

Bulletin

Centre for
Arab & Islamic
Studies
(The Middle East
& Central Asia)

ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

The CAIS Advisory Board annual meeting was held on 20 August 2015.

The ANU Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Ian Young chaired the meeting and welcomed the Board's



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(from l to r): Mr Richard Gibbs, Ms Gai Brodtmann, The Hon. Sussan Ley, Prof. Paul Pickering, The Hon. Melissa Parke, The Hon. Prof. Gareth Evans, Mr Tom Harley, Prof. Ian Young and Prof. Amin Saikal.

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THE LEVANT CRISIS CONFERENCE

The one-day conference, 'The Levant Crisis: Syria, Iraq and the Region', was convened to discuss the causes, the roles of the many antagonists, regional actors and groups and other critical aspects of the conflict. The conference was jointly presented by the Coral Bell School of Asia Pacific Affairs (The Bell School) and the Centre for Arab and Islamic Studies (CAIS) on 11 December 2015. The event was opened by ANU Vice-Chancellor Professor Ian Young, who commented on the great capacity of the ANU to present important collaborative conferences such as this one.



Speakers included (pictured above) an expert on sectarianism, political Islam and studies of religious institutions, Dr Raihan Ismail; The Bell School Director and Professor of International Relations, Michael Wesley, ANU VC Prof. Ian Young; CAIS Director and Professor of Politics, Amin Saikal; former Ambassador to the Middle East, Mr Bob Tyson; CAIS research scholar, Katja Theodorakis. Also speaking were: intelligence and security expert, Dr John Blaxland; former senior diplomat and CAIS research scholar, Mr Ian Parmeter; Middle East specialist, Dr Vanessa Newby; an expert on insurgent 'information operations' and movements, Dr Haroro Ingram, and Russian specialist, Mr Kyle Wilson.

These experts in their fields gave both current and informative analysis of the crisis in the Levant and comprehensively debated the causes of the crisis, the role of regional and outside actors and the future trajectories for Syria and Iraq. The conference provided fresh insights into a very complex and difficult set of conflicts which are of great concern to both those acutely affected and, to governments and agencies around the globe. The conference was televised and will be available for viewing in the near future.

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** The views expressed in articles are those of the authors, not necessarily those of CAIS*

NEWS AND EVENTS

STAFF CHANGES/ APPOINTMENTS

Professor James Piscatori will hold a position at CAIS commencing in January 2016. Professor Piscatori has recently vacated the position of Chair of the School of Government and International Affairs at Durham University. In 2016 he will be taking courses in the Postgraduate program.

Matthew Gray is taking Outside Study Leave (OSP) over second semester 2015. He will be a visiting fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at Tokyo University, Japan.

AWARDS

Dr Zahra Taheri, Lecturer in the Persian Program, was made a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in August.

France Meyer, Lecturer in the Arabic Program, was nominated for the inaugural Patji-Dawes Award to honour outstanding achievements in language teaching by an accomplished practitioner in Australia.

CAIS research scholar, Elisabeth Yarbakhsh has won the 'Dean's Award for the most outstanding paper published by a HDR student in 2014'. She won the award for her paper: 'Green Martyrdom and the Iranian State' published by *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1, 2014.

VISITING FELLOW

In 2016 CAIS will be piloting a Council of Australian Arab Relations (CAAR) International Speakers Program by facilitating high-profile speakers from the Arab world to visit Australia. CAAR is an initiative of the Australian government's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade established in 2003 to foster education and policy links between the Arab world and Australia.

ROUNDTABLES

'Roundtable on Tunisia', Delegation from Tunisia, 23 July 2015.

'The Gulf, Iraq and Syria: will it get worse before it gets worse?', Bob Tyson former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Russia, Iraq and Kuwait, 16 October 2015.

LECTURES AND SEMINARS

'Palestine and Middle East Peace', The

Hon Bob Carr, former Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, 14 July 2015.

'Palestinian Statehood and going to the ICC', Prof. Lawrence Davidson, West Chester University, Pennsylvania, 23 July 2015.

'Islamic Finance: Religious identity, petrodollars, and legal arbitrage', Mahmoud Amin El-Gamal, Professor of Economics, Rice University, Texas, 30 July 2015.

'Civil society and the promotion of democratic transition in Egypt: Opportunities and Challenges', Professor Hamdy A. Hassan, Zayed University & Cairo University, 5 August 2015.

'Turkish foreign policy towards the Middle East under the Justice and Development Party', Associate Professor Bars Doster, 26 August 2015.

'Palestine Today: Citizen or Exile?' Dr Ghada Karmi, 7 September 2015.

'The nuclear deal between Iran and 5+1: Achievements and developments?', HE Mr Abdolhossein Vahaji, 9 September 2015.

'Human Development in the Middle East and North Africa Region: Past and Future', Dr Farrukh Iqbal, 22 October 2015.

'Dilemmas of Socio-Political Transformations in the Middle East', Professor Armando Salvatore, 18 November 2015.

POSTGRADUATE SEMINARS

'The Economic Statecraft of Stability: Chinese Foreign Policy in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan', Dirk Van der Kley, 7 August 2015.

'The Islamic Republic of Iran's Relations with the Republic of Tajikistan in the Post-Soviet Period', Brenton Clark, 11 August 2015.

'Compliance and Defiance in Patron-Client State Relationships: A Case Study of Pakistan's Relationship with the United States, 1947-2013', Aly Zaman, 14 August 2015.

'Twitter's effect on Political Dialogue 'In' and 'Among' the GCC Countries', Maryam Al-Khater, 1 September 2015.

'Transgressive 'Others' and Religious Offences: Making sense of blasphemy cases in Punjab, Pakistan, Sana Ashraf, 2 October 2015.

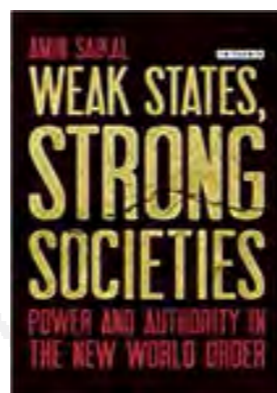
'Interdependence between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in the Formative Phase: Economic and Security Interests as Drivers of Cooperation', Maria Syed, 13 October 2015.

'What are Putin's objectives in intervening in Syria, and what are his aims in the wider Middle East? How are Russians reacting to his new foreign policy initiatives?' Ian Parmeter, 30 October 2015.

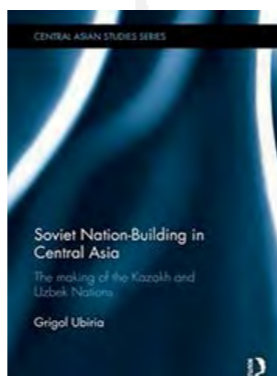
'Germany and the Merkelisation of the Refugee Crisis: The Political, Social and Philosophical Debate', Katja Theodorakis, 13 November 2015.

BOOKS PUBLISHED

Weak States, Strong Societies: Power and Authority in the New World Order, (ed) Amin Saikal, London, IB Tauris, 2016, pp. 272.



Grigol Ubiria, *Soviet Nation Building in Central Asia, The Making of the Kazakh and Uzbek Nations*, Routledge, 2015.



PROSPECTS FOR SECURITY IN AFGHANISTAN & CENTRAL ASIA

This event in Kyrgyzstan's capital city of Bishkek brought leading scholars and analysts from Australia and Central Asia to the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Academy in Bishkek to discuss current and emerging issues in the region related to Afghanistan. The mission of the OSCE Academy is to promote regional cooperation, conflict prevention and good governance in Central Asia through offering post-graduate education, professional trainings and intellectual exchange.



Mr Dirk van der Kley, Dr Kirill Nourzhanov, Dr Christian Bleuer, Prof. Amin Saikal, Prof. Diana Digol, Prof. Irina Chernykh, Dr Mahmadyusuf Tashrifov, Dr Emil Juraev, Dr Kamoludin Abdullaev, Prof. Rustam Burnashev and Prof. Payom Foroughi with scholars from OSCE

This workshop held on 30 November and 1 December was part of the Australian Research Council (ARC)-funded research project entitled 'Afghanistan and Central Asia: Regional security dynamics in a new strategic environment'. The scholars and practitioners who attended the workshop explored how Afghanistan and its neighbours (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan) respond to the emerging security, economic and social dynamics of the region. Their contributions provided new insights into how the Central Asian republics manage threats and tensions in the region, especially after NATO's substantial combat withdrawal from Afghanistan.

Four scholars from CAIS came to the OSCE Academy to exchange opinions and compare notes with eminent colleagues from Afghanistan and Central Asia on different aspects of security in the region. Attending the conference were Professor Amin Saikal, the Director, Dr Kirill Nourzhanov, a senior lecturer, Dr Christian Bleuer, a research fellow, and Dirk van der Kley, a research scholar whose project is on Chinese foreign policy in Central Asia. The informed discussion worked towards promoting better understanding of the complex and rapidly evolving situation and contributed to relevant policy debates in Australia, Afghanistan, Central Asia, and the rest of the world.

The resulting presentation and lively discussion will be integrated into a forthcoming report to be published early next year on the theme of Afghanistan's relations with Central Asia and Russia.

ROUNDTABLE ON TUNISIA

CAIS held a roundtable on Tunisia on 23 July 2015. The principle speakers were a group of Tunisian academics and leaders of NGOs. The delegation was in Canberra for a Symposium on Democratic Transformation in Tunisia organised by Deakin University, in partnership with DFAT. The discussion was chaired by CAIS Prof. Amin Saikal and Professor Fethi Mansouri, the Director of the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation. The speakers were: Raoudha Ben Othman, *Faculté des sciences humaines et sociales de Tunis* University of Tunis; Najet Mchala, Professor of English and critical theory at *The Institut Supérieur des Langues de Tunis*, University of Carthage; Lamia Benyoussef, Assistant Professor in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Alabama, Birmingham; and Ms Ines Amri, a teacher-turned-NGO-professional, founder of *Volonté et Citoyenneté* (Will and Citizenship Organisation).



(from l to r): Ines Amri, Amin Saikal, Fethi Mansouri, Ambassador of Libya, H.E. Mr Musbah Allafi, Lamia Benyoussef, Najet Mchala, Raoudha Ben Othman; and the Ambassador of Tunisia, H.E. Mr Nabil Lakhel

The speakers discussed the aspects of Tunisian social history and politics that set it apart from other Middle Eastern countries going through revolutionary change. Prominent amongst these was the fact that change had been a long process of fermentation in Tunisia— it was not something that occurred overnight just to topple a dictator. It was noted that universal education had always been a priority in Tunisia and this meant the population had the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances. Fifty years of secularism and a spirit of social horizontality allowed Tunisian social and political institutions to provide the stability needed to support change. Conversely, the Tunisian social and political systems showed short-comings in a number of areas. The speakers pointed to a lack of integration of international institutions; political parties that were weak and undemocratic and not open to women and young people, and lastly it was suggested that the polarity between the secularists and the Islamists was potentially a volatile issue.

IRAQ'S POLITICAL LEADERS ARE BEING MADE TO FEEL THE HEAT

by Jacky Sutton

Iraqis of every creed, sect and political philosophy are defying security forces, *Daesh* and the sweltering heat to protest against poverty, unemployment and a venal political elite.

It's been a long, hot summer in Iraq, and as the Islamic year draws to a close, protesters in Baghdad's Tahrir Square are preparing for a final mass demonstration on 18 September before *Eid* and the holy month of *Muharram*.

And in a pageant as compelling as the massed crowds of pilgrims heading towards Karbala to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein or to Mecca to make *hajj*, demonstrators from towns, cities and villages across the country are coming to the capital to join their fellow citizens.

The slogans vary from narrow interest-based aims ('Give us clean water and a job') to those articulating a broader aspiration ('We want democracy and an end to corruption').

The demonstrators are not surrendering, they say, but will announce on Friday that they are going to use the time to take stock of what they have achieved and organise a comprehensive manifesto so that the energy and enthusiasm of the protests is not dissipated through a lack of strategic direction.

They have already forced drastic political concessions from prime minister Haider al-Abadi, which include a pledge to reform Iraq's sectarian quota system that is held to be partly responsible for facilitating the rise of *Daesh* in the Sunni heartlands of the west of the country.

For the last few weeks, Iraqis of every creed, sect and political philosophy have been defying security forces, *Daesh* and the sweltering heat to take to the streets and protest against rampant corruption and the sclerotic political system imposed by the US-backed coalition in 2003 in the name of democratic change.

Iraqis have endured a decade and more of squandered opportunities, raised and dashed expectations, and the humiliation of seeing their country run by craven politicians answering to paymasters as far apart ideologically as Washington and Tehran - with Ankara, Riyadh and Damascus thrown into the mix for good measure.

They are Sunni, Shia, Kurdish, Yazidi, Christian, Turkmen, Shabak — men and women. Iraq's glorious heterogeneity is out there defying the *Daesh* narrative of bleak sectarian hegemony and united in anger and frustration against poverty, unemployment and a venal political elite.

The temperatures this year have topped 50 degrees Celsius and, despite billions of dollars being poured into infrastructure over the last 12 years, OPEC's second biggest oil producer can't provide the power to keep generators running. When it gets too hot, the government simply calls a holiday and schools and offices shut down.

In addition, Iraq's community of people with disabilities (PWDs) has been out in force, raising their voices to protest the government's indifference to the multiple exclusions that they face.

There are over one million PWDs in Iraq according to the Iraqi Alliance of People with Disabilities (IADO), many of them veterans from the Iran-Iraq war or survivors of terrorist attacks. Although Iraq signed the international disability convention in 2013, its laws and its officials' behaviour reflect the patronising attitudes of the 1960s, when people were considered 'handicapped' and were shut away from opportunity and sight.

Iraq's second 'Arab Spring' started as a reaction to the death of Muntazar al-Hilfi, a young student from Basra who was shot dead in mid-July by security forces at a peaceful demonstration against the lack of basic services such as electricity and water. His death, like that of Mohamed Bouazizi in Tunisia and Khaled Saeed in Egypt, was a catalyst for mass action and civil society organisations sprang into action. There had been protests before, in 2011 and 2013, but these were met with sectarian violence and limited, superficial concessions by then prime minister Nouri al-Maliki.

But the game changer for al-Maliki, whose sectarian politics is blamed for providing a ripe environment for the emergence of *Daesh*, was the collapse of the Iraqi army, once an icon of national pride, and the loss of Iraq's third largest city, Mosul, to *Daesh*.

This was followed by the massacre of more than 800 young and unarmed recruits, most of them from al-Maliki's powerbase in the Shiite southern provinces. A year of

protests by families demanding to know what happened to their loved ones set the scene for this summer's unrest and even roused Grand Ayatollah al Sistani, famous for his political reticence but arguably the most influential person in the country, to back the protesters.

This Friday's demonstration — and the government's response to it — could be a watershed moment for Iraq.

Despite government warnings that external forces were behind the mass protests, there was no one single organiser. Rather, Facebook has provided a common platform for mobilising people onto the streets and for exchanging ideas about slogans and demands. It is also the platform for consolidating positions now that politicians have felt the impact of the 'Iraqi Street' and are seeking to co-opt dissenting groups in the business-as-usual pork barrel style of Iraqi politics - by creating "special advisor" roles and organising lavish round tables in five star, air-conditioned hotels.

But Iraqis are no fools, and they have had enough. Police and security forces have been handing out bottles of water to protesters and helping those in wheelchairs get through to the square. The exodus of young people, many to their deaths in the treacherous waters of the Mediterranean, has reached crisis proportions and *Daesh* is just one of a dozen militia groups wreaking havoc on future planning at all levels.

This Friday's demonstration — and the government's response to it — could be a watershed moment for Iraq. And it will be followed, on Monday, by the Baghdad City of Peace Carnival, organised for the fifth time in a row by Iraq's young people in defiance of a senior class that has let them down. And which proudly announces on its Facebook page that it provides safe spaces for people with special needs.

Jacky Sutton wrote this article from Iraq on 18 September 2015.

KABUL: A NEW DAY DAWNS, AN OLD YEAR DIES

by Jacky Sutton

It's cold here in Kabul, but there is no snow. This is good news for we expats, sitting outside the social centre on the UN compound, catching the white rays of the New Year's winter sun and discussing upcoming rest breaks to Goa or grumbling about yet another deadline. Behind us the Koh-e Kuhnah Khomar Mountain looms brown against the azure sky, jutting above her saw-toothed, swarthy sisters. The mountains surround the city, trapping the ever-present smog in a throat-tickling haze that overhangs us like a shadow.

A chill wind blows constantly, but there are no clouds to catch the planes that lumber across the deep arc of the horizon, bearing away the last of the foreign troops whose presence has both comforted and enraged Afghans and aid workers alike for the last 13 years. There was a low-key drawdown ceremony for the US-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) at the heavily defended NATO bunker on Sunday.

The Taliban, or those who claim to represent Washington's current Nemesis (or one of them) responded by mocking the foreigners, claiming that once more the Graveyard of Empires was living up to its name, and sending them packing in undignified retreat. They've been quieter these last few days, the last mass attack being a few days ago in central Kabul, an IED against a minivan filled with unarmed young recruits for the army, and in Helmand, a rocket on a wedding party that killed 24. That after sending a murderer with a bomb into the audience of a school play at the French-run Lycée Estéqlalin Kabul on December 11.

Several people died as a result of that 'spectacular', including a cameraman Zobir Hatami, whose back was blown off. He lived for 10 days more and when he died he was 23. The hundred or so journalists who attended his funeral have vowed not to cover the Taliban any more, not to let their deeds soil their broadcasts or writing. It's a tactic that has worked in the past; like all evangelists, the Taliban like to see themselves reflected in the eyes of others, even if those others are infidels and reporters.

However widespread disgust at the massacre of children in a school in Peshawar earlier in December has

cowed the killers somewhat, denting their self-proclaimed founding myth of being the agents of justice and security — a mission statement enshrined in their institutional Code of Conduct, or Layha. I guess it's hard, walking that narrow line between intimidating people enough so that they don't "collaborate" with the "foreign-backed government" and educate their girls, and intimidating them too much that they are repulsed. So the killers have hunkered down for a while, leaving the streets to the regular guys who rule the country.

There was a big gunfight in Kabul today between supporters of ex-warlord General Din Mohamad Jurat, former head of public order at the Ministry of Interior, and ex-warlord Haji Rahim Puri. It only rates a mention in the press because General Din's son was killed, and this could signal the beginning of faction fighting, which last time round reduced much of Kabul to rubble before a plane flew into a tower in New York over a decade ago and triggered the latest foreign invasion.

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Ms Jacky Sutton passed away in tragic circumstances on 18 October. She was a research scholar at CAIS from January 2014. She had already accomplished much as a journalist and humanitarian activist, working with the BBC and several international organisations, including UN agencies. In all her endeavours, she was clearly focused on helping the needy and improving the role of women in public life. She had set out to do her PhD fieldwork in Erbil, Iraq, in July 2015 and was due back in November to complete her dissertation by early 2017.

Jacky was a highly intelligent and dedicated scholar, with an extraordinary capacity for active participation in various academic and humanitarian efforts and organisations. She had distinguished herself as a very gifted writer, thinker, researcher, teacher and organiser.

The Centre held a Celebration of the Life of Jacky on 24 November 2015. Jacky's sister, Jenny Sutton, was able to travel from Britain to attend the ceremony which was hosted by the CAIS Director, Amin Saikal. Also attending were ANU Pro-Vice-Chancellor Jenny Corbett, academics from the ANU community including the Gender Institute, members of the Canberra branch of UNWomen, representatives of Canberra media organisations, members of the diplomatic community, and many of Jacky's colleagues, fellow scholars and friends.

While the occasion was extremely sad it was a worthy testament to Jacky's commitment to her work with a number of speeches acknowledging her enormous contributions to the political and social organisations she cared so deeply about. Also acknowledged was Jacky's dedication to her scholarly endeavours including her research and teaching while she was enrolled at the Centre. It was also noted that Jacky was a very productive member of the wider academic community presenting many papers and speeches on Iraq and Afghanistan.

Amin Saikal announced at the end of the ceremony, the establishment of the *Jacky Anne Sutton Prize* as a tribute to Jacky Sutton, her life and work. This annual prize, which is set up with the support of the Research School of Social Sciences, CASS, ANU, is to be awarded to the student with the best results in the course 'Politics in the Middle East'.



PAKISTAN-INDIA RELATIONS: TROUBLED TIMES IN A NUCLEAR NEIGHBOURHOOD

by Aly Zaman

During his election campaign in 2013, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had made the cultivation of substantially improved relations with India a cornerstone of his proposed foreign policy agenda. Upon winning the elections and becoming prime minister for a third time, Sharif vowed to pick up the threads of the relationship from where they had been sundered in 1999, when the Pakistani army had scuttled his peacemaking efforts with his Indian counterpart, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, by launching the disastrous Kargil conflict in Kashmir. However, with Sharif's government half way through its term in office, Pakistan's relations with India remains mired in mutual animosity and suspicion and the latter part of 2014 witnessed the most intense artillery exchanges between the armies of the two countries along their common border in Kashmir since the conclusion of a 2003 ceasefire.

Nawaz Sharif had openly proclaimed his thumping electoral win as a popular mandate for normalising relations with New Delhi and emphasised the need for greater economic cooperation and expanded trade as essential conditions for the attainment of his foremost policy objective of reviving Pakistan's anaemic economy. Right from the outset, however, he had to contend with powerful and sustained resistance from the military, including through periodically raising the temperature along the Line of Control. The military also stymied Sharif's attempts to detach trade from politics and pressurised him into holding off on granting Most Favoured Nation (MFN) trading status to India until a new government had been formed in New Delhi after elections in 2014.

Relations between the two countries soured dramatically in 2014. India's new Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, started off on a positive note by inviting his Pakistani counterpart to his inauguration as prime minister. For his part, Sharif demonstrated considerable political courage in accepting Modi's invitation despite opposition from the military. Disappointingly, however, it was not long before the initial promise of an upswing in relations was replaced by an all-too-familiar environment of mutual acrimony. Artillery exchanges between the Indian and Pakistani armies across their disputed border in Kashmir became regular and often lethal occurrences. Both sides

blamed the other for initiating hostilities that led to dozens of military and civilian fatalities and the displacement of thousands of people from their homes along the border.

Although there has been a cautious resumption of diplomatic contacts in 2015, especially a meeting between the two prime ministers in July in which they agreed to revive discussions on terrorism and security issues, the relationship remains tense and cross-border artillery exchanges continue intermittently. New Delhi is sceptical of recent professions made by the Pakistani military and civilian leadership to discontinue the practice of distinguishing between 'good' and 'bad' militants and cites the continued tolerance for India-oriented *jihadi* outfits as evidence of Islamabad's unwillingness to live up to its anti-terrorist rhetoric. For its part, Pakistan accuses India of lending covert assistance to the Pakistani Taliban, supporting terrorist elements in Pakistan's commercial heartland of Karachi and assisting secessionist forces in Pakistan's restive Balochistan province.

In view of the pervasive mistrust — if not outright hostility — that currently afflicts India-Pakistan relations, another substantial terrorist attack in India launched by Pakistan-based militant groups could trigger off a conflict that spirals into an eventual nuclear exchange. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's consistently hardline approach towards Pakistan makes it reasonable to assume that India will mount an aggressive military response to a major attack on its territory purportedly carried out by Pakistan-based non-state actors. However, India faces a considerable dilemma in working out a retaliatory option that will not be sufficiently threatening to Pakistan to incur a nuclear response but will still be effective enough to force a change of thinking in Islamabad about continuing its support to anti-India militant groups. Launching air or missile strikes on suspected terrorist camps in Pakistan-administered Kashmir might be considered a measured response calculated to prevent panic in Islamabad whilst still satisfying public opinion in India. On the other hand, India's decision to limit its retaliation to Kashmir could be construed by Pakistan's decision makers as a price not sufficiently high enough to necessitate withdrawing support to anti-India militants.

An Indian ground incursion into Pakistan would carry even greater risks of escalation. In view of India's overwhelming superiority in conventional arms, Pakistan's strategic planners have sought to maintain 'minimum credible deterrence' through a first-use nuclear doctrine aimed at preventing a conventional Indian attack by threatening the first use of nuclear weapons. In contrast, India has a declared no-first-use nuclear policy but its senior political and military officials have consistently claimed that Pakistan's nuclear capability will not deter India from waging a conventional war. Pakistan has sought to blunt India's conventional superiority — more pronounced than ever before owing to India currently being among the world's largest arms importers — by expanding its nuclear arsenal, including through the incorporation of low-yield tactical nuclear weapons (TNWs) and miniaturised warheads. Pakistan's nuclear programme is believed to be the fastest growing in the world with the potential to stockpile enough fissile material to boost its arsenal from its estimated existing strength of between 110 and 120 nuclear weapons to as many as 200 by 2020.

Apart from the growing conventional imbalance with India, another factor driving Pakistan's accelerated fissile production capacity is the expanding strategic partnership between the United States and India, especially in the realm of nuclear cooperation. A breakthrough agreement during President Obama's state visit to India in January 2015 ended a prolonged bureaucratic deadlock on a nuclear deal initially signed in 2006. Although ostensibly intended only to facilitate civilian use of nuclear energy, the agreement permits India to import uranium, thereby potentially enabling it to put its domestic stocks of uranium to military use without having to divert them from its civilian nuclear facilities. Pakistan has warned that the agreement will have an inimical effect on nuclear deterrence and strategic stability in South Asia. In view of Pakistan's strategic relationship with China, which includes nuclear cooperation, there is the potential for Beijing to hedge against an India-US axis by increasing its military and nuclear-related assistance to Islamabad, further increasing the risk of a major arms race in the subcontinent.

Considering the current downward spiral in India-Pakistan relations and Pakistan's decision to offset its conventional imbalance with India through increasing reliance on nuclear weapons, the need for strategic restraint and nuclear risk-reduction by both countries has seldom been more urgent. By giving its nuclear arsenal a battlefield component through the incorporation of TNWs, Pakistan has considerably lowered the threshold for nuclear weapons use. The costs of a nuclear war in the subcontinent would be catastrophic not only for the region but for the world. The Pakistani military's decision to introduce tactical nuclear weapons into its war-fighting plans is a continuation of its traditional coercive diplomacy towards India, whereby it has been able to ratchet up support to cross-border militancy in Kashmir secure

in the conviction that the nuclear deterrent would ward off a retaliatory Indian attack. Yet, the response of India under Modi to a major provocation seen to emanate from Pakistan is likely to be much more vigorous than ever before. By calling Pakistan's nuclear bluff, however, India might in turn expose itself to a nuclear attack.

A frightening scenario of this sort further underscores the need for India and Pakistan to lower tensions, resume dialogue and establish reliable lines of communication, thereby obviating the potential for accidents and miscalculations that could have devastating consequences on a global scale. Both countries should make a fresh start by clarifying the parameters of their nuclear doctrines in the light of existing ground realities. There

should also be greater transparency on the strength of their respective arsenals as well as on the deployment of nuclear weapons. Consultative meetings of nuclear authorities should be arranged on a regular basis so that mutual concerns could be aired and avenues for their redressal explored. At the end of the day, however, progress on nuclear risk reduction will remain conditional on an improvement in the overall relationship between India and Pakistan. As long as contentious areas such as Kashmir and terrorism remain unresolved, there remains an enduring risk of even a limited conventional conflict escalating into a nuclear exchange.

Aly Zaman is a Research Scholar at CAIS. He has submitted his doctoral thesis for examination.



Australian National University



Applications for Semester 1 enrolment close Friday 29 January 2016.

Information

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PALESTINE AND MIDDLE EAST PEACE

The Hon. Bob Carr, former Premier of NSW and the former Federal Government Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, presented an ANU Public lecture on 'Palestine and the Middle East Peace' on 14 July 2015.

Mr Carr explained in his address why he was now a 'friend of Palestine'. He said that in 1977 when he and Bob Hawke launched the 'Labor friends of Israel', there were 25,000 settlers in the 'occupied territories'. Now there are 500,000 settlers and the Palestinian people are subject to mass arrests, violence and impossible living conditions. Mr Carr argued that in view of the settlements and settler violence, he was now pitching the case in terms of the rights of the Palestinian people, recognised in International law and every draft peace statement supported by the world for a quarter of a century.

In 1977 members of the Labor Party did not know the full story of what had happened in the original occupation. Now Israeli historians, with a measure of Israel's openness, have gone to the archives of their army to tell the full story of how massacres were used during the foundation of Israel in 1948 to drive out 700,000 Palestinians. Now the occupation has lasted 47 years and up to 60 per cent of the Israeli cabinet is on record as opposing a two-state solution.

The International community is backing the recognition of Palestine, with 138 nations supporting it. At the same time, Israel is at risk of being cast as an apartheid state and will become increasingly isolated in the world community. At the same time, Palestinians must commit to non-violent resistance, not a third intifada. They must build international support and engage with the righteous Jews who condemn the takeover of Zionism by the fanatics.

Mr Carr concluded with the point that to accept permanent occupation and colonial rule for the Palestinians, with one religious and racial group enjoying the vote and the majority being denied it, would be unthinkable. He said such colonial rule has never survived and won't in the case of Israel and the Palestinians.



Prof. Amin Saikal, The Hon. Bob Carr and Mr Kevin Bray from the *Australians for Justice and Peace in Palestine*

ISLAMIC FINANCE LECTURE



Prof. Steven Roberts, Director of Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies & Applied Statistics, CBE; Prof. Rabee Tourky, Director, Research School of Economics, CBE; Prof. Amin Saikal and Prof. El-Gamal.

Professor Mahmoud El-Gamal, Chaired Professor of Islamic, Economics, Finance, and Management, Rice University, Houston gave a lecture on 'Islamic Finance: Religious identity, petrodollars, and legal arbitrage' on 30 July 2015. The lecture was hosted by CAIS, the Research School of Finance, Actuarial Studies and Statistics and the Research School of Economics, ANU College of Business & Economics.

In his lecture, Professor El-Gamal explained how Islamic finance as a contemporary form of religious-legal arbitrage, caters to a narrow market segment, and, fails to contribute substantially to financial inclusion of Muslims, who remain among the most excluded financially. He said this is not surprising in light of the genesis and modes of operation of this industry which were established during the twentieth century and were mainly based on medieval and ancient legal stratagems to circumvent ancient prohibitions, which predate Islam.

RUSSIA'S INTERVENTION IN SYRIA

by Ian Parmeter

I spent nearly a fortnight in Moscow and St Petersburg in October, during which I was able to have discussions on Russia's intervention in Syria with several Russian think tankers and journalists, as well as some resident foreign observers.

Russia's objectives in intervening in Syria

The following picture of Russian aims in intervening in Syria emerged from my discussions in Moscow:

Preservation of the Assad regime, with which Russia and previously the former Soviet Union have been closely linked since Bashar al-Assad's father, Hafez, came to power in 1971, and with which Russia has a formal treaty of friendship and cooperation.

Preservation of Russian access to its naval facility in Tartus, the only Russian military base outside the former Soviet Union.

Preventing the US and its Western allies from carrying out another Libya-style operation in Syria through toppling Assad (several Russian interlocutors emphasised the importance of this factor: the Putin administration believes Russia was 'dudged' over UN Security Council Resolution 1973 in 2011, on which Russia abstained in order to allow limited humanitarian military intervention in Libya, but which NATO abused to provide military support to the rebels in ousting Gaddafi).

Demonstrating to Arabs and others (including in other parts of the world) that Putin, in contrast with Obama, stands by his allies and is capable of resolute action in contrast with perceived US dithering.

Preventing development of a dangerous security vacuum in the region if the Assad regime fell (if Sunni hardliners – Islamic State and others – came to control the whole of Syria as well as significant parts of Iraq, the contagion could easily spread and have adverse repercussions in Russia's Muslim-majority provinces).

Russian spokesmen have also made point that the intervention will be limited to air strikes and logistics/training support for the Syrian army. They emphasise that there is no intention that Russian ground forces will become involved in significant operations, and there will be no 'mission creep'.

All I spoke with in Moscow were adamant that Russia would not have intervened if it

had not believed that the Assad regime was losing its capacity to survive and in growing danger of collapse.

And its aims in the wider Middle East

All argued the Middle East is a second order priority for Russia in geopolitical terms. The US, the West broadly and China formed its main geostrategic focus. Some saw its interests in the Middle East as essentially tactical rather than strategic.

None believed Putin had an overall plan to try to resume a Soviet-style strategic rivalry with the US, in which Russia and the US would again vie with each other in cultivating rival clients in many parts of the world, including the Middle East.

Russia simply could not afford that sort of foreign policy, which would involve major investments of people and money in third world countries. Putin, who all argued is a foreign policy realist, was not silly enough to believe it could. So a major Russian play for the Middle East would not make sense, even taking into account the opening provided for Moscow because of the many errors and missteps the US had made in the region in the past 15 years.

But, that said, Russia is benefitting from its appearance of resolve compared with apparent US dithering, and is doing interesting things in the Middle East.

One analyst made the point that even the fact that conservative Arab states don't like Russia's support for Assad does not prevent them from dealing with it. Saudi Foreign Minister al-Jubeir (representing the Gulf Arab states in this as well) is in regular personal dialogue with Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov. Putin and King Salman have agreed in principle to visit each other's capitals.

Russia's relations with Egypt, a major US partner in the region for decades, are moving ahead strongly, with a visit to Cairo by Putin and multiple bilateral ministerial meetings this year.

Russia's regional outreach includes Iraq as well, manifested through the recent announcement of an intelligence-sharing arrangement involving Russia, Syria, Iran and Iraq. This would have been particularly galling to the US, given the blood and treasure it has expended in that country in

the past 12 years.

These notionally pro-US states are clearly using their Moscow diplomacy to send messages of dissatisfaction to the US.

We'll have to see where all this leads. But one Moscow analyst made the point that one of Putin's underlying foreign policy aims was an unambiguous throw-back to the Soviet Union – ensuring that no international decisions of importance should be taken against Russian interests.

How Russians are reacting

It was clear in Moscow that the regime is spinning the Syrian intervention well through a major media campaign. Public statements emphasise that the aim of the intervention is to counter Middle East terrorism *in situ* before it can come to Russia – so protection of the Russian public is the underlying goal.

The campaign also plays to nationalism. The narrative is that the US and allies (including of course Australia) botched their intervention in Iraq and Syria against IS so Russian professionals are now doing the job. Television news shows aerial photos of Russian bombs hitting targets. Weather forecasters on Russian television even comment that clear skies in the Middle East mean it's a good day for bombing.

For now, the intervention seems to have broad public support – polls in mid-October showed some 70 per cent in favour, with Putin's personal approval rating at 90 per cent.

How long will this last? Russians I spoke with made the point that there is no constituency in Russia for solving Assad's problems. The Putin administration would certainly be aware that the public mood could quickly turn sour if the campaign were to lose momentum, and particularly if Russian forces in Syria started to incur significant casualties.

Where does the Syrian intervention go from here?

There are three major factors that would affect Russian planning:

Russia would have to be wary of becoming bogged down in Syria. The aim must surely be to stabilise Assad's situation, push

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RUSSIA'S INTERVENTION IN SYRIA

by Ian Parmeter

continued from previous page

back the rebels, and then look at winding down the operation or getting out. It will be important for Putin to be able to declare to Russian and world opinion that the intervention has achieved its objectives.

These operations are expensive, and the Russian budget is facing difficulties from low oil prices and the impact of Western sanctions. GDP is down three per cent this year, the 2015 Budget in deficit, and there are reports of severe budget pruning measures being planned for next year. Russia still has healthy foreign reserves – over \$500 billion (not that much less than Saudi Arabia's reserves of \$735 billion) – so the situation not yet dire. But the trend is for budget deficits for years to come – a worry in itself and exacerbated by next point.

Western sanctions on export of energy technology to Russia are now having a significant delaying effect on its medium and long-term energy development projects. Many of western Siberia's oil/gas fields are declining, and Russia needs reinvestment, redevelopment and the discovery of new resources just to maintain its current production levels. This has adverse implications for Russian revenue from energy exports for years to come if the sanctions are not eased soon.

So far, the Syrian intervention seems to have been effective in taking some of the pressure off the Syrian army, but the end point for the Russian campaign is not clear.

The aim is probably to enable Assad to preserve his hold on the broad swathe of territory from south of Damascus, up to the Mediterranean coast and across to the Aleppo-Homs corridor. The Assad regime, even with Russian help, probably wouldn't try to push further at this stage. It would be highly significant if the regime could consolidate its hold over this area as it is the most productive part of the country (in normal times) and includes about 75 per cent of Syrian population. With effective control there, Assad would be in a position to survive for some time, and eventually to try to win back the rest of the country.

A Ukrainian connection?

But there's another factor. Russians I spoke with believed the intervention had a link with Ukraine, and speculated on a possible Russian-Western deal on Syria that could

have a flow on to Ukraine and the easing of Western sanctions on Russia.

The essential idea is that Russia and the US would agree on a Syrian government of national unity involving Alawites and 'moderate' Sunnis. The Russians would be prepared to sacrifice Assad (allowing him a dignified exit), thus giving the US a foreign policy win.

The notional deal assumes that Russia would be able to maintain its interests in Syria with such new governmental arrangements, and that Tehran would go along if it could maintain a working relationship with the new leadership and Iran's access to Lebanon through Syria.

The third part of this trifecta is that Russian-Western good will emanating from the Syria agreement would facilitate maintenance of the current lull in the conflict in eastern Ukraine, enabling broad fulfilment of the Minsk II agreement. That could mean that the Europeans – and even the US – might be prepared to ease sanctions.

This would be an extremely clever trick if it could be pulled off.

None of the people I spoke with thought it could – at least in the form envisaged by Russia. Though a deal to coordinate action on Syria would be in the interests of both Russia and the US, there was too much distrust between them for agreement to be reached.

Despite that caveat, Russia now appears to be pushing Assad to have presidential and parliamentary elections. These are not needed at this time (there was a presidential election only last year; and parliamentary elections – last held in May 2012 – are not due till next year). But the elections could be a prelude for new Syrian constitutional arrangements allowing a significant role for moderate Sunnis.

Interestingly, Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov and US Secretary of State Kerry (plus their Saudi and Turkish counterparts) are still talking about some form of agreement over Syria – suggesting none of them has abandoned the idea.

Interestingly also, Putin had talks with German Chancellor Merkel, French President Hollande and Ukrainian President Poroshenko earlier this month. Hollande

seems impressed with the reduction in fighting in eastern Ukraine and is reported even to have said there is a case for easing sanctions.

Time pressures

So, all of that said, to what extent is Russia now in control of what happens in Syria? Does Putin have a clear strategy, or is his policy evolving?

Some I spoke with thought Putin could have his hand forced, and feel compelled to wind down the operation, if it became evident that Russian public opinion was turning against the intervention.

As well, Russia will be watching anxiously the performance of the Syrian army with Russian air and logistics support reinforced by Iranian and Lebanese Hizballah elements on the ground. Can they establish a swathe of territory that Assad can control without direct Russian involvement? If they can't, the intervention strategy would need a rethink.

Putin will certainly want to avoid mission creep to the point where the operation starts to take on a medium to long term character – for budgetary as well as public opinion reasons.

He may also be banking on some sort of agreement on Syria emerging from the Lavrov-Kerry talks.

There is perhaps another clock ticking. Despite the poor personal relations between Putin and Obama, Putin has to assume that his relations with the next US administration from 2017 will be worse – Hilary Clinton and the Republican candidates are all saying they would be firmer with Russia than Obama has been. On that reasoning, Russia has about 15 months to work out a deal on Syria, and for that matter on Ukraine, with the US before the bilateral environment becomes even more challenging.

Ian Parmeter is currently a Research Scholar at CAIS examining Russian policy towards the Middle East in the Putin era. Prior to this he worked on Middle East issues with a number of Australian Government agencies for almost 40 years. His overseas assignments included diplomatic postings in Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Russia and Lebanon, the last as Ambassador.

THE OIL KINGDOM'S GAMBIT

by Maria Syed

Oil is synonymous with Saudi Arabia, there is no mention of one without the other. And not without good reason. Oil is the lifeline for the Kingdom as it is tied intricately to all aspects of life driving the economic engine, and underpinning the political and social base of the state and society. Saudi Arabia is home to 20 per cent of world's oil reserves, the biggest producer and exporter of oil, and the world's major swing producer. Oil is the backbone of Saudi Arabia's economy, accounting for roughly 80 per cent of its budget and 90 per cent of export revenues. Oil has contributed to more than revenue generation. Oil production has underwritten the regime's contract with its people.

Recent commentaries have once again underscored the direct relationship between oil and the Kingdom, suggesting that all is not well for Saudi Arabia. These experts assert that the Kingdom will decline as its oil runs out. While domestic demand for oil has soared due to a growing population, international demand is predicted to fall. To confirm veracity of these claims, an assessment is in order.

The 'peak oil' debate has postulated that if no major discoveries are made, the extraction rate of crude oil will see a steady slump after reaching its maximum output. Within this school of thought there are pessimists and optimists, those that uphold that the world is already past the peak oil stage and those who state that this point is yet to come respectively. Time and again such concerns have been expressed about Saudi Arabia. However, there is also a consensus that technological advancements can help increase production capacity. The best evidence of this view is seen in the shale revolution in the US that experienced its peak oil stage as early as the 1970s. As technological advancements are found they may well advantage Saudis as well. Though technological progress may come in the form of alternative energy sources and not necessarily in hydrocarbons. Furthermore, with the largest proven reserves of oil and the fourth largest reserves of gas in the world, Saudi Arabia is not running out of hydrocarbon reserves any time soon. Russia, as the second largest holder of the world's oil reserves, is the most likely country to deplete its oil reserves, because of its high production rate.

In order for Saudi Arabia to generate oil

revenues, international demand for oil needs to be there. In Europe, renewable sources are increasingly becoming part of the energy mix. With the drive for alternative, renewable and clean energy sources growing. Saudi Arabia, along with other oil-producing countries, seemed threatened with the possibility of renewables replacing fossil fuel. The shale revolution in the US gave rise to fears that the world's biggest importer of crude oil would drastically reduce its demand thus casting reverberations in the international oil market. But in 2013 China became the world's largest net importer of petroleum driving the global energy demand. India's demand for oil is also rising quickly so the future for oil is protected for some time yet.

Saudi Arabia's high domestic demand makes it the sixth largest consumer of oil in the world and the largest in the Middle East. Concerns were raised that if domestic demand did not decline, the Kingdom would turn into a net importer of oil. Saudi Arabia, acting quite pragmatically, has decided to cut down on use of fossil fuels by switching to alternative sources for energy generation. By cutting down on domestic supplies, it will make oil available for exports. The Kingdom has set some grand plans to export electricity eventually through renewable energy sources. It has set a target of meeting twenty per cent of its electricity needs through solar energy by reaching a target of generating 41 gigawatts of solar energy by 2032, an ambitious target by all accounts. The Saudi move is driven by economic interests rather than environmental concerns. As the world transitions into a new energy era, Saudi Arabia wants to retain its position in the global energy market.

The Kingdom is also planning to invest heavily in nuclear energy to meet its energy needs, driven partly by concerns about the Iranian nuclear program. Saudi Arabia has negotiated with a number of countries for cooperation in nuclear energy. Investments have also been made in research and development with the establishment of King Abdullah City for Atomic and Renewable Energy and King Abdullah University of Science and Technology.

Saudi Arabia is trying to outmaneuver the emerging challenges. The oil glut the world

is experiencing currently is a deliberate policy on its part. Saudi Arabia, in close collaboration with other OPEC members, has tried to drive other competitors out of the supply market, most noticeably the shale-energy producers, targeting Russia and Iran at the same time. Since the last quarter of 2014 oil prices have been slashed while keeping the production high so as not to lose market share to competitors. As a result the oil price plummeted to a low of \$45 per barrel in January 2015 from \$115 in mid-2014, and has seen only a slight increase since then. Although this caused Saudi Arabia quite a loss, it affected the US more as rigs shut down and drilling declined due to severe losses incurred by both the US and Canada.

The IMF recently indicated that if the slump in oil prices persisted it will have deleterious effect for oil-producing countries including Saudi Arabia. In fact the picture sketched for Saudi Arabia seemed quite grim with the possibility of it exhausting its financial assets in the next five years if it did not make adjustments and improvements to its current spending policies. To alleviate such concerns, statements have come from Saudi officials indicating a likely increase in oil prices. Simultaneously, announcements have also been made by the Saudi finance minister about possible cuts to unnecessary expenditures. Though these are highly speculative as it will be some time before substantial cuts are implemented. Yet, such cuts are all the more necessary. Reduced oil revenues call for better management of oil revenues. Moving away from a hydrocarbon-based economy and diversification would be prudent. Diversifying income away from oil will develop other sectors that will generate employment to accommodate the growing domestic labour market.

Far from sitting idle and exhausting its oil revenues, Saudi Arabia is devising strategies, taking pre-emptive and counter-measures to cope with emerging challenges. It is fighting for its share of the oil market. It is also dealing with extraneous factors with ingenuity. Rather than seeing a diminution, the Kingdom is working toward an expansion of its power base.

Maria Syed is a CAIS research scholar

POSTGRADUATE NEWS

GRADUATIONS AND AWARDS

Congratulations go to all CAIS students graduating in December.

Dr Adel Abdel Ghafar, was awarded his PhD in December for his thesis on 'The Political Economy of the 2011 Egyptian Uprising'. Adel (pictured right) presented the student address at the ANU College of Arts and Social Sciences graduation ceremony on 15 December 2015.



KHALIFA AL-FALASI PRIZE

Jon Rooks is graduating with a Master of Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies-Advanced. Jon wrote the sub-thesis component of his degree on the topic 'Authority and Leadership among Islamists in Afghanistan'. He was awarded the Khalifa Al-Falasi Prize for best overall marks in Masters Advanced in 2015.

Graduating with a Master of Middle Eastern and Central Asian Studies were Jamie Horsfield and Matt Simpson.

HIGHER DEGREES BY RESEARCH (HDR) – THESIS SUBMISSIONS

Aly Zaman, Brenton Clark and Adrian d'Hagé submitted their theses for examination in Semester 2.

Aly Zaman, a recipient of a CAIS scholarship, has been researching the topic: 'The Domestic Impact of Patron-Client State Relationships: American Patronage and Pakistan's Political Economy during the Cold War'.

Brenton Clark's thesis is entitled 'The Islamic Republic of Iran's Relations with the Republic of Tajikistan in the Post-Soviet Period'. Brenton is currently working as an analyst on Middle East Policy in the UAE.

Adrian d'Hagé has been researching 'The Influence of Religion on US Foreign Policy in the Middle East'.

GRADUATE PLACEMENTS

Dr Lee Schrader, a recent graduate from the CAIS HDR program, has been awarded a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS), Postdoctoral Fellowship at United Nations University Centre for Policy Research in Japan. The fellowship is for two years.

CAIS RESEARCH STUDENTS AWARDED PRESTIGIOUS SCHOLARSHIPS



Two research scholars, Firouzeh Khoshnoudiparast (pictured right) and Dirk van der Kley (left), have been awarded the valuable Endeavour Scholarship for overseas research. The Endeavour Scholarships, funded by the Australian Government, support the internationalisation of the Australian higher education and offer high-achieving Australians opportunities to increase their knowledge and expertise in their field. Firouzeh applied to attend the University of South Florida to continue her research on 'The Diplomatic Theory of International Relations: Iranian Diplomacy and Negotiating Behaviours'. Dirk is attending the Xinjiang Academy of Social Science in Urumqi, China where he will conduct research for his doctoral thesis on Chinese economic policy implementation in Central Asia.



RESEARCH SCHOLARS' ACTIVITIES

Sana Ashraf won the College of Arts and Social Sciences in the Three Minute Thesis Competition (3MT) 2015. She went on to the final round and won the People's Choice Award with her presentation 'Am I hurting God?', based on her research 'Blasphemy and Public Violence in Punjab, Pakistan'. Sana also completed the Vice Chancellor's Leadership Program - a semester long training program for graduate students who are in senior leadership positions in ANU student organisations such as the Postgraduate & Research Students' Association of which Sana is now a member.

Maria Syed, was one of two College of Arts and Social Science students to be awarded a Dean's travel scholarship to attend the Council for Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (CHASS) National Forum held at The University of Melbourne on 15-16 October.

Jessie Moritz received a grant from the ANU Vice-Chancellor's HDR travel fund to present a paper on women's protest movements in Bahrain at the Middle East Studies Association Conference in Denver, Colorado in November 2015.



NEW RESEARCH SCHOLAR AT CAIS

Katja Theodorakis joined CAIS as a postgraduate research scholar in June 2015. She recently graduated with a Bachelor of Development Studies with Honours from ANU. Her Honours thesis, supervised at CAIS by Prof. Amin Saikal, was entitled 'Absent Protagonists? On the need to reorient our thinking about the Orient'. Her current research is exploring the topic: 'Caliphate Calling: Understanding the appeal of radical Islam as a challenge to liberal modernity'.

FIELDWORK

Sebastian Klich is undertaking fieldwork in Semester 2. He will travel to Northern Iraq, Karabakh, and Somaliland to conduct research on unrecognised states.

Caroline Ladewig is currently on fieldwork in Muscat, Oman she is investigating her research topic: Power, Politics and Pedagogy: Female Teacher Education in Oman.

Katlyn Quenzer is on fieldwork in Lebanon, the UK and US on her research topic: 'Writing the revolution: A study of the intellectual history of Palestinians, 1967-1974'.

Dirk van der Kley will be undertaking field research for his PhD thesis on Chinese economic policy implementation in Central Asia. Dirk will be based in Bishkek for field research in late 2015. After which he will be in China. Dirk was fortunate to receive a grant from the ANU Vice-Chancellor's HDR travel fund to assist him with his research.



Taking time out at CAIS: Sana Ashraf with Associate Lecturers: Dr Raihan Ismail and Dr Murat Yurtibilir, research scholar, Katja Theodorakis and Research Fellow, Dr Christian Bleuer.

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We had hoped for a white Christmas in Kabul, and the compound dining room was decked with tinsel. But Christmas Day passed and the sky shone like blue steel, pitiless. Across the city the smog grew thicker as three million people around us drove their cars, cooked, burned rubbish and just lived. Most of them are peasants, displaced from their land or sharecrop by poverty and violence or hunger for the better life promised in the last three electoral cycles and delivered, if at all, as a loan against an opium harvest or a daughter.

No one really knows how many people live in the capital, however, let alone in the country. The last census was done in 1979 and that was partial. Parliamentary seats are allocated based on provincial population, so it's in everyone's interests to claim the biggest constituency as that guarantees another shot at the government trough. Attempts to hold another national headcount have been curtailed at gunpoint, so to speak, while ongoing efforts to organise a biometric voter registry are running into some interesting theological waters.

But what we know is that if there is no snow at Christmas, there will be no run-off in spring. And that, for Afghanistan's

77 percent rural population, will spell disaster. An already fragile and cash-based economy that has become dependent on aid and foreign military contracts will not have the resilience or traditional barter goods to weather the devastation of a drought. Over the centuries Afghanistan's farmers developed sophisticated techniques to modify their wheat, creating landraces that were specific to just a few acres. I will always remember an old man in Yawkowlang, a Shia Hazara community routinely ravaged by Taliban militia, telling me that when the white half-ton trucks filled with black-bearded thugs were sighted on the horizon he would store his precious seeds in a pot underground. Only then he would flee with his family, returning to his smouldering home once the storm had passed to reclaim his heritage and his family's future.

That was back in 2002, when Afghanistan emerged from a ten-year drought with export quantities of export quality wheat seed and a proud spring in its step. That was before the aid money came, and imported, unaccustomed wheat seeds as well as an exodus of young men to the city where poverty, drug-addiction and employment as a bomb-carrying murderer

awaited. Opium is relatively resilient and as the imported crops failed traffickers' agents travelled far and wide across the country giving seeds to farmers for free against the future harvest.

Opium has now become a national, rather than a regional, crop and the UN Office on Drugs and Crime recorded a record-breaking harvest in 2014. International schemes to destroy the crop have given rise to yet another unintended consequence – opium brides. These are young girls accepted in lieu of the promised harvest when the agent returns to collect his debt. Nobody knows how many little girls are sold this way, it is a deeply shameful thing for a father to do and anyway, the birth of a girl does not usually warrant a record.

It's cold here in Kabul, and the night is bitter. There is a crescent moon cut sharp against the glitter of the stars. A dog barks and the sound carries through the crystal air. It's a new year, a new government and we've sung our *Auld Langs Syne*. The year's midnight has passed in Afghanistan but there is no snow.

Jacky Sutton wrote this article from Afghanistan on 1 January 2015

ARABIC PROGRAM

ONLINE ARABIC

The development of the Online Arabic program has progressed to the next stage with the inclusion of Introductory Arabic in 2015 and the preparation of Intermediate Arabic to be offered in 2016. The students enrolled in the Introductory course have found it be extremely valuable and many are looking forward to enrolling in next year's program.

The *Arab Current Affairs and Media Arabic* course, which is part of the Online Arabic program, remains very popular to students with an Advanced level of Arabic proficiency. This course allows students to read, listen and comprehend the Modern Standard Arabic typically used in Arabic-language newspapers and Internet sites, and on Arabic-language radio and television.

ADVANCED ARABIC

Students of Arabic learn much more than the language as they progress through the various levels of the program. In Second Semester 2015, CAIS offered the *Introductory Course to Arabic Literature*. In order to enrol in this course students must have attained an advanced level of Arabic so as they can study Arabic prose and poetry at a sophisticated level.

"My time learning Arabic at ANU has been extremely valuable. In the 3 years I have spent in the course, I have not only gained a conversational level of Arabic, The Arabic teachers are passionate and interesting people. I am extremely grateful to Huda Al-Tamimi in particular, I cannot imagine a more generous and dedicated teacher. I have learnt so much about Islam, politics and culture from her and I consider the many hours I have spent in her classes to be among the most valuable time I have spent at university. I would highly recommend learning Arabic at ANU, it is a unique and rewarding experience."

Geraldine - PhB (Arts)

"I wanted to learn a second language and as ten per cent of the community I live in speaks Arabic, this was the obvious choice. I live in Melbourne, however there are no non-award Arabic language courses available through Universities here. I am a consultant advising government and the public and community sectors. Having a second language gives me access to new markets. Expanding my capacity to communicate with diverse Australian and international communities is also generally a rewarding experience.

This is a fabulous course. Arabic is a challenging language for an English speaker, however this course is the way to learn it. Both France Meyer and Leila Kouatly are very good at what they do and are available when needed. The lessons are considered and each builds on the one before. The online format works well, and on occasions where there are technical hiccups, these are sorted out promptly. I am really looking forward to second year."

Samantha - Online Arabic student -



Congratulations to Cameron Brady - graduating with a Bachelor of Middle East and Central Asian Studies - majoring in Arabic. Cameron is hoping to return to CAIS in 2016 to enrol in a Masters program so he can continue his study of Arabic language.



CAIS languages lunch held in November to celebrate the success of the program. Pictured here (from r to l) language lecturers: Omid Behbahani, (with Pamela Lourandos), Zahra Taheri, Murat Yurtbilir, Huda Al-Tamimi, France Meyer with educational developer, Leila Kouatly and all the students who enjoyed the occasion.

This page is generously sponsored by the Embassy of the State of Kuwait

PERSIAN PROGRAM

GRADUATIONS

Congratulations to Mari Ruuskanen and John Casey who graduated in December. Both Mari and John have taken Persian to the Advanced level and have participated in all opportunities available to them through the program. John is graduating with a BA majoring in Persian and Mari is graduating with a Diploma of Languages majoring in Persian.

ONLINE PERSIAN

CAIS lecturers Dr Zahra Taheri and Dr Omid Behbahani in conjunction with the CASS Educational Development Studio (EDS) team have been working hard to present both the online and on campus streams of Persian language studies. In 2015 Intermediate Online Persian was added to its list of courses offered in the CAIS Persian Program. It will be followed by Advanced Persian Online which is currently being created by Dr Behbahani, and a new member of the EDS team, Ms Masha Sajedi. The implementation of the Online program has enabled many more people to study the Persian language both from within Australia and overseas.



Mari Ruuskanen and John Casey

PRIZES FOR PERSIAN LANGUAGE AND IRANIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

There are three prizes within the Persian Program awarded annually. The Sa'id Foundation for the Promotion of Persian language and literature donates two prizes, the Khayyam Prize, for the best results in Introductory Persian and the Hafez Prize, for the best results in Intermediate Persian. Dr Hashem Etmian, Chief Executive of the Iranian/Persian Cultural Foundation in Canberra, donates a prize for the best results in the Iranian History and Culture course. In 2015 the Khayyam Prize is to be awarded to Benjamin Clark, the Hafez Prize will go to Alexa Pelkowitz and the Hashem Etmian prize will be awarded to Jordan Rocke.

CAIS PERSIAN STUDENT EXCELS

William Bullock Jenkins has been awarded the 2016 Erasmus Scholarship. He will spend a year at the University of Leipzig in Germany followed by another at the London School of Economics studying for a combined masters in Global Studies and Economic History. William has been an integral part of the CAIS Online Languages Project designing courses since 2013. William studied Arabic and Persian at CAIS, as well as Urdu and Hindi as an undergraduate. Having taken Arabic at high school, Will arrived at ANU ready to expand his repertoire and proceeded to excel in further Arabic studies and to be one of the most eloquent and knowledgeable non-native speakers of Persian to graduate from CAIS. He won the Shahpar Rad Prize for Persian in 2010. Will graduated in 2014 with a double degree BArts and a BAsia-Pacific Studies HONS. He was awarded a First Class Honours degree for his thesis, a study of Iranian political economy and regional influence, which was supervised at CAIS by Dr Matthew Gray and Dr Zahra Taheri (pictured right with Will).



STUDY IN IRAN — A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

"In 2013 Iran was one of the many countries I travelled to in the region. I knew relatively little about Iran but found it to be a truly fascinating place. The landscapes varied from deserts to jungles to snowy mountains and the cities ranged from traditional mud buildings to modern metropolises. The people were very welcoming and I found a progressive mindset existing alongside the more conservative aspects of society. I knew I would want to return at some point, and so when I found that Persian language was offered by ANU I decided to take it up.

Iran's geopolitical significance to the wider Middle East and potential for greater engagement with the West provided additional incentives to study the language.

Being enrolled in Persian at CAIS gave me the opportunity to study an intensive Persian language course at Shaheed Beheshti University in Tehran for four weeks over August 2015. I was immersed in the language from the moment I arrived at the airport where I was met by university staff who only spoke Persian. They took me to the dormitory accommodation which was provided for us where I was placed with students from Russia, Turkey and Iraq, an arrangement which meant that Persian became the *lingua franca* of the room. For somebody who had begun studying the language less than six months earlier, it was a steep learning curve but a beneficial one. Following an exam to determine our levels of proficiency, we were placed into suitable classes and began to take four and a half hours of language classes every morning from a number of different teachers. In addition to classes, excursions to historical sites and other attractions were organised by the university. I also found opportunities to converse with native speakers while shopping in a bazaar, walking in a park, riding the metro, climbing a mountain, trying out traditional food or going to a tea house. These activities were not only great for learning the language, but also to gain insight into the contemporary culture and how Iranians see their prospects for the future."

Benjamin Clarke



TURKISH STUDIES PROGRAM

CAIS reintroduced Turkish Studies into the program at the commencement of 2015.

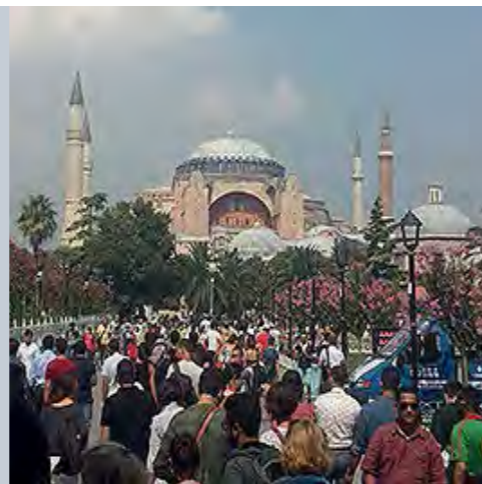
Dr M. Murat Yurtbilir was appointed in January this year to teach both Turkish language and courses in Turkish history and politics. Dr Yurtbilir has taught two sequential courses of Elementary Turkish in 2015 as well as two non-language courses: 'Turkish History: Ottoman State to Modern Turkey' and 'Modern Turkey: History, Culture and Regional Relations'.

In 2016 he will offer Elementary Turkish plus a new non-language course: 'Turkish Politics and Foreign Policy'.

In August this year, the Turkish Embassy selected two CAIS students enrolled in the Turkish Studies program to attend a study trip in Turkey, as part of a scholarship offered by the Turkish Ministry of Culture and Tourism. The trip, comprised of a group of thirty postgraduate students from seventeen countries, took the students to Istanbul, Canakkale in the Dardanelles and finally to Ankara. One of the CAIS post-graduate students, Susan Douglas, has written about her trip.

"Turkey is steeped in history, which was steadily revealed to us as we travelled across the country. In just one week we saw thousands of years of culture, society, religion. The city of Istanbul epitomizes this experience. In the Hagia Sophia (right) there are these layers, in what was once a cathedral for the Byzantine Empire, a Mosque during the Ottoman Empire and finally a museum for the Turkish Republic. In Canakkale, we experienced both ancient and modern Turkey, by touring both the battlefields from the First World War as well as the ancient cities of Troy and Assos. In Ankara, we were able to see a city and a landscape strikingly different to the coastal Canakkale and Istanbul. Ankara exemplified the modern Turkey, as its political and administration centre, but we saw evidence of both Ottoman and ancient life in the museums and old fortresses.

As part of the tour, we attended many lectures organised by the Ministry. In Istanbul, we met with the Turkish Cultural Foundation and the Turkish Coalition of America, who gave us a talk about the culture of Turkey. At Kadir Has University, we attended a lecture by Dr Mustafa Aydin on the history of the Republic of Turkey. In Ankara, I met with the Deputy Directorate General for Research of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mustafa Ozcan, in the Ankara Palas, as he gave a talk about the foreign policy of Turkey, with a special emphasis on its relations with Armenia. It was an amazing and unforgettable experience. I was able to access a Turkish perspective not readily available as a regular tourist."



ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

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newest member, Ms Gai Brodtmann MP. Other attendees were: Prof. The Hon. Gareth Evans, The Hon. Sussan Ley MP, The Hon. Melissa Parke MP, The Hon. Warren Snowdon MP, Prof. Paul Pickering, Mr Richard Gibbs, Mr Tom Harley and Prof. Amin Saikal.

Prof. Saikal informed the board of the Centre's activities and achievements in teaching, research, public policy and outreach in 2014.

The Centre received an \$80,000 grant from the Council for Australian Arab Relations (DFAT) to bring four distinguished scholars from the Middle East to the Centre in 2016.

The Centre hosted two visiting fellows in 2014: Prof. Feisal Istrabadi, Indiana University and Dr Sean Foley, Middle Tennessee State University. Both visitors contributed to the academic richness of the Centre during their visits.

In highlighting the Centre's research strengths, Prof. Saikal mentioned the strong cohort of 25 research scholars, 20 of whom are in receipt of scholarships and commended the success of three research scholars in editing a volume, published by Melbourne University Press.

The meeting acknowledged the passing of The Hon. Malcolm Fraser who was a very supportive member of the CAIS Advisory

Board and a great friend to CAIS and its Director. It was suggested that the Centre host an annual lecture as a tribute to the former Prime Minister.

Prof. Young advised the Board that CAIS had continued its commitment to fulfilling its primary objectives as an innovative and high profile centre of excellence which included the publication of 5 books, numerous book chapters and a number of other research, public policy and outreach achievements. Prof. Young congratulated Prof. Saikal on his promotion to the highest academic level of University Distinguished Professor and acknowledged his international standing as a scholar.

RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

AMIN SAIKAL BOOK

Weak States, Strong Societies: Power and Authority in the New World Order, (ed) Amin Saikal, London, IB Tauris, 2016, pp. 272.

BOOK CHAPTER

'Afghanistan and Iraq: State-Building in Countries with Strong Societies', in Amin Saikal, ed. *Weak States, Strong Societies: Power and Authority in the New World Order*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 107-122.

FEATURE ARTICLES

'The Islamic State strategy v the Western approach', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 9 July 2015.

'Iran nuclear deal a triumph of diplomacy', *The Canberra Times*, 17 July 2015.

'Turkey's double-edge approach in joining the fight against IS', *The Canberra Times*, 27 July 2015.

'Australia's expanding war against Islamic State leaves much to be desired', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 August 2015.

(with Katja Theodorakis) 'Air strikes alone won't solve the Syrian crisis', *The Drum Opinion*, 18 September 2015. [abc.net.au/news/2015-09-18/theodorakis-saikal-air-strikes-arent-the-answer/6783412]

'Russia's double-edge Syrian adventure', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 21 September 2015.

'The Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Another Intifada?', *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 October 2015.

'Middle East extremism will defy military solutions', *The Age*, 25 November 2015.

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'The View from the other side of the hill: Iraq, Afghanistan and the War on Terror', *On Ops' Lessons and Challenges for the Australian Army since 1999 conference*, ADFA/UNSW Canberra, 24-25 June 2015.

[with Tony Walker and Talal Yassine] 'The Middle East: How much does it matter to Australia?' *Crawford Australian Leadership Forum - Global Realities, Domestic Choices*, ANU, 28-30 June 2015.

'Non-Arab Powers: Iran and Turkey', Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Australian Defence College, Canberra, 28 June 2015

'Afghanistan and Pakistan: A Troubled Relationship', *Pakistan Summit: Debating Pakistan's Economy, State, Society and*

Culture, University of South Australia, Adelaide, 5-7 July 2015.

Guest speaker, ACT Chief Minister's *Iftar* Dinner, 9 July 2015.

'Conflicts in the Middle East', Emeritus Faculty Collegiate Lunch, ANU, 5 August 2015.

Roundtable Discussion with Senior US Government Analysts on 'Global political leadership, strategic and economic issues', National Security College, ANU, 13 August 2015.

'The Middle East: An Arena of Conflict within Conflicts', Research Seminar Series, School of Political Science and International Studies, University of Queensland, 21 August 2015.

Panelist: 'Understanding the World's Conflicts', ANU Rhetoric Learning Community, 24 August 2015.

'The Rise of the Islamic State', University of New South Wales/Canberra, Australian Defence Force Academy, 10 September 2015.

'Muslim Middle East and Jihad', *Women and Jihad: Radicalisation, De-radicalisation and Human Rights*, Centre for Muslim States and Societies, University of Western Australia, Perth, 11 September 2015.

Co-convenor, *Political Islam Seminars*, CAIS, September and November 2015.

Panelist: 'Iran Nuclear Deal: Game changer?', ANU International Relations Society, ANU, 7 October 2015.

'Islamic State in a zone of conflicts with conflicts', Parliamentary Library Paper, Australian Parliament House, Canberra, 14 October 2015.

Briefing to Greens Senators on Australia's Involvement in Syria and the Middle East, Australian Parliament House, Canberra, 16 September 2015.

'Islam and the Middle East' [in Persian], Islamic Culture and Relations Organisation, Tehran, Iran, 1 November 2015.

'Middle East: The Regional Troubles' [in Persian], Imam Siddiq University, Tehran, Iran, 2 November 2015.

'The Afghan-Pakistan and Afghan-Iran Relations' [in Persian], Tabatabai University, Tehran, Iran, 3 November 2015.

'Educational Cooperation Roundtable' [in Persian], Ferdowsi University, Mashad, Iran, 4 November 2015.

Participated in 'European and International Affairs: European Security Issues Colloquium', Liechtenstein Institute of Self-Determinations,

Princeton University, Triesenberg, Liechtenstein, 12-15 November 2015.

'Domestic situation and lessons from international involvement in Afghanistan: a critical update', *Prospects for Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia: Connecting Divergent Perspectives Workshop*, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan, 30 November - 1 December 2015.

'The Role of Regional Actors: Iran and Turkey', *The Levant Crisis: Syria, Iraq and the Region Conference*, Coral Bell School & CAIS, ANU, 11 December 2015.

INTERVIEWS

Numerous media interviews for national and international television and radio networks.

ROBERT BOWKER

FEATURE ARTICLES

'Education for Palestinian children at risk from UN funding crisis', *The Wire*, 7 July 2015. [thewire.org.au/storyDetail.aspx?ID=12910#.VZvRumTePQ.twitter]

'Syria: World dithers as new refugee crisis looms', *The Lowy Interpreter*, 15 July 2015. [lowyinterpreter.org/post/2015/07/15/Syria-World-dithers-as-new-refugee-crisis-looms.aspx]

'Iran Nuclear Deal Makes Serious Syria Diplomacy Possible', *The Lowy Institute*, 14 August 2015. [lowyinterpreter.org/post/2015/08/14/Iran-nuclear-deal-opens-door-for-Syria-diplomacy.aspx]

'Is Russia's growing intervention in Syria a game changer?' *The Lowy Institute*, 18 September 2015. [lowyinterpreter.org/post/2015/09/18/Is-Russias-growing-intervention-in-Syria-a-game-changer.aspx]

'Transition away from Syria's Assad regime a fiction', *The Age*, 1 October 2015.

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Security dynamics in the changing Middle East', Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Australian Defence College, Canberra, 30 June 2015.

'Diplomacy and the media in Middle East conflicts', UNSW Security Studies Seminar, Bowral NSW, 31 October 2015.

'Middle East Outlook', ASAN Middle East Institute, Seoul, ROK, 6 November 2015.

INTERVIEWS

Numerous interviews for *ABC 7.30 Report*, *ABC Radio* and TV, *SBS* and *The Age*.

RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

MATTHEW GRAY

JOURNAL ARTICLE

'A Theory of 'Late Rentierism' in the Arab States of the Gulf', Occasional Paper No. 7, Doha, Qatar: Centre for International and Regional Studies, Georgetown University, 2011, reprinted in Barbara Krug (ed.), *State Capitalism*. Vol. II, Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015, pp. 161-198.

FEATURE ARTICLES

'Beyond the spectacle of violence', Inside Story, 17 September 2015. [insidestory.org.au/beyond-the-spectacle-of-violence]

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Iraq after ISIS', Department of Defence, Canberra, 19 May 2015.

Briefing to DFAT on Middle East/Gulf issues, Canberra, 11 June 2015.

'Security dynamics in the changing Middle East', Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Australian Defence College, Canberra, 30 June 2015.

'The economic capacity and significance of the Middle East', Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies, Australian Defence College, Canberra, 1 July 2015.

KIRILL NOURZHANOV

BOOK CHAPTER

'State-Society Dynamics and Authoritarian Stability in Central Asia', in Amin Saikal, ed. *Weak States, Strong Societies: Power and Authority in the New World Order*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2016, pp. 123-148.

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

Political Islam Seminars, CAIS, September and November 2015.

'Security issues in Central Asia', RMC Duntroon, 20 November 2015.

Roundtable Discussions, *Prospects for Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia: Connecting Divergent Perspectives Workshop*, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, 30 November-1 December 2015.

OUTREACH

'Russia, the EU and NATO', Dickson College, 28 October 2015.

'Russian relations with the former Soviet republics', Dickson College, 29 October 2015.

MEDIA INTERVIEWS

Four interviews on Russia and Ukraine.

ZAHRA TAHERI

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Teaching Persian Language Online at ANU: A team challenge', *Oxford Education Research Symposium*, Pembroke College, Oxford, 13-15 August 2015.

'Women in Persian Sufi Literature', *Religious & Cultural Elements Shaping Iranian Civilisation: An historical & literary survey from ancient to contemporary times*, Centre for Classical and Near Eastern Studies of Australia, Sydney University, 10 October 2015.

'Attar's Mystical Doctrines in 'The Conference of The Birds'', Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, 27 November 2015.

Participant in 'Countless Images of Human Beings in Classical Persian Literature Workshop', Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Tokyo, 30 November 2015.

MINERVA NASSER-EDDINE

FEATURE ARTICLES

'Once Again, Australians are Fighting in the Middle East. Why?' *Australian Institute of International Affairs*, 1 September 2015. [internationalaffairs.org.au/australian_outlook/once-again-australians-are-fighting-in-the-middle-east-why/]

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

Political Islam Seminars, CAIS, September and November 2015.

'Israel-Palestine conflict', Royal Military College First Class Cadets, Duntroon, 8 October 2015.

Guest Speaker, 'Woman of Achievement dinner', Zonta International Women's Service Club, Central Coast, 19 November 2015.

OMID MALEK BEHBAHANI

OUTREACH

Simin Behbahani Poetry Memorial, CAIS, 21 August 2015.

Panelist: 'Eurasia-Silk Road-Byzantium: In honour of Professor Samuel Lieu', Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, Sydney, 26-27 November 2015.

Panelist: 'ManiFest - Lectures on Manichaeism', Ancient History Documentary Research Centre, Macquarie University, Sydney, 1 December 2015.

RAIHAN ISMAIL

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

Co-convening and presenting: *Political Islam Seminars*, CAIS, September and November 2015.

'Islam and Extremism' Narabundah College, 31 October 2015.

'Cross Sectarian Co-operation in Fragmented Iraq', *The Levant Crisis: Syria, Iraq and the Region Conference*, Coral Bell School & CAIS, ANU, 11 December 2015.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews on Islam for Associated Press, ABC News Radio and ABC Radio National.

M. MURAT YURTBILIR

FEATURE ARTICLES

'Were the Grey Wolves behind Bangkok bombing?' *New Mandala*, 2 September 2015. [asiapacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/2015/09/02/were-the-grey-wolves-behind-bangkok-bombing/]

'Erdogan'in Cin Seferi ve Cin Basinindaki Yansimalari' (Erdogan's Visit to China and Reflections in the Chinese Media), *Uluslararası Politika Akademisi*, August 10, 2015, (with Xiaoli Guo). [politikaakademisi.org/2015/08/10/erdoganin-cin-seferi-ve-cin-basinindaki-yansimalari/]

'Crackdown on the media in Turkey', *The Wire*, 7 October 2015.

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Performing Foreign Policy for Domestic Stage Play: Turkish Foreign Policy under Justice and Development Party, 2002-2015', *A New Agenda? Debating the Middle East and Central Asia Conference*, CAIS, 3 - 4 July 2015.

Political Islam Seminars, CAIS, September and November 2015.

'Mediatization of Politics or Political Party Bulletins for Legitimacy Fabrication: Analysis of Turkish Press during the Campaign Period before the November 1, 2015 Parliamentary Elections' *POLITSCI '15, 3rd International Political Science Conference*, Istanbul, 11 December 2015.

INTERVIEWS

Interviews with news.com and SBS News.

CHRISTIAN BLEUER

FEATURE ARTICLES

'A Taleb lost in a Polish forest and more: Afghanistan in western films, 2001 to 2015', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 11 September 2015. [www.afghanistan-ana-

RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, OUTREACH ACTIVITIES

lysts.org/afghanistan-western-film/]

'Attack on the Opposition in Tajikistan: Afghan concerns and comparisons', *Afghanistan Analysts Network*, 25 October 2015. [www.afghanistan-analysts.org/attack-on-the-opposition-in-tajikistan-afghan-concerns-and-comparisons/]

Roundtable Discussions, *Prospects for Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia: Connecting Divergent Perspectives Workshop*, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, 30 November-1 December 2015.

GRIGOL UBIRIA

BOOK

Soviet Nation-Building in Central Asia: The Making of the Kazakh and Uzbek Nations, Oxford: Routledge, 2015, pp. 272.

SANA ASHRAF

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Honor, Shame, and Heroism: Blasphemy and Public Violence in Punjab, Pakistan' *Muslim South Asia Graduate Conference*, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, 8-10 October 2015.

'Public Space, Gender, and Violence: Defending Honor against Sexual Transgressions and Blasphemy in Punjab, Pakistan', *Transforming the Field of Study*, ANU Gender Institute, 26-27 November 2015.

Political Islam Seminars, CAIS, September and November 2015.

ZAID ALSALAMI

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

Political Islam Seminars, CAIS, September 2015.

SHUHRAT BARATOV

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'The Uzbek "Citizens" of the Islamic State', *A New Agenda? Debating the Middle East and Central Asia Conference*, CAIS, 3 - 4 July 2015.

DAMIAN DOYLE

BOOK REVIEW

'Urban Violence in the Middle East: Changing Cityscapes in the Transition from Empire to Nation State', By: Ulrike Freitag et al, (Eds.) New York, Berghahn Books, 2015. 664pp. *Middle East Media and Book Reviews Online*, Volume 3, Issue 9, September 2015.

FEATURE ARTICLES

(with Tristan Dunning) 'A brave new Iraq? It

starts with tackling corruption and rebuilding state legitimacy'. In *The Conversation*, 10 September 2015. [theconversation.com/a-brave-new-iraq-it-starts-with-tackling-corruption-and-rebuilding-state-legitimacy-46396]

WILL JENKINS

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Parastatal Foundations and Organised Labour as Forgotten Civil Society and Political Economy Forces in the Islamic Republic of Iran', *A New Agenda? Debating the Middle East and Central Asia Conference*, CAIS, 3 - 4 July 2015.

FIROUZEH KHOSHNOUDIPARAST

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

Panelist: 'Iran Nuclear Deal: Game changer?', ANU International Relations Society, 7 October 2015.

SEBASTIAN KLICH

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

Conference convenor: *A New Agenda? Debating the Middle East and Central Asia Conference*, CAIS, 3 - 4 July 2015.

JESSIE MORITZ

BOOK CHAPTER

'Rents, Start-ups, and Obstacles to SME Entrepreneurialism in Oman, Bahrain, and Qatar,' in Annika Kropf and Mohamed Ramady, eds., *Employment and Career Motivation in the Arab Gulf States: The Rentier Mentality Revisited*, Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2015.

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Women in Protest: Bahraini and Omani Women in the Arab Spring,' Middle East Studies Association, Denver, CO (21 - 24 November 2015).

'Building Opposition: Development, Welfare, and Protest in the Gulf,' *A New Agenda? Debating the Middle East and Central Asia Conference*, CAIS, 3 - 4 July 2015.

IAN PARMETER

FEATURE ARTICLES

'How Russia Returned to the Middle East', published as part of a Special Report by Moscow-based online journal Russia Direct entitled 'Russia's New Strategy in the Middle East', 29 October 2015.

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'The Middle East: Policy Implications for Australia', presentation to senior Australian and partner-country defence officers at Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies,

Canberra, 3 July 2015.

'The role of regional actors: Lebanon, Israel and Jordan', *The Levant Crisis: Syria, Iraq and the Region Conference*, Coral Bell School & CAIS, ANU, 11 December 2015.

JACKY SUTTON

FEATURE ARTICLES

'Iraq's political leaders are being made to feel the heat', *The Drum Opinion*, 18 September 2015. [abc.net.au/news/2015-09-18/sutton-iraqs-political-leaders-are-being-made-to-feel-the-heat/6786654]

KATJA THEODORAKIS

JOURNAL ARTICLE

'Refugees, Citizens and the Nation State: Unrecognised Anomalies and the Need for New Political Imaginaries', *The ANU Undergraduate Research Journal*, Volume Six, 2014.

FEATURE ARTICLES

(with Amin Saikal) 'Air strikes alone won't solve the Syrian crisis', *The Drum Opinion*, 18 September 2015.

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Western Women and The Islamic State (IS): A Search for Meaning and Morality?', *Women and Jihad: Radicalisation, De-radicalisation and Human Rights Conference*, Centre for Muslim States and Societies, University of Western Australia, Perth, 11-12 September 2015.

'How the State is 'Felt': Understanding Legitimacy in a Fractured Levant', *The Levant Crisis: Syria, Iraq and the Region Conference*, Coral Bell School & CAIS, ANU, 11 December 2015.

DIRK VAN DER KLEY

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Pragmatic Policing: China's Approach to Central Asian Security' *A New Agenda? Debating the Middle East and Central Asia Conference*, CAIS, 3 - 4 July 2015.

Roundtable Discussions, *Prospects for Security in Afghanistan and Central Asia: Connecting Divergent Perspectives Workshop*, OSCE Academy, Bishkek, 30 November-1 December 2015.

ELISABETH YARBAKHSH

LECTURES, SEMINARS & CONFERENCES

'Iranian Nationalism from its (Afghan) Margins', *A New Agenda? Debating the Middle East and Central Asia Conference*, CAIS, 3 - 4 July 2015.



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