



DEBATE

Chairman of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS)

Thierry de Montbrial, Chairman and founder of the WPC

We have a few minutes. Miguel, would you like to say something? We will have Miguel Moratinos and then Riad Tabet.

Miguel Angel Moratinos, former Minister of Foreign Affairs of Spain

Thank you, Your Highness and thank you, Thierry. You already covered whatever we will talk about tomorrow, but you have given us some ideas, and we will elaborate. I fully agree with His Highness that 100 years after Sykes-Picot, starting to change borders and draw maps could be quite difficult. What really has changed is the new Arab reality. My question is this: in this new world, after 100 years, how would Arab nationalism start and how would Arab states develop?

With the Second World War came the tremendous tragedy of the Holocaust, and the foundation of Israel as a new state, but now there is a new era. I fully agree with your analysis. My question is about how the Arabs are going to have their own say in this new, challenging world. Of course the United States will be there. Korea, Japan and China have their own oil concerns. The previous agreement of the Saudi Arabian royal family with the United States centred on oil versus security. Now, there will continue to be some issues regarding energy in the United States, but maybe the Japanese, Chinese and Koreans will be involved. What is the Arabs' own position in this new world?

Thierry de Montbrial, Chairman and founder of the WPC

This is an appetiser for tomorrow's discussion and, Your Highness, I hope that you will be there and contribute to the discussion. Yim Sung-Joon, I think it is important to have an Asian view.

Yim Sung-Joon, Senior Advisor at Lee International IP & Law Group

My name is Yim Sung-Joon and I formerly served in the Korean Foreign Service, especially as Korean ambassador in Egypt, so I want to discuss Egypt. This is a very rare opportunity for all Koreans to learn about what is happening in the Middle East, and thank you for your presentation. I have a short question about the general situation in Egypt and the Middle East in general. We, in Korea, have closely followed what has transpired in the region with some hope and expectations. This was when the Tunisian people surprised the whole world with the so called Jasmine Revolution, a kind of popular revolt against its dictatorship.

Tunisia was then followed by Egypt's Tahrir Square Revolution, which ousted President Mubarak and his military Government. However, we saw a dramatic turn of events in Egypt last year when the Muslim Brotherhood-backed Morsi Government was brought down. A new military backed Government was launched this year. What impact or implications does this change have over the whole region in the Middle East? Does it mean that the popular democratic movement in the region has nowhere to go?

**Thierry de Montbrial, Chairman and founder of the WPC**

Riad Tabet, from Lebanon

Riad Tabet, President of Berit International Holding SA

Thank you, Mr. President. Your Highness, I am going to ask you a provocative question TdM did not ask. But I am going to continue in French if you agree. Tout le monde trouve qu'il y a un nombre important de jihadistes qui viennent des régions d'Europe, des États-Unis, d'Afrique du Nord, et d'ailleurs. La question qui se pose est pourquoi ? Il y a un problème réel sur le terrain, il y a des constructions dans ces pays - où il y a des musulmans bien sûr - de mosquées et d'écoles coraniques. Le financement de ces écoles coraniques - où il y a aussi des enseignants qui viennent des régions du Moyen-Orient - provient des pays d'Arabie, du Golfe, et d'ailleurs. L'enseignement de l'islam dans ces écoles est un enseignement que je peux qualifier d'unilatéral. Il se fait dans des régions où les étudiants ne connaissent pas l'arabe. Ils ne sont pas capables de voir ce qu'il y a dans le Coran dans son ensemble, donc ils reçoivent des enseignements un petit peu orientés et dirigés. Il y a un genre de lavage de cerveau qui se fait, qui produit des jihadistes qui viennent au jihad en Syrie et ailleurs. Une autre question liée à celle-ci. La plupart passe par la Turquie, et vous avez dit que vous avez de bonnes relations avec la Turquie. Pouvez-vous aussi nous dire quel est le but de la Turquie de favoriser ces infiltrations à part le fait de vouloir le départ de Bachar Al-Assad ? Il y a d'autres objectifs stratégiques de la Turquie dans la région. Si vous pouvez nous le dire. Je vous remercie.

H.R.H. Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Chairman of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS)

You probably know the situation even better than I, but your question is important, and for us in the Middle East to deal with these important issues, there has to be an Arab opinion. Unfortunately, the Arab League has not provided that needed mechanism for many years. However, when you take the Arab League's actions during the turmoil that has taken place in Libya, Syria and Yemen, there has been a contribution from the Arab League to those problems, and a positive one.

I mentioned the Arab League's interim Government proposal in Syria, for example, that Russia and China unfortunately vetoed. The situation in Yemen is one of turmoil, with the Houthis, a very destabilising group that unfortunately also has the support of Iran, but the Arab League and the UN are still playing a role in terms of trying to bring stability. However, on the whole, I would say that the Arab world does need a new mechanism that can contribute more forcefully to the affairs of the region. The GCC countries themselves did not hesitate in instigating Arab League action when it came to Libya, Syria and Yemen, and we foresee a coalition between the GCC and other important Arab countries like Egypt, when it stabilises and has more ability to be active in the area, like Jordan and Morocco, both very important countries in that context, and perhaps other countries can join this coalition. Perhaps that will have an impact on the wider situation.

The Chinese ambassador said this morning that the situation is not that difficult or complicated on some issues; it is simple. Starting with the Palestinian issue, for me, would be the simplest way to begin solving the problems in the area because everybody knows what the solution is. It is a two state solution, based on the 1967 borders. What is lacking there is simply the political will, and if the world community is willing to put the pressure on both sides to achieve that political will, this is what we can start with and go from there to solve other issues. I always tell my Israeli acquaintances and Jewish friends that once this problem is resolved, with Jewish and Israeli money and Arab brains, we can go a long way in terms of fixing the rest of the world. That is one proposition.

The other issue you asked about is Egypt. Egypt is definitely a missing piece of the puzzle that can be very helpful in solving these problems. Just look at the last problem we had in Gaza; even with Egypt's constrained ability to do things, there would not have been a ceasefire between the Israelis and Hamas if it had not been for Egypt, so its ability to do things is borne out by that very important accomplishment they managed to bring about. The Kingdom, as I said,

will continue to help Egypt, but that is not enough; it is up to the Egyptian people themselves to pull up the bootstraps, as they say, and take care of the necessary issues.

President Sisi was very brave in proposing these very important subsidy cuts on energy in Egypt. This is something that has been going on for the last half-century, since the 1952 Revolution, yet no leader, whether Nasser with all of his popularity, nor Sadat, nor Mubarak, were able to take that step, and yet he did, and the Egyptian people accepted it. That is very important, and it shows a sense of responsibility, not just on the part of the President, but more importantly, on the part of the Egyptian people, who were willing to undertake that added hardship on their lives.

However, when such popular uprisings take place anywhere, in any country - even Tunisia, which is not yet a firm base from which the Tunisian people can reach stability, and it is still a work in progress - these uprisings will take their time to settle down and for new developments to take place. Egypt is going through that difficult period. I do not have a particular solution for Egypt, but it is the Egyptians who will find that solution, and for the last 6,000 years Egypt has been known as a country, as an identity, as a border, as a geographical and geostrategic location, and its contributions to humanity are countless, so I am not pessimistic about Egypt. I think they will come out and do the right thing, but first they have to establish stability, and unless and until they do that, no country can go forward from there.

Regarding our friend from Lebanon, last time in Monte Carlo he asked another provocative question, so maybe he is more of an agent provocateur than you. Yes, jihadism is an issue, it is an issue for all of us, and it is not just the Arabian Peninsula that produces jihadists. We have seen that epidemic spreading worldwide, from Europe, America, China, Russia, and even from Japan. I do not know if any Koreans are involved; I hope not, but it is a universal issue. Regarding these schools you mentioned, particularly from Africa, I have heard the accusation that Saudi Arabia, particularly, has given money and sent teachers, and so on, and I have always asked people who make that accusation whether they have a name, a bank account number, a telephone number, a postal address, or any indication so that the authorities in Saudi Arabia can follow whoever has done that, and we have proven that we do that, particularly after 11 September 2001 in America.

We worked with the Americans, we worked with the Europeans, we worked with the UN, so if there are these accusations, they have to be backed up by facts that can be dealt with soberly, neutrally and effectively. However, simply to say that Saudi Arabia or other Gulf states support these schools, without identifying which schools, which persons, and so on, is not enough. The Kingdom is willing to undertake whatever is necessary because, looking at the victims of these people who act in the name of jihad, Saudi Arabia is a victim, and to think that Saudi money goes to these jihadists in order to come back and make Saudi Arabia a victim is beyond my comprehension.

Added to that is the fact that we have taken action against these jihadists. The Kingdom just arrested something like 120 people inside Saudi Arabia, nearly a third of them from other countries in the area, from Syria, Iraq, East Africa and so on. Therefore, just tell us who these people are, where they are, and the Kingdom will do what is necessary, but to simply throw accusations, whether at the Kingdom or at other GCC countries, is not enough. I will be happy to sit down with you, and if you have any addresses, please give them to me.

Thierry de Montbrial, Chairman and founder of the WPC

Riad, should you have those addresses and telephone numbers, please share them bilaterally with Prince Turki Al-Faisal.

H.R.H. Prince Turki Al-Faisal, Chairman of the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS)

Then the question arises as to how he knows these addresses.

**Thierry de Montbrial, Chairman and founder of the WPC**

Your Highness, as always this has been a fascinating discussion. Tomorrow we will continue the discussion on the Middle East in a different way. One of the speakers, by the way, will be the advisor to the King of Morocco on foreign affairs, and since you mentioned the importance of Morocco, this is quite interesting. You will discuss the accounts with Riyadh, and we will discuss together how the WPC could contribute to improving the situation in the Middle East.