



SMA & INSS PRISM Speaker Series

Between 2020 and 2022, SMA and National Defense University's the Institute for National Strategic Studies' (INSS) [PRISM](#) journal¹ held a collaborative speaker series focusing on the non-military elements of national power and the pacing threat of China.

The global order is undergoing tectonic shifts. With these shifts come extraordinary dangers, as well as opportunities. Great power competition, hybrid, and gray zone conflict, weaponization of new technologies, terrorism and fragile states, climate change, and global pandemics: These are among the issues that the National Defense University's journal, *PRISM*, and the Joint Staff's Strategic Multilayer Assessment (SMA) office track. This collaborative speaker series, initiated in September 2020, presents diverse perspectives on these vital issues for 21st century security from thought leaders in the diplomatic, information, military, and economic (DIME) communities.

Within the DIME construct, national and international security professionals often gravitate toward the military component of national power. Less well understood are the diplomatic, informational, and economic elements. In recent decades, the measures of national strength, power, and influence have changed. No longer can they be measured in terms of military strength alone; indeed, military prowess may have declined relatively to the other elements—particularly economic and informational strength.


While the United States may still retain its edge in military power, peer and near peer competitors—in particular China and Russia—are emerging dangerous and sophisticated adversaries. China has emerged from decades of “hiding its strength, biding its time” as an economic leviathan of the first order, with an economy approaching if not surpassing that of the United States. It occupies a leading position with respect to specific strategic sectors and emerging technologies. Russia has developed tactics and practices termed “gray zone” activities that remain below the threshold of armed conflict yet severely compromise US interests, as well as those of its partners and allies.

The *PRISM* journal and the SMA INSS PRISM speaker series align with the National Security Strategy of the United States (2017) and the National Defense Strategy (2018) and thus recognize the China challenge—in its multiple dimensions—as the most pressing national security issue; however, the sessions within this series will focus on the non-military elements of national power (i.e., diplomatic, informational, and economic competition). Superimposing these perspectives in a multilayer assessment informs the comprehensive approach which the complex national security challenges of the 21st century demand.

¹ In 2024, the Irregular Warfare Center assumed leadership, management, and publication of PRISM. Visit <https://www.irregularwarfarecenter.org/PRISM> for all future editions.

SMA INSS PRISM Speaker Sessions

- *23 September 2020*: Jack Lew (Former United States Secretary of the Treasury, White House Chief of Staff, and Director of the Office of Management and Budget) – [GeoEconomics and the Emerging World Order: The Power of the U.S. Dollar](#)
- *15 October 2020*: Hon. Robert Zoellick (Former World Bank President; US Trade Representative; and Deputy Secretary, Undersecretary, and Counselor to the US Department of State) and moderator Gen (Ret.) David Petraeus (Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Commander of the International Security Assistance Force; Commander, US Forces – Afghanistan; Commander, US Central Command; and Commanding General, Multi-National Force – Iraq) – [America and the World: A History of U.S. Diplomacy and Foreign Policy](#)
- *18 November 2020*: GEN (Ret.) Joseph Votel (Former Commander, USSOCOM and USCENTCOM; President and CEO, Business Executives for National Security (BENS)) – [American Businesses and Great Power Competition](#)
- *12 January 2021*: Hon. Robert Zoellick (Former World Bank President; US Trade Representative; and Deputy Secretary, Undersecretary, and Counselor to the US Department of State) – [Economics, Diplomacy, and Great Power Competition](#)
- *27 January 2021*: Dr. Kurt M. Campbell (Incoming Senior Advisor to President Biden on Asian Affairs; Chairman and CEO, The Asia Group, LLC) – [How to Compete with China](#)
- *3 February 2021*: Mr. Mike Brown (Director, Defense Innovation Unit, Former CEO of Symantec Corporation), Dr. Jim Lewis (Senior Vice President and Director, Strategic Technologies Program, CSIS), Sir Geoff Mulgan (University College, London, [UCL]; Former Chief Executive of Nesta, the UK's innovation foundation), and Dr. Carl Hunt (US Army, Retired) Dr. Nicholas Wright (Intelligent Biology, Georgetown University, UCL, and New America) – [Fresh Options to Reinvigorate Defense Innovation for the World as It Is Now](#)
- *17 February 2021*: Gen (Ret.) David Petraeus (Partner and Chairman of the KKR Global Institute & Former Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; Commander of the International Security Assistance Force; Commander, US Forces – Afghanistan; Commander, US Central Command; and Commanding General, Multi-National Force – Iraq) – [GeoEconomics and Great Power Competition](#)
- *24 February 2021*: Mr. Michael Brown (Defense Innovation Unit (DIU)) – [Innovating for National Security](#)
- *17 March 2021*: Rector Federica Mogherini (College of Europe; Former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) – [The Role of Europe in the New Great Power Competition](#)
- *24 March 2021*: Rector Federica Mogherini (College of Europe; Former High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy) – [Rector Federica Mogherini Reprise](#)
- *8 April 2021*: Dr. Edward Luttwak (Strategist & Historian) – [GeoEconomics Revisited](#)
- *23 April 2021*: LTG (Ret.) H. R. McMaster (Senior Fellow at the Hoover Institution, Stanford University; Former National Security Advisor of the United States) – [What Does China Want?](#)
- *19 May 2021*: Mr. Kevin Mandia (CEO, FireEye) – [Their Silent Intentions](#)
- *22 June 2021*: Ms. Anna Ashton (Vice President of Government Affairs, US-China Business Council), Dr. Rachel Esplin Odell (Research Fellow, East Asia Program, The Quincy Institute), and Dr. Kori Schake (Director of China Policy, The American Enterprise Institute) – [How to Engage with China](#)
- *14 July 2021*: Ms. Michèle Flournoy (Co-Founder & Managing Partner, WestExec Advisors) – [The Three-Body Problem: The US, China, and Russia](#)

- *31 August 2021*: Honorable Sue Gordon (Former Principal Deputy Director of National Intelligence) – [National Security in a Digital World](#)
- *7 September 2021*: Dr. Paul Krugman (Distinguished Professor of Economics, Graduate Center of the City University of New York; Columnist, New York Times) – [Did Globalization Go Too Far?](#)
- *7 October 2021*: Prof. Niall Ferguson (Milbank Family Senior Fellow, Hoover Institution, Stanford University & Senior Faculty Fellow, Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs, Harvard) – [Competing Visions of World Order](#)
- *16 December 2021*: Gen John R. Allen (USMC, Ret.) Mr. Amir Husain (Founder & CEO, SparkCognition) – [AI Will Change War](#)
- *8 December 2021*: Dr. Christopher Paul (RAND), Mr. James P. Farwell (The Farwell Group), and Ms. Elisabeth Braw (American Enterprise Institute (AEI)) – [Information Warfare and the New Threat Environment](#)
- *2 February 2022*: Mr. Nicolas Chaillan (Chief Technology Officer, Prevent Breach & Former Air Force and Space Force Chief Software Officer) – [How Can the US Department of Defense Catch Up With the CCP Within 6 Months?](#)
- *16 February 2022*: Prof. Thomas  – Responding to China: The Case for Global Justice and Democratic Socialism
- *3 March 2022*: Mr. Elbridge Colby (The Marathon Initiative) – [Defense Strategy and a Strategy of Denial?](#)
- *9 March 2022*: Prof. Margaret MacMillan (Professor of International History, Oxford University) – [War: How Conflict Shaped Us](#)
- *29 March 2022*: Honorable Kevin Rudd (President & Chief Executive Officer, Asia Society; 26th Prime Minister of Australia) – [The Avoidable War: The Dangers of a Catastrophic Conflict Between the US and Xi Jinping's China](#)