



January 2019 Monthly Report

NESA Region Trends

Key participant conversations throughout the NESA Center's January programs were focused on primarily on great power politics, in the face of a perceived shift of the U.S. role on the global stage.

- **Beijing challenges U.S. dominance in Indo Pacific and South Asia:** While participants described a prevailing lack of clarity characterizing China's actions and ambitions in the Indo Pacific—questioning if an official Chinese vision for the region in fact exists—participants described Beijing's approach as being primarily economic, and ultimately destabilizing in its effects. By contrast, the U.S. approach to the region is perceived as not merely economic, but also based on a commitment to existing partnerships and to political, security, and social engagement.
- China's deepening footprint in South Asia was described as based on Beijing's desire to promote economic interests and enhance security ties (as seen in the case of Pakistan, for example). Participants voiced concerns that the U.S. is "losing interest" in its commitment to regional allies and partners.
- **U.S.-China rivalry in Indo Pacific proves awkward for some NESA states:** As the changing security dynamic of the Indo Pacific becomes increasingly defined by great power competition between the U.S. and China, smaller states in the region are being confronted by a growing dilemma over how to balance their traditional security ties with the U.S. with their rapidly expanding economic ties with China, expressing not wanting to be compelled to "choose" between the U.S. and P.R.C. Small littoral states in the NESA region expressed the most acute anxiety about great power competition, and of the possibility of being "swallowed" up by the U.S. and China's disparate visions of the Pacific.
- **Drones continue to change the character of war:** Participants from key Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states expressed alarm about recent developments in armed drone aircraft, especially GPS guided high-altitude fragmentation drones (notably used recently by Houthi fighters in Yemen). Participants were especially concerned about the lethality of such drones when used against fixed targets, as well as the possibility of their use by insider threats and nefarious non-government actors.
- **The U.S. has resurrected retrenchment, participants say:** Participants from across the NESA region criticized a perceived embrace of retrenchment from the world stage, begun by the previous—and greatly accelerated by the current—U.S. Presidential Administration. The European Union's (E.U.) foreign policy towards the region was described in similar terms, as the E.U.'s posture towards the region is not seen as independent of the U.S.'. The aggregate picture, per participants, is one of U.S. isolationism, with Europe unwilling to fill the power vacuum.
- NESA region allies cautioned that this perceived trend of U.S. isolationism (and a cautious Europe), is to a gift to some of the U.S.' greatest foes: while describing current U.S. and E.U. policy towards the NESA region as confused, at times capricious, and motivated by self-interest, participants spoke of the increased role of Russia and China, saying for example that the fate of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action hinges more on moves by Moscow and Beijing than it does on Brussels.

“China’s Global Reach” Workshop

30 January—1 February



Workshop participants at APCSS. Dean Roger Kangas is pictured in the center, first row

The NESACenter, along with the other four Department of Defense Regional Centers, participated in a three-day workshop entitled “China’s Global Reach: A Security Assessment.” The workshop was held at the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies (APCSS) in Honolulu, Hawaii, January 30 - February 1, 2019, which brought together 56 experts from the five Regional Centers, as well as key US government offices, DoD Commands, and other organizations. The NESACenter team was led by Dean Dr. Roger Kangas and supported by two professors, Dr. Gawdat Bahgat and Professor Jack Gill.

The goal of the workshop was to identify activities conducted by the People’s Republic of China (PRC) throughout the world that may have an impact on US foreign and security policy. If there is a “strategic competition” taking place between the US and the PRC, what measures should the US government take to ensure that its national interests remain secure and appropriately addressed? The workshop’s activities focused on plenary discussions of a series of presentations by the Regional Center faculty and select outside experts,

as well as working group discussions that addressed the topics of measuring influence, strategic competition, and policy recommendations. The intrinsic value of the NESACenter and its partner Regional Centers was highlighted in the wide-ranging discussions of how the PRC’s policies adjust to different geographic regions and the perspectives and actions of the countries in those regions. Simply put, understanding regional and sub-regional dynamics will allow for effective responses and actions by the United States, if and when they are needed.

It is important to note that this is the first time that all five Department of Defense Regional Centers (NESACenter, DKI APCSS, the William J. Perry Center, the Africa Center, and the George C. Marshall Center) have worked in collaboration on a single workshop and policy-focused product. The workshop will produce a published volume that will be available in July, 2019, and is tentatively to take place in conjunction with a book launch event at Ft. McNair at that time. The five Regional Centers agreed to continue their collaboration in the coming fiscal year (FY20).



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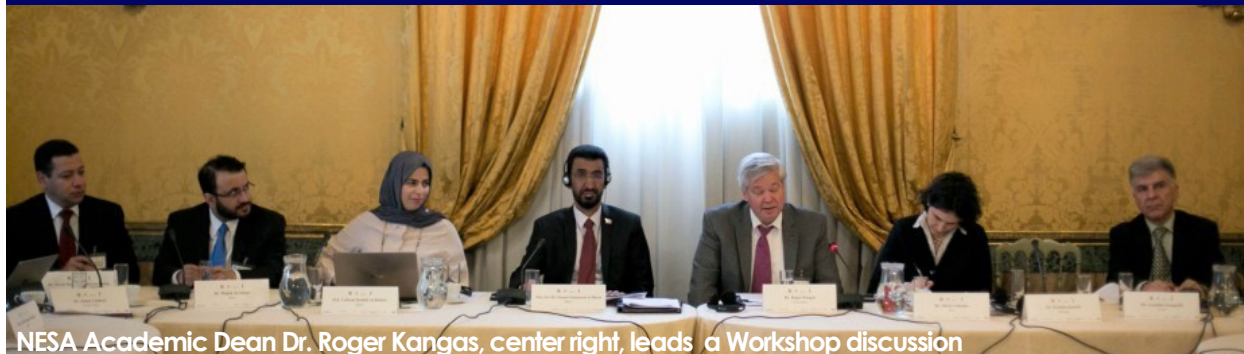
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NESA-QAFSSC-IAI “Middle East in 2025” Workshop

10—11 January



NESA Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas, center right, leads a Workshop discussion

In coordination with the Qatari Armed Forces Strategic Studies Center (QAFSSC) and the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), the NESA Center conducted an intensive two-day workshop in Rome, Italy dedicated to examining the future of the Middle East. The workshop, “The Middle East in 2025” framed discussion in the context of key issues such as energy relations, state-society relationships, the role of regional and global powers, and counter-terrorism.



NESA Professor Richard Russell share perspectives on the future of the Middle East at “the Middle in 2025”

Consisting of numerous roundtable discussions, the two-day workshop focused primarily on the post-Arab Spring decline of state power and state institutions as felt in Egypt, Iraq, and Syria, and the resultant power vacuum in the Arab world. Other representative discussion topics included the war in Yemen; a perceived lack of coherency in U.S. and European Union (E.U.) foreign policy towards the Middle East; and socio-political issues like unemployment levels throughout the region.

Representatives from the E.U., European think-tanks (like IAI, Chatham House, German Marshall Fund, and Center for European Policy Studies), U.S. think-tanks (including the Council on Foreign Relations, Brookings, and the Baker Institute), Georgetown Doha, and Qatar University participated in the discussion. NESA Center Academic Dean Roger Kangas, NESA Professor Richard Russell, and NESA Professor Gawdat Bahgat led the discussion, while NESA’s Overseas Program Coordinator Fahad Malaikah served as the Workshop planner.



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NESA-Saudi Ministry of the Interior Workshop

22—24 January

From 22 January through 24 January, NESA Professor David Des Roches conducted a mission analysis workshop with the Facilities Security Force (FSF) of the Saudi Arabian Ministry of the Interior (MOI) in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. This is the first NESA engagement with MOI forces, which in fact constitute the largest security force on the Arabian Peninsula, exceeding the size of all the militaries of Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states combined. Nine general officers and two colonels participated in the course; most participants were sector commanders, and included the officers responsible for key oil facilities of global importance, including the Abqaiq pipeline junction (site of an attempted terror attack by al-Qaeda in 2006) and the critical Ras Tanura sea loading facility. Other sector commanders included those for the Jeddah and Dammam areas.

Working from the U.S. Army model of military decision making processes (MDMP), Professor Des Roches led participants in rigorous analysis of the FSF mission and command guidance, distilling lessons into a simple yet comprehensive mission statement and five “mission essential” tasks crucial to the success of all FSF units. Such mission essential tasks will aid commanders in identifying which tasks are most useful for future training and prioritization of equipment and resources.

While not a regularly recurring NESA event, NESA’s engagement with Saudi MOI forces has been very well received, and further engagement is expected going forward.



NESA Professor David Des Roches, center, with workshop participants



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2019 Raisina Dialogue Discussion

8—10 January



The Near East South Asia (NESAJunct) Center, in cooperation with the Center for a New American Security (CNAS), conducted an evening event 8 -10 January within the Observer Research Foundation’s (ORF) 2019 Raisina Dialogue, in New Delhi, India. The Raisina Dialogue is also supported by the Ministry of External Affairs of the Indian government and has become the leading South Asian conference devoted to global affairs and international security issues. Participants hailed from all over the world and official delegations included heads of state, foreign ministers, military chiefs, prominent legislators, and general officers. Added to these official delegations were journalists, subject matter experts, and private sector leaders. This year’s Raisina Dialogue was focused on “A World Reorder: New Geometries, Fluid Partnerships, and Uncertain Outcomes.”

On the evening of 9 January, the NESAJunct Center, CNAS, and ORF held a dinner conversation, attended by around 50 participants, as part of the larger Raisina Dialogue. Conversation focused on “Curating a New Concert: Multiple Visions for the Future of the Indo-Pacific.” Speakers included Alicia Garcia Herrero, Chief Economist for the Asia Pacific at Natxis, Daniel Kliman, Senior Fellow of the Asia-Pacific Security Program at CNAS, Li Li, Senior Fellow at the Institute for International Relations at Tsinghua University, Ram Madhav, National General Secretary of the Bharatiya Janata Party in India, and Ruta Miliute, Lithuanian Parliamentarian. The conversation was moderated by NESAJunct Professor Manpreet Anand, and centered on two key topics: the intentions for the regional and global order of the People’s Republic of China, and the sustainability of the rules based order for a free and open global commons.



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NESA Deputy Director David Lamm at the presentation and alumni ceremony for the Saudi War Course.

advancing saudi defense capabilities through military education

NESA Professors Daniel Baltrusaitis and Richard Wiersema participated in the Saudi Armed Forces Command and Staff College (SAF CSC) cadre’s site visit to the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, 8—10 January. During the Fort Leavenworth visit, Saudi and U.S. faculty and leaders discussed in detail the scope and depth of U.S. Army developments in mid-level PME programs.

From 20—24 January, Professors Baltrusaitis and Wiersema then accompanied NESA’s Deputy Director David Lamm to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia for a series of meetings with the U.S. Military Training Mission, SAF CSC leadership, and flag officer leadership at the SAF Transformation Management Office, to review

and discuss NESA proposals for the way ahead in transforming the existing Saudi PME institutions to a National Defense University. The entire student population made NESA alumni after a week of rigorous instruction on geopolitics by Professors Baltrusaitis and Wiersema .

In addition, Professors Baltrusaitis and Wiersema coordinated final preparations for two iterations of a specialized five-day Strategic Leadership Course for Saudi Armed Forces brigadiers and colonels, which they will present in Riyadh during the first two weeks of February.

enhancing u.s.-kazakh relations

On January 24, Dean Dr. Roger Kangas was hosted by the Embassy of Kazakhstan to speak to a group of professionals from the Institute of Diplomacy Academy of Public Administration under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan (pictured below). During the morning session held at the Embassy of Kazakhstan, Dr. Kangas spoke on the topic of U.S.-Kazakhstan relations and engaged in a discussion on topics ranging from current US domestic politics, the US policies in Afghanistan and the Middle East, the security challenges presented by Russia and China, as well as the role and value of multi-lateral security organizations in the Central Asian region.





NESA Professor Dr. Gawdat Bahgat makes remarks at "The Middle East in 2025" Workshop.

faculty & alumni publications

Bahgat., Gawdat "Iran's Space Odyssey Raises Red Flags for Nuclear Community". *The National Interest*. 24 January, 2019. <<https://nationalinterest.org/blog/middle-east-watch/irans-space-odyssey-raises-red-flags-nuclear-community-42397>>

Des Roches, David. "Security Problems of Small States". *Qatar's Resilience: A Model of Resisting Blockade and the Power of Small States*. Al Jazeera Centre for Studies and Arab Scientific Publishers, 2018. English language summary : <<http://studies.aljazeera.net/en/publications/2018/06/qatars-resilience-model-resisting-blockade-power-small-states-180605095522961.html>>

nesa in the news

Select media:

Des Roches, David. Al Mayadeen News. Television. 13 January, 2019. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=1&v=tGSF-IxXGxw>

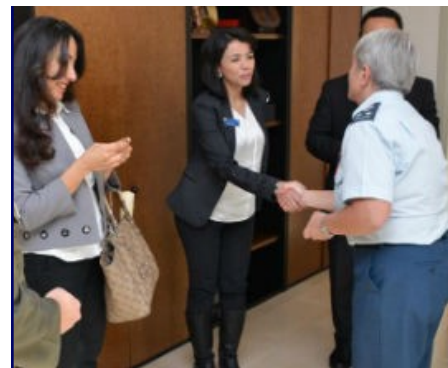
Des Roches, David. Al Mayadeen News. Television. 30 January, 2019. <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCVFQqAC8LQ>>

Other January Events

23 Jan.: Hindustan Times journalist Primit Pal Chaudhuri visited NESA for a roundtable discussion about the upcoming Indian elections and geopolitics in South Asia.

24 Jan.: NESA Professor David Des Roches presented to the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff on arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

28 Jan.—1 Feb: NESA Professor Anne Moisan participated in the first phase of the NESA-AFRICOM Tunisian NDU Seminar (to be featured in the February Report).



19 Jan.: NESA alumna Dr. Eman Ragab, center, receives her fellowship diploma from the NATO Defense College.

additional information and images at:
www.nesa-center.org



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