

Professor Tim Niblock

Professor Emeritus, University of Exeter

**Displacing the Western Powers in the Gulf: the Strategic Implications of
China's Growing Role in the Arab/Persian Gulf Region**

Venue: Peter Chalk 1.3

11st November, 2014

3:00-4:30pm

Chaired by *Dr. Junqing Wu*

The year 2013 marked a historic turning-point for China and the Gulf region. For the previous 200 years Gulf's major trading partners had been either European/Western countries or countries under European domination (e.g. British India). In 2013, for the first time, China overtook the European Union as the Gulf's largest trading partner. And India is now the Gulf's third largest trading partner. The region is, therefore, now entering a new historical era in how it relates to the outside world.

This paper examines the strategic implications of this historic economic shift. The Gulf has been an area of huge strategic importance to Western powers for most of the past 200 years – and especially over the past 50 years. They (especially the US) clearly retain an overriding strategic hold over and around the region, and have gone to great lengths to maintain this position. Is the basis of that exclusive political/strategic position now declining, and what options and possibilities does that create for the Gulf States, China and other Asian powers?

Professor Tim Niblock is a Professor Emeritus in Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter. His research interests cover a wide range of areas related to the politics, economics and international relations of the Arab and Islamic worlds. Of central concern have been the political economy of the states of the Arab world, the international relations of the Middle Eastern region, the relations between Gulf countries and East /South Asian Countries, Islam and the state, and issues relating to civil society and democratisation in Arab and Islamic states.