

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE ON SECURITY, DIPLOMATIC AND ECONOMIC ISSUES IN THE PERSIAN GULF

ORGANIZED BY THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CONSORTIUM OF GEORGIA* -  ISCOG*



JOIN ON FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2024 – 8:30 A. M. – 4:00 P. M. EASTERN TIME

Meeting ID: 861 1052 1825/Password: 887920

<https://iu.zoom.us/j/86110521825?pwd=VW1ua084cGxRS3BsaFq4V1JNbFZPQT09>

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THE INDIANA UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE MIDDLE EAST, INNER ASIAN AND URALIC NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER, THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF GLOBAL CHANGE, REINHARDT UNIVERSITY & THE INTERNATIONAL STUDIES CONSORTIUM OF GEORGIA



Please contact Consortium Executive Director raj.sashti@reinhardt.edu for any additional information.

***Consortium Universities and Colleges:** Reinhardt University, Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College, Albany State University, Alcorn State University (MS), Andrew College, Clayton State University, Columbus State University, Dalton State College, Edward Waters College (FL), Fort Valley State University, Georgia Highlands College, Gordon State College, Jacksonville State University (AL), Middle Georgia State University, South Georgia State College, Tennessee State University, University of North Georgia.

AGENDA

- 8:30 A. M. WELCOME, GREETINGS AND PROGRAM OVERVIEW
Rajgopal Sashti, Consortium Founding Executive Director, Reinhardt University.
- 8:45 AN OVERVIEW OF THE CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF THE MIDDLE EAST
Dr. Carl Pearson, Associate Director, Indiana University, Bloomington.
- 9:00 **GULF DIPLOMACY AND ISRAEL**
Ambassador Feisal Istrabadi, McRobbie Professor in Global Strategic Studies, Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, Founding Director, Center for the Study of the Middle East, and Affiliated Faculty at the Center for Constitutional Democracy, Indiana University, Bloomington.
- 10:00 QUESTION AND ANSWER – PARTICIPANTS
- 10:30 BREAK
- 10:45 **THE CHANGING STATUS OF WOMEN IN THE GULF STATES**
Dr. Bozena Welborne, Associate Professor of Government, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.
- 11:45 QUESTION AND ANSWER - PARTICIPANTS
- 12:15 P. M. LUNCH BREAK
- 1:00 **IRAN'S GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURE**
Dr. Jamsheed Choksy, Distinguished Professor, former Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, former Chair of the Department of Central Asian Studies, and Current Director of the Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center, Indiana University Bloomington.
- 1:45 QUESTION AND ANSWER – PARTICIPANTS
- 2:15 Break
- 2:30 **IRAN AND ITS PROXIES**
Dr. Emily Stranger, Cultural Instructor, United States Department of Defense.
- 3:30 QUESTION AND ANSWER – PARTICIPANTS
- 4:00 **ADJOURNMENT**

Bios of Presenters and Organizers

Ambassador Feisal Istrabadi, McRobbie Professor in Global Strategic Studies, Hamilton Lugar School of Global and International Studies, Founding Director, Center for the Study of the Middle East, and Affiliated Faculty at the Center for Constitutional Democracy, Indiana University, Bloomington.

Ambassador Istrabadi received his SJD ('09) and LLM ('05) from Northwestern University and his JD ('88) and BA ('86) from Indiana University where he is now a Professor in Global Strategic Studies and Director of IU's Center for the Study of the Middle East. He was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary and Deputy Permanent Representative of Iraq to the United Nations in 2004 and served in the Office of the Minister for Foreign Affairs from 2010 to 2012. He was principal legal drafter of the Iraqi interim constitution of 2004 and focuses his research on constitutional issues, problems in engendering rule-of-law institutions, and post-conflict justice issues in the Middle East. An elected Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and a Member of the Council on Foreign Relations, he lectures often at universities and policy institutes and appears frequently in national and international media.

Dr. Bozena Welborne, Associate Professor of Government, Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

Bozena Welborne, B.A., Colorado College and M. A. and Ph. D., University of Colorado, Boulder, teaches courses on the Middle East, political economy, and women's political participation. Welborne's book, *Women, Money, and Political Participation in the Middle East* (Palgrave, 2022), explores how money from abroad conditions women's political and economic opportunities in the region. Welborne is also a co-author of the book, *The Politics of the Headscarf in the United States* (Cornell University Press, 2018), which showcases results from the largest academic survey of Muslim-American women regarding their Islamic practice and politicization. Her work has been published in the *Digest of Middle East Studies*, *Middle East Law and Governance*, *The Journal of Arabian Studies*, *Social Sciences Quarterly*, *Politics and Religion*, *Political Research Quarterly*, and by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and the Baker Institute for Public Policy (BIPP) at Rice University. Prior to Smith, Welborne was an assistant professor at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Dr. Jamsheed Choksy, Distinguished Professor, former Chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, former Chair of the Department of Central Asian Studies, and Current Director of the Inner Asian and Uralic National Resource Center, Indiana University Bloomington.

Choksy completed his undergraduate degree from Columbia University in 1985 and doctoral work at Harvard University in 1991 where he was elected a Junior Fellow (1987-1991). From there, he embarked on a career in academia, beginning as a Visiting Assistant Professor at Stanford University (1991-1993) and subsequently a tenure track professor at Indiana University in 1993, eventually holding appointments in a variety of different programs in that university. He has been a National Endowment for Humanities Fellow and Member at the School of Historical Studies, Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton (1993-1994) and a Mellon Fellow at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Palo Alto (2001-2002).

In 2022, he was elected a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Choksy is considered one of the foremost authorities on Iran, India, Islam, and Zoroastrianism, combining historical understanding to discuss modern issues and topics. An important piece of this research and his pieces in the foreign affairs and popular press, such as *Foreign Affairs*, *Foreign*

Policy, Real Clear World, the Huffington Post and other venues, is pulling from his historical understanding of history, culture, and religion to illustrate how different cultures and people in the Middle East and Central Asia interact.

In 2008, he was nominated by President George W. Bush to the National Council on the Humanities and served as a member of the council until 2019.

Ms. Emily Stranger, Cultural Instructor, United States Department of Defense.

In her daily work, Emily Stranger prepares U.S. soldiers for missions in the Middle East, Central Asia, and many other areas of the world. As a regional expertise and cultural instructor at the United States Department of Defense, she offers soldiers cultural instruction in the regions they are focused on. Stranger developed her regional expertise at the Indiana University, Hamilton Lugar School. She completed her M.A. and is now a doctoral candidate in the Central Eurasian Studies Program. She has studied Azerbaijani, Sorani Kurdish, Kyrgyz, Arabic, Persian, Uzbek, and Pahlavi/Middle Persian.

She now uses her expertise to present regional area overviews to soldiers in the 1st Special Forces Command in Fort Bragg, N.C., offering soldiers expertise in regional culture, history, and political and social issues.

She is also a 2022-2023 Joint Special Operations University (JSOU) Non-Resident Fellow and is currently working on her doctoral dissertation, "The Return to Iranshahr: Islamic Republic of Iran's Strategic Choices for Power and Influence in the 21st Century."

Emily's past research has focused on Iran-sponsored militias and Iran's use of social media to export revolutionary ideas, and her master's thesis was nominated for IU's Graduate School Distinguished Master's Thesis Award in 2019.

Mr. Raj Sashti, Executive Director, International Studies Consortium of Georgia, Reinhardt University, Waleska, Georgia.

Before joining Reinhardt University, Raj was an Associate Professor of Geography and in academic administration at half-dozen public universities and colleges in Georgia including the Georgia Institute of Technology – Sam Nunn School of International Affairs. During his 50+ years of service to higher education, he has been awarded more than \$5,000,000 grants by the U.S. Department of Education, Council for the International Exchange of Scholars, and other organizations. Over the years, Raj has also received three Fulbright Specialist grants and three Fulbright Fellowships to study and travel in Germany, Japan, and Brazil. In addition to serving as an advisor to several major research universities across the U.S., he has traveled around the globe directing Fulbright funded faculty development programs in more than two dozen countries of Europe, Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America. Raj has two M. A. degrees in Geography, one from the University of Akron, Ohio, and the other from Osmania University, Hyderabad, India.

Why should American Students Learn More About Persian Gulf Related Security, Diplomatic, Economic and Resource Related issues?

U. S. Persian Gulf Relations at Cross-Roads

The global response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the Israel-Hamas war has focused new attention on friction between the United States and its traditional partners in the Gulf and reinforced skepticism regarding the United States' status as the dominant international partner in the region. The new multipolar reality, characterized by the expanded influence of China and Russia, has pushed the major Gulf Cooperation Council states toward a position of strategic neutrality.

Nevertheless, the United States and the Gulf Arabs share a vital interest in cooperation that can mitigate against a further breakdown in the relationship. It's time for both sides to identify a realistic way forward that sheds outdated notions of mutual obligation without becoming merely transactional.

The New Geopolitics of the Persian Gulf/Middle East

America's role in a changing region. For about 20 years since the end of the Cold War, the regional power dynamics of the Middle East were relatively stable, and the United States was the uncontested and dominant external power. Today, a combination of the upheavals, revolutions, and civil wars in the region, U.S. war fatigue, the shale energy revolution, and the return of great power competition have dramatically transformed the geopolitics of the Middle East.

America's Role in the Middle East: The View from the Gulf

The United States has not announced any intention to "withdraw" from the Middle East—but the Gulf states are acting as though it has, broadening their foreign partnerships and necessitating an in-depth examination of U.S. Middle Eastern policy.

Historically, the United States has played a major role in shaping the Middle East's political landscape, starting during the Cold War era and continuing through the War on Terror. However, in recent years, Washington's active participation in, and influence over, the Middle East and the Gulf States has noticeably decreased. The past decade has seen a visible decline in what might be called the United States' "effective presence." In other words, while still technically present in the region, Washington has increasingly decided to stay on the sidelines of the Middle East's complicated political ecosystem, raising questions about its future in the region and the Arab world's perception of its influence.

An Introduction to the Persian Gulf Region

<https://gulf2000.columbia.edu/country.shtml>

Where is the Persian Gulf located and why is this important?

The Persian Gulf's strategic location has made it an ideal place for human development over time. Today, many major cities of the Middle East are located in this region.

Why is the Persian Gulf Economically Important?

The Persian Gulf region contains 50% of the world's oil reserves and thus plays a strategic geopolitical role. The region produces nearly one third of the world's oil and also holds a significant portion of the world's natural gas reserves.

Why is the Persian Gulf still an important region today?

The United States produces lots of oil and gas but still imports large quantities. As a result, the world is now reliant on a handful of countries in the Persian Gulf for steady supplies of oil and gas.

For what various reasons has the United States become involved in Middle Eastern affairs?

Since World War II, three main interests—ensuring the free flow of oil from the Gulf, guaranteeing the survival and security of Israel, and limiting the influence of the former Soviet Union—have driven U.S. foreign policy toward the Middle East.