

November 5, 2013

NIKLAS MALCHOW
DR. OTMAR OEHRING

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“The Syrian Conflict and its Impact on Jordan”

Under the Patronage of His Excellency the Foreign Minister Nasser Judeh

Event: International Seminar

Date, Place: July 3rd, 2013, Institute of Diplomacy, Amman – Jordan

Concept: Dr. Hasan Al Momani, Dr. Otmar Oehring

Organization: Regional Center on Conflict Prevention (RCCP), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung – Amman Office (KAS)

1. Program Overview

Wednesday, July 03, 2013

09:30 – 10:00

Registration

10:00 – 10:30

Opening Remarks

H.E. Mohammed Al Daher (General Secretary of the Foreign Ministry)

Dr. Hasan Al Momani (RCCP)

Dr. Otmar Oehring (KAS Amman)

10:30 – 10:45

Coffee Break

10:45 – 12:45

The Political Dimension – Domestic Regional and International

Dr. Rolf Schwarz - A Perspective from NATO

Dr. Maximilian Rasch – A German Perspective

H.E. Dr. Omar Al Rifai – A Jordanian Perspective

Mr. Jaromír Levíček – A European Perspective

12:45 – 13:00

Coffee Break

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13:00-14:00

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14:00 – 15:00

15:00 – 16:00

16:00 – 16:45

List of Participants

H.E. Mohamed Ali Daher NOSOUR

Dr. Hasan AL MOMANI

Dr. Otmar OEHRING

Dr. Rolf SCHWARZ

Dr. Maximilian RASCH

Jaromír LEVÍČEK

Consequences of the Syrian Conflict on Jordan's Security Situation

MG.r. Mahmoud Irdaisat

Dr. Waleed Abu Dalbough

Lunch

Economic Challenges for Jordan

H.E. Dr. Maen Al Nsour

Where is the Conflict Heading?

Dr. Hasan Al Momani – Jordan's Future Role

Secretary General
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Amman, Jordan

Assistant Professor
University of Jordan
Department of Political Science and
International Relations

Resident Representative
Konrad Adenauer Stiftung – Amman Office
Amman, Jordan

Political Officer
Middle East and North Africa
NATO Headquarters Brussels, Belgium

Head of Political Department at the
German Embassy
Amman, Jordan

European External Action Service

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H.E. Dr. Omar Abdul-Monem RIFAI

MG.r. Mahmoud IRDAISAT

Dr. Waleed Abu-DALBOUH

H.E. Dr. Maen F. NSOUR

EU Delegation to the Hashemite Kingdom
of Jordan

Director
International Academic Development
Faculty Member
Geneva Graduate School of Governance

Director General
Centre for Strategic Studies

Head of the American Studies Department
University of Jordan
Joint Assistant Professor
Department of Politics and International
Studies

Economics and Investment Consultant

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Following the uprisings in the Arab world, the developments in Syria sparked particular concern for numerous conflict resolution and peace building efforts due to the structural complexity of the civil war that has already claimed 93,000 casualties. As the evolutions display, the conflict aggravated into an intransparent network in terms of players, level of violence, victims, displaced persons and an increasing number of refugees. Especially Jordan is facing a huge influx of Syrian refugees, which until today totals more than half a million people according to official numbers. Therewith, the effects of the conflict pose significant socio-economic, socio-political and security challenges to the country.

In this context, the Konrad-Adenauer Stiftung-Amman (KAS) and the Regional Center on Conflict Prevention (RCCP) organized an international seminar on the 3rd of July 2013 to discuss various perceptions and perspectives of the Syrian civil war and its impact on Jordan. The seminar was attended by high-ranking policy makers and academics from Jordan and Europe.

The forum, which aims to provide a platform for discussion and communication among the different participants, is inclined to promote and support policy makers, civil society actors and third party mediators that are engaged in conflict resolution. The purpose is to undertake actions that could assist in dealing with the consequences of the civil war.

The following outline of figures and statements needs to be considered with respect to the time of the conference.

Welcome Speeches

At the beginning of the seminar the organizers Dr. Hasan Al-Momani, RCCP, Dr. Otmar Oehring, KAS Amman, and H.E. Mohammed Al Daher welcomed all participants and thanked them for their great commitment. All of them emphasized the likelihood of spill over effects of the conflict throughout the entire region and thus, the hazard it poses to peace and stability.

The Political Dimension – Domestic, Regional and International

Dr. Rolf Schwarz – A Perspective from NATO

The first delegate to discuss the political dynamics of the conflict was Dr. Rolf Schwarz. He started his remarks by stressing the strategic importance of NATO's southern border. Thus, NATO together with its southern partners requires a vital cooperation in political relationships and security matters. In this respect, Dr. Schwarz mentioned the third pillar of the new Strategic Concept - *Cooperative Security* - which emphasizes the coordination of security issues along with its partner countries in order to ensure coherent and effective policy making. This mutual endeavour was institutionalized in a new partnership policy in Berlin in 2011 and at the 2012 Chicago summit in which, according to Dr. Schwarz, Jordan performed exceptional involvement and still continues to do so. He elaborated that, these individual partnership and cooperation programmes (IPCP) need to be promoted in order to accommodate regional challenges arising from the post-Arab Spring.

In light of NATO's approach during the Libya intervention that was authorised by UN mandate and in collaboration with the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council it draws a parallel to the Syrian conflict. Unlike

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the regional and legal support that was given in Libya, the current crisis does not feature regional nor international support for military intervention ¹ as there are uncertainties if military action would be successful in bringing a solution to the conflict. With regard to NATO's position, Dr. Schwarz emphasized the alliance's concern of regional spill-over effects not only to the NATO member Turkey but also to partner countries such as Jordan, Israel, Iraq, and Lebanon. In addition, he states that the support to Turkey's air defence facilities followed upon the alliance's nature of solidarity and is not intended to impose a no-fly zone or any other act of aggression towards Syria. Hence, NATO's aim is to avoid any escalations into Turkish territory and thus, to secure Turkey's borders. Finally, Dr. Schwarz points out that NATO is pursuing a political solution to the crisis that enables the transition to a political body representative to the Syrian people. Therefore, the international community should further a realization of the Geneva II conference.

Dr. Maximilian Rasch – A German Perspective

According to Dr. Rasch the German government condemns the actions of the Syrian regime that operates repressively against the Syrian people. Germany's capacity to the Syrian conflict focuses on the provision of humanitarian aid on the ground, its engagement to proceed with the Geneva II conference and the support to establish a Syrian transitional government. In the context of the G8 summit in Northern Ireland in June this year, Chancellor Angela Merkel stressed that Germany does not perform the role as a mediator but further functions as an element that tries to prevent more humanitarian suffering through an

¹ At the time of the seminar (July 3, 2013)

increased commitment of humanitarian aid.² Consequently, Germany contributed 200 million Euro for humanitarian aid which, according to chancellor Angela Merkel, "is the highest amount we [German government] ever paid for a humanitarian intervention".³ In addition, Germany confirms to provide bilateral help to Jordan in order to cope with the influx of refugees. As a result, Germany welcomes the reception of 5000 refugees and displaced persons from Syria which represents an unprecedented initiative in German asylum policy so far. Also the generous allocation of financial aid symbolizes a considerable action compared to other international efforts. To this effect, after the United States, Germany amounts to the second biggest supporter of humanitarian aid in Syria.

In a governmental declaration, issued at the end of June, Angela Merkel expressed her concern in delivering arms to the opposition due to high risks that prove to be obscure. In addition, the German legal regulations prohibit any delivery of arms to civil war countries.

H.E. Dr. Omar Al Rifai – A Jordanian Perspective

Initially Dr. Omar Al Rifai pointed to the rupture of the Syrian opposition leading to the formation of various branches among them and, as a result, renders political progress hard to attain. Furthermore, he acknowledges the fact that an intervention by the international community would possibly generate a deterioration of the

² The text can be found under the following link:
<http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/DE/Mitschrift/Pressekonferenzen/2013/06/2013-06-18-merkel-g8.html>

³ The Quote can be found under the following link:
<http://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/>

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conflict and lead to additional negative consequences for the neighbouring states.

Due to Jordan's geographical location, its moderate governmental policies, its diplomatic relations and its peace treaty with Israel, the country is essential for regional security and stability. Therefore, a "peaceful, stable and prosperous Jordan" is not only beneficial for the region but it is also in the interest of the US, the EU, NATO, Russia and the Gulf states. In this regard, a joint approach by these actors is necessary in order to prevent harmful spill-overs to Jordan. Yet, one of these negative implications is the destabilization of the Jordanian-Syrian border. Due to the vast and increasing influx of refugees that amounts up to approximately 10% of the population, a deterioration of Jordan's humanitarian and economic infrastructure is observable. A common problem, which however also existed prior to the conflict, is the provision of water, food, electricity, medical care and education. An issue that directly emerged due to the continuous influx of refugees is the willingness of Syrian refugees to accept lower wages. Consequently, the unemployment data increases since those jobs which are usually assumed for Jordanians are taken by cheaper labour.

Towards the end of his deliberations, Dr. Omar Al Rifai expresses his concern to the increment of political Islam throughout the region and its affect on Jordan. In the course of political transitions in Egypt and Tunisia, it becomes evident that the former regimes were replaced by an Islamic leadership. Dr. Omar Al Rifai outlines that the "Brotherhood Crescent" portrays a cause to regional instability. Nevertheless, recent developments in Egypt and Turkey would lead to believe that secular notions might prosper and eventually lead to regional tranquillity.

Mr. Jaromír Levíček – A European Perspective

Jaromir Levíček presented a joint communication on 24th June 2013 that depicts the European Union's concrete terms of action on how to adequately respond to the Syrian crisis: The EU aims to (1) prevent spill-over effects that could lead to regional fragmentation; (2) endorse a political approach that creates a sustainable solution to the crisis and (3) discuss the humanitarian situation and provide aid for the people affected. In addition the European Commission is funding an additional sum of 400 million Euros for humanitarian, economic, and development necessities in Syria and in the neighboring region in order mitigate human suffering. Besides, the Commission's top priority is to reduce human rights abuses and violence through a political resolution. Taking into consideration the European External Action Service, its High Representative Catherine Ashton stresses the need to proceed with political negotiations according to the June 2012 Geneva communiqué and to launch the Geneva II conference as soon as possible. Nonetheless, Lady Ashton also highlights that a political solution is a necessary requirement to secure a "united, inclusive and democratic Syria". According to the ENP (European Neighborhood Policy) it is highly important to help Syria's neighbors and especially those countries concerned with immense infrastructural pressures caused by the influx of Syrian refugees, i.e. Jordan and Lebanon. Lastly, the EU emphasizes that financial support is an essential and necessary instrument to provide help on the ground. However, to effectively solve the conflict a diplomatic resolution is vital in order to ensure a sustainable transition process.

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Consequences of the Syrian Conflict on Jordan's Security Situation

MG. r. Mahmoud Irdaisat

Alongside usual issues of economic, social, security and political nature, Mr. Irdaisat expressed his concern of a shift from a civil war to a proxy war between regional and global actors. Jordan is sharing 375 km border with Syria that in addition to regular border guards, requires Jordanian army units to secure and to safeguard refugees crossing into Jordan. In order to maintain this activity extra financial resources are needed and therewith, challenge the army's already tight budget. More specifically, Mr. Irdaisat highlights that the effects of the Syrian conflict endangers Jordan's security in two ways. First, the situation in the refugee camps generates a tense ambiance over the services and health situation. The same tensions circulate among those Jordanians living in the North due to scarceness of resources and jobs. In this context, Mr. Irdaisat underlines the historical experiences made and thus, the occurring political sentiments among the Jordanian society made with fugitives coming from Palestine in 1948, the civil war in Lebanon, the Gulf wars and recently Syria. Second of all, the appeal by Jordanian Salafists to recruit radicals in order to join their fight in Syria creates a pool of "hardened and radicalized extremists". Eventually those people might turn back to Jordan and hence, pose a long-term security threat just like Jordan was confronted with in 1980 when fighters returned from Afghanistan.

Particularly sectarian divisions and enclaves within Syria display a suitable fundament for extremists on the Jordanian border. Furthermore, the socio-economic and security problems illustrate imminent challenges for the Jordanian government

and society that keep pressurizing them as long as the crisis continues.

Dr. Waleed Abu Dalbough

Similarly to the deliberations outlined above, Dr. Waleed underlines the internal and external security challenges that Jordan is confronted with in consequence of the increasing numbers of Syrian refugees and the menacing danger of military engagement by world powers. In his reflections he observes the following geopolitical shifts.

Initially he states that in general but also as a result of the growing operational influence by non state actors, such as Hezbollah or Al Qaeda, the affects of the conflict evolved from human and economic concerns to a greater degree of military courtesy. In this respect, the motivation to the use of force among the various actors developed to an explicit and actual hazard in terms of a policy of "deterrence and retaliation". Therefore, at the present time, the tool of diplomatic efforts is exhausted which makes a military arrangement by outside parties seem more likely. These evolutions cause severe challenges for Jordan's foreign policy. Which is known for its balanced and moderate principles. On the basis of those shifts and the harmful economic consequences Jordan is facing, the country is exposed to align with the West's and the Gulf States' Syria policies. Hence, Jordan eventually abandons its path of diplomatic neutrality. Accordingly, Dr. Waleed observes that due to the repercussions deriving from Syria and the pressure by outside actors, Jordan is required to switch from an implicit to an explicit course of foreign policy.

In addition, he presumes that there is no option of a good outcome but only a "bad" or a "worse" scenario to come. On the one hand, the worse scenario primarily entails the emergence of a government dominated

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by Islam which would increase the power and influence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Jordan. Furthermore, there is the fear of increasing terrorist actions in the case of political deadlock and anarchy if the Syrian regime collapses. On the other hand, a bad scenario envisages the political survival of the Assad regime linked to the promotion of Shiism in Sunni regions with the support of Iran. This would enhance the fear of sectarian tensions in Jordan and the loss of its position as a moderate and stable state. Thus, Dr. Waleed concluded that Jordan is trapped between international pressure and domestic as well as economic and social difficulties.

Economic Challenges for Jordan*H.E. Dr. Maen Al Nsour*

Dr. Maen F. Nsour presents an extensive socio-economic discourse on the collisions of Jordan's financial needs, its labour market and its macroeconomic challenges set in motion by the effects of the conflict. Since Jordan is the second largest receiver of refugees after Lebanon, the root cause of the diverse issues is, according to Nsour, the insufficient provision of financial resources by the international community in order to respond to the refugee crisis. The financial gap amounts for \$2,981,640,112 within the region and a deficit of \$645.510,674 inside Jordan. These amounts are needed by the UNHCR in order to finance their obligations towards the refugees. In addition, Jordan hosts approximately 491,365 refugees of which 420,473 are registered with the UN. It is estimated that, around 300,000 are dispersed across the country. However, by keeping its borders open and accepting the increasing influx of Syrians, Jordan not only operates according to international law but also respects the deep rooted family ties that Jordanians share with Syrians. If the refugee situation should reach up to one

million at the end of this year - reflecting 17% of the Jordanian population - the present challenges tend to aggravate. Thus, additional pressure would be exercised on basic issues such as healthcare, education, water, electricity and the governments subsidizing efforts of bread, household gas, water and electricity.

Dr. Al Nsour points to the already existing problems of the Jordanian economy that are severely affected by the current crisis. These are weak economic growth rates, high poverty, unemployment (14%) and inflation rates, budget and trade balance deficit, shrinking direct investment, and limited natural resources i.e. water and energy supplies. The determining factor of Jordan's growth, which used to be human resources, also faded due to a decline in budgetary allocations. Nevertheless, one reason of the regress in productivity and competitiveness, among other reasons, is due to the economical mismanagement of numerous governments resulting in the above mentioned shortcomings.

A significant element contributing to Jordan's socio-economic problems are the circumstances of its labour market that is confronted with an unemployment rate above 10% over the last decade. However, it is difficult to counter this concern in a short-term approach since Jordan's unemployment is of structural nature. Furthermore, an extensive and efficient national analysis to target Jordan's unemployment thus, to create new job opportunities does not exist. Even though Jordan faces a "demographic blessing" - 3.5 million citizens or 58% of its population are in working age - that ideally results in more work and investment, the country does not manage to deliver high levels of production. More specifically, the issue arises that only 1.5 million of those young people are economically active and more than 2 million are not even actively seeking employment

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according to Nsour. Another concern are the 500,000 foreign workers – 300 000 displaying a working permit and 200 000 illegal workers - which equals up to 1.2 million Jordanians that are supposed to provide for 6 million. Without any solution for the low participation of workforce within the labour market, issues such as the enhancement of growth rates or higher wages in order to create more jobs, cannot be fixed. Additionally, Jordan's labour force is constructed of mainly males (84%) with secondary education (61%) or even lower.

According to Dr. Nsour, another major problem is the low wage. For instance, the minimum monthly salary of JOD 190 leads to the fact that a family of four is forced to live below the poverty line. Furthermore, 68% of the male workers earn less than JOD 200 per month. The fact that there is little contribution to the labour market already, low wages position families in an even more precarious situation relating to their living conditions. Therefore, it is essential to target and increase labour market participation to reduce low wages and hence, poverty.

In general, Jordan's economy mainly relies on the service sector and hence, on unskilled labour. In 2011 about 65% of the net jobs were created by the private sector. In this respect, the estimated 500,000 foreign workers account for a large part of unskilled and low wage labour. These jobs could be compensated with Jordanians as well, yet undocumented foreign workers with secondary education or less represent almost two times the number of unemployed Jordanians with an equal educational background. Accordingly, this illustrates 200,000 foreign workers compared to 100,000 unemployed Jordanians.

However, the introduction of a new policy framework, which would be suitable to the

economy's needs and effective in its implementation, would most likely further the labour market to incorporate Jordanians with high school education or less while, at the same time, provide positions for foreign workers. In any case, such policies need to detect occupations and sectors in which it is possible for Jordanians to gradually replace foreign workers devoid of surrendering economic productivity or competitiveness. Nevertheless, Nsour emphasizes, the present labour market is too saturated as to integrate new members to the economy. Moreover, the increasing number of Syrian refugees seeking for jobs delays the process and the attempt of the government to adequately respond to the Jordanian level of unemployment.

The Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation (MOPIC) issued a report stating that once the numbers of Syrian refugees reach 660,000 – as the MOPIC estimates in the course of 2013- the financial resources for the provision of basic needs and subsidies (water, flour, electricity, gas, food) by the government would almost double. Thus, the financing of the refugee's needs would increase from \$226 million in 2012 to \$449.1 million during 2013. Furthermore, another study published by the MOPIC, examined the sectoral dimension (education, health care, energy, protection and security, infrastructure, water) and the macroeconomic impact (food subsidies, national debt, impact of imports, impact on the labour market) of the refugees on Jordan during June 2011 and November 2012. In this regard, Jordan's incurred costs in 2011 covered around JOD 140.28 million and increased to JOD 449.902 million in 2012. Thus, Jordan experiences severe negative effects in its socio-economic setting.

Conclusion

The conference allowed for a fruitful discussion that helped to express various

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views and promoted incentives for more dialogue. In addition, the conference established a solid platform in order to discuss the affects of the Syrian conflict on Jordan.