



Trump's America seen by insiders Ambassador Frank Weisner and Dr. «Shibli Telhami»

As part of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs' interest in discussing regional and international changes affecting Egypt internally, it organized a panel discussion on 31 January 2017 at the Egyptian Diplomatic Club over a working lunch in honor of Ambassador Frank Wisner, former US Ambassador to Cairo, and Dr. Shibli Telhami, distinguished Middle East expert in the United States. The importance of the meeting is largely due to the explanations made by figures in direct touch with American political life, at a time questions about the orientations and foreign policy of President Trump's administration have not stopped.

The meeting was attended by ECFA Chair Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran, ECFA Honorary Chair Ambassador Abdul Raouf Al-Ridi, ECFA members Ambassadors Nabil Fahmy, Mohamed Shaker, Mohamed Abdellah, Mohamed Al-Orabi, Mohamed Tewfik, Ihab Wahba, Marwan Badr, Mohammed Anis Salem, Mahmoud Al-Saeed, Mr Makram Mohammed Ahmed and Dr. Mohamed Kamal.

Speaking on the depth of the current political situation of Trump era, Ambassador Wisner raised several points for consideration:

- The United States is now experiencing a challenging phase after President Donald Trump won the last presidential elections, which were greatly controversial both inside and outside the United States, especially after his decisions to prevent citizens of seven Arab Muslim countries from traveling to the United States. This decision has significant implications at the local, regional and international levels, as well as for American public opinion and media in particular, and diplomats too.

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A closer look at Egyptian-American relations

Egyptian-American relations have been widely discussed in the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs' activities in the light of the analyses and expectations that lead to a positive development of relations between the two countries under the administration of President Donald Trump, and of the meeting between Presidents Sisi and Trump, in April.

This interest was reflected in four panel discussions, which began with a Round Table organized by the Council and attended by eleven of its experts specializing in American affairs. It was followed by a meeting with Ambassador Frank Weisner and Dr. Shibli Telhami as well as a seminar held at the Egyptian Cultural Forum, and a dialogue that took place in the Council with the delegation of the American Air War College. At the roundtable, participants presented their vision of Trump's foreign policy and what he said about the US engagement with international issues.

The seminar also focused on monitoring the indicators that may drive Trump to a potential departure from the traditional foreign policy pursued by the United States for decades. The seminar also dealt with the issue of cooperation in the fight against terrorism, military cooperation, and expectations that Trump's ideas could reshape the international order, and finally, Egypt's vision and role on them.

The meeting with Wiesner and Telhami did not depart much from the scope of these topics. The importance of this meeting lies in the elaborate presentations they made capitalizing on their presence in the United States in direct touch with the political scene.

The issues that were raised in the meeting with the delegation of the US Air War College were also discussed in the context of various regional questions and relations with Egypt.

Consistent with the abovementioned, the visit of the American Jewish delegation to the Council. The Council agenda at this time has a series of activities that include a wide range of discussions and in-depth meetings on various international and regional issues in an attempt to get a closer look at Trump's American policy and its implications to Egyptian-American relations.

(Editor)

Sisi - Trump Summit and the Palestinian Issue Top US Air War College Students' Questions



It may be said that, the meeting which held on 28 February 2017 between the students of the US Air War College and several ECFA members was the series of questions posed by the American delegation on the Council views on them, after listening to the welcome speeches at the opening of the meeting by Ambassador Dr Ezzat Saad, ECFA Director and Ambassador Dr. Hussein Hassouna, Coordinator of Permanent Committee for American Affairs of the Council.

Also participants in the meeting included Ambassador Ihab Wahba, Major General Mohammad Ibrahim Al-Duwairi, Major General Hisham Al-Halabi and Dr. Gamal Youssef.

The questions dealt with issues which relating to Egypt, Cairo's relations with the Trump administration, regional problems, the American role in solving the Palestinian issue, and the fight against terrorism.

A member of the US delegation asked about ECFA expectations of the meeting between President Sisi and President Trump and its result.

Ambassador Dr Hussein Hassouna answered on that, the meeting may witness more cooperation between the two countries especially in fighting terrorism.

In reply to a question by a delegation member about the US role, Ambassador Ihab Wahba said, "The good relations between President Sadat and President Carter led to the signing

of the peace agreement with Israel , this step confirmed and elaborated the American role in advancing the peace process."

In response to another question about the anti-American feelings towards the US role in the region, Ambassador Ezzat Saad said that this feeling is linked to the American attitude towards the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Responding to a question about the fields and opportunities which Egypt wants the U.S to invest in it , in the light of the upcoming summit between the Egyptian and American presidents, the answer was that there are many huge projects that Egypt needs to invest in, including the development of the Suez Canal. Egypt also launched giant projects in record time, such as projects for the reclamation of desert lands. However, Egypt does not only need investment, but also needs to obtain technical and technological support and cooperation in various fields such as education.

Meeting with Ambassador Frank Weisner and Dr. Shibli Telhami

Ambassador Wiesner continued at the beginning of the meeting to explain all the dimensions of the situation in America during the Trump era as follows:

- The United States always allows opposition. More than 100 diplomats have signed a memorandum against the President's intransigent decisions to prevent the citizens of seven Muslim countries from traveling to the United States. Wisner stressed that, the US law protects any opposition entity, insures all rights to free expression of opinion and guarantees that it is applied fairly.
 - The Washington is undergoing a period of deep and radical change he had never seen the like of in his diplomatic career, or perhaps before that. The United States has not seen a state of anxiety and tension, as it did over the past few days.
 - He noted that everything that happened in the United States recently, is pushing for a revolutionary change that will lead to a deep and radical change in the US political reality to form a new political order.
- Wisner emphasized that these movements are driving a profound change in political forces within the United States, not only from Democrats but also from Republicans, and that

things are changing in the United States, are no longer as they were in previous years, and that these conflicts will produce a new political base within the United States. He called it a "revolutionary" situation in the American political reality.

Adding that there are certain principles must be taken into consideration when we are evaluating the current period, Wisner said President Trump is very strict, especially in sending direct signals internally, by reviewing some trade and economic agreements, as well as externally. He pointed out that Trump was extremely vocal in his speeches when he said that he would put the war against extremism - especially Islamic extremism - among his priorities during his tenure, and that he was interested in strengthening relations with Israel, Egypt and some Gulf countries, but with the exception of some countries.

- On the Middle East, Wisner said he is confident that the new US administration does not have a strategic vision for the region, but only has some impressions thereon. In his view, this

represents a real opportunity for Egypt and other countries in the region to come up with a new scenario to renew the course of relations with the United States, especially since there are many points that can be agreed upon.

- Frank Wisner said that the next period for US - Egyptian relations, represents a real opportunity and a new challenge for each of the two countries, noting that, the new US administration has no real knowledge of Egypt, except the Minister of Defense, James Mattis.
- Therefore, Egypt has a real opportunity to reshape its relations with the United States as it sees fit. He said that this must be arranged in a very good and precise manner, and Egypt has a real opportunity to write its own scenario, including what is the most appropriate form of relations between the two countries within the framework of its strategic vision on the importance of these relations and their impact on the region, and what contexts Egypt wants for the course of bilateral relations in the next period.
- He stressed the need for Egypt to be very cautious in that, noting that there are a number of issues which the two countries have different issues in it, adding that, it must keep that into consideration and try to find common grounds and deepen points of convergence with the US on several issues such as the war on terrorism, Palestine-Israel reconciliation, and conditions in Jerusalem and in Syria and Iraq, as well as in Iran and some Gulf countries and other issues which require constant consultation.

Mr. Wisner then gave the floor to Dr. Shibli Telhami, praising his extensive contributions to Arab-American affairs.

Dr. Shibli Telhami began his speech by thanking the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs for its hospitality, praising its unique team of ambassadors, academics and experts in international affairs.

On the current American situation, he explained that the American people are in a state of division, stressing that the conflict is not only

a partisan struggle between Democrats and Republicans, but there are many factors within the United States that support divisions and differences in American views held by people with their different categories.

Telhami added that, politics change and will continue to change, especially since it is known for those interested in foreign policy that the President is only one player among foreign policy players. He also pointed out that any country has several tools and factors of foreign policy. In this regard, he raised an important question about the reasons that made Americans vote for Trump.

Telhami stressed that matters are not as they seem to be in America. There are discontent and dissatisfaction among the people. But beyond that, Telhami stressed, the American people no longer feel safe, and have come to realize that the American dream is no longer achievable for several reasons. The most important things are growing poverty and increasing number of the poor, a widening gap between the poor and the rich, and an erosion of the middle class.

He explained that opportunities were greatly diminishing. In this respect he said he and his children are a case in point. He considered himself more fortunate than his children who did not find the same opportunities he found when he immigrated to the United States several years ago.

He added that more than 80% of the American people want radical change in the American system, not just a gradual change, which is interpreted as one of the main reasons for Trump's victory. Most of the American people - even those who did not vote for him - think he is able to make a radical regime change, while only one third of the people agree with him on different issues.

Dr. Shibli concluded by emphasizing that we must be very careful in dealing with the new US administration, especially as the White House policies are expected to be mostly sudden and unexpected.

Round Table about «The New US Administration Policy in the Middle East and the Prospects of Egyptian-American Relations»

On January 2017, 22, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs held a roundtable discussion on the “New US Administration Policy in the Middle East and the Prospects of Egyptian-American Relations” following the winning the Republican candidate Donald Trump in the 2016 US presidential election.



The ECFA seminar highlighted features of the American foreign policy, in light of several indicators including Trump’s statements and promises during his election campaign, his selection of his administration and advisers, and his inauguration speech on 20 January, with special emphasis on Middle East issues, terrorism and the peace process in the region, his promises to transfer the US embassy to Jerusalem, and cancel the Iranian nuclear agreement.

Experts in American affairs, including diplomats and a number of specialized academics, participated in the discussion. Ambassador/ Dr. Mounir Zahran, ECFA Chair opening the

seminar, and Ambassador / Dr. Hussein Hassouna, Coordinator of ECFA American Affairs Committee moderated it.

In general, the views of the 11 ECFA members were varied in the three-hour roundtable discussion. Each presented his or her own vision, which was complementary to what others had presented in an integrated analysis of the subject of the discussion, as evident in the following interventions:

Ambassador / Dr. Mounir Zahran noted that, Trump did not focus on the fundamental issues related to the Iranian nuclear deal, the relationship with China and the future relationship with Russia, adding that the first 100 days

are very specific to the parameters of the new American policy after the completion of the new administration and its institutions and after it starts its functions.

For his part, Ambassador Hussein Hassouna the Coordinator of Permanent Committee of American Affairs at the Council, said that the Egyptian position revolves round aspiring to re-establish relations with the United States, especially on issues of common concern, more specifically, combating terrorism and reaching a peaceful settlement to the regional crises.

ECFA member, Atef al-Ghamri stressed that the pro-Trump movement, which brought him to power, is not the result of a present moment in time. It is the result of a state of unrest that began 30 years ago and developed into a rebellion in 2016, or an influence on decision-making, and that interest groups and lobbyists have the final say.

With regard to thinking about relocating the American Embassy to Jerusalem, it would mean that the United States would be losing its constant claim that it is an honest mediator – on which it has long insisted and which requires that it commits itself to leaving the status of Jerusalem to be determined only in the final status negotiations.

While Dr. Mohamed Kamal Member of ECFA, said Trump believes that the reason for his victory is the difference of his vision from traditional American policy, he said, he will maintain this difference, but there are real questions about the American institutions’ ability to change their vision.

Dr. Mona Makram Ebeid Member of ECFA, stressed Egypt’s need to cooperate with the Trump administration with a new formulating a new vision and policy to combat terrorism, which reflects the Egyptian position that refuses to deal with armed groups.

In this regard, Ambassador Ezzat Saad Director of ECFA, said that evidences indicate to the possibility of significant improvement in US-Russian relations, in a way that may positively impact the settlement of some of the

problems of the region, but we must not ignore the role of other institutions within the United States, which are not keen on a normalization of relations and cooperation with Russia, such as the Congress and the Defence Department. Ambassador Ihab Wahba pointed out that Trump adopts a confrontational approach in all his declared positions, in collision with large segments of American society, as well as a foreign collision approach, like what happened with Mexico and China.

Ambassador Mohamed Tawfiq said that, the good relationship between the presidents of



the two countries, “Sisi and Trump”, would give a strong impetus in the direction of rebuilding the bilateral relations on a more solid basis to serve the interests of the two parties. He also stressed the importance of balanced relations.

While Ambassador / Dr. Sayed. Amin Shalaby stressed that Trump’s positions and views towards the world will play an important role in shaping the world order, which will reflect on Egypt and the region.

In conclusion, Ambassador Hajar Al-Islambouli said that in light of the chaos sweeping the region, Egypt needs to formulate a more functional role in order to be able to present it according to its vision and perception of these crises.

Seminar on the new US administration under Donald Trump at the Egyptian Cultural Forum

As part of interest by the new US administration under Donald Trump, the Egyptian Cultural Forum at its headquarters in Garden City, organized a seminar on 26 February 2017 under the title of "The Trump Administration and the Future of American Foreign Policy". The seminar was moderated by Ambassador Ahmed Al Ghamrawi, Director of the Egyptian Cultural Forum and member of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs. It hosted Mr. Atef Ghamry. The speaker began by explaining how a person from outside the dominant and influential mainstream political institutions - came to the White House. Ghamry explaining the beginnings of the populist insurgency he had observed during his work in the United States in

the 1990s. The populist insurgency announced in 2016 that it will choose a president whose name is "Outsider, which means that, outside the political elite."

Ghamry spoke about Trump's clash with the elite bloc of interlocutors, represented by intertwined policy experts from research and knowledge centers, the Central Intelligence Agency and the judiciary.

Ghamry stresses that high on the priorities of President Trump are what he announced under the slogan of his campaign, "America first", as well as the war on terrorism, although these are just titles until the declaration of his foreign policy principles or "Doctrine".

Ghamry explained that the foreign policy de-

American Jews delegation discusses ECFA's views on Egypt-US relations and ME peace process

On February 8, 2017, ECFA received a delegation of 23 American Jews from different social and professional backgrounds, headed by Mr. John Lipotlier, former US Congressman for the Republican Party of New York, and Mr. Eric Mandel, Founder and Director MEPIN, as part of the delegation meetings with a number of civil society organizations, including ECFA, to know ECFA's view of prospects of Egyptian-American relations under the new administration, and its vision of the Middle

East peace process in the future.

Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran welcomed the delegation and reviewed ECFA history, role and interaction with counterpart centers and councils around the world.

The discussions covered several topics, including Egypt's assessment of its democratic transition experience, Egyptian-American relations in the light of the election of Donald Trump as the new US president, Egypt and its regional role.

ECFA Shield to honor Engineer Ismail Osman



On February 19, 2017, ECFA held a ceremony to honor Engineer Ismail Osman for his outstanding and continuous contributions to the Council. ECFA Chair Ambassador Dr. Mounir Zahran presented ECFA Shield to Engineer Osman in appreciation of his efforts, in the presence of ECFA Honorary Chair Ambassador Abdul Raouf Al-Raidi, ECFA Director Ambassador Dr. Ezzat Saad, and a number of

Arab - American relations: Analytical view

ECFA Director Ambassador, Dr. Ezzat Saad, participated in the third session of the Arab-American Relations Conference on 30 January 2017, in cooperation between the American University in Cairo (School of Global Affairs and Public Policy (GAPP), Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Center and the Middle East Institute in Washington). The Conference, held under the title of Prospects of Arab-American Relations under the New American Administration, was dedicated to the role of other world powers. Ambassador Dr. Saad spoke about prospects of a rapprochement between US and Russia under the new administration, and their possible implications for the Middle East problems, whether negative or positive.

Among the most important references made are the following:

1. There is a consensus among analysts - both in the West and in Russia - that Russia is one of the main challenges facing President Trump. His statements - during his campaign and af-

ter his inauguration - revealed his desire to re-launch relations with Russia against the will of many US institutions such as the Pentagon, Congress and the Intelligence.

2. Nevertheless, the right-wing parties in a number of EU countries have expressed concern that any Russian-American rapprochement would be at the expense of the European Union. In this context, some major powers in the Union, such as France, indicated that they did not mind lifting sanctions on Russia, provided that it gives something in return.

3. The Ukrainian crisis and subsequent economic and financial sanctions against Russia for annexing "the Crimean Peninsula" constituted a turning point in Russia's policy toward the region.

4. However, the above does not mean that the Middle East arena is ripe for a rising Russian role in the region. Russia remains in need of Washington's cooperation to find solutions to the problems of the region.

Seminar on the new US administration under Donald Trump at the Egyptian Cultural Forum

partment will witness a great deal of intervention by President Donald Trump - which may be at the expense of the roles of specialists in his administration.

ECFA Shield to honor Engineer Ismail Osman

Board members.

Engineer Ismail Osman, co - founders of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs, has graciously provided a permanent headquarters for the Council (the current headquarters). This has reduced the financial burdens on the Council, as well as contributed to the Council's direct functioning and ease of communication with its members.

Arab - American relations: Analytical view

5. According to estimates by a number of prominent Russian analysts, Russia has never been a geostrategic rival to the United States in the Middle East, at least in the sense we saw at the time of the former Soviet Union.



Minister Hisham Al Sharif presents his plan to promote local development

On March 22, 2017, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs received Minister of Local Development Hisham El Sherif to talk about his vision to promote local development in Egypt, and his plan to upgrade and improve the services which provided to citizens. He confirmed that, the plan is not limited to financial aspects but is primarily concerned with human and social aspects of development, in line with the government's 2030 Sustainable Development Strategy.

Regarding that, this strategy depend on the information technology and the experience of Egyptian cadres are key to promoting local development and that the ministry is moving at a fast pace to achieve it in line with President Sissi's vision.



Nile River and prospects for cooperation in the lecture of Ambassador Dr. Muhammad Hegazy

In the Frame of the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs' concern with the issue of Nile water and its various dimensions, as one of the most important issues that figure at the top of the priorities of the Egyptian agenda in the recent period, the Council organized a seminar on 30 March 2017, in which Ambassador Dr. Mohamed Hegazy gave a lecture under the title of "River Nile and Prospects for Cooperation". The speaker began with a detailed presentation of the Nile River historically, geographically and culturally, for Egypt. He then presented maps of works on the river, the part-



ner countries with Egypt, and its basic features. After that, he reviewed the current status and understandings between Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia regarding the Renaissance Dam.



Meeting with the Chinese Ambassador in Cairo

On March 9, 2017, the Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs received Mr. Song Aiguo, Chinese Ambassador to Cairo, to speak about "Egypt-China relations and prospects for the future."

The meeting was opened by Ambassador Mounir Zahran Chair of ECFA who welcomed the Chinese Ambassador, noting that, it was the first time that the Council received Mr. Song Iguo, and stressed the historical ties between the two countries. Egypt was one of the first countries to recognize the Government of the People's Republic of China in 1956. Ambassador Zahran referred to the visits that took place at the presidential level between the Egyptian and Chinese presidents in recent times.

On his part, the Chinese Ambassador began by thanking ECFA for inviting him.

Ambassador Iguo underlined the important and distinguished relations between the two countries, adding that "Egypt is the pillar of stability and security in the Middle East."

Seminar on "The Belt and Road Initiative ... and Cooperation with the Suez Canal Economic Zone"



On March 18 2017, a joint seminar between the Egyptian Foreign Affairs Council and the Chinese Center for Contemporary International Studies (CCCWS), was held at the Egyptian Diplomatic Club at It discussed the initiative of the Chinese President Xi Jinping in 2013 and ways of future cooperation with Egypt within the framework of its national project, in achieving this with the economic region of the Suez Canal Economic Zone. The joint seminar headed by Ambassador dr. Mounir Zahran, Chair of the Council and Ambassador Dr. Ez-zat Saad Director of the Council, Ambassador. Song Aiguo Chinese Ambassador in Cairo, Dr. Essam Sharaf, former Prime Minister. The proceedings of the symposium took place over four sessions concluded to emphasize that, the Belt and Road Initiative is a global initiative that will benefit not only the 60 countries - or more - in which the new Silk Road will pass, but also the global economy and contribute to the interaction of human civilizations and cultures.

Outcome of Egyptian Delegation's Visit to NATO Headquarters, Brussels

At an invitation by NATO to the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs –via the Egyptian Embassy in Brussels - the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, through the Office of the Assistant Minister for Multilateral Relations, arranged for the visit by selecting participants in the Egyptian delegation headed by Ambassador Mounir Zahran ECFA Chair. The delegation included Ambassador Wafaa Basim, Deputy Assistant Minister for Security Organizations Ambassador Ahmed Salama, other members of the Foreign Minister's Office, and a number of media professionals.

The NATO Secretariat prepared a partnership program with seven countries south of the Mediterranean (Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Tunisia, Morocco, Algeria and Mauritania), as well as a

program of meetings and lectures with NATO officials. The topics that the NATO Secretariat officials focused on were cooperation and partnership with the Mediterranean countries. They started with a policy of openness. NATO officials spoke of changes in the organization's functions after the end of the Cold War, an increase in its defense plans after tension with Russia due to the Ukraine crisis, as well as its southern Mediterranean missions and prospects of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. NATO officials also noted the cooperation with Egypt in combating terrorism, crimes and weapons of mass destruction and in clearing mines, with particular reference to crises in the region, particularly in Libya, Iraq, Syria, Yemen and Somalia.

ECFA calls for awareness of the gravity of terrorist incident against Copts in Arish

On 26 February 2017

The Egyptian Council for Foreign Affairs has received the news about the incidents of "horrific" killing – to say the least – of Egyptian Coptic families and of the preceding and subsequent attempts by the forces of darkness to drive Egyptian citizens to abandon their homes and relatives and leave their city. Subsequently, thirty families were forced to leave their homeland and their families and migrate to the city of Ismailia.

Accordingly, this terrorist incident is a grave development in Egypt's war against terrorism, and should not simply be a confrontation between the forces of darkness, on the one hand, and the armed forces and the police on the other, but must mobilize all Egyptians to defend the identity of their homeland and the dignity of their state. In this regard, it is imperative to clarify the dimensions of this terrorist incident for this mobilization to take place.

The Arish terrorist incidents are a grave development in the battle forced upon Egypt. Egyptians can only win with the people's solidarity with their armed forces and police in this war, which targets Egypt's identity and national and human fabric.