

Lebanese Armed Forces Staff College Seminar



LAFSC participants in their conflict resolution simulation of the Syrian crisis.

WASHINGTON-April 2-13, 2018- The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) hosted a senior-level delegation from the Lebanese Armed Forces Staff College (LAFSC) for a seminar on 'Syria and the Greater Middle East: 2020 and Beyond.'

The seminar, directed by NESA Professor Dr. Jennifer Jefferis, offered participants analysis and a classroom style discussion over the current conflict in Syria and the range of its effect on neighboring countries in the Levant as well as the opportunity to identify possible solutions for cooperation and resolution of the crisis. 24 senior Lebanese military officers (field grade and general officers) as well as 2 officers from Egypt and Kuwait attended the annual two-week seminar. Dr. Jefferis specifically concentrated the focus of the seminar to address several power-dynamic struggles involved in the Syrian conflict including global, regional, and local entities vying for control.

Throughout the seminar, participants furthered their knowledge on a number of strategic issues including prospects and forecasts for peace in Syria, the role of Iran in the region, the Iran-Saudi Arabia rivalry, the agendas of leading powers in the MENA region, the U.S.-Russian relationship, challenges and opportunities of developing strong governance, and the politics of rebuilding Syria.



LAFSC participants collaborating for their simulation.

D.C. based leading experts on international security including Dr. Mara Karlin, Non-Resident Senior Fellow at The Brookings Institution, Mr. James Sindle, National Security Council (NSC) Director for Lebanon, and Ms. Mona Yacoubian, Senior Advisor for Syria, The Middle East and North Africa at the United States Institute of Peace briefed participants on their perspectives for governance and policymaking in the region.

Dr. Jefferis also arranged off-site visits to Capitol Hill and the U.S. Agency for International Aid (USAID) for further discussions on the American policymaking and legislative process as well as American policy on refugees, displaced persons, and U.S. aid efforts.

At the culmination of their seminar, participants were divided into 6 groups (U.S., Turkey, Russia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the Assad government) and tasked with negotiating a strategy to end the conflict.

After their 7-days at NESA in Washington, LAFSC participants continued their two-week seminar at the Marine Corp University in Quantico and the NATO Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk, VA.

Building Relationships– Enhancing Security

NESA-State Department IVLP Seminar



State Department IVLP Fellows listening to a presentation on narcotics trafficking.

WASHINGTON-April 17-18, 2018- The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) in partnership with the U.S. State Department's Office of International Visitors and the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), led a two-day 'Transnational Crime Threats Seminar' held at the National Defense University on Ft. Lesley J. McNair.

The seminar, held for more than 80+ international law enforcement, security, counternarcotic, and judicial leaders from 57 countries around the world, was the first segment of the IVLP 'Towards a More Safe and Secure World' initiative.



Sri Lankan participant Santhiramohanathas Satheesmohan, asking a question on cybersecurity.

The three-week initiative aims to discuss and examine mutual threats to international peace and security including terrorism, narcotics trafficking, trafficking in persons, border threats, money laundering, and cyber warfare.

NESA Professor John Wood led the seminar with the goal of discussing challenges of international cooperation in the areas of international finance and prosecution of terrorist organizations, providing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of law enforcement and military support to civil authorities, and implementing an understanding of the complex and interconnected emerging global challenges, including the intersection of cyberspace, technology, and terrorism.

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NESA faculty member Professor Brianne Todd, as well as subject matter experts Mr. Jerome Glenn, Co-Founder and CEO of The Millennium Project, Mr. Robert P. Dowling, Managing Director of Alluminate Inc., Mr. Joshua Meservey, Senior Policy Analyst for Africa and the Middle East at The Heritage Foundation, Mr. Yaya Fanusie, Director of Analysis for the Center on Sanctions and Illicit Finance at the Foundation for the Defense of Democracies, and Dr. Vanessa Neumann, President at Asymmetrica, briefed participants on critical themes of international security such as using financial tools to fight terrorism, and analyzing the intersection of narco-criminals, terrorism, and complementary threats.

Participants then travelled from the NESA Center to various American cities in order to engage with federal, regional, and local law enforcement officials, who can provide additional insight and perspective on public safety and security concerns. Their program will conclude with a simulation exercise sponsored by the State Department and the Federal Bureau of Investigation's (FBI) New York Field Office. The NESA Center is proud to partner with the State Department's Office of International Visitors and the IVLP in order foster international security cooperation.

Building Relationships– Enhancing Security

Washington Seminar



Ambassador Tefft (L) and Professor Todd (R) discussing Russian President Putin.

WASHINGTON-April 25, 2018- The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) completed its third Washington Seminar (WS) series of 2018.

The Washington Seminar series is a expert discussion, held for senior diplomatic officials from the NESA region and U.S. allied partner countries, on issues of critical importance to national and regional security.

The theme of this Washington Seminar was centered on 'Reflections on Putin's Russia and the U.S.-Russian Relationship', and featured former U.S. Ambassador to the Russian Federation, H.E. John Tefft. Ambassador Tefft served in Moscow from November 2014-September 2017 and he was present for many noteworthy events in the bilateral relationship.



WS participants, including Afghan Ambassador Hamdullah Mohib (2nd from L), networking.

NESA Professor Brianne Todd facilitated and moderated the discussion, while using her expertise in Russian and Central Asian affairs to guide the conversation forward.

Over 60 officials from 40 regional and partner countries attended the Washington Seminar series, under the non-attribution setting of Chatham House rules.



WS participants, listening to Ambassador Tefft speak on the future of the U.S.-Russian relationship.

Building Relationships– Enhancing Security

Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces Seminar



RSADF participants listening to a brief on the current state of Daesh, presented by LTG (ret.) Wolff.

WASHINGTON-April 4-7, 2018- The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) in partnership with Raytheon conducted a four-day lecture series in Washington for the Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces (RSADF), as part of their two-week Executive Leadership Program.



Honorable Richard Armitage addressing RSADF participants, during their seminar in Washington, D.C.

12 field grade and general officers from the RSADF spent a week in Washington, under the direction of NESA Professor David DesRoches, in an effort to further their education on geopolitics, foreign policy, national security, and defense strategy.

Participants covered a variety of topics while in D.C., including geopolitical events and the dynamics of state-to-state policies and regional security challenges. NESA Director LTG (ret.) Terry Wolff also briefed senior RSADF officers on the progress made by the Global Coalition to Counter Daesh.

Professor DesRoches invited distinguished former Foreign Service officials, Honorable Richard Armitage, former Deputy Secretary of State, and Honorable Adam Ereli, former

U.S. Ambassador to Bahrain, to brief participants on topics of importance to both Saudi Arabia and the U.S.

As part of their site-visit to the NESA Center and D.C., participants took off-site field studies to the Office of the Saudi Arabian Military Attaché and Capitol Hill. RSADF officers concluded their Leadership Program in Boston, Massachusetts, visiting Raytheon’s missile defense and weapons manufacturing facility in Andover.

Upcoming NESA Center Events

NESA-ACSS Post Graduate Seminar
May 24

German Staff College Visit
June 1

Central Asian Seminar
June 11-15

Illicit Commons and Border Security Seminar
June 24-July 2

Building Relationships– Enhancing Security



U.S.-Egypt Track II Dialogue



PARIS– March 19-22, 2018- NESA Professor Dr. Gawdat Bahgat attended a US-Egypt Track II Dialogue in Paris, sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy. The Track II talks aimed to enforce non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and increased collaboration between both countries.

NESA– INSSSL Cooperation



WASHINGTON– April 25, 2018- The NESA Center hosted Asanga Abeyagoonasekera, Director-General of the Institute of National Security Studies in Sri Lanka (INSSSL), to discuss collaboration between the two centers. The discussion was led by NESA Dean Dr. Roger Kangas, and attended by Sri Lankan Defense Attaché Rear Admiral Dharmendra Wettewa.

Building Relationships– Enhancing Security

NESA Professor John Wood at USIP Panel



WASHINGTON—April 25, 2018- NESA Professor John Wood (2nd from L) participated in a panel discussion at the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP), on the topic of 'Afghanistan in 2020: Is Peace Possible?'

NESA Faculty at Track II Conference

GENEVA— April 17-18, 2018- The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESAC) sponsored a workshop on the proliferation of WMD in the Middle East. The workshop was held in partnership with the Geneva Center for Security Policy (GCSP). Dean of Academic Affairs Dr. Roger Kangas and Dr. Gawdat Bahgat led the discussion which focused on security challenges in the broader Middle East, Proliferation of WMD, efforts to establish a nuclear weapons free zone, peaceful nuclear power, chemical & biological weapons, and the role of global powers in non-proliferation efforts.

Faculty Publications

Bahgat, Gawdat. 2018. "Geopolitics of energy: China and the Middle East," China Policy Institute: Analysis.

Kangas, Roger. 2018. "Redefining Extremism in Central Asia," Mantraya Occasional Papers #05 (26 February 2018); republished as ISPSW Strategy Series, Issue #541 (April 2018).

Kangas, Roger. 2018. "Legal Reform in Central Asia: Moving Past History," in Central Asia in the Era of Sovereignty: The Return of Tamerlane?, edited by Daniel L. Burghart and Theresa Sabonis-Helf (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2018), pp.27-56.

Building Relationships— Enhancing Security

Tunisia National Defense Institute National Security Seminar



Tunisia NDI participants, take a group photo outside Capitol Hill.

WASHINGTON- March 27- April 3, 2018- The NESACenter in partnership with U.S. Africa Command (AFRICOM) held its seventh annual Tunisian National Defense Institute (NDI) National Security Seminar for 45 senior government and military officials from 17 Tunisian agencies.

The NDI is a year-long Ministry of Defense program, now in its 35th year, which brings a diverse group of inter-agency representatives together twice each week for an academic year to advance whole-of-government approaches to critical national security and political challenges. Each class is assigned a unique research theme by the Minister of Defense. This year's assignment was entitled "Innovation and Developing a Defense Industry."

The one-week seminar, led by NESACenter Professors Anne Moisan and Larry Velte, was centered on assisting Tunisian officials (from the 2017-18 NDI class) in their research and to better equip them as Tunisia continues its democratic transition. The focus of this year's seminar was to guide officials towards a path to growing a more successful and diverse economy, a critical challenge for Tunisia.

While several sessions during the seminar focused on U.S. government institutions and national security strategy development, the majority of the program concentrated on required foundations for economic development and investments--good governance, rule of law, anti-corruption, public-private partnering and innovation. Participants also heard from a variety of U.S. government officials, "think tank" regional security experts, professional strategists, and local government officials.

Professor Moisan brought in key U.S. government officials including CAPT Mark Asuncion, USN, Director, Multi-National Cooperation Center and Strategic Outreach, J5-International, AFRICOM; Mr. Brett R. Schexnider, Deputy Division Chief, J5 West of West Regional Engagement, AFRICOM; Brigadier General Gregory Porter, USA, Director of the Joint Staff of the Wyoming National Guard; the Director of the Office of Maghreb Affairs, U.S. State Department, Mr. Joshua M. Harris and the U.S. State Department's Tunisia Desk Officer, Mr. David A. Lewis to provide participants a perspective on U.S. foreign policy and priorities in the region.

As part the NESACenter's partnership with the Tunisian Embassy in Washington, H.E. Ambassador Fayçal Gouia welcomed the group, presented a session on U.S.-Tunisian Bilateral Relations, and held a private reception in honor of the NDI participants. Tunisian Embassy officials, including the representative from the Defense Attaché's Office, also participated in the seminar. Participants also had the opportunity to visit Capitol Hill to discuss how Congress influences U.S. national defense and security policy, and how specific legislation passed advances U.S.-Tunisia cooperation. Concluding the program, in anticipation of the first-ever municipal election in Tunisia in May and the first time the military has been allowed to vote, Mayor Allison Siberberg from the City of Alexandria, VA and Ms. Barbara Emerson from Fairfax County, VA spoke to the group about local governance and the critical and pivotal role citizens play in successful democracies.

The seminar culminated the FY2018 NESACenter-AFRICOM program with this year's NDI class visit to Washington, D.C. The first segment of the seminar series (February 2018) led by Professor Moisan and assisted by Mr. John Chere, a former U.S. Defense Attaché to Tunisia, involved providing a series of presentations and leading discussion/breakout groups with the teams of participants.

Building Relationships– Enhancing Security

Future Leaders of Afghanistan Seminar



Emerging Afghan leaders and NESA faculty take a group photo, outside the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

KABUL, Afghanistan- March 24-27, 2018- The Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies conducted a capacity building seminar, held specifically for 'Future Leaders of Afghanistan', at the U.S. Embassy Compound in Kabul.

25 Afghan participants, mostly new to NESA seminars, completed the 4-day program that focused on strategic communications and counter-messaging, as well as complex problem-solving and critical thinking.

NESA Professors John Wood, Brianne Todd, and LTC Michael Rembold, as well as Distinguished Professor Ali Jalali directed the seminar, hosted jointly by NATO RESOLUTE SUPPORT and U.S. Forces-Afghanistan.



Participants strategizing for their final exercise.

At the conclusion of the seminar, participants further developed their understanding on concepts of critical thinking, including the need to challenge underlying assumptions and cultural biases; strategic communications, messaging, and counter-messaging; and techniques to evaluate complex problems, prepare recommendations, and plan for implementation at the national level.

Participants also expanded a network/community of influence of Afghan government officials, in order to share best practices, foster critical thinking, and evaluate whole-of-government approaches.

Most notable during the seminar was a panel discussion featuring a variety of Afghan subject matter speakers, moderated by ToloNews Senior Correspondent Mr. Sami Mahdi, focused on Afghans debating perceptions of their own country.

The U.S. Deputy Chief of Mission to Afghanistan, Annie Pforzheimer, also spent time answering critical questions from participants. Lieutenant General Richard Cripwell, Deputy Commander NATO RESOLUTE SUPPORT MISSION, provided an excellent overview of the importance and challenges of a successful strategic messaging campaign.

Participants received the opportunity to develop a strategic messaging plan in response to a large-scale natural disaster as part of their concluding exercise.

The NESA Center is proud to continue its direct support to the government of Afghanistan and provide guidance for strategic planning at the national level to Afghanistan's emerging leaders.

Building Relationships– Enhancing Security

Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar



Silk Road participants, during a lecture on the art of diplomacy with Ambassador Richard Hoagland.

WASHINGTON-April 2-6, 2018- The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) conducted a capacity-building seminar for 20 emerging leaders from 10 NESA countries in South and Central Asia on the theme of "Statecraft and Decision-Making in the 21st Century."

The annual 'Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar' provided participants with the opportunity to analyze concepts of diplomacy and leadership, including the art of negotiation, strategic communications, and ethics in decision-making under the guidance of NESA Professor Brianne Todd.

The one-week seminar highlighted challenges that participants would face as they tackled governance issues in their own countries and let them examine solutions through a strategic lens.

Several briefs were given by Ambassadors Thomas Pickering, Richard Hoagland and retired Army Major General Dee Ann McWilliams. As part of their off-site visit to Capitol Hill, participants engaged in a roundtable discussion with Congressional staffers Rick Nussio and Hunter Ridgway.

NESA Director LTG (ret.) Terry Wolff spoke to participants on the current state of progress in the fight to defeat Daesh, using the extremist organization as a case study on statecraft and decision-making for policymakers.



Participants conferring with each other in their breakout groups, and preparing for their crisis simulation.

Participants further learned about the U.S. experience with statecraft in American history through field study visits to Arlington National Cemetery and George Washington's home at Mount Vernon.

Participants utilized this information as part of a day-long exercise on border security and human rights during an international refugee crisis simulation.

Through their attendance in the seminar, the soon to be regional leaders broadened their understanding of timely security issues, utilized critical thinking skills to address complex problems, and further expanded their professional networks with new regional partners.

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