

April 2019 Monthly Report

NESA Region Trends

Key discussion trends throughout the NESA Center's April programming focused on issues of security and confronting perceived drivers of instability. Beijing's and Moscow's ambitions in the NESA region remain an acute anxiety, with participants interested in policies to counter the impact of great power competition on their own countries, seeking not to become a theatre of competition or pulled into wider conflict because of it. Middle Eastern participants are also deeply concerned over how best to address swelling refugee populations, which they perceive to be among the ISIS caliphate and Syrian conflict's most enduring—and destabilizing—legacies.

- **U.S.-Iran policy and Central Asia:** While the Trump Administration's strong line on Iran is praised by NESA participants from key Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states, participants from elsewhere in the Near East South Asia region, particularly Central Asia, are dubious that the U.S. is doing enough to counter the full scale of Iran's destabilizing actions. Central Asian participants express that the U.S. overlooks the subversive role that Iran plays in Central Asia, particularly in Afghanistan: participants expressed that Tehran is the main driver of perceptions that the U.S. is bypassing the Afghan government in the Afghanistan peace talks with the Taliban, for example.
- **Refugees and vulnerable populations present challenges and dilemmas:** The refugee issue, an unfortunate hallmark of the modern NESA region, was a recurring topic of discussion throughout the NESA Center's April programs. Participants from across the Middle East described already-scarce government resources straining to care for these at-risk populations. The dramatic growth in refugee populations following the wake of the Syrian Civil War has been so great as to fan existential fears in host countries. Participants from frontline countries describe a desire to continue seeking solutions with the goal of returning refugees to their countries of origin, and expressed opposition to potential refugee integration paradigms.
- Inadequate refugee policies, coupled with a lack of legal support and funding, have allowed multibillion-dollar criminal networks to thrive. Participants discussed how the vulnerability and desperation of migrants and refugees, coupled with globalization's increasingly "borderless" world and demands for cheap labor, have created especially fertile ground for human trafficking syndicates. Questions of where responsibility lies for the rise of these criminal enterprises, however, were harder to answer, with no sense of agreement reached.
- **NESA states walk the line between conflict and stability as great-power rivalry returns:** Participants describe anxieties as the U.S. strategic emphasis towards the NESA region shifts from counterterrorism to jockeying with China and Russia. As competition between the U.S., China, and Russia emerges, participants from across the NESA region express acute concerns over national stability and the strong desire not to become "pulled in" as proxies when the great powers seek to wage conflict short of a hot war. As a consequence of great power competition, participants fear conflict arising in countries where it did not before, and deepening in those where it already exists. Participants remain concerned about Beijing's Belt and Road development schemes.



NESA-AFRICOM Tunisia National Defense Institute Seminar, Phase II

26 March—4 April

From 26 March through 4 April 2019, the NESACenter, in partnership with US Africa Command (AFRICOM), conducted its eighth annual Tunisian National Defense Institute (NDI) National Security Seminar for 46 senior government officials and faculty from 17 Tunisian ministries, including from the President's Office and Tunisian Parliament, all of whom are enrolled in the Tunisian NDI class of 2018-2019. The Seminar is part of a unique program offered through the Tunisian Ministry of Defense which convenes a diverse group twice weekly for an academic year to advance whole-of-government approaches to critical national security and political challenges. Each class is assigned a research theme by the Minister of Defense, with this year's assignment being "Border Area Development Strategy", focusing on the economic development of border communities, a critical challenge for Tunisia.

The seminar, led by NESACenter Professor Anne Moisan, centered on assisting the participants in addressing border area development strategies and to better equip them as they continue to lead their country's democratic transition. The seminar provided

participants with key insights into the required foundations for economic development and investment in underrepresented or underinvested border communities such as specific areas of good governance, rule of law, anti-corruption, economic development, public-private partnering, and innovation.

In their time in Washington, participants received presentations from lecturers including LTG (Ret.) Terry Wolff, the Director of NESACenter and former Deputy Special Presidential Envoy for the D-ISIS Coalition at State ; Haim Malka, Deputy Director and Senior Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies; Dr. Raj Desai, Visiting Fellow at the Brookings Institution; Kevin Carey, Practice Manager at the World Bank ; and Mayor Justin Wilson, Mayor of Alexandria, Virginia. Key U.S. government officials who met with the group included Mr. Christopher Felt, AFRICOM's State Department Liaison ; Ms. Michelle Lenihan, Acting Director, Principal Director for Africa, Office of the Secretary of Defense; and Ms. Elizabeth Litchfield, Deputy Director, Office of Maghreb Affairs, Department of State.



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NESA Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar 2019

1—5 April

The Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies hosted the Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar 2019, “National Interests in a Globalized World” at the National Defense University 1-5 April, 2019. The seminar convened rising young leaders from NESA states across Central and South Asia including Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Nepal, India, and Bangladesh. The Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar is an annual NESA program facilitated by NESA Professor Brianne Todd, with this year’s iteration focused on exploring regional development, stability, and Central Asia’s widening role in a changing world order.

The seminar featured guest speakers from across the Washington, D.C. policy and think tank community and included subject matter experts like Dr. Michael Brown, Professor of International Affairs at George Washington University; NESA Professor and South Asia expert John Wood; and Ambassador (ret) Richard Hoagland, Former Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Bureau of South & Central Asian Affairs at the

U.S. Department of State, who provided insights on emerging global trends and challenges, (re) defining national security, and the art of negotiation.

During their time in Washington, D.C., participants toured the U.S. Capitol building, where they engaged with the Honorable Dennis Hertel, who previously represented Michigan’s 14th District, on topics relating to American governance. While at the Capitol, participants also met with Brigadier General Trent Kelly, the Republican Representative of Mississippi’s 1st District and a NESA’s 2018 Distinguished Alumnus, who discussed his role in expanding U.S. relations with Uzbekistan. At a special Director’s Dinner featuring NESA Center Director LTG (Ret.) Terry Wolff, seminar participants were joined by H.E. Javlon Vakhobov, Uzbekistan’s Ambassador to the United States (and himself a NESA alumnus), who spoke on transformative socio-political changes underway in Central and South Asia, a conversation which fittingly dovetailed with the seminar’s theme, “National Interests in a Globalized World”.



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NESA Building and Sustaining Afghanistan's Civilian-Military Capacity Seminar

2—10 April

The NESA Center for Strategic Studies conducted a capacity building seminar from April 2 through April 10, 2019, at the NESA Center facilities on the National Defense University campus, Washington, D.C. A total of 11 Afghan participants completed the 8-day program that focused on inter-agency collaboration, critical thinking, and crisis management. This program was the ninth iteration of a seminar series initiated in 2012 for the purpose of increasing Afghan governmental capacity.

The seminar included engagements with U.S. government officials from the Department of

Defense, Department of State, and U.S. Agency for International Development. Additionally, external speakers from leading media organizations and the private sector joined NESA faculty in seminar sessions. Participants from Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Office of the National Security Council, Ministry of Interior, and Independent Directorate of Local Governance participated in sessions focused on U.S. policy for Afghanistan and South Asia; inter-agency collaboration, policy and strategy development, media relations, and crisis/disaster management; and completed a capstone exercise simulating the disaster management of a complex crisis scenario.

NESA Professor and course director
John Wood provides remarks at
Seminar commencement



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Saudi War College Washington Course

8—12 April

The NESACenter hosted the fifth iteration of the annual Saudi War College Washington course 8-12 April. The Saudi War College's 2019 international student visits were divided into three parts; the NESACenter hosted the section traveling to the United States, and the other two sections underwent other coursework in either China or Moscow.

Participants gained insights into U.S. governance and U.S. foreign policy topline by engaging with guest speakers including NESACenter Director LTG (Ret.) Terry Wolff, the former Deputy Presidential Envoy to the D-ISIS Coalition, who lectured on the Islamic State after the fall of the physical ISIS caliphate. Other speakers included Dr. Michael Bell, Former Senior Director for Middle East at the National Security Council and Professor at the National Defense University, as well as Becca Wasser of RAND Corporation. Participants were particularly interested in understanding the complex nature of the U.S. system of government, especially the relationship between the executive branch and Congress. While in Washington, D.C. participants visited the U.S. Capitol, where they heard vivid examples of lecture

concepts in practice from former Congressman the Honorable Dennis Hertel, and attended a discussion session at the Saudi Arabia Military Mission in Washington, D.C.



At the Saudi Military Mission, participants heard from General Yousef al-Harbi on military modernization.

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Lebanese Armed Forces Staff College Seminar

15—26 April

As part of its annual engagement course with the Lebanese Armed Forces Fouad Shehab Command and Staff College (LAFSCSC), the NESACenter conducted the seminar “Collaboration, Decentralization, and Fragmentation: Prospects and Problems in a New World Order” 15-26 April. Twenty-five officers from the LAFSCSC attended the seminar, which was conducted in sessions held at the NESACenter facilities at the National Defense University, Fort Hamilton (New York), and the United Nations, New York, New York.

NESACenter’s continuing engagement with the LAFSC is focused on fostering regional development and discovering the most promising alignments in American and Lebanese interests over the coming years. Directed by NESACenter Professor Dr. Jennifer Jefferis, the 2019 iteration of the LAFSC seminar focused on how regional development in the Levant has been challenged by the ongoing second and third order effects of the conflict in Syria, as well as changing global power dynamics. Seminar curriculum was developed with a goal of identifying new avenues for both inter and inner state cooperation. Key discussion points included America’s Middle East

policies and Beijing and Moscow’s ambitions in the NESACenter region. Participants were especially interested in discussing means to address the Syrian refugee swell within Lebanon, which is already struggling with economic issues and a complex domestic and regional political situation.

Participants interfaced with notable guest speakers including Dr. Anthony Cordesman, Chair of Strategy at Center for Strategic and International Studies; Mr. Robert Jenkins, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID); and Shadi Hamid, Senior Fellow at the Brookings Institution. While in Washington, D.C., participants were briefed at the USAID headquarters and toured the U.S. Capitol building, gaining firsthand insights into American governance from former Congressman the Honorable Martin Frost. Other off-site seminar activities occurred at the United Nations headquarters in New York City and at Fort Hamilton, where participants engaged in a three-day group exercise designed to provide tools for conflict analysis through the lens of a fictitious scenario closely mimicking the current regional dynamics.



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NESA-IVLP Transnational Crime Threats Seminar

18 April

The Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies hosted the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP), a select program offered through the U.S. Department of State, at the National Defense University on 18 April, 2019.

The daylong “Transnational Crime Threats Seminar” hosted by the NESA Center covered lessons learned in the counter-ISIS campaign fought in Iraq and Syria, stymieing transnational criminal networks, and strategies for fighting corruption. The almost-80 participants originated from countries throughout the world, including from the Middle East, South and East Asia, the Caribbean, Central America, South America, and Africa. NESA Center Director LTG (Ret.) Terry Wolff shared insights from his recently-finished appointment as the Deputy Presidential Envoy to the Global Coalition to Defeat ISIS, speaking on rehabilitating refugees after the fall of the ISIS caliphate, degrading the illicit funding networks that sustained ISIS and continue to sustain remaining ISIS holdouts, and best practices in de-radicalization. NESA Academic Dean Dr. Roger

Kangas also spoke on how to expand international cooperation in countering trafficking and transnational crime, and was joined by guest speakers including Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown, a Senior Foreign Policy Fellow at the Brookings Institution and Dr. Mariya Omelicheva of the National War College.

As the State Department’s premier professional exchange program, the IVLP offers current and emerging leaders from around the world the opportunity to experience firsthand the wealth and diversity of U.S. society, culture, and politics, while also educating participants on U.S. foreign policy objectives. This iteration, the “Towards a More Safe and Secure World” IVLP Special Initiative, brought judicial, law enforcement, and security officials from around the world to the U.S. to rigorously explore countering transnational threats like terrorism, narcotics trafficking, trafficking in persons, border threats, money laundering, and cyber warfare. For more information about IVLP, visit: <https://eca.state.gov/ivlp>.



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MORE NESAS EVENTS



NESA and NDU faculty with participants of the German War College Higher Command Seminar

NESA-German War College Higher Command Seminar

NESA Professor David Des Roches hosted the Higher Command Seminar of the German War College at the NESA Center on 29 March. The delegation, led by Lt. Gen Juergen Bornemann, consisted of 31 senior German and allied military officers and German government civilian officials. The delegation (which has been coming to NESA for five years) included a presentation by Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas on the role of Russia in the world; a presentation on the current U.S. political situation by NDU Professor Dr. Brittany Bounds, and a presentation on Middle East security after the defeat of the ISIS caliphate by Professor Des Roches.

Mr. Scott Lynde of Raytheon, right, was made a NESA Distinguished NESA Alumnus after attending 11 iterations of the NESA / Raytheon / Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces program.





LTG (Ret.) Wolff, center

Engaging NDU's Academic Community

On 9 April, the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) hosted the program, “Stabilization-Beyond Iraq and Afghanistan”, focused on the stabilization of conflict areas. NESACenter Director LTG (Ret.) Terry Wolff was a featured panelist, along with Andreas Krueger, former Ambassador for Negotiations on Syria and Head of Division for Syria, Iraq, and Anti-ISIS Strategy (German Foreign Ministry), and Ambassador Barbara Bodine, former Ambassador to Yemen and Director and Distinguished Professor in the Practice of Diplomacy at Georgetown University. Panelists discussed the prospects and mechanics needed to build an international coalition in support of the stabilization of post-conflict countries like Syria.

NESA-Saudi Armed Forces War Course

NESA Professors Dr. Daniel Baltrusaitis and Richard Wiersema conducted curriculum development workshops for the Saudi Armed Forces (SAF) War Course faculty, at the SAF Command and Staff College, in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia from 14-18 April, 2019. The workshops focused on developing new objectives for the Senior Leadership course. The SAF cadre attending the workshops expressed enthusiasm and increasing demand for NESA mentorship in their curriculum development efforts. Parts three and four of the workshop series are scheduled to be conducted in July and August of this year.



Dr. Daniel Baltrusaitis



Professor Richard Wiersema



NESAS Professor David Des Roches

Strengthening U.S. Allies' Intelligence Communities

NESAS Professor David Des Roches was a keynote speaker at the CENTCOM Directors of Military Intelligence (DMI) Conference, 1-2 April.

In a well-received speech, Professor Des Roches' remarked on the importance of the entire intelligence cycle, from collection to other processes like fusion, analysis, and dissemination. Attendees from certain Arab states expressed that the holistic approach to intelligence as advanced in Professor Des Roches speech steered them

from a narrow focus on intelligence collection towards a more holistic view of the multi-step intelligence process.

Other keynote speakers were Joint Chiefs of Staff senior historian David Crist, who spoke on the Iran threat, and Anthony Cordesman, Chair of Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (who spoke on the Iran threat), who spoke on continuing problems in building Arab military capacity, like naval countermine warfare. Attendees from the NESAS AOR included DMIs from Algeria, Libya, and Morocco.

Represented by Professors John Wood and Brianna Todd, the NESAS Center conducted a seminar on U.S. security policy, held in coordination with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Turkmenistan in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan 30 April—3 May. The seminar focused on topics including the U.S. security posture towards Central and South Asia, the situation in Afghanistan, and varied approaches to countering radicalization and extremism. Seminar participants included officials from Turkmenistan's Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Defense, and National Security.





NESA Deputy Director David Lamm, second from left, and NESA Professor Dr. Gawdat Bahgat, second from right, with representatives from the UAE Command and Staff College

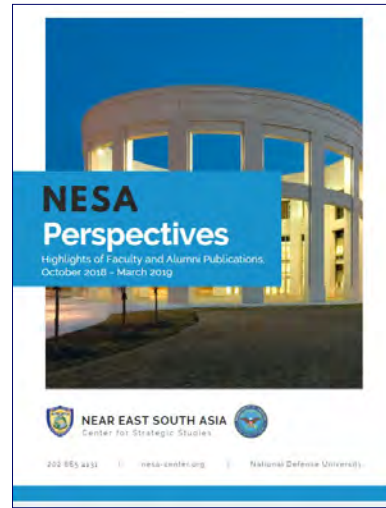
UAE Command and Staff College Visit

The NESA Center hosted a five man delegation of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) Command and General Staff College faculty 8-9 April. They visited the National Defense University, the Army War College, and the Joint Forces Staff College as part of a trip to gather best practices and insights as they transition to a component of the UAE National Defense University.

Participants received a detailed briefing from NESA Deputy Director David Lamm, a tour of NDU facilities, and further briefings on curriculum from academic deans at other NDU institutions including the College of International Security Affairs and the Dwight D. Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy. NESA Professor David Des Roches additionally conducted three meetings with the participants to discuss academic matters.

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FORTHCOMING PUBLICATION



NESA's forthcoming *Perspectives*, to be published electronically May 2019, will feature highlights from faculty and alumni articles and scholarly works from the first half of FY19.



Professor David Des Roches spoke on Russia and terrorism, as well as NATO's "Southern challenge" at the NATO Policy Seminar, held at the NATO School in Oberammergau, Germany, 19-20 April.



UPCOMING EVENTS

May 2019

NESA-AFRICOM “Tying Border Security and Illicit Commons: Making The U.S. More Secure” Workshop:
29 April -3 May, Tunis, Tunisia

NESA-AFRICOM Tunisia National Defense Institute
Seminar, Phase III: 2 May, Tunis, Tunisia

NESA International Military Officers’ Forum B: 6-10
May, Washington, D.C.

NESA Turkmenistan Distinguished Visitor Tour: 13
May, Washington, D.C.

NESA Strategic Studies Network Workshop and
Alumni Event: 27-29 May, Bangkok, Thailand

additional information and images at:
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