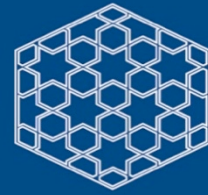




2018 GABR FELLOWS ON A VISIT TO THE DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY



The  
SHAFIK GABR  
Foundation

# The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

October 2019, Issue 27

IN THIS ISSUE

***Bold, Driven and Determined are the three words that are the slogan of all my business and nonprofit activities. I believe if one is bold, he/she can come up with courageous ideas that change the world into a better place; if one is driven, he/she will never lose the passion and motivation; and if one is determined, he/she will convert all those courageous ideas into reality - and that's what President Anwar Sadat has done.***

This October marks the 46<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 6<sup>th</sup> of October war between Egypt and Israel. This was a war that was ended by peace only because of the courageous steps taken by President Anwar Sadat as the first Arab leader visiting Israel to end decades of wars between Egypt and Israel. As International Chairman of Congressional Gold Medal Commission, last month I witnessed a very special moment, when the design for the Anwar El Sadat Congressional Gold Medal was unveiled in the U.S. Department of the Treasury's historic Cash Room. President Sadat was a bold, driven and determined leader who converted his dreams of peace into a reality and brought hope and unity in a world filled with conflict and divisiveness. As President Sadat said in his historic speech at the Knesset: *"I have come to you so that together we might build a durable peace based on justice, to avoid the shedding of one single drop of blood from an Arab or an Israeli. Any life lost in war is a human life, irrespective of its being that of an Israeli or an Arab. When the bells of peace ring, there will be no hands to beat the drums of war."*

M. Shafik Gabr

## In Brief..

- **Abdel Rahman Amr** starts a Master of Arts degree in International Journalism
- **Alex Goldmark** welcomes a new baby
- **Anwar Sadat Congressional Gold Medal Commission** unveils the Medal design in Washington, DC ceremony
- **Bryan Griffin** participates in Warsaw Security Forum
- **Chairman Gabr** meets with Gabr Fellows in Egypt
- **Chairman and Mrs. Gabr** host dinner for Gabr Fellows in Washington, D.C.
- **Gabr Foundation** Reading Corner
- **Marwa Abdallah** Launches Film Educational Forum
- **Meet the Gabr Fellows:** Amr Seda and Fabrice Guerrier
- **RJ Johnson** elected Chief Volunteer Officer For The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Shreveport
- *Syria: Debates Won't Change Reality*, op-ed by **Elizebeth Dent**
- **Question of the Month**

## *News and Updates...*

### **RJ Johnson elected Chief Volunteer Officer for the Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Shreveport**



2018 Gabr Fellow **RJ Johnson** was recently elected Chief Volunteer Officer (Board Chair) for The Salvation Army Boys and Girls Club of Shreveport. In this capacity, RJ will lead the board through the finalization of its strategic plan, territorial merger, and fundraising efforts. RJ is an experienced executive in non-profit and healthcare administration. He is a graduate of the Louisiana Association of Non-Profit Organizations Community Leadership Program.

### **Marwa Abdallah Launches Film Educational Forum**



2018 Gabr Fellow **Marwa Abdalla** launched the 'Film Education Forum' (FEF) last month. FEF is an independent initiative that aims to support the development of skills for young film talents who have limited access to adequate means of expression. The Mission of is FEF is to create a sustainable and market oriented networking and educational hub. The first FEF took place from 21 - 26 September 2019, in cooperation with ElGouna Film Festival in its third edition.

### **Abdel Rahman Amr starts a Master of Arts degree in International Journalism**



2017 Gabr Fellow **Abdel Rahman Amr** started another MA degree in International Journalism at the Communication University of China in Beijing in cooperation with Simon Fraser University in Canada. Abdel Rahman has recently defended his thesis at Simon Fraser University for the Faculty of Communication, Art and Technology. Abdel Rahman earned his Bachelor's degree in Mass Communication from the Canadian International College in Egypt.

### **Alex Goldmark welcomes a new baby**



2013 Gabr Fellow **Alex Goldmark** welcomed a new addition to his family - Zelia Grace Goldmark was born on 19th September in New York City. Alex says that Zelia is happy and healthy, and her mom Liza and Alex are feeling serene and blessed. Alex Goldmark is a journalist and public radio producer covering social enterprise, technology, sustainability and transportation. His work has appeared across the public radio spectrum.

## Bryan Griffin participates in Warsaw Security Forum



2017 Gabr Fellow **Bryan Griffin** participated in the Warsaw Security Forum as part of the New Security Leaders program. The NSL is a fellowship that selects 20 young professionals in the field of international affairs from around the world to participate in the NATO partnered Warsaw Security Conference in early October. Bryan was inspired to apply in large part because of the positive experience he had with the Gabr Fellowship. Bryan holds a Juris Doctorate, Masters of Management, and Bachelors in Classical History and Political Science from the University of Florida.

## Chairman and Mrs. Gabr host dinner for Gabr Fellows in Washington, D.C.



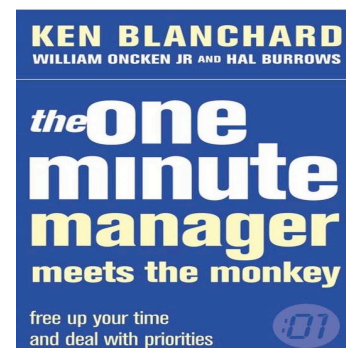
On Saturday, 21 September, Chairman and Mrs. Gabr hosted a dinner meeting with the Gabr Fellows at IRicchi restaurant in Washington, D.C. Present at dinner were **Charles Truxal** (2018 Gabr Fellow), **Courtney Joline** (2017 Gabr Fellow), **Fabrice Guerrier** (2018 Gabr Fellow), **Hayley Rose** (2018 Gabr Fellow), **Katherine Tan** (2016 Gabr Fellow), **Kemp Gouldin** (2015 Gabr Fellow), **Lauren Ziegler** (2018 Gabr Fellow), **Liz Dent** (2015 Gabr Fellow), **Sarah Walker** (201 Gabr Fellow), and **Thomas Hanna** (2016 Gabr Fellow). This was an excellent opportunity for the Fellows to catch up with each other and share the news in their lives and careers, as well as their aspirations for the next five years.

## Chairman Gabr meets with Gabr Fellows in Egypt



In his latest meeting with the Gabr Fellows on September 30th, **Mr. Shafik Gabr, Chairman of the Shafik Gabr Foundation**, discussed several topics with the Gabr Fellows. In this meeting, the Gabr Fellows shared their latest updates and asked Mr Gabr's opinion about various local and international issues. During the meeting, 2017 Gabr Fellow **Amr Seda** presented the book *Super intelligence: Paths, Dangers, Strategies*. 2018 Gabr Fellow **Soad Hossam** made another presentation on the rights, freedoms and liabilities of people in the digital world.

## Gabr Foundation Reading Corner



The Foundation Reading Corner is encouraging Fellows to critique the books that have been recommended over the past many issues. For this issue, Mr. Gabr recommends *The one minute manager meets the monkey* by Ken Blanchard. One Minute Manager Library teaches managers an unforgettable lesson: how to have time to do what they want and need to do. The author explains how managers who attempt to solve every problem given to them by their staff become hopeless bottlenecks.

# Meet The Gabr Fellows

## Amr Seda, 2017 Gabr Fellow, Egypt

**Name:** Amr Seda

**Age:** 31

**Profession:** Lecturer and Entrepreneur

Amr is a Lecturer in the Business department at the British University in Egypt. He also founded Sit Straight; a company that manufactures and sells medical back support products in the Egyptian market. Amr has also been working with the Egyptian presidency since 2017 as a member of the organizing committee for the annual World Youth Forum that is held in Sharm El Sheikh in November/December of every year. Away from academia and business, Amr is passionate about tennis, reading, and yoga.

Amr believes that he came out of the Gabr Fellowship with inspiration, motivation, knowledge, lifetime memories, and most notably, lifetime friends. He believes that the cause itself and the high calibre of the Fellows, the speakers, and the bootcamp-like agenda speak of Mr Gabr's acumen and vision. It is an ongoing commitment to gain and add value within a community of some of the two countries' brightest minds. This is a Fellowship that Amr plans to remain actively involved with for the rest of his life.



## Fabrice Guerrier, 2018 Gabr Fellow, U.S.



**Name:** Fabrice Guerrier

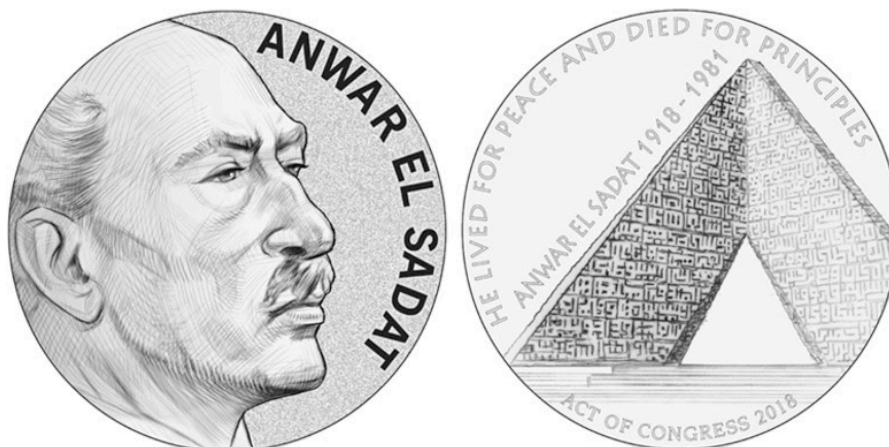
**Age:** 27

**Profession:** Founder & CEO, Syllble, Inc.

Fabrice Guerrier's mission is to lead Syllble, a startup company that drives impact and value to writers and storytellers across cultures who are coming together to collaborate with each other, share ideas to build media franchises, tell new collaborative fiction stories and define a new world literature.

Fabrice believes that the world is changing at an incomprehensible rate. Old structures are fast crumbling in the face of this fourth industrial revolution through the growth of the internet economy and the rise of artificial intelligence. He applied to the Gabr Fellowship because of the dire impact these transformations will have on our global economies, our environments, our collective human creativity and self-expression. Fabrice believes that now more than ever bridging the cultural gaps between the East and the West remains a pivotal step in framing a shared vision to tackle these new existential challenges that we are to face together as a human species. The Fellowship provided him with a new vision and a space to connect with some of the greatest minds of his generation. It gave him deep insights on the inner workings of a changing Egypt, the Middle East and the United States.

## Anwar Sadat Congressional Gold Medal Design Unveiled



On 17<sup>th</sup> September 2019, the United States Mint unveiled the designs for the Anwar El Sadat Congressional Gold Medal in the Department of the Treasury's historic Cash Room. United States Mint Director **Mr David J. Ryder** unveiled the designs, and the ceremony was led by Assistant Secretary of the Treasury for Management **Mr David Eisner**.

After the Presentation of Colors and the playing of the Egyptian and American National Anthems, speeches were held by **Congressman Chris Stewart** (R-UT 2nd District), one of the leading Co-Sponsors of the Anwar Sadat Bill, **His Excellency Yasser Reda**, Egypt's Ambassador to the United States of America, **Mr Shafik Gabr**, International Chairman of the Anwar Sadat Congressional Gold Medal Committee, **Mr Ezra Friedlander**, National Chairman of the Anwar Sadat Congressional Gold Medal Committee, and **Mr Gamal Sadat**, son of President Anwar Sadat.

"We are eternally grateful for President Sadat's contributions towards peace in the Middle East," said **Director Ryder**. "Through this medal, the United States honors a courageous man of principle, vision, and wisdom, who brought hope and unity in a world filled with conflict and divisiveness."

"President Anwar Sadat was an exceptional human being – one whose courageous leadership, unflinching instinct, heroic vision of peace, and strength of implementation knew no bounds. It is he who gave us direction not only for peace in the Middle East, but also for peace in all the rest of the world. And it is to him that leaders of today must look up to in order to make this world a more stable, secure and prosperous place for the next generations to come," said **Shafik Gabr**, International Chairman of the Anwar Sadat Congressional Gold Medal Committee.

The US Congress bestows the Congressional Gold Medal – one of the nation's highest civilian awards – as an expression of gratitude for distinguished achievements and contributions by individuals, groups, or institutions. On December 13, 2018, the Congress of the United States passed the Anwar Sadat Centennial Celebration Act unanimously and it was signed into law by US President Donald Trump authorizing the Speaker of the United States House and the President pro tempore of the US Senate to arrange for the posthumous award of a Congressional Gold Medal to the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat in recognition of his heroic achievements and courageous contributions to peace in the Middle East.

## Question of the Month: A Pulse of the Gabr Fellowship Community



As the Gabr Fellows enter into leadership roles — in business, diplomacy, government, finance, and more— they will continue to grapple with significant challenges, magnified by an increased pace in technological advancement, the potential for ramped up global inequalities, and changes in governance and economic structures.

To better understand the pulse of the Gabr Fellowship community and to begin to articulate substantive dialogue, the Foundation polls the Fellows each month on the key issues facing their respective countries.

1. In his speech during the UN General Assembly, President Trump said that the future belongs to nationalists and not globalists. Do you agree with this statement?

Yes 20 %

No 80 %

I do not know 0%

2. Do you think Iran is involved in the Saudi oil attacks?

Yes 56%

No 16 %

I do not know 28 %

3. In your opinion, what area is the most important for cooperation between US and Egypt? Please choose one of the below:

Security 12%

Combating terrorism 12%

Political 4 %

Economic 40%

Middle East peace 12%

Libya -

Israeli-Palestinian conflict 20 %

***Stay tuned for next month's question of the month and the Gabr Fellows' takes on current events, as our community of future leaders grapple with the most pressing challenges of today and tomorrow.***

# Syria: Debates won't change reality



By: Elizebeth Dent

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Over the past few weeks, my colleagues at MEI have debated whether the U.S. should stay in Syria or leave. Here I'd make a different argument: that it doesn't really matter. The president has already made the decision to leave, and while his aides may have been able to slow roll the troop drawdown, the reality is that Donald Trump has made it clear the U.S. will not disburse any additional resources. Even within the 2020 Democratic field, not a single candidate has advocated increasing resources. We need to face this reality and start making policy decisions based on the facts on the ground — in both Syria and Washington. Only then can we credibly work to ensure that, using the limited means at our disposal, events unfold in a way that aligns with U.S. interests — the most crucial of which should be to ensure Syria is not a haven for terrorism — and alleviates the suffering of the Syrian people.

Even with a heavy dose of realism, the task before us won't be easy. In the case of Syria, there are four examples of problematic decisions that will need to be remediated: 1) de-escalating the priority of counter-ISIS operations, creating the potential for a resurgence; 2)

ceding to Turkey control of the narrative and negotiations on a safe zone in the northeast; 3) refusing to acknowledge the current state of the Syrian civil war; and 4) adhering to the precondition that "Iran must go."

The question is no longer should we stay or should we go, it's what can we achieve with the resources we have? In Syria, we have 1,000 troops and no money. The U.S. should refocus its priorities on ISIS and acknowledge that we do not have the means to accomplish much else.

## **ISIS deprioritization and detentions will lead to a resurgence**

Thousands of ISIS members remain in the hands of the SDF. We've seen some progress on countries repatriating their citizens, including most recently Germany, which has committed to taking back over 100 German men, women, and children imminently, but as the Rojava Information Center (whose views reflect the anxieties of SDF leadership) concludes, it's clear there is no unified global strategy — and may never be — to deal with this issue.

The idea of convening an international court has gained some traction, including from UN ISIS investigator Karim Khan and countries like the Netherlands and Sweden, but as the European Council on Foreign Relations wrote in late May, it would take years to establish and then prosecute fighters. While doing so would go a long way toward sending the message that groups and individuals that commit crimes against humanity will be held responsible, it would do nothing about the immediate problem of what to do with detainees.

Unfortunately, the lack of a coherent policy from the U.S., the only country with an established presence on the ground with the SDF, is leading others to shirk their responsibility to repatriate their citizens or — at the very least — help provide the resources to detain them.

We now see one result: ISIS is already beginning to resurge, both in Iraq, where countering ISIS has taken a backseat to the administration's Iran campaign; and in Syria, where thousands remain in detention and lofty U.S. ambitions and declining resources have left all parties on the ground unable to plan long term.

### **A safe zone in the northeast is neither viable, nor in our interest**

My colleagues Gen. Joseph Votel and Gonul Tol recently wrote that the safe zone agreed upon by the U.S. and Turkey would not work because it fails to address the security concerns of both the Turks and the Kurds or provide a long-term solution for both sides.

The U.S. continues to fall for Turkey's saber-rattling, and this has resulted in a series of massive concessions. When Turkey purchased the S-400 missiles from Russia, it coupled its rhetoric with threats to invade northeast Syria. Out of fear of a Turkish incursion, aside from kicking Turkey out of the F-35 program, the U.S. response was notably muted — and days later, the U.S. cut a deal that appears to give Turkey the buffer zone in Syria it had long desired.

The U.S. went easy on a NATO ally that acquired an adversary's missile system apparently out of concern that a harsher U.S. reaction would precipitate a Turkish response that could potentially put U.S. troops in Syria in danger. At any other time, a move like that would have resulted in a harsh rebuke, if not sanctions. Instead, Turkey got exactly what it wanted — both the weapons system and a buffer zone in northeast Syria. While the U.S. may have staved off a Turkish incursion, it did so at the cost of expanding the mission for U.S. troops in an area where they are already understaffed and under resourced, and effectively rolled over when another country threatened their safety.

### **The Syrian civil war is coming to an end**

After a very short-lived ceasefire, the regime has restarted its campaign against opposition forces in Idlib Province, and it appears to be sustaining the momentum. Its relentless bombing campaign targeting civilians has never stopped horrifying the world, but where we once had hope that the international community might do something about it, the last eight years have proven us wrong. At this point, it is both reckless and irresponsible to pretend that the international community will ever intervene in Syria to alleviate the suffering caused by the brutal Assad regime.

While it may be true that the regime's current gains in Idlib are not sustainable, it is also true that the regime has both the backing of Russia and Iran and the ability to force a stalemate and box in opposition forces until it can regain strength and begin again. Full regime takeover of the final swath of opposition territory in Idlib is inevitable. That is not to say that areas which have already reconciled with the regime are safe or ideal — evidence shows they are not — but territorial victory and unifying the country are two very different goals, and the regime clearly does not care about the latter.

And yet, the State Department continues to message to the Syrian opposition as if it still has the same strength the opposition had in 2013 — almost as if the U.S. government were still considering intervention. It is time to utilize what little leverage the opposition has left to cut the best possible deal for the people of Syria. Any additional prolonging of the war perpetuates their suffering and will only lead to more lives lost with the same unavoidable outcome.

### **Iran will remain in Syria**

The Iranian-Syrian alliance did not begin in 2012; the two have been vital strategic allies since the Iranian revolution in 1979. Iran sees Bashar al-Assad's survival as critical to its regional power and has expended resources — both monetary and human — to ensure it. The U.S. policy of



demanding all Iranian boots leave Syria put a precondition on talks that neither country could ever meet, especially given how heavily Assad has leaned on Iranian forces to retake the majority of Syria.

Despite the heinous nature of the Assad regime and its Iranian backing, it would appear that both the U.S. and Israel have a vested interest in a stronger Syrian state — the only thing that would ensure Israeli security and deter Iranian aggression. Supporting or expanding conditions that work against it will only push Iran to sink its teeth further into the Syrian state apparatus, and yield the opposite result of that intended.

### Conclusion

Aides appear to have walked back, or at least significantly slowed, the president's December announcement that the U.S. was leaving Syria; however, absent additional policy attention, monetary resources, or troops on the ground, it is impossible for the U.S. to accomplish any of its lofty goals. The U.S. cannot ensure ISIS isn't a threat, protect the Kurds from a Turkish invasion or monitor a buffer zone, support opposition forces fighting Assad, and deter Iran with 1,000 troops on the ground and no money.

I would and could argue day and night for additional U.S. resources to be expended in Syria, especially for areas liberated from ISIS and counterterrorism operations. I strongly disagreed with the president's withdrawal announcement and decision to cut critical stabilization funding, but it's also clear to me he will not be walking that back. Experts, including former Special Presidential Envoy Brett McGurk, who resigned after the December announcement, have argued for months that we cannot

do more with less in Syria. That wasn't the case six months ago and it isn't now. It's time to start making hard decisions rooted in the fact that no additional attention or resources will be put toward our policy ambitions in Syria. That means refocusing on the counter-ISIS mission and scaling back everything else.

Once the U.S. government realigns its strategy implementation with the policy decisions the president has already made, the U.S. can start focusing on more realistic and attainable goals. Anything less will increase the risk to our troops, strain our relationship with Turkey, create unfair conditions for our SDF partners, and mislead and confuse the Counter-ISIS Coalition

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*Disclaimer: The views presented in this article are the authors' alone and do not represent the opinion of the Foundation. This article was originally published on [The Middle East Institute Website](#)*

Elizabeth Dent is 2015 Gabr Fellow and a non-resident scholar with the Middle East Institute's Countering Terrorism and Extremism program and a senior consultant with NTT Data.

**Stay tuned for more articles and thoughts from Gabr Fellows in the next newsletter.**

# The Gabr Fellowship Newsletter

For more information on the ShafikGabr Foundation and its *East-West: The Art of Dialogue* Initiative, please visit the website <https://eastwestdialogue.org/>.

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



Ludwig Deutsch, *Egyptian Priest Entering a Temple*, The Shafik Gabr Collection

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