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Senior Conference 55—The Emerging Environment in the Indo-Pacific Region: Drivers, Directions, and Decisions

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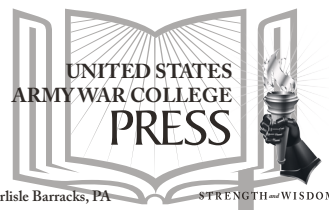
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SENIOR CONFERENCE 55—THE EMERGING ENVIRONMENT IN THE INDO-PACIFIC REGION: DRIVERS, DIRECTIONS, AND DECISIONS

Terry Babcock-Lumish
Tania M. Chacho
Tom Fox
Zachary Griffiths



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**SENIOR CONFERENCE 55 – THE EMERGING
ENVIRONMENT IN THE
INDO-PACIFIC REGION:
DRIVERS, DIRECTIONS, AND DECISIONS**

United States Military Academy

April 7–9, 2019

**Terry Babcock-Lumish
Tania M. Chacho
Tom Fox
Zachary Griffiths
Editors**

March 2020

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FOREWORD

Every year, the Department of Social Sciences at the United States Military Academy runs a Senior Conference on behalf of the superintendent. This event allows distinguished representatives from the private sector, government, academia, the think tank community, and the military services to discuss important national security topics.

Senior Conference 2019, the 55th iteration of this event, explored the emerging security environment in the Indo-Pacific region. For three days, experts with diverse perspectives and experiences considered the shifting economic realities, political dynamics, technological trends, and future forms of conflict and competition that will shape the region's future. Though many questions related to the future of the Indo-Pacific region remain unsettled, the United States will, undoubtedly, have an important role to play – and the world will be watching.

One goal of this conference was to inform the regional assessments of US Army Pacific. We are grateful to General Robert Brown, the commander of US Army Pacific, and to key members of his staff for their participation and collaboration. Colonel Tania Chacho, Major Zachary Griffiths, and Major Tom Fox expertly coordinated Senior Conference 55, and they deserve our thanks for the success of the event. Rapporteur Dr. Terry Babcock-Lumish directed a team of faculty notetakers, including Major Sarah Gerstein, Major Kerney Perlik, Lieutenant Colonel Cole Spitzack, Major Meghan Starr, Major Stephen Taylor, and Captain Kyle Wolfley, whose efforts were essential to the completion of this report. Finally, and

most importantly, we thank the keynote speakers, panelists, and participants for their substantive and lively dialogue throughout the event.

The conference consisted of four in-depth, topic-specific panels and four keynote sessions. All presentations and subsequent discussions occurred on a not-for-attribution basis to allow for free testing and expression of ideas. For this reason, this report is motivated by ideas offered during the event, but it does not attribute these ideas to specific individuals or organizations. Also, it should be noted that the opinions documented in these pages reflect the sentiments expressed by participants and should not be assumed to represent the position of the United States Military Academy, the United States Army, or any other government agency. We hope those who study, formulate, or execute US policy in the Indo-Pacific region will benefit from reading this report.

SUZANNE C. NIELSEN, PhD
Colonel, US Army
Professor and Head
Department of Social Sciences
United States Military Academy

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

A2/AD	Anti-Access/Area Denial
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
BRI	Belt and Road Initiative
BUILD	Better Utilization of Investment Leading to Development (Act)
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
DoD	Department of Defense
INDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OBOR	One Belt, One Road
OPIC	Overseas Private Investment Corporation
PRC	People's Republic of China
SSI	Strategic Studies Institute
US	United States
USAWC	United States Army War College
USG	United States Government
USIDFC	US International Development Finance Corporation

SUMMARY

Senior Conference 55, entitled “The Emerging Environment in the Indo-Pacific Region: Drivers, Directions, and Decisions,” explored the evolving security environment in a critical and dynamic region. For three days, a diverse group of distinguished experts considered the shifting economic realities, political dynamics, and technological trends, as well as the forms of conflict and competition that will shape the region’s future. Although uncertainties abound, understanding the Indo-Pacific’s dynamics is critical for future political, economic, and security decisions both within and far beyond the region. While decisionmakers neglect other parts of the world at their own peril, the greatest challenges of this century will be faced in and by the Indo-Pacific region.

Rather than narrowly focusing the conference on the bilateral US-China relationship, the organizers of Senior Conference 55 deliberately assembled experts taking a broad approach to the entire Indo-Pacific region, focusing on the region as a whole to explore the wider relationships and consequences. Nonetheless, we anticipated a sizable portion of the proceedings would consider the implications of Chinese decisions and actions, as evidenced by China’s influence in the region and throughout the world.

All West Point Senior Conferences abide by a strict policy of nonattribution, akin to the norms established by the Royal Institute of International Affairs (Chatham House) and the Council on Foreign Relations.¹ These guidelines ensure participants can speak openly without concern that statements might later

1. “Chatham House Rule,” Chatham House, accessed August 15, 2019, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule>.

be attributed to them in media. Consequently, we not only asked participants to honor this commitment at Senior Conference 55, but also take care in this publication to avoid assigning provenance. This report distills many views into one document, but we as editors attempted to leave our own views out of it as much as possible. Where our own assessments enter, we use the first person to make that clear. Otherwise, the text reflects the discussion and viewpoints expressed therein.

Several key themes emerged throughout the 2019 proceedings:

First, the United States government (USG) must develop a clear view and comprehensive understanding of an evolving Indo-Pacific. In 2018, the US Department of Defense (DoD) renamed its oldest and largest military command from Pacific Command (PACOM) to Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM), signaling the importance of engaging a wider region to support regional stability throughout the Indian and Pacific Ocean basins. This decision comes amidst heightened tensions with China in a hypercompetitive, multi-domain environment and speaks to the value the USG places on engaging a wider constellation of regional actors. Another helpful reframing is for the United States to understand better the contemporary rise of China not as an emergence, but as a reemergence in accordance with its ancient and dynastic history.

Second, there is an ongoing battle for the narrative of the region. A second theme was whether and how the United States is shaping a coherent and consistent counternarrative to China's ambitious international One Belt, One Road (OBOR) development initiative.

One Belt, One Road (OBOR) versus Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)

Initially developed by the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 2013 as an ambitious, trillion-dollar global development initiative spanning Asia, Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, OBOR refers to an extensive series of infrastructure investments, including both land and sea routes, as well as telecommunications access and other projects.² One Belt, One Road's completion date is slated for 2049, in conjunction with the PRC's centenary. In 2016, the Chinese government invested considerably in an English language campaign rebranding the project as the Belt and Road Initiative because Beijing considered the "one" emphasis of OBOR to have problematic diplomatic consequences.³ Within China, the government still primarily uses the OBOR term (一带一路 *yidaiyilu*) in materials for a domestic audience. Another lesser-used term used is the "New Silk Road." In this report, we made an editorial decision to refer to OBOR rather than BRI.

Some now worry that China's large-scale investments come at the expense of international norms and institutions and that a growing web of international projects and loans are poised to exacerbate, rather than relieve, complex geopolitical problems. While certain China watchers express concern about the increasing financial and political dependence countries will have on China, others are sounding alarms that China seeks to refashion a twenty-first-century global balance of power in direct challenge to the established liberal international order. Some observers even see a remarkable amount of early success in these OBOR projects. A recent Council on Foreign Relations backgrounder described OBOR as a potential "Trojan horse for China-led regional development, military expansion, and Beijing-controlled institutions."⁴ In recent years, countries in the region have sometimes welcomed the potential for increased Chinese investment and at other times pushed back against a seemingly aggressive Chinese campaign.

2. Andrew Chatzky and James McBride, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative," Council on Foreign Relations, May 21, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/chinas-massive-belt-and-road-initiative>.

3. Angela Stanzel, "China's Belt and Road—New Name, Same Doubts?," European Council on Foreign Relations, May 19, 2017, https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_chinas_belt_and_road_new_name_same_doubts.

4. Chatzky and McBride, "China's Massive Belt and Road Initiative."

Third, geography is not dead. While there is validity to the argument that today's digital technologies facilitate everything from global dialogue to integrated markets and increasing cyber capabilities, it would be folly to neglect the continued relevance of physical and human geography. Location, culture, and identity still matter. This concept is particularly important in the most disaster-prone region in the world, already confronting the effects of climate change. Although the DoD is increasingly pursuing nonlethal effects, the United States is also developing new land-based technologies to bolster deterrence against China. The region's geography suggests that land forces would be secondary to naval and air units; however, land-based forces remain significant in any potential conflict in the Indo-Pacific. Finally, in an increasingly diverse and interconnected world, one must not underestimate marginalized or vulnerable communities who feel threatened in the face of rapid economic change and rising nationalism. These groups can include religious and ethnic minorities—such as the Tibetan, Rohingya, and Uyghur peoples—as well as those feeling economically, physically, or socially insecure in the face of demographic or geopolitical shifts and climate change.

Finally, international relationships remain essential. Throughout the Indo-Pacific, leaders are actively navigating relationships to secure national interests and make decisions in the face of economic, technological, diplomatic, military, and ecological uncertainties. The world is watching both the United States and China with considerable interest and concern, as each nation works to attract regional partners and to make sense of where and how to cooperate or compete. It would be shortsighted to force countries to

choose between the United States and China; rather, it is essential for the United States to secure its interests through seeking mutually beneficial solutions with regional partners. As the United States grapples with the dynamics of a rapidly developing Indo-Pacific region, longstanding partners and allies are looking to American leadership to ensure a secure and prosperous future and to prevent unnecessary escalation of tensions. Thus, tending to international relationships and practicing the art of diplomacy remains imperative. While questions abound in the twenty-first century, there is widespread agreement that one of America's greatest assets is its enduring commitment to an inclusive and universal concept of freedom as advanced throughout the twentieth century.

We explore areas for future consideration in greater detail herein but, in brief, we offer five recommendations that emerged from the discussion:

1. The United States cannot go it alone. Strong international alliances and effective partnerships are essential. The United States cannot take these for granted. Over past decades, America has cultivated longstanding international relationships, which take time and effort to maintain. The United States must continue to "show up and turn up." There is no way to surge trust.
2. Walk the walk on being free and open.⁵ America must live up to its values and be the country the world expects it to be. The United States must align its actions with its words.

5. US Department of Defense (DoD), *Indo-Pacific Strategy Report: Preparedness, Partnerships, and Promoting a Networked Region* (Washington, DC: DoD, 2019).

3. Continue to pursue both joint and multi-domain approaches. A key strength of America's military is its ability to conduct joint operations better than any other military; developing effectiveness in multi-domain operations is now necessary.
4. The United States must engage in the global economy as a reliable investment and trading partner. The United States cannot rely on military power alone. To counter China's ambitious use of economic statecraft, the United States must continue to build greater capacity for financial investment and economic engagement.
5. Invest accordingly. If the United States is serious about developing and working toward a peaceful long-term vision for the Indo-Pacific, federal budgets and programs must reflect these priorities.

Even the leading Indo-Pacific thinkers and practitioners acknowledge the difficulty of predicting the region's future with great accuracy. However, the region is—and will continue to be—crucial for both the United States and the broader global community. Today, China is America's primary challenger, with many other countries also influencing an evolving regional foreign policy. As the United States navigates the coming decades beyond narrow political, business, and media cycles, it needs to increase its capacity for decision-making under risk and uncertainty.

Convenings such as these, which create the conditions for open, honest dialogue, are increasingly important. Spaces where decisionmakers challenge assumptions and resist disciplinary or departmental silos are constructive. Senior Conference 55 offered

just this opportunity, but it was simply a start. Working effectively across political boundaries and partisan tensions, as well as across countries, cultures, sectors, and time zones, is mission-critical to getting both domestic and foreign policies concerning the Indo-Pacific right. As the United States confronts challenges throughout the region, we cannot overstate the value of forging strong relationships and continuing candid conversations.

**SENIOR CONFERENCE 55 – THE EMERGING
ENVIRONMENT IN THE
INDO-PACIFIC REGION:
DRIVERS, DIRECTIONS, AND DECISIONS**

**THE INDO-PACIFIC LANDSCAPE:
OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

Opening keynote address on Sunday, April 7, 2019:

Ambassador Wendy R. Sherman, former US Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs

**Lunchtime keynote discussion on Monday,
April 8, 2019:**

Ambassador Gillian Bird, Australian Ambassador to the United Nations in conversation with Ambassador Doug Lute, former US Ambassador to NATO

Evening keynote address on Monday, April 8, 2019:

General Robert B. Brown, US Army Pacific, Commander

Breakfast keynote address on Tuesday, April 9, 2019:

The Honorable Kevin Rudd, former Prime Minister of Australia

With more than 200 years of combined professional experience, the experts contributing to Senior Conference 55's keynote sessions offered invaluable insights. Given the five speakers' ranges of subject matter expertise and geographic reach, the sessions allowed the assembled audience to widen the aperture of the Indo-Pacific discussion to consider opportunities and challenges throughout the region and across the globe. In keeping with Senior Conference 55's non-attribution policy, all keynote remarks, in addition to

each session's concomitant question-and-answer session, are combined to illuminate overarching strategic considerations.

Throughout the three days, these distinguished speakers offered their insights about this dynamic area of the world, informed by experiences in the military, diplomacy, civil society, and academia. Without prior coordination, they highlighted many of the same themes, expressed similar concerns, and arrived at remarkably comparable conclusions and recommendations. While there was disagreement about specific Indo-Pacific policies and plans, the keynote speakers generally agreed on two major points: (1) the future of the Indo-Pacific region is uncertain, but it will have an outsized impact on America's future and may define America's role in world affairs; and (2) the United States must remain economically, diplomatically, and militarily engaged with its partners and allies, reinforcing a rules-based international order in the face of mounting Chinese assertiveness.

Watching, Respecting, and Understanding the Region

Nobody doubts the dynamism of the Indo-Pacific. Covering the Indian and Pacific Ocean basins, this wider region contains 36 countries, 16 time zones, more than half of the world's megacities, 7 of the 8 fastest-growing markets, 7 of the 10 largest armies, 25,000 islands, and 60 percent of the world's population—and it is still growing.¹ The two most populous countries, China and India, have pulled a combined total of nearly one billion people out of extreme poverty.

1. Sean Kimmons, "Land Forces Key to Free, Open Indo-Asia Pacific," *Army News Service*, May 22, 2019, https://www.army.mil/article/222191/land_forces_key_to_free_open_indo_pacific.

At the same time, life expectancy, patents, and gross domestic product per capita are on the rise. In keeping with the last 30 years of extraordinary growth, economists predict that by 2030, the Indo-Pacific will be home to the five largest national economies: the United States, China, India, Indonesia, and Japan.

Nonetheless, such vitality comes with considerable challenges, including increased carbon dioxide emissions, rising inequality, and growing competition for technology, investors, and territory. Five of America's mutual defense treaties are in the region, and most of the threats discussed in the 2018 National Defense Strategy come from this area. Climate change, population growth, and urbanization contribute to both the number and severity of natural disasters that hit the Indo-Pacific region particularly hard. Earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, droughts, and other climate-related extremes are of particular concern for the many countries facing rising sea levels. In addition to potential loss of lives and livelihoods, extreme weather or geological events displace families from their homes and disrupt essential food production and markets. Consequently, there is need for cooperation between countries to respond more effectively to extreme weather events and other exogenous shocks.

Several countries are emerging as crucial actors in the region—for example, by 2030, India will, globally, have the largest population overall, largest old population, largest young population, largest group of wealthy people, and regionally, the largest group of poor people. Currently, the economy is faring well, but with 22 different languages and the vestiges of a caste system, many believe a strongman is necessary for India's inchoate democracy. Lastly, as recent difficulties in Kashmir indicate, India and Pakistan's

coexistence is perpetually just one mistake or misunderstanding away from a nuclear crisis.

Even though Japan is beset by an aging and shrinking population, it remains an economic and military force. An aging population likewise besets South Korea, yet its economy continues to thrive. North Korea remains one of the world's most repressive states and looms as a nuclear threat with a mercurial young leader insisting on fearful obedience from approximately 25 million North Koreans. Experts focused on civil and human rights note recent rigged elections in Cambodia, the jailing of reporters in Myanmar, President Rodrigo Duterte's crackdown in the Philippines, and widespread persecution of religious minorities, particularly Rohingya and Uyghur Muslim minorities. Despite recent elections in India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and Afghanistan, whether authoritarian governments will win out in the Indo-Pacific remains a large and consequential question.

Much of the discussion throughout the three days revolved around China as the most formidable competitor to the United States on the world stage not only economically, politically, technologically, and militarily, but also in terms of worldview and ultimate influence. Chinese Communist Party (CCP) general secretary and People's Republic of China (PRC) President Xi Jinping's priorities are maintaining the following:

- CCP political control today and into the future;
- national unity, which includes resolving territorial disputes;
- economic performance, which now necessitates environmental considerations for sustainability; and

- benign and compliant relationships with 14 neighboring countries and China's maritime periphery.

China benefits from a remarkable degree of continuity in grand strategy, and its strengths are mirror images of its weaknesses. Quite simply, China amasses national power by growing its economy, including domestic stimulus and extending the reach of OBOR far beyond its borders. The CCP harbors a deep belief that its own domestic political legitimacy stems from strong and positive economic growth. Consequently, Xi's stability and security remain inextricably linked to the stability and strength of the Chinese economy, including the internal "magic number" of 6 percent growth. China possesses a formidable security apparatus, in terms of both technological capabilities and sheer number of personnel. Drawing on a population of nearly 1.4 billion—more than four times the population of the United States—China maintains over 2.3 million active-duty People's Liberation Army personnel. Upon identifying technological innovation as a key strategic weakness in 2015, China swiftly ramped up its modernization efforts.

These Chinese strengths exist alongside weaknesses. Many view Xi as the strongest Chinese political leader since Deng Xiaoping, perhaps even Mao Zedong. This perception of power comes at a price, however, with strong internal critiques emerging over his potential overreach on term limits, crackdown on political and academic dissent, overextension in the South China Sea, and heavy-handed use of technology for surveillance and censorship. Another threat to Chinese power includes slowing economic growth and its emerging structural economic deficit. Major

challenges to Chinese military strength include its untested capability in battle, the quality of training, personnel, and its ability to conduct joint operations. Further, China's military remains hampered by its responsibility for domestic security and stability. With an aging population and an underfunded social security and healthcare system, China also has a structural budget problem on its hands.

Finally, while China presents a grand strategy, it suffers from a notable "values vacuum." Freedom—be it academic, economic, spiritual, or otherwise—is attractive. Students of history recall that the effectiveness of the Truman-Kennan Cold War strategy was not merely based on containment, but critically emphasized a values-based approach. But freedom offers a powerful narrative that requires two twists for twenty-first-century global engagement. First, freedom is not uniquely Western; it works in non-Western countries and cultures as well. Consequently, the United States must stop advocating for freedom as a superior American or Western notion. Rather, the United States can find strength in returning to the more inclusive nature of Eleanor Roosevelt's Universal Human Rights Declaration of 1948. Second, increasing economic inequality in the West presents a legitimate basis for external critiques of its "freedom project." So long as inequality persists and grows, the situation provides a basis for the Chinese critique that people do not earn a fair return for engaging in a Western capitalist market system. As Western societies and economies struggle to cope with the injustices of their own systems and difficulties of their own social contracts, they exacerbate both domestic and global anxieties.

Change can be difficult, and people across the globe feel anxious as societies navigate new challenges

in an increasingly complex and interconnected era. At the start of the century, people enjoyed the benefits of globalization, but many today fear losing their livelihoods and identities. The fear of becoming disempowered or unmoored shows up around the world, as evidenced by events such as Brexit in the United Kingdom and the rise of populist and nationalist parties throughout Europe, the Americas, and Asia. Concerned workers and voters are afraid of being left behind as the world grows more diverse and as global integration favors elites.

In previous eras, such as the Industrial Revolution, the world experienced nativism and bigotry from people feeling economically or socially insecure. It is important to understand stability and security stem not only from freedom from fear, persecution, and attack, but also from the security of jobs, ways of life, and familiarity with communities and culture. Human beings derive value from having a sense of purpose and belonging. In its current form, globalization challenges these needs and no government is fully prepared. Consequently, the United States and other countries must actively think through the systems required to help those who are vulnerable in the face of change.

Revitalizing the International Liberal Order

While American pundits regularly speak about the rise of China, it is worth reframing the discussion to recognize the longer arc of history. Given an ancient civilization that tracks time by dynasties and thousands, rather than mere hundreds, of years, it makes sense to recast the global rise of Asia not as an emergence, but as a reemergence. Chinese grand strategy

is rooted in persistently pushing its perimeter east through diplomatic, economic, and various other means. In part, China aims to decouple the United States from its allies and partners in the Indo-Pacific region to realize this broader strategic goal. China is also actively investing and engaging in the developing world to change the nature, content, and culture of global governance to align better with Chinese interests and values.

Strategic thinkers in China tend to see the United States as lacking a coherent or a consistent grand strategy since the end of the Cold War. Having watched Soviet containment carefully, Chinese senior leaders take historical lessons from the implosion of the Soviet Union. China's view is that American presidents come and go, and their momentary periods of power make it difficult to implement a consistent grand strategy. Consequently, Chinese officials see today as a period of great opportunity.

China's ambitious OBOR initiative is the largest infrastructure project in history and provides a vivid illustration of the PRC's intent to lead economically, militarily, and technologically. China is racing to take the lead in the future of technology with 5G and artificial intelligence. In doing so, China benefits from theft of both trade secrets and intellectual property, and many now view it as the "Saudi Arabia of data" for its ability to collect data on citizens.² Instead of serving as vehicles for connection and communication, social media and the internet are now crucial tools in an authoritarian toolbox, offering effective means of state control. Meanwhile, China's military modernization and reforms, its aggression in the South China Sea,

2. Kai-Fu Lee, *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order* (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018), 55–56.

and its shift from land to sea power pose a threat to Taiwan, Japan, and other American allies in the region.

An American vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific that leads to a secure and prosperous region is predicated on security in terms of values, political systems, open seas and airways, free trade, and transparent investment. Today, the United States argues against China's initial OBOR strategy as inconsistent with promises of freedom and openness. That is, many roads and opportunities for engagement are essential – not just one.

The changing character of warfare hints at future hypercompetition across cyber, commerce, and space domains, in addition to traditional land, air, and sea contests. Any area the United States leaves or ignores, even temporarily, can expect a rapid influx of money and influence from China and Russia. At present, the United States views both countries as competitors, but it sees China wielding a longer-term vision and more concerted approach to multi-domain competition. Accordingly, the USG, specifically the Department of Defense and INDOPACOM, are readying an expansion of multi-domain capabilities. The US military operates on the assumption that it must constantly work to shape the security environment to prevent conflict; however, it must also be ready to fight and win, should the need arise.

China is also increasingly confident. While the Chinese were once reluctant to display their technology or military, now they are bolder in displaying capabilities they have that others do not. The Chinese military seems to be growing more risk acceptant, as evidenced by the People's Liberation Army's increased efforts at power projection. In recent years, China constructed nine new islands in the South China Sea and built its

first overseas base in Africa. The United States does not equate confidence or competition with conflict, but it is worried by the PRC's increased aggressiveness.

China's mounting ambitions and reach necessitate not only a better understanding of its activities but also a more robust response from the international community. Considering history, the world in 1918 provides important lessons more than a century later. In a complex strategic global environment, President Woodrow Wilson tried to lead a new global order committed to global governance and action, but he did not have domestic support for his vision. American isolationism adversely affected the interwar period, and it was not until the wake of World War II that the United States reflected on the lessons learned, ultimately committing to a strategy of engagement to avoid repeating strategic errors.

Today, many are, again, looking to the United States to maintain its leadership role in the international community, but they are concerned—for example, the United States and Australia enjoy a strong alliance built over the last century and have fought alongside one another through every conflict. This type of partnership takes time and commitment to build. Accordingly, at a time when one cannot deny the size and influence of the Chinese military over the Indo-Pacific region, friends, allies, and adversaries alike are calculating American “staying power” for the long run. One cannot surge trust.

In contrast to the prediction of many experts, economic liberalism has not led to political liberalism in Asia. In fact, today's authoritarian governments are faring as well as democracies economically, if not better. Further, the global community is increasingly

concerned about sustained American commitment to international agreements, institutions, and norms.

Interestingly, the Pew Research Center finds that, throughout the world, countries still seek America's leadership to support free and open access to information and trade. Despite concerns about American reliability on the world stage, Pew reports countries still prefer American leadership within the world order, as illustrated by figures 1 through 3. This preference is particularly vivid among China's Indo-Pacific neighbors, such as Japan, the Philippines, South Korea, and Australia.

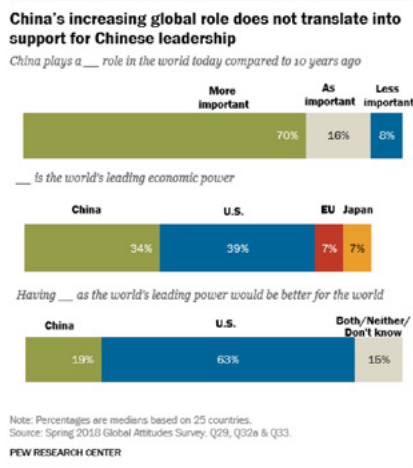


Figure 1. Assessing global support for Chinese leadership

Reprinted by permission from “5 Charts on Global Views of China,” Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (October 18, 2018), https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2018/10/19/5-charts-on-global-views-of-china/ft_18-10-19_chinaviews_chinasincreasingglobal/.

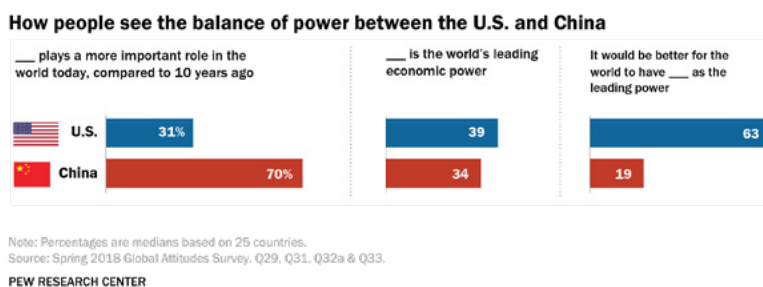
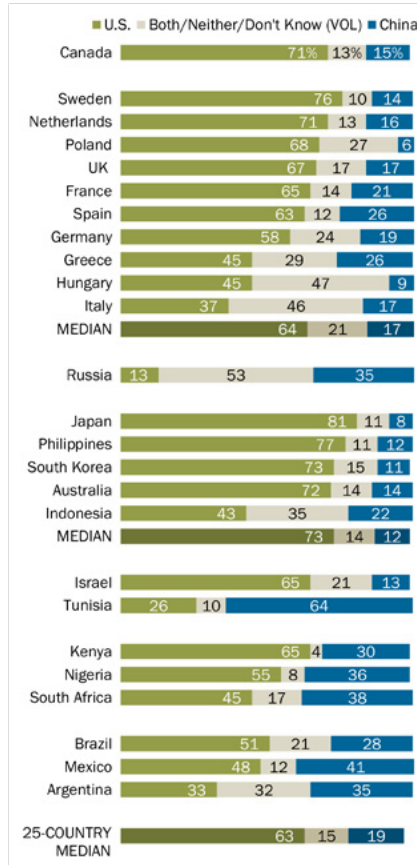


Figure 2. Comparing global views on US and Chinese power

Reprinted by permission from Richard Wike et al., “Trump’s International Ratings Remain Low, Especially Among Key Allies,” Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (October 1, 2018), <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/10/01/trumps-international-ratings-remain-low-especially-among-key-allies/>.

In many countries, large majorities prefer U.S. leadership

It would be better for the world to have ___ as the leading power



Source: Spring 2018 Global Attitudes Survey, Q33.

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

Figure 3. Comparing global support for US and Chinese leadership

Reprinted by permission from Richard Wike et al., “Trump’s International Ratings Remain Low, Especially Among Key Allies,” Pew Research Center, Washington, DC (October 1, 2018), <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2018/10/01/trumps-international-ratings-remain-low-especially-among-key-allies/>.

Governments throughout the Indo-Pacific and the world are carefully watching China's increasing influence in global affairs. So long as China and America are competing for leadership in a multipolar world, the United States must respect, better understand, and consistently engage with other states likewise navigating the challenges of a rapidly evolving and increasingly complex landscape.

US policy in the region remains difficult to decipher. Observers note America's employment of military and economic approaches are intended to advance free and open societies in the region, yet questions abound when US leaders do not show up at international meetings and withdraw from international agreements. Currently, America's greatest challenges are committing to and abiding by its stated values, articulating a long-term strategy, and ultimately, leading as an Indo-Pacific power. When faced with the rise of authoritarian powers preceding World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt declared in his 1940 "stab-in-the-back" speech that a world in which the United States was the "lone island" of democratic liberalism would be a "shabby and dangerous place to live."³ He delivered his famous "Four Freedoms" speech only months later in the 1941 State of the Union. The world is now watching to see how US leaders respond to the current moment.

3. Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Address of the President, University of Virginia" (speech, Graduation Exercise, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, June 10, 1940), http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/_resources/images/msf/msf01330.

American Exceptionalism

While never mentioned explicitly during the three days of proceedings, we identified an underlying theme throughout Senior Conference 55 as the notion of “American exceptionalism.” Invoking Massachusetts Bay Colony Governor John Winthrop’s 1630 sermon introducing the notion of a “city upon a hill,” President-elect John F. Kennedy referenced the image in his 1961 farewell speech at the Massachusetts State House. President Ronald Reagan further popularized the idea of the United States as exceptional within the world order during the height of the Cold War in the 1980s. These two leaders have not been alone in invoking this idea. While the concept of the United States holding a unique place as an international beacon for freedom and other democratic ideals can be debated, it remains a widely understood—and in many international relationships, an assumed—expectation. Across American administrations and across the world, many continue to hope the United States will serve as a benevolent hegemon whose foreign policy is informed by universal values and enables states to enjoy mutual gains. Although, in practice, the post-World War II US foreign policy record has achieved mixed success in this regard, historically, this expectation has been legitimated by a demonstrable US commitment to an open international trading system and democratic institutions.

Many like to think that, historically, domestic politics stopped at the water’s edge. This convention does not appear to hold today, as evidenced by the politicization of foreign policy issues through hyperpartisan domestic squabbles—for example, it is only in recent years that climate change has morphed into a partisan policy issue instead of a nonpartisan data-driven issue. Similarly, both the Trans-Pacific Partnership and collaboration with the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) present logical, evidence-based opportunities to advance American interests alongside global ones, and yet, recent years have seen the United States stepping back. Many experts, political

party notwithstanding, express concerns about American fluctuation in policy and behavior at the very time when international circumstances call for stability and steadiness. In particular, international markets and relationships do not weather unpredictability well, and ambitious long-term planning for technological and military needs necessitates many years of sustained effort.

Democracy is messy, and the American version is a constantly evolving system. One might argue that a reasonable individual, when presented with the choice of political freedom or safety and stability, might opt for an authoritarian government that provides the latter. Articulated during the proceedings was the notion that Americans are always trying to perfect their democracy. Maslow's hierarchy of needs suggests that, first, people must eat. Security and the preservation of life will always be fundamental building blocks. But at some point, once basic needs are secure, people seek to exercise agency. As the Indo-Pacific region has its own past and unique qualities, democracy in Asia will not be a carbon-copy of American democracy. But people yearn for control over their lives, which includes basic freedoms and the right to political participation. Consequently, truly authoritarian governments are at risk in the long term.

When it comes to international engagement and the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific, the United States seeks to work with others where it can and compete where it must. One concern is the polarized state of political discourse in the United States, which can make domestic consensus on issues of foreign policy difficult to forge. One area affected by this dynamic is human rights—for example, concern was expressed that US foreign policy conversations might address

the maltreatment of Christians, but less so the persecution of Muslims. In times of uncertainty and anxiety, people cling to their identities and fear others. In brief, America must be what it seeks the world to be, living up to the stated values of a rules-based order. This includes not only maximizing economic prosperity and minimizing strategic risk in the region, but also advocating for rule of law, human rights, and freedom of navigation and trade.

In addition to direct benefits to the United States, sustained US engagement in the region is valuable for the incentives it gives to other actors, including China. In terms of utility to American policymakers, maintaining a presence allows the United States to engage swiftly in humanitarian and disaster relief missions and rapidly deploy forces in support of other contingencies. Further, continued US involvement may also make it more likely that China will adhere to international norms and agreements. When China does not anticipate consequences for its actions, it is likely to establish its own system, made in the Chinese image—for instance, China has already entered areas the United States has neglected, such as remote areas of Oceania. Consequently, it is important the United States demonstrates sustained commitment to the entire region. America must continue to assure partners and allies of its commitment by consistently showing up, as actions speak louder than words. Any lack of involvement may signal doubt in the American commitment to sustained peace and security in the region.

One area for hope is that military-to-military relations across regional forces remain close, in part because an apolitical military has experience separating current political currents from long-established

relationships. Consequently, experts ardently encourage continued exercises and exchanges. Similarly, the Five Eyes intelligence sharing partnership illustrates a fundamental component of security policy for the Indo-Pacific, with all five countries—the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, and Canada—maintaining high levels of sharing and trust that allow for early detection and countering of threats. This unique arrangement is unlikely to be replicated and provides important benefits. In addition to this intelligence sharing arrangement, the United States must consider the importance of its alliances more generally. The recent seventieth anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) showcased both the strength of the alliance, as well as its continued relevance in the face of global developments. Chinese investment in Europe, for example, could pose a possible threat, with Chinese investment in ports in Italy and Greece giving Beijing a strong vested interest in the economies of these countries. Although these are economically-focused investments at present, there is a growing awareness that the Chinese may use these to their political advantage to influence the prevailing international order into the future.

Throughout East Asia, there is continuous hedging based on perceptions of how military and economic asymmetries will affect American allies in the Pacific. Xi views China as a global power, but that does not necessarily equate to military dominance. In the face of continuous Chinese concerns about domestic challenges, stability in the region is essential. While China must have the space to dissent, it is in the interest of the United States that the PRC do so within the confines of the current rules-based order rather than attempting to establish a competing order. Further, US

engagement with longstanding partners and allies discourages Chinese manipulation of the current international order to serve narrowly its interests. While Xi has the advantage of centralized domestic control, other countries bring soft power advantages to the rules-based order. Cyberattacks may be among the first true tests, with China and Russia on one side, and much of the western world, including the Five Eyes, on the other. At the end of the day, the United States must continue to engage in the Indo-Pacific, playing not only a substantive role but also aligning its words and actions.

Ultimately, the United States must be deliberate in executing a long-term strategy to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region. Essential to this role is the continued cultivation of allies and partners and sustained investment in international engagement. With China's increased aggressiveness and technological advances, as well as the size and significance of the region, the United States must make these recommendations a national priority, focusing American strengths and resources accordingly.

PANEL 1: ECONOMIC CONSIDERATIONS

Panelists

- Dr. Elizabeth Economy, Council on Foreign Relations
- Professor Jennifer Sciubba, Rhodes College
- Mr. David Bohigian, Overseas Private Investment Corporation, Executive Vice President
- Dr. Syaru Shirley Lin, University of Virginia

Moderator: Lieutenant Colonel Joseph DaSilva, Army Talent Management Task Force

Guiding Questions

- What effect will the development of new economic and trading arrangements have on regional relationships and US interests?
- How might emerging markets and new Arctic trade routes impact security priorities in Asia?
- How will demographic trends affect the region?
- What are the implications of these economic changes for US national security interests?

The United States cannot rely on military power alone. The United States and China are actively engaged in economic competition throughout the Indo-Pacific, and the United States risks losing influence if it fails to create economic opportunities with regional partners.

Retreating from global supply chains and broader economic engagement is simply not an option in an increasingly interconnected global marketplace. Private sector firms have enjoyed longstanding working relationships throughout the region. Yet US policy has

been slow to realize the opportunities and challenges of purposeful economic statecraft in the region. This session yielded broad agreement that one of the most important – and hitherto underdeveloped – aspects of American engagement in the Indo-Pacific is the use of economic power to shape the strategic environment.

Although the Indo-Pacific receives substantial attention today, the region has long been a major interest for the United States and will continue to be in the future. Three main themes emerged in this session considering America’s international economic engagement: changing demographics, the potential dilemma between economic prosperity and security, and competition through development economics.

Changing Demographics

The Indo-Pacific is home to over half the world’s population, including the world’s most populous countries, China and India. Most countries have aging populations, with Japan the vanguard of this phenomenon—its median age is currently 46 years—while other states, including China, suffer from low rates of fertility and immigration, as illustrated by figures 4 through 6.

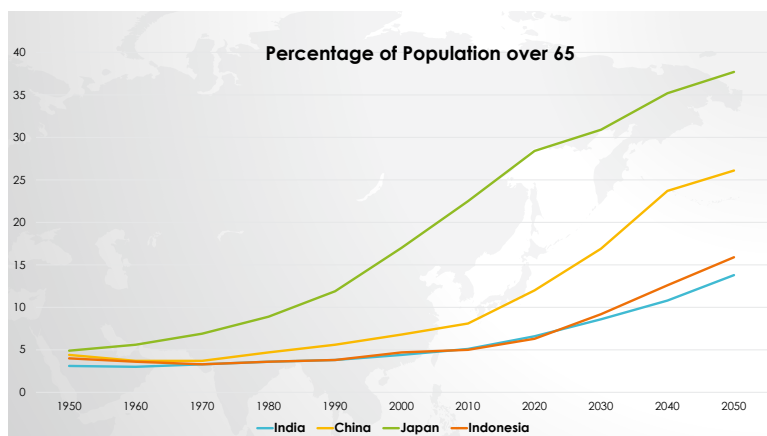


Figure 4. Percentage of the population in the Indo-Pacific region age 65 and over, 1950–2050

From *World Population Prospects 2019*, by United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, custom data acquired via website, ©2019 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.

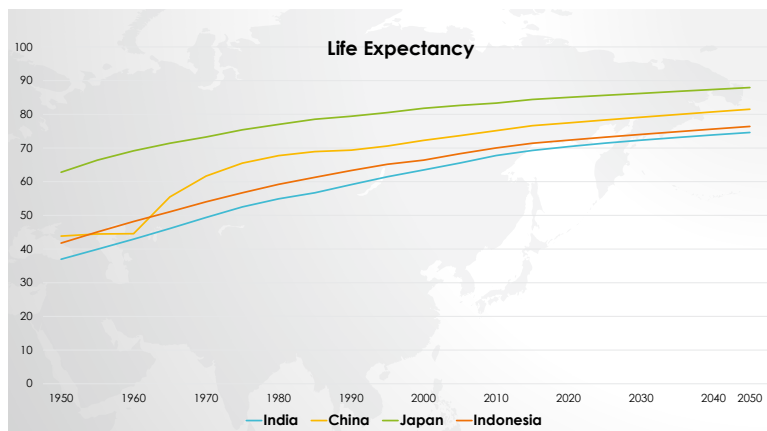


Figure 5. Life expectancy of the population in the Indo-Pacific region, 1950–2050

From *World Population Prospects 2019*, by United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, custom data acquired via website, ©2019 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.

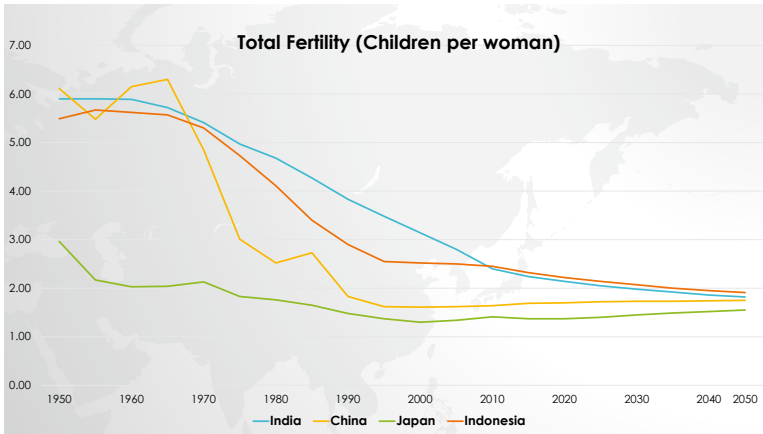


Figure 6. Fertility rates of the population in the Indo-Pacific region, 1950–2050

From *World Population Prospects 2019*, by United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division, custom data acquired via website, ©2019 United Nations. Reprinted with the permission of the United Nations.

According to UN projections, the percentage of those aged 65 and older in China, India, and Indonesia will more than triple between 2000 and 2050, and more than double in Japan. Whether an aging population will result in more or less international cooperation remains an open question. Theory argues both sides: an older populace may result in less aggression and more cooperation, yet aging states may strive to appear strong as a means of deterring aggressors.⁴ Thus, the panel cautioned against drawing oversimplified inferences from earlier periods of demographic transition worldwide or even from previous experience within the region. Further, demographic changes

4. For an overview of the various theories related to population aging and conflict, see Mark L. Haas, “Population Aging and International Conflict,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Politics*, July 2017.

may mean different things for countries at different levels of development in the region. Therefore, it is not necessarily accurate to equate the aging of China with that of Japan, Taiwan, and South Korea. Certainly, the political challenges of coping with an aging population vary significantly depending on the overall level of development of these economies.

It may be problematic to compare population patterns in Europe during the first wave of major demographic change to China today. Even comparing contemporary Taiwan and Singapore—considering their divergent domestic institutions—may lead to incorrect conclusions. Outmigration also presents a striking dynamic in the region, with almost half of all international migrants originating from the region. Demographers anticipate internal migration will reshape landscapes as millions of people move from rural to urban centers in search of better educational and economic opportunities. Rapid urbanization requires proactive planning to make cities places of economic growth and to create new opportunities for sustainable development. Tracking and understanding the trajectory of population trends will be key to guiding America's and other countries' domestic and foreign policymaking in the years to come.

Concerning American demographics, historically, American birthrates and immigration have tracked slightly higher than the world average, yielding an advantage. Now that the United States has crossed over into a low-birthrate society, it must make a conscious choice about how to manage population trends.⁵ A more welcoming national immigration

5. Brady E. Hamilton et al., "Births: Provisional Data for 2018," Vital Statistics Rapid Release Report No. 007 (National Center for Health Statistics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, May 2019).

policy stands to bolster future economic development, labor markets, and tax revenues, whereas more restricted immigration policies will leave the United States more susceptible to ongoing fertility trends (as China is now experiencing). Despite bipartisan efforts toward comprehensive immigration reform across recent administrations, presently, there is little optimism for agreement.

Balancing Prosperity and Security

China's impressive economic growth introduces a major dilemma for countries throughout the region: to seek economic opportunities with a rising power or to develop closer security ties with the United States as counterbalance. Many ambitious young Taiwanese, for instance, seek employment or investment opportunities in China, yet if they wish to retain liberal values and desire security guarantees from the United States, they face a difficult decision. As Chinese trade and finance increases in Taiwan, China becomes the "economic partner of choice" while US investment remains limited.⁶ The difficult tightrope the Taiwanese must walk is remaining connected with China economically while remaining free and democratic in the face of growing Chinese power. Influence from China is penetrating all levels of society, especially in advance of a 2020 presidential election in Taiwan. Must Taiwan choose a pro-China president? And if it does not, will China economically punish Taiwan, especially if US-Taiwan relations tighten and Beijing deems Taiwan to be resisting unification at an unacceptable level?

6. Charles I-hsin Chen, "Why the US May Lose Taiwan to Beijing Economically," *Diplomat*, June 14, 2019, <https://thediplomat.com/2019/06/why-the-us-may-lose-taiwan-to-beijing-economically/>.

What does this mean for other states in the region? Sri Lanka, for instance, also needs Chinese investment since no US investment is available; yet, the country has fallen into high levels of debt with China.⁷ The panel observed that the American position has eroded, while Chinese influence is increasing.

There was noteworthy disagreement about whether Chinese economic growth and influence could be sustained. As overseas development projects create debt from low-income states, attracting investors in the future may become more difficult, and the Chinese government may struggle to manage these projects. A counternarrative posits that China will continue to subsidize its ambitions via stimulus packages because long-term political and security objectives will remain paramount. It remains to be seen whether China is deliberately driving states into debt as a means of taking control of infrastructure and other assets through “debt trap diplomacy,” or if economic vulnerability is a natural result as China deals with countries that are already struggling financially. While there was disagreement on whether the current US administration is doing enough to compete with China, it seems clear that the United States recognizes the threat, as well as other countries’ interest in having the United States continue to serve as a counterbalance in the region.

Economic Statecraft: OBOR and OPIC

The primary focus of the panel was on Chinese and American initiatives that leverage economic

7. Eric Bellman, “Sri Lanka, Deep in Debt, Turns Increasingly to China for Loans,” *Wall Street Journal*, January 29, 2019, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/sri-lanka-deep-in-debt-turns-increasingly-to-china-for-loans-11548774001>.

power to achieve national interests: for China, OBOR; for the United States, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). While the original goal of OBOR was to develop external markets for Chinese manufacturing and overcapacity, particularly in poorer regions through six regional corridors, it has evolved considerably since inception. Today, China is continually extending the project's reach to include online investment opportunities, extensions into the Arctic, and even outreach to South America. The panel considered the most alarming aspect of OBOR to be its security implications, such as a naval base in Djibouti, with speculation that the Chinese military is likely planning additional bases in the future.⁸

There also seems to be a domestic political aspect of OBOR: China is not exporting a Communist model per se, but it is certainly authoritarian components of such a model—for instance, the Chinese are actively training other countries in how to monitor or censor online content. Recent OBOR successes for recipient countries include Greece receiving a prosperous new port and Pakistan enjoying more electricity. Nevertheless, some see China's use of "debt trap diplomacy" as self-serving, creating beneficiaries who become beholden to Chinese interests after failing to pay back loans. Recipient states appear to be catching on and are canceling or renegotiating numerous projects. Chinese companies receive 90 percent of contracts, which often

8. For a further discussion, see Andrew Scobell and Nathan Beauchamp-Mustafaga, "The Flag Lags but Follows: The PLA and China's Great Leap Outward," in *Chairman Xi Remakes the PLA: Assessing Chinese Military Reforms*, ed. Phillip Saunders et al. (Washington, DC: National Defense University Press, 2019), 171–99.

exclude local workers, and some critics now say some OBOR projects are manifestations of neocolonialism.⁹

The Overseas Private Investment Corporation coordinated with US domestic private industry to provide development finance to lower-income countries so they could become reliable, self-sufficient partners. Specifically, OPIC attempted to integrate the tools of defense, diplomacy, and development to support the economic pillar of the 2017 National Security Strategy. Projects within OPIC actively sought to differentiate themselves from the Chinese-led OBOR via five ways:

1. Respecting state sovereignty,
2. Seeking to protect the environment,
3. Empowering local workers,
4. Upholding transparency, and
5. Creating projects that are “built-to-last.”¹⁰

The bipartisan Better Utilization of Investment Leading to Development (BUILD) Act seeks to leverage better private sector equity for development by turning OPIC into a more capable development agency to provide development finance, the US International Development Finance Corporation (USIDFC). This new development finance institution will help developing countries prosper while advancing American foreign policy goals and enhancing national security interests.¹¹

9. Tanner Greer, “One Belt, One Road, One Big Mistake,” *Foreign Policy*, December 6, 2018, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2018/12/06/bri-china-belt-road-initiative-blunder/>.

10. “OPOC, JBIC and DFAT/EFIC Reaffirm Commitment to Indo-Pacific Infrastructure Development,” Overseas Private Investment Corporation, June 25, 2019, <https://www.opic.gov/press-releases/2019/opic-jbic-and-dfat-efic-reaffirm-commitment-indo-pacific-infrastructure-development>.

11. Daniel F. Runde, “America’s Global Infrastructure Opportunity: Three Recommendations to the New U.S.

While some might liken OBOR to the post-World War II Marshall Plan, it is not an aid program, but rather an economic development one. In contrast with the state-directed OBOR, OPIC (and in turn, the USIDFC, once it comes online) relies on voluntary private sector involvement. Therefore, the US initiatives must create the conditions conducive to investment in developing countries. This approach may offer an advantage for China, as the United States does not have the ability to order companies to invest. Moreover, several speakers agreed Washington's withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership was a strategic mistake that cost the United States regional economic influence. There was greater optimism, however, about the United States holding superior technology in areas such as semiconductors. There remains considerable incentive to continue investing in sustaining America's edge in technological innovation, particularly in environmental, biomedical, information, and communication technologies.

Yet to be seen are the specific political outcomes the Chinese seek through OBOR. Does the PRC see OBOR as a form of soft power that makes recipient states agreeable to Chinese influence, or does Beijing seek to use OBOR to gain control over vital digital or physical infrastructure? While Xi broadcasts a long-term vision for China in 2049, the United States has yet to articulate a coherent grand strategy and finds itself hampered by partisan divisiveness and short-termism. The

Development Finance Corporation," Center for Strategic & International Studies, April 11, 2019, <https://www.csis.org/analysis/americas-global-infrastructure-opportunity-three-recommendations-new-us-development-finance>; and "Who We Are," Development Finance Corporation, accessed January 27, 2020, <https://www.dfc.gov/who-we-are>.

world remains interested in how American plans and actions will develop in the future, and what strategic vision the United States will offer.

PANEL 2: SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS

Panelists

- Professor Thomas Christensen, Columbia University
- Dr. David Finkelstein, Center for Naval Analyses, Director of China and Indo-Pacific Security Affairs
- Mr. Scott Norwood, US Army Pacific, Director
- Ms. Lindsey Ford, Asia Society Policy Institute

Moderator: Dr. Al Willner, Center for Naval Analyses, Research Scientist

Guiding Questions

- What domestic challenges do the rising powers of the Indo-Pacific currently face?
- How can we better understand the interdependent relationship between military and diplomatic engagement in the region?
- How does regionalization on the Asian continent affect the potential for cooperative and competing security interests?
- What are US capabilities in the region?
- How are allied and partner perspectives evolving in the region, and what implications does this have for the United States' alliance structure?

The US-China security relationship will define the coming decades. The most dangerous scenario sees a rising China as a security threat to the international order because it seeks to drive the United States out of East Asia, dominate that region, and challenge the

United States in a new Cold War. Fortunately, these concerns are overblown. But the good news ends there.

The challenges posed by China's rise are real and take two main forms: dissuading China from settling its many maritime disputes with weaker neighbors through coercion and military force, thereby destabilizing a region of growing global importance, and encouraging China to contribute to international stability by using its economic clout to help solve global problems. The United States must strike a balance between two divergent strategies to manage this challenge: on the one hand, competing through the maintenance and attraction of regional partners; on the other, cooperating with China where opportunities exist.

The United States is a Pacific power. While some might consider the United States an external actor in the Indo-Pacific, it has maintained a military presence in Asia for almost two centuries and fought multiple wars in the region. Despite varying definitions of the region over time, contemporary challenges call for a consideration of actors throughout East Asia, South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Oceania, in addition to countries located in the Americas that lie along the coast of the Pacific Ocean.

This panel grappled with the shape of the emerging security competition, how the United States should develop a strategy to achieve its goals in the region, and where opportunities for cooperation might prevent unnecessary escalation of tensions. Three discrete topics emerged from this session: the management of competition, the role of allies and partners in the region, and how technology will shape international engagement.

Managing US-China Competition

Panelists offered differing perspectives on the intensity of the US-China competition and how best to manage it. One perspective held that the US-led order has provided immense economic and security benefits to the region, and today, China is actively challenging this order as an emerging power “of consequence.” Because of this, the United States should invest heavily in military and economic tools to balance against China. Should the United States fail to continue to make the Indo-Pacific a priority and offer assurances to allies, these partners, such as Japan, may rearm to protect themselves.

A counterview to that bold approach called for the United States to acknowledge the challenges inherent in China’s growing power and sovereignty claims over territory such as Taiwan, the Senkaku Islands, and the South China Sea, but it also created specific opportunities to cultivate regional cooperation—for instance, without Chinese assistance, international nuclear proliferation will be harder to manage so long as China remains a major trading partner with nuclear-seeking states such as North Korea and Iran. This view assumes China is not dominating the region but rather trying to deter American involvement in regional sovereignty conflicts. There was wide agreement that the goal of US policy should be to convince China not to use force to regain territory it considers sovereign, while avoiding unnecessary escalation, particularly with ballistic missile and nuclear weapons capabilities looming in the background.

Engaging Regional Partners and Allies

Another major feature of the discussion was the role of partnerships and alliances in the region. The United States is increasingly coercing other countries to share a greater burden for security, leading to concerns that Washington is bullying other countries instead of respecting them as sovereign states with their own foreign policies, priorities, and needs. Allies are watching American moves carefully and may hedge against mistreatment and relative international decline by proclaiming neutrality or even drawing closer to China. If the United States forces countries to choose sides, it may not like the outcome.

This session considered the provocative question: “Can a country be a superpower without allies?” Presently, the United States benefits from several partnerships and treaty alliances throughout the region, while China actively avoids “entangling” alliances. The PRC and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea do, however, maintain a “Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation, and Mutual Assistance,” up for renewal in 2021.¹² Participants suggested China is increasingly acknowledging the value of international engagement as useful for balancing power. At the same time, Chinese salami-slicing tactics in the South China Sea make deterrence less effective, and the United States risks losing influence without strong alliances. China’s security partnerships are growing and may undermine American influence, with defense sales and military exercises with the Philippines and Taiwan offering evidence of this phenomenon.

12. Eleanor Albert, “The China-North Korea Relationship,” Council on Foreign Relations, June 25, 2019, <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-north-korea-relationship>.

There is wide agreement that the United States must retain allies and partners to sustain the rules-based international order, particularly when China is actively trying to drive wedges among established international partners. Allies both within and beyond the Indo-Pacific are increasingly concerned about whether the United States will honor its defense treaty commitments, and ultimately, whether it has a coherent, consistent, long-term strategy to deal with China throughout the twenty-first century.

US Defense Agreements throughout the Indo-Pacific Region

The United States views a healthy network of allies and partners as a force multiplier not only for warfighting capability, but first and foremost, to proactively deter conflicts and maintain peace. Current American alliances and treaties in force throughout the region include the following:

Philippine Treaty (Bilateral)

- Date signed: August 30, 1951
- Parties: Philippines, United States

Agreement between the United States, Australia and New Zealand

- Date signed: September 1, 1951
- Parties: Australia, New Zealand, United States

Republic of Korea Treaty (Bilateral)

- Date signed: October 1, 1953
- Parties: South Korea, United States

Southeast Asia Treaty

- Date signed: September 8, 1954
- Parties: Australia, France, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand, United Kingdom, United States

Japanese Treaty (Bilateral)

- Date signed: January 19, 1960
- Parties: Japan, United States¹³

13. US Department of State (DoS), *Treaties in Force: A List of Treaties and Other International Agreements of the United States*

As much as the conversation often becomes one about the United States and China, many argue that getting China right requires getting Asia right. In basketball parlance, the United States should shoot for a “bank shot” with a wider focus throughout the broader region, rather than maintain a single-minded concentration on China alone. To that end, the United States seeks to maintain a robust array of global allies and partners collaborating to safeguard a free and open international order.

Views diverged with respect to whether the United States should pursue more competitive or cooperative strategies to manage Chinese power. Many argue that American leadership must continue to engage with allies and partners through military exercises, technical assistance, and trade to prevent them from choosing nonalignment or closer cooperation with China. In contrast, others express concern that forcing partners to take sides may actually push them closer to China, hindering long-term regional stability and cooperation in solving global problems.

Avoiding narrow, zero-sum decisions may be in everyone’s interest, particularly if countries are better served by pursuing strategic ambiguity, benefiting from effective military deterrence while not aggravating China. In this sense, the United States should want China to succeed in economic projects such as OBOR, but only in ways that are mutually beneficial for all involved. Likewise, OPIC will be successful if it forces China to compete in terms of transparency and economic development. With greater cooperation,

in Force on January 1, 2019 (Washington, DC: DoS, 2019); and “U.S. Collective Defense Arrangements,” State Department, accessed January 27, 2020, <https://2009-2017.state.gov/s/l/treaty/collectivedefense/index.htm>.

countries may find paths to resolving sovereignty disputes diplomatically and without greater escalation.

Countering Military Innovation

China has invested greatly in its development of asymmetric military capabilities to project power, creating challenges throughout the region. From submarines with cruise missiles, advanced air defenses, antisatellite weapons, cyberweaponry, and nuclear modernization, regional allies must reckon with novel challenges, and are looking for US support. Yet, that support must move beyond rhetoric and include action—for example, the United States must seek ways to support allies and partners who face disputes over competing territorial claims in the South China Sea in ways that mitigate the risk of conflict escalation.

The Defense Department is actively working to catch up, but any large-scale innovation requires considerable resources and time. China's anti-access/area-denial (A2/AD) technology, previously underestimated, has greatly improved. Without effective countermeasures, the United States risks being shut out and vulnerable to attack within both the first and second island chains. Consequently, the Defense Department is developing new land-based technologies to bolster deterrence against China, and the US military is increasingly interested in how it might use nonlethal effects, such as cyberwarfare, to shape future conflicts. Moreover, INDOPACOM's Multi-Domain Task Force offers a new force structure intended to overcome the A2/AD threat, and the US Army is piloting this type of unit through simulations and field exercises. Though the region's geography seems to indicate that land forces would be secondary to naval

and air units, one panelist emphasized that land-based forces remain integral in shaping the development of any potential Indo-Pacific conflict.

Of particular interest was the question of how to curb military tensions with China. The United States might consider further use of nontraditional security problems, such as humanitarian disasters and drug trafficking, as opportunities to collaborate with the Chinese. Conducting exercises in preparation for humanitarian disaster response assistance is beneficial for all parties and encourages multilateralism. Accordingly, the United States may wish to reconsider its decision to disinvite China from future Rim of the Pacific Exercises. Participating militaries learn a great deal about the People's Liberation Army Navy during maneuvers (although China correspondingly collects information about US and partner operations). Another option is to make the US Navy's Freedom of Navigation Patrols more regular and routine, and thus less provocative. In sum, these very questions indicate that despite the continued challenge of growing Chinese power, constructive measures exist to navigate it peacefully and should be explored further.

PANEL 3: THE POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGY

Panelists

- Vice Admiral T.J. White, Fleet Cyber Command, Commander
- Mr. Karan Bhatia, Google, Vice President of Global Public Policy and Government Relations
- Ms. Renee DiResta, New Knowledge, Director of Research
- Mr. Jonathan Reiber, Illumio, Head of Cybersecurity Strategy

Moderator: Mr. Jason Healey, Columbia University

Guiding Questions

- What challenges and opportunities do emerging technologies offer countries in the Indo-Pacific region?
- How does rapid adaptation of technology affect social, cultural, and political systems in the region?
- What are the implications of Indo-Pacific technological adaptation for the United States?

From public-private partnerships that develop digital technologies to the implications of subversive information operations and the proliferation of nefarious cyber capabilities, great uncertainty remains about the course of technological adaptation in the Indo-Pacific and its implications for the United States. While there is considerable optimism regarding America's potential as a global leader leveraging its longstanding dominance in technological innovation, others forecast a digital future fraught with increased competition,

most notably from China. Concerns abound regarding the growth of capabilities from malign state and nonstate actors alike, threatening privacy and security. With a precipitous decline of barriers to entry for cyber capabilities, the United States faces a largely ungoverned and rapidly expanding digital ecosphere.

The United States, along with its partners and allies, depends on free and open access to information for prosperity and security. But this dependency is predicated on the ability to establish trust in data and trust among people, organizations, and countries. Unfortunately, America's strategic competitors are interested in leveraging new technologies to erode this trust, degrading the ideas of liberty and privacy in favor of social citizen scores and propaganda.

To make matters more challenging, the distinction between national security technologies that are unique or exclusive, and those available to the global market, is diminishing. America's national security apparatus is no longer a lone driver of technological development for military applications. Rather, the US military is one of many consumers within a hypercompetitive global market, within which everyone's information and data can potentially be exposed and exploited.¹⁴

Technological Infrastructure

Overall, the Indo-Pacific region is relatively weak in technological infrastructure with notable exceptions such as China, Australia, Japan, and South Korea, as well as major urban centers throughout the region.

14. Dhruva Jaishankar, "From the iPhone to Huawei: The New Geopolitics of Technology," *Lawfare* (blog), August 1, 2019, https://www.lawfareblog.com/iphone-huawei-new-geopolitics-technology?fbclid=IwAR0LWj7lhiklLpPnSw_uqjXlay5m4FYL_rJuasynP6d7q80fmNymrJJ7Y2w.

The region's digital development has progressed at different paces and in disparate ways but with optimistic forecasts for considerable growth potential throughout the ASEAN states. Chinese firms are vigorously competing for digital influence with overt financial and political backing from the CCP.

Huawei's 5G is now a mature technology, and China's centralized control enables it to mobilize as a competitive force to rival American firms for market share throughout the world, not just in the Indo-Pacific. Under Xi, China is effectively offering an alternative to the digital world pioneered in Silicon Valley. Instead of one free and open global internet, ostensibly governed by liberal democratic norms, there is a real possibility that the future may produce multiple internets, many controlled by authoritarian regimes.¹⁵

In addition to the physical islands it constructed in the South China Sea, China is on pace to build what could amount to an "intranet island" within a broader global system that walls off its 1.4 billion citizens, while providing comprehensive modern digital capabilities under the exclusive control of the CCP. In addition to a "Great Firewall," enforced via both technology and legislation, China employs more subtle methods of censorship and control—for example, the CCP uses the internet to gain valuable information about grievances, weaponizing this knowledge into actionable intelligence.¹⁶ Despite a lot of attention on the potential dystopian uses of these technologies, the

15. Adam Segal, *The Hacked World Order: How Nations Fight, Trade, Maneuver, and Manipulate in the Digital Age* (New York: Public Affairs, 2016), 223.

16. Gary King, Jennifer Pan, and Margaret E. Roberts, "How Censorship in China Allows Government Criticism but Silences Collective Expression," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 2 (May 2013): 1–18.

CCP also harnesses their power to learn more about the effectiveness of party leaders at the provincial and local levels. If successful, China's model may incentivize other countries to adopt similar approaches as they transition to digital technologies that offer greater potential to exercise domestic political control.¹⁷

Digital Innovation and Governance

How the region collectively adapts to digital technologies depends on how successful China is in exerting influence through such programs as OBOR and marketing digital technologies at markedly reduced prices. China is not settling for today's technologies. Sophisticated data mining, machine learning, and artificial intelligence are imminent, accelerated by significant and targeted investments in innovation. Its leadership has set a national goal to acquire, via both licit and illicit means, technologies to advance future economic and military capabilities.¹⁸

Despite the creation of Cyber Command, the United States remains bureaucratically dispersed in its efforts to invest in and regulate the digital domain.

17. Seva Gunitsky, "Corrupting the Cyber-Commons: Social Media as a Tool of Autocratic Stability," *Perspectives on Politics* 13, no. 1 (March 2015): 42–54, <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592714003120>.

18. Elsa B. Kania, and John K. Costello, *Quantum Hegemony? China's Ambitions and the Challenge to U.S. Innovation Leadership* (Washington, DC: Center for a New American Security, 2018), <https://www.cnas.org/publications/reports/quantum-hegemony>. For reference to China's illicit means of technology acquisition, see Jon R. Lindsay and Tai Ming Cheung, "From Exploitation to Innovation: Acquisition, Absorption, and Application," in *China and Cybersecurity: Espionage, Strategy, and Politics in the Digital Domain*, ed. Jon R. Lindsay, Tai Ming Cheung, and Derek S. Reveron (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

Technological innovation regularly outstrips existing legislation or regulations. While American innovation communities and the broader economy benefit from a robust entrepreneurial culture, access to venture and early-stage capital, and minimal barriers to entry for start-up firms, the United States does not have a single “Department of Digital.” It is cumbersome to coordinate all stakeholders, let alone develop a coherent strategy with unity of effort. At a time when American legislators are considering breaking up digital titans such as Apple, Google, Facebook, and Amazon, it may be worthwhile first to consider how best US “big tech” may effectively counter state-sponsored Chinese firms, such as Huawei.

Just as the Renaissance and the Industrial Revolution introduced sweeping technological, economic, and social change, today’s Digital Revolution has exploded over the last 30 years, making it the largest and fastest human adaptation in history. In the last decade alone, digital users have gone from just over one billion to more than four billion.

Currently, India is the second largest online market, immediately behind China. Despite there being an anticipated 636 million users by 2021, the Indian internet penetration rate remains relatively low, with more urban than rural users, and more male than female users. Usage is largely via mobile devices, and social media is particularly popular, with Facebook the most popular social networking site in the country. According to a 2017 report, India’s online education market is poised to grow dramatically from about \$250 million to almost \$2 billion by 2021, with massive interest in reskilling, online certifications, and test preparation,

in addition to both primary and secondary supplementary education.¹⁹

This unprecedented sweep of change in people's lives, coupled with the accelerating pace of technological development, makes predictions exceedingly difficult; however, lifelong learners are increasingly recognizing the importance of adaptation in an ever-changing digital landscape. Critical thinking skills and the ability to adjust to shifting norms and challenges remains vital, regardless of nationality or geography.

Influence Operations

A major concern is the expanding use of digital information technologies for influence operations. Efforts to sway populations, both foreign and domestic, are nothing new, but emerging digital technologies have changed the game. With novel digital technologies, influence operations are increasingly easy, inexpensive, difficult to detect, and hard to counter. These operations include the weaponization of social media and the use of "deepfake" mimicries that leverage existing footage. Many new technologies in rapid development and dissemination will continue to expand the possibilities for influence operations.

The rise of low-cost propaganda championed by Russia is gaining attention from actors in the Indo-Pacific, notably China and North Korea, although both lag behind Russia in sophistication.²⁰ Russia created a robust collection of both overt and covert capabilities

19. KPMG in India and Google, *Online Education in India: 2021* (India: KPMG / Google, 2017), 11.

20. Lora Saalman, "Little Grey Men: China and the Ukraine Crisis," *Survival* 58, no. 6 (2016): 135–56, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00396338.2016.1257201>.

to run secretive efforts by the “troll factory” known as the Internet Research Agency. Alongside publications from attributable media outlets such as RT and Sputnik, the Internet Research Agency propagates content to unsuspecting online sympathizers. China, which has long run its own fake personas in the form of internet commenters of the “50-Cent Army,” has kept that capability largely inwardly-focused.²¹ Appearing to lag behind Russia in establishing a persistent US audience for digital influence operations, China is beginning to build standing social media audiences for English-language propaganda. While some countries embrace censorship, America’s First Amendment protections make it difficult to combat trolling-and-propaganda operations once a real person in the United States begins propagating the content.

The diffusion of digital technologies with dual-use applications poses challenges to threat and risk assessments. Confronted with a more adversarial China, those seeking to protect themselves face the challenge of a digital world that lacks clear natural barriers. Adversaries can weaponize information and directly influence individuals thousands of miles away or control the content and flow of information within their own state. Centralized control and a lack of political accountability afford authoritarian regimes substantial advantages in this emerging digital landscape.²²

The much-heralded twentieth-century strategy of containment has little application in the digital domain. The United States must decide how far it is willing to respond in kind or focus instead on

21. Rongbin Han, “Manufacturing Consent in Cyberspace: China’s ‘Fifty-Cent Army,’” *Journal of Current Chinese Affairs* 44, no. 2 (2015): 105–34, <https://doi.org/10.1177/186810261504400205>.

22. Segal, *Hacked World Order*.

patching vulnerabilities and fortifying critical institutions. While recent events trend against the persistence of an open, free internet, the internet already possesses some clearly delineated borders as growing numbers of nonconformist actors enter the digital field and exert control. Continued investments in science, technology, engineering, and math education; basic and applied research; both public and private research and development; critical thinking skills; and retraining are critical to allowing Americans to navigate a rapidly evolving digital landscape.

The USG should make advancing the digital economies of the Indo-Pacific a key part of its foreign and international economic policy. Engaging constructively and collaboratively with governments' policy choices in the region will be particularly important. There are concerning trends around forced data localization, content regulation, censorship, market access barriers, and economic protectionism targeting the US digital sector. As the world moves into a phase when the concepts of national and regional networks or a balkanized internet could do real harm to a global internet, the USG should push back on those trends.²³ A thriving open and secure digital ecosystem in the Indo-Pacific is key to long-term US interests.

23. Segal, *Hacked World Order*, 233.

PANEL 4: FORMS OF CONFLICT AND COMPETITION

Panelists

- Dr. Joe Felter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for South and Southeast Asia
- Mr. August Cole, Futurist and author of *Ghost Fleet*
- Dr. Tanvi Madan, Brookings Institution, Director of India Project
- Ms. Shehzi Khan, Indo-Pacific Command, Senior Policy Advisor

Moderator: Dr. Jennifer Staats, US Institute of Peace, Director of East and Southeast Asia Programs

Guiding Questions

- What characteristics of the regional security environment are likely to persist?
- What implications does the changing character of war have for the United States in the Indo-Pacific region?
- In the presence of a shifting distribution of power, how can states in the region manage relations to avoid armed conflict?

This session focused on the persistent characteristics of the security environment, the implications for the changing nature of war in the region, and the importance of regional relations amidst a shifting distribution of power.

Characteristics of the Regional Security Environment

Looking to the future of an increasingly competitive global economic and security landscape, the world is watching the United States and China make sense of one another. Those interested in better understanding the Indo-Pacific region can learn from three historic flashpoints in this part of the world: North Korea, China-Taiwan cross-strait stability, and India-Pakistan relations. Informed by these experiences and then some, American policymakers are scrambling to identify a coherent, long-term vision and to determine how to manage a rising (or reemerging) China. Is it a version of containment akin to a twentieth-century approach or does the United States seek China's support of existing international values and norms?

In a competition of values, a series of challenges emerged. From a defense perspective, America's alliances and partnerships appear very strong as a result of sustained effort placed on military-to-military engagement. Stepping back from a security-specific lens, regional alliances do not appear as robust, particularly when the United States signals it is potentially stepping back from previously established diplomatic and economic engagement. Is the world moving more toward multilateralism or further away from it?

The United States must recognize emerging challenges to democracy worldwide. Many are positing a false dichotomy by which Indo-Pacific states must choose between democracy or economic security—or perhaps democracy or security writ large. Threats already on America's radar, such as nuclear proliferation and global terrorism, continue to deserve attention. But it is essential the United States recognize

other major transnational threats, particularly when they are central to the contemporary Indo-Pacific experience. Consider, for example, the challenge of climate change as the top security issue for many Southeast Asian states, particularly island-based communities. They seek to understand precisely how American partners will support their concerns of food insecurity and fishing rights in the face of climate change. Many are concerned that climate change has grown unnecessarily politicized and worry that America is interested in serving only as a security partner, not an economic or diplomatic one.

Despite sensational headlines of tectonic geopolitical shifts afoot or even a coming Cold War between the United States and China, there remains more continuity than change in the international security environment. Strong states still compete for power and influence, and weak states still compete for survival. Post-Cold War, the United States focused on the Global War on Terror, but China did not face a significant threat from transnational terrorist networks. Rather, throughout this time, Chinese leadership concentrated on its domestic economic and infrastructure development. Looking forward, the US National Security Strategy recognizes great power competition is alive and well in a dynamic Indo-Pacific, even as the precise challenges and decisions afoot remain uncertain. To that end, the United States must continue to invest in both civilian and military American resourcefulness to understand and respond better to future challenges.

Changing Nature of Warfare

Today there is a diminishing marginal difference among the Great Powers. In the past, only superpowers

possessed the most advanced military technology, but this is no longer the case. Commercial technology has eclipsed government technology, which has diminished the comparative advantage of Great Powers. Power projection used to be measured in major equipment, but now, cybertools enable any actor with an internet connection to engage offensively. The world today stands witness to new domains of warfare, including cyber and space. Accordingly, the United States must maintain competitiveness in all these areas, traditional and nontraditional.

In addition to investing in offensive cybercapabilities and artificial intelligence, the United States must enable commanders on the ground with more options and the ability to make decisions more rapidly. The fog of war is now about having too much information, rather than not enough. Instead of command-and-control postures with all decisions made centrally, being effective calls for maintaining mission command by empowering men and women trained to do their jobs at all levels. Dealing with overwhelming amounts of information requires military leaders to be critical thinkers and to delegate effectively. This capability is especially true when they work across a massive geographic region, stretching across thousands of miles and multiple time zones.

The United States is not yet comfortable with gray-zone competition—nonmilitary means of realizing objectives such as election manipulation, information warfare, and economic coercion—but must swiftly increase its understanding and management of efforts below the level of war. China and Russia do this very well, but the United States has not yet responded in kind.

Management of state relations in the Indo-Pacific is critical for avoiding full-scale conflict. To do this, the United States must strengthen its existing alliances and partnerships across the region. In the security realm, the USG has done well. But security cannot lead in all relationships. Rather, the United States must strive to lead diplomatically and economically. It must likewise consider human security issues as imperative to international relationships, lest resource and water shortages threaten wellbeing and destabilize populations.

Getting Creative

Very different from traditional investment in weapons development or military exercises, there is also a growing trend in creative means of futures planning. The demand signal for alternative methodologies with which to consider the future of warfare is increasing because conventional approaches are not up to the task of envisioning the future of combat in the face of rapid technological change. Consequently, fiction can become a tool for “thinking the unthinkable” with regards to the future of war.

One way to get ahead of this challenge is to use storytelling as a method to envision the future more expansively. The number of actors and influencers in the planning and operations process is growing more complex and varied. Many are familiar with human intelligence and signals intelligence, but one panelist suggested visionary thinkers and planners have the potential to challenge assumptions about the future of warfare and conflict radically via fiction intelligence. This panelist explored the possibilities for inventive policymakers who empower planners to think more out-of-the-box and to reveal unconventional

approaches and solutions. Problems subject to such analysis could include the need to move goods from east to west, the evolving security situation in the Arctic, or the potential of new technologies.

Exploring the “Indo” Side of Indo-Pacific

China-India competition has increased in intensity since 2008. China is behaving more assertively and is less willing to hide capabilities and intentions. Despite multiple bilateral border disputes, no shots have been fired yet. Beijing is more actively trying to shape politics in the region, irritating India’s quest for its own leadership. Likewise, a growing economic relationship between India and China has resulted in an almost \$54 billion trade deficit for India, resulting in Indian concern about economic dependence on—and potential vulnerability to—Chinese influence.²⁴

Another aspect of the India-China relationship is the regional balance of power. China seems content with a bipolar or multipolar world while seeking a unipolar Asia, deeply troubling India. A unipolar Asia with Chinese leadership challenges the rules-based order. Considerable cooperation between India and China has largely evaporated, partly due to these concerns. Many questions persist about India’s role on the global stage, and India harbors concerns that China seeks to block its rise within international institutions, demonstrating not only their widening economic and military gap but also the lack of trust between them. Meanwhile, concerns about China have been the

24. “What Is the Trade Balance for China to India? (1995–2017),” Observatory of Economic Complexity, accessed June 10, 2019, <https://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/visualize/line/hs92/show/chn/ind/all/1995.2017/>.

single most important driver of US-India cooperation for two decades with the United States offering an essential counterbalance to a reemerging China. Finally, to America's chagrin, India also views a closer relationship with Russia as a potential solution to its China problem.

Management of State Relations across the Indo-Pacific

The aim of America's Indo-Pacific strategy should be competing effectively, maintaining security, and helping other countries build capabilities to protect themselves in support of a rules-based international order. Consequently, states need not be forced to choose between opposing powers. Rather, the United States must actively construct a sustainable relationship with China. Countries are afraid of having to choose, so the United States must grow comfortable with countries not going "all in" with it and its allies.

Leading in the Indo-Pacific is also possible without leading from the front. The United States can work alongside or in support of its partners and allies. To do so, it must be willing to have a constellation of different arrangements, be they bilateral, trilateral, or otherwise. As challenging as it may be for the United States not to impose its preferences, American decisionmakers benefit from listening to and cultivating locally-owned ideas. Finally, the United States must remain invested in ASEAN as an extremely important regional institution committed to a shared vision and values for the region.

Behind closed doors, many countries recognize the qualitative value of being an ally of the United States, but they cannot publicly express such intentions due

to their relationships with China. Moving forward, the United States can benefit from continuing to demonstrate its sizable economic, diplomatic, and security value, while also reassuring states that a binary choice is not required.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the three days of Senior Conference 55, recommendations emerged from formal presentations as well as question-and-answer exchanges involving all the participants. The following are the five main takeaways:

1. **The United States cannot go it alone.** Strong international alliances and effective partnerships are essential, and the United States must not take these for granted. Over time, the USG has cultivated longstanding international relationships, which Washington must maintain. Support for—and active, reliable engagement in—the rules-based international order is essential for American interests in the Indo-Pacific and throughout the world. At present, the United States benefits from goodwill and trust earned over decades of collaboration during peace and war. China does not enjoy these same advantages, which the United States must work to preserve as China seeks to reshape the region's dynamics in its favor.
2. **Walk the walk with respect to being free and open.** America must live up to its values and be the country the world expects it to be. Accordingly, the US Constitution and Bill of Rights must serve as its guiding lights. The United States must take care not to assume

freedom is necessarily American or Western, but rather, freedom abides by the shared values of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Universal rights include freedom from coercion by other countries, freedom of values and belief systems, unfettered access to seas and airways, open investment environments, transparent agreements between countries, protection of intellectual property rights, and fair and reciprocal trade.

3. **Continue to pursue joint and multi-domain approaches.** A key strength of America's military is the ability to conduct joint operations better than any other military in the world. But developing effectiveness in the emerging multi-domain environment is now mission critical. Bringing to bear a full suite of military capabilities—land, air, maritime, special operations, cyber, and space—in conjunction with diplomatic and economic efforts requires both interagency and international coordination. This work includes moving from concept to reality by certifying as a land joint task force headquarters, integrating cyber and space, more effectively collaborating between military and civilian organizations, investing in security force assistance brigades, and actively participating in exercises and other multilateral efforts to advance collective defense.
4. **The United States must engage in the global economy as a reliable investment and trading partner.** In doing so, American leaders must plan for 2050, not 2020. China's use of economic statecraft in the forms of loans and investment

is attractive to neighboring countries, whereas American-led opportunities are sparse, and the United States is stepping away from multilateral trade agreements. Efforts by the OPIC to attract private capital and develop the region economically are noteworthy. But both public and private-sector leaders must continue to build capacity for financial investment and sustainable economic engagement in support of long-term US foreign policy goals beyond near-term media cycles or quarterly reports. Rather than force countries to choose between the United States and China, it is essential the United States secures its interests by both competing and seeking mutually beneficial solutions throughout a global marketplace.

5. **Invest accordingly.** If the United States is serious about developing and working toward a peaceful long-term vision for the Indo-Pacific, it must plan, budget, and act accordingly. This requires not only investing in future combat capabilities but also in diplomatic, economic, and educational priorities domestically and internationally. The Fiscal Year 2020 Budget should reflect these priorities, as should forthcoming federal programs and budgets.

SENIOR CONFERENCE 55 PARTICIPANTS

While the panelists and keynote speakers are critical stage setters, the value of Senior Conference 55 relied on active engagement by all participants. This year, attendees included scholars, practitioners, military leaders, and senior government officials with extensive experience in the Indo-Pacific region.

Mr. Karan Bhatia, Vice President for Global Policy and Government Relations, Google

Ambassador Gillian Bird, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Australia to the United Nations

General Robert B. Brown, Commander, US Army Pacific

Mr. David Bohigian, Acting President and Chief Executive Officer, Overseas Private Investment Corporation

Colonel Tania Chacho, Director of the International Affairs Program, United States Military Academy

Lieutenant Colonel Rich Chen, China Desk Officer, Joint Staff J5

Dr. Thomas J. Christensen, Director of the China and the World Program, Columbia University

Mr. August Cole, Author and Futurist, Creative, Foresight/SparkCognition

Captain (Retired) Bernard D. Cole, US Navy Professor Emeritus, National War College, National Defense University

Lieutenant Colonel Joseph V. Da Silva, Army Talent Management Task Force

Ms. Renée DiResta, Director of Research, New Knowledge

Dr. Antulio J. Echevarria II, Editor in Chief, US Army War College Press

Dr. Elizabeth C. Economy, Senior Fellow and Director for Asia Studies, Council on Foreign Relations

Dr. Joseph H. Felter, Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for South and Southeast Asia, US Department of Defense

Dr. David M. Finkelstein, Vice President, Center for Naval Analyses

Ms. Lindsey Ford, Director for Political-Security Affairs, Asia Society Policy Institute

Major Brian Forester, Speechwriter to the Commanding General, US Army Pacific

Colonel (Retired) Sherwood D. Goldberg, Senior Advisor for the Program on National Security, Foreign Policy Research Initiative

Colonel E. John Gregory, Academy Professor and Director of the Chinese Program, US Military Academy

Major Jason Halub, Taiwan, Mongolia, and China Desk Officer, Joint Staff J5 (Strategy, Policy, and Plans)

Dr. Harry Harding, University Professor and Professor of Public Policy, University of Virginia

Mr. Jason Healey, Senior Research Scholar, Columbia University

Dr. Takako Hikotani, Associate Professor of Modern Japanese Politics and Foreign Policy, Columbia University

Dr. Jeffrey W. Hornung, Political Scientist, RAND Corporation

Major Daisuke Hoshino, Japanese Exchange Instructor, US Military Academy

Dr. Yue Hou, Assistant Professor of Political Science, University of Pennsylvania

Brigadier General Cindy R. Jebb, Dean of the Academic Board, United States Military Academy

Dr. Tyler Jost, Postdoctoral Research Associate, Harvard University

Dr. Morgan Kaplan, Postdoctoral Fellow, Northwestern University

Ms. Shehzi Khan, Senior Policy Advisor, US Indo-Pacific Command

Mr. Sarwar A. Kashmeri, Adjunct Professor of Political Science, Norwich University

Lieutenant Colonel (Retired) Eric Kiss, Senior Advisor for Indo-Pacific and Chinese Affairs, Office of the Undersecretary of Defense for Intelligence in Commonwealth and Partner Engagements

Colonel (Retired) Heino Klinck, Principal, Klinck Global LLC

Dr. Richard A. Lacquement Jr., Dean, School of Strategic Landpower, US Army War College

Lieutenant Colonel Theodore “Leo” Liebreich, Country Director for Indonesia and Timor-Leste, Office of the Secretary of Defense

Dr. Syaru Shirley Lin, Professor of Political Economy, University of Virginia

Ambassador Douglas Lute, former United States Permanent Representative to the North Atlantic Council

Dr. Tanvi Madan, Foreign Policy Fellow, The Brookings Institution

Ms. Marissa Maurer, Public Diplomacy Policy Officer (East Asian and Pacific Affairs), Department of State

Mr. Charles McLaughlin, Director for Strategic Planning, National Security Council

Colonel Suzanne Nielsen, Professor and Head, Department of Social Sciences, United States Military Academy

Mr. Scott Norwood, Strategic Effects Director, US Army Pacific

Captain Caroline Pestel, Executive Officer, Office of Net Assessment

Mr. Jonathan Reiber, Head of Cybersecurity Strategy, Illumio

The Honorable Kevin Rudd, Australia’s 26th Prime Minister

Dr. Phillip C. Saunders, Director, Center for the Study of Chinese Military Affairs, National Defense University

Dr. Jennifer D. Sciubba, Stanley J. Buckman Professor of International Studies, Rhodes College

Ambassador Wendy R. Sherman, Director, Center for Public Leadership, Harvard Kennedy School

Dr. Scott Silverstone, Deputy Department Head, Department of Social Sciences, United States Military Academy

Dr. Sheila Smith, Senior Fellow, Council on Foreign Relations

Dr. Jennifer D. Staats, Director, East and Southeast Asia Programs, US Institute of Peace

Dr. Cynthia Watson, Dean of Faculty and Academic Programs, National War College, National Defense University

Mr. Randy Wheeler, Assistant Deputy for Strategic Effects, US Army Pacific

Vice Admiral T.J. White, Assistant Deputy for Strategic Effects,
US Army Pacific

Dr. Jacqueline E. Whitt, Associate Professor, US Army
War College

Lieutenant General Darryl A. Williams, Superintendent, United
States Military Academy

Dr. Albert S. Willner, Senior National Security Strategy
Specialist, Center for Naval Analyses

Dr. Larry Wortzel, Senior Fellow, American Foreign
Policy Council

SENIOR CONFERENCE HISTORY

1963 Nations and Their Internal Defense

Executive Secretary: Captain Ames Albro

Keynote Address: Dr. Walt W. Rostow

1964 Latin American Problems

Executive Secretary: Captain Americo Sardo

Keynote Address: The Honorable David E. Bell

1965 The Role of the Military in National Security Policy Formations

Executive Secretary: Major John W. Seigle

Keynote Address: Lieutenant General Andrew J. Goodpaster

Banquet Address: The Honorable Solis Horowitz

1966 United States Security Policy in Asia, 1966-1976

Executive Secretary: Major William L. Hauser

Keynote Address: The Honorable U. Alexis Johnson

Banquet Address: Lieutenant General Andrew J. Goodpaster

1967 Support for the US Foreign Policy with Military Resources in Conditions of Internal Violence

Executive Secretary: Major Dana G. Mead

Keynote Address: The Honorable Thomas H. Hughes

Luncheon Address: The Honorable Frank Pace Jr.

1968 Problems for United States Policy: Tangiers to Tehran

Executive Secretary: Major William E. Odom

Keynote Address: The Honorable Paul Warnke
Banquet Address: Ambassador Charles Yost

1969

No Conference

1970 The Changing Role of the Military in American Life

Executive Secretary: Lieutenant Colonel William M. Wix
Keynote Address: The Honorable Robert E. Osgood
Banquet Address: Professor Adam Yarmolinsky

1971 The Nixon Doctrine in Asia

Executive Secretary: Major John R. Landry
Keynote Address: Admiral Thomas Moorer
Banquet Address: The Honorable Marshall Green

1972 A Reappraisal of the Future of NATO

Executive Secretary: Major James R. Ellis
Keynote Address: The Honorable Robert F. Ellsworth
Banquet Address: Lieutenant General Edward L. Rowney

1973 The American Army and Changing National Priorities

Executive Secretary: Major Peter H. Ward
Keynote Address: Professor Marion Levy
Banquet Address: The Honorable Robert F. Froehlke

1974 Educating the Professional Soldier

Executive Secretary: Captain Jack H. Jacobs
Keynote Address: The Honorable Barry Goldwater
Banquet Address: Professor Morris Janowitz

1975 Changing Security Interests in an Evolving World

Executive Secretary: Captain Roger J. Arango
Keynote Address: The Honorable Paul Nitze
Banquet Address: Professor Graham T. Allison

1976 Arms Transfers

Executive Secretary: Major Waldo D. Freeman
Keynote Address: Dr. John F. Lehman Jr.
Banquet Address: Professor Geoffrey Kemp

1977 National Compulsory Service

Executive Secretary: Captain James R. McDonough

Keynote Address: Dr. David P. Taylor

Banquet Address: Professor Adam Yarmolinsky

**1978 Integrating National Security and Trade Policy:
The United States and the Soviet Union**

Executive Secretaries: Captain William Robinson and Captain Ralph Crosby

Keynote Address: Lieutenant General James M. Gavin

Banquet Address: Dr. Samuel P. Huntington

**1979 The Role of the Military in National Security Policy
Formulation in the 1980s**

Executive Secretary: Captain Gregory Vukisch

Keynote Address: Dr. Walt W. Rostow

Banquet Address: Mr. Richard C. Steadman

1980 Defense Manpower Planning

Executive Secretary: Captain Eric T. Olson

Keynote Address: The Honorable Robert B. Pirie

Banquet Address: Professor Charles Moskos

1981 Industrial Capacity and Defense Planning

Executive Secretary: Major Henry A. Leonard

Keynote Address: Mr. Norman Augustine

Banquet Address: General Alton D. Slay

**1982 The "Military Reform" Debate: Directions for the
Defense Establishment for the Remainder of the Century**

Executive Secretary: Major Peter W. Chiarelli

Keynote Address: The Honorable Newt Gingrich

Banquet Address: General Edward C. Meyer

**1983 The Nuclear Debate: Rationality, Morality, Security,
and Stability**

Executive Secretary: Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey S. McKittrick

Banquet Address: The Honorable George Ball

Banquet Address: Lieutenant General Brent Scowcroft

1984 Defense Technology

Executive Secretary: Lieutenant Colonel John S. Lilley

Banquet Address: Dr. William J. Perry
Banquet Address: Professor John Keegan

1985 Vietnam: Did It Make a Difference?

Executive Secretary: Major Douglas E. Lute
Banquet Address: Ambassador Robert W. Komer
Banquet Address: The Honorable William P. Bundy
Concluding Address: Dr. Robert E. Osgood

1986 The Pacific Basin: American Strategy for the 1990s

Executive Secretary: Major Lonnie S. Keene
Banquet Address: Mr. Seiichiro Ohtsuka
Banquet Address: Mr. Zhang Jingyi
Concluding Address: General Richard G. Stilwell

**1987 NATO at Forty: Change, Continuity, and Implications
for the Future**

Executive Secretary: Major David H. Petraeus
Banquet Address: General (Ret.) Andrew Goodpaster
Banquet Address: His Excellency Joseph M.A.H. Luns
Concluding Address: Honorable Zbigniew Brzezinski

1988 US National Strategy in the 1990s

Executive Secretary: Captain David S. Clark
Banquet Address: Dr. Edward Luttwak
Banquet Address: Dr. Samuel P. Huntington
Concluding Address: Mr. R. James Woolsey

**1989 Seeking Conventional Stability in Europe: Force
Enhancements and Arms Control**

Executive Secretary: Major Jeffrey Long
Banquet Address: Major General (Ret.) William F. Burns
Banquet Address: The Honorable M. Benoit d'Aboville
Concluding Address: Dr. Fred Ikle

1990 Decade of Challenges: US 1990s Intelligence

Executive Secretaries: Major Kevin R. Cunningham and Major
Dennis Lowrey
Banquet Address: The Honorable William E. Colby
Banquet Address: The Honorable Frank C. Carlucci
Concluding Address: Professor Loch K. Johnson

1991 Unburdening the Past: Forging America's Army for the 21st Century

Executive Secretary: Major Robert L. McClure
Banquet Address: Brigadier General Harold W. Nelson
Banquet Address: General (Ret.) Edward C. Meyer
Concluding Address: General Gordon R. Sullivan

1992 The United States and the Atlantic Alliance

Executive Secretary: Captain Mark D. Smith
Banquet Address: Sir Michael Quinlan
Banquet Address: General (Ret.) Edward C. Meyer
Concluding Address: General John R. Galvin

1993 Coping with Conflict and Change in Central Eurasia

Executive Secretary: Major Wally Z. Walters Jr.
Banquet Address: The Honorable Paul Wolfowitz
Banquet Address: Sir Brian Urquhart
Concluding Address: General (Ret.) John R. Galvin

1994 The Army and Society in the 21st Century

Executive Secretary: Captain Clemson G. Turregano
Banquet Address: Lieutenant General Daniel W. Christman
Banquet Address: Admiral William A. Owens
Concluding Address: Lieutenant General William E. Odom

1995 The Role of the Military in Preventing Deadly Conflict

Executive Secretary: Major William D. Woolf
Banquet Address: General Gordon R. Sullivan
Banquet Address: Lieutenant General Sir Michael Rose
Concluding Address: The Honorable Jack Reed

1996 Faces of Battle: Contending Visions of Future Warfare

Executive Secretary: Major Marc L. Rosen
Banquet Address: Lieutenant General Wesley K. Clark
Banquet Address: Professor John Keegan
Concluding Address: General (Ret.) Barry R. McCaffrey

1997 Security, Strategy, and Statecraft

Executive Secretary: Major Douglas Henry
Banquet Address: Dr. E. Randolph Jayne II
Banquet Address: The Honorable William Perry
Concluding Address: Dr. Jane E. Holl

1998 National Military and Civilian Service

Executive Secretary: Captain Grant R. Doty

Banquet Address: The Honorable Dave McCurdy

Banquet Address: The Honorable Harris Wofford

Concluding Address: Mr. Steven Waldman

1999 NATO at 50: Perspectives and Prospects

Executive Secretary: Lieutenant Colonel Mark Fassio

Banquet Address: The Honorable Marc Grossman

Banquet Address: General Wesley K. Clark

Concluding Address: The Honorable Robert Hunter

**2000 Emerging Threats and Their Consequences for
US National Security Policy**

Executive Secretary: Captain William B. Ostlund

Banquet Address: General Richard B. Myers

Banquet Address: Ambassador Richard Butler

Concluding Address: Dr. David S.C. Chu

2001 The Future of the Army Profession

Executive Secretary: Lieutenant Colonel Kevin Dopf

Banquet Address: Lieutenant General (Ret.) Walter F. Ulmer

Banquet Address: Professor Andrew Abbott

Concluding Address: Brigadier General William G. Webster Jr.

**2002 Special Operations Forces in the 21st Century: Training
and Educating for New Roles and Missions**

Executive Secretary: Major Charles Miller

Banquet Address: Lieutenant General William Tangney

Banquet Address: The Honorable Robert Andrews

**2003 Combating Terrorism: Challenges and Opportunities
in the Use of Power**

Executive Secretary: Major Joanne C. Moore

Banquet Address: Dr. Bruce Hoffman

Luncheon Address: The Honorable Edwin Meese III

Banquet Address: General (Ret.) Wayne A. Downing

2004 Defense Transformation and the Army Profession

Executive Secretary: Major Elizabeth Robbins

Banquet Address: Major General James M. Dubik

Banquet Address: The Honorable James Marshall

Concluding Address: Lieutenant General Franklin L. Hagenbeck

2005 Special Operations Forces and the War on Terror

Executive Secretary: Major Jeffrey C. Denius

Banquet Address: Lieutenant General William G. Boykin

Banquet Address: Major General Herbert Altschuler

Concluding Address: Brigadier General (Ret.) Russell Howard

2006 Public Diplomacy: Message, Process, Outcomes

Executive Secretary: Major Chris Hornbarger

Banquet Address: Ambassador Edward Djerejian

Banquet Address: Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt

**2007 American Civil-Military Relations: Fifty Years after the
Soldier and the State**

Executive Secretary: Major David M. Dudas

Banquet Address: Dr. Peter Feaver

Banquet Address: General (Ret.) Eric Shinseki

**2008 The Professional Military Ethic in an Era of
Persistent Conflict**

Executive Secretary: Major Scott Taylor

Banquet Address: Secretary William J. Perry

Keynote Address: General George W. Casey

Banquet Address: General William S. Wallace

**2009 Bridging the Cultural Divide: Military-NGO Relations
in Complex Environments**

Executive Secretary: Major Paul S. Oh

Banquet Address: Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker

Banquet Address: Mr. Sam Worthington

Concluding Address: Mr. Maxie McFarland

2010 Towards an Army Officer Corps Strategy

Executive Secretary: Major Matthew J. Lennox

Banquet Address: The Honorable Thomas Lamont and General
Martin Dempsey

Keynote Address: Mr. Michael Gregoire

Keynote Address: Dr. Peter Cappelli

**2011 Expeditionary Economics: Toward a Doctrine of Enabling
Stabilization and Growth**

Executive Secretary: Major Seth Bodnar

Keynote Address: Brigadier General H.R. McMaster

Keynote Address: Dr. Paul Romer

**2012 America's Prosperity and Security in a Networked World:
Challenges and Prospects**

Executive Secretary: Lieutenant Colonel John O. Hagen

Banquet Address: Senator Sheldon Whitehouse

Keynote Address: The Honorable Ashton B. Carter

Keynote Address: Mr. Wes Bush

Keynote Address: General Keith Alexander

2013

No Conference

**2014 The Army We Need: The Role of Landpower in an
Uncertain Strategic Environment**

Executive Secretaries: Major Joseph Da Silva and Major Charlie Lewis

Keynote Address: Senator Jack Reed

Keynote Address: Brigadier General (Ret.) Huba Wass de Czege

Keynote Address: The Honorable Ashton B. Carter

Keynote Address: Major General (P) H.R. McMaster

**2015 Counterterrorism: Unconventional Approaches to an
Unconventional Threat**

Executive Secretaries: Mr. Don Rassler and Ms. Rachel Yon

Keynote Address: General (Ret.) John Abizaid

Keynote Address: Ambassador Michael Sheehan

Keynote Address: General Joseph Votel

2016 National Security Reform for a New Era

Executive Secretaries: Major Elizabeth McGovney and Major Nate Strickland

Keynote Address: The Honorable Michele Flournoy

Keynote Address: Dr. Henry A. Kissinger

Keynote Address: Dr. Kori Schake

Keynote Address: General (Ret.) Martin E. Dempsey

**2017 The 70th Anniversary of the National Security Act:
An Agenda for Policymakers**

Executive Secretary: Major David Miller

Keynote Address: The Honorable John O. Brennan

Keynote Address: The Honorable Christopher Gibson and The Honorable Steven Israel

Keynote Address: The Honorable Frances Townsend
Keynote Address: Ambassador Douglas Lute

**2018 American National Security in the 21st Century:
Implications for Education in Politics and Economics**

Executive Secretary: Major Elizabeth Verardo

Keynote Address: General (Ret.) Barry R. McCaffrey

Keynote Address: General (Ret.) Pete Chiarelli

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