

***Ad Hoc Committee on Energy and Environment  
Euro-Mediterranean Parliamentary Assembly***

**Vienna, Austria  
18 May 2009**

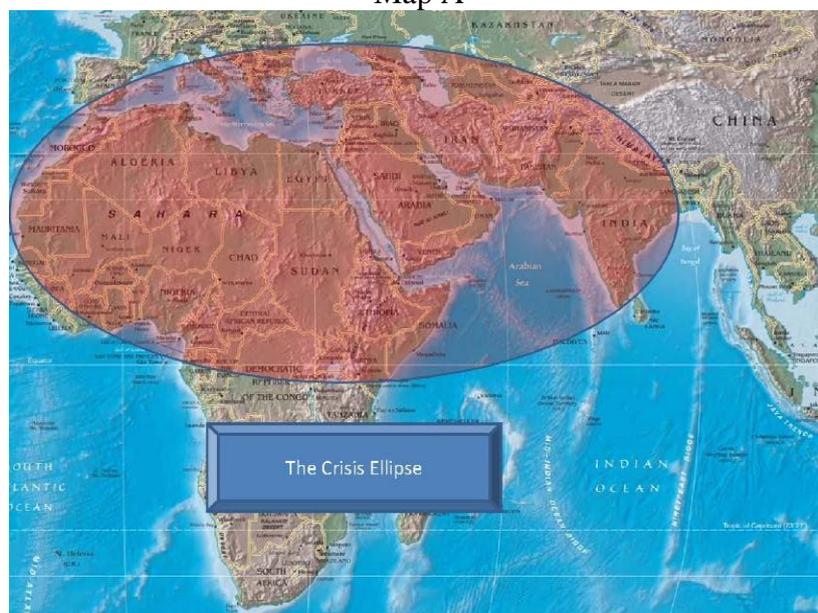
**Statement of HRH Prince El Hassan bin Talal**

The question we are asking is, how can we reduce the strain on Earth today so that in forty years nearly ten billion people will be provided with sufficient food, water, and energy?

At the Club of Rome, of which I was president for several years, we started modeling a potential answer to this question in the early 1970s, as I was keenly aware of the importance of the limits to growth.

A cursory look at Map A, the "crisis ellipse", tells us that water covers most of our Earth's landmass.

Map A



The primacy of the sea in facilitating trade and commerce is still uncontested. Our seas have yet to be dislodged as the main conduit for the movement of approximately 90% of global commerce and 65% of the world's oil. It turns out that the seas (in their strategic importance to commerce and consequently in their strategic importance to those that control commerce), were not made equal. The Indian Ocean, "covering the entire arc of Islam",<sup>1</sup> is the channel of necessity for 70% of the world's

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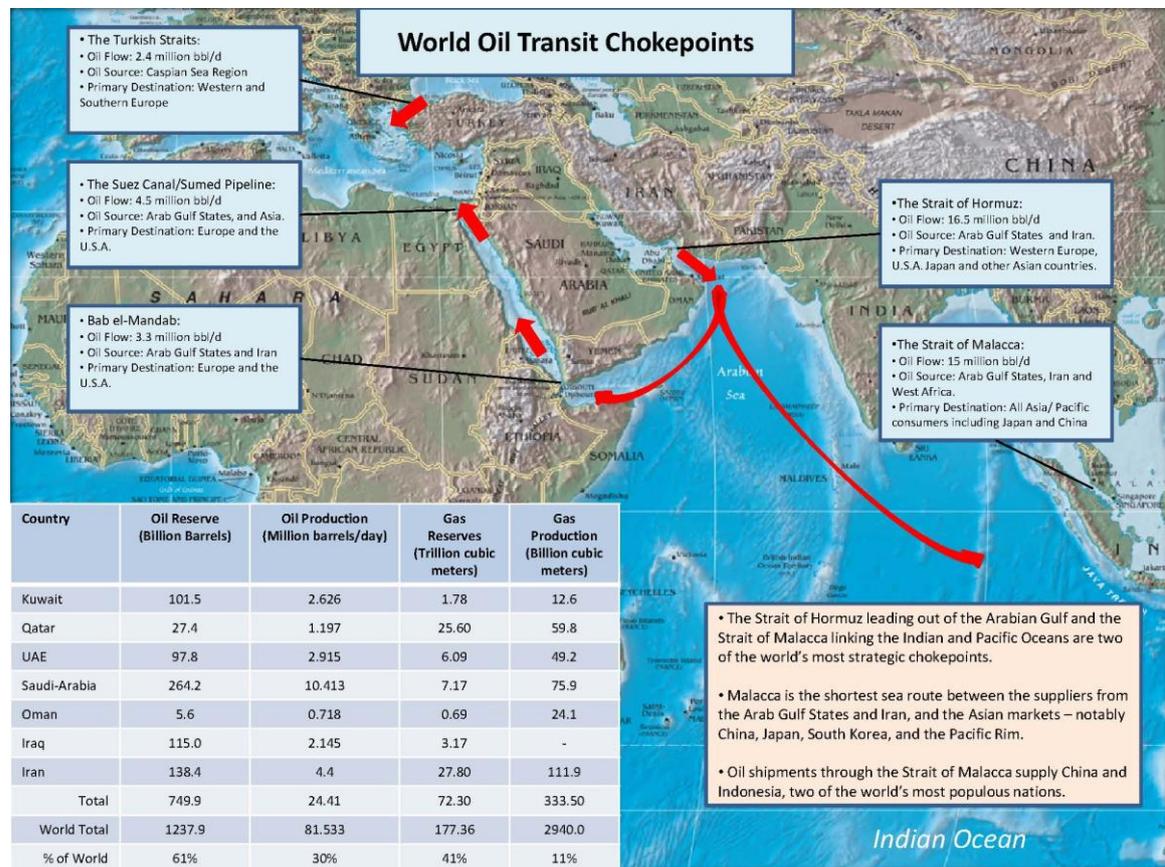
<sup>1</sup> Robert D. Kaplan, "Centre Stage for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: Power Plays in the Indian Ocean", *Foreign Affairs*, (March/April 2009) at pg 1.

petroleum, and therefore a passageway to some of our system’s “chokepoints” — major and strategic trade interstate seaways that sit astride the locus of impending instability and conflict. Among these chokepoints are:

**Bab el Mandeb** – Oil flow: 3.3 million bbl/d; Oil Source: Arab and Gulf States; Primary destination: Europe and the United States.

**The Strait of Hormuz** – Oil flow: 16.5 million bbl/day; Oil Source: Arab Gulf States and Iran; Primary destination: Western Europe, United States, Japan and other Asian countries.

**The Strait of Malacca** – Oil Flow: 15 million bbl/day; Oil Source: Arab Gulf States, Iran and West Africa; Primary destination: All Asia/Pacific consumers including Japan and China.



The strategic importance of the Indian Ocean is only set to augment as the world’s demand for oil proliferates. Within the next 25 years, global energy needs are expected to rise by 40%, with half of this increase emanating from the mounting energy demands of India and China. In the quest for energy security, the Indian Ocean will be the point at which global vulnerabilities play out in the future. The mushrooming of oil pipelines continues to be a serious reality.

However, I am not as concerned with the pipelines as I am with the people living next to these pipelines. Should global crude oil combustion remain the predominant energy base for civilisation, we can expect the Indian Ocean and its

chokepoints to become hotbeds of acute resource conflict, the reverberations of which will be felt far beyond the domains of the original instigators.

The fact is, we are now facing a crisis that exceeds the rigid parameters assigned to us by the now discredited dichotomy of government and market, better known as the public and private divide – a divide which does not provide effective rules or standards for the management of our universal resources, our global commons.

When I officially declared the West Asia – North Africa (WANA) Forum open last month in Amman (an inclusionist forum of all countries of the region without exception), I reminded participants that they were not delegates of countries, but delegates of the “third sphere” – that *ad hominem* space that challenges the public/private dichotomy and frees us from the constraints of thinking purely in terms of national citizenship.

Indeed, the dysfunctional and co-dependent relationship between the public and private sector has left our environmental and cultural spaces under brutal assault. Why should we choose between the mass unemployment and social collapse offered by the public sector, and the environmental collapse and intolerable inequality attendant under the private sector regime? Why should we limit our collective engagement to the private and public spheres alone when this restricts our use of the material, environmental, genetic, social, cultural and intellectual goods that rightly belong to every one of us?

When the local users of resources are not organised, do not communicate, lack trust, and have no effective means of changing the rules of resource oversight or administration, a tragedy of the commons results. Mine is a clarion call to pre-empt that tragedy, and where it has already occurred, to mitigate its harmful effects.

In the Arab context, I had the privilege at the 1980 Arab Economic Summit conference held in Amman of contributing to the concept of a strategy for an Arab Development Decade. I also had the privilege of hosting the preparatory working theme of Arab intellectuals and economists that was proposed to the Kuwait Arab Economic Summit held earlier this year on the importance of developing a regional identity. However, and unfortunately, unilateral thinking remains more important to many than multilateral.

In September 2008, I had the privilege in the kitchen cabinet of ECOSOC in New York to call for an economic council and a social council for our region. The time has come for us to seriously inspect our institutional arrangements for promoting authentic policy projection from our regions – from the Euro-Atlantic; from the ESCAP region;<sup>2</sup> and from WANA. We must begin to convene – *en masse* – in matters concerning the welfare of our people and our environment. This means engaging civil society groups, individual citizens and international organisations in order to shift responsibility and authority downwards to individuals, communities and civil society, and upwards to international organisations, regional systems and networks, bypassing the squabbling banks, lobbyists and ideologues.

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<sup>2</sup> United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific

Inspiration can be drawn from the Helsinki Process, which encourages new forms of cooperation between different stakeholders drawn together not by ideology, but by their fervent commitment to a universal and convivial region. I am talking of supra-national politics. Europe came together in a supra-national commitment to coal and steel. Why is it that we cannot come together in a supra-national commitment to water and energy for the human environment?

### The Meeting Point: Towards a Preventative Security Regime

As you all know, a tsunami is a natural disaster. A terrorist attack such as 9/11 is a security disaster, and swine flu is a human disaster. To me, all of these are human security disasters.

I have in the past advocated the strategic importance of the WANA region as an intermediary meeting point between East and West. Today, as ESCAP and SAARC<sup>3</sup> move toward the West, and the Euro-Atlantic moves toward the East – particularly towards the Southeast European countries which border our Black Sea region, and indeed the energy ellipse from the Caucasus to Hormuz – we need to interact in this region. However, the overwhelming tendency has been to pursue vested interests, unilateral approaches, and of course insular interests, as opposed to the global good or the regional commons.

By pursuing unilateral agendas alone, we ignore the multilateral and regional realities. Allow me to describe what we have unravelling in front of us. The litany of our trans-border problems, historical and juridical, are proliferating at a dizzying rate. The cumulative causality between climate change and security does not respect national boundaries. The steady depletion of fossil fuel is, of and by itself, an existential threat.

Water scarcity bodes as an alarming reality that threatens to change the character of our world order. Trans-border resource conflicts threaten to destabilise already fragile regions. Exponential population increases in Asia will place an even greater strain on already scarce resources. The United States' rising debt crisis and the rapidly deteriorating moral authority arising from her economic and military failures threaten to dislodge her as the model of democracy.

While NATO struggles to justify its existence through an ever-widening footprint, what is desperately needed is the promotion of a good neighbourhood policy. Europe's recent *Second Strategic Energy Review*,<sup>4</sup> with its focus on diplomacy and smart power, or insider power – diversification of energy supplies, external energy relations, crisis response mechanisms, energy efficiency and domestic energy resources – is a welcome response to the fierce tensions surrounding access to remaining fossil fuels and an increase in the use of renewable energies. However, both NATO and the EU lack comprehensive strategies for dealing with the security aspects of energy.

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<sup>3</sup> South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions – Second Strategic Energy Review: An EU Energy Security and Solidarity Action Plan*, November 2008.

In March 2009, President Obama and UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon shared a commitment that “2009 must be the year of climate change,” stressing the importance of a comprehensive successor pact to replace the Kyoto Protocol – which will be discussed at the UN climate change conference in Copenhagen in December 2009. However, I would like to point out that none of the fifteen countries involved in preparatory meetings for the Copenhagen conference are from the WANA region – the Arab states, Israel, Iran, and Turkey are simply not represented.

The landscape of our world is changing, and dramatically so. Will we seek to apply the same failed unilateral strategies in the face of these challenges? If we want different results, we have to do things differently, we must discuss and implement a preventative security strategy for the perilous future. The components of this preventative security regime must include at the very minimum: 1) establishment of an EU–WANA Water and Energy Community for the Human Environment; 2) the creation of a Social Cohesion Fund; and 3) development of a Regional Security Organisation.

#### EU-WANA Water and Energy Community for the Human Environment

At the very top of the agenda should be the establishment of a supra-national, non-partisan Water and Energy Community for the Human Environment – an institutional framework providing new incentives for the management and protection of common resources.

I communicated these issues to Juan Somavia at the International Labour Organisation (ILO) before his presentation on its “green jobs” initiative. My belief lies in the need to apply a framework in our region that goes beyond dreams. We must remember that the US dollar (the current reserve currency of choice) is fundamentally linked to global crude oil, and even if every business were to adopt a greening agenda, crude oil would still remain the most important ingredient of economic growth and the profit and wage incentives in these “green” businesses would still be denominated in dollar values linked directly to oil. We therefore have to look elsewhere for a comprehensive and durable solution.

As one who helped present the DESERTEC initiative two years ago in Brussels, I would like to remind you that solar radiation is the largest accessible but least used form of energy on Earth. Most international grids service communities of well over 500 inhabitants – they do not consider small and rural communities, who in many instances and indeed impoverished urban communities, are the recruiting glove for extremism. The sun is essentially a virtually inexhaustible supply of energy, and on a daily basis the world’s deserts receive about 700 times more energy from the sun than humanity presently consumes in fossil fuels. What is more important is that grid parities are looking much more reasonable today than ever.

The DESERTEC project aims to tap into solar and wind power from these energy-rich desert areas. Perhaps I should not call it a project – it is a concept whereby projects would extend from the Gulf region across North Africa into Europe. The use of HVDC (High-Voltage Direct Current transmission lines) facilitates efficient transfer with projected losses of less than 5% per every 1000kms.

DESERTEC scientists project that in 40 years, solar thermal power plants could generate over half of the electricity needs of the entire EU-WANA region.<sup>5</sup>

The benefits of adopting this initiative catapult across several spheres. Take for example the fact that the freshwater crisis in WANA could be resolved through seawater desalination. However, desalination currently requires the combustion of large amounts of fossil fuels. In the long run, powering desalination through renewable energy would be cheaper, both financially and ecologically. So, too, would the scope for job creation in solar plant and collector production give the region a much needed economic boost. According to the recently published DESERTEC Red Paper, “the construction of only one 250 MW parabolic trough plant requires 1,000 workers and engineers for a period of two to three years.”<sup>6</sup>

Another critical component of a preventative security regime is a regional institution for water management. Estimates project that by 2025, water scarcity could affect up to five billion people (about 1.7 billion people are already affected).<sup>7</sup> Climate change implications exacerbate this impending crisis; increased droughts, precipitation, evaporation as well as the overall retardation of the hydrological cycle all threaten to further devastate already dry regions.

The WANA region already faces a challenge of carrying capacity. It is one of the principal regions of stateless persons, displaced persons, internally displaced persons, migrants and refugees under different mandates, and these millions of people are not referred to in the financial references by the yardstick of GDP. Moreover, the region already lags behind in water infrastructure development and an aggravation in droughts would largely ravage this area. Water consumption has been doubling every twenty years and clean water supplies are coming under extreme strains. A regional institution for water management would develop agreements for the sharing of water resources, water and irrigation projects, and the sharing of expertise and data on drip irrigation, water absorption, transpiration of plants, watershed dynamics, water basins, sedimentation, withdrawal from aquifers, water storage, deterioration of water quality and increased hydropower demands.

The meeting held in Barcelona, Spain by CITpax and IEMed on 11 and 12 May 2009 was convened to consider and debate the concept of establishing a Community of Water and Energy in the Middle East, and to chart ways “of cooperation to pre-empt adverse impacts”. However, for future activities conceptions must emerge whereby both the EU and WANA include the participation of all the Rift Valley riparians (by the Rift Valley I mean the Jordan Rift Valley). In 1996 all participants presented a proposal to the United States for a supra-national Rift Valley authority, rather like the Danube Commission, the Mekong Commission, or the Indus Valley Commission. I would also hope that the moment comes where the eight Nile Valley Basin countries consider the fact that by the year 2050 the Nile Basin will require a carrying capacity of five full Nile Rivers, and not one depleted Nile River.

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<sup>5</sup> DESERTEC Foundation, *Red Paper: An Overview of the Desertec Concept* (2009).

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>7</sup> See <http://www.climate.org/topics/water.html>.

In our efforts to find durable solutions to the energy and water crisis, we must remember how we got here in the first place. We find ourselves in this ecological and resource quagmire because we were reckless in ignoring the fact that our ecosystem has a carrying capacity and an ecological infrastructure.

### A Social Cohesion Fund

A preventative security regime must adopt the concept, in Arabic or in Islamic syntax, of *Al-himma*, of *Awaqaf* – endowment foundations for the protection of the natural and the human environment. I thank here the International Union for the Conservation of Nature for having taken this proposal seriously, as well as my colleague the former Prime Minister of Egypt Abdul Aziz Hijazi for taking seriously the work of the Zakat Foundation established in Malaysia and the establishment of a Food Bank.

It is important to refer to what George Qorm, my colleague from the Arab Thought Forum and former Minister of Economy of Lebanon says, and that is to use local syntax in terms of developing authentic regional policies. The step-sister status of ECOSOC *vis a vis* the Security Council accentuates the narrow construction of the “security threat”. ECOSOC meetings in New York, Geneva, and elsewhere do not promote the authentic policies from our West Asia North Africa region, simply because our region is only a Middle East region in name. Realities of unilateralism are existential issues that are not discussed in substance.

Going back to the crisis ellipse, I continue to ask when will the social and economic threats that ravage over three quarters of the world’s population – constituting fundamental attacks on human dignity – be considered severe enough to be security threats? With ECOSOC teetering on the brink of redundancy – its efficacy and technical competence in serious questions – we need to look to *regional solutions*.

When I speak of a Cohesion Fund, I speak of solidarity with the poor. The world’s poor have a legitimate right to and need for increased energy services that are affordable, healthy, reliable and sustainable. We can no longer view the world’s poor as collateral damage and externalities falling beyond the bounds of our own harmonious social systems, or as my friend Senator Cristovam Buarque from Brazil calls “one and a half billion people protected by the gold curtains”.<sup>8</sup> We must ensure that the most marginalised and vulnerable of our populations are involved as stakeholders in their own development. Encouraged to stay where they are and not turn into migrants and human misery across the Mediterranean, accentuated by this forced migration.

As a member of the UN Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, we have produced a study “*Making the Law Work for Everyone*”, prefaced by Gordon Brown who was a colleague before he took up his present responsibilities, with the aim of empowering those who are vulnerable, with knowledge and hope for a prosperous future.<sup>9</sup> It is essential to visit the plan presented by Paul Volcker for an

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<sup>8</sup> Cristovam Buarque, *The Golden Curtain: The Shocks of the End of the Twentieth Century; and a Dream for the Twenty-First* (1995), translated by Linda Jeronme (2007).

<sup>9</sup> Commission on Legal Empowerment of the Poor, *Making the Law Work for Everyone* (United Nations Development Programme, 2008).

asymmetric Social Cohesion Fund to empower citizens in the region, not least of all empowering them in those natural human rights, clean air and clean water that today have become commodities.

### A Regional Security Organisation (RSO)

A Regional Security Organisation that develops “new security thinking”, interdisciplinary security thinking – an understanding that the traditional, state-centric, fixation on hard security has done little to facilitate the safety and integrity of vulnerable peoples within the region – is an indispensable component of any preventative security regime.

Within this context, and as a member of the Nuclear Threat Initiative (NTI), I welcome Kuwait’s recent contribution of \$10 million to the alternative fuel bank of low enriched uranium, along the lines of the agreement reached by NTI, the US Department of Energy, and the government of Kazakhstan.

In Jordan, we are a home for the homeless, but at what cost? I refer here to the Middle East Quartet Progress Report, released in 2008 by 21 NGOs; Save the Children; Caritas; CARE; Oxfam; and others on the state of Palestinians under occupation in the territories and in Gaza, and indeed on the state of human dignity in Iraq.<sup>10</sup> The mandate of such an organisation to create a conference on trans-border security as well as developing stability agreements is critical to the accurate definition of future political, economic, and environmental stability.

To quote President Köhler of Germany, “The credibility of freedom is something that can be measured by our ability to share opportunities with others, internally and externally. And it can be measured by our readiness to accept the responsibility for our neighbour for the good of the whole.”<sup>11</sup> This is a cogent summation of what I have been saying here today.

Let me repeat: an inter-regional meeting is inevitable. We can either meet brutally in the future as we clash over scarce resources and dwindling returns on investment – or we can meet now, while there is still time, to discuss and implement a preventative security strategy, incrementally, developed step by step for the preservation of our shared environment and sacred commons.

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<sup>10</sup> Crisis Action Group, Care International UK, Oxfam International et. al., *The Middle East Quartet: A Progress Report* (September, 2008), available online at <http://www.oxfam.org/en/policy/middle-east-quartet-progress-report>.

<sup>11</sup> Federal President of Germany, Horst Köhler, "The Credibility of Freedom", Berlin, Germany (March 24<sup>th</sup> 2009).