



A NEW-MED CONFERENCE

**Regional (Dis)order in the Middle East:  
Historical Legacies and Current Shifts**

**Bologna, April 11, 2017**

**9.30/16.30**

IN COOPERATION WITH THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY SAIS EUROPE, BOLOGNA

Venue:

*The Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe  
Via Belmeloro, 11  
Auditorium – Ground Floor  
Bologna, Italy*

AGENDA

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REGIONAL (DIS)ORDER IN THE MIDDLE EAST: HISTORICAL LEGACIES AND CURRENT SHIFTS

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09:00-09:30 REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS

09:30-09:40 WELCOME GREETINGS

**Michael G. Plummer**, The Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe, Italy

**Lorenzo Kamel**, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy; University of Freiburg's Institute for Advanced Studies, Germany

**Raffaella Del Sarto**, The Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe, Italy

09:40-10:00 INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

**Emiliano Alessandri**, OSCE, Austria

**Massimo Carnelos**, Italy's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

**Nicolò Russo Perez**, Compagnia di San Paolo, Italy

10:00-11:30 **SESSION I – TERMS AND CONCEPTS IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE**

*A number of dichotomies (e.g. success and failure, change and continuity, religious and secular) and concepts (e.g. order, sectarianism, citizenship, minorities, power) are commonly used to address and analyze what large parts of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) are currently experiencing. The first panel addresses the importance of history and path dependency, thus putting commonly used terms and concepts in a historical context. The discussion will trace ongoing dynamics back to major historical junctures in which key powers and events shaped what the region is experiencing at present.*

Chair: **Marwan Bishara**, Al Jazeera Media Network

Panelists: **Beth Baron**, City University of New York, USA

**Isa Blumi**, Stockholm University, Sweden

**Lorenzo Kamel**, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy; University of Freiburg's Institute for Advanced Studies, Germany

**Nora Lafi**, Leibniz-Zentrum Moderner Orient, Germany

11:30-11:45 Coffee Break

11:45-13:15 **SESSION II – REGIONAL ORDER, BORDERS, AND THE FRAILTY OF AUTHORITY**

*It is often claimed that the state system in the MENA region is in crisis and that the “Sykes-Picot order” is being reshaped to reflect realities on the ground. Institutions have collapsed, civil and proxy wars are ravaging the region, and the gulf between rulers and ruled is wider than ever. But how new is the phenomenon of weak states and arbitrary/elusive boundaries in the region? What are the historical roots of the phenomenon of failing and failed states and the all too common reality of weak and dysfunctional governance? By focusing on these questions, the panel will aim to ascertain whether on-going convulsions, including the rise of non-state actors, are to be taken as a sign that the regional state system is still forming or is, on the contrary, already doomed to demise.*

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Chair: **David C. Unger**, The Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe, Italy

Panelists: **Raffaella Del Sarto**, The Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe, Italy  
**Patrick Cockburn**, The Independent, United Kingdom  
**Beverley Milton-Edwards**, Queen's University Belfast, Ireland  
**Bahgat Korany**, American University in Cairo, Egypt

13:15-14:30 Adjourns

14:30-16:00 **SESSION III – THE ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ACTORS**

*The political, economic and security interests of international and regional actors have traditionally shaped regional dynamics in the MENA region. In addition to the traditional involvement of the US and Europe, Russia, the Arab Gulf monarchies, Iran, and China, have in recent years stepped up their engagement. The changing mix of external actors and their evolving role in some of the local crises has possibly further complicated the stability and the security-related dynamics in the region. What is new in the role that extra-regional players are playing in the region? What are the dynamics of external involvement? In light of a highly mixed historical legacy, what are the chances that extra-regional actors become constructive elements of a future regional security equation?*

Chair: **Ettore Greco**, Istituto Affari Internazionali, Italy

Panelists: **Louise Fawcett**, Oxford University, United Kingdom  
**Ian Lesser**, The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Belgium  
**Sanam Vakil**, The Johns Hopkins University SAIS Europe, Italy  
**Ekaterina Stepanova**, National Research Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), Russia

16:00-16:30 CONCLUDING REMARKS

**Francesco Cavatorta**, Laval University, Canada  
**Edhem Eldem**, Boğaziçi University, Turkey

16:30 CONFERENCE CLOSING

In cooperation with