



NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

# NESA Update

September 2021 – October 2021

## NESA Region Trends – CYBER

- Reports of a successful test of a Chinese hypersonic missile have been received with mixed enthusiasm in the MENA region. Most regional states do not find it relevant other than as an indication of how major powers are engaged in various forms of technological competition. Yet, in Gulf security circles, the successful test received more fanfare, both as a potential regional risk and as a potential redefinition of how major actors operate in the region.
- Given investments by major powers in Artificial Intelligence and the promised enhanced capabilities that will result - from data management to predictive modeling - regional powers in the NESA AOR are beginning to take notice. The preference for security spending still remains in traditional tools and platforms, but the security dimensions of advanced computing are becoming a target for states with the financial means to obtain.
- Gulf powers remain keenly interested in autonomous systems and are engaging with major producers of such systems to gain greater familiarity. This includes purchasing autonomous systems and engaging in exercises with partner states that utilize autonomous systems. For example, Gulf partners are keen to cooperate with the U.S. Navy's Task Force 59 on unmanned maritime vehicles. Task Force 59, based in Bahrain, was stood up in September.
- COP26 has highlighted South Asia's increased interest in developing, acquiring, and deploying technologies intended to mitigate the impacts of climate change. Given the estimations of how climate will impact the region, South Asian regional states, particularly littoral states, increasingly view climate as a priority security risk. *The COP26 event is a global United*

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Engagement • Education • Outreach

# NESA Region Trends

*Nations summit about climate change and how countries are planning to tackle it. COP stands for Conference of the Parties, and the summit will be attended by the countries that signed the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) – a treaty that came into force in 1994.*

- The challenge of aerial drones throughout the Gulf and Levant persists. Regional experts have highlighted ongoing tensions near Syria over Turkish drones, the ongoing development of Iran's aerial drone production (and potential distribution to affiliated regional groups), and efforts to purchase aerial drones by various Gulf Kingdoms, namely the UAE, KSA, and Qatar.
- Integrated systems are further progressing in specific MENA region urban environments, with Dubai and Abu Dhabi leading the way. These 'smart cities' signify the depth of trade with major technological producers with specific MENA states, including China who has become the largest international advocate for 'smart city' systems.

# NESA Programs & Events

## **MENA Regional Waters: Red Sea/Arabian Sea Smuggling Conundrum Workshop**

The NESA Center hosted a two-day workshop on security challenges in the waters of the Middle East with a specific emphasis on the Red Sea and Arabian Sea. NESA was assisted in this effort with support from the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS). Esteemed representatives from regional countries and professionals in the maritime community gave lectures and contributed to valuable discussion about maritime security. Issues discussed included information sharing, countering maritime criminality, maritime domain awareness, and the necessity of enhancing trust among regional states. NESA Academic Dean, Dr. Roger Kangas, kicked off the workshop with welcome remarks and NESA Director, LTG (ret.) Terry Wolff provided final remarks and farewell thanks. Dr. Catherine Kelly of the Africa Center for Strategic Studies moderated a session focusing on African viewpoints on the Red and Arabian Seas. The event was led by NESA's Mr. Jeffrey Payne. <https://nesa-center.org/mena-regional-waters-red-sea-arabian-sea-smuggling-conundrum-workshop/>

## **MENA Regional Waters: Red Sea/Arabian Sea Smuggling Conundrum Workshop**

14–15 September 2021



*Speakers from top left: Mr. Jeffrey Payne (NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Roger Kangas (Academic Dean, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Gulbin Sultana (Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses), Dr. Joshua Tallis (CNA), Dr. Catherine Kelly (Africa Center for Strategic Studies), Mr. Abdul Mohammed (Chief of Staff and Senior Political Advisor, African Union High Level Implementation Panel for Sudan, and South Sudan), Mr. Timothy Walker (Maritime Project Leader and Senior Researcher at Institute for Security Studies), Mr. Jay Benson (Stable Seas), Mr. Martin Cauchi Inglott (Head of Project, CRIMARIO II), Dr. Ian Ralby (I.R. Consilium), Mr. Blake Herzinger (Pacific Forum), VADM Pradeep Chauhan (National Maritime Foundation), LTG (ret) Terry Wolff (Director, NESA Center for Strategic Studies)*

# NESA Programs & Events

## Iraq Capstone Visit

On 13–17 September 2021, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies hosted the Iraq Capstone Visit to National Defense University (NDU) in Washington DC for an in-person seminar that consisted of ten sessions throughout five days.

The seminar started off with opening remarks from NESA Center Director LTG Terry Wolff, U.S. Army (Ret.), and NESA Center Professor Daniel Curfiss, who introduced the seminar and moderated the event. Sessions included presentations from NESA leadership and faculty, including Director LTG Terry Wolff, U.S. Army (Ret.), Dean Dr. Roger Kangas, Dr. Michael Bell, Dr. Gawdat Bahgat, and Professor Richard Wiersma. Topics included the United States government, national security strategy, national security council, the long war in Iraq and Afghanistan, regional situations and perspectives, violent extremism, policy-/decision-making in the U.S., professional military education, and the role of education and training. <https://nesa-center.org/iraq-capstone-visit>



*NESA Professor Daniel Curfiss*

# NESA Programs & Events

## Iraq's National Defense College Visit to NDU

On 20–24 September 2021, the NESA Center hosted a delegation from Iraq's National Defense College (INDC). The first day started with opening remarks from NESA Center Dean Dr. Roger Kangas and a seminar introduction from NESA Center Professor Daniel Curfiss, who also moderated the seminar series. Over the course of the five-day seminar, members of the NESA Center's leadership, faculty, and several guest speakers delivered remarks on topics including countering violent extremism, strategic leadership, introduction to the U.S. government, policy decision making, professional military education, a diplomat's perspective, Afghanistan, asymmetrical warfare, and regional concerns. NESA Center leadership and faculty speakers included Director LTG Terry Wolff, U.S. Army (Ret.), Professor Daniel Curfiss, Professor Richard Wiersema, Dr. Michael Bell, Professor Ali Jalali, Professor David Des Roches, and Dr. Gawdat Bahgat. Members of the Iraqi delegation also had the chance to engage with NESA faculty members and guest speakers in dialogue, asking hard-hitting questions of speakers and providing an Iraqi perspective on the multitude of issues discussed throughout the week. <https://nesa-center.org/iraqs-national-defense-college-visit>

### Iraq's National Defense College Visit

20–24 September 2021



*INDC Group Photo*



# NESA Programs & Events

## Senior Executive Seminar

The NESA Center conducted a weeklong Senior Executive Seminar on the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and the strategic implications for the NESA region. Dr. Gawdat Bahgat, Dr. Hassan Abbas, and Dr. Richard Russell moderated discussions with senior WMD experts from leading think tanks and NGOs, current and former U.S. government officials, and UN officers to explore the implications of proliferation developments on regional stability and security. The seminar consisted of ten sessions dedicated to topics including, but not limited to, missile proliferation, biological weapons, chemical weapons, and the intersection of gender issues and WMD. <https://nesa-center.org/senior-executive-seminar-nuclear-weapons-proliferation-strategic-implications-for-the-nesa-region>

### Senior Executive Seminar “Nuclear Weapons Proliferation: Strategic Implications for the Nesa Region” 20–24 September 2021



Speakers from top left: Dr. Gawdat Bahgat (Course Director, Professor, NESA Center), Dr. Roger Kangas (Academic Dean, NESA Center), LTG Terry A. Wolff, USA (Ret.) (Director, NESA Center), Phillip Dolliff (Deputy Assistant Secretary for Non-Proliferation Programs, Bureau of International Security and Non-Proliferation, U.S. Department of State), Dr. Hassan Abbas (Professor, NESA Center), Dr. Jessica Varnum (Deputy Director, Middlebury Institute of International Studies), Mr. George Perkovich (Ken Olivier and Angela Nomellini Chair Vice President for Studies, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), Ms. Jane Nakano (Senior Fellow, Center for Strategic & International Studies), Ms. Kelsey Davenport (Director for Nonproliferation Policy Arms Control Association), Dr. Jaime Yassif (Senior Fellow, Global Biological Policy and Programs, Nuclear Threat Initiative), Mr. Christopher King (Deputy Chief and Senior Political Affairs Officer, United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs), Dr. Jeffrey Lewis (Director of EANP, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies), Dr. Richard Russell (Professor, NESA Center), Dr. Renata Hessmann Dalaqua (Program Lead, Gender and Disarmament, United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research)

# NESA Programs & Events

## **NESA-IISS Southern Asia Security Conference**

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From 24–26 September 2021, Dean Dr. Roger Kangas along with Professor Dr. Hassan Abbas and Professor John Gill participated in the restart of the annual NESA-IISS Southern Asia Security Conference in Bahrain. This was the 14th iteration of the conference after a hiatus in 2020 because of the health crisis. As in the past, this off-the-record track 1.5 event brought together a substantial number of senior serving/former military and civilian officials, sitting legislators and subject matter experts from India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan, as well as academics and officials from the UK and the U.S. No officials from Afghanistan participated this year, but we were able to draw on the insights of two influential non-Taliban political figures virtually; we also heard from a former Afghan parliamentarian and Doha negotiator who was present in person. Topics included the situation in Afghanistan, Afghan-Pakistan relations, India-Pakistan tensions, the India-China rivalry, the impact of the pandemic, and countering extremism/terrorism in the wake of the Taliban takeover in Afghanistan. <https://nesa-center.org/annual-nesa-iiss-southern-asia-security-conference/>

## **NESA-IISS Southern Asia Security Conference**

24–26 September 2021



*Speakers from left: Professor John Gill, Professor Dr. Hassan Abbas, Dean Dr. Roger Kangas*

# NESA Programs & Events

## **PMR Design for the Saudi Arabian National Defense University**

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NESA Center Professors Dr. Michael Bell and Charles Marks delivered the preliminary design to transform the Saudi Armed Forces Command and Staff College into the Saudi Arabian National Defense University. The NESA team presented the details of the design to our partners at the Command and Staff College and the Saudi Ministry of Defense's Transformation Management Office. The NESA team, which includes 19 NESA civilian and military staff and faculty, completed the preliminary design ahead of schedule and under budget.

Pictured is the conference room in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, during the distributed program management review, including NESA faculty (from right to left) Matt Holbert (NESA Deputy Program Manager), Charles Marks (Associate Dean for Strategic Planning), and Dr. Wayne Clark (Associate Dean for Assessments). To Professor Marks's right are Dr. Abdullah al-Mojel from Ministry of Defense Transformation Management Office, Brigadier Hassan al-Malki, Director of the Strategic Implementation Office (SIO), and Brigadier Muteb al-Rasheedi, Operations Officer for the SIO. <https://nesa-center.org/pmr-design-for-the-saudi-arabian-national-defense-university/>

## **PMR Design for the Saudi Arabian National Defense University**

30 September 2021





# NESA Programs & Events

## Maritime Security Coordination and Countertrafficking Operations Issues

On 20 October 2021, the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) conducted the Maritime Security Coordination and Countertrafficking Operations Issues virtual workshop in partnership with U.S. Africa Command, the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies (WJPC), the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies (GCMC), and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed). This was the fourth iteration of the “NESA-AFRICOM Transnational Threats” series of virtual workshops held throughout 2021. This “pilot” hybrid series is a spin-off of annual in-person/in-region workshops with NESA, AFRICOM, WJPC, and IEMed. The online workshops were expanded to include GCMC.

Professor Anne Moisan, with support from Mr. Fahad Malaikah, conducted/moderated the workshop. AFRICOM’s Maritime, Drug Enforcement Administration, and Homeland Security experts, CDR Kevin Duffy, Mr. Kyle Burns, and Mr. Daniel Baldwin, provided presentations, which were followed by a robust open discussion. Twenty-seven participants from 15 countries were in attendance. <https://nesa-center.org/maritime-security-coordination-and-countertrafficking-operations-issues>



*Speakers from top left: Professor Anne Moisan, CDR Kevin Duffy, Mr. Kyle Burns, Mr. Daniel Baldwin*

# NESA Programs & Events

## Washington Embassy Orientation Seminar 01-22

The NESA Center conducted the Washington Embassy Orientation, attended by diplomats and defense attachés from over nineteen countries. This week-long orientation featured a range of speakers, including diplomats, national security professionals, academics, business leaders, and journalists. As newly arrived foreign government representatives in Washington, participants were advised on how to navigate the Washington bureaucracy and cultivate productive relationships that will allow them to advance their country's interests. <https://nesa-center.org/washington-embassy-orientation-seminar-01-22>

### Washington Embassy Orientation “Working in Washington” 18–22 October 2021



*Speakers from top left: Dr. Michael Sharnoff (Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), LTG Terry Wolff, USA (Ret.)(Director, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Michael Bell (Provost, National Defense University of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies; former Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and Senior Director for Middle East Affairs on the National Security Council), Ambassador Phillip Carter III (President, Mead Hill Group LLC), The Honorable Dov Zakheim (Senior Advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies; Senior Fellow at the CNA Corporation), The Honorable Charles Boustany, Jr., M.D. (Former Congressman (Republican, Louisiana's 3rd District [2013-2017], Louisiana's 7th District [2005-2013]); President, Association of Former Members of Congress), Brianne Todd (Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. James McGann (Senior Lecturer of International Studies at the Lauder Institute, Director of the Think Tanks and Civil Societies Program, and Senior Fellow at the Fels Institute of Government at the University of Pennsylvania), Mr. Jean AbiNader (Principal and Founder, AbiNader Advisory Services), Mr. Ali Al-Arabiyyat (Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of Jordan), Amy Mackinnon (National Security and Intelligence Reporter, Foreign Policy), Laura Rozen (Foreign Policy Journalist; Author of the Diplomatic Newsletter)*

# NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

## Dr. Hassan Abbas



**13 September 2021** – Published an opinion piece to Acton Institute’s Power-blog titled “With the ‘new Taliban’ now in power, can we expect anything different?” <https://blog.acton.org/archives/122441-with-the-new-taliban-now-in-power-can-we-expect-anything-different.html>

**24 September 2021** – Delivered a talk for the Asian American Forum (AAF) in Washington DC. Discussed politics and security in the Middle East and how the return of the Taliban to Kabul will impact these dynamics. The event was virtually attended by about 30 participants, including diplomats, World Bank/IMF officials, and local journalists. <https://aaforumdc.org>

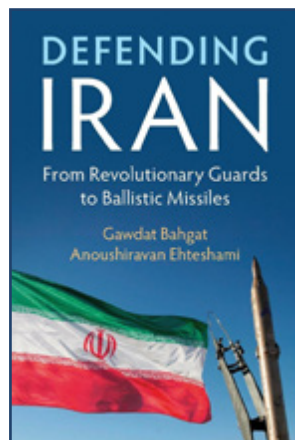
## Dr. Gawdat Bahgat



**12 September 2021** – Interviewed for an article titled “The Unknowns of 9/11” for Hamodia– The Daily Newspaper for Torah Jewry. <https://hamodia.com/prime/the-unknowns-of-9-11>

**September 2021** – Coauthored a book with Anoush Ehteshami from Durham University titled “Defending Iran From Revolutionary Guards to Ballistic Missiles.” The book is an authoritative analysis of Iran’s defense doctrine and security policies set within the context of security and political relations in the Middle East and published by Cambridge University Press.

**PDF Excerpt:** [https://assets.cambridge.org/97811084/76782/excerpt/9781108476782\\_excerpt.pdf](https://assets.cambridge.org/97811084/76782/excerpt/9781108476782_excerpt.pdf) **Publisher Site:** <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/defending-iran/0F09FBA9D2F-022CB6B77660B548B3D5A>



## David Des Roches



**21 September 2021** – Contributed a chapter on American attitudes towards Britain for the King’s College London School of Security Studies report titled “Global Britain: Views From Abroad.” <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/research-papers/global-britain-views-from-abroad>

**29 September 2021** – Quoted in an article on the evolution of modern terrorism titled “The Evolution of Terror Groups Since 9/11: From Tech to Politics” for Breaking Defense. <https://breakingdefense.com/2021/09/the-evolution-of-terror-groups-since-9-11-from-tech-to-politics/?fbclid=IwAR1MVKTiOq6TlgbDM9cEoR7IDfNUkfyPB-jd7fiWUBdl2DUNCWBqgEXp7wj0>

**11 October 2021** – Gave the first post-COVID public lecture at the King Faisal Center for Research and Islamic Studies (KFCRIS) in Riyadh on Great Power Competition. Prince Turki al Faisal, the former head of Saudi intelligence and the designated royal family member who speaks to English language media, was in attendance. There were about 60 people present, including quite a few members of the government. **Video:** <https://youtu.be/n8ifOBYjOsc>



*Photo of Prince Turki al Faisal and Professor Des Roches*

# NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

## Ali Ahmad Jalali

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**23 September 2021** – Served as a panelist at a webinar titled “Iran Facing Outward: Changing Politics, Military Doctrine, and Border Issues” by the Middle East Institute (MEI). MEI featured contributors to The Middle

East Journal’s 2021 Summer Issue. The pieces discussed included a background briefing on Afghan-Iranian geopolitical relations and an article on the foreign policy drivers of populism in Iran. <https://www.mei.edu/events/iran-facing-outward-changing-politics-military-doctrine-and-border-issues>

**13 October 2021** – Served as a discussant on an online presentation by the former National Security Advisor Ambassador John Bolton on the future of the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan. The meeting was organized by the Afghan Diaspora Unity Council (ADUC) with participants from North America, Europe, and Australia. [https://youtu.be/FKPt3uzl\\_qk](https://youtu.be/FKPt3uzl_qk)

## Jeffrey S. Payne

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**15 September 2021** – Joined Veerle Nouwens (Senior Research Fellow for International Security Studies) with the Royal United Services Institute (RUSI) for a podcast titled “Episode 24: U.S. Perspectives on Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean Region,” where they explore why the Indian Ocean region’s maritime security is of importance to the U.S. Indo-Pacific strategy, what activities are already in place, and what could lie ahead. They also touch on Afghanistan and how this impacts U.S. strategy. <https://rusi.org/podcasts/bridging-the-oceans/episode-24-us-perspectives-maritime-security-indian-ocean-region>

**15 September 2021** – Interviewed by Dr. Pramod Jaiswal (Strategic Affairs Editor) with Khabarhub on the issues related to Indo-Pacific, Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), and Maritime Security. The interview was titled

“United States has some competition with other maritime actors as they don’t share the same methodology: Prof. Jeffrey.” **Read more and watch the video here:** <https://english.khabarhub.com/2021/15/209279/>

## Dr. Michael Sharnoff

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Joined the Yaschik/Arnold Jewish Studies Program Advisory Board at the College of Charleston. The Advisory Board promotes the interests of the Jewish Studies Program and serves as a bridge to the larger community of Charleston, South Carolina, and beyond. <https://jewish.cofc.edu/about/index.php>



# NESA Alumni Activities & Contributions

23 September – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed for the *Observer Research Foundation*: [“Rajapaksa’s dysfunctional regime in Sri Lanka and its impact on South Asia.”](#)

04 October – **Zine Labidine Ghebouli (Algeria)** authored a policy analysis for the *Middle East Institute*: [“Algeria’s foreign policy: Between hope and reality.”](#)

19 October – **Uttam Kumar Sinha (India)** co-authored an Op-Ed in the *Hindustan Times*: [“Climate Crisis: Why India must focus on adaptation.”](#)

The *Arab Content Impact Factory* (ARCIF) named **Eman Ragab (Egypt)** as one of the “10 most influential Arab authors in the field of political science” out of 2600+ authors in its 2020–21 report.

**Total NESA Alumni: 11,536**

**Total Countries: 135**

**Total Alumni Engaged in FY21: 1,017**



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

# NESA Upcoming Events

**SES 01-22** | 15–19 November 2021 | Virtual

**Qatar - U.S. Middle East Policy Seminar** | 8–10 November 2021 | Virtual

**Caspian Region Security Discussion** | 16–17 November 2021 | Virtual

**Manama Dialogue** | 17–19 November 211 | Manama, BAH/Hybrid

**IISS-NESA India-Pakistan Risk Management** | 8 December 2021 | London

**ES 01-22** | 6–17 December 2021 | Virtual

**SANDU Faculty Development Workshop** | 1–5 November 2021 | Washington DC

**SANDU Faculty Development Workshop** | 15–19 November 2021 | Washington DC

**SANDU Faculty Development Workshop** | 6–17 December 2021 | Washington DC, Carlisle, Quantico, & Norfolk



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