

April 8, 2010

10:00AM ET

Operator: This is a recording for the teleconference, Thursday, April 8, 2010, scheduled for 10:00AM Eastern Time. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your patience in holding. We now have our speakers in conference. Please be aware that each of your lines is in a listen only mode. At the conclusion of our speakers' presentations, we will open the floor for questions. Instructions will be given at that time on the procedure to follow if you would like to ask a question. It is now my pleasure to turn this morning's conference over to Ms. Gerber. You may begin

Gerlinde Gerber: Hello and welcome. My name is Gerlinde Gerber and I'm the Communications Associate with Réalité-EU. I'm very pleased that such a prominent group of journalists from across the globe could join us in the conversation with Sami Alfaraj. Réalité-EU is a Web site and newsletter for journalists, leaders, and key analysts that focuses on the development in and around the Middle East, which pose a threat to Europe and beyond. Réalité-EU is a non-profit organization not connected to any government. Réalité-EU is supported by individuals concerned with the growing threat of Iran, across Europe, and the Middle East. Information on our Web site is in five languages, such as English, French, German, Spanish, and Arabic. We are also sending out material in Portuguese, Turkish, Chinese, and Japanese and they will be soon on our Web site. See www.realite-eu.org for further information about Iran, its nuclear program and peaceful ways to curtail the proliferation of nuclear weapon in the Middle East. For this briefing with Mr. Alfaraj is on the record. Now, it is my pleasure to introduce our speaker today. Sami Alfaraj is the head of Kuwait Center for Strategic Studies, which he established in 1997, as the first private consulting center on strategic issues in the Gulf region. He serves as an advisor to the JCC and is a consultant for the Kuwaiti government and

for parliamentary organizations, private corporations, and government agencies throughout the Gulf region. He has advised Kuwait's Office of Prime Minister, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the National Security Bureau of Crisis of Management Issues. At this time, he participates in Kuwait's contingency planning for the Iranian nuclear crisis and the situation in Iraq and also contributes to the quarterly strategic assessment of Kuwait. Mr. Alfaraj will say some opening remarks and then answer questions, which were submitted by our listeners. Mr. Alfaraj, you have the way.

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: Okay. Thank you. Good morning or good evening, whatever the case, wherever you are. I'm speaking from Kuwait, from very close to Iran, across to Iran, which has been very much in crisis for the last year. That's to say, we have not actually had any escalations in this crisis. We see that developments are already going up, culminated today by the threat of Mr. Ahmadinejad to Mr. Obama as he does, a threat to Iran with the nuclear capabilities that Iran would really make the United States suffer the consequences. Here in the Gulf, we take the Iranians quite seriously because of an historic view of this situation. That's to say, we in the Gulf, and not only in the Gulf, but all regional states; that is to say, Egypt, Jordan, Israel, Turkey, look at Iran differently than the way the world looks at Iran. Iran is probably a nuisance for a big power like the United States or Russia or China or even to Britain or France or even Germany and Japan. But, for us, it's a part of the balance of power in the region and here when we consider the Iranian crisis, we consider the grand strategic level of it. We look here in the Gulf at strategy; we do not look at modality. To explain modality, we look at what Iran is doing at the symmetric level and what Iran is doing on the conventional military force level and even on the nuclear lever as being the modalities for a grand strategic vision of Iran with regard to control in the region. Iran has said it more than once that it aspires to a different rule commensurate with regard to be the real weight of Iran. Iran and the statements of its policy makers talks about that it is high time for Iran to work to change the status quo. So, to explain,

Iran looks at the nuclear factor or the nuclear capability as being a modality and, therefore, here we are not very much concerned with the modalities; although, it is a subject of concern for us and the tactical level and operation level as well as strategic levels. But it's not on the grand strategic level. The grand strategic level, what is important for us is that Iran wants to push the boundaries of its influence. Today, Iran is pushing such boundaries in Iraq and Lebanon, in Syria, in Palestine, in Yemen, in Sudan, and even in the Nile Valley. When you look at this, it represents to us in the Gulf as a full circle around us. We, therefore, look at a way to address such a challenge in different layers, not just the nuclear level. The nuclear level is now being addressed by great powers, like the United States and Russia, the south plus one. It is also addressed under regional level by Israel having the capability. It is addressed by a nation like Turkey, which has the conventional capabilities to meet it. But for us, we have started a kind of an embrace with Iran in order to be able to address it at the beginning of the conventional level. There is no doubt in my mind that Iran really gets away with developing the military capabilities in the future and nuclear capabilities in the future that looks a lot of regional power will follow suit. This is not a threat by regional powers; it's just a kind of what they regard as something related to their own survival. When you look at the situation today in Iraq, we have conventionally armed Iran intervening in the politics of one block of the balance of power in the Gulf. That is to say, the balance of power in the Gulf, what I mean by that is that the old balance of power that existed between street locks, that is Persia, that is Mesopotamia, and Arabia. We have maintained that balance of power until 1980 when Saddam invaded Iran. That balance of power now has been shattered. It needs to be rectified, but it could be rectified by only one block, that is Iran, for the time being, then it's going to be a state of imbalance for the others. The others would seek to find capabilities to address that state of imbalance and, therefore, this is the explanation for the argument by the Gulf states, by Egypt, by Jordan, and by Israel, just to name a few in the region. When we talk tomorrow about Iran being found to be in possession of military capabilities or delivery systems, that can bring such capabilities into this field of

adversity, what Iran considers to be the adversity, then we would be entering another layer of the argument and this is going to be in a very unconventional way. It's going to be, if one considers the limits today to be quite unsafe, unstable. Just imagine a nuclear armed Ahmadinejad in the future. People will come to us, especially our colleagues and brethren and the other ones and they say, what about Israel possessing also some nuclear capabilities? The fact of the matter is Israel has possessed nuclear capabilities and has maintained that mysterious times with regard to nuclear capabilities which has addressed actually in a very funny way the Middle East balance of power. First of all, this has made it quite impossible for any participants in past nuclear and past Middle East war to really think about the dissemination under adversity. The second is that this layer of Israeli deterrence has not been addressed to us in the Gulf. Third, this layer has not been spoken of at all and the field of deterrence. It is not being spelled out as a measure of a state policy. It's the 13th hour when you talk detailed strategic exposé about some Israeli commentator to international commentators. Now, what we in the Gulf have to, we address such issues raised by our colleagues in the area by saying that when you talk about parity, strategic parity in the Middle East and the nuclear level, you are talking about if we have Israel kind of on the western side, specifically the nuclear capabilities, then we are having Iran possessing nuclear capabilities in our east. This is going to put us in the middle, so no matter what trouble or escalation happening between nations in the future. Even if it's going to be in the conventional level, not in the nuclear level, we'll going to suffer from such competition between the two. We would rather have Israel today as the only nation possessing nuclear capabilities and working with it after region settlement and the general conflict between the Arabs and Israelis to reach, hopefully in the future, a nuclear free zone in the Middle East. But when we have two nations possessing nuclear capabilities, it's going to be more difficult to reach such a thing. Today, we look at Iran thinking on actually expansion. This is not an Iran versus the new world. This is the same old Persia. Persia has always sought to have an outlet on the Mediterranean and the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea and in the Gulf. And in that

manner, Iran does not really have today the economic capability that warrants it to have such an influential position. Iran is not contributory to the development in the area. Iran is just seeking to reach such a stature and that is an example of a nation having access to force by way of intimidation. Intimidation that has been exercised by Iran today on the symmetric level, on the conventional level, and Iran wishes to reach it even on the nuclear level one day. So, no matter what the Iranians are going to go in regard to their "peaceful intentions" with regard to the nuclear program, we don't really detect what we see, what we think we take it from history. A lesson learned from history like Iran would pursue the utmost it could reach. Iran has also been so Iran never stops from expanding in the Middle East throughout history, except when Iran was stopped. The question for us today in the region and in the world: Can we actually work together to stop Iran or not? If we don't, then we will reach actually such calamities in the Middle East in the form of imbalance of power, which would encourage nations in the area to really enter new war. Thank you very much.

Gerlinde Gerber: Thank you, Sami. Let me start with the questions that were handed in by email. The first question is: What sanctions could influence the Iranian regime without hurting the Iranian people?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: I think the most important thing for us to think about with regard to sanctions is that you have a nation that's been under one form of other sanctions. They were the U.S. incurred sanctions for the past 31 years and now you have one layer and second layer and, when you talk about sanctions, I don't think sanctions have been on the minds of the Iranian nation. The first important thing in that, we didn't have to tread into this part with them as in the question of not hurting the Iranian people. I think it is going to be quite helpful to the Iranian people to know that there is a difference between this area of expansion, the coming layer of sanction, and this regime of sanction. As I said, these sanctions have been around for

31 years, so the first thing is not to have the Iranian people materially, we have to make a sacrilegious impact, different between the two. That is one argument that could really measure the sanction. The second is that we have to look at the enforcements measured. Enforcement measured in place now do not really clear to our sacrilegious impact on the side of the Iranian nation. What I believe and no matter what type of sanction you agree upon tomorrow, whether it is a fuel guzzling sanctions or the bond from trouble from Iranian for the Iranian official, these things could not be enforced without some form of blockade. When you say blockade, blockade is quite, it's a word I chose with full knowledge of its connotation. A blockade in international law is an act of war, but it is an act short of the use of military men. That is to say you really deploy the capabilities, whether they are on the sea, in the air, or on land; in order to just really call them a region around Iran to stop the goods from getting in and out of Iran. The fact that when the Iranian nation today hears about a certain level of a military presence over the horizon that's going to stop certain goods from reaching Iran, this is still going to really mess up psychological impacts we are seeking. Here we can see that they are much closer to really fully confrontation with international communities, but it is not a full confrontation. But they feel that they are closer to it and here, in my view, we are going to create a situation where the Iranian, especially the Iranian occupation will have a choice between sitting idle as they are today or taking a side. If they take a side and that is to really stop the course of this, pressured by this Iranian leadership leading to war and leading to confrontation with the world, then they would be of use to us, but if they take side with the leadership against the war, then we should not really worry about them. We should not count on them or pursue international agenda without attention being paid to their stand.

Gerlinde Gerber: Okay. The second question is: How would a military action against Iran's nuclear capacities influence the Gulf region if it comes to a war?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: If it comes to a war, we have no doubt it would be quite terrible of them in the short term. That is to say, we are expecting retaliation by Iran against us, no matter what the Iranian leaders say today. The fact of the matter is that even when we talk today about possible confrontation, military confrontations, in the area between Israel and Iran, the fact of the matter I would say is that the Iranians believe that we are going to be quite helpful in such a scenario because to me the roots between Israel and Arab, fight against Iran, coming from Israel as it happens has to be to pass over Gulf states and influence all Iraq. Possibilities have to really be utilized probably in the area they would think. Possibilities would be utilized by Israel to relate to, that belongs to the United States and the region. So, Iran puts us all in one tent and, therefore, we have to be ready for such a psychological view taken by the Iranian leaders. We believe that retaliation would be probably against us from the moment they fire against Israel, no matter whether we are with Israel in the scenario or against Israel in the scenario. The fact of the matter also is the proximity of Gulf targets to Iran and the fragility of such parties to make Iran very tempted to really give first fireball to the Gulf region, not to mention the oil terminations, exporting oil terminals, talking about the United States' fragilities, great fragilities, in the region, especially in Kuwait, which is around 140 kilometers away from Iranian shore and the capabilities in the Gulf. We're talking about some Iranian seashore capabilities and, for it to become reaching even the shores of the Gulf; we're talking now about service to service in this side of the region, population in the Gulf. So, in the short term, as I said, it's going to be stabilizing, but in the long term, we have to really come to terms with the fact that by hook or by crook we have to really stop Iran one day. We have to stop this by diplomacy. We have to stop it through concerted actions. We have to stop it through concerted sanctions and regime taken by the whole international community, but all said we would have to address Iran by other means. As the United States leader, you may say all the options are out on the table. The Israelis say all the options are not on the table and, even for us in this region, if Iran is not going to be stopped, as I said earlier, it has to be stopped somehow; otherwise, you will risk that nuclear arms and

nuclear Middle East and we don't want to reach that. So, anything short of that is going to be something that we have to come to term with. That is to say we are not really advocating war. We think war is a last resort and we hope we are not going to reach that last resort. But in the final analysis, if there is a war and Iran was met on that challenge and that level and Iran was stopped, then the impact and ability would be positive then, but we want to rectify the balance of power once again to this region and each nation will not export that and to remain secure in its border without intervention by the Arabs.

Gerlinde Gerber: And do you think Iran could channel nuclear material with the terrorist groups it supports around the world?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: Well, Iran, I don't think, the fact that a nation that has nuclear capabilities would seek to really share that with its proxies; however today it is quite difficult for us when we take situations like south of Lebanon and Iraq to really draw a line between revolutionary guard and the so-called subversive cell or terrorist cell or what is that force called? The army there in Iraq or Lebanon or Hamas in Gulf district. This difficulty of drawing the line between conventional forces, that's to say, Iranian forces, and proxies, of course, that's to say, individual organizations in Iraq or Lebanon or all of that, in Yemen, in Gulf district, because Iraq difficulties, we would ignore the official of the people who are going to the organizations are going to be using some WMD, some form of WMD, and I don't mean necessarily nuclear, but it could have the form of kind of an old model or a cake model or model of dirty bomb, which would generate the same sacrilegious impact, but without producing the same material explosive effect as it was inserting Taliban, inserting kind and a certain condition. I believe that such a thing would mean for the Iranian an escalation process would have to be really approved from high up and so, when it is approved from high up in the Iranian leadership as a form probably we could expect one form of retaliation, then it has to be done with the comprehension of what that it will be

followed by adversity that has been targeted by such form of capability. So, I would say that probably it is going to be done by revolutionary guard acting in a territory of the adversity, but having the guard being terrorists, which they're not really going to change the whole impact that is out for the targeted nations.

Gerlinde Gerber: Thank you. The next question: Due to the growing tension between Sunni and Shia in the Middle East, could an Iranian bomb strengthen or weaken the Shia communities within Iran, or outside Iran, in the Middle East?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: We have seen a case in front of us which is to the so-called projected between "Hezbollah victory over Israel." This situation really added fuel to the fire to the nationalistic side of the Gulf on the part of not only reeling in a nation, but also sympathize with Iran; whereas, in the measure, if you're Shias, but some of them are of an Islamist or Pan-Arabic or anti-American or anti-Israel elements here in the Middle East and especially in the Gulf. Nations in the Gulf, like these nations, have components in their nation throughout history who are Shias, but who are Arab. There are components in areas like Kuwait and Dubai where the Shias are actually, some of them or a great part of them, who migrated from Iran and, therefore, would Iran, the acquisition of nuclear capabilities tomorrow, add to this nationalistic framework, I would say. Would that cause a problem to us in the Gulf? I would say, yes, for sure. Would that direct attention of all Shia communities in the Gulf toward a militaristic approach to us and the world? Yes. Would it divert their attention from development of their communities and playing the part in their communities as they do today, for instance? I think in Kuwait or Bahrain to militaristic approach to the so-called slogan that the solution for Israel to come to a test would be "resistant" or "military action." Well, yes. And so we could say that in Iran the acquisition of nuclear capabilities and the fall of military means would ignite that dream of the "Shia and Muslim" and nuclear bomb that is to say we are considering the Pakistani one

as some new Muslim bomb. Yes, it's going in general and to some of us, yes, it's going to cause some problems for us here.

Gerlinde Gerber: Talking again about the proximity of Iran and Kuwait, how dangerous is a nuclear Iran to Kuwait and if you have taken any precautions for a probably earthquake that could detect Boushari plans, which is right across from Kuwait? Do you think you might face a second general blow in your country in case of a war?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: Well, we look at Boushari from many dimensions. It is dimensions of national doctrine dimension. The second is the human accident dimension and the third, the incident of war. I don't think there is anything to argue taken by the United States or Israel or being trained or discussed that has those kind really seem okay about such military scenario before it is contained, touching some nuclear capabilities, nuclear facilities in Iran. With regard to Boushari, Boushari could be omitted as many say, but when we talk about this counts, there was a scenario and looked at the national disasters in our view and the accidents in our view, Boushari remains a flashpoint for us. Boushari must consider what we share as a city. It's much closer to the first Gulf city, which is Kuwait City, than any other city in Iran, major city in Iran. Kuwait City is the first major city to Boushari, if we take into consideration two factors. One factor is that the direction of the length, which goes from east to west and north/south in the Gulf, especially on Iran and the direction of the seashore. And the second is the direction of the currents in the Gulf which called current, clock-wise; that is to say, if there is a contamination of the sea, the sea current offers next to Boushari, then it's going to reach us by the current. Now, if it's going to reach us counter clock-wise, it will hit the first dissemination plants and then would go with the current into seven other dissemination plants in the JCC region, because we are all in this JCC, depends on dissemination plants to get our work so we don't have major rebuild in the Gulf, you would know. And so if it's going to hit the most sensitive, I expect our security,

which in held and wants security. Then there is the concentration of population. It's the largest any day, Kuwait City, it is going to touch the seven regions, southern/western regions of Iran, like the advise programs in West Iran. It's going to touch some of the fallout in Iraq in the far-reaching Gulf. But the Kuwait region is the most populated in comparison with just the region. The dense population is another factor because here in Kuwait, we live on 13 percent of the whole Kuwaiti territory and the density in Kuwait City is very high. It also creates different problems, difficulties in the JCC zone to respond to the three scenarios and that is a national disaster, accident, and war because we in the JCC have more than 200 nationalities within, residing and living with the JCC, so the question of directing them through emergency measures is going to be very difficult. How many languages we ought to use? What type of direction? What type of sign? What type of signal? What type of siren? What type of forces? And then we have density, also the traffic, traffic mode, and the Gulf cities because they were designed 40 years ago for a certain type, certain number of population, and now we have almost tripled into it, we have more than tripled in other areas of the Gulf; they have much more than in Kuwait. And, when you look at all of these as one as different as the crisis, many picture in the future, there's a person or persons or agencies assigned to deal with such crisis. It's going to be really difficult for him or her and the other thing is that these areas, not only have water decontamination plants, now they also have not only do they have population centers, they also have the oil industries and the oil exploring facilities. So, nationally we've got an accident or a war that could create contamination in the region, which is going to really shut down the oil facilities as well. It's going to endanger the 200 nationalities from all over the world, which resides in the region. However, that doesn't mean that we have not been really putting measure in place. We have been consulting the international economic agency. We have direct advise. We have a crisis management center linked to Vienna directly to get instant advice in case of scenarios. We have equipment all over to measure the type of radiation in the region. We have mapped out all the region. These are new developments in the region. Iran started the program,

so we mapped out the whole area in order to put benchmarks in order to measure the radiation. We have hosted, assembled, and now trained. We have just last week, two weeks ago, we had the United States here helping in crisis management for any contamination, the crisis in the future. We have all parts of expertise being invited from all over the world. We have East Europeans, we have Russia, we have French, we have British, and, of course, the United States because the coalition power here, is here. So, we are working on that, but it is going to be enough in time, when time comes for a national disaster, for an accident, or for a war. I really have to say probably 50/50.

Gerline Gerber: Thank you. The next question aims more at America. If Iran is really attempting to expire nuclear weapons, to what degree is America's behavior in the Middle East to blame? After all, before the Iraq War broke, Iran was led by Mohammed Khomeini, a liberal reformer and a leader who the West could deal with. Would Iran be attempting to deliver up a nuclear weapon program had Ahmadinejad never come to power?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: We must take into consideration that dealing with Mohammed Khomeini era development of a nuclear capability was not the policy in Iran. 1985, according to Iranian admissions in 2003, May, June, and August, 2003, the Iranians admitted that we have revitalized their project in 1985, but since 1996, nobody knew about the expanse of that project. So, the expanse of that project, at least kind of crescendoed in 1996. The expansion happened under the Israeli leader, a leader called Mohammed Khatimi. But it was Ahmadinejad who I heard personally in a presentation done by the Iranians in Tehran who really wanted to be given the credit of being the father of the nuclear problem in Iran, Ahmadinejad. And so today two prominent leaders positioned in Iran basically are the leaders of Iran and who's really the Iranian nuclear capabilities develop. So, Ahmadinejad is certainly not the first; he's not the champion of this. Let me say that today we would like to highjack the issue and make himself appear in the

eye of the Iranian nation as being the father of the nuclear bomb in order to be different from the others. That's why the guard is in military. The United States policy, I believe that, until now there are people in Washington who see Iranian's intentions and behaviors. We must take into consideration the Iranians see and American policy more than the United States proclaims, it is going to do. For instance, in 1988, Iran accepted the huge follow on the assumption at the time by Khomeini that the bombing of civilian air bursts by the United States was considered to be a signal that the United States was going to join the fray on the side of Iraq against Iran and they accepted the ceasefire. In 2003, the national intelligence estimates of the United States of 2007, said the Iranians felt their military program in September of 2003. But for us here in region, we say this is quite natural because next to them there was a big coalition force numbering 150,000 plus troops sitting idle, not doing their job. So, the Iranians thought at the time thankfully that they were going to come and just like they finished Saddam Hussein, they would finish the Iranian regime and, therefore, they had to stop any excuse of the United States and the excuse would be that they were pursuing a military problem. So, Iran actually basically gets to fight and, even as the United States does not really intend to fight in Iran. When you see today that Iran is basically talking about somewhat a cake form of mid-size on a daily basis about experiments or other experiments, they want to create a form of deterrent, some form of deterrent addressed at the Americans and the Israelis, but we have some type of efficient capability called, scene 1 missile, scene 2 missile because shahab-3 is no longer involved. It is quite redundant now in comparison with these. But when you look at the capability of such missile, although they are different in quality, they do not really present a major threat as the Iranians would like us to believe. The only explanation of that is the Iranians on a daily basis actually expecting a war, expecting a confrontation with the world because they know they are doing something really they are misbehaving with the international community. So, they are expecting all the worst case scenarios again. So, what I would like to say to sum up my response to this question is

that the United States need only just to show that they are serious about addressing the Iranian nuclear threat and get on with it.

Gerline Gerber: And the next question is a little bit more general and then I have two more questions. So, the general question: How disastrous would it be for Iran to acquire nuclear weapons? After all, even Pakistan has them.

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: You see in Pakistan, India, the balance of power in all the sub-Indian Continent, there are things that dates back to the creation of India, modern India, modern Pakistan, and the balance of power between two; one Hindu nation and one Moslem nation due to the fact there are two more modern in India than in Pakistan. But then there is the general balance of power in Asia as a whole between India and China. So, for Iran, it was natural even if it was expected in 1954, national intelligence estimates in the United States that under the Shah, it would be a matter of time before the Shah would turn the so-called peaceful and nuclear trouble on his administration into a military one and the Shah would have basically sort of, sorry in 1974, not 1954, national intelligence estimated in the United States. So, the Shah found himself probably pushed in a wrong direction when India detonated its first device in 1975. And then we have that chain reaction by Pakistan in 1998 after the second Indian detonation. Iran never looked at that part of the world as being an area of interest or really have an impact on the balance of power and Ahmadinejad of Iran saw himself as a player. Iran looks at this part of the world and looks at the situation vis a vis Israel, for instance, vis a vis the United States and the Gulf, and then if one were to put himself or herself in the shoes of the Iranians, he would consider that sometimes they would find themselves pushed into considering such measures and that is developing nuclear devices for their own defense. But what they forget about is the general balance of power in the area. So, if they were to seem frightened from the capability, conventional capabilities and non-conventional capabilities of the United

States in the region, that they could really be targeting Iran in the future, just like they did with Saddam Hussein. They have the cause to hear actually. If they look at Israel having the nuclear capabilities, they don't have a cause to hear. Why? Because there has never been a case, animosity between Iran and Israel and, therefore, to take today to be more royal than the king and to locate positions more stable than the Palestinian's position; some of the Israeli see the position in order to create the case of them to acquire nuclear weapons, to face up to Israel, this is quite a fallacy that we really do not take seriously. We consider Iran today as just like I explained in my introduction, as intent on expanding its influence in the region and would try to acquire certain capabilities to advance that. Now, this is the point where we really are opposed to Iran. Not only us in the Gulf, but also when I say the Gulf, it's not only the JCC, but also Iraq and Yemen and then we say also Turkey and we say even Syria and we say even Israel, of course, Israel and Egypt and Jordan. We all have the same position we will lead on that when Iran says I would like to have more role in the Middle East, in the full of the Middle East, that they say I would like to have Iran more stature, more influence upon the full of the Middle East, there is a certain sum of influence exercised by the nation. And, if Iran wants to take that by hood or by crook by intimidation, this is going to be taken from either the like of us in the Gulf, the JCC, from Iraq, from Yemen, or from Israel, or from Egypt, or Jordan, or Turkey. And, of course, we have to have a different stand in international community against the Iranian nuclear capability and that is why I explained at the beginning that we're got to have a level head with Iran, no matter what the international community thinks. This is going to require that certain diligent state would address acquiring nuclear capabilities, many capabilities, I think they would go as far as that in order to stop Iran from attempting to expand its influence. And, therefore, so the component between the situation in the sub-continent is Islam and the situation in the Gulf and the general balance of power in the Middle East.

Gerlinde Gerber: Speaking about the international community, let's look into the upcoming events and development. Can you comment on the Nuclear Summit in Washington on April 12 and 13? And where does Iran sit and what do we have to expect?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: For us here, we cannot imagine honestly in spite of the fact that President Obama spoke in his campaign, promises about addressing the nuclear issue on the general scale, on the threat of global threat, not only Iran. But we say we believe here in the Gulf and in the region as a whole, that without the developments and the Iranian pursuit of nuclear capability, we could not imagine such a conflict taking place in Washington, DC addressing that. The second thing is that, as is evident, you would see that there has been a change in the declared nuclear policy of the United States addressed by President Obama a few days ago and there was no change with regard to two regional powers and that is North Korea and Asia and Iran, again in Asia and the Middle East. So, Iran is, we say, the absent present. So, even if Iran were not to be in Washington, DC, it is the present factor that is in their minds and about the head of any participant and that's different. I think measures are going to be taken there. People would find a rationale for stronger measures taken there to address the shortcomings of the MPT and that's because that influence would really trigger the world response to the MPT as a whole and to Iran and North Korea. So, if the conference in Washington succeeds, not only in the language, but also in the measures addressed and agreed upon at least by the majority of nations there, then it would be the right signal for Iran. If the United States wastes time addressing Chinese concerns, this is an issue that is going to be more addressed probably in the Gulf and direct relations with China and substituting oil for China and free trade zone in China, then the administration of Mr. Obama would be able to do for the Chinese at present, to present, I mean present financial crisis. I think what we need to say: Does the [inaudible 00:49:08] accept one, which is China, would expect that China, even if it doesn't change position after really going through the certain expansion, at least by the United States, at least

by the European community, and even if Russia and China could be addressed by other rapprochements in oil and trade and the Gulf more than anywhere else in the world, if the international would succumb to really Chinese stubbornness, then we're not going to get through with certain areas of sanction and this is going to really be a bad signal for the Iranian leadership.

Gerlinde Gerber: Thank you very much. I want now to open up for the Operator for other journalists to ask questions in case you didn't cover everything yet.

Operator: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, at this time, we would like to open the floor for questions. If you would like to ask a question, please press the "star" key followed by the "one" key on your Touchtone phone now. Questions will be taken in the order in which they are received. If at any time you would like to remove yourself from the questioning queue, please press "star two." Once again, to ask a question, "star one" on your Touchtone phone now. Our first question will come from Sammy Samuels.

Sammy Samuels: Thank you. I've been very impressed with everything you've said, Mr. Alfaraj. One question, which is being raised, is known as EMP, electro-magnetic pulse, which Iran could have the capability without going much further to destroy the electric grids of its neighbors and even further afield by their flares. I don't know how much of a technology you know about this, but do you have any thoughts on it?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: This is one of the issues being addressed here with regard to the [skips 00:51:25]. We have, of course, the expertise coming from NATO, expertise comes physically from the United States. It is addressed here and it is their preparation for that. It is addressed, but we haven't actually made a decision for preparation of that yet, but something is being taken

to consider Russia and it is going to be really a big, big fiasco if they succeed in doing that, by having the capabilities to grant.

Sammy Samuels: Thank you.

Operator: Thank you. Once again, to ask a question, it's "star one" on your Touchtone phone now. Our next question will come from Hoda Hosseini.

Hoda Hosseini: Yeah. Hello. I want to ask Mr. Alfaraj about Qatar. All the Gulf regions are worried from Iran. We know that from Qatar they have very good relations with Iran and even Muscat, Oman and Muscat. First, I want to ask you, if you have enough weapons, but in the Gulf do you have enough personnel or do you need some more help from the West, from the Americans, and from the Europeans? And what can Europe do for you?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: First of all, I want to say something, that you in the face of it to see the difference in position, that from my experience with the JCC and about the modern decade and security agencies here in the Gulf, I would know something that in the foreign policy level, there are different levels of stance and there are differences of statement and statements by policymakers address something even certain times in the relationship with Iran. We must understand one thing that the hand extended to Iran is not just extended by Oman or Qatar, but it is extended months ago by Kuwait. Although, we do not defer from position of Saudi Arabia until April last year, the hand of Saudi Arabia was also extended to Iran and until now. So, there are differences in the prepared statement, but with regard to planning, with regard to we all in the peninsula and there are incidents of that and it is something that we would love to have in the future, to have Yemen and Iraq to join. We are planning for on the same position that I presented to balance power between this side, inside the Arabian peninsula and Mesopotamia

and Persia. So, there is the strategic mindset dominates the thinking here that we have to look at this as Arabia, not as Arabs, but as Arabia as one block in the balance of power. That's one thing. Whether we have the personnel capable of doing that, we have with regard to the military main, we have always construed a leverage over Iran and the qualitative edge to have more, much better weapons. And why? Because we have less personnel than they do and, therefore, we actually to have more far-reaching weapons, more devastating weapons, but if you look at them, you would see that they all are, they fit into the so-called rubric of descent.

Hoda Hosseini: But we see war between Al-Hosseini and the Saudi army and the Al-Husseini and they were backed by Iran, almost on the Saudi arm.

Dr. Sami Alfaraj; Yes. Here I do not disagree with you. It is not as simple as that, but I do not disagree with you. But, however, you have to look at the Iranian points to support their whole team is the question I pose to you is: What made the Al-Hosseini start their war? Because the south, although, not as "serious challenge" to them on the land corridor between one, they put the real challenge in the seafront and that is south of, on the western side of the Arabian Sea, by the numbers when they deployed their flotilla, their navy. They were terrible with the American Navy to integrate and to evict supplies. So, basically you could have a direct strategy and that is to face the Hosseini where they are and you could have a direct imbalanced approach and that is what you need to cut their supplies. So, here is a no win situation actually. The fact the matter the Hosseini would press at the end to really seek peace or seek accommodation in the country. Whether we need capabilities of personnel, we have treaties, not only with what's in power, but also with Egypt, with Jordan, and we will have treaties with Turkey soon. And also to have NATO standards, especially in Turkey, but without having personnel that presents lack of cultural class with the Gulf setting; in spite of the fact that we've fallen troops

[skips 00:57:32] since the time of Alexander the Great. Do you hear me? Yeah, so we have capabilities in the form of personnel and, with consistent

Hoda Hosseini: Excuse me. You go to sign a treaty with Turkey very soon?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: Of course there will be a treaty soon. No, just to see how they got in the Arab Summit, then the first meeting would be Turkey and the nations neighboring the Arab world, so Turkey is, and then the rest of the Arab world.

Hoda Hosseini: Well, at the Summit, did you invite Ahmadinejad to Qatar, not so?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: Well, they invited as a last measure, but to speak to him, but they didn't invite him since. So, it was quite a significance he did not take up that initiative and that's why we have a situation generated between us and Iran, generated to this level. And I go back to the question of personnel and where we're consistently at. But we have all the positions in weapon systems and region and I don't mean on the ground or on the shore, but on the naval front, on the systems could reach us very soon in case of war, so this would be our position.

Hoda Hosseini: Are you waiting for a war, sir?

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: We are planning to address a war scenario as a worst case scenario. It doesn't mean it's going to happen, but we have to plan as small states, we have to plan on a worst case scenario all the time in order to be ready because we won't have time when war really erupts in the region.

Hoda Hosseini: Thank you.

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: Thank you.

Gerlinde Gerber: Are there more questions from journalists?

Operator: At this time, we have no further questions in the queue.

Gerlinde Gerber: All right. Then that closes the call. Thank you so much, Mr. Alfaraj, for joining us today.

Dr. Sami Alfaraj: My pleasure.

Gerlinde Gerber: And I also wanted to invite you to our Web site, www.realite-eu.org. We provide the latest thinking on breaking news and long term trends on these and other issues as well as give reporters list of expert intellio. Thank you so much. It was a pleasure to have you all. Thank you.

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