

Levant**2016-2****Chair: Dr. Jennifer Jefferis****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 Levant working group will focus on issues of strategic importance to this vital sub-region.

Sub-Topics

- The situation in Syria;
- Refugees, migration, and the development of at-risk populations;
- The geopolitical implications of the Iran and P5+1 Deal;
- Regional security in the wake of new world power differentials;
- The root causes of terrorism and countering violent extremism;
- Israeli-Palestinian conflict;
- Ungoverned spaces and their security implications; and
- The future of the so-called Islamic State (Daesh).

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 Levant to join this group, but they must have expertise in this sub-region.