



NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

NESA Update

December 2021 – February 2022

NESA Region Trends – LEVANT

- **Lebanon is slowly becoming a failed state** with the economy and the state collapsing. The Lebanese economy appears to have been based on an unsustainable scheme, and outside financiers (Gulf Arabs and the Lebanese diaspora mostly) have recognized structural failings and stopped sending funds. Iran, through Hezbollah, has the ability to set the political agenda but doesn't have the resources or the inclination to save the economy. No Western lender will support a system that props up Hezbollah, so the country is amidst a real crisis.
- **The first time in more than a decade, the Palestinian Authority** elected two close allies of Mahmoud Abbas to leading positions. One of them is likely to succeed the 85-year-old, Abbas, in leadership.
- A few years ago, **the Trump Administration entertained the idea of creating an "Arab NATO,"** i.e., an alliance between Arab countries and Israel to counter Iran. Egypt and Jordan did not support this proposal, and the Trump Administration stopped talking about it. Israel and some GCC states have consolidated their security cooperation in the last few weeks and months. This emerging security cooperation has fundamentally altered the security landscape in the Middle East. The Israeli president is scheduled to visit Turkey in mid-March – the first visit in more than a decade.
- **There is an emerging consensus in Israel** and elsewhere that some kind of agreement will be reached in Vienna between global powers and Iran. Israeli leaders have made it clear that any agreement will not restrain Israel, and Jerusalem will maintain a "free hand" to deal with Iran.

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Engagement • Education • Outreach

NESA Programs & Events

Executive Seminar: New & Emerging Security Challenges

From 6–17 December 2021 – the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA Center) conducted an Executive Seminar on “New and Emerging Security Challenges.” Leading academics and practitioners presented on a variety of non-traditional security threats, including climate change, pandemics, cyber security, human trafficking, migration, and non-state actors.

Course Director NESA Center Distinguished Professor Dr. Hassan Abbas welcomed the group and started off the seminar, followed by NESA Center Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas and NESA Center Director LTG Terry A. Wolff, USA (Ret.). Discussions were moderated by NESA faculty members Dr. Hassan Abbas, Dr. Michael Sharnoff, Anne Moisan, and David Des Roches. <https://nesa-center.org/executive-seminar-new-emerging-security-challenges>



Speakers from top left: Dr. Hassan Abbas (Distinguished Professor, NESA Center), Dr. Roger Kangas (Academic Dean, NESA Center), LTG Terry A. Wolff, USA (Ret.) (Director, NESA Center), Dr. Mely Caballero-Anthony (Professor of International Relations Head of Centre for Non-Traditional Security Studies; President's Chair in International Relations and Security Studies, S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies), David Des Roches (Associate Professor, NESA Center)
[Click here to view list of speakers.](#)

NESA Programs & Events

NESA (SSN)-AFRICOM-IEMed Sahel Workshop

On 8 February 2022 – as part of the continuing series of Strategic Studies Network (SSN) sub-regional working groups, NESA Center Professor Anne Moisan and Fahad Malaikah, in partnership with USAF- AFRICOM and the European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), conducted Part I/II of a program entitled “The Sahel – Mediterranean Compendium: Sharing Perspectives on the Current Security Situation and Future Obstacles in the Region Workshop.” Part I/II was a virtual program with 48 participants from 15 countries; Part II/II will be conducted in person in Casablanca, Morocco, from 14 to 15 June 2022.

“Complex and impenetrable” is how foreigners, sometimes even locals, describe the Sahel. As the Sahara’s southern “shore,” the general public often struggles to understand that what occurs in such a remote area can affect its nearest neighbors, Europe, and the whole international community. Yet, since at least the beginning of this century, several international actors have established their presence in the region, merging individual interests with regional needs for security and stability. <https://nesa-center.org/strategic-studies-network-workshop>

NESA (SSN)-AFRICOM-IEMed Sahel Workshop 8 February 2022



Speakers from top left: Prof. Anne Moisan, Amb. J. Peter Pham, Amb. Senen Florensa, Amb. Emanuela Claudia Del Re, Dr. Abdoulaye Sounaye, Dr. Hussein Solomon, Lurdes Vidal, and Roger Albinyana

NESA Programs & Events

NESA Center Supports Establishing SANDU

8 February 2022 – For the first time since the ‘pandemic public health and travel restrictions’ began, the Strategic Implementation Office (SIO) met in person to review the Target Operating Model (TOM) submission, which they prepared for the Saudi Ministry of Defense. The SIO is the combined Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA Center) and Saudi Armed Forces Command and Staff College design team. It began work in 2019 as the pandemic set in, and over the last two years, it has completed a baseline assessment, best practices benchmarking, and initial and final design phases of the program. The completed TOM provides the Saudi Ministry of Defense with a comprehensive way ahead for establishing the Saudi Arabia National Defense University (SANDU), which is widely regarded as the most critical part of the wider Defense Transformation initiative. <https://nesa-center.org/nesa-center-supports-establishing-sandu>

NESA Center Supports Establishing SANDU

8 February 2022



The photograph was taken in the Strategic Implementation Office conference room at the Armed Forces Command and Staff College campus outside Riyadh, KSA.

NESA Programs & Events

Executive Seminar: Conflict Beyond Evolving Warfare

From 31 January – 11 February 2022, the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA Center) hosted a virtual Executive Seminar on “Conflict Beyond Evolving Warfare.” Course Director NESA Center Associate Professor David Des Roches welcomed the group and started the seminar, followed by NESA Center Director LTG Terry A. Wolff, USA (Ret.) and NESA Center Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas. The seminar consisted of 18 interactive sessions where NESA Center experts, as well as several external experts, were invited to discuss and engage with seminar participants – critically analyzing developments in modern warfare. Discussions were facilitated by NESA Center Manager of Academic Affairs Jeffrey Payne and Associate Professor Daniel Curfiss. The two-week seminar had 54 participants from 21 countries. All discussions were held off-the-record under Chatham House rules of non-attribution. <https://nesa-center.org/executive-seminar-conflict-beyond-evolving-warfare>

Executive Seminar “Conflict Beyond Evolving Warfare” 31 January – 11 February 2022



Speakers from top left: Professor David Des Roches, LTG Terry A. Wolff, USA (Ret.), Dr. Roger Kangas, Professor Daniel Curfiss, Dr. T.X. Hammes (Distinguished Research Fellow, National Defense University), Jeffrey Payne, Dr. Joel Wuthnow (Senior Research Fellow, INSS [NDU]), COL Liam Collins, PhD, USA (Ret.) (Director, Modern War Institute at West Point), Samantha Turner (Senior Adviser - Gender, USAID), Charles Lister (Senior Fellow, Middle East Institute), LTG Ben Hodges (Ret.) (Pershing Chair, Center for European Policy Analysis), Dr. Alex Vatanka (Director of Iran Program, Middle East Institute), Chris Kubecka (Distinguished Chair, Cyber Program, Middle East Institute), [Click here to view list of speakers.](#)

NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

Dr. Hassan Abbas



14 January 2022 – Lectured at the Inter American Defense College (IADC) in Washington DC on Political and Security Trends in South and South East Asia at the IADC State of World Conference which was attended by around 85 officials and faculty members. [[Speaker List](#)] [[About the Event](#)]

31 January 2022 – Wrote a blogpost titled “Afghanistan and Taliban” as background notes for the online conference, Taking Stock of the 9/11 Era, which was held in November 2021 and organized by the Norwegian Defence Research Establishment (FFI) in cooperation with the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. <https://www.ffi.no/en/our-service/taking-stock-of-the-9-11-era/blogpost-afghanistan-and-taliban>

Dr. Gawdat Bahgat



29 December 2021 – Gave a virtual lecture at Kuwait University on “The Changing Strategic Landscape in the Middle East.” The event was attended by 63 students and faculty.

1 January 2022 – Published a chapter titled “Iran and the United States: The Way Forward,” in Adib Farhadi & Anthony Masys (Eds), The Great Power Competition, Springer. The volume is the outcome of the NESA-University of South Florida (USF) joint program on global power competition. [[Springer Abstract](#)] [[Google Books Preview](#)]

12 January 2022 – Published the article “Iran nuclear deal negotiators must act with urgency, given Iranian and Israeli nuclear brinkmanship” in the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists. <https://thebulletin.org/2022/01/iran-nuclear-deal-negotiators-must-act-with-urgency-given-iranian-and-israeli-nuclear-brinkmanship>



David Des Roches



14 December 2021 – Commented for TRT World on reports Russia was threatening to move its intermediate-range nuclear missiles further into Europe. Professor Des Roches tied this into Russian circumvention of the INF treaty and the overall Putin push to get the West to recognize Russia’s “near abroad.” <https://youtu.be/uKtuQtAwR00>



14 January 2022 – Presented on U.S. policy in the Middle East for the Inter-American Defense College’s annual conference. Professor Des Roches was invited to write an article based on the presentation. [[Speaker List](#)] [[About the Event](#)]



9 February 2022 – Was a panelist in a National Council on U.S. Arab Relations discussion titled, “Iran Nuclear Deal Negotiations: Policy Implications for Success or Failure.” Other panelists were Norman Roule, (Former United States National Intelligence Manager for Iran; Senior Advisor, United Against a Nuclear Iran) and Dr. Mohammed al Sulami (Founder and President, Rasanah: International

NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

Institute for Iranian Studies — the only Saudi-based think tank in the Arab world to focus on Iran). Des Roches' remarks were on regional concerns about the Iran deal.

Video: <https://youtu.be/ZpyGp2UTmil>

John H. Gill



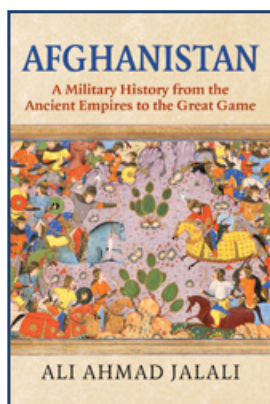
20 January 2022 – Participated in a virtual review of a draft United States Institute of Peace (USIP) report on India-Pakistan crises as a subject matter specialist. Professor Gill has been part of the draft report preparation process since Summer 2021, contributing to four previous virtual discussions and submitting written remarks on the draft. The report is slated for publication in Spring 2022.

Ali Ahmad Jalali



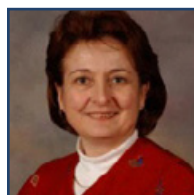
15 December 2021 – Released a new book published by the University Press of Kansas titled, "Afghanistan-A Military History from the Ancient Empires to the Great Game." The book is a prequel to Professor Jalali's earlier published work

that covers Afghanistan history from the Great Game to the global war on terror. It is based on modern interpretation and analysis of primary Greek, Roman, Arabic, Persian, Turkic, Chinese, Indian and Afghan sources. One notable feature of the study is the exchange of military culture and technology over the centuries that influenced military developments far beyond the region. <https://kansaspres.ku.edu/978-0-7006-3263-3.html>



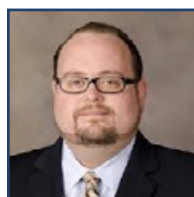
19 December 2021 – Had a virtual meeting with the leadership team of the Afghan Diaspora Unity Council for a discussion on the role of Afghan diaspora in addressing humanitarian aid to populations in Afghanistan.

Anne Moisan



31 January 2022 – Conducted a NESA Women, Peace, and Security Round-Table (WPS RT) during the Executive Seminar (ES): Conflict Beyond Evolving Warfare. The WPS RT supports the NESA Center's proposed and approved WPS program to OSD for FY22. The mini-WPS session provided a small informal round-table discussion on the various themes and sub-themes of the ES plus related security issues and to bring out unique women's ideas and perspectives. Ultimately, the goal is that networking on day one of the ES encourages active participation during the various ES sessions and Q&A and provides a post-ES-WPS network for continued NESA engagement. The round-table and the ES had nine women attending from 6 countries.

Jeffrey S. Payne



14 December 2021 – Took part in SIGNAL's 6th Annual China Policy Conference, "Navigating Through the Storm: Israel & the U.S.-China Rivalry." Over 100 participants attended with most hailing from the U.S. and Israel (with smaller delegations from China and Japan). <https://sino-israel.org/events>

17 December 2022 – Wrote an article for The Diplomat's blog, Trans-Pacific View, titled, "Jumpstarting an Indian Ocean Region Approach for the United States." <https://thediplomat.com/2021/12/jumpstarting-an-indian-ocean-region-approach-for-the-united-states/>

Richard Wiersema



28 December 2021 – Met with Pakistan Attaches on an invitation from the Pakistan Embassy. Professor Wiersema discussed plans and options for the upcoming Pakistan National Defense University visit to Washington DC with

NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

the embassy's military staff. In June of this year, the NESA Center will host the first visit from the Pakistan NDU to the U.S. capital since 2019.

17–20 January 2022 – Discussed, along with Dr. Jack Midgley, extant and emerging issues in Jordan's strategic environment with a select group of faculty and students at the Royal Jordanian National Defense College. This was part of a series of quarterly reviews conducted in support of the NDC's national security curriculum.

31 January–3 February 2022 – Taught a four-day elective course titled "Perspectives on Military Strategy" to sixty colonels, brigadiers, and equivalent civil service officers in the senior program at the Saudi Armed Forces Command and Staff College (AFCSC). The elective is offered each year as part of the NESA Center's in-stride support to the Staff College's ongoing transformation into the Saudi Arabian National Defense University (SANDU).

NESA Alumni Activities & Contributions

11 December 2021 – **Uttam Kumar Sinha (India)** published an Op-Ed in the Hindustan Times: "[History within history: 25 years of the Ganga Treaty.](#)"

12 December 2021 – **Antonia Dimou (Greece)** published an Op-Ed in Modern Diplomacy: "[Geopolitics and strategy drive Greece-US relations.](#)"

13 December 2021 – **Zine Labidine Ghebouli (Algeria)** published an analysis for the Middle East Institute: "[The post-Hirak presidency: Tebboune's promises and achievements two years on.](#)"

15 December 2021 – **Arslan Chikhaoui (Algeria)** published an Op-Ed for the NESA website: "[GCC-Algeria Relationship within the Regional Constellation.](#)"

4 January 2022 – **Dr. Mohan Malik (India)** published an article for Indo-Pacific Perspectives: "[The Gulf: Dragon on the Prowl.](#)"

17 January 2022 – **Shanthie Mariet D'Souza (India)** published an analysis for ISAS Insights: "[Mapping Regression and Retribution: The Taliban and the New Afghanistan.](#)"

27 January 2022 – **Antonia Dimou (Greece)** published an Op-Ed for Modern Diplomacy: "[Libya's Energy Puzzle: Every Challenge is an Opportunity.](#)"

4 February 2022 – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed for ORFOnline: "[Political economic instability and Wang Yi's peripheral diplomacy in Sri Lanka.](#)"

NESA Upcoming Events

Saudi War College Electives ROE/LOAC | 8 February–8 March 2022 | Saudi Arabia

Saudi War Course Curriculum Development: National Security | 28 February–4 March 2022 | Washington DC

INSS-NESA: The Future of Iran Nuclear Talks & the Regional Implications | 2 March 2022 | Virtual

SANDU-President Visit to U.S. PME Institutions | 14–25 March | Washington DC

Royal Saudi Air Defense Executive Leadership Visit | 15 March 2022 | Washington DC

UAE NDC Virtual Visit | 15–16 March 2022 | Virtual

Senior Executive Seminar (SES) (CT-01) | 21–25 March 2022 | Virtual

(SES) Women, Peace, & Security Round-Table – *By Invite Only* | 21 March 2022 | Virtual

IOR Underwater Challenges | 21–23 March 2022 | Virtual

Tunisia NDI Visit | 21–31 March 2022 | Washington DC

Saudi War College Electives Security Cooperation/International Defense Management | 27–31 March 2022 | Saudi Arabia

NESA Nepal Visit | (T) 28 March–1 April | Nepal

Visit www.NESA-Center.org for additional information.

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