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### **Middle East Fireside Chats with Leaders from the Region**

**Salam Fayyad**, Visiting Senior Scholar and Daniella Lipper Coules '95 Distinguished Visitor in Foreign Affairs, Princeton School of Public and International Affairs; Former Prime Minister, Palestinian Authority

**Amos Yadlin**, President and Founder, MIND Israel; Former Head of Military Intelligence of Israel

**Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa**, National Security Advisor, Kingdom of Bahrain

**Moderator: David Ignatius**, Columnist, *The Washington Post*

Salam Fayyad discussion recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sXhGUQQQu54>

Amos Yadlin discussion recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V6NyHOgPVcY>

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa discussion recording:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iefsUww3YUU>

### **Salam Fayyad**

David Ignatius

Thank you for joining us. Prime Minister, a pleasure. So when I began covering the Middle East in 1980 just a shockingly long time ago, a colleague said to me, David, covering this part of the world, pessimism pays, and I am very pained to say that for much of the time, that has proved true, not always, but we have three people who are going to speak about the Middle East who embody, to me, the best in values and judgment and reasons to be hopeful, even in this really painful situation, as with any sensible approach, we're going to have a three part plan. We're going to do this in segments. If we have time, I'm going to ask the audience for questions, especially our rising leaders. So be prepared. Let me begin with Prime Minister Salam Fayyad. One of the things that people say about the Palestinian problem is we need someone like Salam Fayyad, and that's often the beginning of a solution. Unfortunately, there isn't often a lot left. Prime Minister, you know that the current discussion is focused on the Biden administration's plan for a ceasefire and exchange of hostages. Brett McGurk, who might have been here with us is, I think, on a plane to the Middle East right now, he and Director of the CIA, Bill Burns, have been back and forth tirelessly, but you have been very blunt, and I would say devastating in your critique of this effort. And I'm going to read briefly from something that Salam Fayyad published in Foreign Affairs at the end of June to begin our conversation. You wrote, even if or when the guns go silent, implementing this proposal ceasefire phase phase one, two and three will be riddled with difficulties. There is still no consensus on how to govern post war. Gaza, you went on, Hamas is not going away. When the so called day after arrives, Hamas will still be around. And you argue in this article, as you did in foreign affairs back in October, right after the war started, that the PLO must admit Hamas. So I want you to, for our audience, break down the arguments that you made in that article, why you think what the administration is now trying to do is unrealistic, and what you think ought to be done instead.

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Salam Fayyad

Thank you very much, David for the introduction. It's a pleasure to be with you and to speak to the issue. First on what I said, most recently in Foreign Affairs article, was that really so much intended to be critical of the plan, per se. In fact, the declarant the president rolled out at the time gave us all a sense of hope that at long last, here it is, the President of the United States laying out a vision for how this war can come to an end. At the same time, I was skeptical, because, to my knowledge, and that sadly remains true today, there was not adequate consideration given to what's going to happen the day after the war becomes silent, as I said. Then that said, the remains the reality today, the best of my knowledge, I could be wrong about that. I'm not up to date on the very latest you reference, the fact that it's related to the east, and so are others. But at the time when the plan was rolled out, it didn't look like it was going to be adopted quickly, Hamas announced they welcomed it. They said we were in line with this. We were okay with it, but we knew that they had issues with it. At the same time, when the President wrote down the plan, he said, it's exactly an Israeli proposal. And I had my doubt, to be honest with you, and that's the reason why I was doubtful then, and I remain skeptical today that that was not going to happen because, subsequently, on the strength of very good and effective deviation by a number of regional partners, Qataris, Egyptians, certain United States, Hamas too, from that sticking point regarding the shape of The ceasefire that they were talking about, and they were became perfectly aligned with what the President announced and with what subsequently became enshrined in UN Security Council resolution. But where we are today is the Government of Israel, specifically the Prime Minister of Israel, keep change. Keeps changing the corpus, proving them, and that's where things stand best. To my knowledge, that needs to happen Israel must really actually go forward and agree with the plan and adopt it, because this has become pointless and to no end the war.

David Ignatius

So I would just note for the audience that Ron Dermer, who's probably Prime Minister, Netanyahu, closest advisor, was at the White House on Monday, meeting with McGurk and Sullivan, and the White House issued a statement afterwards, saying that Israel affirmed this plan. Whether that's true or not, I don't know, but Salam, if I may, the thing that surprised me most in what you wrote was your insistence that the PLO should admit Hamas as a member. I've been watching Hamas now for 25 years, and from my vantage, they brought nothing but misery to the Palestinian people. And so, you know, you were a wise man. You were, to me, the leading voice of sensible Palestinian views. Why do you want Hamas on the PLO?

Salam Fayyad

Hamas is a political movement and ideology and such. Therefore, not only was I skeptical when the goals were pronounced the way they were by the Government of Israel early on, to eradicate Hamas. To destroy Hamas, you can't destroy an ideology much as you may wish to disagree with it. The bottom line is that this is a political movement you cannot destroy. The only way you can deal with the political ideology is to have a competitive ideology that is seen as competitive as such by the people. And when you look at the emergence of Hamas in 1987 formally, and its ascendancy rise in polls, and how it was accepted and viewed by the public, that is tied closely to the failure of it that the PLO, acting on behalf of

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all Palestinian people, back in 1993 entered into the Oslo Accords with Israel. That paradigm did not fare very well, as all of you in this room know no doubt. And so that is basically the competition. And you combine that with the fact that the PLO, acting through the Palestinian Authority, did not always govern well, led to a situation where you had two key players. On the one hand, a partner in the so called PLO that is actually diminishing in political standing in the eyes of public and on the other hand, a competing ideology is that to differ, and had the failure of the old school process actually to benefit from to rise. How do you deal with that? They are there. They're forced to be reckoned with. Hamas was the most significant political faction in Gaza before the war, and remains true today. So unless we already talk about ceasefire, and it's important for this world to come to an end today, before tomorrow, for all they talk about the need to secure agreement on a ceasefire, unless there is a consensus plan on what is going to happen the day after, I do not view that effort as serious enough, because actually, much to the chagrin of any the day after, unless there is a consensus, consensus, the way I visualize it, and I hope it comes tomorrow, today before tomorrow is going to be dominated by real emergence of status quo in Gaza.

David Ignatius

So one central theme for the Biden administration has been the idea that part of the day after part of the future is what people describe as a revitalized Palestinian Authority. They even abbreviated the RPA. You struggled when you were prime minister to take, I'm going to be very frank here, what was regarded by Palestinians as a corrupt and inefficient governing authority and make it work better. You had some successes, but you know, it better than anybody on this planet, how hard it is. So how? How's that going to work? How are we going to get to a revitalized pa that will actually serve your people?

Salam Fayyad

First of all, that is going to take a long time. But more importantly, it's not the most critically needed element to begin the process. What is required to get this process started, this political accommodation in order to make it possible for the consent of already acting through a national consensus government, one that is not of the factions or by the factions to show up in Gaza immediately after the guns goes either. That is why I made this proposal to expand the PLO to include all points of view represented by the full spectrum of President body politic, and Hamas certainly is, is a big chunk of that, but a lot of independents are there too many other cities have become totally disillusioned with what they had agreed to, what the President leadership agreed to back in 1993 so Hamas is not alone. The reason Hamas is gaining ground is because many who are not partisan at all actually are in that space. Now, what you had said about reforming personal authority, I mean, the last one would really not view that as a priority, is myself, for sure, I stood on that platform for a very long period of time, and I think there should be no question that it is required. It's iron that the world is decided to discover that the PA was in need of reform only after October 7. That's a much delayed recognition of something that's obvious. One of the key reasons why President authority is as weak as it is today is because of poor governance. So that's absolutely essential, but it's not the first step that's required. First step is political accommodation. What a court for is expanding. Fail also it includes everybody. And the key task of this body at this stage is to agree to a consensus government that's not of the factions or by the factions, to govern both in

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Gaza and West Bank. And that is a total order. It requires political accommodation, because you have said that the key task of this government, in addition to dealing with the pressing issues of the day, obviously, is to reform the operation of the President offered. That's key requirement. Good governance always and everywhere, essential. It's critically important, tied to our ability to get to freedom and determination. It's that important. I believe in it, but, but first things first, let's get that done. And you cannot get consensus without unless that's the logic behind so.

David Ignatius

So I think Israelis and Palestinians too, would want to know, would this Hamas of the future be demilitarized so that it couldn't impose its will by force, as it did in Gaza on the rest of the PLO?

Salam Fayyad

Yeah. A point related to that is the manner in which the PLO, which for long has been considered to be partner in peace, particularly after the transformation of 1988 when the PLO, when all the German presidential famously made that speech saying the Palestinian National Council declares the establishment of state of Palestine. That was the session for our Parliament at large, signaling willingness to accept a solution to conflict, a Palestinian state on the territory Israel occupied in 1967 subsequently in 1993 you know what happened? There was this agreement, but that agreement was about self rule. It was not about statehood. Statehood was not mentioned. The agreement was, I don't know if one can say was even implicit on statehood was about self rule, and all we have heard about it since then. My own experience actually would attest to that. You refer to the period of time during which I was Prime Minister Yari. We did a lot of things, and actually long before that, when I was finance minister, in terms of reforming the financial prison authority, not many people expected that we get to the point where we got but especially during the years when I was Prime Minister, when security improved vastly. And everybody would say that the Israeli government failed to do the simplest of things that they should have done that would have imparted political credibility to what we're trying to do at the time, which was to stop military incursions in so called area, a meaning urban areas of respect, the violence dropped marketing. There was one year where there were no casualties whatsoever after the violence of second father and all. But what happened that simple task, simple ask, not to mention cause continued expansion. But beyond that, that simple as simple as or expectation of the radio government to stop sending the army into the areas of West Bank, where clearly there was a major sector around the security that was a failure. It made the whole effort look like an exercise in adapting to the reality of prolonged occupation and acquiescence to our dreams being kind of diminished to nothing more than self rule that undermined us politically in terms of how the Israelis relate to us. And you said something about Amazon law. But for those of you who are not, you know, do not do history that much, going back to the 80s and 70s and old, but the PLO was the arch enemy of Israel. Israel did everything it possibly could to avoid having to deal with the PLO until it decided by the robot. And why is that? Because they decided that that's where the political power lay, and that Europe, that's where the arms were, and all of that sort of thing. You mentioned something about demilitarization and all of that that comes actually with when we get to the point of discussing in a serious way statehood that will come with it, but first things, first ceasefire and commitment to nonviolence. Commitment to nonviolence that's critically

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important. And I'm not talking about commitment to nonviolence in and around Gaza only, but I'm talking about commitment to nonviolence that's comprehensive everywhere in determinism occupied in 1967 and the Israelite itself. That's not it's one thing to achieve now building on that, if you can think of a political process that can give sense of credibility to what is being said about two state solution, and for the second statehood, those issues about agriculture and all can be discussed. It's a legitimate conversation to have, for sure. Let's get the basics done.

David Ignatius

So another area where you've been outspoken that I want our audience to think with you about is the Biden administration's effort to draw Saudi Arabia into normalization of relations with Israel and support for a peace process, and the Saudi demand has been that Israel agree to a pathway toward a two state solution. And you said flatly that you think that's unrealistic, because the Israelis simply are not in a place where they're going to accept that. And you described an interesting alternative to this pathway, and I'd like you to explain that for the audience, it involves perspective rights, as opposed to immediate pathways.

Salam Fayyad

First of all, let me actually give credit to excellent editorial work by Foreign Affairs staff, because it was took a word that I used in my own draft, is what work around, and they made a subtitle out of it, and that's where that idea is embedded, as a matter of fact. So they were I had in mind was the following, and it's also related to what I thought was unrealistic. We moved from a period prior to October 7, where everybody was competing for finding the right words to describe how impossible it is to get the two state solution to see the light of day. But then all of a sudden, after October 7, everybody was talking about two state solution as if that said Palestine was going to come into being tomorrow. That's unrealistic. In the interim or before that actually, for October 7, there was consideration about normalization, extending to include Saudi Arabia. And Saudis had the expectation that in order for them to get into this trilateral deal, they needed some assurance about, you know, Palestinian statehood. Prior to October 7, the conversation was about modest things, things like, maybe, I'm not to be saying Saudis themselves were asking for this. But there was things and conversations and all about maybe, you know, converting parts of Area B under Oslo, rural areas, into Area C, into area B, and so on so forth. Some talk about money arrangements and all of that, minimal, minimal things. But then, as the war went on, the expectation was framed in the far away. What we need to see is an irreversible and irrevocable path to statehood. You start to think about that, is there a government in Israel today that's prepared to sign on to even a revocable and reversible path to statehood, anything that had, per Senate statehood on it? I guarantee you the probability of that being a starting point of conversation with the government, the probability of that is zero. I'm not saying that that problem is going to be significantly higher than that under the Israeli government over the forcibly future. So if you see the way I see it, then you need to look for an alternative forward. And it really is basic. You can't, I mean, you can't determine, continue to determine the speed of a caravan by the speed of the slowest camera, you need to do something about that. The current government of Israel and the successor in the middle future, in the foreseeable future, is unlikely to really join in in anything that has the promised Palestinian statehood. And I remind

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everybody, respectfully, Palestinian statehood was not in Oslo. A lot had to happen to invest in the goodwill that also generated, to convert the promised statehood into reality, none of the power. So we need some serious work to actually fix it. So my proposal is to say, let's rather than think about a framework where everybody is included, including Israel, when the government of Israel is not willing to actually advance not an iota on anything that's related to Palestinian statehood. I mean, there are elements on the current elements from the current Israeli government who do not wish to see the PA, the feeble PA, even continue to exist. That's a known fact. So what is the point of delaying everything until you get the government's right to give it up? So my suggestion modesty was keep what Israelis are aside, and let's ask Palestinians seek recognition by the international community of our right, and the wording here is precise, our right to a sovereign state of Palestine on the territory Israel occupied in 1967 in its entirety, and have that enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution, which means that it has to have the support of United States. Obviously, you're not saying for that to happen. It being understood that that the statehood, the contours of it, the borders and everything else, has to be negotiated with Israel at some point. But you can't hold the process hostage to this current government of Israel so busy will continue to prosecute a war to no end forever and without really trying to do something about political process. That would be a good starting point.

David Ignatius

So I would just note for the audience that that language is very similar to UN resolutions 242, and 338, which were the kind of foundation stones of US policy on the Palestinian issue for a generation. So the idea of once again, making that a foundation, even though, at present, it's not possible to move forward, has some sense to it. So I want to ask you about a more immediate worry. I had an opportunity to talk last week with King Abdullah of Jordan, and without going into what he said, I think it's fair to say that Jordanians are concerned about the possibility that as this conflict goes forward, still without a ceasefire, there could be an implosion in the West Bank. The West Bank has escaped the kind of catastrophic violence that people expected. And I want to ask you what your sense is about the political situation West Bank, how close it is to the kind of explosion that Jordanians fear.

Salam Fayyad

I think the right to be concerned first of all, and I remind everyone, if I may, that right before October 7, everybody was talking about the West Bank, and everybody was actually worried that the situation West Bank was not that far from the Father erupting, that that was the situation before. So if anything, what happened subsequently, after October 7 was that vulnerability, that risk actually has increased, has not diminished. And with each passing day, with the horror that continues to go on, Gaza casualties and all people who are alive for the fact that just not enough death to go around, sometimes you see the pressure of it all as a is not unlikely to lead to an expansion of the war and instability in the West Bank and the rest of it, the seeds of which were there even before Koba Summit. So King is absolutely right to be worried about that situation, all the more reason why I think regional countries need to actually invest in trying to really get the process moving. And finally, to me, if we are serious about ceasefire, about bringing the war to an end, we must be serious about the governance of influence in Gaza. There are some people who actually question. They say, why are we talking about this? There is war going on.

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If you're serious about ceasefire, thinking about the day after immediately. Now, there must be a consensus plan on what to do. So I think that's what's important. Be important for regional countries to get invested in that. I think that's really important.

David Ignatius

So I have one last question, and if I can, I'm going to ask for one question from the rising leaders, but my last question, Donald Trump is going to be nominated for presidential candidate the night at the convention when he was president, before Trump supported, so far as I can tell, the idea that Israel should annex the West Bank. He was pushed back from that at the last minute before the Abraham accords by the UAE, if President Trump is elected to a second term and pushes for annexation of the West Bank. What would be the consequences?

Salam Fayyad

I wish we could have more time to talk about this, because it's really absolutely important. First of all, you set annexation and the Trump plan of January 2020, if you will, remember that plan provided for President state in name only, I would say, because if you really looked into the plan, there was absolutely nothing that is independent about it, it was state of leftovers, essentially, or 70% of West Bank. It being understood that the 30% was going to be annexed to Israel. And Prime Minister of Israel at the time wanted to rush to actually doing that the park, and said, No, hold off. Doesn't mean annexation is not taking place. It is actually not long ago, current government of Israel, specifically, the Minister of Finance announced Israel that they're doing all kinds of things in West Bank on settlements, five settlements. But most importantly, he said actually that construction and development in Area B, which under Oslo Accord, is the purview of President authority, is now going to be subject to approval of the Government of Israel, which effectively means, rather than the redeployment and changing C into B into A. He's talking exactly the opposite. B is going to become C. So this is real and imminent there, regardless of what happens in the United States. Who was elected as part of the United States morality. Look, I mean, people talk about the United States and the slow what do we really have to do with this and all of that? There are those who call for this engagement. The US is uniquely positioned to do something about this. I think the US really has a moral obligation to do something about it, against the backdrop of something that could foreclose forever, the possibility of us in a state emerging on the territory occupied in 1967 and the best thing that the current administration can do, particularly against the backdrop of what appears to be now much talked about likelihood of change of administration, is to fend off against that arrangement by having resolution, UN Security Council Resolution, enshrine our right not, not to recognize Palestine. That's political fiction. Recognize our right, our right to a sovereign state on the territory occupied by Israel 96 other and have that enshrined in UN Security Council Resolution. That's the best service the United States can do in service of its own objective. What it saw, at some point, at its own national interest to have a solution its conflict, a state of Palestine, American territories by the 90s, etc, today, tomorrow, day after. But certainly, while the President, under the current administration, that I view as highest priority is consistent also with their agenda, or try to pursue normalization the rest of it. It fits nicely. And I for those of you who actually may not know this may sound like asking too much. You may have invited us actually, when you said this may like some bucket or the recognition of our right to I

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remind everyone that actually that's the essence of the so called Declaration of Principles of 1993 in which DPLO, acting on behalf of all Palestinians, recognized not Israel, not Israel's existence, but Israel's right to exist in peace and security. So all I'm looking for here, for real, serious about Palestinian state law, is a reciprocal country recognition of our right to a state on the territorial route occupied 1967 that ought to be US policy, especially so important if that is enshrined into international law, not the US law, because the new administration, if it is part of international law. And with all respect, I'm not talking about general assembly, I'm talking about Security Council. This is a concrete suggestion, and I hope it be looked into seriously.

David Ignatius

So I think that's a good point at which to end this conversation. Forgive me for not taking questions. So it's really a pleasure to have Salam Fayyad, as everybody's heard, he's a straight talker at a time when we need that.

### **Amos Yadlin**

David Ignatius

So I'm going to start off for people who don't know Amos with two words and dates, and I'm going to let him explain why they're important in understanding who Amos Yadlin is. The first is Osirak, 1981 and the second is Al Kibar 2007 I believe. And if you'd explain why briefly, why each is important, both for you and the State of Israel.

Amos Yadlin

Okay, in 2008 Vice President Cheney came to visit Israel, and Defense Minister Barak invited him to a dinner and invite me as the chief intelligence of Israel. And he basically introduced me as you did. This is the only gentleman that participated in destroying two nuclear programs that threatened to destroy Israel. So Cheney said, Amos, one to go. So when I left the intelligence, I said to my successor, it is your job. I'm now going to another war, but Israel is facing existential threat, not from the Palestinians, from the rest of the Arab and Muslim world. This should be remembered. The last half an hour was only on Israel and Palestine. But to make the record straight, Israel and the Palestinians reach an agreement with the PLO, the PLO violated the agreement by an Intifada in 2000 that killed 1500 Israelis led by Yasser Arafat and then, and then Hamas took over in Gaza. Hamas is a terror organization that not accepted the PLO principles because the Europeans asked them to say, Swissy, we recognize Israel, we denounce terror and we recognize the agreement between Israel and the PLO. Of course, Hamas refused and broke the agreement. So the idea to bring Hamas into the PA is a bad idea, unless they will recognize, they will accept the three demands, not Israel demands, protect us, us, us Russia, and they don't remember who is the peace. So it is not that simple. It is not that simple.

David Ignatius

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So go back to the beginning of a nightmare that we've been living through for nine months, the events of October 7, which are still sharply engraved, I think, on everybody's minds, but it's always worth going back to the beginning of the story. So I want to ask you almost what your own memories are of that day when you heard the news of what was happening, your reactions to it. And then the question that haunts you, I know haunts Israelis, how could this possibly have happened to such a strong country with such a good intelligence service that it was surprised and initially overwhelmed on October 7.

Amos Yadlin

On October 6, we have a memorial day for 50 years of Yom Kippur. I was a young pilot, maybe the youngest that flew on Yom Kippur. So we decided my class in flight school to have a meeting in my home and speaking about Yom Kippur war. And we insist that it will be not only drinking and eating and some substance. So some of us spoke about the intelligence failure. Another spoke about the operational challenge of coping with the Russian missile to ground groundwater missiles. And one was a prisoner of war. So we spoke about what is the meaning of being prisoner of four midnight, everybody went home. I did the dishes until one o'clock I went to sleep, and I wake up after five hours and 29 minutes to something that's worse than Yom Kippur as a national failure. And you asked me about the failure, it's a trilateral failure. It's an intelligence failure because the Israeli intelligence should give the IDF the Early Warning, the early warning that Hamas is going to attack. And then it was an operational failure, because the Southern Command should be ready if there is no intelligence wake up call. And it is a political failure. It was the Prime Minister of Israel who didn't want to negotiate with Salam Fayyad, who didn't want to go on a political plaque, and he preferred the terrorist in Gaza. He allowed Qatar to give them a lot of money to build the military that, according to the agreement between Israel and the PLO, any Palestinian territory should be demilitarized. And what happened in Gaza, they built the military, and this military attacked Israel. So I was never thought that such a failure can happen. I was a head of intelligence 14 years ago, and the intelligence become even better since then. Maybe they thought that they know everything. This is the they haven't picked the signals from the knowledge and then the noise. So this is the intelligence failure. I at the end of this day, the end of this day, I should go back to history, Yom Kippur, I already spoke about it. Surprised at that. I went back to the War of Independence, which Israel was attacked by seven Arab countries. This was my teacher in first grade. I opened I become a little bit more educated. I asked myself throughout the seven countries, Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, the Iraqis were in the West Bank. The teacher said, Yemen and Saudi okay, they have an explanatory force to Egypt. But I also went back to the very *raison d'être* of the State of Israel, the holocaust that Israelis and Jews will not be killed in their home, in the beds, will not be burned, will not be beheaded, will not be raped. And this is the day that since the Auschwitz chevenis have stopped walking on the Holocaust. Israelis, Jews were killed in the highest number. And I knew the families. I have a daughter who is a male. She mentor somebody to one in the elections that should happen at the end of October. Wonderful woman, young woman, I saw her in my daughter who wonderful husband, two twins and a daughter. The funeral was for the whole family. I saw all the coffins. So the killing of my other daughter is a clinical psychologist, and she is treating a woman that went into a shelter from the party. She was in the shelter with 15 other people. The terrorist kills them one by one with hand grenades and shooting. She was the only one protected by the bodies laid there for five hours until she was rescued. And now my little

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daughter, who is a professional now, has to treat her. So this is a trauma that I think nobody can understand. Israel after the seventh of October is a different Israel. And if we were security paranoid before, we will be much more in the future, much more and Hamas will be destroyed to the level that they cannot have a military anymore and cannot repeat the seventh of October once again.

David Ignatius

So thank you. Thank you for sharing that with such powerful detail. We'll all remember that I know. So I want to ask you about the war that has followed, which has now lasted for nine months. And I want you to put on your military intelligence and assessment hat and give us a situation report on where things stand now after nine months, how degraded has Hamas been, how successful has the IDF been in executing its military plan? What would you say about where we are and what's left to do?

Amos Yadlin

Yeah, I think first, David, we should go out of Gaza, because we started with Gaza. The next day, Nasrallah started to shoot in the north, then the Houthis, then the militia in Iraq, then Iran. So if I were the National Security Advisor, I would say to the Prime Minister, it's time to re define the goals of the war. You will not kill the last Hamas terrorist, as people are saying, you are not you replace a terrorist idea with another idea. It's not our job. We cannot do it. Hamas was degraded from a military that can operate against Israel to a level of insurgency terror groups, and they are in a very bad shape, very bad shape. The whole command and control was destroyed. Many of the battalions and the brigades commanders are not there in as a matter of fact, they are now pushing Sinwar to stop the war. So this is a military insurgency. I would like to bring them to a level of a crime gang, but they are somewhere between these two. But redefine the goals of the war is saying first, bring back the hostages. Bring back the hostages. There is six or five female soldiers at the age of 18 to 21 the other females, the Hamas, decided that every Israeli between 19 to 55 is a soldier. I spoke about my daughter. She has her best friend, a yoga teacher never served in the IDF. She is now in Hamas, nine months, night after night. Who knows what's happening there. So bringing back the hostages is a national duty. Those who failed on the seventh of October need to bring them back home. And then define Hamas is not anymore Israel to Israel, and the third goal should be bring back this destroyed kibbutzim to be the most advanced, prosperous region of Israel. This will be my goals. If there is ceasefire, if there is a hostage, there is ceasefire in the south, which important also to the innocent people in Gaza that Sinwar doesn't care about, but I care about them, and they deserve a ceasefire. There will be a ceasefire in the north. It is not me assessing it. Nasrallah said, I'm helping Sinwar so he will stop. Then you spoke with Salam Fayyad on the normalization. It still can happen. It still can happen. I thought that the deadline was June, but my friends in Washington are saying we still can make and then the coalition against Iran that we saw so efficiently and very impressively stopping the largest barrage of ballistic missiles in the history of military in of military history. This all can be a strategic victory for Israel, instead of dreaming on some absolute victories that, unfortunately, my Prime Minister is trying to sell to his people, and this is the time to say enough is enough with Gaza, bring back these people. It's important to our national unity and sense of security and start to solve the strategic problem that this war created.

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David Ignatius

So people are speaking frankly on this panel today, and I want to ask you for your Frank assessment of your Prime Minister. You've known and worked with Prime Minister Netanyahu for decades. You know him as well as anyone in Israel. Give us your assessment of his performance as prime minister and his current position, or non position, on the ceasefire.

Amos Yadlin

I'm not used to criticize my Prime Minister outside of my country. However, anybody can read what I'm publishing, would Bibi Netanyahu retired in 2019 he would enter history as one of the most successful Prime Ministers of Israel. The economy was in great shape, the Israeli military, the Israeli intelligence, the Israeli high tech. And he could wait one day serving long and Ben Gurion and quit. Now, unfortunately, is going to enter history as one of the worst Prime Ministers of Israel, and this is because what he have done with his right wing government since January 2023, trying to undermine Israel democracy, and then the war since seven of October. And once again, if I was his advisor, say, Prime Minister, you are very much sensitive to history. Your father was an historian. Your legacy is in a big, big trouble, but try to improve it. Try to improve it by ending the war, bring back the hostages, do a deal with the Saudis, and he will get a support. He will get a support from the opposition, from Lapid and Ganz they will give him some political safety net with a demand for coming election, a close election, but this can improve in a way, his entrance into the history, not as he's entering now as we speak.

David Ignatius

So you spoke earlier about then Vice President Cheney saying after almost literally dropped the bomb that destroyed the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak, and also led the decision to attack the Syrian reactor. And as Cheney said, You've got one nuclear program left in Iran. So I want to ask you about the clock that's ticking with Iran. Iran has stepped up its rate of enrichment of fissionable material. Some Iranian leaders who before held back from saying that this had a military dimension. Are now more or less admitting it. I want to ask you, almost where you think this is heading, is Iran going to sneak out, break out, and have actual nuclear capability if they restart their weapons program they haven't done? Will Israel know, and will the United States know? And do you think it's possible that they'll just be just before the starting line as a pre nuclear state, and will Israel accept that?

Amos Yadlin

Thank you, David, for the question. You know, being a fighter pilot in 81 was a risk, but the risk was mine. Okay, being the head of intelligence in 2007 I was responsible for much more than myself. It was my nation, my country, and when we found the North Korean nuclear reactor, and I came to Prime Minister olmert Say here what we found, he asked me three questions, when it will be hot? Because you are not attacking a hot reactor. It is Chernobyl. You don't want to do it. How much time do I have before it will be hot? And what Assad will do if we will attack it? Remember, it's one year after the second Lebanese war, the Prime Minister was very worried that we will go to another war. So in the first two questions, I gave him a very precise answer, because it's in generical questions. We look at the reactor. It was a North Korean. We knew that it's only to produce nuclear plutonium for nuclear weapons. On how much time

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do we have, they need to cool it with water from the afar river. So I asked the engineers, I said, to build this pump station on the afro river six months. So I told the president, you have forms and what Assad will do. How can I know? So looking into the future, you don't have crystal ball you. It's all depends on the decision of a supreme leader or Assad. And then I'm not saying why we are paying you such a big budget, and you cannot tell me what Assad will do. Excuse me, Prime Minister, I'm sitting with you. I'm from your team, the blue team. You the Prime Minister, the defense minister, the foreign minister, Chief of Staff, Heather, Mossad and myself, small group, we discussed something, and I have no idea what you will decide. So Assad even don't know that. We have found this very, very secret. The defense minister, have no idea. The Syria defense minister, the Chief of Staff, have no idea. Only his small, black gang. He don't know that we found it, and they have no idea that we're attacking it. So even I will produce the best chip that can read what people think, and my agent will put it in his bed, and it will transmit through satellites to television to my headquarter, I will not have the answer, because he's not thinking about anyway to your question. So that's a good bit of history, therefore. So the Iranians of the US and its disengagement from the Middle East due to the war that Israel is in gravity, maybe it is the time to break out to the bomb. So to your question, for a nuclear bomb, you need three ingredients, enrich uranium, a platform to launch it, a missile, and the weapon itself, the bomb, the two firsts they have, they already accumulate enough fossil material in 60% for eight or nine bombs, and they can convert it to 90% within 10 days. So it's behind us. And if I were the head of intelligence today, or if I will speak with my friend, Bill Berns, I will recommend concentrate on the organization group, and it is your highest priority to find whether the Supreme Leader have said to himself, I fired 300 missiles to Israel. I invested a lot of money in it, and somehow the Israelis, with the help of very white coalition, stopped it may be at a time to go to the bomb, so look very carefully at this weapon group and be very much ready if needed to eliminate it. And this is also my advice to whoever the next prime minister of Israel, whoever the next president of America, agree between the two of you, don't fight over JCPOA or other agreement. Make agreement as two partners that don't want to see a nuclear Iran. And this is the policy of, if I remember right four last American president say Iran will not have a nuclear bomb, so let's do an agreement between the two of us. How we stop them? What is our red lines? What is the strategy? What is the operation? Be ready. Because I have a concern that Iran looking at what's going on on the global stage, having Russia and China behind them, which was not the case a decade ago, they may break out the bomb.

David Ignatius

So I have one more question. Then this time, I am going to turn to the rising leaders for a question from them. This is a tough question to ask an Israeli, but I think it's an important one. You served in the Israeli Air Force for decades. You know its rules of engagement. Why have civil Palestinian civilian casualties in this war been so high. I've watched wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, and I know how the United States struggles with this problem, not always successfully, but I need to be honest, the level of civilian casualties seems beyond what a good air force should achieve. How did this happen?

Amos Yadlin

Numbers matters. If you saw Americans in Afghanistan, if you saw American in Mosul and Raqqa, the numbers are even higher, even higher. So go back to your numbers and check them again. But I will not

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avoid answering your question. The people to blame about the number of casualties are the leadership of Hamas. They choose to locate their command posts, shelters, observation posts, rockets, launching, not in the battlefield, in sites, schools, hospitals. They are using their own citizens to put Israel in the wrong place that Israel is. They're using them as a human shield. They using them as a materials for Tiktok. That's you have to blame Sinwar from A to Z Israel trying to avoid collateral damage. And if you were in Iraq, you know that the Americans have 01235, collateral, five is you want to kill one terrorist. Five, innocent. So our rules of engagement are lower than that, lower than that, unless Hamas is doing what they are doing. So blame Hamas from A to Z. Blame Hamas for the nine months of the war, because he could stop the war after two weeks, after months, if he would put the hostages on a pickup truck and bring them not to Israel, to the Egyptians, to the Qataris, the war would be over. So Sinwar is to blame, and I'm not going to take any of the blame on the Israeli military. Let me finish with you say that anybody that use that deal with the Middle East should be a pessimist. I'm not a pessimist. When I was chief of intelligence, I used to also brief President of Israel, President Peres once tell Amos, you always come with some scenarios that are a source of concern. Be optimist because the optimists and the pessimists are dying the same, but live differently. So and once again, Fayyad and myself, if you put the two of us in a room, we can agree on 90% how to solve the Israeli Palestinian position conflict, however, Fayyad, unfortunately, is not representing the Palestinian 75% of the Palestinians in the West Bank supporting the massacre of the seven of October. This is a real problem, a real problem. But after Yom Kippur War, it was a very tough war. Five years later, Sadat came to Jerusalem and said, no more war, no more bloodshed. And Prime Minister Begin who planned to live after retirement in Sinai, gave him the whole area. So I'm waiting five years from now for an Israeli Sadat, for a Palestinian Sadat, and let's hope that the awful wall will lead to a peace.

David Ignatius

So I hear hear. the idea of you and Salam Fayyad in a room together that encouraged me. So is there one brave young Yes, yes, please.

Audience question

Earlier, you mentioned that you believe Israel should withdraw from Gaza. In that case, what would happen to the Philadelphia corridor. Israel previously relied on Egypt to secure it, and while it was aware that it was somewhat porous, I think has been surprised by the extent to how porous it has been under Egypt. How could Israel withdraw troops and expose the Philadelphia corridor again?

David Ignatius

Good question.

Amos Yadlin

Yeah. Let remind those who are not in the history, we have withdraw from Gaza Salam. Know we have withdraw from the last inch of Gaza to the 7067 border Sharon, dismantle all the settlement, which show you what the meaning of leadership if you decide to do a step forward. And in Philadelphia, there was a un European group that should inspect it, they fail. They fail. So Israel has no desire to go back to Gaza.

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And as long as the issue of demilitarization will be solved, let's say, by partnership with the Egyptians, with the we can build an underground wall, as we did on the Israeli border. Hamas haven't entered Israel through underground tunnel. None of them the underground obstacle was very efficient, and some sensors have cooperation between Israel, US and Egypt. We don't have to be in Philadelphia, but this cooperation and plan should be agreed before we withdrew, to make sure that Hamas will not rebuild itself.

David Ignatius

So I want to thank Amos for again like Salaam Fayyad being frank about enormously difficult, important things. Thank you so much. Amos.

**Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa**

David Ignatius

Sheik Nasser, so thank you for joining us, as I'm sure most people know Bahrain was one of the initial signers of the Abraham accords with Israel. Donald Trump may be on his way back to the White House, but certainly during his first term, one of the genuinely important and praiseworthy achievements of his administration, in my view, was the Abraham Accords, with Saudi Arabia not yet joining, but the UAE Bahrain those accords still hold, even after nine months of a very brutal and difficult war in Gaza, there's been intense Arab anger and opposition to that war, and yet Bahrain continues to be in this relationship with Israel. Explain to us the decision that you've made, both initially in joining the Abraham accords and now in sticking with them.

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Thank you very much for the kind words that you said. You know, coming here, first of all, let me address I did my, probably my best mistake. I fell in love with Aspen, which I'll have to come much more often. So simply,

David Ignatius

A good mistake.

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Simply going back to the original question again, I would endorse what you said. There's always optimism. I'm from His Majesty's school. We are from the optimist camp, and when we went for the Abraham accord. We didn't have a laundry list, and we didn't have any list that we wanted to achieve first of all, and then we would sign the Abraham accords. Signing the Abraham accords was basically one of the most important milestones that we have achieved. We have opened a channel with the Israelis and the officials and the Israeli government. And I see this is why we should continue, and this is why we should always keep an open door and the channel with the Israelis.

David Ignatius

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So an important day in the Middle East that I don't think gets enough recognition, is April 13 to 14 when Iran launched an attack on Israel. It turned out to be 100 ballistic missiles, probably 250 drones, and it was essentially completely stopped by integrated air defense and extraordinary performance by a number of air forces, obviously led by Israel. What's not widely understood is that CECOM, starting several years ago, organized integrated air defense and radars, including countries in the Arab world such as Bahrain. So that night of April 13 was an important one for Bahrain, and I'd like sure our audience would be interested in hearing what that was like for you what you knew about the Iranian threat as those missiles and drones were launched, and whether you think this air defense integration might be the beginning of some broader regional defense cooperation.

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Well, deterrence is our key word, right, and in all aspects when we speak about our region and its conflicts, and especially when we point pinpoint Iran being within the mix, don't forget, Iran is only 200 miles away from the Kingdom of Bahrain. We host the Fifth Fleet command over there with multinational commands as well. So we play a vital role in the deterrence and also the stability of the region. We are proud of it. It's been running out now for more than 75 years, which is a great achievement for the Kingdom of Bahrain. It wasn't only for the kingdom Bahrain, but also for the region. So I refer to my grandfather when he described the Fifth Fleet as the mountain of fire that is protecting us from all threats. Well, that night in specific, you know, we were all in duty, and we are always in close contact with our colleagues and allies and the region itself. Thank God we have a proper integrated system, especially trying to cover our airspace. So this is excellent example for how we should come closer, how we should always integrate our efforts and always layer the map and make sure that we don't let loose any I mean, we should airtight the region in specific but there's so much details to go into that specific attack. We know many countries have been in charge of the deterrence itself, and we are proud as the Kingdom of Bahrain to be part of that integrated system.

David Ignatius

So I just note the importance of that. On that night, many countries as Highness just said, including Bahrain, certainly including Jordan, were part of the defense that prevented the war. If those missiles had landed and hit their targets, we would have been in a very different situation. So I think it's really an important moment, and the fact that Bahrain and other Arab nations were working with the US in Israel needs to be noted. So you mentioned the Iranian threat. It is awfully perilously close to Bahrain. Bahrain, like the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, has been exploring the possibility, not simply, of deterring Iran with the strong forces. You've got the Fifth Fleet based there in Manama, but also the possibility of engaging Iran through direct diplomacy. I don't think that's widely understood, but maybe you could just say a few words about how your kingdom is thinking about the possibility of perhaps opening direct dialog with Tehran.

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Well, we are strong believers in two paths, deterrence and diplomacy as well, and in the art of diplomacy, we should always keep an open door. I know we have cut relations with Iran. We have zero

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contact with Iran. And I think talking to Iran, like what we have done in the during the Abraham Accords, talking to Israel is always important for us, always important for the security of the region. We should always keep these channels open in order to get a proper structure for our security and stability and harmony in the region. So I am encouraging that we should move forward. And for your information, we have been speaking with the Iranians, and you might have followed or read that His Majesty spoke openly about why we should speak to Iran and open a diplomatic channel. But that doesn't mean that we shouldn't always focus on how do we secure our secure our deterrent element and make sure that we are always well integrated together.

David Ignatius

So if this diplomacy went forward, I assume that would mean, among other things, opening embassies in each country.

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Well, we are taking baby steps right now. As long as we talk together, we haven't yet met. But what is important, David over here, is we don't have someone in the middle. It is between two capitals, and we will talk direct, and we will lay the points on the table, and we will address it as grown ups and professionals.

David Ignatius

So potentially, watch this space as we, as we say, in my in my business. So I want to introduce the audience to an acronym, set of initials that you may not be familiar with. It's pronounced, I think cecipa, yes, sir, and that stands for comprehensive security integration and prosperity agreement, not not the most beautiful name, probably, but just to give some background, Saudi Arabia has sought from the United States a NATO like agreement that would Have an Article Five that would provide for essentially instantaneous American defense of Saudi Arabia in the event of war that would have to be ratified by the Senate, which at present is, let's just say, a long shot. And Bahrain shows a different course. It's not widely known, but last September, Bahrain and the United States agreed on this agreement, and Sheik Nasir explain what it is, what it would mean for Bahrain if it was attacked by Iran or anybody else, and whether you think it might be a model for other countries, maybe even including your neighbor, Saudi Arabia?

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Well, first of all, SISIFA, I know it's what, not one of the most beautiful abbreviations, especially I'm a Quantico graduate, and I had to read all of your military studies, and they are just full of it. So when I thought I knew English, I came here and I had to figure out everything

David Ignatius

You've cracked. The Pentagon's biggest secret is unpronounceable acronyms

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

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So SISIFA, it is one of the most important achievements we have achieved for the Kingdom of Bahrain and the United States. Why? Because it's not just military defense orientated. It is a comprehensive security integration, and also it has the prosperity agreement element in it, if you allow me, with my great memory, I had my notes with me, I would like to point three articles and that agreement, which are the most important things. And believe me, we have fought hard for those articles until we got them right. So Article Two, which is the most important thing, is defense and security cooperation. Article Three is the economic, commercial and trade cooperation. Article four is science, technology and network security. Let me read out a paragraph from Article Two, and then I'll talk about it. I'm quoting SISIFA Right now, any external aggression or threat of external aggression against the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of any of the parties shall be a matter of grave concern to the other parties in the event of external aggression or threat of external aggression against one party, the parties shall, in accordance with their respective constitutions and laws, immediately meet at The most senior levels to determine additional defense needs and to develop and implement appropriate defense and deterrent responses as decided upon the parties, including in the economic, military and or political realms, the parties stand ready to immediately share available and appropriate information and intelligence in response to such an event.

David Ignatius

So, as I mentioned to you yesterday, when we were having a preliminary chat, that language, I would describe thinking about NATO as article four and a half, Article Five in the NATO Treaty promises collective defense and immediate response. Article four says that if there's an attack, there should be immediate consultation. And this, as I say, is in between, and the advantage is it doesn't it's not a treaty. It doesn't have to be ratified. It doesn't have to be so you know, first that I assume you negotiated this with your American counterpart, our national security advisor, or his deputy, Brett McGurk. Is this something you think might be a model for other countries? And is Bahrain working to try to extend this to to the GCC as a whole.

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Well, we are right now working on the expansion of this agreement and also letting other countries join the agreement. It started as a bilateral agreement, but it is eventually going to become a multilateral agreement, and looking at a wider scope. It's not just the Middle East. So we are looking at showing that the United States has a lot of friends around the world, and this agreement should bring the true friends altogether. Now what's important about it is I believe that this is the furthest the United States went, and security guarantees to an Arab state. So this is why I hardly suggest that we should go forward. It's a short of Article Five, but has all the guarantees, and I really encourage that, that we we build on it, because it is done in a way so flexible that we can build on it as well.

David Ignatius

So one secret that journalists have is that when we want to know what Saudi Arabia is thinking, but for whatever reason, we can't get through to Saudi leadership. We asked the Bahrainis, you're They're neighbors of Saudi Arabia, your two monarchies in the Middle East, you see the world in very similar

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ways. So I want to ask you, without obviously you're not speaking in any way for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, whether you think Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman is ready for normalization of relations with Israel, or the kind that Bahrain has embraced, and whether you think that normalization process is still on track, despite all the recent difficulties and the trauma of the Gaza war.

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

Saudi Arabia is a key player in the region. We always refer Saudi Arabia as the backbone of the GCC the Gulf states. Again, this is a sovereign thing that the Saudis should decide on. But looking at the wider picture, we all live within an organization that we believe in, which is the Arab League. And during the Arab Summit, we saw that the Arabs today are moving along and heading towards peace. And now that I have mentioned the Arab summit during hosting it in the Kingdom of Bahrain this year, His Majesty announced in his speech a peace conference, and he called for all countries around the world to join the Peace Conference. And meanwhile, while we are we're talking right now, our foreign minister is traveling the world and insisting and making clear that the peace conference is a way forward to bring and unite our our region, because at the end of the day, we all are believers in the region that the solution, our end state, is clear, a two state solution. So this is our end state, but from here until then, we cannot jump start our steps. We should take it step by step, and I would urge a cease fire, because as soon as this is achieved, you know, in your article two days ago, you have underlined the day after. And I have heard that a lot, let's not jump even to the day after. Let's jump, first of all, and put a pose to what's happening and the killing that's happening from both sides. And let's just put an end and order a ceasefire. And then you will see a lot of options layout after the cease of fire. So this is why we recommend that. But again, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the key player as well, and they have been announcing and talking about their ways to get together. Now what we have to make sure and ensure that is the readiness and the seriousness of both parties in this conflict.

David Ignatius

So I know we'd all join in hoping that that ceasefire happens, as you say right now, and I'll just share with the audience, because it's not widely known what King Hamad announced at this Arab League Summit in May, so called Bahrain declaration. I'm just going to quote from it. He called for an international peace conference and irreversible steps, irreversible steps, to implement the two state solution in accordance with the Arab Peace Initiative. So every member of the Arab League is on record supporting that. That's a good thing. So Your Highness, you are the only Arab state I believe that is a member of what's called Operation prosperity guardian. Kind of guy might call it OPG again, so and this is the effort to prevent the Houthis in Yemen from firing off drones and missiles and whatever they have at shipping in the Red Sea. It's been very successful every day. You can read a CENTCOM press release announcing that they just took up a couple more Houthi UAVs. But the problem with this is we're basically firing million dollar missiles to shoot down \$1,000 drones, and that's sort of the definition of an unsustainable military campaign. So as a member of the coalition, I want to ask you, what's a better long term solution to get some security in the Red Sea?

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

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First of all, I'm a proud Bahraini to be part of OPG as the only state that we have been announcing in our statements, together with the United States and the rest of the countries that are in this operation. Let me do a bit of history as well here the Kingdom of Bahrain and how much we we punch way over our weight. And I believe that this is courage from our leadership ever since back to to 200 years ago. But I'm gonna stick to the US and Bahrain relations. We had the Fifth Fleet in Bahrain more than 75 years. Obviously, the state of department came afterwards, probably to take the credit. But you know, they came after the Fifth Fleet, and then we have started the combined operations of the United States. It wasn't just us hosting the United States, it was us being there, opening our bases to the United States. And we fought communism with you. We fought the Gulf War with you. We have opened all of our bases, and it was full of the American jets and the Kingdom of Bahrain. We were proud, proud at that time. And then we have fought Daesh with you. We were for 40 days alone, fighting ISIS together with you, and then you name it, we have been there. We are a non NATO ally, but we fight hard alongside with the United States. We believe, and because we believe, and there will be no security, there will be no harmony, there will be no stability in the region, unless if we put hands together and take action. And then lately, as you mentioned in the OPG, obviously this operation, us being part of this operation is definitely not against one party, or, let me say, Al Houthis. It is us. They are securing the world's interests, and we see how important it is, and we feel responsible to be part of that, part of this mission, to make sure that we have we continue and maintain the flow. Is it working as good as we expect? I don't believe so, but we there is a margin that we can also improve our operations over there.

David Ignatius

So I just would note that any people meeting in Milwaukee tonight who question the value of American alliances, I hope they'll take a look at what Sheik Nasser just said, because it's illustrative of why alliances are useful, I want to call on our rising leaders for a question. Then I actually want to ask one at the conclusion. But is there somebody from from that group who'd like to ask a question of Sheikh Nasser? Yes, please.

Audience question

Hi, sir, I work for Robert O'Brien, who played a part in the Abraham accords. Can you just tell us a little bit about what the accords have meant to the citizens of the member countries and what normalization has been like?

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

First of all, send my best regards to Robert. So the Abraham Accords, as I tell, as I said in the beginning, we went with zero conditions. We didn't put out a laundry list, because we were believers. And in the Kingdom of Bahrain, we host a synagogue, we host a Jewish community, and happened to be our ambassador was a Jewish woman from Bahrain in the United States. So we are strong believers in coexistence, and how do we live together in peace and stability? So we saw the answers are within the Abraham accords. And also we have thought of, what if things go south, if we sign the Abraham Accords, we still have said we should go forward, open the channels, and I think it did us good more than anything

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else. So I think this is a great milestone. We would encourage others to join the Abraham accord, and we should leave those accords alive.

David Ignatius

So my last question, this is kind of wrapping up. What, to me, has been an unusual, really valuable discussion in the Middle East. So if we had young people from your kingdom, in a world where young people often are very anxious about the future, what would they say about whether they think they'll end up living in a better and safer world.

Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa

I have children myself. I'm a father of five, and I see that coming, and I worry about that every single day. And when I wake up, until I sleep, I ask myself two questions. Number one, do I do I really deserve that sleep tonight or not? And then number two, this is why I'm killing myself every day. But number two is, am I teaching my kids something valuable for their future? Am I teaching them something and showing them something that should stay with them now in Bahrain, me as a National Security Advisor, I'm I'm very much keen in our national identity, because without a past, without a foundation, you do not understand your cause. Now, us and the Kingdom of Bahrain, we do not live up every single day, upon promises we live upon, upon purpose every single day, and what we plan for is not the next week or the next meeting. Is we plan for the next generations. We have identified the issues. We have identified where are the threats within our people, first of all, and then the radius around them. This is why our government is the one that pays the tax for its people to make sure that they are highly educated, number one, and then secured with a job, secured with a purpose, and they understand what are they made of? As Bahrain, I see that in the region, and we are thankful to have a leadership that understands it, identifies it, and also takes action upon it.

David Ignatius

So we've gone from my opening comment about about pessimism to I hope reasons for optimism. Want to ask the audience to join me in thanking Sheik Nasser and all our speakers.