



GEORGE C. MARSHALL

EUROPEAN CENTER FOR SECURITY STUDIES

A GERMAN - AMERICAN PARTNERSHIP

Benjamin P. Nickels, Ph.D.

Professor, Regional Security Studies

Areas of Expertise

- European Relations with North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East
- Migration, Displacement, and Demography and Security
- Irregular Warfare, Counterterrorism, and Counterinsurgency
- Strategic Competition, Geopolitics, and Security Cooperation

Academic Degrees

- Ph.D. with distinction, History, University of Chicago
- Master of Arts, History, University of Chicago
- Bachelor of Arts with honors, triple major (History, French, History of Culture), University of Wisconsin



Ben Nickels, Ph.D., joined the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies in 2018 and is course director of the European Security Seminar – South and a professor of international security studies. He leads the Marshall Center's resident, outreach, virtual, and partnership programming on European-U.S. relations with North Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, and the Middle East.

Nickels was academic chair for transnational threats and counterterrorism at the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (2011–2018), where engagements with security professionals took him to Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Djibouti, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Seychelles, South Africa, Tanzania, Tunisia, and Uganda. He was a faculty researcher at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (2009–2011). His fieldwork included interviews in London, Manchester, and Birmingham with civil society leaders implementing Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism programs, and in Brussels with EU and NATO counterterrorism policymakers. Nickels was also an analyst and team supervisor for a defense contractor with the U.S. Army (2007–2009).

Nickels is co-author of "On the Periphery: Containing the Spread of Violent Extremism and Terrorism in Africa," and his policy pieces have been published by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, London School of Economics, West Point Combating Terrorism Center, and Wilson Center, among others. Fluent in French and familiar with Arabic, he has given hundreds of lectures and briefings in French and English at government meetings, international forums, and academic institutions such as Georgetown, Oxford, and Harvard.

Nickels has received numerous awards and fellowships, including a Fulbright scholarship to Morocco and a Chateaubriand Fellowship in France. He was awarded the Civilian Service Achievement Medal by the U.S. Army Southern European Task Force–Africa and earned his European Studies Certificate and Integrated Liberal Studies Certificate.