

## FALL STRATEGIC SEMINAR:

### Culture, Power, Politics and the History of Afghanistan and Central Asia: Counter Narcotics and the Nexus of Terror

Training Dates: October 8-12, 2018

Location: University of Nebraska Omaha, Center for Afghanistan Studies

#### Seminar Objective:

The Center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska Omaha successfully held its Second Annual Fall Strategic Seminar from 8-12 October 2018. The Seminar was on Culture, Power, Politics and the History of Afghanistan and Central Asia: Counter Narcotics and the Nexus of Terror. The keynote speaker was Hashim Wahdatyar, Director at the Institute of Current World Affairs, Washington DC, former Sr. Spokesman at United Nations and UNODC, Asia Society Fellow and Subject Matter Expert on counter narcotics and its links to terrorism.

The purpose of the seminar was to demonstrate the Center for Afghanistan's deep ties with the region, present, discuss and explore different approaches to policy and share perspectives on regional history to the attendees from the National Geospatial Agency and UNO, who in turn participated with experts in the fields of economics, history, politics, geography, geology, robotics, counter narcotics and counter terrorism to discuss U.S. and Central Asia policy issues in Afghanistan and the region.

#### The training focus and seminar topics included:

- Poppy cultivation, interdiction and eradication: International and Afghan Efforts and Policy Effectiveness
- University of Nebraska-Omaha: Why Afghanistan? / Afghanistan Today
- Counter Narcotics and the Nexus of Terror: How Opium Fuels the Taliban's War Machine in Afghanistan
- Counter Narcotics and the Nexus of Terror: The politics of Regional Collaboration
- Afghanistan Agriculture: Trade, Market and Alternative Livelihood
- Conflict Resolution: Local to Regional Powers and the Politics of Hate
- Land Held Hostage: Afghanistan Natural Resources and Counter Terrorism Policies
- Tribal Dynamics and the System of Governance: Local and Regional Socio-Political Factors
- Afghanistan's Modern History since The Fall of the King: 1973 to Present
- History Religious Factors in Afghanistan and Regional Influences: Power Vacuum and Competition for Control

- Artificial Intelligence: Applications and Innovations in Central Asia
- Terror Networks and Regional Security in South-Central Asia
- DISCUSSION: Women, the Main Victims of Terrorism and Narcotics: Afghanistan and the Region
- The Media, Ownership and its influence in Afghanistan
- Politics, Perils of Globalization and the Rise of Extremism
- “Afghanistan’s Future: Breaking the Cycle of Conflict”; Panel Discussion

The seminar also allowed for attendees to access the Private Collection and research resources at the Criss Library regarding Afghanistan and Pakistan. This new relationship in research will help the Center for Afghanistan Studies and the University of Nebraska Omaha continue in the future as a steady and accessible point for other government agencies and organizations, to utilize our deep academic resources, as well as our strong cohort of subject matter experts ranging from policy making issues to uses of artificial intelligence in map making and water resource management.

Below are the participant’s comments:

\*Excellent information and resource sharing regarding counter narcotics, counter terrorism in Afghanistan and Central Asia.

\*Very good information on the history and current political situation in Afghanistan and its implications for the region.

\*Really enjoyed learning about the wide range of connections between Afghanistan and Nebraska’s University system.

\*The panel discussions on conflict resolution, culture, politics and economics were intense and extremely relevant.

\*Geology and Geography sections provided relevant information and solid sourcing to establish future research projects for team and individual tasks.