



SMA Reach-back Report

New Iran Strategy

Question (R6.6): *How does USCENTCOM, working within a whole of government approach, coordinate military operations in support of the change in approach towards Iran from the previous to the current administration?*

Contributors

Ambassador James Jeffrey, Washington Institute for Near East Policy; Dr. Spencer Meredith III, National Defense University; Dr. Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, University of London; Dr. Abdulaziz Sager, Gulf Research Center

Executive Summary

Ali Jafri, NSI Inc.

As battlefield successes actualize, decision makers have an opportunity to align tactical and operational policies with a strategic vision. One year into a new presidential administration offers a window wherein actors on the ground can map their plans onto the tone, intent, and objectives of the new commander-in-chief. Despite some continuity between President Trump and his predecessor's policies, particularly as related to Iran, there remain some significant differences. A wholesale White House-initiated change of approach vis-à-vis Iran has not yet occurred, despite these differences. If no substantive changes are made, CENTCOM is well positioned to build on established success in Iraq. However, if such a change were to occur, it would require a whole-of-government approach; within this framework, CENTCOM would be able to leverage capabilities built up over the course of their engagement in Iraq.

What is the Trump Approach?

Despite President Trump's commitment to being seen as an abrogator of his predecessor's policies, there remains some consistency in his policies vis-à-vis Iran. Dr. Abdulaziz Sager of the Gulf Research Center suggests that there is a lack of consensus around what exactly a novel Trump strategy would entail. He sees little daylight between Trump's and Obama's use of CENTCOM to contain Iranian influence. Similarly, Ambassador James Jeffrey of the Washington Institute on Near East Policy suggests that President Trump might follow a mixture of policies similar to those of the Obama Administration, i.e., primacy of nuclear issues (though Jeffrey concedes that whereas President Obama sought reconciliation on this point, President Trump has the opposite point of view), counterterrorism operations, and strengthening regional alliances. Despite the differences in approach to the Iranian nuclear issue, Jeffrey argues that insofar as President Obama labeled Iran a regional threat, there is little difference in rhetoric between Presidents Obama and Trump.

Moving beyond a boilerplate classification of Iran as a threat lays bare significant differences in the new administration's strategy. According to AMB Jeffrey, the Trump administration perceives Iran as both a regional hegemon and ideological threat. This calculation exceeds the characterization that President Obama had for Iran. Similarly, Dr. Spencer Meredith III of National Defense University's College of International and Security Affairs notes that the current administration perceives Iran as an expansionist power, hoping to recapture historical glory; he contrasts this with the Obama-era observation that Iran was guided more by internal politics than outward-looking objectives. This view is shared by Dr. Nicholas O'Shaughnessy, of the University of London, who suggests that President Trump's view on Iran is characterized by distrust and antagonism. Despite that worldview, Dr. O'Shaughnessy writes that it is unlikely that President Trump would nullify the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). This view is also shared by AMB Jeffrey who is not convinced that the President's domestic political allies are willing to pull out of the deal and institute a hard reset on relations with Iran.

A Whole of Government Approach

Despite near-consensus on the necessity of employing a whole-of-government approach if a strategic reset occurs, experts sought clarity on what precisely such an approach would actually entail (Jeffrey, Meredith). According to AMB Jeffrey, the approach taken since 2003 is not aligned with what appear to be the current Administration's objectives, and suggests that policymakers strive for a clearly articulated approach similar to that employed during the Balkan Wars which specified a distinct political outcome followed by negotiations.

From a technical perspective, Dr. Meredith notes that capability specialization and clearly-defined policy documents bear the best results and suggests that the National Security Council serve as the primary coordinator of a multi-approach Iran policy. In addition to a "nation building" default, Ambassador Jeffrey suggests that apart from the JCPOA, negotiation skills at Foggy Bottom below the Secretary have dwindled. Similarly, Jeffrey argues, the Department of State today is not oriented towards incremental and measured progress working with multiple state actors.

CENTCOM Military Options in a Strategic Reset

There is not yet clarity as to whether or not the United States will commit to a full-scale strategic reset with Iran; such a move would be characterized by a major change in policy, such as the negation of the JCPOA. This lack of clarity makes military planning difficult (Sager).

Even if the current policy is not clarified further, there still exist some mission sets where CENTCOM is well equipped to succeed. AMB Jeffrey notes that the command has technical capabilities, relationships, and know-how to achieve its operational objectives in the region. Dr. Meredith notes that the mission of security force assistance, coordinated along clear lines of efforts, remains critical. He also noted the importance of engaging allies to help CENTCOM achieve its objectives in the region. Dr. O'Shaughnessy echoed this point, stressing the need for a pluralist policy, i.e., one wherein military and non-military entities are aligned on common goals. He notes that the most effective engagement with Iran happens in the diplomatic realm, and military capabilities can be best contextualized as force projection.

An alternative outcome is, as Dr. O'Shaughnessy proposed, an ostensible "cold war," i.e., a situation typified by tough talk between adversaries, but with little changing below the harsher tone on the surface. This would prevent cooperation in areas of mutual interest between the United States and Iran, such as containing the spread of Da'esh into Afghanistan. On the other hand, O'Shaughnessy concedes,

this situation would at least offers some measure of predictability, not just for policymakers, but CENTCOM as well. Experts did not anticipate a more conciliatory strategy; therefore, CENTCOM's options in that context were not discussed.

Expert Contributions

Ambassador James Jeffrey

The Washington Institute for Near East Policy

Original Question: How does USCENTCOM, working within a whole of government approach, coordinate military operations in support of the change in approach towards Iran from the previous to the current administration?"

Guiding Questions: What are the implications of the Administration's "new policy" (regarding Iran) for CENTCOM's activities in the region? In other words, how does the Administration's approach regarding Iran line up with CENTCOM's missions and desired end state (see list of CENTCOM missions below)?

CENTCOM Command Priorities

- *Ensure an Effective Posture – An effective posture with trained and ready forward-stationed forces and equipment demonstrates our tremendous capability and enduring commitment to our partners and allies in the region. It reassures them; it enables access and influence; and, it positions us to secure our enduring national interests. An effective posture also optimizes freedom of movement, deters state aggressors, and provides decision space and flexible response options for national-level decision makers.*
- *Strengthen Allies and Partnerships – A coalition approach – at home and abroad – expands our ability to operate on multiple fronts. Strong relationships based upon shared values create greater cohesion and enhance the effectiveness of available resources and capabilities. Integration with partners, within the region and beyond, enriches the benefit of our presence, mitigates resource constraints, and expands the reach of the force. By building the capacity of regional partners, we enable them to assume a larger share of the responsibility for securing their sovereign spaces.*
- *Deter and Counter State Aggressors – Effectively posturing to maintain freedom of movement, freedom of action, and freedom of navigation is essential to securing our enduring national interests and the interests of our partners and allies. We must also actively counter malign influence, and be prepared to confront aggression, while reducing the freedom of action of surrogates and proxies operating in the region.*
- *Disrupt and Counter Violent Extremist Organizations and their Networks – We must protect our Homeland from terrorist threats that emanate from the Central Region. We will accomplish this by degrading and defeating VEOs and their networks, including ISIS and al Qaeda and their associated forces, and by preventing the further spread of sectarian-fueled conflict and VEOs. Ultimately, our goal is to achieve a Central Region where improved security leads to greater stability, and where regional cooperation counters actors that threaten U.S. interests.*

Desired End States. Our efforts in support of partners throughout the USCENTCOM AOR are designed to achieve our desired end states. These end states include: USCENTCOM properly postured to protect U.S. interests; free flow of commerce and access to areas in accordance with international law; strong and supportive allies and partners; state aggressors deterred or countered; WMD safeguarded and use prevented; VEOs degraded and their influence eroded; and, lasting increased regional stability and security.

Request: What are the characteristics that define the Trump Administration's "Iran policy"? Please note where it is different from the previous administration's policy.

Response: As laid out in the December 2017 NSS, President Trump sees Iran as a serious regional threat. Background briefings by senior administration officials furthermore strongly suggest a change in priority—Iran is now the number one regional threat, not VEO's (in part because of the defeat of ISIS at least temporarily in Iraq and Syria; in part because Iran's role in 'creating' ISIS in the first place by its expansionist policies in Sunni areas is also now better-understood.)

Differences with Obama Administration: Rhetorically little as Obama Administration repeatedly listed Iran as a regional threat. Operationally, major: President Obama appeared to waffle between thinking (1) that the only problem with Iran was the nuclear file, thus its 'regional aggression' was more defensive or a reflection of Saudi competition, or (2) that Iran was a problem to some degree in the region but that confrontation with it was counter-productive, whereas a better relationship with it as exemplified in the trust-building and communications with the JCPOA would empower moderates like Rouhani and Zarif and eventually lead to a change in behavior. Trump Administration sees Iran as a realpolitik (regional hegemon) and ideological (espousal of Islamic and Shia Islamic doctrine) threat.

Similarities with Obama Administration: Although reasoning different, Trump Administration could end up pursuing the same cocktail of policies in the region—emphasis on the nuclear account (but in Trump's case walking back from it), CT, and "token" anti-Iranian expansion activities and operations—FMS, air defense emphasis and integration, occasional pin-prick military operations as in Syria last Spring, more indulgence of bad Saudi 'anti-Iranian' activities. Reasoning is, CT is for good reason very popular in America, the JCPOA is anathema to Trump personally and to much of the Republican Party, and taking truly effective action to contain Iran is a long-term and risky activity which this like the last Administration may not have the stomach for. There are indications some key allies (KSA, Israel, Turkey are beginning to sense this.)

Request: How does the Administration's approach to Iran line up with CENTCOM's mission and desired end state (listed above)?

Response: Rhetorically, perfectly. Operationally, also well. CENTCOM has the relationships, the conventional capabilities and experience to deal with a new 'Tanker War,' and the mix of advisory efforts, fires, intelligence, and diplomacy as shown in ISIS campaign to play a major role in containment of Iran 'unconventionally. The problem is not CENTCOM; it is the will of national leadership to make rhetoric a reality. See last in 1. Above.

Request: Is a whole of government approach the best and most appropriate approach for implementing a new Iran strategy?

Response: A "whole of government" approach is not only appropriate but inevitable in any military or political-military campaign. It's the definition of 'w-o-g' that is important. The conventional definition of that phrase since 2003 has come to be a 'transformational' approach to a population by the civilian arms of the U.S. government working 'through with, etc.' local governments and allies (or the U.S. military taking on primarily civilian activities with a local population and government for same ends) to produce both success in some internal conflict/insurgency, and resilience of that population and government to new threats. It is essentially nation and state building.

This sort of “w-o-g” has not been shown to be effective in the last two decades (or in Vietnam, or during the colonial era), because it presupposes the U.S. as a government (in either civilian or military guise) can truly reach out to a population, and over a relatively small period of time revise or improve dramatically its political and economic situation, and resolve or contain historical disputes. There is no evidence, again, that such a ‘Phase IV’ mission can work and thus be an exit strategy. From immediate humanitarian relief (Mosul at present) to long term assistance (Iraqi oil sector) the U.S. can have an effect on a state in ways that advance U.S. security and diplomatic objectives, but this is only at the margins. It in and of itself cannot transform a political/sociological system.

A true ‘w-o-g’ approach would align all activities to a known political outcome that must be realistic, not absolute, with the eventual goal to negotiate a deal with some opponent. Balkan Wars a good example. The primary “w-o-g” tools are military, broadly defined, and diplomatic. The goal of the latter is to encourage or force outside states to pull back from intervening against us in conflicts (ISIS has been largely destroyed because this effort was successful; Taliban is still active because that effort (i.e., with Pakistan) has not been.) Likewise al Qaeda and Shia extremist groups in Iraq 2003-8 thanks to support from respectively Syria and Iran.)

There is a place for direct civilian support to a population and a state, but it can only help on the margins as a complement to the next above. The biggest mistake the U.S. has made in the region over the past 15 years is to believe it has a ‘fly-away’ transformational civilian capability directly with populations than can achieve strategic success resolving our security concerns, preferably quickly.

This encourages the U.S. to play down the importance of both serious (and thus expensive, and dangerous) military actions and diplomatic activities (which to be effective also involve risks—talking with the enemy, accepting ‘win-win’ limited victories, putting serious pressure on outside actors tempted to intervene against us) which is the real path to success.

Request: What role is CENTCOM best postured to play? What roles should be taken on by other organizations?

Response:

As per 2. Above CENTCOM is well positioned to execute the military elements of any serious strategy and support the civilian elements. But the key ingredients to any overall strategy and especially the military component is selection of realistic, feasible goals and the will to carry through—but these are not ‘tasks to CENTCOM’ but ‘tasks to national command authority.’ CENTCOM’s role in advancing the latter apart from input on key goals, should be (1) to remind national leadership that it cannot deliver on expectations re Iran or any other problem absent this national command authority commitment, and (2) that the U.S. has no significant civilian engagement ‘secret sauce’ that once CENTCOM and partners has ‘cleared and held’ can quickly make permanent a ‘build’ security success. (U.S. military has been typically on the wrong side on this issue.)

The ‘wingman’ for CENTCOM as noted in 3 above is diplomacy normally conducted by the State Department. The State Department however is not currently in a position to act effectively on any Middle East challenge beyond that posed by ISIS. The ‘nation-building-as-the-response-to-internal-conflicts’ mindset is well entrenched in the State Department, and experience (beyond the JCPOA) negotiating with both hostile states (Iran) and allies to advance clear cut American objectives has

atrophied. Finally, State's posture on any diplomatic issue defaults to 'maximalist American win' (North Korea the current best example) even though experienced diplomats know that this is as common as the unicorn, because as a weak, under constant attack institution it does not have the independence and self-confidence (beyond the Secretary personally) to 'speak truth to power.'

Dr. Spencer Meredith III

National Defense University
College of International and Security Affairs

Original Question: How does USCENTCOM, working within a whole of government approach, coordinate military operations in support of the change in approach towards Iran from the previous to the current administration?"

Guiding Questions: What are the implications of the Administration's "new policy" (regarding Iran) for CENTCOM's activities in the region? In other words, how does the Administration's approach regarding Iran line up with CENTCOM's missions and desired end state (see list of CENTCOM missions below)?

CENTCOM Command [Priorities](#)

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- *Deter and Counter State Aggressors – Effectively posturing to maintain freedom of movement, freedom of action, and freedom of navigation is essential to securing our enduring national interests and the interests of our partners and allies. We must also actively counter malign influence, and be prepared to confront aggression, while reducing the freedom of action of surrogates and proxies operating in the region.*
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Request: What are the characteristics that define the Trump Administration's "Iran policy"? Please note where it is different from the previous administration's policy.

Response: Key difference is assumption of intent – current administration assumes Iranian intent is to pursue regional power status in keeping with historic identity and interests. Differs from previous administration that focused more on internal power dynamics and the assumed ability to shape them with international incentives. Basic realism vs. liberalism. Proof of the former's more appropriate usage evidenced by Iranian actions in Iraq, posturing vis-à-vis Saudis, partnership with Russia, and responses to protestors.

Request: How does the Administration's approach to Iran line up with CENTCOM's mission and desired end state (listed above)?

Response: Clearly in the sense that strong allies are the cornerstone to US actions ensuring interests. Current treaty driven too much by outsiders' paradigms rather than existing (longstanding) regional paradigms. This impacts the last goal of "lasting increased regional stability and security" – unfeasible in a lasting sense as competing interests necessitate instability as do external variables. Just take the EU for example, its own internal debates resonate far and wide into Iran deal, beyond just negotiating positions. Conflict in EU and ME, Africa, etc. is inevitable, as it is between US and its partners today, adversaries tomorrow. Great Powers acknowledge this and are guided by principles, not blinded by wishful thinking.

Request: Is a whole of government approach the best and most appropriate approach for implementing a new Iran strategy?

Response: What does this even mean? WOG gets bandied about as if it were self-evident, but it is not and the effort often undermines the real value specialization brings to complex "political warfare" as the US is currently engaged in the ME. Better to emphasize different levels, timing of efforts for DOS in some areas, DOD in others, OGA and others as ancillary/supporting. NSC needs to coordinate.

Request: What role is CENTCOM best postured to play? What roles should be taken on by other organizations?

Response: Security Force Assistance with very clear no-go lines of effort – partners need non-negotiables that they can actually avoid, just as much as clear achievable; avoid maximal, idealistic language of the past, focus on significance (defined by values and interests) and feasibility (constrained by values and interests). DOS needs to embrace realism. Need more "I" relative to D, M, E.

Dr. Nicholas O'Shaughnessy

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Request: What are the characteristics that define the Trump Administration's "Iran policy"? Please note where it is different from the previous administration's policy.

Response: The Trump administration policy towards Iran is defined by intense hostility and distrust, and the belief that Obama negotiated away too much in achieving the nuclear deal. One facet of course is that because this was Obama's policy Trump opposes it- personal rivalries come into play here. Essentially Obama's was détente whereas Trump's is a renewal of the cold war, at least ostensibly. However in practice Trump is always more flexible than he first appears. It is unclear how far the Trump 'policy' is actually a performance script to appease core supporters and Obama haters. When push comes to shove, it is unlikely that Trump will overturn the nuclear deal.

However, it is also unlikely that Trump will exploit any openings with Iran and he will probably over-react when, as is their custom, they engage in minor but irritating provocations. So the cold war will continue and with it insensitivity to Iranian feelings, legitimate or illegitimate- for example by moving the embassy to Jerusalem.

Request: How does the Administration's approach to Iran line up with CENTCOM's mission and desired end state (listed above)?

Response: There is an obvious fracture here, an innate tension but on the other hand it is livable: a return to cold war is frustrating but it merely stabilizes the situation in an unsatisfactory way rather than moves to solve it. On the other hand, we now have clarity and predictability, as will Iran, and they are less likely to indulge in frankly juvenile provocations. There is a real unease, even fear, on their part? But there will be no movement forward.

The unfortunate thing is that Iran and the US cannot really co-operate effectively now on matters of mutual concern e.g. expansion of IS into Afghanistan. Moreover of course Iran is a player in Iraq and here again we lose what advantages we might have had with a more conciliatory- oriented approach.

Request: Is a whole of government approach the best and most appropriate approach for implementing a new Iran strategy?

Response: The need is for clarity, predictability and coherence, which is what a whole government approach offers.

Request: What role is CENTCOM best postured to play? What roles should be taken on by other organizations?

Response: A pluralist policy is best, i.e. the creation of strategic coalitions with partners and using both military and non-military organisations. Specifically, the prime players with Iran are the diplomats not the military, and also sympathetic countries which can act as intermediaries. The military are the reserve, not being used or even likely to be used against Iran: their power and value in this specific context is principally symbolic e.g. the US Sixth Fleet.

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

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Original Question: How does USCENTCOM, working within a whole of government approach, coordinate military operations in support of the change in approach towards Iran from the previous to the current administration?"

Response: At this stage, it remains unclear of exactly what the new strategy is and there are a lot of question marks that remain unanswered. For example, one does not know to what degree the new strategy has any military component or whether CENTCOM itself is part of the Iranian containment. For the region, the simple fact is the realization that if you join the efforts you will also become a target for Iran as the Iranian never hesitate in targeting the region. As a result, there is no reason for the moment to change one's approach while one is unsure of how this new policy will be enacted and while the suspicion about the US policy in the region has not shifted.

Biographies

Ambassador James Jeffery



Ambassador James F. Jeffery is the Philip Solondz distinguished fellow at The Washington Institute where he focuses on U.S. diplomatic and military strategy in the Middle East, with emphasis on Turkey, Iraq, and Iran.

One of the nation's most senior diplomats, Ambassador Jeffery has held a series of highly sensitive posts in Washington D.C. and abroad. In addition to his service as ambassador in Ankara and Baghdad, he served as assistant to the president and deputy national security advisor in the George W. Bush administration, with a special focus on Iran. He previously served as principal deputy assistant secretary for the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs at the Department of State, where his responsibilities included leading the Iran policy team and coordinating public diplomacy. Earlier appointments included service as senior advisor on Iraq to the secretary of state; chargé d'affaires and deputy chief of mission in Baghdad; deputy chief of mission in Ankara; and ambassador to Albania.

A former infantry officer in the U.S. Army, Ambassador Jeffery served in Germany and Vietnam from 1969 to 1976.

Dr. Spencer Meredith III

Dr. Spencer B. Meredith III is a professor of national security strategy at the US National Defense University. With a doctorate in Government and Foreign Affairs from the University of Virginia, and two decades of research and work on post-Soviet regions and the Middle East, his expertise bridges scholarly and practitioner communities. To that end, he has published widely on strategic topics related to democratic development, conflict resolution, and special operations. He is a Fulbright Scholar and a regular advisor and contributor to several DoD and interagency projects, including multiple Joint Staff Strategic Multilayer Assessments, intelligence community workshops, and JSOC efforts supporting the joint warfighter in the areas of governance, human factors of conflict, and influence operations.



Dr. Nicholas O'Shaughnessy



Nicholas O'Shaughnessy is Professor of Communication at Queen Mary, University of London, UK and latterly director of their Marketing and Communications Group; Visiting Professor (2016-) in the Department of War Studies at King's College London, and a Quondam Fellow of Hughes Hall Cambridge University. Earlier in his career he taught for eleven years at Cambridge. Nicholas is the author or co-author or editor of numerous books on commercial and political persuasion.

Ultimately his concern is with the 'engineering of consent'- the troubling matter of how public opinion can be manufactured, and governments elected, via sophisticated methodologies of persuasion developed in the consumer economy.

A co-authored book, *Theory and Concepts in Political Marketing*, was published in April 2013 with Sage. *Selling Hitler: Propaganda and the Nazi Brand* (Hurst) was published in September 2016, and a second volume – *Marketing The Third Reich: Persuasion, Packaging and Propaganda*- has been out since September 2017 with Routledge. 'Key Readings In Propaganda' (with Paul Baines, four volumes, Sage London 2012): Volume One: Historical origins, definition, changing nature. Volume Two: The psychology and sociology underpinning Propaganda. Volume Three: Propaganda in military and terrorism contexts. Volume Four: Advances and contemporary issues in Propaganda.

Other topics in propaganda are pursued in numerous journal articles such as *Selling Terror: The Symbolization and Positioning of Jihad* (with Paul Baines), *Marketing Theory* Volume 9 (2) (pp 207-221) 2009. *The Dark Side of Political Marketing, Islamist Propaganda, Reversal Theory and British Muslims* with Paul Baines et al, *European Journal of Marketing*. V44 3/4 2010. *Al Qaeda message evolution and positioning, 1998- 2008: Propaganda analysis re-visited*, Baines and O'Shaughnessy, *Public Relations Inquiry* pp 163-191 May 2014. *Putin, Xi, And Hitler: propaganda and the paternity of pseudo democracy*. *Defence Strategic Communications* (the official journal of NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence) Vol 2 Spring 2017. *The Politics of Consumption and the Consumption of Politics: How Authoritarian Regimes Shape Public Opinion by Using Consumer Marketing Tools*. *Journal of Advertising Research*, June 2017, 57 (2).

His perspective has always been that persuasion is the hidden hand of history, its core dynamic. And certainly it is the case that propaganda has become again an important part of our global public and civic discourse.

Dr. Abdulaziz Sager

A Saudi expert on Gulf politics and strategic issues, Dr. Abdulaziz Sager is the founder and Chairman of the Gulf Research Center, a global think tank based in Jeddah with a well-established worldwide network of partners and offices in both the Gulf region and Europe.



In this capacity, Dr. Sager has authored and edited numerous publications including *Combating Violence & Terrorism in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, *The GCC's Political & Economic Strategy towards Post-War Iraq* and *Reforms in Saudi Arabia: Challenges and Feasible Solutions*. He

is also a frequent contributor to major international media channels and appears regularly on Al-Arabiya Television, France 24 and the BBC. In addition to his academic activities, Dr. Sager is actively engaged in track-two and mediation meeting. For example, he has chaired and moderated the Syrian opposition meetings in Riyadh in December 2015 and November 2017.

In addition to his work with the Gulf Research Center, Dr. Sager is President of Sager Group Holding in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which is active in the fields of information technology, aviation services and investments. Furthermore, he holds numerous other appointments including on the Makkah Province Council, Advisory Board of the Arab Thought Foundation, Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, Faculty of Economics and Administration at King Abdulaziz University, Saudi Ministry of Education, Geneva Center for Security Policy and German Orient Foundation. Dr. Sager has also sat on the advisory group for the UNDP Arab Human Development Report, and participates in the Think Tank Leaders Forum of the World Economic Forum and the Council of Councils of the Council on Foreign Relations.

Dr. Sager holds a Ph.D. in Politics and International Relations from Lancaster University and an M.A. from the University of Kent, United Kingdom and a Bachelor Degree from the Faculty of Economics and Administration of King Abdulaziz University.

Mr. Ali Jafri



Ali Jafri provides research support on issues of national security, armed groups, and human security in the defense and intelligence communities. He previously served as a member of a multi-disciplinary team of analysts, technologists, and data scientists tasked with helping bring innovative practices to customers in the intelligence community. Prior to joining NSI, he worked at Georgetown University, conducting research on emerging threats, focusing on political instability in South Asia. He is a graduate of the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy at Tufts University, where he completed a Masters in Law and Diplomacy.