



# After the Iran War: The Global Geopolitical and Economic Fallout



Annual  
Conference  
2026

23 June 2026

Orchard Hotel, Ballroom 1, Level 3  
442 Orchard Road Singapore 238879

# After the Iran War:

## The Global Geopolitical and Economic Fallout

The US–Israel 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.

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- 09:00am**      **Conference Opens**  
**Welcome Remarks**  
**Professor Joseph Liow**  
*Chairman, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore*
- 09:05am**      **Opening Remarks**  
**Mr Chan Chun Sing**  
*Singapore's Coordinating Minister for Public Services and Minister for Defence*
- 09:20am**      **Q&A with Mr Chan Chun Sing**  
Moderated by:  
**Professor Joseph Liow**  
*Chairman, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore*
- 10:00am**      **Panel 1: The Persian Gulf After the US-Israel-Iran War**  
**Speakers:**  
**Professor Arang Keshavarzian**  
*Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, New York University*  
**Dr Bader Al-Saif**  
*Assistant Professor, Kuwait University*  
*Fellow, Chatham House*  
**Dr Ebtesam Alketbi**  
*Founder & President, Emirates Policy Center*
- 10:45am**      **Q & A Session**  
Moderated by:  
**Dr Jean-Loup Samaan**  
*Senior Research Fellow, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore*
- 11:30am**      **Tea break**

# CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

- 12:00pm**      **Panel 2: External Powers and the New Middle East Reality**  
**Speakers:**  
**Dr Jonathan Fulton**  
*Associate Professor, Zayed University*  
**Mr Kabir Taneja**  
*Executive Director, Observer Research Foundation Middle East*  
**Dr Yun Sun**  
*Senior Fellow and Director of the China Programme, Stimson Center*
- 12:45pm**      **Q & A Session**  
Moderated by:  
**Dr Iqbal Singh Sevea**  
*Director, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS), National University of Singapore*
- 1:30pm**      **Lunch break**
- 2:30pm**      **Panel 3: The Economic Implications of the Last Gulf War**  
**Speakers:**  
**Mr Ahmed Al-Omran**  
*Correspondent, Financial Times*  
**Mr Brian Braun**  
*Principal for South and South-east Asia Geopolitical & Country Risk, Control Risks*  
**Ms Clara Ferreira Marques**  
*Managing Editor for Commodities and Energy in Asia, Bloomberg*  
**Dr Li-Chen Sim**  
*Associate Fellow, US Middle East Institute, Washington DC*
- 3:15pm**      **Q & A Session**  
Moderated by:  
**Ms Michelle Teo**  
*Executive Director, Middle East Institute, National University of Singapore*
- 4:00pm**      **Session Ends**

# SPEAKER PROFILE



## Mr Chan Chun Sing

### Coordinating Minister for Public Services and Minister for Defence

Mr Chan Chun Sing was appointed Singapore's Coordinating Minister for Public Services and Minister for Defence on 23 May 2025. He has concurrently served as Minister-in-charge of the Public Service since 1 May 2018.

Mr Chan Chun Sing was appointed Singapore's Coordinating Minister for Public Services and Minister for Defence on 23 May 2025. He has concurrently served as Minister-in-charge of the Public Service since 1 May 2018.

Mr Chan previously served as Minister for Education from May 2021 to May 2025, where he advanced lifelong learning and broadened access to education for learners of diverse abilities, needs and interests. He strengthened professional development for educators and deepened partnerships between schools and industry to better align education with future workforce needs. From May 2018 to May 2021, Mr Chan led Singapore's economic and industrial development as Minister for Trade and Industry. In this role, he ratified the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership agreement and deepened international cooperation on the digital economy. He also served as Deputy Chairman of the People's Association from October 2015 to May 2021, steering national efforts to foster social cohesion and community engagement.

From May 2015 to May 2018, he was Secretary-General of the National Trades Union Congress and expanded the Labour Movement network to represent all working people in Singapore. Before this, he served as Minister for Social and Family Development (2013-2015) and Acting Minister for Community Development, Youth and Sports (2011-12). He was also Second Minister for Defence (2013-15) and Minister of State for Information, Communications and the Arts (2011-12).

Serving with the Singapore Armed Forces (SAF) from 1987 to 2011, Mr Chan held various appointments including Chief of Army. He left the SAF to run in the 2011 General Election and was elected Member of Parliament for Tanjong Pagar Group Representation Constituency.

An SAF (Overseas) and President's Scholarship holder, he graduated with First Class Honours in Economics from Christ's College, Cambridge University, UK. He was also awarded the 1998 Distinguished Master Strategist Award by the US Army Command and General Staff College. In 2005, he completed the Sloan Fellows Programme at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology under the Lee Kuan Yew Scholarship.

Born in 1969, Mr Chan is married with three children and enjoys reading and jogging.

# SPEAKER PROFILE



## Professor Joseph Liow

**Dean, Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy,  
National University of Singapore**

**Chairman, Middle East Institute, National University  
of Singapore**

Prof Joseph Liow (Joseph Chinyong Liow) is Dean of the Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and Wang Gungwu Professor in East Asian Affairs, National University of Singapore and concurrently, Chairman of the Middle East Institute at the same university. He was previously Dean of the College of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, where he was also Tan Kah Kee Chair in Comparative and International Politics, and Professor and Dean at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies. He held the inaugural Lee Kuan Yew Chair in South-east Asia Studies at the Brookings Institution, Washington DC, where he was also a Senior Fellow in the Foreign Policy Programme.

Prof Liow's research interests encompass Muslim politics and social movements in South-east Asia and the geopolitics and geoeconomics of the Asia-Pacific region.

He is the author, co-author, or editor of 18 books, the most recent being *Navigating Uncertainty: Our Region in an Age of Flux* (World Scientific 2024), *Islam and Political Power in Indonesia and Malaysia* (Cambridge University Press 2022), and *Dictionary of the Modern Politics of South-east Asia, fifth edition* (Routledge, 2022). A regular columnist for The Straits Times, his commentaries on international affairs have also appeared in The New York Times, Washington Post, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, CNN, National Interest, Nikkei Asian Review, Wall Street Journal, and South China Morning Post. He has testified to the United States Congress, delivered a special closed-door briefing to the Asean Defence Minister's Meeting, and been invited to give briefings to global leaders, including former German Chancellor Olaf Scholz. In addition to scholarship and policy analysis, Joseph has also consulted for a wide range of MNCs, including Shell, BHP Billiton, Morgan Stanley, Canon, Chevron, Japan Bank for International Cooperation, Temasek, Total, Global Dairy Platform, Evli, and Equinor. He is a member of the Trilateral Commission and the Experts and Eminent Persons Group of the Asean Regional Forum, and sits on the board of several peer-reviewed academic and policy journals. He is also on the boards of the Social Science Research Council (Singapore), ISEAS-Yusof Ishak Institute, and the National Arts Council.

He holds a PhD in International Relations from the London School of Economics and Political Science, a MSc in Strategic Studies from the Nanyang Technological University, and a BA (Hons) in Political Science from the University of Madison-Wisconsin.

## 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 after 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.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 1 | MODERATOR



## Dr Jean-Loup Samaan

**Senior Research Fellow, Middle East Institute,  
National University of Singapore**

Dr Jean-Loup Samaan is a Senior Research Fellow specialising in Middle East strategic affairs, with a particular focus on the Israel-Hezbollah conflict, and the evolution of the Gulf security system. Prior to joining MEI, he held various positions in the policy sector. He worked as a visiting scholar with Rand Corporation (2007-2008) and as an Adviser at the directorate for strategic affairs of the French Ministry of Defence (2008-2011). He then gained extensive experience in the domain of military education and training, first as a deputy director for the Middle East Faculty of the Nato Defence College (2011-2016), and then as an associate professor in strategic studies with the UAE National Defence College (2016-2021).

Dr Samaan has written four books as well as various articles for academic and policy journals. He holds a PhD in political science from University of Paris La Sorbonne (2009) and an accreditation to supervise research (2017) by the doctoral school of Sciences Po, Paris.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 1 | SPEAKER



## Professor Arang Keshavarzian

**Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies,  
New York University**

Prof Arang Keshavarzian is Professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University. His research and teaching centres on questions of the political economy of Iran and the wider Middle East.

He has had a particular interest in the relationship between spatialisation, capitalism, and political power. He is the author of *Bazaar and State in Iran: The Politics of the Tehran Marketplace*, and co-editor with Ali Mirsepassi of *Global 1979: Geographies and Histories of the Iranian Revolution*. His most recent book, *Making Space for the Gulf: Histories of Regionalism and the Middle East* (Stanford University Press, 2024), received the 2025 Roger Owen Prize from the Middle East Studies Association for best book in economic history, economics, and political economy, as well as an honorary mention for the 2025 biennial book award from the Association for Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies. His articles on various topics have appeared in several edited volumes, as well as *Politics & Society; International Journal of Middle East Studies; Geopolitics; Economy & Society; International Journal of Urban and Region Research; Middle East Report*, and the *New York Review of Books*.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 1 | SPEAKER



### **Dr Bader Al-Saif**

**Assistant Professor, Kuwait University**  
**Fellow, Chatham House**

Dr Bader Mousa Al-Saif is a historian of the modern and contemporary Middle East and Islamic thought. He focuses on the Arabian Peninsula, namely its geopolitics, public policy, culture, reform dynamics, trans-national trends, and gender studies. He is an assistant professor of history at Kuwait University and a fellow at the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House), and the Arab Gulf States Institute. Dr Al-Saif has over two decades of experience researching and working in the Arab Gulf states, most notably as a deputy chief of staff to a former prime minister of Kuwait, senior vice president of the oil and gas sector at Agility, and a senior public policy consultant. He is the recipient of various awards and a co-founder of several NGOs in the fields of education, youth empowerment, and transitional justice. He has published numerous peer-reviewed articles and book chapters, and his edited volume on women in the Gulf will be released later this year. He holds a PhD with distinction from Georgetown University, a Master of Education and a Master of Theology, both with honours, from Harvard University, and a Master of Law with honours from the School of Oriental and African Studies. He graduated summa cum laude from Boston College in political science and history.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 1 | SPEAKER



### Dr Ebtessam Alketbi

#### Founder & President, Emirates Policy Center

Dr Ebtessam Al-Ketbi is the Founder and President of the Emirates Policy Center (EPC), one of the most influential think-tanks in the Arab world. She is a Professor of Political Science at the United Arab Emirates University. In recognition of her position as the leader of one of the Arab world's most influential think tanks, she served as a member of Consultative Commission of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) (2015-2024).

In July 2018, the *Arabian Business* magazine featured her among the 50 Most Influential Women in the Arab world. In 2019, Dr Al-Ketbi received the Women Super Achiever Award during the World Women Leadership Congress. In 2021, she was named Adviser to the Global Commission for Post-Pandemic Policy. In January 2023, she was named an Advisory Board Member of T20 International.

She is currently a Member of the Board of Directors of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, the Global Advisory Board of the Observer Research Foundation in India, the International Advisory Board of the Italian Med-Or Foundation, and the Indo-Pacific Civil Society Forum (IPCSF). She has also been accepted as a Global Member in the non-governmental "Trilateral Commission (Europe)", and an inaugural member of the MENA Regional Advisory Council of the Institute for Integrated Transitions (IFIT) in Spain.

Dr Al-Ketbi is a regular commentator on political events in the Gulf region in various Arab and foreign media outlets. She is the author of several books, including *The UAE as A Middle Power: Strategies to Adapt to a Divided World Order* (2025), *The UAE's Role in Empowering Religious Diplomacy* (2023), *The UAE Power Building Model: Mohamed bin Zayed's Vision* (2022), and *Iran and the Biden Administration: A Potential Return to Negotiations* (2021).

## Panel 2

# External Powers and the New Middle East Reality

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 also underscored the shortcomings of another Asian power: India may have cultivated close ties with all the parties involved in the conflict, but 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.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 2 | MODERATOR



### **Dr Iqbal Singh Sevea**

**Director, Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS),  
National University of Singapore**

Associate Professor Iqbal Singh Sevea is Director of the Institute of South Asian Studies (ISAS) at the National University of Singapore (NUS). He is an internationally recognised scholar of contemporary and modern South Asia whose core research focuses on South Asian politics, social and political thought, governance and Islamic thought.

Associate Professor Sevea has held academic appointments in leading institutions globally and is the author of several publications. Before joining ISAS, he was an Associate Professor with the Department of History at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill where he was a faculty member from 2012 to 2021. Prior to this, he was an Assistant Professor and the Coordinator of the Contemporary Islam Programme at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. His publications include *The Political Philosophy of Muhammad Iqbal: Islam and Nationalism in Late Colonial India* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), *India and the Future of G20: Shaping Policies for a Better World* (New Delhi: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2023) and *Islamic Political Thought in Modern South Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming, 2024). He has also published articles and chapters on ethnonationalism in South Asia, the Partition and its aftermath, culture and state ideology in Pakistan, modern Islamic thought, the spread of transnational Islamic movements across the Indian Ocean, conceptions of bodily piety in South Asia and Muslim education in South Asia.

Associate Professor Sevea holds a DPhil in History from the University of Oxford. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in history from NUS and a master's degree from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 2 | SPEAKER



## Dr Jonathan Fulton

**Associate Professor, Zayed University**

Dr Jonathan Fulton is an Associate Professor of Political Science in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zayed University in Abu Dhabi, UAE, and a non-resident senior fellow for Middle East Programs and the Scowcroft Middle East Security Initiative at the Atlantic Council. His research focuses on China's relations with the Middle East-North Africa, and his most recent book is *Building the Belt and Road Initiative in the Arab World: China's Middle East Math* (Routledge, 2025). He is the author of The China MENA Newsletter on Substack.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 2 | SPEAKER



### **Mr Kabir Taneja**

**Executive Director, Observer Research  
Foundation Middle East**

Mr Kabir Taneja is the Executive Director of the Observer Research Foundation's Middle East office. He previously focused on India's relations with the Middle East (West Asia), examining domestic political dynamics, terrorism, non-state militant actors, and the region's evolving security architecture.

He is the author of books, book chapters, journal articles, and op-eds, and is a regular contributor to Indian and international media. He speaks frequently at international conferences.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 2 | SPEAKER



### **Dr Yun Sun**

#### **Senior Fellow and Director of the China Programme, Stimson Center**

Dr Yun Sun is a Senior Fellow and Director of the China Programme at the Stimson Center. Her expertise is in Chinese foreign policy, US-China relations, and China's relations with neighbouring countries and authoritarian regimes.

From 2011 to early 2014, she was a Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution, jointly appointed by the Foreign Policy Programme and the Global Development Programme, where she focused on Chinese national security decision-making processes and China-Africa relations. From 2008 to 2011, she was the China Analyst for the International Crisis Group (ICG) based in Beijing, specialising in China's foreign policy towards conflict countries and the developing world. Prior to the ICG, she worked on US-Asia relations in Washington, DC for five years. She earned her PhD from Johns Hopkins University.

## Panel 3

# The Economic Implications of the Last Gulf War

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.

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. 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.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 3 | MODERATOR



### **Ms Michelle Teo**

**Executive Director, Middle East Institute,  
National University of Singapore**

Michelle Teo has more than 20 years' experience in both the government and private sectors. Her career has spanned international relations, corporate and digital communications, and the globe. Michelle's career with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken her to Europe, Australia, North America, the Middle East, North and Southeast Asia. Michelle served as Singapore's Deputy High Commissioner in Canberra. She then joined IBM, first as Communications Leader with IBM Singapore and later with IBM ASEAN. Prior to joining the Middle East Institute in NUS, Michelle was working with local SMEs focused on digital content re-design for Singapore government agencies.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 3 | SPEAKER



## **Mr Ahmed Al Omran** **Correspondent, The Financial Times**

Mr Ahmed Al Omran is a Saudi journalist who works as a correspondent for Financial Times, covering the political and economic developments in the kingdom and other countries in the Gulf region. He was a Knight-Bagehot Fellow at Columbia University in New York, and before that, he worked as a correspondent for The Wall Street Journal in Riyadh. His work has also appeared in The New York Times, Foreign Policy, and Monocle.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 3 | SPEAKER



### **Mr Brian Braun**

#### **Principal for South and South-east Asia Geopolitical & Country Risk, Control Risks**

Mr Brian Braun is a Principal for South and South-east Asia Geopolitical & Country Risk practice. Based in Singapore, he draws on his extensive experience successfully overseeing public governance programmes across Asia to lead a team of regional analysts delivering tailored geopolitical and regulatory risk assessments to support strategic decision-making in complex markets.

Before joining Control Risks, he served as Resident Programme Director in Malaysia, and more recently, in Sri Lanka for a global non-profit organisation, where he led political analysis and stakeholder engagement efforts to support democratic governance. His work included stakeholder mapping and risk assessments in Bangladesh, political economy analyses in Cambodia, local governance assessments in the Philippines, corruption assessments in Tunisia and provincial open government assessments in Sri Lanka.

Mr Braun also has extensive experience in electoral support and management, having served as an international election observer in Tunisia, a domestic observer trainer in Thailand, and has led several USAID and US Department of State-funded election support programmes across Asia and the Middle East.

He holds a bachelor's degree in international relations and German from Cornell College, and a master's in Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Chicago.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 3 | SPEAKER



### **Ms Clara Ferreira Marques**

#### **Managing Editor for Commodities and Energy in Asia, Bloomberg**

Clara Ferreira Marques is a senior Bloomberg journalist and editor based in Singapore, currently managing Bloomberg's commodities and energy coverage in Asia. Previously, she was a Bloomberg Opinion columnist and editorial board member covering foreign affairs, climate and commodity markets, with a particular expertise in China, Russia and sanctions policy.

She joined Bloomberg in 2020 after a long career at Reuters, where she worked in Asia, Europe and Africa, including as Mumbai bureau chief, editor-in-charge of company news in Asia and associate editor for Reuters Breakingviews.

She and her team were finalists for the Gerald Loeb Award in 2025 for their work on sanctioned Iranian oil flows in the South China Sea.

# SPEAKER PROFILE

## PANEL 3 | SPEAKER



### Dr Li-Chen Sim

**Associate Fellow, US Middle East Institute,  
Washington DC**

Dr Li-Chen Sim is a specialist on hydrocarbon and low carbon energies in the Middle East. Her research centres on the political economy of development and implications on foreign and domestic policy, with particular emphasis on Asia, the Arab Gulf, and Russia. Bridging academia, industry, and policy, her influence is reflected in top-ranked publications, collaborations with industry, and engagements with leading think tanks and embassies.

Her most recently published books include *Asian Perceptions of Gulf Security* (Routledge, 2023) and *Low Carbon Energy in the Middle East and North Africa* (Palgrave 2021). Her articles have appeared in top-tier academic journals such as *Global Policy*, *Energy Research & Social Science*, *Journal of Contemporary China*, *Policy Studies*, *Energies*, and *Asian Security*; on forums hosted by premier think-tanks the Atlantic Council and Harvard University's Belfer Center; and in popular media like the *South China Morning Post* and *Natural Gas Intelligence*.

She is active on the speaking circuit, having been a guest at Chatham House London, the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington DC, Emirates Center for Strategic Studies & Research, Foreign Service Institute in Washington DC, Insead Abu Dhabi, and Japan's Institute of Energy Economics, among others.

With a PhD from Oxford, she is currently an Assistant Professor at Khalifa University in the United Arab Emirates and an Associate Fellow at the US Middle East Institute.

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