



22 JANUARY 2024

ABU DHABI - UAE

UMEX and SimTEX Conference **CONFERENCE PROGRAMME**

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الإمارات العربية المتحدة
وزارة الدفاع



THEME

SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS: UNPRECEDENTED IMPACTS OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN EVOLVING UNMANNED ERA

08:00 – 08:30	Registration and Networking
08:30-08:45	Patron of the ceremony arrival to VIP Majlis
08:45 – 08:30	Seating of all guests in the main hall
08:45 - 08:50	Health and Safety Video
09:00 – 09:05	National anthem & Opening ceremony video
09:05 – 09:15	Inaugural and Welcome Speech by H.E. UAE Minister of State for Defense
09:15 – 09:30	Opening speech
09:30– 09:50	Keynote Presentation: Artificial Intelligence: An overview of the current landscape and AI impact on the future of intelligent autonomous systems
09:50– 10:30	Panel Discussion: Harnessing Disruptive Technologies: The true potential of technological advancements of unmanned systems.
10:30 – 10:50	Keynote Presentation: Future focus: The impact of autonomous systems in society and industry beyond defense.
10:50 – 11:10	Refreshment Break

THEME

**SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS:
UNPRECEDENTED IMPACTS OF
EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN
EVOLVING UNMANNED ERA**

11:10 – 11:30	Fireside Chat: Techniques and technologies: Understanding and mitigating the evolving threat posed by unmanned systems
11:30 – 12:10	Panel Discussion: The future of military operations: Integrating legacy systems with intelligent unmanned systems through manned/unmanned teaming.
12:10 – 12:30	Keynote Presentation: Investing in countermeasures and cybersecurity : in a rapidly changing threat landscape and all-to-all connectivity
12:30 – 13:10	Panel Discussion: Investment opportunities in the market and segments of accelerated growth.
13:10 – 13:30	Keynote Presentation: Laws on LAWS: The status of regulation on Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems
13:30 – 13:35	Closing Speech and concluding remarks
13:35 – 13:45	Honoring Ceremony

CONFERENCE OBJECTIVES



Show case innovation: provide a platform for discussing cutting edge technology, encouraging the exchange of ideas that drive innovation and development in unmanned systems market dynamics.



Integration strategies: discuss strategies for the seamless integration of the unmanned systems into existing infrastructure, addressing compatibility and improbability challenges.



Identify and address challenges and opportunities facing unmanned systems industry, fostering dialogue to find solutions and improve the field. As well as keeping participants informed of the latest advancements and market dynamics.

ABOUT

As the sixth edition of this influential event, UMEX 2024 brings together experts, innovators, and industry leaders to explore the latest advancements in unmanned systems. This conference serves as a platform for knowledge exchange, fostering collaboration with a focus on defense and commercial systems. UMEX 2024 is not only shaping the current landscape but also charting the course for the future of unmanned systems.



TOPICS The UMEX Conference under the theme of "Soaring to new heights: unprecedented impacts of emerging technologies in evolving unmanned era.

Keynote Presentation:

Artificial Intelligence:

An overview of the current landscape and AI impact on the future of intelligent autonomous systems.

Fireside Chat:

Techniques and technologies: Understanding and mitigating the evolving threat posed by unmanned systems.

Key Presentation:

Investing in countermeasures and cybersecurity: in a rapidly changing threat landscape and all-to-all connectivity.



SPEAKERS BIOGRAPHIES



H.E. Omran Sharaf,

Assistant Minister, Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation for Advanced Science and Technology, UAE

As UAE Assistant Foreign Minister for Advanced Science and Technology, Omran represents the Emirates globally in the field of advanced science, technology and space. In June 2022, he was appointed to chair the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Prior to these appointments, he was the Project Director of the Emirates Mars Mission (EMM) at the Mohammed bin Rashid Space Centre (MBRSC) in Dubai. He was responsible for developing, launching, and operating the mission, including the design, engineering and construction of the Hope probe, which reached its orbit of Mars on the 9th February 2021. Omran led the project from its initial conception and developed all the necessary capabilities and partnerships at MBRSC, effectively transitioning the organisation from one that focused on earth observation satellites to interplanetary exploration mission capability.

An experienced electronics and systems engineer, who trained in the

US and Korea, Omran was responsible for developing and implementing the Command & Data Handling Subsystem (C&DH) for the DubaiSat-1 high resolution LEO imaging satellite. He also headed the development of the C&DH subsystem and payload electronics subsystem for DubaiSat-2, along with being a systems engineer of that project.

Prior to EMM, Omran was Director of the Programs Management Department at MBRSC, which was responsible for defining new strategic programs, the project management office and the product and mission assurance functionalities of the Centre.

Omran earned his bachelor's degree in Electrical Engineering from the University of Virginia, USA, in 2005, and his Master's in Science and Technology Policy from the Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), South Korea, in 2013.

SPEAKER

**HE. Dr. Saeed Aldhaferi**

Director, Center for Futures Studies,
University of Dubai President, Robotics
& Automation Society - UAE UNESCO
co-chair in Anticipatory Systems
Visiting Lecturer in Artificial Intelligence
at Oxford University Member
of the WEF – Global Future
Councils - Metaverse

Dr. Saeed is a futurist, thought leader, AI ethicist, Author, and Public keynote speaker. He has been in many positions: the founder and former Director General of the Emirates ID Authority, a former member of the scientific advisory committee of the UAE Space Agency, and a former Advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs on information technology.

Currently, He is the director of the Center for Futures Studies at the University of Dubai, a visiting lecturer at Oxford University course: Artificial Intelligence: Generative AI, Cloud and MLOps (online), president of the UAE Robotics and Automation Society (RAS), a member of the Global Future Council of the World Economic Forum (WEF) on Metaverse, a UNESCO co-Chair on anticipatory systems, and he is on industrial advisory boards of several

universities in the UAE. Dr. Saeed is on the advisory board of several international forums including the World Ethical Data Foundation, friends of the forum committee of the Dubai Future Forum, and a senior fellow of the AI 2030: Responsible AI for a Better World initiative. He has participated as a member of the judging panel for the Dubai Future Expert Program.

He co-authored the book Digital Nation: How the UAE is building a future based on tech innovation. He has written several articles and reports that were published in Harvard Business Review Arabia, MIT Technology Review Arabia, and Dubai Policy Review Journal. He has been invited to speak at prestigious universities and international platforms including the University of Oxford, the University of Cambridge, the WEF, the UN, and OPEC.



DR YEHYA

Before joining Tawazun in 2009, Dr Yehya was with major Oil and Gas Company in Abu Dhabi for over 16 years. Prior to that, he had worked in Resources Centre in a major bank in the USA.

At Tawazun, he has led various people development initiatives such as:

- Leadership Development Program
- Establishment of MBA in Manufacturing Excellence
- Integration of Female Emirati National in manufacturing
- Facilitating the process of articulating vision, mission and values for the organization
- Conducting various people development workshops for senior staff
- Attracting and enticing young Emirati National to pursue their education in STEM-C (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math and Coding)
- Member of Executive Committee for establishing Business Incubator/ Accelerator

Dr Yehya served on the Executive Committee of Tawteen Program and later as a Chairman of the Executive Committee. He currently serves on:

- Board Member of Emirates Post Group
- Member of the Executive Board of UAE University, College of Business and Economy.
- Member of the Board of the Academic Affairs at Zayed University.
- Member of the Evaluation and Assessment Executive Committee of Ministry of Interior's Quality Award.
- Member of Khalifa Innovation Center Executive Committee.
- Member of the executive judging panel for Federal Authority for Government Human Resources.

He has co-authored articles that were published in the National HRD Journal and American Society for Training and Development (ASTD) publication. Dr Yehya has participated as a keynote speaker in local and international conferences. Dr Yehya has completed his undergraduate and graduate studies in the USA and has obtained his Doctorate Degree from the Bradford University in the UK.

SPEAKER

**H.E DR. MOHAMED AL KUWAITI**

Head of Cyber Security
UAE Government

Dr. Al Kuwaiti is currently holding the position of the Managing Director of the National Data Centre under the Supreme Council for National Security. He is also working as Assistant Professor (Adjunct) of Homeland Security Program at Rabdan Academy. In his current role Dr. Al Kuwaiti aims to create a fully governed approach to data privacy, sharing and processing as well as the unification and connectivity of government systems and digitization towards a smart government.

His interests are consulting on detecting, monitoring and responding to cyber warfare, Network Forensics, Corporate Governance & Process, and national cyber policy. He is an honorable member of Society of Engineers -UAE, IEEE Society, Golden Key National Honor Society and Computer Society. He is a visiting lecturer on Cyber Security at few universities such as Khalifa University and National Defense College in Abu Dhabi.

**Dr. Fan Zhu**

Chief Technology Officer,
Bayanat

As the CTO, Dr. Fan outlines the technological vision of Bayanat, from optimizing the production workflow to augmenting the product portfolio with cutting-edge technology. Prior to joining Bayanat, Dr. Fan was leading the G42 map department, and one of the founding directors of the Inception Institute of Artificial Intelligence of G42. He also spent two and a half years with the New York University Abu Dhabi as a research fellow focusing on 3D Computer Vision. Dr. Fan has authored/co-authored over 100 papers in top AI conferences and journals, and he holds 5 US, Europe and China patents. Dr. Fan holds a PhD degree in Computer Vision and a MSc degree with distinction in Electrical Engineering from the University of Sheffield.

SPEAKER



Dr. Sherif Hashem

Professor of Information Sciences and Technology at George Mason University (GMU).

Dr. Hashem is a Full Professor of Information Sciences and Technology at George Mason University (GMU). His professional and research interests include cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, cyber policies and strategies, and management of information security. He has 5 published book chapters and over 60 professional reports and refereed articles in international journals and conference proceedings.

Dr. Hashem is the Former Chair of the Board of Directors of FIRST (Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams). He is a member of the African Union's Cybersecurity Expert Group (AUCSEG), a Senior IEEE member and an ISACA Certified Information Security Manager (CISM).

Over the last two decades, Dr. Hashem led several key cybersecurity efforts at the national level, and set up the framework for further developing the Egyptian Computer Emergency Readiness Team (EG-CERT). In 2016, He became the Chairman of the

Executive Bureau of Egypt's Supreme Cybersecurity Council. He led the team that drafted Egypt's first National Cybersecurity Strategy (2017-2021). Successful cybersecurity initiatives and activities led by Dr Hashem have contributed to Egypt's advanced cybersecurity rank: 14th among 193 countries, as reported by the ITU Global Cybersecurity Index in July 2017.

At the international level, Dr Hashem was an expert member of the United Nations Group of Government Experts (UN GGE) on the Developments In The Field Of Information And Telecommunications In The Context Of International Security (Aug 2012 - June 2013), a 15-members high-level group of experts that developed strategic cybersecurity reports to be endorsed by the UN General Assembly. He has been invited to give cyber security and ICT professional and strategic keynote speeches by numerous leading international organizations including: UN, ITU, Interpol, OECD, African Union, the League of Arab States.

Dr. Hashem received a Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Purdue University-USA, a M.Sc. in Engineering Mathematics and a B.Sc. in Communication & Electronic Engineering from Cairo University-Egypt. He completed the Senior Executive Program at Harvard Business School-USA. He received several awards and recognition including: the Global Bangemann Challenge Award from the King of Sweden (Stockholm - 1999).

**Dr. Robert W. Sadowski**

Army Chief Roboticist (Robotics ST) U.S. Army CCDC Ground Vehicle Systems Center

and is guiding development of robotics and autonomous systems technology as part of the Army Modernization

Enterprise. Dr. Sadowski is a graduate of the United States Military Academy with a Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering (BSEE) and received his M.S. and Ph.D. in electrical engineering from Stanford University as a Fannie and John Hertz Fellow. He also holds a Master's degree in Strategic Studies from the United States Army War College. He is a recent Meritorious Presidential Rank Award Recipient.

Dr. Robert W. Sadowski is a member of the Scientific and Professional (ST) cadre of the Senior Executive Service and serves as the United States Army's Senior Scientist for Robotics within the Research, Technology and Integration Directorate at the United States Army CCDC Ground Vehicle Systems Center in Warren, MI.

Dr. Sadowski previously served twenty nine (29) years of active United States Army duty culminating as the Electrical Engineering Program Director and Academy Professor at the United States Military Academy in the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science where he continues working with the faculty.

Dr. Sadowski has over forty (40) months of operational experience in Southwest Asia in a

variety of leadership, staff, and engineering positions including Iraq and Afghanistan. He currently chairs the OSD Autonomy Community of Interest

SPEAKER

**Gary W. Rosholt**

RADM, USN(Ret)

Vice President L3Harris United Arab Emirates

Gary Rosholt is the Vice President of L3Harris Technologies United Arab Emirates. He leads the corporate office in the United Arab Emirates and is responsible for all aspects of the company's business interests in the Middle East region, except Saudi Arabia, including strategy, operations, and growth of L3Harris programs as well as successful execution of all ongoing business.

Previously, he was a partner and Chief Executive Officer of Trident Military Equipment Trading, LLC in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

In 2015, Rear Admiral Rosholt retired from the US Navy after more than 35 years of active and reserve military service as a US Navy SEAL. Highlighting his career was his Flag officer assignment as the Senior Defense Official / Defense Attaché in the US Embassy in Abu Dhabi and Mr. Rosholt is a Board Member-at-Large for the American Chamber of Commerce, Abu Dhabi as well as the Private Sector Co-Chair of the Overseas Security Advisory

Council for the Abu Dhabi chapter.

L3Harris Technologies is an agile global aerospace and defense technology innovator, delivering end-to-end solutions that meet customers' mission-critical needs. The company provides advanced defense and commercial technologies across air, land, sea, space and cyber domains.

L3Harris has approximately \$17 billion in annual revenue and 48,000 employees, with customers in more than 100 countries. L3Harris.com.

Prior to that, the Deputy Commanding General, Special Operations Command for the United States Central Command. Operational assignments included deployments with SEAL Teams, Underwater Demolition Teams and Special Boat Units to the Western Pacific and Middle East regions. In his civilian career, he was a consultant focusing on US Special Operations peculiar research, development and acquisition programs.

Mr. Rosholt is a graduate of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign with a degree in Electrical Engineering and holds a Master of Science degree in Operations Management from the University of Arkansas. He was licensed as a Professional Engineer by the Commonwealth of Virginia.



James Anthony Morse

His Excellency
Rabdan Academy President

James was appointed as the President of Rabdan Academy, Abu Dhabi, 12 August 2016.

Rabdan Academy provides a future class multi-disciplinary learning environment of choice for the continuing development and integration of safety, security, defense, emergency preparedness and crisis management professionals. It develops individual and organizations to future-class standard that ensures a highly specialized, multi-disciplinary, coherent, robust and sustainable national capability for protection of the international community, its people and its asset.

James' new role comes after a most successful and rewarding 34 year career in the Royal Navy, which culminated in the role of Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Capability), Controller of the Navy and Chief of Staff of Navy HQ.

James joined the Royal Navy in 1982, serving in a spectrum of ships, from Patrol Craft to Aircraft Carrier, commanding HM Ships DASHER,

SUTHERLAND, NORFOLK and CHATHAM. He also commanded the United Kingdom Task Group, deploying to the Gulf, and was based in Washington DC as the Chief of Defence Staff's Liaison Officer to the Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff. He has sailed many of the World's oceans during his career, taking part in operations and exercises across the globe, but with a strong bias to the Middle East and South Atlantic. His shore postings have included the Permanent Joint Headquarters and within the Ministry of Defence he was the Assistant to the First Sea Lord and the Director Force Development. He also led the team undertaking the Navy Command Review, a significant change programme. As a Rear Admiral he was Commandant of The Joint Services Command and Staff College (JSCSC) and Director General of the Defence Academy. He holds a BSc in Mechanical Engineering from Bristol University and an MA in International Relations from King's College London. He is a graduate of the Higher Command and Staff Course at JSCSC and the Royal College of Defence Studies in London, has a Diploma in Company Direction at the Institute of Directors and is a Trustee of the Coastal Forces Heritage Trust. He was appointed as a Companion in the Most Honourable Order of the Bath in the New Years Honours 2016.

SPEAKER


John W. Nicholson Jr.

Retired U.S. Army General
Chief Executive,
Lockheed Martin Middle East

John Nicholson is the Chief Executive for Lockheed Martin in the Middle East and was appointed in December 2021. Residing in Abu Dhabi, he is responsible for the company's strategy, operations, and growth in the UAE, Kuwait, Jordan, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Iraq, Lebanon and Pakistan. General Nicholson last served as the Commander of all U.S. Forces and the 41 nation NATO-led Coalition in Afghanistan from 2016 to 2018. Before that, he served as Commander of NATO's Allied Land Command and Commanding General of the 82nd Airborne Division. Commissioned in 1982, he served as an infantry officer at all levels with over six years in combat. He lived in Europe and the Middle East for more than twelve years, forging close relationships with security leaders in those regions. Following retirement from active duty in November 2018, he became the President of the Pentagon Federal Credit Union Foundation supporting post 9-11 combat veterans, service members, caregivers, and

their families. The foundation created an educational program and venture capital fund which trained and invested in veteran entrepreneurs. He has been a mentor to U.S. general officers through the U.S. National Defense University and to NATO flag officers through the NATO Senior Mentor Program. He is a member of the Harvard's Belfer Center Elbe Group which has maintained a track two dialogue between retired Russian and American senior officials. He has previously been an adjunct faculty member in Harvard's John F. Kennedy School Senior Executives in National and International Security Program. General Nicholson holds Bachelor's Degrees from the United States Military Academy and Georgetown University and Master's Degrees from the School for Advanced Military Studies and the National Defense University as well as two honorary doctorate degrees.



Tim Allen,
CEO, Houbara Defence & Security

moving on to QinetiQ plc in 2013 as the company's MENA Regional Director. Tim assumed the leadership of Houbara when QinetiQ and MGE established the Joint Venture in Abu Dhabi in 2018.

Tim retains a keen interest in the potential of technology to enhance training and improve operational performance and his current portfolio extends to providing, maintaining and operating unmanned systems for military training in both the aerial and maritime domains.

Brigadier (rtd.) Tim Allen is the Chief Executive Officer of Houbara Defence & Security LLC, a joint venture between QinetiQ plc and Middle East General Enterprises (MGE). Established in the United Arab Emirates, Houbara provides access to QinetiQ's portfolio of global services and products. As a leading international supplier of defence and security technical expertise, QinetiQ is widely trusted as an independent source of pan-domain products, advisory services and innovative solutions.

Tim Allen has focussed on the Middle East region throughout both his military and commercial careers. During 31 years of service with the British Army he gained operational experience in Northern Ireland, Oman, the Balkans, Iraq and Afghanistan. Following regimental command, he specialised in the delivery of joint and combined arms training, culminating in commanding the UK's Collective Training Group. Tim Allen left the British Army in 2010 to join Cubic Defence Applications, before

SPEAKER

**Ernesto Damiani**

Dean of the College of Computing and Mathematical Sciences, Director of the Center for Secure Cyber-Physical Systems at Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi, Full Professor at the Department of Computer Science, Università degli Studi di Milano. President of the National Interuniversity Consortium for Computer Science.

Ernesto Damiani is Dean of the College of Computing and Mathematical Sciences, Director of the Center for Secure Cyber-Physical Systems at Khalifa University, Abu Dhabi, and Full Professor at the Department of Computer Science, Università degli Studi di Milano, Italy, where he leads the SESAR research lab, and President of the National Interuniversity Consortium for Computer Science.

His research interests include Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Cyber-physical systems, secure service-oriented architectures, privacy-preserving big data analytics and cyber-physical systems security. Ernesto holds/has held visiting positions at a number of international institutions, including George Mason

University in Virginia, US, Tokyo Denki University, Japan, LaTrobe University in Melbourne, Australia, and the Institut National des Sciences Appliquées (INSA) at Lyon, France.

He is a Fellow of the Japanese Society for the Progress of Science and has been Principal Investigator in a number of large-scale research projects funded by the European Commission, the Italian Ministry of Research and by private companies such as British Telecom, Cisco Systems, SAP, Telecom Italia, Siemens Networks (now Nokia Siemens) and many others.

He serves in the editorial board of several international journals; among others, he is the EIC of the International Journal on Big Data and of the International Journal of Knowledge and Learning and is associate editor of the IEEE Transactions on Service-oriented Computing and of the IEEE Transactions on Fuzzy Systems.

He has served as vice-chair of the IEEE Technical Committee on Industrial Informatics. In 2008, Ernesto was nominated ACM Distinguished Scientist and received the Chester Sall Award from the IEEE Industrial Electronics Society. Ernesto has co-authored more than 870 scientific papers and many books, including "Open Source Systems Security Certification" (Springer 2009).



Daniel F. Baltrusaitis
Ph.D DEFENSE SECTOR CONSULTANT

Prof. Daniel F. Baltrusaitis was the Assistant Commandant for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College at the National Defense College of the UAE. Dean Baltrusaitis has served in a number of university positions including Professor of Strategy and Strategic Studies at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies at National Defense University in Washington D.C.; Professor of Strategy, Comparative Defense Strategies, and Leadership at the National Defense College in the United Arab Emirates; Associate Professor of International Security Studies, Dean of Resident Academics at the U.S. Air War College; and Director of Outreach and Engagement for the Spaatz Center for Officer Education.

Prof. Baltrusaitis' research interests include defense strategy, coalition and alliance politics, contemporary defense affairs, international relations and joint operational art. Dean Baltrusaitis' professional journal articles have appeared in a variety of publications and he is the author of a study of the Iraq War alliance structure titled *Coalition Politics and the Iraq War: Determinants of Choice* (Lynne Rienner, 2009)

SPEAKER



Prof Fakhreddine (Fakhri) Karray

Professor of Machine Learning,
MBZUAI

Fakhri Karray is the inaugural co-director of the University of Waterloo Artificial Intelligence Institute and

served as the Loblaws Research Chair in Artificial Intelligence in the department of electrical and computer engineering at the University of Waterloo, Canada. He is also Professor of Machine Learning at the

Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI), a research-oriented artificial intelligence (AI) graduate institution in Abu Dhabi, UAE, where professor Fakhri has held the position of Provost. Fakhri's

research focuses on operational and generative AI, cognitive machines, natural human-machine

interaction, and autonomous and intelligent systems, with applications to virtual care systems, cognitive

and self-aware devices, and predictive analytics in supply chain management and intelligent transportation

systems. He holds editorial roles in major publications related to intelligent systems and information fusion.

Fakhri's latest textbook, "Elements of Dimensionality Reduction and Manifold Learning," was published by

Springer Nature in 2023. In 2021, he was honored by the IEEE Vehicular Technology Society (VTS) with the

IEEE VTS Best Land Transportation Paper Award for his pioneering research on enhancing traffic flow

prediction using deep learning and AI. Furthermore, his research on federated learning in communication

systems earned him and his co-authors the 2022 IEEE Communication Society's MeditCom Conference Best

Paper Award. He holds fellowship status in the IEEE, the Canadian Academy of Engineering, and the

Engineering Institute of Canada. Additionally, he has served as a Distinguished Lecturer for the IEEE and is

a Fellow of the Kavli Frontiers of Science. Fakhri earned his Ph.D. from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, USA.



Stanislas de la Motte

Admiral (Retired), Navy Advisor to the Chairman and C.E.O., Naval Group

Born in 1964, Admiral Stanislas de La Motte joined the French Naval Academy in 1983. He attended the High Military Studies Course from September 2010 to June 2011.

He was the Deputy Chief of Staff of the French Navy from December 2018 to August 2022 and promoted to Vice-Admiral on the 24th December 2018.

He has been General Inspector of the Armed Forces – Navy since 1st August 2022 date of his promotion as Admiral, to the 1st of July 2023.

Retired at this date, he joined Naval Group as naval advisor of the society.

Previous assignments and posts:

- Navy headquarters – Head of nuclear affairs and risk management department (2017-2018), promoted to Rear-Admiral on the 1st July 2018
- Navy headquarters – Coordinating Authority for International Relations (2016-2017)
- Deputy Commander of the Submarine Forces (2014-2016)

- Ministry of Defence – Head of the homeland operations office (2011-2014), promoted to Commodore on the 1st August 2014

- Joint Military Staff – Head of joint logistics department (2009-2010)

- Navy headquarters – Head of naval support department (2006-2009)

- Chief of staff of the Submarine Squadron in Toulon (2004-2006)

- Nuclear safety officer of CVN Charles de Gaulle (2002-2004)

- Joint Military Staff – Nuclear safety analysis officer for Nuclear Forces (1999-2002)

- Sea and shore training officer at the Submarine Squadron in Toulon (1996-1998)

- Chief Engineer of SSN Perle (1994-1996)

- Assigned to various submarines from 1986 to 1996

Education:

- 1983: Naval Academy

- 1987: MOD Nuclear Power School

- 1998: Joint Defence College

- 2010: High Military Studies Course (CHEM) and Higher Studies in National Defence Institute (IHEDN).

He has been awarded various medals including the French Legion of Honour with the rank of Commandeur.

Admiral de la Motte is married and father of six children.

SPEAKER


Robert (Bob) S. Harward

VADM, USN (Ret.) SEAL Executive Vice President International Business & Strategy Shield AI

VADM (Ret) Bob Harward is Shield AI's Executive Vice President for International Business and Strategy. Prior to joining Shield AI, Bob served as the Chief Executive for Lockheed Martin Middle East and was recognized by Forbes as one of the fifty (# 10) most influential CEOs in the Middle East.

Bob has lived in Abu Dhabi for nine years. A National Security Expert in both theory and application, he served on the National Security Council for the Bush administration, commissioned the National Counter Terrorism Center, and has extensive combat experience as a U.S. Navy SEAL in Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Somalia, Yemen and Bosnia, as well as the rest of the Middle East. Bob is a U.S. Naval Academy alum; holds a master's degree in International Security Affairs from the Naval War College and a graduate of MIT's Foreign Policy Program.

As a Vice Admiral (SEAL) in the United States Navy, his last assignment was as Deputy Commander, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM).

He was also requested by President Trump to serve as his National Security Advisor.

Bob is a professional parachutist and has performed all over the world to include setting the world record by jumping on to Mount Everest. He enjoys all forms of physical and intellectual competition to include Racquetball, Squash, Triathlons, Chess, Poker, and Physical training.



Ashfaq Ladha

Senior Vice President Mergers & Acquisitions/Corporate Finance, EDGE Group

Ashfaq leads the M&A function at EDGE Group and is responsible for transactions end to end.

Ashfaq has over 20+ years of solid experience in London, Dubai and Abu Dhabi within Blue-Chip organizations that include EY, Mubadala Investment Company, and EDGE Group, advising on complex commercial and M&A transactions, leading the finance function, and served as a member of the Audit & Risk Committee.

For over ten years, Ashfaq has been providing his expertise in the aerospace and defence sector. Additionally, Ashfaq has in-depth experience in manufacturing, investments, and real estate.

Ashfaq holds a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Cardiff Business School, is an Associate and Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, and is a CFA Charter holder. Ashfaq has also completed numerous

post-graduate courses with London Business School, Oxford University, and INSEAD, in addition to others, covering institutional private equity, leadership, CFO development, and advanced negotiations.

Ashfaq is a member of the Board of Directors for AL TARIQ.

SPEAKER


Vice Admiral Brad Cooper,

Commander, U.S. Naval Forces
Central Command

Vice Adm. Brad Cooper is the son of a career Army Officer. He is a 1989 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy, and earned a master's degree in Strategic Intelligence from the National Intelligence University. He has also studied national security policy and international relations at Harvard and Tufts Universities.

A career Surface Warfare Officer, he served on guided missile cruisers, guided missile destroyers, aircraft carriers and amphibious assault ships. His ship commands include USS Russell (DDG 59) and USS Gettysburg (CG 64). Cooper is particularly proud of the extraordinary men and women with whom he served on sea duty during 9 deployments and 13 real-world operations all around the world. His amazing Sailors in USS Gettysburg earned the Battenberg Cup as the best ship, submarine or aircraft carrier in the Navy's Atlantic Fleet.

Ashore, he served in a variety of executive, military assistant and special assistant roles in the White House,

the Office of the Secretary of Defense, U.S. Africa Command and U.S. Pacific Fleet headquarters. He also served as principal U.S. Advisor to the Interior Minister of Afghanistan and Director, Surface Warfare Officer assignments (Pers-41).

As a flag officer, he mostly recently served as commander, Naval Surface Force Atlantic. Previous tours include service as Chief of Legislative Affairs, where he lead the Navy's engagement efforts with the U.S. Congress; commander, U.S. Naval Forces Korea during the height of tensions on the Korean Peninsula in 2016-2017; and, commander, Expeditionary Strike Group 7 in Okinawa, Japan, where he lead 7th Fleet's Navy-Marine Corps team on the U.S. military's first F-35 deployment.

Cooper has been recognized with various personal and unit-level awards including the Distinguished Service Medal and Bronze Star Medal. He is a recipient of the Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Award for Visionary Leadership.



Dr. Ray O. Johnson

Chief Executive Officer
Technology Innovation
Institute

Dr. Ray O. Johnson is the Chief Executive Officer of the Technology Innovation Institute (TII), the applied research pillar of Abu Dhabi's Advanced Technology Research Council (ATRC). He is also the Chief Executive Officer of the business development and program management arm of ATRC.

Under his leadership, TII has grown to become one of the world's leading research institutes pushing the frontiers of knowledge, attracting the best global talent, and pioneering R&D breakthroughs across new technologies. His collaborative approach has delivered game-changing partnerships with governments, research institutes, universities, and industry partners around the world, which help drive solutions to some of society's most pressing challenges.

In the past year, Dr. Johnson's tenure has seen key milestone announcements including the launch of the MENA region's first electromagnetic compatibility laboratories for high-energy laser and microwave testing as well as the region's first impact lab to test and manufacture advanced materials and composites under extreme conditions. Further achievements include the development of NOOR, the world's largest Arabic natural language processing (NLP) model to date; building the UAE's first national and sovereign cryptography libraries; developing variations of a post-quantum cryptography library; the construction of a state-of-the-art directed energy facility that

offers advanced pre-qualification testing in the UAE; and starting work on building the first quantum computer in the Arab world.

TII now employs 1000+ team members spanning 80 nationalities, of which 225+ are UAE Nationals. Together, Dr. Johnson's team has made a significant scientific contribution with more than 1100 publications and 40+ patents.

Dr. Johnson brings to TII decades of experience in global technology leadership, making strategic investments in disruptive technologies and developing business strategies that resulted in several new billion-dollar lines of business. He has collaborated with leaders in the highest echelons of government, industry, and academia, and he is frequently sought after as a speaker at global forums on business, strategy, innovation, and education.

Before joining TII, he was an Operating Partner at Bessemer Venture Partners, a top-tier American venture capital company. Prior to this, he was Corporate Senior Vice President and Chief Technology Officer of the Lockheed Martin Corporation, in Maryland, USA, where he was responsible for the corporation's operational performance and the associated board-reportable metrics. He led Engineering and Technology, Production Operations, Global Supply Chain, Program Management, and Logistics and Sustainment, while managing more than 72,000 people working on over 4,000 programs. He also led the Advanced Technology Laboratory in Cherry Hill, New Jersey, a profit and loss (P&L) center focused on generation-after-next technologies, and the Center for Innovation, that conducts collaborative experimentation and analysis.

Dr. Ray O. Johnson holds Ph.D. and M.S. degrees in Electrical Engineering from the Air Force Institute of Technology in Ohio, USA. He is a Full Academician of the International Academy of Astronautics, and a Fellow of the International Society for Optical Engineering (SPIE), the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), and the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA).

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See you in

2026



