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International Council on
Environmental Economics
and Development
Accredited to the United Nations and the Governing Body
of the UN Environment Programme

ARAB GEOPOLITICS 2024

Augmenting NATO Southern Partnerships

High-Level Conference

Organised by the NATO Defense College Foundation

with the support of Luiss University

in cooperation with

NATO Public Diplomacy Division, the NATO Defense College, Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale, Fondazione Compagnia di San Paolo and International Council on Environmental Economics and Development (ICEED)

Rome, 25th of October 2024

Venue: Luiss University – Aula Toti ([Viale Romania, 32](#))

Since the **Arab revolutions of 2011**, the Southern Region has experienced **prolonged instability**, significantly affecting both regional and international actors. The political upheaval and economic challenges across the area underscore the urgent need for **cooperative security**, with NATO playing an important role in addressing these evolving threats.

Considering the Region's strategic importance and the Washington Summit conclusions (July 9-11, 2024), Partnerships such as the **Istanbul Cooperation Initiative (ICI)** and the **Mediterranean Dialogue (MD)** are vital for promoting *political dialogue* and *practical cooperation* in key areas like maritime security, infrastructure protection, and climate security.

While Russia remains the foremost threat to Euro-Atlantic security, systemic competition from China and various hybrid threats in the South demand **collective solutions**. Recognizing the **strategic importance** of the **Southern Neighbourhood**, NATO seeks to shift the narrative *from fragmentation to cooperation* by refining its communication strategies, countering disinformation, and clarifying its **security objectives**.

This High-Level Conference will gather **18 international experts** at LUISS University to address these crucial issues.

The event will be opened by *Alessandro Minuto-Rizzo* (President, NATO Defense College Foundation), *Florence Gaub* (Director, Research Division, NATO Defense College), and *Nicolò Russo Perez* (Head, International Affairs, Compagnia di San Paolo).

The first panel, moderated by *Matthew Robinson* (Director, Euro-Gulf Information Center), will examine how to reshape the narrative around the Southern Region, moving from a fragmented perspective to a more unified approach. The qualified

panellists are *Abdulaziz Sager* (Chairman, Gulf Research Center), *Abmad Masa'deb* (Former Secretary General, Union for the Mediterranean), *Luigi Narbone* (Director, Mediterranean Platform, LUISS University), and *Len Ishmael* (Senior Fellow, Policy Center for the New South).

The second panel, chaired by *Silvia Colombo* (Senior Researcher, NATO Defense College), will focus on creating a converging strategic framework between NATO and its Southern partners. The panel will include *Mahmoud Karem* (Professor, British University; former Ambassador to NATO and the EU), *Ebtessam Al-Ketbi* (President, Emirates Policy Center), *Mohammed Al-Oraifan* (Director, NATO-ICI Regional Centre), and *Manal Al Hasawi* (Founding Partner, Think Tank Strategy & Development Consulting).

Special interventions will feature *Alessandro Ervolani* (CEO, Rheinmetall Italy), *Benedetto Della Vedova* (Member of Parliament, Foreign Affairs Committee), and *Aaron Lesbno-Yar* (Former Ambassador to the EU and NATO, Ben-Gurion University).

Stefano Pontecorvo (President of Leonardo Company) and *Abdulaziz Alumaishbeg* (Assistant Secretary for Political Affairs, Gulf Cooperation Council) will deliver their final addresses, bringing the High-Level Conference to a close.

The event will be held **in English** and **live-streamed for broader access**. Further details can be found in the **attached programme**.

PARTICIPATION: write to ndcf.pressmediarelations@gmail.com (Lorenza Santarelli, +39 328 02 56 192), specifying whether you want to participate **in person or virtually**. Kindly note that the number of seats available in the conference room is extremely limited.

INTERVIEWS: Along with your registration for the event, please indicate any interest in interviewing one or more speakers **by Monday, October 21st**. We will inform the relevant speakers and arrange the interviews accordingly.

Media Partner:



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