

THIERRY DE MONTBRIAL

Founder and Executive Chairman of Ifri and the WPC

Ladies and gentlemen, hello. Today, three of us will be speaking French and one Arabic. I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that the World Policy Conference uses two languages equally, English and French. So you can speak French whenever you like. We will be speaking French and Arabic.

What is the purpose of this session? It is the idea I had a few months ago that the World Policy Conference should be a place where everyone can meet. We come from five continents and all of us are driven by the idea of good governance, in other words, doing our part to ensure that the world as a whole makes the best possible progress. This is not a naïve vision of peace. We are perfectly aware of the tragedies going on in the world today, but we are trying to work towards finding the best possible solutions to problems and preventing conflicts from spiraling into war, as happens all too often. That is why we came up with the idea, here in Abu Dhabi, of spending some time with the three Abrahamic religions to get back to basics. What is the point of religions? Certainly not to make war. They must serve to elevate ourselves. They must serve a transcendental relationship that all men and women have within them. It must inspire us to give the best of ourselves.

That is what we propose as the theme of this morning's discussion with three eminent personalities. His Holiness the Patriarch of Constantinople has honored us with his presence since our 2012 meeting in Cannes 13 years ago. We have Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, the Secretary General of the Council of Elders. Frankly, Your Excellency, you do not give us the impression that you have such a leading position among the older generation. You look too young. But after all, young and old can and should work together, and that is what we plan to do. We also have another young man with us, the Chief Rabbi of France, Haïm Korsia, whom you already know as he was with us last year.

These are the three figures brought together here. I would like to thank them very much. In a moment, we shall see whether the goal is achieved, which I have a feeling it will be.