SMA Future of Global Competition and Conflict Panel Discussion

(Part 2 of 3)

Assessing the Durability of the Chinese Regime

Booklet

13 February 2020

1300-1400 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: This panel discussion is part two of a three-part series, focused on the SMA white paper, entitled "Chinese Strategic Intentions: A Deep Dive into China's Worldwide Activities." This second part will focus on the durability of the Chinese regime.

Speakers: The speakers for this discussion will include:

- Dr. Michael Beckley (Tufts University)
- Dr. Nicholas Wright (Intelligent Biology)
- Ms. Nicole Peterson (NSI, Inc.)- moderator

Agenda: The following are brief descriptions of what each panelist will discuss during their presentation:

- **Dr. Michael Beckley**- "The Chinese Economic Miracle: How Much Is Real... How Much Is a Mirage?

  - China's economic growth over the past three decades has been spectacular, but the veneer of double- digit growth rates has masked gaping liabilities that constrain China's ability to close the wealth gap with the United States. China has achieved high growth at high costs, and now the costs are rising while growth is slowing. New data that accounts for these costs reveals that the United States is several times wealthier than China, and the gap may be growing by trillions of dollars every year.

- **Dr. Nicholas Wright (Intelligent Biology)**- "How Durable May a Digital Authoritarian Regime Be Within China?"

  - China is currently building a digital authoritarian regime. This development represents the latest variant of authoritarian regime in the People's Republic of China (PRC), which has adapted to survive over its 69 year existence. How will it affect the regime's durability?

  - "Digitization" is only one factor affecting the Chinese domestic political regime's durability, and the PRC faces tough economic, social, and political challenges. Digitization buttresses the regime's durability in the short- to medium-term by providing a plausible route for the regime to maintain control whilst making its citizens rich; it helps give the regime a tangible, plausible story. Whether this approach actually works—or whether China instead languishes in a regime-threatening "middle income trap" of relative economic failure—will only be revealed in the longer-run.

Speaker Biographies

Dr. Michael Beckley (Tufts University)

Michael Beckley is an associate professor of political science at Tufts University and a Jeane Kirkpatrick Visiting Scholar at the American Enterprise Institute.

His research on US-China relations has received awards from the American Political Science Association and the International Studies Association andbeen featured by numerous media includingthe Financial Times, Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, the New York Times, NPR, and the Washington Post.
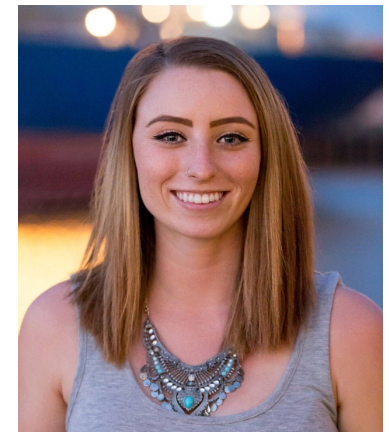
Previously, Michael held positions at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, the U.S. Department of Defense, the RAND Corporation, and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He continues to advise offices within the U.S. Intelligence Community and U.S. Department of Defense.

Michael holds a PhD in political science from Columbia University. His first book, Unrivaled: Why America Will Remain the World's Sole Superpower, was published in 2018 by Cornell University Press.

Ms. Nicole Peterson (NSI, Inc.)

Nicole Peterson is an Analyst who assists in qualitative research and strategic analysis in support of Strategic Multi-Layer Assessment (SMA) efforts primarily focused on national security issues and Department of Defense (DoD) concerns. She has contributed to NSI's Virtual Think Tank (ViTTa®) and discourse analyses during her time at NSI. Nicole coordinates SMA's speaker series, which encompasses a broad range of topics from radicalization of populations and violent extremist organizations to artificial intelligence. She is also the publisher of SMA's weekly newsletter, which summarizes SMA speaker sessions, outlines upcoming events, and disseminates relevant publications. Nicole began her career at NSI as an undergraduate intern for its commercial sector and was subsequently promoted to an associate analyst for its government sector in 2016. She graduated with honors from the University of San Diego where she received a BA in applied mathematics and a minor in accountancy.

Dr. Nicholas Wright (Intelligent Biology)

Dr. Nicholas Wright is an affiliated scholar at Georgetown University, honorary research associate at University College London (UCL), Consultant at Intelligent Biology and Fellow at New America. His work combines neuroscientific, behavioural and technological insights to understand decision-making in politics and international confrontations, in ways practically applicable to policy. He leads international, interdisciplinary projects with collaborators in countries including China, the U.S., Iran and the UK. He was an Associate in the Nuclear Policy Program, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Washington DC and a Senior Research Fellow in International Relations at the University of Birmingham, UK. He has conducted work for the UK Government and U.S. Department of Defense. Before this he examined decision-making using functional brain imaging at UCL and in the Department of Government at the London School of Economics. He was a clinical neurologist in Oxford and at the National Hospital for Neurology. He has published academically (some twenty publications, e.g. Proceedings of the Royal Society), in general publications such as the Atlantic and Foreign Affairs, with the Pentagon Joint Staff (see www.intelligentbiology.co.uk) and has appeared on the BBC and CNN. Wright received a medical degree from UCL, a BSc in Health Policy from Imperial College London, has Membership of the Royal College of Physicians (UK), has an MSc in Neuroscience and a PhD in Neuroscience both from UCL.