

American University in Cairo

AUC Knowledge Fountain

Performances, Events, and Presentations

Fall 10-4-2023

CASAR Public Panel Discussion: "Global and Regional Repercussions of the 6th of October War: Arab and American Perspectives"

The Prince Alwaleed Center for American Studies and Research CASAR
casar@aucegypt.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://fount.aucegypt.edu/events_and_performances



Part of the [American Politics Commons](#), [Comparative Politics Commons](#), [International Relations Commons](#), and the [Political Theory Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

APA Citation

CASAR, T. (2023). *CASAR Public Panel Discussion: "Global and Regional Repercussions of the 6th of October War: Arab and American Perspectives"*.

https://fount.aucegypt.edu/events_and_performances/33

MLA Citation

CASAR, The Prince Alwaleed Center for American Studies and Research *CASAR Public Panel Discussion: "Global and Regional Repercussions of the 6th of October War: Arab and American Perspectives"*. 2023.

https://fount.aucegypt.edu/events_and_performances/33

This Lecture/Talk/Speech is brought to you for free and open access by AUC Knowledge Fountain. It has been accepted for inclusion in Performances, Events, and Presentations by an authorized administrator of AUC Knowledge Fountain. For more information, please contact fountadmin@aucegypt.edu.

October 4, 2023, at 1 p.m.
AUC New Campus History Department Conference Room
Event Report by Maha Muehlhaeusler

Event Title: Global and Regional Repercussions of the 6th of October War: Arab and American Perspectives

Summary:

With the 50th anniversary of the 6th of October War (1973) on the horizon, the CASAR department put together a panel to discuss different perspectives in the Middle East and United States. After an introduction to the CASAR department by Director Mark W. Deets, the panelists were introduced. This panel featured AUC History department professor Mouaness Højairi, who discussed and contrasted Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, and Lebanese perspectives. Also from the history department was Professor Michael Reimer, who discussed American Jewish and Israeli perspectives on the war. The special guest for this event was a panelist, a distinguished scholar from the University of Central Florida, David Dumke, who discussed the American perspective on the war. A former member of the United States Congress, Professor Dumke is the director of Global Perspectives and International Initiatives at his university and also co-hosted a public television programme discussing Middle East politics, diplomacy, and United States policies. After the three professors presented their unique findings, the panel was open to a Q&A, where event attendees were free to join the discussion as well.

Report:

With the 50th anniversary of the 6th of October War (1973) on the horizon, the CASAR department put together a panel to discuss different perspectives in the Middle East and the United States. After an introduction to the CASAR department by Director Mark W. Deets, the panelists were introduced. This panel featured AUC History department professor Mouaness Højairi, who discussed and contrasted Egyptian, Syrian, Palestinian, and Lebanese perspectives. Also from the history department was Professor Michael Reimer, who discussed American Jewish and Israeli perspectives on the war. The special guest for this event was a panelist, a distinguished scholar from the University of Central Florida, David Dumke, who discussed the American perspective on the war. A former member of the United States Congress, Professor Dumke is the director of Global Perspectives and International Initiatives at his university and also co-hosted a public television programme discussing Middle East politics, diplomacy, and United States policies.

The panel began with Professor Moaness Højairi, whose personal research is focused on history writing, identity formation, and nationalism in the Middle East. Højairi began by explaining the difference between the Syrian Republic and Egypt after the October War and the historical memory of the event as part of a “nationalist myth.” Interestingly, Højairi points to a similarity in the way elites and rulers establish themselves using the October War as this nationalist myth, but he questions to what extent the Syrian perspective can apply this perspective. The reason for this is argued to be that it was much easier for the Egyptian

narrative under President Sadat to make the claim that it was an Egyptian-Israeli conflict, focusing on the return of Sinai to Egypt and therefore the war being a huge Egyptian military success. In the Egyptian narrative, Hojairi emphasized the focus on the crossing of the canal and the annexed Sinai territory. In contrast, Syria does get the Golan Heights territory back, and this conflict is the last between Syria and Israel, as it turns into a conflict between Israel and Palestine. Hojairi turns to the positive side of the post-war perspective, which is a vacuum left by Egypt and therefore given a role that would not have been possible without '73. This vacuum was also escalated by the death of President Gamal Abdel Nasser. In terms of the Lebanese perspective, Hojairi argues that Lebanon, as a divided entity, is constantly held together by regional power. Following the vacuum of '73 and Egypt no longer under Nasser, it was one of the factors that allowed Lebanon to fall into civil war. In conclusion, Hojairi argues that the conditions that allowed Syria and Lebanon to exist today are the results of 1973.

The next panelist was CASAR's guest, David Dumke, who discussed the United States reaction and impact and condensed his arguments into several points. He begins with the United States and the Cold War. Dumke made the argument that the core of the United States involvement with Israel was Cold War diplomacy, as Israel had aligned itself as a Western state against communism. Dumke highlights the Nixon administration between 1969 and 1973, which included Roger's Plan, focused on sovereignty and peace, and highlights its failure. Dumke also emphasizes that US diplomacy focused on Egypt, not Syria. One of the important arguments Dumke made was that the result of '73 was a turning point for the nature of United States involvement, as aid became the biggest tool for regional diplomatic involvement and a United States "umbrella." Another point Dumke made was the timing of the war and the effect of this timing. Starting in 1972 was the Nixon administration Watergate scandal, and the United States began to pull out of Southeast Asia following the end of the war in 1973. This was a "huge prestige loss" for America, and what followed were the 1974 elections. There was a total change in power dynamics and foreign policy. A large class of freshman congressmen decided to reduce the power of party political financing of campaigns, and members had to rely on themselves to become reelected.

Professor Reimer added to the discussion by exploring the American Jewish perspective. He emphasized that the United States was surprised by Egypt's "brilliant move" across the canal. Reimer also argued that the United States and Israel became complacent after 1967, as part of this "myth of invincibility," and quoted a primary source stating, "Israel made the mistake of emphasizing the war between it and Egypt and the humiliation," referring to 1967. Using a personal touch, Reimer shares how he was in high school during the '73 war, and it was only in '73 that he discovered who the Jews in his school were, as they were very secular. He also added that there was immense sympathy for the Israeli cause and that the United Jewish Appeal from 1973–1974 raised 700 million dollars. Israel was able to recover from the war, Reimer argued, because of the outpour of support from American Jews, and he stressed the psychological impact of the war on American Jews. In conclusion, Reimer points out the importance of discussing the 1967 war in relation to the effects of the 1973 October War because it was a different kind of war. In 1967, Israel was celebrated, and in 1973, the disaster of what Jews have endured was awakened.

After the panelists shared their thoughts, there was time for a questionnaire from other panelists or students attending the event. Professor Reimer asked Professor Hojairi to explain

more about how the '73 war created conditions for war in Lebanon. Hojair explained in more detail how, from 1972 to 1973, the violence in Lebanon was not yet fully armed. The conditions after 1973 allowed for a violent and fully armed war. He described the October War as the "last straw" or a catalyst for the civil war in Lebanon. Another question was about media coverage of the 1967 war in the United States. The response by the panelists was that the media always showed many Arab states surrounding Israel. Professor Hojairi directed a question to Professor Dumke, asking if the United States ever changed its commitment, since in 1967 it was clear they were not going to allow for Israeli defeat. Dumke replied that Kissinger did not want Israel to lose, nor did the Arab countries; the "biggest loser is the Soviet Union," going back to the idea that, from the perspective of the United States, it was about the Cold War. Another question was: what was President Sadat's reasoning for crossing the canal without the backing of any international power? The panelists answered that though Sadat did have aid from the Soviet Union in terms of weaponry, for example, he did not want his political or militant plans to be dependent on the Soviet Union.