

Webinar

The current Middle East situation and its strategic consequences

March 31, 2026

Speaker Biographies



Ambassador Joseph W. Westphal is a Senior Global Fellow at The Lauder Institute, the Center for Leadership and Change Management at Wharton, University of Pennsylvania; Fellow at the National Academy of Public Administration; and Non-Resident Fellow at the International Studies Center of the Catholic University of Chile.

Dr. Westphal was the U.S. Ambassador to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia from March 2014 to January 2017.

Prior to this appointment, he was the Under Secretary of the US Army and its Chief Management Officer from 2009 to 2014. He also held the positions of Assistant Secretary of the Army (Head of the Army Corps of Engineers) from 1998 to 2000 and Acting Secretary of the Army in 2001.

Dr. Westphal began his career in 1975 as a professor of political science at Oklahoma State University and later served as a Department Head. In 2002 he became the Chancellor of the University of Maine System and Professor of Political Science. He also served as Director of the Tishman Environmental Center and Provost at the New School University in New York and Adjunct Professor at Georgetown University in Washington D.C.

In government, he worked in both the House and Senate for more than twelve years. He has held positions in the administrations of Presidents Carter, Reagan, Clinton, Bush, and Obama, working in the Department of the Interior, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Environmental Protection Agency, the Department of Defense and the Department of State.

Ambassador Westphal received a B.A. from Adelphi University (1970), an M.A. from Oklahoma State University (1973), and his Ph.D. from the University of Missouri-Columbia (1980).

Ambassador Westphal was born in Santiago, Chile and immigrated with his family to the United States in 1957. He is fluent in Spanish.



Ramon M. Esteve is a business leader with more than 30 years of experience in the Agricultural commodity sector. He has held various Senior Management positions throughout his career within the ECOM group and continues being involved in all aspects of the business.

A member of the Board of ECOM AgroIndustrial, he was between 2019 and 2024 also President of the Swiss-Latin American Chamber of Commerce as well as President of the Executive Board of the Swiss Trading and Shipping Association.

Mr. Esteve holds a License in Law from the University of Lausanne.