



An SMA & NDU Speaker Series

Innovation Now—New Paths Forwards

Speaker Series Description

Strategy is the art of creating power, and technological innovation has been central to creating global economic, political, and military power for at least the past two centuries. But how to foster innovation and translate it into power has differed across times and contexts. During the Cold War—which itself differed from previous epochs—defense industries spearheaded US innovation in key fields like air and space, whilst today civilian sectors dominate innovation in artificial intelligence (AI) or space. During the Cold War the US and Soviet Union both showed remarkable innovation—Sputnik sparked the ARPA’s creation—and although for a few decades afterwards the US faced no true peer competitor, now China is transitioning to join the US at the technological frontier. This is the next phase of China’s economic development as it transitions from catch-up imitation to innovation. Meanwhile, allies make significant contributions to US innovation, such as the UK-based pioneering AI unit DeepMind bought by Google, whilst Russia has regained its innovative mojo in niche areas, and the European Union (EU) now explicitly seeks “technological sovereignty.”

So, what options do the US and its allies have to foster innovation in our contemporary world?

In 2021, SMA and NDU collaborated to host a series of events to address this question to help US and allied policymakers understand the challenge and to provide fresh paths forward.

- *2 March 2021:* Dr. Diane DiEuliis (National Defense University), Dr. James Giordano (Georgetown University and US Naval War College), Dr. Nicholas Wright (Georgetown University, University College London, and New America) – [Beyond Decoupling: Biological Tech, Innovation, and Global Rivalry](#)
- *20 April 2021:* Prof. Anthony Finkelstein (Chief Scientific Adviser for National Security, UK), Ms. Claire Hancock (Deputy Chief Scientific Adviser for National Security, UK), and Dr. Timothy Grayson (Director, Strategic Technology Office at DARPA, US) – [Innovation Amongst Allies Now—Greater Than the Sum of the Parts](#)
- *18 May 2021:* Dr. Robert Atkinson (President, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation), Dr. Loren Graham (Professor Emeritus of the History of Science, Massachusetts Institute of Technology & Harvard University), Dr. Walter Hudson (COL, US Army (Ret.)) (Associate Professor, Eisenhower School, National Defense University; Global Fellow, Wilson Center), and Dr. James

Mulvenon (Director, Intelligence Integration, Intelligence Solutions Group) – [The United States, China, and Russia: An Innovation Net Assessment](#)

- *27 May 2021*: Dr. Robert Atkinson (President, Information Technology and Innovation Foundation) and Mr. John Thornhill (Innovation Editor, The Financial Times) – [A New Approach to Industrial Policy?](#)
- *8 July 2021*: Representative James R. Langevin (Democrat, Rhode Island, US Congress), Representative Michael J. Gallagher (Republican, Wisconsin, US Congress), Chi Onwurah (Labour Party, Member of Parliament and Shadow Minister for Digital and Business, UK), Lord David Willetts (Conservative Party, Member of the House of Lords, Former Minister for Universities and Science, UK), and moderator Dr. Nicholas Wright (Intelligent Biology, University College London, and Georgetown University) – [Innovation With Allies Now—The US, UK, and Forging a Technological Edge](#)