



EU-NA Fellows first day in Cairo – Egypt

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By Paloma Haschke

9.00 – 10.00am League of Arab States Headquarters

Reception and orientation by Mrs Magda ZAKI – Director of the department of Dialogues of Civilizations at League of Arab States

The purpose of this fellowship is to learn to look at others with an objective eye. The Arab region and the Muslim world are tired to be assimilated to terrorism and extremism. The fellows should try to see what is really happening in the region through neutral observations and get rid of generalization and stereotypes. Most of the problems in Egypt are not coming from Islam but from poverty and poor education.

10.30am – 12.00pm League of Arab States Headquarters

Lecture “The Implication of Arab Spring on the Dialogue of Civilizations, Islam and the West, and the Declaration of the Palestinian State” M. Gamal ZAIDA – Managing Editor & Columnist at *Al Ahram Egyptian Daily Newspaper*.

The Arab Spring: This revolution was a huge surprise for everyone and no one could have predicted it. The main reason is that the youth has been ignored for so long that it was hard to anticipate the way young people would use new technologies and social media. They are now ready to build a new country

Dialogue of Civilizations: Inspired by Huntington’s theory on clash of civilizations, the Bush administration has destroyed what has been built so far in terms of dialogue of cultures. The Obama government hasn’t done much more to restore it.

The Arab-Israeli conflict: No one has understood why the US didn’t allow the Palestinians to have their own state since the peace negotiations are not going anywhere. The position of Washington at the UN was shocking and unjustified.

The Implication of the West toward the Arab World: The West is defending positive values such as democracy and Human rights. However it’s foreign policy in the Arab world is very confusing since Western countries have been supporting Mubarak and Qaddafi for decades to protect their interests.

12.00 – 12.45pm League of Arab States Headquarters

Presentation “Women During and After the Revolution in Egypt” Dr Iman BIBARS – Vice-President, Ashoka Global

The Egyptian revolution doesn't belong to a group in particular. Everyone went down in the street to protest. There was no difference of gender, age, social class, or religion. Women and kids were allowed to protest side by side with men and were not sent home, as it would have been the case before the revolution. Also religious chants were not allowed on the Square and when a group was trying to spread Islamic slogans it was never repeated by the crowd. This is why it is actually the first true revolution in the country's 7000 year history. The 1952 revolution was lead by the army but this time the entire population went to Tahrir Square to express its voice.

The reason why the Egyptian people took the streets it's because it couldn't bear anymore to see its children being killed by the regime. It was a matter of dignity.

Having a voice is quite new for the country this is why there are a lot of different voices emerging. It sounds like a cacophony and people need to learn to listen to each other instead of fighting. The government is spineless and what need to be addressed first in order to build the future of the country is illiteracy and poor education, which concern more than 60% of the population.

12.45 – 1.30pm League of Arab States Headquarters

Lecture “Development and Finance in the Middle East” M. Mansoura KELADA – Chief Operating Officer in Assets and Investment Management, National Bank of Egypt

Clash of civilizations sets people apart. Developing international finance on the contrary brings them together.

Recently, foreign direct investments (FDI) have shifted from bilateral exchanges to multilateral relationships. This is mostly due to:

- a shift of economic development policies from government-driven centrally planned investments to market-oriented private sectors investments
- privatization
- large corporations going global
- capital convertibility (free capital flows) and lower sovereign risks as assessed by the capitalist market

There is few challenges to the development of FDI today but they can all be addressed and resolved through a mutual help between partners:

- legal framework
- access to information
- time value
- culture differences
- political risks and uncertainty

3.30 – 5.00pm Cairo University

Dr Mohammed SOFFAR – Center for Civilizational Studies and Dialogue of Cultures

The center has been created in 2002, in the wake of 9/11 to tackle the issues between civilizations and to deal with different cultural sensibilities, two domains of thoughts that have never been addressed before in a political science university in Egypt.

The center does not have a website but a Facebook page to avoid passive audience. The aim is to treat the audience as a partner in the development of the center. This department of studies wants to get ideas from the public – without distinction of age, gender, or class – rather than imposing its ideas on the audience.

Opposing the French vision of common outside appearance, the German philosopher Norbert Elias defines civilization through culture, which is the spirit of a people living in the same area, and through the creativeness that comes out of it. Two precisions can be added to this definition. Spengler says that cultures are like seasons and have their own cycles. Toynbee thinks that encounters between civilizations have to be violent.