



THE GABR FELLOWSHIP NEWSLETTER

KEÇİD DÖVRÜNDƏ OLAN DÜNYADA
FİKİR AYRILIQLARININ ARADAN QALDIRILMASI
12-14 MART 2026 | BAKI, AZƏRBAYCAN

BRIDGING DIVIDES IN A WORLD IN TRANSITION
12-14 MARCH 2026 | BAKU, AZERBAIJAN



*M. Shafik Gabr with Pascal Rathle, 2022 Fellow
at XIII Global Baku Forum, Bridging Divides in a World in Transition, Baku, Azerbaijan*

In This Issue

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

- Elizabeth Dent featured in an Egyptian newspaper *Masry Al Yom* - Page 12
- Jude Husein running for City Council - Page 10

- The Age of Uncertainty Page 2
- About the Author Page 5
- .Monthly Predictions Page 8
- Fellows' Updates Page 9
- Fellows' World News Page 12
- Fellowship Impact Page 14
- Foundation Effect Page 15
- About the Fellowship Page 19
- Support Foundation Page 20
- Chairman's Recommendations Page 21
- March Birthdays Page 22
- Appendix Page 23

The Age of Uncertainty

M. SHAFIK GABR

March 2026



Having lunch in Puglia every February at the home of my dear friend Giuseppe Rossi had been a tradition for the past five years.

Rossi is a very successful entrepreneur who bet early on Apple and Google after making a lot of money on Netscape's IPO way back in 1995, when Netscape's share price at \$28 shot to \$75 on the first day of trading.

Rossi, at the age of 55, was athletic, a nutrition freak, semi-retired, yet highly active in global philanthropy, with a Foundation supporting young Italian professionals to grow their careers by giving them scholarships to attend special courses at MIT, Harvard, Yale, Oxford, and Cambridge.

Rossi lived most of his life between New York, London, and Rome. He moved to Puglia with his wife Maria, four German Shepherds, and his butler Sebastian.

Puglia, a sun-drenched region in Italy's heel, is known for 800 plus km of coastline and over 60 million olive trees. Famous for great cuisine, including Orecchiette (little ears) pasta, taralli biscuits, plus local wines like Negroamaro.

Every year, Rossi convenes a special two-day event at the hotel Borgo Egnazia. The hotel is located in Savellettri di Fasano, where the hills of the Itria Valley gently fall away to the Adriatic Sea. The hotel itself is a resort surrounded by large Arab-style gardens and dry stone walls.

My lunch with Rossi was always held the day before the launch of his annual forum. This year it was titled "Surviving the Age of Unpredictability." He usually hosted six to ten guests in his villa, while we resided at the Borgo Egnazia.

What was different this year was that Borgo Egnazia had added, in their beautiful gardens, a modern conference facility where, in June 2024, it was the venue of the 50th G7 Summit hosted by Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni.

Back at Rossi's villa, the other guests joining us for the pre-forum lunch were Andrew Shepard, a British industrialist; Farida Fraeij, a Moroccan, very successful entrepreneur who had created and sold four global companies in the sectors of cosmetics, surgical robotics, track transportation and pharma, and who was presently researching space; Robert Stevens, an American, the founder and Chair of Stevens Capital with over USD 100 billion under management and offices across the globe; Alison Mason, born in Brazil to a diplomatic family, who had lived in Russia, Germany and France, and was now residing in Bern, Switzerland. Alison is the founder and Chair of a major security company that operates in over 35 countries under different names, and finally, Ismail Nakmos, an Emirati with a mixed background from the UAE and Azerbaijan, who was a global investor in India, China, the EU, and the US in various sectors, but mainly AI.

As we were guided to the fabulous 12-foot ceiling dining room overlooking the Adriatic, plus a carefully designed glass dome that always reminded me of the Vatican, I was chatting with Farida about Morocco, a country I enjoy tremendously for relaxation, great food, and a serene atmosphere.

I always remember Morocco fondly, as I sponsored in 1994, with the guidance of André Azoulay, the King's advisor, the first public meeting of both Arab and Israeli leaders in a conference in Casablanca, chaired and attended by the former King Hassan II.

As we were sitting at the dining table, in came Dominic Tan, a well-known Singaporean media leader, author, and global journalist. We spent the first course exchanging pleasantries and the latest news of ourselves, our travels, families, and present status. As the second course was being served, Giuseppe put a spoon to the wine glass, getting the attention of the entire table, upon which a serious quiet descended.

Giuseppe, after welcoming us each individually, asked, "How do you see the status of the world? Is it on a positive or negative path?" He questioned.

Andrew, with a very serious, glum face, laid down a very negative outlook. He described several conflicts ongoing in the world and the resulting state of

the British economy. "It's struggling, due to poor leadership," he stated, also noting that the same leadership in Britain was incentivizing major global entrepreneurs and investors to move to other countries.

Robert, with an equally glum look, referred to what U.S. policies have been doing to global markets: the uncertainty, the unpredictability. "Except to those who know, who are making tons of money, who can do so as they have advanced knowledge of what is coming up the road."

Giuseppe asked Robert about the Iran war: "Was the U.S. ever under the threat of Iran?"

Robert's eyebrows went up; he cracked half a smile and said, "No." He added that a lot of money was being made in this war, plus there was a lot of destruction, and more show and made-up conclusions than reality.

As the servers were removing the main course dishes and serving an appealing chocolate cake with red strawberries, Farida mentioned the danger of listening to statements such as "Iran accepted the ceasefire under overwhelming pressure", as they are false and that such false statements lead to the wrong conclusions.

"The U.S., as a superpower," she said, "must have a much better appreciation of the concepts of stability and security to allow for global economic growth and world peace."

Farida added that they were doing very well in Morocco, but the time we live in today is not helpful, full of uncertainty.

Alison interjected, as she pointed her spoon at the chocolate dessert and gave Giuseppe a thumbs up: "Can you imagine if all the money spent on this Iran war, which Iran did not initiate, was spent on medical research for cancer, MS, arthritis, homes for the homeless, and food for the hungry?"

Alison added that as we had this delicious dinner, approximately 673 million people in the world were undernourished, which is about 8% of the global population.

Giuseppe saw Ismail raise his hand and gave him the floor. Ismail, in a quiet, measured voice, wanted to make a comment that no one had addressed. He said, "I want to only mention facts." and was silent for six or seven seconds. Then he outlined the fact that no one had mentioned Israel's continued role as a destructive player in Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, both the West Bank and Gaza, and initiating the war on Iran.

"Israel," Nakmos added, "can end all the catastrophes in the Middle East if it gives the Palestinians a state, as per the resolution of 1948. A Palestinian state, would bring an end to all conflicts, militant groups, and inhumane acts that are ongoing now."

Dominic interjected, saying, "But Israel needs to defend itself." Nakmos responded: "Against what? October 7?"

Nakmos explained slowly that the conflict was born because Gaza was an open prison for decades, and Palestinians were treated as third-degree citizens, like animals, not human beings. "Please listen to Ehud Olmert," Nakmos added. "That would bring peace to the region and security for Israel, with it integrating with 350 million Arabs, and would give the Palestinians the home and dignity they deserve, so that no more Palestinians are born in Israeli occupation and die under Israeli occupation."

Giuseppe interjected, looked at me, and said, "Shafik, you are silent?" I shifted in my seat and said, "The Summit at the Borgo Egnazia, in Apulia, on June 13th, 2024, had as its main focus that the G7 leaders confirm their strong determination to uphold the international order based on the rule of law."

"But as we sit here today in 2026, we must admit there is NO international order based on any law." I added that we must face this fact if we plan to leave a better world for the next generations. Otherwise, with the advent of AGI, we are guaranteeing that this uncertainty and lack of international order based on the rule of law the state of the world is guaranteeing for the next-generation chaos and that power rules.

Some guests around the table nodded; others were busy consulting their phones.

Giuseppe said, "And with this note, let's move towards the after-dinner terrace for coffee, tea, and liqueur."

I thanked Giuseppe and asked to be excused as I was tired and wanted some order in my travel to get some hours of sleep before the conference begins tomorrow, and with that, I said good night, hoping to be reenergized to face a sceptic audience tomorrow to warn of the consequences of doing nothing and that it is time to take a firm stand to agree on an international order based on the rule of law before it becomes a free for all.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



M. Shafik Gabr is a renowned leader in international business, innovation, and investment, and is one of the world's premier collectors of Orientalist art, and an accomplished philanthropist.

During his career, Gabr established over 25 companies, plus three investment holding companies, including ARTOC Group for Investment and Development, which is a multidisciplinary investment holding company with businesses in infrastructure, automotive, engineering, construction, and real estate. Over the past three years, he has focused on investment in technology and artificial intelligence.

Gabr is the Chairman and founding member of Egypt's International Economic Forum (EIEF), a member of the International Business Council of the World Economic Forum, a Board Member of Stanhope Capital, International Chairman of the Sadat Congressional Gold Medal Committee, and a Member of the Steering Committee of Parliamentary Intelligence Security Forum.

Gabr is on the Advisory Board of the Centre for Financial Stability, the Advisory Board of The Middle East Institute, and the Global Advisory Council of the Mayo Clinic. He is also a former Member of the Metropolitan Museum's International Council and a former member of the Business Council of the World Economic Forum.

In his capacity as Chairman of EIEF, Gabr has hosted global leaders from the worlds of politics, economics, business, media, technology, and culture. These include President Vaclav Klaus, President Atifete Jahjaga, President Boris Tadić, President Zlatko Lagumdžija, Prime Minister Tony Blair; Secretaries James Mattis, John Kelly, and Rex Tillerson; H.E. Amr Moussa, members of Congress, business leaders in technology, academics, and media figures from CNN, Fox, and CNBC. Gabr has also hosted six CNBC programs on 'World Business' and 'Peer to Peer'.

Moreover, as Chairman of the Shafik Gabr Foundation, Gabr regularly hosts his interactive 'Expecting the Unexpected' working dinners in Cairo, Davos, London, Munich, and Washington, DC. The dinners are off the record and engage leaders across the board in timely predictions of geopolitical and geoeconomic issues. The most recent dinners were held in Davos on January 16th, 2025, during the World Economic Forum, and on February 16th, 2025, at the Munich Security Conference. The guests included former Presidents, Ministers, Ambassadors, members of Congress, international organization chairs, heads of think tanks, business leaders, and distinguished scholars from Europe, the Middle East, the United States, and Asia.

Gabr has previously served as the Chairman of the COMESA (Common Market for East and South Africa) Business Council and a member of the Executive Board of the International Chamber of Commerce (Paris). He also served on the advisory boards of Zurich Financial Services and The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). Furthermore, Gabr was a founder of the American Chamber of Commerce in Egypt in 1982, serving as its first Egyptian President from 1995 until 1997, and was a Founding Member of the Wilson Global Advisory Council.

Gabr has been recognized among the “Most Influential Arabs” and “Top 50 Business Leaders in the Arab World.” In 2009, Mr. Gabr was presented with the Foreign Policy Association’s (FPA) award for Corporate Responsibility. In June 2014, Mr. Gabr was awarded the Meridian Global Citizen Award, and in November 2014, the Middle East Institute’s Visionary Award. In March 2015, Gabr received the American University in Cairo’s Global Impact Award in New York. In May 2016, Gabr was awarded the College of Mount Saint Vincent’s Saint Vincent de Paul Award and Drew University’s Peacebuilder Award. In September 2017, Gabr received the Policy Direction and Leadership Award from the London Centre for Policy Research. Most recently, in November 2024, Gabr was awarded the highest honor conferred upon foreign nationals by the President of Italy: the ‘Grande Ufficiale’ (Grand Officer) of the ‘Ordine della Stella d’Italia’ (Order of the Star of Italy) for his extraordinary achievements and merit.

Since 2016, Gabr has focused his attention on innovation and investment in technology, as well as his Foundations. Gabr has invested in a wide spectrum of technology companies, ranging from startups to fully mature companies, and across a wide variety of sectors. Gabr’s focus is multidimensional in a world of technology, which is reflected in his personal approach to the sector through its multifaceted applications, including AI, machine learning, data mining, mobility, and business.

M. Shafik Gabr’s contributions and insights have been the subject of numerous articles, including some published in Egypt Independent. Additionally, his perspectives on international business, investment trends, and cultural diplomacy have been featured in interviews with global media outlets such as Bloomberg, CNBC, BBC, Al-Horra and many more. Through these platforms, Gabr has highlighted his extensive work on cross-cultural dialogue and offered perspective on world markets and geopolitics.

Through The Mohamed Shafik Gabr Foundation for Social Development, Gabr is helping to improve elementary-school education in Egypt, introducing students to arts and culture, and promoting sports and physical fitness for youth. In the area of higher education, Gabr is a major supporter of the American University in Cairo. The Foundation also developed a free medical-care system by providing “Medical Caravans” for residents of underprivileged areas of Greater Cairo. The Foundation established its first Medical and Social Development Centre in Mokattam, Cairo, offering free medical and health services. In 2012, Gabr established the Shafik Gabr Foundation in the U.S., which supports educational and medical initiatives and, in November 2012, launched the ‘East-West: The Art of Dialogue’ initiative (see www.eastwestdialogue.org), promoting exchanges between young emerging leaders from the U.S. and Egypt with the purpose of cultural dialogue and bridge-building. At present, the Foundation’s Fellowship program has over 140 Fellows.

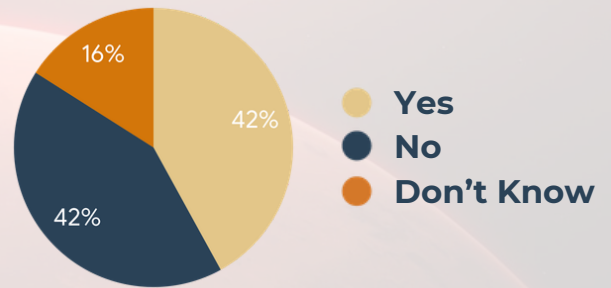
Gabr is recognized as one of the world’s largest collectors of Orientalist art, amassing a unique and extensive collection that captures the beauty, culture, and history of the Middle East and North Africa. His collection showcases masterpieces from the 19th and early 20th centuries, reflecting the works of prominent Orientalist painters who were captivated by the region’s vibrant landscapes, traditions, and people. Through his dedication and passion for preserving and sharing these historical artworks, Gabr has significantly contributed to fostering cultural appreciation and understanding of the Orientalist movement on a global scale.

Gabr holds a BA in Economics and Management from the American University in Cairo and an MA in Economics from the University of London.

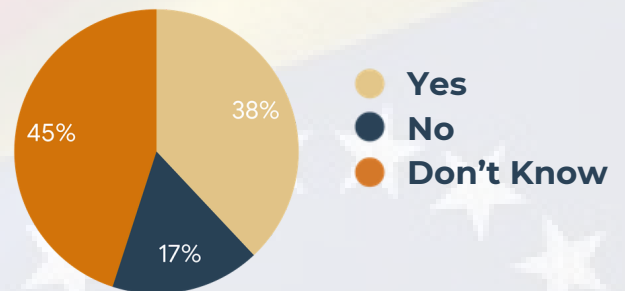
MONTHLY WORLD PREDICTIONS

GLOBAL OUTLOOK: KEY QUESTIONS SHAPING THE MONTH AHEAD

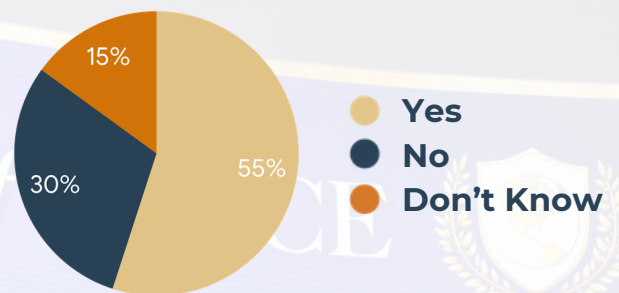
Will President Trump declare victory in the Iran conflict before he visits China on March 31, 2026?



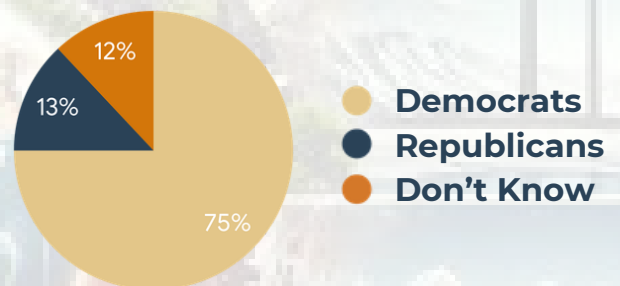
Will the price of gold exceed USD 5,500 by April 15, 2026?



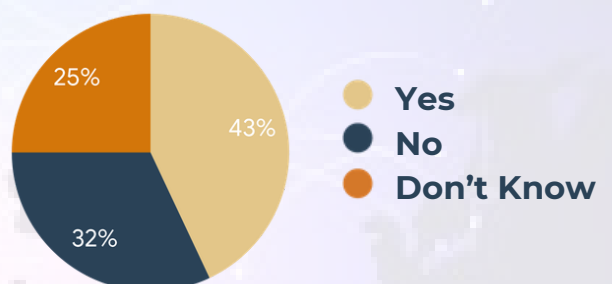
Will Benjamin Netanyahu remain Prime Minister of Israel by the end of October 2026?



Will the U.S. House of Representatives have a Democratic or Republican majority after the 2026 midterm elections?



Will the price of oil exceed USD 150 by April 15, 2026?





FELLOWS' UPDATES



Becca Doten, 2013 Fellow

Becca Doten, 2013 Gabr Fellow, has transitioned to the private sector after more than 20 years of government service. On March 16, she joined Actum, LLC as Senior Managing Director, a public and government affairs consulting firm, where she will bring her extensive policy experience to bear on behalf of clients navigating complex governmental landscapes.

Erika Witt, 2014 Fellow

Erika Witt, 2014 Gabr Fellow, was featured in a television segment on Great Day Louisiana highlighting a new exhibition on the legacy of King Tutankhamun now on display in New Orleans, a subject central to her passion for Egyptology and museum work.

[Click to watch](#)



George Williams, 2025 Fellow

George Williams, 2025 Gabr Fellow, has been named Chair of the Global Futures Collaborative at Howard University's Ralph Bunche International Affairs Center, Howard University's think tank for foreign policy, leadership, and subnational diplomacy. He has also been accepted into the University of Oxford's MSc in Major Program Management, a two-year dissertation-based program designed for senior leaders focused on mega project governance, which he will begin this fall.



FELLOWS' UPDATES



Ibrahim Hammouda, 2017 Fellow

Ibrahim Hammouda, 2017 Gabr Fellow, has published a new analysis through Levantintel examining the economic shockwaves on Egypt stemming from escalating tensions in the region, and other global events. The piece linked reflects his continued work connecting investors and policymakers through rigorous, regionally-grounded research.

[Click to read article](#)

Jeremy Pesner, 2022 Fellow

Jeremy Pesner, 2022 Gabr Fellow, has been nominated as a Fellow of the British American Project, a distinguished transatlantic network of emerging leaders, and will be interviewed for the role shortly. He also recently completed a seminar in Creative Emotional Wizardry, a healing methodology he intends to apply both personally and with others.



Jude Husein, 2025 Fellow

Jude Husein, 2025 Gabr Fellow, is running for City Council and soft-launched her campaign in Philadelphia, raising over \$25,000 in less than six days. She is the youngest candidate in the race and the first Palestinian-American to launch a bid for City Council in the City of Philadelphia, a milestone that speaks to the leadership and civic commitment the Fellowship seeks to cultivate.

[Support Today](#)



FELLOWS' UPDATES

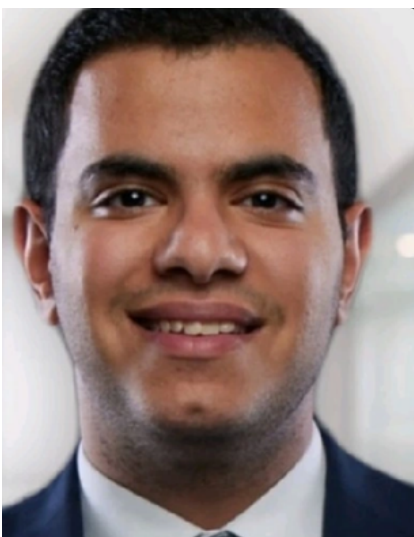


Kellie Quinn, 2022 Fellow

Kellie Quinn, 2022 Gabr Fellow, will begin a new role in April as Director of Membership for the Associated General Contractors of San Diego, supporting the region's construction industry through education, labor relations, governmental advocacy, and contract-bidding services. She also recently served as a panelist for the Creative Communities San Diego Project Review, contributing to its music program committee, a funding initiative supporting arts, culture, and the creative economy within the City of San Diego.

Layla Galal, 2022 Fellow

Layla Galal, 2022 Gabr Fellow, has recently settled in Zimbabwe, opening an exciting new chapter in her international journey. Now based there, she continues to build on a dynamic career in communications. With more than four years of experience in government and political communications, as she brings a strong blend of strategic insight and regional expertise.



Youssef Emam, 2025 Fellow

Youssef Emam, 2025 Gabr Fellow, published an article in Youm7 examining Egypt's new Startup Charter and its implications for the broader entrepreneurial ecosystem, a contribution that reflects his ongoing commitment to legal awareness and economic development in Egypt.

[Click to read article](#)



THE AMERICAN VOICE IN EGYPTIAN NEWS

ELIZABETH DENT, 2015 FELLOW

Elizabeth Dent, 2015 Gabr Fellow, a veteran researcher at the Washington Institute for Near East Studies, a former Pentagon official, and a former advisor to the US Secretary of Defense, reveals in an interview with Al-Masry Al-Youm from Washington, D.C., that diplomacy was not given enough time before the outbreak of war, saying: "I agree with the opinion of Omani Foreign Minister Badr Al-Busaidi that the diplomatic track with Iran was not given enough time," but she pointed out that negotiating with Tehran is "extremely difficult."

[Click to read article](#)



Elizabeth Dent (2015)

XIII GLOBAL BAKU FORUM

PASCAL RATHLE, 2022 FELLOW



M. Shafik Gabr with Pascal Rathle (2022)

Pascal Rathle, 2022 Gabr Fellow, played a distinguished role at the XIII Global Baku Forum, where he introduced Mr. Shafik Gabr to participants of the NGIC Young Leaders program representing 13 nationalities.

Through this prominent platform, Pascal helped foster an inspiring dialogue on the global leadership gap, the need for visionary and values-driven leadership, and the responsibility of the next generation to drive meaningful change.

His presence and contribution at the forum reflect his continued commitment to international engagement, cross-cultural exchange, and empowering future leaders.



CONGRESSIONAL HOCKEY CHALLENGE

HUNTER KING, 2017 FELLOW



Hunter King, 2017 Gabr Fellow, represented the Shafik Gabr Foundation at this year's Congressional Hockey Challenge. The Congressional Hockey Challenge is an annual ice hockey game for charity featuring federal lawmakers, congressional staff and administration officials from across the political spectrum against lobbyists representing a broad array of interests. The Lobbyists won this year 4-3 in a shootout. Surrounding the game are various events that take place on Capitol Hill, providing another opportunity to for the Foundation to network and grow the mission.

ST. PATRICK'S DAY IN BOSTON

DAN (SULLY) SULLIVAN, 2013 FELLOW

Sully, 2013 Gabr Fellow, marked St. Patrick's Day 2026 in Boston alongside former U.S. Ambassador to Ireland Claire Cronin, a moment that captured the spirit of cross-cultural connection the Fellowship champions. The encounter is a reminder that the relationships Fellows build extend far beyond the program itself, opening doors to meaningful engagement with leaders across sectors and borders.





FELLOWSHIP IMPACT



Alen Amini, 2023 Fellow

"Met amazing people, learned a lot, and developed a community I'm excited to remain a part of."

Bassma Fahim, 2015 Fellow

"It impacted my life in so many aspects that I can't tell in only one line or sentence, personally and professionally. I'm blessed by being selected amongst those amazing fellows under the umbrella of the East West: The Art of Dialogue."



Becca Doten, 2013 Fellow

"Provided first-hand experience of the beauty and challenges faced by Egypt, and the incredible art and culture of its people. Very appreciative of the continued information and engagement."

Daniel Lansberg-Rodríguez, 2013 Fellow

"It opened the Middle East to me, garnered me lifelong friends, including Shafik, and opened my Latin American/American eyes to how much of my culture stemmed from 800 years of Islamic Spain."



Eze Redwood, 2015 Fellow

"It broadened my worldview and gave me exposure to high-ranking people, while connecting me to friends for life."



Hunter King, 2017 Fellow

"Broadened my scope and challenged me to look at other people's viewpoints."

Jeremiah Bowden, 2014 Fellow

"It provided a true glimpse of what life is like in Egypt and gave access to engage leaders I would have never had the opportunity to otherwise. The lifelong friendships are invaluable!"



Layla Galal, 2022 Fellow

"It made me more open-minded."

Mohamed Ismail, 2015 Fellow

"The connections and network I got from the fellowship have been a key driver to my career."





WHAT MY FATHER'S CINCINNATI RUG SHOP TAUGHT ME ABOUT IRAN | OPINION

Those who believe the United States can force meaningful change in Iran through military pressure should look carefully at the record in Afghanistan, Libya, and Iraq.

ALEN AMINI, 2022 FELLOW



Members of Iranian security forces stand guard in Tehran on March 9, 2026, during a gathering to support Iran's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, after his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was killed in the U.S.-Israeli war that began on the last day of February. Majid Asgaripour/WANA (West Asia News Agency) via Reuters

My father ran a rug store in Cincinnati, first on Fourth and Elm, later in Hyde Park Square, where customers came for Persian rugs and often stayed to argue about the world.

"The most dangerous regime in the world is the Islamic Republic of Iran," he would say, often and without hesitation.

It was a line he repeated to customers, friends, and anyone willing to listen, sometimes between sales, sometimes long after the store had closed. He left Iran in the 1970s before the revolution and chose never to return. Like many in the diaspora, his understanding of the country was shaped by what he remembered and what he feared.

From Cincinnati, Iran was something he knew through memory, news, and conversation, not daily life. He followed satellite Persian language television channels,



ARTICLES BY FELLOWS

Fox News, and the steady stream of conversations among other exiles who shared his anger toward the regime. He was deeply patriotic and proudly American, and his views on Iran were firm. He believed the government had to fall and was open to the United States using force to make that happen.

I loved my father, and I still admire his instinctive belief in freedom and justice. But in the years since his passing, I have grown uneasy with how confidently diaspora voices like his continue to shape American debates about Iran. Too often, those conversations are marked by certainty untethered from lived experience and by a readiness for confrontation that carries little personal cost.

Today, those debates are no longer theoretical. The war has begun.

Distance makes certainty about war dangerously easy

The United States and Israel have launched major strikes on Iran, and the conflict is already spreading across the region. Iran has responded with missile attacks and other strikes targeting American forces across the Middle East.

The result is a conflict that has already claimed the lives of seven American service members and thousands of Iranians, including hundreds of children.

Many of the loudest calls for regime change in Iran come from outside the country. Figures such as Reza Pahlavi are frequently elevated in Western media as potential transitional leaders, even though their level of support inside Iran is unclear and cannot be freely measured under current conditions. Other prominent voices build large online followings by demanding harsher sanctions or military action. Television panels reward conviction more than accuracy. Distance makes certainty easier than getting things right.

It would be like someone raised in Cincinnati who has never lived in Iran going on television to explain what Iranians want. I can speak to what I have absorbed, not what I have lived.

We have seen versions of this story before. In the early 2000s, during debates over Iraq, exile voices and outside advocates promised that American power could quickly produce democracy. Many spoke with confidence, even though few had lived under the regimes they sought to topple for years, if not decades, and fewer still would bear the consequences. The result was a war that cost trillions of dollars, killed hundreds of



ARTICLES BY FELLOWS

thousands, destabilized an entire region, and left Iraq fragile long after the arguments that justified it had faded.

That history should have anchored our debates more firmly in reality. Iran is not Iraq, but the lesson about certainty and distance still applies.

Iran is more than the regime that rules it

There is no question that the Islamic Republic is repressive and widely resented by many of its citizens. I do not defend the regime, nor do I underestimate its brutality. But Iran is not reducible to its government. It is a country of nearly 90 million people, most of them under 35, many of whom have never known anything but the Islamic Republic. Their views are layered, and they may resent the state while fearing chaos, war, and foreign intervention even more.

Those who believe the United States can force meaningful change through military pressure should look carefully at the record in Afghanistan, Libya, and Iraq. Promises of liberation often gave way to prolonged instability. Iran is larger, more complex, and more interconnected than any of those countries, and destabilizing it would not be a contained event. The consequences would ripple outward across borders and generations.

Growing up in Cincinnati taught me to value pragmatism over posturing and to take responsibility for the consequences of big decisions. Foreign policy is weakest when it is shaped by distance rather than exposure to its costs.



Iranians rally in Tehran on March 9, 2026, to support Iran's new supreme leader, Mojtaba Khamenei, alongside his father, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who was killed amid the U.S.-Israeli war that began on the last day of February. Majid Asgaripour via Reuters



ARTICLES BY FELLOWS

History warns us what exile certainty can cost

If the past year has clarified anything, it is the danger of allowing the loudest exile voices and online influencers to substitute for serious analysis. Policymakers would be better served by listening to researchers with recent in-country experience, to analysts who understand Iran's internal dynamics, and, when it is safe to do so, to Iranian civil society voices themselves.

War has now arrived. The question is how far it will go.

As an American with Iranian roots, I hope for an Iran where strong, educated women lead freely and without fear, and where young people inherit more rights and fewer restrictions than their parents. That future is not built by bombs or blockades, but slowly through patience, targeted pressure, and diplomacy grounded in reality.

One of the final conversations I had with my father was about Iran. A business associate had just returned from a visit and described a country full of tension, yes, but also humor, color, and life. My father listened quietly for a moment and then said something I have never forgotten.

"Maybe it is more complicated than I wanted to believe."

He was right.



Alen Amini, 2022 Fellow

Alen Amini is the executive director of Starfire, a Cincinnati-based organization dedicated to building inclusive communities by investing in the strengths and stories of people with developmental disabilities.

ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP



2022 Gabr Fellows at the National Defense University with the NDU President, Lt Gen Michel Plehn

Launched in 2012, the Gabr Fellowship program helps connect and build constructive relationships between future leaders aged 24 and 35. Each year, the Fellowship consists of 16-24 Fellows, half of whom are men and the other half women, with an equal distribution between participants from the United States and Egypt. The Fellowship also accepts applicants from Jordan, Lebanon, France and the United Kingdom. Fellows represent a variety of sectors, including the arts, law, finance, tech, non-profits, and entrepreneurship – both business and social.

The mission of the Fellowship is to promote greater mutual understanding by building bridges between the two cultures by facilitating and the exchange of ideas between emerging leaders from the United States and Egypt. Together, they explore one another's cultures, political realities, business trends, and their goals for the future.

In addition to engaging in deep discussions with key stakeholders from both countries in business, government, academia, religion, science, tech and finance, all Fellows are invited to form multinational teams to complete an action project. These projects empower the Fellows as intercultural ambassadors, amplifying the Fellowship's reach and impact.

Ultimately, through hands-on activities, rigorous discussions, cultural site visits, and the collaborative action projects, the Fellows have a greater understanding of both countries and become part of an international cohort dedicated to building a more equitable and peaceful world.



Gabr Fellows with Major General Mohamed El Keshky, Egypt's Former Assistant Minister of Defense

The Gabr Fellows have acquired a greater understanding of both Egypt and the United States and the challenges faced by both communities. Having served as cultural as well as linguistic ambassadors to one another, they then return home to play the role of diplomat, introducing Egyptians and Americans to a people, a culture and a future never before explored in this way.

Together, they are creating the legacy of The Gabr Fellowship: an international cohort dedicated to pursuing cooperative, collective solutions to their region's most pressing issues.



Gabr Fellows at the Pyramids



SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION

THE SHAFIK GABR FOUNDATION INVITES YOU TO INVEST IN THE FUTURE AND PARTNER WITH THE FOUNDATION USING ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING MEANS:

SPONSOR A FELLOW

Individuals have the opportunity to nominate a Fellow and, if selected, sponsor their participation in the Gabr Fellowship. Sponsors will be recognized in all Foundation publications, marketing materials, and at all events.

CORPORATE PATRON

Corporations can nominate Fellows for participation in the Fellowship Foundation and sponsor their participation on a company-wide level. The company will be listed in all publications, the logo will be presented on the Foundation's homepage, and be given visibility at all events in the United States and Egypt.

UNRESTRICTED SUPPORT

A general operating grant can empower the Foundation to continue to invest in innovative platforms to facilitate ongoing dialogue between the East and West. From new technologies to expanding the program to more countries and a greater number of participants, the Fellowship can create a broader multiregional impact.



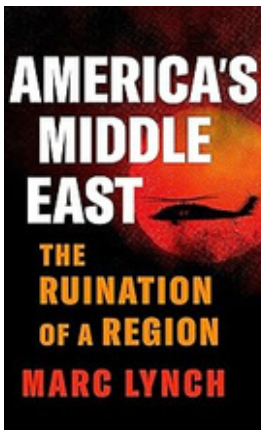
TO SUPPORT THE FOUNDATION VISIT <https://www.eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/how-to-support/>

**We also invite our readers to contribute thoughts, stories, and recommendations for the newsletter!
Please write to chairman@shafikgabrfoundation.org**



CHAIRMAN'S RECOMMENDATIONS

BOOKS & MOVIES YOU DON'T WANT TO MISS



America's Middle East: The Ruination of a Region

Marc Lynch's book is a searing critique of how decades of U.S. foreign policy failures and the marginalization of Palestinian rights have systematically destabilized and devastated the Middle East.



The Optimist: Sam Altman

Based on over 200 interviews, Keach Hagey's 2025 biography. The Optimist offers a deep dive into the complex personality of the OpenAI CEO, tracing his evolution from a precocious child in St. Louis to the most influential figure in the AI revolution.



Official Secrets

This is a 2019 British political thriller based on the true story of Katharine Gun, a GCHQ translator who became a whistleblower during the lead-up to the 2003 Iraq War.

March 2026

HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO OUR MARCH 2026 FELLOWS!



Erika Witt
2014 Fellow
March 3rd



King Adjei-Frimpong
2025 Fellow
March 19th



Dan Sullivan (Sully)
2013 Fellow
March 22nd



Karim Elsharkawy
2017 Fellow
March 23th



Mariam Alsherif
2025 Fellow
March 25th

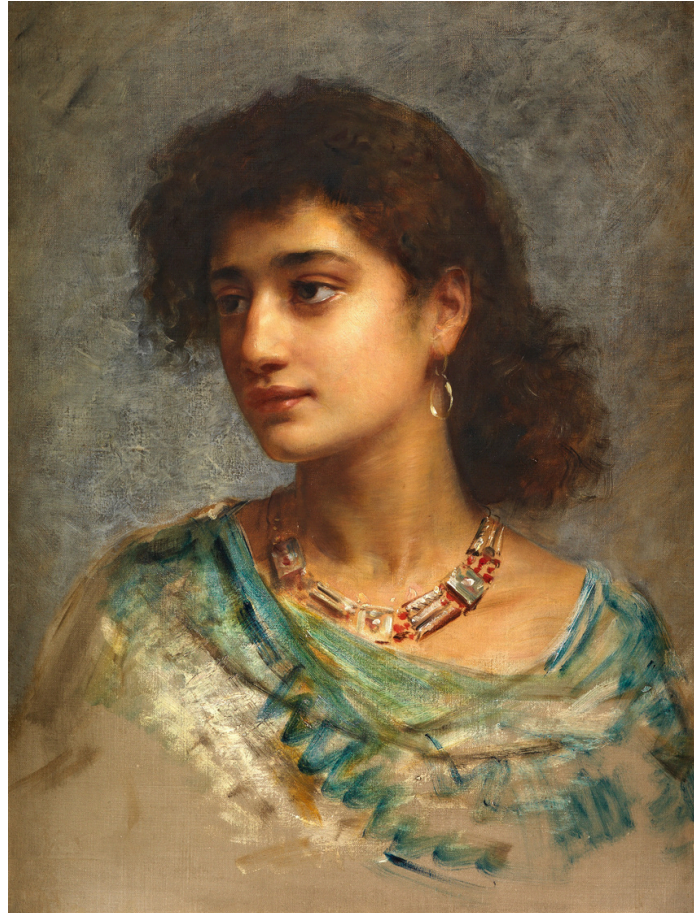


Murray Abeles
2015 Fellow
March 30th



For more information on the Shafik Gabr Foundation and its
East-West: The Art of Dialogue Initiative,
please visit the website at **eastwestdialogue.org**

For earlier itineraries of the program, please see the previous years' reports at
<https://eastwestdialogue.org/fellowship/brochures/>



Delight of the Home

Oil on Canvas

Edwin Longsdon

THE SHAFIK GABR COLLECTION

Connect with us



The Shafik Gabr Foundation
444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 840, Washington, DC 20001
7 Hassan Al-Akbar Street Cairo, Egypt, 11571