



Center on Irregular Warfare & Armed Groups

Annual Symposium Report - 2017

“Rising Tides”



“This is definitely one of the best I have seen in the series since its inception. All the speakers were on point, on topic, and well-spoken .”

“The multi-disciplinary approach was a major positive, one of the best conferences yet.”

“As always, this conference has proven to be insightful and has provided an excellent opportunity for the CIWAG community of interest to engage on relevant operational issues. Excellent job.”

The Center for Irregular Warfare and Armed Groups at the US Naval War College presented its 9th annual symposium, *“Rising Tides,”* on 27-28 June 2017. Over 80 US and international academics, practitioners, and operators attended to discuss various strategic and operational challenges associated with irregular warfare and armed groups. Attendees also included members from DHS, DIA, NCIS, intelligence agencies, Special Operations Forces, and State Street Bank, Inc.

NWC President RADM Jeffery Harley opened the conference, and Lt. Gen Joseph Osterman, Deputy Commander USSOCOM, gave the keynote address. The symposium focused on a spectrum of challenges - *Rising Tides* - that scholars, operators, and practitioners will be dealing with today’s security environment.

Highlighted Panels:

**Nigerian Chameleon: The Many Faces of Boko Haram:
Dr. Andrea Dew (NWC) & Mr. Jacob Zenn (The Jamestown Foundation)**

Key Findings:

- ⇒ Al-Qaeda (AQ) began a long-term, albeit relatively low-cost, investment in Nigeria/Nigerians since as early as the Afghan jihad in the 1980s.
- ⇒ After 9/11 AQ mobilized this investment in the armed group that became known as Boko Haram (BH) in Nigeria. Interaction between Nigerian security forces and BH further mobilized grassroots support for the group.
- ⇒ AQ's inability to reign in BH's leader, forced AQ to divest itself of BH and enabled the Islamic State in Iraq and al-Sham (ISIS) to acquire a faction of BH in

**Hard Science/Dark Futures:
Dr. James Giordano (Georgetown University) , Mr. John Campbell (U.S. Special Operations Command)**

Key Findings:

- ⇒ Brain science and its technologies are being, and will be increasingly considered, developed and engaged for use in military, intelligence and war-fighting operations.
- ⇒ Activities of state and non-state actors in neurotechnological research, development, testing and evaluation increase the diversity, pace, and likelihood of brain science being used to create weapons of mass disruption.
- ⇒ The scope and scale of state and non-state enterprise(s) in brain science and technology demand ongoing and revised attention toward surveillance, oversight, guidance and governance at both national and international levels.

Food Security- A Non-Traditional Threat to Security and Stability:

BG Eric Peck (Kansas State University), Ms. Lynndee Kemmet (U.S. Military Academy), Mr. George O’Conor (Wheeler Creek)

Key Findings:

- ⇒ With global population levels set to increase, maintaining food security, already a challenge in many regions, will become increasingly difficult due to a variety of factors that may disrupt food production.
- ⇒ Food distribution is also an issue which may require global collaboration and changes in state policies.
- ⇒ Climate change that results in severe storms, destruction of food stocks, or other risk factors such as major pandemics that impact plants and/or animals also have the potential to wipe out large portions of global food supplies.
- ⇒ A team at West Point with support from Kansas State University, and the Defense Threat Reduction Agency are working on developing a system-based model that maps variables focusing in on many of these looming food security threat issues.

Additional Symposium Panels included:

- ⇒ **ISIS: Ideology and Propaganda:** Mr. Charlie Winter (King’s College), Dr. Craig Whiteside (NWC), Dr. Burak Kadercan (NWC)
- ⇒ **Gray Zone Strategies: South China Sea:** Professor Peter Dutton, NWC, CMSI) Mr. Ryan Martinson (NWC), Mr. Conor Kennedy (NWC)
- ⇒ **Economic Warfare and Capital Markets:** Mr. Paul Selian (State Street Corporation)
- ⇒ **Assessing Irregular Environments:** Mrs. Chirstina Phillips (Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory), Prof. John Houfek (NWC)
- ⇒ **Gibridnaya Voina’: Russian New Generation Warfare on Land and Sea:** Dr. Michael Peterson (NWC, RMSI) Mr. Michael Kofman (Willson Center), Dr. Dmitry Gorenburg (Harvard University)

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U.S. Naval War College

686 Cushing Road

Newport, RI 02841

The Center on Irregular Warfare & Armed Groups (CIWAG) at the U.S. Naval War College was created in 2008 using grants from private philanthropic foundations to ensure that education and research on irregular warfare and armed groups remains timely and easily accessible to military officers and their Interagency counterparts who devise strategies for dealing with armed groups around the world.



“Bringing Operators and Academics Together”

