

NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES



IMPACT REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2018



2018



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ABOUT THE NESA CENTER

Established in 2000 when the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) recognized the need for an organization dedicated to the challenging region extending from North Africa across the Arabian Peninsula and into South Asia, the NESA Center today is the preeminent DOD institution for building relationships with and understanding the NESA region. Based at the National Defense University, the NESA Center supports the theater security cooperation efforts of the U.S. combatant commands, U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM), U.S. European Command (USEUCOM), and U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USPACOM). NESA is one of five regional centers under the Defense Security Cooperation Agency. NESA organizes conferences, seminars, workshops, and Track II diplomatic efforts, with an alumni network consisting of almost 9,000 security professionals from 120 nations.



NESA LEADERSHIP



DIRECTOR

LTG (RET.) TERRY WOLFF



DEPUTY DIRECTOR

DAVID LAMM



ACADEMIC DEAN

DR. ROGER KANGAS

Lieutenant General (ret.) Terry Wolff joined the NESA Center after serving as the Director of Strategic Plans and Policy, J-5 for the Joint Staff from 2011 - 2013, and as a Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Iraq and Afghanistan on the National Security Council. Since 2015 and in addition to his leadership role at NESA, Director Wolff has served as the current Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the Global Coalition to Counter ISIL. He retired from the military in 2014 after 34 years of service.

David Lamm became NESA's Deputy Director in 2010. He previously served as the Joint Staff's Chief of Plans and Operations (Operations Directorate), as Commander in U.S. Army Central Command, as Chief of Staff of Combined Forces Command, and as Director for Afghanistan at the Defense Policy Analysis Office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He is a Distinguished Military Graduate of Canisius College and was commissioned in 1977.

Dr. Roger Kangas is the Academic Dean and a Professor of Central Asian Studies at NESA. He teaches at Georgetown University, and was previously a Professor of Central Asian Studies at the George C. Marshall Center for European Security and Deputy Director of the Central Asian Institute at Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies. Dr. Kangas has advised the Combatant Commands, NATO/ISAF, USAID, and other government entities on Central Asia issues.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE



The NESACenter is thankful for the support given by in-region partners, U.S. Government stakeholders, alumni, U.S. embassies, and U.S. allies for providing invaluable assistance for the continuity of NESACenter programs. With their efforts, foreign policy communities around the world are better equipped to answer and analyze towards tough security challenges impacting our world. This year, THE NESACenter successfully completed almost 30 resident programs with participants from 120 countries, resulting in over 860 new alumni—with the addition of numerous topical seminars and meetings—and the engagement of nearly 9,000 participants.

The NESACenter has the unique ability to use the collaborative interests and knowledge of U.S. military organizations including U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM), U.S. Pacific Command (PACOM), U.S. Army Central (ARCENT), and the Joint Staff, To render a specialized set of 22 programs addressing specific regionally sensitive security and defense issues.

Beyond the NESACenter's specialized regional and topical courses, the Executive and Senior Executive Seminars employ broad multi-lateral engagement to provide a collaborative space for policymakers to rigorously discuss security strategy and cultivate relationships. Through the NESACenter's whole-of-society approach, alumni are prepared to develop policy recommendations within their governments, non-governmental agencies, think-tanks, and national security communities consistent with mutual objectives.

The NESACenter's unique ability to navigate unofficial channels and conduct Track II strategic dialogues makes it an excellent resource for international policymakers to provide and present analysis. NESACenter programs conducted in coordination with the University of California at Los Angeles, the University of Ottawa, the Middle East Institute, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies cover strategic international challenges like the Arab-Israeli Peace Discussions, the U.S.-Iran Nuclear Dialogue, South Asian Regional Security, Middle East-North Africa Security, the India-Pakistan Nuclear Settlement, and the India-Pakistan Military to Military Relationship.

The NESACenter is proud to work with CENTCOM, AFRICOM, in-region partners, and our expansive alumni network to catalyze whole-of-government approaches addressing key issues like returning jihadi fighters, countering violent extremism, border security, and critical socio-political and humanitarian situations in the NESACenter region. The NESACenter's unique programs and Track II diplomacy forums provide a crucial space for U.S. and NESACenter policymakers to engage on key issues, while NESACenter's 'Future Leaders' seminars cultivate ideas from rising change makers and allow them to present solutions to complex topics to US policymakers. Throughout FY18, NESACenter program participants presented to National Defense University senior leaders, the State Department's Office for Countering Violent Extremism, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for the Middle East, as well as members of Congress and staff within the Committees on Foreign Relations, Homeland Security, and Intelligence for the U.S. Senate.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Terry Wolff".

LTG. (RET.) TERRY WOLFF

DEAN'S NOTE



Since 2000, the NESACenter has been working with partner countries from North Africa, the Levant, Gulf, and South and Central Asia. Professionals from these nearly 40 countries have attended NESACenter programs in both the U.S. and in the region, addressing topics of mutual interest. These can be two-week Executive Seminars or one-week Senior Executive Seminars that take place in Washington, DC, with the purpose of explaining the US national security system and approaches, as well as having

in-depth discussions on current security topics. Others are country-, or region-specific programs focusing on challenges to a particular sub-region of the NESACenter AOR. U.S. engagement in Central Asia differs from that in the Gulf, and regional threats in North Africa can vary from those in South Asia, so we tailor a range of programs to address these needs.

From returning foreign fighters to technology and security to non-traditional threats, to great power rivalries and the malign influences of certain states and non-state actors, the topics selected for programs are of relevance to both the U.S. national security community and those of the countries in the region. Most of the programs involve serving government officials, but can also include representatives from the think tank and academic communities, offering a “whole of society” approach in finding solutions to the challenges discussed.

A central feature of any NESACenter seminar is that we encourage open discussion and debate. While official positions will be presented, the goal is to have reasoned, critical, and honest discussions of them, so as to discern where and why problems exist in finding solutions to security challenges. The academic environment of the NESACenter allows us to advance policy objectives and get clearer feedback from partner countries.

We at NESACenter believe the open and frank discussions that take place during our events ultimately help the greater security objectives of our U.S. government stakeholders, from key Defense Department offices in Washington, DC such as DSCA and OSD-Policy, to the Combatant Commands that work in our region: Central Command (CENTCOM), Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), Africa Command (AFRICOM), European Command (EUCOM), and Special Operations Command (SOCOM). As we address “whole of government” issues with our program participants, we also practice this ourselves, engaging with other U.S. government departments with security interests, such as the Department of State and Department of Energy, to name a few.

The NESACenter is a resource for all of those who hope to better understand the complex security environment of our region, and who are willing to listen to voices from that region as we develop coherent, effective policies therein.


DR. ROGER KANGAS



DEFEATING VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

The NESAs region is threatened by a variety of Violent Extremist Organizations (VEOs). ISIL/Daesh remains an ongoing threat throughout the Levant, despite great success by the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIL and the impact of regional-led efforts to counter ISIL. Added to the problems posed by Daesh are the problems created by VEOs in the Afghanistan/Pakistan region. VEOs of this border region complicate security conditions for the Pakistani government and challenge the borders of Afghanistan. Both states suffer economically as a result of these security threats. Beyond the Levant and South Asia, VEOs like al Nusra, Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, and al Shabab, among others threaten the growth and stability of regimes from Morocco to Bangladesh.

NESA prioritizes programming that addresses the threats posed by VEOs. As such, NESA works with our regional partners to hold strategic workshops, conferences, and dialogues to address the VEO challenge. In FY18, NESA offered the following courses that explicitly focused on targeting VEOs:

- **Countering Transnational Threats Senior Executive Seminar: Cooperating to Succeed; May 2018** – *one of NESAs annual core seminars, this program focused on the various means by which regional actors and the U.S. are altering institutions or building ties to address the ever-changing VEO challenge.*



DEFEATING VIOLENT EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

- **Iraq National Security Sector Workshop; January 2018** - *this program, a new initiative developed as a means to conduct strategic discussions on the Counterterrorism challenge in Iraq, brought leaders from Iraq's security sector to NESAs for conversations on how to enhance capabilities to protect against ongoing and future terrorist threats.*
- **Pakistan/Afghanistan Strategic Dialogue; January 2018** - *senior military leaders from Afghanistan and Pakistan meet at NESAs to discuss the security challenges along the border region.*
- **Afghanistan Building and Sustaining Government Capacity Workshop; December 2017 and March 2018** - *an ongoing NESAs initiative that seeks to work with rising civil and government leaders on solutions to the country's security problems, particularly in relation to the threat from the Taliban and other VEOs.*
- **Levant Counter Terrorism Seminar; July 2018** - *this program brought a diverse cadre of Levantine leaders together to discuss ways to effectively counter VEOs, with special attention paid to the ongoing Syria conflict.*
- **Social Media Narratives and Countering Violent Extremism Workshop; July 2018** - *a North Africa focused program that brought senior government leaders together to discuss how technological and communicative platforms are used by VEOs to build their ranks.*
- **Central Asian – Afghanistan Security Seminar; August 2018** - *taking a regional perspective on the VEO challenge, this program brings senior governmental and military officials together to examine the VEO threat.*
- **Peer to Peer Indian Regional Competition; January 2018** - *a NESAs offshoot of the State Department Peer to Peer program, this competition featured Indian university students competing on how they can counter the spread of VEO ideology among their peers.*
- **Returning Fighters and Reintegration in North Africa and the Sahel; February 2018** - *North African states were a major source of Daesh recruitment and with that organization diminished, many of these radicalized individuals are returning home. This program focused on how to effectively address the challenges associated with radical returnees.*
- **Refugees and State Capacity Seminar; July 2018** - *this program addressed the social and economic costs of the Daesh fight by looking at the refugee crisis, the economic strain on regional states, and the challenges of maintaining stability in an unstable region.*

NESAs offers more courses addressing CVE/CT issues, but those are a component part of programmatic efforts focusing on several themes. NESAs's alumni network serves as an ever-present communicative tool for alumni to reach out to NESAs and each other to address CVE/CT issues.



DISMANTLING TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL NETWORKS

Connected to efforts to defeat VEOs, Transnational Criminal Networks are another complexity of the NESAs AOR requiring specific effort to address. Over the past five years, NESAs has built its alumni roster throughout the region with officials engaged in stopping criminal networks, as well as creating specific programmatic efforts designed to address the criminal challenge.

The most pressing transnational criminal challenge comes from North Africa, where a variety of criminal organizations have arisen that engage in trafficking and put strain on the stability of the region. Narcotraffickers and human smugglers are the most pressing issues for regional police and border security forces, but other forms of criminality are also present and a growing challenge. Beyond North Africa, maritime criminality remains a continual struggle for coast guard and naval forces operating in the Indian Ocean. Instability in several coastal zones provide a platform for maritime criminality and those set to counter these criminals are stretched thin. Arms smuggling between the Horn of Africa and the Arabian Peninsula is a pressing problem, along with the lingering challenge of piracy.

NESA operates with the understanding that transnational criminality is tied to the VEO challenge in the NESAs AOR. Thus, programming has diversified and matured that looks at criminal networks.



DISMANTLING TRANSNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS

Programs explicitly focusing on transnational illicit networks and criminality include:

- **NESA – AFRICOM Border Security Workshop; November 2017** – *this program brings police, military, and border security officials from throughout North Africa together to exchange data on border security, discuss criminal networks, and offer best practices.*
- **Strategic Studies Network – South Asia Working Group on Rising Regional Tensions; January 2018** – *conducted under the larger Strategic Studies Network, this program brought together former officials and current subject matter experts from throughout South Asia to discuss transregional pressures heightening tensions among regional states.*
- **Tunisia NDI Program; March 2018** – *this continuing program brings the current class from the Tunisian National Defence Institute to NESA for an engagement focusing on strategic issues in North Africa, including the challenges posed by transnational crime.*
- **Illicit Commons and Border Security Seminar; June 2018** – *NESA brings government officials, military officers, and subject experts from throughout North Africa together for discussions and to conduct tabletop exercises on how to best counter illicit networks.*

- **Central Asia – Afghanistan Security Seminar; August 2018** – *beyond this program's interest in CVE/CT issues, it also focuses on border security issues throughout Central Asia and Afghanistan. Criminal networks have exploited the borders of the region consistently for smuggling goods and human beings. The program focuses on ways in which the region can work on overcoming mistrust and start a regional response to criminal enterprise.*

- **Strategic Forum – Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean Region; August 2018** – *NESA brings together subject matter experts, naval officers, and coast guard officers for discussions on how to address regional maritime security threats. For much of the Western Indian Ocean littoral states, particularly those along the eastern coast of Africa, countering criminal activity is a priority.*

NESA offers more courses that address transnational criminal issues, but those conversations are a component part of larger programmatic efforts. NESA's alumni network allows for discussions with senior regional military and security officers, legislators, diplomats, activists/civil society, academics, and religious leaders – both regionally and with U.S. institutions.



CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS

Countries within the NESAs AOR struggle with developing the capacity to address an ever-changing series of threats. NESAs works towards enhancing partner capacity by focusing on the strategic arena, or to put it another way, NESAs programming works with partner countries at threat recognition, resource implementation, and security planning. Many states around the world waste resources on threats that are not the most damaging to their country's stability or have not invested sufficient attention towards the horizon on what threats are emerging. NESAs seeks to work with partners to avoid these errors seen throughout the world.

NESAs programs that heavily focus on capacity building include:

- **NESAs Executive Seminars; October 2017, March 2018, and September 2018** - these core seminars of the NESAs Center bring security officers and government officials from the AOR to Washington, DC for an in-depth look at the emerging security challenges shaping our world. Exercises and group discussion help to build lessons that participants can take home to integrate into their own institutions.
- **Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces Executive Leadership Seminar; October 2017 and April 2018** - this program works with Saudi military partners on topics tied to strategic planning for both border security and overall regional stability.



CAPACITY BUILDING EFFORTS



- **NESA – CENTCOM International Military Officers Forum;** *November 2017 and May 2018 – a program that brings the international military fellows stationed at CENTCOM to NESA for a week long engagement focused on the building of foreign policy using the aspects of the U.S. system as a model.*
- **Tunisia NDI Program;** *March 2018 – this continuing program brings the current class from the Tunisian National Defence Institute to NESA for an engagement focusing on strategic issues in North Africa.*
- **Afghanistan Building and Sustaining Government Capacity Workshop;** *December 2017 and March 2018 – an ongoing NESA initiative that seeks to work with rising civil and government leaders on solutions to the country’s security problems, particularly in relation to the threat from the Taliban and other VEOs.*
- **NESA Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar;** *April 2018 – this program gathers rising leaders from throughout Central Asia for a collaborative week of discussions focused on enhancing security and overcoming border challenges.*

- **Strategic Forum – Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean Region;** *August 2018 – NESA brings together subject matter experts, naval officers, and coast guard officers for discussions on how to address regional maritime security threats. For much of the Western Indian Ocean littoral states, particularly those along the eastern coast of Africa, countering criminal activity is a priority.*

This list is not exhaustive. NESA’s faculty priorities building partner capacity and integrate such an effort into every NESA program in some way, shape or form based on the input provided continuously by NESA’s alumni network.



GREAT POWER COMPETITION INSIDE THE NESAS REGION

The NESAS AOR is a geographic area where great power competitors compete. The U.S. presence is centered on the building and sustaining of a system of alliances and partnerships. Other major powers adopt a different methodology, whether it be economic in focus or political in nature. NESAS develops programs examining the actions of great powers in the NESAS AOR, particularly by looking towards regional reactions to the great powers.

NESAS's programming in this area includes:

- **NESAS Executive Seminars; October 2017, March 2018, and September 2018** - these core seminars of the NESAS Center bring security officers and government officials from the AOR to Washington, DC for an in-depth look at emerging security challenges shaping our world. Key elements of these programs focus on great power competition.

- **NESAS Senior Executive Seminar; February 2018** - this program, available for general officers and senior government officials from the AOR, focuses on complex strategic questions impacting the wider MENA and CASA regions. Participants have an interest in great power competition and NESAS faculty integrate special sessions devoted to such interests.

- **Strategic Forum - Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean Region; August 2018** - with a focus on the complications of maritime security in the Indian Ocean, this program featured wide-ranging discussions about the status of the current U.S.-led international system as it pertains to the maritime domain and the implications for security and stability in the Indian Ocean by the increasing wake of China politically and the People's Liberation Army Navy.





COUNTERING FORCES UNDERMINING THE GLOBAL SYSTEM

Related to great power competition in the NESAs AOR are the challenges that undermine the existing international system. This international system is most often associated with U.S. leadership, particularly in the dimensions of international legal regimes, multilateral efforts, and protection of the global commons. The system's design is to lift all actors collectively and actions that undermine that system threaten to introduce greater discord within the NESAs AOR and increase the probability of conflict. Existing regional conflicts and political battles within the NESAs AOR are one means by which the system can be weakened.

NESA has long recognized the strategic problem that regional political battles create, along with the need to think long-term about how to maintain stability. Such programs include:

- **Iraq National Security Sector Workshop; January 2018** - *this program, a new initiative developed as a means to conduct strategic discussions on the CT challenge in Iraq, brought leaders from Iraq's security sector to NESA for conversations on how to enhance capabilities to protect against ongoing and future terrorist threats. It also addresses the issue of Iraqi militias and the foreign actors often sponsoring them.*



COUNTERING FORCES UNDERMINING THE GLOBAL SYSTEM

- **Pakistan/Afghanistan Strategic Dialogue;** *January 2018 – senior military leaders from Afghanistan and Pakistan meet at NESAs to discuss the security challenges along their border.*

- **Afghanistan Building and Sustaining Government Capacity Workshop;** *December 2017 and March 2018 – an ongoing NESAs initiative that seeks to work with rising civil and government leaders on solutions to the country's security problems, particularly in relation to the threat from the Taliban and other VEOs.*

- **Central Asian – Afghanistan Security Seminar;** *August 2018 – taking a regional perspective on the VEO challenge, this program brings senior governmental and military officials together to examine the VEO threat.*

- **Strategic Forum – Maritime Security in the Western Indian Ocean Region;** *August 2018 – with a focus on the complications of maritime security in the Indian Ocean, this program featured examinations of the maritime risks posed by instability throughout*

the littoral Red Sea and threats posed by Iranian coastal and naval forces.

- **NESAs Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar;** *April 2018 – this program gathers rising leaders from throughout Central Asia for a collaborative week of discussions focused on enhancing security and overcoming border challenges, including regional actors that seek to undermine regional progress.*

- **Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces Executive Leadership Seminar;** *October 2017 and April 2018 – this program works with Saudi military partners on topics tied to strategic planning for both border security and overall regional stability. Of particular focus is the current conflict in Yemen and how Saudi Arabia's regional competition with Iran impacts the wider region.*

- **WMD in the MENA Region;** *April 2018 – tied to Iran's nuclear efforts, this program examined the regional response to an Iranian nuclear bomb.*



THE NESACENTER ALUMNI NETWORK



The NESACenter boasts a network of nearly 9,000 alumni from over 120 countries spanning the NESACenter region and beyond. Despite Department of Defense (DOD) budget constraints, the NESACenter has gained an average of 865 new alumni per fiscal year (FY) since FY13, while re-engaging an average of nearly 200 of those alumni identified as “key influencers” per FY, as part of its effort to both build and sustain relationships.

As an element of its core mission, the NESACenter strives to maintain meaningful contact and build its community of interest through NESACenter courses, workshops, and its constant outreach efforts. It maintains an active series of DC-based programs to build and reinforce strong bonds with local embassies and regularly hosts in-country alumni gatherings to stay connected with its vast alumni network. NESACenter also stays frequently engaged with its alumni on a remote basis through its various social media outlets (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and YouTube) and monthly newsletters.

The NESACenter boasts a network of nearly 9,000 alumni from over 120 countries spanning the NESACenter region and beyond.

The various recommendations that NESACenter regularly receives from course participants provide useful context within which to interpret foreign government views, shape the curriculum of future NESACenter events, and prioritize its efforts based upon interpreted National, DOD, Department of State, and COCOM (CENTCOM, AFRICOM, EUCOM, INDOPACOM) priorities and lines of effort. This ensures maximum program relevancy to the policymaker and customer in developing future policy direction.

THE NESAC ALUMNI NETWORK

The constructive and honest feedback regularly received from participants also ensures that NESAC Center courses maintain a very high standard, while providing a rich cross-fertilization of insights and lessons learned from different countries and regions. Through this process, participants are constantly challenged by other ways of thinking and researching, while our DC-resident events and foundation seminars expose participants to American culture and democracy to positively influence their attitudes about the United States and its people. NESAC forums also allow for Israeli-Arab, Indian-Pakistani, Algerian-

Moroccan, intra-GCC, and other intra-regional interactions that many other forums and venues don't easily permit.

Finally, the NESAC Center alumni network provides a unique contact database of regional speakers for other Regional Center and COCOM programs, as well as a distinguished group of in-region contacts for COCOM VIP visits to the region.

Despite budget constraints, the NESAC Center has gained an average of 865 new alumni each year since 2013



NESA BY THE NUMBERS

8,944

**TOTAL NESA
ALUMNI**

**ALUMNI 2000-2018
AS OF SEP. 30, 2018**

120

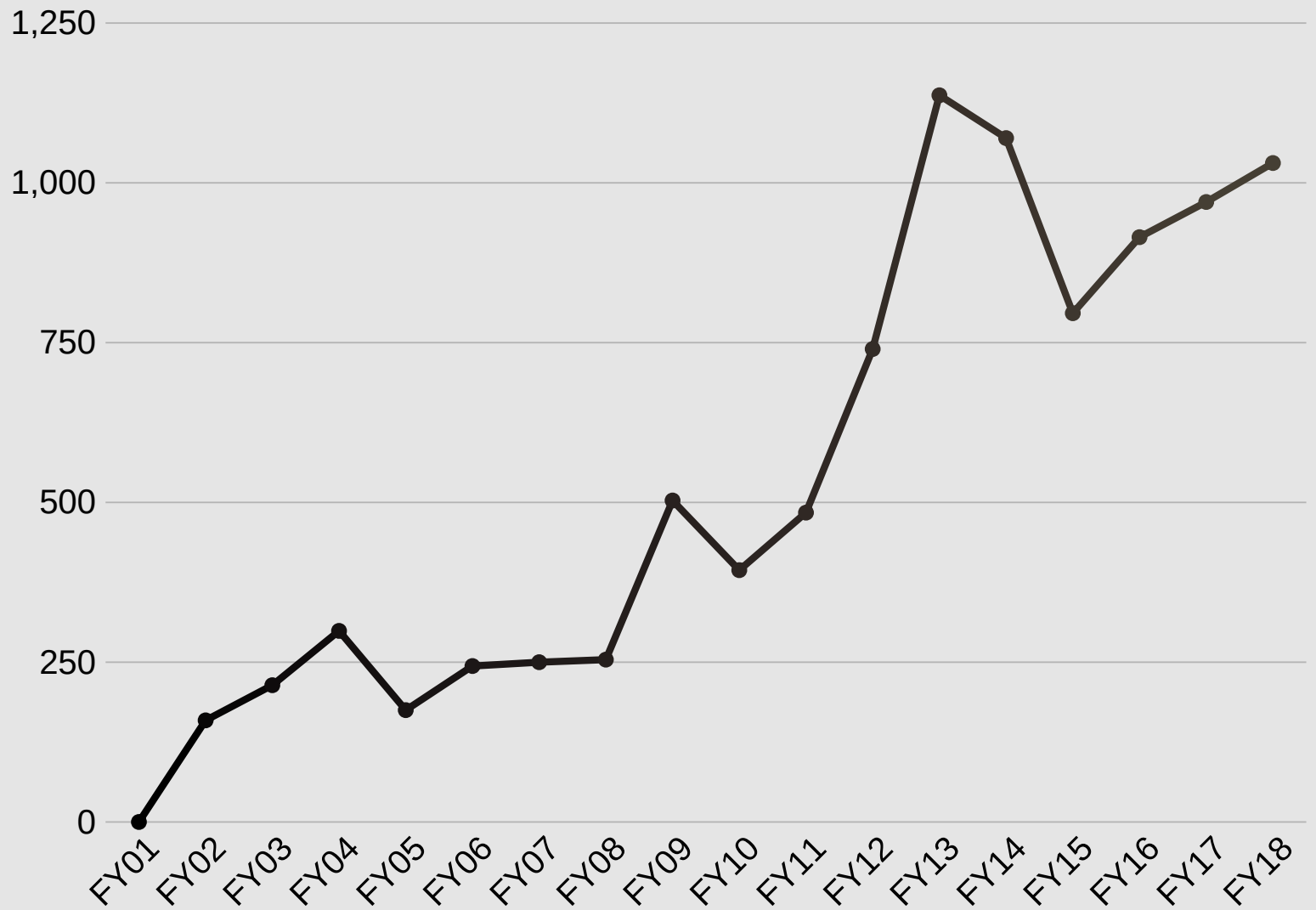
**COUNTRIES
ENGAGED**

**COUNTRIES ENGAGED 2000-2018
AS OF SEP. 30, 2018**



ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT BY FY (FY01-18)

ALUMNI



5,228

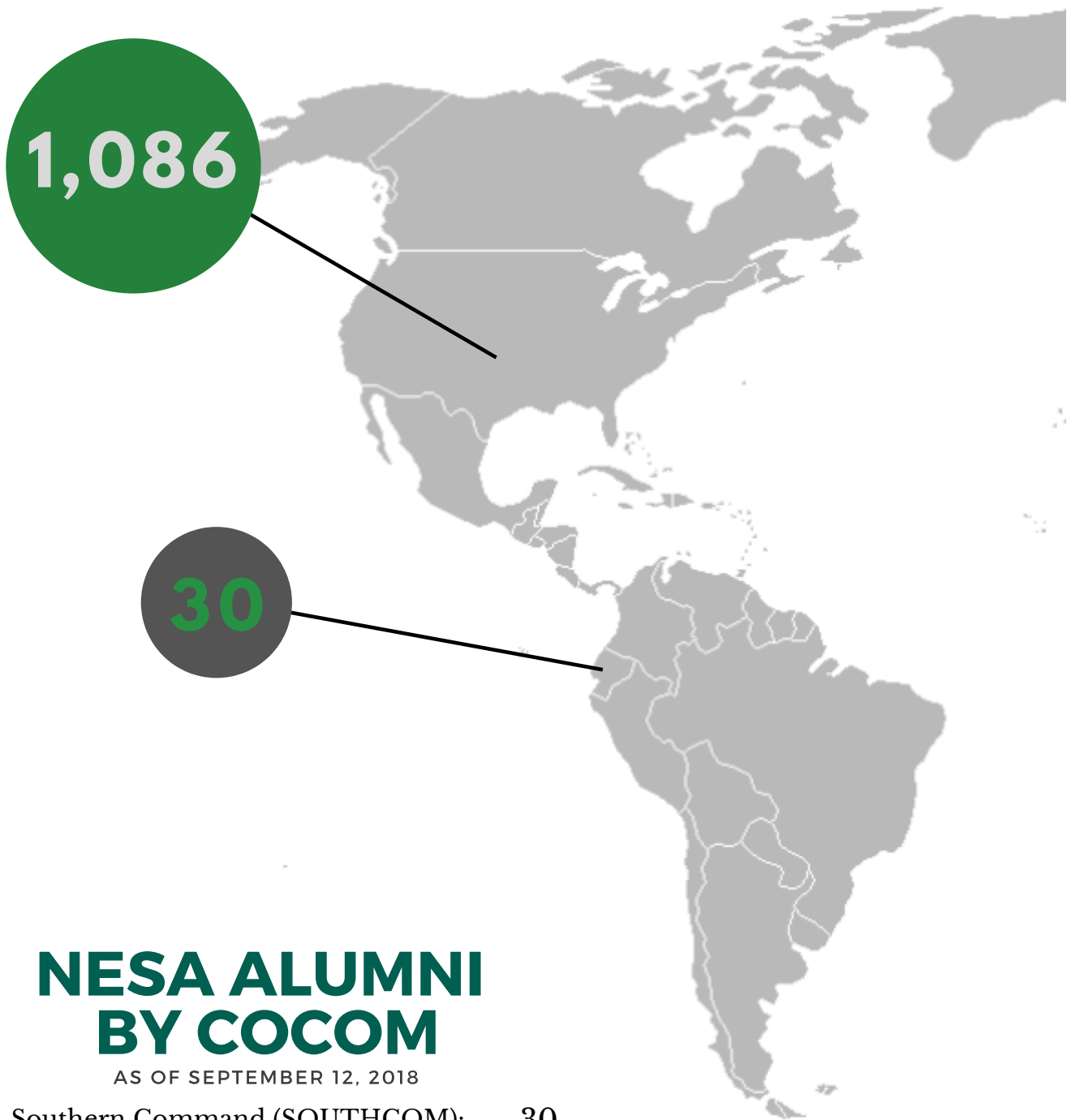
New NESAs added since FY13

866

New alumni added in FY18

NESA BY THE NUMBERS

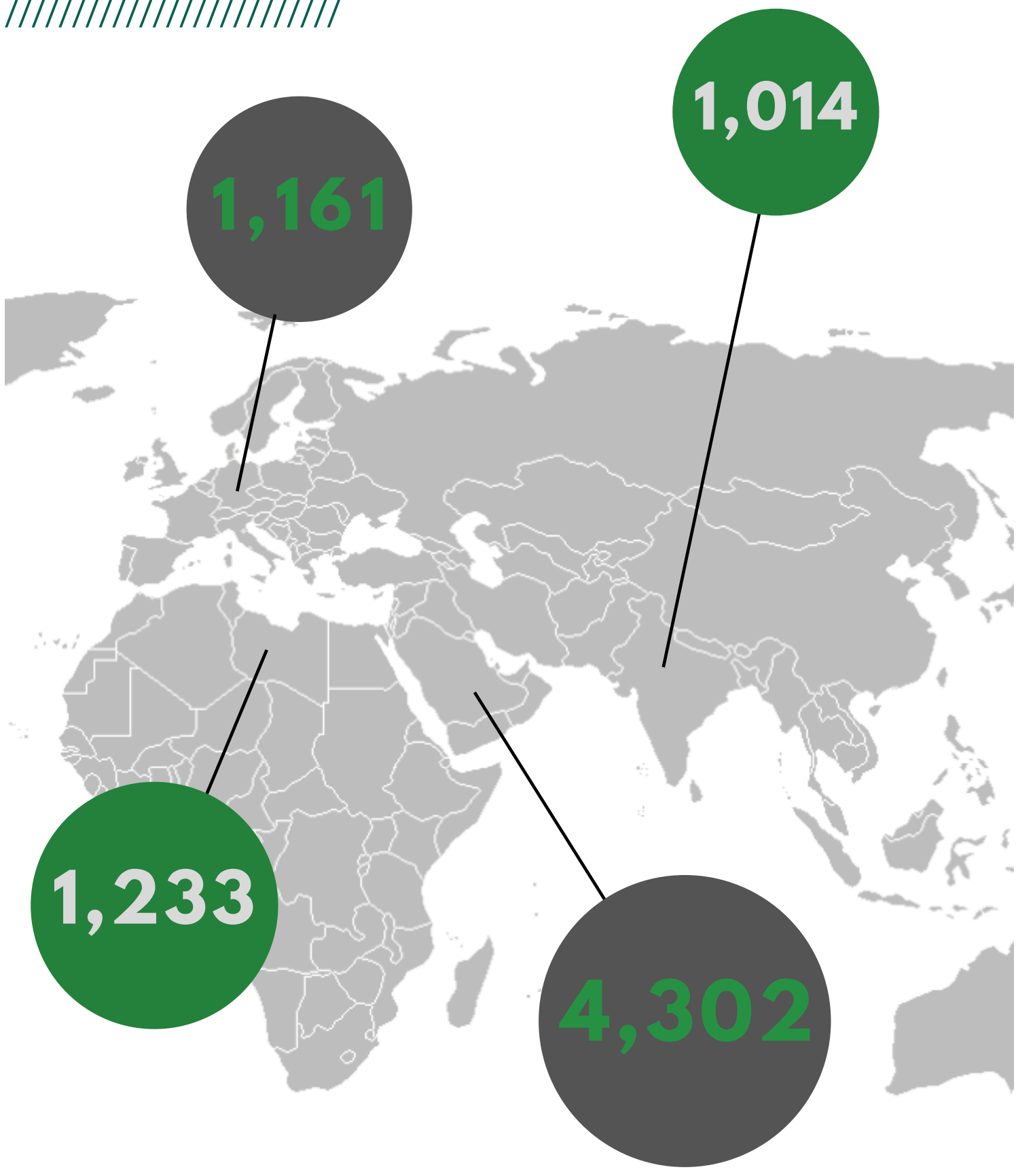
GLOBAL IMPACT



NESA ALUMNI BY COCOM

AS OF SEPTEMBER 12, 2018

U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM):	30
U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM):	1,086



U.S. AFRICA COMMAND (AFRICOM):	1,233
U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM):	4,302
U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM):	1,014
U.S. EUROPEAN COMMAND (EUCOM):	1,161

Additional information and images at:

NESA-CENTER.ORG



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