



**Hearing on “The Greater Middle East Initiative: Sea Island  
and Beyond”  
United States Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
Washington, DC  
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**Websites of interest:**

Majlis El Hassan  
[www.elhassan.org](http://www.elhassan.org)

The Arab Thought Forum  
[www.almuntada.org.jo](http://www.almuntada.org.jo)

The Royal Institute for Inter-Faith Studies  
<http://www.riifs.org/>

The Higher Council for Science and Technology  
[www.hcst.gov.jo](http://www.hcst.gov.jo)

The Royal Scientific Society  
[www.rss.gov.jo](http://www.rss.gov.jo)

The Arab League  
[www.arableagueonline.org/](http://www.arableagueonline.org/)

World Conference on Religions for Peace  
[www.wcrp.org/](http://www.wcrp.org/)

The Club of Rome  
[www.clubofrome.org](http://www.clubofrome.org)

Al Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies  
<http://extra.ahram.org.eg/>

Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Cooperation “TREC”  
<http://saharawind.com/documents/trec.pape.pdf>

Search for Common Ground / Partners in Humanity  
[www.majliselhassan.org](http://www.majliselhassan.org)    [www.sfcg.org/](http://www.sfcg.org/)

Global Marshall Plan Initiative  
[www.globalmarshallplan.org](http://www.globalmarshallplan.org)

Commission on Globalization (University of Wisdom)  
[www.commissionon](http://www.commissiononglobalization.org/) globalization.org/

Human Security - Oxford Research Group  
<http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/>

Thank you Mr. Chairman, Senator Biden, and members of this distinguished Committee. Thank you for your kind invitation.

1. The Administration's Greater Middle East Initiative to be discussed at the G8 Summit in Sea Island has already been harshly criticised by those who consider that it fails to address the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and seeks to impose reform from the outside.
2. Allow me to start by saying that such critics miss the point on both counts. My part of the world needs as many initiatives for reform as can be imagined both from within and from the outside. Reform can also accelerate rather than retard peace making in the Middle East.
3. Let us remember that over the millennia, our part of the world prospered only when it had two-way openness and interaction. The free movement of ideas was the key to prosperity: the free movement of goods, capital and people followed.
4. During the nineties, two ideas or initiatives were launched in our region. After the 1991 Gulf War, the Madrid Middle East Peace Process was sponsored by the United States and the Russian Federation. It had bilateral and multilateral tracks with working groups on refugees, water, environment, economic cooperation and regional security and arms control. In 1994, the European Union launched the Barcelona Process for Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. The Madrid Process is now at a standstill. But Barcelona is still ongoing and has been conceptually expanded by the new neighbourhood initiative.
5. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict and Iraq are of course key issues for the people of the Middle East. Although interrelated, it would be unwise and impractical to assume that the Palestinian-Israeli issue, Iraq, and overarching regional reform should be tackled in any chronological order. Resolution of any one issue should not be conditional upon any other. These issues can and must be addressed simultaneously. Progress on any one of these fronts will facilitate resolution of the others. The inverse is also true. Failure to address any one of these issues diminishes the prospects for resolving all of them. Senator Lugar is correct to assert in his proposal that "if we help to produce a resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, fresh

political winds would sweep through the region and new possibilities for political reform would flourish.” A stable, secure and democratic sovereign Iraq would have a similar effect. Each issue is an integral part of any credible initiative to promote permanent reform in the Middle East.

6. Today I speak before you as a person who for more than three decades has worked to foster reform through civil society. As a “Prince” this may sound contradictory. But this life-long journey started in 1970 when I founded the Scientific Society to promote technology transfer and education. The long list of other NGOs that I sponsored includes the Arab Thought Forum, the Institute for Inter-Faith Studies, the Hashemite Educational Society, El Hassan Youth Award. Currently, I am promoting the concept of an Islamic World Forum.
7. I am referring to all this not for immodest self-acclaim, but to say what a lonely task it has been. During these years, I often referred to ‘toothless declarations’ and the ‘powerless lobby for the powerless’. That is why I welcome any conversation on reform in the Middle East whether from within or from without.

Let me now move from the general to the specific.

8. The Achilles’ heel of reform efforts and attempts to nurture civil society is the thin, and often invisible, dividing line between patronage and partnership. Society itself, the ultimate beneficiary of reform, can easily be tempted by the ‘patronage trap’. Short-term material gains can be more attractive than long-term institution building.
9. The key question is how to change attitudes and move from principles to instruments and mechanisms – to move from concepts to defining objectives and processes for implementation. The basic dilemma or contradiction is that society itself is both a target and an instrument of policy.
10. In the hard security field, governmental institutions in our part of the world are well developed. Perhaps too well developed in the military and intelligence field. Cooperation in the soft security field means building new partnerships with civil society and businesses. But, as we know, civil society institutions are only embryonic in our region. And the process should not end up unwittingly nurturing

‘sham’ civil society institutions, like the oxymorons created by communist governments during the Cold War.

11. That is why I consider that the proposal for the Greater Middle East Twenty-First Century Trust is a key component for the success of initiatives to promote reform in the Middle East. Let me explain why.
12. As we struggle to keep up with complex phenomena, the world has slipped during the last decade into a static approach in the face of mobile cultural, social, political and economic realities. The world requires imaginative leaps into non-traditional combinations of policies.
13. The concept of a ‘Greater Middle East Twenty-First Century Trust’ is one such imaginative leap. It is both timely and essential to achieve a better future in our region. It should promote the list of ideas of GMEI and at the same time promote other complementary initiatives from within the region. Self reliance is the ultimate objective, rather than looking to the United States as policeman, nurse maid and benefactor, to be blamed selectively when problems arise.
14. I totally agree with what Senator Lugar has recently said, and I quote:

“The United States cannot feed every person, lift every person out of poverty, cure every disease, or stop every conflict. But our power and status have conferred upon us a tremendous responsibility to humanity. In an era afflicted with terrorism, the world will not be secure and just and prosperous unless the United States and talented individuals devote themselves to international leadership.

To win the war against terrorism, the United States must assign U.S. economic and diplomatic capabilities the same strategic priority that we assign to military capabilities. There are no shortcuts to victory. We must commit ourselves to the slow, painstaking work of foreign policy day by day and year by year.” End of quote.

15. The Trust should represent a new form of social compact to institutionalise the inclusion of civil society in project design. In doing so, it will avoid the ‘patronage trap’. In addition, it should have benchmarks to assess progress, and performance-based

evaluations. A third key element is transparency and openness. Senator Lugar's vision includes all these concepts in the Trust.

16. In the words of Senator Lugar, it is a vehicle for action rather than a set of programmes. I would add that it should stimulate the evolution of genuine civil society in our region because it goes beyond the primary development paradigm of growth, infrastructure and health. This is the area or rather the vacuum that many of the extremist organisations have exploited to engage the neglected elements of societies. The Trust should aim to deal with those neglected elements as partners. As a grant- and investment-making body that could conform to Islamic financial principles, the Trust can be a culturally sensitive vehicle.
17. The Lugar Trust could begin with a regional conference of NGOs, Ministers of Development, Middle East opinion-makers and academics to map out a mechanism for funding meaningful development projects with broad impact. Working groups on education, infrastructure, free speech, human rights, entrepreneurship, government and fiscal reforms, technology, and poverty eradication should convene to weigh and recommend specific projects.
18. Meanwhile, regional reform should focus on issues of collective security, free trade, and free movement of goods, people and capital.
19. Others should be brought into the mix. The European Union and the OSCE could provide high-level capacity-building support to Middle East regional forums, in particular to explore regional declarations, such as the Alexandria Declaration, on security, democracy, human rights and development. NATO should develop its framework of cooperation with states in the Middle East, especially to prepare the ground for a system of regional security cooperation based on transparency, verification, and arms control. I have called for many years for a regional code of conduct. In fact the Treaty of Peace between Jordan and Israel calls for a CSCME (a Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Middle East).
20. It has become fashionable to talk about the lack of progress in the Middle East and the Islamic world. But, the Arab Development Report, and the Unified Arab Economic Report, known as the quadpartite report (issued by the Arab League, The Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development, the Arab Monetary Fund and



OAPEC), contain many positive indicators. The challenge is to build on the progress realised so far and achieve a transformation in the economies of the region.

21. In the latest World Development Report (WDR), The World Bank considers that for the first time in human history it is possible to eradicate global poverty in our lifetime. It states that development is not just about money or even about numerical targets, as important as those are. It is about people. The WDR focuses on basic services, particularly health, education, water and sanitation, seeking ways of making them work for poor people. The objective should be to invest in and to empower people, and improve the climate for investment.
22. The revival of Muslim intellectual thought should be a priority in the Greater Middle East. A momentum has to be built for a Muslim movement for peace and a new humanitarian order. This is the aim of the Islamic World Forum (IWF) which I hope to launch. A wake-up call is urgently needed to lead to a number of programmes aimed at Muslim intellectual proactivism.
23. This effort will provide a platform for a centrist movement to bridge the gaps between non-Arab and Arab Muslims, as well as between different Islamic groups including Sunnis and Shiites.
24. With proper leadership this effort can reveal that violent extremists in our region are only Islamic in name. They are in fact as Islamic as the GDR (German Democratic Republic) was democratic.
25. For the last fifty years the centre of gravity of the Western Alliance has been Europe, but its future is moving to the East and South. The Alliance has to redeploy conceptually and materially to Central and South Asia, the Middle East and Africa.
26. The question is not whether the United States and the G8 can 'fix' the Middle East. The real question is whether we in the Islamic world can redeploy our intellectual resources in partnership with the United States and the G8 so that the front lines are transformed into a meeting ground for security, cooperation and prosperity. The GME Twenty-First Century Trust is a vehicle that can help us achieve that transformation.

27. Peace is real and durable only when the root causes of conflict have been eliminated. It is important to eradicate poverty to limit violence. The Trust answers the call of those working for reform in the region and will make their task less lonely and more productive.
28. There is a need for partners that can network. For four decades I have worked for concepts. I have come here to put those concepts into instruments. Yes, I believe in the power of ideas, and I have come here to work with you in this partnership to try to put this concept into a strategy. Ideas from within and beyond the region should be tabulated within a matrix that develops a strategy based on a vision. When one faces a closed door - one must open another.
29. Whereas the G8 is presenting a list of ideas, I would hope that the partnership concept of Senator Lugar would hone these ideas, strategise them and evolve the instruments for implementation. To succeed we must be positive on how to contribute to the partnership. We need a coherent and dynamic civil society; a network of think tanks. Hence the importance of ideas such as the Council on Foreign Relations' suggested Tri-Consortium. This is what I bring with me to the table. Sea Island is about governmental cooperation at the highest level. People to people cooperation, citizens' conferencing can turn it to partnership.
30. I stand before you as an Arab who believes in the power of ideas. Arab intellectuals need to talk to governments about government deals. In my former position, I worked for 34 years in pioneering a Jordanian centrist policy alongside my late brother, King Hussein.
31. What we seek is cosmopolitanism and a broader based interdisciplinary strategy - not a policy of compulsion. I regard partnership as complementary to official responses. Complementarity of the broader partnership - economic, social, cultural. Common humanity is the basis for promoting soft security.
32. I regard Europe as a possible role model given historic geographic proximity with the Arab world and in terms of pluralism.
33. We have to gently step up to the template of compliance with international norms because we are a region without a name - a no-name region. West Asia and South Asia combined have a greater population than China.

34. Robert McNamara, who I knew as Secretary of Defence as well as President of the World Bank, contributed to the architecture for peace. My concern is for how wars end. In that context, I am grateful to members of the panel of the Middle East Commission of the 1970s – David Rockefeller, Jakob Javits as well as Robert McNamara.
35. Help us to help ourselves. Help us to come to terms with ourselves and to help promote the views that we share and end the stereotyping of each other. I call for a rule of law, not of power
36. The time has come to ask for a bold breakthrough. Sadat went to Jerusalem; King Hussein concluded the Peace Treaty. The Palestinians partnered in Oslo. Nixon called on China, Reagan on the Soviet Union. The British Prime Minister visited Libya. Can we go the extra mile to avoid the inevitability of conflict? Can we move from politics to statesmanship?
37. What would you think of convening a meeting with the sherpas of the G8 for which I have been calling for years?
38. A number of concepts come to mind in considering what mechanisms exist or should be established to help develop new partnerships with governments, businesses and civil society to promote political, economic and social reform in our region. First come first served will not work (e.g. Casablanca). A matrix of regional and global initiatives is an important tool for deciding priorities. “The Greater Middle East Twenty-First Century Trust” can partner and network extensively with a number of on-going efforts, that include the following examples:

#### **A) HUMAN RESOURCES**

- (i) Human security has been defined by the Commission on Human Security that it complements state security, furthers human development and enhances human rights. It complements state security by being people-centred. It broadens the human development forces beyond ‘growth with equity’. At the core is respecting human rights and promoting democratic principles. Early May, I hosted the Amman Roundtable on Human Security in the Middle East which considered organising a MECA (Middle East

Citizens' Assembly) in Amman. We worked jointly with the Canadians and Norwegians on the Lysøen Declaration in 1998. The Swedish Government's 'Fundamental Standards of Humanity' of 1992 were set on the basis of international law and human rights as well as cultural and ethical norms testifying to the growing awareness of the need for global action against flagrant violations.

- (ii) Copenhagen produced a shopping list of ideas for the economic basket of the Middle East multilateral peace track. When we met in Casablanca for the MENA economic summit, Shimon Peres and I had a vision for a new Middle East, a vision based on earlier studies which included a zone of human, economic and natural resources.
- (iii) 'Governance in South Asia' is an ongoing study of the roots of misgovernance in that region and how to move towards a common minimum agenda for good governance that includes recognising the sovereignty of the citizen, social development and common culture.
- (iv) Through co-chairing the Independent Commission on International Humanitarian Issues in the early '80's, we looked at the challenge, the victims and the hope. We advised the UN on the need for a New International Humanitarian Order. We called for a new law of peace - the powerless lobby for the powerless.
- (v) WOCMES. I spoke three years ago in Mainz, Germany at the First World Congress for Middle Eastern Studies. This Congress brought together Middle East Studies associations from Europe and from the Middle East (all countries). The second of these Congresses will be held in Jordan in 2006.
- (vi) At the end of June, together with colleagues from Turkey, a Parliament of Cultures will be inaugurated to promote understanding among different cultures in the world and to enhance dialogue between their thinkers and intellectuals. The first project out of the Parliament of Cultures, will, we hope be a School of Mediterranean Humanities to bridge the intellectual and cultural gap between Western and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, through a new curriculum of *terra media* studies.

- (vii) Partners in Humanity is an idea preceding 9/11. This calls for a humanitarian outreach programme that would serve to improve understanding, build positive relationships and promote dialogue between the Muslim world and the U.S. We met in Boston and New York and last year we held our first roundtable in Amman.
- (viii) A Middle East Citizens' Assembly. Similar to the Helsinki Citizens Assembly that arose out of the links of the 1980s between the Western peace movement and East European opposition groups. The aim was 'détente from below'. The Helsinki Assembly has been effective in transmitting ideas and proposals to governments and to institutions.
- (ix) Human Values for Developing a Shared Consciousness. Extending a hand over the boundary. It is not the pipelines that matter but the people living next to the pipelines. e.g. Iraq post-war psychological reconstruction and development - to empower Iraqis to decide their own future. A Truth and Reconciliation Commission is one instrument.
- (x) University of Wisdom Studies. This is being established in the belief that humanity will only successfully deal with the challenges of the future if it is firmly rooted in the wisdom of the past. The cornerstone is the 'new Alexandrian Library' of the Philosophical Research Society, comprised of over 25,000 volumes of texts and manuscripts of ancient Greek philosophers, ancient Hindu and Chinese masters, the esoteric traditions of Judo-Christianity, and the mysticism of Islam - all the traditions comprising what Huxley called the 'perennial philosophy'.
- (xi) Script Writers. Interactive script writing for the media. Embedded scholars rather than (or as well as) embedded journalists.

## **B) THE ARAB LEAGUE**

- (i) The Arab League Summit in Tunis. The attitude is that you cannot address structural reform for the Middle East unless you address parallel political crises. These principles were

conveyed to the United States and other partners. Tunis pointed out certain fears. The Alexandria Declaration certain opportunities. This is what I see being brought to the table.

- (ii) The economic documents that were presented at the 1980 Arab Economic Summit, included some very important approaches, which are still valid such as the call to remove barriers to facilitate the free movement of goods, capital and labour.
- (iii) However Arab divisions, especially the estrangement between Arab countries and Egypt after its signing the Camp David Accords, had led to a state of disarray in Arab structures, to moving the Arab League headquarters from Cairo to Tunisia, and to the disruption of several technical initiatives at the level of Arab institutions. Accordingly, Lebanese Prime Minister, Mr. Saleem Al-Huss, was commissioned, at the end of the 1980s, to head a working team to examine the condition of the Arab League. These concepts can be revisited.
- (iv) Unfortunately, though, the existing Arab order has fallen short of appropriately employing these resources to interconnect the infrastructures of Arab countries or to come up with a shared vision. Perhaps 'what-if scenarios' would help us envision the future, away from 'short-termism' that has bridled us.
- (v) Are we addressing unilateralism or are we addressing multilateralism. If we want to talk of region, then it is a multilateral concept. Soft security, or what Professor Joseph Nye calls soft power, is the key.
- (vi) If we talk of region, we must talk of South Asia and West Asia. Not only to talk about difficulties but about solutions. In terms of regional groupings in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, you have got it right as our part of the world is covered by the Subcommittee on Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

## **C) ARAB CIVIL SOCIETY**

- (i) The Arab Thought Forum. Founded twenty-three years ago to promote exchange of ideas in the Arab world that include: reform of the Arab League; establishment of an Arab court of justice; an Arab parliament and an Arab security council. Its activities include:
  - a. Sana'a Symposium on 'Arab Conflict Resolution through Peaceful Means' was held in 1999.
  - b. The Kuwait Symposium 'Prospects for Arab Cooperation between Regionalism and Internationalism' - proceedings published in 2002.
  - c. Next symposium will be on 'Centrism' (or 'enlightened moderation', as President Musharraf calls it).
- (ii) The meaning of the concept of "Belonging and Development" which has been upheld by the Arab Thought Forum since its foundation. The 1980 Economic Summit held in Amman was the first Arab summit to be totally devoted to Arab development. In-depth studies were prepared and discussed, such as "The Arab Development Strategy" and "The Decade of Arab Development". Accordingly, that summit constituted a bridge between thought and policies, and between intellectuals and decision-makers. Now action is needed for the phoenix to rise from the ashes.
- (iii) The Al Ahram Centre for Strategic Studies was established a few years ago and boasts a number of fine researchers.

## **D) ENERGY**

- (i) TREC: Trans-Mediterranean Renewable Energy Corporation, for development, climate stabilisation and good neighbourhood. The objective is to help transform the Mediterranean from a region of various divides and conflicts into a region of harmonised socio-economic development, cooperation and good neighbourhood.

- (ii) From Larry Elliott's article, The Guardian Monday 31 May, 2004 – "The attack [Saudi Arabia] has some shock value for oil prices, but things may calm down again", said Peter Gignoux, senior oil adviser at the New York-based GDP Associates. "This was a terrible act of terrorism, but it hasn't had any impact on Saudi oil production or exports". The effects of dearer crude are already being felt in the west, with inflation in the 12-nation eurozone rising from 2% to 2.5% in May, prices of unleaded oil in the UK moving above 90p a litre and US motorists paying a record \$2 a gallon for their fuel.

Oil prices ended last week at just below \$40 a barrel in New York, around \$2 a barrel lower than a week earlier amid optimism that Opec would act to bring prices back down to the cartel's \$22-\$28 range.

- (iii) I wonder how can such thought be implemented in a wise, prudent and enlightened way? How can it spur people's conscience? Perhaps the first step consists in defining the nature of issues and problems that form a common basis for Arab countries in every geographic region of the greater Arab Nation: the Arabian Peninsula, the Arab Mashreq and Maghreb, and the Nile Valley. Undoubtedly, the cluster consisting of the triad: (water – energy – human environment) furnishes the common ground, both subregionally and inter-regionally.

## **E) GOVERNANCE**

- (i) Towards a Universal Declaration on the Basic Principles of Democracy: From Principles to Realisation: Professor Cherif Bassiouni is working on the three paradigms of (i) the universality or relativity of democracy; (ii) democracy as a process or a condition; and (iii) democracy as methods and modalities or as substance and substantive outcomes.
- (ii) Project Proposal relating to Problems of Implementation and Compliance in the field of International Humanitarian and Human Rights Law. This was presented to the UN in June 2000 by the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the Independent Bureau for Humanitarian Issues.



## **F) ECONOMY**

(i) A Global Marshall Plan for a world-wide Eco-Social Market Economy: This Plan represents -

- First, a solid foundation for a new, sustainable, global increase in economic prosperity.
- Second, an especially intelligent and efficient way towards global sustainable development.