

THE IISS MANAMA DIALOGUE

FIRST PLENARY SESSION

SATURDAY 18 NOVEMBER 2023

WALEED ELKHEREIJI

DEPUTY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS,

SAUDI ARABIA

Waleed Al Khuraiji, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, Saudi Arabia

Good morning, everyone. Ladies and gentlemen, may the blessings of God be with you. I would like first of all to thank the Kingdom of Bahrain for the efforts that they have made in organising this forum, for its success and for their good hospitality. I would like as well to thank Dr John Chipman, the Chief Executive of the IISS. It is a pleasure to be with you today and I convey to you the salutations of the Foreign Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and his wishes for the success of this event.

Ladies and gentlemen, the Manama Dialogue has always had a huge importance because it has enabled dialogue that highlights the most important issues relating to regional security and to finding sustainable solutions. The title of this conference – War, Diplomacy and De-escalation – has a very important influence on what we need to do. In fact, this session of the Manama Dialogue is taking place within this very important crisis that is touching this area. We are facing horrific crimes that are violating international law. We are witnessing military aggression that is leading to thousands of victims, a war that nobody will be gaining from, and the region, of course, will not get out of this without huge repercussions.

In Palestine today we are facing horrific events, barbaric violations against unarmed civilians because of the huge escalation of the occupation forces of Israel and their violation of international laws and humanitarian values, disregarding the international calls, and they are bombarding vital facilities, neighbourhoods full of civilians, hospitals and other civil facilities. We have always repeated that civilians should not be attacked, under no pretext. We have condemned the policy of forced displacement and mass sanctioning that is followed by Israel and the embargo against the Palestinian population. Such a prolonged war will be leading to a humanitarian crisis, an unjustified one that will be leading the region to a huge crisis, destabilising the regional security and removing all possibility of peace.

Since the start of this crisis, we have worked with all our allies and partners to mobilise the international community for it to play its role and to put an end to these repeated violations and to the cycle of violence, for the Palestinian population to be able to enjoy their least legitimate rights. But in fact, the latest events push us to really think of how to find a solution. The Kingdom is calling upon the United Nations to impose a humanitarian pause or a humanitarian truce as a first step that needs to be followed by de-escalation and holding the Israeli Defense Forces accountable for what they have done and to work towards peace in the region.

But in return, and thanks to the extraordinary common international Islamic summit that was held in Riyadh, we are working towards a unified Islamic voice that would support the Palestinian population towards a just and sustainable peace in this region. The Kingdom has worked in order to put an end to the slaughter and to find some solutions to get out of this crisis. We will go on mobilising all these efforts in order to convey our message, to convey our priorities to the entire world: to reach an immediate ceasefire; to remove the siege on Gaza and to open the way for medical and humanitarian assistance; releasing the hostages and the detainees; and reviving the efforts of a durable, fair and comprehensive peace.

In fact, this is reminding us of having to go again to a peace process that will give back the Palestinians their legitimate rights for them to establish their state upon the borders of 1967 with East Jerusalem as their capital, based on the international resolutions and the Arab Peace Initiative. This is the only way to put an end to this conflict and to find a better future for the entire region to live in peace, stability and security.

Majesties, Highnesses, ladies and gentlemen, we are facing this huge responsibility that is caused by this crisis and many others in this area to reduce these tensions in which we are living that are only leading to wars and destruction. Everybody knows the importance of this region and its vitality for

international economy and trade. This means that security and peace in this region will have repercussions beyond this region, or the crisis and the conflicts will of course reverberate all over the world. In fact, such conflicts will have ramifications, namely adding and increasing violence and extremism and creating a fertile ground for more terrorism. Consequently, it is very important to work on solving these problems and treating them in a collective way by strengthening the international organisations for them to be able to put an end to the ramifications.

At the end, I would like to reiterate the importance of an immediate ceasefire, stopping the killing of civilians and putting an end to this conflict in Palestine. We would like to call upon the international community to put an end to this war, to achieve the peace we are looking for for a better future in this region that needs to live in security, peace and prosperity.

May the peace of God be with you.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Minister, thank you very much for your remarks.

May I now invite Brett McGurk to take to the podium, the Coordinator for the Middle East and North Africa, in the United States National Security Council. Brett.