

Closing Statements

of the

Middle East Military Technology Conference MEMTEC

29-30 October 2019

The proceedings of the Middle East Military Technology Conference (MEMTEC) – held on the 29th and 30th of October, 2019, alongside the second Bahrain International Defense Exhibition and Conference (BIDEC) – have now come to an end. Participants included high-ranking officials, experts, academics, and representatives of global companies specialized in manufacturing modern military equipment. Five sessions saw remarkable presentations and enriching discussions on the following topics related to military technology: the current technological scene, cyber-defense strategies, the impact of artificial intelligence on how armed forces operate, military technology's ability to render models that simulate potential wars, and the future of military technology in the Middle East.

Participants agreed on the following:

First: Despite modern technology's role in enhancing work efficiency within armed forces, to the extent of changing their doctrines in response to the changing concept of war and security threats, all countries should seriously cooperate to prevent terrorist groups and rogue nations funding them from possessing advanced technology, as this would alter the course of conflicts. Therefore, a grave responsibility falls on the international community to create an international legal system to confront this threat, in line with the active efforts of national legislative organizations, in order to ratify legislations that deter individuals and groups pursuing the acquisition of such technology and using it to threaten the national security of countries.

Second: The region witnessed the malign use of military technology in the attacks on oil tankers off the UAE coast and Saudi Arabia's ARAMCO oil facilities, which is a clear and present danger that has damaged oil producing areas and affected the backbone of the world economy, as well

as strategic international waterways. This calls upon global and regional powers to rise to the challenge and assume responsibility for protecting energy security through enduring mechanisms.

Third: Given the tremendous impact of the modern communication's revolution, which has led to an outburst of information, increasing the threat posed by cyber terrorism, numerous countries have established national centers specializing in countering cyber threats. Some countries have gone further to include countering cyber threats in their national security strategies. This reflects an awareness and responsibility to facing the danger that brings the threat of a new warfare that extends beyond the conventional concept of national sovereignty. This new type of warfare is easily accessible and carries the risk of profound ramifications and losses, requiring an international stance to establish alliances that confront the dangers of these new threats.

Fourth: Artificial Intelligence defense applications will no doubt bring forth a vital advancement, especially in safeguarding maritime security. However, this new development has several requirements and challenges that require research and consideration, in order to enhance military capabilities and efficiency in asymmetrical warfare.

Fifth: In addition to the importance of the ideas and opinions demonstrated in all sessions, there was a common agreement on the inevitable focus on pre-emptive measures, not only through plans and preventive procedures, but also through training armed forces on simulation models that mimic potential crisis scenarios. This trend has become a priority for several armed forces around the world. The GCC states have begun following this trend by conducting specialized exercises to achieve this goal.

Sixth: This conference has reaffirmed the fact that there is no room for discourse that involves national security outside the context of regional and international security. Threats have become all-reaching, demanding so that all those involved need to to confront them through cooperation; enhancing partnerships and alliances among regional countries and global powers, using mechanisms, such as localizing technology through plans

that identify regional technological requirements and clearing obstacles that delay their acquisition.

Based on the aforementioned opinions and conclusions, participants recommended the following:

First: Despite the change in the nature of war and the receding risks of conventional warfare, the careful choice and procurement of weaponry remains a strategic necessity, dictating the importance of investing in modern military technology to comply with the reality of current threats.

Second: The importance of devising adequate national security strategies to coincide with military development technologies.

Third: The necessary ratification of a number of regulations on the use of military technology by the international community – through the United Nations – to prevent armed militias from acquiring it and threatening the national security of countries, in addition to preventing countries from using such technology for non-peaceful purposes.

Fourth: Utilizing safe information exchange mechanisms between countries, as a basis to thwart terrorist groups plans and efforts to use modern technology in targeting state security without waging conventional wars.

Fifth: Amid multiple challenges facing regional and global security, setting priorities remains crucial, led by energy security and the security of vital waterways in general.

Sixth: Given the violent nature of current regional crises that pose a challenge to regional and global security, crisis management mechanisms must be devised to limit their impact, in addition to utilizing Artificial Intelligence applications to enhance defense capabilities of armed forces.

Participants expressed their profound gratitude, in its highest regard, to His Majesty King Hamad bin Isa Al-Khalifa, King of the Kingdom of Bahrain, for His Majesty's gracious patronage of the second Bahrain International Defense Exhibition and Conference. They also thanked Major General His Highness Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al-Khalifa, National Security Advisor,

Commander of the Royal Guard, and Chairman of the Supreme Organizing Committee, extending their gratitude to the Bahrain Defense Force and its Commander-in- Chief, His Excellency Field Marshall Shaikh Khalifa bin Ahmed Al-Khalifa, for their exceptional support and efforts in the success of the second edition of this event, which reflects the Kingdom's regional status and international recognition, established by its international strategic partnerships that were portrayed by this esteemed audience. The Kingdom of Bahrain shall remain a country of peace and an oasis of security and safety for those far and near.

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