

The
SHAFIK GABR
Foundation



Gabr Fellows meeting in Cairo with Chairman Shafik Gabr and Mrs Gehan Gabr, October 2021

THE EGYPTIAN

I had a long day at work, with one late meeting with my Senior Director for Development, before leaving for dinner at the Royal Automobile Club—although to be precise, they cancelled the word Royal after 1952.

Ahmed Selim walked into my office, very dignified as always wearing a dark blue suit, a crimson tie and brown loafers. Ahmed, born in 1960, did not look like he could be older than 45 with salt and pepper hair and a slight beard. Athletic, a deep thinker and a successful investor since his twenties, Ahmed used to run investment funds in New York and London, before returning to Cairo just over a year ago.

After pleasantries were concluded, we were joined by our Vice President for Planning Raouf Shams where we discussed the outlook for 2022/23. Once we had finished, Ahmed turned to me and said “Sissi is trying to make miracles happen”.

I was a bit surprised that Ahmed had suddenly shifted the topic of discussion and asked him to clarify his point.

Ahmed relaxed in his seat and crossed his legs and said “I have been observing Egypt very carefully since my return and we are facing some very serious challenges.” Ahmed sighed and continued: “I am a very proud Egyptian, even though I have lived abroad and have a second home abroad, but as an observant citizen who wants to see Egypt have its proper place in the world of nations, I believe we must point in full transparency to the challenges.”

Raouf said: “Mr Selim, you have lived abroad. Egypt is a developing country and it’s difficult to compare so directly.”

Ahmed looked at Raouf and said: “With all due respect, you are wrong. China was a less-than-developed country, with opium in every corner, and where is it now? In only 50 years China has become the second global economy.”

“What Egypt lacks is its population becoming as serious about their development as Sissi is.” Ahmed added.

IN THIS ISSUE:

- About the Fellowship
- Article: A Russia-Ukraine exit strategy by Tom Pickering
- Chairman Gabr's book recommendations
- Connect with us
- March birthdays
- Fellows news and updates
- How you can support the Fellowship
- Spotlight on: Becca Doten
- Questions of the Month: a pulse of the Gabr Fellowship Community

I asked Ahmed to clarify again. He responded by saying that last month he went to the Ministry of Justice's "experts" building for a meeting. Ahmed explained: "I not only felt sorry for the staff there - I felt embarrassed as an Egyptian. The building was disorganized, unkept, unmaintained and plain filthy. But everyone acted as if it's the Four Seasons. Everything functioned as if all was well."

"The meeting itself went reasonably well," Ahmed said with a small smile, "as the member of staff was quasi-professional and did her best given the circumstances."

Raouf interjected saying that yes, some government agencies are not up to par. Ahmed immediately reacted: "No Raouf, that is not correct, we Egyptians can and should do better".

I ordered espressos and some biscuits for the three of us and agreed with Ahmed: "Yes, we have the ingredients to do better but we are not doing it." Ahmed shifted in his seat, pulled a pad from his briefcase and began writing.

As Ahmed was writing and Raouf overlooking his shoulder, Ahmed raised his left hand and said "Listen" then started down his list. "Traffic is a mess, and there are no rules. Non-stop honking and no safe crossing zones for pedestrians forcing them to crisscross amongst the moving vehicles. Is that sanity?" he asked before continuing. "Rubbish constantly on the ring road, bureaucratic regulations that make no sense except to frustrate, government authorities that seem focused on making the lives of ordinary citizens a nightmare..." he kept counting on his fingers.

As I was finishing my espresso and taking a bite of one of the cinnamon biscuits I said: "The point you made at the start of this conversation about Sissi trying to make miracles is very relevant." I added: "Sissi is building cities, infrastructure, alleviating poverty, enhancing green power, strengthening defense capabilities, working with youth, embracing climate issues, undertaking economic reform, encouraging electric transportation, investing in education, encouraging agricultural land reclamation and reigniting Egyptian pharaonic civilization."

Raouf intervened saying: "But life has become more difficult for the underprivileged."

I finished my first biscuit and took a second one from the plate as a moment of silence persisted. I got up and paced near the window overlooking the glorious Nile with its ever-strong current and I turned towards Ahmed and Raouf.

"Yes, Sissi is trying to make miracles," I said. "On policies, infrastructure, regional peace and new cities plus others he is galloping ahead. But remember," I added, "he cannot do it alone. Egypt has a population of more than 100 million citizens and we must not only share with him the responsibility but bear a lot of it," I suggested. "We need to be on the same page."

"But is this not the role of the government?" Raouf said, "That was described as bureaucratic by Mr Selim. Not only that," Raouf added, "some opinion writers stress that it is the role of the government to make the people happy and they are very far from that in the current state of affairs."

Selim interjected that unless the ultimate majority of Egyptians accept a new social contract very much unlike what Nasser espoused, in other words be born with everything either free or subsidized, with a guaranteed government job, as long as they continue to support the status quo, then there is no hope.

Raouf asked "Do you mean overthrowing the social structure?"

"Yes" Selim said, "unless you want to drown in inefficiency, ignorance and lack of knowledge." Selim raising his hands said: "The world is moving fast with artificial intelligence, machine learning, space, drones and in the future there shall be intelligent human beings with embedded chips for health, memory and enhanced capabilities, and just normal human beings." Looking at his pad, Selim added, "Egypt cannot be left behind."

I looked at Raouf and said "Ahmed is right." Then sitting down I said, "it's time the voice of reason descended upon Egypt. I had hoped, after Sissi was elected in 2014 that he would have proposed that all Egyptians forgo all holidays for two years and work together to make up the losses during the catastrophic time of the damned Brotherhood."

Ahmed moved to the door pointing to his watch, and I remembered he was going to a reunion dinner. As Raouf and I were walking him to the elevator I added a final point, "Egyptians need to row together in the same direction to be amongst the winners tomorrow. It would be better to remember what Kennedy said: ask not what your country can do for you, but what you can do for your country".

Shafik Gabr

March 2022

Issue 56

FELLOWS NEWS AND UPDATES

R J JOHNSON



2018 Gabr Fellow RJ Johnson was recently appointed to National Pan-Hellenic Council, Inc-National Executive Board as Area 4 Coordinator. In this role, he will oversee and represent Collegiate and Alumni NPHC Councils made up of chapters of the nine historically Black Greek Letter Organizations in Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas. Also referred to as the “Divine 9,” The National Pan-Hellenic Council (NPHC) was founded on May 10, 1930 at Howard University in Washington, DC. The purpose of the NPHC is to foster cooperative actions of its members in dealing with matters of mutual concern. To this end, the NPHC promotes the well-being of its affiliate fraternities and sororities, facilitates the establishment and development of local councils of the NPHC and provides leadership training for its constituents. RJ is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Inc.

LEISEL BOGAN

2016 Gabr Fellow Leisel Bogan recently organised a study group on "Crises and Congress: Technology, Fakes, and the Future of Governance."

Hosted by The Technology and Public Purpose program at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, of which Leisel is a Fellow, this study group explored three recent crises in governance and how Congress has responded to each crisis. The sessions addressed the proposed legislation in relation to fake information and internet harms, legislative and executive modernization issues, and how technology is (or isn't) used to solve foreign policy challenges.



FABRICE GUERRIER

2018 Gabr Fellow Fabrice Guerrier concluded Season 2 of The Fabrice Guerrier Show Interviewing Haitian-American author Edwidge Danticat on her visions of the future.

Edwidge Danticat is a Haitian American novelist, short story writer and essayist. She is a 2009 MacArthur fellow and a 2018 Ford Foundation “The Art of Change” fellow.

To listen to the podcast,

[CLICK HERE](#)



Spotlight: Becca Doten Appointed as LAX Chief Airports Officer



2013 Gabr Fellow, Becca Doten, has recently been promoted from Deputy Executive Director for Public and Government Affairs for Los Angeles International Airport to their Chief Airport Affairs Officer.

Becca, originally from Minnesota, attended Hastings High School before going on to the University of Southern California where she graduated with a BA in Film Production. She has previously worked for various government bodies including the California State Senate, Office of LA City Councilmember Richard Alarcon and California State Controller's Office, contributing to her experience in communications, governmental affairs and public policy, which she now brings to her new role.

She first joined LAWA (Los Angeles World Airport) in 2017 as the Director of Public Relations, from there she became Managing Director of Media relations before her penultimate role Deputy Executive Director of Public and Government Affairs in September 2020. She also served as the Interim Chief Corporate Strategy and Affairs Officer. Her new position will see her take on the role of Chief of Staff and serve as LAWA's official liaison officer to LAX airline partners and oversee: Public relations, Community Relations, Government, Airport Marketing and Air Service Development.

LAX is the third-busiest airport in the world and the second busiest in the US since 2019. It recently underwent a \$14.5 billion capital improvement program that will bolster the 9 terminals as well as build new facilities. It serves close to 90 million passengers a year with an average of 700 daily nonstop flights to 113 destinations in the US and on average 1,200 weekly nonstop flights to 46 countries on 72 commercial airlines.

Note: For all Information Statements, please visit <https://www.eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/updates/>

To learn more,

CLICK HERE



QUESTIONS OF THE MONTH: A PULSE OF THE GABR FELLOWSHIP COMMUNITY

As the Gabr Fellows enter into leadership roles—in business, diplomacy, government, finance, and more— they will continue to grapple with significant challenges, magnified by an increased pace in technological advancement, the potential for ramped up global inequalities, and changes in governance and economic structures. To better understand the pulse of the Gabr Fellowship community and to begin to articulate substantive dialogue, the Foundation polls the Fellows each month on the key issues facing their respective countries and the global community at large.



1.) Do you think Ukraine should become a member of NATO?

Yes - 41%

No - 41%

Unsure - 18%

2.) If the impact of Ethiopia's water utilization for its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam (GERD) shrinks Egypt's water quota, do you see this as an issue that touches upon Egypt's national security interests?

Yes - 79%

No - 3%

Unsure - 18%

3.) Do you think Donald Trump will run for President in the next US elections?



Yes - 71%

No - 23%

Unsure - 6%

Stay tuned for next month's 'questions of the month' and the Gabr Fellows' takes on current events, as our community of future leaders consider the most pressing challenges of today and tomorrow.

A Russia-Ukraine exit strategy

By Tom Pickering
Responsible Statecraft, 2 March 2022

Russia has entered a war of choice in Ukraine. It was not unexpected but badly under-anticipated in scope, brutality, and impact. It hazards the continent and planet with the specter of a nuclear exchange and has been the generator of immediate global condemnation and pressure.

President Biden has made it clear that the United States has no national interest in a direct war with Moscow. Any escalatory actions risk broadening and spreading the conflict, as President Putin has already demonstrated. Furthermore, an extended war will be disastrous for the economy and civil society of Ukraine, put European stability at risk, and raise the prospect of a nuclear exchange, which — once begun — no one knows how to stop.

Thus far, we have resorted to economic sanctions and claimed that they are more potent than they actually have been. So far. But they are badly needed to support the only acceptable end game to the crisis — a forward and diplomatic solution. For should diplomacy fail, that would leave only surrender by one side, or continued expansion of conflict.

Energy sanctions might work. Putin in the past has shown himself attentive to energy issues, especially price declines. The war allows him to double down with threats to cut Europe off and drive up prices at the same time. NATO and its global friends must take this seriously. Commitments from the United States and others to increase LNG and oil supplies to Europe are essential to counter and corner Putin. Prices are tricky factors to deal with. Large quantities of oil and LNG with at least temporarily subsidized prices by suppliers can face Putin with the choice of continuing a conflict where his economy is in growing jeopardy, or coming to the table to work out a solution.

Further steps on energy are important. Major producers, in addition to providing more oil and gas and reducing prices, should band together for a long-term effort to increase investment in research and development on renewables. It fits their strategy of reserving hydrocarbons for hard to replace uses. It meets 21st century needs for survival and can build technology and use science to assure progress and reduce damage to the globe.

The choice for Putin has to be made apparent and stark: Negotiate, or risk your regime. Facing the prospect of a balanced diplomatic answer, or war, leaves little room for maneuver. To assure that he gets the message, economic pressure should be complemented with careful military reinforcement and positioning. NATO is protected by Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty, which says an attack against one is an attack against all. But credible support for Article V requires fielding a force in NATO countries to make the commitment more than a billboard slogan. The United States so far has moved less than 10,000 troops; Russia is engaged with 200,000.

Negotiations must involve both Ukrainians and Russians. You don't make peace with your friends but your enemies, as Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's former Prime Minister, once famously said. The objective must be an end to the conflict and the damage it is wreaking. And there can be no full solution without Russian withdrawal, which makes the task for diplomacy harder. But a future sovereign and independent Ukraine can become as Henry Kissinger has described it — a “bridge” country, both politically and economically.

It could begin with a parallel, balanced relationship for Ukraine with President Putin's economic sphere and the European Union. There are competent international economists who could fit the pieces of that puzzle together without compromising Ukraine with either body. For many years Ukraine's own economy was integrated closely in the Soviet Union with that of Russia. Much of the original dispute arose because of a contest for affiliation between the EU and Russia. Politically, Ukraine should continue to enjoy an open door to NATO even if reservations among NATO member states will for the foreseeable future assure there is no universal support for Ukraine to join. It would also be important for the United States and like-minded NATO states not to seek to change the views of those who oppose Ukraine's membership.

Those now advocating to escalate, expand or extend this conflict to press the West's perceived advantage over Russia and ultimately affect regime change will do so over an ever-growing number of dead Ukrainians in whose interests they presume to act.

[CLICK HERE](#)



to read more

Disclaimer: The views presented in this article are the author's alone and do not represent the opinion of the Foundation.

ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

Launched in 2012, the Gabr Fellowship programme helps to connect and build constructive relationships between future leaders between the ages of 24 and 35. Each year, the Fellowship consists of 20-24 Fellows, half of which are men and the other half women, with an equal distribution between participants from the United States and Egypt. The Fellowship also accepts applicants from Jordan, Lebanon, France and the United Kingdom. Fellows represent a variety of sectors, including the arts, law, finance, tech, non- profits, and entrepreneurship – both business and social.

The mission of the Fellowship is to promote greater mutual understanding by building bridges between the two cultures by instigating dialogue and the exchange of ideas between emerging leaders from the United States and Egypt. Together, they explore one another's cultures, political realities, business trends and their goals for the future.



2018 Gabr Fellows visit the World Bank, Washington DC

In addition to engaging in deep discussions with key stakeholders from both countries in business, government, academia, religion, science, tech and finance, all Fellows are invited to form multinational teams to complete an action project. These projects empower the Fellows as inter-cultural ambassadors, amplifying the Fellowship's reach and impact.

Ultimately, through hands-on activities, rigorous discussions, cultural site visits, and the collaborative action projects, the Fellows have a greater understanding of both countries and become part of an international cohort dedicated to building a more equitable and peaceful world.

The Gabr Fellows have acquired a greater understanding of both Egypt and the United States and the challenges faced by both communities. Having served as cultural as well as linguistic ambassadors to one another, they then return home to play the role of diplomat, introducing Egyptians and Americans to a people, a culture and a future never before explored in this way.

Together, they are creating the legacy of 'The Gabr Fellowship': an international cohort dedicated to pursuing cooperative, collective solutions to their regions' most pressing issues.



Gabr Fellows with Egypt's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister Sameh Shoukry



Gabr Fellows take on the Pyramids

SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION

The Shafik Gabr Foundation invites you to invest in the future and partner with the Foundation using one or more of the following means:

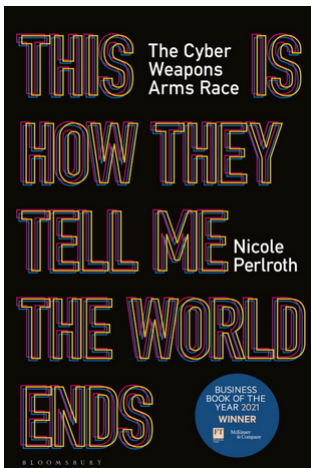
Sponsor a Fellow - Individuals have the opportunity to nominate a Fellow and if selected, sponsor their participation in the Gabr Fellowship. Sponsors will be recognised in all Foundation publications, marketing materials, and at all events.

Corporate patron - Corporations can nominate Fellows for participation in the Fellowship Foundation and sponsor their participation on a company-wide level. The company will be listed in all publications, the logo will be presented on the Foundation's homepage and be given visibility at all events in the United States and Egypt.

Unrestricted support - A general operating grant can empower the Foundation to continue to invest in innovative platforms to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the East and West. From new technologies to expanding the programme to more countries and a greater number of participants, the Fellowship can create a broader multiregional impact.

To support the Foundation,

CLICK HERE

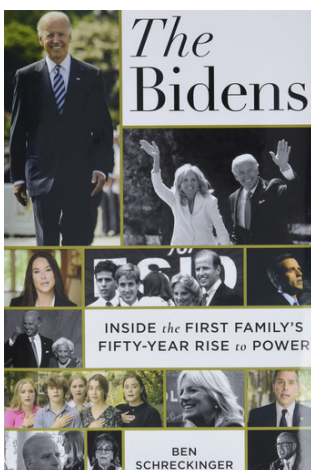


Gabr Foundation Reading Corner

The Foundation Reading Corner encourages Fellows to critique the books that have been recommended to them in each issue. For this issue, Mr. Gabr recommends *This Is How They Tell Me the World Ends: The Cyberweapons Arms Race* by Nicole Perlroth and *The Bidens: Inside the First Family's Fifty-Year Rise to Power* by Ben Schreckinger.

Filled with spies, hackers, arms dealers, and a few unsung heroes, written like a thriller and a reference, *This Is How They Tell Me the World Ends* is based on years of reporting and hundreds of interviews. *The New York Times* reporter Nicole Perlroth lifts the curtain on a market in shadow, revealing the urgent threat faced by us all if we cannot bring the global cyber arms race to heel.

The Bidens is an exploration of Joe Biden as told through his extended family. The premise of the book is that the best way to understand Joe Biden - his values, fears, and motives - is to understand his family: their Irish (and not-so-Irish) roots, their place in the Delaware pecking order, their business deals, and their personal struggles and triumphs alike.



HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR MARCH FELLOWS!



Erika Witt
2014 Gabr Fellow
March 3



Dan Sullivan
2013 Gabr Fellow
March 22



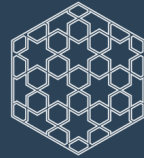
Karim El Sharkawy
2018 Gabr Fellow
March 23



Murray Abeles
2015 Gabr Fellow
March 30

March

Monthly Newsletter



The
SHAFIK GABR
Foundation

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



Johann Discart, *The Connoisseurs*
oil on panel
The Shafik Gabr Collection

Connect with us



info@shafikgabrfoundation.org
<https://www.eastwestdialogue.org/>

The Shafik Gabr Foundation

444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 840, Washington, DC 20001
7 Hassan Al-Akbar Street Cairo, Egypt, 11571