



July 2019 Monthly Report

NESA Region Trends

Participant discussions throughout The NESA Center's July programming ranged from sub-regional topics, including the economics and politics behind the NESA region's illicit drug trade, to the perceived return of great power politics to the NESA region.

proxies in the event that 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.

- **Bold solutions required to combat drug trafficking throughout NESA:** With a steady clientele in Europe to the north, the Sahelian smuggling route to its south and the heroin route traversing it from east to west, the NESA region both influences, and is negatively influenced by, illicit drug trafficking, the focus of a key July seminar. Participants called for increased coordination between states to more systematically deal with trafficking in the region, specifically recommending the development of a joint task force to foster the development of consistent interdiction processes and judicial consequences across all states in the region.
- Participants also called for improving communications across agencies within each state (including between police and border security/customs authorities), as well as for enhanced information sharing across NESA states so as to share the burden of both drug transit and sales in the region.
- **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
- **MESA's uncertain future:** While participants, particularly from the Arab world and Europe, concur that the NESA region demands a collective security architecture, they are less enthusiastic about the U.S.-proposed Middle East Strategic Alliance (MESA), often touted as an “Arab NATO”. While participants from prospective member states do not object to MESA's core priorities—constraining Iran and reducing the region's U.S. presence without allowing China or Russia to gain influence—many are extremely skeptical of MESA's success, and view it in the context of previous efforts to create a lasting regional security infrastructure (like the Baghdad Pact) and more recent efforts to create cooperative security in the region (like 2006's Gulf Security Dialogue 2006 and 2015's Camp David Summit).
- **Little hope of bridging the gulf in the GCC:** Participants from key NATO states agree with participants from Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states that near-term prospects of achieving an end to the ongoing GCC crisis are dim. British and European participants are unoptimistic that U.S.-and/or U.K.-led diplomatic efforts can mend the crisis between Qatar and the blockading states, as the U.K. is consumed with both Brexit and leadership change, and the Trump Administration preoccupied with domestic concerns and winning re-election in 2020. Indeed, Qatari participants expressed the sense that the U.S. and U.K. have become disinterested in resolving the dispute, and characterized both actors as content with the GCC rift as a “new normal”.



NESA-CENTCOM Gulf-Levant Workshop “Countering Trans-Border Narcotics Trafficking”

8-11 July

The Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies, in cooperation with U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), conducted the program "Countering Trans-border Narcotics Trafficking" from July 8-11 2019 at the NESA facilities at National Defense University in Washington, D.C. The workshop was designed to identify trends in the illicit drug trade in the Levant and the Gulf, specifically looking at which types of drugs are most heavily used by region, which borders are most frequently crossed by traffickers, and how effective individual states' policies related to drug use and sales actually are. The program was led by NESA Professor Dr. Jennifer Jefferis, and was attended by forty participants from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and the United States.

The program was structured to deepen participants' knowledge and understanding of the recent trends and developments of narcotics trafficking in the CENTCOM region; expose participants to the practices and policies of counter-narcotics and counter-trafficking programs in neighboring countries, including processes used to address money laundering and interdict illicit trade routes; and enhance participants' ability to work cooperatively with their regional counter-parts during trans-border counter narcotics trafficking operations and strategy development.

Throughout the course, participants heard from and actively engaged subject matter experts including Dr. Vanda Felbab-Brown, Senior Fellow in Foreign Policy at Brookings Institution, and Middle East Eye reporter Paul Cochrane. In other sessions, participants were assigned to collaborative small groups and assigned a hypothetical scenario from which they had to develop a regional strategy for addressing illicit narcotics trafficking.



TheNESACenter



TheNESACenter



nesa-center.org



Saudi Curriculum Development Workshop Series

22—26 July
&
29 July—2 August

In July and August, the NESACenter conducted two curriculum development workshops for students and faculty from the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces Command and Staff College. The first workshop was conducted 22-26 July and the second was conducted the following week, 29 July—2 August, both at the NESACenter facilities at the National Defense University.

As the majority of the Saudi workshop participants are returning NESACenter alumni, workshop lectures and case studies focused on applying concepts introduced during previous Saudi curriculum development sessions. The NESACenter team, led by Professors Daniel Baltrusaitis and Richard Wiersema, leveraged this experience and longstanding relationship to inform the current objectives of the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces Command and Staff College and the Royal Saudi War College. Representative lectures from both workshops included “Drafting Course Evaluations”, “Teaching Methods”, and “Drafting Lesson Objectives”.

NESACenter’s continuing workshops with the Saudi Arabian Armed Forces Command and Staff College function as valuable waypoints in the College’s developing capacity to write and maintain a war college curriculum, and strengthens the ability of senior Saudi officers to understand U.S. approach to problem-solving and prepares them to work with U.S. forces in joint and coalition environments.



TheNESACenter



TheNESACenter



nesa-center.org



Informing the U.S. Military Community on Current and Emerging Threats



NESA Professor David Des Roches spoke to [Sky News Arabia](#) June 24 and [Al Hurra](#) July 15 about the Iran threat

On July 3, the NESA Center hosted a daylong seminar on international security touchpoints for over (50) students and faculty of the Air War College (AWC), the preeminent military education school of the U.S. Air Force.

The AWC seminar featured lectures from NESA leadership and faculty, and additionally drew from the academic capital of NESA's sister Defense Department regional centers. NESA Professor Dr. Gawdat Bahgat welcomed the participants and spoke on security challenges in the Middle East (with a focus on the Iran threat and the Trump Administration's national security decision making processes), while NESA Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas lectured on the return of great power politics to the NESA region. Dr. Fabiana Sofia Perera, Assistant Professor at the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies spoke on security challenges in Latin America, while Dr. Raymond Gilpin, Academic Dean of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies spoke on African security and stability challenges—and the geographics spillover effects of conflicts in the Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The AWC Seminar was coordinated with the support of Senior Program Planner Mr. Omar Sedky.



NESA Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas, center, and NESA Professor David Des Roches, second from right, with participants from the SANG meetings .

Worldwide impact—from D.C. to Europe to the NESA AOR

EDUCATING FOREIGN MILITARIES

On July 3 the NESA Center hosted the Ministry of the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) for a series of meetings with NESA and National Defense University faculty.

In their time on the NDU campus, SANG representatives met with NDU Vice Provost Dr. Brian R. Shaw, NESA Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas, and NESA Professor David Des Roches. Conversation topics included best practices in military education and academic administration.



SHAPING THE GLOBAL ACADEMIC DEBATE

NESA Professor David Des Roches attended a series of workshops and meetings in Europe (in the United Kingdom and Brussels, Belgium) throughout July, including the tenth annual Gulf Research Meeting Group (GRM), with Professor Des Roches and fellow attendees pictured, above. The GRM is the largest academic conference highlighting issues of importance to the Gulf region, providing a basis for undertaking and engaging in academic and empirical research in the fields of politics, economics, energy, security and the wider social sciences. GRM 2019 was conducted at Pembroke College, at the University of Cambridge, U.K. July 15-16.



Attached is a photo of Uzbek Ambassador (and NESAs alumnus) Javlon Vakhobov speaking at the Embassy dinner in honor of Minister of Defense Kurbanov and his visiting delegation.



On 11 July Professors Brianne Todd and John Wood participated in a visit by Major General Bakhodir Kurbanov, Minister of Defense of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to the National Defense University. The Uzbek delegation included four NESAs Center alumni, and they visited NDU for an office call with NDU Senior Vice President Ambassador Arnold Chacon and a working lunch with NDU leadership and faculty. During the office call, Minister Kurbanov discussed the NESAs Center's initiative with Uzbekistan's Armed Forces Academy to conduct a regular VTC series on regional security issues.

Professors Todd and Wood also attended an evening reception at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in honor of the visiting delegation.



UPCOMING EVENTS

August 2019

NESA-AFRICOM “Are We Winning the Messaging Fight?” Countering Violent Extremism Workshop: 5-9 August, Location: In-Region

NESA-AFRICOM “Youth and Today's Challenges” Roundtable: 8 August, Location: In-Region

NESA-CENTCOM Regional Cooperation Workshop 2019: 5-18 August, Location: In-Region

NESA-U.S. Army Central CASA Land Forces Symposium: 26-29 August, Arlington, VA

NESA-Defense Threat Reduction Agency Gulf Missile Seminar: 25-28 August, Location: In-Region

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



contact us

Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies

Abraham Lincoln Hall, Fort Lesley J. McNair

300 5th Ave SW

Washington, DC 20319-5066

Phone: (202) 685-4131 Fax: (202) 685-4999

Media Requests:

Media and Communications Office

Phone: (202) 685-9467 NESA-communications@ndu.edu



[/TheNESACenter](https://www.facebook.com/TheNESACenter)



[TheNESACenter](https://twitter.com/TheNESACenter)



nesa-center.org
