

# NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

Monthly Report—January 2021

## NESA Region Trends – FOCUS ON THE GULF

- **Perceptions among the GCC states is that internal disputes are suspended, not ended.** Disputing parties remain vigilant to see if another state begins to “backslide” or any other action that could justify a resumption of the intra-GCC rupture.
- **Saudi Arabia** seeks to build momentum towards their perspective that the cessation of offensive support in Yemen contributes to Saudi security, though this perspective has not gained ground among other international actors. Furthermore, the release of the UN panel of experts report on Yemen highlights, among many things, that the Houthis have been stealing humanitarian aid. This confirmation overshadowed criticism of Saudi and Emirati engagement in Yemen.
- **The revocation of Houthi sanctions is being poorly received in the region.** Argued as a mechanism to show goodwill, it has done little to ease regional worries and reinforces the perspective that Yemen is deeply, deeply broken.
- **The region, particularly GCC states, are seeking any and all signals regarding the prospect of new negotiations with Iran ala a new nuclear deal.** Speculation is rampant with many questions surrounding what terms would such a deal be based upon? Will regional powers have a voice in negotiations? Will Iran’s missile program be a subject of such negotiations?
- **President Biden confirmed that the U.S. Embassy in Israel will remain in Jerusalem.** Israel welcomed this announcement and Arab media basically did not cover it.

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Engagement • Education • Outreach

# NESA Programs & Events

## Chatham House Workshop

In a virtual event lead by **Dr. Gawdat**, The NESA Center met with European experts from **Chatham House** and other **European think-tanks** to discuss the future of US-Iran relations under the Biden Administration. NESA director and experts provided the U.S. perspective, while the European experts explained how Iranian leaders read the political map in Washington. The discussion also addressed the role major European powers (France, Germany, and the United Kingdom) are likely to play to close the broad gap between Washington and Tehran and “revive” the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action/nuclear deal. <https://nesa-center.org/european-think-tanks-discuss-the-future-of-us-iran-relations-under-the-biden-administration/>

## Chatham House Workshop

January 29, 2021



*Speakers at the Chatham House Workshop from top left: Dr. Sanam Vakil, LTG (Ret.) Terry Wolff, Bijan Khajepour, Dr. Mike Bell, and Roxane Farmanfarmaian.*

Visit [www.NESA-Center.org](http://www.NESA-Center.org) for additional information.

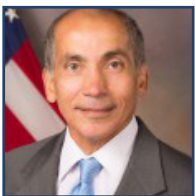
# NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

## Dr. Hassan Abbas



**January 28, 2021** – Delivered a lecture for National Defense University's (NDU) Reserve Component National Security Course (RCNSC) series focusing on "Iran, Geopolitics, and Sectarianism." The session had 125 participants.

## Dr. Gawdat Bahgat



**January 22, 2021** – Along with David Des Roches, spoke to about 20 graduates at Al-Khawayan University (Morocco). The goal was to provide students the U.S. perspective on counter-terrorism and investment in human capital, gender equality, and women empowerment.

**January 24, 2021** – Spoke at an academic conference on Economic and Political Stability in West Asia and the Middle East. The conference was organized by a university in New Delhi, India with about 40 attendees. An edited volume with the papers and presentations will be published.

## David Des Roches



**January 27, 2021** – Participated in a live-panel discussion for the Gulf International Forum. Other speakers included: Ambassador Ron Neumann, Ambassador Barbara Bodine, Abdulghani Al-Iryani, and Mohammed Zaher Sahloul. The focus was on The Way Forward for America's Foreign Policy in Yemen. Professor David Des Roches remarks spoke of the difficulty of developing policy which can punish the bad while not harming the good, of the inherent problems of sanction based policies, and the regional views of the Yemen conflict. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IQRFGK9WTC8>

**January 29, 2021** – Featured specialist on a program for the National Council on US-Arab Relations. Specialists

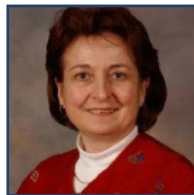
explored the Biden Presidency, the GCC, and Iran. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FUBEOU0ekjE&t=2740s>

## Ali Ahmad Jalali



**January 28, 2021** – Interviewed by researchers from the Stimson Center and USIP (United States Institute of Peace) for a report on Afghanistan-Pakistan relations.

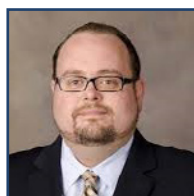
## Anne Moisan



**January 28, 2021** – Professor Moisan along with faculty from the William J. Perry Center (WJPC) – Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies and the George C. Marshall Center (GCMC) – European Center for Security Studies brought a North African, Latin American, and European group of Alumni together for an on-line session to discuss Transnational Challenges. Presentations were provided by Professor Celina Realuyo and Dr. Benjamin Nickels. Followed by a series of moderated open discussions.

**January 28, 2021** – Conducted the first-ever Women, Peace, and Security add-on workshop with women attending the Executive Seminar 02-21. Effort was to build and mentor a cadre of senior women security experts from the NESA region.

## Jeffrey S. Payne



**January 2021** – Published the paper, "Green Waters: Strategic Opportunity in the Indian Ocean Region" for INSSSL (The Institute of National Security Studies Sri Lanka) Defence Review 2020 Volume III. <http://www.insssl.lk/index.php?id=54>



# NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

## Michael Sharnoff



**January 26, 2021** – Published an argument for Foreign Policy (FP) titled “Don’t Pursue Saudi-Israeli Peace at Jordan’s Expense.” <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/01/26/dont-pursue-saudi-israeli-peace-at-jordans-expense/>

## NESA Digital Series

### Fahad Malaikah

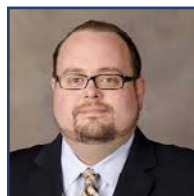


**January 22, 2021** – In the eleventh edition of the NESA Alumni Virtual Interview Series, Mr. Fahad Malaikah hosts Mr. Asanga Abeyagoonasekera for a discussion of his new book, “Conundrum of an Island: Sri Lanka’s Geopolitical

Challenges.” Mr. Abeyagoonasekera sheds light on what inspired him to write the book. He reviews the various topics covered within including: Sri Lanka’s relations with its neighbors in South Asia and China, how the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted Sri Lanka’s views on geostrategic competition, and what he would like to see from the new Biden presidency in its policies towards Sri Lanka and the wider Indian Ocean Region (IOR). <https://nesa-center.org/sri-lankas-geopolitical-challenges-with-abeyagoonasekera/>



### Jeffrey S. Payne



**January 14, 2021** – In the first iteration of the IOR Digital Series in 2021, Dr. Thomas Lynch of the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS) at National Defense University (NDU) joins NESA’s Jeffrey Payne to discuss his views on

Great Power Competition, U.S.-India bilateral relations, and the trajectory of India as an actor of influence within South Asia, the Indian Ocean Region, and the Indo-Pacific. <https://nesa-center.org/indias-strategic-rise-south-asias-choices-and-great-power-competition-with-dr-thomas-lynch/>





# NESA Alumni Contributions

Ennaji, Moha. 2021. "Us Confirms Full Sovereignty Of Morocco Over The Sahara in Exchange for Recognizing Israel", for NESA Center. <https://nesa-center.org/us-confirms-full-sovereignty-of-morocco-over-the-sahara-in-exchange-for-recognizing-israel/>

Bahri, Younes. 2021. "Algeria at the Center Of Regional Transformations: Prospects for Redeployment", for NESA Center. <https://nesa-center.org/algeria-at-the-center-of-regional-transformations-prospects-for-redeployment/>

Chikhaoui, Arslan. 2021. "40 Years Later: The Role of Algerian Diplomacy During the Iran Hostage Crisis", for NESA Center. <https://nesa-center.org/40-years-later-the-role-of-algerian-diplomacy-during-the-iran-hostage-crisis/>

# NESA Alumni Engagement

**Total NESA Alumni: 10,637**

**Total Countries: 134**

**Total Alumni Engaged in FY20: 635**

**Total Alumni Engaged thus far in FY21: 120**

Visit the new NESA Alumni Interactive Map:  
<https://nesa-center.org/alumni-map/>



# NESA Upcoming Events

## **NESA Executive Seminar**

February 1–11, 2021  
Washington, DC

## **NESA Washington Seminar**

February 11, 2021  
Washington, DC

## **NESA Senior Executive Seminar**

March 29, 2021–April 2, 2021  
Washington, DC

## **NESA Washington Embassy Orientation**

April 8, 2021  
Washington, DC

**Near East South Asia (NESA)  
Center for Strategic Studies**

Fort Lesley J. McNair  
National Defense University  
Abraham Lincoln Hall  
300 5th Ave SW  
Washington, DC 20319-5066

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

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 @TheNESACenter

 Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies

 NESA-Communications@ndu.edu