



SMA CENTCOM (Afghanistan) Panel Discussion

Stability, Reconciliation & Reintegration: Research Findings

In Support of US CENTCOM

Booklet

15 February 2019

1030-1200 ET

**Dial (866) 712-4038;
Passcode 37250264#**

Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) provides planning support to Commands with complex operational imperatives requiring multi-agency, multi-disciplinary solutions that are NOT within core Service/Agency competency. Solutions and participants are sought across USG and beyond. SMA is accepted and synchronized by Joint Staff/J-39 DDGO and executed by ASD (EC&P).

Agenda

Panel Description: On 15 February 2019 from 1030-1200 ET, SMA will convene the SMA Reach Back cell “Phase II” study teams to review their key research findings related to stability, reconciliation, and reintegration in Afghanistan in support of US Central Command.

In July 2019, the SMA Reach Back cell was asked to address five guiding questions using state-of-the-art tools and methodologies.

1. How has the ceasefire changed the dynamics and potential for a negotiated settlement in Afghanistan?
2. What are the interactions between reintegration and reconciliation? What is the implication if USCENTCOM is focused on reintegration but the USG is focused on reconciliation?
3. What are the drivers and buffers of instability in Afghanistan? Is our current approach undermining the path to stability in Afghanistan?
4. What catalysts could trigger a fragmentation scenario?
5. How can we increase the resolve and capability of regional actors to get to political reconciliation? Actors should include Pakistan, China, Russia, Iran, India, and Saudi Arabia

Speakers: Researchers from across industry, academia, and government will address these questions are part of this panel event. The speakers for this discussion will include:

- Dr. Skye Cooley (Oklahoma State University)
- Dr. Lawrence Kuznar (NSI Inc.)
- Dr. Belinda Bragg (NSI Inc.)
- Dr. John Stevenson (NSI Inc.)
- Dr. Plamen Petrov (BBN Technologies, Raytheon)
- Dr. Karin Johnston (US Department of State, Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations)

The panel will also include a contributor to the recently released SMA periodic paper, “Negotiated Settlement in Afghanistan: Elements of a Grand Bargain.”

Mr. Sher Jan Ahmadzai (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



Speaker Biographies

Mr. Sher Jan Ahmadzai (University of Nebraska at Omaha)



Sher Jan Ahmadzai, is the Director Center for Afghanistan Studies at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He has worked with Afghan government before coming to the United States and served as the Scheduling Manager for President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. Mr. Ahmadzai' work experience of more than 15 years in the United States and Afghanistan as a government employee at the office of the President, has provided him with opportunities to understand the dynamics of the system of government and regional and global politics concerning Afghanistan and the United States. Mr. Ahmadzai is a regular contributor and commenter for many national and international media outlets such as VOA and BBC Radio and TV on various issues related to the US Pakistan, Taliban, security and terrorism in South-Central Asia. He has also written for CNN, BBC and Omaha World Herald on Afghan peace process. He has also participated in various Track II talks on Afghanistan and provided feedback to policy makers. Mr. Ahmadzai has also written papers and co-authored a book on Transboundary Waters of Afghanistan focusing on hydro politics that is in play in the region and has written about Water Security in the region. His chapters are about the relationship of between Afghanistan and her neighbors concerning sharing water recourse and how it can become a source of cooperation or conflict in the region.

Dr. Belinda Bragg (NSI Inc.)

Dr. Belinda Bragg is a Principal Research Scientist for NSI. She has provided core support for DoD Joint Staff and STRATCOM Strategic Multi-layer Analysis (SMA) projects for the past six years. She has worked on projects dealing with nuclear deterrence, state stability, U.S.–China and U.S.-Russia relations, and VEOs. Dr. Bragg has extensive experience reviewing and building social science models and frameworks. She is one of the two designers of a stability model, (the StaM) that has been used analyze stability efforts in Afghanistan, state stability in Pakistan and Nigeria, and at the city-level to explore the drivers and buffers of instability in megacities, with a case study of Dhaka. Prior to joining NSI, Dr. Bragg was a visiting lecturer in International Relations at Texas A&M University in College Station. Her research focuses on decision- making, causes of conflict and political instability, and political uses of social media. Dr. Bragg earned her Ph.D. in political science from Texas A&M University, and her BA from the University of Melbourne, Australia.



Ms. Sarah Canna (NSI, Inc.)



Sarah Canna applies her open source analytic skills to regions of vital concern to US Combatant Commands, particularly the Middle East and South Asia. To help military planners understand the complex socio-cultural dynamics at play in evolving conflict situations, she developed a Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa™) tool, which is designed to rapidly respond to emergent crises by pulsing NSI's extensive subject matter expert (SME) network to provide deep, customized, multidisciplinary analysis for defense and industry clients. Prior to joining NSI, she completed her Master's degree from Georgetown University in Technology and Security Studies. She holds a translation certificate in Spanish from American University and has been learning Dari for three years.

Dr. Skye Cooley (Oklahoma State University)

Skye Cooley (Ph.D., University of Alabama) is an assistant professor in the School of Media and Strategic Communications at Oklahoma State University. His research interests are in Russian political communication, global media and digital democracy, as well as civic deliberation online. Dr. Cooley holds certifications of accreditation in public relations (APR) and civilian service peace keeping operations (POTI). He has traveled actively through Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa; publishing and presenting research on international political communication.



Dr. Karin Johnston (US Department of State)



Dr. Karin L. Johnston is a Franklin Fellow in the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO), Office of Analysis, Planning, Programs, and Learning (APPL). She helped establish and build out CSO's Defections/Disengaged Fighters (DDF) portfolio and assisted the team's interagency work on DDR-related topics. Dr. Johnston co-authored a practitioner's guide for developing a defection plan with the UK Stabilization Unit. She is currently a member of an interagency task force assigned to assist Mission Somalia in the implementation of the Stabilization Assistance Review. Dr. Johnston also served a speaker at the Naval Postgraduate School's Center for Civil-Military Relations in Monterey, California.

Dr. Lawrence Kuznar (NSI Inc.)

Lawrence A. Kuznar (Professor of Anthropology, Indiana University- Purdue University-Fort Wayne and NSI, Inc.) Dr. Kuznar conducts anthropological research relevant to counterterrorism and other areas of national security. His current research focuses on discourse analysis of Daesh leadership messaging to provide leading indicators of intent and behavior and has applied this methodology to Eastern European State and non-State Actors, Iran, and polities in the Middle East and Asia. He has developed computational models of genocide in Darfur and tribal factionalism in New Guinea, mathematical models of inequality and conflict, and integrated socio-cultural databases for predicting illicit nuclear trade and bioterrorism. He has conducted discourse analysis of the expression of conflict and enmity in Arabic, Farsi and Pashto, to identify leading indicators of conflict. Dr. Kuznar's recent research has been funded by academic sources, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Strategic Multilayer Analysis, Air Force Research Lab (AFRL), the Human Social Cultural Behavior (HSCB) modeling program of the Department of Defense, and by the US Army Corps of Engineers. He has also served on the HSCB Technical Progress Evaluation panel and a National Counterterrorism Center (NCTC) net assessment panel.



Dr. Plamen Petrov (BBN Technologies, Raytheon)

Dr. Plamen V. Petrov (Raytheon BBN Technologies) is the Principle Investigator for DARPA Causal Exploration Model Assembly Technical Area. Dr. Petrov leads semantic knowledge graph and predictive analytics work at BBN. He offers robust research, management, and hands-on experience in knowledge-intensive decision support applications. Currently Dr. Petrov leads the development of Causal Modeling and Course of Action Projection techniques under DARPA CauseEx. Previously he led research and development tasks for novel collection orchestration and sensemaking applications for a proprietary IC customer and was co-PI on the IARPA Open Source Indicators (OSI) program where he developed a large-scale predictive analytics platform. He was a key technical contributor on DARPA XDATA, where he applied pattern matching algorithms on large-scale social network and transactional data sets. Prior to joining BBN, Dr. Petrov was CTO at 21st Century Systems, Inc. where led a cutting-edge software research organization and served as PI on DARPA, ONR, and AFRL-funded projects in the areas of software agents, agent-based decision support, command and control, and intelligent systems. Dr. Petrov holds a Ph.D. in Computer Science from the New Jersey Institute of Technology in the area of intelligent agent applications for interactive command and control simulations and decision support applications.

Dr. John Stevenson (NSI Inc.)



John A. Stevenson is a Principal Research Scientist at NSI, Inc. He earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in Political Science at the University of Chicago, and an A.B. in Government from Dartmouth College. Dr. Stevenson's passion is to curate illuminating data narratives to best enable informed decision-making given environmental uncertainty and complexity in support of all kinds of organizational ends. His substantive areas of expertise are multi-method social science methodology, and the statistical and historical modeling of political conflict and radicalization in sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia. His published peer-reviewed work ranges from the effects of genocide memorials on authoritarian regime durability in Rwanda to an empirical evaluation of the varying effectiveness of differing types of counter-terrorism campaigns against Boko Haram in Nigeria. Prior to joining NSI, Inc., Dr. Stevenson was a lead investigator and senior researcher in the DHS Center of Excellence, National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland, College Park; and served as the elected representative of research and professional faculty to the University Senate.