



2022 Gabr Fellows with Dr. Ahmad Dallal, President of the American University in Cairo, October 2022

## Egypt's Hate Club

The room was full at the Washington Centre. It was a bright summer day, and the light was oozing via the great window on the left side of the giant room. There must have been over 200 people in the audience. I came early and sat in the first row facing the stage that several years ago I had spoken from.

Some members of the audience were standing on the right-side wall near the back. The topic of today was Egypt – US: human rights and democracy. There were three seats on the stage. They were vacant now as the two speakers and the moderator had not arrived. A sharp din occupied the room. The young lady on my left was tense, her knee was rocking, and her hands were clasped. I introduced myself, and she smiled and responded, “My name is Rose Wilkins, I am a professor of political science at GW. Egyptian born but an American citizen.” We chatted for a while and as people were moving around, I saw Hassan Agaby waving at me from the right side of the aisle. Hassan, a friend from Egypt, immigrated to the US a dozen years ago and was a senior anaesthetist at a major hospital in Maryland. I waved back to Hassan and promised to call later by pointing and raising my silenced cell phone.

As I was resuming my conversation with Rose, I had someone tap on my shoulder from behind, and it was two beaming, smiling faces. James and Mary, two Gabr Fellows from 2017. They were outstanding Fellows who had participated in my East-West: The Art of Dialogue Initiative organized by my foundation. James today was a marketing manager at a tech company, and Mary was a paralegal working for a DC law firm. We caught up with each other’s news and both James and Mary confirmed they would attend the Gabr Fellows reunion.

The moderator Ed Rich climbed the stage. Ed, in a navy suit with an open collar, white shirt and black loafers fixed his mic and sat down. Rich was a veteran moderator of tough debates and appeared frequently on different television programs. Rich immediately called the meeting to order and invited his two guests to the stage. John Walker, a distinguished diplomat, author, and political analyst along with Sameh (Sam) Farouk, a charming, successful businessman, philanthropist, and practice lecturer. John, American born and served his country in different posts across the world, including a dozen years in Egypt, Morocco, and Saudi Arabia.

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Sam, Egyptian born with dual Egyptian-British nationality, having a series of philanthropic projects in Egypt in the areas of health/medical treatments and education. Both men tall, ramrod, took their seats. John, in a dark grey suit, a bright solid navy tie, and a light blue shirt. Sam, in a black suit and a black crew cut pullover. Sam had a catching smile with his salt and pepper hair and beard, with round profound-like eyeglasses.

After brief introductions, Ed Rich turned to Sameh and said,

“Egypt is not a democracy and has huge human rights violations as repeatedly criticized by Project on Middle East Democracy.” (POMED)

Sameh, calmly with a well resonating voice, said “Who is behind POMED?” I could tell, seeing the twinkle in Sameh’s eyes, he knew the answer before Rich responded by stating the names that came to his mind including Amy Hawthorne, Elliott Abrams, Michele Dunne, Robert Kagan, Sarah Yager, Reuel Gerecht, Tamara Wittes, amongst others. Sameh rubbed his beard, smiled, and said “Not one Egyptian living in Egypt. All Americans criticising Egypt... Gerecht, ex-CIA, Amy and Michele, who have competed to criticise Egypt year after year, Elliot, who supported the Muslim Brotherhood, and Yager from Human Rights Watch. I wonder, does everybody know who finances the Human Rights Watch and POMED?”

Sameh took a deep breath before Ed would interject; he added: “Egypt is by no means with no shortcomings on human rights. Egypt needs to do much better notwithstanding its challenges of having 9 million refugees and illegal immigrants...” Ed’s eyebrows were raised in surprise... Sameh continued: “and they live as equally as every Egyptian with some access as per IOM’s report.” Sameh looked straight at Ed and emphasized that Egypt is in a very turbulent region with countries imploding around it such as Libya, Chad, Sudan, not to mention the endless trouble in Gaza, and the continued terrorist threats by the likes of the Muslim Brotherhood, Islamic Jihad, al-Jama-al Islamiyah, and the many chameleons they had bred. John leaned forward in his seat, and without any introduction from the moderator, which I found very unprofessional, looked at Sameh and said: “But you can’t deny you have a journalist and activists jailed for no reason.” Ed tried to intervene but Sameh, with a broad smile said: “If you call people that have titles as journalist and activists that incite violence and act on planning instability and chaos then the answer is yes. Moreover,” Sameh

added, “have you forgotten John that we have courts just like you but ours are more lenient. You just sentenced two men who allegedly were openly planning to kidnap your Michigan Governor but did not, to 16 and 19 years of prison. I wonder what the sentence would be if they did as our local terrorists did.” John went quiet as Ed took control of the debate, but you could hear murmuring in the audience. Ed turned to John and asked, “How do you see the Egypt-US bilateral relationship?” John crossed his legs and responded that the relationship has many positives, such as military corporation, intelligence sharing, bilateral naval and defence exercises, a counter-terrorism partnership, and Egypt’s moderating role between the Palestinians and the Israelis. “However,” John added, “the US sees that Egypt needs to do much more in the areas of human rights, democracy, and LGBTQ. Deficiencies in the areas freeze and reduce American aid to Egypt.” Ed turned to Sameh and said, “How do you relate to John’s points?” Sameh again, with a disarming smile, said: “I agree with John’s position points, but I would add that Egypt provides a huge number of military flyovers for the US Air Force, and has given priority access to all US naval units to cross the Suez with zero downtime, saving hundreds of millions of dollars. As for LGBTQ, Egypt is a Muslim country and that speaks volumes. Just like Poland, a Catholic country, we do not promote nor market or teach our children LGBTQ. We believe in ‘live and let live privately’ but will allow no such attempts to destroy the fabric of the family for its values.”

“Regarding democracy,” Sameh, raising his right hand, said: “Egypt is deficient, and must work hard on the twin objectives of education and institution building so that it would have the democratic system that is legitimate, transparent and sustainable.” Sameh added that the US democracy was not perfect by any means. Money and the fact that one Senator can freeze a bill, an appointment or an agreement does not reflect democracy.

“For example, Senator Patrick Leahy from Vermont, elected in 1974 in the Senate for 50 years and not been to Egypt for over 20 years, freezes the aid money to Egypt, on the basis of a whim, which he calls human rights violations, whilst in his backyard, Guantánamo remains. America still has 325 Native American reservations, and their population has decreased horrifically to 5 million, which is less than ten percent of what it was!”

The audience was murmuring again at Sameh’s pointed reply. Ed looked at John and asked: “Why so much criticism of Egypt whilst it has always been a strong ally sending 23,000 troops with America to liberate Kuwait, replacing American troops in Somalia, providing peacekeeping forces and more. So, explain to me,” he added, “why are Congressman Don Beyer of Virginia, Tom Malinowski of New Jersey, and other members of Congress, such as Ro Khanna always critical of Egypt although none of them really engage with Egypt? More surprising, is Senator Chris Murphy of Connecticut making a weird statement saying, “Every day we continue sending billions to Egypt while paying lip service to their human rights violations is a blow to American credibility.” He added: “Some Senators critical of Egypt do so with little actual data and decline to meet Egyptians, both officially and non-officially, to debate issues.” John responded stating that each of these members of Congress have a reason. He added that Don Beyer has Mohamed Sultan in his district. The son of Salah Sultan, a Muslim Brotherhood leader. Malinowski’s job was human rights at State before he became member of Congress, John explained and added “For Senator Murphy, he has a constituent whose father is imprisoned in Egypt.”

However, notwithstanding all this, John added that Egypt was a reliable ally and as a general principle too much public American interference in the integral workings of an ally may backfire on American interests.

Quiet diplomacy is much more impactful. As an example, John explained how President Obama achieved the release of Mohamed Sultan. Ed looked at the audience and said, "I will open the floor for comments in a minute" and he gestured towards two assistants flanking the room with roaming mics. Sameh took the opportunity of Ed pausing and said: "Just as a correction to Senator Chris Murphy's statement, Egypt does not receive a penny from the US." He added that whilst Israel receives a cheque to spend as it desires, Egypt, on the other hand, receives a credit line at the US Treasury for which a half dozen US government agencies have to approve what Egypt can buy from the US. "In reality," he continued, "Egypt uses it to buy spare parts for the US defence equipment it bought in earlier years and that was stopped by Obama leaving the Apache helicopters grounded because Obama supported the Muslim Brotherhood and was not happy that the Egyptian people threw them out." John interjected that Sissi undertook a coup, and before Ed could interfere, Sameh again, with a warm smile said: "No...no...not at all... you forgot John that President Sissi was originally appointed by the Brotherhood, and he only moved when 30 million Egyptians in 40° centigrade during the holy month of Ramadan, stood in the streets of Egypt, repeating one word "irhal" (leave), and that is when Sissi moved to support the people." "It was a recall, no coups" Sameh added, as Ed intervened and moved his arms to each side as a referee in a boxing ring.

"Let's have the first question from the audience." Ed motioned, moving forward in his chair, and pointing to someone in the back. "Please state your name and title and put your question to the mic," gesturing to the closest assistant with the mic. A young man in casual clothes got up and said: "My name is Fred Austin, a freelance journalist and my question is why does Senator Murphy and others criticize Egypt publicly instead of going there and talking to Egyptian leaders about their concerns?" Ed looked at John and said: "That is for you." John re-crossed his legs and briefly stated that the US government is in continuous contact with their counterparts in Egypt.

Ed looked across the audience and pointed to Mary Healy, a Gabr Fellow sitting behind me. Mary stood up, introduced herself, and said: "Why isn't there greater cooperation between Egypt and the US in the area of education, more scholarships, more universities opening branches in Egypt, like they are doing in the Gulf?" Both Sameh and John agreed that it is a needed initiative, and that Egypt should lobby for such an objective.

Next, a gentleman in the middle aisle asked a question about Egypt's commitment to climate issues and both Sameh and John responded with details about COP-27, Egypt's EU projects and the Benban solar park being one of the world's largest solar power plants. Ed was looking at his watch when both Rose and I raised our hands. Ed pointed to Rose saying that ladies should go first and that these will be the last three questions. As I moved in my chair slightly, another hand was raised at the other side of the room. Rose asked Ambassador John: "What gives America the right to judge Egypt's legal system?" She continued, explaining that if a person was indicted for inciting hate or violence, or overturning the government, what gives us the right to say they were unfairly judged? "No one criticized us," she added, "when we indicted, and provided harsh verdicts on the January 6th protestors after detaining them for months."

John was given the question by Ed, but he had no real response and added: "America just wishes Egypt to be more transparent in its legal system." Mary shook her head, not satisfied. I was next and my question focused on why the US has not worked with Egypt on a BIRD (Binational Industrial Research and Development) program as it did with Israel? I continued: "Israel had no tech back in the 1980s and it was only with America's (BIRD) program and financing that Israel's technological base grew.

The huge BIRD grants, and encouragement of the US government to US industry, to invest in Israel made Israel a global tech country. Why not Egypt?"

Sameh responded that such a program would not only help Egypt but would be a launching pad for America to compete with China in all of Africa. As for sure, America will not build in Africa, ports or airports as China is doing. "Tech penetration is the answer," Sameh added. John joined by saying: "It's an excellent idea and why is Egypt not lobbying for it?"

The final question went to a lady in the front sitting beside my friend Hassan Agaby. She introduced herself as an Egyptian American activist - whatever that meant - and she asked why there is a so-called "Egypt Hate Club" with groups such as Working Group on Egypt and Project on Middle East Democracy (POMED), amongst others, that attack Egypt in advertisements addressed to the US President, cabinet members, Congress etc. and provided think tanks with manipulated studies: "You would say that is freedom of speech - with which I agree - but my question is why is there not one peep about Israel's decades-long occupation of Palestinian lands, horrible abuses of human rights, killings of over 200 children in the occupied territories and over 200,000 Palestinians detained and imprisoned, and not one word from Senator Murphy or others about human rights violations or the real fact that we give Israel billions of dollars every day?"

Silence gripped the room. People were slowly rising or leaving the room as the meeting was ending. Ed looked at Sameh and gestured at John. John uncrossed his legs, looked at Ed and said: "This meeting is about Egypt and America, not Israel."

Ed thanked the speakers, general clapping followed - the lady asking the question in a loud voice said, "No answer!" But her loud remark was drowned out by the moderator and speakers removing the mics, shaking hands and the large audience shuffling out of the auditorium.

I remained sitting, thinking about the last question and remembering my old article "Bravo Israel."

# FELLOWS NEWS AND UPDATES



## MUHAMMAD NAGI, 2015 FELLOW

2015 Gabr Fellow Muhammad Nagi was featured on Enterprise's Founder of The Week.

Every Tuesday, Founder of the Week looks at how a successful member of Egypt's startup community got their big break, asks about their experiences running a business, and gets their advice for budding entrepreneurs. Speaking to Enterprise in July was Muhammad Nagi, cofounder of MQR and currently the managing director of MQR/Greek Campus, which recently merged into one entity.

To read the full interview,

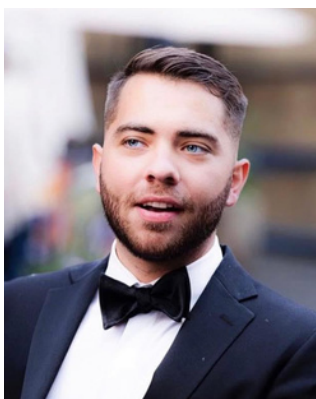


## NOURHAN MOUSSA, 2014 FELLOW

2014 Gabr Fellow Nourhan Moussa has completed the program in International Human Rights Law at Fordham University and received her certificate in the UN avenue in New York.

During her time in Washington, DC and New York, she had meetings with staffers of 11 Members of the House of Representatives and the Senate, the Middle East Institute and US State Department. The topics she discussed were the launch of the NextGen Egypt - US Coalition, Egyptian-American bilateral relationship, combating misinformation, GERD, the need for effective tools for real communications between the two strategic allies, and the role of public diplomacy, among others.

Nourhan also met with 2022 Gabr Fellows Jeremy Pesner and Harley Adsit, and 2018 Gabr Fellow Allison Feikes.



## CHARLES TRUXAL, 2018 FELLOW

2018 Gabr Fellow Charles Truxal has been recognized with the Patrick Henry award.

The Patrick Henry Award is designed to provide recognition to local officials and civic leaders, who in a position of great responsibility distinguished themselves with outstanding and exceptional service to the Armed Forces of the United States, the National Guard or NGAUS (National Guard Association of the United States).

# FELLOWS NEWS AND UPDATES

## SARAH BADR, 2017 FELLOW

2017 Gabr Fellow Sarah Badr recently had her first engagement with IOM (International Organization for Migration) in MENA, as part of the regional facilitation team for the Arab states and MENA region.

With support from the United Nations Network on Migration, IOM Libya and IOM MENA held a workshop for the UN in Libya Program Management Team to further integrate migration into Cooperation Frameworks and Common Country Analysis at the UN.

The UN partners aim to prioritize migration as a cross-cutting issue within the 2030 agenda and integrate it into the work of UNCTs in Libya.

To find out more,



## HARLEY ADSIT, 2022 FELLOW

2022 Gabr Fellow Harley Adsit is working on a CRM for House Staff so that offices can streamline communications, bill tracking, letter tracking, and more. This is a project that was built out of frustration with a lack of easy-to-use, centralized resources that connect all aspects of a congressional legislative and communications team. She's expecting it to be in beta testing by the end of the month.

Harley is Communications Director for Congressman Buddy Carter (R-Ga).

## AHMED RADWAN, 2015 FELLOW

2015 Gabr Fellow Ahmed Radwan started teaching a new workshop "Improv for all" on the improvisational theatre technique in collaboration with MQR coworking space at Greek Campus, Cairo owned and co-established by 2015 Gabr fellow Muhammad Nagi.



# FELLOWS NEWS AND UPDATES



## MOHAMED HASSAN, 2022 FELLOW

2022 Gabr Fellow Mohamed Hassan successfully launched his startup, "Bad Bunch," which focuses on branding, social media, packaging, photography, and web design. Mohamed already secured two clients, one from Saudi Arabia and another from the United States.

To visit the startup's website,



## SHEHAB FAROUK, 2014 FELLOW

2014 Gabr Fellow Shehab Farouk will be delivering a four-day training program with the Oman Commercial Arbitration Centre titled "Preparation of Tribunal Secretary" which is the first of its kind training program in Oman.

The program will take place in September, and Shehab designed and drafted its material with the latest practices in the field of international arbitration.



## DALIA YOUNIS, 2017 FELLOW

In cooperation with the Jesuit Cultural Center in Alexandria, 2017 Gabr Fellow Dalia Younis's Klaxics ensemble presented its first workshop and performance in Alexandria in July 2023 with 29 participants including the ensemble members and Alexandrian participants who were selected among a large number of applicants to join the workshop.

During the 3-day workshop, participants practiced singing A Capella (making music with the human voice only, without instruments) and joined the ensemble in the performance that was held on the fourth day.

Their contribution was in one of the ensemble's songs arranged by Dalia in celebration of the team's first performance in Alexandria: "Wa Ammar Ya Alexandria" (Viva Alexandria) by the composer Ammar Al-Shari'i.

This was the ensemble's second visit to Alexandria, as it won the first prize in 2021 in the "Naghama Horra" (Free Tone) competition for underground bands held by the Bibliotheca Alexandrina as part of the Summer Festival.



# FELLOWS NEWS AND UPDATES

## SHADY ELSHERIF, 2014 GABR FELLOW AND WESSAM BAHER, 2022 GABR FELLOW

2014 Gabr Fellow Shady Elsherif and 2022 Gabr Fellow Wessam Baher were invited by the Turkish Ambassador to Egypt, H.E. Salih Mutlu Sen, to attend the reception of The Democracy and National Unity Day of Türkiye.



## INTERVIEW WITH....

### NICK THOMAS, 2015 GABR FELLOW



2015 Gabr Fellow Nick Thomas is a generalist with a penchant for human interaction and diplomacy. He was a pilot, serial entrepreneur, and an aspiring diplomat. Nick ran international adventure travel programs, consulted and spoke on the sharing economy and SDGs, and even embarked on a U.S. Congressional race in 2018. He also worked as Director of Business Development for EarthX. Most recently Nick starred as the lead male actor in the movie "Amazon Queen" (2021), and supporting lead in "An Egypt Affair" (2023).

**1) What are the 3 most important takeaways of your 2015 Gabr Fellowship experience?**

- Strengthened knowledge of a critical region
- Valuable connections with my fellow Gabr Fellows
- Phenomenal immersive experience that is nearly incomparable.

**2) Would you visit Egypt again?**

- Of course!

**3) What can make Egypt-US bilateral relations stronger?**

- A refocus on bilateral communication (possibly a state visit) and not simply US - MENA policy, and a stronger push for soft power diplomacy (let's see if my film commissions build some connection!)

**4) Did the program in Egypt and the US bring new knowledge to you?**

- Yes, the immersive experience was particularly powerful but the overall program in 2015 and consistent follow-ups since then have proved immensely beneficial and rewarding.

# 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.



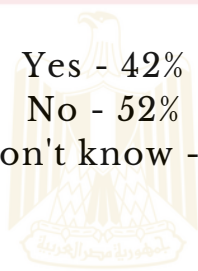
**1.) Do you agree with the US decision to send to Ukraine cluster munitions, which are known to cause grievous injuries to civilians?**

Yes - 22%  
No - 60%  
I don't know - 18%

**2.) Do you see the restoration of political ties between Turkey and Egypt as positive or negative?**

Positive - 72%  
Negative - 2%  
I don't know - 26%

**3.) Do you think school students should be allowed to “opt-out” of courses on topics related to sex and gender?**



Yes - 42%  
No - 52%  
I don't know - 6%

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



# An Uncertain Future

By Michael Goff, 2014 Gabr Fellow

This article's theme is on some major trends that will define the future, with emphasis on geopolitics and technological development. For the former, I will discuss the work of Seán Cleary, executive vice-chair of the FutureWorld Foundation among numerous other achievements, and for the latter, that of Dale Buxton, an investor whose portfolio includes OpenAI, Formula E, and much else.

I was in Egypt for a reunion for a travel fellowship I did in 2014. The fellowship is *East-West: The Art of Dialogue*, an initiative of M. Shafik Gabr, who is the chairman of the ARTOC Group for Investment and Development. There is far too much to say about the fellowship to attempt to do so here. Seán and Dale were among the speakers this week. By way of disclaimer, since I am going from in-person presentations, I will try my best to represent their work accurately but do not guarantee success.

Seán's presentation was entitled "Strategic Foresight in an Age of Disruption". If there are ten houses on one's street, and one of them is on fire, then it is very natural to pay more attention to the house than is burning than to the nine houses that are not. Likewise, when we consider geopolitics, it is natural to pay more attention to what is going wrong than what is going right. But this can give a distorted picture. For that, Seán opened with these important macrotrends.

He emphasised connectivity, including shipping, air travel, and Internet access, as vital factors that drive these trends.

It must be emphasized that, while improving standards of living are long-standing world macrotrends, they are neither automatic nor inevitable. Good statecraft is about ensuring that these trends continue well into the future.

A major governance challenge is that there are three central priorities—global integration, national sovereignty, and democratic accountability—that exist in tension. On many important questions, it is necessary to recognize trade-offs. In *Global Trends 2040*, a work of the U.S. National Intelligence Council, much uncertainty at that date revolves around which priority will be dominant.

Seán spoke at length about the Russian invasion of Ukraine. While he and I would disagree on several points, we would agree that the invasion is a violation of the UN Charter, Article 2, that the invasion is morally indefensible and characterized by severe war crimes, and that it has been a serious strategic miscalculation for Russia.

Why Vladimir Putin thought this was the right decision will, I am sure, be discussed for many decades. Seán highlighted two factors: the expansion of NATO, about which I wrote last year, and the deployment of Aegis Ashore in Romania and Poland. Aegis Ashore, the land-based version of the ship-borne Aegis, is a central component of American missile defense, about which I have written several times before. Russian leaders—not just Putin—clearly don't like NATO expansion or U.S. missile defense. But I am more sceptical that these considerations played a significant role in the decision to attack Ukraine.

Broadly speaking, there are two schools of thoughts regarding foreign policy: realism and idealism, though I dislike these terms because they falsely imply that idealists aren't canny and that realists are cynical and amoral. With caveats about the risk of oversimplification, I would characterize Seán as in the realistic camp and myself as in the idealist camp. For Seán, security rests in every nation, including Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Finland, and so forth, feeling that their security needs are met and in exercising a balance of power. In my view, security is best achieved when a single responsible power has disproportionate strength, which in today's world would be the United States and allies—the Pax Americana vision.

Seán discussed climate change as of great international importance. On that front, progress since the Kyoto Protocol was signed in 1997 has been disappointing. He also highlighted growing tensions between the United States and China. Here, while Americans have to acknowledge that we have real, well-based problems with the Chinese Communist Party, I see potential for positive engagement. China's brokering of a restoration of relations between Saudi Arabia and Iran and their peace proposal in Ukraine are two recent positive moves.

To read the full article,

[CLICK HERE](#)



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

# Xi Jinping's Vision for the Middle East

By Yair Albeck  
Hudson Institute, July 2023

Chinese leader Xi Jinping clearly aspires to establish a new global economic order centered around Beijing, not Washington. However, a new global economic order cannot be built in a day. The immensity of this challenge has forced Xi to set his sights on a set of interim goals. These include cementing the Communist Party's control of the Chinese economy and shielding supply chains, capital flows, and strategic bilateral and multilateral relationships from hostile American policies.

These goals equate to the creation of a Sinocentric global economic subsystem. This would be partially integrated into the current Western-led system but would be sufficiently decoupled from the West to protect the pillars of the Chinese Communist Party's political economy.

In Beijing's grand design, the Middle East plays an indispensable role. But Western analysts have often misjudged China's interests in the region as purely commercial. While Xi values the region for its economic potential, he sees it as one of the most important arenas of competition with the United States.

Yet when United States National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan recently discussed American leadership of the global economy, he focused on Europe and the Indo-Pacific and mentioned Africa and Latin America. He did not mention the Middle East once.

Washington's persistent blind spot in the Middle East has obscured its view of Beijing's global ambitions. If the US does not rectify this mistake, it risks losing more influence in the region and aiding China's effort to supplant the US atop the global economic order.

Xi faces multiple hard facts as he endeavors to construct a Beijing-led economic bloc. The US and its allies continue to dominate key sectors of the global economy, from finance to high-tech industries like robotics, aeronautics, semiconductors, and closed-circuit chips. Additionally, the US dollar remains the international reserve currency.

Moreover, China lacks domestic reserves of oil. This disadvantage puts a hard ceiling on the potential of Chinese manufacturing. Beijing currently relies on Iranian and Russian oil, which are discounted due to American economic sanctions. By maintaining strong strategic ties with Middle Eastern oil producers, the West can retain leverage over any prospective Sinocentric bloc in the region.

Yet Xi wants China to be more than a manufacturing hub. He seeks to take the lead in high-tech sectors that will help Beijing to establish new international standards, create an alternative global financial system, and achieve self-sufficiency in strategic industries. As Hudson's John Lee has demonstrated, China's dependence on Western technology makes it economically vulnerable. Beijing has launched multiple initiatives to mitigate this vulnerability by making the West reliant on Chinese technology and other manufacturing inputs.

The Middle East holds the potential to facilitate Xi's hegemonic ambitions. Middle Eastern states possess substantial capital reserves to invest either in China or in other countries through partnerships that China facilitates. China, meanwhile, would benefit from using the Middle East as a market for its high-tech products and will depend on the region as an energy source for decades to come. Gulf countries, which have become disenchanted with the US, have welcomed Beijing's efforts to tighten relations.

These factors render the region uniquely attractive to Beijing as it seeks to overcome its economic challenges.

Launched in 2013, Xi's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to lay the groundwork for a Sinocentric economic bloc through extensive infrastructure projects abroad. The BRI is a wide-ranging initiative, comprising the Silk Road Economic Belt and the Twenty-first Century Maritime Silk Road. With total investments nearing \$1 trillion, the BRI seeks to strengthen China's economic growth, promote Chinese exports, expand the reach of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), and secure Beijing's control over key commodities.

To read the full article,

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# 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.



2022 Gabr Fellows at the National Defense University with the NDU's President, Lt Gen Michel Plehn

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 Major General Mohamed El Keshky, Egypt's Former Assistant Minister of Defense



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, visit

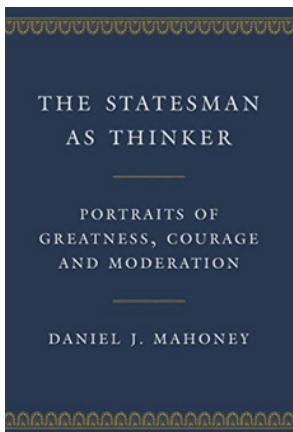
<https://www.eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/how-to-support/> or

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## Gabr Foundation Book and Movie Corner

The Foundation Book and Movie Corner encourages Fellows to critique the books and movies that have been recommended to them in each issue. For this issue, Mr. Gabr recommends *World Without Mind: The Existential Threat of Big Tech* by Franklin Foer and *The Statesman as Thinker: Portraits of Greatness, Courage, and Moderation* by Daniel Mahoney.



In *World Without Mind*, Foer elegantly traces the intellectual history of computer science – from Descartes and the enlightenment to Alan Turing, Stuart Brand and the hippie origins of today's Silicon Valley – and exposes the dark underpinnings of our most idealistic dreams for technology.

In *The Statesman as Thinker*, Daniel Mahoney provides thoughtful portraits of statesmen who struggled to preserve freedom during times of crisis: Cicero, Burke, Tocqueville, Lincoln, Churchill, de Gaulle and Havel.



As for the movies, Mr Gabr recommends *Official Secrets* (the true story of a British whistleblower who leaked information to the press about an illegal NSA spy operation designed to push the UN Security Council into sanctioning the 2003 invasion of Iraq) and *Shock and Awe* (a political thriller set in 2003, as the Bush administration prepares to invade Iraq, about sceptical journalists who question the administration's claim that Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction).

# HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR AUGUST FELLOWS!



**Leslie Lang Tsai**  
2013 Gabr Fellow  
August 4



**Nathan Thomas**  
2014 Gabr Fellow  
August 4



**Kellie Quinn**  
2022 Gabr Fellow  
August 6



**Assem Bolbol**  
2022 Gabr Fellow  
August 7



**Mike Burgess**  
2015 Gabr Fellow  
August 17



**Mariam Ibrahim**  
2013 Gabr Fellow  
August 22



**Ahmed Naguib**  
2014 Gabr Fellow  
August 23



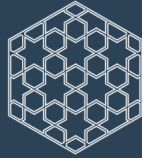
**Katherine Tan**  
2016 Gabr Fellow  
August 26



**Neeven Mohamed**  
2017 Gabr Fellow  
August 26

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*Monthly Newsletter*



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For earlier itineraries of the program, please see the previous years' reports at  
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**Jean-Léon Gérôme, *Arnaut of Cairo***  
Oil on panel  
The Shafik Gabr Collection

Connect with us



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