

HIS EXCELLENCY OMRAN SHARAF

Assistant Foreign Minister for Advanced Science and Technology of the United Arab Emirates

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Now, His Excellency Omran Sharaf has the floor.

Omran Sharaf, Assistant Foreign Minister for Advanced Science and Technology of the United Arab Emirates

First of all, I would like to thank the organizers for having me here, it is such an honor and pleasure to speak about a very important topic. For me, AI is just the beginning of bigger challenges and opportunities that emerging and critical technologies will bring to nations, regions and geopolitics. Earlier we spoke about it from a technical point of view and today, on my side, I would like to focus a bit more on the political side of emerging and critical technology, which includes AI.

In the past, technology played a vital role in shaping the geopolitical landscape in the background. Today with AI and other upcoming emerging technologies, the arrow has shifted to being in the frontline. I am saying this because in the past, advanced technologies were only focused or within the reach, capacity and capability of state actors. Today, we have non-state actors who actually have access to this sector, developing this technology and having a say in how this technology is shaped down the line. Because of this, the impact on the equation that defines geopolitics has changed. Technologies such as AI and others, whether it is genomes or quantum, where there was a recent breakthrough, will change the ways nations deal and work with each other and AI is an excellent platform or opportunity for us to learn how to prepare.

In general, I believe as nations we have been very reactive when it has come to actually dealing with AI. Some people are panicking, some are not, and I think it will bring many more opportunities than challenges. The question is how we govern it, if we regulate it or nurture it so that it goes in the right direction. I think this debate needs to happen at the level of multilateral platforms and bilateral discussions, where nations have to discuss this but at the same time, not hinder or stop the progress of the developments in this important field that brings a lot of benefits to humanity.

That takes me on to the next point in relation to nations working together. Because of AI and other emerging technologies, countries will have to revise their approach to collaboration and the relationships they establish with each other, with blocs, or even working with countries they may not see eye-to-eye with. The ways that these technologies are applied and used are



becoming more complicated. In the past, it was very easy to talk about national political systems, pensions, social setup, demography, etc., and build relationships or ties with other nations, whether strategic or transactional. Today, with emerging technologies, that has changed a lot, and it requires more depth, and a better understanding of the points of views of other countries. I am saying this because, when it comes to emerging technologies like AI, the risk is too high of having very divergent discussions or multipolar discussions. That is because it will involve a different code of ethics, different guidelines and different blocs not working together and that is very dangerous. The fact that this technology is very complex actually requires us to work together because from an efficiency point of view, it is more efficient and effective for us to collaborate rather than have different blocs not working together on this important and critical capability.

This is how I want to start, and I would like us to have the opportunity to focus on the questions that come up.

Daniel Andler

Thank you very much, Your Excellency. You raised the issue of emerging technologies, we have not yet talked about converging technologies, but it is in the background, and we may go back to that.