



NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

NESA Update

April 2022 – May 2022

NESA Region Trends – SOUTH ASIA

- **The ongoing and obvious climate alterations in South Asia are creating political momentum** and a greater push for coordinated effort beyond the region itself. No longer a ‘theoretical’ problem, the regional states are advocating for more comprehensive environmental security approaches that seek to address climate change and specific human-caused environmental degradation. This is a potential whole of government opportunity that could be a way to breakthrough on specific elements of data sharing, intensified SAR and HA/DR cooperation, and even oceanic technology joint efforts.
- **Political tensions in Pakistan are escalating**, raising domestic security concerns as well as potential complications for U.S.-Pakistan relations. Pakistan’s economic downslide in recent weeks with weakening currency and fears of default plus increased political polarization pushes the country towards a dangerous point. The new coalition government is under severe stress from ousted political opposition led by former and disgruntled prime minister Imran Khan. However, a recent meeting between Pakistan’s new foreign minister and U.S. Secretary of State on the sidelines of a UN conference in New York (and consequent diplomatic readouts) indicates an improvement of the bilateral relationship.
- **Afghanistan: Hardliner and conservative Taliban sections are gaining more strength** vis-a-vis relatively moderate and young Taliban, as evident from the introduction of harsher policies. Islamic State (Khorasan) is also gaining more strength and now posing a severe security challenge to the Taliban. The new Taliban government is also facing mounting financial and humanitarian challenges.

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Engagement • Education • Outreach

NESA Programs & Events

Armenian National Defense Research University Strategy Seminar

From 11–14 April 2022, NESA Center Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas, NESA Center Professor Dr. Gawdat Bahgat, and NESA Center Professor Richard Wiersema conducted a Strategy Seminar with thirty members of leadership and faculty at the Armenian National Defense Research University (NDRU) in Yerevan, Armenia. The U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation (ODC) coordinated the seminar at NDRU’s request. Lectures and discussions were presented and led by the NESA Center team on Developing Defense and Security Policy, U.S. Regional Policy in the Caucasus, Implications for Armenia of Russian-Turkish Influence, Conflict Resolution in the Southern Caucasus, Impacts of the Ukraine War, and Changing Nature of Modern War. The event generated and engaged 26 new NESA Center alumni. The NESA Center team established solid ties with the NDRU’s commandant and faculty leadership and secured their support (as well as that of the ODC) for future cooperation and engagement. <https://nesa-center.org/armenian-national-defense-research-university-strategy-seminar/>

“Armenian National Defense Research University Strategy Seminar”

11 – 14 April 2022



Left to Right: Dr. Gawdat Bahgat and Dr. Roger Kangas taking questions during the NESA-NDRU Strategy Seminar.

NESA Programs & Events

Washington Seminar: “Is the U.S. Pulling Out of the Middle East?”

On 21 April 2022, The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies hosted another Washington webinar to explore the security challenges facing the Middle East and South Asia. The U.S. national security strategies, over the past two presidential administrations, have called for more focus on Europe and Asia and less on the Middle East. In the aftermath of the U.S. military withdrawal from Afghanistan and the reduced intensity of Islamic State operations in the region, many observers argue that the U.S. is pulling out of the Middle East. These voices have grown louder since Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and China’s increasing assertiveness against Taiwan. Is the U.S. really pulling out of the Middle East, or is that claim simply hyperbole? NESA Center Professor Dr. Richard Russell and distinguished scholar-practitioners from the Atlantic Council William Wechsler (Senior Director, Rafik Hariri Center & Middle East Programs) and Kirsten Fontensorse (Nonresident Senior Fellow, Rafik Hariri Center & Middle East Programs) walked us through the strengths and weaknesses of this controversial claim. The Washington Seminar discussion series is a flagship NESA Center program designed to provide senior diplomatic officials from the NESA region and U.S. partner countries with a forum for candid and substantive discussion on issues of critical importance to national and regional security. <https://nesa-center.org/washington-seminar-is-the-u-s-pulling-out-of-the-middle-east/>



Speakers from the left: Dr. Richard Russell, William Wechsler, and Kirsten Fontensorse.

NESA Programs & Events

Distinguished Alumni Award for Bangladesh CSA GEN S.M. Shafuiddin Ahmed

General S. M. Shafuiddin Ahmed, Bangladesh Army Chief of Staff, was inducted as the ninth Distinguished Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA Center) Alumnus on Thursday, 21 April 2022, at the NESA Center Hall of Fame located in Lincoln Hall.

Bangladesh has been one of NESA's most active partners in South Asia over the years as NESA has nearly 300 alumni from Bangladesh. NESA participants from Bangladesh have a reputation for being very keen, outspoken, and engaged. Several keep in particularly close touch with NESA through our social media outlets and contribute to NESA website publications. General Shafuiddin is the first NESA Alumni Hall of Fame member from South Asia. <https://nesa-center.org/distinguished-alumni-award-for-bangladesh-csa-gen-s-m-shafuiddin-ahmed/>

Distinguished Alumni Award for Bangladesh CSA GEN S.M. Shafuiddin Ahmed

21 April 2022



From left to right: General Shafuiddin and NESA Deputy Director David Lamm.

NESA Programs & Events

Lebanon Fouad Shehab Command & Staff College Program

The NESA Center hosted the Lebanese Armed Forces for a Lebanon Fouad Shehab Command & Staff College Program titled “Back to Basics: U.S. Security Partnerships in the Middle East” from 18 to 22 April 2022.

This seminar explored the enduring issues and values that can reinforce or challenge partnerships around the Middle East region. It took a look at what the Biden Administration policy of “back to basics” looks like on the ground, how this shapes long-term goals and objectives, and what role partner states play in achieving these objectives. The program was led by NESA Center Adjunct Professor Dr. Jennifer Jefferis and NESA Center Associate Professor Dr. Michael Sharnoff and offered a unique forum for discussing strategic issues directly with U.S. government officials, subject matter experts, scholars, and advisors. Forty-one military officials participated in this program with discussions held off-the-record under Chatham House rules of non-attribution. It was structured so the participants could engage with the speakers (and each other) to enrich the interaction and seminar experience. <https://nesa-center.org/lebanon-fouad-shehab-command-staff-college-program-2/>

Lebanon Fouad Shehab Command & Staff College Program “Back to Basics: U.S. Security Partnerships in the Middle East” 18 – 22 April 2022



Lebanon Fouad Shehab Command & Staff College Program Group Photo (18 April 2022).

NESA Programs & Events

Translation Services for the Strategic Initiatives Office – An Investment into The Future

Recently, the translators' team for the Strategic Initiatives Office celebrated the submission of the joint project with the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies. These individuals were a crucial part of an international team of over 30 members who tirelessly worked for almost two years to prepare, baseline, benchmark, preliminary design, and then provide a final design for the Saudi Arabian National Defense University.

The establishment of the National Defense University is part of the transformation across the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as part of Vision 2030, under the direction of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. The roadmap of accomplishing this reformation, completed and submitted to the Transformation Management Office, transforms the current military education system into the Saudi Arabia National Defense University. The translation team, Wafa Al Shutwi, Joud Al Subaie, Loujain Al Rasheed, and Shahad Al Sahali, are the first Saudi female staff in the Command and Staff College, which is a military institution. Working in a military environment, with almost all team members being senior ranking members, they seamlessly integrated into the team. <https://nesa-center.org/translation-services-for-the-strategic-initiatives-office-an-investment-into-the-future/>

“Translation Services for the Strategic Initiatives Office – An Investment into The Future”

April 2022



SIO Translation Team

NESA Programs & Events

USF & the NESA Center Host the 5th Great Power Competition Conference

On 28–29 April 2022, The University of South Florida (USF) College of Arts and Sciences and the Near East and South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies hosted the 5th Great Power Competition Conference titled “The Future of National Security After 9/11: Where We are We Now? Where Will We be in 10 Years?” The semi-annual conference was dedicated to the candid examination of the United States’ ever-changing role on the world stage. This installment was the second in a two-part series that began with the September 2021 event examining the 20th anniversary of 9/11.

The conference focused forward, asking if the nation had made adequate changes to practices and policies to prevent a similar surprise attack from happening again and exploring how prepared—or unprepared—we are for the changing future. For more information visit www.GPC-Conference.org to read about the event, the full agenda, list of speakers, and access the session video recordings. Access the videos directly here [Day 1](#) and [Day 2](#). <https://nesa-center.org/usf-and-the-nesa-center-host-the-5th-great-power-competition-conference/>

USF & the NESA Center Host the 5th Great Power Competition Conference
**“The Future of National Security After 9/11: Where We are We
Now? Where Will We be in 10 Years?”**
28 – 29 April 2022



NESA Programs & Events

Beyond the Geopolitics of the Quad

From 4 to 6 May 2022, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies, in cooperation with the Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, the National Maritime Foundation, the Australian National University, and the Japanese Institute of International Affairs (Tokyo), conducted a workshop titled “Beyond the Geopolitics of the Quad – a Discussion of Cooperative Options.” The workshop focused on how the Quadrilateral Security Review member states can enhance regional security and provide regional common good throughout the Indo Pacific. This was a hybrid event with in-person participants gathered in Bangkok, Thailand, while the remainder appeared via digital connectivity.

Twenty-eight participants from 13 countries took part in the workshop. Participants in the workshop hailed from throughout the Indo Pacific and included military officers, diplomats, subject matter experts, and non-governmental organization representatives. Several themes of the discussions covered were enhanced maritime security, furthering secure digital infrastructure, and advancing environmental security. NESA Center Assistant Professor Jeffrey Payne led the workshop. <https://nesa-center.org/beyond-the-geopolitics-of-the-quad/>

“Beyond the Geopolitics of the Quad – a Discussion of Cooperative Options”

4 – 6 May 2022



Group Photo of the workshop, Beyond the Geopolitics of the Quad, held from 4 to 6 May 2022.

NESA Programs & Events

Qatar Joint Staff College Visit

From 15–20 May 2022, the NESA Center hosted the Washington Visit of Qatar’s Joaan bin Jassim Command and Staff College Senior Officer Program in Washington, DC. The 35 participants included senior military officers and senior leaders from various Qatari government agencies. This program was part of the capstone trip at the end of a challenging year-long academic program.

Participants took part in various discussions led by experts who have served in senior positions in the U.S. government and in the Washington think-tank community. Issues discussed included the Russia-Ukraine War, the roles of the State Department and the National Security Council in public policy, the role of Congress in security affairs, and great power competition. The group also conducted a leadership and logistics-focused staff ride of the Gettysburg battlefield, a visit to the National Portrait Gallery presidential display, and commencement at the National Museum of the United States Army. NESA Center’s Academic Dean, Dr. Roger Kangas, delivered an up-to-the-minute presentation on the Russia Ukraine war, drawing on his recent field research in the region. The Program Operational Director was Magoumba Dieye and the Course Director was Professor David Des Roches. <https://nesa-center.org/qatar-joint-staff-college-visit>

Qatar Joint Staff College Visit

15– 20 May 2022



Group photo of the Qatar Joint Staff College Visit at NDU.

NESA Programs & Events

Tunisian National Defense Institute National Security Seminar

From 17–20 May 2022, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies in coordination with the Saudi Arabian National Defense University (SANDU) conducted a War College Joint Professional Military Education Seminar titled “Partnering with Coalition Forces, Agencies, and Non-combatants.” The seminar was held at National Defense University (NDU) in Fort McNair, Washington, DC.

SANDU course faculty and academic year 2021–2023 graduates attended the seminar to learn about the application of joint warfighting concepts. The four-day seminar started with a welcome from Course Director Dr. Wayne Clark and Associate Dean Charles Marks. Participation in war gaming preparation, exercises, and assessment were the focus for the first couple days. Dr. Wayne Clark, Dean Charles Marks, COL Randall Snow, COL Derek Martin, Professor Richard Wiersma, Professor David Des Roches, and Dr. Adam Oder presented workshop topics consisting of multiple subject matter collaborations, exercises, assessments, and deliverables supporting SANDU War Course Professional Military Education (PME) curriculum development and education delivery. <https://nesa-center.org/sandu-war-college-joint-professional-military-education-seminar/>

SANDU War College Joint Professional Military Education Seminar Partnering with Coalition Forces, Agencies, & Non-combatants 17 – 20 May 2022



Photo of Course Director Dr. Wayne Clark speaking during the seminar.

NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

Dr. Hassan Abbas



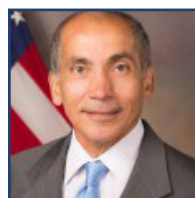
11 April 2022 – Gave a lecture during the Reserve Components National Security Course (RCNSC) Seminar Series at the National War College at National Defense University (NDU) in Washington, DC. The RCNSC is an executive-level

Department of Defense two-week seminar held three times a year. Dr. Abbas spoke on the topic of Iran, geopolitics, and sectarianism. The event was attended by 110 participants. <https://rcnsc.ndu.edu/About/Registration-and-General-Information>

23 April 2022 – Spoke at a virtual seminar organized by the World Muslim Communities Council (UAE). Dr. Abbas was a panelist on U.S. Muslim World Relations, attended by 25 participants. <https://www.twmcc.com/en>

27 May 2022 – Wrote an essay published by GRID News on political developments in Pakistan and implications for the U.S.-Pakistan relations titled, **“Pakistan’s Dangerous Moment: Imran Khan builds a comeback on bashing the U.S.”** <https://www.grid.news/story/global/2022/05/27/pakistans-dangerous-moment-imran-khan-builds-a-comeback-on-bashing-the-us>

Dr. Gawdat Bahgat



16–20 May 2022 – Spoke at a European Security Seminar – South on Climate Change and Security in the Mediterranean sponsored by the George C. Marshall European Center (GCMC) for Security Studies in Garmisch, Germany.

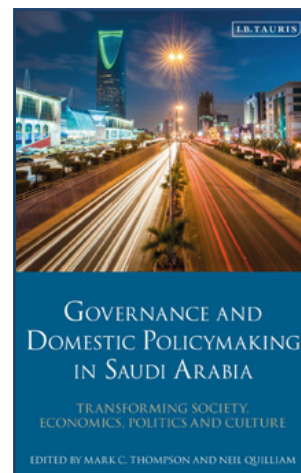
<https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/news-archive/marshall-center-hosts-first-course-climate-change>

David Des Roches



21 April 2022 – Wrote a book chapter on Saudi Defense reform that was published in an edited volume titled, “Governance and Domestic Policy-Making

in Saudi Arabia – Transforming Society, Economics, Politics and Culture.” Professor Des Roches wrote Chapter 4, “Gulf Research Meeting 2019: Beyond the Glitter Factor: Building Defense Capacity in King Salman’s Saudi Arabia.” <https://www.amazon.com/Governance-Domestic-Policymaking-Saudi-Arabia/dp/0755644379>



29 April 2022 – Weighed in on the Biden Ukraine aid request for the Turkish public broadcast service, TRT World. <https://youtu.be/-JrkH7HH-2w>

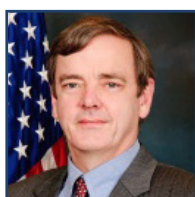


NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

26 May 2022 – Made a case for an Arab security alliance in an opinion piece co-authored by Ambassador Adam Ereli for Star and Stripes titled, “An idea whose time has come — America needs a NATO for the Middle East.”

<https://www.stripes.com/opinion/2022-05-26/an-idea-whose-time-has-come-%E2%80%94-america-needs-a-nato-for-the-middle-east-6137012.html>

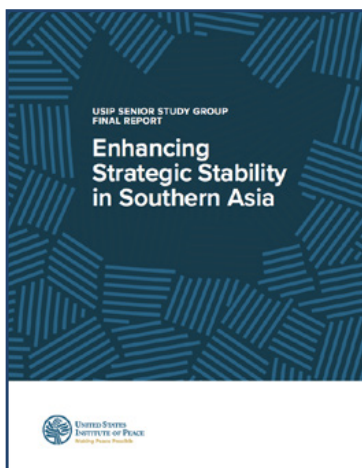
John H. Gill



17 May 2022 – Participated in a recent United State Institute of Peace (USIP) study on strategic stability in Southern Asia as a Senior Study Group Member. The study, entitled “Enhancing Strategic Stability in Southern Asia: USIP Senior

Study Group Final Report,” details escalation risks, to include the nuclear and terrorism dimensions, as well as USG policy options for the triangle of India, Pakistan, and China. It also addresses the implications of the war in Ukraine and the Taliban takeover for regional stability in “Southern Asia” (this term is used to include China specifically).

Read the report: <https://www.usip.org/south-ern-asia-strategic-stability-report> **View the report launch:** <https://youtu.be/ztbUosb0f2M>



Ali Ahmad Jalali



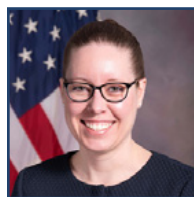
15 April 2022 – Interviewed by DoD Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR) researchers about the failure of institution building in Afghanistan and lessons learned. <https://www.sigar.mil>

02 May 2022 – Spoke at a seniors class at Loyola University Baltimore campus on the topic of Security issues after the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan.

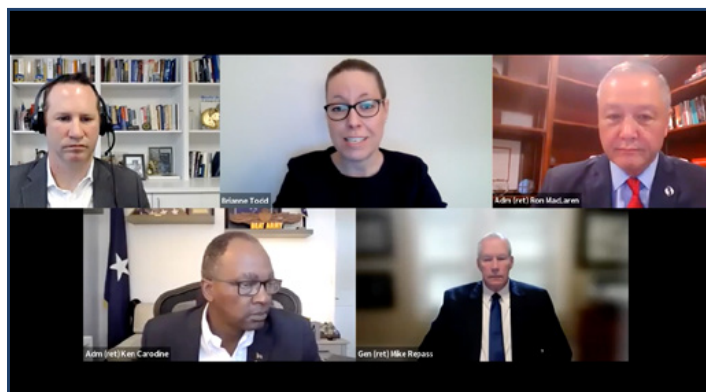
12 May 2022 – Interviewed by VOA for comments on a UN Security Council meeting on Afghanistan in response to the imposition of new restrictions on women’s rights by the Taliban in Afghanistan. https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=watch_permalink&v=326703626245708



Brianne Todd



19 May 2022 – Joined as part of a discussion panel for a webinar titled “Assessing Caspian Naval Defenses: Threats and Opportunities” for the Caspian Policy Center. The webinar focused on the implications of Russia’s use of the Caspian Sea on the South Caucasus and Central Asia and the long-term security challenges for the littoral states. <https://youtu.be/E7JZB82qU6Y>



NESA Alumni Activities & Contributions

14 April 2022 – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** published a brief for the Centre on Asia and Globalisation: "[Political-economic Turmoil in Sri Lanka: Competing interests of China and India.](#)"

16 April 2022 – **Mirza Sadaqat Huda (Bangladesh)** published an article for Science Direct: "[Autocratic power? Energy megaprojects in the age of democratic backsliding.](#)"

17 April 2022 – **Shahab Enam Khan (Bangladesh)** published an Op-Ed for Ceylon Today: "[A Forlorn Ceylon Reality: Lessons to Learn.](#)"

26 April 2022 – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed for the Institute for Security and Development Policy: "[Sri Lankan Crisis between Debt-trap and Strategic-trap: The Chinese Stake.](#)"

10 May 2022 – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Hindu: "[A democratic and strategic dissonance in India-German ties.](#)"

15 May 2022 – **Uttam Kumar Sinha (India)** published an Op-Ed for the Hindustan Times: "[South Asian nations must collaborate on climate.](#)"

15 May 2022 – **Antonia Dimou (Greece)** published an analysis for The Jerusalem Strategic Tribune: "[Greece in the Eastern Mediterranean: From Collective Engagement to Action.](#)"

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

NESA Upcoming Events

- Strengthening Israel-Jordan Trust to Enhance Defense & Security Cooperation Seminar** | 6–10 June 2022 | Washington, DC
- Pakistan NDU Visit** | 13–14 June 2022 | Washington, DC
- NESA (SSN)-AFRICOM-IEMed “The Sahel-Mediterranean Compendium: Sharing Perspectives on the Current Security Situation & Future Obstacle in the Region Workshop”** | 14–15 June 2022 | Casablanca, Morocco
- NESA-AFRICOM “Transnational Threats & Transoceanic Borders Workshop”** (Includes WPS & Youth Round Tables) | 16–17 June 2022 | Casablanca, Morocco
- NESA-AFRICOM “The New World Order: Future Trends & International Players Workshop”** | 20–22 June 2022 | Casablanca, Morocco
- Iraqi GO CAPSTONE I** | 13–24 June 2022 | Washington, DC
- Israel (Mabal) Defense College Visit** | 21 June 2022 | Washington, DC
- RASDF Executive Leadership Visit** | 23–24 June 2022 | Washington, DC
- Air War College Visit** | 23 June 2022 | Washington, DC
- Indian Ocean Island Forum** | 22–25 June 2022 | Bangkok
- RJNDC Visit and Global Net Demonstration** | 26–30 June 2022 | Jordan
- NESA Community Oriented Policing & Countering Violent Extremism Seminar** | 27 June–1 July 2022 | Abu Dhabi
- NESA-AFRICOM “Changing Nature of Security & Institutions Workshop” Part I/II** | 11–13 July 2022 | Tunis, Tunisia
- NESA-AFRICOM “Libyan Task Force Round Table”** | 14–15 July 2022 | Tunis, Tunisia (BY INVITE - LIBYANS ONLY)
- Saudi Command and Staff College Visit** | 18–29 July 2022 | Washington, DC
- CENTCOM Strategic Survey Seminar** | 19–21 July 2022 | Tampa
- ES-03-22** (Includes WPS on 25 July) | 25 July–5 August 2022 | Washington, DC/HYBRID
- SWC Faculty Development Workshop** | 24–27 July 2022 | Saudi Arabia

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