21ST REGIONAL SECURITY SUMMIT

THE IISS MANAMA DIALOGUE

FIRST PLENARY SESSION

THE FUTURE OF GLOBAL SECURITY GOVERNANCE

SATURDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2025

DR BASTIAN GIEGERICH

DIRECTOR-GENERAL AND CHIEF EXECUTIVE, IISS

AYMAN SAFADI

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER; MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND EXPATRIATES, JORDAN

DR JOHANN WADEPHUL

FEDERAL MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS, GERMANY

THE RT HON. YVETTE COOPER MP

SECRETARY OF STATE FOR FOREIGN, COMMONWEALTH AND DEVELOPMENT AFFAIRS, UNITED KINGDOM

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
We will now open up for questions. I will take maybe five or six in the first round, and then we will return to the panel, and then we will get another round in. We have about 50 minutes for discussion now. As many of you know, we have a very active Young Leaders Group here amongst us, so I will make sure that I call on a few of them as well as we go on.

First on my list is Simon Mayall from the UK. Simon, your mic is live.

Lieutenant-General (Retd) Sir Simon Mayall, International Senior Advisor, Coutts; Director, Sandcrest Consulting Ltd
Thank you very much, Bastian. It is very understandable that the focus of all three speakers is the ongoing situation in Gaza, Israel, the Palestinian issues. But if you get a bigger map, one of the features of the Middle Eastern environment that I view as most hopeful at the moment is the military, economic and ideological weakening of Iran. And although the Foreign Secretary mentioned the nuclear file, often that has been used by Iran as a cover for the activities of its proxies, the militias in Hamas, obviously Lebanon, the Hashd al-Shaabi in Iraq.

I would just be interested to hear the panel's views on what we do now about Iran? Because to my mind, the weakening there offers huge hope for all those regions, because Iran has always used the Arab world as its strategic depth in a malign manner. Thank you very much.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
We will take a few more, from Oman and from the Young Leaders Group, Hailana Albusaidi.

Hailana Albusaidi, Political Economist, Political Affairs and Negotiations, The Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf
Good morning, everyone, this is Hailana Albusaidi from the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) General Secretariat. I just wanted to touch bases on Sudan. There is an extremely annoying international silence on what is going on in Sudan and Al-Fashir. Sudan has the largest humanitarian crisis in the world, and a lot are not talking about it because it forces you to have a lot of uncomfortable conversations about anti-Blackness and about who gets humanitarian aid extended to and who gets ignored. This is how greed, racism and power shapes who gets empathy and who gets ignored.

Sudan is bleeding right now, and empathy is not emotional. It is intellectual. What are governments doing right now to save Sudan?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
From the United States and from *The Economist*, Gregg Carlstrom.

Gregg Carlstrom, Middle East Correspondent, *The Economist*
Thank you, Bastian. Gregg Carlstrom, Middle East correspondent for *The Economist*. Two questions for Minister Safadi. First, around security in Gaza: on that stage two years ago, you said there will be no Arab troops going to Gaza, none. Do you still think that is the case? And if there is a stabilisation force made up entirely of non-Arab troops, will that have legitimacy in Gaza?

Then, second, around reconstruction: there has been some talk in Jerusalem and Washington about, if Hamas refuses to disarm, starting the process of reconstruction to the east of the so-called yellow line, so in Israeli-controlled parts of Gaza. I am wondering what you think about that?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS

From the Netherlands, Meia Nouwens.

Meia Nouwens, Senior Fellow for Chinese Security and Defence Policy, IISS
In all of your remarks, you rightly discuss the role of countries from this region and from the West to ensure the ceasefire turns into a lasting peace and rebuilding of Gaza. But China, of course, is increasingly positing itself as a global leader on security, including through its Global Security Initiative. My question, therefore, is, seeing as it has taken a rather hands-off approach to engagement on security in this region in the recent conflicts, are you satisfied with China's role to date? And what are your expectations of China moving forward?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
I might take two or three more. From Bahrain and the Young Leaders Group, Nouf Al Awadhi.

Nouf Al Awadhi, Senior Bilateral Relations Specialist, Asia and Pacific Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bahrain
Good morning, Excellencies. I wanted to address my question to His Excellency, Minister Ayman Safadi. History and international relations has taught us that ceasefires can last between a few hours and a few decades. However, considering the volatility of the region, what are the mechanisms in place now and that will be in place in the future to ensure that both parties do not break the ceasefire, and thus taking the region into another chapter of instability?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. I will take two more, and then we will return to the panel. I might give warning, Yvette, I might start with you, and then we will come to Johann. And then Ayman, since there are a few that are directed specifically to you, we will end the round with you. But let us take two more. Tom Beckett from the UK. Tom.

Lieutenant-General (Retd) Sir Thomas Beckett, Senior Adviser and Corresponding Director, IISS–Americas
Thank you, Bastian. It is a short question, but since we have got three important foreign ministers on the stage, I would like to know if they think the international rules-based order is dead, and if they do not think it is dead, could they explain why?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you, Tom. That is very crisp. We will take one more in this round, from Saudi Arabia, Shafi Aldamer.

Dr Shafi Aldamer, Chairman, Global Studies, King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals
Thank you so much. The proposal that was mentioned by Mrs Cooper about the administration of Gaza is perfect, but how can the UK and other partners put an effort in order to encourage the others to go ahead with this plan, particularly the US?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. Let us return to the panel for a round of responses, and then we will turn again to the audience for a second round of interventions and questions. Yvette, may I ask you to start us off in this round?

The Rt Hon. Yvette Cooper MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, United Kingdom
Yes. Just to pick up a few of the questions. I think on Iran, we know that Iran has been obviously a long-term threat to the stability and security across this region, but also more widely. In the UK, we

have had Iran-backed threats on our streets too. I think coordinated action in order to address the threats and the challenges from Iran will continue to be important. It is why we took the approach, and Johann and I worked together on the snap-back process, because we took the nuclear threats so seriously and will need to continue to do so.

On the Sudan issue, I strongly agree with this question. I think this conflict has been ignored for far too long, and it is desperate. The scale of the crisis that is taking place, the scale of the atrocities that are taking place almost as we speak in Sudan, and the fact that millions of people face famine in Sudan. We need the same kind of international energy and commitment that we have seen rightly around Gaza, but we need that same level of energy and commitment around Sudan, most immediately to get the ceasefire, to get urgently needed humanitarian aid in place, but also to get respect for international humanitarian law in place on all sides, and the pressure to come from all nations on the parties involved as well.

The issues around the security, some security issues, reconstruction issues in Gaza: I think we need to keep Gaza together, not have greater fragmentation within Gaza, and also to see this as – the UK's strong, long-held view that we need the two-state solution, and that does mean Gaza, the West Bank and East Jerusalem to be part of a future Palestine living peacefully alongside the State of Israel.

But we know there are so many steps, in terms of maintaining this ceasefire, the question about how the ceasefire needs to be maintained at the moment. I believe that we should be seeking to strengthen a formal monitoring process, a formal independent monitoring committee to be able to deal with what will inevitably be incidents that will take place, to ensure that they do not destabilise the ceasefire as a whole. Of course, that means we will need the progress both on what the governance processes should be, the transitional governance arrangements for Palestine to be led by Palestinians, but to know that there will need to be transitional arrangements, and there will need to be those security guarantees, the security and stabilisation forces in place. We know that none of this will be easy, but it does require everyone to lean in.

In terms of how China plays into this, well, I hope, as a for example, as we will need UN resolutions, and I think a series of them, to underpin this process at different stages along the way. I hope China will strongly support those United Nations resolutions, because although there have been different leaderships, different regional processes, ultimately we will need the underpinning of that UN process to provide the right kind of legal framework as well.

Which goes, I think, then to Tom's final question, about is the international rules-based order somehow over? I think what we are seeing at the moment is something that is more varied and more high energy that is taking place, with different forms of leadership and regional partnerships and frameworks in order to drive the response to individual conflicts. But ultimately, they need to be underpinned, as we have seen in Gaza, by the UN resolutions, by that international rules-based order, and by that international process. So yes, I strongly believe in still a rules-based order. It needs to modernise, but it needs ultimately to underpin any work that we do to deliver security and peace.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. Johann?

Dr Johann Wadephul, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Germany
Yes, thank you. Yvette already mentioned that the United Kingdom, Germany and France are working in the E3 format on the Iran file together. Of course, we took the nuclear threat very seriously and had to trigger, unfortunately, the snap-back mechanism. We included in all our talks with Iran, of course, the behaviour of Iran here in the region, and of course also the missile programme. And we

will do so also in the future. As we said to Iran, we are ready for new negotiations. We are ready, we are waiting for a call, which we did not receive right now. But of course, the behaviour of Iran here in the region will also be part of our further negotiations with Iran.

Sudan is absolutely an apocalyptic situation there. The greatest humanitarian crisis of the world, which must not be overseen. Violence against the civilian population must stop immediately. The Rapid Support Forces (RSF) have publicly pledged to protect civilians, and they will be held accountable for these actions. On the other side, expelling senior World Food Programme representatives is nothing but cynicism. So the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) needs to reverse this decision. Ceasefire is needed. We warn against the division of the country.

China: China's role in the world is a very important one. But China has to play a more productive role, as it is one of the P5 members of the Security Council. It has a special responsibility to contribute to peace, not only in Ukraine, but also in this very region. And we do not see a readiness in China, and encourage them to be active in Ukraine, with all its influence on Russia, as well as here in the region.

On Gaza, Ayman, you are asked to give an answer. As the two of us just met two days ago, we are reading from the same page. I would say only one sentence. We really have to speed up. My fear is that we are a little bit, not a little bit, that we are running out of time. Ceasefire is good. That was very necessary. We needed a surge of humanitarian aid, as I said before. But we really need to fill the vacuum within the Gaza Strip for security, for administration. And we really have to do that as soon as possible in order to avoid that Hamas is again taking over, I would say, power in the Gaza Strip. And that, of course, could be again a motivation for Israel to once again use military force. That, of course, is not the way ahead we are planning.

So please, everybody, let us step up and let us become quicker. I know that you are, in your format, convening in the next days. This is very important.

Lastly, the international rules-based order is challenged, as is each and every legal system. In Germany, it is forbidden to murder people, but it is happening. But this is normal. And our legal system is not over. It is violated on a daily basis – if you go to traffic, thousands or millions of times – but it is not over. You see that we now, in this very situation with regard to the Gaza Strip, have a consensus, nearly a consensus, I would say, that a new Security Council mandate is needed to legitimate the use of force through the International Stabilization Force further on that shows that, in the end of the day, everybody is going back to our international rules-based order and that we are on a very good way to defend it. Thank you.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. Ayman, may I invite you to address some of the questions, in particular the ones that were asked to you directly on how do we assure adherence to the ceasefire and prevent future instability, but then also legitimacy of the stabilisation force? Those questions, please.

Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister; Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Jordan
Thank you so much. Again, very, very quickly on Sudan, I echo the comments of my colleagues here. Sudan has got to be addressed. Sudan has not received the attention it deserves. A humanitarian crisis of inhumane proportions has taken place there, and I think we have got to stop that. And we all need to come together to do that.

On Iran, I think we all in the region want good relations with Iran. Iran is part of the region and therefore working out a mechanism in which Iran is integrated and part of the region is a priority for

all of us. But in order for that to happen, we really need to address the causes of tension with Iran and why is it that many of us in the region have had problems with Iran in the past, and that means addressing its regional policies and ensuring that we move towards relationships on the basis of non-interference in the affairs of others and respecting the sovereignty of other countries. We need to engage in that dialogue, and we need to make sure to get to that point.

If we just focus on the nuclear file alone, I think that does not address all the reasons for problems in this aspect of the region. But I think, let us put everything on the table and have a very frank, open dialogue why we are here, what are the reasons, address them, and then move forward. And the only way for that is to make sure that everybody respects sovereignty, territorial integrity of the other, and there is no interventionism or meddling in the affairs of the others.

I think on Gaza, look, I mean, ultimately the agreement that has been reached needs to be respected, adhered to by all parties. It took us two years to get there, and finally, we have something. It is not ideal, but it is a very, very important start. It saves lives. Everybody has to be committed to the ceasefire agreement that was reached.

Going forward, I think it is imperative that we understand that we need to go step by step, but not towards an unknown. We need to go step by step towards a clear endgame. For now, stabilising Gaza, ensuring that we address the catastrophic consequences of the war, but ultimately that should be linked to a political horizon that would deliver the just and lasting peace, whose only path is the two-state solution.

We cannot have a fragmentation of Gaza. I totally agree with you, Yvette. And Johann and I have had this conversation. Gaza is one, and Gaza is part of the Occupied Palestinian Territory. I do not want to be addressing theoretical possibilities right now, but I would say that in order for us to get to the endgame that we all want, which is lasting and just peace, Gaza needs to be one. Everybody needs to adhere to the ceasefire agreement, and all the hard work in terms of working out security mechanisms, governance and political horizons must continue.

On the stabilisation force, look, I mean, I can speak for Jordan, and I can tell you what His Majesty has said not too far long ago. We are too close to the issue, and we cannot deploy troops in Gaza to police Gaza. That said, we can do a lot more. Again, we have been playing a major role in being a humanitarian hub for Gaza. We can train the Palestinian police. We can cooperate with the International Stabilization Force in terms of also offer training and be part of command and control, and offer whatever help that we can. But being on the ground is something that we do not entertain because, as I said, we are too close to the conflict.

But, again, the word that I think we are approaching this from is workability. We all want the same thing there. Again, President Trump's plan has a lot of ideas. How do we make them more workable? How do we create conditions that would ensure they deliver the objective of ensuring the end of conflict and getting us to peace?

And workability, within that definition, it is imperative that Palestinians are secured by Palestinians, that Palestinians are governed by Palestinians. You cannot have the International Stabilization Force doing the policing of the Palestinian community. Remember, you are talking about over two million people who have been traumatised over two years, as I said, where civil order has collapsed. It is imperative that there is a Palestinian police that is well trained, well equipped, acting with a very clear mandate, in cooperation with a stabilisation force that will be offering support, offering assistance, and also deconflicting with the Israelis.

Again, I think one major issue we are going to have to address is a timeline for Israeli withdrawal from Gaza. I do understand that is contingent on putting all the pieces together, but I think all of us are committed to working together to putting all those pieces together.

The Arab Muslim group that is led by Saudi Arabia, we have been doing a lot of work on that. I can assure you we are not short of ideas. We have enough ideas that will ensure the workability of the plan, and we will be discussing those ideas with our partners in the US and Europe as well. This is what we need to be doing. How do we make conditions work?

Ultimately, again, I link it back to the West Bank. Ultimately, we need to restore faith and peace. What is the endgame? The endgame must be peace. Otherwise, we are going to find ourselves in the same vicious cycle. We have got to look at the root cause of conflict. The Palestinian–Israeli conflict needs to be resolved. The world agrees that 140-plus countries have recognised the Palestinian state, and that is extremely important in terms of it reflecting where the world stands on the future of the conflict.

We have the New York conference declaration that clearly states what needs to be done. If we are all committed to that, if we all work together on that, I think we will be able to move to a better future and restore hope, and again, guarantee peace and security for Palestinians and for Israelis. Other than that, I think we will find ourselves in the same vicious circle over and over again. All of us are ready to do their parts. We in the Kingdom are definitely willing and ready to do our part. I think in cooperation, complementarity with our partners, we should be able to move forward.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. I have more than a dozen people on the list who are seeking the floor. I will try and get to many of you now in a second round. We will start with Edward Brown from the UK.

Brigadier (Retd) Ed Brown, Consultant, Former Chief Executive Officer, Britam Arabia
My question is about the Gaza stabilisation force, and I am sorry if I sound a little bit like a dog with a bone. But we have heard from all of the speakers the critical nature of humanitarian aid, reconstruction and even monitoring, which, of course, we all agree with. But the lack of an international security force in Gaza has led already to a security vacuum which puts the ceasefire at risk and the world's ability to deliver those other very critical functions. Now, we have heard and completely understand that Jordan will not deploy troops on the ground, but of course somebody must. Are you able to say a little bit more about what is the plan, who leads it, who trains it, and what time frame?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. And from the Young Leaders Group, and from Jordan, Mohammad Hawash.

Mohammad Hawash, Senior Research Assistant, Middle East Council on Global Affairs
Thank you. Ms Cooper, thank you for naming the use of rape as a weapon of war in Sudan. It is one of the ugliest crimes that could be committed. My question is for the whole panel. What are you doing to fight back, not only in Sudan, also in Palestine? There have been tens of cases after the release of Palestinian hostages emerging about the use of rape as a weapon of war by Israeli soldiers who carry British and German weapons. What are you doing to fight back there as well?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you. From Germany, Ben Schreer.

Dr Ben Schreer, Executive Director, IISS–Europe; Director, Defence, Technology and Future Conflict, IISS

Thank you, Bastian. My question is for Foreign Minister Wadephul and Secretary Cooper. I mean, you both spoke about the need for much increased European efforts to help stabilise the conflict in this region, but I wonder how realistic this is given that Ukraine, for instance, quickly runs out of money and weapons and is arguably much closer to home. There are economic pressures in Europe and sceptical public. I wondered if you could maybe comment on how do you ensure that that much increased assistance can actually be forthcoming?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. And from the UK, Layla Moran.

Layla Moran, Member of Parliament, House of Commons, United Kingdom
Thank you very much, Bastian, and the panel. I want to build on Tom Beckett's excellent question earlier, which was actually my first question about the international rules-based order, because I am hearing it on doors in the UK, which I never thought I would. Normally, it is potholes and dog poo. But the international rules-based order is coming up as an election issue. What is the point of it if countries pick and choose what they decide that they are going to enact? And I give the specific example of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on the occupation, which came out in 2024. The UK still has not responded. I do not know about Germany and Jordan. But when are countries going to abide by the decisions taken in the international rules-based order so that we can report back to people and say, actually, it matters, and it works?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. I will take a few more. From Singapore, Huzeir Dzulhisham.

Huzeir Ezekiel Dzulhisham, Senior Analyst, Office of the Dean, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS)
Thank you. I just had one question for all the panellists. According to Palestinian public polls, the support for the Palestinian Authority (PA) is at an all-time low. Do you believe that it is feasible to continue support, and are there plans to buttress its legitimacy?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. From the Young Leaders Group, and from Bahrain, Mahdi Ghuloom.

Mahdi Ghuloom, Junior Fellow, Geopolitics, Observer Research Foundation Middle East
Hello. Thank you, Excellencies. This is Mahdi Ghuloom from the Observer Research Foundation (ORF) Middle East think tank. The common conception among observers is that the Gulf states will be the major financiers of reconstruction and post-conflict areas, such as Syria and Gaza and others. How do the panellists read this prediction? And what parallel avenues are there for reconstruction financing? And what role do you see your respective countries or multilateral institutions playing?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. From the United States, Abigail Hauslohner.

Abigail Hauslohner, US Foreign Affairs Correspondent, *Financial Times*
Thank you. President Trump's peace plan includes disarmament of Hamas. Could you speak a little bit about who will disarm Hamas if that is an objective to be completed? Who specifically should do that? What does disarmament of Hamas mean? And if the disarming force is a Palestinian police force, as he described as the people who should be policing Gaza, will that include people previously affiliated with Hamas? Thank you.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS

Thank you very much. From the UK, Matthew Symonds.

Matthew Symonds, Co-founder, *The Independent*; Former Defence and Security Editor, *The Economist*; former Executive Director, The Lawrence Ellison Foundation; Trustee of the IISS
I would like to ask the panel what makes them think that Israel has any genuine intention of pulling out of the 52% of Gaza that it occupies, and what might change that intention?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. Also from the UK, Robert Ward.

Robert Ward, Japan Chair; Director of Geo-Economics and Strategy, IISS
Thank you, Batian, and thank you to the panel. A question to the Foreign Secretary, if I may. The UK has growing security commitments across the world, in Europe, in this region, and of course in the Indo-Pacific. Expectations of the UK's role and support are also very high among allies and partners such as Japan and others. How does the UK balance or maintain these expensive commitments given the severe constraints on the UK's domestic resources? Thank you.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. I will take two more, and then we will return to the panel. From Germany, Sascha Bruchmann. Sascha.

Sascha Bruchmann, Research Fellow, Defence and Military Analysis, IISS–Middle East
Good morning, Excellencies. You all mentioned the UN Security Council resolution on Gaza, and in the background of the snap-back sanction of the UN Security Council resolution, we heard the Russians and Chinese would have not allowed it had it not been for the way that they were designed. My question with the resolution discussion on Gaza is: are we seeing that global geopolitics has an influence on the UN Security Council? Is it going back to a state where, closer to the Cold War, where the big powers cannot agree and there is a bit less of a role for the UN Security Council to play in peacekeeping, peace enforcement, than what we have gotten used to over the last 30 years? Thank you.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. And finally, in this round, from the United Arab Emirates, Mina Al-Oraibi.

Mina Al-Oraibi, Editor-in-Chief, *The National*
Mina Al-Oraibi from *The National*. The future of global security governance will require beyond just the announcements of disarmament: making sure that those carrying the weapons have a place to go, reintegration into society, be it Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) members dropping their arms and crossing the border from Turkiye to Iraq, be it different armed groups in Syria. What role can governments that are represented in the panel play to help in disarmament actually becoming societal reconstruction beyond bricks and mortar?

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. Let us return to the panel. Ayman, I will start with you in this round, and then we will move our way back, and then we will see how we are doing for time, whether we can have a third round. There are still a few people on the list. I have not forgotten you. We will see how we get on. Ayman?

Ayman Safadi, Deputy Prime Minister; Minister of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates, Jordan
Thank you so much. Just quickly, on the international law, I do not think we have a problem with the international law. I think we have a problem with the quite often selectivity in the application of

international law, and that is something that needs to be addressed because it is – without the rules-based order, I think we will be living in chaos. I think we really have to take a deep look into what has happened over the past few years and why is it that international law is losing its credibility.

On the issue of, again, Gaza, look, I mean, I have got to be honest with you, we are still working out ideas. I mean, everybody is in discussion. I think what we know is that everybody wants this conflict over. All of us want the same endgame here. Question is, how do we make it work? And still a lot of ideas back and forth. It is not easy to address a situation as catastrophic that Gaza has become after two years of war. So many variables, as you said, but it is a work in progress, and we are all working to that. But again, the point of departure is, how do we make whatever ideas we put on the table work? And I think all of us have something to bring to the table in this conversation.

On the issue of Hamas disarmament, look, Hamas itself has said it will not be part of the governance of Gaza going forward. That we will have a Palestinian technocratic committee governing Gaza supported by the international community within a clear mandate that will, again, ultimately make sure that Gaza stabilises and moves forward towards a future of peace. A lot of details will have to be worked out. The Palestinian police that will have to take care of Gaza has to be vetted, trained, supported by all of us. The link to the PA must be there.

I think ultimately we will be able to work out answers to all those questions, but it is still a work in progress. And I think what we all know, though, is that Gaza has to be secure, that I think a lot of us agree that the policing has to be done by the Palestinian police, a Palestinian police force that should be vetted, accepted, trained, capable, enabled by all as well.

Then everything is going to have to be part of an ecosystem. The ecosystem should address the three major components after the ceasefire: humanitarian aid and early recovery, security, governance, and political horizon. I think within those four headlines, everything has to work out into place. And once we do that, we will be able to move forward.

On the PA, look, I mean, we all support the PA. We recognise the PA as the representative of the Palestinian people. It is the government of the Palestinians. President Abbas has committed to major reforms. The PA itself is saying that it needs to be able to reform, to be able to move forward. And that is something that we all support.

Again, after two years of war in Gaza and the narrowing of political horizon, the loss of hope of Palestinians that there is a path forward, it is not unexpected for people to lose faith in everything, including institutions. But I think if we are able to restore hope, if we are able to say that there is an endgame that would deliver the rights of the Palestinians within the context of the two-state solution, along with the reforms that President Abbas has committed to, I think we will be able to restore people's confidence in the whole process.

But one thing also we need to put on the table, why is the PA not popular? Part of it has to do with politics and part of it has to do with political realities. The PA is not being able to pay salaries right now because Israel is still withholding almost $3 billion in money towards the Palestinians, and that is the taxation money that the Israelis collect on behalf of the Palestinians. There are hundreds of checkpoints at the West Bank, so if a Palestinian wants to move from a village to a village, it should take him ten minutes. It is taking him two hours or three hours a day.

That is why I keep saying we need to look at the whole ecosystem. The PA has reforms that it said it wants to do, and we believe it must do, because that will be in the interest of the Palestinian people

and the interest of the PA itself. But Israel has a lot to do as well, and all of us have a lot to do in terms of agreeing on how we move forward and challenging whatever is going on wrong.

I think, again, back to the bigger picture. The bigger picture is that peace can be delivered through the two-state solution. Now we all know, and let us be realistic, now is not the time to achieve the two-state solution because the components are not there for it. But now is definitely the time to protect the two-state solution, because if we protect the two-state solution now, then we protect the future of peace for the whole region because there is simply no alternative to that.

Any measure that undermines the two-state solution must be challenged and the party that undermines the two-state solution must be held to account. That is how we move forward and that is how we maintain credibility of our narrative and our political position. Again, as I said, many, many details have yet to be worked out yet. But I think the good thing is that all of us have come together in the region and beyond to say we have got to end this problem, and we all remain in conversation on how to achieve that.

If I may, one word. We did not mention Lebanon at all, and I think it is imperative that we mention Lebanon as well, because Lebanon could be a success story. I think all the makings for Lebanon to stabilise are there, and I think all of us need to go back. Again, the golden rule is that support Lebanon institutions, support Lebanon's integrity and sovereignty, and we will be able to move forward.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. Johann?

Dr Johann Wadephul, Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs, Germany
I can associate myself completely with what Ayman said, especially on Lebanon. Coming just from Lebanon and meeting the President, the Foreign Minister and the Prime Minister, they are on a very good way to really bring the monopoly of power back to the state, which is very important, and they have our full support.

I think I am not only speaking for Germany but also on behalf of the European Union. Bringing the LAF, the Lebanese Armed Forces, back to the role to be the only military power and police power in the state and to defend the state and its institutions is crucial, and they have our full support on that way ahead.

The international rules-based order is still alive, and of course, the justice system is part of that. And of course, we have to abide to decisions taken by the International Court of Justice, and opinions prepare decisions. And of course, we are reading these opinions, and they are of course very important. But for Germany, it is absolutely clear that the International Court of Justice has to be defended, has to be workable, and that everybody has to abide to his decisions and that is for everybody. Everybody is equal before this court and before the law.

You spoke, Ayman, about the bigger picture. The bigger picture, we are reading all from the same page here in Europe, in the United States, and in the Muslim and Arab countries here around. Everybody knows that the two-state solution is the only solution to find a peaceful cooperation and to live peacefully and with a lasting peace together Israelis and Palestinians. That is also, at the end of the day, well known in Israel. And they want to defend of course also the Abraham Accords system and perhaps enlarge it and encourage other states to associate and to be part of that.

If so, and what I heard from Benjamin Netanyahu, especially in the Knesset, and also what he said in Washington, was he has had the clear will to do that, and we should take him by word given the chance but also say what it means for the future, and that means to give Palestinians a chance for a state-building process which is now to begin. As I said before, we have to accelerate the speed, because rightly the question was raised, what about the vacuum of power we do now see within the Gaza Strip?

It is clear we need these International Stabilization Forces. Fortunately, a lot of Muslim countries have said they are ready to be part of it. You have heard it. It is Indonesia. It may be Pakistan and others as well. They have to decide whether they will be part of it. The precondition is, of course, we need, again, this UN Security Council allowance for that, the resolution. This is needed, but if it is there, they will be active and they will play a role.

Of course, the readiness of the Kingdom of Jordan and Egypt to train the Palestinian police is very important, and I can only encourage both countries to really begin it right now, because if it is right that Palestinians – you have started yesterday. You were ready to start yesterday. Okay, very good. That is a good sign, and I want really to thank you for that engagement. That is so important.

And of course, these then have to play the role to disarm Hamas. This is a precondition, to be absolutely clear: without disarmament from Hamas, without being very clear that Hamas itself cannot play a political role in the Gaza Strip, we will not come to a positive solution. But the will is there, and they will all have our support. And Germany together with the UK and other European countries, we are ready to give assistance, not only to the PA, which we have done before. We are one of the biggest donors for PA and for the Palestinians in the past, and we will do so in the future. We are ready to play an important role together with Egypt and the reconstruction conference, which we hope Egypt will host within the next weeks. Germany is ready to be there in the Gaza Strip and elsewhere in Palestine, together with Egypt and with other countries. Thank you so much.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. Secretary Cooper, on these broader questions, but then there was also a specific question of how the UK might balance the multiple global commitments, fairly high expectations but a resource constraint. Over to you.

The Rt Hon. Yvette Cooper MP, Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, United Kingdom
Starting with those questions, both for the UK, maybe for Europe as a whole. Clearly, one of the most immediate security challenges we face is the war in Ukraine and the additional pressures that means for us, for defence, for security. And it is one of the reasons why the UK government is substantially increasing our investment in defence, as is Germany, as are other European countries. And we know that we need to take on the greater responsibilities around that defence investment and security partnerships that are linked to that.

But when it comes to other parts of the world, other areas, including our role in terms of supporting the ceasefire and peace process in the Middle East, in many ways that will be a role which is about providing expertise and diplomacy and support for the role that other partners play. We too, alongside Jordan, have been involved in training Palestinian police officers, for example, in the past. That is something we would like to continue to support being able to do.

We have expertise that goes back to the experiences in Northern Ireland, for example, on demining, and we have significant expertise in, where we know that there are unexploded ordnances across Gaza, as we speak, that are preventing aid getting through because no one knows where the streets

are safe, where the buildings are safe. Where we are funding, putting additional funding into support through the UN and through some of our expertise and agencies based in the UK to be able to do those kinds of assessments, practical measures like that, that I think all of us need to be part of, and of course part of those international debates around some of the crucial questions.

And this is the second area, I think, of questions, was around some of those next steps on the ceasefire agreement, be it around the next steps in terms of Hamas response, the next steps in terms of the Israeli government response, the International Stabilization Force or the Palestinian police force. Look, at the heart of this is that all parties signed up not just to the immediate ceasefire agreement but to a broader peace process and to the 20-point plan that was outlined by President Trump. And that means all parties needing to continue to be part of that, Hamas making commitments to disarm, Israel making commitments to be part of a process of withdrawing from Gaza.

Yes, there are going to be steps along the way. None of these processes are going to be swift. There will be sometimes two steps forward, one step back in all of the different negotiations that will need to take place. But we have to hold everyone to that process. We will only be able to do so if we keep the momentum up. That means crucially getting the humanitarian aid flowing much more swiftly than it is already, but also the additional progress on what kind of, the detail around the Palestinian committee – Palestine is led by Palestinians; around the UN resolutions that we have discussed; and yes, the crucial work on the International Stabilization Force as well.

On the decommissioning, disarmament process, again, there are ways in which that can also be done through independent monitoring processes as well. Again, it will require creativity, but it is very, very easy to come up with all the reasons why things will not work. The challenge for us is what are the practical steps to make sure that it does.

Questions, I think, on the UN, the rules-based order: I think Johann has responded to many of those about the importance of the international judicial institutions but also the importance of the UN. Obviously, look, it is a challenge, the fact that a UN Security Council permanent member has invaded a sovereign nation next door and that undermines actually many of the values of the UN founding charter. So that is challenging for the operation of the UN, but it does not mean we walk away from the UN processes because we still recognise the importance of them and the importance of modernising the UN for the future as well.

There was a question further about rape as a weapon of war. It was 25 years ago yesterday that the global community made a commitment through UN Resolution 1325 to protect women and girls from the horrors of war, to ensure that they are not just the victims of conflict, but they can be leaders in peace. And that commitment must not be forgotten. It feels at the moment as though we have gone backwards on the use of rape as a weapon in war, on the use of sexual violence in conflict. We have a responsibility, again, all of us. Some of that is about the rules of war, some of that is about the pressures around conflict, the response to conflict. Some of it is also frankly about the approach to tackling violence against women and girls in each of our own countries.

We have made a commitment in the UK to halve violence against women and girls in a decade. We would love to work with countries across the world on those kinds of commitments so that we ensure that everyone can live in freedom from fear.

Final point I wanted to say is the societal reconstruction question that was asked – not just about physical reconstruction but societal reconstruction. I think this is crucial. Johann and I were in Northern Ireland a few weeks ago, in Belfast, where we are three decades on from the Good Friday

Agreement. But we were hosting an event of the Berlin Process, which was Western Balkan nations coming together as part of reconciliation and peace processes 30 years on from the Dayton Accord.

Many of our discussions were actually about how challenging it can still be even decades on from deep and serious conflicts, but how much it is about communities agreeing to work together as well as about having the political commitments and the government commitments in order to make peace work. We know that peace is not easy, but we also know that it matters more than anything else.

Dr Bastian Giegerich, Director-General and Chief Executive, IISS
Thank you very much. We will start our next session in 31 seconds. We will have a very short staging break now. But I would like to thank the three ministers for such an engaging conversation and for dealing with the many questions that were posed to you and for putting your thoughts up for debate. I think we are off to a very good start. A key theme is, of course, using this opportunity well but not forgetting the many challenges that lurk just beyond and getting the pacing and the ambition and the gradual progress right. I think that will be very hard, as you said. It is only going to get harder from here. Thank you so much. May I invite you all to thank our fantastic panel. Thank you very much.