

International Conference

The International System with Trump: To Where?

The conference aims to discuss the changes that have taken place in the international system since the inauguration of Donald Trump as the President of the United States (US) in 2017. The conference asks questions on how have other states reacted to and interacted with these changes, and where is the international system heading to in the future.

The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked a momentous shift in the international system, transforming it from a bipolar to a unipolar regime under the leadership of the US. The American liberal values and the policies of the market economy dominated the global arena, especially after reducing the trade barriers under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), and the free trade agreements, that have been spreading in the world since 1995, allowing an easy exchange of goods and services.

However, the dominance of the US on the international system started to decline with the rise of other superpowers like China and Russia, in addition to the increasing role of international organizations.

Trump, a conservative Republican President who represents the American populist nationalism, have been making sure in his discourse, its construction and representations of the self and other, to emphasize on “Making America Great Again,” through targeting the American citizens, who felt defeated due to the dwindling stance of America in international relations.

Trump's administration identified the US national interest in four pillars: to protect the territory, sovereignty and the American way of life; to promote the country's prosperity; to preserve peace through strength; and to advance US global influence. Internationally, Trump's administration develops protective policies to attain economic benefits at the expense of other states, aiming to reassert the American dominance over the international system.

The conference will discuss Trump's policies and their impact on the international system through the following sessions:

Day One:

Opening Session: US with Trump's Presidency: Domestic Changes and Foreign Policy:

Head and Commentator: Dr. Ali Jarbawi

Speakers: Khalil Jahshan (via Skype), Denise DeGarmo,

This session will focus on the internal changes that occurred and led to Trump's winning the elections in 2016. It will also explore his domestic policies, as well as his foreign policy, which aim to reassert the US dominance over the international system.

First Session: The Rise and Retreat of International Issues: Populism, Globalization and Human Rights

(Head and Commentator: Omar Shakir)

This session will discuss three main international issues affected by Trump's policies and/or helped in Trump's winning the elections in 2016:

Contribution One: Populism in Europe: State, Reasons and Consequences

(Speaker: Karsten Grabow)

The contribution discusses the impact of the populist movements in Europe through addressing questions such as: Will populism lead to fragment the European Union in the future? Will it disable the union from being an effective power in the international system? Are these movements threatening important principles like democracy and rule of law, and fostering hatred and racism all around the world? How has the rise of populism led to Trump's winning the US presidential elections?

Contribution Two: Globalization in the Era of Trump: New Directions for Global Regional Trade Policy?

(Speaker: Anja Zorob)

This contribution tackles the status of globalization during Trump's presidency and Trump's policies towards globalization, especially as his administration has campaigned on an anti-globalization platform.

Contribution Three: Human Rights in Trump's Era

(Speaker: James L. Cavallaro)

The contribution discusses the status of the human rights norms during Trump's presidency, and how they are affected by Trump's policies.

Second Session: International Powers: China, Russia, and the EU

(Head and Commentator: Dimitris Bouris)

This session deals with the international powers that prominently affect the current international system. Many researchers see that the current international system is transforming from a unipolar system, under the leadership of the US, into a tri-polar system with the rise of international rival powers (China and Russia, and the EU as an economic giant), which seek to reduce the American hegemony on the international system.

Contribution One: China's Foreign Policy and its Challenge to the US Dominance

(Speaker: Dong Manyuan)

This contribution deals with the Chinese foreign policy that rejects the unipolar US global domination. The intervention also tackles the Chinese endeavor to build international relations based on mutual respect, justice and cooperation, protecting the global peace and supporting mutual development. The contribution also deals with the growth of the Chinese economy as the second largest economy in the world after the US.

Contribution Two: Russia's Foreign Policy and its Challenge to the American Domination

(Speaker: Jeffrey Mankoff)

The contribution discusses the Russian foreign policy, its military power, its challenge to the American domination and attempts to achieve a multipolar system, as well as the Russian military intervention in the Arab region, especially in Syria.

Contribution Three: The European Union foreign policy in Trump's era

(Speaker: Marc Frings)

This contribution deals with policy disputes between the EU and the US during the Trump administration. It delves into the implications behind Trump's support of Brexit, and his encouragement to other European member states to leave the union. The contribution also discusses Trump's stance towards the EU reception of Syrian refugees.

Day Two

First Session: Regional Conflicts on Dominance: Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia

(Head and Commentator: Ahmad Azem)

This session deals with three regional powers (Iran, Turkey and Saudi Arabia) which compete among themselves to impose their dominance on the Middle East. These powers formed alliances that serve their interests and regional goals.

Contribution One: Iran's foreign policy in the region during Trump's presidency

(Speaker: Alam Saleh)

The contribution discusses Iran's regional policies and security concerns, during Trump administration, aiming to survive, either through defensive and/or offensive mechanism. This contribution thus examines Iran's foreign policy and security discourses in relation to the regional changes and challenges. It delves into rational behind Iran's pragmatic yet sectarianised regional policies in the past few years.

Contribution Two: Understanding America's Policies towards Turkey during Trump's Era: A Turkish Perspective

(Speaker: Ozden Zeynep Oktav)

This intervention discusses the US policies towards Turkey in Trump's Era. It also tackles the Turkish role in and its strategies towards the Arab region, and the Turkish stance from the murder of Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi consulate in Istanbul, and the impact of this incident on the Saudi-Turkish relations.

Contribution Three: Saudi Foreign Policy in the Trump Era: Everything Changes, Everything Stays the Same

(Speaker: Neil Partrick)

The contribution explores the relations among Saudi Arabia, Israel and the US. It considers the Saudi military intervention in Syria, and its leadership to the Arab coalition on Yemen (The Decisive Storm Operation), and its impact on Iran. The intervention also discusses the Saudi siege on Qatar, and its ramifications on the Middle East region. All these issues will be tackled in light of the changes that occurring in the international system and the US.

Second Session: The Palestinian Israeli Conflict and the Great Powers in Trump's Era: Where Do Palestinian Stand

(Head and Commentator: Ghassan Khatib)

This session explores the impact of the changes occurring in the international system in Trump's era upon the Palestinian issue and the Palestinian – Israeli conflict. It discusses the impact of Trump's biased policies towards the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and discusses Russia, China and the EU's policy towards the Palestinian issue and their (possible) roles in the Palestinian – Israeli conflict in light of Trump's presidency. This session also tries to answer questions such as: where do Palestinians stand nowadays in a

world with Trump? What actions should Palestinians take at the internal, regional and international levels to ensure positive impacts on the Palestinian people or mitigate any negative impact of the transformations occurring in the international system during Trump's presidency?

Contribution One: The US Policy towards the Palestinian – Israeli Conflict

(Speaker: Khaled Elgindy)

Contribution Two: Russia and the Palestinian – Israeli Conflict

(Speaker: Viacheslav Matuzov)

Contribution Three: China and the Palestinian – Israeli Conflict

(Speaker: Liu Chang)

Contribution Four: The EU and the Palestinian – Israeli Conflict

(Speaker: Daniela Huber)

This contribution will give a short overview on how the EU's position on the conflict has evolved from the Venice Declaration through the Barcelona Process to becoming a member of the Quartet, as well as the practices the EU and its member states have adopted in these frameworks, which frequently undermine these positions. It will then discuss the EU's (non-)reaction to Trump's policies (Jerusalem, UNRWA etc) in light of Brexit and the rise of nationalist populism within Europe, before concluding with some policy recommendation on how the EU could act in such a context to uphold international law and multilateral institutions.