



# **SMA CENTCOM Panel Discussion**

## ***Black Swan Scenarios***

*From the SMA Study in Support of USCENTCOM:*

### ***Assessment of Strategic Implications of Population Dynamics in the Central Region***

**Booklet**

**27 March 2020**

**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:** At the request of United States Central Command (USCENTCOM), SMA initiated a study in August 2019 to understand the strategic implications of destabilizing population dynamics within the Central Region. CENTCOM asked SMA research teams to consider how drivers of instability in the region—to include long-term internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees, spread of radical ideologies and extremism, great power competition, disruptive non-state actors, and the potential for black swan scenarios—could be mitigated across PMESII levers of national power.

In this panel, researcher teams will present the results of their research studies into black swan and gray rhino phenomena in the Central Region. Studies range from unintended consequences of the killing of Qassem Suleimani to the future of great power competition in the region to the theoretical underpinnings of black swan/gray rhino events.

## Black Swan Questions

The following questions will be addressed in Part III:

- [B8]** How will Chinese and Russian relationships with key regional powers such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Syria, Israel, Egypt, and Pakistan (regionally and vis-a-vis India) play out over the next 5-25 years?
- [B12]** What effects will changing fossil fuel dependence have on great power competition in the region? Factors include emerging and drastic technological advancements as well as alternative sources from non-Middle East regions.
- [B13]** What if India and Pakistan engaged in a large-scale conventional fight? How might this affect great power competition and regional dynamics?
- [B14]** How might great power competition and regional dynamics change if another 9-11 scenario occurred that emanated from the Central Region?
- [B14]** (Revised) How might great power competition and regional dynamics change following the targeted killing of Qassem Soleimani?
- [B15]** How might regime changes in key regional countries change great power competition dynamics—Iran, KSA, Syria, etc.?

**Speakers and Topics:** The speakers for this discussion, the titles of their briefs, and the links to their publicly released reports are provided below.

The order in which the panelists are listed will be the order in which they will present.

- **Introductory Remarks:** Ms. Sarah Canna (NSI, Inc) moderator
- Dr. David Dorondo (Western Carolina University) and Dr. Maorong Jiang (Creighton University)
  - *How Will Chinese and Russian Relationships with Key Regional Powers Play Out Over the Next 5-25 Years?* (<https://nsiteam.com/how-will-chinese-and-russian-relationships-with-key-regional-powers-play-out-over-the-next-5-25-years/>)
- Dr. Gary Ackerman (University at Albany) and Dr. Doug Clifford (University at Albany)
  - *Red Teaming Great Power Competition in the CENTCOM AOR* (<https://nsiteam.com/red-teaming-great-power-competition-in-the-uscentcom-aor/>)
- Dr. Larry Kuznar (NSI, Inc.)
  - *Hunting Gray Rhinos and Black Swans: Statistical and Machine Learning Models of Political Stability and Terrorism*
    - *Report and Supplemental Documentation:* <https://nsiteam.com/hunting-gray-rhinos-and-black-swans-statistical-and-machine-learning-models-of-political-stability-and-terrorism/>
    - *Panel Discussion:* <https://nsiteam.com/sma-centcom-panel-discussion-black-swans-and-gray-rhinos-in-the-centcom-aor-vigilance-against-the-unsuspected-and-keeping-our-eyes-on-the-prize/>
- **Q&A**

# Speaker Biographies

## Mr. Gary Ackerman (University at Albany)

Gary Ackerman is Associate Professor of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity at SUNY, Albany, where his research focuses on understanding how terrorists and other adversaries make tactical, operational, and strategic decisions, particularly with regard to innovating in their use of weapons and tactics. Much of his work in this area is centered on the motivations and capabilities for non-state actors to acquire and use chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear weapons. In addition to his faculty position at Albany, he is Associate Dean for Research and Laboratory Development, and the founding director of the Center for Advanced Red Teaming (CART). He is also the founding director of the Unconventional Weapons and Technology Division at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), to which he remains a senior advisor. His previous positions have included research director and special projects director at START, and before that the director of the Weapons of Mass Destruction Terrorism Research Program at the Center for Nonproliferation Studies in Monterey, California. He has headed more than ten large government-sponsored research projects in the past five years dealing with various aspects of counterterrorism policy and operations. He is the co-editor of *Jihadists and Weapons of Mass Destruction* (2009), the editor of "Designing Danger: Complex Engineering by Violent Non-State Actors" (special issue *Journal of Strategic Security*; 2016) and author of over seventy publications. He is an associate at the Global Catastrophic Risk Institute and the Project for Future Human Flourishing. He was a member of the ODNI's WMD Expert Advisory Group of the Information Sharing Environment initiative (2007-2008) and has testified on terrorist motivations for using nuclear weapons before the Senate Committee on Homeland Security. Born in South Africa, Professor Ackerman received his Bachelors (Law, Mathematics, International Relations) and Honors (International Relations) degrees from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, and an M.A. in International Relations (Strategic Studies) from Yale University. He completed his Ph.D. in war studies at King's College in London.

## Ms. Sarah Canna (NSI, Inc)

Ms. Sarah A. Canna is a Principal Analyst at NSI. In this capacity, Ms. Canna applies her open source analysis 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, Ms. Canna 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. This tool has been used to study the so-called Islamic State as well as Eurasian cooperation and conflict. Ms. Canna is also a lead editor and integrator of white papers, reports, and proceedings focused on violent extremism, influence and deterrence, and adversarial intent. Ms. Canna also supported durability analyses using the NSI State Stability (StaM) model for Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nigeria, and (at the megacity level) Dhaka, Bangladesh. Prior to joining NSI, she was an associate within the Social Science Program at Strategic Analysis, Inc. (SA), where she supported multidisciplinary projects ranging from developing and assessing computational social science models, evaluating state instability forecast models, and developing cultural aptitude taxonomies. Additionally, Ms. Canna provided analytic support to the Defense Science Board (DSB) 2008 task force on Understanding Adversaries, the 2007 DSB summer study on Challenges to Military Operations in Support of US Interests, and the 2006 DSB summer study on 21st Century Strategic Technology Vectors. Prior to joining SA, she was a research associate at Intellibridge Corporation in Washington, D.C. where she provided daily open source analysis to the Commander, US Southern Command and the Commandant, US Coast Guard. She also managed a network of 200-plus subject matter experts, upon whose knowledge Intellibridge analysts relied. Ms. Canna has a MA degree from Georgetown University in Technology and Security Studies. Ms. Canna holds a translation certificate in Spanish from American University and is learning Dari.



### **Dr. Doug Clifford (University at Albany)**

Douglas Clifford is Program Manager for the Center for Advanced Red Teaming (CART) at the College of Emergency Preparedness, Homeland Security and Cybersecurity at the University at Albany (SUNY). In this role, he coordinates the development, implementation and analysis of all red teaming efforts, and oversees all Research Assistants and Interns. In addition to his role as Program Manager, he is an adjunct faculty member at the college, instructing undergraduate students on exercise design and implementation. Prior to his time at SUNY Albany, he served as a Military Police Officer in the United States Army, with the 10<sup>th</sup> Mountain Division (Light) Fort Drum, NY. This time in service included deployments in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (2005, 2007), where he developed and implemented security standards and training for local law enforcement. He received his B.A. (Homeland Security) from the University at Albany.



### **Dr. David Dorondo (Western Carolina University)**

**David R. Dorondo**  
**Department of History**  
**Western Carolina University**  
**(828) 227-3908**  
**[dorondo@email.wcu.edu](mailto:dorondo@email.wcu.edu)**

David R. Dorondo earned the degree of B.A. *cum laude* in history from Armstrong State College in 1980 and the M.A. in German and European diplomatic history from the University of South Carolina in 1984. From 1984 to 1987, he was a member of St. Antony's College, Oxford and was admitted to the degree of D.Phil. from the University of Oxford in 1988. He earned a Fulbright Fellowship to attend the Otto-Friedrich-Universität Bamberg in the Federal Republic of Germany for the academic year 1985-1986, having already spent the year 1981-1982 at the same institution as a graduate exchange student. Since 1987, he has served as a member of the Department of History of Western Carolina University and teaches both graduate and undergraduate courses in modern European military and political history and the history of international relations. He is a member of US Strategic Command's Deterrence and Assurance Academic Alliance and serves as a subject-matter expert for, and contributor to, the US Joint Staff J39 Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA).



### **Dr. Maorong Jiang (Creighton University)**

Dr. Maorong Jiang is an Associate Professor of Political Science and International Relations and Director of the Asian World Center at Creighton University. After his graduate studies at the Beijing Foreign Affairs College, he taught international relations as a regular faculty member at the Military College of International Relations in China.

Jiang remained as active duty PLA officer for ten years and later transferred to the Central Government in Beijing. Jiang was selected as a young government official by the US State Department to participate in the International Visitors Leadership Program (IVLP) in 1990 and served as a visiting fellow at the University of Hawaii at Manoa for three years. Since coming to the U.S. for his doctoral studies in 1996, Jiang's counsel has been sought by several government agencies interested in engagement with both China and North Korea. From 2014 through 2016, Jiang served as one of the five supervisors in the US Midwest responsible for the Japan Foundation Outreach Initiative Project and was selected by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan to participate in its "Building a Multi-layered Network of Influential Figures" program in 2016. Jiang's publications and public presentations are mainly on security issues in general, and on US-China and US-DPRK relations in particular.

## Dr. Lawrence A. Kuznar (NSI, Inc.)

Lawrence A. Kuznar (Chief Cultural Sciences Officer, NSI, Inc., Professor of Anthropology, Purdue University-Fort Wayne) Dr. Kuznar conducts anthropological research relevant to counterterrorism and other areas of national security. His research ranges from advanced statistical and geographical modeling of social instability, to discourse analysis of adversaries including North Korea, China, Russia, Iran, and ISIS (Daesh) to provide leading indicators of intent and behavior. 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 geo-spatial analysis of illicit nuclear trade and bioterrorism. Dr. Kuznar's recent research has been funded by academic sources, the Office of the Secretary of Defense Strategic Multi-Layer 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. He conducted extensive research among the Aymara of southern Peru and with the Navajo in the American southwest. Dr. Kuznar has published and edited several books and numerous peer-reviewed articles in journals such as *American Anthropologist*, *Current Anthropology*, *Social Science Computer Review*, *Political Studies*, *Field Methods*, and *Journal of Anthropological Research*. Dr. Kuznar earned his Ph.D. and M.A. in Anthropology, and a M.S. in Mathematical Methods in the Social Sciences from Northwestern University. His B.A. in Anthropology is from Penn State.

