



NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

NESA Update

October 2021 – December 2021

NESA Region Trends – GULF

- **U.S. Withdrawal.** Gulf partners continue to fear American withdrawal from the Gulf. The withdrawal from Afghanistan is seen as a sign of extreme weakness. Gulf partners have been concerned about a U.S. withdrawal from the region since the “pivot” was first announced, and see ANY decrease in troop strength as a sign of impending withdrawal. Regional powers have sought to mend fences. The UAE Crown Prince paid a historic visit to Turkey (first in a decade), his brother, UAE National Security Adviser, visited Iran in early December. Some European countries have sought to capitalize on perceptions of withdrawal. The French President visited the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, UAE, and will go to Qatar), huge military sales were made during this visit.
- **Iran Negotiations.** Gulf partners are concerned that the U.S. will sacrifice their security interests to the Iranians, either through ignorance of the threat or through design. Gulf partners still resent the Obama Administration’s lack of military response to repeated Iranian provocations.
- **Saudi Arabia Leadership Continued Isolation.** The Saudis are concerned about the continuing hostility to the Royal Family in the wake of the Khashoggi murder and the uncertainty of continued supply of critical weapons.
- **Yemen War.** This continues with little prospect for resolution. It’s seen as a drain on on allied/government-sided forces - namely Yemen Government forces, KSA forces, and UAE.
- **COVID.** The recovery from COVID has been irregular. Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE are relatively

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Engagement • Education • Outreach

NESA Region Trends

recovered; Kuwait is still under restrictions and relatively locked down; Oman is somewhere in the middle with a serious problem with economic damage to tourism, which had been seen as a vital money-spinner.

- **Given Oman's Economic Problems, Rich Gulf Neighbors are Helping.** The Sultan of Oman went to Qatar and signed economic deals. In early December, the Saudi Crown Prince visited the Sultanate. Oman is one of six members of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Usually, rich members like Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, or UAE support less wealthy members like Oman or Bahrain, similar to families helping each other.

NESA Programs & Events

Raytheon Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces Executive Leadership Program

On 17–29 October 2021, The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA Center) held a Raytheon Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces Executive Leadership Program in Washington DC and Boston, Massachusetts. Major General Abdullah al Qahtani (head of the Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces Institute) led participants through site visits, including the Raytheon manufacturing facility in Andover, Massachusetts where they inspected the Patriot air defense system components. The participants also held discussions on contemporary security concerns with world-class policy experts such as Dean Roger Kangas of the NESA Center and representatives of various Washington DC security think tanks.

This program is an example of the long-running (over six years) partnership between the NESA Center, America’s defense industry, and key security partners in the Middle East. The program planning lead was Mr. Omar Sedky, and the academic lead was Professor David Des Roches. <https://nesa-center.org/raytheon-royal-saudi-air-defense-forces-executive-leadership-program>

Raytheon Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces Executive Leadership Program

17–29 October 2021



NESA Center Professor David Des Roches speaking during the Raytheon Royal Saudi Air Defense Forces Executive Leadership Program.

NESA Programs & Events

International Military Officers' Forum

From 1–5 November 2021, the NESA Center hosted foreign military officers assigned to U.S. Central Command in Tampa in Washington D.C. for an International Military Officers' Forum titled "World Power Competition and Middle East Turmoil." NESA Center experts, including Professor Dr. Richard Russell, Deputy Director COL (Ret.) David Lamm, Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas, and Professor Brianne Todd, as well as several external experts, were invited to discuss a wide variety of issues with considerable attention to global and regional power competition. <https://nesa-center.org/international-military-officers-forum>



Speakers from top left: COL (Ret.) David Lamm (Deputy Director, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Daniel Byman (Professor, Edmund Walsh School of Foreign Service Georgetown University), Dr. James Lindsay (Senior Vice President, Director of Studies and Maurice R. Greenberg Chair, Council on Foreign Relations), Dr. Jorge Benitez (Assistant Professor of International Relations Command and Staff College, U.S. Marine Corps University Non-resident Senior Fellow, Atlantic Council), Dr. Nora Bensahel (Visiting Professor of Strategic Studies and Senior Fellow of the Merrill Center for Strategic Studies, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies), Dr. Roger Kangas (Academic Dean, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Steven Cook (Eni Enrico Mattei Senior Fellow, for Middle East and Africa Studies and Director of the International Affairs Fellowship for Tenured International Relations Scholars Council on Foreign Relations), LTG (RET.) David Barno (Senior Fellow, Philip Merrill Center for Strategic Studies, Visiting Professor of Strategic Studies, Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies), Mr. Abraham Denmark (Vice President of Programs and Director of Studies; Senior Advisor to the Asia Program; Senior Fellow in the Kissinger Institute on China and the United States, Wilson Center), Mr. Elbridge Colby (Co-Founder and Principal, The Marathon Initiative), Mr. Michael Singh (Lane-Swig Senior Fellow, Managing Director, The Washington Institute), Ms. Brianne Todd (Assistant Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Richard Russell (Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), The Honorable Dov Zakheim (Senior Fellow, CAN, Former Comptroller, U.S. Department of Defense)

NESA Programs & Events

Qatari Diplomatic Institute Virtual Seminar

From 8–10 November 2021, Dr. Gawdat Bahgat led the Qatari Diplomatic Institute Virtual Seminar to help foster a shared understanding of the evolving strategic landscape in the Middle East and promote mutual cooperation. The seminar was attended by over 100 officials from the Qatari Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Sessions were led by NESA Director LTG Terry Wolff, USA (Ret.) and faculty, who shared their perspectives and analysis on the opportunities and challenges facing the Biden Administration in the foreign policy realm. Topics covered included war on terrorism, great power competition, the U.S. military's presence in the Middle East, the Arab-Israeli conflict, Afghanistan, drones, and cybersecurity. <https://nesa-center.org/qatari-diplomatic-institute-virtual-seminar>



Speakers from top left: Dr. Gawdat Bahgat (Course Director, Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Professor David Des Roches (NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Minister Ali Jalali (Distinguished Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Roger Kangas (Academic Dean, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Richard Russell (Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), Dr. Michael Sharnoff (Professor, NESA Center for Strategic Studies), LTG Terry Wolff, USA (Ret.) (Director, NESA Center for Strategic Studies)

NESA Programs & Events

Caspian Security Conference (co-sponsored with the Caspian Policy Center)

16–17 November 2021, The Washington DC-based Caspian Policy Center and the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA Center) organized a Caspian Security Conference entitled, “What Comes Next for the Caspian Region Following the U.S. and Other NATO Forces’ Withdrawal and the Resurgence of the Taliban in Afghanistan.” The two-day virtual conference explored regional reactions to the recent political and security events in Afghanistan. It brought together experts from Afghanistan, Central Asia, the South Caucasus, India, Pakistan, Turkey, the United States, and several European countries. In both closed and public sessions, the participants discussed specific challenges in the region – from stopping the spread of extremist ideas to ways in which economic development can still take place, despite the Taliban’s takeover of Afghanistan. Of specific interest were the participants’ calls to have the U.S. remain engaged in the region to help Caspian states manage the current security challenges. Academic Dean Roger Kangas, Professors Ali Jalali, Hassan Abbas, Brianne Todd, and Jack Gill represented the NESA Center and served as speakers and session moderators. In addition, a number of the participants were NESA Center program alumni, especially those from the Central Asia Working Group of the NESA Strategic Studies Network. <http://caspiansecurity.org> Panel 1 Video: <https://youtu.be/C77sfbBrcqY> Panel 2 Video: <https://youtu.be/IIJkUDBmlkQ>



NESA Programs & Events

Community Oriented Policing & Countering Violent Extremism

From 14–18 November 2021, the NESA Center for Strategic Studies hosted a hybrid seminar organized in collaboration with the UAE Ministry of Interior titled “Community Oriented Policing and Countering Violent Extremism” in Abu Dhabi, UAE. The workshop was designed to help participants evaluate and analyze the nature and dynamics of major community policing challenges, especially in the realm of violent extremism, and deliberate on building counter-narratives to extremism. The hybrid seminar was attended in person by participants from 11 countries, including Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Pakistan, Maldives, Nepal, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, UAE, and Singapore (virtually). <https://nesa-center.org/community-oriented-policing-countering-violent-extremism>

“Community Oriented Policing & Countering Violent Extremism” 14–18 November 2021



Speakers from left: Major General Jassim Antali (UAE), Dr. Hassan Abbas (NESA Center Distinguished Professor of International Relations), Dr. Qamar ul Huda (Non-Resident Senior Fellow, The Atlantic Council), Victor Vartanian (former DHS Special Agent), Hamdan Al Yammahi (Senior Official of the UAE Ministry of Interior)

Moderators and Speakers (Not Pictured): Major General Khalifa Hareb Al Khaili (Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior), Dr. Roger Kangas (Academic Dean, NESA Center), Dr. Melissa Jardine (former Australian Police Officer, Global Law Enforcement and Public Health Association), Dr. Jennifer Jefferis (Professor, School of Foreign Service, Georgetown University and Adjunct Professor NESA Center), Professor Zoha Waseem (University of Warwick, UK), Ellie Bird (Retired UK Police Officer), Gary White (Former Police Officer, Northern Ireland), Dr. Tahir Abbas (Professor, University of Leiden, Netherlands), Jane Townsley (Retired UK Police Officer and former President of International Association of Women Police), Dr. Azza Karam (Secretary General Religions for Peace, New York), Dr. Ahmet Yayla (Former Turkish Police Officer and Professor at Georgetown University), Dr. Nadia Gerspacher (Adjunct Professor at American University and Author of “Community Oriented Policing for CVE Capacity: Adopting the Ethos Through Enhanced Training”)

NESA Programs & Events

Senior Leader Seminar

From 15–19 November 2021, the Near East South Asia Center (NESA) hosted a virtual Senior Executive Seminar titled “Global and Regional Power Competition.” The seminar started off with welcomes from Course Director Dr. Michael Sharnoff, NESA Center Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas, and NESA Center Director LTG Terry A. Wolff, USA (Ret.). The five-day seminar series focused on great power competition, its history, recent developments, and how it impacts key policy areas – particularly in the NESA region. Discussion sessions were led by NESA Center Professor Col Daniel Curfiss, USMC (Ret.), NESA Center Professor Amb. Ali Jalali, NESA Center Professor Mr. Jeffrey Payne, NESA Center Deputy Director COL (Ret.) David Lamm, NESA Center Professor COL (Ret.) Anne Moisan, and facilitators from leading institutions. <https://nesa-center.org/senior-executive-seminar-global-regional-power>

Senior Leader Seminar “Global & Regional Power Competition” 15–19 November 2021



Speakers from top left: Dr. Michael Sharnoff (Professor, NESA Center), Dr. Roger Kangas (Academic Dean, NESA Center), LTG Terry A. Wolff USA (Ret.) (Director, NESA Center), Dr. Thomas Lynch (Distinguished Research Fellow at the Center for Strategic Research at the Institute of National Strategic Studies of the National Defense University), Col Daniel Curfiss USMC (Ret.) (Professor, NESA Center), Mr. Jeffrey Payne (Professor, NESA Center), COL (Ret.) Anne Moisan (Professor, NESA Center), Amb. Ali Jalali (Distinguished Professor, NESA Center), Dr. Naysan Rafati (Senior Iran Analyst at International Crisis Group), Dr. Amy Austin Holmes (International Affairs Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations), Mr. Erik Brattberg (Director of the Europe Program and a fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), COL (Ret.) David Lamm (Deputy Director, NESA Center), Dr. Marcus D. King (Associate Professor of International Affairs and Director of the Elliott School's Master of Arts in International Affairs Program at George Washington University), Dr. Jeni Klugman (Managing Director, Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security), Mr. Todd Harrison (Director of Defense Budget Analysis and Aerospace Security at CSIS), Dr. Matthew Levitt (Director of the Reinhard Program on Counterterrorism & Intelligence at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy)

NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

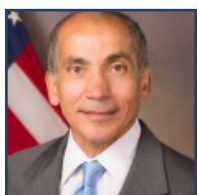
Dr. Hassan Abbas



25 October 2021 – Guest lectured for Professor Vali Nasr’s (Majid Khadduri Professor of Middle East Studies and International Affairs) class at John Hopkins University, Washington DC. Dr. Abbas presented on what the Taliban’s return means for religion and politics in South Asia.

26 October 2021 – Spoke at a virtual book talk on the topic of “The Prophet’s Heir: The Life of Ali Ibn Abi Talib” which was organized by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London, UK. The talk was live-streamed on Facebook with around 56 attendees. <https://www.soas.ac.uk/south-asia-institute/events/26oct2021-the-prophets-heir-the-life-of-ali-ibn-abi-talib.html>

02 November 2021 – Delivered an in-person lecture titled “The Taliban, The Islamic State, and the Future of Southwest Asia.” The hybrid event was for members of the George Washington University campus community for the Middle East Policy Forum (MEPF) about the “new” Taliban and the onset of their deadly rivalry with the Islamic State in Khorasan (ISK). Dr. Abbas also deliberated on what these new developments mean for U.S. security policy across the region.



Dr. Gawdat Bahgat

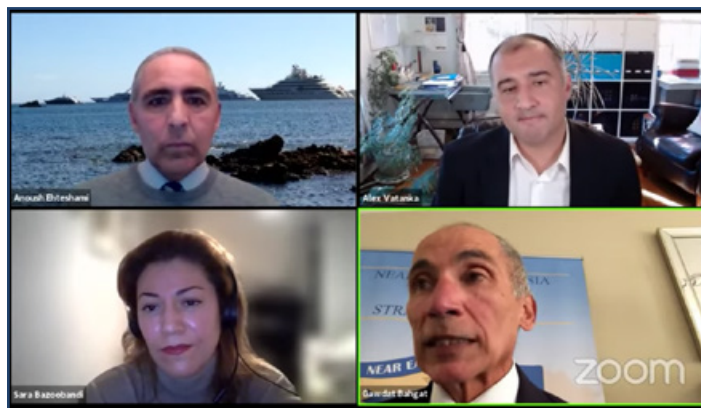
06 November 2021 – Published an article for the Gulf International Forum (GIF) ti-



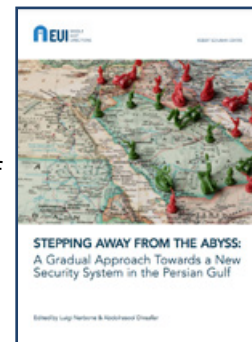
tled “Renewable Energy and the Politics of Fossil Fuels” about the recent surge in energy prices underscores the risks of phasing out fossil fuel production too quickly

without adequate supplies of green energy. <https://gulff.org/renewable-energy-and-the-politics-of-fossil-fuels>

09 November 2021 – Did a book launch for the book “Defending Iran: From Revolutionary Guards to Ballistic Missiles.” The Middle East Institute (MEI) hosted the authors Gawdat Bahgat and Anoushiravan Ehteshami for a panel discussion on Iran’s defense strategy. <https://www.mei.edu/events/book-talk-defending-iran-revolutionary-guards-ballistic-missiles>



6 December 2021 – As part of a panel, Dr. Bahgat presented at Cardiff University’s Centre for Conflict, Security, and Societies on the ebook “Stepping Away From the Abyss: A Gradual Approach Towards a New Security System in the Persian Gulf,” followed by an open Q&A session. The book was published by the European University Institute. Dr. Bahgat contributed “Peace in the Persian Gulf: An Assessment” to Section 1 of the book. <https://cadmus.eui.eu/handle/1814/71221>



NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

David Des Roches



11 November 2021 – Discussed the Xi-Biden summit in light of a positive statement on climate change for TRT World, a Turkish state-funded network (radio and television national public broadcaster.)

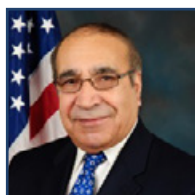
https://youtu.be/y_wAkudmuts



30 November 2021 – Spoke and participated in the Gulf International Forum and University of Michigan joint event titled “From Conflict to Dialogue: The Shifting Relationship between the U.S., Saudi Arabia, and Iran.” Des Roches’ remarks covered the misconceptions of U.S. policy – how Biden is locked into a negotiation process because of campaign promises, the theological nature of the debate between the JCPOA and Max Pressure camps, the ineffectiveness of sanctions in a corrupt regime, the unacceptability of Iran’s conditions in the current political climate, and the demand-driven nature of U.S. weapons sales to partners. <https://youtu.be/uSUJnhaOUUE>



Ali Ahmad Jalali

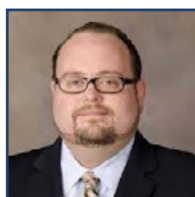


04 November 2021 – Delivered the keynote address on what lies ahead in Afghanistan at a virtual conference co-hosted by the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) and the Institute of War and Peace (IWAP). The conference

was titled “The Collapse of the Afghan National Defense and Security Forces: Factors and Reasons.” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O1Kjd4kDCs>



Jeffrey S. Payne



27–29 October 2021 – Spoke and participated in the Indo-Pacific Regional Dialogue (IPRD) which is an annually recurring international conference on the topic of maritime strategy. The dialogue was sponsored by the Indian Navy

and the National Maritime Foundation of India. About the Conference: <https://maritimeindia.org/the-indo-pacific-regional-dialogue> Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F24gZjIR32Y>



NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

10 November 2021 – Was trained by the EU's CRIMARIO II Team on its IORIS Maritime Coordination & Communications Secure Platform. IORIS provides maritime centers with a means to plan and coordinate maritime operations, offering command and control functions for crisis/incident management. The NESA Center now has the ability to use this platform. <https://www.crimario.eu/en/information-sharing/the-ioris-platform/#:~:text=The%20IORIS%20Maritime%20Coordination%20%26%20Communications,role%20of%20the%20specific%20centre>

08 December 2021 – Spoke at the Joint India - EU Maritime Domain Awareness and Interoperability Workshop. Mr. Payne presented on the topic of the challenge of needing to know versus the responsibility to share. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V0POFzoEQ74>



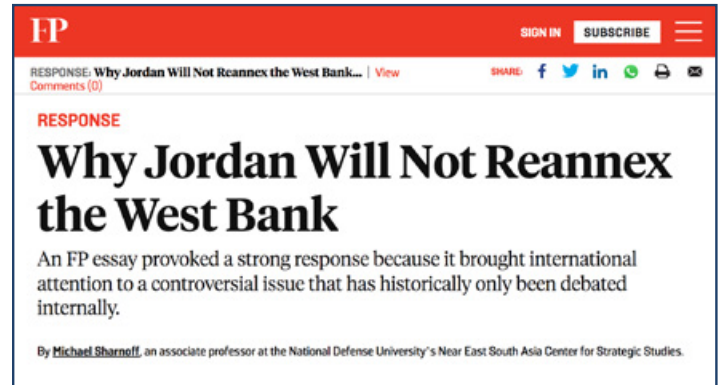
Dr. Michael Sharnoff



07 November 2021 – Published an article for Sage Journals titled “Maps of the West Bank in Jordanian Postage Stamps, 1952–1985.” The article chronicled and analyzed Jordanian perceptions of the West Bank through postage stamps. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/23477989211053177>

10 November 2021 – Published an article titled “Why Jordan Will Not Reannex the West Bank” for Foreign Policy (FP). The essay is in response to debates about a

renewed Jordanian role in the West Bank. https://foreign-policy.com/2021/11/10/palestine-jordan-will-not-reannex-the-west-bank/?tpcc=recirc_latest062921



NESA Alumni Activities & Contributions

29 October – **Uttam Kumar Sinha (India)** published a brief for *IDSA-India*: [“Prospects for India–Russia Cooperation in the Arctic.”](#)

09 November – **Elie Abouaoun (Lebanon)** published an analysis for *USIP*: [“What’s Behind the Lebanon-Gulf Diplomatic Row?”](#)

10 November – **Zine Labidine Ghebouli (Morocco)** published an analysis for the *Middle East Institute*: [“Algeria-Morocco tensions: The onset of a regional cold war.”](#)

11 November – **Elie Abouaoun (Lebanon)** published an Op-Ed for *Kurdistan 24*: [“Who is waking Iraq’s beasts?”](#)

11 November – **Uttam Kumar Sinha (India)** published an Op-Ed for *Sputnik News*: [“Indian Navy Presence in Arctic Could Act as a Strategic Counterweight to China: Analyst.”](#)

16 November – **Shanthie D’Souza (India)** published a brief for the *Middle East Institute*: [“A gift from the Afghan Taliban to Pakistan and China.”](#)

01 December – **Youssef Cherif (Tunisia)** published an analysis for *ISPI*: [“Tunisia’s Year of Living Dangerously.”](#)

01 December – **Uttam Kumar Sinha (India)** published an Op-Ed in the *Hindustan Times*: [“The centrality of the Arctic in the India-Russia partnership.”](#)

01 December – **Shanthie D’Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed in *The Hindu*: [“Afghanistan, the rise of a narco-terrorist state.”](#)

02 December – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed for the *Observer Research Foundation*: [“One Country One Law, China circumnavigating a Sri Lankan fertiliser hazard.”](#)

Nov – Dec – **Haizam Amirah-Fernandez (Spain)** contributed a chapter to the *IEMed Mediterranean 2021 Yearbook*: [“Social Unrest, Crises Aggravated by the Pandemic and Pending Revolutions in Arab Countries.”](#)

NESA Upcoming Events

Saudi War Course (SWC): War Termination & Post Conflict Concerns | 2–6 January 2022 | KSA

SWC Electives: Military Strategy (T) | 23–27 January 2022 | KSA

Executive Seminar 02-22 | 31 January–11 February 2022 | Virtual

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