

**The Boris Mints Institute**  
**for Strategic Policy Solutions to Global Challenges**  
The Gershon H. Gordon Faculty of Social Sciences  
Tel Aviv University



**The BMI 2019 Conference**  
**Conflict Diplomacy in**  
**the Digital World**  
**Conference Report**

Link Campus University, Rome | September 18<sup>th</sup>–20<sup>th</sup>, 2019



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WATER



RENEWABLE ENERGY



# The BMI 2019 Conference Conflict Diplomacy in the Digital World Conference Report

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## ► Executive Summary

The modern world faces many challenges, one of the most vexing of which is conflict resolution. This was the subject addressed at the 2019 BMI Conference: “*Conflict Diplomacy in the Digital World*”. Possible solutions to some of the world’s most complex and protracted conflicts were analysed in-depth, leading to many important conclusions.

For example, the Colombian peace process was discussed, in order to determine the necessary conditions which allowed it to succeed. The purpose of this was to better understand how solutions can be built for other global conflicts: what works and what does not. In addition, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (IPC), both its roots and current state of affairs, was discussed. Our panellists reached the conclusion that a two-state solution is not currently tenable. As a result, there is a strong need for an interim solution. Of course, the Middle East in general is in need of new approaches to conflict resolution, not just the IPC. The region as a whole presents a concentration of conflict

and tensions. Therefore, it is crucial that existing systems be improved in order to promote effective conflict resolution on the judicial, political and economic levels. Contemporary diplomacy also faces a number of challenges, not least of which is ‘fake news.’ As a result, our panellists suggested that a ‘step back’ be taken and important negotiations should be conducted behind closed doors in order to protect valuable information. It was also noted that the European Union is currently undergoing a process of radicalization as countries struggle with issues surrounding migration, thus strengthening negative trends in the realm of conflict resolution.

This year’s conference proved to be a success and paves the way for new and innovative solutions to the conflicts which plague the contemporary geopolitics. Such solutions will be tailored to the realities of the dynamic and rapidly changing society in which we live and stand to improve the quality of life throughout the world.



## Introduction



A decade ago, the world entered a crisis that brought about a number of challenges for industrial and developing countries, affected hundreds of millions of people and increased inequality within and among states. These challenges include increased immigration, nuclear proliferation and global warming. There were also successes, at least one in the particular context of conflict resolution. The Colombian peace process is considered a prime example. It is hoped that this may serve as a model for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (IPC) – one of the longest standing and most significant geopolitical conflicts.

It is still unclear what exactly the future of diplomacy will be in the digital age. New technologies have proven to be game-changers in many respects. Many of these technological developments play a role in the wave of radicalism which is now facing Europe. Chief among these are 'fake news.' However, fake news has had an impact not just in Europe. Closer to home for Israelis, Prime Minister

Benjamin Netanyahu recently used fake news to scare Likud voters into voting. Ironically, he ended up scaring Arab voters into voting as well and their votes may have brought him down. This is just one example of the far-reaching political consequences of fake news. This conference, a joint effort of The Boris Mints Institute and Link Campus University, brought new insight to these matters through panel discussions with key figures, including academics, politicians, and ambassadors.

In his opening address, Dr. Boris Mints, the Founder and President of BMI, had this to say:

“In the 20th century, humanity experienced two world wars, which are the most radical form of conflict. Today, we live with the hope that nothing like this will ever happen again. We clearly understand that persisting regional, intercountry, domestic, and other such conflicts result in thousands and sometimes hundreds of thousands of victims, including those of the civilian population. It is important to note that despite the existence of serious conflicts, which are not infrequently detrimental to the population of the countries in which they occur, we do not have a legal basis for conflict resolution, by means of a normal institutional, judicial process. Humanity awaits for universal approaches to conflict resolution. We badly need to create an early monitoring system and develop new international juridical bodies to meet the dream of billions: finding fair solutions at early stages of conflict.”



# ➤ The Peace Process in Colombia

Moderator: **Prof. Piero Schiavizzi**, Link Campus University

## Panellists:

**Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami**, Vice President, Toledo International Center for Peace and former Foreign Minister of Israel

**Mr. Sergio Jaramillo Caro**, Former High commissioner of Peace, Colombia

**Prof. Alberto Melloni**, Director of the John XXIII Foundation for Religious Studies, Coordinator of the European Research Infrastructure of Religious Studies



Every war and every significant global conflict leave scars on humanity. Unfortunately, in contemporary society, peace processes can cause deep wounds no less. Nowadays, a peace process is vulnerable to public opinion and, as such, they tend to divide the public. In fact, negotiating peace can at times be seen as riskier as waging war, even for a democratically elected governments. The question here is whether - in the digital world - it is easier or more difficult to conduct conflict diplomacy, as the issue of peace is not an issue of justice. Rather, it is one of politics and theology.

Colombia is more than a nation, in terms of its geopolitical importance. It is South America in a single country, including parts of the entire continent within one nation. Conflict often starts with a narrative which people have internalized and continue to move forward unchanged. Resolving a conflict means changing this narrative. So how can this be done?

According to Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami, who worked closely with the Colombian government towards resolving this

famous conflict, the Colombians answered this question by creating a commission to address matters of history and competing narratives. This was a success. When a narrative is at the core of the conflict it creates a wall— blocking progress. A commission charged with addressing such narratives provides a route around this wall.

In a world of fake news and unreliable information, public opinion can be easily swayed. A possible solution to this challenge is to conduct negotiations behind closed doors. Indeed, this was the case in Columbia. In addition, the government was effective in its use of force, demonstrating the importance of a military deterrent. The capacity for force is necessary at times to push for negotiation. Further, the Colombians were very successful in creating the diplomatic environment needed to allow for change and taking advantage of political changes in the region.

The Colombian conflict was social and drug-oriented and not territorial, religious or cultural. Hence, this model may not be applicable to other conflicts. The Colombian peace process was about demobilization and disarmament in exchange for political participation. It should not be confused with a peace process that is based on long standing structural problems. Again, the case of Columbia was not about solving historical and geographic problems. The peace process was successful because the government was able to address the root of the conflict. It passed a restitution law which was a prerequisite for a peace process, making the victims of the conflict a focal point of the solution. Likewise, the government understood what the opposition wanted and reacted to this. If you compare Colombia to Guatemala or El Salvador, it is clear





that Colombia is an institutionally vertebrate state. It is a working and credible democracy and therefore has the conditions needed for the implementation of a peace process.

If the agenda is agreed upon and the sides are willing to put their ideologies aside for the sake of peace, then peace can be achieved. This point actually has an important message for the criminal court in The Hague. In the transition to peace, justice cannot be allowed to override politics. Likewise, it must be recognized that it is delusional to assume that a conflict will end. The conflict may be reduced, subdued; its shape may change— but it will not end.

Countries that grapple with wicked problems believe themselves to be unique. Mr. Sergio Jaramillo Caro, a central figure in the Colombian peace process, notes that in this respect, Colombia is different from other countries. Caro notes that the Colombian conflict witnessed major negotiations which failed completely and was far more violent than many comparable conflicts. So how did this particular peace process eventually succeed? Of course, there must be favourable conditions, but even ideal conditions do not guarantee peace. Things could have ended differently. In particular, careful preparation was needed. There were 6 months of secret talks before the peace process became public. Likewise, negotiating the proper framework of the agreement was tremendously important. As alluded to, there was a need for a new narrative- one that embraced peace, by developing a new narrative in which the goal is not only disarmament but also guarantees that the conflict will not repeat itself. Once both sides managed to agree on such a narrative, the next step was to create an agreement which could be fully implemented by both sides. The international community helped, but only in a supporting role (however, international involvement can actually do the opposite if not handled correctly). Finally, it should be mentioned yet again the importance of focusing on the victims. Doing so helps encourage both sides to work past obstacles on the way to peace. In the case of the Colombian peace process, the victims became owners of the negotiations.

Prof. Alberto Melloni demonstrated the great extent to which Catholicism has historically been culturally embedded in both sides of conflict, Catholic arguments were used for both war and peace and Popes have likewise

been involved in the Colombian conflict. There were three papal visits to Colombia between 1968 and 2017 by three different popes. In each case, the Popes took pains to layout their position regarding the country, be it economic, social or regarding the peace process itself. The latest— Pope Francis— supported granting a central role to the victims and putting oneself in the place of the victim. This is very much related to his Jesuit faith, as well as an important development of Vatican diplomacy. Indeed, in light of the Catholic nature of the country, religious support was very important for the Columbian peace process.

Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami has been involved in conflict resolution in both the Colombian and the Israeli-Palestinian conflicts. He noted important parallels between the two. Both conflicts are long lasting and witnessed several failed attempts of resolution. The Colombian conflict was actually more violent than the IPC in terms of displaced population and deaths. However, the two are similar in that in Israel, as in Columbia, when matters improved - citizens became less interested in a solution. Both countries are also notorious cases of peace processes within a democracy. It is also hard to find other cases of peace processes that have faced such stiff resistance. The reasons that the process eventually did succeed in Columbia has been noted. In particular, the proper preparation of a sequenced and multi-phased process was crucial. Secret talks leading to a framework agreement made up more than half of the negotiation. This framework included: disarmament, restitution and representation. The agreement also provided a new vision and narrative. This narrative defined an agenda which both sides could accept. The international community did its part in helping the Colombians, but only after the process matured, in order to ensure that the first stages of the process were implemented. Importantly, it was decided to first focus on the victims and to invite them to the Havana talks, with support from the Catholic Church.

Peace process negotiations are harder now than ever before, because the public is more exposed to the views of opposition. To wit, the Colombian peace plebiscite in 2016 failed mainly due to fake news. Indeed, it is always easier to negotiate behind closed doors as the digital world creates asymmetry between government and opposition or non-state actors. Why did the Colombia peace process eventually work? As noted, a peace process needs a few prerequisite conditions to succeed. One is the ability of the



government to neutralize the opposition and their military capabilities. If you do not have the capacity to defeat your enemy, you cannot force a peace process. The Colombian government had this power as the Clinton administration helped upgrade their army. Another prerequisite is a solid diplomatic environment. Peace was possible because of changes that took place in areas surrounding the conflict – Bolivia and Venezuela. Venezuelan president Chavez helped to pressure FARC which helped Colombian president Santos. Further, the good relations between Colombia and the so-called Bolivarian axis denied oxygen to the FARC. Likewise, Cuba was engaged in a peace process with president Obama at the time, which meant that Cuba would not support FARC. Likewise, in the Middle East, the end of the Cold War allowed a peace process to develop.

Complete defeat of the opposition forces is not necessary nor sufficient for conflict resolution. What is needed is to overcome "non-negotiables," such as religion and ethnicity. Unlike the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, a drug related conflict, such as in Columbia, does not have such ethnic or religious components. FARC is not as uncompromising as Hamas or the PLO. The conflict in Northern Ireland had its own non-negotiables, and that is why it proved

more resilient. Currently, Northern Ireland has gone 3 years without an autonomous government. In contrast, Colombian opposition insurgency is "easier" and resolution was simpler: demilitarization, reassertion, and political participation. Why, then, was there an implementation crisis? Structural problems in Colombia— geography, diversity, and government agency— all pose challenges. FARC prospered in ungoverned lands. The peace process addressed the short term – disarmament, reassertion and participation - but it did not solve basic problems. To fix the roots of a conflict, the government must have the capacity to govern. FARC claimed to fight social injustice. In response, even before the peace process began, the government passed a law to help displaced people and restore their lands. This meant, as noted, that the victims were made to be the focus. In fact, victim's associations participated in the peace process and helped craft policy. Further, Colombians had strong state institutions when compared to other countries, having the region grappling with state-wide issues. The government also understood that they were standing before an important moment in FARC's evolution. FARC agreed to a shared agenda in the negotiations which allowed for a clear outline of transitional justice and ensured that peace was possible.



# ▶ The Fundamentals of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Moderator: **Professor Itai Sened**, Head of the Boris Mints Institute, Tel Aviv University

## Panellists:

**Dr. Sami Miaari**, Department of Labor Studies, Tel Aviv University

**Prof. Fabio Nicolucci**, Middle East political analyst, Link Campus University

**Dr. Ahmed Abdelwahed**, Chairman of the Academy for International Development – Middle East and North Africa (AID-MENA)

**Amit Loewenthal** – Ph.D. student, Tel Aviv University



Prof. Nicolucci opened the discussion, analysing the Israeli-Palestinian conflict from the perspective of game theory: since its beginning, the IPC is thought of by both sides as a zero-sum game. It is, however, a cooperative game, resulting in either a win or a loss for both sides. It is a conflict which intertwines many dimensions: social, cultural, religious, and territorial. It is also a conflict of narratives. It was difficult in the past to get Palestinians and Israelis to talk. What was easier was to understand the different narratives and the conflict between them – it was all about the past. At the turn of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the situation changed dramatically and a new conceptual framework formed. The Oslo Accords failed, the Second Intifada came along, tragedies such as the September 11th occurred. The world has undergone massive digitalization and important political changes. As a consequence, the conflict became focused on the present. As a result, it became easier for the sides to talk to one another, though

it remains difficult for them to understand one another. This state of affairs is the exact opposite of the first 50 years of the conflict. In addition, political terrorism has entered the arena and several problems related to international relations have risen. The national dimension is shrinking because Palestinian politics have collapsed. Ironically, everyone knows what to do in order to achieve a two-state solution, yet this has been practically impossible to do since 2000.

Dr. Abdelwahed emphasised that Israelis and Palestinians do not have a good understanding of one another. Hence, the two-state solution is good on paper but not that good in practice. Therefore, civilian organizations need to spend their resources doing the groundwork and increasing mutual understanding. In contrast, they should spend far less time increasing awareness to the conflict. One of the main sources of escalation is the conflict in and around the Gaza Strip. It affects Israelis, Palestinians, and the entire Middle East. The problems emanating from the Gaza Strip have not been solved. Instead, they are used to fuel further political agendas. Unfortunately, instead of fighting terrorism as a whole, only individual terrorists are fought against. Killing them only perpetuates the vicious cycle of violence. Lack of good services, education, economic opportunity – all of this produces terrorists. These realities must change in order to reduce terrorism. Moreover, educating societies on how to make peace is crucial to breaking this vicious cycle. The source of the conflict may be multifaceted, but economic conditions





play a major role in its escalation. Two notable examples are the effects of trade shocks in the 1990s (Cali and Miaari, 2015) and the economic effects of Israeli settlements in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank (Cali and Miaari, 2017).

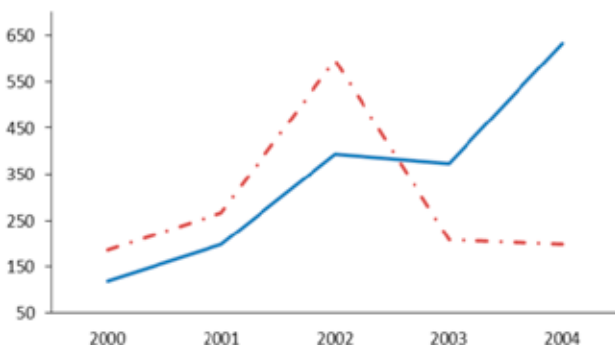
Dr. Miaari elaborated on the effects of the aforementioned trade shocks. In his work with Cali (2015), they argue that increases in exports reduce the intensity and the probability of being involved in the conflict. This was measured by comparing the number of Palestinian fatalities by Israelis and Palestinian suicide attacks inside Israel to increases in employment (Figure 1). Sectoral employment, as well as social demographic data, are taken into account as well. When compared to pre-Intifada levels of violence, employment rates are shown to have a significant level of impact. In addition, China has emerged as a global leader in trade, which has led to a decrease in exports for smaller nations, such as Palestine (Figure 2). The baseline model shows that a reduction in export to the world, employing 10% of the private sector, will increase the violence of the conflict by 12% in both the short and long run models. On the other hand, increases in Palestinian export reduce the intensity of the conflict. These findings can be explained by the opportunity cost mechanism, as stronger economic conditions lower the incentive to take an active part in a conflict. Indeed, these results show that trade is an important tool which might be helpful in finding a solution to the conflict.

In his response, Mr. Loewenthal mentioned another aspect of escalation which can be explained by economic factors: the radicalization of Palestinian public opinion. In the 2000s, many Palestinians moved from the moderate Fatah to the radical Hamas. The final result was Hamas' victory in

the 2006 elections. This phenomenon cannot be explained only by the violence of the Second Intifada (Jaeger et al 2012). Another factor are the Israeli settlements. An analysis by Cali and Miaari (2017) suggested that an addition of one thousand Israeli settlers to a settlement located one kilometre from a Palestinian town, reduces its support for moderate factions by between 0,5-0.6 percentage points. In contrast, Palestinians living close to the four northern West Bank settlements dismantled as part of the 2005 Disengagement were afterwards more likely to support moderate factions. Cali and Miaari (2017) suggest that the radicalization occurs near settlements due to increased competition on land, water, and other scarce resources.

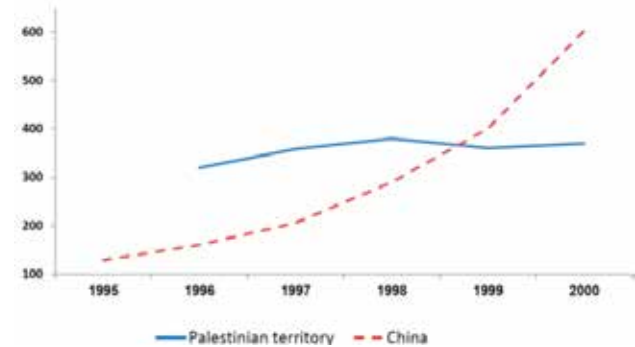
Opportunity costs and competition for resources are not the only economic factors with the potential for radicalizing individuals. Another hypothesis which is currently being examined by the Boris Mints Institute research fellows is that economic inequality among Palestinians played an important role in the rise of Hamas. This is based on the theory of relative deprivation, as coined by Gurr (1970). This theory argues that individuals evaluate their economic position in relation to reference groups in society, and when their economic position relative to the reference group is unfavourable - they become frustrated. This frustration is then channelled into participation in collective action, ranging from the peaceful voting and demonstrations to violent civil resistance or even revolution. This theory fits not only the narrative of some Palestinian voters who felt left out of the Oslo Accords-induced growth, but also of the narrative of the Arab spring uprisings. As such, it may help us to better understand the sources of current conflict in the Middle East.

**Figure 1:** Palestinians Killed by Israeli Forces in the West Bank and Gaza, 2000-2004;



Source: Cali and Miaari (2015)

**Figure 2:** Israeli imports: China vs. Palestinian Territory, 1995-2000 (USD mln);



Source: Cali and Miaari (2015)



Based on Dr. Abdelwahed's arguments, however, it should be noted that long-term public opinion on both sides is also affected by education and overarching narratives. It is no coincidence, for example, that Arab public opinion, even in countries such as Egypt that are at peace with Israel, still view Israelis as the enemy. Likewise, they view Arabs living in Israel and the Palestinian Authority as traitors who work with the enemy. It is also no coincidence that many Israelis view Arabs and Muslims, even in countries who are at peace with Israel, as enemies. The same can be said in regard to their view of Arabs citizens of Israel. The narratives which are passed on the media and education system are meant to make the public more resilient and unified when facing the everyday hardships of the conflict. However, this resilience comes with a price – a tendency to see the other side as the enemy, and those who negotiate with it as traitors. This trend showed its first signs of changing after the Oslo Accords, but returned in the wake of the Second Intifada. Another dangerous

trend is that, starting with the First Intifada and more after the Second, Israelis and Palestinians have less and less opportunities for positive contact. Often, the only direct contact between Israelis and Palestinians is violent or involves an unequal balance of powers— between a soldier and a person waiting at a checkpoint, between a terrorist and his victim, or between Hilltop Youths and harassed villagers. This means Israelis and Palestinian do not have a good understanding of one another. They experience the other side only as an enemy. This means that while the two-state solution is good on paper, it is not so realistic in practice. It is hard to coexist or negotiate with people you consider your sworn enemy. It is unlikely that the Israeli or the Palestinian governments will act to change the narratives or create new policies that allow for more contact between Israelis and Palestinians. Therefore, it is up to NGOs, who currently focus on increasing awareness of the conflict, to do the groundwork necessary to change the aforementioned trends.



# ➤ The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: Perspectives and Prospects

Moderator: **Amb. Prof. Maurizio Melani**, Link Campus University, Former D.G. in the Italian MFA and Ambassador to Iraq, the Political and Security Committee of the EU, and Ethiopia

## Panelists:

**Amb. Prof. Itamar Rabinovich**, Member of BMI Advisory Board, Founder and President of the Israel Institute, Former Ambassador of Israel to the USA and President Emeritus of Tel Aviv University

**Amb. Daniel Shek**, Former Ambassador of Israel to France and Monaco



Prof. Melani opened with a discussion of the historical background of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict (IPC), which is elaborated upon here by the editors. The conflict has been going on for well over a century. Zionism, the Jewish national movement, brought with it the organized settlement of Jews in Palestine and garnered the support of one of the Great Powers (as reflected in the Balfour declaration). As Arab national movements began to appear on the scene, a Palestinian national movement also arose—partly as a reaction to Zionism. The conflict between the two movements soon became violent, Jewish and Arab residents of Mandatory Palestine clashed in a struggle for dominance. The 1947 UN resolution was meant to implement a two-state solution: one Jewish and one Palestinian. It was accepted by the Zionist leadership, but not by the Palestinian leadership nor the neighboring Arab countries. The 1947 decision and the subsequent 1948 Israeli declaration of independence transformed the conflict into a series of wars between Israel and its neighbours. After the 1967 war, the Arab countries

withdrew from representing the Palestinian struggle and were instead replaced by the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). Likewise, the conflict transformed from conventional war into limited armed struggles and terrorism. From its base of operation, first in Jordan and later in Lebanon, the PLO launched domestic and international attacks on Israelis. The PLO also managed to earn a degree of legitimization as the representative of the Palestinian people, reflected, for example, in the 1980 “Venice Declaration of the Heads of State and Government of the European Community Member States”, since this was the name of such gathering at the highest political level before the establishment by the Maastricht Treaty of the European Council of the European Union.

Driven out of Lebanon by Israel in the early 1980s the PLO and was isolated and distanced from the arena, which served as an important trigger for the organization’s acceptance of the existence of Israel and agreeing to negotiations. On the other side, the First Intifada and the Madrid Convention led Israel to accept the PLO as a representative of the Palestinian people. It also caused Israelis to recognize the need to concede at least some of the territories occupied in the 1967 war. This mutual acceptance of the existence and legitimacy of the other side led to the peace process that culminated in the Oslo Accords. Following the assassination of Rabin, Israel’s Prime Minister, these ideas were gradually rejected and abandoned. First by the Likud government in Israel after the 1996 elections and then by Arafat after the Camp David talks. This turn of events contributed to extremism



and the strengthening of Hamas. Eventually, it led to a re-escalation of the conflict in the form of the Second Intifada.

Prof. Melani emphasized that a solution is of paramount importance not only for Israel, but for the entire region. The accepted solution so far has been a two-state solution: an independent Palestinian state alongside a Jewish, democratic Israel. The main alternative to this – a one-state solution – will result in either a non-Jewish or a non-democratic country. The question posed to the participants was, therefore, this: since in the present situation the establishment of a Palestinian state is impossible, should there be a revision of the two-state solution, or will another Israeli government return to this solution?

Prof. Rabinovich answered that there are reasons to think a two-state solution is no longer viable. Every agreement in the Israeli-Palestinian and Israeli-Arab conflict, so far, was based on agreement between three sides: Israel, Palestinians or Arabs, and the USA. Notable examples are the peace agreements with Egypt and Jordan and the Oslo accords. Currently, these three partners are not available for negotiations, each side for its own reasons. On the Israeli side, an Israeli annexation policy, propagated by Netanyahu, blocks the option of negotiations. Netanyahu has managed to put public opinion on the IPC 'to sleep'. This was aided by the EU and other international organizations which ceased their involvement and stopped pushing Israel to negotiate. Netanyahu has instilled among many the belief that there is no urgency, nothing that Israel cannot live with.

Amb. Shek agreed with these points adding that changes in the relationship between Israel and Arab states created the illusion that you can make peace with the Arab world while skipping Palestinians. It also gave rise to the notion that you can successfully manage the conflict. In truth, however, the conflict manages you and will come back to haunt you. Prof. Rabinovich suggested that political change, perhaps following the Israeli September 2019 elections, may lead to policy change. But, this depends on the coalition that may form. A coalition of the Likud and Blue and White, for example, will be ill deployed for a two-state solution.

Prof. Rabinovich explained that on the American side, the Trump administration is hard to predict, but their actions and positions thus far do not bode well for the peace process. The administration may change policies like had been done on other issues, but it is doubtful that they can come up with a plan that satisfies both sides.

Prof. Rabinovich argued that one can only resolve what is a problem in the here and now. In Europe of 1989 we could not account for the territorial changes of 1945. The same is true in the case of the IPC. Another issue is the obsession of Palestinian decision makers with "statehood." Palestinian politicians think of a state in 19th century terms, with no foreign intervention. In an age where many modern states, such as Cyprus, have foreign military bases, this sort of statehood might not be necessary. Historically, the narrative of Palestinian national movement was first and foremost based on return, then liberation, then national self-determination, and then a state as a base to fight Israel. It actually took Arafat a long time to make a state the target. For the Palestinian national movement, the state is merely a means - not an end.

Both Prof. Rabinovich and Amb. Shek agreed that resigning to the status quo is a luxury the world cannot afford. Israel may be the stronger actor, but it should be active in solving the conflict not for the Palestinian sake, but for its own sake, these years of standstill have led to a cultural failure. Both sides of the conflict do not believe that dialog will move them forward. Amb. Shek suggested that the international community should re-examine the core beliefs of previous attempts at negotiation:

1. The talks should be bilateral;
2. The USA should be the main mediator;
3. That "nothing is agreed until everything is agreed" (a focus on "the end of the conflict").

As an alternative to such bilateralism and mediation, Amb. Shek suggested, is looking towards the Arab peace initiative and an increased role for Jordan and Egypt. The Arab peace initiative never received a response from Israel. The asymmetry between the sides is disadvantageous to Israel, and the Palestinians have few tangible assets to give in return for Israeli concessions. However, the



potential of normalization and economic ties with the Arab and Muslim world can help selling such a solution to the Israeli public. If a situation is created wherein Israel receives concrete benefits from Arab countries, it then makes concessions easier.

The participants also discussed the merits of an interim solution.

Prof. Rabinovich, who supports interim solutions, argued that when the choice is between an interim solution and creeping annexation - an interim solution is far more desirable. If such an interim solution includes a freeze of settlements and expanding "A" areas, this will help us to eventually reach a long-term agreement in the future. Hopefully, future Israeli governments will want this, along with the Palestinian Authority and the Americans.





# ➤ The Middle East in the Contemporary Global Perspectives

Moderator: **Amb. Prof. Maurizio Melani**, Link Campus University, Former D.G. in the Italian MFA and Ambassador to Iraq, the Political and Security Committee of the EU, and Ethiopia

## Panelists:

**Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami**, Vice President, Toledo International Center for Peace and former Foreign Minister of Israel

**Prof. Massimo D'Alema**, Link Campus University, President of the Italianeuropei Foundation Former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

**Dr. Elisabetta Trenta**, former Minister of Defence of Italy



Prof. D'Alema described the Middle East as the world's multiplier of instability and epicentre of conflict. The region is the center of geopolitical attention and tension. It is an important border between global north and south. Likewise, much of the increased trade between east and west passes through it. The Middle East has created the waves of immigration with which the EU cannot deal. Of course, the religious narrative of the conflict makes finding solutions even harder.

Prof. Melani argued that the Middle East has always been the center of interests for major powers. This interest only increased when oil became important. The geopolitical challenge in the Middle East is not only about the IPC. The region has a long history of wicked problems. The victors of the two World Wars shaped the politics of the Middle East. As colonial forces receded, Arab nationalist revolutions began in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria. The Soviet

Union extended its support towards Arab Nationalist regimes, while Western powers took control of Iran (until the 1979 revolution) and supported Saudi Arabia and Pakistan. Islamists supported by the US, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan at the end of the Cold War later turned against the West. This culminated with the 9/11 attacks. As the U.S. entered Afghanistan and Iraq in order to establish control, Iran took advantage. The consequence of the American intervention was the increase of Iranian power in the region and its increased push to develop nuclear military capabilities. These power struggles still fuel many armed conflicts in the region, such as in Libya and Yemen. On the other hand, they also allowed for understanding and cooperation between Israel and Saudi Arabia.

Prof. Ben Ami argued that even the main religious conflict, the Sunni-Shia<sup>1</sup> conflict, is secondary to the overall power struggle. Qatar, UAE, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt are all Sunni and they often find themselves at odds. Therefore, the religious divide alone cannot explain the dysfunction of the region. This dysfunction characterizes the involvement by the international community. Further, Russia and China do not have an ethos of peace making. The Chinese, for example, have economic interests but no peace interests. In a similar sense, Japan and India are far more interested in Israeli technology than in the peace process. The West has its own problems – the EU has Brexit and its economic challenges and struggles to survive. In turn, it does not invest into NATO and eastern

<sup>1</sup> The two main movements of Islam.



European countries drift towards Russia and towards nationalism and conservatism.

Prof. Ben Ami stated that since the collapse of the bilateral Israeli-Palestinian peace process in January, there is a belief that the international community can be more active in creating a solution. But, at the moment, there is no international community. The international actors are fragmented. Even without Trump, the US is not going to find common ground with China, Russia, the EU and the UN - not for conflict resolution and not for other challenges, such as global warming. Any concept of a world order is disintegrating and the rules of conduct are changing. The world has regressed to a Westphalian system when it comes to the balance of power: America first, Britain first, etc. The US missed the opportunity it received after the Cold War - no new order has been built. US Neocons believed that bringing liberal democracy and free-market economy would bring peace. This is what they tried to do in Iraq. Obama aimed at same direction but through peaceful means – the Obama speeches only triggered the Arab Spring. The West believed they can transplant their model in the Middle East. This was an illusion. The US failed in peace and failed in war and the international community is not interested in being dragged into the Middle East again.

A good example for the weakness of the international community is the Iranian crisis. Iran signed an international agreement, but Trump withdrew from it and re-sanctioned Iran. The EU tried to circumvent this, but failed because it is too weak, both politically and economically, to withstand the sanctions incurred for trading with Iran. Iran then pushed back and found out that Trump is the opposite of Theodore Roosevelt – he speaks loudly and carries no stick. They took down an American drone and the US did not respond. The clear message conveyed to the Iranians is that Trump has no other option than sanctions. If new negotiations do begin, do not be surprised if you see a repetition of Trump's NAFTA debacle. Trump insisted on renegotiating NAFTA but could not get a different deal. This shameful conduct will make Trump a defining president for this era in American history. His presidency will be remembered as a return to Westphalian order or, more accurately, chaos. There is only one way of defining Trump's policy: 'contradictable.' First, he declared a non-

interventionist U.S. policy. Next, he ordered the U.S. air strikes in Somalia and Syria. The elections are coming and he needs to pivot on foreign policy in order to gain support. Russia is entering the vacuum left by the US in the Middle East. It enjoys good relations with all countries in the region. Saudi Arabia and Egypt, traditional allies of the U.S. are now trying to befriend Russia. Russia's role has been recognized in Israel as well. China is also increasing its power in the Middle East, as it is strategically important for the reasons mentioned above. Yet, China is more interested in economics than politics. Thus, it is keen on maintaining the status quo.

The participants all agreed that currently the major international players in the region are the US, Russia, China, and the EU. Dr. Trenta provided a detailed explanation of what each of these major players in the region do.

The US policy in the region has shifted greatly because of Trump, since conflicting signals and declarations given by Trump make the US policy unpredictable. In the 2016 elections, Trump ran as a noninterventionist candidate, contrary to both Hillary Clinton and the Republican establishment. As president, however, this did not prevent him from intervening in Syria and Somalia by initiating air strikes. As a presidential candidate he was bent on withdrawing forces from Iraq and Afghanistan, but as president he sent more troops to the region. Towards the 2020 elections, Trump must demonstrate achievements in the Middle East, but the Iranian situation makes this hard. The US footprint in Middle East remains constant – its troops are still spread out in many countries and it is still involved in Iraq and Syria.

To the space left by the shift in US policies Russia has entered. Russia enjoys good relations with all countries and tries to further them in order to replace the US. Traditional allies of the US, like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, have increased their ties with Russia, both civilian and military. Unlike the US, Russia strives to act and acts not as an ideological agent or a global policeman, but as a power broker. It looks for allies in divided countries like Lebanon and in conflicts like the Syrian civil war. Some see Russia as a counterweight for Iranian hegemony. The new and expanding role of Russia is one reason for the US to stay in the Middle East.



Another emerging international player in the Middle East is China. Unlike the US and Russia, who are directly or indirectly involved in armed conflicts in the Middle East, China uses only soft power. It does so to pursue its economic and trade interests. Indeed, Chinese involvement continues to grow and the Silk Road Economic Belt operation is making China a major strategic actor. China wishes to maintain the status quo and have a good relationship with its clients and with everyone in the Middle East. For these reasons, China has pledged money to Middle East development.

While the world considers the EU as one player in the Middle East, it is composed of 28 countries with separate foreign ministries. Their actions in the Middle East are not always coherent or based on any common strategy. This incoherence will only become stronger after Brexit. If the EU wants to remain an effective union and successfully defend its borders, this situation cannot go on. Prof. D'Alema replied that out of all international forces, Europe actually has the greatest interest in resolving the conflicts in the Middle East. Without a singular foreign policy, the EU will have trouble defending itself from the consequences of

further conflicts and in fact Europe will be the first to pay the price. The EU is only reacting, when it should take the initiative in balancing out other international forces, creating the promise of security and promoting peace. Regarding the current armed conflicts in the Middle East, the EU should take the initiative in ending the war in Syria and admitting that the Assad regime cannot be defeated. Likewise, it should take measures to prevent insurgents from toppling the Libyan regime. On the Iranian front, the EU should make efforts to save what is left of the nuclear agreement. Doing so is the only way to stop escalation and ensure that the Iranians do not radicalize further. Such steps include negotiations with the Iranian government. Finally, the EU should become more involved in the IPC. Such involvement must include some new means of pressure, such as informing Israel and the PA that the EU is no longer willing to fund PA workers and the Palestinian welfare system. This responsibility will fall upon either Israel or an independent and economically viable Palestinian State. The EU must act now at least in order to prevent the situation from deteriorating any further. There should also be coordination between the individual EU countries on these matters.



## ➤ Diplomacy in the Modern Era

Moderator: **Prof. Itai Sened**, Head of BMI

### Panelists:

**Ambassador Ferdinando Salleo**, Former Secretary General of the Italian MFA, Former Ambassador to USA, USSR (and then Russia) and OECD

**Prof. Itamar Rabinovich**, Member of BMI Advisory Board; Founder and President of the Israel Institute; Former Ambassador of Israel to USA and President Emeritus of Tel Aviv University

**Ambassador Daniel Shek**, Former Ambassador of Israel to France and Monaco

**Prof. Clelia Piperno**, Project Director and Chair of the Talmud Translation Project



There are many complexities that characterize the current state of global diplomacy. European politics is not stable - there have been new elections in Austria, Italy, Spain, and Israel. The institutions of democracy which are required for diplomacy to function are either failing or face serious challenges. In the recent Israeli elections, for example, some parties openly tried to dismantle Israel's judicial institutions, such as the supreme court. More than Israelis are pleased by the results of these elections, they are relieved courts are safe. Had the results been different, the supreme court would have suffered the consequences.

The world found ways to produce more than it thought it could in the past, e.g. through the green revolution. As a result, the problem of resource scarcity has become smaller. However, most excess production goes to the top 1 or 10 percent of the world's population. If 90% of the population will continue to be blocked out of these improvements, it will almost certainly lead to dissatisfaction and political strife. Many financial and democratic institutions are not functioning as they once did. Thus, it becomes harder to redistribute resources. How will institutions of the

future look and how will they function? How do you run diplomacy in an environment of fake news and with a public that has been fed misleading rhetoric? What is the role of diplomacy in the contemporary world and how should it adjust to the new realities?

Amb. Ferdinando Salleo expressed his opinion that most contemporary leaders are side-tracked. Diplomacy requires a great deal of data-driven analysis and a deep understanding of other people's needs and customs. Increasingly, information, culture, and experience are not considered to be determining factors in the decision-making process. Even treaties are no longer considered to be sacred. Further, much of diplomacy has become diplomacy of the impromptu: most leaders do not make the time for sufficient planning. Where can diplomacy find its place in a world where its message has been transformed into a mere instrument rather than the transmission of a way of thinking? The geopolitical environment is changing and there is an urgent need to strengthen diplomacy. Decisions made by all countries are influenced by external factors, without a direct relationship to the authority of the state. Many countries face serious threats to their national security. This is the time for diplomacy to exert itself. President Wilson advocated open and public diplomacy; yet, the emphasis on framing a message to the public is outdated. Transparency is not achieved by bringing everything into the public view. Transparency is adherent to the rules that the people have set for themselves through democracy. There is a need to advocate for professionalism in diplomacy and the resurrection of the force of treaties. Prof. Rabinovich concurred with many of these conclusions.





Diplomacy is changing and new questions arise. For example, what is the significance of an embassy when people and goods move freely and quickly between countries? The international community is increasingly aware of these changes, but diplomacy is still important. Policy is crafted by the executive branch of foreign ministries and national security organizations and implemented by diplomats who gain a feel for what is happening in the country and build important relationships in and for the process. In 1977, when Begin was elected PM in Israel, only one person in the US embassy beyond the information agency officers knew him. Nowadays, after the information revolution, media plays an important role and ambassadors appear in the media as part of their job. Ambassadors have a strong command of the local language. Israel is not very good at this and it is an acute failure. Countries with good foreign services invest in young personnel, stationed in countries in order to learn the local language and culture. In many countries, foreign ministries have become weaker as prime ministers and presidents take more and more of their power for themselves. The Israel Foreign Ministry was almost forced to stop its activity recently due to a lack of funding. It happened in other places as well. Diplomacy can be divided into two: foreign affairs carried out by ambassadors and special negotiations such as peace processes. The latter is still very significant. There is a need for a sequel for Kissinger's *Diplomacy* to establish new guidelines.

For Amb. Daniel Shek, diplomacy is a lifelong commitment. He points to two aspects of diplomacy: diplomacy as a representation of one's country to another and diplomacy as a tool for conflict resolution. Conventional wisdom states that diplomats are an endangered species due to modern technology. The characteristics of the profession have changed over time due to easy travel and communication. State leaders can technically meet and talk all the time, though they usually do not. This created a new and different environment for diplomats.

Conflict resolution remains a major challenge in the digital world. An algorithm is not the solution. Technology does help us comprehend but humans remain the problem solvers and artificial intelligence has not proved itself as a viable replacement. Effective human diplomatic work is needed, and it is important for governments to support it. Diplomats should be perceived as the second line of transmission of political decisions. In addition, the battle

must be waged against fake news. There is a difference between experience and expertise, but both are required in order to ensure a more sustainable future.

There are exciting projects that endorse new forms of diplomacy, bringing together old means and new technology to help with diplomatic work. One example is the Talmud Project, a translation of the Talmud into Italian. It has been helpful to Italian diplomats and politicians who frequently quote it during their speeches and negotiations, as words are their most powerful asset. This project was initiated and overseen by Prof. Clelia Piperno.

The world has often considered diplomacy to be a negative thing. In reality, however, diplomacy is about implementing abstract ideas into policy and being a strong and supportive presence of the country on the ground. In this day and age, the media is important as it directly affects public opinion. Diplomacy is actually an optimistic profession, bringing hope to many. The profession must adapt to a different environment. The tools have changed profoundly - an ambassador now needs twitter more than a tuxedo. It is more important to learn how to manipulate the media than how to write a diplomatic note. However, the essence - communication - has not changed. Likewise, its final goal remains the same: finding the best and most efficient way to bridge gaps, resolve disputes and come to agreements. Nevertheless, to achieve all this, ambassadors must learn more about the media - how to read it and communicate through it. Despite the digital turn, there still is no viable alternative for the physical presence of a representative serving as the mouth, eyes, and ears of their government. Diplomats create social networks and build relationships for times of crisis. Thus, reports of the demise of the diplomat are premature. If there is one real threat to diplomacy as a tool for conflict resolution, it is the loss of secrecy. In an environment that sanctifies transparency this is difficult to say, but it must be said. For example, the Oslo accords were only possible because they were kept secret until the last moment. Concessions made in closed door negotiations could not be made publicly. When the doors are open, you negotiate not only with the other side, but with those on your own side as well. Compromise then becomes much harder, as people do not like their leaders to make concessions and politicians do not want to look weak. This problem has only been exacerbated due to social media.





WATER



RENEWABLE ENERGY



# Europe after the European Parliament Elections

Moderator: **Amb. Prof. Maurizio Melani**, Link Campus University, Former D.G. in the Italian MFA and Ambassador to Iraq, the Political and Security Committee of the EU, and Ethiopia

## Panelists:

**Prof. Daniela Giannetti**, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna

**Prof. Wolfgang C. Müller**, Department of Government, University of Vienna

**Karen Umansky**, BMI Fellow, Department of Public Policy, Tel Aviv University

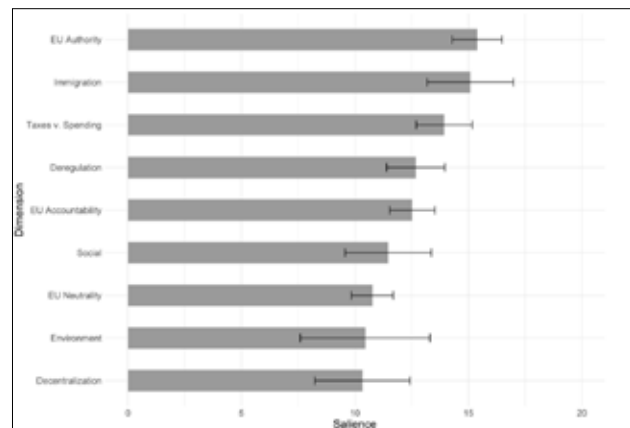
**Hon. Václav Klaus**, Member of BMI Advisory Board, Co- Founder of the Václav Klaus Institute, former President of the Czech Republic



The state of the European Union is a matter of the utmost importance. In recent years, both populism and nationalism are on the rise in the EU. This is a challenge to a region where, until now, there was a common acceptance of the values of liberal democracy, economic integration, economic support for new member countries, and a common foreign security policy. In the ever-changing world, strategic autonomy is important and it has become even more so after Brexit. With that, there appears to be a growing need for the EU to have a central role in global crisis management. While small and divided European countries do not have an interest in global and regional issues, climate change, defence, and other issues, together, they can promote new initiatives, and address such issues. This can only be done by overcoming the growing distrust among EU countries. This distrust is the result of a constant economic crisis and mass immigration, all of which had led to xenophobic and nationalistic reactions. After almost 70 years of integration which brought peace and prosperity

to the EU and its neighbours, pro-EU parties have begun to lose in national parliamentary elections. There is also a growing conflict between high and low debt countries.

Prof. Wolfgang Müller expressed his concern that the notion of the ‘international community’ is rapidly fading. While Europe remains an important supranational institution, the world is facing a predominance of egoism, that shifts public opinion. Negative events have led to growing support for populist and anti-EU forces, as people become more radical and unsatisfied with democratic authorities. We are at the beginning of a new phase, as the grand coalition of the European Parliament is below 50% of seats for the first time since 1994. The larger representation of “Renew Europe” may mean that it has the power to bring about a shift in policy. Immigration has become a far more important issue than the traditional economic left-right divide. This can be seen in the graph below, presented by Prof. Daniela Giannetti:



(Giannetti, 2019)



The rise of nationalist forces and the results of the European Parliament election send signals regarding national politics and future elections. The results were not good for the European future, but in relative terms it was not as bad as it could have been. According to Prof. Giannetti, change is here but it is not dramatic. It is interesting to see, for example, what will happen with the EU commission. The party system is changing and de-concentrating across wings. The Grand coalition still has a majority, if one counts liberals and pro-EU parties.

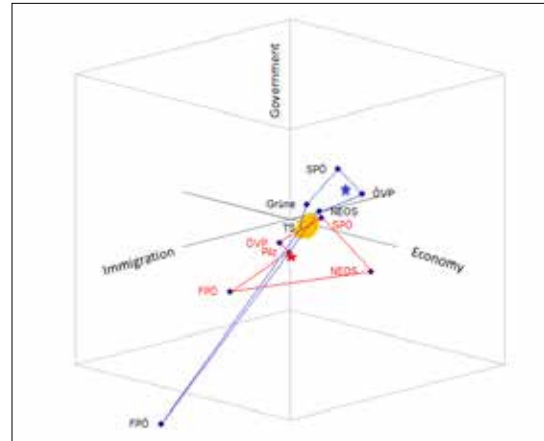
Western Europe is ruled by coalition governments. Newer and smaller parties have taken the place of the older ones. They are usually populist, nationalist, and not mainstream. This makes the coalition building process challenging and trying to co-opt them brings instability. Yet, excluding them by forming coalitions without them with grand coalitions or minority governments may actually strengthen radical parties over time. In the French system, for example, the change has been fundamental. The two mainstream parties were wiped out in national elections and a new political constellation was created. In Germany, the grand coalition ruled in 3 of 4 last governments, but was weakened in the last elections, especially the SPD. The UK 'voice of reason' is at also risk of a similar fate. Spain was an important pro-EU state, but it is now stuck in a political stalemate. Many other important EU states have euro-sceptic governments or other strong anti-EU forces.

Radical parties are on the rise. People feel threatened by immigration and, and less represented by their democratic systems governments. This form of populism is a by-product of representative democracy, according to BMI's Fellow and PhD student Karen Umansky.

In her research, Umansky presents a model of how parties transform in order to gain the support of their voters. Economic austerity and the shift away from the welfare state make people feel left behind. This contributes to the rise of new radical parties that add a new dimension to the political spectrum. In 2013, the government and the economy were the most important planks in party platforms. By the 2017 elections, Austrians seem more concerned with immigration following the 2015 immigration crisis. In addition, parties adopted a more anti-establishment posture and became less consolidated. This is a big shift from socialism and communism. Despite

this, many parties did move from the far corners closer to the center to get more votes, as can be seen in the diagram below:

Parties' Positions on the Issue of Immigration in the 2013 and 2017 Austrian Elections



(Umansky, 2019)<sup>2</sup>

Hon. Vaclav Klaus, Former President of the Czech Republic and a member of the BMI International Advisory Board, raised his concern that Europe after the 2019 EP elections might remain the same as before. According to him, the European institutions are not paying attention to the political situation. For better or worse, Europe will probably continue supporting mass migration, non-cooperation with the East, and attacking any party with strong right-wing views. There is an increasing pressure of maintaining their unity, and perhaps the political stances of Poland and Hungary will help support substantial change in the EU. With all that former communist countries had lost over half a century of communism, they did gain a special sensitivity to national sovereignty.

<sup>2</sup> Notes: Blue shape - 2013 election; Red shape - 2017 election



## ➤ Concluding Remarks and Further Actions

**Prof. Vincenzo Scotti**, President of Link Campus University, Former Italian Minister of Interior, Cultural Heritage, State Holdings, and Former Mayor of Naples

**Prof. Itamar Rabinovich**, Founder and President of the Israel Institute; Former Ambassador of Israel to USA and President Emeritus of Tel Aviv University

In his concluding remarks, Prof. Rabinovich observed that this conference addressed three political conflicts: the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the conflict resolution in Columbia, especially as it grants us perspective for conflicts in the Middle East; and the political conflict surrounding the European Union. Prof. Scotti also noted several important takeaways from the conference, to which the editors of this report add some of their own reflections.

In the digital age, diplomats and policy makers must adapt to a world of transparency. Closed door negotiations may be easier, but there is a need to keep the public informed. Politicians and diplomats must know how to communicate with the wider public, both in their home country and in their host country. They must also excel in influencing social media as much as in writing a diplomatic note.

In the modern world, major conflicts are asymmetric, engaging independent states and non-state actors. Such conflicts have no easy ending. It is difficult to fully defeat non-state forces in the battlefield. Therefore, disarmament and rehabilitation programs are essential for long term stabilization. The hallmark for such programs was implemented in Colombia, and it provides important insights on conflict resolution throughout the globe. First, confidence building processes are important. In Colombia, this was achieved by integrating the Colombian army and FARC in the process. Second, victims should be given center stage in conflict resolution. Third, the process of transitional justice, or restorative justice, has proven to be an essential basis for conflict resolution. This process is more political than judicial and uses evangelical principles to achieve forgiveness and conflict resolution. The conference highlighted the important role of historical narratives. Competing narratives must be harmonized in reconciliation processes. A shared understanding of the past cannot be a precondition for conflict resolution, but a standardization of the narrative is helpful in the long run.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is unfortunately more intractable and resilient than the Colombia conflict due to "non-negotiables" – conflicting religious and nationalistic narratives that make negotiations risky for leaders and frame dovish politicians as traitors. While it is difficult to deal with such problems directly, it is possible to address other factors to de-escalate the conflict. One such factor is economics. Currently, Palestinian poverty and competition over limited resources between Palestinians and Israeli settlers in the West Bank increases tensions and radicalizes public opinion against the two-state solution. A sustainable improvement in Palestinian economic conditions can prepare public opinion to negotiations. Another factor is the narrative passed on the public by the media and education systems. Being informed of the other side's narrative, and eventually harmonizing conflicting narratives, should be an integral part of any reconciliation process. As changes in government education policies are unlikely, this process should be led by non-governmental organizations.

Changing narrative and economic conditions will help bring de-escalation and a solution in the long term, but in the short term, maintaining the status quo in regard to the conflict, including a creeping annexation of the West Bank by Israel without granting equal rights to Palestinians residing there is not an option. Israel must respond to the Arab Peace Initiative. Potential of normalization and economic ties with Arab and Muslim world can help "selling" the solution to the Israeli public, and give a multilateral "umbrella" to the process.

A particularly sobering point that arose during the conference was the fragmentation within the international community. There are no longer dominant superpowers. Instead, there is a return to the Westphalian system of America first, Britain first, etc. This makes it more difficult to create international coalitions to address global issues.



In fact, it mandates a new approach to conflict resolution. Instead of relying on the US or the international community, a wider role should be granted to local actors, much as was done in the Colombian peace process.

Within this new framework of conflict resolution, the European Union should also take a more dominant role. This will directly benefit the EU, because a successful resolution of conflicts, especially in the Middle East, will reduce the pressures from refugees and immigrants, as well as the threat of terror attacks on European soil. Among the conflicts that can benefit from EU involvement

are the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, the civil wars in Syria and Libya, and the conflict surrounding the Iran nuclear deal. In order to be an active international actor, the EU faces several internal challenges – recession, immigration, and the rise of radical anti-establishment parties. All of these issues were reflected in the recent elections to the EU parliament. Still, the pro-EU parties, consisting of the European People's Party group, the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats and Renew Europe, enjoy a solid majority that can allow coordinated efforts towards a uniform European foreign policy.



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# Conference Schedule

## Thursday, 19.9.19

### 09:00 Opening Statements:

**Prof. Vincenzo Scotti**, President of Link Campus University, Former Italian Minister of Interior, of Foreign Affairs, of Cultural Heritage, of State Holdings and Former Mayor of Naples

**Dr. Boris Mints**, President of BMI

**Prof. Itai Sened**, Head, BMI; Founding Head, School of Social and Policy Studies, Tel Aviv University

### 10:00 The Peace Process in Colombia – Why Did it Work?

**Moderator: Prof. Piero Schiavazzi**, Link Campus University

**Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami**, Vice President, Toledo International Center for Peace and former Foreign Minister of Israel

**Mr. Sergio Jaramillo Caro**, Former High commissioner of Peace, Colombia

Discussion

**Prof. Alberto Melloni**, Director of the John XXIII Foundation for Religious Studies, Coordinator of the European Research Infrastructure of Religious Studies

Discussion

### 11:15 Coffee Break

### 11:30 Academic Forum 1: The Fundamentals of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

**Moderator: Professor Itai Sened**, Head of the Boris Mints Institute, TAU

**Dr. Sami Miaari**, Department of Labor Studies, Tel Aviv University

**Prof. Fabio Nicolucci**, Middle East political analyst, Link Campus University

**Dr. Ahmed Abdelwahed**, Chairman of the Academy for International Development – Middle East and North Africa AID-MENA

**Discussant: Amit Loewenthal** – Ph.D. student, Tel Aviv University

Discussion

### 12:30 Lunch – Link Campus University

### 14:00 Ambassadors' Forum 1: The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict – Perspective and Prospects

**Moderator: Amb.Prof. Maurizio Melani**, Link Campus University, Former D.G. in the Italian MFA and Ambassador to Iraq, to the Political and Security Committee of the EU and to Ethiopia

**Amb. Prof. Itamar Rabinovich**, Member of BMI Advisory Board; Founder and President of the Israel Institute; Former Ambassador of Israel to USA and President Emeritus of Tel Aviv University

**Ambassador Daniel Shek**, Former Ambassador of Israel to France and Monaco

Discussion

### 15:15 Coffee Break

### 15:30 Foreign and Defense Ministers' Forum: The Middle East in the Contemporary Global Perspective

**Moderator: Amb. Prof. Maurizio Melani**, Link Campus University, Former D.G. in the Italian MFA and Ambassador to Iraq, to the Political and Security Committee of the EU and to Ethiopia

**Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami**, Vice President, Toledo International Center for Peace and former Foreign Minister of Israel

**Prof. Massimo D'Alema**, Link Campus University, President of the Italianeuropei Foundation Former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy

**Dr. Elisabetta Trenta**, former Minister of Defence of Italy

Discussion



## Friday, 20.9.19

### 09:00 **Ambassadors' Forum 2: Diplomacy in the Modern Era**

**Moderator: Professor Itai Sened**, Head of the Boris Mints Institute, TAU

**Ambassador Ferdinando Salleo**, Former Secretary General of the Italian MFA, Former Ambassador to USA, USSR (and then Russia) and OECD

**Prof. Itamar Rabinovich**, Member of BMI Advisory Board; Founder and President of the Israel Institute; Former Ambassador of Israel to USA and President Emeritus of Tel Aviv University

**Ambassador Daniel Shek**, Former Ambassador of Israel to France and Monaco

**Prof. Clelia Piperno**, CEO of the Talmud Project

Discussion

10:30 Coffee Break

### 10:45 **Institutional and Academic Forum : Europe after the EP Elections**

**Moderator: Amb. Prof. Maurizio Melani**, Link Campus University, Former D.G. in the Italian MFA and Ambassador to Iraq, to the Political and Security Committee of the EU and to Ethiopia

**Prof. Daniela Giannetti**, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna

**Prof. Wolfgang C. Müller**, Department of Governance, University of Vienna

**Karen Umansky**, BMI Fellow, Department of Public Policy, Tel Aviv University

**Hon. Vaclav Klaus**, Member of BMI Advisory Board, Co- Founder of the Václav Klaus Institute, former President of the Czech Republic

Discussion

### 12:15 **Concluding Remarks:**

**Prof. Vincenzo Scotti**, President of Link Campus University, Former Italian Minister of Interior, of Cultural Heritage, of State Holdings and Former Mayor of Naples

**Prof. Itamar Rabinovich**, Founder and President of the Israel Institute; Former Ambassador of Israel to USA and President Emeritus of Tel Aviv University

12:45 End of the meeting



## ➤ List of Participants (in alphabetical order)

1. **Dr. Ahmed Abdelwahed**, Chairman of the Academy for International Development – Middle East and North Africa AID-MENA
2. **Mrs. Joelle Aflalo**, Member of BMI Advisory Board; Founding Member, Matanel Foundation
3. **Prof. Shlomo Ben-Ami**, Vice President, Toledo International Center for Peace and former Foreign Minister of Israel
4. **Dr. Haim Ben-Yaakov**, Senior executive for Regional Development and Public Affairs, Tel- Aviv University
5. **Mrs. Natalia Borovik**, Executive Manager of the Mints Family Charitable Foundation
6. **Mr. Sergio Jaramillo Caro**, Former High commissioner of Peace, Colombia
7. **Prof. Massimo D'Alema**, Link Campus University, President of the Italianeuropei Foundation, Former Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Italy
8. **Prof. Armen Darbinian**, Member of BMI Advisory Board, Rector of Russian-Armenian State University and former Prime-Minister of Armenia
9. **Prof. Simeon Djankov**, Member of BMI Advisory Board, Director, Financial Markets Group, London School of Economics, Former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of Bulgaria
10. **Mrs. Ayelet Fishman**, Adv., Director of BMI
11. **Prof. Franco Frattini**, Link Campus University, Council of State Section President, President of the Italian Society for International Organization, Former Vice President of the European Commission and Minister of Foreign Affairs and of Public Administration of Italy
12. **Prof. Daniela Giannetti**, Faculty of Political and Social Sciences, University of Bologna
13. **Hon. Vaclav Klaus**, Member of BMI Advisory Board, Co- Founder of the Václav Klaus Institute, former President of the Czech Republic
14. **Amit Loewenthal**, BMI Fellow, Department of Public Policy, Tel Aviv University
15. **Mr. Igor Luksic**, Member of BMI Advisory Board, former Prime Minister, Montenegro
16. **Amb. Prof. Maurizio Melani**, Link Campus University, Former D.G. in the Italian MFA and Ambassador to Iraq, to the Political and Security Committee of the EU and to Ethiopia
17. **Prof. Alberto Melloni**, Director of the John XXIII Foundation for Religious Studies, Coordinator of the European Research Infrastructure of Religious Studies
18. **Dr. Sami Miaari**, Department of Labor Studies, Tel Aviv University
19. **Dr. Boris Mints**, BMI Founder and President
20. **Prof. Wolfgang C. Müller**, Department of Government, University of Vienna
21. **Prof. Fabio Nicolucci**, Middle East political analyst, Link Campus University
22. **Dr. Alexander Pesov**, Member of BMI Steering Committee
23. **Mr. Petr Pesov**, BMI intern
24. **Prof. Clelia Piperno**, CEO of the Talmud Project
25. **Prof. Itamar Rabinovich**, Member of BMI Advisory Board; Founder and President of the Israel Institute; Former Ambassador of Israel to USA and President Emeritus of Tel Aviv University
26. **Mr. Seppo Remes**, Member of BMI Advisory Board; Co-Founder and Chairman of EOS Russia
27. **Ambassador Ferdinando Salleo**, Former Secretary General of the Italian MFA, Former Ambassador to USA, USSR (and then Russia), and OECD
28. **Ambassador Daniel Shek**, Former Ambassador of Israel to France and Monaco
29. **Prof. Piero Schiavazzi**, Link Campus University
30. **Prof. Vincenzo Scotti**, President of Link Campus University, Former Italian Minister of Interior, of Cultural Heritage, of State Holdings and Former Mayor of Naples
31. **Prof. Itai Sened**, Head of BMI; Founding Chair, School of Social and Policy Studies, Tel Aviv University
32. **Dr. Elisabetta Trenta**, former Minister of Defence of Italy
1. **Karen Umansky**, BMI Fellow, Department of Public Policy, Tel Aviv University





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