# SMA STRATCOM Panel Discussion: Challenges to 21st Century Deterrence (Part I)

## Speaker Biographies

Lieutenant General Robert Elder (USAF, Retired) joined the George Mason University faculty as a research professor with the Volgenau School of Engineering following his retirement from military service as the Commander of 8th Air Force and US Strategic Command’s Global Strike Component. He currently conducts research in the areas of command and control, assured communications, strategic stability and deterrence, competition-cooperation management, and international actor decision making. General Elder served as the Central Command Air Forces Deputy Commander for Operation Enduring Freedom, Air Operations Center Commander and Deputy Air Component Commander for Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Commandant of the Air War College. He was the first commander of Air Force Network Operations and led the development of the cyberspace mission for the Air Force. He received his Doctorate in Engineering from the University of Detroit.

Mr. James A. Siebens is a Fellow with the Defense Strategy and Planning program at the Stimson Center, and an editor of Military Coercion and U.S. Foreign Policy: The Use of Force Short of War (Routledge 2020), a book on U.S. strategy and military operations since the end of the Cold War. Siebens’ research focuses on grand strategy, foreign military intervention, and gray zone conflict. He is currently leading a project on China’s uses of armed force short of war. Siebens previously served as a Research Associate, and as Special Assistant to the President and CEO at the Stimson Center. Prior to joining Stimson, Siebens worked as a Data Analyst at the National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START) at the University of Maryland, where he contributed to a Defense Department project on Gray Zone conflict. Siebens is a Term Member at the Council on Foreign Relations and holds an M.A. in International Affairs with a concentration in Global Security from American University’s School of International Service.

Dr. Christopher Yeaw is the Research Director for Nuclear Programs at the National Strategic Research Institute at the University of Nebraska, U.S. Strategic Command’s University Affiliated Research Center.

Immediately prior to his appointment at NSRI, Dr. Yeaw was the National Nuclear Security Administration's Senior Policy Advisor for Defense Programs, having served as the Department of Energy's lead official in the development and rollout of the [2018 Nuclear Posture Review](https://dod.defense.gov/News/SpecialReports/2018NuclearPostureReview.aspx). Formerly, he was the founder and director of the Center for Assurance, Deterrence, Escalation, and Nonproliferation Science & Education (CADENSE), a nuclear weapons think tank at the Louisiana Tech Research Institute. From 2010-2015, Dr. Yeaw served as the first Chief Scientist of Air Force Global Strike Command (AFGSC), which was established in 2009 to organize, train, equip, operate, secure, and maintain all U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile and nuclear-capable bomber forces.

Dr. Yeaw began his career in 1996 at the Naval Surface Warfare Center as a lead missile defense engineer following his graduation with a doctorate in nuclear engineering and engineering physics from the University of Wisconsin at Madison. Next, he served as a lead nuclear weapons technical intelligence officer with the Defense Intelligence Agency. After his tenure at DIA, Dr. Yeaw served as the Principal Advisor for Nuclear Matters to the Assistant Secretary for Verification and Compliance, during which he was a member of the first special diplomatic mission to Libya and led the initiation of the dismantlement of the Libyan covert nuclear weapons program. He then served as the Chief Scientist of the Department of Energy's Office of Intelligence. Finally, prior to his AFGSC assignment, he was an Associate Professor and Director of the Mahan Scholars Research Program at the Naval War College in Newport, R.I., where he also founded the USSTRATCOM-sponsored Deterrence & Escalation Game and Review (DEGRE) nuclear war game series.