

Central Asia

2016-4

Chair(s): Dr. Roger Kangas/Ms. Brianne Todd

Synopsis

The theme of the 2016 Strategic Studies Summit will be the “NESA Region in 2020.” The working groups and plenary sessions will examine how the strategic landscape of the NESA region will evolve over the next 3 to 5 years with the intention of mapping the future outlook of each sub-region. Members of the Central Asia working group will focus on issues of strategic importance to this vital sub-region.

Sub-Topics

- The root causes of terrorism and ways to counter violent extremism;
- Long-term objectives of militant groups currently active in Central Asia and Afghanistan (e.g., the so-called Islamic State, Taliban, Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, East Turkestan Islamic Movement, etc.);
- Energy security in an era of economic turbulence;
- The implications of changing demographics for local populations and state security interests;
- Interests and influences of external actors, including the United States, Russia, China, Turkey, India, and Iran, in Central Asia; and
- Afghanistan’s relations with regional partners in Central and South Asia.

Work Product

A policy report of publishable quality forecasting the main drivers that are likely to shape the sub-region’s economic and strategic landscape. The working group will commence its first meeting at the February/March 2016 Strategic Studies Network Annual Summit. Members of the group are expected to produce a short paper on a sub-topic prior to the first meeting. The combined report will be completed prior to the 2017 Strategic Studies Summit, with the prospect of an interim meeting, whereby the most active members of the working group will be invited to a second round of meetings. The final working group plan will be determined by the working group chair in consultation with working group members.

The final product will be presented at the 2017 Strategic Studies Summit. The paper will be published on the SSN website and could be adapted for publication elsewhere. Group members are expected to maintain contact and work collaboratively by virtual means during the time between physical meetings.

Working Group Membership

Up to 20 fellows with relevant expertise, drawn from interested member institutions, possibly including outside experts. Membership in this working group is open to all. Working group members do not have to be from Central Asia to join this group, but they must have expertise in this sub-region.