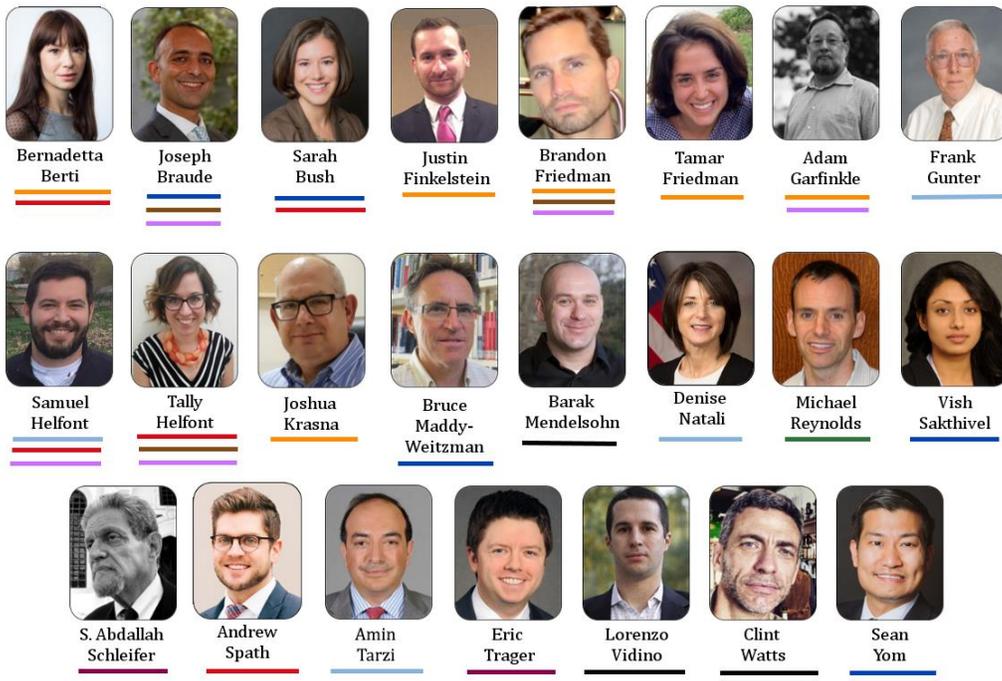
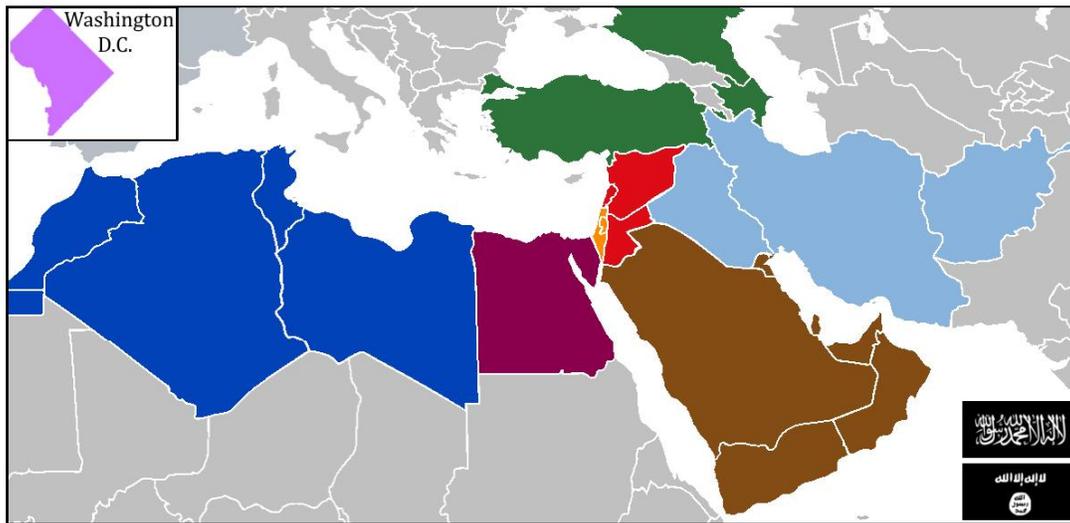


Mid-Year Program Update

FPRI'S MIDDLE EAST SCHOLARS AND REGIONAL COVERAGE

The Program on the Middle East boasts a diverse array of +20 accomplished scholars, based locally, nationally, and globally. Between them, their expertise spans the region and the pressing issues that bear upon it. Meet the Team:



* Colored lines under each scholar correspond to their regional expertise on the map

PRODUCTIVITY

In the first half of 2017, the activities of FPRI's Middle East Program significantly raised the Institute's profile by engaging with key foreign policy debates taking place in government, in the think tank world, in academia, and in the media. Its scholars regularly [published](#) and [commented](#) on critical developments and trends in the Middle East, and participated in a diverse array of [Middle East-related programming](#) that bear upon American foreign policy and national security priorities.

The spotlight below of **Dr. Denise Natali**, the newest member of FPRI's Board of Advisors and a Distinguished Research Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies (INSS) at the National Defense University, is but one illustration of the broad reach our scholarship has across multiple platforms spanning the globe.

<p>TELEVISION INTERVIEWS</p>  <p>THE KURDISH QUESTION FUELLING THE DESIRE FOR INDEPENDENCE</p>	<p>PUBLICATIONS</p>  <p>Counting on the Kurds The Peshmerga's Prospects Against ISIS By Denise Natali</p>
<p>RADIO INTERVIEWS</p>  <p>Turkish President Criticizes U.S. Arming Of Kurds In Syria May 16, 2017 · 4:30 PM ET Heard on All Things Considered</p>	<p>CITATIONS & QUOTES</p>  <p>Iraqi Kurds to hold independence referendum in September The Iraqi Kurds will hold an independence referendum in September that is sure to pass.</p>

IN SIX MONTHS: 200+ CONTRIBUTIONS 100+ OUTLETS 10+ COUNTRIES



FPRI's 2017-2018 ROBERT A. FOX FELLOWS

Sponsored by Robert A. Fox, these Fellows have been chosen on the basis of their erudite scholarly contributions, and their ability to respond to contemporary developments in the region in a sound and timely fashion, based on FPRI's focus on geopolitical analysis.



Joshua Krasna is a well-respected analyst specializing in Middle East political and regional developments and forecasting, as well as in international strategic issues. He recently retired after 30 years of service in Israel, including postings as an Israeli diplomat in Jordan and Canada. His last assignment before retirement was as an Instructor at Israel's senior professional military education school, the Israel National Defense College. While there, he mentored and led teams of senior military and civilian students, taught courses on intelligence and on national security, and served as lead instructor for the economic and social tracks of the program. He has published articles in the *Journal of Conflict Studies* and *Contemporary Security Policy*, and is proficient in Hebrew and Arabic. Dr. Krasna holds a PhD from the Bar Ilan University and is a graduate of Columbia University and the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies.



Clint Watts is a consultant and researcher modeling and forecasting threat actor behavior and developing countermeasures for disrupting and defeating state and non-state actors. As a consultant, his research predominately focuses on terrorism forecasting and trends seeking to anticipate emerging extremist hotspots and to anticipate appropriate counterterrorism responses. More recently, Mr. Watts used modeling to outline Russian influence operations via social media and the Kremlin's return to Active Measures. Alongside his FPRI affiliation, he is also a Senior Fellow at the Center For Cyber and Homeland Security at The George Washington University. Watts has served as a U.S. Army infantry officer, as an FBI Special Agent on the Joint Terrorism Task Force (JTTF), as the Executive Officer of the Combating Terrorism Center at West Point (CTC), and as a consultant to the FBI's Counter Terrorism Division (CTD) and National Security Branch (NSB). He earned a B.S. from the United States Military Academy and an M.A. from Middlebury Institute of International Studies.

NEW BOOKS BY PROGRAM SCHOLARS

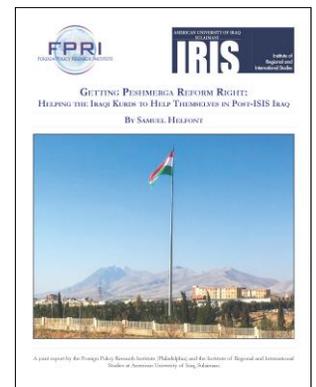
- **2016-2017 Robert A. Fox Fellow [Benedetta Berti](#)** published *The End of Terrorism: Beyond ISIS and the State of Emergency* (Mondadori, January 2017) in Italian, in which she argues that terrorism—namely the indiscriminate use of civilian violence adopted by armed groups to achieve political or military goals against a stronger foe—is a tactic that is here to stay. Rather, it is the myriad of complex drivers that lead to the use of this tactic that must be examined and addressed.

Dr. Berti has been described as a “rising star” by FPRI's President Alan Luxenberg. Alongside her FPRI affiliation, she is an Eisenhower Global Fellow, a Fellow of Israel's Institute for National Strategic Studies, a TED Senior Fellow, a Non-Resident Fellow at the Modern War Institute at West Point, among others. In just the past six months, Berti has written and been quoted on a variety of topics from the strategic implications of the growing humanitarian crisis in Gaza to Syrian siege warfare and ISIS resilience, in publications such as *Foreign Affairs*, *The Jerusalem Post*, *OpenCanada*, and *The Times of Israel*.



SCHOLAR-RELATED NEWS

- **Robert A. Fox Fellow [Clint Watts](#)** testified on March 30 in front of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, providing a groundbreaking account of [Russian Active Measures and Influence Campaigns against the United States](#). Watts’ report of mass Russian hacking, trolling and honeypotting brought increased attention to the Russian cyber threat. Then on April 27, Watts testified in front of the Senate Committee on Armed Services’ Subcommittee on Cybersecurity, providing further insight into [Russian Cyber-Enabled Information Operations](#) and offering four areas in which the United States should work to counter these cyber operations. Both testimonies were the subject of countless articles, and Watts was cited, interviewed, and featured in dozens of media outlets.
- In early March, **Robert A. Fox Fellow [Samuel Helfont](#)** attended the influential “Sulaimani Forum” at the American University of Iraq–Sulaimani (AUIS) alongside government leaders, international experts, and respected commentators to tackle the complex issue, [Beyond DAESH: Ending the Cycle of Conflict toward Durable Solutions](#). Dr. Helfont then met with senior Peshmerga political and military leaders to discuss the United States’ role in meeting the difficult challenges facing Iraq, and the Kurds in particular. In May, FPRI and the Institution of Regional and International Studies (IRIS) at AUIS then co-published Helfont’s resulting report outlining fresh policy recommendations for [Peshmerga Reform in Post-ISIS Iraq](#). Not only was this report read in influential policy circles in Washington, D.C., but its writing also facilitated a burgeoning relationship with a foreign institution that will help to expand FPRI’s policy influence globally.



FPRI EVENTS ON THE MIDDLE EAST

- [Why Americans Misunderstand the Middle East, Terrorism, and Islam—and Always Will](#) ▪ March 2017 ▪ Adam Garfinkle, Editor, *The American Interest*
- [A Conversation on the Future of Israel and Palestine](#) ▪ March 2017 ▪ Amb. Maen Rashid Areikat, former head of the PLO Delegation in the United States & Alan Luxenberg, President of FPRI
- [Religion, Politics, and Iran’s Revolutionary Guards](#) ▪ May 2017 ▪ Afshon Ostovar, Assistant Professor of National Security Affairs at the Naval Postgraduate School & Ron Granieri, Executive Director of Center for the Study of America and the West, FPRI.
- [Iraq: Where Do We Go from Here?](#) ▪ May 2017 ▪ Samuel Helfont, Robert A. Fox Fellow at FPRI; Denise Natali, Distinguished Research Fellow at the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University; Nada Bakos, former analyst for the CIA and served as the agency’s Chief Targeting Officer.
- [The Legacy of the Six Day War And Israel’s Domestic Politics Today](#) ▪ June 2017 ▪ Neri Zilber, journalist and researcher of Middle Eastern politics and culture.

