



# NPS IN THE NEWS

## Weekly Media Report – Feb 21 – Mar 13, 2023

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### RESEARCH:

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#### [Department of Defense Awards \\$2 Million for Social Science Research Under the Defense Education and Civilian University Partnership](#)

*(Department of Defense 8 Mar 23)*

The DoD announced the selection of six DoD and university faculty teams to pursue fundamental social science research through the Defense Education and Civilian University Research (DECUR) Partnership, a program under DoD's Minerva Research Initiative (Minerva)... PI Mariel Borowitz (Georgia Institute of Technology) and Co-PI James Clay Moltz (**Naval Postgraduate School**)

### STUDENTS:

#### [Tinseltown turncoats: How Hollywood is Using American films to Push Chinese Propaganda](#)

*(Washington Times 5 Mar 23) ... Bill Gertz*

China is influencing Hollywood studios and using American films to promote communist propaganda as part of a grand strategy seeking global hegemony, according to a report by two Army officers... "The resulting financial influence has given Chinese film studios the placement and access necessary to change the content of American films, while forcing American film studios to self-censor to appease Beijing's sensibilities," states the report written by Maj. Morgan A. Martin and Maj. Clinton J. Williamson and published by the **Naval Postgraduate School**.

#### [Geneva Native and Marine Corps Capt. Schmitt Honored](#)

*(Finger Lakes Times 6 Mar 23) ... Alan Brignall*

U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Thomas Schmitt, a Geneva native and computer science student at the **Naval Postgraduate School**, was honored as a recipient of the 2023 Copernicus Award during this year's WEST 2023 Conference Feb. 14.



## FACULTY:

### [Reviewing The COVID-19 Intelligence Failure](#)

*(The Cipher Brief 1 Mar 23)* ... Dr. Kenneth Dekleva

The Reviewer — Dr. Kenneth Dekleva served as a Regional Medical Officer/Psychiatrist with the U.S. Dept. of State from 2002-2016, and is currently Professor of Psychiatry and Director, Psychiatry-Medicine Integration, UT Southwestern Medical Center, Dallas, TX; he is also a Senior Fellow at the George HW Bush Foundation for US-China Relations and is author of the novel *The Negotiator's Cross*. The views expressed are entirely his own and do not represent the views of the U.S. Government, the U.S. Dept. of State, or UT Southwestern Medical Center.

**REVIEW** — Erik Dahl is a highly regarded professor and scholar of national security studies at the **Naval Postgraduate School**, where his research focuses on intelligence, threat analysis, and national security. His latest book, *The COVID-19 Intelligence Failure* dives into the controversies surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and he eagerly addresses issues surrounding how such medical intelligence was and is, gathered. He delves into issues as to why intelligence failed and compares this to other threats including 9/11 and recent pandemics from SARS to H1N1, Ebola to Zika, and lastly, to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The book is a welcome addition to the scholarly and policy literature regarding intelligence analysis, threat warnings, and their ramifications.

### [National Security This Week with Professor Ryan Gingeras, 3-8-23 \[Audio Interview\]](#)

*(KYMN Radio 8 Mar 23)* ... Jon Olson

Host Jon Olson and Professor Ryan Gingeras from the US **Naval Postgraduate School** discuss the many facets of Turkey and Greece's fractured relationship, among other topics.

### [China Is Pushing Disengagement With the United States Hard](#)

*(Foreign Policy 8 Mar 23)* ... Covell Meyskens, associate professor at the **Naval Postgraduate School**

As talk of a new Cold War with the People's Republic of China (PRC) becomes ever more normal in the United States, a common discussion point in foreign policy circles has been that Washington was wrong to engage with Beijing over the past few decades. Critics point out that China has not, as Americans hoped, transformed from an authoritarian country into a like-minded democracy. Instead, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has become stronger and more autocratic, China's economy has gained more international leverage, and the People's Liberation Army has developed into the United States' top military competitor.

### [Iraq 20 Years After the American Invasion | Info](#)

*(Breaking News 10 Mar 23)*

*(France 24 10 Mar 23)*

Twenty years after the US-led invasion of Iraq toppled Saddam Hussein, the oil-rich country remains deeply affected by the conflict. Although it is closer to the USA, it is far from the liberal democracy that Washington envisioned...“The US simply didn't understand the nature of Iraqi society, the nature of the regime they were overthrowing,” said Samuel Helfont, assistant professor of strategy at the **Naval Postgraduate School** in California.

## ALUMNI:

### [Retired Lieutenant General L. Neil Thurgood named Special Advisor to the President for Military Affairs and Technology](#)

*(UAH 21 Feb 23)* ... Elizabeth Gibisch

UAH President Charles L. Karr today announced that retired Lieutenant General L. Neil Thurgood has been named Special Advisor to the President for Military Affairs and Technology... Thurgood holds a bachelor's degree in business and communications from the University of Utah; a master's degree in system management from the **Naval Postgraduate School**; a master in strategic studies in military and strategic leadership from the USAF Air War College; and a doctorate in strategic planning and organizational behavior from the University of Sarasota.



## [REAR ADMIRAL STUDEMAN DELIVERS REMARKS AT AFCEA WEST OUTLINING CHINA CHALLENGES](#)

*(DVIDS 23 Feb 23)*

On February 15, Commander of the Office of Naval Intelligence and Director of the National Maritime Intelligence-Integration Office, Rear Adm. Mike Studeman, spoke at AFCEA West 2023 in San Diego... I started studying the China problem in 1995 with a Masters from the **Naval Postgraduate School** in Asia Regional Affairs. I learned Mandarin Chinese from the Defense Language Institute. Almost every job that I've had, no matter what it was focused on, involved some kind of China element, so I've been looking at the problem for almost 30 years.

## [Naval Air Station Oceana to Welcome New Leadership Friday](#)

*(Yahoo! News 23 Feb 23)* ... Caitlyn Burchett

Naval Air Station Oceana will bid fair winds and following seas to its commanding officer Friday as the installation welcomes new leadership... Djunaedi graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1997 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He was designated a Naval Flight Officer in April 1999. He later graduated from the **Naval Postgraduate School** with an executive master's in business administration.

## [City of Ithaca Names New Fire Chief](#)

*(Finger Lakes Daily News 23 Feb 23)* ... Lucas Day

The City of Ithaca and the Ithaca Fire Department have promoted Acting Chief Rob Covert to Fire Chief... Chief Covert came to Ithaca from Seneca County and graduated from Cornell University in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Labor Relations. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Fire Administration and a Master of Public Administration degree. He began his career with Ithaca Fire in 1992. While serving in the department, he studied at the **Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, CA and received his Master of Arts Security Studies in 2013. He currently serves as an Intelligence Liaison Officer and a State Fire Instructor for the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

## [Legislation Reintroduced to Honor Vietnam War POW Everett Alvarez Jr.](#)

*(KSBW 23 Feb 23)* ... Kingston Rivera

On Thursday, the Everett Alvarez, Jr., Congressional Gold Medal Act was reintroduced to award Commander Everett Alvarez Jr. A Salinas native and graduate of the U.S. **Naval Postgraduate School**, Commander Alvarez Jr. is the second-longest-held prisoner of war in American history.

## [Decorated Military Leader to Serve as Executive-In-Residence](#)

*(Elon University 6 Mar 23)* ... Eric Townsend

Recently retired U.S. Air Force Major General Chris Craige will mentor students and offer career guidance this spring in the Martha and Spencer Love School of Business... Craige holds graduate degrees from Embry-Riddle University, the **Naval Postgraduate School**, and the National Defense University.

## [Laredo Sector Welcomes Acting Chief Patrol Agent](#)

*(Custom Border Patrol 8 Mar 23)*

*(Homeland Security 8 Mar 23)*

*(Texas Border Business 8 Mar 23)*

Laredo Sector Border Patrol welcomes Joel Martinez as Acting Chief Patrol Agent of the Laredo Sector... Chief Martinez is a graduate of the CBP Leadership Institute-University of Maryland-Smith School of Business and holds a bachelor's degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management from Ashford University. He completed the U.S. **Naval Postgraduate School** studies, Fleet Seminar (Strategy & War) at NAS-Ft. Worth in May 2018.

## **UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:**

**March 14:** Winter Quarter Awards Ceremony

**Mar 24:** [Winter Quarter Graduation Ceremony](#)



## RESEARCH:

### U.S. Navy, Qualcomm Strike Deal to Research 5G, AI and More

*(Connected 21 Feb 23) ... Joe Dyton*

Qualcomm Technologies and the **Naval Postgraduate School** recently partnered to explore 5G, AI and cloud computing, C4ISRNET reports. The collaboration's goal is to inform the Navy and Marine Corps' digital pursuits and simultaneously engage faculty and students with the private sector's top scientists and engineers.

"The core of warfighter development at NPS is preparing leaders to solve complex problems," said school president retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau. "This cooperative effort between NPS and Qualcomm Technologies is a great opportunity for our warrior-scholar students and defense-expert faculty to experiment with the latest 5G-enabled technologies and collaboratively explore innovative solutions to the issues faced by our Navy and Marine Corps."

A cooperative research and development agreement (CRADA) facilitated this partnership, according to C4ISRNET. A CRADA allows the U.S. government to engage non-federal organizations, like Qualcomm. The wireless company is one of the latest to team up with the Naval Postgraduate School; the Navy also signed an agreement with Microsoft in May to get an early look at its newest tools.

Focus areas of this new deal reflect the military's plans to spend billions of dollars on reliable connectivity and computer augmented decision-making, C4ISRNET reports. The spending comes as the U.S. focuses more on tech-savvy nations such as Russia and China. At least one Navy official has deemed 5G as a "great enabler" that's "more, better, faster." Fifth-generation wireless tech is expected to offer faster speeds and more bandwidth, which could improve logistics ashore and networking at sea.

Additionally, service officials are turning to AI and autonomy. As an example, Task Force 59 finished a three-week event dedicated to unmanned systems in Bahrain in December.

The Navy is "creating a culture that nurtures innovation and drives our competitive advantage," services chief information officer Aaron Weis said. "(The NPS-Qualcomm partnership is) another step in the right direction and will identify promising emerging commercial technologies so we can rapidly adopt them for full-scale implementation."

The joint research deal will also include establishing an innovation lab at the Naval Postgraduate School campus in Monterey, CA, C4ISRNET reports. Navy Secretary Carlos Del Toro in December hinted that another innovation center could be created. It would concentrate on, "the truly transformational technology that we need, not just two years, five years down the road, but 10, 15 years down the road," he said.

AI and machine learning were among the initial areas of interest, Del Toro added.

[U.S. Navy, Qualcomm strike deal to research 5G, AI and more | Connected Real Estate Magazine \(connectedremag.com\)](#)

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## Department of Defense Awards \$2 Million for Social Science Research Under the Defense Education and Civilian University Partnership

*(Department of Defense 8 Mar 23)*

The DoD announced the selection of six DoD and university faculty teams to pursue fundamental social science research through the Defense Education and Civilian University Research (DECUR) Partnership, a program under DoD's Minerva Research Initiative (Minerva).

DECUR aims to develop collaborative relationships between Defense Professional Military Education (PME) institutions and civilian research universities to improve national security-relevant basic social science research, train future military leaders in social science methods, enhance scientific cooperation between civilian and military educational institutions, and ultimately better inform DoD policymakers' understanding of the social and cultural forces shaping U.S. strategic interests globally.



“The Department depends upon groundbreaking social science research to better understand the evolving geopolitical environment in which our military operates,” said Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering (USD(R&E)) Heidi Shyu. “Generating unique insights into topics as varied as the destabilizing effects of climate change and the threats of misinformation, Minerva and the DECUR program have for years been key tools in the protection of our national security.”

“The DECUR Partnership will help encourage and facilitate connections between faculty at PME institutions and civilian universities who have complementary intellectual and research interests,” said Dr. Bindu Nair, Director of the Basic Research Office (BRO). “By fostering this partnership, DECUR awardees will generate knowledge and methodologies that will equip them to take a lead in social science research that addresses National Defense Strategy-relevant problems.”

Through its network of faculty investigators, Minerva strengthens the Department’s connections with the social science community and helps DoD better understand and prepare for future challenges, particularly those prioritized in the National Defense Strategy. The BRO within the Office of the USD(R&E) funds this initiative and administers it jointly with the Strategy and Force Development Office within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Policy.

The DoD selected six faculty for the following projects, which are funded for three to four years.

**1. Critical Minerals, Battery Technology, and Reducing Dependence on Hostile Suppliers in the Clean Energy Supply Chain**

Principal Investigator (PI) Joshua Busby (University of Texas, Austin) and Co-PI Emily Holland (United States Naval War College)

Topic Area (Office of the Under Secretary of Defense (OUSD)): Social Implications of Environmental Change

**2. Strategic Competition in Cyberspace: Measuring the Effects of Cyber Campaigning through Experimental Methodology**

PI Richard Harknett (University of Cincinnati) and Co-PI J.D. Work (National Defense University)

Topic Area (OUSD): Security Risks in Ungoverned, Semi-Governed, and Differently Governed Spaces

**3. Understanding Multi-stakeholder Regime Formation: The Case of Cislunar Space**

PI Mariel Borowitz (Georgia Institute of Technology) and Co-PI James Clay Moltz (Naval

**Postgraduate School)**

Topic Area (OUSD): Security Risks in Ungoverned, Semi-Governed, and Differently Governed Spaces

**4. Characterizing and Countering the Normalization of Extremism and Communal Violence in Cyber-Social Space**

PI Yu-Rin Lin (University of Pittsburgh) and Co-PI Deborah Wheeler (United States Naval Academy)

Topic Area (Office of Naval Research): Community Studies on Online and Offline Influence

**5. Assessing the Influence of China’s Belt and Road Initiative in Local Communities at Global Scale**

PI Kenneth Joseph (University at Buffalo) and Co-PI Camber Warren (Naval Postgraduate School)

Topic Area (OUSD): Computational Social Science Research to Difficult-to-Access Environments

**6. Artificial Intelligence Design across Cultures: Cognitive Linguistics Describes Ethical Implications**

PI Scott Jarvis (University of Utah) and Co-PI Gwyneth Sutherland (National Defense University)

Topic Area (Air Force Office of Scientific Research): Social and Cultural Implications of Artificial Intelligence

[Department of Defense Awards \\$2 Million for Social Science Research Under the Defense Education and Civilian University Partnership > U.S. Department of Defense > Release](#)

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## STUDENTS:

### **Tinseltown turncoats: How Hollywood is Using American films to Push Chinese Propaganda**

*(Washington Times 5 Mar 23) ... Bill Gertz*

China is influencing Hollywood studios and using American films to promote communist propaganda as part of a grand strategy seeking global hegemony, according to a report by two Army officers.

Hollywood has established financial ties with the Chinese film industry, one of the world's largest movie markets. Once a financial relationship is established, the studios are beholden to the wishes of the party that controls all filmmaking operations in China, the report said.

"The resulting financial influence has given Chinese film studios the placement and access necessary to change the content of American films, while forcing American film studios to self-censor to appease Beijing's sensibilities," states the report written by Maj. Morgan A. Martin and Maj. Clinton J. Williamson and published by the **Naval Postgraduate School**.

The China-Hollywood financial ties allow China's ruling Communist Party to exercise a large degree of influence over American studios in terms of content in their movies.

"Disney, for example, worked closely with the China Film Group Corp. during the production of the live-action 2020 'Mulan' remake, going as far as to get the script approved by the Central Propaganda Department," the report said.

[Tinseltown turncoats: How Hollywood is using American films to push Chinese propaganda - Washington Times](#)

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### **Geneva Native and Marine Corps Capt. Schmitt Honored**

*(Finger Lakes Times 6 Mar 23) ... Alan Brignall*

U.S. Marine Corps Capt. Thomas Schmitt, a Geneva native and computer science student at the **Naval Postgraduate School**, was honored as a recipient of the 2023 Copernicus Award during this year's WEST 2023 Conference Feb. 14.

The Copernicus Award, which is sponsored by the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association and the U.S. Naval Institute, was established to recognize individual contributions to naval warfare in command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence (C4I); information systems; cyber operations; and information warfare.

"It is an extreme honor to win this award," Schmitt said in a news release. "I am very proud, and quite frankly, blown away by the team of Marines I was fortunate enough to work with in earning this recognition."

Schmitt was among 25 Copernicus Award winners from Marine Corps, Navy and Coast Guard commands who were recognized at a ceremony following the first day of WEST 2023, a prominent West Coast naval conference and exposition co-sponsored by AFCEA International and USNI. Schmitt was presented with his award by Lt. Gen. Matthew Glavy, Deputy Commandant for Information.

According to MARADMIN 513/22, nominees for the prestigious award must have made a "specific, demonstrable contribution to the advancement of C4I, Information Systems, or Cyber Operations during fiscal year 2022. Contributions can be technical in nature, but may also originate from doctrinal, fiscal, organizational, or other dimensions of information systems. The contribution should involve exceptional initiative, leadership, and insight within the nominee's area of expertise."

Schmitt was nominated for this award for work he completed at his previous command, 2nd Marine Division at Camp Lejeune, N.C., involving commercial off-the-shelf radars and how to use those sensors more effectively in a littoral environment.

While Schmitt is still a relatively new student at NPS, arriving in July 2022, he hopes to continue similar research in pursuit of master's degree in computer science.



“I would really like to learn the ‘why,’ ” Schmitt said. “In the fleet, we are so focused on the six inches in front of our face that we don’t think about the big picture. I am hoping to gain a more nuanced understanding of the systems I was using in the fleet, and ultimately bring that knowledge to my next command to make the Marine Corps more effective.”

The Copernicus Award was established in 1997 as the result of a discussion among the late Vice Adm. Art Cebrowski, an NPS graduate who was serving as the Navy’s deputy chief of naval operations for communications networks (OPNAV N6); retired U.S. Air Force Lt. Gen. C. Norman Wood, president and chief executive officer of AFCEA International; and retired U.S. Navy Capt. James A. Barber, publisher and CEO of USNI. The name for the award came from the Copernicus Architecture used as the blueprint for the future C4I structure of the Navy.

WEST 2023 was held Feb. 14-16 in San Diego. The overarching theme for the conference was “Readiness, Capability, and Capacity: How Do the Sea Services Match Up Against the Future Threat?” [Geneva native and Marine Corps Capt. Schmitt honored | News | fltimes.com](#)

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## FACULTY:

### Reviewing The COVID-19 Intelligence Failure

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**REVIEW** — Erik Dahl is a highly regarded professor and scholar of national security studies at the **Naval Postgraduate School**, where his research focuses on intelligence, threat analysis, and national security. His latest book, *The COVID-19 Intelligence Failure* dives into the controversies surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic and he eagerly addresses issues surrounding how such medical intelligence was and is, gathered. He delves into issues as to why intelligence failed and compares this to other threats including 9/11 and recent pandemics from SARS to H1N1, Ebola to Zika, and lastly, to the current COVID-19 pandemic. The book is a welcome addition to the scholarly and policy literature regarding intelligence analysis, threat warnings, and their ramifications.

In the book’s early chapters, Dahl expertly lays out his case that pandemics ought to be considered a national security problem, and he takes the reader through the history of such analytic objectives and enterprises. This debate, both within the US intelligence community and within academia as well as think tanks, dates from the early 2000s, when an analogous counterterrorism model, both at ODNI and CIA, proved highly successful in tracking, mitigating, and defeating the greatest terror threats of our time.

At a time when CIA has shifted to a model of gathering and analyzing intelligence regarding nation state threat actors – such as Russia, China, North Korea, and Iran – Dahl raises the question of whether transnational, multidisciplinary approaches to challenges like pandemics, food/water/energy insecurity, migration, and climate change remain worthy intelligence objectives at the highest level of reporting.

Careful readers will recall then CIA Director Leon Panetta’s attempts during 2009, to set up such multi-disciplinary programs, as well as the National Intelligence Council’s (whose membership included a senior US government physician, Dr. Clyde Manning, as Senior Advisor for Global Health Security) strategic reports in 2012, on issues such as global water security. So, there are important and perhaps useful precedents for such strategic medical intelligence analyses as noted by Dahl.



Subsequent chapters examine the role of the US intelligence community, including CIA's Medical, Psychological, and Health Security Center (headed by a senior-level physician in the Directorate of Analysis) and the National Center for Medical Intelligence, which is housed in the Pentagon.

The former has a long and storied history, founded, and developed under the leadership of the late Dr. Jerrold Post, a psychiatrist whose office provided (and continues to provide) leadership psychology profiles of world leaders for senior-level policy makers up to the White House and across the national security community.

Dahl makes a compelling argument that such offices and ranks of those who lead them deserve higher visibility in today's threat environment. Dahl notes the difficulties inherent therein, as the intelligence community grapples with bureaucratic challenges, and – I would add – CIA itself struggles with finding the best model to collect, analyze, and summarize both strategic and tactical intelligence regarding future pandemic threats.

In this section, Dahl might have weighed in more heavily regarding which models might work best, e.g., a mission-centered model (following former Director John Brennan's reform to the agency's organization structure), or a more traditional regional/geographical model, where health/medical intelligence collection and analysis would involve medical/health experts, embedded in regional/geographic bureaus, or in 'fusion cells.' Recent media, policy, and academic debates suggest that the jury remains out on this issue.

Dahl gives an excellent overview of state, national, and international medical surveillance warning systems, and outlines how they failed in the case of the COVID-19 pandemic. He correctly points out how many outstanding and highly renowned medical experts were simply dead wrong early in the pandemic, losing a key opportunity, fatally so, to influence decision-makers regarding policy decisions made during the beginning of the pandemic.

One of the great ironies of the pandemic is that some of the first dire – and correct – warnings about the pandemic at the national security level were made by non-scientists, such as Deputy National Security Advisor Matt Pottinger (a former Marine, journalist, and China expert) and Assistant to the President for Trade Policy Peter Navarro (an economist). Dahl touches upon this theme, but I wish that he would have given it further explanation, assessing how influence is generated and measured within processes such as the President's Daily Brief and the important, but little understood, President's Intelligence Advisory Board. A lapse in Dahl's book is under-emphasizing the prescient early warnings (which were tragically ignored by the US government) about potential lab safety that were issued in US Dept. of State cables from Wuhan during 2018.

A key point made by Dahl throughout the book is that recurrent, chronic strategic warnings about pandemics are likely to be ignored by decision-makers. Having sat through numerous pandemic preparedness meetings and 'table-top' exercises from the mid-2000s on, as a senior US Dept. of State physician-diplomat, I can personally attest to this. As Dahl correctly argues, what is required is tactical, real-time intelligence.

In this sense, the analogy with counterterrorism warnings is quite appropriate. Dahl proposes various models, such as enhancing NCMI and CIA's medical/health analysis personnel's roles, funding, and visibility. Novel programs such as IARPA and ARPA-H are noted by Dahl, and are likely to prove valuable in a strategic, risk-mitigation sense. Readers would do well to remember that DARPA's 2008 Rapid Vaccine Development Program led by Drs. Michael Callahan, a pandemic and virology expert and Admiral Brett Giroir, later President Trump's Coronavirus Testing Czar, laid the groundwork for the successful development of a COVID vaccine under President Trump's 'Operation Warp Speed' program. Even among intelligence failures, there were some successes and the seeds of future successes.

While Dahl touches upon the controversy regarding COVID's origins in Wuhan – a huge intelligence failure of a different sort – he sees this through the prism of medical and health intelligence and analysis. In this situation, he might have given greater weight and salience to the extreme difficulties of gathering any intelligence in states such as China, North Korea, Syria, Russia, and Iran – the hardest of targets – where the state actor actively hinders and covers up any outside assessments of disasters such as pandemics, natural disasters, and/or accidents. This highlights the importance of [on the ground] human





intelligence sources, in addition to the vast technical capabilities of the US intelligence community and its allies.

Overall, Erik Dahl's book is a most worthy and enjoyable read. It adds to the important academic and policy literature regarding debates on the COVID-19 pandemic and its origins, as well as its profound intelligence failure. If the book occasionally falls short, that has to do with the lack of our understanding of behavioral psychology and the psychology of intelligence analysis, and how intelligence products influence leaders and policy makers. Perhaps this is another tale for the future, one of black swans and gray rhinos. In that spirit, I look forward to Erik Dahl's future work.

[Reviewing The COVID-19 Intelligence Failure \(thecipherbrief.com\)](#)

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## **National Security This Week with Professor Ryan Gingeras, 3-8-23 [Audio Interview]**

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## **China Is Pushing Disengagement With the United States Hard**

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As talk of a new Cold War with the People's Republic of China (PRC) becomes ever more normal in the United States, a common discussion point in foreign policy circles has been that Washington was wrong to engage with Beijing over the past few decades. Critics point out that China has not, as Americans hoped, transformed from an authoritarian country into a like-minded democracy. Instead, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has become stronger and more autocratic, China's economy has gained more international leverage, and the People's Liberation Army has developed into the United States' top military competitor.

To rectify what they see as the United States' mistaken policy of engagement, U.S. commentators and politicians now regularly call for Washington to work with its allies and partners to contain China's rise. Some analysts have taken exception to this new geopolitical consensus in Washington and urged the United States not to abandon engagement with China on areas of shared concern, at the very least to avoid a military or climate catastrophe.

Yet any attempt to find common ground with China will have to confront the fact that there are plenty of advocates of disengagement in Beijing itself. A little under a decade ago, a frequent refrain in Chinese foreign policy circles was that Beijing was not ready to be a global leader and still had much to learn from the United States, and should continue to engage with the country. And when Chinese President Xi Jinping came to power in 2012, this sort of talk did not immediately disappear. During my last trip to China in 2019, several scholars in Shanghai still downplayed the PRC's capability to lead globally and stressed the need to cooperate with and study the United States.

But generally, under Xi, China's propaganda apparatus appears determined to tell "a good China story" that lauds how CCP rule, and especially Xi's leadership, has generated a plethora of domestic accomplishments and raised China's global clout. In recent years, Chinese state media has also worked hard to put to rest the idea that the PRC should take the United States as a model to emulate. Every day, Chinese media pumps out enormous volumes of content about why the United States is failing as a global leader.

Criticisms of the United States are nothing new in Chinese discourse. They have in fact been a media staple since the PRC's establishment in 1949. However, during the height of U.S.-Chinese engagement in



the 1990s and 2000s, Beijing tempered talk about U.S. imperialism and directed public attention more toward Japanese aggression in China during World War II.

After the 2008 financial crisis, CCP elites began to think that the United States' global hegemony was in decline, and that China had a strategic opportunity to employ its expanding geopolitical power and mold the international environment to align with its national interests.

The Trump administration's confrontational handling of international institutions and Washington's partners buttressed the CCP's view that China's chance to act as a global leader had arrived—and that Beijing had to be more assertive in shaping global discourse, as Trump's team made restraining China's rise a top foreign-policy objective. The Biden administration's sustained pressure on Beijing reinforced the CCP's determination to convince audiences both in and outside China that, as a recent Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs report declared, U.S. hegemony is a danger to the world. Chinese state media argues that the solution to the U.S. threat to international stability and security is the PRC—which putatively has no intention of using its growing power to dominate or destabilize other countries, but rather strives to realize “the shared interests of mankind” and advance “peaceful development” worldwide.

China's Global Security Initiative, announced in 2022, positions the PRC as rejecting U.S. efforts to split the world into hostile regional blocs and make “the law of the jungle” the only rule of international affairs. The Chinese state press advocates for thinking of the world as a “global village” and constantly lionizes Beijing for promoting economic development—the most important vehicle for realizing global peace and progress—with the Belt and Road Initiative, launched in 2013, and Global Development Initiative, started in 2021. Citing these initiatives, Chinese media proclaims that humanity can move away from the current United States-led international order, which it claims only enhances developed countries' “capacity to exploit the rest.”

Under Beijing's leadership, the world will allegedly instead shift toward a new era based on international solidarity and cooperation, in which all people will enjoy the fruits of just and sustainable global development. International relations will transition from a unipolar system centered on the United States to a multipolar order in which developing countries are “better represented and ... heard on the international stage.” Beijing contends it is well-suited to cooperating with developing countries to create this fairer global economy because of its recent experience overcoming colonialism and underdevelopment and its long history of prioritizing world peace and harmony.

[China Is Not Interested in American Engagement \(foreignpolicy.com\)](https://foreignpolicy.com)

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## **Iraq 20 Years After the American Invasion | Info**

*(Breaking News 10 Mar 23)*

*(France 24 10 Mar 23)*

Twenty years after the US-led invasion of Iraq toppled Saddam Hussein, the oil-rich country remains deeply affected by the conflict. Although it is closer to the USA, it is far from the liberal democracy that Washington envisioned.

George W. Bush's war, launched after the 9/11 attacks, is remembered for the shock and awe of the attacks, the toppling of a giant statue of Saddam, and the years of bloody sectarian turmoil that followed.

The decision after the March 20, 2003 ground invasion to dismantle the Iraqi state, party and military apparatus deepened the chaos that fueled years of bloodshed, from which the jihadist group Islamic State later emerged.

American forces, supported mostly by British troops, never found the weapons of mass destruction that justified war, and eventually left Iraq, free of dictators but plagued by instability and also under the influence of Washington's archenemy, Iran.



“The US simply didn’t understand the nature of Iraqi society, the nature of the regime they were overthrowing,” said Samuel Helfont, assistant professor of strategy at the **Naval Postgraduate School** in California.

Bush, whose father went to war with Iraq in 1990-91. after Saddam’s attack on Kuwait, he said he wanted to impose “liberal democracy,” but that effort disappeared even after Saddam was toppled, Helfont said.

“Building democracy takes time, it doesn’t create utopia overnight,” said Hamzeh Hadad, visiting fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

Instead of revealing nuclear, biological or chemical weapons, the attack by the US-led international coalition opened a Pandora’s box, traumatizing Iraqis and alienating some traditional US allies.

Major violence erupted again in Iraq after the February 2006 deadly bombing of a Shiite Muslim shrine in Samarra, north of Baghdad, sparking a two-year civil war.

By the time the US withdrew under Barack Obama in 2011, more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians had been killed, according to the Iraq Body Count group. The United States claimed nearly 4,500 dead on its side.

### **Chaos and corruption**

Even more horrors befell Iraq when the IS group declared its “caliphate” and seized nearly a third of the country in 2014. It was a savage reign that ended in Iraq only in 2017 after a grueling military campaign.

Today, about 2,500 US forces are stationed in Iraq. Not in an occupying, but in an advisory, non-combat role in the international coalition against IS, whose remaining cells continue to launch sporadic bombings and other attacks.

Years of violence have profoundly changed society in Iraq, which has long been home to a diverse mix of ethnic and religious groups. The minority Yezidis were targeted in what the UN called a genocidal campaign, and much of the once vibrant Christian community was driven out.

Tensions also simmer between the federal government in Baghdad and the autonomous Kurdish authorities in northern Iraq, particularly over oil exports.

In October 2019, young Iraqis led a nationwide protest movement that grew out of frustration over mismanagement, endemic corruption and Iranian interference. As a result, a bloody showdown broke out that left hundreds dead.

Despite Iraq’s vast oil and gas reserves, about one-third of the population of 42 million lives in poverty, while about 35 percent of the youth are unemployed, the UN says.

Politics remain chaotic, and parliament took a year marred by post-election infighting before swearing in a new government last October.

Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani has vowed to fight corruption in Iraq, which ranks at the bottom of Transparency International’s corruption index, at 157 out of 180 countries.

“Any Iraqi can tell you that corruption started to thrive in the 1990s when Iraq was under international sanctions,” Haddad said, adding that corruption is now more in focus “because Iraq is open to the world.”

Iraq is plagued by other challenges, from devastated infrastructure and daily power outages to water shortages and the ravages of climate change.

And yet, Haddad says that today’s Iraq is a “democratized state” that needs time to mature because “democracy is uneven.”

Iran is gaining influence

A major unintended consequence of the US invasion was the massive increase in influence that its archenemy Iran now has in Iraq.

Iran and Iraq fought a protracted war in the 1980s, but the neighbors also have close cultural and religious ties as majority Shia countries.

Iraq has become a key economic lifeline for the Islamic republic as it is hit by sanctions over its disputed nuclear program, while Iran supplies Iraq with gas and electricity as well as consumer goods.



Politically, Iraq's Shiite parties, freed from the yoke of Sunni dictator Saddam, have become "the most powerful players," says Hamdi Malik, a fellow at the Washington Institute.

Iran-backed groups have managed to maintain some "cohesion" despite the clashes since the last election, he said, adding that "Iran plays a key role" in ensuring that cohesion lasts.

"In contrast, Iraq's minority Kurds and Sunnis are not strong players, mainly because they suffer from serious internal divisions," Malik said.

Pro-Iranian parties dominate Iraq's parliament, and more than 150,000 fighters from the former Iran-backed Hashid al-Shaabi paramilitary force have been integrated into the country's army.

Baghdad must now manage relations with both Washington and Tehran, said a Western diplomat in Iraq who spoke on condition of anonymity.

"It is trying to balance its relations with Iran, its Sunni neighbors and the West," and that is a very delicate exercise, he concluded.

[Iraq 20 years after the American invasion | Info-breakinglatest.news-Breaking Latest News 20 years after US invasion, Iraq far from 'liberal democracy' \(france24.com\)](#)

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## ALUMNI:

### **Retired Lieutenant General L. Neil Thurgood named Special Advisor to the President for Military Affairs and Technology**

*(UAH 21 Feb 23)* ... Elizabeth Gibisch

UAH President Charles L. Karr today announced that retired Lieutenant General L. Neil Thurgood has been named Special Advisor to the President for Military Affairs and Technology.

"We are extremely proud to have Neil Thurgood join us at UAH," said Dr. Karr. "He has been a great asset for the Nation, having led efforts across many areas, including hypersonics and directed energy. I am very excited to see the positive impact he will have on UAH as we continue to strive to support our Nation, Team Redstone and the North Alabama community."

In this position, Thurgood will help establish sustainable educational programs with entities at Redstone Arsenal, including the U.S. Army, NASA and the Federal Bureau of Investigation, and he will establish and support the development of training programs for companies that do business with government entities. In addition, Thurgood will support the development of a directed energy consortium focused on enhancing UAH's externally funded research portfolio, leading to early development of technologies that can be utilized in the field. Finally, Thurgood will develop and implement educational and training programs at UAH that can benefit military veterans, and he may teach both undergraduate and graduate courses in fields such as leadership, logistics, directed energy or hypersonics.

Thurgood last served as Director for Hypersonics, Directed Energy, Space and Rapid Acquisition, on Redstone Arsenal where he was responsible for fielding capabilities to deter rapidly modernizing adversaries, including overseeing development of an Army Long Range Hypersonic Weapon. He led the Army Rapid Capabilities and Critical Technologies Office mission to field critical technologies that addressed immediate, near-term and mid-term threats.

"This is a great opportunity to give back to the community and our Nation, as we develop the next generation work force, continue the early development of critical technologies and support our National goals," said Dr. Thurgood.

The University of Alabama in Huntsville, a part of the University of Alabama System, has a history of partnering with companies in Huntsville and various entities at Redstone Arsenal. The addition of Thurgood will create opportunities to strengthen these partnerships both on the Arsenal and within the community.

Thurgood holds a bachelor's degree in business and communications from the University of Utah; a master's degree in system management from the **Naval Postgraduate School**; a master in strategic



studies in military and strategic leadership from the USAF Air War College; and a doctorate in strategic planning and organizational behavior from the University of Sarasota.

[Retired Lieutenant General L. Neil Thurgood named Special Advisor to the President for Military Affairs and Technology \(uah.edu\)](https://www.uah.edu)

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## **REAR ADMIRAL STUDEMAN DELIVERS REMARKS AT AFCEA WEST OUTLINING CHINA CHALLENGES**

*(DVIDS 23 Feb 23)*

On February 15, Commander of the Office of Naval Intelligence and Director of the National Maritime Intelligence-Integration Office, Rear Adm. Mike Studeman, spoke at AFCEA West 2023 in San Diego.

Below are his remarks as prepared. His speech, “An Intelligence Officer’s Perspective on China,” can also be viewed online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hVflrfHH4g4>

Good afternoon, I'm honored to talk about something that's on all of our minds. I'd like to talk about three main issues: the trouble of seeing China, America's information instrument, and Taiwan, because that's where all roads ultimately lead.

I've been the ONI Commander for six months, and I've also just come fresh off of six years of operating in the joint community through three combatant commands—CYBERCOM as the Joint Intelligence Center Commander and then a double J2, first at SOUTHCOM, where there is a China problem, by the way, and also in INDOPACOM for my last three years.

I started studying the China problem in 1995 with a Masters from the **Naval Postgraduate School** in Asia Regional Affairs. I learned Mandarin Chinese from the Defense Language Institute. Almost every job that I've had, no matter what it was focused on, involved some kind of China element, so I've been looking at the problem for almost 30 years.

The 911 Commission over twenty years ago issued recommendations for the Intelligence Community. Two of the main ones were that we were failing to use our imagination and that we weren't connecting the dots. If I do anything today it's to enlarge the imagination and maybe connect a few dots, because the China challenge is a significant one and it's the number one challenge to the nation for a reason. I'm going to speak truth, I'm going to be very forthright. In the intelligence business, we have a responsibility to provide a sense of what the dangers are to U.S national security, to the American people, and we need to provide clarity when we talk about those dangers. We also need to enable optimal action, to do something about the information we have. We can't just be omniscient spectators.

**The China Problem – More Gigantic than Understood or Appreciated**

I'm going to be very honest with you: it's very unsettling to see how much the U.S. is not connecting the dots on our number one challenge, even though the National Security and Defense Strategies call China out. It's disturbing how ill-informed and naive the average American is on China. I chalk this up to a China blindness. We face a knowledge crisis and a China blindness problem and the reasons are pretty clear.

First of all, China's pretty good about flying under the radar. It uses time in a very adept way. It is very good at creeping its way to its objectives. This incrementalism doesn't alert you like something fast, red, and blinking going across your sight line. It's the slow moving other thing that doesn't get your attention. The whole intent if you're on the Chinese side is to avoid alerting the existing hegemon to the rising hegemon's intentions, plans, and capabilities. What you don't want to do as the rising power is to alert the big guy on the block. What you want to do is make yourself look like you're not so much of a threat and you want today's hegemon to be very, very complacent about what's happening. This approach is akin to the boiling the frog syndrome and that's what we're seeing in play today.

It's also true that Chinese are very good at engineering a veneer of responsibility regarding all of their actions. The machinery they employ in the information space is incredible and it's very good at





downplaying the China threat by showing a rosy form of its history and painting China's rise as peaceful. That information spin is fed through the front ends of the Confucius Institutes, as one example of their many dissemination channels. Beijing uses a very selective form of Chinese history designed to show peacefulness within the Chinese DNA, even though they have one of the bloodiest histories and have engaged in Machiavellian realpolitik for almost all of their history.

The other issue in play is that the National Security Community is highly distracted. We are divided regarding where as a nation we should spend our energy, which is finite. When you have to deal with ground campaigns, when you're dealing with an Iraq, an Afghanistan, a Syria, and now Ukraine, that's going to take up a significant portion of your executive bandwidth. That's another reason why we aren't able to focus persistently and well on China matters.

Then there's the basic issue that the China problem is so massive. Most people don't have a framework to understand it in all its proportions. It's like the blind man and the elephant metaphor where you're feeling the tail and you say that's a rope, you feel the leg and it's a tree, the side it's a wall, the tusk is a spear, the trunk is a snake. Everybody has their own sense of what they're seeing. We have a myopia problem and the lenses are different depending on who you talk to.

Some examples: If you go to the business community they'll be very focused on the access to the China market--the profit that can be made in a large foreign population. They're worried about manufacturing centers, they're worried about trade, and they have a very big lobby. Other Americans and other international China watchers focus on human rights. They talk about the Xinjiang problem of repression and the idea of genocide through sterilization and a million Uyghurs, detention camps, and re-education systems.

If you're in the political science community, you're look at the rise of authoritarian governments and "wither democracies?" Those experts worry about authoritarianism becoming a more attractive model for governance. They study the ability of liberal democracies to perform, the nature of comprehensive power in the modern age, and how that power is used by strong nations.

If you're in the data or the privacy business, you pay attention to Huawei and ZTE, maybe even TikTok. You see a big data problem, and worry about access and manipulation of that data.

Then there's the intellectual property theft issue. IP theft valued at 200 to 300 billion dollars a year continues to be stolen from America by the Chinese. Beijing has been doing this for years, which translates to trillions of dollars of our intellectual property that is being used to fuel the fastest modernization, virtually, that we've seen in history with regard to the rise of the PLA and other ways that the Chinese are attaining a technological edge. This is done on your backs, our backs.

Others that may be concerned about China focus on rare earth minerals, monopolies where the Chinese will have supply chain grip on minerals we need for our economy and military.

If you go to the Department of Homeland Security, you're going to hear about their concern about cyber penetration into the critical infrastructure of the United States, where the China could hold us at risk, whether it's energy, water, transportation, whatever.

If you go into the FBI, they'll talk about the Chinese successes in penetrating academia and our laboratories. Swimming upstream so they can get into our R&D base--another way that they steal technological insights.

If you go forward in the Indo-Pacific, issues of concern will orient on South China Sea coercion - lasing, water hosing, ramming, radio intimidation, heavy patrolling, or maritime militia "cabbage patching" in clusters around assets of other claimants. China does those things, ideally quietly, beyond the sight line of the international community, but it's a persistent problem for Southeast Asian rim nations.

Another lens that some Americans may see China through is the "lawfare" (legal warfare) one. Concerns about how the Chinese are slowly, steadily, drip by drip, trying to change the basic elements or the understanding of what international law calls for, attempting to transform it with very active lawfare measures.

Some Americans, very few I suspect, may know about the United Front Workers Party's political work, how the Chinese export propaganda and use information controls to advance their objectives in foreign countries. Or use weaponized corruption to capture political and business elites, left and right, so they can expand their influence globally.



Then there are Admiral Paparo's concerns in the Pacific Fleet, where he pointed out China's unsafe, risky behaviors in the air and at sea. We stand at a serious crisis point with the amount of risk the Chinese are taking to push us away even from the international commons as we try to monitor China's rapid military modernization and their associated coercive activities in the region. We are potentially very close to another Lieutenant Commander Wang Wei in April 2001, getting too close to an EP3, harassing to the point where ultimately a mishap occurred.

In all of the above, I didn't say one thing about Taiwan yet, did I? So, the China problem is not all about Taiwan. It is much bigger than that and frankly it's very difficult to have a conversation, what I just laid out, about the genuine scope of the China problem. We must all possess a greater appreciation for how all these things are connected--it's almost mind-blowing how big the China problem is.

### China Views and Objectives

Now let's talk about China's views and overarching goals. China sees the United States as the number one enemy and calls us out as such, particular in their domestic environment. They don't beat around the bush and they have been saying this for quite some time. Worth rewinding 34 years when China's leaders took a look at Tiananmen in 1989 and said "that can never happen again." Party leaders viewed the attractive power of democracy and freedom as the root cause of the protests and considered it an existential threat to the CCP. As a result, China's leaders revamped China's education system. Young Chinese today continue to be fed a form of revisionist history with regard to America, with the main theme that America has been an enemy of the China state for hundreds of years and a destructive force in international affairs. You won't get the Flying Tigers helping to save them in World War II against Japan. You won't get the amount of help we gave them, including trade, financial support, and weapons, after Deng Xiaoping opened up China. We continue to be China's number one enemy and we are regularly demonized.

China continues to be engaged in a whole of society effort to execute their grand strategy which is to achieve the dream. The China dream is "rejuvenation" by 2049. Xi Jinping intends to do as much to achieve that dream during his tenure, because he believes in its righteousness and his potential to become the greatest modern leader of China, even greater than Mao.

China's strategy is to become the strongest poll in a multi-polar world. They have a vision of reclaiming their place atop the hierarchy of states, where big states do what they can and small states suffer what they must. It's Melian Dialogue all over again. They instinctively want to return to the days of the Middle Kingdom, where they were center stage. The Chinese feel like it's a historical anomaly in the last 200 years that China hasn't been the indispensable power.

China thinks that if they lead the world community that there'll be a more stable system. They intend to elevate the stature of authoritarian governments, and legitimize not just their governance model, but ensure the long-term safety and security of the CCP.

China's grand strategy involves building hard power, soft power, and sharp power to reduce the relative power of the world's hegemon - that's us - who they think is failing. They think America is dangerous, they think we do things that produce chaos. They think our hand was behind every Color Revolution, upheavals in the name of freedom that resulted in disasters for a number of countries. To the Chinese, America's policies and actions haven't translated into peace and security, but instability and human suffering.

China also thinks we've been the standard bearer for liberal democracies, but can't deliver solutions for the modern age. They don't think that democracies are efficient, they think they're ineffective, and they think we can't get rid of poor leaders easily enough. They believe liberal democratic societies indulge in excessive individualism and allow too much special interest influence that interferes with advancing the common good. (I think we can admit, there's a kernel of truth in these criticisms.)

The recent lower GDP of the PRC and the graying of the population, the declining demographics, are not going to change the CCP's views or goals. And their latest charm offensive is nothing more than a tactic as they take care of setbacks they've faced.

To distill the root of concern about China: history tells us that a messianic leader with centralized control in charge of a totalitarian society harboring grievances, with a lot of hard power at their disposal,



with an ambition to change the international system to their preferences, represents one of the most dangerous trends in geopolitics.

So dealing with these realities require our very best effort. We need to have more conversations with the country about these challenges at all levels, including at the very highest levels. We need to truly understand the problem, diagnose it right, and then figure out the best way to mobilize our society to deal with this. Arguably this is a tougher problem than what we faced against the Soviet Union in the Cold War, because the Chinese are far more economically powerful and interdependently tied into the global economy.

We need to have conversations with the country that are calm, balanced, and objective. We must figure out a middle way between something that's overheated when we talk about China and something that's undertreated. I believe we're in an undertreatment of the China problem today and we've experienced overheated.

The China challenge could, in fact, be the most non-partisan issue in this country, one that could unite the country in significant ways. This is the time to transcend our domestic struggles and shine a light on a far more dangerous struggle--the international one that will have far more implications for your average American.

China is well on the way to building impressive comprehensive national power and material strength.

China is already deeply influential in the Global South - that means many countries that are voting in the U.N are already highly leveraged by the Chinese and those votes will count. China aims to transform major elements of the international order, and many small to mid-size countries will support China's positions because they are essentially obligated to the Chinese in terms of their economies. Look at this like a weiqi board, the Chinese game, where they've turned a lot of stones. If we're white, and our allies and partners are white, China has turned a lot of those stones black and they continue to flip them. We should be concerned about waking up one day and finding we've been outmaneuvered.

So can we, please, lower the amount of internal bickering within the United States and focus on the international challenge that actually affects every American.

#### Turning On and Tuning Up America's Information Instrument

The information domain is the main playing field for engaging in strategic competition, but, frankly, America's information instrument is the weakest of all our national instruments, and we need to shore that up ASAP.

Ironically, China has empowered more people in its police state down its chain to engage in lies, half-truths, and propaganda than the U.S. in an open democracy allows its people down chain to deploy the truth. There's something wrong with that. If you're on an information team or in an organization that owns one of those - what you've faced to date is tightly-controlled authorities, reduced freedom of action, bureaucratic roadblocks, restrictions, and hesitancy. As a result, U.S messaging is slow, late, thin, and maybe even outright absent. There have been missed opportunities, left and right, to expose "red" malign behavior and amplify good "blue" actions. We can't just count on the missteps of the Chinese in the information domain.

It's a truism in the information domain that whomever frames the narrative, dominates the narrative. The Chinese are very effective at being the first mover on the issues, so they get their story out first and they're ready to explain away almost anything. In a vacuum, their messages do resonate, they have definitive traction. If there's anything we've learned recently as a country, it is that more people are more misled than most people think.

So, we need to better organize for success in the information domain and if we don't we could very well lose the peace. We spend a lot of time worrying about winning the war, prevailing in crisis, but we can also lose the peace in the meantime if we only think about dealing with China through the lens of a defense plan.

Another key point. The Chinese are focused on what they call gaining greater and greater "discourse power." China attributes much of America's rise since 1945 to using language and ideas about what is acceptable, what is fundamentally good, in the international community. China realized that they needed to catch up and have more discourse power and they're well on their way to developing it. The Chinese believe whoever rules the word, rules the world.



The Chinese are, in fact, already winning over many in the international community. Why? Because they offer promises of connectivity and prosperity and progress. All those things that relate to the Belt and Road Initiative, the Global Security Initiative, all the “Silk Roads” (Polar, Digital, Space, Health, etc). These concepts are very attractive to many developing countries.

China is also already shaping U.N. documents, redefining what constitutes a human right, describing development as a human right, to shift the emphasis away from freedom and safety. They have also successfully inserted phrases like “the community of common destiny for mankind” into U.N. documents. These are examples of using discourse power to build legitimacy and redefine widely-accepted thematic that govern world affairs.

In competition, the information domain is the central domain. Whoever is immersed and proficient in that space is able to do battle with their ideas. That's where you win friends, it's where you influence choices, it's where you build trust, it's where you gain access...or you just don't. America has got to see the information sphere as “key terrain” worth defending, and not just for the Russia problem, but for the China problem as well.

Yesterday, Lieutenant General Smith said “if you're not winning in the information space, you're not winning at all.” So true. That goes for peacetime, crisis, or any combat environment as well. We have work to do to puncture the false narratives of our adversaries, untwist distortions, highlight the “say-do” gaps of our adversaries, and wage the truth promptly and confidently.

The difference between U.S information operations and the PRC information operations, or Russian IO for that matter, is that when we do it, we are educating. When our adversaries do it, they are manipulating. So we need to play to our primary advantage—the truth is on our side. I agree that there are some good initiatives underway. If you go to the State Department, the Global Engagement Center, if you're going in the Intelligence Community with Title 50 authorities, the Joint Staff Combatant Commands, the Fleet Information Warfare Center Pacific, which Admiral Vernazza will explain to you, those all hold promise. There are ready capabilities, some of which are already in play. But we need more support in the interagency and from the National Security Council to operate at the speed and the scale that we need as part of this intense competition. We need a process that's more decentralized and something that's more “command by negation”-like to be able to unleash the full potential of our American information teams. I say this all to you as a proud, but very frustrated Navy and Joint Information Warfighter.

### Taiwan Dynamics

Three points on Taiwan. First point, the PRC’s own actions have created the problem of Taiwan today and the reason why we're near crisis today. The PRC’s military modernization has been one of the fastest in human history. They invested in every warfare area to produce a massive war machine, which they then deployed in key areas closer to our allies and our partners and our friends. They increased operations around Taiwan, projecting power in an anaconda-like way, with more patrols, closer, more often.

Xi Jinping gave a “get ready by 2027” mandate as an edict to his forces, upping it from 2035. Xi Jinping has been very clear about his desire to resolve the Taiwan problem. If the Taiwan problem is not solved, then there is no successful rejuvenation, in the Chinese view. Also, for years now, large annual exercises take place for over four months not too far away from Taiwan. So Taiwan and the region have seen these threats up close, which has been destabilizing unto itself.

Couple the closer proximity of China’s war machine with the oppression in China and the regional fear factor goes up exponentially. The world saw what happened in Hong Kong, where China squelched freedom, delivered a death blow to democracy. Many who fled Hong Kong found refuge in Taiwan, where they told their stories about what it was like as the Chinese police state moved in. If you are citizen of Taiwan, Hong Kong’s experience showed that there is no viable “one country, two systems” formula. Taipei continues to reject China’s false political promises, so this is the backdrop of instability that we see today.

China’s assertiveness is very dangerous and is on display in many other areas beyond Taiwan, too, which contributes to a high degree of distrust regarding Beijing’s intentions. Look at the Indian border,





with the near-war conditions there as a result of assertiveness. China has taken over villages in Bhutan. China is deeply inside Burma, they're down to the Mekong, they're in the South China Sea, they're all over the Senkakus. The Chinese outward expansionism of influence and presence is scaring and destabilizing an entire region. So the Taiwans are rightly concerned. The U.S. is also rightly concerned and our aim is to fulfill our obligations under the Taiwan Relations Act, which is to give Taiwan enough defense articles to be able to achieve their own defense.

The irony in all this right now is that all sides feel like their deterrence is diminishing.

The U.S. and allies feel like there's a greater chance that China could convert to using military action of any scale, because they are just all around Taiwan. They're so close, they could transition any time. So that puts everybody up in a highly sensitized state to think through worst-case situations.

On the other side, if you're Chinese, you believe that you weren't at fault for creating the unstable situation. And it looks like Taiwan is moving towards de facto independence. The Chinese perceive that everything that the U.S. does in terms of its operational posture, FMS, or with Congressional Delegation visits, constitutes encouraging Taiwan to actually move towards solidifying de facto independence.

Of course, Taiwan's separation from the motherland is the most significant "core" sovereignty issue for Beijing. If they lose Taiwan, in their eyes, that would set off a chain reaction of fragmentation in other parts of China, like in Tibet or in Xinjiang, which in turn would lead to chaos, disorder, and devastation. That's the emotional side for the Chinese. They feel like their deterrence to keep Taiwan as a part of China may be slipping and they're trying to arrest a negative trend.

And when China takes a look at their levers for arresting this perceived negative trend, their military may be the only useful one left because they've tried diplomatic, informational, and economic measures, but none of those has altered the strategic dynamics. That's the reason why they're using the military more. It's a form of pressure, it's a form of penalization of Taiwan, as the PLA attempts to exhaust the Taiwan Air Force and Navy. But it's also a strategic signal to the United States: the message is that "if you maintain course and if you change the political status quo of Taiwan, I'm going to have to use combat arms to resolve this problem."

Point two: this is not the time for "strategic clarity." It makes no sense, because it doesn't buy any deterrence. The Chinese already think that the U.S. is going to intervene, along with maybe Japan, Australia, and others, if the PLA attempts a military operation against Taiwan. That's one of the reasons they're building a military so powerful, so they can handle outside intervention. They assume it's going to occur.

You're not going to buy deterrence by having "strategic clarity." What you may do, in fact, is actually tie the President's hands, current and future. America shouldn't give out blank checks, especially when we don't know the circumstances we'll face in the future where we may or may not want to commit U.S. forces based on a variety of situational factors.

"Strategic ambiguity" has served us well for 45 years and we need to continue to understand that it has value going into the future. We need to continue to kick the can down the road. Changing the political status quo will generate dire consequences for all parties involved.

Last point: we need to handle these issues with a very deft hand. That means not just focusing on integrated deterrence. Managing this flashpoint also requires employing integrated assurance. Not just assurance for our allies and partners, who in fact are nervous and do require support, but assurance to China as well. We have to assure Beijing that we are not trying to permanently separate Taiwan from them. If they don't feel that assurance, then they won't feel that time is on their side and it may force them into a war of necessity. That would be cataclysmic for all. So, we need smart statecraft and smart employment of all of our instruments of national power, then maybe we can avoid a worst case situation.

[DVIDS - News - REAR ADMIRAL STUDEMAN DELIVERS REMARKS AT AFCEA WEST OUTLINING CHINA CHALLENGES \(dvidshub.net\)](#)

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## Naval Air Station Oceana to Welcome New Leadership Friday

*(Yahoo! News 23 Feb 23) ... Caitlyn Burchett*

Naval Air Station Oceana will bid fair winds and following seas to its commanding officer Friday as the installation welcomes new leadership.

Capt. Steve Djunaedi will become the air station's 48th commanding officer during a change of command ceremony at the Center for Naval Aviation and Technical Training Unit. He will relieve Capt. Bob Holmes, the base's commanding officer since Aug. 5, 2021.

Djunaedi assumes the position of commanding officer of the East Coast's hub of naval aviation after a stint as the installation's executive officer.

Djunaedi graduated from the United States Naval Academy in 1997 with a bachelor's degree in political science. He was designated a Naval Flight Officer in April 1999. He later graduated from the **Naval Postgraduate School** with an executive master's in business administration.

Djunaedi's operational assignments were with Fighter Squadron 211 and Strike Fighter Squadron 213 Blacklions. He also served as the executive officer and commanding officer of VFA-154 Black Knights, and as the "air boss" on the USS Harry S. Truman, with deployments to support Operation Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom, and Inherent Resolve.

Ashore, Djunaedi served as an instructor at Strike Fighter Weapons School, Atlantic, and as a joint staff liaison officer at NATO's Headquarters Supreme Allied Command Transformation.

Holmes will retire after a 27-year Naval career. He previously served as the executive officer and commanding officer of Electronic Attack Squadron 132; as a policy analyst for the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy; and as executive assistant to the commander of U.S. Naval Forces Central Command.

[Naval Air Station Oceana to welcome new leadership Friday \(yahoo.com\)](#)

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## City of Ithaca Names New Fire Chief

*(Finger Lakes Daily News 23 Feb 23) ... Lucas Day*

The City of Ithaca and the Ithaca Fire Department have promoted Acting Chief Rob Covert to Fire Chief.

Ithaca Mayor Laura Lewis had this to say regarding her recommendation of Chief Covert to the Common Council at their meeting last night: "I am so pleased that the Common Council voted unanimously to promote Acting Chief Rob Covert to the permanent position of Fire Chief for the Ithaca Fire Department. Chief Covert's long-standing commitment to serving our community as a 30-year Fire Fighter, Deputy Chief, and, most recently, as Acting Chief speaks volumes about his professional experience and dedication. His strong, steady leadership will serve the department well and I look forward to working with him in this role. I was honored to submit his name to council and thrilled by their enthusiastic support of his appointment."

Chief Covert came to Ithaca from Seneca County and graduated from Cornell University in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science in Industrial Labor Relations. He also holds a Bachelor of Science in Fire Administration and a Master of Public Administration degree. He began his career with Ithaca Fire in 1992. While serving in the department, he studied at the **Naval Postgraduate School** in Monterey, CA and received his Master of Arts Security Studies in 2013. He currently serves as an Intelligence Liaison Officer and a State Fire Instructor for the New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services.

Serving both the City and Town of Ithaca, the Ithaca Fire Department employs 64 career personnel who work from four stations to provide fire, rescue, emergency medical, and many other services to an area of 33 square miles and a population that can top 90,000. Chief Covert emphasizes the personal and professional development of the members of the Department as the best way to accomplish its stated mission.



In response to his promotion, Chief Covert said, “I thank the Mayor and Common Council for their support. It is a privilege to have this opportunity to lead an organization with so many talented and dedicated men and women.”

[City of Ithaca Names New Fire Chief | Finger Lakes Daily News](#)

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## **Legislation Reintroduced to Honor Vietnam War POW Everett Alvarez Jr.**

*(KSBW 2 Mar 23) ... Kingston Rivera*

*(KSBW 2 Mar 23) ... Kingston Rivera*

On Thursday, the Everett Alvarez, Jr., Congressional Gold Medal Act was reintroduced to award Commander Everett Alvarez Jr. A Salinas native and graduate of the U.S. **Naval Postgraduate School**, Commander Alvarez Jr. is the second-longest-held prisoner of war in American history.

Alvarez Jr. became the first aviator captured in Vietnam after his plane was shot down in August 1964. He spent eight years and six months in captivity.

The Congressional Gold Medal is bestowed by Congress to honor those who have had a significant impact on American history and culture. The award is Congress' highest honor.

The legislation was previously introduced last Congress. It must first be passed by the House and the Senate before the president can sign it into law.

[Legislation reintroduced to honor Vietnam War POW Everett Alvarez Jr. \(ksbw.com\)](#)

[Padilla, Lummis Introduce Bipartisan Bill to Honor Vietnam War Prisoner of War Everett Alvarez, Jr. with the Congressional Gold Medal<sup>🗨️</sup> - Senator Alex Padilla \(senate.gov\)](#)

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## **Decorated Military Leader to Serve as Executive-In-Residence**

*(Elon University 6 Mar 23) ... Eric Townsend*

Recently retired U.S. Air Force Major General Chris Craige will mentor students and offer career guidance this spring in the Martha and Spencer Love School of Business.

The newest member of the Martha and Spencer Love School of Business faculty brings with him to campus this spring a record of exemplary service in some of the most prominent combat operations of the past quarter century.

Recently retired U.S. Air Force Major General Chris Craige will mentor and guide business students throughout the semester as the school's newest executive-in-residence.

Craige's expertise with human resources and developing human capital emerged as chief of staff to a major command in Europe and Africa, leading airpower efforts supporting both continents. He also served at the Pentagon where he oversaw the executive development, talent management and career mapping for all Air Force general officers.

Craige is available to meet on campus with business students most Tuesday mornings or by appointment during the 2023 Spring Semester. To schedule a meeting, email [ccraige@elon.edu](mailto:ccraige@elon.edu).

Craige most recently served as commander of the U.S. Air Force's personnel center where he was responsible for running programs covering the entire life cycle of military and civilian actions with worldwide operations impacting nearly 2 million total force airmen, retirees, and family members.

A distinguished graduate of the U.S. Air Force Academy, he flew combat operations as a command pilot in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and his career included command of Incirlik Air Base in Turkey during NATO's defensive response and posturing for the Syrian civil war.

He also served as the commanding general of an air expeditionary wing in Kabul, Afghanistan, where his team fielded critical capabilities for the Afghan Air Force, all while protecting U.S. and coalition forces.



Craige has worked with multiple services and federal agencies in several joint-service commands. As lead strategist for a combatant command, he focused national security priorities for Europe and Africa, alongside key partners within the U.S. Department of State and USAID teams.

His distinguished career included a station assignment as the U.S. Air Force's military aide to the vice president of the United States where he coordinated daily between the vice president, his National Security Affairs team, the White House Situation Room, and the president's Emergency Operations Center.

Craige holds graduate degrees from Embry-Riddle University, the **Naval Postgraduate School**, and the National Defense University.

Craige is the second executive-in-residence to join the Love School of Business for the 2023 Spring Semester and brings the total number of executives on the faculty to four alongside David Goslin, Mike DeStefano, and Kevin Trapani.

[Elon University / Today at Elon / Decorated military leader to serve as executive-in-residence](#)

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## **Laredo Sector Welcomes Acting Chief Patrol Agent**

*(Custom Border Patrol 8 Mar 23)*

*(Homeland Security 8 Mar 23)*

*(Texas Border Business 8 Mar 23)*

Laredo Sector Border Patrol welcomes Joel Martinez as Acting Chief Patrol Agent of the Laredo Sector.

On March 1, Deputy Chief Patrol Agent Joel Martinez of the Rio Grande Valley Sector assumed command as Acting Chief Patrol Agent of the Laredo Sector. Chief Martinez, a 31-year veteran of the U.S. Border Patrol, began his U.S. Border Patrol career in 1992, at the Laredo South Border Patrol Station.

A San Benito native, Chief Martinez has held several key leadership positions to include Assistant Chief-Southwest Border Operations Division (now Ops East/Central) at U.S. Border Patrol Headquarters in Washington, D.C., Deputy Patrol Agent in Charge, and Acting Patrol Agent in Charge of the Brownsville Station. He was later promoted to Patrol Agent in Charge of the station where he began his career at the Laredo South Station, before his ascent to the Director-Alliance to Combat Transnational Threats (ACTT).

In May of 2019, he became the Deputy Chief Patrol Agent of the Laredo Sector, before later assuming the duties as Deputy Chief Patrol Agent of the Rio Grande Valley Sector.

Chief Martinez is a graduate of the CBP Leadership Institute-University of Maryland-Smith School of Business and holds a bachelor's degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Management from Ashford University. He completed the U.S. **Naval Postgraduate School** studies, Fleet Seminar (Strategy & War) at NAS-Ft. Worth in May 2018.

[Laredo Sector welcomes Acting Chief Patrol Agent | U.S. Customs and Border Protection \(cbp.gov\)](#)

[Laredo Sector Welcomes Acting Chief Patrol Agent Joel Martinez - HS Today](#)

[Laredo Sector Welcomes Acting Chief Patrol Agent - Texas Border Business](#)

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