

## The 11<sup>th</sup> meeting of The Global Strategy Group Middle East

*10-11 February 2014, Marina Hotel, Kuwait City*

### The agenda

As of 5 January 2014

<b>Monday 10 February 2014</b>	<i>All sessions are private, held behind closed doors</i>
9:00-9:30	<b><i>Welcome and self-introduction of participants</i></b>
9:30-11:00	<p><b><i>Towards the fragmentation of the Arab world?</i></b></p> <p>Three years after the start of the revolutions and popular uprisings in the Arab world, the region seems evolving towards greater fragmentation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent is the increasingly acute Shiite/Sunni divide becoming a structural trend with major implications?</li> <li>• Is the region increasingly divided between countries in the throes of political and social tumult and countries – mostly the Arab monarchies – sustaining existing regimes mostly through a tightening of control?</li> <li>• How far will the economic divide between these two groups of countries go and what could be the implications?</li> </ul>
11:00-11:30	<b><i>Coffee break</i></b>
11:30-12:45	<p><b><i>Scenarios for Egypt</i></b></p> <p>The Egyptian military has now established its grip on power and is clearly intent at eliminating the Brotherhood as a political force. The draft Constitution of early December confirms the status of the military, the police and the judiciary forces; it institutionalize the autonomy of the military – which will nominate the defense minister. Religion-based political activity is banned. A referendum in January 2014 is supposed to endorse this constitution. Much will depend on how the constitution will be translated into laws as well as on the timing and results of presidential and parliamentary elections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent the outcome of the Military enterprise will depend on its ability to get the economy restarted?</li> <li>• Will the pro-democracy forces satisfy themselves with what look like an amended version of the Mubarak era?</li> <li>• Will the Military succeed in rooting out the Brotherhood as a political force, or will Egypt go through another rebellion with the promise of a deeper transformation of the existing regime?</li> <li>• What are the possible scenarios for Egypt from underlying tumult, to stability and economic evolution under authoritarian rule?</li> </ul>

13:00-14:15	<b>Luncheon</b>
14:30-15:45	<p><b><i>Syria: The irreversible march towards fragmentation?</i></b></p> <p>The civil war in Syria has so far proved to be intractable to any kind of negotiated, solution among the warring parties with the Assad regime unable to reassert full control and the opposition unable to defeat the regime. Complicating the situation even more is the growing influence of Jihadist forces in the rebel camp and the increasing wariness in Western countries towards supporting the anti-Assad camp with the fear that the alternative might prove to be worse than the present situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can there still be any solution imposed from the outside that would keep Syria together?</li> <li>• What could be the fragmentation scenarios?</li> <li>• What would be the implications of Syria's fragmentation for the region as a whole?</li> </ul>
15:45-16:10	<b>Coffee break</b>
16:10-17:30	<p><b><i>Assessing the implications of the game change with Iran</i></b></p> <p>The late November interim nuclear deal with Iran has the potential of being a major game changer given its regional and global implications. Without presuming what will happen next and whether a definitive agreement can be reached by spring 2014 or later, the deal and what has been going around it marks the reintegration of Iran on the global scene. It might be seen – and Tehran sees it that way – as endorsing Iran nuclear ambitions, or at least leaving them intact. Even more, it crystallizes a major split between the US on the one hand and Saudi Arabia and Israel on the other.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To what extent does the deal indicate a genuine change of mindset in the Iranian leadership?</li> <li>• What kind of realignment in the region is the Geneva deal setting in motion?</li> <li>• Would there be any kind of possibility of a <i>quid pro quo</i> between the nuclear deal and a change of Iran's position with respect to Syria and the Assad regime?</li> </ul>
17:45-18:45	<p><b><i>Debate: If democracy is not for today, then what needs to be done?</i></b></p> <p>There is no denying the fact that the turn of events in Iraq, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt has been a setback and a disappointment for those who were hoping for democratic institutions and culture to take roots in the Arab world. This will presumably take a much longer time and will require more transition phases. So the key question now is: What is needed, and what is to be avoided, in the next period for creating the conditions of an evolution towards genuine forms of democratic regime in the Arab countries in transition?</p>
20:00-22:00	<b><i>Dinner in honor of the members of the Global Strategy Group Middle East</i></b>

<b>Tuesday 11 February 2014</b>	
09:00-10:15	<p><b><i>The Arab monarchies under pressure: Can short-term expediencies prevail over long-term imperatives?</i></b></p> <p>The Arab monarchies response to the uprisings in the region has been to tighten control while, in some cases, lavishing additional subsidies on their people to maintain their acquiescence and increase labor protection and preferential treatment for Gulf nationals in the labor market to reduce the resentment generated by the overflow of foreign workers. At the same time there is a change in political climate and critical attitudes among intellectuals and various political groups. Political expectations are rising among citizens of monarchies.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Could the energy (shale gas) revolution sap one of the power basis of most of the monarchies in the region?</li> <li>• What is the varying margin of maneuver of the different monarchies in implementing some reforms that would do enough to satisfy the people without endangering their hold on power?</li> <li>• How much could the monarchies count on the failure – so far – of democratic experiments in the Arab world to help release the pressure on them?</li> <li>• What are the scenarios for the Monarchies?</li> </ul>
10:15-10:45	<p><b><i>Coffee break</i></b></p>
10:45-12:00	<p><b><i>How much does the US influence still count in the region?</i></b></p> <p>It has been said that Barack Obama is the first US President that both the Saudis and the Israelis neither fear nor trust. Whether it is the flip-flop about Syria, or the nuclear deal with Iran, or the president loss of credibility at home, or the US wariness to use its resources as a the sole superpower for potentially risky endeavours abroad, the perception is one of a US in the decline, of a loss of American ability to shape events.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does this perception of decline reflect a structural trend or is it linked to the policies and attitude of a specific US administration?</li> <li>• What are the implications for the region as Iran reasserts itself as a “rehabilitated” or re-integrated player?</li> <li>• Can the US still be in driving force in forcing a negotiated agreement on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict?</li> </ul>
12:15-13:15	<p><b><i>Taking home: The key trends that will shape events in the next 12-18 months ....and beyond</i></b></p> <p>Drawing on the contents of the discussions of the 11<sup>th</sup> GSGME meeting, this concluding session will focus on the 5 or 6 key trends that have been identified and that are most likely to shape the turn of events in the region for the period ahead</p>
13:30-14:30	<p><b><i>Closing luncheon</i></b></p>