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## China and the Middle East

Tuesday, February 17, 2015

Carlucci Auditorium, U.S. Institute of Peace  
Washington, DC

*China in the Middle East* is a daylong conference designed to explore China's emerging role in the Middle East and its implications for regional stability, U.S. policy and Chinese grand strategy.

China's role in the region is expanding in accordance with Beijing's burgeoning economic, political, and to a lesser extent, military interests there. China is expected to surpass the United States as the world's largest oil importer this year, making energy security the top issue in Beijing. China is also becoming financially invested in the future of the region; last year 22 percent of Chinese companies' global investment was directed towards the region. While the number of Chinese nationals working and traveling in the region is still modest, Chinese tourism in the Middle East and North Africa increased more than fivefold from 2000 to 2012. Beijing has also become a marginal arms seller in the region and is the leading proliferator of small arms in the world, with Middle Eastern countries as top recipients.

Some national leaders and scholars have voiced concerns about the implications of enhanced Chinese influence in the region while others have argued for a greater Chinese contribution to regional stability. China could leverage its significant soft power to help resolve conflicts - according to a recent Pew global poll, China's favorability in the region was higher than that of the United States. Beijing also maintains working relationships with a number of important governments in the region that the United States shuns, such as Syria and Iran, and may consider contributing to degrading and destroying ISIS in Iraq and Syria given its own interests in combatting Islamic terrorism. Beijing may also play a greater role in the Middle East peace process in the future, as the Palestinians view China as a more impartial actor.

This conference will evaluate China's nascent regional role, implications for regional security, the reactions of other regional actors, and implications for U.S. policy.

*This conference is co-sponsored by the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Georgetown University Center for Security Studies and made possible in part through the generosity of the Philip and Patricia Bilden Asian Security Studies Fund.*

## Agenda

### **0830-0930: Registration**

### **0930-0945: Welcome**

Jim Reardon-Anderson, *Interim Dean, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University*  
Nancy Lindborg, *President, United States Institute of Peace (USIP)*

### **0945-1045: What is China's Role in the Middle East?**

Degang Sun, *Professor, Middle East Studies Institute, Shanghai International Studies University*  
Dan Blumenthal, *Director of Asian Studies, American Enterprise Institute (AEI)*  
Dawn Murphy, *Assistant Professor, Air War College*  
Moderator: *Oriana Skylar Mastro, Assistant Professor, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University*

### **1045-1100: Break**

### **1100-1200: Does China Enhance Stability in the Middle East?**

Steve Levine, *Adjunct Professor, Georgetown University*  
Paul Sullivan, *Adjunct Professor, Georgetown University*  
Mikkal Herberg, *Senior Lecturer, University of California, San Diego*  
Moderator: *Sarhang Hamasaeed, Senior Program Officer, Center for Middle East and Africa, USIP*

### **1200-1230: Break**

**1230-1345: Lunch Keynote: Ambassador Chas W. Freeman, Jr. (USFS, Ret.), President Emeritus, Middle East Policy Council & U.S. China Policy Council**

### **1345-1400: Break**

### **1400-1500: How Do Different Players in the Region See China's Expanding Role?**

Jon Alterman, *Senior Vice President, Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy, and Director of Middle East Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)*  
John Garver, *Professor of International Affairs, Georgia Tech*  
Sam Chester, *Analyst, Clarity Capital*  
Moderator: *Daniel Byman, Associate Professor, Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University*

### **1500-1515: Break**

### **1515-1615: How Should U.S. Policy Adapt to These Changes?**

Barbara Bodine, *Director of Institute for the Study of Diplomacy, Georgetown University*  
Aaron David Miller, *Vice President for New Initiatives, Distinguished Scholar, The Woodrow Wilson Center*  
Michael O'Hanlon, *Senior Fellow and Co-Director, Center for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Security and Intelligence, The Brookings Institution*  
Thomas McNaugher, *Director of Studies, Georgetown University Center for Security Studies*

### **1615-1630: Concluding Remarks: What are Important Areas for Future Inquiry?**

Oriana Skylar Mastro, *Assistant Professor, Georgetown University*  
Manal Omar, *Acting Vice President, Center for Middle East and Africa, USIP*  
David Maxwell, *Associate Director, Georgetown University Center for Security Studies*

### **1630-1800: Reception for speakers, select students**