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## **International and Regional Involvement in the Middle East (IRIME)**

### **The Theme and Goals**

In a region of changing stability, the Middle East countries have experienced a decade of abundant intervening forces. Global powers and aspirants for regional hegemony are shaping and re-shaping axes, networks and influences. The goal of this project is to map these changing networks in the post-Arab Spring Middle East, and to analyze the motives and influence of the involved powers. The normalization agreements between the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain and Israel are a regional game-changer that raises many questions on their ramifications. One of the main points for discussion is the impact of the Abraham Accords on the wider region. We seek to propose a novel point of view on the foreign policy interests of various powerful actors engaged in the Middle East and to discuss their motivations that in the aftermath of the agreements. These actors include the US, China, Russia, Turkey, Iran, Israel, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

### **The Workshop's Plan**

The workshop which will be held between 2021 and 2022 and will include 6 sessions, one every 2 months. Each session will be dedicated to a main topic. The workshop sessions will be held in an online format via Zoom under Chatham House Rule. The workshop is designed as a closed virtual roundtable with presentations and open discussion between the invited discussants. The workshop will culminate in an edited volume and an international conference.

### **Participants' Bios (in alphabetical order)**

**Dr. Geneive Abdo** is a visiting fellow at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington and a consultant at the World Bank. She was most recently a visiting fellow at the Brookings Doha Center. Her current research focuses on the shifting political and religious alliances within Shia communities in the Middle East. She has worked at several Washington-based think tanks, including the Atlantic Council and the Stimson Center. She was a non-resident scholar at the Brookings Institution from 2013-17. She was also a lecturer at the Elliott School of International Affairs at the George Washington University from 2016-19.

**Dr. Aziz Alghashian** is a Saudi researcher who is fascinated with the elusiveness of Saudi foreign policy. He obtained a PhD from the University of Essex in 2019 where he taught International Relations, and Politics and Middle Eastern Studies for several years. Currently, his research focuses on Saudi policy towards Israel, and Arab-Israeli relations more broadly. His research aims to highlight the rich history of Saudi-Israeli/Arab-Israeli pragmatism. Implicit and tacit forms of cooperation and communication are core themes within his research. In addition to research and teaching he has provided commentary to news outlets including: France24, Sky, BBC, Forces TV and Russia Today. Dr. Alghashian is currently a Fellow with the SEPAD group.



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**Dr. Mohammed Baharoon** is the director general of b'huth, which he established with Ahmed Al Mansoori in 2002 in Dubai, UAE. Baharoon received his master's degree in English literature from Texas Tech University in 1995 and his English Major from Kuwait University in 1987. This led to a career in media where he worked as a reporter for Al Arabi Magazine, which was a premier cultural monthly in the Arab world. Baharoon continued his media career as a writer for Al Ittihad newspaper and then as an editor for Gulf Defence Magazine.

**Dr. Sara Bazoobandi** is a senior lecturer in International Political Economy at Regent's University London and an associate fellow at Middle East North Africa program of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, Chatham House. She has contributed in various global and regional track two initiatives and research projects on political, economic and social affairs of the Middle East North Africa region. Dr. Bazoobandi's core research interest is focused on Iran and Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries and she has carried out extensive research on various aspects of the Persian Gulf sovereign wealth funds. She is a frequent participant to various international events and media interviews discussing current regional affairs.

**Dr. Raphael Ben-Levi** is a postdoctoral Azrieli fellow in the School of Political Sciences at the University of Haifa. His primary research is in the field of International Relations, focusing on security studies, nuclear nonproliferation, and the philosophy of international relations. His research explores the influence of worldviews, values and identity on strategic thinking in Israel and the United States and how these cultural factors shape policy toward states engaged in nuclear proliferation. He also has an interest in political philosophy and ideologies, just war theory, comparative religion, and the history of ideas in general.

**Dr. Kristin Diwan** is a senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. She works at the intersection of comparative politics and international relations with an emphasis on social movements. Her current projects concern generational change, nationalism, and the evolution of Islamism in the Arab Gulf states. Her articles have appeared in both academic and policy journals such as *International Affairs* and *Foreign Affairs*, and her commentary in prominent media such as the *New York Times*, *Financial Times* and *Washington Post*. She holds a Ph.D. in Government from Harvard University.

**Dr. Ehud (Udi) Eiran** is a Senior Lecturer (US Associate Professor) at the University of Haifa, Israel. His research interests include spatial, technological, and legal aspects of international conflict (mostly in the Arab-Israeli context), negotiation and conflict resolution, and maritime strategy. He held research and teaching appointments at Harvard (2003-2010), MIT (2010), Stanford (2019-2021), and UC-Berkeley (2020). He is the author of two books and some fifty peer-reviewed, and policy articles. Prior to his academic career, he held a number of positions in the Israeli civil service, including as Assistant foreign policy Advisor to the Prime Minister (1999-2000). Eiran is also a board member of Mitvim, an Israeli think tank.



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**Prof. Michael Eppel** was born in Poland 1947. Arrived to Israel 1957. Phd. in Tel Aviv University (Middle Eastern History), 1991. Head of the Department of Middle Eastern studies in Oranim College of Education 1993-1998. Visiting Professor at University of Minnesota USA 2007-2008. Head of the department of Middle Eastern studies in University of Haifa 2008-2011. Free lance political commentator in the Israeli press 1969-1998. Interviews in the press and T.V. and radio stations all around the world 1995-2021. Fields of research: Middle Eastern regional arena, Iraqi politics and the Iraqi socio-political history, history and politics of Kurdistan and Kurdish national movement, Russian and Chinese involvement in the Middle East, Chinese and Russian foreign affairs, the social process and political conditions in the Middle East.

**Prof. Yoram Evron** is Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Haifa. Focusing on China's national security and foreign relations, his research and teaching interests include China's military procurement, arms proliferation, and military modernization, China-Middle East and China-Israel relations, as well as Asian powers' involvement in the Middle East and China's relations with small and medium developed states. Dr. Evron is the founder and director of the Business in Asia B.A. program and the Asia Markets M.A. program, both of them in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Haifa. His articles have been published in Journals such as Journal of Strategic Studies, International Relations, Pacific Review, and Asian Survey.

**Prof. Jonathan Fulton** is an Assistant Professor of Political Science in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zayed University, in Abu Dhabi, UAE, and a senior nonresident fellow at the Atlantic Council. His research focuses on China - Middle East relations, international relations of the Gulf, Chinese foreign policy, and Asia - Middle East relations. He has written widely for both academic and popular publications. His books include *China's Relations with the Gulf Monarchies*, *External Power and the Gulf Monarchies*, *Regions in the Belt and Road Initiative*, and the *Routledge Handbook of China-Middle East Relations*.

**Prof. F. Gregory Gause, III** is a member of the board of directors of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington and is the John H. Lindsey '44 chair, professor of international affairs, and head of the international affairs department at the Bush School of Government and Public Service at Texas A&M University. He was previously on the faculties of the University of Vermont (1995-2014) and Columbia University (1987-95) and was a fellow for Arab and Islamic Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York (1993-94). Gause was also a former Fulbright Scholar at the American University in Kuwait. His research focuses on the international politics of the Middle East, particularly the Arabian Peninsula and the Persian Gulf.

**Prof. Bernard Haykel** is a scholar of the Middle East and focuses on the history, politics and economics of the Arabian Peninsula. He is professor of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University where he is also director of the Institute for the Transregional Study of the Contemporary Middle East. Professor Haykel is presently completing a book on Saudi Arabia's political history. He is considered an authority on Islamist political movements and Islamic law and is the author of numerous articles on the politics of Saudi Arabia and Yemen, Salafism, al-Qaeda and ISIS. Haykel has received several prominent



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awards, such as the Prize Fellowship at Magdalen College, Oxford, the Carnegie Corporation and Guggenheim fellowships and the Old Dominion Professorship at Princeton. Professor Haykel earned his D.Phil. in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford.

**Dr. Hussein Ibish** is a senior resident scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington and a weekly columnist for Bloomberg Opinion and The National (UAE). He previously served as a senior fellow at the American Task Force on Palestine, executive director of the Foundation for Arab-American Leadership, and communications director for the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee. He has a PhD in comparative literature from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

**Dr. Ariel Kabiri** earned his BA and MA (Magna cum laude) from the International Relations Department at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and his PhD at the University of Haifa's School of Political Sciences in the fall of 2012. His research addresses the relative effects of material versus ideational sources on policy and outcomes. Currently Kabiri teaches political science and international relations at the Western Galilee Academic College and the University of Haifa.

**Raymond Karam** is the chief program and development officer at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. Prior to joining AGSIW, Karam served as the EastWest Institute's Washington, DC representative. In this capacity, he directed the institute's outreach to members of Congress, congressional staff, various federal departments, foreign embassies, and international organizations. A skilled dialogue practitioner, Karam also led the EastWest Institute's Track II diplomatic initiatives with partners in the Middle East on issues of regional security, nonproliferation, economic development, and environmental governance. He facilitated U.S.-Iran policy dialogues, which served as one of the few bridges for sustained, face-to-face discussions between Americans and Iranians.

**Dr. Arie Krampf** holds a position as Senior Lecturer (tenure track) for Political Economy and International Studies. His main areas of expertise are Comparative Political Economy and International Political Economy, with a strong research focus on Israel's growth model, especially concerning the interaction between economic and security issues. Dr. Krampf recently was awarded with a highly competitive 3-year research grant from the Israel Science Foundation. Dr. Krampf is a member of the executive board of the Israeli Association for the Study of European Integration (IASI), and the Israeli Association for International Studies (IAIS). He is also a senior researcher at the The Simone Veil Research Centre for Contemporary European Studies at Ben Gurion University.

**Dr. Gallia Lindenstrauss** is a Senior Research Fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies and specializes in Turkish foreign policy. Her additional research interests are ethnic conflicts, Azerbaijan's foreign policy, the Cyprus issue, and the Kurds. She has written extensively on these topics and her commentaries and op-eds have appeared in all of the Israeli major media outlets, as well as in international outlets. Dr. Lindenstrauss completed her Ph.D. in the Department of International Relations at Hebrew University. She formerly lectured at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and at the Interdisciplinary Center, Herzliya, and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Leonard Davis Institute for International Relations at the Hebrew University, and a visiting fellow at the Bipartisan Policy Center.



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**Dr. Carmela Lutmar** is a researcher and lecturer in the Division of International Relations in the School of Political Sciences at the University of Haifa. She holds an MA in Peace Studies from the University of Notre Dame, and received her PhD from New York University (2004). Dr. Lutmar was a research associate, and Lecturer at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University (2005-2009). Her research interests include leadership, regime changes, mediation in civil wars, and postwar governance in war torn societies.

**Prof. Benjamin Miller** is Professor of International Relations at the School of Political Sciences, and the Director of the National Security Center, The University of Haifa. Miller is the recipient of the Provost Prize for a Distinguished Senior Researcher for 2020. Miller received a Ph. D. from the University of California at Berkeley and has held Research Fellowships at Harvard University, MIT, Princeton University (Center for International Studies), McGill University and at the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRS). He has taught at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Duke University, the University of Colorado, Boulder, Princeton University and Dartmouth College. He also served for many years as the President of the Israeli Association for International Studies (IAIS). Miller's most recent book focuses on explaining changes in US grand strategy, entitled *Grand Strategy from Truman to Trump*.

**Dr. Robert Mogielnicki** is a Senior Resident Scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington (AGSIW). He manages the institute's political economy research and leads "Next Gen Gulf" – a long-term research series that that he created to examine technology trends in the Middle East. He is an Adjunct Assistant Professor at Georgetown University's Walsh School of Foreign Service, where he teaches a graduate-level seminar on China-Middle East and North Africa relations. Dr. Mogielnicki is also serving as the Middle East and North Africa advisor with Freedom House for a year-long research project on global media and technology influence. Dr. Mogielnicki holds a D.Phil degree from the University of Oxford's Magdalen College and a M.Phil degree in Modern Middle Eastern Studies from the University of Oxford's St Antony's College.

**Prof. Elie Podeh** is a professor in the Dept. of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. He is the President of the Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies Association of Israel. Eli Podeh's main fields of interest are modern Egypt, inter-Arab relations, the Arab-Israeli conflict; and, education and culture in the Middle East. He is a Senior Research Fellow at the Harry S. Truman Institute for the Advancement of Peace, and a Board Member of Mitvim – the Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies. He has served as head of the Dept. of Islamic and Middle East Studies (2004-2009) and editor of Hamizrah Hehadash (New East, 2000-2008). At present, he serves as the President of the Middle East and Islamic Studies Association of Israel (MEISAI).

**Amb. William Roebuck** at present is the Executive Vice President of The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. Roebuck completed his diplomatic career in late 2020, after 28 years of service in postings across the Middle East, including Baghdad, Damascus, and Jerusalem. He served as U.S.



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ambassador to Bahrain from 2015-17 and as Chargé d'Affaires in Libya in 2013. As Deputy Special Envoy for the Global Coalition Against ISIS, Roebuck was embedded with U.S. Special Forces, serving as the senior (and often only) U.S. diplomat on the ground in northeastern Syria from 2018-20, receiving the State Department's Award for Heroism for his work there. He was born and raised in North Carolina and began his career as a Peace Corps volunteer in Ivory Coast.

**Amb. Douglas Silliman** is president of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. He previously served as U.S. ambassador to Iraq from 2016-19 and U.S. ambassador to Kuwait from 2014-16. From 2013-14, he served as a senior advisor in the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs in the U.S. Department of State, working on Iraq issues and the U.S.-Africa Leaders Summit. Silliman was deputy chief of mission at the U.S. Embassy in Iraq from 2012-13, minister counselor for political affairs in Baghdad from 2011-12, and deputy chief of mission in Ankara, Turkey from 2008-11. He joined the Department of State in 1984.

**Dr. Li-Chen Sim** is a political economist based in the UAE and a non-resident scholar at the Middle East Institute in the USA. Dr Sim is a specialist in the political economy of Russian and Gulf energy and its intersection with international relations. Her interests include the politics of hydrocarbon/renewable/nuclear energy in the Middle East, Gulf-Asia exchanges, Russia-China relations in the Middle East, and Russia-Gulf interactions. She is active on the speaking circuit, having been a guest at Chatham House London, Middle East Institute Singapore, Emirates Center for Strategic Studies & Research, Gulf Intelligence, National Defense College, and New York University Abu Dhabi among others.

**Dr. Emma Soubrier**, a non-resident fellow at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, is a professorial lecturer and a visiting scholar at the Institute for Middle East Studies at the George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs, where she teaches a class on U.S. policy in the Gulf. Her research focuses on the security strategies and foreign policies of the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, particularly the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia, and the political economy of arms trade in the Gulf. Her forthcoming book, *Qatar and the United Arab Emirates: Diverging Paths to Regional and Global Power* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2022), is based on her PhD thesis, which received a Dissertation Award from the Institute for Higher National Defense Studies (France) in 2018.

**Dr. Alexander Tabachnik** is a Research Fellow at the Chaikin Chair for Geostrategy, the University of Haifa. Alexander's research interests include: the post-Soviet sphere, ethnic nationalism, identity formation, separatism and separatist movements, nation building and state building; regional security; Russian foreign policy and Russian information warfare; economic, technological and security policies of the Gulf Countries.



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**Dr. Moran Zaga** is a researcher at the University of Haifa and a policy fellow at Mitvim - The Israeli Institute for Regional Foreign Policies. Moran's main research focus is on borders in the Middle East. Her first study was the United Arab Emirates, focusing on the evolution of its tribal boundaries to modern borders. Moran is also involved in policy analysis and discussions on contemporary geopolitics of the Arab Gulf. Moran was recently appointed to lead the newly-founded unit of research collaborations between the University of Haifa and Gulf research institutions. She is also a lecturer, a commentator in media, and an advisor to Israeli governmental institutions.