Early Warning

MIT **Security Studies Program**

Quarterly Newsletter | Summer/July 2026

The Security Studies Program celebrates 50 years

On June 6, the Security Studies Program (SSP) celebrated its 50th anniversary with a full day of festivities, friendship, and food. Alumni from across the country and around the globe joined us at the MIT Media Lab to catch up with colleagues and share memories of what makes SSP so special. The day's programming included panel discussions reflecting on SSP throughout the decades and examining the rigor of SSP's research. Alumni also took the opportunity to share anecdotes and affirm the strength of the SSP community.

Thank you to everyone who celebrated this momentous occasion with us. Here's to another 50 years!

Congratulations to SSP's class of 2026!

We are pleased to announce a new cohort of SSP PhD graduates: Nick Blanchette, Wenyan Deng, Suzanne Freeman, Eleanor Freund, Eyal Hanling, Wright Smith, Raymond Wang, and Diana Zhu. We look forward to your ongoing contributions to security studies and political science!

And congratulations to Raymond Wang for receiving the Lucian Pye Award for the Best Doctoral Thesis!

Security Studies Program goes to Seattle

In March, SSP faculty, graduate students, and military fellows traveled to Washington state to visit active military and defense-industrial sites around the Puget Sound. Over the course of the trip, the SSP group toured Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Naval Station Everett, and Vigor Shipyard. SSP students had the opportunity to learn from the program's military fellows and faculty, as well as from the officers, enlisted personnel, civilians, and industry professionals who shared their expertise at each visit.

Across four days, the trip gave SSP students and faculty a firsthand look at how each service—and industry partners—confronts the practical demands of deterrence, readiness, logistics, maintenance, and modernization in an increasingly contested security environment. Of particular value to the experience were the SSP Military Fellows, who were not only essential to planning the trip, but also enriched each visit with their deep insight and experience.

Doolittle Award presented to General Timothy Haugh

On April 15, SSP had the honor of presenting former Commander, US Cyber Command and Director, National Security Agency/Chief, Central Security Service General Timothy D. Haugh with the General James Doolittle Award.

In a discussion with SSP Director M. Taylor Fravel, General Haugh spoke about a range of issues related to intelligence, cyber, emerging technologies, and national security.

Named after General James Doolittle, the Doolittle Award recognizes an individual who has made significant contributions to the advancement of US air power.

Wargaming Lab holds Flagship Game

Recently the Wargaming Lab ran its annual Flagship Game at the Endicott House in Dedham, MA. Held over two days, twenty participants from various governmental organizations, the private sector, and academia participated in the Wargaming Lab's Taiwan Blockade game.

The game consisted of six teams representing the governments of the US, China, Taiwan, Japan, and the European Union, along with private sector actors from the US and Japan who attempted to advance their political, commercial, and military interests to manage a blockade of Taiwan.

The Wargaming Lab, led by co-directors Erik Lin-Greenberg and Eric Heginbotham, is a research group that seeks to build a deeper understanding of how to deter conflict and preserve peace through the innovative use of wargaming. The Lab – a part of MIT’s Security Studies Program – strives to be a center of excellence that advances the practice of wargaming, disseminates policy-relevant research, and builds networks of scholars and practitioners.

The Center for Nuclear Security Policy wraps up a busy semester

The Center for Nuclear Security Policy (CNSP) hosted two panels as part of the spring semester’s CNSP Speaker Series. The first panel featured four former US senior officials who discussed US nuclear planning, civilian oversight on targeting, the US Nuclear Posture Review, current and future nuclear weapons capabilities, and US extended deterrence commitments.

The second panel featured three prominent French scholars and government officials who discussed French vital interests, forward deterrence, and the concept of mutual support.

CNSP’s Speaker Series will resume during the fall semester.

In May, CNSP visited Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay in Georgia for the inaugural CNSP field trip. The group met with RADM Wirth, Commander of Submarine Group 10, for a briefing on Kings Bay as well as the current and future US submarine force.

The group then met with CAPT Bozin, Commanding Officer, to tour the Trident Training Facility, which prepares sailors to operate and maintain submarines. Finally, the group had the opportunity to tour the SSGN Georgia, an Ohio Class nuclear-powered guided missile submarine, while it was in port.

Scholarly Publications

"Structure amid change: The global nuclear order and the Soviet collapse"
Mariana Budjeryn (CNSP Senior Researcher)
Journal of Strategic Studies

"Stability in a secondary strategic direction: China and the border dispute with India from 1962 to 2020"
M. Taylor Fravel (Faculty)
Routledge Handbook of China–India Relations, Chapter 7

"Revisiting the Effectiveness of Nuclear Compellent Threats"
Charles Glaser (Senior Fellow) & Alexander B. Downes
Security Studies

Commentary

"*Trump's Nuclear Review*"
Vipin Narang (Faculty), et al.
Real Clear Defense, May 26, 2026

"One Year After Pahalgam: Competing Narratives and Converging Risks"
Beenish Pervais (Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow)
South Asian Voices, May 18, 2026

"The U.S. Has Been Central to the NPT Since the Beginning. What Will It Do in 2026?"
Matthew Sharp (Senior Nuclear Fellow)
Arms Control Today, April 2026

"Can Trump Get a New Nuclear Deal With Iran? Washington Has More Demands—and Tehran Has More Leverage"
Matthew Sharp (Senior Nuclear Fellow) & Nate Swanson
Foreign Affairs, May 12, 2026

"*The Hormuz Minefield: In the Strait, Iran Holds the Advantage—and America Has No Good Options*"
Caitlin Talmadge (Faculty)
Foreign Affairs, March 13, 2026

"Why Iran's disruption of the Strait of Hormuz matters"
Caitlin Talmadge (Faculty), Samantha Gross, and Melanie W. Sisson
The Brookings Institution, March 19, 2026

"The end of the American way of war?"
Caitlin Talmadge (Faculty) & Mara Karlin
The Brookings Institution, June 10, 2026

Multimedia

Mariana Budjeryn (CNSP Senior Researcher) was a panelist on the *Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe: CSCE*'s "BRIEFING–

Nuclear Power and Nuclear Powers: Lessons from Ukraine."

Mariana Budjeryn (CNSP Senior Researcher) appeared on TVP World to discuss "What if Ukraine had nuclear weapons?."

Mariana Budjeryn (CNSP Senior Researcher) was featured on the *Stockholm International Peace Research Institute's (SIPRI)* talk on the 40th anniversary of the Chornobyl disaster and the Russian occupation of the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant.

Mariana Budjeryn (CNSP Senior Researcher) was featured in *France 24's* webinar, "Ukraine back in favour? At G7, Trump threatens return of Russia oil sanctions."

M. Taylor Fravel (Faculty) appeared on *NPR*, "Why has China doubled its nuclear capacity in the last decade?"

Charles Glaser (Senior Fellow) was featured on a podcast discussing his book, *Retrench, Defend, Compete*.

Charles Glaser (Senior Fellow) gave a book talk on *Retrench, Defend, Compete*, at the *Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies*.

Erik Lin-Greenberg (Faculty) appeared on *NPR* (1A), "Tech: How Technology Is Changing The World Of Warfare."

Caitlin Talmadge (Faculty) was featured in Anton Troianovski, Peter Eavis, Julian E. Barnes, and Greg Jaffe's article: "Weakened by war, Iran hits back by strangling a vital waterway" for the *NYTimes*.

Caitlin Talmadge (Faculty) appeared on *NPR (Morning Edition)*, "Analysts say potential US operation to seize Iran's Kharg Island would be risky."

Caitlin Talmadge (Faculty) was featured in Mark Landler and Anton Troianovski's article: "A dangerous limbo leaves Iran, and the world, between peace and war."

Caitlin Talmadge (Faculty) was featured in Neil MacFarquhar's article: "What changed after almost four months of war? Analysts say not much."

Quotes

M. Taylor Fravel (Faculty) was quoted in the following:

Vision Times News, "A Broader Military Purge? Analysts Focus on Key PLA Meeting Led by Xi Jinping," on April 13, 2026.

Barry Posen (Faculty) was quoted in the following:

Salon, "Republican lawmakers increasingly concerned over Hegseth's ideological military," May 1, 2026.

Caitlin Talmadge (Faculty) was quoted in the following:

Bloomberg News, "U.S. at odds with allies over how easy it is to reopen Hormuz," June 15, 2026.

News

Joshua Byun (Stanton Nuclear Security Fellow) will be departing Boston College (and the Greater Boston Area) this summer to join the Walsh School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University as an Assistant Professor of Security Studies.

Daniel Cebul (PhD Candidate) received the Smith Richardson Foundation's World Politics and Statecraft Fellowship.

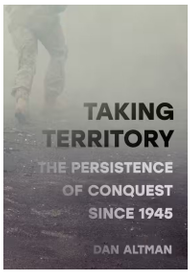
Kathryn Dura (PhD Candidate), **Christine Liu** (PhD Candidate), and **Tyler Sagerstrom** (PhD Candidate) received the Center for International Studies (CIS) "PhD Student Research Grants" on April 23, 2026.

Kelly Greenhill (Senior Fellow) is a recipient of the Derek Brewer Visiting Fellowship from the University of Cambridge in England. For the next academic year, she will reside at Emmanuel College within the University of Cambridge.

Samuel Leiter (PhD Candidate) will be a Pre-Doctoral Fellow at George Washington University.

Erik Lin-Greenberg (Faculty) received the "2026 Best Book Award" (Section 31) from the Foreign Policy Section of the American Political Science Association (APSA) for *Remote Revolution: Drones and Modern Statecraft* (Cornell University Press, 2025).

Alumni Books



Dan Altman (PhD)

Taking Territory: The Persistence of Conquest Since 1945

Cornell University Press

Alumni Highlights

Kevin Benson (Military Fellow) appeared on the "Revolution in Military Affairs" podcast, in "Episode 3: There is No Phase Four, Right?" In March, he also presented a seminar for the Indian Army War College, delivered two lectures on strategic and operational planning at the National Defense University (DC), and delivered a book talk with the International Security Bridge.

Fiona Cunningham (PhD) was awarded the 2026 Peter Katzenstein Book Prize for her book *Under the Nuclear Shadow: China's Information-Age Weapons in International Security*.

Thomas Fraise (Stanton Fellow) published "Hacking the bomb? What Claude Mythos AI reveals about the gamble of nuclear deterrence," in *The Conversation*.

Francis Gavin (Affiliate) was awarded the 2026 Lionel Gelber Prize for his book *Thinking Historically: A Guide to Statecraft and Strategy*.

P.R. Goldstone (PhD) received the Special Commendation Award for Outstanding Service, Civil Division, from the US Department of Justice. He is also an author of US government position on novel questions of U.S. foreign relations law relating to the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act and the New York Convention on Enforcement of International Commercial Arbitration Awards.

Phil Haun (Affiliate), his book *Tactical Airpower and the Vietnam War: Explaining Effectiveness in Modern Air Warfare* (Cambridge University Press) was shortlisted for the RUSI Duke of Wellington Medal for Military History 2025.

Se Young Jang (Stanton Fellow) was featured on "Better Know a Non-Nuke: South Korea," an episode of The Arms Control Primer Podcast Series, for the *International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS)*.

Eric Labs (PhD) testified before a joint hearing of House Subcommittees on House Armed Services Committee and the Transportation Committee, along with the Infrastructure

Committee. *The Congressional Budget Office (CBO)* published his report "Increasing the Size and Missile Capability of the Navy's Fleet Within the Next Five Years."

Aidan Milliff (PhD) and **Paul Staniland** (PhD) published *"Indian Public Opinion toward the Major Powers"* (Cambridge University Press, 2026). Millif also appeared on an episode of Grand Tamasha's "What Do Indians Think About the World?", and appeared on *Irregular Warfare Initiative's* "The 'Short of War' Podcast" about "Hidden Costs of Precision: What Drone Strikes Actually Do to Civilians."

Cullen Nutt (PhD) was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure at the U.S. Naval Academy, effective mid-August 2026.

Erik Sand (PhD) will be an assistant professor at the LBJ School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. He also published "Strategy in the New Missile Age," in *Security Studies*.

Joshua Schwartz (Statecraft Fellow) has a forthcoming article, "Rethinking Reputation: When Fighting to Demonstrate Resolve Backfires," in *Journal of Politics*.

Lauren Sukin (Stanton Fellow) published "After Trump, Partisanship Will Still Undermine U.S. Credibility," in *Foreign Policy*. Additionally, Sukin published two articles: "Divisions at Home, Broken Promises Abroad? How Domestic Politics Shapes the United States' Nuclear Credibility," with Helen Webley-Brown in *International Studies Quarterly*, and "Implausible Deniability and Escalation in the Gray Zone," with Kathryn Hedgecock, in *Security Studies*.

David Weinberg (PhD) assisted with drafting bills and advocating for protecting voters from being disenfranchised by faithless presidential electors that passed into law in Connecticut, Maryland, Oregon, and South Dakota.

Tim Wolters (PhD) presented "Corsairs, Cannons, and Correspondence: The Barbary War in a College Classroom," at the North American Society for Oceanic History's annual conference in New Haven, Connecticut.

Paul Van Hooft (Stanton Fellow) published "Nonproliferation and strategic stability as US extended nuclear deterrence erodes," in the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*.

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