



2011 ANNUAL REPORT





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LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT



I founded the Institute for the Study of War in 2007 because America was at war in Iraq and Afghanistan and needed to prevail in those conflicts. Strategies being proposed in Washington seemed to be divorced from reality on the ground, because they were based on old information, ideology, or unfamiliarity with military art.

Five years later, ISW has become a central resource for our nation's leaders as they evaluate and implement the most effective strategies for a nation facing global threats. ISW provides independent, reliable research on our ongoing military operations and emerging threats. As General David Petraeus, the recipient of ISW's first National Security Leadership Award, noted, ISW is "connecting policy with actual implementation . . . This has been an organization that has truly been value added."

ISW is a dynamic, flexible organization, designed to respond to international crises as they develop. We launched a Libya research portfolio less than 72 hours after the NATO intervention began. Hours after the U.S. troop withdrawal ceremony in Iraq, our analysts began tracking the movement of the Baghdad Brigade against the compound of Iraq's Vice President Tariq al Hashemi. And we launched our Middle East Security Project in November to address the growing security challenges in the region.

ISW is also a deployable organization. I spent the majority of 2011 in Afghanistan working directly with Generals Petraeus and John Allen, completing my 15-month deployment in September. Senior Research Analyst Jeffrey Dressler also deployed to Afghanistan at the request of the command. Deputy Director Marisa Cochrane Sullivan and Research Analyst Ramzy Mardini spent more than two weeks in Iraq, interviewing over 40 political and military leaders. These deployments and research visits were made possible through the generosity of our donors. ISW does not accept government funding in order to ensure that our work is not tied to government expectations. We keep our analysis objective, accurate, and independent.

In 2011, ISW published reports on Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Iran, and Syria. We hosted many national security leaders, including General David Petraeus, General James Mattis, Lieutenant General Richard Mills, Senator John McCain, and Senator Joseph Lieberman. We also welcomed talented new researchers to our team, including Captain Joseph Holliday (U.S. Army, Reserve), Mardini, Captain Jonathan Rue (U.S. Marine Corps, Reserve), and Paraag Shukla. The pages that follow highlight these experts' contributions.

As 2012 begins, I am concerned for our nation's security and military strength. The White House recently announced a defense strategy that assumes that America is more secure than it was in 2001. It is rolling out a defense budget that curtails our military strength. But the United States faces grave dangers. Iran is confronting our Navy in the Strait of Hormuz. The conflict in Syria is protracting, and America's departure from Iraq has instigated a political crisis that may lead to civil war and regional conflict. The war in Afghanistan is not over, and negotiations with the Taliban will not achieve our national interests there. International terrorist groups based in Pakistan, including al-Qaeda, continue to attack our forces, destabilize the Afghan state, and project violence around the world. The research team at ISW will remain focused on helping our warfighters and policy leaders understand and react to these numerous threats to the United States.

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

Dr. Kimberly Kagan, President & Founder

OUR HISTORY AND MISSION

HISTORY

Dr. Kimberly 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. General Jack Keane (U.S. Army, Ret.), the chairman of ISW's board, also played a central role in developing the intellectual foundation for this change of strategy in Iraq, and supported the nascent Institute. Over the past five years, ISW has built a reputation for its accuracy and ability to translate complex military concepts and specialized information into formats accessible to military commanders, civilian leaders, the media, and a general audience.

Dr. Kagan published her first Iraq Report in March 2007, introducing the Washington policy community to ISW's flagship research product. ISW has remained the premier source for unbiased analysis on the changing political and security dynamics in Iraq and has continued to cover this important topic even after U.S. forces left the country in December 2011.

ISW launched the Afghanistan Project in April 2009 in response to demands for similarly rigorous analysis on the war in Afghanistan. Research from this project has focused on insurgent groups such as the Haqqani Network, Afghan high politics, corruption, and coalition operations. In addition, ISW has used its relationships with military commanders to launch a Best Practices in Counterinsurgency series that aims to capture the most important lessons from today's wars in order to speed the application of these lessons to the formulation of new military strategy.

In November 2011, ISW added a Middle East Security Project. This new research program studies the 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.

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. Dr. Kagan spent half of 2011 deployed in Afghanistan working with top commanders. In July 2011, she was awarded the Department of Defense Civilian Service Award for her efforts.

MISSION

The Institute for the Study of War advances an informed understanding of military affairs through reliable research, trusted analysis, and innovative education. We are committed to improving the nation's ability to execute military operations and respond to emerging threats in order to achieve U.S. strategic objectives. ISW is a non-partisan, non-profit, public policy research organization under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of the United States.

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. ISW researchers spend time in conflict zones conducting independent assessments and enhancing their understanding of realities on the ground. Through reports and timely events, our research educates military and civilian leaders, reporters, and the public to enhance the quality of policy debates.



OUR RESEARCH



ISW's research in 2011 examined conflicts and threats in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southwest Asia. Our open-source research methodology relies on our analysts' experience in theaters of war, interviews with military and civilian personnel, and the critical examination and tracking of global and regional news sources. ISW also utilizes Palantir—advanced software used by the intelligence community—to compile data, analyze trends, and conduct social network analysis to understand how security incidents unfold over time and across terrain.

THE MIDDLE EAST SECURITY PROJECT

The increased volatility in the Middle East following the protests and regime changes of the Arab Spring has created fertile ground for the expansion of terrorist groups, sectarian conflict, and Iranian hegemony. ISW launched its Middle East Security Project to address these challenges, debuting the project at a discussion featuring General James Mattis, Commander, U.S. Central Command. The project's first reports addressed Iran's Naval Forces, the security situation in Syria, and the conflict in Libya. As part of this project, ISW will remain one of the only organizations committed to monitoring the stability of Iraq.

IRAN

Tracking Iran and its regional and military ambitions are critical features of ISW's new Middle East Security Project. The Iranian regime has cultivated proxies within neighboring states and maintains a navy capable of harassing the U.S. and international ships in the Strait of Hormuz. Iran is on the brink of nuclear development, and U.S. sanctions have only intensified the standoff between Iran and the West.

In October 2011, ISW published "*Iran's Two Navies: A Maturing Maritime Strategy*," the first report from the Middle East Security Project. In this report, U.S. Navy CDR Joshua Himes documents the way Iran has divided its naval capabilities between its traditional Navy and the Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps Navy to project greater influence in blue waters and conduct joint exercises.

Himes' reporting on Iran's naval ambitions and capabilities garnered significant media attention. ISW's analysis on Iran's navy was also featured in *Foreign Affairs.com*.

"Iran recently asserted plans to send naval patrols to the Western Atlantic. Although Iran probably doesn't have the capacity for such a mission, this kind of rhetoric speaks to Tehran's grand ambitions and is a way of emphasizing what it sees as the illegitimacy of the U.S. naval presence in the Persian Gulf."

—Senior Research Analyst Jonathan Rue in *Foreign Affairs.com*, October 24, 2011



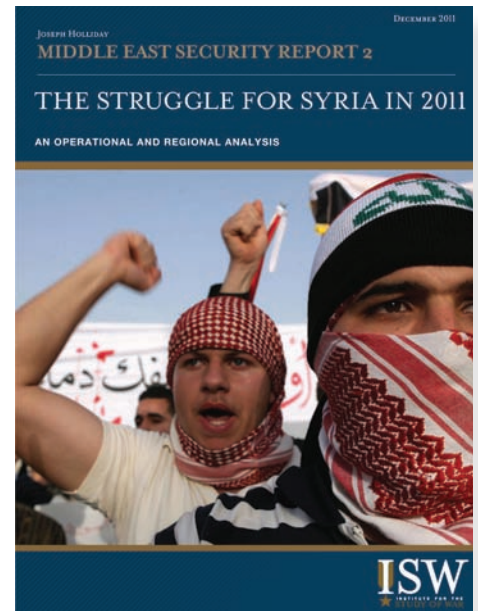
▲ General James Mattis and Dr. Kimberly Kagan speak at the launch of ISW's Middle East Security Project.

SYRIA

Since the beginning of the Arab Spring, the prospect of a civil war in Syria has brought together Syria, Iran, Iraq, and Lebanon. It has threatened to ignite existing tensions between those states and their neighbors.

The prospect of the collapse of the Assad regime or of the Iraqi state, with which Syria is closely tied, would have profound regional implications, drawing the United States, Iran, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia into even more direct competition, if not outright conflict.

In December 2011, ISW published its first in a series of reports on Syria, “*The Struggle for Syria in 2011: An Operational and Regional Analysis*.” The report analyzes the operations and strategy of the Assad regime and the regional and international responses to the conflict.



“At the end of 2011, as both sides harden their stance and secure regional support, Syria’s slide towards civil war may be unavoidable.”

—Senior Research Analyst Joseph Holliday in “*The Struggle for Syria in 2011*”

IRAQ

Iraq, ISW’s flagship research program, will remain a fundamental part of the Institute’s Middle East Security Project. Intricately involved with U.S. allies, adversaries, and interests in the region including Turkey, Syria, and Iran, Iraq remains critical to U.S. national security interests in the Middle East.

ISW’s research analysts have led the debate on Iraq’s strategic importance in the media, on Capitol Hill, and throughout the Washington policy community.



In 2011, ISW’s Iraq publications—including a report by Senior Fellow LTG Jim Dubik (Ret.) “*U.S. in Iraq Beyond 2011: A Diminishing, But Still Vital Role*,” and the policy brief in both Arabic and English “*Extending the U.S. Military Role in Iraq*”—examined the future of U.S. military involvement in Iraq, its stalemated government formation, and the threats to long-term regional stability emanating from the country.

In December, research analyst Ramzy Mardini began a regular series of updates on the emerging political crisis. Deputy Director Marisa Sullivan also presented her analysis on Iraq before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia.

ISW will remain one of the only organizations committed to monitoring the instability in Iraq in 2012, enabling U.S. policymakers to monitor the consequences of the withdrawal of U.S. forces.

LIBYA

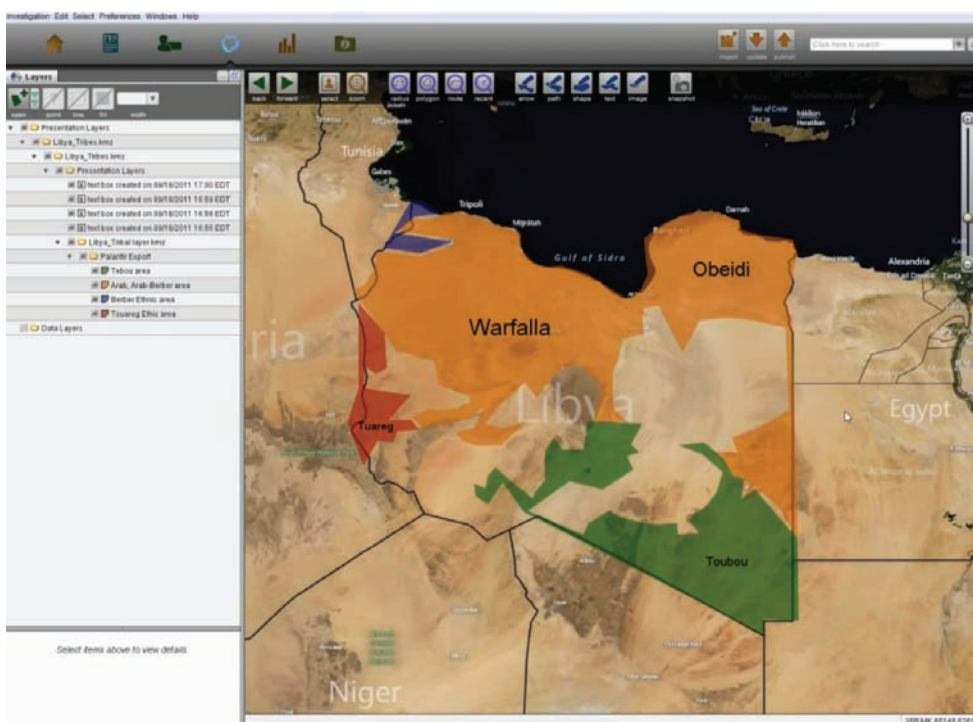
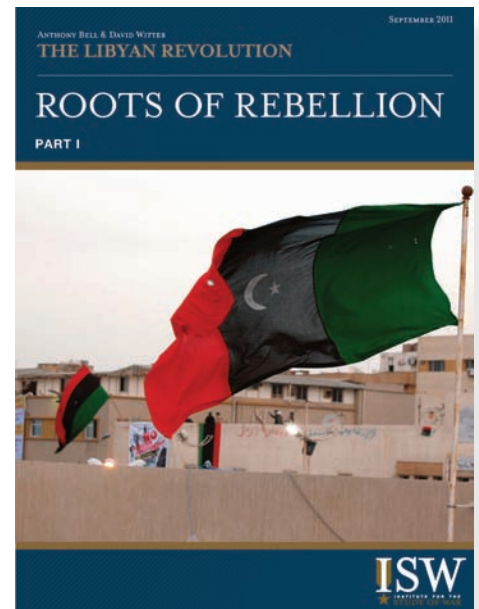
ISW spearheaded research on the revolution in Libya, providing daily tracking and analysis.

The project, which included daily updates on ISW's website and weekly updates for email subscribers, was up-and-running within 72 hours of NATO involvement in March 2011 and became one of the most visited sections of our website.

ISW published a detailed, four-volume report series, "*The Libyan Revolution*," documenting the historical context of the revolution and covering the conflict from its beginning to the end of NATO's mission, in separate releases from September to October 2011.

In collaboration with Palantir Technologies, ISW also produced a short video that demonstrated how the conflict evolved over the course of eight months.

The Libya Project highlights ISW's versatility and flexibility to provide detailed, accurate research on unfolding situations.



◀ ISW & PALANTIR TRACK LIBYA
ISW demonstrated how it has used Palantir to capture the developments of the Libyan revolution in 2011.

AFGHANISTAN

ISW's Afghanistan Project, founded in 2009, produces detailed publications on the changing security and political dynamics in Afghanistan, focusing on both the operational and strategic levels of the war.

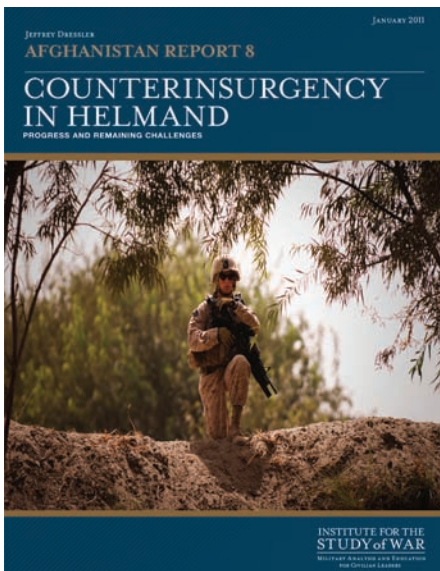
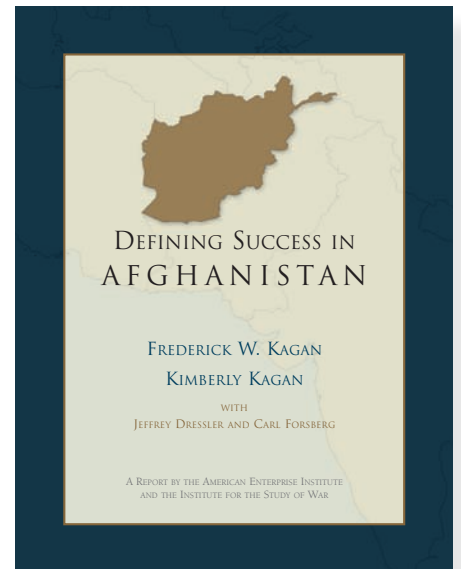
Research analysts document the patterns of enemy activity in Afghanistan and Pakistan, examine military operations by Coalition and Afghan forces, study the implications of the drawdown of Surge forces, and explore the political, economic, and demographic dynamics underlying the conflict.

In 2011, Dr. Kagan co-authored the report *“Defining Success in Afghanistan,”* which explained why the counterinsurgency strategy in Afghanistan is the only approach for securing national security interests in Afghanistan.

Senior Analyst Jeffrey Dressler's *“The Haqqani Network in Kurram: The Regional Implications of a Growing Insurgency”* discussed the expansion of the Haqqani Network into Pakistan's tribal areas to gain advantages in Afghanistan.

Dressler, who has deployed to Afghanistan and briefed at the Pentagon and U.S. Army War College, was one of the leading voices on the Haqqani Network following its attack on the U.S. embassy in Kabul in September 2011, with media hits in publications such as *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

ISW's analysts will continue to serve as primary resources for the military, the media, and government officials as they grapple with the insurgency and governance challenges that lie ahead for Afghanistan.



“Elements within Pakistan’s security services, perhaps most notably current and retired Inter-Services Intelligence Directorate (ISI) officials, provide operational support and resources for the Haqqani Network to wage their insurgency against U.S., coalition and Afghan forces inside Afghanistan.”

—Senior Research Analyst Jeffrey Dressler,
Foreign Policy Magazine, September 23, 2011

MY YEAR IN AFGHANISTAN

DR. KIMBERLY KAGAN
DECEMBER 2011

I returned in September 2011 from a 15-month deployment in Afghanistan, where I was assisting General David Petraeus and his successor, General John Allen, with the design and implementation of our military campaign. In August and September, I had the opportunity to visit some of our units in the field, to help assess the progress of the campaign, and to see firsthand what remains to be done to help prevent Afghanistan, once again, from becoming a safe-haven for regional and international terrorists. I walked beside commanders and soldiers assigned to the Spartans, the 3rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team, in Nalgham village, a town just outside Kandahar City where the Taliban movement began. Mullah Omar had delivered his early sermons at the Sangisar mosque there in the 1990s, and Nalgham's villagers had actively supported the Taliban ever since.

Although coalition forces cleared the village, the local leaders referred to Nalgham as "the land of broken promises," because earlier in the conflict no troops had remained to prevent the enemy's return. This had allowed the Taliban to brutalize locals who had worked with the coalition, and ultimately made the fight to clear Nalgham during the Kandahar campaign in September 2010 all the more difficult.

Indeed, coalition and Afghan forces had fought to clear Nalgham just weeks before we arrived, and after heavy fighting, they had forced the Taliban out of its command and control post straddling the main road. The Taliban had staged military operations against coalition forces while also intimidating the community, riding around on motorcycles armed with AK-47s. They assured the population that the United States would seek to destroy Muslim institutions. After clearing the village, our troops quickly refurbished the Sangisar mosque, much to the surprise of the local population, who therefore celebrated its reopening with our soldiers and began working in support of U.S. and Afghan forces. The symbolism that coalition forces had liberated Mullah Omar's mosque from the Taliban was not lost on the enemy or the people. The Taliban was fighting hard to intimidate the villagers again, but this time, we stayed.

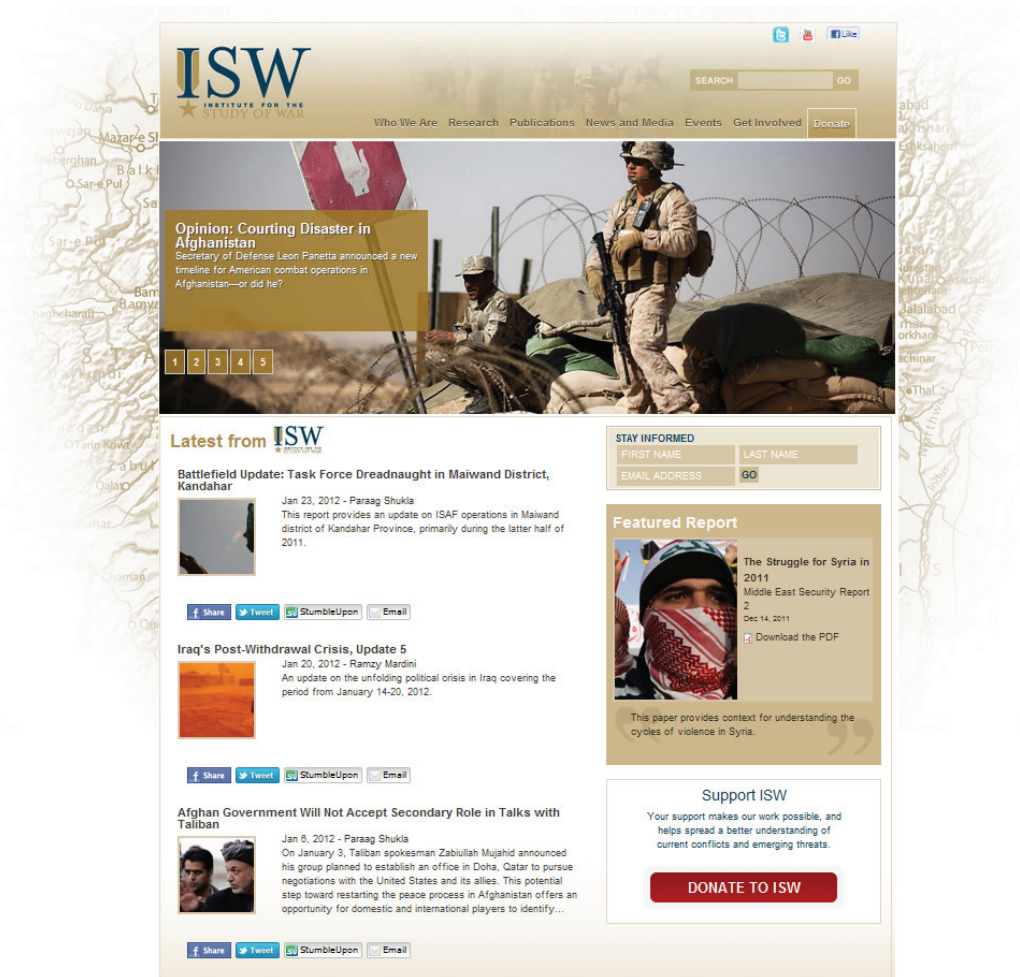
On the day I visited, we walked along the road from the former command post—where two local stores were now opened—to a residence in the village. As we moved along the fields, children of all ages and their parents came out to greet us. The kids knew our soldiers and were not afraid to interact, joke, and play around. Teenage boys did not act hostilely or try to restrain their younger siblings.

We met with a local leader under the vines, where we sat quietly to discuss the situation. He was fighting the Taliban, even though he was vulnerable to retribution. He shared with us a narrative of Taliban defeat he used to help mobilize the community against the enemy. In the 1990s, he explained to us and them, Nalgham was lawless. The Taliban who began preaching in Sangisar were, in fact, religious scholars, and they did bring lawfulness back to the community. But that Taliban was long gone; its leaders had been killed or fled to Pakistan. Those who now called themselves Taliban were not religious scholars at all, but rather teenage thugs with guns. They were not protecting the community, but rather destroying it. Just as it had been right to support the Taliban in the 1990s, so too was it right to fight the group now bearing its name. As dusk fell and we parted company, he reminded us that Nalgham was a land of broken promises. He looked us in the eye and asked us if America would stay this time. I could not answer.

Transformation is underway in many communities throughout Helmand and Kandahar, where increased security has allowed communities to mobilize against the Taliban, and Nalgham is one exceptional example. Though what remains to be done is straightforward, in order to be truly successful, the military campaign requires a sustained, significant U.S. presence for a few more years. Coalition and Afghan forces must maintain control of the terrain they have cleared in Helmand and Kandahar to prevent the Taliban from regaining command of their former strongholds. Maintaining control of this territory will dissociate the Taliban senior leaders living in Pakistan from their Afghan followers, forcing them to seek other alliances.

We must also shift effort, resources, and some troops to eastern Afghanistan to clear the safe havens inside the country that allow Taliban-affiliated terrorists, particularly the al Qaeda-linked Haqqani network, to stage attacks on Kabul. We must ensure that U.S. forces complete complex clearing operations that only they can undertake, in the mountainous and well-defended inland safe havens south of Kabul. To secure Afghanistan's future stability, we must prevent the Taliban from controlling passage on the road between Kandahar and Kabul. And we must prepare the Afghan Security Forces to defend their territory from the predations of Pakistan-based insurgents and terrorists. The way forward requires time and troops; the more troops available, the less time it will take. Will America stay this time? I wish I had the authority to say yes.

LAUNCHING A NEW UNDERSTANDINGWAR.ORG



ISW launched a new website in December, providing us with a more user-friendly and attractive way to present our research to a growing audience. The new site is better organized and easier to search, making it simpler to showcase new work and reference previously published materials. Over time we'll grow our capabilities so each ISW product will get more visibility through the use of multimedia such as photo streams, in-house video, and enhanced interactive maps.

In 2011 more than **160,000** unique visitors spent time on understandingwar.org. They came from countries around the world, ranging from the United States and the United Kingdom to Pakistan and India.

ISW is also driving interest in its publications and events through social media. Every day ISW keeps Twitter and Facebook followers informed on relevant developments in ISW's subject areas. By early 2012 ISW had more than **2,150** followers on Twitter and more than **800** "likes" on Facebook.

ISW & PALANTIR



In 2011, ISW implemented Palantir, a sophisticated relational database that handles structured and unstructured data sets, including big data, harnessing cloud technology. Using Palantir's software, researchers can situate events on a map to understand how security incidents unfold over time and across terrain. Palantir also facilitates social network analysis by allowing researchers to investigate and visualize the known and unexplored connections between entities and events.

Working with Palantir Technologies and Praescient Analytics, ISW analysts are trained to enter, map, and analyze data with the software.

Recently, ISW produced a video examining the networks associated with the Iranian regime responsible for the foiled fall 2011 plot to assassinate the Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the U.S. ISW also leveraged Palantir's analytic platform to examine relational, geospatial, and temporal elements of the Libyan landscape throughout the 2011 conflict, based on ISW's series of reports "The Libyan Revolution." These videos are available on ISW's website at www.understandingwar.org.

WHERE WE'VE BEEN IN 2011

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 of the chain of command and bureaucracy. This allows them to render fully independent advice and assistance to the military in theater.

In 2011, ISW deployed analysts to Afghanistan and sent them also to Iraq, Afghanistan, and Bahrain, as well as to U.S. military units across the United States.

On these trips, our analysts have advised senior military commanders, briefed units to prepare them for deployment, interviewed key political leaders, and conducted independent research assessments.



▲ Frederick Kagan, Kimberly Kagan, and General John Allen in Kabul



Dr. Kimberly Kagan spent much of 2011 in Afghanistan working directly with the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) and assisting Generals David Petraeus and John Allen with the development and implementation of comprehensive civil-military campaign plans, and providing analysis of Afghan politics and security.

In July 2011, she received the Distinguished Public Service Award from the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the highest honor he can award to an individual outside the Department of Defense.

At the ceremony in Kabul honoring Dr. Kagan for her service, General Petraeus highlighted the significant value ISW adds to the command in deploying analysts to assist our military in the field.

Deputy Director Marisa Cochrane Sullivan, Research Analyst Ramzy Mardini, and ISW's journalist in residence, *New York Times* correspondent Michael Gordon, traveled as an independent delegation to Iraq in July 2011 to gain a better understanding of Iraq's political and security dynamics.

They conducted over forty interviews with diverse members of Iraq's political and security establishment, including Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, Iraqiyya leader Dr. Ayad Allawi, religious leaders, Iraqi journalists, youth movement leaders, and civil society activists.

Their analysis, trip report, and media briefing, based on these extensive meetings, have been highly influential in Washington.



▲ Marisa Cochrane Sullivan, Michael Gordon, and Ramzy Mardini in Baghdad.

At the invitation of International Security Assistance Force, Senior Research Analyst Jeffrey Dressler joined a two-week battlefield circulation of Afghanistan in October 2011 with several other civilian analysts. The group travelled to Wardak province to visit an Afghan Local Police site; Kandahar province to meet with Regional Command South commander Major General James Huggins; the village of Sangisar, the former home of Taliban leader Mullah Omar; and Marjah, a former stronghold of the Taliban in Helmand province.

In May 2011 Dressler traveled to Afghanistan at General Petraeus' invitation to conduct research for the command. He also conducted briefings in 2011 for the Pentagon's Joint Staff, Congress, and deploying units across the country including 901 INSCOM Military Intelligence Brigade at Fort Meade, Fort McCoy in Wisconsin, and the U.S. Army War College.

“Iran and Turkey now have more influence, and they are taking advantage of what the U.S. has sacrificed for in Iraq.”

—Marisa Cochrane Sullivan, *The Wall Street Journal*
“Obama's Iraq Abdication,” July 2011

STAFF TRAVEL

AFGHANISTAN

GHAZNI
NANGARHAR
KUNAR
KHOST
WARDAK
LOGAR
PARWAN
LAGHMAN
PAKTIA
KANDAHAR
HELMAND
KABUL

IRAQ

BAGHDAD
ARBIL

BAHRAIN

OUR PROGRAMS



▲ General James Mattis speaks to Field Report attendees at The Willard in November.

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.

DEFINING SUCCESS IN AFGHANISTAN

In January 2011, ISW President Kimberly Kagan returned to Washington, D.C. from Kabul to discuss her co-authored report “Defining Success in Afghanistan.” She was joined on the panel by ISW Chairman General Jack Keane (U.S. Army, Ret.), Andrew Exum, a senior fellow at the Center for a New American Security, and Dr. Frederick Kagan, director of the AEI Critical Threats Project, to discuss what success would look like in Afghanistan and why the counterinsurgency strategy can succeed.

“Success in Afghanistan is the establishment of a political order, security situation, and indigenous security force that is stable, viable, enduring, and able—with greatly reduced international support—to prevent Afghanistan from being a safe haven for international terrorists,” the Kagans wrote.

IRAQ & AFGHANISTAN: THE STAKES IN 2011

Dr. Kagan joined national security expert KT McFarland for a discussion on the military and policy challenges for Iraq and Afghanistan in 2011. The March event, co-hosted with The Atlantic Bridge, was held at the Union League Club in New York City.



▲ Dr. Kimberly Kagan and KT McFarland

AFGHANISTAN: REGIONAL STABILITY, GLOBAL SECURITY



▲ Peter Bergen and Dr. Kimberly Kagan

Author Peter Bergen, Joel Rayburn from the National Defense University, and Dr. Kagan discussed the unfolding campaign in Afghanistan in a March panel event moderated by ISW Senior Fellow Lieutenant General James Dubik (U.S. Army, Ret.).

The panel discussed governance challenges, on-going counterinsurgency operations, the changing face of the enemy, and the growth of Afghan security forces. More than 100 people attended the event, which ISW co-hosted with the Reserve Officers Association.

IRAQ'S FRAGILE TRANSITION

In April, ISW Senior Fellow Lieutenant General James Dubik (U.S. Army, Ret.) moderated a panel on Iraq's future with Dr. Michael O'Hanlon of the Brookings Institution, Emma Sky of Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government, and Max Boot of the Council on Foreign Relations.

"This summer and going into the fall, withdrawal is going to become mission one: We're going to be hell-bent on pulling out later," Boot remarked. "But the cost of that, I think, is going to be very steep for the future of Iraq."



▲ Max Boot, Emma Sky, and Dr. Michael O'Hanlon

FIELD REPORT: THE FIGHT TO SECURE HELMAND PROVINCE

In May 2011, then-Major General Richard Mills joined ISW and the Marine Corps Association to discuss lessons learned from his time as commander of Afghanistan's Regional Command Southwest.

In the conversation with Dr. Kagan, Major General Mills focused specifically on the military's efforts to secure Helmand Province.

"We took the fight to the enemy," Mills told the audience of over 150 at the U.S. Navy Memorial.

"I think what we saw on the battlefield was an enemy that was backpedalling, an enemy that had lost momentum and, in fact, there was some serious resource allocation problems because of his lack of ability to get to the drugs and his lack of ability to resupply himself. So a much changed insurgency by the time we left, one that I think will counterattack, has to counterattack but himself is in a much weaker position than what we found it."



▲ Major General Richard Mills and Dr. Kimberly Kagan

AFGHANISTAN IN 2011 AND BEYOND: COUNTERINSURGENCY, TRANSITION AND DRAWDOWN



▲ Dr. Michael O'Hanlon, General Jack Keane, Senator John McCain, and Senator Joseph Lieberman

In late June Senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman, senior members of the Senate Armed Services Committee, joined General Jack Keane (U.S. Army, Ret.) and Brookings' Dr. Michael O'Hanlon to discuss counterinsurgency and the future of the conflict in Afghanistan at an ISW-hosted event at the Newseum.

Their discussion came just days after President Barack Obama's decision on troop withdrawal levels from Afghanistan and offered analysis on the president's decision and suggestions for the way forward.

This event was also the first that ISW live-streamed over the Internet.

"It's our job to go to our constituents and explain to them what's at stake here and what the consequences of failure are," McCain said.

"But there is an intense war weariness, coupled with the traditional tension in the Republican party between the Eisenhower Republicans and the Taft Republicans, the internationalists and the isolationists. And that -- that battle has been well joined."

FIELD REPORT: ALL HANDS ON DECK

ISW hosted a private Field Report conversation in June with Captain Pete Pagano (U.S. Navy) and Colonel Mark Desens (U.S. Marine Corps), leaders of the USS Kearsarge & the 26th Marine Expeditionary Unit Navy-Marine Corps team that completed a wide range of missions across Southwest Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean.

Pagano and Desens discussed their versatile missions and operations in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Libya during their deployment.



▲ Attendees listen as Captain Pagano and Colonel Desens discuss their mission aboard USS Kearsarge.

IRAN'S TWO NAVIES

ISW offered a preview of the first report published through the new Middle East Security Project, “Iran’s Two Navies: A Maturing Maritime Strategy,” at a private conversation in June.

Commander Joshua Himes (U.S. Navy) discussed his report with an audience of industry leaders and retired military officials.

Commander Himes argued that Iran’s expanding naval capabilities and regional influence have strong implications for U.S. policy both towards Iran and in the Gulf.

SECURITY IN THE MIDDLE EAST: A FIELD REPORT WITH GENERAL JAMES MATTIS



▲ Gen. James Mattis, Dr. Kimberly Kagan, and Maj. Gen. Arnold Punaro (Ret.)

ISW’s 2011 Field Report series culminated in November with an event featuring CENTCOM Commander General James Mattis, to celebrate the launch of ISW’s Middle East Security Project.

To an audience of over 200 at the Willard Intercontinental, General Mattis discussed the challenges facing his countries ranging from Bahrain and Yemen to Iraq and Afghanistan.

He also discussed the threat to the U.S. and its allies from Iran.

MEDIA & POLICY



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.

In 2011, ISW analysts wrote for publications such as *Foreign Policy*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Weekly Standard*. They were cited in print publications more than **125** times.

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 **50** times. Archived research, especially on the Haqqani network, gained new life as the media became more interested in the insurgent group's activity and reach.

For example, ISW analyst Jeffrey Dressler, who has studied the Haqqani network over the past few years, talked to Reuters about the challenges the U.S. military faces from the Haqqanis in eastern Afghanistan. "The Haqqanis are more tactically sophisticated, better trained, and in certain cases more entrenched in population centers" than the core of the Taliban, he said.

In June ISW Deputy Director Marisa Cochrane Sullivan testified on U.S. engagement in Iraq before the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on the Middle East and South Asia. "Our experience in Iraq has shown that progress comes through increased engagement, of which an enduring troop presence is a critical part," she said. "Therefore, we must renew and deepen our commitment to Iraq to consolidate the gains that have come at such a high cost."

And in December ISW's Ramzy Mardini told *The New York Times* about Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki's intentions even as U.S. troops were still leaving the country. "There are two dominant narratives in Washington about Maliki," he said in a December 12 story. "Some say he is a nationalist; others say he is a puppet of Iran."

The New York Times

“The charade is over: America has intervened in a civil war with the de facto aim of regime change in Libya. Washington must now accept that decision and face its consequences.”

—Lt. Gen. James Dubik (U.S. Army, Ret.), The New York Times, April 26, 2011

“While much of the world’s attention focuses on Iran’s nuclear program, Tehran has made considerable progress on another security front in recent years—steadily increasing the reach and lethality of its naval forces. The goal by 2025, if all goes as the country has planned, is to have a navy that can deploy anywhere within a strategic triangle from the Strait of Hormuz to the Red Sea to the Strait of Malacca.”

FOREIGN
AFFAIRS



— W. Jonathan Rue, ForeignAffairs.com, October 24, 2011

THE WALL
STREET
JOURNAL.

“Failing to sign a new U.S.-Iraqi security agreement would redound to Iran’s great benefit. The Obama administration has a fleeting opportunity that it cannot afford to squander.”

—Marisa Cochran Sullivan, The Wall Street Journal, July 28, 2011

The Washington Post

“Without the pacifying effect of the U.S. military, uncertainty and fear appear to be shaping Iraqi politics, making scenarios where actions spiral towards armed conflict and fragmentation more likely.”

— Ramzy Mardini, The Washington Post, December 20, 2011

ISW'S INAUGURAL PRESIDENT'S CIRCLE DINNER

On August 4, 2011, ISW hosted its inaugural President's Circle dinner at the Newseum to thank its most generous supporters.

At the event, President Kimberly Kagan presented ISW's first annual Award for National Security Leadership to General David Petraeus. The award recognizes an individual who embodies exceptional service, intellect, and leadership in national security.

This was one of General Petraeus' last public appearances before his retirement after 37 years of service in the U.S. Army.

Dr. Kagan, who spent a year in Afghanistan working closely with the general, noted that his "career of selfless service to this nation has been a great lesson to me, and as a historian, I've been fortunate to observe a great military leader as he makes tough decisions on the ground."

One hundred and fifty distinguished guests attended the reception, dinner, and awards ceremony.

Chairman of ISW's Board General Jack Keane (U.S. Army, Ret.) provided opening remarks for the discussion between Dr. Kagan and General Petraeus on the lessons he learned during his distinguished career and his thoughts on current and future national security challenges.

In his remarks, Petraeus noted that ISW fills an important niche, saying, "We've got plenty of folks who all want to do policy and then we got folks who want to do tactics, but [before ISW] there was nobody sort of in the middle that was actually connecting policy with actual implementation."

General Dynamics Corporation sponsored the 2011 National Security Leadership Award.



“Kim Kagan is a leader. She has gotten the big ideas right for this organization, she has communicated them to the organization and indeed to supporters, she has overseen their implementation and she has then captured best practices, worst practices, refined them and repeated the process. And so, Kim, tonight I really want to say thanks to you for all that you have done. You are a barracuda at some times... But just let me say thanks to you formally for your tremendous leadership.”

— General David Petraeus, August 4, 2011



NEW STAFF IN 2011



JOSEPH HOLLIDAY is a Senior Research Analyst at ISW. He served as an infantry and intelligence officer in the U.S. Army from June 2006 to September 2011, and continues to serve in the Army reserves. During his time on active duty, Joe deployed to East Baghdad, Iraq from November 2007 to January 2009 with the 10th Mountain Division, 2-30 Infantry Battalion. From May 2010 to May 2011, Joe deployed to Afghanistan's Kunar Province as the Intelligence Officer for 2-327 Infantry Battalion, 101st Airborne Division. He holds a Bachelor's degree in history from Princeton University.

RAMZY MARDINI is a Research Analyst at ISW, where he focuses on Iraqi politics and security. He also serves as an Adjunct Fellow at the Iraq Institute for Strategic Studies. Before joining ISW, Ramzy previously worked at the Office of the Vice President, assisting the national security staff on Iraq and Middle East affairs. From 2007 to 2010, Ramzy served as a Middle East Analyst at the Jamestown Foundation and edited two books on the region, *Volatile Landscape: Iraq and its Insurgent Movements*, and *The Battle for Yemen: Al-Qaeda and the Struggle for Stability*. In 2006, he joined the State Department as an Iraq Desk Officer for Political Affairs, and later served as a Research Associate on Iran at the Center for Strategic Studies at the University of Jordan – Amman. Ramzy holds a B.A. in political science from Ohio State University, and a M.A. in international relations from the University of Chicago.



TRICIA MILLER is Director of External Affairs at ISW, assisting with outreach to the media and Congress. Tricia comes to ISW after a career in political journalism, most recently covering House and Senate campaigns for Roll Call newspaper. Prior to that, she covered former Sen. John Edwards on the campaign trail through a partnership with NBC and National Journal. She began her career as a researcher at the Almanac of American Politics. Tricia, a native Iowan, graduated from Olivet Nazarene University in Illinois with a degree in journalism. She is also a graduate of the European Journalism Institute, the Institute on Political Journalism, the World Journalism Institute and the Summer Institute of Journalism.



JONATHAN RUE is a Senior Research Analyst at ISW where he focuses on Persian Gulf security issues. From 2007 to 2011, Jonathan was an active duty Marine officer, where he deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as an advisor to the Iraqi army. Previously, he was a National Security Analyst at Science Applications International Corporation, supporting various customers within the Department of Defense in a variety of areas such as counter proliferation, combating weapons of mass destruction, and defense support to civil authorities. Jonathan received a master's degree in international relations from the London School of Economics and bachelor's degrees in history and political science magna cum laude from the University of Georgia. Jonathan is an officer in the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve.

KATIE SANTORO is the Executive Assistant to the President at ISW. She holds a bachelor's degree, magna cum laude, in international relations and Italian studies from Tufts University. Santoro has also completed coursework at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the University of Bologna. While at Tufts, she focused on security studies, researching WMD nonproliferation. Katie has interned at the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation and Student Pugwash USA, a nonprofit devoted to promoting social responsibility in science and technology. Prior to joining to ISW, Santoro worked in human resources at Steptoe and Johnson, LLP, a major international law firm, where she managed the emergency preparedness program, and as a student assistant for the Tufts International Relations program.



PARAAG SHUKLA is a Senior Research Analyst at ISW, where he focuses on national governance in Afghanistan. Prior to joining ISW, Paraag served as an Intelligence Officer with the Department of Defense, where he focused on Afghan governance, politics, and strategic policy. In 2010, he deployed to the three-star ISAF Joint Command (IJC) in Afghanistan, where he received a joint service commendation medal for his analysis of governance issues as well as planning for the 2010 Parliamentary Elections. Paraag previously worked at the RAND Corporation, where he was a coauthor of the study "Money in the Bank: Lessons Learned from Past Counterinsurgency Operations." He holds a degree in Government and International Politics from George Mason University and is fluent in Hindi. He has conducted extensive research on the 1999 Kargil War in Kashmir, about which he is writing a feature screenplay.



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Charitable support is critical to ISW's work. It allows us to advise military leaders and policymakers on sound military strategies. ISW's work and policy impact has been recognized by our nation's highest ranking military commanders and Washington's leading policymakers, as they increasingly look to our publications and events for independent experts' views on current conflicts and threats.

Our research and analysis is respected because of its high quality and its independence. We do not accept government funding. We set our own research agenda. And we have strong research independence policies. We can offer analysis and informed advice that runs contrary to the conventional wisdom.

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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.



▲ Kimberly Kagan and General Jack Keane (U.S. Army, Ret.) welcome guests to ISW's 2011 holiday party.

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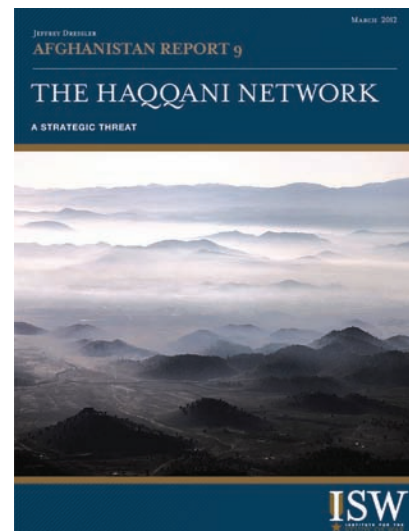
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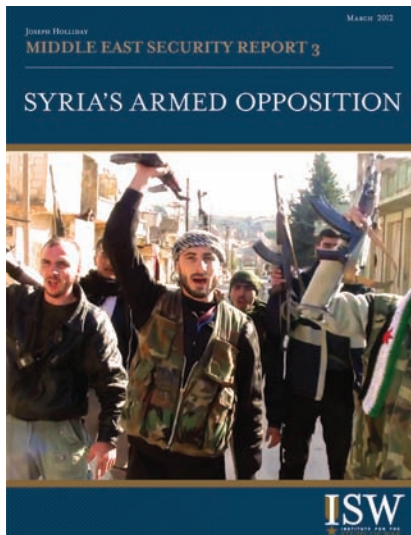


▲ Kimberly Kagan, Dr. Laith Kubba, Dr. Kenneth Pollack and Marisa Cochrane Sullivan discuss Iraq's evolving political crisis in February 2012.

"The Haqqani Network: A Strategic Threat," released in March 2012, studies Afghanistan's most potent and dangerous insurgent group.



▲ ISW Senior Fellow Lieutenant General James Dubik, U.S. Army, (Ret.), speaks on Iraqi police assistance at a joint ISW-USIP event in February 2012.



◀ *"Syria's Armed Opposition,"* published in March 2012, details the situation in Syria.



▲ Kimberly Kagan and Joseph Holliday discuss his research on Syria in March 2012.



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