



Ministry  
of Defence

## **SMA UK MoD Panel Discussion**

### **India and Post-COVID Global Competition: Everything You Need to Know**

*Part of the SMA UK MoD Speaker Series, entitled*

*COVID-19: Second- and Third-Order Effects—System  
Shocks, Disruption, and Emergence*

**Tuesday 17 November 2020  
1030-1200 EST/1530-1700 GMT**

**[Join the Event](#) via MS Teams**

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:** India is big—and crucial for any successful US or Chinese global strategy. But in the post-COVID global order, what will India decide to do, and what is India able to do?

Our panel of world-leading experts will provide the key knowledge policymakers need. We will go from Indian domestic scene, to the region, and on to global competition.

- **Milan Vaishnav (Director, South Asia Program, Carnegie Endowment)** will examine Indian domestic political realities. COVID has roiled domestic politics in many countries, but what has happened in India and to Narendra Modi?
- **Rudra Chaudhuri (Director, Carnegie India)** will consider COVID's economic effects and how they affect India's ability to shape the region. He will also address the potential for technology cooperation and how this may shape the future of multilateralism.
- **Walter Ladwig (Senior Lecturer, King's College, London)** will speak to defense budgets in the post-COVID environment and their implications for India's military and military-to-military cooperation. He will also touch on demographic trends and implications for internal security.
- **Tanvi Madan (Director, The India Project, Brookings Institution)** will focus on India-China relations, in which COVID has affected dimensions ranging from the strategic to the military, economic, and technological.

The moderator will be **Nicholas Wright (Georgetown University; University College London; New America)**.

**Speaker Series Description:** The US Joint Staff Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) and the UK Defence Science Technology Laboratory (Dstl; part of the United Kingdom Ministry of Defence [UK MoD])<sup>1</sup> have partnered to create the “COVID-19: Second- and Third-order Effects—System Shocks, Disruption, and Emergence” speaker series. With all of the focus on the very important tactical aspects of arresting the infectious disease and preserving life in response to the novel coronavirus (first-order effects), the aim of this series is to elevate the conversation to a more strategic level and consider the second- and third-order effects across global systems. In this context, it is perhaps helpful to view COVID-19 as a Gray Rhino,<sup>2</sup> one of many highly probable, high-impact, yet underappreciated threats that could present similar patterns of systemic shocks and disruption in the future.

Our approach in this series is to ask gifted thinkers to apply a combination of foresighting and sensemaking for the SMA and the UK MoD communities. Speakers will explain what they are watching, communicate how they are making sense of these observations and patterns (analytic approaches), and give us a hint of what we should be keeping an eye on (e.g., Are there historical patterns? Should we expect transformative changes to the global order and who might be advantaged by them? Where do the speakers see fragility, anti-fragility, adaption, and even perhaps emergent behaviors that may have consequences?). Our goals are to reach beyond monitoring; to actively understanding the breadth, complexity, and impact on national defense and security with the clear aim of working towards mitigation, resilience, and sustainability; and to turn thought into action.

What do the second- and third-order impacts from the Gray Rhino that is COVID-19 teach us about future Gray Rhinos beyond infectious disease? What does this Gray Rhino reveal about the often-underappreciated relationships between national security, economic and financial systems, governance, populations and the social contract, and political stability throughout the globe? How might this understanding shape our decisions going forward? The future global world order, technology and COVID, the health and security nexus, societal resilience, and the utility of the systems thinking, and net assessment are just a few of the issues that we hope to explore in this series.

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<sup>2</sup> Popularized by Michele Wucker, a *gray rhino* is a highly probable, high impact yet neglected threat: kin to both the elephant in the room and the improbable and unforeseeable black swan. Gray rhinos are not random surprises but occur after a series of warnings and visible evidence.

# Speaker Biographies

## **Rudra Chaudhuri (Director, Carnegie India)**

Rudra Chaudhuri is the director of Carnegie India. His primary research focuses on the diplomatic history of South Asia and contemporary security issues. He is currently writing a book on the global history of the Indian Emergency, 1975-1977. At present, he is also heading a major research project that involves mapping and analyzing violent incidents and infrastructural development on and across India's borders.

He is the author of *Forged in Crisis: India and the United States Since 1947* (published in the U.K. by Hurst, in 2013, and in the U.S. and South Asia by Oxford University Press and Harper Collins, respectively, in 2014). His research has been published in scholarly journals such as *International History Review*, *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, *Journal of Strategic Studies*, *International Affairs*, the *RUSI Journal*, *Defense Studies*, and other academic and policy-focused journals. He is an occasional commentator in the media.

He is a senior lecturer at the Department of War Studies and the India Institute at King's College London (currently on research leave). In addition, he is the founding director of the U.K. Foreign and Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Diplomatic Academy for South Asia. He is also a visiting professor of international relations at Ashoka University, New Delhi. He previously taught at the U.K. Joint Services Command and Staff College. He holds a PhD in War Studies from King's College London.

## **Walter Ladwig (Senior Lecturer, King's College, London)**

Dr. Walter C. Ladwig III is an Associate Professor (UK: Senior Lecturer) in International Relations in the Department of War Studies at King's College London. His research interests include South Asian security, U.S. foreign policy, and irregular warfare. Walter's scholarly work has been published in a number of academic journals including *International Security*, the *Journal of Strategic Studies*, and *Asian Survey*, among others. His first book, *The Forgotten Front: Patron-Client Relationships in Counter Insurgency* (Cambridge 2017), examines the often-difficult relations between the U.S. and local governments it is supporting in counterinsurgency. He is currently writing a book on Indian defense policy.

Walter has commented on international affairs for the *Economist*, the *Washington Post*, the *Financial Times*, and the *BBC* and his opinion pieces have appeared in a number of newspapers including the *New York Times* and the *Wall Street Journal*. He has held fellowships at the University of Virginia and the University of Pennsylvania, and previously taught courses on insurgency, terrorism, and Cold War history at the University of Oxford and the University of Cambridge. He received a B.A. from the University of Southern California, an M.P.A. from Princeton University, and a Ph.D. from the University of Oxford.

## **Tanvi Madan (Director, The India Project, Brookings Institution)**

Tanvi Madan is a senior fellow in the Project on International Order and Strategy in the Foreign Policy program, and director of The India Project at the Brookings Institution in Washington, DC. Madan's work explores India's role in the world and its foreign policy, focusing in particular on India's relations with China and the United States. She also researches the intersection between Indian energy policies and its foreign and security policies.

Madan is the author of the book "Fateful Triangle: How China Shaped US-India Relations during the Cold War" (Brookings Institution Press, 2020). She is currently completing a monograph on India's foreign policy diversification strategy, and researching her next book on the China-India-US triangle.

Previously, Madan was a Harrington doctoral fellow and teaching assistant at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. In the past, she has also been a research analyst at Brookings, and worked in the information technology industry in India.

Madan has authored a number of publications on India's foreign policy and been cited by media outlets such as the Associated Press, the Economist, the Financial Times, The New York Times, and The Washington Post. Madan has also appeared on a number of news shows including on the BBC, CBS, Channel NewsAsia, CNBC, Fox News, India Today TV, NDTV, NPR, and PBS.

In addition to a Ph.D. in public policy from the University of Texas at Austin, she has a master's degree in international relations from Yale University and a bachelor's degree with honors in history from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, India.

**Milan Vaishnav (Director, South Asia Program, Carnegie Endowment)**

Milan Vaishnav is a senior fellow and director of the South Asia Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. His primary research focus is the political economy of India, and he examines issues such as corruption and governance, state capacity, distributive politics, and electoral behavior.

He is the author or editor of multiple books, including *When Crime Pays: Money and Muscle in Indian Politics* (Yale University Press and HarperCollins India, 2017). At Carnegie, he hosts a weekly podcast on Indian politics and policy, *Grand Tamasha*.

Milan is an adjunct professor in the Edmund A. Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University and has previously taught at Columbia and George Washington Universities. He holds a Ph.D. in political science from Columbia University.

**Nicholas Wright (Affiliated Scholar, Pellegrino Center for Clinical Bioethics, Georgetown University Medical Center)**

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](http://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.