

**MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE
2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**THE MIDDLE EAST PIVOT: CHINA'S BRI
BETWEEN GEOSTRATEGY AND
COMMERCIAL OPPORTUNITY**

11-12 FEBRUARY 2019

Goodwood Park Hotel

ABOUT THE CONFERENCE

The Middle East is a central region around which Asia, Africa and Europe pivot. When the West went east towards China, it crossed the Middle East and stayed; this is also known as the history of colonialism. Today, as China moves west in reverse, with its Belt and Road Initiative, will China do things differently?

The Middle East Institute at the National University of Singapore will host a conference to address two major sets of questions that arise as China's engagement with the Middle East deepens:

1. What geopolitical challenges and opportunities does this present? Can the Chinese preference for focusing primarily on economics/business and minimising its geopolitical engagement be sustained in this volatile yet indispensable region? What is the scope for competition and collaboration among the US, Russia and China there? And what role will regional powers like Israel, Turkey, Iran and Saudi Arabia play in the mix?
2. What are the commercial and religious challenges and opportunities that come into view as China's engagement with the Middle East deepens: for China, for the Middle East, and for third parties like Singapore?

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PROGRAMME

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| DAY ONE | <u>Monday 11 February 2019</u> |
| 0930-1000 hrs | Registration |
| 1000-1030 hrs | Opening and Keynote Speech by Minister for Trade and Industry, Chan Chun Sing Guest of Honour - ESM Goh Chok Tong Q&A Session Moderated by Chairman, Middle East Institute Bilahari Kausikan |
| 1035hrs | Photo Session with GOH ESM Goh Chok Tong and Minister for Trade & Industry, Chan Chun Sing <i>(To include Chairman, Director, Board Members, Panel Moderators and Speakers)</i> |
| 1045hrs | ESM and Minister Chan take their leave <i>(Chairman and Director to see them out)</i> |

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| 1045 -1215 hrs | <p>Session One: Infrastructures</p> <p><u>Session Chair</u> Dr Serkan Yolacan Research Fellow Middle East Institute</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Land-bridge or Bypass? The Middle East and the OBOR Professor Bai Gao, Professor of Sociology, Duke University Visiting Professor, Institute of New Structural Economics, Peking University 2. Maritime Chokepoints: A view of BRI from the Indian Ocean Assistant Professor Jatin Dua, Anthropology, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor 3. The Creation of a Dispute Resolution Regime for the Belt & Road Initiative Dr Michael Hwang Chief Judge Dubai International Financial Centre |
| 1215 hrs | Conference Participants to Move to Tudor Ballroom for Lunch Address by Minister |
| 1230-1400 hrs | <p>Lunch Address by Minister for Education, Ong Ye Kung</p> <p><u>Venue:</u> Tudor Ballroom Goodwood Park Hotel</p> <p>Q&A Session Moderated by Chairman, Middle East Institute Bilahari Kausikan</p> |
| 1345 hrs | <p>Photo Session with Minister for Education, Ong Ye Kung</p> <p><i>(To include Chairman, Director, Board Members, Panel Moderators and Speakers)</i></p> |
| 1355 hrs | <p>Minister Ong takes his leave</p> <p><i>(Chairman and Director to see Minister out)</i></p> |

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| 1400-1530 hrs | <p>Session Two: Finance and Economics</p> <p><u>Session Chair</u> Professor Tan Kong Yam Economics, Nanyang Technological University</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Future Calling: Infrastructure Development in Central Asia Dr Ariel Cohen, Senior Fellow, International Tax and Investment Center (ITIC) and Director, Energy Growth and Security Program (EGS) Non-Resident Senior Fellow, Eurasia Center, Atlantic Council 2. Is the Middle East ready for China? The Middle East Countries Have Yet to Develop a China Policy Dr Nasser Saidi President Nasser Saidi & Associates 3. Infrastructure Investment in Middle East and Central Asia Mr Pang Yee Ean Director-General, Investment Operations Department Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank |
| 1530-1600hrs | Tea Break |
| 1600-1730hrs | <p>Session Three: Panel Discussion China-Middle East Trade</p> <p><u>Session Chair</u> Dr Linda Matar Senior Research Fellow Middle East Institute</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Petrochemical Industry in the GCC Mr Mutlaq al-Morished Chief Executive Officer TASNEE 2. Turkey's View of China as an Economic Partner Dr Altay Atli Lecturer, Department of International Relations Koc University, Istanbul 3. China, Iran, and the Middle East Professor Wu Bingbing Qatar Chair Professor Peking University |
| 1730 hrs | End of Day One Proceedings |

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| DAY TWO | <u>Tuesday 12 February 2019</u> |
| 0930-1130 hrs | <p>Session Four: Panel Discussion Religious Networks Along the BRI</p> <p><u>Session Chair</u> Professor Joseph Liow Dean, College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Dean of the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can Turkey’s Muslims Solve China’s Uyghur Problem? Dr Serkan Yolacan Research Fellow Middle East Institute 2. Chinese Muslims as Connective Agents Between States of China and Arabia: An Overlooked History Ms Janice Jeong Graduate Student Duke University 3. Shaping the New World Order: The Battle for Human Rights Dr James Dorsey Senior Fellow S Rajaratnam School of International Studies 4. The “Religious Westphalian” Turn in Eurasia: The Consequences for Sino-Gulf Trans-Islamic Networks Mr Mohammed Turki Al-Sudairi Research Fellow King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies, and Head of Asian Studies Unit |
| 1130-1145 hrs | Coffee Break |

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| <p>1145-1345 hrs</p> | <p>Closing Roundtable on China and the Middle East – The Geopolitical Context</p> <p><u>Session Chair</u> Professor Engseng Ho Director Middle East Institute</p> <p><u>Speakers</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How Can China Avoid Falling Into the Geopolitical Trap in the Middle East? Associate Professor Wang Suolao Deputy Director, Institute of Area Studies Associate Professor, School of International Studies, Peking University 2. Middle East: China Loves Us All! Ehud Yaari Lafer International Fellow The Washington Institute 3. Separating Geostrategy from Opportunism: BRI and the Future of the Middle East Dr Jon B. Alterman Senior Vice President, Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy Director, Middle East Program Centre for Strategic and International Studies 4. [full title to be advised] Professor Bernard Haykel (tentative) Professor of Near Eastern Studies, Director, Institute fir Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East, Director, Program in Near Eastern Studies Princeton University |
| <p>1345 hrs</p> | <p>End of Conference</p> <p>Photo-Taking Session (Moderators and Speakers)</p> |

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