

Interview with CNN Business Arabic on the ceasefire announcement & impacts, 9 Apr 2026

In this TV interview with CNN Business Arabia, aired 9th April 2026, Dr. Nasser Saidi discusses the ceasefire announcement pausing the war in Iran & wider conflict in the Middle East. He says that the recent market rallies are unsustainable, reflecting a temporary reaction to the truce amidst the continued closure of the Strait of Hormuz and ongoing pressure in the oil and gas markets. Sharp fluctuations in oil, stock, and bond prices are likely, with current investor gains remaining temporary given the uncertainty. Inflation is expected to persist, driven by rising energy and insurance costs. Shipping, aviation, and tourism indicators will be closely monitored as crucial factors influencing market direction.

Watch the interview below.

Interview with Al Arabiya Business on the Fed's rate decision in the backdrop of

the Iran war, 18 Mar 2026

In this TV interview with Al Arabiya aired on 18th March 2026, Dr. Nasser Saidi discussed the Fed's expected and unavoidable decision to hold rates steady in the face of higher expected inflation in the US and globally as a result of higher energy prices, higher agricultural and food prices, plastics, transport & logistics, along with supply chain disruptions. While the impact depends on the length, breadth, scope and intensity of the war, the effects will be longer lasting given destruction of critical infrastructure including energy, water and desalination, ports and airports and potentially digital connectivity.

Dr. Saidi states that we are moving into uncharted territory. Expect greater policy coordination between G7 central banks.

Watch the interview below.

Comments on Hormuz trade alternatives in AGBI, Mar 17 2026

Aathira Prasad's comments appeared in an article in AGBI titled "[UAE businesses scramble for Hormuz trade alternatives](#)" published on 17th March 2026.

The comments are posted below.

The problem, analysts say, is not just the existence of alternatives, but their limits. Capacity constraints, higher

transport costs and longer transit times mean these routes cannot absorb the volumes that normally pass through Hormuz.

"[Multimodal routes] are quite costly and time consuming. And there aren't sufficient, say, trucks that you can use to transport these goods from one place to the other," said Aathira Prasad, director of macroeconomics at Nasser Saidi and Associates.

Roughly 20 million barrels of oil a day transit the waterway. By comparison, an oil tanker truck typically carries about 240 barrels. Replacing 20 million barrels daily by road would require around 83,000 truck journeys every day.

A significant share of trade entering the UAE has been re-exported from here to other markets," Prasad said. "So there are lots of dependencies here which have come to an abrupt halt."

Crises of this scale often accelerate structural change. Analysts expect the disruption to sharpen the focus on supply chain resilience and alternative logistics infrastructure across the Gulf. "Projects like Etihad Rail become quite important because suddenly you have connectivity within the Emirates. If you extend it across the GCC, it will become an alternative infrastructure that you don't have in place currently," Prasad said.

Regional policymakers may also move to activate long-discussed cross-border logistics systems. Customs corridors across the GCC – previously largely conceptual – could gain momentum. Saudi Arabia last week launched a new Logistics Corridors Initiative aimed at strengthening supply chain resilience and facilitating cargo movement between the kingdom's ports and those across the GCC.

"You always see a shift immediately after a crisis," she

added.

“GCC can emerge as ‘Middle Powers’ in second Cold War”, Op-ed in Arabian Gulf Business Insight (AGBI), 9 Jan 2024

The opinion piece titled [“GCC can emerge as ‘Middle Powers’ in second Cold War”](#) appeared in the Arabian Gulf Business Insight (AGBI) on 9th January 2024.

The article is published below.

GCC can emerge as ‘Middle Powers’ in second Cold War

Three factors will enable the GCC to benefit from the fragmentation

We are living in a second Cold War. A multipolar world is evolving as governments adopt policies that are leading to increased economic and financial fragmentation.

Trade, foreign direct investment and financial flows are increasingly encumbered by regulatory and legal restrictions.

The number of global trade restrictions introduced each year has nearly tripled since the pre-pandemic period, reaching almost 3,000 last year, according to the International Monetary Fund.

The result is a restructuring of global supply chain networks. Political decisions dubbed “friend-shoring”, “near-shoring” or “on-shoring” imply increased geo-political fragmentation and de-globalisation.

While the speed of globalisation slowed after the 2008 financial crisis, a major trigger of de-globalisation was the Trump administration’s policy of “China decoupling”.

This was subsequently relabelled “China de-risking” and described in Washington as a policy that aimed to prevent Beijing from emerging as a global tech power.

This tech war, which started with restrictions on access to high-performance chips, has expanded. Now barriers have been imposed on trade, foreign direct investment and financial flows.

The Russia-Ukraine war, the conflict in Gaza and the spillover effects have widened the geo-economic-political fragmentation, resulting in the second Cold War.

Two blocs, but allies don’t always agree

Two major blocs are emerging: the US and its allies, and China-Russia and their allies. Other countries fall into a multi-faceted, multi-interest grouping.

Even within the blocs, there is increased political fragmentation and divergence of interests – notably between the US and the European Union. The upshot of geo-strategic confrontation is a ratcheting up of military spending, at the

cost of addressing economic development and investment.

Strategic mistakes, miscalculation and events may lead to the Cold War becoming hot.

National security narratives are increasingly dominating economic policy decisions. Trade is weaponised, while investment (inward and outward), finance and payment systems are affected. National security interests imply a re-engineering and redesigning of food, energy and tech supply chains towards greater self-reliance.

National security logic has also led to the weaponisation of the US dollar, imposing restrictions on its use in international payments and the freezing of “unfriendly” or “enemy” foreign assets.

This threatens dollar-based international payments and the financial architecture built over the past decades of global financial liberalisation.

The same logic is leading to the weaponisation of access to and diffusion of modern tech and AI, widening the global tech divide and reducing productivity and general growth.

The new Cold War could result in a massive 7 percent loss of global GDP according to the IMF, as a result of global supply chains becoming less efficient, inward-looking self-sufficiency policies being disguised as re-shoring, and restrictions on access to tech and critical resources such as rare earths.

The GCC as emerging ‘Middle Powers’

For the GCC countries, this ominous scenario has a silver lining. It offers a geo-strategic opportunity, allowing them to emerge as Middle Powers between the two global blocs.

The GCC has built its soft power through successfully hosting international events and diplomatic mediation. Next up is the

building of economic and financial power.

Three strategic factors represent the building blocks that will enable the Gulf states to benefit from the fragmentation.

First is the GCC's geography between Africa and Asia and the nations' promising demographics.

Second, the member states are unique in being old and new energy powerhouses.

Third, the economic diversification of the GCC – combined with investments in trade facilitating logistics, transport, and infrastructure – means the six countries are integrated in global supply chains.

The GCC nations need to enhance and develop economic and financial tools to enable them to become effective Middle Powers. A priority is to accelerate their economic and financial integration, starting with core infrastructure to achieve economies of scale and greater efficiency.

GCC economic and financial integration is a building block for overhauling and implementing the GCC common market, allowing the Gulf countries to negotiate as an empowered economic bloc.

Already, GCC members are participating in international blocs – Brics+ and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor – along with trade deals that include a likely GCC-China agreement in 2024 and various comprehensive economic partnership agreements.

Cop28 has highlighted that climate change will pose geo-strategic challenges in the coming decades. The GCC states possess the technologies and financial resources to make regional and global investments in climate adaptation, and building and retrofitting infrastructure to make it climate resilient.

These tools underpin the evolving “regional globalisation”

policies of the GCC, which will lead to the growing economic integration of the Mena region and African countries. This regional globalisation will reduce the risks of the new Cold War.