



2012 ANNUAL REPORT





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MISSION

The Institute for the Study of War works to ensure that American security strategy is well formulated by improving how our leaders understand conflict and military issues. ISW enhances the quality of policy debates on national security by providing independent analysis, accurate data, and superior insight on today's most challenging crises. ISW is a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organization.

We believe ground realities must drive the formulation of strategy and policy. In pursuit of this principle, ISW conducts detailed, open-source intelligence analysis to provide the most accurate information on current conflicts and security threats. Through reports and timely events, our research educates military and civilian leaders, reporters, and the public.

LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Is the tide of war receding? American forces have come out of Iraq and are drawing down in Afghanistan. The Middle East, however, is awash in violent conflict. Political upheaval in the region has generated civil war in Syria, created fertile ground for the expansion of terrorist groups, exacerbated violent sectarian conflict, spurred regional powers to increase support to armed proxies, and brought political Islamist parties to the fore. Iran has continued its nuclear enrichment program and weapons research. The force of American influence may be receding, but the tide of war is not.

The threats to the United States and its interests emanating from the greater Middle East are numerous, imminent, and growing. Al Qaeda associates have expanded throughout the Middle East and North Africa. Al Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) is resurgent and is trying to hijack peaceful Sunni protest movements in Anbar and Ninewah in order to restart an insurgency. Saudi Arabia and Qatar have empowered the Syrian armed opposition's most radical elements, such as AQI's offshoot Jabhat Nusra, by providing them with resources at the expense of moderate, secular groups. The Muslim Brotherhood holds power in Egypt and is resurgent in Syria. Iran, meanwhile, has provided materiel, training, covert support, and foreign military assistance to the Assad regime in order to maintain him in power for as long as possible, establish a follow-on Alawite state when he falls, and preserve the Syrian chemical weapons program on which Tehran relies to deter Israel. Iranian support to Hezbollah in Lebanon and Shi'a oppositionists in Bahrain, as well as to separatist groups in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province and the Houthis in Yemen, is another manifestation of the competition among regional powers, along sectarian as well as power political lines.

Two wars on separate fronts proved challenging enough over the last decade. The multiplicity of simultaneous threats presents a serious strategic challenge to our policy makers, leaders, diplomats, and commanders. The regional conflict that may ensue from them is greater than any we have encountered over the last decade. Many threats are visible. The United States can and must avoid strategic surprise.

The United States is cutting its defense budget, however. The resulting deterioration of force structure and readiness will make it difficult to respond even to predictable threats.

ISW's work is essential to America's national security as U.S. forces reposition in this strategic environment. ISW continues to help America's leaders understand strategic risks, emerging threats, and the dynamics of conflicts. Our analysts, enabled by cutting edge technology, have generated ground-breaking insight into emerging conflicts such as the Syrian Civil War as well as our established fields of research. ISW is effective because it works with practitioners, from commanders to diplomats, to assist them with formulating and implementing our foreign and defense policy. ISW is trusted because its research is accurate, and its people dedicated to keeping America and its warfighters safe and secure. ISW's 2013 research projects will likewise produce the insightful, trusted research that is our organization's hallmark. The following pages will show our team's passion for the mission of securing our nation.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kimberly Kagan". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Dr. Kimberly Kagan, President & Founder

CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS



2012 represents an important milestone for ISW—it marks our fifth anniversary as a leading think tank in Washington, supporting our commanders, warfighters, policymakers, and the public. Over the past five years, ISW has seen tremendous growth, not only within in the scope of our research, but also the depth and breadth of our influence within the defense and policy communities.

OUR RESEARCH

Since its inception in 2007, ISW has built a reputation for its accuracy and ability to provide cutting-edge analysis on existing and emerging threats. ISW helps our warfighters, military commanders, intelligence professionals, and policymakers understand ongoing military crises, anticipate contingencies, and develop intelligent strategic options.

Dr. Kim Kagan founded ISW in May 2007 as U.S. forces undertook a new counterinsurgency strategy to reverse the grim security situation in Iraq. She was frustrated with the lack of accurate information documenting developments on the ground in Iraq and the detrimental effect of biased reporting on policymakers. Dr. Kagan established ISW to provide real-time, independent, and open-source analysis of ongoing military operations and insurgent attacks in Iraq. Since publishing the first Iraq Report in 2007, ISW has remained the premier source for unbiased analysis on the changing political and security dynamics in Iraq, even after U.S. forces left the country in December 2011.

Since 2007, the scope of ISW's research and analysis has broadened considerably as Dr. Kagan identified the need for similarly rigorous analysis as threats emerged in Afghanistan and the Middle East. In 2009, ISW launched the Afghanistan Project, which has produced research on insurgent groups such as the Haqqani Network, Afghan high politics, corruption, and coalition operations.

In November 2011, ISW launched the Middle East Security Project. Researchers in this program study national security threats emerging from the Arabian Gulf and wider Arab World, identifies ways the United States and Gulf States can check Iran's growing influence and contain the threat posed by its nuclear ambitions, explains the shifting balance of power within the Middle East, and assesses responses the United States and Arab states take to address these changes as they emerge.

As we move into 2013, ISW will seek to provide the best possible analysis that competes with, informs, and ultimately improves the analysis generated within the U.S. government. We aim to transform the role of think-tanks and private-sector research institutions. We will leverage technological, human, and organizational advantages to lead change in the realms of intelligence and policy planning. We will pioneer models, methods, techniques, and products that can be adapted and adopted into both government and private-sector analysis. We will raise the standard for discussions and coverage of strategic issues and policy.

ASSISTING THE WARFIGHTER

ISW values the importance of learning from experience on the ground in theaters of war. Over the years, ISW's analysts and fellows have spent significant time deployed to theater to assist commanders, conduct interviews, and improve their situational understanding. ISW analysts have traveled to Iraq and Afghanistan, and have also briefed troops preparing for deployment, including units from the 1st Infantry Division and SOCOM.



GROWING RELATIONSHIPS WITH TOP LEADERS

The unique relationship ISW has with our nation's senior military commanders and policymakers indicates the reach and impact its products have among the national security community. These relationships continue to influence the access our analysts have and they also inform the quality of events ISW hosts. Noteworthy guest speakers over the years have included: General Ray Odierno, LTG Mike Barbero, LTG Dan Allyn, MG Rich Mills, General David Petraeus (U.S. Army, Ret.), Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army; and Commander of the XVIII Airborne Corps and the former Commander of Regional Command East in Afghanistan. The prestige that accompanies these events further extends the impact and relevance of ISW and the analysis it brings to the community.

INFLUENCE

ISW's work has achieved international influence in the news media, making press appearances in more than 37 countries and in more than 20 different languages. Washington's Pentagon and White House corps of reporters say ISW is an exceptional resource for in-depth information and insider access. Highlights of our media appearances include CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, The New York Times, USA Today, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, LA Times, Politico, National Public Radio, Associated Press, Reuters, and more.

ISW scholars have conducted more than 100 briefings for senior civilian policymakers in one year, including top officials in the Department of Defense, the National Security Council, Senators, and Congressmen. This year, ISW has continued our rapid pace of Congressional outreach. Senior Analyst Jeffrey Dressler testified before the House Committee on Foreign Affairs and Syria analysts Joseph Holliday and Elizabeth O'Bagy briefed numerous senior policy makers on Syria.

OUR STAFF

As ISW's research portfolio has grown, so has our size and caliber of our staff.

When ISW began, we consisted of a few unsalaried interns, borrowed office space, some maps, and a desire to inform the policy community, journalists, and the public about ongoing military operations in Iraq.

ISW now consists of a staff of nearly twenty professionals and a hundred alumni, most of whom continue to serve our nation. As ISW continues to expand, it will continue to seek to contribute to the development of potential national security leaders and thinkers who understand military operations and their connection to policy.



COMPARATIVE ADVANTAGES



Founded in 2007, ISW has achieved a level of influence rare even for Washington's most established think-tanks. Demand for ISW's work has grown to include senior members of the U.S. government, the Departments of State and Defense, Congressional staff, and senior military commanders, who increasingly seek ISW expertise to help shape their thinking on key foreign policy issues in the Middle East and South Asia. ISW measures its impact in part by the degree to which our analysts are requested to brief these audiences and participate in their planning.

IN-DEPTH AND COMPREHENSIVE RESEARCH

Our influence is a product of the quality and integrity of our research. ISW analysis is accurate and comprehensive because of our vigorous approach, which includes field research, personal interviews, and daily tracking. It is also sensitive to change, and ISW determines research priorities according to what is actually happening on the ground rather than what is in the news.

EXCEPTIONAL YOUNG PEOPLE

ISW's staff is fresh, talented, and creative. We challenge assumptions, imagine new solutions, and contribute original and dynamic perspectives to the foreign policy community. We cultivate a team with a broad and varied set of skills and backgrounds, including regional expertise, linguistic skill, military experience, and intelligence training.

A POWERFUL COMMUNITY OF INTEREST

ISW's network of military leaders and regional experts extends far beyond the reaches of most think tanks, and ISW actively seeks to incorporate their perspectives. ISW's Field Reports, a signature military speaker series, hosts commanders returning from Iraq or Afghanistan in order to share their unvarnished views of the wars, fresh from the field. This senior cadre of experienced professionals perfectly complements our young team.

TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION

ISW integrates cutting-edge technologies such as the Palantir analytical platform. Technology allows ISW to capitalize upon a culture of innovation in order to maximize avenues of open source research in a collaborative intellectual environment. ISW believes in multi-faceted research, and ISW pioneers new analytical methodologies that complement advances in technology in order to provide the best possible understanding of real world events.

ISW'S FIFTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION



“Dr. Kim Kagan and her institute couple analytical rigor and objectivity with compelling arguments that have translated into government policy that have made our military operations more successful, and they will anchor the new ISW project on the Middle East, which as we all know remains one of the most important yet turbulent regions in the world. I have no doubt that her and their work will make another positive difference here.”

— Major General Arnold Punaro (USMC, Ret.)



“ISW is an important outside voice providing a fresh perspective on the challenges we face.”

— General Raymond Odierno

OUR RESEARCH

2007-2012



THE MIDDLE EAST SECURITY PROJECT

- The Libyan Revolution, Part 1: Roots of Rebellion
- The Libyan Revolution, Part 2: Escalation and Intervention
- The Libyan Revolution, Part 3: Stalemate and Siege
- The Libyan Revolution, Part 4: The Tide Turns
- Iran's Two Navies
- The Struggle for Syria in 2011
- Syria's Armed Opposition
- Syria's Political Opposition
- Iranian Influence in the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, and Afghanistan
- Syria's Maturing Insurgency
- Jihad in Syria

THE IRAQ PROJECT

- From 'New Way Forward' to New Commander
- Enforcing the Law: The Baghdad Security Plan Begins
- Anbar Awakening: Displacing Al-Qaeda From its Stronghold in Western Iraq
- The Battle for Diyala
- The Real Surge: Preparing for Operation Phantom Thunder
- Iran's Proxy War Against the United States and Iraq
- The Fight for Mosul
- The Battle for Basra
- Expanding Security in Diyala
- Special Groups Regenerate
- The Fragmentation of the Sadrist Trend
- Diyala's Provincial Election
- Balancing Maliki
- The U.S. in Iraq Beyond 2011
- The Resurgence of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq

THE AFGHANISTAN PROJECT

- Kunar and Nuristan: Rethinking U.S. Counterinsurgency Operations
- Securing Helmand
- The Taliban's Campaign for Kandahar
- Accelerating Combat Power in Afghanistan
- The Re-election of Hamid Karzai
- Politics and Power in Kandahar
- The Haqqani Network: From Pakistan to Afghanistan
- Counterinsurgency in Kandahar
- Counterinsurgency in Helmand
- Defining Success in Afghanistan
- Reversing the Northeastern Insurgency
- The Karzai-Fahim Alliance
- The Haqqani Network: A Strategic Threat

BEST PRACTICES IN COIN

- Building Security Forces and Ministerial Capacity: Iraq as a Primer
- Accelerating Combat Power in Afghanistan
- After the Surge: Task Force Raider's Experience in Iraq
- Creating Police and Law Enforcement Systems
- Operational Art in Counterinsurgency

OUR PROGRAMS

THE MIDDLE EAST SECURITY PROJECT

After five years of intensive study of the conditions affecting security in Iraq, ISW recognized the need to address Iraq, Syria, and emerging threats in the Middle East from a regional perspective. Sectarianism, authoritarianism, Salafism, and the regional battle for influence between Iran and the Arab states are themes that cross borders and cause conditions in one state to resonate in many others. The policy implications of these themes therefore demand a synchronous approach to research. Granular insights achieved through focused study of local conditions in one country must be stitched together with insights gained elsewhere in order to identify and understand their linkages. Accordingly, ISW approached the Middle East program in 2012 through individual country teams, publishing works primarily on evolving conditions in Syria and Iraq, as a lens through which to regard the Middle East broadly.

Together with the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute, ISW also published a thematic study into the complex nature and extent of Iranian Influence across the region in 2012. This report, *Iranian Influence in the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, and Afghanistan*, featured insights by ISW Fellow Marisa Sullivan into Iran's strategy in Iraq as it manifested after the withdrawal of U.S. troops. This report framed research efforts into Iranian proxy groups, Iranian naval activities, and Iranian diplomatic overtures across the Middle East in 2012 as part of Iran's broader strategy for regional influence.

“Iran is on the defensive in the Levant in a way it has not been for many years, and a great deal is at stake for the future of the Islamic Republic’s regional and even global strategy and, therefore, for the interests of those states concerned with shaping Iran’s behavior and capabilities abroad.”

—Marisa Sullivan, et. al., in *“Iranian Influence in the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, and Afghanistan,”* May 2012



▲ General James Mattis and Dr. Kimberly Kagan speak at the launch of ISW's Middle East Security Project.

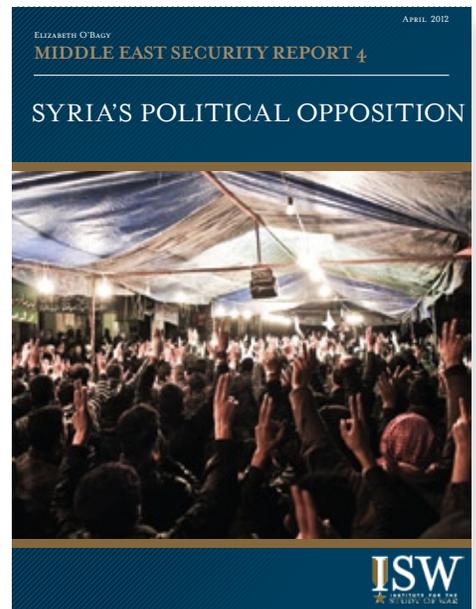


The uprising against Bashar al-Assad intensified in December 2011, and it became evident that the opposition movement would develop into a violent insurgency against his autocratic and predatory rule. Given that the majority of the Syrian population mobilized to this cause, ISW recognized that this insurgency might overwhelm Assad’s regime security forces, driving Syria into a civil war with an uncertain outcome. As the civil war expanded in the summer of 2012, the deleterious effect upon regional stability caused by Syrian population displacement, the investment of external actors on both sides of the conflict, as well as the growing power of Salafi-jihadi fighters, has become evident.

ISW addressed the crisis in Syria by tracing the formation of Syria’s opposition movement from its inception as a violent and disorganized uprising. Senior Analyst Joseph Holliday published two reports, Syria’s Armed Opposition and Syria’s Maturing Insurgency, detailing the formation of rebel units and operational networks as they developed new tactical procedures to combat regime capabilities. Research Analyst Elizabeth O’Bagy published two reports in parallel, Syria’s Political Opposition and Syria’s Political Struggle: Spring 2012, to describe the simultaneous formation of the grassroots political opposition that aspired to

provide local and provincial level governance. O’Bagy also published Jihad in Syria, addressing the presence of Salafist groups and foreign fighters in Syria, with specific emphasis upon a new indigenous threat, Jabhat Nusra, a front of AQI. Together this body of work contributed significant insight into the personalities, capabilities, limitations, and growth of the opposition into a capable fighting and governing force.

This insight into Syria’s opposition was novel in many respects, and Holliday and O’Bagy were requested on many occasions to brief policy makers, members of Congress and the Senate, the National Security Staff, and the United Nations, as well as foreign policy professionals within the State Department, Defense Department, and various Embassies in Washington D.C. Their insights contributed to the formulation of U.S. policy and strategy on Syria.



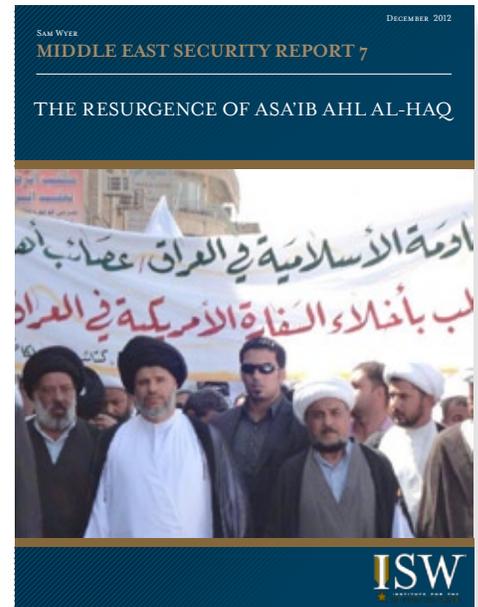
“The international community must prepare for protracted civil war in Syria, but the extent of regional destabilization could depend on whether the opposition develops into an alternative government or descends into chaos and competition among warring factions.”

—Senior Research Analyst Joseph Holliday in “Syria’s Maturing Insurgency,” June 2012

Stability in Iraq depends upon the political participation of the Sunni Arabs, who abandoned AQI in 2008 for this alternative. Days after the last of U.S. troops withdrew from Iraq in December 2011, Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki began a campaign of Sunni marginalization and power consolidation that continued throughout 2012. The Sunni have been unable to mount an effective political response, and many Sunni have lost confidence in national political compromise. Meanwhile, tensions between Baghdad and the Kurds have intensified, as encroachments by Maliki's newly-appointed provincial operational commands provoked a Kurdish military response. 2012 closed in worse condition than it began, with Maliki targeting additional Sunni political figures, a nationwide campaign of anti-Maliki protests concentrated in Anbar province, attacks by al Qaeda in Iraq increasing in sophistication, Kurdish President Jalal Talabani sidelined by a stroke, and the Syrian civil war pressing against Iraq's borders.

ISW addressed the deterioration in Iraq in 2012 by launching a series of Iraq Weekly Updates, publishing 52 installments over the course of the year. This series chronicled and collated sparse information emanating from Iraq to follow these events, elucidating key observations to inform the enduring community of Iraq experts as to the state of affairs post-withdrawal. The topic was otherwise unaddressed by the policy community, with no clear U.S. policy in Iraq articulated in 2012. Meanwhile, this body of knowledge served two key purposes: first, it enabled analysts at ISW to piece together events and decisions in Iraq and determine how they connected to those in Syria, Iran, and other states; second, it stands as a record to contextualize U.S. policy in Iraq in 2013, which must necessarily treat Iraq in the context of her neighbors.

In addition, Research Analyst Sam Wyer published *The Resurgence of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq*, to describe how this historic Shi'a militant group best known for attacks against U.S. troops during Operation Iraqi Freedom has transitioned and expanded into the political, religious, and social spheres. The report also assesses Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq as a political proponent of Maliki and an opponent of the Sadrist Trend, and furthermore an agent of Iran with latent potential to reinforce Iran's interests as a traditional regional proxy. Within the context of Iran's regional strategy, this report will support the development of a regional approach to limit Iran's support base.



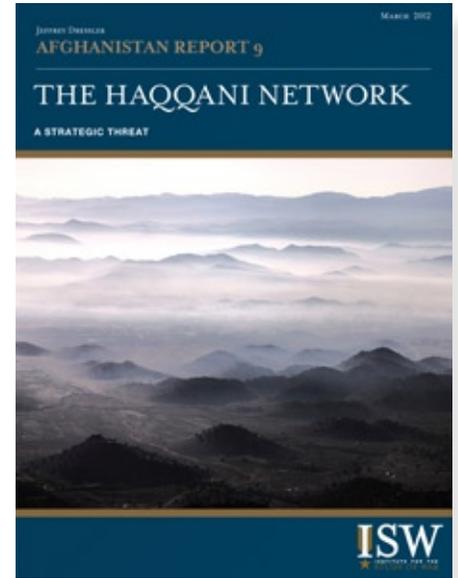
“A year ago, Maliki used the withdrawal of U.S. forces as a cover to move against Hashemi, a long-time critic who had accused Maliki of sectarian, pro-Shi'a policies, as well as to intimidate Issawi and Mutlaq, whose Baghdad residences were surrounded by government forces. This time, Maliki appears to have exploited the distraction caused by President Jalal Talabani's stroke to go after another of the public faces of Iraq's Sunni political community.”

—Research Analyst Stephen Wicken in Weekly Iraq Update #51, December 2012

AFGHANISTAN

2012 was a pivotal year for the ISAF campaign in Afghanistan as well as for the determination of U.S. policy in Afghanistan post-2014. Simultaneous efforts to disrupt the insurgency in the East, to transition lead security responsibility to Afghan National Security Forces, and to reconcile insurgents politically placed demand upon estimates of enduring strategic threats to Afghanistan. Meanwhile the threat of Green-on-Blue attacks called into question the viability of the transition mission, demanding both a granular assessment of the attacks as well as an assessment of the capability of the Afghan National Army to conduct its mission without assistance.

ISW research on Afghanistan in 2012 therefore focused upon identifying enduring strategic threats to Afghanistan and regional stability. Chief among these threats is the Haqqani Network, assessed by Senior Analyst Jeffrey Dressler to be an al Qaeda associate, a violent threat to U.S. interests in Afghanistan, and an internationally financed organization with the ability to regenerate. Dressler's analysis in [The Haqqani Network: A Strategic Threat](#), informed the debate over whether to designate the network as a Foreign Terrorist Organization. The Haqqani Network was ultimately designated in September 2012. Dressler also published an assessment on "Strategic Issues Facing the Next COMISAF", closing 2012 with a strategic forecast of what faces the transitioning force in 2013.



Dressler appeared before the House Foreign Affairs Committee to deliver testimony on the need to designate the Haqqani Network as a Foreign Terrorist Organization in October 2012. Dressler also conducted briefings for the intelligence community, senior congressional leaders, and military leaders on the Haqqani Network. He provided pre-deployment training for several combat units and instructs at the National Defense University.

Dr. Kimberly Kagan, Dr. Frederick Kagan, and LTG James Dubik (Ret.) also contributed significant works on troop presence in Afghanistan in 2012, including "Why U.S. Troops Must Stay in Afghanistan" by Dr. Kimberly Kagan and Dr. Frederick Kagan, and [Combat Power and Confidence within the Afghan National Army](#) by LTG James Dubik (Ret). These articles describe what operational resources are needed in order to accomplish the mission of transitioning Afghan security responsibility to the Afghan National Army in the context of the present threat. This military analysis directly informs national decisions concerning the necessary force posture in Afghanistan post-2014.

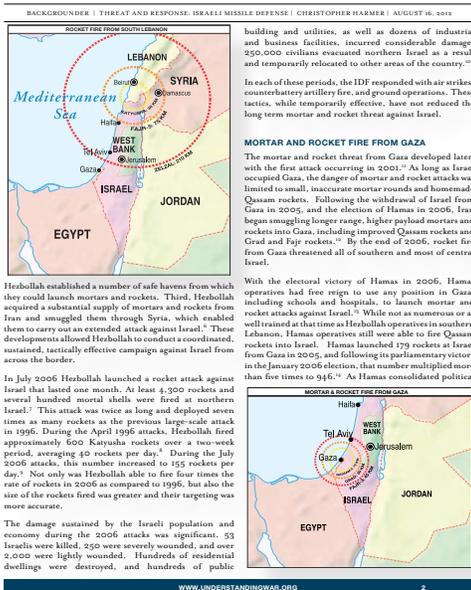
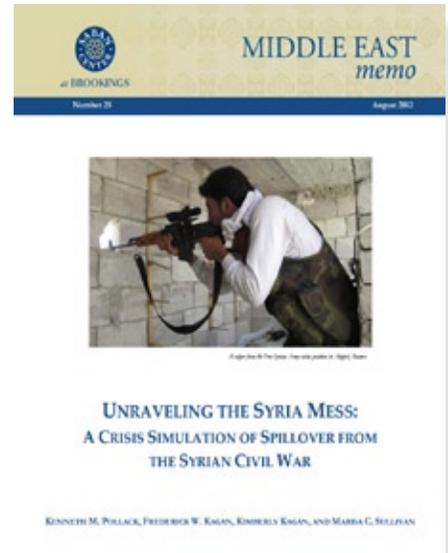
"The Haqqani Network represents a strategic threat to the enduring stability of the Afghan state and U.S. national security interests in the region. The Haqqanis are currently Afghanistan's most capable and potent insurgent group, and they continue to maintain close operational and strategic ties with al-Qaeda and their affiliates. These ties will likely deepen in the future."

—Senior Research Analyst Jeffrey Dressler in "The Haqqani Network: A Strategic Threat," March 2012

ISW's insight into local dynamics that affect the decision calculus of state and non-state actors places the organization in a prime position to forecast future outcomes. In the security sphere, ISW also possesses a core competency for military operational planning. This planning incorporates terrain analysis, technical estimates of military strength, trend analysis of significant events, and other techniques that may be applied to describe conflicts that have not been addressed by the U.S. military. As ISW research approaches potential conflicts in order to provide policy opportunities that may avert or mitigate them, this is a significant function.

In 2012, ISW pursued this objective on several occasions, recognizing that policy planning rarely incorporates operational assessments of this nature. In August 2012, ISW combined efforts with colleagues at the American Enterprise Institute and the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution in order to host a wargame simulating the impact of spillover of the Syrian civil war into neighboring states. ISW participated in a derivative joint publication, Unraveling the Syria Mess: A Crisis Simulation of Spillover from the Syrian Civil War, following this exercise.

ISW and the Critical Threats Project at the American Enterprise Institute conducted another event to simulate the regional effects of a third party strike against Iranian nuclear facilities. ISW analysts combined on a third occasion with colleagues from several institutions to discuss whether or not viable policy alternatives existed to establish a No Fly Zone in Syria. ISW published a graphic product, The Syrian Air Force & Air Defense Overview, after this discussion. These events demonstrated the intellectual velocity and agility that derives from ISW granular research and applies it directly to policy priorities.



Additionally, ISW Senior Naval Analyst Christopher Harmer published technical analyses on a wide range of topics, including Israeli Missile Defense, Syrian Air Defense Force Attack on Turkish Reconnaissance Aircraft, and Russian Naval Base Tartus. These individual reports enhanced the quality of policy debates by making technical expertise accessible.

“The United States may have a more pressing need to take action to shut down the Syrian civil war sooner, before it destabilizes Iraq, because the United States is not likely to do anything to shut down an Iraqi civil war once it has resumed, even though an Iraqi civil war could be extremely threatening to American vital interests.”

—Dr. Kimberly Kagan, Marisa Sullivan, et. al. in “Unraveling the Syria Mess: A Crisis Simulation of Spillover from the Syrian Civil War,” August 2012

WHERE WE'VE BEEN IN 2012

STAFF TRAVEL

U.S. HEADQUARTERS

V CORPS; WIESBADEN, GERMANY

1ST INFANTRY DIVISION; FORT RILEY, KANSAS

U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND; TAMPA, FLORIDA

SOCOM VSO CONFERENCE; ORLANDO, FL

SOCOM ACADEMIC WEEK; SAVANNAH, GA

3ID, 4 BCT; SAVANNAH, GA

1ST ID; FT. RILEY, KANSAS

902ND MI BRIGADE; FT. MEADE, MD

2ND CAVALRY REGIMENT AND 19TH MP

BRIGADE; STUTTGART, GERMANY

AFGHANISTAN

AFGHAN PROVINCES:

KABUL

LOGAR

WARDAK

GHAZNI

PAKTIYA

PAKTIKA

KHOST

NANGARHAR

PARWAN

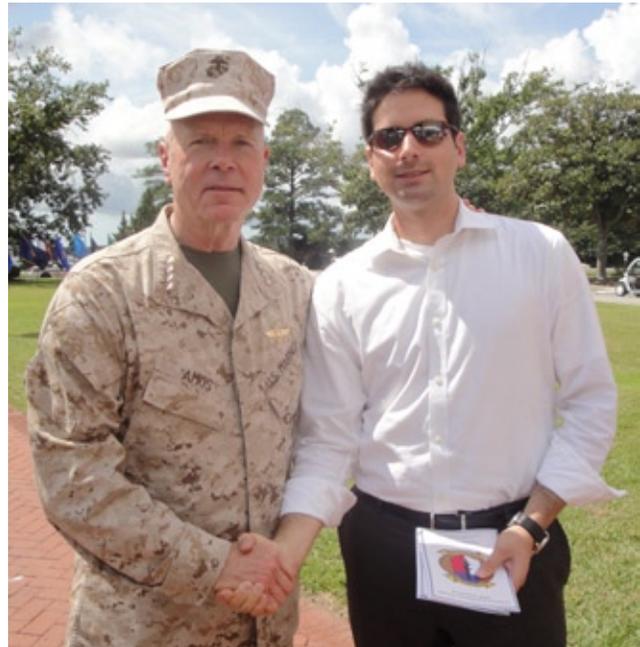
KANDAHAR

CAIRO, EGYPT

ISTANBUL, ANTAKYA, TURKEY

ISW continues to play a unique role serving the research and intellectual needs of our commanders in the field. Charitable support to ISW allows our scholars to deploy to theater, while remaining unsalaried by the government and outside the chain of command and bureaucracy. This allows them to render fully independent advice and assistance to the military in theater.

In 2012, ISW analysts Jeffrey Dressler and Joseph Holliday supported U.S. military units in Germany and across the United States. On these trips, our analysts advised military commanders, briefed units to prepare them for deployment, shared their assessments and methodologies, and joined in planning discussions. Jeffrey Dressler also deployed to Afghanistan in order to support operations in theater. He also interviewed key leaders and conducted independent research assessments.



▲ Jeffrey Dressler meets with General James Amos at Camp Lejeune.

Dr. Kagan spent much of 2012 in Afghanistan working directly with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and assisting General John Allen with the development and implementation of comprehensive civil-military campaign plans, and providing analysis of Afghan politics and security.

Elizabeth O'Bagy also traveled to Turkey and Egypt to conduct field research into shifts in the socio-political landscape of the Middle East over the course of ongoing conflicts in 2012.

EVENTS



▲ General Raymond Odierno speaks to Field Report attendees in New York.

ISW provides innovative education by hosting events with senior military and civilian national security leaders. ISW Field Reports remain our most popular events because they consist of informative, frank discussions with commanders returning from theater and other senior defense leaders.

AMERICA'S ARMY: THE STRENGTH OF THE NATION WITH GENERAL ODIERNO

In May 2012, ISW's president, Dr. Kim Kagan, hosted an intimate luncheon discussion with General Raymond T. Odierno, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army at The Union League Club in New York. The discussion, attended by around twenty New York-based business executives centered on the future of our force. General Odierno discussed a variety of topics, including the possible impact of budget cuts and sequestration, force modernization, the drawdown in Afghanistan, and future threats facing our nation.

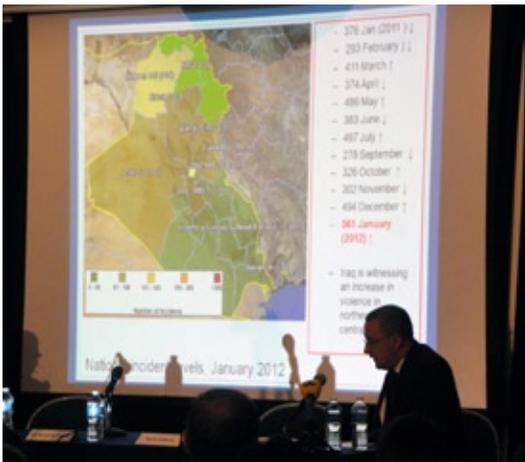
THE SURGE IN AFGHANISTAN: COMMAND VOICES

On November 30, ISW President Dr. Kim Kagan sat down with Major General (P) Jim Huggins and Lieutenant Colonel (P) J.B. Vowell to hear about their experiences in Afghanistan over the last year. MG (P) Jim Huggins, former Commander of the 82nd Airborne Division and Regional Command (South), discussed the security situation in Southern Afghanistan, and LTC (P) J.B. Vowell, former Commander of TF No Slack in Kunar, Afghanistan discussed the continuing challenges in Kunar, where al-Qaeda and its affiliates continue to operate. The discussion, hosted at the Army Navy Club, was attended by nearly 60 of ISW's supporters and broadcast on C-SPAN.



▲ Dr. Kim Kagan and Major General (P) Jim Huggins

IRAQ AFTER THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL



▲ Dr. Michael Knights

In February, ISW hosted a panel discussion on the future of Iraq after the U.S. withdrawal.

The panel included: Dr. Michael Knights, a Lafer fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy; Dr. Kenneth M. Pollack, a Senior Fellow at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution; Dr. Laith Kubba, the senior director for the Middle East and North Africa program at the National Endowment for Democracy; and Marisa Cochrane Sullivan, the deputy director at ISW.

Dr. Kimberly Kagan moderated the discussion. The panelists analyzed the implications of the growing trend of violence and national political struggles on Iraq's stability.

FIELD REPORT WITH COLONEL CHRISTOPHER TONER

In April, Colonel Chris Toner discussed the battle for Eastern Afghanistan, the Haqqani Network, and drivers of instability in the conflict.

Toner recently returned from a twelve-month combat tour where he commanded Task Force Duke of the 3rd Brigade, 1st Infantry Division in Khost and Paktya Provinces of Regional Command-East, Afghanistan.



▲ Colonel Christopher Toner and Dr. Kimberly Kagan

FIELD REPORT WITH LIEUTENANT GENERAL DANIEL ALLYN

On August 2, ISW hosted Lieutenant General Daniel Allyn, US Army, Commander, XVIII Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, who recently returned from a year-long combat tour in Afghanistan where he served as Commanding General of Regional Command-East and of Combined Joint Task Force-I.

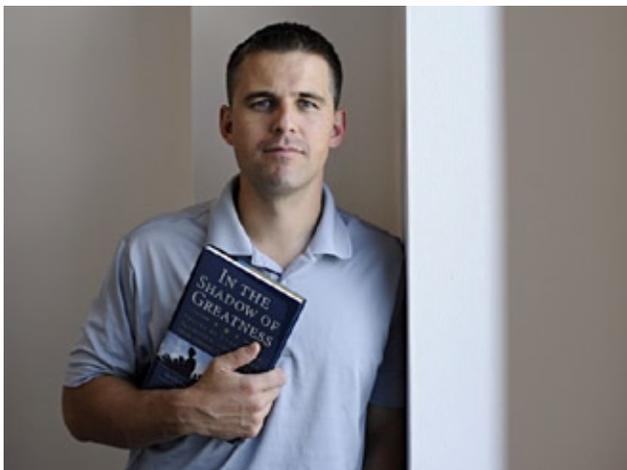
The discussion, moderated by ISW Chairman General Jack Keane (Ret.), focused on the evolving security challenges in Eastern Afghanistan in light of the approaching 2014 drawdown, in particular, the threat posed by the Haqqani Network.

When discussing the critical tasks of the US mission, Allyn emphasized the importance of developing the Afghan National Security Forces: “Develop the Afghan security forces to be able to secure their own country. This was the central focus of our efforts. It drove our entire partnership strategy and really it was the underlying principle that we applied to everything that we did there. Number One: Afghans secure their country.”



▲ Lieutenant General Daniel Allyn

“IN THE SHADOW OF GREATNESS” BOOK LAUNCH



▲ Lieutenant Commander Josh Welle is the lead writer and editor of “In the Shadow of Greatness.” Photo courtesy of Amanda Lucier, *The Virginian-Pilot*.

In November ISW celebrated the publication and success of the LA Times Best Seller, “In the Shadow of Greatness”.

The book’s co-authors, Major Elizabeth Kreft, USAF, Capt Seth Lynn, USMCR, and LCDR Joshua Welle, USN, explained how the book was created and its impact on bridging the civilian and military divide in America today.

“In The Shadow of Greatness” highlights a young person’s transformation from student to leader, and covers the breadth of operations in the Navy and Marine Corps today.

The authors were among the first graduates of the Naval Academy to enter a nation at war since Vietnam. In the Shadow of Greatness addresses issues that go beyond one Annapolis class; it explains the trials of most military veterans of this era. Understanding how a young person enlists to serve, deploys to the fight, and returns home is completely unfamiliar to most Americans.

In exchange for battle scars, these soldiers gained an unbreakable sense of purpose to America’s ideals—freedom, equality, and democracy. The book’s compilation of personal narratives is a seminal read on the leadership of this generation and is described as the most authentic and raw narrative to emerge from the Wars in Iraq, Afghanistan, and beyond.

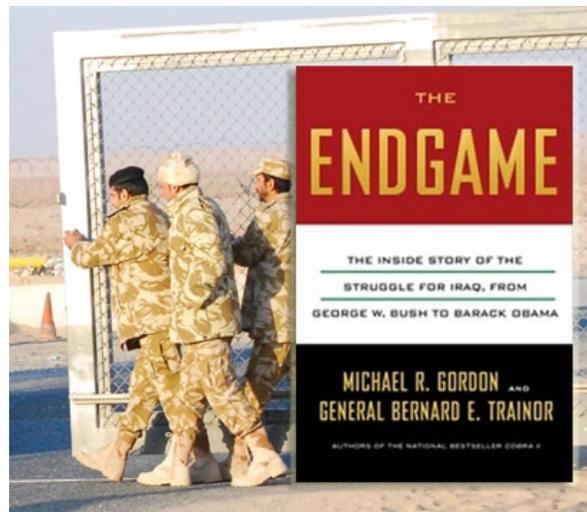
“THE ENDGAME: THE INSIDE STORY OF THE STRUGGLE FOR IRAQ, FROM GEORGE W. BUSH TO BARACK OBAMA” BOOK LAUNCH

In October, ISW hosted the launch of a news-making and heavily researched account of the Iraq War by Michael R. Gordon, former Senior Fellow at ISW and Chief Military Correspondent at *The New York Times*.

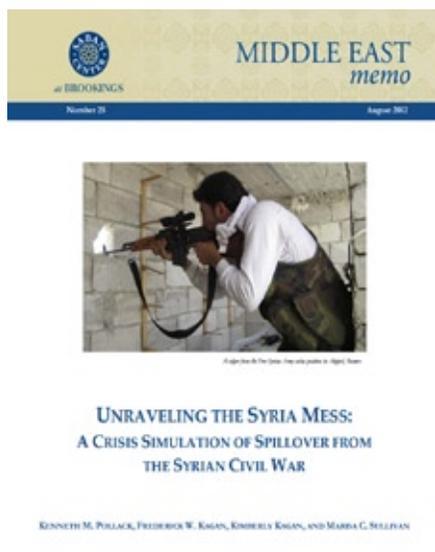
Co-written with Bernard E. Trainor during Gordon’s tenure at ISW, *The Endgame: The Inside Story of the Struggle for Iraq, from George W. Bush to Barack Obama*, is an exemplary work of investigative journalism and historical reconstruction, which covers the Iraq conflict from 2003 through the first half of 2012.

The authors’ research was based on internal documents, as well as interviews with key figures in both the Bush and Obama administrations, including senior military officers and officials at State and Defense Departments and within the intelligence community. The authors also drew on interviews with Sunni and Shiite leaders, Kurdish politicians, tribal sheikhs, former insurgents, and senior Iraqi military officers to present Iraqi perspectives on the war.

Gordon and Trainor previously coauthored *Cobra II*, a well-regarded history of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, and *The Generals’ War*, an account of the 1991 Persian Gulf War. At *The New York Times*, Mr. Gordon has covered a variety of national security issues, including military conflicts, defense policy, and the proliferation of nuclear and chemical weapons.



UNRAVELING THE SYRIA MESS: A CRISIS SIMULATION OF SPILLOVER FROM THE SYRIAN CIVIL WAR



On June 27, 2012, the American Enterprise Institute, the Institute for the Study of War and the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution jointly conducted a one-day crisis simulation that focused on the impact of spillover from the deepening civil war in Syria.

The simulation consisted of three moves and featured an American, a Turkish, and a Saudi team. The intent was to explore the interaction between the U.S. government and two of its most important regional allies, allies most able to act in Syria for various reasons (and among the most affected by the violence in Syria).

The simulation looked at potential developments between August 2012 and April 2013.

OUTREACH & POLICY



▲ Joseph Holliday presents at GovCon 8, October 23, 2012.

ISW's research provides members of the media with an independent, in-depth look at current conflicts and security threats. Reporters rely on ISW to provide context on evolving conflicts and national security policy decisions in the news.

Those publications ranged from American newspapers and magazines such as *The New York Times*, *USA Today* and *National Journal* to foreign periodicals such as *The Daily Telegraph*, Reuters and *The National*.

ISW researchers were featured in radio and TV segments on outlets such as the BBC, CNN and Fox News nearly **60** times and were featured in numerous publications such as *Foreign Policy*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Weekly Standard*. They were cited in print publications more than **80** times.

The New York Times

"It's not a good sign that Maliki is so keen to work with a group that has been responsible for the deaths of many Americans," said Marisa Cochrane Sullivan, deputy director at the Institute for the Study of War in Washington and an expert on Asaib Ahl al-Haq. "A.A.H. having a prominent role in the government is not in the interest of the United States."

—Political Role for Militants Worsens Fault Lines in Iraq, *The New York Times*, January 5, 2012

"We can't discount him using this, we just can't," Mr. Holliday said. "If we believe the Assad regime and their closest allies view this as an existential struggle, we have to assume they could use chemical weapons against their population at some point in the conflict."

THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL

— U.S. Concerned as Syria Moves Chemical Stockpile, *The Wall Street Journal*, July 13, 2012



In 2012 ISW grew its social media presence exponentially. Most notably we reach over 1,400 fans on Facebook, 4,500 Twitter followers every day. Since 2009, our website has welcomed over 1 million visitors.

As social media gains ground as a critical Communications requirement, we've successfully expanded and strengthened our approach by standing up new efforts like LinkedIn to expand our social media footprint, dramatically increasing our Fans, Friends, and Followers with help from self-guided education and instituting an information tracking & analytics process to capture and evaluate ISW products.



Slideshare, a presentation sharing website, garnered an additional 66,000 views for our products ranging from Afghan National Army Command & Corps Structure graphics to The Battle for Damascus: The Current State of Play in Syria.

SELECT 2012 BRIEFINGS

UNITED NATIONS- SYRIA SPECIAL ENVOY

FORMER SENATOR JOHN KERRY'S STAFF

UNITED STATES INSTITUTE FOR PEACE

UNITED STATES SPECIAL OPERATIONS COMMAND (SOCOM)

GOVCON 8

SENATOR CHRIS COONS' STAFF

HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

BROOKINGS INSTITUTION

UNITED STATES HOUSE FOREIGN AFFAIRS SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE MIDDLE EAST AND SOUTH ASIA

FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION



▲ Lieutenant General James Dubik, U.S. Army, (Ret.), speaks at The United States Institute of Peace.

INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY

ISW believes superior insight derives from a fusion of traditional and innovative methods. ISW core research values include a resolve to understand ground truth realities, which are in modern times increasingly revealed through the web. ISW recognizes that the analyst of the future must be able to process a wide variety of information sources, ranging from personal interviews and historical artifacts to high volume structured data in order to comprehend their full meaning. Fusion of this magnitude requires a strategy to manage and visualize information, and so ISW has vigorously pursued technology solutions. ISW shares its technology vision with the American Enterprise Institute Critical Threats Project (CTP).

ISW'S TECHNOLOGY PARTNERS

ISW celebrates its strategic partnerships with leading technology companies that allow ISW to pioneer new methods of research and analysis. In 2012, ISW and CTP formed technology partnerships with Palantir Technologies and Praescient Analytics.



Palantir Technologies is a software company that builds platforms for geospatial, temporal, and graphic visualization for the purpose of enhancing expert analysis and collaboration. This platform is an excellent complement to ISW's research activities, and ISW's young analysts represent the best and brightest among

potential new users who may demonstrate its effective use. ISW shares a joint Palantir instance with CTP, courtesy of our partners. The bulk of ISW research and analysis is conducted in Palantir.



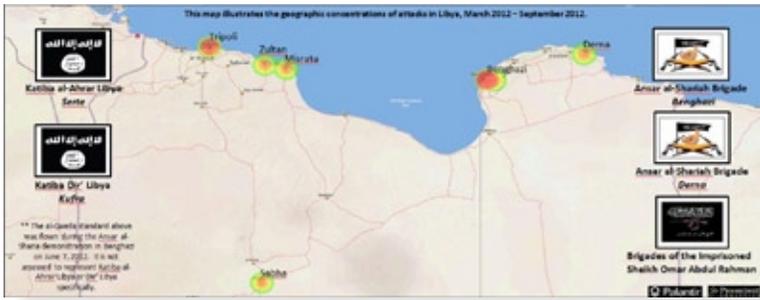
Praescient Analytics is a technology consulting company that specializes in software integration and customized solutions. Praescient provides user Palantir training and software support to ISW and CTP. ISW also provides design and ontological feedback to Palantir through Praescient. As expert and imaginative analysts, Praescient contributes invaluable insight to ISW's technology vision.

ISW concretized its technology partnerships by welcoming embedded analysts from Palantir and Praescient to work at ISW. Embedded analysts leverage Palantir both as design experts and as foreign policy analysts to optimize team integration.

INTEGRATION INTO RESEARCH

In 2012, ISW implemented Palantir across all research portfolios, including Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, and the broader Middle East. Combined with CTP, which covers Iran, Yemen, Pakistan, al Qaeda, and North Africa, ISW has accumulated and curated a rich archive of significant events, organizations, and networks that can be observed and anticipated in order to inform policy. Routine information such as international media reports and academic sources are stored and tagged in Palantir to build this archive.

ISW also incorporated new information sources, particularly social media, videos, and images, into the research program in 2012. The ISW Syria team uses these sources to identify and characterize rebel groups and commanders as well as to verify the activities and demonstrated capabilities of the opposition and the regime. Using Palantir, the Syria team validates significant activities with high confidence by tracking dual sources. Analysts currently process their observations from these new sources by hand and enter into Palantir manually.



Analysts also use Palantir to share their information across research teams, which led to a number of cross-border discoveries in 2012. For example, ISW Syria and Iraq analysts and CTP Iran analysts identified locations in Syria assessed to be frequented by both Iraqi Special Groups and the Iranian Quds Force. They were also able to replay key diplomatic events between Iran and Iraq in 2012 in order to discern the Iranian state reaction to major shifts in the Syrian civil war.

Palantir also allows analysts to visualize and present information to external audiences. ISW’s constituencies expect premium quality maps, graphs, and charts from ISW products. This is true not only key leaders, but also of the public, who consumed ISW graphic products at an exceptional rate in 2012. Cumulatively, ISW graphic products published in 2012 received 58,276 views through SlideShare. Technology is also instrumental to ISW’s mission in this regard.

ISW extends our deep gratitude to Palantir Technologies and Praescient Analytics for their vision, support, and partnership in 2012. We look forward to new challenges and frontiers in 2013.

ISW’S CONTRIBUTION TO TECHNOLOGY

ISW also recognizes the opportunity to contribute valuable insight to emerging technologies. Semi-automated and user-assisted designs benefit from agile and imaginative analysts working live missions who can enable companies to refine their tools, observe new implementation, and demonstrate effective use.

In 2012, ISW and CTP presented Palantir research into Syrian rebel groups, IRGC core leadership, and al Qaeda groups at two separate Palantir Government conventions. ISW customized a Palantir ontology that has been requested multiple times by government and non-government organizations as a model for their own implementation. ISW analysts routinely offer design suggestions and new requirements to Palantir through Praescient for consideration.

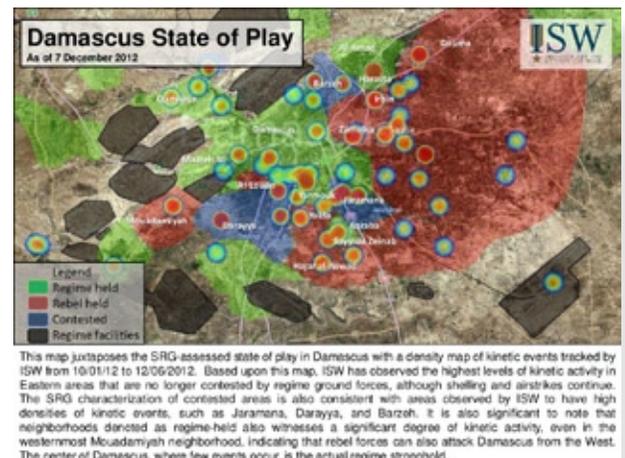
ISW contributes thought leadership to companies that share a vision for an open source intelligence revolution.

ISW’S TECHNOLOGY VISION FOR 2013

ISW looks forward to broadening the scope of our technology integration as we imagine new frontiers for future research.

New capabilities ISW seeks to incorporate include:

- Automation of routine research tasks, such as international media monitoring
- Social media monitoring for anomaly detection and early warning
- Tagging of images, books, and videos
- Common Operating Picture visualization
- Facial recognition
- Cyber intelligence
- Cyber security



2ND ANNUAL PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE DINNER

HONORING SENATOR JOSEPH I. LIEBERMAN

On November 13, 2012, the Institute for the Study of War hosted its second annual President's Circle dinner at The Fairmont Hotel in Washington.

At the dinner, ISW Founder and President Dr. Kimberly Kagan presented the 2012 ISW Award for National Security Leadership to Senator Joseph Lieberman (ID-CT). The ISW Award for National Security Leadership honors an individual who embodies exceptional service, intellect, and leadership in national security.

This award came on the eve of Senator Lieberman's January 2013 retirement after a 40-year career as an elected official. Senator Lieberman's service was characterized by his thoughtfulness, his principled leadership, and his effectiveness as a legislator. He departed the Senate as one of Congress's most influential voices on security issues; a strong and consistent advocate for using America's military might to defend America's interests and values when they are seriously endangered. In her remarks, Dr. Kagan noted that Senator Lieberman "has an extraordinary determination... To keep one's eye on the larger issues that are at stake, and again, to do so many times when it is not in one's political interest or in one's personal interest to do so, and to just hold to that course doggedly because it's the right thing to do, is really an amazing quality and has certainly been inspiring to me."

Following opening remarks by ISW's Chairman GEN Jack Keane (U.S. Army, Ret.), Sen. Lieberman and Dr. Kagan held a candid, hour-long, on-the-record conversation that covered a broad range of national security issues, including: the enduring importance of the Middle East for U.S. national security, the threat of violent Islamic extremism, Iranian hegemonic and nuclear ambitions, the strategic pivot to Asia, and the dire impacts of a reduced U.S. defense budget.



Lieberman observed, “The less money we commit to defense the smaller and less adequately equipped the military will be and the fewer responsibilities it can take on. You don’t have to be a genius to know that.”

The 2012 ISW Award for National Security Leadership was sponsored by General Dynamics, a market leader in business aviation; land and expeditionary combat systems; armaments and munitions; shipbuilding and marine systems; and information systems and technology.



“In providing rigorous, non-partisan, and timely analysis, ISW plays a vital and valuable role in support of the critical missions our military is leading abroad.”

— Senator Joseph Lieberman

WHO WE ARE

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(U.S. ARMY, RETIRED)
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RESEARCH DIRECTOR

JIM ADAMS
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KATIE SANTORO
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MAGGIE RACKL
COMMUNICATIONS & NEW MEDIA MANAGER

JEFFREY DRESSLER
SENIOR ANALYST, AFGHANISTAN PROJECT

MARA TCHALAKOV
RESEARCH ANALYST, AFGHANISTAN PROJECT

JOSEPH HOLLIDAY
SENIOR ANALYST, MIDDLE EAST SECURITY PROJECT

ELIZABETH O'BAGY
RESEARCH ANALYST, MIDDLE EAST SECURITY PROJECT

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STEPHEN WICKEN
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SAM WYER
RESEARCH ANALYST, IRAQ PROJECT

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PRAESCIENT RESEARCH ANALYST

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SUPPORTING ISW



▲ *Dr. Kimberly Kagan in Nalgham village, Kandahar in August 2012 after a meeting with the Zhari district governor, Afghan Local Police, and U.S. commanders Major General Jim Huggins and Colonel Brian Mennes.*

CHARITABLE DONATIONS TO ISW HELP KEEP OUR NATION SECURE.

Charitable support is critical to ISW's work to improve American leaders' understanding of national security and military issues. Our research and analysis is respected because of its quality, its timeliness and its independence. In order to remain independent, non-partisan and maintain an agile research agenda, ISW is entirely supported by private donations and does not receive government funding.

ISW has a unique understanding of the dynamics of military conflict and emerging threats. Our analysis is not only available to military and civilian decision-makers, but also to the public, so that everyone with an interest in America's security can understand the conflicts our nation is involved in and what threats may lay ahead. By donating to ISW, our supporters have had a direct impact on ensuring America's success both at home and abroad.

ISW is grateful to the many individuals, corporations, and foundations that provide generous support to help us execute our mission.

OUR SUPPORTERS IN 2012

SUSTAINING SUPPORTERS

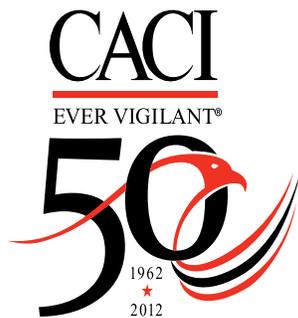
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CORPORATE COUNCIL

Many of America's top corporations are members of ISW's Corporate Council. Corporate Council members believe that an advanced understanding of military issues results in significantly better national security policy. They recognize the relevance, accuracy, and impact of ISW's research and analysis. Corporate Council members receive a number of benefits, including exclusive briefings with ISW's leadership, advance publications, access to our network, tailored analysis, increased corporate visibility, and invitations to exclusive events and discussions with national security leaders.

PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE

President's Circle members receive inside access to ISW's leadership and latest analysis with exclusive briefings, events, and regular research updates. To demonstrate their commitment to our nation and its warfighters, President's Circle members support ISW with major gifts, providing ISW with the resources it needs to accomplish its mission. Members attend ISW's annual President's Circle Dinner, which provides an opportunity to meet with prominent defense, policy, and business leaders, as well as other ISW supporters, researchers, and staff.

MEMBERSHIP

ISW members receive exclusive access to our research. Membership provides different benefits at a variety of levels. Members receive exclusive newsletters, invitations to private events, copies of ISW publications, and an ISW Challenge Coin.



▲ *President's Circle Member Major General Arnold Punaro (Ret.) speaks at ISW's Fifth Anniversary Celebration.*

LOOKING AHEAD IN 2013

THE SYRIAN ARMY DOCTRINAL ORDER OF BATTLE

A REPORT BY JOSEPH HOLLIDAY • INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF WAR
FEBRUARY 2013



◀ *The Syrian Army: Doctrinal Order of Battle*, released in February 2013, establishes the composition of the Syrian Army, provides insight into the historical roles of particular units, and assesses the doctrinal order of battle of the Syrian Army as it existed in 2011.

▼ On February 20, 2013, ISW welcomed home General John R. Allen, U.S. Marine Corps, former commander of the International Security Assistance Force and U.S. Forces in Afghanistan, for a conversation and dinner at the Hay-Adams Hotel in Washington, D.C.



JOSEPH HOLLIDAY
MIDDLE EAST SECURITY REPORT 8

FEBRUARY 2013

THE ASSAD REGIME

FROM COUNTERINSURGENCY TO CIVIL WAR



◀ *The Assad Regime: From Counterinsurgency to Civil War*, explains how the Assad regime lost its counterinsurgency campaign, but remains well situated to fight a protracted civil war against Syria's opposition.

A photograph of a mountain range with multiple layers of peaks, creating a sense of depth and distance. The mountains are shrouded in a light mist or haze, and the sky is a pale, uniform color. The overall tone is soft and atmospheric.

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