

MEETING THE FUTURE TOGETHER



**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES
FOR THE INDO-PACIFIC AND THE MIDDLE EAST**

23 – 25 February 2021 | 4pm



CONFERENCE STATEMENT

The staggering growth in trade between Asia and the Middle East offers both new opportunities and challenges that Singapore may contribute to and benefit from.

Technology, human capital development, people-to-people ties and sustainable city development are just some of the opportunities at hand.

Technology, for example, plays an important role in defining the Middle East's relationships with the United States and China. Technology also moulds regional alliances. Technology lay at the heart of the decision of the United Arab Emirates to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Continued US pressure on Middle East countries limits their technology cooperation with China in telecommunications, and military and cyber applications. But there is room to expand in fields like financial technology, education, and health.

Education, sustainable development initiatives and tourism increase the scope for cooperation and offer vast new opportunities for both sides, particularly in expertise exchange and growing people-to-people ties. To seize them, states must be nimble and adroit in creating space for manoeuvre, something of relevance to many Middle East and Asian countries alike, which aspire to build resilience.

The Middle East Institute's Annual Conference will gather experts and policymakers to identify potential growth areas, future opportunities, and how robust trade paves the way for both regions to achieve their strategic priorities.

TUESDAY, 23 FEBRUARY 2021 | DAY ONE

1600hrs

WELCOME REMARKS

Ms Michelle Teo | Executive Director, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

1610hrs

OPENING SPEECH

Mr Teo Chee Hean | Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security

1620hrs

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

Moderator: Mr Bilahari Kausikan | Chairman, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

1650hrs

PANEL 1: TRADE – A CORNERSTONE OF THE NEW EAST-WEST ASIA CONNECTION

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Dr Tan See Leng | Minister in the Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Trade and Industry

1700hrs

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Ms Kathy Lai | Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Enterprise Singapore

Panel Members:

Professor Choi Byung-il | Professor, Ewha Womans University & President, Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies

Mr Masakazu Toyoda | President, Institute of Energy Economics Japan

Professor Omar Al-Ubaydli | Director of Research, Bahrain Center for Strategic, International and Energy Studies (Derasat)

Professor Shen Dingli | Director, Programme on Arms Control and Regional Security, Fudan University

1745hrs

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1830hrs

END OF DAY ONE

WEDNESDAY, 24 FEBRUARY 2021 | DAY TWO

1600hrs

RECAP OF DAY ONE

1610hrs

PANEL 2: THE ROLE OF TECH - BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH SMART CITIES AND CYBERSECURITY

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan | Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister-in-charge of Smart Nation Initiative

1620hrs

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Mr David Koh | Chief Executive, Cyber Security Agency of Singapore

Panel Members:

Dr Gulshan Rai | Former National Cyber Security Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office, Government of India and Director on the Board of National Stock Exchange

Professor Isaac Ben-Israel | Head, Security Studies Programme and Head, Blavatnik Interdisciplinary Cyber Studies Centre, Tel Aviv University

Dr Steve Griffiths | Senior Vice-President (Research & Development), Khalifa University

1700hrs

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1800hrs

END OF DAY TWO

THURSDAY, 25 FEBRUARY 2021 | DAY THREE

1600hrs

RECAP OF DAY TWO

1605hrs

PANEL 3: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT - BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

KEYNOTE SPEECH

Mr Lawrence Wong | Minister for Education and Second Minister for Finance

1615hrs

PANEL DISCUSSION

Moderator: Professor Tan Eng Chye | President, National University of Singapore

Panel Members:

Professor Abdullah Baabood | Visiting Professor, Chair of the State of Qatar for Islamic Area Studies, School of International Liberal Studies
Waseda University

Professor Brian P. Schmidt | Vice-Chancellor & President, Australian National University
2011 Nobel Laureate Physics

Professor Guido Saracco | Rector, President, Commission for Strategies for Development, Politecnico di Torino

Dr Mariët Westermann | Vice Chancellor, NYU Abu Dhabi

Mr Shigeo Katsu | President, Nazarbayev University

1715hrs

QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

1815hrs

CLOSING REMARKS

Ms Michelle Teo | Executive Director, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore

1830hrs

END OF CONFERENCE

SPEAKER PROFILES



MR TEO CHEE HEAN

Senior Minister and Coordinating Minister for National Security, Singapore

Mr Teo Chee Hean was appointed Senior Minister on 1 May 2019. He also serves, since 21 May 2011, as Coordinating Minister for National Security. He also oversees the Smart Nation and Digital Government Group, the National Security Coordination Secretariat, the National Population and Talent Division and the National Climate Change Secretariat under the Prime Minister's Office.



Panel 1 Keynote Speaker

DR TAN SEE LENG

Minister, Prime Minister's Office, Second Minister for Manpower and Second Minister for Trade and Industry, Singapore

A veteran medical practitioner, Dr Tan See Leng was Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director at IHH HealthCare Berhad from 2014 to 2019. During Dr Tan's tenure, the group doubled its revenue from RM 6 billion to RM 12 billion.

Dr Tan was also Group Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director at Parkway Pantai Limited from 2010 to 2019. Under his leadership, Parkway Pantai attained a successful listing, raising USD 2.1 billion in 2012.

SPEAKER PROFILES



Panel 2 Keynote Speaker

DR VIVIAN BALAKRISHNAN

Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister-in-charge of Smart Nation Initiative, Singapore

Dr Vivian Balakrishnan is the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Minister-in-charge of the Smart Nation Initiative. He previously served as Minister for the Environment and Water Resources; Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports; Second Minister for Trade and Industry; Minister-in-charge of Entrepreneurship; and Second Minister for Information, Communications and the Arts. He has been a Member of Parliament since 2001.



Panel 3 Keynote Speaker

MR LAWRENCE WONG

Minister for Education and Second Minister for Finance, Singapore

Mr Lawrence Wong was elected a Member of Parliament in May 2011 and was re-elected in September 2015 and July 2020. He has held positions in the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Communications and Information, and the Ministry of Culture, Community and Youth and the Ministry of National Development. After the 2020 General Election, he was appointed the Minister for Education and the Second Minister for Finance.

PANEL ONE: TRADE – A CORNERSTONE OF THE NEW EAST-WEST ASIA CONNECTION

This first panel will discuss new trade flows as the Middle East looks increasingly towards Asia. This “Look East” trend is particularly evident among Gulf nations, as they seek new partners for their economic modernisation.

In turn, East Asian nations are also looking towards West Asia in search of new markets – China’s BRI envisions the Middle East as a key node, while India has looked increasingly towards the Gulf, Israel, and Iran.

Singapore has long cast its eye on opportunities in the region – could this new swing bear fruit in the form of a key role for the “hinge state”? Where are the areas to be exploited? How can East Asia’s key strengths boost the Middle East in terms of governance, education, and tech? Leaving aside energy, how will the “Asian Century” transform the region?

The dual shocks of low oil and gas prices and pandemic-induced global economic slowdown have hit the GCC countries at a time when the urgency for promoting economic diversification, expanding employment opportunities for their youthful populations and attaining fiscal sustainability had already become critical in the low oil price environment which took hold in mid-2014. This has created an existential challenge to restructure and diversify their economies, and for re-negotiating their “social contracts” with citizens will be a critical task. Asia, as the Middle East’s largest economic partner in trade and investments, can play a significant role in this process.

MODERATOR



MS KATHY LAI

Deputy Chief Executive Officer, Enterprise Singapore

Ms Kathy Lai is Deputy Chief Executive Officer of Enterprise Singapore, overseeing Global Markets. Enterprise Singapore is the government agency championing enterprise development. The agency works with committed companies to build capabilities, innovate, and internationalise.

It also supports the growth of Singapore as a hub for global trading and start-ups and builds trust in Singapore’s products and services through quality and standards. Ms Lai served as Assistant Chief Executive Officer and subsequently, Deputy Chief Executive and Acting CEO, of then-International Enterprise (IE) Singapore, over a period of more than 15 years.

PANEL MEMBERS



DR CHOI BYUNG-IL

Professor, Ewha Womans University

President, Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies

Dr Choi Byung-il is the President of Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies. He is also a professor and a former Dean of the Graduate School of International Studies (GSIS) at Ewha Womans University in South Korea.

Most recently, he was the President of the Korea Economic Research Institute, a think tank representing the Korean business sector. He served leadership positions at several academic associations including the President of the Korean International Economic Association, President of the Korean Association of Trade and Industry Studies and President of the Korea Association of Negotiation Studies. He was also a member in various advisory councils for the Korean government.



MR MASAKAZU TOYODA

President, Institute of Energy Economics, Japan

Mr Masakazu Toyoda has been Chairman and CEO at the Institute of Energy Economics, Japan since 2010, which has been ranked among the top three energy and resource policy think tanks for six consecutive years, in the Global Go To Think Tank Index Reports by University of Pennsylvania.

In addition, as a member of the Strategic Policy Committee of Agency for Natural Resources and Energy of the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry of Japan, he contributed compiling the Fifth Strategic Energy Plan which was approved by the Cabinet in July 2018. He also lectures about Energy Study as an Adjunct Professor at the National Graduate Institute for Policy Studies in Tokyo.

PANEL MEMBERS



DR OMAR AL-UBAYDLI

Director of Research, Bahrain Center for Strategic,
International and Energy Studies (Derasat)

Dr Omar Al-Ubaydli is Director of Studies and Research and Director of Economics and Energy Studies. He previously worked as an Assistant Professor of Economics at George Mason University, USA, as well as being a member of Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell's Joint Advisory Board of Economists.

Dr Al-Ubaydli received his BA in Economics from the University of Cambridge (Queens' College) and his MA and PhD in Economics from the University of Chicago. Dr Al-Ubaydli's research has been published in several international, peer-reviewed journals and has been featured by media outlets including the Economist magazine.



PROFESSOR SHEN DINGLI

Director, Program on Arms Control and Regional Security,
Fudan University

Professor Shen Dingli was a former Executive Dean at Fudan University's Institute of International Studies and former Director of Center for American Studies. He is also an Honorary Visiting Professor of Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri, United States of America. He has taught international security, China-US relations, China's foreign and defence policy in China, the US and the "Semester at Sea" Program. His research and publication covers China-US security relations, regional security and international strategy, arms control and non-proliferation, foreign and defence policy of China and the US etc.

PANEL TWO: THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY - BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH SMART CITIES AND CYBERSECURITY

The development of smart cities and digital infrastructure are crucial components of Asia's development strategy, and the Middle East is increasingly looking in this direction as well.

New technologies are set to improve the life of citizens by making the delivery of public services more efficient and effective. Smart cities encompass highly complex, interdependent networks of devices, systems, and users.

That said, sophisticated cyberattacks on critical infrastructure, from smart utilities to telemedicine, e-government and automated surveillance, could severely disrupt years of development in a matter of seconds. Understanding the challenges and the opportunities for cooperation between the Middle East and Asia's smart cities could be crucial in building resilience.

MODERATOR



MR DAVID KOH

Chief Executive, Cyber Security Agency of Singapore

Mr David Koh is the Commissioner of Cybersecurity and Chief Executive of the Cyber Security Agency of Singapore (CSA). As a Commissioner, he has the legal authority to investigate cyber threats and incidents to ensure that essential services are not disrupted in the event of a cyber-attack. Concurrently, as Chief Executive of CSA, he leads Singapore's efforts to provide dedicated and centralised oversight of national cyber security functions.

These include enforcing the cybersecurity legislation, strategy and policy development, cyber security operations, ecosystem development, public outreach and international engagement. Mr Koh also sits on the Boards of the Government Technology Agency (GovTech), Defence Science and Technology Agency (DSTA) and DSO National Laboratories (DSO), and the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) Cyber Security Advisory Panel.

PANEL MEMBERS



DR GULSHAN RAI

Former National Cyber Security Coordinator, Prime Minister's Office, Government of India and Director on the Board of National Stock Exchange

Dr Gulshan Rai holds an MTech and Doctoral degree and has over 39 years of experience in different areas of information technology which include different aspects of e-governance, cyber security, cyber laws and several related fields covering policies and operations. He was the first National Cyber Security Coordinator in the Prime Minister's Office, Government of India. Prior to that, he was in the Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology.

He held the post of Director General, CERT-In (Indian Computer Emergency Response Team) and headed cyber security initiatives and cyber laws in India. He was a member of the Data Protection Committee set up by Government of India to frame the privacy law. He has also led the team to set up a National Watch and Alert System in the country as part of the cyber security initiative and a Computer Emergency Team.



PROFESSOR ISAAC BEN-ISRAEL

Head, Security Studies Programme and Head, Blavatnik Interdisciplinary Cyber Studies Centre, Tel Aviv University

Professor Isaac Ben-Israel graduated from Tel Aviv University with degrees in mathematics, physics and philosophy, earning his PhD in 1988. A retired major-general in the Israel Air Force, Professor Ben-Israel has served as head of military R&D of the Israel Defence Forces and the Ministry of Defence. He is a two-time recipient of the Israel Defence Award and the Israel Air Force Award and was a member of Knesset from 2007 to 2009.

He is the Chairman of the Israeli Space Agency at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Space and Head of the Blavatnik Interdisciplinary Cyber Research Center and the Yuval Ne'eman workshop for Science, Technology and Security at Tel Aviv University.

PANEL MEMBERS



DR STEVEN GRIFFITHS

Senior Vice President (Research & Development), Khalifa University of Science and Technology

Dr Steven Griffiths is Senior Vice President for Research and Development and Professor of Practice at the Khalifa University of Science and Technology. At Khalifa University, he oversees the development and implementation of the university's research strategy and operations.

In addition to his managerial activities at Khalifa University, Dr Griffiths is advisor to the UAE Research Program for Rain Enhancement Science, a Zayed Sustainability Prize Selection Committee member, a member of the Dubai Future Council on Energy, an elected member of the Global Energy Prize International Award Committee, a Governing Board Member of the Graphene Engineering Innovation Center at the University of Manchester, a member of the UAE Artificial Intelligence Expert Group and a board member of the Microsoft Energy Core.

PANEL THREE: HUMAN CAPITAL DEVELOPMENT - BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Across the Middle East and North Africa, around half of the population is less than 25 years old. To turn this into a “demographic dividend”, countries in the region need to secure sufficient education and training facilities, either internally or abroad. This panel will explore how the experience of Asia’s developmental model, which emphasised education, can be turned into the Middle East’s “school”.

We ask: What strategies can Asian states use to convince students in the Middle East to look eastwards, and what kinds of benefits can they expect in return? Can the Asian education sector promote itself as one whose expertise, pedagogy, and lifestyles are better suited to the needs of Middle Eastern students than their counterparts in Europe and the US? Can reputable Asian universities find parallel universities to sign mutually beneficial collaborative agreements? Should Asian states, building on the American model, establish scholarships for foreign citizens to nurture pro-Asian educated elites abroad? Can the Asian education model spur upskilling in the Middle East?

MODERATOR



PROFESSOR TAN ENG CHYE

President, National University of Singapore

Professor Tan Eng Chye was appointed President of the National University of Singapore (NUS) on 1 January 2018. He is the University’s 5th president, and the 23rd leader to head Singapore’s oldest higher education institution.

Prof Tan, who attended Raffles Institution (1974 to 1979), obtained his Bachelor in Mathematics (First Class Honours, 1985) at NUS and his PhD (1989) at Yale University. He joined NUS as a faculty member in the Department of Mathematics in 1985, as a Senior Tutor, and has held visiting positions at various universities overseas such as the Rutgers University, University of Washington at Seattle, University of California at Berkeley and University of Maryland, USA; Universities of Tokyo and Kyoto, Japan; as well as the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology.

PANEL MEMBERS



PROFESSOR ABDULLAH BAABOOD

Visiting Professor

Chair of the State of Qatar for Islamic Area Studies, School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University

Professor Abdullah Baabood is currently a visiting professor at the School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University in Tokyo, Japan and is also a Research Chair in Islamic Area Studies in the same university. Professor Abdullah has taught and carried out research at different universities and institutions. He was a visiting professor at the Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore and a visiting professor at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, Hamad Bin Khalifa University, Qatar.

He previously held the positions of the Director of the Gulf Studies Center at Qatar University and the Director of the Gulf Research Center at the University of Cambridge, UK. Professor Abdullah's teaching and research interest focuses on international relations, international political economy, especially on globalization and regionalism.



PROFESSOR BRIAN P. SCHMIDT

Vice-Chancellor & President, Australian National University

2011 Nobel Laureate Physics

Professor Brian P. Schmidt was appointed Vice-Chancellor and President of The Australian National University (ANU) in January 2016. Professor Schmidt is the 12th Vice-Chancellor of ANU. Winner of the 2011 Nobel Prize in Physics, Professor Schmidt was an astrophysicist at the ANU Mount Stromlo Observatory and Research School of Astronomy and Astrophysics before becoming Vice-Chancellor.

Professor Schmidt received undergraduate degrees in Astronomy and Physics from the University of Arizona in 1989 and completed his Astronomy Master's degree (1992) and PhD (1993) from Harvard University. Fellow of the Australian Academy of Science, The United States Academy of Science, and the Royal Society, he was made a Companion of the Order of Australia in 2013.

PANEL MEMBERS



PROFESSOR GUIDO SARACCO

Rector, President, Commission for Strategies for Development
Politecnico di Torino

In 2018, Professor Guido Saracco was appointed as Rector of the Politecnico di Torino by the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research. He graduated cum laude in Chemical Engineering at the Politecnico di Torino in 1989, where he became a PhD holder in 1994. In 2012, he became Head of the Department of Applied Science and Technology.

He ranks 30th among the top Italian Scientists worldwide in the field of materials and nano sciences. He has represented the Politecnico di Torino in the Research Grouping of the European Joint Technology Initiative pertaining to hydrogen and fuel cells. He was a member of the Bioenergy Education Group for the drawing up of the Set Plan in the Energy sector of the European Community for the H2020 Programme.



PROFESSOR MARIËT WESTERMANN

Vice Chancellor, NYU Abu Dhabi

Dr Mariët Westermann is Vice Chancellor and Chief Executive of New York University Abu Dhabi. She previously served as Executive Vice President of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, where she oversaw grant making and research. Dr Westermann was also the first Provost of NYU Abu Dhabi and Director and Professor of NYU's Institute of Fine Arts, Associate Director of research at the Clark Art Institute, and a faculty member at Rutgers University.

As a historian of Netherlandish art, she has authored numerous scholarly and museum publications, including the widely read *A Worldly Art: The Dutch Republic 1585-1718*, and curated the exhibition *Art and Home: Dutch Interiors in the Age of Rembrandt* (Denver Art Museum and Newark Museum). Her current research investigates the garden of Eden in the Judaic, Christian, and Islamic traditions.

PANEL MEMBERS



MR SHIGEO KATSU

President, Nazarbayev University

Mr Shigeo Katsu is President of Nazarbayev University, a position he has held since December 2010. He also holds such positions as Chairman of the Board of Nazarbayev Intellectual Schools, Board Member of Nazarbayev Fund and Chairman of the Board of Directors of First Heartland Jýsan Bank JSC.

Prior to Nazarbayev University, over the course of a 30-year career at the World Bank, Mr Shigeo Katsu held various positions including leading financial sector reform support for China, Director for Cote d'Ivoire, and Vice President for Europe and Central Asia.



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