



## The Great Rivalry III Security and Defence in the Middle East

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The Great Rivalry conference series examines the evolution of geopolitics in the wider Middle East and North Africa, on an annual basis, with **high-level scholars, practitioners and policy-makers**. The 2018 chapter gravitates around the question of how the region's security and defence configuration changed in conjunction with the changing geopolitical balance. Speeches will cover perspectives from: NATO, the United States, Russia, the United Kingdom and the European Union, including Italy's niche involvement, and the Gulf.

### PANEL

**PAOLO MESSA** is the Director of the Center for American Studies in Rome. He is a member of the Strategic Committee at the Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and a well-known specialist on international relations and on political communication.

**COLONEL FILIPPO BONSIGNORE** is the Director of the Middle East Faculty at the NATO Defense College, where he maintains close relations with Mediterranean Dialogue and Istanbul Cooperation Initiative countries.

**DAVID DES ROCHES** is an Associate Professor at the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) at the National Defense University. His areas of expertise include countries of the Arabian Peninsula and Gulf regional security. He served as senior director at the US Department of Defense for Pakistan and NATO operations as well as on the US Special Operations Command staff and the Joint Staff thorough the Middle East.

**DAVID CAMPBELL BANNERMAN** is currently a Member of the European Parliament for the British Conservative Party and since 2014 he has been chairman of the European Parliament's Delegation for relations with Iraq.

**VINCENZO AMENDOLA** has long served in the Italian Parliament where he has consistently focused on foreign affairs. Since January 2016, he has held the position of Undersecretary of State of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation.

**GUMER ISAEV** is the Director of the Center for the Contemporary Middle East Studies based in Saint Petersburg. Previously, he was an Associate Professor at the State Saint Petersburg University. He is author of multiple of books and articles focusing on the international relations and politics in the Middle East.

**ASHRAF KISHK** is the Head of the Crisis Management & Regional Security Program at Bahrain Center for Strategic, International & Energy Studies (DERASAT). Previously he was the Director of the Cairo Branch of the Diplomatic Center for Strategic Studies. Dr. Kishk is an author of numerous articles concerning Gulf regional security.

**MITCHELL BELFER** is currently President of the Euro-Gulf Information Centre (Rome, Italy), Senior Lecturer in International Relations, Terrorism and Security at the Metropolitan University Prague (Czech Republic) and Editor in Chief of the Central European Journal of International and Security Studies. He has a decade-long experience in the Gulf.

**CINZIA BIANCO** is currently supervising research at the EGIC. She is based in the United Kingdom where she is undertaking a PhD programme on Gulf politics and security at the University of Exeter. Previously she has been the Research Fellow for the Istituto Affari Internazionali in Qatar, Oman, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates the context of the European Commission's research programme on Europe-Gulf relations "Sharaka".

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### Partners Overview

**The Center for American Studies** is among the oldest and most prestigious European institutions dedicated to the study of the United States, its culture and society. The main aim is to promote and stimulate dialogue between Italy and the United States.

**The NATO Defence College** is the international military college for North Atlantic Treaty Organization countries in Rome. The mission is to contribute to the effectiveness and cohesion of the Alliance by developing its role as a major centre of education, outreach and research on transatlantic security issues.

**The Euro-Gulf Information Centre (EGIC)** is an initiative that aims to build social, political, strategic, cultural and economic bridges between the people of Europe and the Arabian Gulf. It draws on the expertise of a multitude of scholars, policy makers, economists and members of European and Gulf civil societies to enhance inter-regional relations.