



The 6th Annual Conference on Israel's China Policy

Navigating Through the Storm: Israel & the U.S.-China Rivalry

Hybrid Conference

Tuesday, December 14, 2021

8-10.30am
U.S. Eastern

2-4.30pm
CET

3-5.30pm
Jerusalem

9-11.30pm
Beijing/Singapore

Conference Agenda

Inaugurated in 2016, SIGNAL's Annual Conference Series on Israel's China Policy draws together senior Israeli and international participants from government, business, and academia to assess China-Israel relations, China's engagement in the Middle East, and the geopolitical implications of China's role on the world stage. While specific themes vary every year, the mission of the conference series is to inform Israeli policy thinking on evolving relations with China.

Convened shortly ahead of the yearend, the 2021 SIGNAL conference will be particularly timely to take stock of the primary drivers shaping China-Israel relations. Firstly, the conference will examine the implications for Israel of China's growing interest and presence in the Middle East amid the Sino-American rivalry. Secondly, with the Biden administration's China strategy heavily relying on closing ranks with its allies, the conference will evaluate possible strategic consequences for Israel and its relations with China. Finally, the conference will explore the emerging opportunities and challenges for Israeli businesses in China and with Chinese corporations.

Due to COVID-19-related restrictions, SIGNAL will convene its sixth annual conference in hybrid format – broadcasting from Tel Aviv with a select live audience and connecting with speakers and participants from around the world via a ZOOM webinar platform.



Conference Program

Welcome

Ms. **Carice Witte**, Founder & Executive Director, SIGNAL – Sino-Israel Global Network & Academic Leadership

Opening Addresses

MK **Yoav Kisch**, Former Deputy Minister of Health

Ambassador **ZHAN Yongxin**, Former Ambassador of China to Israel

China's Growing Engagement in the Middle East – Implications for Israel

The opening session of the conference will examine China's growing interest and presence in the Middle East having become a key Chinese diplomatic arena. Notably, China continues to manage the delicate balance needed to maintain friendly relations with all the regional protagonists – including Iran, Saudi Arabia, Israel, Egypt, UAE, and Qatar. China has established a 25-year strategic partnership with Iran, while it is deepening commercial and investment relations with the Sunni countries ahead of next year's China-Arab summit. Having led the pro-Palestinian agenda in the U.N. during the hostilities between Israel and Gaza in May, China is now interested in extending the China-Israel Comprehensive Innovation Partnership as noted by President Xi in his call with Israel's President Herzog. These developments raise several critical questions:

- Can we expect a steady increase in China's Middle East engagement? Will it strengthen its strategic footprint in the region?
- Will China be able to pursue friendly relations with all, or will it have to choose sides? If so, which "side" is it likely to prefer?
- How will China's Middle East policies affect Israel?

Speakers

Mr. **Ehud Yaari**, Middle East Commentator, Channel 12 News Israel; Lafer International Fellow, Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Dr. **Jon B. Alterman**, Senior Vice President, Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy, and Director, Middle East Program, Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS)

Dr. **YAO Jinxiang**, China Institute of International Studies (CIIS)

Moderator: Dr. **Nir Boms**, Research Fellow and Chairman of the Syria Research Forum and the Gulf Israel Policy Forum, Moshe Dayan Center, Tel Aviv University



The Key Role of Allies and Partners in America's Strategy Towards China: Possible Strategic Consequences for Israel

This session will focus on the evolving major role of allies and partners in Washington's China strategy. Since taking office, the Biden administration has taken notable steps to close ranks with allies and partners. The U.S. is working to engage and deepen cooperation with key countries in the Indo-Pacific arena through the "Quad" (comprising of the U.S., Japan, India and Australia) and has established a new defense pact with the U.K. and Australia (AUKUS). The U.S. has also prodded NATO to direct attention to the strategic challenge emanating from China. Assessing the efficacy of the U.S. strategic reliance on allies and partners, this session will also examine its implications for Israel and address several questions:

- How effective is this aspect of the Biden administration's strategy in dealing with the China challenge?
- How has the U.S. strategy affected China's approach and policies towards American allies and partners? Has it been a catalyst for China's cultivation of its own set of allies and partners?
- What are the possible implications for U.S. allies and partners in the Middle East, including Israel? Do these developments create new opportunities for them, or might they become a "strategic headache"?

Speakers

Dr. **Evan A. Feigenbaum**, Vice President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace

Dr. **ZHAO Hai**, Director, International Politics Research Department, National Think Tank for Global Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Prof. **Alessio Patalano**, Professor of War and Strategy in East Asia, Department of War Studies, Keio University, King's College London

Moderator: Mr. **Tommy Steiner**, Policy Director, SIGNAL – Sino-Israel Global Network & Academic Leadership

Israeli Businesses in China and with Chinese corporations: Emerging Opportunities and Challenges

Commercial transactions – mainly in the Hi-Tech and technology sectors – served as primary drivers of China-Israel relations over the past decade. Most recently, President Xi stated that China wishes to expand the Comprehensive Innovation Partnership. This session will examine opportunities and challenges in China-Israel business relations focusing on the shifts in China's domestic economic policies and the impact of the U.S.-China rivalry. The session will address several issues, including:

- How will China's new domestic economic agenda – "Common Prosperity" – affect foreign business opportunities in China?
- With technology a key factor in the U.S.-China rivalry – will Chinese-Israel Hi-Tech partnerships remain unscathed? Can Israel afford to allow closer Tech relations with China?
- Considering the uncertain post-COVID-19 global economic outlook, how important is the China market for Israel's economic fortune?



Speakers

Prof. **Leo Leiderman**, Coller School of Management and Berglas School of Economics, Tel-Aviv University;
Chief Economic Advisor of Bank Hapoalim

Prof. **WANG Dehong**, International Business School, Beijing Foreign Studies University (BFSU)

Mr. **Hagai Dror**, Managing Director, Healthcare Israel (HCI)

Moderator: Ms. **Carice Witte**, Founder & Executive Director, SIGNAL – Sino-Israel Global Network & Academic Leadership

Concluding Addresses

Lt. Gen. **Vinod G. Khandare**, PVSM, AVSM, SM, (Retd), Former Military Adviser to the National Security Council Secretariat of India

Mr. **Efraim Halevy**, Former Chief of the Mossad



Convener

Ms. **Carice Witte** is the Founder and Executive Director of SIGNAL, Sino-Israel Global Network & Academic Leadership, an Israel-based China-Israel think tank with programming in both countries. Ms. Witte is an expert in China-Israel relations and a leading contributor to defining this field of research in Israel. She initiated the establishment of Israel Studies Programs (ISPs) at the university level in China in 2011, a field recognized by China's Ministry of Education in 2013. SIGNAL now contributes to the academic excellence of ISPs at over a dozen universities across China. Ms. Witte was responsible for the establishing SIGNAL's cooperation with Fudan University – related to the BRI, and with Renmin University – related to the Middle East. Ms. Witte has led over 400 briefings between researchers and experts in China and Israel and initiated a track II China-Israel Dialogue and China-Israel-US seminar in 2017 which attract top experts from leading institutions in the US, China and Israel in the areas of diplomacy, security, geopolitics, economics, technology and finance.



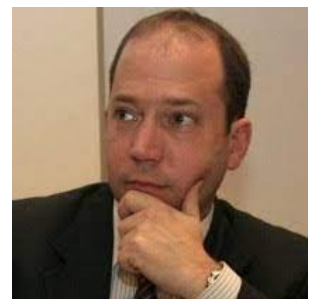
For the past decade, Ms. Witte has cultivated cooperation between faculty, experts, think tanks, research centers and universities in Israel and China. Ms. Witte represents Israel in numerous conferences in China and elsewhere that focus on China, China-Israel relations, the Digital Silk Road and the Belt & Road Initiative. Ms. Witte has authored research and policy analysis papers for both China and Israel in the fields of trade, Sino-Israel relations, strategic communication and global Jewry and is sought out by the Israeli press to explain issues relating to China in Israel. Her research focuses on Israel's perspective on Xi Jinping Thought and its potential implications for the Middle East, Israel and the BRI, Sino-Israeli relations, China's understanding of the Middle East and China's foreign policy. Carice is a graduate of Yale University with a degree in Chinese Studies.

Speakers & Moderators

Dr. **Jon B. Alterman** is a Senior Vice President, holds the Zbigniew Brzezinski Chair in Global Security and Geostrategy, and is Director of the Middle East Program at CSIS. Prior to joining CSIS in 2002, he served as a member of the Policy Planning Staff at the U.S. Department of State and as a Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern Affairs, and from 2009-2019 he served as a member of the Chief of Naval Operations Executive Panel. In addition to his policy work, he often teaches Middle Eastern studies at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies and the George Washington University. Earlier in his career, Alterman was a scholar at the U.S. Institute of Peace and at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy and a legislative aide to Senator Daniel P. Moynihan (D-NY) responsible for foreign policy and defense. From 1993 to 1997, Alterman was an award-winning teacher at Harvard University, where he received his Ph.D. in history.



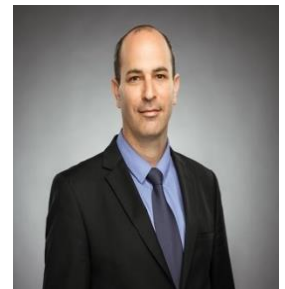
Dr. **Nir Boms** is a research fellow at the Moshe Dayan Center at Tel Aviv University. He is the Chairman of the Syria Research Forum and the Gulf Israel Policy Forum as well as the coordinator of the TAU Workshop on Israel and the Middle East and the Hiwar Forum for Intra-Regional Dialogue. Dr. Boms received his doctorate from the University of Haifa. His dissertation analyzed the Influence of Information Technology on the Creation of Civic Society in Syria and Iran. He holds MA degrees in the fields of Political Science and Judaic Studies from the University of Maryland. He currently teaches at the Rothberg School of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem (Israel in a Changing Middle East), in addition to Tel Aviv University. Amongst additional affiliations he is a fellow at the International Institute for Counter Terrorism in Herzliya; a member of the board of the Israeli Council on Foreign Relations and the Institute for Monitoring Peace and Cultural Tolerance in School Education. He Co – Founded of CyberDissidents.org (now





Movements.org), a network of bloggers from the Middle East that focuses on freedom of expression and the promotion of dialogue in the region. Under the framework of his educational and peace endeavors, he co-founded the Tiyul-Rihla project, in 2012, an initiative bringing Israelis and Palestinians together to travel and learn the history and identity of each other. Prior to his return to Israel in 2004, he served as the Vice President of the Washington based Foundation for the Defense of Democracies (FDD). Prior to his tenure at FDD, Dr. Boms was the Academic Affairs Liaison at Israel's Embassy in Washington, DC.

Mr. **Hagai Dror** is the Managing Director of Healthcare Israel. Mr. Dror is a healthcare leader with over a decade of experience in health economics and in leading national health reforms. Hagai led the budgeting of the Israeli ministry of health, overseeing more than 8 billion USD annually and over 20,000 personnel. He helped lead Israel's healthcare system to a 90% patient satisfaction rate, top-tier rankings by international health measures, one of the lowest costs-per-patient in the world, and positioned Israel as a leading developer and exporter of healthcare innovation. In 2016, Hagai led Israel's health ministry to establish Healthcare Israel – to deliver life-saving and cost-saving healthcare innovation technology and expertise to the world while developing knowledge, research and infrastructure in Israel.



Dr. **Evan A. Feigenbaum** is Vice President for Studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, where he oversees research in Washington, Beijing, and New Delhi on a dynamic region encompassing both East Asia and South Asia. He was also the 2019-20 James R. Schlesinger Distinguished Professor at the Miller Center of Public Affairs at the University of Virginia, where he is now a practitioner senior fellow. Initially an academic with a PhD in Chinese politics from Stanford University, Feigenbaum's career has spanned government service, think tanks, the private sector, and three major regions of Asia. During the intensive final phase of the U.S.-India civil nuclear initiative from July to October 2008, he co-chaired the coordinating team charged with moving the initiative through the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors and the Nuclear Suppliers Group and then to Congress, where it became the U.S.-India Nuclear Cooperation Approval and Nonproliferation Enhancement Act. He negotiated agreements with the governments of Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and also has extensive policy experience with North and South Korea, Japan, and Australia. He received three individual and two group superior honor awards from the State Department. Following government service, Feigenbaum worked in the private and nonprofit sectors: He was vice chairman of the Paulson Institute at the University of Chicago, and the co-founder of MacroPolo, its digital venture on the Chinese economy; head of the Asia practice at the markets consultancy Eurasia Group, a global political risk consulting firm; and senior fellow for East, Central, and South Asia at the Council on Foreign Relations. Before government service, he worked at Harvard University (1997–2001) as lecturer on government in the faculty of arts and sciences and as executive director of the Asia-Pacific Security Initiative and program chair of the Chinese Security Studies Program in the John F. Kennedy School of Government. He taught at the U.S. Naval Postgraduate School (1994–1995) as lecturer of national security affairs and was a consultant on China to the RAND Corporation (1993–1994).



Mr. **Ephraim Halevy** is the Former Head of the Mossad. In 1961, he joined the Mossad and served there for close to forty years in senior positions. He served as Deputy Head of Mossad from 1990 to 1995 and was subsequently appointed as Israel's Ambassador to the European Union. In 1998, Mr. Halevy was appointed Head of the Mossad. Having concluded his term as the Mossad chief in 2002, Prime Minister Sharon appointed him to head the National Security Council and serve as his National Security Advisor. Following his retirement from government service in 2003, he headed of the Center for Strategic Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem till 2011. Mr. Halevy received the Director's Award from the Central Intelligence Agency for his decades-long contribution to the relations between Israel and the United States.





In 2013, Mr. Halevy received the President Herzog prize for service to Israel in defense, security and diplomacy. Mr. Halevy holds an M. Juris/LL.M. degree (cum laude) from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Bar-Ilan University.

Lieutenant General **Vinod G. Khandare**, PVSM, AVSM, SM (Retd), is the former Military Advisor to the National Security Council Secretariat of India. General Khandare is a former officer of the Indian Army. He served as the Director General of the Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) from November 2015 to January 2018. General Khandare was commissioned into Garhwal Rifles on 1 September 1979. He has served his country in Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram and two overseas tenures as UN peacekeeping mission in El Salvador in Central America and chief instructor in Kingdom of Lesotho. He has commanded an infantry battalion along the volatile Line of Control during the Kargil Conflict of 1999 and 19th Infantry Division (India) in Kashmir Valley. He commanded a Brigade with operational role on Northern Borders. He served in Kashmir Valley in 2010-11 as Deputy GOC in a CI Force. He has served as instructor on weapons at Infantry School Mhow and as Directing Staff at Defence Services Staff College, Wellington.



MK **Yoav Kisch** was elected to the 20th Knesset in March 2015. MK Kisch served as the Deputy Minister of Health and chaired the Knesset's House Committee. He headed the Eretz Israel caucus and the Caucus for the rights of IDF soldiers. MK Kisch serves as a reserve combat pilot in the Israeli Air Force with the rank of lieutenant colonel. MK Kisch holds an MBA from INSEAD Fontainebleau (graduate business academy) in France. He was born and raised in Tel Aviv and currently lives in Ramat Gan.



Prof. **Leonardo Leiderman** holds the positions of Visiting Professor at the Coller School of Management and Professor (Emeritus) at the Berglas School of Economics, Tel-Aviv University. In addition, he is the Chief Economic Advisor of Bank Hapoalim, the largest commercial bank in Israel. Leiderman is also Visiting Professor of Economics at the Abu Dhabi School of Management. Among previous senior positions held by Prof. Leiderman are: Managing Director and Head of Emerging Markets Economics at Deutsche Bank, based in New York and London (2000 to 2002), and Senior Director and Head of the Research Department at the Bank of Israel (1996 to 2000). From 1992 to 1996 Prof. Leiderman was an advisor to the Governor and to the monetary department at the Bank of Israel. From 1988 to 1991, Prof. Leiderman was Chairman of the Department of Economics at Tel-Aviv University.



Prof. **Alessio Patalano** is a Professor of War and Strategy in East Asia at the Department of War Studies (DWS), King's College London (KCL), where he specialises in maritime strategy and doctrine, Japanese military history and strategy, and East Asian Security. Prof Patalano is a Senior Fellow at the highly influential think tanks *Policy Exchange* and the *Royal United Services Institute* (RUSI). He is the author of *Postwar Japan as a Seapower* (Bloomsbury 2015) and his most recent book is titled *Maritime Strategy and Naval Innovation in the Age of Competition* (Naval Institute Press 2021).





Mr. **Tommy Steiner** is the Policy Director of SIGNAL and holds Fellow positions with international policy institutes. Based in Israel, Tommy is an Honorary Fellow of the Middle East Institute (MEI) at the National University of Singapore, an Associate Fellow at the Henry Jackson Society, and a Senior Fellow at Cevro Institute's Prague Center for Transatlantic Relations (PCTR). Concurrently, Tommy is an Adjunct Lecturer and teaches International Relations and Strategic Studies at the Lauder School of Government at Reichman University (IDC) Herzliya. Until recently, Tommy was a senior research fellow at Reichman University's Institute for Policy and Strategy and managed the Annual Herzliya Conference Series from 2007 through 2013. Tommy earned his MA (cum laude) in International Relations from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.



Prof. **WANG Dehong (Peter)** is professor of accounting and finance at the International Business School of Beijing Foreign Studies University. He earned his PhD in management from Renmin University of China, and MBA from State University of New York at Buffalo. He was a visiting scholar in Ben-Gurion University in Israel in Fall 2016, and visited many cities, towns and villages in Israel and Jordan by self-driving in the period. Then he published a research book on the Sino-Israel economic and trade relationship in late 2020, *Belt and Road: Business Models and Risk Management*.



Mr. **Ehud Yaari** is an Israel-based Lafer international fellow of The Washington Institute. A Middle East commentator for Israel's Channel 12 television and former associate editor of *Jerusalem Report*, Mr. Yaari has been a Middle East commentator for Israeli television since 1975. Among his numerous awards for journalism are the Israeli Press Editors-in-Chief prize for coverage of the peace process with Egypt, the Sokolov Prize for coverage of the Lebanon War, and the Israel Broadcasting Award for coverage of the Gulf War. Mr. Yaari's articles have appeared in respected newspapers and journals such as the *New York Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Washington Post*, *Foreign Affairs*, and *Atlantic Monthly*.



Mr. **Yao Jinxiang** is an assistant research fellow at China Institute of International Studies (CIIS). He received two Ph.D. degrees in 2019 on International Politics: one in School of International Studies, Peking University (China), and the other in Graduate School of Asia-Pacific Studies, Waseda University (Japan, Double-Degree Program). And he received his MA in International Politics from School of International Studies, Peking University in 2014 and his BA in Diplomacy from the School of International Studies, Renmin University of China



Ambassador **Zhan Yongxin** is the former ambassador of China to Israel. He currently chairs the China National Committee for Pacific Economic Cooperation (CNCPEC) and is an adjunct professor at Nanjing University. Amb. Zhan Yongxin was born in Shanghai in January 1957. He has a bachelor's degree in world economics from Peking University and a master's degree in international economic relations from China Foreign Affairs University. Amb. Zhan held senior positions in Ministry of Foreign Affairs of China, including Deputy Director-General of the Policy Planning Department, Deputy Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Hong Kong SAR, and Director-General of the Department of Hong Kong, Macao and Taiwan Affairs.





Dr. Zhao Hai is the director of international political studies at the National Institute for Global Strategy, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (NIGS-CASS), one of the top government-affiliated think-tanks. He is concurrently a research fellow at the Institute of World Economics and Politics, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences (IWEPP-CASS). Dr. Zhao has done research on topics ranging from China-US relations, China's foreign policy to global governance. Besides academic publications, he is a frequent international affairs opinion contributor to the China Daily and a guest commentator at the China Radio International (CRI) and the China Global Television Network (CGTN). Previously, Zhao Hai worked as a research fellow at the National Strategy Institute of Tsinghua University (NSI), and held various positions at think tanks in Chicago and Washington D.C. in the United States. Dr. Zhao obtained his PhD in international history from the University of Chicago. He also studied at the Hopkins-Nanjing Center for Chinese and American Studies, and graduated from Peking University with a master's degree in World History, and dual bachelor's degree in history and law.

