



2017 FELLOWS AT THE MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE, WASHINGTON D.C.

The 2017 Gabr Fellows have completed both the Egypt and the US exchange program *The US part of the Gabr Fellowship exchange, which took place in New York, New Jersey, Washington, D.C. and Virginia between 21-29 October has come to a close. However, the Gabr Fellowship continues, and meetings with the Fellows shall take place regularly, with the nineteen 2017 Fellows added to the Gabr Fellowship Family, which now stands at 101 Fellows.*

With the fifth Gabr Fellowship exchange program finished, and reflecting on this year's cohort, I feel a strong sense of pride for the young men and women who participated in this year's Fellowship. They have shown great intellectual curiosity, determination, active participation in the meetings, and also integrity and loyalty – all traits of true Gabr Fellows.

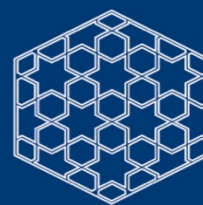
In return, the visits to the US and Egypt have been a life-changing experience that has shaped each and every one of them and will stay with them wherever life may lead them next.

I would like to once again thank everyone who has made the 2017 Gabr Fellowship a memorable one – all the distinguished speakers and their supporting staff, and people who have graciously opened the doors of their homes and their institutions to the Fellows.

Special thanks also to members of the Shafik Gabr Foundation Advisory Board, especially Congressman Nick Rahall and Brigadier General (Ret.) Tom Cosentino, plus my dedicated staff – Samantha, Eman, Aleks, Reham and Alina.

Finally, a thank you to previous years' Fellows who have been a support to the new cohort, and the 2017 Fellows themselves – you are the reason this program exists, and you continue to motivate me to develop and expand the Gabr Fellowship.

M. Shafik Gabr



The
SHAFIK GABR
Foundation

The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

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IN THIS ISSUE

▪ Gabr Fellows' News

- Read about the latest news and achievements of our Fellows

▪ Fellowship Updates

- Read the article *Despite obstacles, Egypt is strengthening its partnership with the US* by Dr. Sasha Toperich, one of this year's Fellowship speakers
- Watch the panel discussion *Egypt-US: The Path Forward* held at the SAIS Johns Hopkins
- 2018 Fellowship Applications commence on January 8, 2018

In Focus...

Magda Kura on Whole Whale podcast



The podcast covers stories of data and technology at non-profits across the country. **Magda Kura (2015 Gabr Fellow)** talked about Democracy Works and TurboVote, the tech tool she manages, which is used to improve voter turnout and participation. Listen to the podcast here:

<https://www.wholewhale.com/podcast/072-voting-work-democracy-works/>

Nourhan Moussa to represent the USA at the UN Security Council simulation of the 2017 World Youth Forum



As part of the Presidential Leadership Program, **Nourhan Moussa (2014 Gabr Fellow)** is part of the organizational team behind the 2017 World Youth Forum.

The World Youth Forum will also hold a simulation of the UN Security Council, where more than 60 young people from around the world will participate. Nourhan has been chosen as one of three people to represent The United States of America at the simulation. The sessions of the Security Council take place from the 7th to 9th of November. For more information, and to tune in, please visit <https://egyouth.com/en/>

Alexis Taylor is the new Vice President of the Austin Hub of the World Economic Global Shapers



Alexis Taylor (2016 Gabr Fellow) was recently accepted into Impact Hub Austin's *Affordable Housing Accelerator* with the venture she has developed to monitor and promote enforcement of City-funded affordable housing project agreements.

She is currently advising the City of Austin on their Economic Development Policy, and was selected by the White House and the State Department to represent *3 Day Startup* and Austin, Texas at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Hyderabad, India. The delegation will be led by Ivanka Trump.

Alexis says: "All of this and more is because of the Gabr Fellowship. I'm very grateful for the time the Foundation has invested in me to make all of this possible."

Daniel Lansberg-Rodriguez welcomes two beautiful girls to his family



Daniel Lansberg-Rodriguez (2013 Gabr Fellow) and his wife Marianell recently welcomed the birth of their happy and healthy twin daughters, Michelle and Claudia. Congratulations!!

Kemp Gouldin Launches Egyptian Youth Baseball League's first season



Thanks to the efforts of **Kemp Gouldin (2015 Gabr Fellow)** and his Because Baseball Initiative, on October 28th, 100+ Egyptian youth hit the fields in Cairo for the Egyptian Youth Baseball League's first season!

Stay tuned for more information, videos and photos, and follow Kemp's Twitter on @BecauseBaseball - and in the meantime check out this video picked up by RightThisMinute:

<http://www.rightthisminute.com/video/rtmtv-egyptian-children-are-introduced-americas-past-time>

Bryan Griffin runs NYC marathon



It seems like the fast pace of the recently completed Gabr Fellowship did not tire out **Bryan Griffin (2017 Gabr Fellow)**, who joined the New York City marathon on Sunday, 5th November.

SAIS Johns Hopkins hosts a special panel discussion entitled *Egypt-US: The Path Forward*



As part of the 2017 Gabr Fellowship, on October 24, the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), a division of Johns Hopkins University, hosted a special panel discussion entitled *Egypt-US: The Path Forward*.

The panel consisted of **Mr. M. Shafik Gabr**, Chairman of The Shafik Gabr Foundation, **The Honorable Mark Kimmitt**, Former Assistant Secretary of State (POLMIL) BG (ret) US Army, and **Congressman Jeff Fortenberry**, U.S. Member of Congress (R-NE). The panel was moderated by **Dr. Sasha Toperich**, Senior Fellow, SAIS, and Director of the Mediterranean Basin Initiative.

The panel had a lively and interesting discussion on the relationship between the US and Egypt on the military, political, academic, business, and economic fronts and what is in store for the future.

Watch the full discussion here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FPRQbogFBEO&t=1481s>

Ibrahim Hammouda awarded at the Halaqet Wasl Organization



Ibrahim Hammouda (2017 Gabr Fellow) has been honoured by the Halaqet Wasl cultural organization, about which we have written in the previous Newsletter. The ceremony took place on 31st October, and we have a snippet of Ibrahim's speech below:

"If you want to study people, read their novels. Culture has always been a main factor of bringing people together. And as a poet, and a writer, I hopefully add to our Egyptian soft power. I have been to the States to build bridges between us. However, I would not have done this without the Shafik Gabr Foundation, which gave me the chance to take part in its great efforts that support peace, and humanity."

2017 Gabr Fellows complete their US trip – take a look at what they have been up to...



2017 Gabr Fellows at FOX News with Mr David Clark, Mr Eric Shawn and Ms. Arthel Neville (left), and at the CNBC Studios with Mr Brian Sullivan (right).

The U.S. visit of the Gabr Fellowship Program ended on October 29, 2017. The 2017 Gabr Fellows have gone back to their day jobs after a ten-day intellectually and culturally intense visit to the US. But this marks only the start of lifelong friendships, intellectual and cultural exchanges, the continuation of fulfilling careers and effecting positive and necessary change in the world of today. Averaging seven different meetings and topics per day, along with three working receptions, the intensity and diversity of each day offered the 2017 Gabr Fellows much food for thought.

The 2017 Gabr Fellows, along with the U.S. Gabr Foundation Director Samantha Kleinfield and Egyptian Fellowship Director Eman Saleh, started off their American journey in the city that never sleeps, New York City. During the three days in New York, the Gabr Fellows met with prestigious speakers at American Pulse TV, FOX Studios, CNBC, Drew University, Asia Society, Morgan Stanley, Metropolitan Museum of Art, and Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. The Fellows also visited the Egyptian Consulate and its Mission to the United Nations.

Emblematic of the diversity that is the City and the group of Egyptian and American Fellows, the topics covered ranged from healthcare, finance, real estate to news media, storytelling, culture, and the performing arts. They also varied from Middle East stability, the role of the United Nations in the 21st Century, and the role of Egypt in the UN Security Council to interfaith dialogue, the feasibility of coexistence, and arts as the engine of innovation. More specifics on the speakers and topics discussed can be found in the forthcoming 2017 Gabr Fellowship trip report to be published by January 2018.

The Fellows also had a chance to visit the 9/11 Memorial and Museum and take a night boat cruise on the New York Harbor, where they reflected on their Egypt trip and on the similarities and differences between Cairo and New York.



2017 Fellows at Morgan Stanley with Mr Brian Pfeifler (left), at the UN Security Council (center) and at the Pentagon with Dr. Dot Ohl, Dr. Larry Rubin and Ms. Rachel Brandenburg (right).

The second half of the 2017 Fellowship Program took place in the nation's capital, Washington, D.C. and Virginia, where several Federal Agencies are headquartered. The Gabr Fellows visited various parts of the U.S. Federal Government's Executive Branch (White House, National Security Council, State Department, Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, and Justice) and the Legislative Branch of the U.S. Government (the Senate and the House of Representatives). They also visited The World Bank, SAIS Johns Hopkins University, the Middle East Institute, the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, the Atlantic Council, Cushman & Wakefield, the Aspen Institute, the Egyptian Embassy and Defense Attache's Office, the National Gallery of Art, and the Smithsonian Museum – the world's largest museum, education, and research complex.

A breathtaking array of topics were covered during these four days of intense meetings and dialogue in the nation's capital. The US-Egypt relationship (in regional, military, diplomatic, political, foreign policy, and economic terms), the future of the Middle East and the world order more largely, the Iranian nuclear deal, Qatar, and the Muslim Brotherhood were discussed at great length. Clarifications were made on the entire context of the military and economic aid from the U.S. to Egypt that cannot be understood simply from reading the news. The Fellows together with the speakers made noble attempts at solving the challenges and opportunities in counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism, including how to achieve a universal definition for terrorism and violent extremism, and studied how events such as the looting of antiquities relate to terrorism. They examined the evolution and future of cyber-security, privacy, and weighed the pros and cons of the "Internet of Things." Distinguished speakers also provided explanations of other aspects of homeland security such as borders, immigration, and trade policy, and the opioid crisis. Speakers also analyzed together with the Fellows climate change, Middle East sovereign wealth funds, and opportunities for enhancing US-Egypt investment, regional infrastructure, and private-public partnerships.

Emphasis was also placed on the importance of communicating across national and cultural divides and investing in people-to-people exchange and education between the Middle East and the U.S., which is already embodied in several Gabr Fellows' action projects this year. Time was made for the Fellows to present their action projects to Mr. M. Shafik Gabr and the rest of the group and get valuable feedback. The Fellows rounded out the week of meetings with cultural visits to explore the recurring motifs in Orientalist Art at the National Gallery of Art and American history, science, and innovation in various Smithsonian museums.

Special thanks goes to The Honorable Georgette Mosbacher, to McDermott, Will & Emery, and to the Egyptian Ambassador to the U.S., Ambassador Yasser Reda, for welcoming and honouring the Gabr Fellows at three very special receptions during their stay in the U.S.

Stay tuned for more updates in the forthcoming Newsletters, in the 2017 Fellowship Brochure, and for live updates on the Foundation website (<https://eastwestdialogue.org/>).



2017 Gabr Fellows with Congressman Dana Rohrabacher



Gabr Fellows at the National Gallery of Art with Dr Mary Morton



Gabr Fellows at U.S. Capitol with Congressman Nick Rahall and Mr John Ciccone

Despite obstacles, Egypt is strengthening its partnership with the US

by **Dr. Sasha Toperich**, Senior Fellow and Director of the Mediterranean Basin Initiative at The Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS

Dr. Sasha Toperich writes about the strengthening of the relationship between Egypt and the US, and mentions the important work of the Shafik Gabr Foundation

I watched President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi's address at the United Nations last week from the DMC TV studios in Cairo. Along with Dalia Youssef, a member of the Egyptian parliament; Mamhoud al-Said, former ambassador and assistant foreign minister; and Ahmed Abou Ali, vice president of the AmCham Egypt, I was a guest of Ossama Kamal's, a well-known television anchor in the country.

In my view, the address served to reassert Sisi's leadership on the global stage and was an indication of Egypt's return to a regional and international role after an exasperated period of revolts and political and economic instability.

In his address, Sisi rightly highlighted that Africa is not only "at the heart of Egypt's foreign policy" and where "[our] historic roots lie," but considering the free tax agreement Egypt has with the continent, it is also an appealing destination for Egyptian businesses.

He was correct to contrast the security threats in Africa as similar to the ones faced in the Arab world. In Egypt's uncompromised fight against terrorism and efforts to eradicate terrorist groups in Sinai and those that daily attempt to infiltrate to Egypt from Libya, Sisi talked about the need to eliminate its root cause, but not only through military means. Egypt could swiftly emerge as an example of bold religious reforms, which Sisi launched with the Grand Mufti of Egypt and Al Azhar, one of the world oldest Islamic University based in Cairo.

The effort includes newly established communication channels of Islamic authorities in Egypt with the young generation through social media, and Dar-el-Ifta (the Egyptian State-run Islamic Institution) now has over 6,200,000 followers. The institution has established offices in 35 countries, where it regularly

monitors websites and mosque prayers in order to identify those who interpret the Quran in ways that incite violence and encourage Islamic radicalism. Dar el-Ifta also opened phone lines to promptly communicate with people who provide religious guidelines in moderate interpretations of the Islamic teachings. They observe international and local religious preaching in mosques and engage with those who misinterpret the Muslim Holy Book in radical ways.

Elements of the banned Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt are trying to undermine the religious reforms by calling Sisi a secular detached from Islam — which is certainly not the case — but Egyptians are seeing through the fog and lies of the Muslim Brotherhood and it is unlikely that they will ever be tricked again. Muslim Brotherhood efforts — mostly through social media — to instigate sectarian division between Egyptian Muslims and Christians have been unsuccessful and clearly show the true nature of their organization.

At the U.N., Sisi also talked about the importance of empowering youth through the economic reforms Egypt has undertaken. In creating a "new Egypt," education reform is perhaps the most fundamental, and this is a field where Egypt faces many challenges: From the need to modify school curricula, reduce the number of teachers (from 1,350,000 to an optimum of 850,000), restructure classroom structures (where now up to 70 students share one classroom), and train teachers so that they uphold high educational standards.

Egyptian thinkers and politicians are keen to open more channels of communication to improve mutual understanding and cooperation. The warm relationship between U.S. President Trump and Egyptian President al-Sisi is important, but people-to-people connections are vital and must be improved significantly. For example, it took nine years for an Egyptian parliamentary delegation to visit Washington D.C., which happened last June. A dire lack of such communications created serious gaps that need to be bridged.

This burden cannot only rest on Shafik Gabr, a brilliant example of a true visionary and

beacon of the people-to-people ties between the U.S. and Egypt through youth exchange programs and fellowships within his "East – West Dialogue" foundation.

Egypt needs a strong partner in the United States. The country is going through difficult structural reforms to modernize and balance its economy, while still healing from the destructive legacy created by Morsi's Muslim Brotherhood, along with fighting terrorism and keeping its citizens safe. The country is managing to bring its foreign policy back on its feet, but with respect to diplomacy and overall reforms, it will take time to move ahead from "Nasserism" and the outdated socialist political mentality.

We need to understand this and reassure the Egyptian society that we stand together in this journey. Criticism from the U.S., especially on human rights issues, is important and healthy. After all, Sisi himself acknowledged that there are issues in this respect and that Egypt is addressing them in manner and ways that will not hamper security efforts to bring lasting stability. This is vital not only for domestic security, but for the tourism sector, the Egyptian economy, but also regional stability.

However, criticism alone won't do much. Building stronger connections between Egyptians and Americans on all levels, fostering better understanding of each other, and being there for each other is the only way forward if we are to start a new area of U.S.-Egypt relations.

This relationship is in and of itself important to both countries, but it also strategic, having in mind the crucial role that Egypt could play in any peace agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians. The meeting between Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and President al-Sisi that took place at the U.N. Assembly can attest to that.

There can be no doubt that, despite its problems, Egypt is moving in the right direction.

<http://thehill.com/opinion/international/35270-despite-obstacles-egypts-partnership-with-the-us-is-strengthening>

The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

For more information on the Shafik Gabr Foundation and its *East-West: the Art of Dialogue* Initiative, please visit the website <https://eastwestdialogue.org/>.

For earlier itineraries of the US program, please see the previous years' reports at <https://eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/brochures/>



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