



Gulf Research Centre Cambridge

Knowledge for All

GULF RESEARCH MEETING

16th Gulf Research Meeting

21 - 23 July 2026 – University of Cambridge

Workshop No. 7

Emerging Technologies and Defense Industrialization in the GCC: Navigating the Localization–Outsourcing Dilemma in the AI Era

Workshop Schedule

Workshop Directors

Dr. Alessandro Arduino

Dr. Eman Ragab

First Workshop Day - Wednesday, 22 July 2026

08:15 - 08:30 – Welcome coffee and tea

08:30 - 09:00 – Introduction of Workshop and Participants

09:00 - 09:45 – Paper 1: Telecom Orbits and Strategic Equilibria: How Gulf and MENA States Navigate US–China Technological Competition in Telecom and Space

Author: Irina Tsukerman

Discussant: Alessandro Arduino

09:45 - 10:30 – Paper 2: Saudi Arabia’s Localisation-Outsourcing Challenge in the Age of Emerging Technologies

Authors: Olivia Higgins and Chahrazad Taoubane

Discussant: Kristian Alexander

10:30 - 10:45 – Coffee and tea break

10:45 - 11:30– Paper 3: Absorbing Technology, Building Power: Defense Industrial Localization in the United Arab Emirates

Author: Francesco Salesio Schiavi

Discussant: Ali Rashid Al Abri

11:30 - 12:15 – Paper 4: Algorithmic Military Power: Ethical and Legal Challenges of AI-Enabled Autonomous Weapons in the GCC States

Author: Yasmine Abdel Moneim

Discussant: Hichem Karoui

12:15 - 13:00 – Paper 5: From Consumer to Intermediary? The UAE’s Emerging Role in Defense Technology Transfer

Author: Alvert Vidal Ribe

Discussant: Ozgur Pala

13:00 - 15:00 – Lunch break (lunch served at King’s College)

15:00 - 15:45 – Paper 6: Sovereign AI and the Militarization of Artificial Intelligence in the Gulf: U.S.–China Competition and the Transformation of GCC Military Industry Complex

Authors: Alessandro Arduino and Ali Rashid Al Abri

Discussant: Francesco Salesio Schiavi

15:45 - 16:30 – Paper 7: Civilian Control, Military Doctrine: Institutional Limits of Advanced Technology Integration in Gulf Defence Sectors

Authors: Hayyan Nassar Waked, Shyam Bihari Goyal*, Anand Singh Rajawat*

Discussant: Bediha Beser

16:30 - 16:45 – Coffee and tea break

16:45 - 17:30 – Paper 8: Selective Modular Localization in the AI Era: Qatar’s High-Leverage Defence Industrial Strategy and the Role of Turkey

Author: Ozgur Pala

Discussant: Eman Ragab

End of First Workshop Day

Evening Free

Second Workshop Day - Thursday, 23 July 2026

08:45 - 09:00 – Welcome coffee and tea

09:00 - 09:45 – Paper 9: GCC New Defense Posture: From Arms Importer to Emerging Defense Producer

Author: Eman Ragab

Discussant: Irina Tsukerman

09:45 - 10:30 – Paper 10: The UAE-Brazil Emerging Defense Partnership: Industrial Cooperation and the Transformation of Global Arms Production

Authors: Kristian Alexander and Leonardo Mazzucco

Discussant: Hayyan Nassar Waked

10:30 - 11:15 – Paper 11: Hypersonic Horizons and Drone Saturation: Strategic Autonomy and Defence Industrialisation in the GCC

Author: Tahir Mahmood Azad

Discussants: Olivia Higgins and Chahrazad Taoubane

11:15 - 11:30 – Coffee and tea break

11:30 - 12:15 – Paper 12: Regional Defence Innovation Hubs: Is the GCC Capable of Becoming a Global Leader?

Author: Hichem Karoui

Discussant: Charles Forrester

12:15 - 13:00 – Paper 13: Hardware Matters: Quantum Technologies and Defense Capability Building in the Gulf

Author: Bediha Beser

Discussant: Leonardo Mazzucco

13:00 - 14:15 – Lunch break (lunch is served from 13:00 till 14:00 at the workshop venue)

14:15 - 15:00 – Paper 14: Practical Applications and Limitations of Military AI in the Context of GCC Military Operations

Author: Charles Forrester

Discussant: Albert Vidal Ribe

15:00 - 15:30 – Publication discussion and questionnaire

End of Second and Final Workshop Day

19:00 Farewell Dinner at King's College

Not in attendance:

Paper 15: Defense AI and the Impact of LLMs on National Security in the Gulf: The Cases of the UAE, KSA and Qatar

Author: June Park