



Nexus²⁵ Hosts Two-Day Training Module for Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies Graduate Students

From February 28th to March 1st, 2025, the Nexus²⁵ project delivered a training module "Security at the Food-Climate-Migration Nexus" for a select group of graduate students from Johns Hopkins' School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS). This module included a lecture series and an interactive scenarios exercise, underscoring the importance of nexus thinking in addressing current geopolitical challenges – and the need to have more cross-silo policy thinking.

Key Takeaways

1. Governments need to systematically address multiple, interconnected policy areas at the same time instead of maintaining traditional, separate policy engagements.
2. The European Union must urgently diversify its food and critical minerals supply chains.
3. There is a widespread need to speed up the bureaucratic process, particularly when it comes to the EU's foreign policy and response to crises.
4. Closer EU integration is key to leveraging competitive advantages of the bloc.
5. Recent political shifts have highlighted the importance of addressing national challenges like socioeconomic inequality, access to education, and polarization. Domestic policy is also national security.
6. There is a growing need to hold intergenerational and cross-community dialogues.
7. Breaking down silos at all levels of government and policy is key to addressing complex crises.

Background

The first day consisted of a series of interactive lectures from leading experts in the fields of governance, resilience, and socio-political strategy. These lectures were structured to build a foundation across key nexus concepts and issues. Sessions included:

- Welcome remarks from SAIS Professor Nina Hall;
- An introduction to nexus topics from Nexus²⁵ team members Erin Sikorsky (Center for Climate and Security) and Dr. Luca Cinciripini (Istituto Affari Internazionali), with grounding comments from Dr. Michael Werz (Center for American Progress);
- A lecture on demography, migration and population change from Dr. Raya Mutarak (University of Bologna);
- A lecture on multilateral climate commitments at the G7 and G20 from Prof. John Kirton (University of Toronto and G7 Research Group); and
- A case study lecture on overlapping challenges in Nigeria from Nexus²⁵ member Dr. Chiara Scissa (Istituto Affari Internazionali).

The second day transitioned from theory to practice, involving participants in a collaborative scenario game. This exercise mirrored the wargaming and scenario planning utilized by leaders in the security and defense areas to forecast potential outcomes and test underlying assumptions.

In the context of this scenario – a 2035 wildfire in Europe and North Africa driving food insecurity and migratory movements (amidst competition with China and an internationally absent United States), students identified potential socio-political, technological, demographic, diplomatic, military and economic drivers that would intersect with these developments to shape the security risk landscape. The players then developed narratives addressing these potential futures and navigated a shifting scenario as additional nexus challenges were added to the scenario.

The Nexus²⁵ project will continue this work throughout 2025 and early 2026. Key takeaways will be incorporated into a final report to be released in mid- to late-2026.



Nexus²⁵ is a joint project of the Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI) in Rome and the Center for Climate and Security (CCS) in Washington, DC. The project, led by Dr. Nathalie Tocci at IAI, Erin Sikorsky at CCS and Dr. Michael Werz at the Center for American Progress (CAP), is funded by Stiftung Mercator in Germany.

For additional information please visit <https://www.nexus25.org> or contact the Nexus²⁵ team at info@nexus25.org.