

NABIL FAHMY

Dean Emeritus of the American University in Cairo, former Foreign Minister of Egypt

Steven Erlanger, Chief Diplomatic Correspondent, Europe, for *The New York Times*

Ladies and gentlemen, I am Steven Erlanger, and I have the great privilege of doing this panel on the Middle East. We have a nice tight panel, which is good, because we are hoping to have a conversation. Everything is going to be a bit shorter because of the long lunch but before I start, I wanted to say two things. One is to thank Thierry, Song-Nim and all the team for truly a substance-filled conference. I have been very impressed because there are a lot of conferences that are not nearly as substantive. Second, if I am allowed, I just want to make a nod to someone who used to come to this conference constantly, who was a great friend called Jim Lowenstein, who died at the age of 95. He was an American Ambassador, he founded the French-American Foundation, he played tennis into his eighties, he was very important in his criticism of the Vietnam War as a young foreign service officer. A charming man, I miss him terribly and I just wanted to bring his name up.

Onward to our real substance. I will not introduce these two gentlemen, I think everyone knows who they are. I am just going to start with you, Mr. Fahmy. Anwar Gargash was here, and he gave a pretty good speech and said that October 7 was a geopolitical earthquake. To me, October 7 was a bit like the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989, it was completely unexpected, it was not predicted, and the ripples are continuing. What are the outlines of this earthquake, and do you think there are more ripples to come?

Nabil Fahmy

Sure. First of all, thank you for the question. Before I get into that I want to thank Thierry and the WPC team for the invitation and all the hospitality, and of course, I want to thank the Emirates for their continuous hosting of this project.

I agree, I actually think that October 7, October 8 and thereafter, was a geopolitical shake down or earthquake but I do not think it was a surprise. The volume, if you want the bloodshed, was a surprise. But with 70 years of conflict, you have had recurrent outbreaks of violence. To get to your point, before October 7 we were all becoming complacent that this could continue with occupation and tension, security and insecurity, without there being damage. More and more, people even started to lose sight of the very fact that the real solution to this Israel living in security and peace in its borders and the Palestinians in security and peace in their borders. Before October 7, the two-state solution was something that you and I talked about but not the public.

Steven Erlanger

Even you and I did not talk about it much.

Nabil Fahmy

With what happened on October 7 and after that, now everybody understands, this cannot continue. There will be continuous bloodshed, recurrent, nobody knows who will start it and where unless we solve the problem and that means doing two things at the same time or at least linking them together. That is dealing with the crisis, in other words October 7 and the ramifications, the Gaza situation and ultimately finding a way to lead that into the resolution of the conflict, which is Palestine-Israel, which has to be dealt with in itself and that always has ramifications regionally and many others.