



NEAR EAST SOUTH ASIA CENTER FOR STRATEGIC STUDIES

NESA Update

October 2024

REGIONAL TRENDS – CENTRAL & SOUTH ASIA

BANGLADESH

- Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wazed's tenure ended on 6 August 2024 when she fled Bangladesh for an undisclosed location in India. Her resignation followed massive protests over Bangladesh's quota system for state jobs. The protests were in themselves worth following, but the impact throughout South Asia from the change in regime has created a host of questions regarding the future trajectory of the region. Sheikh Hasina's departure from Bangladesh calls into question India's neighborhood policy as she maintained strong ties with Delhi (and balanced her diplomatic efforts between India and China). Her government's nonalignment tradition with Western nations could change with a new regime, along with the stability of ongoing relations with India. Combined with the political disturbances in Sri Lanka in 2022–2023, Bangladesh's political turmoil speaks to the need to evaluate the overall economic health and political stability of South Asia. Depending upon the new regime in Dhaka, Bangladesh's foreign policy approach could shift and require all partnering nations to reevaluate their respective approaches.

INDIA

- The world's largest national election resulted in the continued majority of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), along with the third consecutive term as Prime Minister by Narendra Modi. The key surprise from the election was that polling dramatically overestimated the BJP's popularity and underestimated the electoral gains of the INDIA coalition (led by the Indian National Congress). Despite rampant misinformation and some sectarian tensions, democratic institutions held firm and the electorate punished the BJP for uneven economic growth. For the global community, the election was the first to be followed closely by large populations outside South Asia due to India's growing global economic presence and its large expatriate population. For the U.S., a third term of Prime Minister Modi signaled the continuation of intensified cooperation with the U.S. Yet, potential electoral vulnerability by the

IN THIS REPORT

- 1–2 NESA Region Trends
- 3–13 Programs & Events
- 14–17 Engagement
- 18–19 Alumni Pubs & News
- 20 Calendar

Engagement • Education • Outreach

NESA Region Trends

BJP if the economy continues its uneven rise could signal new leadership and the potential reexamination of current forms of outreach and engagement with the U.S.

- On 10 September 2024, Stanford University hosted the third India-U.S. Defense Acceleration Ecosystem (INDUS-X) Summit. INDUS-X is a partnership between the Department of Defense and the India's Ministry of Defense, with India's Defense Innovation Office (DIO) and the U.S. Defense Innovation Unit (DIU) facilitating consultations for public-private partnerships. The summit demonstrates the maturity of India-U.S. relations and the depth of our joint security innovation. INDUS-X seeks to facilitate joint private-sector research, development, and production of security and defense-related products. Hosting the event in Silicon Valley highlighted the technological component of the effort. The long-term aims of INDUS-X are to help bypass choke points in each nation's respective R&D and regulatory systems to assist in technological transfer, greater interoperability, intensified research, and overall national security enhancement of each respective state. Private sector actors, both established firms and start-ups, are key to the effort. Additionally, the program helps universities, laboratories, and research facilities to jointly develop, experiment, and test technological advancements to assist in increasing the pace of expanding cooperation and comprehensive security. INDUS-X is one element of a larger effort by the U.S. and the Department of Defense to develop technological-related innovation with key partners and allies around the world.

PAKISTAN

- The political situation in Pakistan is marked by a complex interplay of power among the military, judiciary, and civilian government. The country's leadership struggles to maintain authority amidst economic challenges and poor legitimacy following allegations of manipulation of February 2025 election results. Former Prime Minister Imran Khan's controversial ousting in 2022 triggered protests and a significant political backlash, leading to a highly polarized environment. He remains in jail facing various corruption charges.
- While a major constitutional amendment package is under consideration to strengthen the current government led by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, the opposition alleges that this military-backed initiative is meant to curb the judiciary. Many consider the judiciary in Pakistan to be highly politicized, interfering inappropriately in political matters. On the economic front, Pakistan has lately received a bailout package from the IMF, but economic instability, marked by high inflation, a growing debt crisis, and energy shortages, exacerbates the political turmoil.

NESA Programs & Events

Nepal NDU Design Committee Dialogue at the NESA Center

From 8–12 April 2024, the NESA Center’s professional military education team, in collaboration with the State Department’s Bureau of Political-Military Affairs and the U.S. Office of Defense Cooperation, Kathmandu, hosted six senior members of the Nepal National Defense University Design Committee for a series of seminars and discussions in Washington, D.C. The sessions were with leadership and faculty from both National Defense University and Marine Corps University. [Continue reading.](#)



Chatham House: Iran Dialogue

On Friday, 12 April 2024, the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies held a hybrid roundtable discussion with about 15 Iran experts in London. Chatham House, a leading British think-tank, organized the meeting. Academic Dean Dr. Roger Kangas and Professor Dr. Gawdat Bahgat represented the NESA Center. The agenda covered two sessions, the first on Iran’s domestic landscape and the second on regional and international dynamics. [Continue reading.](#)



2024 Lebanese Armed Forces Seminar

From 15–19 April 2024, the NESA Center hosted a seminar titled “The United States and the Middle East in 2025” at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. The program was designed to provide an academic setting in where thirty-five members of the Lebanese Armed Forces could better understand the upcoming U.S. election’s impact on foreign policy strategy and priorities, identify key partnerships in the Middle East and shared security interests, and consider options to improve U.S.-Lebanon relations and regional stability. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA Programs & Events

Tunisian National Defense Institute National Security Seminar

From 16–24 April 2024, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies, in partnership with U.S. Africa Command, held its annual Tunisian National Defense Institute (TNDI) National Security Seminar for 45 senior government officials from 14 Tunisian agencies, as well as the President’s Office. This is the 13th year in the NESA-AFRICOM partnership with the Tunisian National Defense Institute. Joining the program from the Embassy of the Republic of Tunisia here in Washington, D.C. were Elkansa Arfaoui Harbaoui (TNDI 2022), Counselor and the Defense Attaché S. Col Ferid Amor (TNDI 2019). [Continue reading.](#)



Saudi Arabia National Guard Command and Staff College Program

From 18–24 April 2024, the NESA Center for Strategic Studies held sessions supporting the students of the Saudi Arabia National Guard (SANG) Command and Staff College. Commencing at the NESA Center at the National Defense University (NDU) in Washington, D.C., the SANG Command and Staff College students met with NESA Center Acting Director COL David Lamm, USA (Ret.), alongside Associate Dean Richard Wiersema and Professor Dr. Gawdat Bahgat. The sessions included an overview of the NESA Center and NDU, coupled with a focused examination of the themes “Russia/Iran Drone Cooperation.” [Continue reading.](#)



SSN: Environmental Security Seminar

The Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies held its “Strategic Studies Network (SSN) Environmental Security” seminar in Washington, D.C., from 22–24 April 2024 for 21 participants from 18 countries. The seminar had the goal of bringing together participants to better understand the history and significance of climate change. Through presentations and discussions, participants could assess the impacts of climate change on national and international security, analyze food and water security, discuss mitigation and adaption efforts, articulate strategies to address climate change, and finally, review and discuss a way forward and recommendations. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA Programs & Events

Saudi Armed Forces Command and Staff College War Course

From 23–24 April 2024, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies team, led by Program Manager Matthew Holbert and Academic Advisor Andrea Brewington, delivered a two-day Faculty and Student engagement to the Saudi Armed Forces War College. The event focused on strategy and strategic logic. [Continue reading.](#)



Indo-Pacific Minilateral Series

From 23–25 April 2024, the NESA Center, along with Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, conducted a workshop entitled “Maritime Security, the Indo-Pacific, and Advancing Maritime Domain Awareness” in Jakarta, Indonesia. The local host and partner for the event was the National Research and Innovation Agency. Nearly 60 participants took part in the event, representing 14 countries. Issues discussed included how minilateral arrangements are impacting regional maritime security efforts, how innovation challenges existing approaches to maritime governance, and the state of maritime information sharing. [Read about the forum and access the report.](#)



Qatar Defense Academy Program

From 28 April–6 May 2024, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies held a program for 37 participants from the Qatar Defense Academy. The program was held in Washington, D.C. and provided a comprehensive overview of the U.S. National Defense University (NDU). Topics covered included cyber, airpower and warfare, homeland security, and regional discussions on Iraq, Iran, and Afghanistan, and the role of Congress.



NESA Programs & Events

United Arab Emirates Command and Staff College War Course Program

From April 29 to May 9, 2024, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies conducted a specialized program in Washington, D.C. for faculty members of the United Arab Emirates War Course. The program focused on the capabilities, mission, structure, and organization of mid-career U.S. military educational institutions analogous to the UAE Command and Staff College War Course. The initiative was led by Professor David Des Roches, with the support of Associate Dean Richard Wiersema, Program Manager Matthew Holbert, Associate Professor Justin Boston, and a number of distinguished external speakers.



CTSES “Countering Violent Extremist Organizations and Narratives”

On From 29 April–3 May 2024, the NESA Center for Strategic Studies hosted a Combating Transnational Threats Senior Executive Seminar (CTSES) titled “Countering Violent Extremist Organizations and Narratives,” held at National Defense University in Washington, D.C. The CTSES engaged 38 participants from 27 countries and of the participants who completed the course, 21% were female. The seminar analyzed the scope and extent of the challenges posed by violent extremist organizations and facilitated conversations on lessons learned from effective campaigns. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA-AFRICOM Transnational Threats Know No Borders Workshop

From 6–9 May 2024, the NESA Center, in partnership with United States Africa Command, held a focused workshop with 29 participants in Casablanca, Morocco. The 29 senior government and civilian security experts came from 11 countries, including a number from the Americas. The participants (40% were women) provided a “whole of society” approach and came from various countries across the globe, including countries from Latin America, Africa, the Levant, the U.S., and also from U.S. AFRICOM and the William J. Perry Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA Programs & Events

Pakistan National Defence University Seminar

From 11–15 May 2024, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies hosted a Foreign Study Tour delegation from the Pakistan National Defence University, comprising of 15 students and faculty led by their Chief Instructor, Major General Naeem Akhtar. The purpose of the program was to gain an understanding of U.S. national security concerns, U.S. interagency relationships, the U.S. approach to professional military education (PME), and differing perspectives on issues of mutual interest, particularly in the South Asia region. [Continue reading.](#)



2024 Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar

From 13–17 May 2024, the NESA Center hosted a Silk Road Future Leaders Seminar focused on the theme, “Security Implications of Climate Change.” The seminar, held at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., brought together the next generation of young military officers, diplomats, and academics from South and Central Asia. Twelve sessions were conducted, each organized around themes addressing current regional threats in South and Central Asia. [Continue reading.](#)



Washington Seminar – May 2024

The Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies hosted a luncheon discussion on 15 May 2024 in Washington, D.C. The conversation focused on the theme “Emerging Challenges, Technological Innovation, and the Maritime Domain.” Approximately 49 members of a variety of embassy country teams posted in Washington, D.C., along with a delegation of participants from the Silk Road Seminar. Assistant Professor Jeffrey Payne moderated a conversation with Aditi Kumar, the Deputy Director for Strategy, Policy, and National Security Partnerships at the Defense Innovation Unit, and Gregory B. Poling Senior Fellow and Director for the Southeast Asia Program and Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.



NESA Programs & Events

U.S. Army War College Strategic Staff Ride Seminar

On 15 May 2024, fifteen U.S. Army War College students and accompanying faculty attended a two-hour seminar hosted by the NESA Center for Strategic Studies. The students and faculty were in Washington, D.C. as part of the Army War College's annual Strategic Staff Ride, which brings the entire student body to the national capital region to engage policy, strategy, and security experts in person on a variety of contemporary challenges and issues. [Continue reading.](#)



Saudi Arabia National Guard Program

A delegation of seven senior officers from the Saudi Arabia National Guard met at the NESA Center and National Defense University in Washington, D.C. on 20 May 2024 to discuss educational techniques and the structure of U.S. professional military education systems. Delegates discussed the link between military education and the personnel system, the interaction between education and officer career paths in the U.S. military, the structure of the National Defense University, and the mission and capabilities of the NESA Center. [Continue reading.](#)



Dynamics of Countering Human Trafficking in South Asia and the Gulf Seminar

From 20–24 May 2024, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies hosted a “Dynamics of Countering Human Trafficking in South Asia and the Gulf Seminar” held at National Defense University in Washington, D.C. The seminar engaged 19 participants from 14 countries, including Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Malaysia, Maldives, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Türkiye. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA Programs & Events

Executive Seminar: Changing Regional Security Dynamics in the MENA Region

From 3–7 June 2024, in partnership with the Policy Center for the New South, the NESA Center held an executive seminar in Rabat, Morocco. The seminar aimed to address the principal challenges facing Middle Eastern nations, exploring diverse strategies for addressing them. Led by Dr. Gawdat Bahgat (Professor, NESA Center) and Karim El Aynaoui (Executive President, Policy Center for the New South), the event looked into primary security concerns in the Middle East, identifying socio-economic, security, and strategic obstacles while exploring opportunities for fostering economic growth and political stability. [Continue reading.](#)



2024 Air War College International Officer Seminar

On 6 June 2024, the NESA Center hosted 49 international fellows and faculty from the Air War College. The students were briefed at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C. by Associate Professor Dr. Michael Sharnoff on the Security Challenges in the Middle East and on Security Challenges in Asia by Assistant Professor Jeffrey Payne, Distinguished Professor of International Relations Dr. Hassan Abbas, and Distinguished Professor Ambassador Ali Jalali. Following lunch, Africa Center for Strategic Studies Professor Dr. Nathaniel Allen led a discussion on Security Challenges in Africa, and Juliana Rubio, Associate Director of the Americas Program at the Center of Strategic and International Studies, delivered a presentation on Security Challenges in Latin America. [Continue reading.](#)



Welcoming Ambassador John Desrocher: NESA Center's New Director

We are delighted to welcome Ambassador John Desrocher as the new Director of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies. With 35 years of dedicated service in the U.S. Foreign Service, Ambassador Desrocher brings a wealth of experience from his assignments across North Africa, the Middle East, and the State Department in Washington, D.C. Most recently, he served as Deputy Commandant of the Eisenhower School for National Security and Resource Strategy at the National Defense University. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA Programs & Events

2024 Indian Ocean Region Workshop

From 24–26 June 2024, the NESA Center, in cooperation with the National Maritime Foundation of India and its sister regional center, Daniel K. Inouye Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, conducted an Indian Ocean Region Workshop in Bangkok, Thailand. The focus was on how maritime security and maritime domain awareness can be furthered through coordination amongst states and between state entities and private sector stakeholders, including academia, research institutions, technological firms, and shipping firms. Thirty-one participants took part, hailing from eleven countries. [Continue reading and access the report.](#)



2024 NESA-AFRICOM The Impact of the Changing Nature of Security on the Region Workshop

From 24–28 June 2024, the NESA Center, in partnership with U.S. Africa Command, held a focused workshop with 35 participants in Casablanca, Morocco, on "The Impact of the Changing Nature of Security on the Region." The senior government and civilian security experts came from seven countries to include a total of 38% women in the workshop. Together, they provided a "whole of society" coupled with a "whole of government" approach as they challenged their preconceptions of "security and threat" and discussed how security in the 2020s has radically changed across the region and the globe. [Continue reading.](#)



2024 Air Command and Staff College Seminar

On 28 June 2024, the Near East South Asia Center hosted approximately 85 students and faculty from the Air Command and Staff College. The group convened at Fort McNair in Washington, D.C., where they participated in a series of briefings and discussions including an in-depth analysis of security dynamics in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, global power competition, security dynamics in Africa, and security challenges facing Latin America and South America. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA Programs & Events

2024 Eastern Mediterranean Security Roundtable

The Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies, in partnership with SETA, a prominent Turkish think tank, held a roundtable discussion in Istanbul, Türkiye, from 15–17 July 2024. The event brought together ten ambassadors and scholars from think tanks from Morocco, Egypt, Türkiye, Israel, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Kuwait. Notably, five of the participants were women. The agenda encompassed a range of topics, including Turkish policy, the U.S election, global power competition, the war in Gaza, Iran, energy transition, climate change, economic development, and investment in human capital. [Continue reading.](#)



2024 NESA Center Executive Seminar: The Indo-Pacific, MARSEC, and Technology

From 22 July–2 August 2024, the NESA Center conducted an Executive Seminar focused on how the maritime domain and new technologies are shaping the security environment of the Indo-Pacific. The seminar’s proceedings included conversations on autonomous/unmanned systems, the maritime challenges associated with asymmetry, transnational criminality, power projection and competition within the maritime domain, and maritime domain awareness, among others. [Continue reading.](#)



Qatar Cyber Officer Development Workshop

On 22 July 2024, the Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies conducted a Qatar Cyber Officer Development Workshop in with officers from the Qatari Armed Forces, focusing on the advancement of cyber skills. The event, held at the National Defense University in Washington, D.C., involved six participants. Key sessions addressed topics such as “The U.S. Approach to Developing Cyber Skills in the Officer Base” and the “U.S. Cyber Strategy.” Notable speakers included David Des Roches, Professor at the NESA Center, and Dr. Joseph Schaefer from the National Defense University Cyber College.



NESA Programs & Events

2024 Iraqi General Officer Capstone Seminar

The NESA Center for Strategic Studies hosted the annual Iraq Capstone event in Washington, D.C., from 22 July–2 August 2024. A senior delegation of representatives from the Iraq interagency participated in a robust program comprised of best practices from senior United States professional military education programs, subject matter experts delivered content of vital interest to senior policymakers, and exercises designed to apply learning in policy development. [Continue reading.](#)



Thailand National Security Council Engagement

On 23 July 2024, the NESA Center for Strategic Studies, in collaboration with the College of International Security Affairs (CISA), convened a meeting in Washington, D.C., with representatives from the Thailand National Security Council. The session was led by NESA Center Director Ambassador John Desrocher and Distinguished Professor Dr. Hassan Abbas, alongside Dr. Thomas Marks from CISA. The discussions centered around critical topics such as the dynamics of insurgency, the role of religion, and strategies for countering radicalization. [Continue reading.](#)



Washington Seminar – July 2024

The NESA Center hosted a luncheon discussion on 31 July 2024 in Washington, D.C. on the upcoming U.S. Presidential elections. Associate Dean Charles Marks moderated a conversation with Yuko Mukai, the Washington, D.C. correspondent for Yomiuri Shimbun, Japan’s national print newspaper, and Jonathan Landay, the National Security reporter for Thomson Reuters news service. The conversation focused on the implications of the Presidential election on U.S. foreign policy with a guaranteed change of administration regardless of the election outcome. Approximately 75 members of a variety of embassy country teams posted in Washington, D.C., along with a delegation of Iraqi interagency policymakers, participated in the discussion. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA Programs & Events

Post-Grad Senior Military Executive Engagement International NDU Fellows Welcome Dinner

In partnership with the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS), the NESA Center hosted a welcome dinner as part of the “Post-Grad Senior Military Executive Engagement” for foreign African colonels and general officers attending the U.S. Senior Military Service Schools at National Defense University Class of 2024/25. The program is focused on African and Egyptian graduates in USAFRICOM’s area of responsibility. The sit-down welcome dinner on 6 August 2024 was hosted by the NESA Center Director, Ambassador John Desrocher in partnership with the Acting ACSS Director, Colonel Daniel Hampton. There were 26 guests from 13 African countries in attendance. [Continue reading.](#)



NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

Dr. Hassan Abbas



6 April 2024 – Professor Dr. Hassan Abbas was quoted in an article published by The Associated Press, "[Reclusive Taliban leader releases Eid message urging officials to set aside their differences.](#)"

29 April 2024 – NESA Center Distinguished Professor Dr. Hassan Abbas was recently elected as a [trustee of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies \(AIPS\)](#) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Established in 1973, the AIPS is a bi-national research and education organization with a mission to promote the academic study of Pakistan in the U.S. and to encourage scholarly exchange between the U.S. and Pakistan.

June 2024 – Dr. Abbas went to the Stimson Center to engage with South Asia Fellows and hold discussions on the political and security developments in South Asia.



5 July 2024 – At the [47th Annual Convention of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America \(APPNA\)](#), held from 3–7 July 2024, in Washington, D.C., Dr. Hassan Abbas served as a panelist in the discussion, "Social Forum: 'Pakistan's Polycrisis' - Is it Worsened by a Controversial Election?" Dr. Abbas spoke on political developments in Pakistan. The event was attended by about 400 guests.

APPNA 47TH ANNUAL CONVENTION
JULY 3-7, 2024 WASHINGTON D.C.

SOCIAL FORUM
"PAKISTAN'S POLYCRISIS"
IS IT WORSENERD BY A CONTROVERSIAL ELECTION?

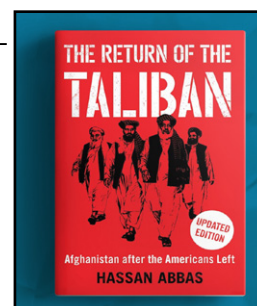
MODERATORS:
Dr. Mohammad Taqj | Dr. Jamil Azam Farooqi

SPEAKERS:
Qutubul Ismail | Maryam Sarmad | Hassan Abbas | Muneed Pirzada
Human Rights Activist | Political Commentator, Journalist & Human Rights Activist | Scholar, Author & Political Commentator | Political Commentator, TV Anchor & Columnist

FRIDAY
JULY 5, 2024
2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

For more information and registration about the convention, please visit:
www.appna.org/appna-47th-annual-summer-convention-2024/

1 August 2024 – An updated Paperback of Dr. Abbas' book, "The Return of the Taliban: Afghanistan After the Americans Left" was released by Yale University Press.



Dr. Gawdat Bahgat



17 May 2024 – Dr. Bahgat spoke on panel titled "Strengthening Cultural Bonds: A New Vision For TurkishAmerican Relations" in New York City and hosted by the Presidency of the Republic of Türkiye Directorate of Communications. He spoke on a panel during Session One, "Strengthening the Ground of Transatlantic Cooperation: Past and Present."



23 July 2024 – Dr. Bahgat and Deputy Director COL David Lamm, USA (Ret.) spoke on emerging security dynamics in the Middle East (i.e., war in Gaza, war in Ukraine, Abraham Accords, Iran and global power competition) at the 9th AFCENT Theater Security Cooperation Conference. The theme was "Regional Atmospheric Assessment." Approximately 100 people attended the virtual event.

28 April–2 May 2024 – Alongside Deputy Director Lamm, Dr. Gawdat Bahgat spoke at the Regional Land Forces Symposium, sponsored by the U.S. Army Central (ARCENT) in Charlotte, NC.

11 June 2024 – Dr. Bahgat spoke on China and the Middle East at a one-day conference organized by [James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies](#).

NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

David Des Roches

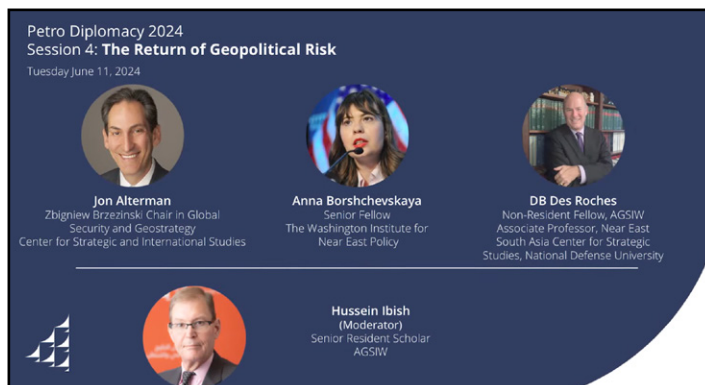


24 April 2024 – Professor David Des Roches joined a panel for a discussion on recent security developments in the Middle East presented by the Internal Security Student Organization at Harvard Kennedy School, titled “Middle East Security (2024) Iran, Israel, Gaza, and Beyond.”

22 May 2024 – The Middle East Institute interviewed Prof. David Des Roches and Abdolrasool Divsallar, Ph.D, a Non-Resident Scholar with MEI’s Iran Program, about Iran’s April 13 missile and drone attack on Israel and what it reveals about both countries’ attack and deterrence capabilities for an episode of [MEI’s weekly podcast, Middle East Focus](#).



28 May 2024 – Prof. David Des Roches appeared on a Moroccan TV news channel, MEDI1, segment to discuss Moroccan-American military cooperation, the [African Lion 2024 exercise](#), and long-term security engagement. The video segment is in Arabic.



11 June 2024 – Professor Des Roches participated in the The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington “[Petro Diplomacy 2024: The Countdown to Net Zero](#).” His presentation was during “Session 4: The Return of Geopolitical Risk” and starts at 24:46.

July 2024 – In the latest Winter/Spring edition of the Middle East Journal, the “[2024 Special Issue: Iraq since the US Invasion](#)” features an insightful review by Prof. Des Roches. His article, “Enduring Challenges of Middle East Security and the Evolving Role of the United States,” delves into three recent books dealing with Middle East security.

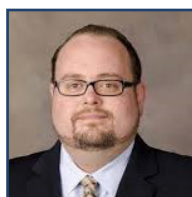
10 July 2024 – [VOA Africa News Tonight](#) interviewed Professor David Des Roches on the possibility of a NATO - African Union cooperation. Remarks at 8:20.

Christopher Muller



11 July 2024 – Christopher Muller attended the Egypt National Day celebrations at the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt in Washington, D.C. Together with Deputy Registrar Emily Santucci, they had the opportunity to connect with several NESA Center alumni from Egypt and other diplomatic missions in Washington, D.C., including Kuwait, Algeria, Jordan, and Saudi Arabia. The event was also attended by NESA Center Director Ambassador John Desrocher. The evening featured remarks from Ambassador Zahran, along with representatives from the U.S. Department of State and Congress.

Jeffrey Payne



17 April 2024 – Professor Jeffrey Payne gave a presentation at the Underwater Domain Awareness (UDA) framework for Strategic Security Architecture event hosted by the Maritime Research Center in Pune, India. There were approximately 25 virtual and 30 in-person participants in attendance. The focus was on the elements of how underwater securi-

NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

ty topics are being conceived in India and throughout the Indian Ocean Region.



10–12 June 2024 – Prof. Payne participated in a workshop jointly hosted by [Australian National University](#) National Security College and India’s National Maritime Foundation on Maritime Domain Awareness and Information Fusion. Bringing together fusion centers from around the region, the event examined how governments, militaries, and law enforcement are investing in processes designed to counter Maritime threats through data sharing and a common operational picture. Approximately 40 representatives from 17 countries took part.

13 June 2024 – At the China’s Himalayan Hustle virtual event, hosted by ISDP in Sweden, Prof. Payne spoke to an audience of 21 people. The webinar aimed to examine the extent of the Chinese investments and reach in infrastructure building in the Himalayan region. It explored China’s Himalayan strategy through its forays in neighboring territories to understand its long game in the region and whether China can ultimately achieve its revisionist aims in the Himalayas.

6–7 July 2024 – Prof. Payne contributed a chapter and spoke at the Chinese Overseas Ports in Africa and MENA Conference in San Francisco. The event was hosted by the Mr. & Mrs. S.H. Wong Center for the Study of Multinational Corporations with about 15 participants. The conference had a focus on China’s investments in port and port-related infrastructure throughout Africa and the Middle East, and how that investment is impacting regional politics.

10 July 2024 – Prof. Payne delivered a presentation on

“South Asia Dynamics” to the Reserve Component National Security Course (RCNSC) at National Defense University for about 92 participants.

Dr. Michael Sharnoff



16 May 2024 – Dr. Michael Sharnoff gave a presentation at the Washington Center on the “[Quest for Peace in the Middle East](#)” to more than 100 students across the United States interested in national security and foreign policy careers.

23 May 2024 – Dr. Sharnoff published the article “[Arab Challenges to Jordan’s Custodianship of Holy Sites in Jerusalem](#)” in the Journal of South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Vol. 47, No. 3, Spring 2024, pp. 57–78.

10 June 2024 – Professor David Des Roches, Distinguished Professor Hassan Abbas, Professor Gawdat Baghat, and Associate Professor Michael Sharnoff met with the Global Coalition to D-ISIS at Office of the Secretary of Defense in the Pentagon. NESA Center faculty learned more about D-ISIS Global Coalition efforts and priorities and shared perspectives on the current threat of ISIS and other issues in the Middle East, and Central and South Asia.

11 June 2024 – Associate Dean Charles Marks, Distinguished Professor Hassan Abbas, and Associate Professor Michael Sharnoff engaged with Security Cooperation Organization (SCO) personnel from CENTCOM, EUCOM, and INDOPACOM at Fort Lesley J. McNair in Washington, D.C. The NESA Center provided an overview of regional center functions, the NESA Center mission and lines of effort, NESA Center programing, and concluded by answering questions. Another SCO briefing was held with Dean Roger Kangas, Professor Gawdat Bahgat, and Associate Dean Charles Marks on 30 July 2024.

12 July 2024 – Dr. Sharnoff delivered a presentation on “U.S. Diplomacy in the Middle East” to the Reserve Component National Security Course (RCNSC) at National Defense University. The RCNSC is a two-week course offered in January, April, and July designed for Reserve military officers’ grade 0-5, 0-6, and E-9, as well as interagency and international

NESA Faculty & Staff Engagement

fellows (IFs). Each course typically has approximately 120–160 students. Michael previously presented on this same subject for the RCNSC in April 2024.

Richard Wiersema



20 April 2024 – Associate Dean Richard Wiersema participated on a four-person panel on the topic “The Strategic History of the Persian Gulf” during the Society of Military History’s annual conference in Arlington, VA. Dean Wiersema presented differing views of the Gulf region as a theater or objective in great power global strategies, which framed three subsequent presentations by scholars from the Emirates National Defense College, Australian National University and Rabdan Academy, who focused on the First World War

Anglo-Indian campaign in Mesopotamian, the Arcadia Agreement and the Persian Gulf Command during the Second World War, and the effects on high technology proliferation among Gulf state militaries, respectively. *The image below has Dean Wiersema on the left and Dr. Nicholas Gardner on the right.*



Alumni Publications & News

Alumni Publications & News

02 April – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed in the Global Strat View: "[Sri Lankan Prime Minister's Beijing Visit an Invitation for Chinese Strategic Expansion.](#)"

03 April – **Kalpani Gunathilaka Danangalage (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed for The Morning: "[SL's econ development & nat. security: Political stability essential.](#)"

08 April – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Diplomat, "[India's Long Road to Net-Zero.](#)"

09 April – **Raghavendra Kumar (India)** published an article for the Australian Journal of Maritime and Ocean Affairs: "[Locating Mozambique in India's strategy for a gas-based economy: leveraging natural gas in transition to a greener future and energy security.](#)"

12 April – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** wrote a viewpoint for the South Asia Journal: "[Undemocratic Rule of Modi's India is a Security Threat to South Asia.](#)"

13 April – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an article for the National Interest: "[Can India and the United States Bridge the Climate Gap?](#)"

29 April – **Charani Patabendige (Sri Lanka)** published an entry for the LSE Blog: "[The Importance of Political Literacy in South Asia.](#)"

29 April – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Diplomat: "[Meeting the Climate Crisis in Afghanistan.](#)"

01 May – **Viraj Solanki (India)** wrote an analysis for IISS: "[India's increased defence and security engagement with Southeast Asia.](#)"

11 May – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** authored an article for the South Asia Journal: "[Modi's Wolf Warrior Diplomacy Opens a Window for China in South Asia.](#)"

11 May – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Diplomat: "[Negotiating Climate Finance: India's Leadership Role in the Global South.](#)"

13 May – **Arslan Chikhaoui (Algeria)** wrote an article for the NESACenter Alumni Blog: "[The Trilateral North Africa Alliance Initiative.](#)"

28 May – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Diplomat: "[India, Iran, and the Taliban's Gamble on Chabahar.](#)"

29 May – **Charani Patabendige (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed for Eurasia Review: "[Social Media, Democracy And National Security.](#)"

14 June – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Diplomat: "[Afghanistan Under the Taliban: No Country for Women.](#)"

15 June – **Arslan Chikhaoui (Algeria)** wrote an article for the NESACenter Alumni Blog: "[G7 Summit: Algeria Strategic Partner in Mediterrafrica.](#)"

21 June – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** wrote an article for the NESACenter Alumni Blog: "[Domestic Political Stability and Foreign Policy in Modi 3.0: Chinese Submarine Base at Pekua in Bangladesh.](#)"

21 June – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Diplomat: "[India's Spurning Strategy Toward China: Contestation in Indo-Pacific.](#)"

27 June – **Anuttama Banerji (India)** published an article for Stimson: "[A Shared Interest: Why India and Pakistan Should Strengthen the Indus Waters Treaty.](#)"

28 June – **Frederic Grare (France)** published an Op-Ed for NatStrat: "[Enhancing Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief in the Indian Ocean.](#)"

02 July – **Charani Patabendige (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed for Modern Diplomacy: "[Fostering Social Media Literacy: Addressing Terrorism and Extremism in the Digital Age.](#)"

Alumni Publications & News

05 July – **Arslan Chikhaoui (Algeria)** wrote an article for the NESAs Alumni Blog: "[Bilateral Business Councils, an Inclusive Lever of Algeria's Economic Diplomacy.](#)"

05 July – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Diplomat: "[A Grand Bargain with the Taliban in Doha.](#)"

14 July – **Charani Patabendige (Sri Lanka)** published an Op-Ed for Modern Diplomacy: "[Perception's Role in Conflict: Understanding and Mitigating its Impact.](#)"

18 July – **Shanthie D'Souza (India)** published an Op-Ed for The Diplomat: "[Supply Chain Disruption: A Key Trigger for India's Plea for Climate Change Action.](#)"

30 July – **Sandun Gunawardana (Sri Lanka)** wrote an article for the NESAs Alumni Blog: "[Human Trafficking.](#)"

01 August – **Asanga Abeyagoonasekera (Sri Lanka)** wrote an article for Global Strat View: "[Seven Days in Sri Lanka: My Mother's Life and Shadows of Betrayal.](#)"

Calendar

Upcoming NESACenter Events

- **RJNDC Academic Kick-off** | 6–10 October 2024 | Amman, Jordan
- **Cyber Security Seminar** | 7–10 October 2024 | Mehravan, Armenia
- **SANDU Faculty Development Workshop** | 7–17 October 2024 | Washington, D.C.
- **ARCENT Land Forces Commander's Conference** | 12 October 2024 | Washington, D.C.
- **One-Day Executive Seminar** | 13 October 2024 | Doha, Qatar
- **Washington Embassy Orientation** | 21–25 October 2024 | Washington, D.C.
- **Underwater Domain Awareness Roundtable** | 22 October 2024 | Virtual
- **Washington Seminar** | 24 October 2024 | Washington, D.C.
- **Executive Seminar 01-25** | 28 October–8 November 2024 | Virtual
- **Indian Ocean Maritime Domain Awareness Technology Conference** | 12–15 November 2024 | Colombo, Sri Lanka
- **Executive Seminar 02-25** | 9–13 December 2024 | Washington, D.C.

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