



# China in the Middle East and Africa

June 22, 2022

Notre Dame Jerusalem Global Gateway  
Tantur Ecumenical Institute  
Jerusalem, Israel

Presented by

**Keough School of Global Affairs**

**The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security**

With support from

**Notre Dame International**

**The Notre Dame International Security Center**

# Conference Schedule

## 9:30 a.m.

### Call to Order

Prof. Joshua Eisenman, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

### Welcome Remarks

Jonathan Noble, Senior Assistant Provost for Internationalization, University of Notre Dame

Prof. Efraim Inbar, President, Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security

## 9:45 a.m.

### Panel 1: China and the Global Strategic Landscape

#### Chair: Prof. Efraim Inbar, President, Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security

China's Balancing Act Between Iran and the Gulf

*Mr. Ilan Berman (American Foreign Policy Council)*

The Belt and Road Initiative in the Global South

*Dr. Chen Yunnan (ODI)*

China's Emergence as a Middle East Power

*Dr. Jonathan Fulton (Atlantic Council/Zayed University)*

China, Authoritarianism, and MENA?

*Dr. David O. Shullman (Atlantic Council)*

## 11:15 a.m. Break

## 11:30 a.m.

### Panel 2: China's Political and Economic Clout in the Middle East

#### Chair: Dr. Chen Yunnan, ODI

China and the MENA post the Abraham Accords

*Dr. Nath Aldalala'á (TRENDS)*

India's Arab-Mediterranean Corridor VS. China's Belt and Road Initiative as a means of Strategic Connectivity

*Dr. Oshrit Birvadker (JISS)*

China's Role in the JCPOA and Implications of China-Iran 25-year Agreement

*Mr. Alexander Grinberg (JISS)*

The New Crossroad: Chinese in Afghanistan

*Dr. Wang Duanyong (Shanghai International Studies University)*

## 1:00 p.m. Lunch

## 1:45 p.m.

### Book Talk: Prof. Joshua Eisenman, *China's Strategic Relations with Africa: A New Era of Political and Security Engagement*

Moderator: Eric Olander, Editor in Chief, The China-Global South Project

## 2:45 p.m.

### Panel 3: China in Africa

#### Chair: Prof. Joshua Eisenman, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

African Views of China

*Dr. Joseph Asunka (Afrobarometer)*

The Forum on China-Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) Today and Tomorrow

*Dr. Irit Bak (Moshe Dayan Center)*

The Meeting of Giants: Reflections on China-Africa Relations

*Ms. Sharon Bar-David (Ben Gurion University)*

Co-ordinated Engagement? Russia and China in MENA

*Dr. Li-Chen Sim (Khalifa University)*

## 4:15 Break

## 4:30 p.m.

### Panel 4: China and Israel

#### Chair: Mr. Tuvia Gering, Research Fellow, Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security

Geopolitics and Chinese infrastructure investments in Israel

*Ms. Galia Lavi (Institute for National Security Studies, Tel Aviv University)*

China's Quest for Discourse Power in Israel

*Mr. Alexander Pevzner (Reichman University)*

The US is Wrong in its Attitude Towards China - and Israel May Also Pay the Price

*Prof. Yitzhak Shichor (The Hebrew University of Jerusalem)*

Sino-US Competition and the Implications for Israel and the Jewish People

*Dr. Shalom Wald (Jewish People Policy Institute)*

## 6:00 p.m.

### Closing Remarks

Prof. Joshua Eisenman, Keough School of Global Affairs, University of Notre Dame

## Conference Organizers



### Joshua Eisenman

Prof. Joshua Eisenman is associate professor of politics at the University of Notre Dame's Keough School of Global Affairs and senior fellow for China studies at the American Foreign Policy Council. His research focuses on the political economy of China's development and its foreign relations with the global south—particularly Africa. His work has been published in top academic journals including *World Development* and the *Journal of Contemporary China*, and in popular outlets such as *Foreign Policy* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Eisenman's second book, *China and Africa: A Century of Engagement* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), co-authored with Ambassador David Shinn, was named one of the Best International Relations Books of 2012 by Foreign Affairs. Eisenman and Shinn are now working on their next volume, which will examine the China-Africa political and security relationship. Eisenman has been a visiting faculty member at Fudan University, Peking University, and New York University Shanghai. He holds a PhD in political science from UCLA and an MA in International Relations from Johns Hopkins University.



### Tuvia Gering

Mr. Tuvia Gering is a research fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS) and a Krauthammer Fellow, specializing in Chinese security, foreign policy, and disaster and emergency management. Prior to joining the JISS, Gering was a research-analyst at the Israeli Chinese Media Center (CMC) and a special lecturer in Chinese to PRC guests of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Gering has published in peer-reviewed journals and is frequently quoted in international and domestic media, with bylines on the *Jerusalem Strategic Tribune*, *Sinocism*, *SupChina*, *Asia Times*, *9DashLine*, *Israel Defense*, *Tablet Magazine*. He is the author of the *Discourse Power* newsletter on Substack.



## Speakers

### Nath Aldalala'a

Dr. Nath Aldalala'a holds a PhD in International Relations and a PhD in English Literature and Cultural Studies. His research interests include the discourse of representation, American foreign policy in the Middle East, and China's relations with the Middle East. Aldalala'a is currently serving as a professor of International Relations at Shandong University, China.

Recent publications include *Contextualizing Biden's China Foreign Policy*, *End of Liberal Triumphalism: A perspective on China in the post-Covid global order*, and *The impact of Covid-19 on global politics*.



### Joseph Asunka

Dr. Joseph Asunka is the CEO of Afrobarometer. He was previously a program officer in the Global Development and Population program at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, where he managed a portfolio of grants to increase accountability in fiscal governance and foster citizen participation to improve public services in developing countries. Before joining Hewlett, Asunka was a lecturer in political science at UCLA, where he taught courses on African politics, political economy of development, research methods, and data analysis. He has published in journals such as the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Research and Politics*, and *Population Research and Policy Review*.



### Irit Bak

Dr. Irit Bak is head of the Inter-University program of African Studies at Tel Aviv University, a lecturer in the Department of Middle East and African Studies and Head of the Africa Research Program at the Moshe Dayan Center for Middle Eastern and African Studies. Her research interests are contemporary Islam, conflicts resolution and regional organizations, primarily in the Horn of Africa and West Africa. She has published extensively within various academic journals and in other forums on these themes and is considered to be a leading commentator on African issues by the Israeli media. Her recent book, *Sovereignty and Intervention in Africa: Conflict Resolution and International Organizations in Darfur*, was published by IB Tauris in 2015.



### Sharon Bar-David

Sharon Bar-David is a PhD candidate at the department of politics and government, Ben Gurion University. She was trained as sinologist at the Hebrew University and Jiao Tong Shanghai University, and Chinese is her main research language. She specializes in politics and policy, with a focus on the Communist Party of China. Bar-David is currently researching China's investments in Africa and China's foreign policy, focusing on the new refurbished Addis-Djibouti railway. She is a co-editor of the newly published book *Meeting of the Giants: Reflections on China- Africa Relations*.



### **Ilan Berman**

Mr. Ilan Berman is senior vice president of the American Foreign Policy Council in Washington, DC. An expert on regional security in the Middle East, Central Asia, and the Russian Federation, he has consulted for the US Central Intelligence Agency as well as the US Departments of State and Defense. Berman is a member of the Associated Faculty at Missouri State University's Department of Defense and Strategic Studies. He is the author and editor of ten books on the MENA region and a frequent writer and commentator for leading publications.



### **Oshrit Birvadker**

Dr. Oshrit Birvadker, a Research Fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS) specializing in Indian foreign policy and security. Birvadker is a lecturer at Reichman University at the Department of Strategy, Diplomacy, and Security at Shalem College. She also serves as a consultant governmental ministries and private companies, a columnist for Israeli newspapers, and a foreign policy commentator, Birvadker is also the author of the popular blog *Miss India in The Marker*. She is a renowned social activist within the Indian Jewish community and the CEO of the social enterprise Mantra. Birbadker holds a PhD in Middle Eastern Studies from Bar-Ilan University.



### **Chen Yunnan**

Dr. Chen Yunnan is a senior research officer in the Development and Public Finance programme. Her research interests center around development finance institutions and infrastructure finance in the Africa region, and she is a specialist on China's overseas development finance. She has a background in political economy and development studies, and earned her PhD at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies, where she conducted extensive field research with the SAIS China Africa Research Initiative.



### **Jonathan Fulton**

Dr. Jonathan Fulton is an assistant professor of Political Science at the College of Humanities and Social Sciences at Zayed University in Abu Dhabi. He is also a senior nonresident fellow at The Atlantic Council in Washington, DC. His research focuses primarily on Chinese foreign policy in the Middle East, with a specific focus on China-GCC relations. Fulton's books include *China's Relations with the Gulf Monarchies*, *Regions in the Belt and Road Initiative*, *External Powers and the Gulf Monarchies*, and *The Routledge Handbook on China-Middle East Relations*. His research has appeared in scholarly journals and his writing frequently appears in newspapers and popular publications.



### **Alex Grinberg**

Mr. Alex Grinberg is a research fellow at the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS), focusing on Iran and Islamist movements, as well as Iranian intellectual history and contemporary Shi'a thought. Grinberg's other study interests include Iran's domestic policy, regional strategy, and geopolitical theaters more broadly. Prior to teaching Persian at Ariel University and working as a geopolitical and intelligence analyst in private firms, Grinberg held several positions in the IDF military intelligence research department (AMAN). Born in Moscow, Grinberg is a keen observer of Russian affairs and speaks Russian, Hebrew, English, Farsi, Arabic, and French fluently.



### **Efraim Inbar**

Prof. Efraim Inbar is the president of the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security (JISS). Inbar was the founding director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, and a professor of political studies at Bar-Ilan University. He is a visiting professor at Georgetown, Johns Hopkins and Boston universities; a visiting scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars; a Manfred Warner NATO Fellow; and a visiting fellow at the (London-based) International Institute for Strategic Studies. He was president of the Israel Association of International Studies; a member of the Political Strategic Committee of the National Planning Council; chairman of the National Security Curriculum committee in the Ministry of Education; and a member of the Academic Committee of the IDF History Department. He has authored five books and edited fourteen collections of scholarly articles.



### **Galia Lavi**

Ms. Galia Lavi is a research fellow at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), and a researcher and coordinator of the Israel-China program. She is also a PhD student at the history school of Tel Aviv University and her research topic is the history of science and technology in late Qing China, focusing on the development of railways. At the INSS, her main interests are Israel-China relations, focusing mainly on infrastructure; China's foreign policy in the Middle East; the Belt and Road Initiative; and China's relations with the US.



### **Jonathan Noble**

Jonathan Noble is senior assistant provost for internationalization at the University of Notre Dame, and serves as the University's regional leader for Asia and Europe. As the regional leader for Asia and Europe, Noble is responsible for the regions' academic affairs, research strategies and programs, gateways and centers, institutional partnerships, and operational effectiveness. As assistant provost for Asia between 2012 and 2017, Noble was the founding director of the Beijing Global Gateway and founder of the Greater China Scholars Program. He served as the advisor to the provost's office for Asia initiatives between 2007 and 2011, during which he assisted in the establishment of the Liu Institute for Asia & Asian Studies and its Asia Leadership Forum. Noble holds a PhD in East Asian languages and literatures from The Ohio State University and a BA in East Asian studies from the College of William & Mary.



### **Eric Olander**

Mr. Eric Olander is the editor-in-chief of The China-Global South Project, an independent, non-partisan multimedia news initiative dedicated to exploring every facet of Chinese engagement in Africa, the Middle East, and throughout the developing world. Olander manages three sites in English ([www.chinaglobalsouth.com](http://www.chinaglobalsouth.com)), Arabic ([akhbaralsin-africa.com](http://akhbaralsin-africa.com)), and French ([projetafriquechine.com](http://projetafriquechine.com)) and hosts two weekly podcasts on Chinese foreign policy. Olander has more than 30 years of journalism experience as a chief editor, producer, and correspondent at many of the world's leading international news organizations including CNN, the BBC World Service, the Associated Press, and FRANCE 24 among others.



### **Alexander B. Pevzner**

Mr. Alexander B. Pevzner is a senior researcher at Strategy Risks Corp. Pevzner was previously a researcher with Israel's Institute for National Security Studies and the Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security. Pevzner has extensive experience studying China's political communications and news media, domestic politics, and foreign policy. He lectures on Chinese strategy and national security at the Honors track of Lauder School of Government, Diplomacy & Strategy, Israel's Reichman University, and at the College of Management Academic Studies, Rishon LeZion, where he was founding director of Israel's Chinese Media Center (ICMC). Pevzner also served as director of China affairs at The Israel Project, and as correspondent with Dow Jones Newswires in Taiwan, where he covered Taiwan-China ties, among other topics. Pevzner has over 26 years of experience in China and Taiwan and spent nine years living in Asia.



### **Yitzhak Shichor**

Prof. Yitzhak Shichor is professor emeritus of Political Science and Asian Studies at the University of Haifa and Michael William Lipson Chair Professor Emeritus at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His main research interests are China's Middle East policy; international energy relations; Chinese defense conversion; labor export and East Asian democratization processes; Sino-Uyghur relations and the Uyghur Diaspora. His recent publications include *Ethno-Diplomacy: the Uyghur Hitch in Sino-Turkish Relations* and *Missiles Myths: China's Threat to Taiwan in a Comparative Perspective*.



### **Sim Li-Chen**

Dr. Sim Li-Chen is a specialist in the political economy of Russian and Gulf energy and its intersection with international relations. Her interests include the politics of renewable and nuclear energy in the Middle East, Gulf-Asia exchanges, Russia-China relations in the Middle East, and Russia-Gulf interactions. Her most recently published books include *Low Carbon Energy in the Middle East and North Africa and External Powers and the Gulf Monarchies*. Her articles have appeared in leading academic journals such as *Russian Review*, *Cambridge Review of International Affairs*, and *Energy Research & Social Science*; on forums hosted by the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington and Harvard University's Belfer Center; and in popular media like the *South China Morning Post* and



*Al-Monitor.*

**David O. Shullman**

Dr. David O. Shullman is senior director of the Global China Hub at the Atlantic Council, where he leads the council's work on China. He is an adjunct professor at Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service. Shullman served for nearly a dozen years as one of the US Government's top experts on East Asia, most recently as Deputy National Intelligence Officer for East Asia on the National Intelligence Council (NIC) in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). In this role Shullman led the US intelligence community's strategic analysis on East Asia, represented the IC in interagency policy meetings, and advised senior White House and Cabinet officials.



**Wang Duanyong**

Dr. Wang Duanyong is the director of the Centre for China's Overseas Interests Studies and an associate professor at Shanghai International Studies University, China. He received his PhD in Economics from Wuhan University in 2007. He has served in enterprises, universities and think tanks for nearly two decades. In recent years his research focuses on Chinese investment and infrastructure projects in Africa and the security risk of Chinese citizens abroad. Dr. Wang also conducted field research in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Kenya, Nigeria, Egypt, Pakistan and Afghanistan.



**Shalom Wald**

Dr. Shalom Wald was born in the Italian city of Milan in 1936 and grew up in Basel, Switzerland, where he studied social sciences, history, and religious history, earning his PhD in 1962. He joined the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 1964 and remained there until retirement in 2001. Wald's long career in research and policy spans across multiple sectors, including education, innovation, science and technology, energy, and biotechnology. Wald was the OECD/DSTI Biotechnology Unit's Head before joining the Jewish People Policy Institute (JPPI) in 2002, where he has been writing about Jewish-Israeli relations with China, science and technology, and Jewish history. Currently, he is examining India-Israel-Jewish People ties.



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The Jerusalem Institute for Strategy and Security counsels Israel's leaders in defense and diplomatic matters and trains the next generation of Israeli national security specialists. It educates foreign leaders about Israel's security and foreign policies. JISS communicates realist positions in Israeli policy debate, emphasizing security in diplomatic agreements.

JISS considers the Jewish People's historic connection to the Land of Israel as a central component of national security. It highlights the importance of united Jerusalem to Israel's security and destiny.





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