



Celebrating Roger Petersen

After a year at the helm of SSP as acting director, **Professor Roger Petersen** is celebrating his retirement from MIT this summer.

Petersen arrived to MIT in the wake of the September 11 terrorist attacks, and made his academic home SSP for the next 23 years. An expert on emotions and conflict, he says his finest contribution to the field of International Studies came in the form of mentoring PhD students moving through the SSP system.

His contributions to the field also include a number of books: *Resistance and Rebellion: Lessons from Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), *Understanding Ethnic Violence: Fear, Hatred, Resentment in Twentieth Century Eastern Europe* (Cambridge University Press, 2002), *Western Intervention in the Balkans: The Strategic Use of Emotion in Conflict* (Cambridge University Press, 2011), and most recently, *Death Dominance, and State-Building* (Oxford University Press, 2024).

[Watch the retirement celebration & student video tribute](#)



CSAF is Doolittle Dinner guest of honor

On May 7th, MIT SSP welcomed **General David W. Allvin**, the Chief of Staff of the United States Air Force, as this year's recipient of the General James Doolittle Award. Made possible by a generous pledge from Pierre and Amy Chao, the annual award commemorates the life of General James Doolittle - a United States Air Force General, aviation pioneer, and MIT alumnus. During his acceptance remarks and the lively Q&A that followed, General Allvin emphasized that we live in a "time of consequence" and that the key challenge for the United States is to embrace agile thinking to adapt to a rapidly changing international security environment.

[Learn more](#)



Wargaming Lab hosts first workshop at MIT

The SSP Wargaming Lab hosted a day and a half long workshop at MIT's iHQ in April. It featured presentations from scholars and practitioners working on a variety of wargaming related topics, followed by discussant comments, and a keynote address from Air Force Lt Gen (Ret) Jack Weinstein.



The SSP Wargaming Lab seeks to run games that answer interesting policy relevant questions, develop new approaches to wargaming, and build networks between scholars and policymakers involved in wargaming.

[Learn more](#)



MIT SSP takes field trip to Europe

SSP's spring field trip brought students and faculty to Europe in March, where they toured a number of military installations and WWII battle sites in Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany. Some highlights of the trip include a Battle of the Bulge staff ride, SHAPE, HQ NATO Allied Air Command, EUCOM J4, Space Forces-EUAF, Marine Security Group Region-5 at Frankfurt US Consulate, Wiesbaden Army Airfield, and more.





Assistant Director earns Infinite Mile award

Congratulations to **Laura Kerwin** (second from left) for receiving an Infinite Mile Award from the MIT School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. This award recognizes her outstanding contributions to SSP as the program's assistant director. M. Taylor Fravel, director of SSP, presented her with the award and described her leadership skills, along with specific ways that she has transformed the program.

Photo credit Jon Sachs



Faculty members are 'committed to caring'

SSP faculty **Mariya Grinberg** and **Erik Lin-Greenberg** were selected as recipients of the Committed to Caring awards for 2023-2025.

The Committed to Caring (C2C) program at MIT is a student-driven initiative that celebrates faculty members who have served as exceptional mentors to graduate students. Twenty-three MIT professors have been selected as recipients of the C2C award for 2023-25, marking the most extensive cohort of honorees to date. These individuals join the ranks of 75 previous C2C honorees.

Publications

“External threats and civilian control: the case of the Ukrainian military’s professional adaptation to Russian aggression”

Polina Beliakova (Brophy Fellow)

Elgar, April 2024

“Indian Espionage: Success, Failure, and Tradition”

Joel Brenner (Senior Fellow)

International Journal of Intelligence and Counterintelligence, April 2024

“Cheap Tweets?: Crisis Signaling in the Age of Twitter”

Benjamin Harris (PhD Candidate) & **Erik Lin-Greenberg** (Faculty)

International Studies Quarterly, April 2024

“Fear or Anger? Leaders’ Childhood War Trauma and Interstate Conflict Initiation”

James D. Kim (Stanton Fellow)

International Studies Quarterly, April 2024

Death, Dominance and State-Building: The US in Iraq and the Future of American Military Intervention

Roger D. Petersen (Faculty)

Oxford University Press, March 2024

Commentary

Nasir Almasri (PhD Candidate) published “In the Israel-Iran standoff, it’s not about direct deterrence” in the *Middle East Institute* on April 22, 2024 with Eran Etzion, Evren Balta, Brian Katulis, Mohammed Mahmoud, and Marvin G. Weinbaum.

Renanah Miles Joyce (Affiliate) published “Extremism and Terrorism: Rebel Goals and Tactics in Civil Wars” in *Perspectives on Politics* on May 1, 2024 with Virginia Page Fortna.

James D. Kim (Stanton Fellow) published “Dousing South Korea’s Nuclear Desires” in *East Asia Forum* on April 16, 2024.

Erik Lin-Greenberg (Faculty) published “[The Tradeoffs of Transparency: How Commercial Intelligence Enables – and Inhibits – National Security Outcomes](#)” in *The Republic* on April 19, 2024 with Theo Milonopoulos.

Multimedia & Talks

Polina Beliakova (Brophy Fellow) discussed “Why Defense Reform In Ukraine Is Crucial” in the series “[Social Science Of War](#)” published by West Point, Modern War Institute.

M. Taylor Fravel (Faculty) and **Eric Heginbotham** (Principal Research Scientist) were quoted in a [Financial Times visual storytelling article](#) identifying five key military contests that would help define the outcome of a war in Taiwan.

James Dongjin Kim (Stanton Fellow) discussed “[Dousing South Korea’s Nuclear Desires](#)” in the series East Asia Forum.

Roger Petersen (Faculty) gave talks on his new book, *Death Dominance, and State-Building* at the following venues in March and April:

- Center For New American Security, [virtual](#).
- Naval War College, Newport, Rhode Island.
- Columbia University, Saltzman Institute.
- US Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland.
- University of Maryland, College Park, Brody Forum.
- US State Department, Washington DC.
- RAND, Washington DC.
- MIT Middle East North Africa Program (MENA), Cambridge, MA.

Barry Posen (Faculty) [appeared on a podcast](#) in early May to discuss the fog of war and nationalism.

Jim Walsh (Senior Research Associate) appeared on *NPR’s Here and Now* a few times in April to discuss “[Iran blames Israel for attack on Iranian consulate in Syria](#)” and “[Middle East war intensifies after Iran’s unprecedented attack on Israel](#).”

Chikako Ueki (Visiting Scholar) gave a talk about her book project titled “Searching for Enemies: Divergence and Convergence of a ‘China Threat’ in the United States and its Asian Allies” at MIT SSP on May 22, 2024.

News

Polina Beliakova (Brophy Fellow) will be joining American University's School of International Service as a tenure-track Assistant Professor of Foreign Policy and Global

Security in the fall of 2025.

Jonathan Caverley (Affiliate) has been appointed the interim Editor-in-Chief for the Naval War College Press and is eagerly soliciting submissions by SSP community members to its quarterly scholarly journal.

Suzanne Freeman (PhD Candidate) will be a pre-doctoral research fellow at George Washington University's Institute for Security and Conflict Studies for the 2024-2025 academic year. She was also awarded the Smith Richardson World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship this spring.

Mariya Grinberg (Faculty) **and Erik Lin-Greenberg** (Faculty) were selected as recipients of the Committed to Caring awards for 2023-2025. The program celebrates faculty members who have served as exceptional mentors to graduate students.

Phil Haun (Affiliate) was named inaugural Director of the U.S. Naval War College's new Deterrence Studies Institute. He also gave a talk titled "Tactical Air Power and the Vietnam War Book Talk" at Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey CA on April 5, 2024.

Sam Leiter (PhD Candidate) was awarded a 12-month research grant from the Fulbright Commission for research at Tokyo University this spring. He also earned grants from the Toshiba International Foundation and the Center for International Studies for the summer of 2024, and will be a cohort member of the 2024-2025 [Mansfield Next Generation of U.S.-Japan Nuclear Policy Experts](#).

Vipin Narang (Faculty) was promoted from Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy to Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Space Policy, effective May 20, 2024.

Apekshya Prasai (PhD Candidate) defended her dissertation on May 8. She will be starting a post-doc at the Watson Institute at Brown University from July 2024 to June 2025. She will start as an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at Boston University beginning in July 2025.

Alumni Highlights

Pete Atkinson (Military Fellow) was accepted to a doctoral program in Public Administration and Policy with Old Dominion University. He will begin the program in Fall 2024. He was also recently featured by [Military Officers Association of America](#), and will soon speak at the Association of the [United States of America Greater Los Angeles Chapter symposium](#).

Kevin Benson (Military Fellow) participated in a classified military exercise at Fort Leavenworth, KS, from April 17-26, 2024. He will also be teaching a seminar at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College on 15 May 2024. His book, *Expectation of Valor: Planning for the Iraq War*, will be released in the U.S. on July 15, 2024.

Shannon Brown (Military Fellow) was selected for promotion to Brigadier General, and will transition jobs this summer to Assistant Deputy Commandant for Programs and Resources, Headquarters Marine Corps.

Emma Campbell-Mohn (SM) participated in the “NATO Youth Summit” in Miami on May 13, 2024.

Matt Cancian (PhD) began as an Associate Professor at the Naval War College.

Caileigh Glenn (Statecraft Fellow) published [The Policy Paradox: Emerging Technology and US Economic Statecraft](#) for the H-Diplo | Robert Jervis International Security Studies Forum on April 24, 2024.

Michal Ben-Josef Hirsch (PhD) gave a talk titled “Obstacles, Constraints, and (few) Tenuous Opportunities in Israel/Palestine” at Boston Committee on Foreign Relations on March 5, 2024.

William James (Statecraft Fellow) published “[Tony Blair and the tragedy of liberal interventionism](#)” in *Engelsberg Ideas* on April 23, 2024, and gave a talk titled “British Grand Strategy in the Age of American Hegemony” at King's College London on March 21, 2024.

Gregory Koblentz (PhD) appeared in the “[Newsroom](#)” published by CNN.

Peter Krause (PhD) gave six talks on the Israel-Hamas conflict at various institutions: World Affairs Council of Rhode Island (March 2024); Olin College of Engineering (March and April 2024); Emerson College (April 2024); Salem State University (March and April 2024).

Joseph O'Mahoney (Stanton Fellow) was awarded a 2024/25 Leverhulme Research Fellowship for a research project titled “The Decay of War: Legitimacy and Change in the International System.”

Josh Rovner (PhD) published “[Everything, Everywhere, All at Once? Cyberspace Operations and Chinese Strategy](#)” in *War on the Rocks* on March 25, 2024, and gave a talk titled “Strategy and Grand Strategy in Cyberspace” at ISA, San Francisco, CA, on April 6, 2024.

Joshua Schwartz (Statecraft Fellow) published “[What Iran's Drone Attack Portends for the Future of Warfare](#)” for the *Modern War Institute* at West Point on April 20, 2024.

Paul van Hooff (Stanton Fellow) published “[A European Nuclear Weapon is Virtually Impossible](#)” in *NRC* on April 16, 2024.

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