



EWI VP and Head of the Conflict Prevention Program

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“Engaging Jordan and the Arab World”

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I am honored to be with you today, enjoying your hospitality at this famous location, and faced with the opportunity to learn more about Jordan through you. This is a young and dynamic country with a long history, which has been at the crossroads of civilizations. The Jordan River has been flowing through the veins of the world’s three great religions - Judaism, Christianity and Islam - since the time of Abraham. Moses, Jesus and the Prophet Mohammed are all linked to this land and have left their mark.

Today, Jordan continues to link different nations, faiths and cultures, uniting people of good will. Yours is a nation that cherishes diversity rather than fearing it and believes in building bridges and not walls. Yours is a nation which embraces modernity and innovation, interacts with other nations and engages in inter-religious dialogue. The "Amman Message" reveals a message of tolerance and humanity.

The purpose of my trip is to familiarize you with the EastWest Institute, build trust and confidence, establish contacts, and hopefully secure cooperation on issues of common interest for Jordan, the Arab world and EWI. We will search for common ground between the Arab and Western worlds and hope to explore possibilities for Jordan’s active participation in the Institute's Conflict Prevention program and other projects. Jordanian and Arab voices must be actively heard in all matters concerning global problem solving.

As a representative of the EastWest Institute it is not only an honor and a pleasure to be here, it is also an emotional journey back to the Institute’s founding. At the height of the Cold War, two Americans visiting Amman conceived the idea for the Institute’s founding. The formula was to create a new type of institution where Americans and Europeans could engage those with whom they did not agree on issues of international peace and security. The late King Hussein met with EWI Founder John Edwin Mroz and one of the first EWI fellows was Major General Yusuf Kawash, a former member of the Jordanian Army. In the fall of 2005 our Board of Directors made the decision to become a global institution. As a consequence, our name, “EastWest” took on a new meaning: the new rising East that includes China, India and the Arab/Muslim world, and the West. We have established contacts in China and India, and today we hope to explore with you – senior Jordanian government officials and business leaders – common areas of interest and opportunities for partnering and cooperating.

We believe that for EWI to fulfill its mission and "make the world a safer place" it must decisively shift its thinking about the Arab world. We hope to expand our network, which is united by the values of respect, fairness, responsibility, honesty and compassion, into this region and, with your help, set up channels for engagement and address strategic fault lines. We need to strengthen the Eastern element in EWI's work. The contacts that we build and our future cooperation with Jordan and the wider region will be crucial to our long-term strategic goals. In essence, we hope to bring current and emerging Jordanian decision-makers and specialists to the US and Europe for innovative discussions aimed towards strategic problem solving through our programs and projects. These discussions will hopefully create new mechanisms enabling dialogue among countries in the Middle East and the Euro-Atlantic community to defuse threats to stability and build bridges between the Arab world and the West in new ways.

Western discourse is selectively focused on the West's strategic concerns in your part of the world. Arab discourse is focused on the policies of the US, its allies and Israel. In their mutual obsession, the two parties have developed distrust. The result is "Islamophobia" in the West and anti-Americanism in the Arab world.

We need to overcome the growing mistrust between Western and Arab countries. We need to develop a new constructive relationship between our countries. Through its programs, EWI helps to bring about global transformation. We need to develop a vision of the future that is politically feasible and shared by the East and the West. We need to understand that the project of human civilization is a joint venture. Recognition of this basic fact can heal wounds and improve relations. We need to revive the cross-fertilization of ideas among cultures. EWI is at the forefront of this.

A thousand years ago, the Arab world championed the sciences, technology and public services. It strongly emphasized plurality, freedom of critical inquiry and the state's support for the sciences and rational thinking. Were the Arab world to reclaim its scientific and literary heritage and recreate this golden era, it could once again emerge as a thought leader for rest of the world.

The greatest challenge of the 21st Century is for us to come together, discover a common identity, reaffirm and restore universal human values, appreciate our common history and create a vision for a shared future.

It is necessary for all parties to move away from the blame game and seek common approaches to global problems. It is natural to have differences, but it is important to recognize these differences and address them so that we may find solutions that are acceptable to all. That is exactly what EWI has done best.

EWI believes that Jordan's role as a regional leader and its commitment to world peace and security make it an ideal partner for our efforts to forge new channels of dialogue and action between the Arab world and the West.

As I said, we hope to identify issues of common interest. Cooperation on the following EWI projects would bring us closer to achieving stability and better understanding:

The **Common Vision Initiative** seeks to find methods for mitigating and effectively managing tensions and conflicts between the West and the Arab world.

The **Violent Extremism and Radicalization Project** is designed to counter the tide of extremism by launching a series of activities involving all sectors of society to deepen our understanding of violent extremism and its root causes.

The **Global Solutions Initiative** is a leadership-based strategy for addressing critical issues related to conflict prevention and global security. We will convene future decision makers around specific challenges like water, extremism, weapons of mass destruction, and then focus and sustain their energies to create innovative global responses to these various challenges. We thus hope to create a new global leadership force. The focus is on horizon issues that can leverage short-term change, while building a new type of global leadership network. China and India have already agreed to participate. Jordan's engagement in this effort is very much welcomed. We hope to select a site for a modest leadership center here.

The **International Task Force on Preventive Diplomacy** will develop practical mechanisms to build domestic and international political will to shorten the time between early warnings and early responses to violent conflicts. The Task Force will not duplicate, but build on previous work. It will address the cracks in the current conflict prevention architecture, advocate for increased capacity-building, mainstream and institutionalize conflict prevention, foster coherent ideas and instruments, and advocate for determined and consistent action. An international group of approximately 15 renowned experts in the area of conflict prevention from around the world will form the Task Force Core Group. The Group will receive support from a high-level advisory group of eminent persons. I am honored to inform you that this morning His Royal Highness Prince Hassan accepted our invitation to become a member of this group.

EWI has an extraordinary track record of developing trust between the "old East" and the West. We believe the time has come to expand our work into this region and our projects are effective vehicles for doing just that.

We count on your support. Thank you.