The mission of the Near East South Asia Center for Strategic Studies (NESA) Center is to enhance stability in the Near East and in South Asia by providing an academic environment where strategic issues can be addressed, understanding deepened, partnerships fostered, defense-related decision-making improved, and cooperation strengthened among military and civilian leaders from the region and the United States. As of April 2006, David W. Barno, Lieutenant General, USA (Retired), former Commander of the Combined Forces Command Afghanistan, became the NESA Center Director.

Launched in October 2000, the Center builds on the strong bilateral relationships between the United States and countries in the NESA region by focusing on a multilateral approach to addressing regional security concerns and issues. It is designed to meet the knowledge needs of national security professionals by providing a forum for rigorous examination of the challenges that shape the security environment of the region. The Center provides a focal point where national decision makers can gather to exchange ideas and explore tools for cooperative problem solving.

The core curriculum examines four broad themes: the impact of globalization on regional strategic issues; the changing strategic environment - including an assessment of the campaign against terrorism and the implications of initiatives such as missile defense and military transformation; elements of strategic planning; and concepts for enhancing regional security.

The Center’s annual core activities include:

- Four three-week Executive Seminars (mid-to-upper level military and civilian professionals)
- One eight-day Senior Executive Seminar (upper-level military and civilian professionals)
- Two two-week Counter-Terrorism Seminars (mid- and upper-level military and civilian professionals)
• Several one- to three-day topical seminars for the Washington, D.C.-based NESA region community

Additional activities for future implementation include mission-relevant research fellowships, alumni activities, and distance education programs.

Executive, senior executive, and counter-terrorism seminars are held in Washington, D.C. Thematic regional and sub-regional conferences are held in Washington, D.C. or in the region. Participation is open to military and official civilian representatives from all countries in the NESA region with which the U.S. government maintains formal diplomatic relations, non-NESA countries that have strategic interests in the region, U.S. military, and federal government officials. Participants are nominated by their governments. The twenty-four participating nations from the region include:

Afghanistan  India  Lebanon  Oman  Tunisia
Algeria,  Iraq  Maldives  Pakistan  Turkey
Bahrain  Israel  Mauritania  Qatar  The United Arab Emirates
Bangladesh  Jordan  Morocco  Saudi Arabia  Yemen
Egypt  Kuwait  Nepal  Sri Lanka

Funded by the Department of Defense, the NESA Center, comprised of nearly forty faculty and staff, is associated with the National Defense University in Washington, D.C. The purview of the NESA Center extends from the Atlas Mountains in the west to the Himalayas in the east to Marrakech to Bangladesh.

The countries with which the United States has diplomatic relations will participate in the Center’s programs, as well as countries with a strategic interest in the region.

Afghanistan  Egypt  Jordan  Mauritania  Pakistan  Tunisia
Algeria  India  Kuwait  Morocco  Qatar  Turkey
Bahrain  Iraq  Lebanon  Nepal  Saudi Arabia  The United Arab Emirates
Bangladesh  Israel  Maldives  Oman  Sri Lanka  Yemen

Participation in the Center’s programs is not limited to these nations. We are actively soliciting the participation of neighboring countries with security interests relevant to the states of the region.