufan Center (TSC) and the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS). In 2021, the Global Security Forum confirmed partnerships with the Airey Neave Trust, Defense One, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), New America Foundation, Nordic Safe Cities, The Soufan Group, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED), and Qatar Airways. Visit: www.globalsecurityforum.com #GSF2021

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