



17th Levantine Heritage Foundation Zoom lecture gathering with guest speaker Brian VanDeMark
13 January 2022, 6pm (UK time)

American University of Beirut: The Story of America's Influence in the Middle East

The United States is known throughout the Middle East for its military interventions, but for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries America's primary influence in the region was educational. What began as a humble missionary school, the AUB grew to become the premier institution of higher education in the Middle East. Under the leadership of five generations of the Bliss and Dodge families, the university came to symbolize what America, in its better moments, can offer the rest of the world. By engaging Middle Easterners on their own terms, AUB became a place where people of all faiths and perspectives--including Arabs and Jews--learned to work together, understand, and respect one another. There is an old saying in the Middle East that "you can fight someone you don't know, but you can't make peace with him." It's been done before. It can be done again.

Booking essential: <https://brian-vandemark-presentation.eventbrite.co.uk>



Brian VanDeMark is a professor of history at the U.S. Naval Academy, Annapolis, where he has taught since 1990. He attended college at the University Texas, Austin, and graduate school at the University of California, Los Angeles. He has authored several books on U.S. history, including *American Sheikhs: Two Families, Four Generations, and the Story of America's Influence in the Middle East*, and co-authored Robert McNamara's #1 best-selling Vietnam memoir, *In Retrospect*. His most recent book is *Road to Disaster: A New History of America's Descent into Vietnam*.

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