

THIERRY DE MONTBRIAL

Founder and Chairman of Ifri and the WPC

First, I would like to thank very briefly the staff of Ifri. I will ask Song-Nim to join me on the stage. Please give her as well as her team a warm applause for their months' worth of work. It is to the whole team of Ifri that we pay homage.

I would also like to hail and thank Florent de Chantérac's production team. Florent, come join us, and let us thank the members of your team through you. The hybrid model is not so easy to achieve, including in places with state-of-the-art technologies, for a number of reasons. Thank you to all Florent's team. When I mention production, I include interpreters for whom it represents a lot of work. Of course, I also include the communication team of Guillaume Foucault who has done an excellent job.

I would like to thank most profoundly the United Arab Emirates. The holding of this event is somewhat the result of a friendship which I already mentioned yesterday in my debate with Anwar Gargash whom I dubbed the Kissinger of the Emirates. I must say that the success has exceeded my expectations for the WPC has never been closer to its purpose, i.e. giving a voice to middle powers and observing the world not through the lenses of superpowers and major powers, which are absolutely welcome here, but to look at the world's problems through our own eyes: the middle powers, the major middle powers, the small middle powers. I think that the strong presence of United Arab Emirates personalities brought a lot to our debates. I thank them very much for this and of course for all the essential help they have provided.

I would like to mention the two people who made the link between the French and the local teams: I give my warmest thanks to Gabriela Iancu who has been constantly in touch with us, as well as to a very close collaborator of Mr. Gargash, Nahida Nakad, who has helped us tremendously during the last phase of the preparation of the conference. Let us applaud them.

I must add a last word: we all understand that planning this event has not been easy. First because it never is, but also because it is – as far as I know – the first international conference of a certain size to have taken place in almost normal conditions since the beginning of the pandemic.

I thank each and every one of you, including of course the participants, our members. Let us cordially greet each other. I thank the speakers, who did an excellent job. I believe their debates and contributions have been remarkable, including of course those of our young leaders who closed the conference. I also thank my wife Marie-Christine. I hope I did not forget anyone.