

# THE IISS MANAMA DIALOGUE

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**HRH PRINCE TURKI AL FAISAL AL SAUD**

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD, KING FAISAL CENTER FOR  
RESEARCH AND ISLAMIC STUDIES; FORMER DIRECTOR  
OF GENERAL INTELLIGENCE DIRECTORATE, SAUDI  
ARABIA

**HRH Prince Turki Al Faisal Al Saud, Chairman of the Board, King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies; former Director of General Intelligence Directorate, Saudi Arabia**

Ladies and gentlemen, first of all let me extend my thanks and gratitude to the IISS for this kind invitation to join this discussion. My thanks, also, and gratitude go to His Majesty King Hamad and Crown Prince Salman for their invitation and generosity in allowing me to come here and facilitating my arrival at this conference.

Also, I take this opportunity to congratulate Dr Bastian Giegerich on his new role as Director-General and Chief Executive Officer of this esteemed institution. I wish him all the success in his new task, though assuming this role is not an easy job after my friend John Chipman. John, by his determination and tireless efforts, has led IISS through the years to its international prominence, including in this region. Thank you, John, for all that you have done during your tenure in office.

Ladies and gentlemen, ever since the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, every time a crisis or war erupts in our region, talks arise about the need to find a solution to the root causes of the issue at hand. However, all talk the talk, but do not walk the walk to the end. There was never a lack of ideas, statements, declarations, peace initiatives, United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and General Assembly resolutions. Alas, all stopped at Israel's door due to the unwavering US and European backing. Therefore, all initiatives went in vain. Peace remained an elusive goal.

The conflict did not begin on 7 October this year. There is a long history that led to today, most of it in the mode of assaults on Palestinians. The world is witnessing the failure in stopping this Israeli assault that amounts to genocide in Gaza and is also coupled with the threat of using nuclear weapons. And let me just make clear: as the Crown Prince said yesterday, I condemn Hamas's barbaric attack on civilians on 7 October. But I must also condemn the equally barbaric and more savage attack of the Israelis on Palestinian civilians, not only in Gaza, but also in the West Bank.

This war is a turning point in the process of a serious search for a just solution to the Palestinian issue that deals with the root causes of this protracted conflict. The Israeli nuclear threat is an open invitation to others in the region to pursue this option. We must ponder this recklessness on the part of Israel and not let it pass without reckoning.

Ladies and gentlemen, this war is not only reminding us in this region of the hypocrisy and double standard of those claiming to be the guardians of what they call the rules-based international order, democracy, human rights, international law and other norms. They are reminding us of the lip service we were receiving through the years of their goodwill and their concern for peace and security in this important region.

I remember last year on this podium, Mrs Ursula von der Leyen stressing the collectivity of the security of the Arab region, or Gulf region, and Europe. And where do we stand on that today? I still do not know. But we must take this fact, and we must consider that war is also an indication of political and diplomatic failure of the international community. All of us have failed in solving this problem, and the responsibility goes on all of us to find a solution.

Continued failure in tackling this issue is unsustainable anymore, particularly when public opinion across the world is more conscious of the justice of the Palestinian cause and the atrocities of continued Israeli occupation. The Israeli, American and European illusion that peace can be achieved by bettering Palestinians' lives under occupation, normalising relations with Arab states, or that Arabs and Muslims are fed up with this issue, are not an alternative to all real peace requires and to avoid recycling this conflict every few years. This continuation has been hampering all efforts in the region to move forward toward peace, stability, development and prosperity during the last seven decades.

As I have said before, there is no lack of initiatives for regional and international peace efforts. However, what is more needed is working to implement UNSC resolutions concerning this issue and to impose their implementation, as happened on Iraq and other countries. I do believe, when it comes to the need for a newer initiative for regional peace, that the Kingdom-initiated Arab Peace Initiative in 2002 is still on the table and is still the only initiative that reflects the norms and principles of international law, UNSC resolutions, and the need to tackle the root causes of this conflict.

This initiative provides Israel with the recognition it desires from the Arab and Muslim world and countries. It makes normalisation of relations between states a normal diplomatic conduct. It makes Israel an integral and normal state within the region. And above all, it brings justice to the Palestinians with their own state.

Israel, unfortunately, has continued and still continues not to consider that option. It is obvious that without a just solution to this issue that takes into consideration the legitimate demand of the Palestinians for self-determination, this area will never experience stability and will remain exposed to all negative possibilities. If the issue today is Gaza, who knows where and when the next war will be.

The hope is still there that after this disastrous war, the United States and its allies in Europe honour their commitment to solving this protracted conflict fairly by endorsing this initiative, and work with Arab countries and Israel to bring this issue to rest.

I would now like to refer just for a few minutes to what was said in previous sessions of this conference. There is a narrative that if Hamas releases the hostages, then we can move forward on humanitarian support and humanitarian pauses in the fighting. As I mentioned, this conflict did not begin on 7 October 2023. So what about those Palestinians who have been incarcerated in Israeli jails before then, without due process and without legal recourse? What about their fate? Are they also going to be included in this quid pro quo? I hope they will be considered in that quid pro quo.

The second point I would like to make is that the security question is lopsidedly weighted in Israel's favour. Who will guarantee the Palestinian people's security from Israeli aggression? There was a mention of the international peace conference by Minister Zayani. That, as he said about another subject, should happen today, not tomorrow. And I hope that we take that seriously and go forward with it.

There is also no mention of the day after – as there is about Gaza – about Israel. Is this government going to continue the day after this fighting stops? You can imagine what is going to happen there. They are going to be even more awful, more right-wing and more extremist than they are today. They have already talked about the nuclear devastation of Gaza.

And ladies and gentlemen, there is one stigma that is used by Israel to cudgel the heads of those who call for holding Israel responsible for its barbaric and horrific acts, and that is the cudgel of anti-Semitism. I hope we can find a solution for that.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.