



# GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM 2021 **OVERVIEW & FINDINGS REPORT**

THE **SOUFAN** CENTER

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## **GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM**

Cooperation or Competition?

Changing Dynamics of Global Security

OCTOBER 12 – 14, 2021  
DOHA, QATAR

# THE GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM

For several years, the annual Global Security Forum, organized by The Soufan Center, has brought together an international network of senior officials and experts that has consistently included ministers, heads of security agencies, academics, practitioners, and journalists, and thousands of attendees. This conference provides a unique, dynamic platform for leading international stakeholders to address the international community's leading security challenges.

## GSF 2021

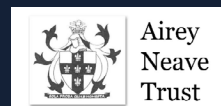
The 2021 Global Security Forum on "Cooperation or Competition? Changing Dynamics of Global Security" took place from October 12-14, 2021, in Doha, Qatar, as a hybrid event, bringing together both virtual and in-person participants. Hundreds of attendees representing governments, academia, media, and the private sector joined us this year, and thousands more tuned in to GSF 2021 virtually.

Against the backdrop of an unprecedented global pandemic, geopolitical dynamics have shifted between competition and cooperation as states grapple with the socioeconomic fallout of COVID-19, the collapse of Afghanistan, the ongoing threat posed by ISIS and al-Qaeda, and an increasingly transnational violent far-right movement fueled by disinformation and misinformation online. The 2021 Global Security Forum focused on the imperative of uniting and reconnecting at the individual, organizational, national, and multilateral level, which is paramount if the international community is to stave off the ill-effects of the more pronounced political polarization tied to the pandemic. GSF 2021 and its dynamic set of speakers examined a diffuse range of threats, while emphasizing the opportunities for collaboration to inform policy and practice.

## ORGANIZER



## PARTNERS



It is an honor to have hosted the fourth annual Global Security Forum in Doha, Qatar. Thank you to all participants, guests, and partners who helped make this year's forum a success, as well as to the State of Qatar for allowing us to host GSF in Doha. As in years past, GSF 2021 brought together the world's foremost academics, members of the media, and government leaders to discuss the most pressing and complex challenges to global security. This year's theme, "Cooperation or Competition? Changing Dynamics of Global Security," was especially apt for a year that saw the evolution of existing challenges and the emergence of new threats.

It is remarkable to reflect on the growth of GSF from its inception in 2018 to the present. Thanks to the hard work of the organizing team, as well as our partner organizations, GSF has become one of the world's leading forums for the discussion of international security and emerging threats.

This year, we were honored with the presence of H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Khalifa Bin Abdulaziz Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Interior of Qatar, during the opening ceremony. It was our privilege to additionally open the forum with insights from H.E. Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda. We gratefully welcomed H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Qatar, who discussed Qatar's role in diplomacy to respond to developments in Afghanistan.

In addition to many other esteemed participants and experts, we were honored to include commentary from Greek Minister of Justice Kostas Tsiaras, U.S. Department of Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas, Singaporean Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security Teo Chee Hean, Maldivian Minister of Home Affairs Sheikh Imran Abdulla, and Nigerian National Intelligence Agency Director-General Ahmed Rufai Abubakar, as well as UN Assistant Secretary-General Michele Coninsx and Ambassador Geraldine Byrne-Nason, representing Ireland at the United Nations in New York.

The participation of such global leaders highlighted the value of holding GSF in the current global climate and allowing for both virtual and in-person discussions. The GSF is, and will always be, a platform for free discussion and critical examination of the world's security challenges. By openly and honestly discussing these topics, we are better positioned to develop solutions that may have a lasting impact. As we look ahead in 2022, we step forward better prepared to address the many challenges to come in the year ahead.

Yours Sincerely,

**Ali Soufan**  
Founder, The Soufan Center

## KEY HIGHLIGHTS

The 2021 Global Security Forum (GSF) focused on the theme, “Cooperation or Competition? Changing Dynamics of Global Security.” The discussions covered a breadth of issues, including: expanding far-right extremist networks, the evolving global jihadist threat, developments in Afghanistan, the security impact of COVID-19, great power competition, and online disinformation. The following key highlights reflect the central points raised by speakers throughout GSF 2021:

- **COUNTERTERRORISM AND “GREAT POWER COMPETITION” ARE NOT MUTUALLY EXCLUSIVE**

Rivalry among “great powers” cannot be divorced from counterterrorism efforts, particularly as many states support or coordinate on activities of violent non-state actors. Despite counterterrorism fatigue as we reflect on the twentieth anniversary of September 11, 2001, terrorism threats persist and have evolved, posing new challenges. As global jihadist groups increasingly operate through regional affiliates rather than an operational core, transnational far-right extremist networks are becoming increasingly dangerous—and both employing more low-cost approaches to violence through individuals or small groups. The terrorism threat has expanded and grown more diffuse, becoming more difficult to trace and prevent. Rather than view counterterrorism and great power competition as competing paradigms, they should be considered as complementary.

- **ADDRESSING UNDERLYING GRIEVANCES—including HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, POOR GOVERNANCE, AND POLITICAL POLARIZATION—is CRITICAL TO COUNTERING TERRORISM AND CONFLICT**

Violence has become cyclical in contexts where the drivers of radicalization or core grievances prompting unrest are not sustainably addressed or worse, where human rights abuses may be perpetrated in the name of counterterrorism and serve to fuel further conflict. In many cases, ineffective local governance, foreign interventions, and the complex roles of violent non-state actors have contributed to this deficiency. Whether to offer a consequential response to persistent protest movements or to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE), government policy should identify and address the grievances that can lead to support and sympathy for terrorist groups and further the potential for conflict, and ensure that operational measures targeting terrorist groups are complemented by efforts to counter the ideology and narratives that underpin it. For example, as the U.S. is becoming seen as an exporter of far-right extremism and conspiracies like QAnon, progress on countering domestic terrorism will depend on progress on divisive and systemic issues like guns and racism in America.

- **KINETIC COUNTERTERRORISM IS NOT ALWAYS THE BEST WAY TO COUNTER TERRORISM AND CAN EVEN EXACERBATE THE THREAT**

Despite twenty years of coordinated international counterterrorism efforts, the global terrorist landscape looks more diverse and dangerous than ever before. The disproportionate focus on deploying solely kinetic counterterrorism operations has meant a dearth of energy committed to countering the ideological underpinnings of terrorism and addressing the grievances exploited by terrorist groups in recruiting or mobilizing support. Moreover, abuses conducted in the name of counterterrorism have sometimes further alienated citizens from the state and fuelled support for terrorist groups. Holistic, effective responses to terrorism require filling security vacuums with peacebuilding, development, and education initiatives, in addition to kinetic efforts. Afghanistan and Iraq offer prime examples of the long-term inadequacies of the current approach, and the risk of increased jihadist mobilization within Afghanistan under Taliban leadership and in the surrounding region emphasizes the sense of urgency behind deploying more comprehensive counterterrorism strategies globally.

- **COOPERATION, RATHER THAN COMPETITION, IS ESSENTIAL TO ADDRESS SHARED CRISES**

In our globalized world, complex security issues in one part of the world—such as governance challenges, terrorism, and global health crises—have far-reaching regional and international impacts. Challenges that defy borders, such as climate change and the COVID-19 pandemic, can only be solved through multilateralism. Even when focusing narrowly on national interests, governments must acknowledge that ignoring such issues until they reach a country's borders is short-sighted and eliminates opportunities to minimize the global impact. A devastating reaffirmation that our international community is only as strong as the weakest link, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven the importance of cooperation between states, as well as local and municipal partners. Particularly, in the more resource-constrained environment of the pandemic, governments must increasingly rely on cooperation to address multitudes of issues to include counterterrorism and global health through pooling resources, leveraging existing expertise, and supporting capacity development.

- **INCREASED INVESTMENT IN MULTILATERAL INSTITUTIONS WILL BE NECESSARY TO DEVELOP LONGER-TERM STRATEGIC RESPONSES TO TRANSNATIONAL THREATS AND DYNAMICS**

Short-term measures to address security threats have proven to not only be ineffective but to also potentially do harm. As global security threats evolve, long-term strategic interventions are required to address multiple phases of the threat response, from prevention through recovery. Furthermore, multilateral institutions such as the United Nations must ensure responsiveness to the threat landscape. Lasting crises, such as the impact of climate change on security, humanitarian needs, and displacement, require sustained, flexible strategies. Likewise, the multilateral counterterrorism architecture developed over the past twenty years requires an independent assessment and further consideration about what priorities align with contemporary terrorist threats and international needs. Moreover, it is essential that governments and local partners consider how these measures complement broader strategic goals including conflict prevention, stabilizing fragile assistance, and ensuring humanitarian access in the most ravaged environments.

- **CONTEMPORARY SECURITY THREATS REQUIRE MULTI-SECTORAL COLLABORATION**

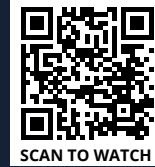
As the terrorism threat landscape becomes increasingly diverse, geographically decentralized, and mobilized online, counterterrorism and prevention efforts will require all of the interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral resources available. Public-private partnership are critical but often underrepresented, particularly in addressing online radicalization, countering terrorist financing, investing in communities or rehabilitation efforts, and countering mobilization and recruitment by violent extremist actors. Innovation outpaces legislation and regulation, so private sector resources and expertise are critical to an effective response and policymaking, including providing communities with opportunities to seek meaningful employment, development, and security. Additionally, inclusive planning and decision making necessitates bringing together local and regional expertise, perspectives, and partners, as well as practitioners, academics, and governments, through multilateral and research institutions.





# DAY 1

OCTOBER 12, 2021



## OPENING CEREMONY & WELCOME REMARKS

H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Khalifa Bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani, *Prime Minister and Minister of Interior, State of Qatar*

Mr. Michael Masters, *President of the Board, The Soufan Center*

Dr. Ahmad Hasnah, *President, Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU)*



H.E. Sheikh Khalid Bin Khalifa Bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani (Center)

Michael Masters opened the 2021 Global Security Forum by welcoming honored guests, participants, and attendees, including His Excellency Sheikh Khalid Bin Khalifa Bin Abdulaziz Al-Thani, for the opening ceremony. Mr. Masters thanked conference partners, including the Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS), Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), United Nations Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED), Airey Neave Trust, New America Foundation, Defense One, Nordic Safe Cities, Qatar Airways, and The Soufan Group. He thanked the government of Qatar for fostering a space for the open and honest exchange of ideas and introduced the conference theme of “Cooperation or Competition? Changing Dynamics of Global Security.”

Ahmad Hasnah, welcoming guests as a GSF partner, emphasized the importance of interdisciplinary learning and fostering both healthy competition and cooperation among students in university settings. He also stressed the criticality of collaboration between universities, the private sector, governments, and communities to effectively address global challenges.

“We must continue to come together in cooperation to address the existing and emergency security issues we face globally and whose effects are felt locally to include protecting vulnerable communities.”

— Mr. Michael Masters



“That relationship [between universities, the private sector, government, and communities] is key in being able to deal with the future challenges that we are all faced with.”

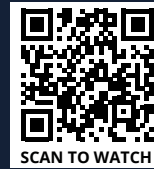
— Dr. Ahmad Hasnah



## FIRESIDE CHAT: "RESILIENCE BUILDING AND SECURING DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA"

H.E. Paul Kagame, *President, Republic of Rwanda*

Mr. Steve Clemons, *Editor at Large, The Hill*



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Steve Clemons, H.E. President Paul Kagame

His Excellency Paul Kagame joined Steve Clemons in a conversation examining complex security issues, resilience building, and development in Africa. The discussion reinforced one of the overarching themes of the conference: cooperation between nation-states to overcome some of the most significant global challenges. President Kagame highlighted the inextricable linkages between health and security, pointing out that no country—no matter how prosperous—can address these challenges on their own.

In a globalized system, complex security issues in one part of the world—such as governance challenges, terrorism, and civil wars in Africa and the Middle East—have far-reaching regional and international impacts. "Africa is important not just for the role it will play in competition between the U.S. and China, but it's important in its own right," President Kagame asserted. Cross-border spillover of health, security, displacement, or economic crises can impact entire regions. Regions like the Sahel, where armed groups have proliferated in ungoverned spaces, are facing such challenges and offer further evidence of the need for governments to cooperate in order to transform the security landscape. Nonetheless, he asserted, "I really don't think it should be the primary responsibility of these big powers to manage Africa," calling for support and collaboration instead. Through its cooperative efforts in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Mozambique, and the Central African Republic (CAR), Rwanda has attempted to serve as an exemplar to demonstrate the importance of forging partnerships with other African nations to support stability.

“Africa is important not just for the role it will play in competition between the U.S. and China, but it’s important in its own right.”

— H.E. Paul Kagame



## FIRESIDE CHAT: “AFGHANISTAN: TWO DECADES REPORTING FROM THE GROUND”

Mr. Richard Engel, NBC News Chief Foreign Correspondent and Host, MSNBC’S “On Assignment With Richard Engel”

Mr. Ali Velshi, Host of “Velshi”, MSNBC



SCAN TO WATCH

“  
[Doha] has become the Switzerland or Vienna...  
for Central Asia right now. This is the place where  
the meetings are happening [on Afghanistan].  
”

— Mr. Richard Engel

Richard Engel and Ali Velshi discussed some of the challenges surrounding the Taliban takeover of Afghanistan. Detailing his experience in Kabul as the Taliban seized control, Mr. Engel revealed, “I entered the Republic of Afghanistan, and it was about to become the Islamic Emirate hours later.” He described how the United States and its allies were woefully unprepared to deal with the fall of Kabul, highlighted by the obvious lack of intelligence sharing and cooperation which resulted in the chaotic airlift of some Afghan partners. Once news broke that Afghan President Ashraf Ghani had fled, there was a true breakdown of law and order, he recalled. The speakers emphasized how it was ultimately up to well-connected individuals to manage many ad-hoc evacuations using their connections to get people out of Afghanistan.

Qatar has been influential and essential in facilitating evacuations of Afghans, especially for special immigrant visa (SIV) holders, and played a unique role as an interlocutor and mediator. The U.S. Kabul embassy shifted operations to Doha and is handling the Afghanistan portfolio there, which reflects the expanding diplomatic trust between the United States and Qatar. As the “new great game unfolds,” and geopolitical competition heats up, Mr. Engel argued that Doha has positioned itself as the Geneva or Vienna for Central Asia. Afghanistan, which spurred the “great game” over two centuries ago, continues to be the locus of geopolitical tensions today, reflecting contemporary dynamics between the U.S., Russia, Central Asian states, Iran, and China.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Richard Engel, Ali Velshi

### RELATED TSC ANALYSIS

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## FIRESIDE CHAT: “PROTECTING THE U.S. HOMELAND FROM DIVERSE SECURITY THREATS”

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas, Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, United States

Mr. Michael Isikoff, Chief Investigative Correspondent, Yahoo News



SCAN TO WATCH



ON SCREEN: The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas

In conversation with Michael Isikoff, Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas spoke about the breadth of U.S. national security challenges. Secretary Mayorkas highlighted the evolution of the threat landscape—shifting from the prominence of the foreign terrorist threat to elevated concern over domestic extremism—and expressed apprehension that the situation in Afghanistan raises the specter of an increasingly prominent foreign terrorist threat.

The Secretary called the events of January 6, 2021 an “insurrection” and stated his disappointment in the country’s inability to unite around condemning the storming of the Capitol. The new U.S. domestic terrorism strategy offers innovations to address many facets of the threat; however, he argued that, currently, the U.S. does not require a new law to specifically address domestic terrorism, asserting the sufficiency of existing criminal statutory provisions at this time. In parallel, the cybersecurity landscape across the public and private sectors has significantly shifted. Notably, the number of ransomware attacks has exponentially risen, growing approximately 300% in the last year. Discussing immigration, Secretary Mayorkas addressed the critiques of the Biden administration’s continued use of Title 42, calling it a “public health imperative” rather than an immigration policy embraced by the Administration. Mr. Isikoff emphasized that, along the United States-Mexico border, migrant encounters have reached a 20-year high, upon which the Secretary pointed to economic downturns tied to the pandemic propelling the rise in migration.

“  
We certainly see a foreign nexus to the domestic  
[extremism] landscape that we watch most closely.  
”

— The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas



SCAN TO VISIT MAP

### RELATED TSC ANALYSIS

*Mapping Insecurity: Tracking Violent Domestic Extremism*



PANEL: "THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SECURITY & DIPLOMACY"

Mr. Gilles de Kerchove, Former Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Council of the European Union

Ambassador Nathan Sales, Former Under Secretary for Civilian Security, Democracy, and Human Rights (acting), U.S. Department of State; and Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council

Mr. Mark Power, Deputy U.K. Ambassador, British Embassy Israel

Ms. Laila Bokhari, Board Director, Nordic Safe Cities; Senior Adviser, Yara International; and Former Deputy Minister/State Secretary in the Prime Minister's Office and Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Norway

Mr. Bobby Ghosh, Editor, Bloomberg



SCAN TO WATCH

"If there is one beneficiary of the COVID-19 crisis, it is on the right-wing violent extremists' side."

— Mr. Gilles de Kerchove



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Bobby Ghosh, Amb. Nathan Sales, Ms. Laila Bokhari, Mr. Mark Power ON SCREEN: Mr. Gilles de Kerchove



Amb. Nathan Sales



Ms. Laila Bokhari

By devastatingly demonstrating that our international community is only as strong as the weakest link, the COVID-19 pandemic has proven the importance of cooperation between states. The costs borne by underdeveloped countries will impact wealthy countries, and the political misinformation spread in one locale has global health implications. Laila Bokhari acknowledged, "it's a very natural instinct that when a crisis hits, you look inwards; how do I protect my country and my people?" Yet, despite self-interests often driving policy, the recent history of counterterrorism and intelligence sharing demonstrates that states cannot think only about their own borders. The transparency and truthfulness of China's diplomacy has now been particularly placed in doubt due to a lack of transparency around the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in several international actors reconsidering their frameworks for engagement with Beijing. At the end of the Cold War, there was an assumption that economic contact, person-to-person interactions, and diplomatic activity would inexorably lead to economic and political liberalization in China; that framework is no longer one Washington and many of its allies can rely upon.

Discussing opportunities for strategic cooperation, Nathan Sales highlighted the importance of the United States sharing the COVID-19 vaccine. In particular, U.S. attention is likely to focus on working closely with Africa to stop the spread of COVID-19 and supporting security, and Washington has a comparative advantage in both helping defeat the virus and building counterterrorism capabilities consistent with rule of law. As for security implications of COVID-19, Gilles de Kerchove shared concern that the pandemic could well lead to new forms of violent extremism across the ideological spectrum and exacerbate threats from violent far-right groups.

"Here's what COVID and terrorism have in common... we [the U.S. and allies] have a comparative advantage.... to help defeat COVID... [and] to build counterterrorism capabilities that are consistent with the rule of law, that are effective in reducing radicalization."

— Ambassador Nathan Sales



“  
We hope that [the Taliban] can also appoint women, because their role is indispensable to the Afghan society... We told them that if you think [the exclusion of women from government] is from a religious perspective, it is not acceptable, and we disagree with you.

— H.E. Dr. Mutlaq bin Majed Al-Qahtani

”

## FIRESIDE CHAT: “QATAR’S POLITICAL AND DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS ON AFGHANISTAN”

H.E. Dr. Mutlaq bin Majed Al-Qahtani, *Special Envoy of the Foreign Minister of the State of Qatar for Counterterrorism and Mediation in Conflict Resolution, State of Qatar*

Mr. Peter Bergen, *Vice President, New America*



SCAN TO WATCH



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Peter Bergen, Dr. Mutlaq bin Majed Al-Qahtani

Against the backdrop of meetings between government delegations and the Taliban in Doha, His Excellency Dr. Mutlaq Bin Majed al Qahtani joined GSF to share reflections on the ongoing negotiations. In conversation with Peter Bergen, he described how Qatar has taken on a unique role, both in aiding the evacuations, as well as in bringing competing parties to the negotiating table. The insights shared by His Excellency illustrated that the U.S. and other Western countries will likely rely on Qatar to safeguard interests and maintain open lines of communication with the Taliban for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, as governments debate whether to recognize the Taliban as the government of Afghanistan, he stated that, for Qatar, “this is not a priority. What is more of a priority... is the humanitarian [crisis], education, free passage.”

While cautioning against imposing values on another country, His Excellency made Qatar’s position on women’s rights clear; he argued that diversity and inclusivity it is not an issue of religion or culture, but rather that it is crucial for a prosperous society, a point frequently emphasized to the Taliban given concerns about the repression of women, girls, and minorities. The conversation touched on several key challenges for the Taliban, ranging from securing international buy-in, to the Taliban’s ties to terrorist organizations and the ongoing security issues related to Islamic State-Khorasan. This discussion demonstrated how a state like Qatar can find creative ways to navigate that balance between cooperation and competition in addressing complex dynamics like in Afghanistan.





FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Peter Bergen, Mr. Charles Spencer ON SCREEN: Ambassador Edmund Fitton-Brown

## PANEL & REMARKS: "THE EVOLUTION OF THE GLOBAL SECURITY LANDSCAPE"

**Mr. John Godfrey**, *Acting Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Acting Special Envoy for the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism, United States*

**Ambassador Edmund Fitton-Brown**, *Coordinator, United Nations Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning the Islamic State, al-Qaeda, and the Taliban*

**Mr. Charles Spencer**, *Assistant Director of the International Operations Division, Federal Bureau of Investigation, United States*

**Mr. Peter Bergen**, *Vice President for Global Studies and Fellows, New America*

With governments facing escalating constraints on resources owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, they will increasingly rely on cooperative counterterrorism efforts through pooling resources, leveraging existing expertise, and supporting capacity development. Assessing the evolution of the global security landscape from the U.S. perspective, John Godfrey touched upon three core counterterrorism principles set out by the Biden administration to address contemporary challenges. These include: keeping pace with current developments, including the rise of racially or ethnically motivated violent extremism (REMVE); integrating counterterrorism efforts with broader national security efforts like cybersecurity; and focusing on diplomatic and preventative efforts.

The rise of transnational far-right terrorism will remain an important challenge to address in today's global threat matrix, in both offline and online spaces. Charles Spencer called online recruitment and propaganda-inspired mobilization "the number one vulnerability" to the U.S. Furthermore, with greater opportunity arising for terrorist groups in crisis environments like Afghanistan, Edmund Fitton-Brown described how al-Qaeda has been intentionally playing the long game when compared to Islamic State—"I would characterize them as having been strategically patient over the years."

The Taliban takeover of Afghanistan offers many wins to militant groups, including strategic successes, operational gains, and propaganda benefits. They, and others, will also benefit from recent prison releases, as well as from cohorts of foreign fighters already in the country and to a lesser extent from those looking to join from neighboring countries and even further afield. Another major regional focus of the discussion was sub-Saharan Africa, where Salafi-jihadist inspired groups have been able to expand rapidly and take advantage of instability, with Mozambique serving as a stark example of how quickly situations can deteriorate.

"I think al-Qaeda is going to be back in Afghanistan, very prominently and very quickly."

— Mr. Charles Spencer



Mr. Charles Spencer



Mr. John Godfrey

"While the lessons we have learned over the previous decades will play a key role moving forward, we must remain vigilant and able to adapt quickly if we are to successfully meet the threats of tomorrow."

— Mr. John Godfrey



## PANEL: “ARE WE EQUIPPED TO DEAL WITH CURRENT GLOBAL TERRORIST THREATS?”



**Colonel (Retired) Chris Costa**, *Former Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Counterterrorism, United States; and Executive Director, International Spy Museum*

**Dr. Bruce Hoffman**, *Senior Fellow for Counterterrorism and Homeland Security, Council on Foreign Relations*

**Ms. Robin Wright**, *Columnist, The New Yorker; and Joint Fellow, U.S. Institute of Peace and Woodrow Wilson Center*

In a discussion moderated by Robin Wright, Bruce Hoffman and Chris Costa analyzed changes in the global terrorism landscape across the ideological spectrum. Discussing the evolving threat posed by Salafi-jihadist groups, Dr. Hoffman indicated that it has “spread both numerically and geographically” via regional affiliates of al-Qaeda and Islamic State. The Taliban’s renewed control of Afghanistan is likely to revive al-Qaeda, he argued. Consequently, Col. Costa indicated the need for the U.S. to consider working with non-conventional partners for “over-the-horizon” operations and expressed concern that “no administration has really gotten to root causes.” On January 6, 2021, the insurrectionists “achieved what al-Qaeda couldn’t do, which is to penetrate the citadel of American democracy,” noted Dr. Hoffman. He highlighted that “the legacy of 9/11 extends directly to 1/6” by showing how extremists can capitalize on a lack of confidence in government to accelerate violent action and exacerbate societal divisions. Furthermore, the U.S. is becoming an exporter of far-right extremism and conspiracies like QAnon.



ON SCREEN: Dr. Bruce Hoffman

To address the violent far-right threat, Col. Costa advocated for investigations, analysis of root causes, implementation of the new domestic terrorism strategy in the U.S., and terrorist designations. Reinforcing the ongoing need to prioritize countering these terrorism threats alongside other geopolitical, economic, and global health priorities, Dr. Hoffman asserted, “You can’t divorce great power rivalry from terrorism.” It was important for governments to allocate further resources toward countering underlying ideologies and radicalization to violence. Throughout the Global War on Terror, Dr. Hoffman said, no administration has been successful at “breaking the constant cycle of regeneration.”

“You can’t divorce great power rivalry from terrorism... When the United States withdraws, it created a vacuum that our great power opponents seek to fill, or it encourages local terrorist groups to try to seize that vacuum.”

— Dr. Bruce Hoffman

“The biggest lesson learned... is the idea that the future [terrorism threat] landscape really requires spending more time on... terrorists’ legal rights, humane dispensation of terrorist detainees, [and] root cause issues.”

— Col. (Ret.) Chris Costa



ON SCREEN: Colonel (Retired) Chris Costa, Dr. Bruce Hoffman, Ms. Robin Wright

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**PANEL: “THE TRANSITION FROM COUNTERTERRORISM TO GREAT POWER COMPETITION: CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND STRATEGIC IMPACT”**



Ambassador Bilahari Kausikan, *Former Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Singapore; and Chairman, National University of Singapore Middle East Institute*  
Mr. John Brennan, *Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency, United States*  
Mr. Mark Mazzetti, *Washington Investigative Correspondent, The New York Times*



ON SCREEN: Mr. Mark Mazzetti, Mr. John Brennan, Amb. Bilahari Kausikan

Stressing the criticality of a balancing act to maintain dual pressure on counterterrorism and great power competition, panelists emphasized the need to sustain counterterrorism efforts to prevent and counter surges in the threat, alongside constant geopolitical competition. Nonetheless, the resource allocation for counterterrorism may vary by government agency depending on threat assessments and political priorities, noted John Brennan. For example, the CIA’s new, expanded China mission center demonstrates the scale of the intelligence challenge and geopolitical prioritization.

“  
**The competition between the U.S. and China is not competition between two systems; it’s competition within a system to see which will dominate the system.**  
”

— Ambassador Bilahari Kausikan

“  
**China has the benefit of having continuity in its policy approach because it doesn’t have to deal with election cycles.... It’s difficult for the United States to pursue a thoughtful, durable policy... to deal with a strategic challenge such as China because of the political environment in Washington.**  
”

— Mr. John Brennan



Mr. John Brennan



Amb. Bilahari Kausikan

Regarding competition between the U.S. and China, panelists debated the willingness across several U.S. administrations to use hard power to reinforce foreign policy objectives and counter China’s growing influence. Rather than a “new Cold War” framing, they depicted U.S.-China dynamics as competition for influence within a single globalized system. “The competition between the U.S. and China is not competition between two systems; it’s competition within a system to see which will dominate the system,” Ambassador Bilahari Kausikan explained. He additionally advocated that the U.S. address a gap in trade policy with the Indo-Pacific, such as was endeavored with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), to complement military options. Both China and the U.S. could also find ways to cooperate on shared concerns in the wake of the American withdrawal from Afghanistan, such as on terrorism, panelists noted. Ambassador Kausikan shared that while he understood it was no longer in the U.S. national interest to remain in Afghanistan, the execution of the withdrawal could have been handled much better operationally. Speaking about the evolution of U.S. policy in the Middle East, Mr. Brennan reiterated the value of Israeli-Arab negotiations through the Abraham Accords.



## PANEL: “THE EVOLUTION OF TERRORIST GROUPS: ADAPTING TO GLOBAL RESPONSES AND DYNAMICS AND STRATEGIC IMPACT”



SCAN TO WATCH

**Dr. Audrey Kurth Cronin**, *Distinguished Professor in the School of International Service and Director of the Center for Security, Innovation and New Technology, American University*

**Dr. Tim Wilson**, *Trustee, Airey Neave Trust, and Senior Lecturer and the Director of the Handa Centre for the Study of Terrorism and Political Violence, University of St Andrews*

**Ambassador Umej Bhatia**, *Permanent Representative to the United Nations Offices in Geneva and Vienna, Singapore*



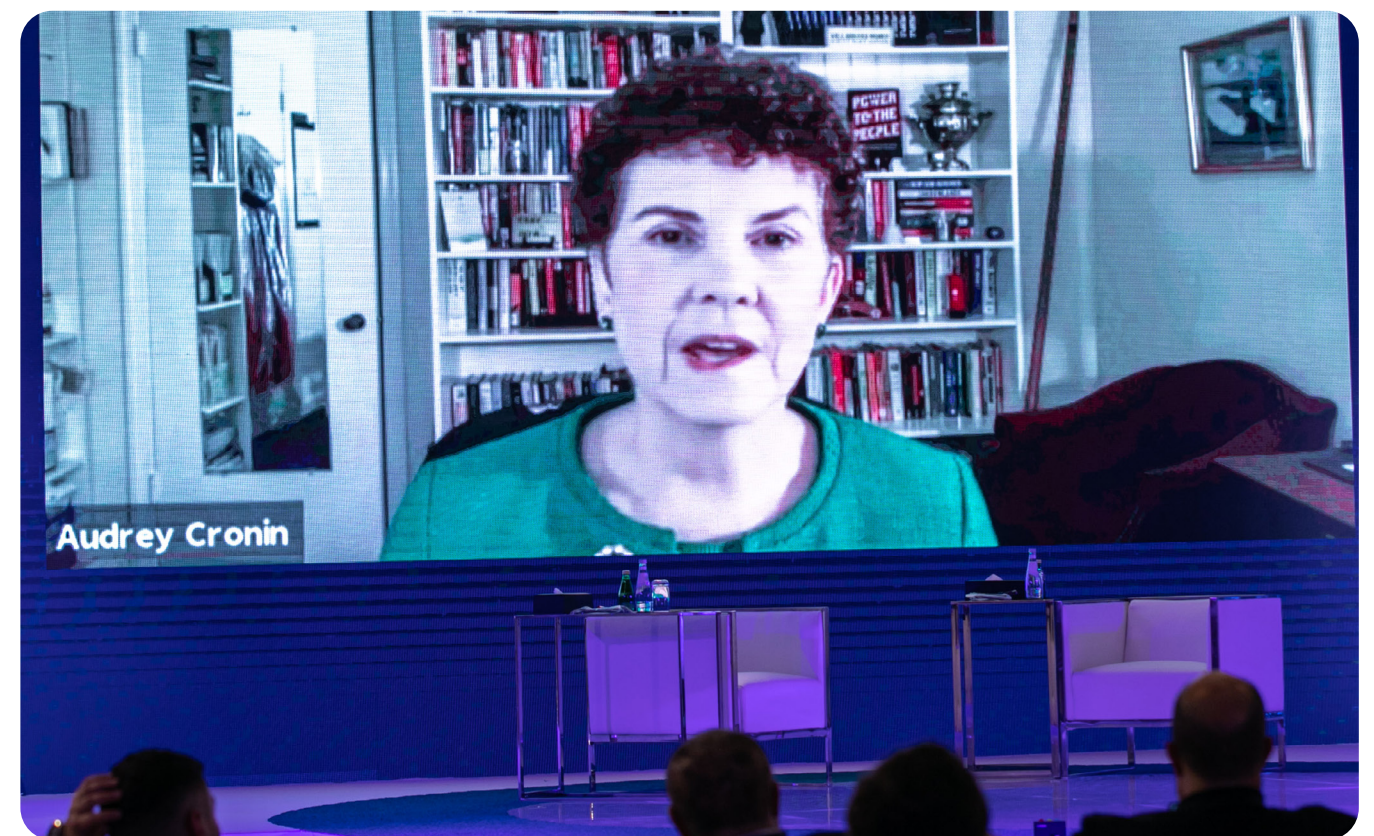
ON SCREEN: Amb. Umej Bhatia, Dr. Tim Wilson, Dr. Audrey Kurth Cronin

With an eye to the influence of technology, Audrey Kurth Cronin, Tim Wilson, and Umej Bhatia discussed the evolution of terrorism over the past 20 years. The rise of the digital age has changed the tactics, mobilization efforts, and propaganda dissemination of terrorism in unprecedented ways. This evolution not only makes the threat of terrorism potentially more lethal, but also brings with it unique challenges for international cooperation, policy making, and leadership. Dr. Cronin highlighted that the line between state actors and non-state actors is becoming increasingly hard to discern, given terrorists' use of tools like the Internet of Things for example, and innovation outpaces legislation and regulation. Dr. Wilson underscored the challenges of building consensus between states on data sharing, privacy, and regulation of emerging technologies—further complicating the efforts to reduce terrorists' use of these same technologies.

“  
The evolution of diffusion, not only in tactics but also ideology and motive, poses a present and future threat

— Dr. Tim Wilson

Twenty years since the 9/11 attacks, the new challenges of cooperation in regulating emerging technology are at the forefront of efforts to counter terrorists across the ideological spectrum. Balancing the need for security with civil liberties is often viewed as a challenge of competing interests within liberal democracies. Differences between liberal democracies and authoritarian countries on approaches to data gathering and regulation of free speech further complicate the ability to build consensus and cooperative tools in this regard. Nonetheless, Dr. Cronin and Dr. Wilson both agreed on the need for greater international cooperation on this front, which will be dependent on political will.



Dr. Audrey Kurth Cronin

“  
We have to find a viable model for democracy in the digital age, that balances the various interests that people have and the relationship between civil liberties and security.

— Dr. Audrey Kurth Cronin



## FIRESIDE CHAT: “THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC: IMPACTS ON GEOPOLITICS, NATIONAL STRATEGIES, AND GLOBAL COOPERATION”

Mr. Matthew Pottinger, *Former Deputy National Security Advisor, United States, and Distinguished Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution*

Mr. Lawrence Wright, *Author and Staff Writer, The New Yorker*



SCAN TO WATCH

“I would say that the list of evidence accumulating on the side that this was an accidental [COVID-19] leak far outweighs the circumstantial evidence on the side that this time it was another natural origin.”

— Mr. Matthew Pottinger

In conversation with Lawrence Wright, Matthew Pottinger discussed the national security and societal impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, including its role in exacerbating social tensions in the United States. Mr. Pottinger emphasized the tangible national security impact of the social fissures so dramatically demonstrated during the Capitol insurrection, and the risks of the erosion of confidence in American democracy. Speculating on the source of the COVID-19 pandemic, he argued that the circumstantial evidence suggests the likelihood of an accidental lab leak rather than natural origin. He also acknowledged the limits of the World Health Organization (WHO) in policy enforcement, suggesting instead that multilateral coordination by groups of states could be more impactful to impose tangible costs on non-compliant countries.



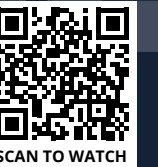
ON SCREEN: Mr. Matthew Pottinger, Mr. Lawrence Wright

Addressing pervasive mis- and dis- information and the need for nuanced analysis driving policy, Mr. Pottinger expressed concern that the bureaucracy of the U.S. intelligence community limits its ability to provide timely, novel analysis. He recommended developing channels for additional research that offer findings beyond the organizational consensus and more expansive utilization of red teaming. Similarly, concerning the critical role of the media, Mr. Wright emphasized, “The whole world needs for America to be educated so it doesn’t make those kinds of [foreign policy] mistakes again.” In Afghanistan, for example, Mr. Pottinger was concerned that without eyes and ears on the ground, a resurgent al-Qaeda would raise questions about the efficacy and safety risks to civilians of “over-the-horizon” counterterrorism operations.

## DISCUSSION & FILM SCREENING OF “TOTALLY UNDER CONTROL”

Mr. Alex Gibney, *President, Jigsaw Productions*

Mr. Steve Clemons, *Editor at Large, The Hill*



SCAN TO WATCH



ON THE PODIUM: Mr. Steve Clemons ON SCREEN: Mr. Alex Gibney

Alex Gibney discussed his documentary film, “Totally Under Control,” with Steve Clemons, before a screening at GSF 2021. The film provides an in-depth look at how the United States government handled the response to the COVID-19 outbreak during the early months of the pandemic. The failures of the response were even more alarming considering that prior to the initial outbreak of COVID-19, the United States had a rigorous and very detailed playbook for how to manage a pandemic. In spite of having in place plans, infrastructure, and processes for managing a pandemic, the U.S. response fell markedly short, noted Mr. Gibney. “You had an administration that was rigorously anti-government. They believed in dismantling government,” he explained, referencing the hesitancy of the Trump administration in executing existing plans to address the pandemic.

As the 2021 Global Security Forum looked at broad dimensions of contemporary security challenges, many parallels were raised with the lessons of the film. From truth decay, to a politicization of science, to hyper partisanship, and weaponized information, both the global security and public health landscape have been grappling with shared symptoms of the same challenge. As the global international system contends with cooperation versus competition, the film sets out the importance of cooperation and coordination across government, private sector, scientific communities, and others. Across vaccine development, Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) provision, and testing, effectual responses require a substantial amount of cooperation. In conclusion, Mr. Gibney shared an ultimate lesson that “one thing you learn during a pandemic is that if you have unequal access to healthcare suddenly you are going to get much more rapid spread which is ultimately going to affect everybody.”

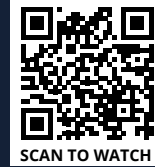
“One thing you learn during a pandemic is that if you have unequal access to healthcare suddenly you are going to get much more rapid spread, which is ultimately going to affect everybody.”

— Mr. Alex Gibney



# DAY 2

OCTOBER 13, 2021



SCAN TO WATCH

## FIRESIDE CHAT: "COOPERATION FOR DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY"

H.E. Teo Chee Hean, *Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, Republic of Singapore*

Mr. Bobby Ghosh, *Editor, Bloomberg*

His Excellency Teo Chee Hean identified three key factors for addressing global security issues in his conversation with Bobby Ghosh: multilateralism, building resilience, and sustainable development. He expressed concern that "we seem to be lurching from crisis to crisis" tied to a dearth of multilateralism and cooperation. Senior Minister Teo advocated for more effective utilization of international institutions, including strengthening regional organizations, like ASEAN. He anticipated rebalancing of geopolitical power and leadership, as well as his hope that the two sides of the Pacific would come together, with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) as one mechanism supporting this aim while also reinforcing the agency of small countries. In regard to the controversy over the AUKUS accord, he noted that the cooperation encompassed is not truly new, but that any novel multilateral architecture should complement existing regional coordination mechanisms and be as inclusive as possible. Driving home the criticality of sustainable development, Senior Minister Teo identified combating climate change as "the challenge of our times," requiring global cooperation and information sharing through mechanisms like the Paris Agreement.

Drawing a contrast to cooperative approaches in responding to the global financial crisis, Senior Minister Teo argued that there have been "many lost opportunities" for cooperation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as a reversion to nationalism. He emphasized the significance of building resilience by sharing how Singapore has drawn on three types of reserves in its pandemic response: financial reserves, organizational capacity reserves for resource provision, and reserves of community spirit and a sense of global community.

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**Enlightened self-interest is more likely to get us win-win outcomes, peace, stability, and co-prosperity in the world.**

— H.E. Teo Chee Hean

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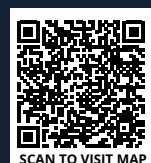


ON SCREEN: H.E. Teo Chee Hean



“  
Our aim is  
to reach a  
regional security  
understanding  
between the GCC  
and Iran.  
”

— H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani



**RELATED TSC ANALYSIS**  
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Crafting a U.S. Strategy*

## **FIRESIDE CHAT: “STRATEGIC COOPERATION IN THE GULF AND BEYOND”**

H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, *Deputy Prime Minister  
and Minister of Foreign Affairs, State of Qatar*

Mr. Ali Velshi, *Host of “Velshi”, MSNBC*



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: H.E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, Mr. Ali Velshi

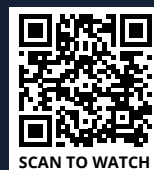
His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani joined Ali Velshi to discuss Qatar’s role in fostering cooperation across several key foreign policy issues. These included the current situation in Afghanistan, the future of the GCC, Iran’s relationship with the Gulf countries and the United States, and the prospect of normalized relations with Israel. His Excellency called for the international community to come together in order to find a way forward for dealing with the situation in Afghanistan, cautioning that isolation would not solve the crisis and ensure collective security. His Excellency noted that there is currently no clear platform for which the international community can come together to agree upon a uniform roadmap for the country, and that it would be a mistake for states like the U.S., Russia, and China to see influence in Afghanistan and cooperation with the Taliban as a zero-sum game.

When discussing challenges in the Gulf region, His Excellency highlighted Qatar’s ability to offer convening power, the country’s commitment to standing with its allies, and building strong institutional relationships with other countries as key components of Qatar’s diplomatic success. These strategic frameworks aided Qatar in its relationships with the other GCC countries, Iran, and the United States. With regard to Iran, for example, Qatar has been continuously encouraging both Iran, as well as the United States, to return to the JCPOA deal. His Excellency noted that while the GCC countries have a long way to go in re-establishing relationships following the 2017 crisis, Qatar is working on identifying further areas of economic cooperation and interconnectedness, as well as building a framework for preventive diplomacy in order to avoid future misunderstandings from escalating.



## FIRESIDE CHAT: “BRINGING TERRORISTS TO JUSTICE AND PROMOTING GLOBAL ACCOUNTABILITY”

Mr. Karim A. A. Khan QC, *Prosecutor, International Criminal Court*  
Mr. Bobby Ghosh, *Editor, Bloomberg*



Mr. Karim Khan, in conversation with Mr. Bobby Ghosh

“  
We need to collectively share the heavy burden to ensure that the space for impunity is narrowed.

— Mr. Karim A. A. Khan QC

In this fireside chat, Karim Khan explored the challenges and opportunities in prosecuting terrorists in discussion with Bobby Ghosh. Drawing on experiences and lessons learned as the former head of the UN Investigative Team to Promote Accountability for Crimes Committed by Da’esh (UNITAD) and his first 100 days serving as a Prosecutor at the ICC, Mr. Khan stressed the importance of states coming together in partnership with multilateral institutions, like the ICC and the United Nations, to seek justice and provide accountability for victims. Mr. Khan highlighted the ability for independent, impartial, and evidence-based trials to not only expose violent extremist ideologies, but also recognize the heroism of the victims that stood in opposition and heal divided communities.

However, several challenges remained in bringing terrorists to justice at the international and state-levels, though crimes against humanity may have been committed. Primarily, such an exercise is underpinned by a partnership between the ICC and states, which requires decision-makers to understand the potential of the rule of law, and the benefits it can bring to a state that exercises it. Instead of viewing it as a human-rights box-checking exercise, Mr. Khan argued that the rule of law should be seen as an integral part of a state’s security, stability, and economic development. In addition, he highlighted the need for the ICC itself to integrate an understanding of diverse cultures and religions in order to promote the universal values of the Court—something that he hopes to further during his tenure. Mr. Khan’s insights illuminated the complex work of the cooperation between the ICC, the UN, and states in promoting justice and accountability.

### RELATED TSC ANALYSIS

*Bringing Terrorists to Justice: Prosecuting ISIL War Crimes and Terrorism*



## FIRESIDE CHAT: “TOWARDS CLOSER JUDICIAL COOPERATION TO TACKLE INTERNATIONAL CRIME”

H.E. Kostas Tsiaras, *Minister of Justice, State of Greece*  
Mr. Steve Clemons, *Editor at Large, The Hill*



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: H.E. Kostas Tsiaras, Mr. Steve Clemons

In conversation with Steve Clemons, His Excellency Kostas Tsiaras reflected on efforts to work with strategic and international partners to strengthen judicial cooperation to address international crimes, including transnational organized crime, terrorism, and others. Minister Tsiaras shared insights on how the Greek justice system was dealing with various dimensions of transnational crime and terrorism today, especially noting the importance of collaboration through the European Union. Touching on transnational threats, he noted, “crime does not stop at the borders of a country. By their very nature, modern crime, such as fraud, money laundering, trafficking, but also environmental crimes and cybercrime, require cross-border investigations by law enforcement and deepening judicial cooperation between countries.” He touched upon important tools within the European Union framework for international judicial cooperation, which included Eurojust and the European Public Prosecutor’s Office.

Additionally, Minister Tsiaras touched upon the importance of both Greece and the European Union working more with other countries, as tools and partnerships are needed to address criminal activity which crosses both internal and external European Union borders on a regular basis. Despite a fruitful climate for judicial cooperation in Europe, there are certain areas however, such as refugees and migration, where states are grappling with managing a unified response. Reinforcing the value of multilateral cooperation, Minister Tsiaras’ commentary set out the importance of collaborative and collective tools for dealing with a host of contemporary security and criminal challenges both within Europe and along its borders.

“  
Criminals may cross both internal and external European Union borders. It happens every day. Close cooperation with third states is therefore crucial in addressing the challenges of more complex crimes that grow due to globalization and digitalization.

— H.E. Kostas Tsiaras



## REMARKS

Ambassador Ahmed Rufai Abubakar  
Director-General, National Intelligence Agency, Nigeria



Amb. Ahmed Rufai Abubakar

Ambassador Ahmed Rufai Abubakar shared insights into development and security challenges in Africa, and the power of multilateral initiatives, with several illustrative examples from Nigeria. The defeat of the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, and movement of foreign fighters from Libya, “sent a wave” of significant terrorist expertise and financing into the Lake Chad Basin and more broadly to the Sahel, he said. Furthermore, the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change have prompted severely exacerbating existing security and economic challenges. Nonetheless, Ambassador Abubakar highlighted progress on multilateral security efforts in Nigeria. For example, the CVE approach in Nigeria utilizes a bottom-up approach, incorporates gender dimensions, and embeds conflict prevention and peacebuilding in the strategy. One critical lesson learned in combatting Boko Haram includes the power of regional and international cooperative efforts on security and intelligence.

Ambassador Abubakar argued that the erosion of multilateralism is limiting effective, cooperative responses to complex security issues that defy borders, such as to the pandemic and climate change. He challenged the international community to reevaluate existing frameworks of engagement and intervention in Africa to ensure such efforts effectively align with local needs, and to apportion greater resources to non-kinetic efforts such as development and peacebuilding.

“

**This global forum however provides the platform to effectively render the call for renewed cooperation and sustained global action to roll back the hostile security environment and development trends in Africa.”**

— Ambassador Ahmed Rufai Abubakar

”

## FIRESIDE CHAT: “AFGHANISTAN EVACUATIONS AND HUMANITARIAN CHALLENGES”

Mr. Dexter Filkins, *Staff Writer, The New Yorker*  
Mr. Ali Velshi, *Host of “Velshi”, MSNBC*



Mr. Dexter Filkins

“  
**There were many Afghans who were willing and able to fight for that society... But the way in which [the withdrawal] was done I think made this outcome more or less inevitable, which was chaotic and a total collapse.**

— Mr. Dexter Filkins

”

In conversation with Ali Velshi, Dexter Filkins detailed the numerous shortcomings and challenges associated with evacuations from Afghanistan as the Taliban assumed power. It was the “most incompetent and disgraceful execution of a U.S. policy that I’ve ever seen,” Mr. Filkins said. He described multiple phases of the chaotic evacuation—in the lead up to the Taliban entering Kabul, when the U.S. still controlled the airport, as well as after the Taliban execute greater territorial control of the city. American citizens, green card holders, interpreters, CIA informants—all people who should have been evacuated months before the withdrawal—were left to navigate the scramble that ensued. Those attempting to help, many in a personal capacity, ended up fighting the U.S. government bureaucracy each step of the way, he reflected.

Over the past two decades, the United States and its allies showed what was possible with international assistance, and the education and rights of many women in Afghanistan were completely transformed as a result of a collaborative domestic and international effort. Conversely, Washington also demonstrated the failure to cooperate and coordinate with allies on a strategic level. U.S. efforts to build the partner capacity of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces (ANDSF) failed miserably, with accusations of “mirror imaging.” The lack of requisite planning and coordination virtually ensured that the U.S. evacuation would be a fiasco, he argued, in large part because the prior diplomatic negotiations were hollow, with the Afghan government sidelined throughout the process. With an economic collapse looming, Afghanistan is looking at a repeat of 1989, a transition phase that ultimately led to the events of September 11, 2001. Afghanistan remains a failed state, one of many in the region, that will continue to fuel radicalism and extremism while destabilizing parts of Central and South Asia, Mr. Filkins affirmed.



## PANEL: “THE CRISIS IN AFGHANISTAN AND FUTURE PATHS”



SCAN TO WATCH

**H.E. Ambassador Roya Rahmani**, *Former Ambassador of Afghanistan to the United States and Non-Resident Ambassador-Designate to Mexico, Argentina, the Dominican Republic, and Colombia; and Senior International Security Fellow, New America*

**Mr. Ioannis Koskinas**, *Senior Fellow, International Security Program, New America; and CEO, The Hoplite Group*

**Mr. Saad Mohseni**, *Chairman and CEO, MOBY Group*

**Mr. Peter Bergen**, *Vice President, New America*

In a conversation moderated by Peter Bergen, Roya Rahmani, Ioannis Koskinas, and Saad Mohseni analyzed the causes and failures prompting the fall of democratic governance in Afghanistan, as well as offered a reality-check of several common claims. Critiquing the U.S. withdrawal as badly managed, panelists challenged the idea that we could not see this outcome looming. Disputing the claim that Afghan security forces did not fight, Mr. Koskinas detailed patterns of provincial governors' local deals with the Taliban, eroding security institutions, and the significant impact on Afghan forces of the U.S. withdrawal of air power and mechanics. Analyzing elements that undermined the efficacy of state governance, Mr. Mohseni detailed how Afghan leaders were detached from realities of the populous, the corrosive long-term impact of corruption, and the loss of state legitimacy prompting opportunism for control. Mr. Koskinas projected that the U.S. decision to give up the longest runway in Central Asia would likely become a major blunder for its implications on U.S. global reach in the realm of great power competition.



ON SCREEN: Amb. Roya Rahmani

“**[The Taliban] are tightening the grip [on the rights of women] as they go along... They are not making any major mistakes that would turn all the cameras back toward them... They have learned that patience and waiting pays off.**

— Amb. Roya Rahmani

“**The elections were actually the beginning of the end for us [in Afghanistan]... with these individual who were at the helm running the country who were so detached from reality.**

— Mr. Saad Mohseni

“**The psychological impact of telegraphing ... I don't think Sun Tzu said, tell them what you're going to do and give up your runway before the evacuation is complete.**

— Mr. Ioannis Koskinas



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Peter Bergen, Mr. Saad Mohseni, Mr. Ioannis Koskinas

Ambassador Rahmani disputed the claim of a “Taliban 2.0,” anticipating little change in Taliban ideology or actions around individual freedoms or the rights of women. She emphasized the Taliban's recent restrictions on women for work and education, likely escalating their measures as international attention wanes. Mr. Mohseni urged the need to continue engaging with the Taliban to potentially impact their policies. “The forever war may have ended for the U.S., but the misery for the Afghan nation continues,” he said. Panelists urged the international community to not walk away from Afghanistan and focus more on addressing civilian humanitarian and security needs.



## PANEL: “THE UNITED NATIONS AND COUNTER TERRORISM: EXAMINING TWENTY YEARS OF SECURITY COUNCIL ENGAGEMENT AND IMPACT”



**Ms. Michèle Coninsx**, Assistant Secretary-General/Executive Director, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

**H.E. Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason**, Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Ireland

**Dr. Majed Al-Ansari**, President, Qatar International Academy for Security Studies (QIASS)

**Mr. Eric Rosand**, Senior Associate Fellow, Royal United Services Institute

**Mr. Irfan Saeed**, Acting Deputy Coordinator, U.S. Department of State Bureau of Counterterrorism, United States

**Mr. Mark Power**, Deputy U.K. Ambassador, British Embassy Israel

In the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) took sweeping steps to develop norms, build states’ capacities, and foster international cooperation to prevent and counter terrorism and violent extremism. However, the threat landscape has changed significantly since then; it is more diffuse, decentralized, and had shifted from Central Asia and the Middle East to Africa, though the impact of the recent Taliban takeover in Afghanistan may yet change that again. As Michele Coninsx noted, new and unconventional methods are also being used, and transnational far-right terrorism poses increased concern. As Irfan Saeed reiterated, multilateralism remains critical to addressing the kinds of emerging threats that require cooperation among practitioners, academics, and governments—such as the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and its inspired institutions, or platforms like the Christchurch Call.



ON SCREEN: Ms. Michèle Coninsx



ON SCREEN: Amb. Geraldine Byrne Nason

“  
If the Council is serious about addressing terrorism, prevention should be a priority.  
”

— H.E. Ms. Geraldine Byrne Nason



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Mark Power, Mr. Eric Rosand, Mr. Irfan Saeed, Dr. Majed Al-Ansari

Security Council actions spawned a complex bureaucratic architecture, often arcane and opaque to many. There was a period, observed Mark Power, where it seemed the UN system was responding to states’ demands with a clear division of labor between different entities. However, what impact—on the threat and on the ground—has the proliferation of UNSC actions had, and does it apply to more localized threats that require multi-stakeholder interventions, asked Eric Rosand. Moreover, the lack of definition has left the framework open to abuse, though it might also allow for more flexibility to address evolving challenges.

Beyond the policy frameworks, however, Majid Al-Ansari noted that a key benefit of UN counterterrorism efforts has been capacity-development initiatives for developing countries. This was especially important in emerging areas like disinformation/misinformation, he added. Despite the volume of activity, the Security Council had remained in a reactive mode; however, “If the Council is serious about addressing terrorism, prevention should be a priority,” stressed Ambassador Geraldine Byrne Nason. Citing the important roles played by women in peace processes in Northern Ireland, she stressed the importance of the Women, Peace and Security agenda and its relevance to counterterrorism, reminding participants that the Security Council had an important role to play in advancing human rights, gender equality, and protecting humanitarian action around the world.

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*Securing The Future Initiative*





## FIRESIDE CHAT: “DOMESTIC TERRORISM IN THE UNITED STATES”

**Mr. Joshua Geltzer**, Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Homeland Security Advisor, United States National Security Council

**Ms. Karen Greenberg**, Director, Fordham Law's Center on National Security



SCAN TO WATCH



Mr. Joshua Geltzer

As the United States attempts to grapple with today's domestic terrorism threat, it remains important not to focus too narrowly on one particular worldview or ideology. There are a range of grievances and viewpoints motivating the lion's share of political violence and terrorism in the U.S. today. As Joshua Geltzer noted, “domestic terrorism is a complex, multifaceted, and evolving threat.” Notably, today's threats significantly vary from the type of national security concerns in the immediate aftermath of September 11, 2001. The threats are now far more diverse and home-grown, and the Biden administration's strategy to combat domestic terrorism is a direct reflection of this nature of the threat. Mr. Geltzer explained the rationale behind the Biden administration's domestic terrorism strategy following the events of the January 6 insurrection, including indicating the need to continue studying whether a domestic terrorism statute may be needed. Nonetheless, the new strategy intentionally focused on a need to protect civil liberties, he noted.

The threat of violent extremism among members of the U.S. military and law enforcement poses a particularly troubling threat, one which Mr. Geltzer emphasized must be scrutinized through implementation of the strategy to ensure that the government does not facilitate the abuse of power and police and military resources to such an end. Echoing a broader theme of addressing the grievances driving radicalization, speakers discussed that making sustainable progress on countering domestic terrorism in the U.S. requires making progress on divisive and systemic issues like guns and racism in America.

“If you think about the [U.S.] domestic terrorist threat today, you can't limit it to one particular worldview, certainly not one particular entity organization.”

— Mr. Joshua Geltzer



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### RELATED TSC ANALYSIS

*Countering Terrorist Financing: Lessons Learned for Tackling Far-Right Terrorism” & “Countering Terrorist Narratives & Strategic Communications: Lessons Learned For Tackling Far-Right Terrorism*



# PANEL: "THE EVOLUTION OF RIGHT-WING VIOLENT EXTREMISM AND TERRORISM"



SCAN TO WATCH

**Dr. Kacper Rekawek**, *Postdoctoral Fellow, University of Oslo Center for Research on Extremism*  
**Ms. Vidhya Ramalingam**, *Founder and CEO, Moonshot*  
**Ms. Deeyah Khan**, *Filmmaker and Founder, Fuuse*  
**Mr. Nicholas Rasmussen**, *Executive Director, Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism*  
**Mr. Jason Blazakis**, *Senior Research Fellow, The Soufan Center*  
**Mr. Michael Isikoff**, *Chief Investigative Correspondent, Yahoo News*

Over the past five years, the threat posed by violent extremists adhering to far-right or conspiracy-theory driven ideologies has been exacerbated by the global pandemic and political partisanship, with violence materializing in both online and offline spaces. The volume and scale of this threat has propelled the matter to the forefront of domestic and international terrorism concerns for many Western countries. However, Nicholas Rasmussen noted how "painfully little" time was spent addressing this challenge in his former role as Director of the National Counterterrorism Center in the United States. Several panelists touched upon the almost singular focus by security professionals on Salafi-jihadist inspired terrorism in the post-9/11 years, with much of the global security architecture and policy focus today less able to pivot to the rising threat posed by right-wing violent extremism as a result.

"I don't believe that legislation and prevention models to pull people out are in contradiction with one another. Both can and should exist at the same time."

— Ms. Vidhya Ramalingam



Mr. Michael Isikoff

"The online environment is an accelerant, an enabler, a catalyst for this kind of radicalization."

— Mr. Nicholas Rasmussen



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Michael Isikoff, Mr. Jason Blazakis, ON SCREEN: Mr. Nicholas Rasmussen, Ms. Vidhya Ramalingam, Ms. Deeyah Khan, Dr. Kacper Rekawek

The importance of the online space to this movement was repeatedly raised, as well as concerns about political climates and heightened partisanship. While the online space certainly presents a risk factor, it also presents an opportunity for proactive responses like engagement and off-ramping. Engagement with vulnerable individuals was raised as a key issue for drawing people out of these movements, with Deeyah Khan noting, "the only way to do this is the only way the people who recruit them into these groups do it. They don't start with the ideology, it's about the human relationship." While the 9/11 era drew significant focus away from this threat, panelists were clear that the right-wing challenge should not be treated as a new phenomenon, because decades worth of experience and knowledge exists in the United States, Canada, and Europe for countering these movements based on past and existing experience.



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*A Perfect Storm: Insurrection, Incitement, And The Violent Far-Right Movement*



## PANEL: “EMERGING TRENDS AND DYNAMICS IN GLOBAL TERRORISM”



**Ms. May Salem**, Program Manager, DDR & Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism, The Cairo International Center for Conflict Resolution, Peacekeeping & Peacebuilding (CCCCPA)  
**Dr. Gina Vale**, Senior Research Fellow, International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation (ICSR)  
**Mr. Mohamed Sinan Siyech**, Associate Fellow, Observer Research Foundation  
**Mr. Omar Mohammed**, Historian Founder of Mosul Eye; Research Fellow, Program on Extremism, George Washington University; and Lecturer, Sciences Po  
**Mr. David Scharia**, Chief of Branch, United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED)

In a panel discussion organized for GSF by the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (CTED) Global Research Network, in which TSC was a founding member, panelists dissected a range of emerging trends and dynamics in global terrorism. Speakers highlighted the lack of resources and implementation for prosecution, rehabilitation, and reintegration efforts in the Middle East and Africa. Omar Mohammed expressed concern over the often warped and disproportionate media coverage of foreign terrorist fighters as compared to the dynamics affecting displaced Syrian civilians, for example.

Speakers encouraged additional research on intergenerational waves of violence and the impact on radicalization and recruitment, as well as on examples of successful community resiliency to counter radicalization and bolster governance. Mohamed Sinan Siyech also highlighted the security implications of climate change, particularly the nexus with food and water insecurity and how natural disasters affect conflict developments. May Salem emphasized how terrorist groups are capitalizing on gaps in governance and trust, as well as ingratiating themselves by providing resources and responding locally to crises like COVID-19 where authorities fail to do so. Furthermore, panelists noted that terrorist groups have often successfully manipulated traditional gender roles to fuel recruitment narratives. Policy recommendations included: more effectively filling security vacuums with peacebuilding, development, and education initiatives; ensuring interdisciplinary approaches to research; and ensuring mechanisms to incorporate civilian victims of conflict in discussion of solutions.

“

**We need to go beyond our own gender stereotypes about the parameters of women’s involvement [in ISIS].**

— Dr. Gina Vale

”

“

**“[Terrorist groups] are responding to climate change... COVID-19... It’s very important that the government is able to provide or at least engage in dialogues and conversations and build trust with communities... because terrorist groups are doing this.**

— Ms. May Salem

”



ON SCREEN: Mr. Mohamed Sinan Siyech, Mr. David Scharia, Ms. May Salem, Mr. Omar Mohammed, Dr. Gina Vale



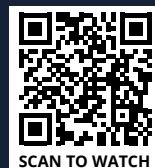
# DAY 3

OCTOBER 14, 2021

## REMARKS

**Honourable Sheikh Imran Abdulla**

*Minister of Home Affairs, Republic of Maldives*



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The security impacts of the climate crisis are imminently affecting the Maldives, noted the Honourable Sheikh Imran Abdulla. “Countries’ self-interests should not outweigh the impetus for cooperation to address global commons issues,” he stressed, calling for multilateral efforts to combat climate change. Reflecting on evolving terrorist threats tied to the COVID-19 pandemic and developments in Afghanistan, he reflected that the pandemic has demonstrated the adaptability of terrorist networks, which have capitalized on virtual channels for propaganda for recruitment. To address concerns about the security implications of the crisis in Afghanistan, Minister Abdulla advocated for global cooperation to support Afghan refugees and to address the potential flow of foreign terrorist fighters.

He particularly emphasized the criticality of government efforts on preventing and countering the threat of violent extremism, as well as the importance of properly resourcing rehabilitation and reintegration efforts. Close to 200 Maldivian citizens traveled to Iraq and Syria between 2012 and 2018, and a large contingent is expected to return to the Maldives soon. In preparation, the Maldives recently established a National Reintegration Center to ensure a smooth transition. Minister Abdulla asserted, “I firmly believe that the future of counterterrorism lies in the strengthening of our local and international P/CVE efforts—efforts that address vulnerabilities in our communities and efforts that seek to adequately and humanely repatriate and rehabilitate men, women, and children returning from the conflict zones.”

“  
**I firmly believe  
that the future of  
counterterrorism lies  
in the strengthening  
of our local and  
international P/CVE  
efforts.**  
”

— Honourable Sheikh Imran Abdulla



Honourable Sheikh Imran Abdulla

## REMARKS

**The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP**

*Minister of State (Minister for Security and Borders), United Kingdom*



SCAN TO WATCH

The Rt. Hon. Damian Hinds MP noted that since the attacks of September 11, 2001, there have been huge strides in international counterterrorism cooperation, though the threats are increasingly wide-ranging and grave. In the United Kingdom, the terrorist threat is diverse and evolving, he said, ranging from complex terrorist plans with overseas elements to attacks perpetrated by individuals or small groups taking inspiration or direction via the internet. Their motivations are often also more varied, making the task facing counterterrorism agencies even more difficult. In the U.K. alone, 31 late-stage attacks have been stopped over past four years. The growth of extreme right-wing terrorism was also cause for concern; about one in five domestic counterterrorism investigations focused on the extreme right-wing, he noted. “It’s a significant threat, and we must use all the tools at our disposal to fight it.” The United Kingdom’s four-pronged CONTEST strategy provided the basis for efforts to protect the country, its citizens, and interests. Despite terrorist threats facilitated and amplified by the internet, the U.K. has been proactive in efforts to combat online harms.

Addressing developments in Afghanistan, Minister Hinds noted that it is necessary to stop Afghanistan from once again becoming a haven of terrorism. In prior efforts to combat jihadist networks, the U.K. was a committed and active member of the Global Coalition Against Daesh and led on efforts to counter their propaganda. Beyond terrorism, threats posed by malign state actions, cybersecurity, and organized crime remained important security concerns in the U.K. In the face of such threats, international cooperation has allowed states to learn from one another; “If we have a stronger mutual understanding, we can in turn make our response more effective.”

“  
**Right-wing  
extremism is a  
significant threat,  
and we must use  
all the tools at our  
disposal to fight it.**  
”

— The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP



ON SCREEN: The Rt Hon Damian Hinds MP



# PANEL: “THE FUTURE OF CVE”

Mr. Jeppe Albers, *Executive Director, Nordic Safe Cities*  
 Dr. Fatima Akilu, *Executive Director, Neem Foundation*  
 Mr. Qudus Malik, *Esq., Executive Director, Global Lawyers for Refugees*  
 Mr. Michael Masters, *President of the Board, The Soufan Center*



Measures to prevent and counter violent extremism (P/CVE) have taken on several forms, addressing development, educational, professional, religious, and sociopolitical issues. Although early assumptions and narratives singled out specific profiles as vulnerable—defined by age, religion, or gender—Fatima Akilu reminded GSF audiences that “it is all age groups and all genders,” adding, “We need to broaden our imagination when we think about extremism and what is next.” Similarly, Qudus Malik noted that the “biggest blunder” of early P/CVE efforts had been to define terrorism by religion. He also elaborated that there was a discrepancy in how different groups were treated in the media and law enforcement, with attacks perpetrated by non-Muslims rarely being described in religious terms.

The need to ensure a diversity of tailored responses was stressed by several panelists. In Nigeria for example, the “soft approach” made education a national security imperative and compelled inclusion of sports and trauma counseling as critical elements of the government’s approach. In Nordic cities, Jeppe Albers highlighted that P/CVE initiatives built on a strong groundwork of education, social services, and democratic values; individual interventions could then draw on these existing resources. However, he noted that it was a bit more complicated to address individuals who did not need the support of local services, as the entry-points for engagement would be more limited. The internet was a game-changer, he noted, and “to focus on prevention we need a digital mindset.”

Michael Masters asked the panelists whether it was helpful, or counterproductive, to use the terminology of P/CVE. While some groups felt that the terminology of P/CVE was politicized, Qudus Malik argued that there was no reason to be wary of government engagement but to instead see them as opportunities to reaffirm positive values. “I never think about terminology unless I am sitting in conferences,” added Fatima Akilu, “I focus on the different issues that need a response.”

“  
 We need to broaden our imagination when we think  
 about extremism and what is next.  
 ”

— Dr. Fatima Akilu

“  
 Relationships with tech companies, with social  
 media platforms... that’s something that was  
 see is the new frontier of [CVE].  
 ”

— Mr. Jeppe Albers



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Michael Masters, Mr. Qudus Malik, Esq, Dr. Fatima Akilu ON SCREEN: Mr. Jeppe Albers



## FIRESIDE CHAT: “DISINFORMATION, CONSPIRACIES, AND THE ROLE OF THE INTERNET”

Mr. Max Rose, *Former United States Congressman from New York*

Mr. Michael Masters, *President of the Board, The Soufan Center*



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Max Rose, Mr. Michael Masters

Max Rose reflected on the emerging threats posed by disinformation and conspiracy theories, and the important roles and opportunities for governments and tech firms to mitigate the threats. The business models and algorithms used by major social media companies are inherently vulnerable to disinformation and conspiracies, he observed, with platforms needing to keep users on their platforms for as long as possible while making sure they can be hyper-targeted for advertisements. “It’s far easier to keep someone attuned to your platform if you are feeding them with hate, with sadness, with vitriol, with divisiveness,” concluded Mr. Rose. In order to address the problem, he made the comparison that social media and tech companies should be held to similar standards of safety as other private-sector companies; for example, such regulation should be similar to that of vehicle manufacturers who are obligated to report and comply with passenger safety standards.

The conspiracy and disinformation challenges compounding national and international security concerns have likewise compounded other public safety concerns, with public health and messaging around the global COVID-19 pandemic serving as primary examples, Mr. Rose noted. Governments are faced with the critical challenge of countering powerful profit generating models that fundamentally exacerbate hate, extremism, and disinformation. Given the serious societal consequences, Mr. Rose concluded that “we are working with a sector here that is not culturally aligned with a strong public sector.” This can quickly prompt real world consequences when disinformation and the spread of propaganda fuels violence.

“  
It’s far easier to keep someone attuned to your platform if you are feeding them with hate, with sadness, with vitriol, with divisiveness.  
”

— Mr. Max Rose



# PANEL: "DISINFORMATION AND CONSPIRACIES: ASSESSING THREATS AND RISKS ONLINE"

**Dr. Marc Owen Jones**, Assistant Professor, Middle East Studies, Hamad Bin Khalifa University  
**Mr. Zachary Schwitzky**, Founder and CEO, Limbik  
**Mr. Michael Isikoff**, Chief Investigative Correspondent, Yahoo News



In conversation with Michael Isikoff, Marc Owen Jones and Zachary Schwitzky considered the risks posed by disinformation and conspiracies in the online space, and the potential offline impacts on social cohesion, politics, and security. Disinformation and conspiracy theories do not take place in a vacuum, but rather intersect heavily with broader social, economic, and political trends in society. Speakers touched upon the importance of the emotive drivers for why certain narratives resonate with audiences and individuals. The present global climate for "weaponized information" also presents opportunities for adversaries and global powers to interfere in national political and social issues, especially in Western countries. "We, as Americans, have made Russia's job significantly easier. Russia amplifies what we put out instead of having to originate it. It's a lot more about amplification now," noted Zach Schwitzky on this major shift.



Mr. Zach Schwitzky

**"We, as Americans, have made Russia's job significantly easier. Russia amplifies what we put out instead of having to originate it. It's a lot more about amplification now."**

— Mr. Zach Schwitzky



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Michael Isikoff, Dr. Marc Owen Jones

**"The scale of harms is often outweighed by their particular business models, which relies on generating engagement for advertising revenue and monetizing individuals."**

— Dr. Marc Owen Jones

The discussion highlighted the complex ecosystem that ultimately allows dis- and mis-information to thrive online, with players ranging from state-backed entities, to for-profit communications companies, to influential individuals and groups online—all manipulating and benefiting from algorithms that amplify their content. This has a detrimental impact on marginalized and minority communities, as well as on legitimate protest and human rights movements. Regulation, legislation, and reform were all presented as options to address the challenge, although speakers agreed that the scale and complexity of the problem presents no easy answers for policymakers.



**RELATED TSC ANALYSIS**  
*Quantifying The Q Conspiracy: A Data-Driven Approach to Understanding the Threat Posed by QAnon*



“

**The West broadly speaking focuses too much of the military response to terrorism. Terrorism is a real problem... and it's a bigger threat to people in the region than it is to people outside, but it has to be seen as a symptom of deeper problems in societies.**

— Mr. Rami Khouri

”



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#### **RELATED TSC ANALYSIS**

*The Decade of Defiance & Resistance: Reflections On Arab Revolutionary Uprisings And Responses From 2010 – 2020*

## **FIRESIDE CHAT: “DYNAMICS OF SECURITY & DEVELOPMENT IN THE MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA”**

**Mr. Rami Khouri**, *Director of Global Engagement, Adjunct Professor of Journalism, and Journalist-in-Residence, American University of Beirut, and Senior Fellow, Middle East Initiative, Harvard Kennedy School*

**Dr. Colin P. Clarke**, *Senior Research Fellow, The Soufan Center, and Director of Research, The Soufan Group*



SCAN TO WATCH



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr. Rami Khouri, Dr. Colin P. Clarke

In conversation with Colin Clarke, Rami Khouri analyzed the social, political, and economic challenges driving civilian uprisings and political unrest in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) over the past decade since the Arab Spring. Two common threads Professor Khouri identified in recent decades in the Middle East, along the lines of recent developments in Afghanistan, are ineffective local governance and unceasing foreign interventions. In many contexts across the MENA region, a new phenomenon has arisen over the past decade of persistent civic protest movements spanning several years and pushing to fully replace the ruling elite, he observed. Lebanon, Sudan, Algeria, and Iraq offer helpful case studies for revolutionary uprisings and grievances therein, about which Professor Khouri wrote in his May 2021 report for The Soufan Center. He emphasized the dehumanization and humiliation of civilians by authorities driving such movements, with the absence of opportunities for redress of grievances or a political voice for the majority of citizens in increasingly militarized states.

In the long run, reform of governance systems to ensure a greater voice and resources to the public is the only sustainable process to address grievances fueling radicalization and extremism. Professor Khouri noted the reluctance to such change by ruling elites that benefit from current systems; responses by authorities have often involved ignoring demands, symbolic reform pledges, or forceful repression. Despite anti-sectarian momentum seen in public protests, both manipulative, fear-based rhetoric by local political elite and foreign meddling continue to exacerbate sectarianism. Professor Khouri pointed to rule of law, freedom of expression, and independent judiciaries as the most critical reforms for the MENA region.



## PANEL: "TERRORISM THREATS AND RESPONSES ONLINE: THE ROLE OF ICTS"

**Ms. Dina Hussein**, *Head of Counterterrorism and Dangerous Organizations Policy for Europe, the Middle East and Africa, Facebook*

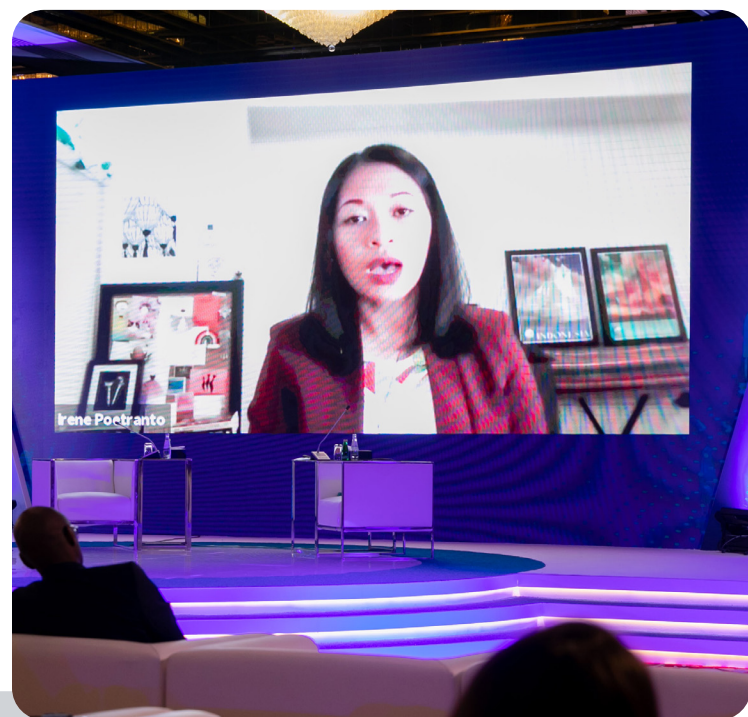
**Ms. Irene Poetranto**, *Senior Researcher, The Citizen Lab*

**Mr. Kevin Baron**, *Founding Executive Editor, Defense One*



SCAN TO WATCH

The role of the Internet, social media, and communications technologies pose immense questions for addressing the mounting security risks posed by disinformation and conspiracies online. Regarding categorization of online threats, Dina Hussein explained Facebook's process for crafting their own dangerous organizations list, through analyzing domestic legal obligations, such as compliance with various government listings in the United States; referencing the UN counterterrorism sanctions list; and forging complementary internal indicators and protocols. Addressing the shift in the nature of online threats, she highlighted how jihadist threats were clearer to define online, given consistent messaging and the clearer command and control centers. Now, the more network- and community-based threats are more difficult to identify and detect across the ideological spectrum, particularly tied to conspiracy theories.



ON SCREEN: Ms. Irene Poetranto

**"The concern is that companies are increasingly serving as the gatekeeper of freedom of expression, the arbiter or decision-maker over what types of content are allowed."**

— Ms. Irene Poetranto

“

**Facebook telling you to not be an extremist is like your parents telling you to not do drugs.**

— Ms. Dina Hussein

”



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Ms. Irene Poetranto, Mr. Kevin Baron, Ms. Dina Hussein

Irene Poetranto expressed concern about states transferring responsibilities to the private sector, resulting in companies "increasingly serving as the gatekeeper of freedom of expression." She emphasized human rights concerns over the use of commercial spyware by law enforcement in the name of counterterrorism and the need for application security and transparency around user data to protect civilian privacy and prevent misuse of data by governments. For example, Ms. Poetranto noted China's manipulation of counterterrorism language and online discourse to justify repression of Uighur communities in Xinjiang and prevent freedom of expression. Panelists also agreed on the need for greater transparency and data sharing by social media companies to facilitate more collaboration with researchers and civil society. Demonstrating effective collaboration therein, they discussed the "redirect" method used to offer users an off-ramp away from potentially radicalizing materials or fora online and toward resources from civil society partners.



# PANEL: "SECURITY, COMPETITION & COOPERATION IN ASIA AND THE PACIFIC"



**Inspector General Boy Rafli Amar**, National Counter Terrorism Agency (BNPT) Chief, Indonesia  
**Dr. Asfandiyar Mir**, Affiliate, Center for International Security and Cooperation, Stanford University; and Senior Expert, United States Institute of Peace  
**Dr. Shashi Jayakumar**, Senior Fellow, Head of the Centre of Excellence for National Security, and Executive Coordinator of Future Issues and Technology, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies  
**Ms. Maya Mirchandani**, Senior Fellow, Observer Research Foundation  
**Dr. Waheguru Pal Sidhu**, Clinical Professor, New York University School of Professional Studies  
**Dr. Ahmad El-Muhammady**, Associate Fellow at the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Hague  
**Mr. Bryan Bender**, Senior National Correspondent, Politico

“Cooperation is the driving force for the region, particularly in Asia and the Pacific, in addressing the scourge of violent extremism and terrorism.”

— Inspector General Boy Rafli Amar



The U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban’s seizure of control will undoubtedly have an impact on the security landscape in Asia and the Pacific. Panelists agreed that the boon that Afghanistan will provide for the global jihadist movement will likely have a detrimental impact on the regional security landscape ranging from the Indian Subcontinent to East Asia, from Central Asia to Southeast Asia. Such concerns are exacerbated not only by organizations in the region that enjoy ties with groups active in Afghanistan, like ISIS and al-Qaeda, but also the history of self-radicalization and the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters that flocked to Afghanistan in the 1980s and Syria in the 2010s. Tied to conflicts within the region as well, Inspector General Boy Rafli Amar detailed his concern that “the region may experience an arms race” that could hamper peace and security.



“From [India’s perspective], the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan has created a set of circumstances that is really pandoras box.”

— Ms. Maya Mirchandani

“In Malaysia, we look at the terrorism threat and radicalization as... locally created, regionally connected, and globally inspired.”

— Dr. Ahmad El-Muhammady

Looking at solutions, the issue of a lack of cooperation and trust among regional powers in the Asia Pacific, coupled with the vacuum—political, military, and soft-power—left by the U.S. in Afghanistan, paints a dire picture. While panelists agreed that international cooperation is key to safeguarding the security situation in countries anticipating spill-over effects from Afghanistan, there was recognition that there was currently little if any political appetite for it and that the U.S. had not sufficiently invested in such regional collaboration to put in place a sustainable convening framework before the hasty withdrawal.



**RELATED TSC ANALYSIS**  
*Terrorism and Counterterrorism in Southeast Asia:  
Emerging Trends and Dynamics*



# PANEL: "DYNAMICS OF SECURITY & DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA"



**Dr. Peter Neumann**, *Professor of Security Studies at the Department of War Studies, King's College London*  
**Dr. Karima Bennouna**, *United Nations Special Rapporteur in Cultural Rights; Visiting Professor, University of Michigan Law School; and Homer G. Angelo and Ann Berryhill Endowed Chair, Martin Luther King Jr. Professor of Law, University of California Davis School of Law*  
**Dr. Oluwale Ojewale**, *ENACT Regional Organised Crime Observatory Coordinator, Institute for Security Studies*  
**Ms. Josie Ensor**, *U.S. Correspondent, The Telegraph*

In a conversation moderated by Josie Ensor, Peter Neumann, Karima Bennouna, and Oluwale Ojewale discussed the impact of terrorism and violent extremism on security and governance in Africa, particularly in relation to the proliferation of regional affiliates of al-Qaeda and Islamic State. Dr. Neumann indicated that while some conflicts maintain a local or regional focus, when they "connect to the wider narrative of ISIS, the struggle for a so-called caliphate, they take on a different dimension." ISIS often exploits the chaos of conflict to gain footholds, he noted. Jihadists operating in Africa capitalized on the crime-terror nexus, noted Dr. Ojewale. Analyzing the competition between ISWAP and Boko Haram, he noted how ISWAP aims to replace local governance, whereas Boko Haram gains infamy for its brutality of violence. Dr. Bennouna flagged the significance of cultural engineering by jihadist groups that aim to destroy local cultural heritage and practices. While international support for counterterrorism efforts by governments in Africa is necessary, Dr. Ojewale argued that success will only be marginal if local authorities do not take ownership of such responses.

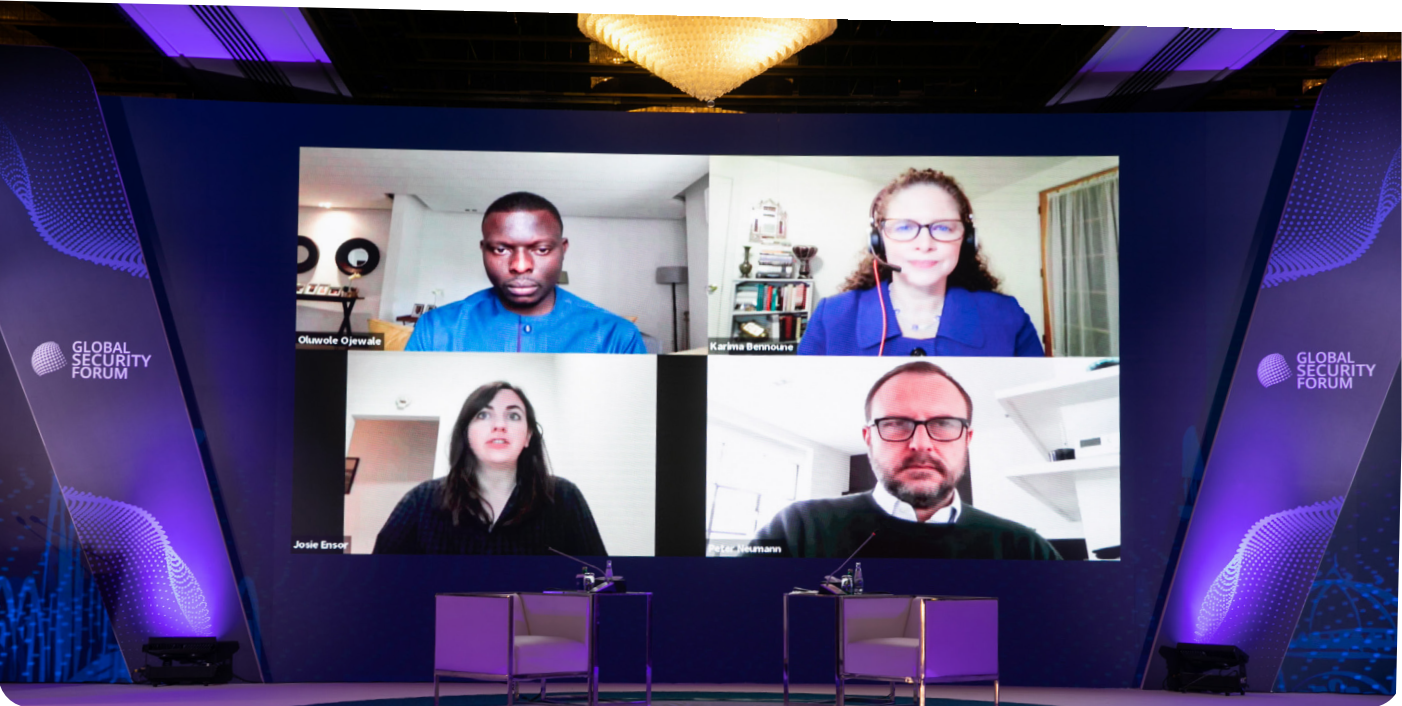
“Poverty provides the enabling environment... to make people vulnerable to recruitment in the first place.”

— Dr. Oluwale Ojewale



Dr. Oluwale Ojewale

Panelists advocated for a whole-of-society and whole-of-government approach, including increased coordination through the United Nations, rather than solely kinetic efforts, to address driving factors that create an enabling environment for terrorism and conflict. The lack of appropriate international response to mass casualty jihadist attacks in Africa is both "morally objectionable and a very large strategic mistake," asserted Dr. Bennouna. She stressed that "we need an international approach that views terrorism anywhere as being equally unacceptable to terrorism in Paris or New York." She similarly noted the importance of the international media covering such stories and not treating victims of jihadist violence as "third world body count."



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Dr. Oluwale Ojewale, Ms. Josie Ensor, Dr. Karima Bennouna, Mr. Peter Neumann

“I think that we need an international approach that views terrorism anywhere as being equally unacceptable to terrorism in Paris or New York... 9/11 should have taught us that the security of those in one place may be directly linked to those on the other side of the world, and that's a lesson we do not want to have to learn again.”

— Dr. Karima Bennouna



“  
Success in  
tackling these  
issues requires  
cooperation,  
not a go-it-alone  
approach.  
”

— Senator Joseph Donnelly

## CLOSING REMARKS

Senator Joseph Donnelly, *Former United States Senator from Indiana*



Senator Joseph Donnelly

Senator Joseph Donnelly, Chairman of the Board for The Soufan Center, closed the 2021 Global Security Forum by thanking all participants and attendees for joining this year's conference. Recalling themes across prior Global Security Forums since 2018, he noted that The Soufan Center built on the momentum of previous conferences by assembling the sharpest minds from government, the private sector, and non-profit worlds for further dialogue. Aligning with many of the topics discussed throughout GSF 2021, The Soufan Center published numerous products and reports this year that underscore the challenges of cooperation in fast moving international environment, while also offering concrete and action-oriented recommendations for policy and practice. TSC publications spanned topics of al-Qaeda, Iran, disinformation and QAnon, violent far-right extremism, terrorism in Southeast Asia, and protest movements in the Arab World.

Senator Donnelly emphasized that 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. He expressed appreciation for the thoughtful new approaches proposed throughout the conference in response to regional and national security challenges, including analyses accounting for the impact of COVID-19 on international cooperation. Senator Donnelly left the audience with one request—to use the ideas and lessons from GSF 2021 as they engage further with colleagues to address global security challenges, keeping in mind that it is easier to achieve change through cooperation than it is through competition.



# MEDIA COVERAGE

The 2021 Global Security Forum was covered by national and international media, who covered a range of topics to include: the repercussions of the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan; human rights violations and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan; future governance prospects of the Taliban; COVID-19, China, and disinformation; Middle East regional dynamics (e.g. GCC, Iran, and Israel); U.S. domestic violent extremism; and COVID-19 and security. Discussions and commentary from the 2021 Global Security Forum were picked up by over 100 national and international media outlets, including AP, AFP, Reuters, Al Jazeera, TIME, The Guardian, CNN, Defense One, Voice of America, TRT, and Yahoo News. The 2021 Global Security Forum was also well attended by national media from Qatar.

The three-day conference also drew upon a distinguished set of journalists and writers to serve as moderators including: Bloomberg’s Bobby Ghosh; CNN Analyst Peter Bergen; Defense One’s Kevin Baron; The Hill’s Steve Clemons; New York Times’ Mark Mazetti; NBC’s Ali Velshi and Richard Engel; The New Yorker’s Dexter Filkins, Lawrence Wright, and Robin Wright; Politico’s Bryan Bender; The Telegraph’s Josie Ensor; and Yahoo News’ Michael Isikoff. In 2021, the Global Security Forum continued to work with Defense One as a media partner.



“Mutlaq Al-Qahtani, special envoy of the Qatari foreign minister, urged other countries to engage more deeply with the Taliban as Afghanistan’s de facto authority, while urging the Islamist movement to act as a ‘responsible’ administration and respect the right of women to work and girls to attend school. ‘We think this (recognition) is not a priority. What’s more a priority as we speak now is the humanitarian, is the education, is free passage of passengers,’ Qahtani said at a global security forum in Doha.”

“What we are saying to the Taliban, which is the caretaker government, the de facto authorities in Kabul, (is that) discrimination and exclusion... this is not a good policy,’ al-Qahtani said in a speech at the Global Security Forum in Doha organized by The Soufan Center. ‘As a de facto authority, you have certain responsibility, obligations to discharge.’”

“I think engaging with them (the Taliban) is the most important now,’ said Mutlaq al-Qahtani, a special envoy to Qatar’s foreign minister, who brushed aside the question of whether to recognize a Taliban government. ‘A priority as we speak now is the humanitarian (situation), is education, is free passage’ of people wishing to leave, he told the Global Security Forum conference in Doha.”

“Top Biden Administration officials also appear to be distancing themselves from the policy. Speaking at the Global Security Forum on Tuesday, Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas said Title 42 ‘is not an immigration policy that we in this administration would embrace, but we view it as a public health imperative as the Centers for Disease Control has so ordered.’”

“Karim Khan, the newly appointed international criminal court chief prosecutor, speaking at the Global Security Forum in Doha, also urged the Taliban to realize they were pursuing an overly harsh form of Islam. Khan, who is Muslim, said: ‘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.’”

“Mutlaq Al-Qahtani, the Qatari Foreign Minister’s Special Envoy for Counter-Terrorism and Mediation in Dispute Resolution, said ‘We believe that recognition is not a priority, and what is more important is humanitarian and educational work and freedom of movement for travelers,’ Al-Qahtani said, at the Global Security Forum in Doha.”



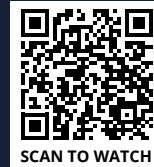
## INTERVIEWS



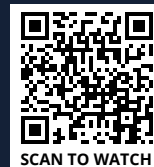
**MR. KARIM A. A. KHAN QC**  
Prosecutor  
International Criminal Court



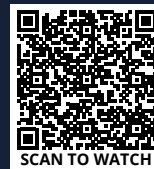
**AMBASSADOR NATHAN A. SALES**  
Former Under Secretary for Civilian  
Security, Democracy, and Human Rights  
(acting), U.S. Department of State



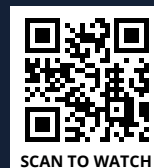
**MR. CHARLES SPENCER**  
Assistant Director  
FBI



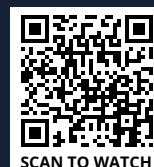
**H.E. DR. MUTLAQ BIN MAJED AL QAHTANI**  
Qatar's Special Envoy for Counterterrorism  
and Mediation of Conflict Resolution



**DR. FATIMA AKILU**  
Executive Director, Neem Foundation



**MR. IOANNIS KOSKINAS**  
Senior Fellow  
New America



Peninsula

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THURSDAY 14 OCTOBER 2021 | The Peninsula

## Communicating with Afghan govt a must for stability: FM

FROM PAGE 1

H E The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs said that the international community does not want to punish the Afghan people on things that has nothing to do with them, noting that the goal should rather be finding ways to deal with conditions in Afghanistan in order to have stability in the country by having the US and other countries engage with the Taliban.

On the recognition of the Taliban government, the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, pointed out that this issue is the focus of everyone, explaining that the State of Qatar recognises the state and not the government.

nents of the Afghan people.

Regarding the divergence of views between Qatar and the US, which believes that what is happening on the ground should be followed up to determine aspects of cooperation with the Taliban, H E Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani affirmed that the two countries share the same goals and objectives for a stable and inclusive Afghanistan and for the people to enjoy their rights by building on the gains made during the past two decades.

Regarding whether the State of Qatar considers itself a friend of the Taliban, he affirmed that the matter is not viewed from the perspective of friend and enemy, but rather that the only way to

cooperative approach with unifying attitudes towards dealing with the Afghan situation.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs explained that the agreement between the US and the Taliban was not the product of a few days, but rather it came as outcomes for many years of action, and that The Taliban acknowledged and pledged to confront and fight any extremist group, pointing out that the Islamic State in Khorasan represents a threat not only to Afghanistan and the coalition forces, but also to neighbouring countries and the region.

Regarding the Qatari-American relations and the challenges that the region is facing, he



GULF TIMES

## Prime Minister attends launch of Global Security Forum 2021

QNA — DOHA

Prime Minister and Minister of Interior H E Sheikh Khalid bin Khalifa bin Abdulaziz Al Thani attended the launch of the 4th Global Security Forum (GSF) with the theme "Cooperation or Competition? Changing Dynamics of Global Security". The three-day conference is taking place at the Sheraton Hotel in Doha.

The launch of the forum was attended by a number of Their Excellencies, members of the diplomatic and judicial corps, experts and academics, as well as policy makers and guests of



bringing up people capable of dealing with the global challenges needs mainly educating the leaders of the future.

"The relationship between universities, governments, the private sector, as well as the community is key in being able to deal with future global security challenges. I think universities need to leave their comfort zones and become more involved with their communities and governments, working together, and feeding their research outcomes into those entities, as well as learning from the practices and challenges being faced on the

الوطن

## رئيس الوزراء يشهد انطلاق منتدى الأمن العالمي



الرئيس الرواندي:  
شراكتنا  
وصداقتنا قوية  
مع قطر



# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

On behalf of The Soufan Center, I would like to sincerely thank our honored guests, speakers, and attendees for making the 2021 Global Security Forum another successful one to add to the books. Despite the tremendous obstacles created by a global pandemic, we were able to safely convene hundreds of experts, practitioners, and policymakers from government, security, academia, media, entertainment, and the private sector over three days in Doha, Qatar. What's more, we were proud to welcome thousands of distinguished speakers and viewers virtually. Thank you for your trust as we navigated the evolving pandemic restrictions and your flexibility in adapting to the hybrid in-person and virtual conference format. Participants' commitment to engaging in the critical dialogues of GSF 2021 embodied the true sentiment and aim of the conference, to reinforce the need for greater global cooperation even as the instinct for competition was strengthened by many geopolitical dynamics.



Addressing the topic of "Cooperation or Competition? Changing Dynamics of Global Security," GSF 2021 included discussions on expanding far-right extremist networks, the evolving global jihadist threat, developments in Afghanistan, the security impact of COVID-19, and great power competition. Exploring regional dimensions across Central Asia, the Asia Pacific, the Middle East, North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Europe, and North America, experts addressed both challenges and opportunities, identifying lessons learned and policy recommendations throughout. In particular, conversations emphasized the importance of promoting justice and accountability for perpetrating acts of terrorism and enhancing support for victims, ensuring strategic cooperation on development as well as security imperatives, and pausing to reflect on lessons learned in the last two decades of counterterrorism. Speakers additionally highlighted the growing disinformation-terrorism nexus and extremists and terrorists capitalization of online fora.

GSF 2021 brought to the forefront the criticality of supporting multilateralism in multiple forms—between governments, international organizations, civil society organizations, public-private partnerships. While many different factors affect terrorism, kinetic measures or counterterrorism is not always the answer, and we must address the conditions and drivers that give rise to these threats more broadly through development, education, and informed policy development and implementation. I am proud that our conference offered an opportunity to reinforce the importance of regional and context-specific analysis for research and policymaking on security by fostering conversation among a diverse group of participants from around the world. We are honored that you joined us for the 2021 Global Security Forum, and look forward to welcoming you to the next GSF.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Naureen Fink".

**Naureen Chowdhury Fink**  
Executive Director  
The Soufan Center

## ABOUT THE SOUFAN CENTER

The Soufan Center (TSC) is an independent non-profit center offering research, analysis, and strategic dialogue on global security challenges and foreign policy issues, with a particular focus on counterterrorism, violent extremism, armed conflict, and the rule of law. Our work is underpinned by a recognition that human rights and human security perspectives are critical to developing credible, effective, and sustainable solutions. TSC fills a niche role by producing objective and innovative reports and analyses, and fostering dynamic dialogue and exchanges, to effectively equip governments, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society with key resources to inform policies and practice.

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# GLOBAL SECURITY FORUM