

MIDDLE EAST INSTITUTE @ NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SINGAPORE

ANNUAL CONFERENCE 2026

23 June 2026

Concept Paper

After the Iran War: The Global Geopolitical and Economic Fallout

Scope of the Conference:

The U.S.–Israeli war against Iran, launched on 28 February, rapidly escalated into a broader conflict that drew Gulf states into the fray. Civilian infrastructure in Dubai, Doha, and the rest of the Arabian Peninsula was soon caught in the line of fire, transforming the crisis into a full-fledged regional war with far-reaching consequences for security, geopolitical alignments, and economic stability. Iran’s subsequent closure of the Strait of Hormuz sent shockwaves through global energy markets and threatened critical trade routes, with South-east Asia bearing the brunt of the turmoil. Against this backdrop, the Middle East Institute’s Annual Conference 2026 will convene three expert-led panels to examine the war’s global repercussions. The discussions will assess not only the immediate impact on the Middle East but also the broader implications for Singapore and the wider East and South-east Asian region.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Tuesday, 23 June 2026

Orchard Hotel, Ballroom 1, Level 3

442 Orchard Road Singapore 238879

Time	Event
0900hrs – 0905hrs	Conference Opens Welcome Remarks Prof Joseph Liow <i>Chairman, Middle East Institute</i>
0905hrs – 0920hrs	Opening Remarks Mr Chan Chun Sing <i>Singapore's Coordinating Minister for Public Services and Minister for Defence</i>
0920hrs – 1000hrs	Q&A with Mr Chan Chun Sing Moderated by: Prof Joseph Liow <i>Chairman, Middle East Institute</i>
1000hrs – 1045hrs	Panel 1: The Persian Gulf After the US-Israel-Iran War The Iran war has upended the strategic landscape of the Gulf. The campaign's initial goal of toppling the Iranian regime failed — the targeted killing of Tehran's leadership created a volatile, uncertain power structure, one perhaps more hardline than its predecessor. This raises questions about the Islamic Republic's future contours, and Iranians' acceptance of the new regime. Tehran's response to the bombardment has been equally consequential. By expanding its strikes to civilian infrastructure across the Gulf, it has shattered prior efforts at regional de-escalation, and the Gulf Co-operation Council's efforts to portray the region as an oasis of calm in order to sustain its various economic transformation efforts. For Gulf monarchies, this may signal an inflection point, forcing them to reassess their security arrangements and foreign policy priorities. This panel brings together leading experts to confront the central question facing local policymakers: What comes next? From shifting alliance structures to the future of regional deterrence, the discussion will unpack the long-term geopolitical and economic consequences for the region. Speakers: Dr Arang Keshavarzian <i>Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University</i> Dr Bader Al-Saif <i>Professor, Kuwait University</i> <i>Fellow, Chatham House</i> Dr Ebtesam Alketbi <i>President, Emirates Policy Center</i>

1045hrs – 1130hrs	<p>Q & A Session</p> <p>Moderated by:</p> <p>Dr Jean-Loup Samaan <i>Senior Research Fellow, Middle East Institute, NUS</i></p>
1130hrs – 1145hrs	Tea break
1145hrs – 1230hrs	<p>Panel 2: External Powers and the New Middle East Reality</p> <p>The Iran war has reshaped the view of Great Powers in the region. Beijing’s reluctance — and inability — to play a major role in conflict management in the Middle East in the past three years, has reinforced the view of it as economically indispensable, but strategically unimportant. Meanwhile, US partners in the region are increasingly questioning their reliance on Washington for their security. In the aftermath of the latest conflict, some Gulf states might re-evaluate their strategies vis-à-vis the US-China competition. The war has underscored the shortcomings of another Asian power: India may have cultivated close ties with all the parties involved in the conflict, but it has largely been absent from diplomatic efforts to cease hostilities. The fact that Delhi’s chief rival, Pakistan, was heralded for its involvement was both a blow to India, as well as a revelation of its enduring limitations in the Middle East.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Dr Jonathan Fulton <i>Associate Professor, Zayed University</i></p> <p>Mr Kabir Taneja <i>Executive Director, Observer Research Foundation – Middle East</i></p> <p>Dr Sun Yun <i>Director China Programme, Stimson Center</i></p>
1230hrs – 1315hrs	<p>Q & A Session</p> <p>Moderated by:</p>
1315hrs – 1415hrs	Lunch break
1415hrs – 1500hrs	<p>Panel 3: The Economic Implications of the Last Gulf War</p> <p>The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has marked a turning point for the global economy. By severing one of the world's most critical arteries for oil transit, the conflict has sent shockwaves through international trade and energy markets, driving prices sharply upward and heightening the threat of sustained global inflation. For Gulf Arab states, the consequences have been dramatic. Falling oil revenues, accelerating capital flight, and the potential exodus of foreign labour have exposed deep structural vulnerabilities in economies long anchored in hydrocarbon exports and foreign investment.</p> <p>For Singapore and South-east Asia, the impact of the war has also been immediate, with major concerns regarding supply chains and access to various commodities.</p>

	<p>As Singapore’s Foreign Minister, Vivian Balakrishnan, said, the disruption of the Strait of Hormuz is “an Asian crisis” — one that extended to the region’s own critical artery, the Malacca Strait. This panel brings together experts to examine the economic consequences of the war and to explore what recovery, adaptation, security, and resilience may look like in the months and years ahead.</p> <p>Speakers:</p> <p>Mr Ahmed Al-Omran <i>The Financial Times correspondent in Saudi Arabia</i></p> <p>Mr Brian Braun <i>Principal for South and Southeast Asia Global Risk Analysis, Control Risks</i></p> <p>Ms Clara Ferreira Marques <i>Managing Editor for Commodities and Energy in Asia, Bloomberg</i></p>
1500hrs – 1545hrs	<p>Q & A Session</p> <p>Moderated by:</p> <p>Dr Li-Chen Sim <i>Assistant Professor, Khalifa University</i></p>
1545hrs	<p>Session Ends</p>

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