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## Security Roadmap for West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula

### Short Biographies of Tafahum Team Members

**Dr. Christian Koch** is Senior Advisor and Director of Research at the Bussola Institute in Brussels, Belgium. He also currently co-directs the Tafahum Project on a Security Roadmap for West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula sponsored by the German Federal Foreign Office and is a member of the Bertelsmann Foundation Strategy Group on “The EU and Russia, Turkey, Iran, Saudi Arabia: Strategies for the EU Neighbourhood.” Prior to joining the Bussola Institute, he served as Director of the Gulf Research Center Foundation, as Research Program Leader on Gulf-Europe Relations at the Gulf Research Center in Dubai and as Head of Strategic Studies at the Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, Abu Dhabi. Dr. Koch’s work combines the analysis of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states on pertinent foreign and security issues, with a particular interest in GCC-EU relations. He is particularly interested in better understanding the dynamics driving regional security issues in the Gulf region and promoting aspects of cooperative security among regional and international actors. Dr. Koch is the editor of eight books; author of *Politische Entwicklung in einem arabischen Golfstaat: Die Rolle von Interessengruppen im Emirat Kuwait*, coauthor of “Establishing a Regional Conference on Security and Cooperation in the Gulf Region”, as well as numerous chapter contributions and journal articles. Dr. Koch received his PhD from the University of Erlangen-Nürnberg.

**Adnan Tabatabai** is co-founder and CEO of CAPRO – Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient. He attained his master’s degree in Middle East Politics at the School of Oriental and African Studies / University of London. He holds an assigned lectureship at the Heinrich-Heine-University of Dusseldorf’s Institute for Social Sciences. As an Iran expert, Tabatabai is

consulted by European policymakers and businesses on Iran's domestic and external affairs. His analysis and commentary is regularly features in international media. Furthermore, Tabatabai has curates multiple publications and events on Iran. He is the author of the German book "Morgen in Iran – die Islamische Republik im Aufbruch" (2016, Edition Kröber-Stiftung).

**Jan Hanrath** is CEO and co-founder of CARPO – Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient. He studied political science, European law and psychology (focus on intercultural communication) at the University Duisburg-Essen and currently writes his PhD thesis on German public diplomacy in the Middle East. From 2008 to 2014 he was researcher at the Institute for Development and Peace (INEF) at the University Duisburg-Essen and served as an Associate Fellow at the INEF. In the past years he has worked as a researcher and coordinator in projects on Iran-Saudi dialogue, economic development in Yemen, migration and conflict, political transformation in the Middle East, and academic exchange. He has published inter alia on intercultural dialogues, Middle Eastern politics, new social media and political mobilization, and migration and conflict.

**Sanya Kapasi** has 15 years of wide ranging experience working with the Gulf Research Center. Her primary area of expertise is in event management, with specific focus on logistics and coordination involving participants, venues and travel. Many GRC events have been associated with projects, therefore she has deep insight into the dynamics of project-related events, including the precise handling of timing, tracking and troubleshooting issues. Sanya is multilingual – including fluent Arabic – and her event-related experience is global, with the principal focus areas being the Gulf region and Europe.

**Tobias Zumbrägel** is a researcher at CARPO as well as a research associate and PhD candidate at the Chair of Middle East Politics and Society at the Friedrich-Alexander-University of Erlangen-Nürnberg (Germany). He studied History, Political Science and Middle East Studies in Cologne, Tübingen (Germany) and Cairo (Egypt). Zumbrägel conducted extensive field research in Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait. His research focuses on questions of legitimacy, power and state authority in the Middle East with a special interest in environmental and digital transformation.

**Layla Ali** is Researcher at the Gulf Research Center (GRC) in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and Project Coordinator for Tafahum. She has received her Undergraduate degree in Politics and International Relations from the University of the West of England and her Master's of Science degree in International Relations from the University of Bristol, UK. Layla was previously a

Research Intern at the Gulf Research Center in 2017 where she oversaw research on defence and security, carried out data collection, preparation, and analysis, and conducted research reports addressing critical issues within the Gulf region. Layla is fluent in English, native in Arabic, and understands both French and Spanish.

**Thomas Pietzsch** is a M.A. student at the Department of Islamic Studies and Near East Languages at the Institute of Oriental and Asian Studies (IOA) at the University in Bonn. Next to his studies, he works as project assistant for the DAAD-funded project on 'Academic Approaches to Peacebuilding and State building in Yemen 'at the IOA of which CARPO is also a partner. Previously, he worked as a student assistant for a project on Middle Eastern travelogues to Europe and as a teacher of German language for refugee children.

**Vasim Ahmed Shaikh** is a Commerce Graduate from the University of Mumbai (India), he is a CA inter student from the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI). Vasim has completed an Article ship of 3 years under the M. P Kala and Co. (Chartered Accountants), India. Along with the academic qualification, he has also completed the Advance diploma in Computer Studies at BITS Ins., India. He is currently working with Gulf Research Center, as an Accounting Manager since 2003., managing the accounting and finance function of the Gulf Research Center and its inter group Companies:

Gulf Research Center – Dubai, UAE, Gulf Research Centre – Cambridge, UK

Gulf Research Center Foundation, Geneva, Gulf Research Center – Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

Knowledge Corporation LLC - Dubai, UAE.

His major responsibilities are to manage the Projects Accounting and Reporting. The Projects managed by him are:

- **Public Diplomacy and Outreach -Al Jisr** --- Gulf Research Center, Dubai and European Commission
- **Promoting Deeper EU-GCC Relations** --- Gulf Research Center, Saudi and European Commission
- **Gulf Labour Market and Migration (GLMM) program** --- Gulf Research Center Foundation, and Geneva and Open Societies Foundation (OSF)
- **INCONET-GCC2** (Gulf Research Center Foundation, Geneva and European Commission)
- **Tafahum Project on a Security Roadmap for West Asia and the Arabian Peninsula** Gulf Research Center Foundation (GRCF) and German Federal Foreign Office