



Ministry
of Defence

SMA UK MoD Panel Discussion

**How to Make Alliances
Succeed Across Multiple
Dimensions of Power: Atlantic,
Indo-Pacific and Historical
Lessons**

*Part of SMA's "Fresh Options for Strategic Advantage in
the Global System Now" Speaker Series*

**Tuesday 19 October 2021
1030-1200 Eastern time/1530-1700
UK time**

[Join the Event](#) via ZoomGov

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: Alliances are a source of huge strategic advantage. This is one of the two central new ideas in the recent US Interim National Security Strategic Guidance and is central to the UK's Integrated Review. But even amongst the most established alliances, such as the "Five Eyes" community or US–Japan alliance, effective collaboration requires understanding that each partner has distinct—as well as shared—national interests and perspectives. One can, for instance, be very close security partners but competitors in significant economic domains. Thus, this event asks:

How can we manage alliances—both leveraging alliance strengths and avoiding alliance pitfalls—to generate strategic advantage now and in the foreseeable future?

Our distinguished panelists include:

- **Sir John Sawers** (Former Head of MI6)
- **James Schoff** (Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA)
- **Odd Arne Westad** (Yale University)

Our moderator will be **Nicholas Wright** (Intelligent Biology).

Speaker Series Description: This event is part of our SMA UK MoD speaker series, entitled:

Fresh Options for Strategic Advantage in the Global System Now.

What options do the US or the UK have now to gain strategic advantage? The global economic centre of gravity is moving ever further eastwards into Asia, whilst global politics becomes more multipolar. New technologies provide vast new opportunities at global scale. To be sure, the US remains a superpower—even if China may also attain that status in the next decade or two—and a country like the UK retains considerable strengths, such as the scientific prowess it showed in Covid-19 vaccines, genetics and treatments. But how can such nations use their strengths, and minimise their weaknesses, to control or influence the course of events to their advantage? And to the advantage of democracies more broadly?

We seek to identify and debate fresh options for countries like the UK and US to strengthen their position and principles in the global environment. If politics is the art of the possible, then what's possible? What is the space of options for strategies to create strategic advantage in the technological, security, economic and political spheres? How can we think long-term? How can we best blend established, reimagined and entirely new allied institutions? Indeed, although alliances are crucial, how do we go beyond fine aspirations in order to identify clear options—like the "Five Eyes" and "Democratic-10" (G-7 plus India, South Korea and Australia) networks—that can put meat on the bones of an alliance strategy? Domestic and foreign policy imperatives must be aligned, but how can we do that effectively now?

To see new windows of opportunity for our contemporary epoch, we bring together leading scholars and practitioners in a new event series. Recent series in this forum have included speakers such as Sir Lawrence Freedman (King's College, London), General David Petraeus (former Director, CIA), Sir David Omand (former Director, GCHQ), Moises Naim (former Exec. Director, World Bank), Jack Lew (former US Treasury Secretary), Barry Posen (MIT), Anne-Marie Slaughter (former Head of Policy Planning, US State Dept.) and Dr Thomas Bagger (Foreign Policy Director for the German President).

The US Joint Staff Strategic Multilayer Assessment and the UK Defence Science Technology Laboratory (Dstl; part of the UK Ministry of Defence) have partnered to create this new series. SMA POC: Nicole Peterson, npeterson@nsiteam.com; UK POC: Richard Allington, rdallington@dstl.gov.uk.

Speaker Biographies

Sir John Sawers (Head of MI6, the British Secret Intelligence Service, from 2009-2014)

John Sawers is Executive Chairman of Newbridge Advisory, a firm he founded in 2019 to advise corporate leaders on geopolitics and political risk. He is also a Non-Executive Director of BP.

Sir John has 36 years of experience in diplomacy and intelligence, culminating in five years as Chief of the British Secret Intelligence Service (MI6) until he left public service in 2014.

As MI6 Chief, he was a member of the UK National Security Council and the Joint Intelligence Committee, contributing to the strategies and policy decisions on how to promote and protect British interests around the World. He led the Service through a period of international political upheaval and high terrorist threat, including against the 2012 London Olympics. He also modernised the way the Service works and created a more open approach to public accountability.

Prior to leading MI6 he was the UK's Ambassador to the United Nations, Political Director of the Foreign Office, Special Representative in Iraq, Ambassador to Cairo and Foreign Policy Adviser to Prime Minister Tony Blair. In his earlier career he worked overseas in Yemen, Syria, South Africa and Washington, and at home was involved in policy on the EU, Russia and the Middle East.

Sir John became Chairman and Partner at Macro Advisory Partners after he left public service until he set up Newbridge Advisory, his own company.

He studied at the universities of Nottingham, St Andrews and Harvard. In addition to his corporate work, he has pro bono roles with King's College London, Chatham House, the Royal United Services Institute, the Bilderberg Association, the Ditchley Foundation and Sevenoaks School.



James Schoff (Senior Director, Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA)

James L. Schoff is currently Sr. Director at the Sasakawa Peace Foundation USA in Washington, DC and leader of its "US-Japan NEXT Alliance Initiative" (a new forum for bilateral dialogue, networking, and the development of joint recommendations involving a wide range of policy and technical specialists). Prior to joining SPF USA, Schoff was a senior fellow and director of the Japan Program at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace for nine years, following two years as senior adviser for East Asia policy at the U.S. Office of the Secretary of Defense. At the Department of Defense, he supported strategic planning and policy development for security cooperation with Japan and the Republic of Korea. Schoff's career spans over 30 years working in the fields of business, education, government, and the non-profit sector, all related to Japan, East Asia, and the U.S.-Japan alliance. This includes six years living in Japan and one year in Saipan.

A description of the initiative can be found here:

<https://spfusa.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/News-Release-Mr.-James-Schoff.pdf>



Odd Arne Westad (Elihu Professor of History and Global Affairs, Yale University)

Odd Arne Westad is a scholar of modern international and global history, with a specialization in the history of eastern Asia since the 18th century. He studied history, philosophy, and modern languages at the University of Oslo before doing a graduate degree in US/international history at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where he primarily worked with Michael H. Hunt. Westad has published sixteen books, most of which deal with twentieth century Asian and global history.



In the first part of his career, Westad was mainly preoccupied with the history of the Cold War, China-Russia relations, and the history of the Chinese civil war and the Chinese Communist Party. He published two monographs, *Cold War and Revolution*, which deals with US and Soviet intervention in the Chinese Civil War in 1944-1946, and *Decisive Encounters*, which is a general history of the Chinese civil war and the Communist victory in the period from 1946 to 1950. He also edited several books on Sino-Soviet and Cold War history topics.

Since the mid-2000s, Westad has been concerned with more general aspects of post-colonial and global history, as well as the modern history of China. The three key works from this period are *The Global Cold War*, which argues for ways of understanding the Soviet-American conflict in light of late- and post-colonial change in Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean; *Restless Empire*, which discusses broad trends in China's international history since 1750; and *The Cold War: A World History*, which summarizes the origins, conduct, and results of the conflict on a global scale.

Dr. Nicholas Wright (Intelligent Biology, University College London, and Georgetown University)

Dr. Nicholas Wright is an affiliated scholar at Georgetown University, Honorary Senior Research Fellow 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 useful for 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.

