



November 2019 Monthly Report

NESA Region Trends

Key discussion trends throughout the NESA Center's November programming focused primarily on issues of security and confronting perceived drivers of instability, whether Beijing and Moscow's ambitions in the NESA region or even non-traditional threats like climate change.

- **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 has not before, and deepening in those where it already exists. Participants remain concerned about Beijing's Belt and Road development schemes.
- **Nontraditional threats demand nontraditional responses:** October and November seminar participants devoted much discussion to nontraditional (i.e., nonmilitary) threats--like climate change, ideological extremism, and food and natural resource shortages--demanding nontraditional responses. Compounding NESA governments' ability to meet such challenges, some participants say, is lack of trust in government institutions, as well as decision makers' poor capacity to adequately assess long-term threats. As nontraditional threats cannot be defined in purely military terms, participants agree that military force--while vital to national security--may be more limited in its ability to meet such challenges and that instead, imaginative and flexible solutions leveraging grassroots engagement of local communities are required.
- **Analyzing best practices in counterterrorism:** The practices, military tactics, and political strategies underpinning counter-terrorism (CT) and deradicalization were recurring topics of discussion. Participants were not always unified on what should be considered CT priorities; North African participants emphasize the importance of pre-empting radicalization of vulnerable individuals before it begins, while Middle Eastern (primarily Levantine) participants emphasize stemming the flow of terrorist financing.
- **Iran and instability in the Middle East:** Iran remains a key anxiety for Middle Eastern--especially Gulf--participants, with the issue given fresh urgency in the wake of the sophisticated missile and drone attack on Saudi Aramco this September. Participants generally fear that the vision of Iranian hardliners and the IRGC will continue to define the Islamic Republic's foreign policy ambitions in the near future. In part to better counter Iranian aggression, participants urge utilizing diplomacy to resurrect a moderate policy core in the NESA region, and a return to the immediate post-Cold War, post-Gulf War dynamic in the Middle East, during which regional disputes were commonly solved through negotiations and working towards development and economic prosperity.



NESA-AFRICOM Tunisia National Defense Institute Seminar, Phase I/II

26 November

In collaboration with US Africa Command (AFRICOM), the NESA Center continued its partnership with the Tunisian National Defense Institute (NDI) into its ninth year, executing Phases I/II for a Tunisian NDI security seminar program 26 November 2019, in Tunis, Tunisia.

The program was led by Professor Anne Moisan, who lectured on the development of a Tunisian National Cybersecurity Strategy and conducted an intensive workshop at the Tunisian NDI with the NDI Director, key NDI faculty, and the auditeurs who will lead their research effort. The 2020 class consists of 42 senior government officials from 17 Tunisian ministries. Auditeurs included 19 from the various Security Sectors, two from the President's Office and one parliamentarian, all of whom are enrolled in the Tunisian NDI class of 2019-2020.

The NESA-AFRICOM TNDI seminar series is part of a unique program, now in its 37th year, offered through the Tunisian Ministry of Defense, which convenes an interagency working group throughout the academic year to advance whole-of-government approaches to Tunisia's critical national security and political challenges. Each class is assigned a specific research theme by the Minister of Defense, with this year's being tasked to draft a National Cybersecurity Strategy. The class of 2019-2020 will come to Washington, D.C. 24 March - 4 April 2020 for Phase II/III, which will also be led by Professor Moisan.

Pictured is Professor Moisan with attendees of the 2019 NESA-AFRICOM TNDI seminar, Phase III, in Alexandria, Virginia.



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Building Relationships, Enhancing Security



On 5 November 2019, NESAs welcomed Major General Rashad Al Sa'adi, Commandant of the National Defense College (NDC) in the United Arab Emirates, for talks in parallel with his visit for the semi-annual program management review. Both NDU and NESAs have had a long-standing partnership with the NDC of the UAE. As early as 2012, NESAs sponsored development workshops between NDC and NDU schools to mentor the Emirati institution in curriculum development, faculty development, program management, school administration, and faculty hiring.

NESA coordinates Emirati requests as part of its Memorandum of Agreement with the NDC to act as their education program support. NESAs coordination of NDU support continues to provide value to the development of the Emirati defense college.

During this visit, NESAs leadership confirmed to MG Rashad that NDU is committed to assisting NDC in their institution developmental efforts, highlighted the important role that NESAs plays in the continuing partnership between NDU and NDC, and offered to coordinate further support from NDU elements, in keeping with development goals set by UAE NDC. Such support in future may include, among other areas, faculty development via exchanges or shadowing programs, subject matter expertise for niche curriculum topics, and wargaming development. Underscoring the meaningful partnership that NESAs enjoys with the UAE Defense College, NESAs **Professor Daniel Baltrusaitis** departs the Center in December 2019 to assume his new role with the UAE Defense College itself, as its incoming Academic Dean.

NESA NOVEMBER FACULTY UPDATES

20-21 October: NESA **Deputy Director David Lamm** lectured at the Campbell University Counterinsurgency Seminar on "Reflections on Modern Counterinsurgency: Afghanistan and Yemen".

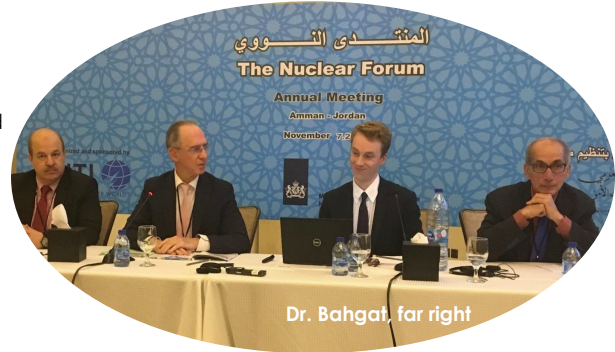
21-22 October: **NESA Director LTG (Ret.) Wolff** and **Academic Affairs Director Jeffrey Payne** participated in the Galle Dialogue on International Maritime Security in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

24 October: **Professor David Des Roches'** book chapter "A Promise Partially Fulfilled: Maritime Cooperation", about challenges and opportunities in devising a collective defense strategy for GCC states, was published in the [e-book](#) "The Dilemma of Security & Defense in the Gulf Region" (Gulf International Forum). Another book chapter, "The Democratization of Air Power: An Industrial-Age Monopoly Weakens" was also published this month in "The Future of Airpower" by SEGMA ME (United Arab Emirates).

28 October: **Professor Michael Sharnoff** was hosted as a guest lecturer at the Cosmos Club, Washington, D.C., presenting on "The Rise of the Non-Arab States in the Middle East".

1 November: **Professor Michael Sharnoff** delivered a [paper](#), "Gamal Abdel Nasser's Support of the Palestinian Cause: A Critical Assessment", at the Association for the Study of the Middle East and Africa's annual conference in Washington, D.C.

6 November: **Professor Michael Sharnoff** published an [article](#), "How Big Is Russia's Win in Syria?", for RussiaMatters.org, an analytical portal hosted by Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center for International Affairs.



6 November: **Professor David Des Roches** lectured on structural issues in U.S.-Middle East security policy at the George Washington University's Middle East Policy Forum. Also on 6 November, Professor Des Roches [spoke](#) on the panel "U.S.-Arab Defense Cooperation Dynamics", at the National Council on US Arab Relations Defense 28th Annual Arab-U.S. Policymakers Conference.

6-7 November: **Professor Gawdat Bahgat** spoke on missile proliferation at a weapons of mass destruction conference, "Security and WMD Training Workshop" in Amman, Jordan sponsored by the Arab Institute for Security Studies.

November 9: **Professor Ali Jalali** delivered a keynote speech at the Institute for Cultural Diplomacy Annual Conference in Berlin, Germany. The conference centered on the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, with Professor Jalali lecturing on its consequences for the Middle East and Central and South Asia.



BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS, ENHANCING SECURITY

10 November: **Professors Richard Russell and Gawdat Bahgat** conducted two roundtable discussions in Israel, one in Jerusalem in conjunction with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the other in Tel Aviv at the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS). The roundtables focused on U.S.-Israel bilateral relations and regional disputes in Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, and the rest of the Middle East.

13 November: **Professor David Des Roches** gave a presentation on Gulf Security to the British Army's Scotland headquarters at Napier University (Edinburgh, Scotland). On 15 November, he delivered presentation on U.S. interests in the Gulf at Sciences Po in Paris, France.

Professor Des Roches' November media appearances include: discussing escalating U.S.-Iran tensions with [Sky News Arabia](#) (17 November), and possible U.S. sanctions against Egypt for procurement of Russian defense articles (with [Al Jazeera](#), 18 November and [Voice of America](#)'s "Africa News Tonight", 19 November).

13 November: **Professor Hassan Abbas** delivered a talk at Harvard University, hosted by the Harvard Weatherhead Centre's Shiism & Global Affairs, on the subject of "Iraq and Geopolitics of Protest". While in Boston, Professor Abbas also recorded a podcast for the Harvard Divinity School on the escalating protests in Iraq protests and role of religious leadership.

13 November: **Professor Ali Jalali** was a guest speaker at the Westminster Institute in McLean, Va, [discussing](#) "Prospects for Peace in Afghanistan".

18 November: **Professor Hassan Abbas** delivered a VTC lecture, "The Extremism Challenge", as part of a specialized program for senior commanders from across the Baltic Sea region enrolled at the Baltic Defense College in Estonia.

19 November: **Professor Hassan Abbas** delivered a VTC presentation on models for countering and preventing violent extremism in South Asia to a group of 30 Afghan and Pakistani youth leaders participating in #PeaceLab, an initiative organized by the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad as part of the U.S. effort to engage Afghan and Pakistani youth.

22-24 November: **NESA Director LTG (Ret.) Wolff** and **Academic Dean Dr. Kangas** participated in the IISS Manama Dialogue in Manama, Bahrain.



Professor Jalali



Dr. Abbas



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