

**Politics by Other Means:
The Future of National Security and Diplomacy in a Polarized Land**

*Led by **John Noonan**: Senior Counselor for Military & Defense Affairs, National Security Advisor to Senator Tom Cotton (R-AR) and the Presidential Campaigns of Governor Jeb Bush and Governor Mitt Romney*

To understand national security is to understand the nature of threat, and how threat evolves and emerges in a fast-paced world. Political influences on technology, demographics, culture, and identity all play a role in how voters comprehend threat. In a world led by western democracies, those voters and their beliefs shape the geopolitical order. 2016's unusual electoral cycle is an apt and recent example of that dynamic.

This study group will examine the impact of ideology on national security and foreign policy. Since the end of the Cold War, strong political undertows have altered our traditional understanding of defense and diplomacy. Resurgent nationalism has placed great strain on the North Atlantic Treaty and the European Union, while similar dynamics have complicated international trade and the balance of power in Asia. New powers have risen, old powers have returned, and aspiring powers have emerged. Through this composite lens, we will endeavor to decipher how politics affects threat, looking to the past to help understand the future.

Course Plan (Order subject to change based on speaker availability)

September 26th: **Democracy: The Worst Form of Government (Except all the others). International Threats to Electoral Integrity.**

The interference by the Russian Government in the 2016 election stunned many Americans and international observers. But election meddling is an old game, played by adversaries and allies alike over the course of human history. We will strive to understand the nature of this perpetual menace, how the United States and liberal democracies can insulate themselves from electoral interloping, and the impact of foreign powers on domestic debate.

No invited guest for this session

October 3rd: **Hostages to Fate: Inside the U.S. Led Effort to Free Political Prisoners.**

Over the past two decades, there has been an explosive increase in the number of political hostage-takings throughout the world. Robert C. O'Brien, the Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs will give us a sobering look inside the fight to free political prisoners across the globe, and offer his insights into the larger geopolitical ripples contribute to the sharp uptick in the detention of innocents, dissidents, and activists overseas.

Confirmed Guest: [Robert C. O'Brien](#), *Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs*

October 10th: **Break of Day in the Trenches. The 21st Century Battlefield and the Dissolution of Front Lines.**

One of the harsh lessons of the First World War was that technology had evolved so rapidly over the course of the industrial revolution, military leaders could not comprehend the terrible effects it would have on the battlefield. Today, political shifts have increased the likelihood of so-called Great Power War, with the President signing a new National Defense Strategy that focused America's military might on potential conflict with Russia and China. As the digital revolution mimics of the 21st century mimics the industrial revolution of the 19th century, what terrible effects could be felt in a warring world where technology has eradicated the traditional understanding of "front lines?" Colonel James Hickey, USA Ret., leader of the operation to capture Saddam Hussein and a senior adviser to the Senate Armed Services Committee, will speak to how a rapidly evolving battlefield could impact civilians and soldiers alike, as well as offer his personal insights as commanding officer during the Hussein capture mission.

Confirmed Guest: [*Colonel James Hickey, U.S. Army Retired*](#). *Former Commander of 1st Brigade, 4th Infantry Division, and Senior Advisor to the Senate Armed Services Committee Majority.*

October 17th: **Do Drones Dream of Electric Sheep? Ethics and War in the 21st Century**

Emerging technologies bring new strategic, legal, and moral challenges. We will explore the latest political and ethical debates such as autonomous robotics in military and surveillance functions, the definition of what constitutes an act of cyberwar, the eventuality of a conflict in space, the rise of hypersonic weapons, and the dangers of militarized artificial intelligence, among others. Eric Fanning, Secretary of the Army under the Obama Administration, will offer his insights into how technology has transformed our understanding of morality and ethics in conflict.

Confirmed Guests: [*Eric Fanning*](#), *the 22nd Secretary of the Army under President Obama*

October 24th: **Campaigns and Conflict: National Security Policy on the Presidential Trail.**

The most solemn responsibility a Presidential candidate has is presenting a clear strategy and policies for the defense of the United States. From President John F. Kennedy's suggested "missile gap" with the Soviet Union, to Senator John McCain's controversial decision to run on his support of the Iraq War (and President Barack Obama's campaign against it), to President Trump's campaign on withdrawal from international treaties, the most pressing national security challenges of our times are often first shaped on the campaign trail. Senator John McCain's foreign policy advisor from his 2008 run will join us in a class/workshop that both explains how strategies are written and how students can successfully seek a career in campaigns and political policy.

Confirmed Guest: [Dr. Kori Schake](#), Deputy Director General of the International Institute of Strategic Studies, former Senior Foreign Policy Advisor to McCain 2008 Campaign, Author of *Safe Passage: The Transition from British to American Hegemony*

October 31st: **Everybody Wants to Rule the World: The Future of Geopolitics and Conflict.**

The post-Cold War era is over. New powers have risen, technology has hyper-empowered small states and actors to threaten western Democracies. Admiral William McRaven, USN Ret., former Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command and architect of the raid on Osama Bin Laden's compound in Pakistan, will join us by live video chat. Admiral McRaven will share his thoughts on a rapidly changing and dangerous world, the new nature of threat, and the prospect for peace in the 21st Century.

Confirmed Guest: [Admiral William McRaven U.S. Navy Retired](#), former Chancellor of the University of Texas University System, ninth Commander of U.S. Special Operations Command, retired U.S. Navy SEAL.

November 1st: **Treaties Last Until They Don't. The Relevance of Contracts, Pacts, and Accords in the Post-Cold War World.**

International treaties are the backbone of the rules based liberal world order. But is the ecosystem of treaties and agreements signed in the mid to late 20th century failing? From new strategic trials like a revanchist Russia and Brexit, to emerging political challenges like the rise of U.S. and European nationalism, what lies ahead of the North Atlantic Treaty, the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, the Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces Agreement, and other key diplomatic pacts?

NOTE: THIS MAKE-UP STUDY GROUP WILL BE HELD THURSDAY NOVEMBER 1st AT 4:30

Confirmed Guest: [Air Vice Marshall Gavin Parker](#), Royal Air Force, United Kingdom's Defense Attache to the United States.

November 14th: **Nuclear Deterrence is Dead, Long Live Nuclear Deterrence.**

For 70 years, nuclear deterrence has kept at bay war between major powers. But deterrence is based on political credibility and constancy. Is this fragile equation shaken by current partisan instability? Uncertainty at home pushes the public towards dismantlement, uncertainty abroad pushes the public towards rearmament. We will discuss the civic debate around nuclear weapons policy, the current nuclear chain of command, the propagation of atomic weapons, and the question of a bilateral deterrent in a multipolar world. The commander of all U.S. strategic nuclear forces will be on hand to offer his insights into maintaining the balance of peace in a brave new world.

Confirmed Guest: [General John Hyten](#), *United States Air Force. Commander, United States Strategic Command*