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Naval Postgraduate School (U.S.)

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NPS IN THE NEWS

Weekly Media Report – March 15-21, 2022

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EDUCATION:

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(Defense One 16 Mar 22) ... Lt. Col. Gabe S. Arrington

Reinvigorate our wargaming efforts, then-Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work told Pentagon and military leaders in 2015. Services, research institutions, and industry have since responded with an explosion of wargames. But these largely uncoordinated efforts have left knowledge gaps, reflected various biases, and insufficiently addressed mid- and long-term scenarios. To fix these problems and ensure unity of effort, the DOD should create a Joint Wargaming Center... A student describes his strategy during hands-on exercises at the Basic Analytic Wargaming Course taught by the **Naval Postgraduate School** Wargaming Mobile Education Team in Wiesbaden, Germany, Aug. 30 thru Sept. 10, 2021.

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US President Joe Biden is scheduled to speak to his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, on Friday, as the crisis in Ukraine continues... At a hearing of the commission on Thursday, Emily Meierding, an assistant professor at **Naval Postgraduate School**, warned sanctions had an "uneven track record". She was quoted by the South China Morning Post as saying "The result [of sanctions on China] could be a network of petro pariahs—major oil importers and exporters targeted by the United States that create a parallel energy trading system that isn't vulnerable to US sanctions."

[US Sanctions on China for Aiding Russia Could Be Counterproductive, Advisory Panel is Told](#)

(SCMP 18 Mar 22) ... Joshua Cartwright

Experts warned on Thursday that imposing Ukraine-related sanctions on Beijing could backfire, pushing China and Russia closer together and weakening America's influence abroad... Given China's dependence on oil and gas imports, Beijing would see any attempt at hindering its access to foreign fossil fuels as a direct threat to its national security, said Emily Meierding, an assistant professor at the **Naval Postgraduate School**. She pointed to the "uneven track record" of sanctions and how they would push China to find ways to avoid them.

[Career Submariner Steps in as NPS' New Undersea Warfare Chair](#)

(Navy.mil 18 Mar 22) ... Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tom Tonthat

(NPS.edu 18 Mar 22) ... Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tom Tonthat

Retired Navy Vice Adm. Phillip G. Sawyer has taken the helm as the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Undersea Warfare (USW) Chair, and will now serve as the primary liaison and advisor between the university and the Navy's submarine force.

[The West Still Doesn't Understand the Taliban](#)

(Foreign Affairs 21 Mar 22) ... Carter Malkasian

The Taliban have been in power in Afghanistan for more than half a year. During that time, the United States and its allies have struggled to come up with a coherent policy response. Western leaders would generally like the Taliban to form an inclusive government, respect women's rights, refrain from persecuting members of the former Afghan state, and renounce international terrorism. Amid an economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, international policymakers are confronted with a serious dilemma: either they choose to continue to treat the Taliban as an international pariah and thereby withhold most forms of support, or they provide economic assistance to the country and effectively prop up the regime... Carter Malkasian is Chair of the Defense Analysis Department at the **Naval Postgraduate School** and is the author of *The American War in Afghanistan: A History*. From 2015 to 2019, he served as Senior Adviser to U.S. General Joseph Dunford, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

ALUMNI:

[Armed Services Committees Leadership Announces Selections for National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology](#)

(Inhof Senate 17 Mar 22)

The bipartisan leadership of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, Representatives Adam Smith (D-Wash.) and Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), and Senators Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), today announced their appointments to the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology, which was established by Sec. 1091 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)



for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22)... Paul Arcangeli will be retiring from the House Armed Services committee on April 1st after 18 years with the committee, most recently serving as staff director. He has served in a variety of roles with the committee since 2004, including as deputy staff director, minority staff director, and staff lead for the Subcommittee on Readiness. Prior to joining the Committee, he served as the Director of the Department of Defense's Humanitarian Demining Training Center at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. Previously, he served as executive vice president for a company conducting innovative research in fuel, emissions, and environmental technologies. In 1999, he retired from the U.S. Army after serving as an explosive ordnance officer, as a maintenance officer, and as the Chief of the Information Technology Projects Division at the United States Military Academy, West Point. He holds a Master of Science in information technology from the **Naval Post Graduate School** and a Bachelor of Science in biology from the University of North Georgia.

Creighton Joins West Bend Mutual Insurance Board

(Biz Times 17 Mar 22)

Kathleen M. Creighton has been elected to the board of directors of West Bend Mutual Insurance Company in West Bend. Creighton recently transitioned from the U.S. Navy after a 33-year career, including six years as a Rear Admiral. She was one of a few Information Warfare Community Flag Officers specializing in cybersecurity, information technology (IT) solutions, network operations, and C4ISR capabilities. Creighton has led large organizations with global footprints for the past six years. These include Director, Command, Control, and Communications and Computers at U.S. Indo Pacific Command, where she directed cyberspace operations and enabled assured communications for 375,000 U.S. forces in theater... Creighton is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program, where she graduated from the **Naval Postgraduate School** with a Master of Science in Information Technology Management.

President Biden Announces Key Regional Appointments for USDA, FEMA, and HUD

(The Whitehouse 17 Mar 22)

Today, President Joe Biden appointed the following individuals to serve in key regional leadership roles at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)... Throughout his career, Sivak has served in leadership roles during major Emergency Operations Center and incident management activations as a result of major incidents and events. These include the 2012 Super Bowl, 2018 Mercy Hospital Active Shooter Incident, COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest in May and August 2020, and Presidential Election Consequence Management. Sivak is a Certified Emergency Manager through the International Association of Emergency Managers and a graduate of the Executive Leadership Program at the **Naval Postgraduate School** Center for Homeland Defense and Security. He holds a Master of Science in Public Service Leadership from DePaul University, a Bachelors of Arts degree from Marquette University, and is originally from East Cleveland, Ohio.

UPCOMING NEWS & EVENTS:

Mar 21-24: [NWSI Nimitz Research Group Warfare Innovation Workshop](#)

Mar 22-24: [Center for Executive Education SCW Workshop](#)

Mar 25: [Winter Quarter Graduation](#)

Mar 29: [SGL with Rear Admiral Blake Converse](#)

Apr 4-8: [Center for Executive Education NSLS Workshop](#)

Apr 19-21: [Naval Research Working Group](#)



EDUCATION:

The DOD Needs a Joint Wargaming Center

(Defense One 16 Mar 22) ... Lt. Col. Gabe S. Arrington

Reinvigorate our wargaming efforts, then-Deputy Defense Secretary Robert Work told Pentagon and military leaders in 2015. Services, research institutions, and industry have since responded with an explosion of wargames. But these largely uncoordinated efforts have left knowledge gaps, reflected various biases, and insufficiently addressed mid- and long-term scenarios. To fix these problems and ensure unity of effort, the DOD should create a Joint Wargaming Center.

In his memo, Work prescribed three lines of effort. The first, led by the services and combatant commands, looks up to five years ahead and focuses on current concepts. The Joint Staff leads a mid-term effort, studying new capabilities and operational concepts five to 15 years out; while the Office of Net Assessment leads a long-term effort focused on technology trends and competition.

The near-term line has proven to be the easiest for the DOD to execute, mainly through service entities such as the Air Force Wargaming Institute and the Naval War College, which focus on educational and service-specific wargames. The services continue to invest in wargaming capability and modeling and simulation that complement their specific missions, such as the Wargaming and Advanced Research Simulation Laboratory at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico, and the Marine Corps Wargaming and Analysis Center in Quantico, Virginia.

But as the Pentagon responded to the new wargaming guidance, so too did industry and the research institutions associated with national security. This response, while well-intentioned, means that mid- to long-term wargame efforts are not being led as intended by the Joint Staff and Office of Net Assessment. Instead, much of the wargaming design, execution, and report writing is contracted outside the Department of Defense.

One consequence is that too many wargames are built on data that is outdated, insufficient, generalized, or inaccurate. Mid- and long-term ones that involve policy and strategy development are too often conducted at an unclassified level. Considering the role of sensitive intelligence and classified information in senior leaders' decision-making, this practice should now be considered obsolete.

A student describes his strategy during hands-on exercises at the Basic Analytic Wargaming Course taught by the **Naval Postgraduate School** Wargaming Mobile Education Team in Wiesbaden, Germany, Aug. 30 thru Sept. 10, 2021.

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LSU Announces Strategy and Commitment to Become Leader in Cybersecurity, Military Studies

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Today, as part of its mission to serve Louisiana and the nation, LSU unveiled a broad and aggressive series of initiatives in cybersecurity and legacy of military studies that will involve all eight LSU campuses and have statewide impact on workforce, research and development, and economic impact. Building upon the university's existing strengths in these areas, the commitment will focus on aligning key areas from all LSU campuses and beyond to build new partnerships and explore novel approaches to talent and technology development.

"This is our 'Sputnik moment,' and we must be bold and visionary in securing the safety of our nation," said LSU President William F. Tate IV. "Just as Sputnik underscored the importance of technology and research, the world today underscores we urgently need the very best to protect everything from small businesses to our ports and manufacturers. With these initiatives, LSU is expediting the expansion of cybersecurity research and talent development for all, and we'll do it in



exciting ways for our students and faculty. The winners will be the overwhelming demand for this education and firms who need this talent.”

“This is a momentous leap forward not only for the Louisiana State University System, but for our state and our nation, and it comes at a time when the threat of a cyberattack on our national security has never been more apparent,” said Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards. “Strengthening cybersecurity in Louisiana while also developing the workforce needed to support the agencies, organizations and firms needed to carry out this critical work is one of the top focuses of my administration, and it aligns perfectly with LSU’s research-based mission to serve our state and nation. I am thrilled that LSU has undertaken this effort statewide and I am heartened to know that the next generation of cybersecurity experts and leaders will be made right here in Louisiana.”

This past year, LSU was the only university in the country invited by the National Security Agency, or NSA, to apply for its prestigious Center for Academic Excellence in Cyber Operations, or CAE-CO, which is a deeply technical, interdisciplinary, higher education program firmly grounded in computer science, computer engineering, and electrical engineering disciplines with hands-on applications via labs and exercises. Only 22 institutions nationwide hold the distinction, and LSU anticipates to be the next university designated by NSA as a CAE-CO institution, joining an elite network of cyber excellence that includes the **Naval Postgraduate School** and Air Force and Naval Academies.

To broaden LSU’s scientific research capacity and ability to produce increasing numbers of highly technical graduates, LSU has combined its own resources with those of several key partners to recruit and hire leading cyber experts, with scholarships and professorships to support those new hires.

Guiding these new initiatives are two structures focused on growing LSU’s expertise in cybersecurity, coordinating space and assets, and collaborating to explore the intersection between cybersecurity and military studies.

The Alignment for the Pursuit of Excellence in Cyber Security, or APECS, Initiative will serve as the university's principal new initiative for investment in cyber security. APECS reimagines how existing and new expertise, space, programs, and partners across all eight LSU campuses can be oriented for cyber talent and technology development, all brought to bear to prepare technically sound cyber warriors to proactively defend Louisiana’s most critical assets.

“At LSU, our focus is on producing top-tier cybersecurity practitioners and researchers—essentially, cybersecurity superheroes,” said Professor Golden G. Richard III, director of the LSU Applied Cybersecurity Lab. “We have several things already in place to support that effort, including a very successful Scholarships for Service (SFS) program, which provides full-ride scholarships to highly qualified students, and the FIREStarter cyber range, which helps us offer hands-on, practical education in both offensive and defensive cybersecurity. The APECS initiative will expand the cybersecurity faculty to give us additional room to grow and strengthen our relationships with state and industrial partners, opening up new collaborative opportunities for students.”

Next, the Institute for Advanced Military and Defense Studies will serve as the programmatic intersection of cyber and ROTC and enable a leadership development opportunity like no other in the nation, with the goal of reestablishing LSU as a national leader in military, defense, and security studies.

On the ROTC program, new efforts include:

- Relocating the program to an existing state-of-the-art building with plans to improve and better integrate efforts across campuses and disciplines;
- Enhancing recruiting efforts to attract the very best and brightest from across the state for participation in the ROTC program and future service to our nation;
- Improving all elements of education and training from classrooms, to training laboratories to the physical fitness infrastructure; and
- Elevating the LSU ROTC program to national prominence while continuing to value and respect the proud heritage and tradition of the Ole War Skule.
- On the academic side, new efforts include:
- Immediate hiring of up to 10 cyber security faculty to strengthen teaching and research and broaden LSU’s talent development pipeline from undergraduate through doctoral education;



- Developing a value-added leadership certificate program for military and civilian students alike;
- Establishing programs beginning with a cyber bootcamp for incoming freshman interested in pursuing a career in cyber studies or cyber defense, to begin in fall 2022;
- Integrating capabilities across the LSU system like LSU Shreveport's Cyber Collaboratory and the AgCenter's Extension as assets in a powerful statewide talent development effort; and
- Creating novel approaches to cyber education like the FIREStarter program where Louisiana State Police Cyber Crime analysts teach undergraduate Computer Science courses.

“Along with its federal and state law enforcement and technology partners, the Louisiana State Police Cyber Crime Unit works on hundreds of cybercrimes across Louisiana every year,” said Lt. Colonel Kenny VanBuren. “The scale of the threat demands new generations of problem-solvers, and programs like FIREStarter – where we’re actively teaching cyber forensics to LSU undergraduates – is the kind of novel approach Louisiana needs to build talent and strengthen our communities.”

On the engagement side, new efforts include:

- Working closely through formal partnerships with the U.S. Secret Service and Louisiana National Guard to develop tools and technologies as well as engage directly with students for teaching, recruiting, and research;
- Collaborating with industrial partners in telecommunications, healthcare, manufacturing, and energy in new student- and research-centered cyber security facilities and projects; and
- Supporting defense partners like Radiance Technologies in emerging R&D, science, and talent opportunities.

“As a leading cyber and technology company for the defense, intelligence, and space communities, we consider universities as essential for research and talent development,” said Heath Berry, vice president of electronic systems and cyber technologies at Radiance Technologies. “From our discussions with LSU leadership it is clear they are invested in becoming a great cyber and defense university. We are excited about the opportunity to partner with LSU, grow our Baton Rouge operations and laboratory, and work with their students and faculty to address technical challenges.”

“Beyond protecting our nation’s leaders, the United States Secret Service is also tasked with safeguarding the trusted financial infrastructure of our economic and ultimately national security. Finding the right expertise to help defend those assets is critical, and in our discussions with LSU it is evident the university is fully committed to cybersecurity and defense,” said U.S. Secret Service Special Agent in Charge Leslie Pichon. “We are excited to work with their faculty and administration, find new ways to engage students on campus for training and teaching, and help talented students understand the incredible opportunities this partnership can offer.”

“The Louisiana National Guard and LSU both have statewide missions and reach. This collaboration unites us like never before in service to Louisiana. Defending our critical infrastructure and strategic assets is an opportunity to develop creative solutions,” said Maj. Gen. Keith Waddell, adjutant general of the LANG. “Our partnership with LSU focuses on training, talent, and tool development, and we are excited to have the university working with us to protect Louisiana. We’re thrilled LSU has made us a key component of their vision for cybersecurity and defense, and we believe this partnership positions the Guard and LSU to serve as national thought leaders in how to protect the state and its citizens as well as the potential to grow our cyber mission.”

In support of these initiatives, LSU has designated a new cyber-military corridor on its Baton Rouge campus, with the previously named Louisiana Emerging Technology Center as the cornerstone. The adjoining LSU’s Center for Computation & Technology allows for future development and collaboration on one of the most highly visible corners of campus, and enables engagement between LSU’s cyber experts, our military and ROTC programs, and our agriculture corridor to seed future collaborations and



partnerships. The alignment has already generated deep interest from several industry, academic and military organizations, and additional announcements on all fronts are anticipated in the near future.

“You cannot become great by wishing your way to excellence,” said Tate. “Bold decisions, strategic investments, industry partnerships like these are the only way to make the gains we need to in short order for the safety of our state and nation.”

Today’s announcement is the latest transformative investment in Tate’s recently announced Scholarship First Agenda, focused on creating solutions that are essential to the future of agriculture, biotechnology, the coast, defense and energy within Louisiana and throughout the nation. LSU will ascend to its potential to lead the nation in these five key areas through a combination of private, state and federal support. Learn more about the Scholarship First Agenda at www.lsu.edu/president/priorities.

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FACULTY:

Putin Likely Didn’t Plan on Publicly Available Information in his War in Ukraine

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Even a cyber and info war aficionado like Russian President Vladimir Putin must begrudgingly appreciate the karmic role that the slew of publicly available information is playing to complicate his Ukraine incursion. Seemingly at every juncture, social media and other sources of publicly available information are highlighting every Russian miscue and providing forums to counter Russian info wars.

The examples abound: exposure of Putin’s plans and intentions during the buildup on Ukraine’s periphery, students and academics using traffic data to accurately predict the impending invasion, and the proliferation of apps documenting troop movements and declining morale. Likewise, groups like Anonymous are helping identify and exploit gaps in Russia’s vaunted cyber defenses.

The critical role of publicly available information has been well-documented. However, what’s missing in this discussion is the increasingly important role commercially available information (CAI) can play in this effort. Companies are regularly churning out massive amounts of data that would be useful for the U.S. government, and this trend is growing exponentially. By 2025, the commercial sector is expected to produce 135 zettabytes of data. To put that in perspective, 1 zettabyte is equivalent to roughly 300 million copies of library of Congress holdings.

CAI, to clarify, is not synonymous with “open source,” which is readily, and intentionally, made available for viewing to large audience segments. In contrast, CAI is a commodity, collected for business purposes—such as advertiser ids and the multitude of other forms of data that companies routinely collect and sell to other entities. As such, it has monetary value, and companies are not giving it away. This monetization of data means that, while it is technically publicly available (albeit for a price), it is not “out there” for everyone to view like social media and other open source platforms.

Today’s constant barrage of information makes it easy for countries to wage disinformation campaigns. Your emotions are the weapon of choice. Learn how disinformation works and how we can fight it in this short video. This is one link you can feel good about sharing.

In this Internet of Things world, companies are routinely gathering data on Russia and other U.S. adversaries as part of their normal business operations. Unlike “open source,” this often includes data that our adversaries would not want the U.S. government to access. In fact, much of this data, heretofore, could only have been obtained using more risky clandestine means. When I managed open source collection in Europe, and then the Middle East, we used to say that open source provides about 80 percent of the “lower hanging fruit” so that operators could focus their efforts on the remaining 20 percent. CAI, in contrast, can also help address that more difficult remainder.



What types of data are we talking about? In the Russia example, companies have unique information on priority topics such as military personnel and equipment, Russian aviation and shipping records, company and financial records, Cyber vulnerabilities, and much more.

In the State of the Union address, President Joe Biden laid out an aggressive plan for countering Russia. It is not an overstatement to say that CAI can underpin virtually every potential U.S. action. This would include identifying Russian entities to sanction and their ill-gotten holdings to seize. It would also help inform DoD planning and enable a wide range of cyber and other intelligence operations.

As a former CIA officer, it's easy to envision myriad potential use cases for the IC. For analysts, this data can help fill critical information gaps, augmenting classified holdings—particularly on hard targets like Russia and China that typically present greater collection challenges. This data would also be invaluable for clandestine operations; e.g. identifying people of interest, validating their bona fides, and their access to information. Cyber gurus would have a field day with data highlighting Russian and other adversaries' nodes and vulnerabilities.

This raises a critical question: Is the U.S. government well positioned to access and exploit this information? The answer at this critical juncture is not yet. As the war in Ukraine rages, many undoubtedly useful data bases remain untapped by U.S. agencies.

Why? Many companies either do not understand the intrinsic U.S. government value of their data, or as mentioned previously, they are looking to capitalize on their holdings. Even for patriotic companies that want to help, identifying the right mechanisms for sharing with the government are not clear. I am confident that there are many entities that would welcome the opportunity to help counter Putin, or to help with our China-related efforts. However, the access points are often murky at best. And then there's the vexing challenges of figuring out how to meaningfully partner with government. For tech companies, this is often referred to as traversing the valley of death.

On the government side, U.S. agencies that could exploit such data face a daunting task: how do they identify the hundreds of potential data providers, vet them to ensure that they are not under hostile foreign government control, and then execute contracting actions in a timely manner?

In short, it's just not a smart use of already busy government officials' time, and they also are not equipped to do this at scale. The process of technical scanning to determine which companies might have valuable data holdings requires expertise and resources that agencies lack. This endeavor also requires continuous monitoring to identify new providers that are constantly emerging. And, once the companies are vetted, agencies would need to do separate contracting actions for each one, which is not feasible given the sheer number of entities involved.

This begs for a more streamlined U.S. government approach to procure data at scale; and one that matches the speed of mission. This, ultimately, may necessitate partnering closer with commercial entities that specialize in data procurement on a macro scale to deliver these outcomes. Their role would be to provide the easy button for government: providing a bespoke, user-friendly marketplace for vetted data suppliers. This could also help curtail price gauging by utilizing cost estimators for various data sets.

It is clear that the race is on with our adversaries to access and operationalize commercially available information. We are already lagging in this regard, and failure to address this pressing need expeditiously will put us even further behind. It is past time for the private sector and government to partner more effectively to close this gap. Are we up for the task?

John Tullius retired from CIA after serving as the National Intelligence Chair at the **Naval Postgraduate School** 2016-19, where he taught a variety of intel-related courses and worked with student teams on technology initiatives to address DoD operational requirements.

[Putin Likely Didn't Plan on Publicly Available Information in his War in Ukraine \(thecipherbrief.com\)](https://thecipherbrief.com)

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Defying Pressure, Koch Industries Continues to Operate in Russia

(Anti War 17 Mar 22) ... Dave DeCamp

Amid a mass exodus of Western companies from Russia, the US conglomerate Koch Industries is defying the pressure and has decided to continue operations in the country.

Guardian Industries, a subsidiary of Koch Industries, operates two glass manufacturing plants inside Russia that employ about 600 people. Outside of Guardian, Koch Industries employs 15 other individuals in Russia.

Dave Robertson, the president and COO of Koch Industries, released a statement explaining the conglomerate's decision and denouncing Russia's invasion. He stated, "The horrific and abhorrent aggression against Ukraine is an affront to humanity."

"While Guardian's business in Russia is a very small part of Koch, we will not walk away from our employees there or hand over these manufacturing facilities to the Russian government so it can operate and benefit from them," Robertson said. "Doing so would only put our employees there at greater risk and do more harm than good."

Economist David R. Henderson, an emeritus professor of economics at the **Naval Postgraduate School** and a research fellow with the Hoover Institution, praised Robertson's statement. "If you want to hurt a government, you don't do it by giving it more resources," Henderson told *Antiwar.com*.

According to a tally done by Yale University's School of Management, over 400 companies have withdrawn from Russia or limited operations. In response, Russia is exploring the idea of seizing the companies' assets that are left behind and potentially nationalizing the businesses.

Since Russian President Vladimir Putin ordered the invasion on February 24, the US has worked with its allies to impose crushing sanctions on Russia aimed at wrecking the country's economy. The measures have done nothing to deter Putin since they were factored into his decision to attack Ukraine, but the sanctions are punishing ordinary Russians for their president's decision.

Americans are also feeling the economic pain from the sanctions, something President Biden said to be prepared for. Amid soaring gas prices and inflation, Biden signed an executive order banning Russian oil imports and then announced a plan to ban other Russian goods.

Robertson noted that Koch Industries is complying with US sanctions. "To be clear, Koch companies are complying with all applicable sanctions, laws, and regulations governing our relationships and transactions within all countries where we operate," he said.

Koch Industries CEO Charles Koch has a history of backing organizations that favor a more non-interventionist foreign policy, including the Quincy Institute, the Cato Institute, Concerned Veterans for America, and the American Institute for Economic Research.

[Defying Pressure, Koch Industries Continues to Operate in Russia - News From Antiwar.com](#)

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Ahead of Biden-Xi Call, Experts Caution US Against Coercing China on Ukraine

(The Week 17 Mar 22)

US President Joe Biden is scheduled to speak to his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, on Friday, as the crisis in Ukraine continues.

A spokesperson for China's Foreign Ministry said the telephonic conversation will happen on Friday evening (Beijing time). The call follows an intense seven-hour meeting in Rome on Monday between US National Security Adviser Jake Sullivan and senior Chinese foreign policy adviser Yang Jiechi.

"US officials have warned that China has amplified Russian disinformation that could be a pretext for [Russian President Vladimir] Putin's forces to attack Ukraine with chemical or biological weapons. There are also reports—denied by the Kremlin—that Russia has reached out to China for aid as it faces sanctions and an invasion that faces stiff resistance by Ukrainians," AP reported.

"President Biden will be speaking to President Xi tomorrow and will make clear that China will bear responsibility for any actions it takes to support Russia's aggression, and we will not hesitate to impose



costs,” US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was quoted as saying by Reuters on Thursday. Blinken expressed concern over China “considering directly assisting Russia with military equipment to use in Ukraine”.

Ahead of the meeting, a key US advisory panel was warned that any sanctions on China imposed over the Ukraine conflict could push Beijing closer to Moscow. The US-China Economic and Security Review Commission is an independent body that provides advice to the US government on security implications of China's economic policies.

At a hearing of the commission on Thursday, Emily Meierding, an assistant professor at **Naval Postgraduate School**, warned sanctions had an “uneven track record”. She was quoted by the South China Morning Post as saying “The result [of sanctions on China] could be a network of petro pariahs—major oil importers and exporters targeted by the United States that create a parallel energy trading system that isn’t vulnerable to US sanctions.”

Edward Chow of the Center for Strategic and International Studies told the commission of China's long-term energy strategy. “Although China and Russia’s energy interests converge in the short run, they diverge in the long run with China’s energy transition away from fossil fuels for both environmental and national security reasons... Smart American policy would endeavour to accentuate the differences between the two countries rather than push the two of them closer together, as we seem determined to do in recent years,” Chow was quoted as saying by South China Morning Post.

[Ahead of Biden-Xi call, experts caution US against coercing China on Ukraine - The Week](#)

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US Sanctions on China for Aiding Russia Could Be Counterproductive, Advisory Panel is Told

(SCMP 18 Mar 22) ... Joshua Cartwright

Experts warned on Thursday that imposing Ukraine-related sanctions on Beijing could backfire, pushing China and Russia closer together and weakening America’s influence abroad.

Speaking before the US-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a government advisory panel, witnesses emphasised how China’s energy insecurity could affect its response to such measures.

Given China’s dependence on oil and gas imports, Beijing would see any attempt at hindering its access to foreign fossil fuels as a direct threat to its national security, said Emily Meierding, an assistant professor at the **Naval Postgraduate School**. She pointed to the “uneven track record” of sanctions and how they would push China to find ways to avoid them.

“The result could be a network of petro pariahs – major oil importers and exporters targeted by the United States that create a parallel energy trading system that isn’t vulnerable to US sanctions,” she said. Instead, she recommended finding a way to “engage China constructively on this conflict” without threatening their energy security.

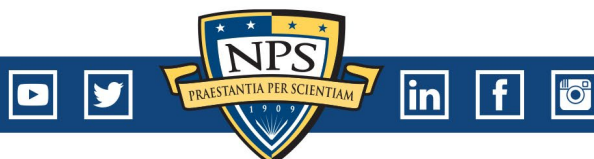
What China could gain, and lose, in the Ukraine-Russia crisis

Edward Chow, senior associate in the Energy Security and Climate Change Programme at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a Washington-based think tank, pointed out Beijing’s longer-term energy strategy.

“Although China and Russia’s energy interests converge in the short run, they diverge in the long run with China’s energy transition away from fossil fuels for both environmental and national security reasons,” he said.

“Smart American policy would endeavour to accentuate the differences between the two countries rather than push the two of them closer together, as we seem determined to do in recent years.”

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said on Thursday that President Joe Biden planned to warn Chinese President Xi Jinping that the US will impose unspecified costs on China if it takes any action to support Russia’s war on Ukraine. The two leaders are scheduled to speak by phone on Friday. It will be their first conversation since Russia invaded Ukraine more than three weeks ago.



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Career Submariner Steps in as NPS' New Undersea Warfare Chair

(Navy.mil 18 Mar 22) ... Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tom Tonthat

(NPS.edu 18 Mar 22) ... Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Tom Tonthat

Retired Navy Vice Adm. Phillip G. Sawyer has taken the helm as the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS) Undersea Warfare (USW) Chair, and will now serve as the primary liaison and advisor between the university and the Navy's submarine force.

Sawyer retired from active duty in September 2021, serving as Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy (N3/N5) in his final assignment. In fact, Sawyer [visited NPS in May](#) of 2021, and says he was highly impressed with the school's capabilities, and the direct Naval application of student research.

"The lieutenants and lieutenant commanders bring an enthusiasm through their academics and research that is rejuvenating and adds an operational advantage to the world-class organization that is the Naval Postgraduate School," said Sawyer. "It's just an ideal place to be able to come and work to progress the Navy and Marine Corps down the paths that we need for the future."

As a career submariner, Sawyer brings years of experience and knowledge to the USW program in guiding its future direction. He understands the importance of maintaining an advantage in the USW domain and how NPS can help solve Fleet problems and create operational advantage for the U.S. Navy to stay ahead of its rivals.

"There's a lot out there for undersea warfare and there's plenty of work for us to do both here at NPS and in the Navy," said Sawyer. "My goal here is twofold. First, help the students understand what undersea warfare is while helping the world-class academic staff here better understand the operational side of what they're doing and how it applies to the fleet.

"Also, I'm here to make sure that we're helping the fleet as best we can," he continued. "It's making sure that they have an open door to come in and say, 'Here's something we're trying to solve. Can Naval Postgraduate School help us with that?'"

Sawyer also sees the interdisciplinary capabilities of NPS as a way to support the USW program, finding ways for various areas of research to connect with the domain.

"I think the research that's done here – from acoustics or physics to mechanical engineering and additive manufacturing, even [artificial intelligence] and machine learning – have applications within the Navy and specifically USW," he said. "A strong link between what NPS is doing and how we're going to use that operationally is needed. With maybe some tweaks to refine or focus a project a little bit differently to leverage it for undersea warfare."

Sawyer says that NPS' interdisciplinary capacity is further demonstrated through its Naval Warfare Studies Institute (NWSI) and its task force approach to research to benefit USW and other programs.

"The point is that most Navy problems don't neatly fall into one degree discipline," said Sawyer. "If you're outside looking in, you may not know if it's a physics problem or an acoustic issue. NWSI is now the place to bring that problem and the NWSI team let the subject matter experts who understand NPS to all work on it. They will direct it to the right NPS experts – researchers, academics, professors, students – across departments to attack the problem. As Undersea Warfare Chair, I will be a senior advisor to some of the teams to develop an operational voice. I am very excited about the advent of NWSI here. I think it's going to be significant for the Fleet and NPS."

NPS President retired Vice Adm. Ann Rondeau also expressed excitement about the future of the USW program under Sawyer's leadership, while also offering her deep appreciation for the exemplary performance of former chair retired Rear Adm. Jerry Ellis, who served in the position from March 2009 until his retirement in 2021.

“I am deeply grateful to these leaders,” said Rondeau. “Rear Adm. Ellis dedicated his life to the Navy with nearly 60 years of total service. In the final chapter of his career, he focused his leadership into teaching and mentoring our warrior scholars, many of whom are leading the Naval forces today.

“Vice Adm. Sawyer brings a wealth of Fleet experience, strategic insight and exemplary leadership skill with him,” she continued. “We are very fortunate to have Vice Adm. Sawyer join our senior leader team and faculty. Our students, NPS and future Navy are in very good hands.”

As Sawyer steps into his new role, he says he’s looking forward to being a part of the university’s evolving impact on the future Fleet and force.

“I think Naval Postgraduate School is a world-class organization that brings together things you don’t find anywhere else,” Sawyer concluded. “Other civilian installations have world-class researchers and academics. Others have students like we have military students, but nobody brings it all together like NPS.”

[Career Submariner Steps in as NPS’ New Undersea Warfare Chair > United States Navy > News-Stories](#)

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The West Still Doesn’t Understand the Taliban

(Foreign Affairs 21 Mar 22) ... Carter Malkasian

The Taliban have been in power in Afghanistan for more than half a year. During that time, the United States and its allies have struggled to come up with a coherent policy response. Western leaders would generally like the Taliban to form an inclusive government, respect women’s rights, refrain from persecuting members of the former Afghan state, and renounce international terrorism. Amid an economic and humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, international policymakers are confronted with a serious dilemma: either they choose to continue to treat the Taliban as an international pariah and thereby withhold most forms of support, or they provide economic assistance to the country and effectively prop up the regime.

The policy debate is hindered by how surprisingly little the world knows about the new regime. The Taliban’s intentions, interests, and decision-making structure are foggy; its current leader, Mawlawi Haibatullah Akhundzada, has neither been seen on television nor photographed in years; other members of the Taliban’s leadership, such as Mullah Mohammad Hassan, Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar, and Sirajuddin Haqqani, are also rarely or never seen. A helpful guide to understanding the new Taliban regime is Bette Dam’s recent book, *Looking for the Enemy: Mullah Omar and the Unknown Taliban*. Dam’s richly detailed study, based on years spent tracking the Taliban as an investigative journalist, exposes many of the inner workings of the group—and highlights how little the West truly understands about how the movement functions. Offering a far more nuanced view of the group than has generally been portrayed in the West, her research suggests that policymakers should neither attempt to marginalize the regime completely nor expect the Taliban to bow to international demands. Rather, policymakers should aim to craft an open-minded but clear-eyed policy that avoids overly punitive actions while taking time to understand the organization and identify areas where cooperation is feasible. Thereby, they can avoid needlessly turning the Taliban into an enemy or expending valuable resources pressing for far-reaching concessions that are unlikely to ever occur. And crucially, in adopting such an approach, they may be able to prevent the country from sliding further into humanitarian disaster.

FILLING IN THE BLANKS

Dam has studied Afghanistan since the early 2000s, and in 2012 began writing a book about Mullah Mohammad Omar, the one-eyed leader of the first Taliban regime, which hosted Osama bin Laden and ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001, when it was [overthrown](#) by the United States. Mullah Omar had rarely been seen in public after the fall of the regime and has always been a somewhat mythical figure.



Dam's effort to track down the elusive Taliban leader led her on a years-long quest throughout the Afghan hinterlands, which she recounts in *Looking for the Enemy*. The conventional wisdom has long been that Omar led the Taliban from Pakistan in the wake of the 9/11 attacks. But amazingly, after years of persistent investigation, Dam reveals good evidence that he was based in Afghanistan—at times only a short distance from U.S. forces—right up to his death in 2013. Omar had evaded detection by living in a modest mud dwelling, communicating infrequently with his subordinates through cassette tapes or handwritten instructions.

Omar was never well understood. He was often portrayed in books and the media, especially in the early years of the war, as something of an extremist who gave sanctuary to al Qaeda. But Dam makes the case that Western policymakers and the media are biased against Omar and the Taliban because they know so little about them, complicating assessments of their connections with terrorism. “The mainstream media were talking up the enemy and in doing so were prolonging the war,” Dam writes scathingly. “Remarkably little credible information was to be found about Omar after his departure from Kandahar at the end of 2001. He and bin Laden were the key targets for the Americans and their allies in Afghanistan, but it was as if the two men had disappeared off the face of the Earth.” Indeed, when Omar died in 2013, no one outside a small coterie of Taliban members knew about it, and it would take more than two years for the information to leak out to the world.

Dam argues that the Taliban are widely misunderstood. She offers her account as a corrective to stereotypical portrayals of the group as oppressive zealots best known for banning music, instituting oppressive punishments, and barring the activities of women. Through extensive interviews with people who lived under Taliban rule, Dam demonstrates that life under the Taliban was never so uniform. Throughout the 1990s, communities under Taliban control could listen to traditional music, have poetry readings, and play sports. Though women were generally confined to the home, some girls attended primary schools. And, she writes, “There is little evidence for the common assumption that executions and stonings were being held every Friday in large stadiums in cities such as Kabul and Kandahar, and that local people were forced to attend.”

She also offers evidence that the movement commanded more popular support than is generally recognized, at least in the rural parts of the country. The residents of Kandahar, for instance, appreciated the Taliban's efforts in 1994 to clear out warlords who had been taxing and harassing them and to ensure basic security and stability. Living in a traditional society, they were not taken aback by the Taliban's strictures. Even in Kabul, some residents cheered in 1996 when the Taliban entered the city and ended the anarchy. And although enforcement of the new restrictions on daily life—and women's lives, in particular—could be harsh, some were pleased as food and fuel became cheaper and the airport reopened.

Dam also complicates assessments of the Taliban's support for al Qaeda—perhaps the issue of greatest concern to the United States and the world. She shows that the relationship between Omar and bin Laden was ambiguous. Although Omar allowed bin Laden to stay in Afghanistan, he was displeased with bin Laden's calls for international terrorism and tried to prevent him from talking to the media. Bin Laden's son later told Dam: “Relations were not good. Omar didn't really want anything to do with my father but he couldn't ignore him totally, precisely because he was being attacked so fiercely abroad.”

Dam argues that the Taliban are widely misunderstood.

The United States mismanaged this complexity, Dam argues. Washington's efforts to marginalize the Taliban in the 1990s proved largely counterproductive. The United States' pariah treatment of the Taliban obstructed mutual understanding, exacerbated biases, and deterred compromise, especially when dealing with al Qaeda. Military actions designed to compel the Taliban to repudiate al Qaeda instead triggered intransigence and entrenched Omar's refusal to turn over bin Laden. When, for instance, the United States attacked al Qaeda camps in eastern Afghanistan in 1998 after the group's bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania, Omar was outraged. “If the whole world carries on opposing us despite our assurances and keeps asking for bin Laden, then we won't hand him over,” he exclaimed. “Instead, we'll defend him to our last drop of blood.” Shortly thereafter, Omar warned the U.S. diplomat Tom Malinowski that such attacks would only increase Islamic solidarity and hostility toward the United



States. In the words of one of Malinowski's aides, "The sixty cruise missiles essentially drove him into bin Laden's arms."

Yet Dam also seeks to temper hopes that the group might be willing to make broader concessions in exchange for a degree of engagement with the West. As she observes, Taliban leaders have often prioritized their faith, at whatever cost that may bring to their international reputation, over practical compromises with the international community. After the Taliban destroyed two monumental Buddha statues near the central Afghan town of Bamiyan in 2001 and was met with global condemnation, for instance, Omar remarked: "I'm not concerned about our relations with the world. My task is to implement the rules of Islam, no more or less than that." Moreover, Omar famously refused to give up [bin Laden](#) to the United States out of fear that "enemies ... would tear into him and label him a fake Muslim if he were to hand over such a big prize to the United States." Omar even looked to his dreams for guidance, a practice that has a strong tradition among Afghan religious leaders. Policymakers would do well to pay close attention to these examples: the Taliban's current leader, Haibatullah, seems to model himself on Omar. Haibatullah similarly stays in Kandahar, avoids the camera, and is said to likewise privilege following his interpretation of Islam—a reading of Islamic law as the sole source of law and authority—over pragmatic dealmaking. Dam's book is a reminder to Washington and others that the Taliban's dedication to Islam is real, that they genuinely believe it is for the betterment of their country, and that they often value it over diplomatic compromise, often no matter the cost.

The strength of Taliban beliefs is evident not only in their relationship with the United States but with their primary benefactor, Pakistan. Dam shows that the Taliban's relationship with Afghanistan's neighbor has often been ambivalent and fraught: although the Taliban have accepted Pakistani aid and support, she writes, they resent what they perceive as Pakistan's arrogant treatment of Afghanistan as one of its provinces. "The Taliban saw foreign interference as a curse. [...] It was important for everyone to realize that the Taliban had emerged 'from within' the country." Dam quotes Omar scolding a Pakistani party leader for daring to advise him: "What exactly are you doing here? [...] You need to focus on getting an Islamic state in Pakistan first."

A NEW CHAPTER?

Dam's research helps policymakers chart a potential new course with the Taliban. Treating them as a reviled extremist movement may possibly inflame the very terrorist support that the United States and its allies fear most. Washington's conventional method of countering potential terrorist threats by launching strikes on Afghan soil comes with far more blowback than many U.S. policymakers have realized. Especially when civilians are killed, such strikes have turned local populations powerfully against the United States. If their use continues, it could prompt Afghans to rally around the Taliban regime—and potentially around other extremist groups in the region. Patient diplomacy to compel the Taliban to turn over wrongdoers is the better choice.

Per Dam's assessment of the Taliban, diplomatic engagement with the organization is the sensible option—perhaps even, as time passes, granting the regime a seat in the United Nations or even reopening a U.S. embassy. The Biden administration has been wise to allow banks to transact in Afghanistan and the international community to unfreeze their respective Afghan government assets and deliver aid without fear of U.S. retribution. While the Biden administration recently decided to authorize transactions involving the Afghan people, Washington should also consider repealing existing U.S. sanctions on financial transactions and trade with the Taliban government specifically. Both the United States and the Taliban would benefit from a neutral and independent Afghanistan, which would reduce the chances of the country becoming a field for great power rivalry and rekindling the civil war.

Treating the Taliban as a reviled extremist movement may inflame the very terrorist support that Washington fears most.

But those hoping that the Taliban will accede to Western demands regarding the formation of an inclusive government and respect for human rights will likely be disappointed. The Taliban may bend to small conditions—allowing a few more girls to go to school, humanitarian aid being funneled through nongovernmental organizations, restraining reprisals or public beatings—but loftier expectations are, unfortunately, baseless.



The unlikelihood of getting the Taliban to change their basic approach to governance and society make major economic investments in the country unlikely. Yet secondary levels of humanitarian assistance, divorced from politics, ought to be feasible. Afghanistan should receive aid on the basis of the suffering of its people, not as a reward to its government for being a cooperative partner. The Biden administration's controversial decision to devote half of the Afghan government's \$7 billion in frozen assets to humanitarian assistance, given directly to the Afghan people rather than through the Taliban government, appears to be a recognition of the limitations of working with the Taliban. It is also a sign of the powerful forces pushing the Taliban and the United States apart. The United States has few interests in Afghanistan, and in terms of domestic politics, giving U.S. taxpayer dollars to a former enemy would likely receive only lukewarm support at home. But while the degree of financial assistance necessary to sustain economic growth is politically infeasible, the United States and the international community should nonetheless avoid cutting the Taliban off.

As the United States and others think through how to engage with the new Taliban regime, any good strategy will require policymakers to practice patience, not assume the worst, and above all to try to learn more about their interlocutors. One does not have to like the Taliban to see that Dam offers sound policy counsel.

Carter Malkasian is Chair of the Defense Analysis Department at the **Naval Postgraduate School** and is the author of *The American War in Afghanistan: A History*. From 2015 to 2019, he served as Senior Adviser to U.S. General Joseph Dunford, then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

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ALUMNI:

Armed Services Committees Leadership Announces Selections for National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology

(Inhof Senate 17 Mar 22)

The bipartisan leadership of the House and Senate Armed Services Committees, Representatives Adam Smith (D-Wash.) and Mike Rogers (R-Ala.), Chairman and Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee (HASC), and Senators Jack Reed (D-R.I.) and Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.), Chairman and Ranking Member of the Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC), today announced their appointments to the National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology, which was established by Sec. 1091 of the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2022 (FY22).

The National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology will conduct a thorough review of how advances in emerging biotechnology and related technologies will shape current and future activities of the Department of Defense, provide an interim report to the President of the United States and the Armed Services Committees within one year, and submit a final unclassified report within two years to the President and the committees, including recommendations for action by Congress and the federal government.

Twelve appointed members will make up the Commission, including two members appointed by the HASC Chairman, one Member of the House and one not; two members appointed by the HASC Ranking Member, one Member of the House and one not; two members appointed by the SASC Chairman, one Member of the Senate and one not; two members appointed by the SASC Ranking Member, one Member of the Senate and one not; and one member each appointed by the Speaker of the House, House Minority Leader, Senate Majority Leader, and Senate Minority Leader, respectively.

The leaders of the Armed Services Committees named the following appointees:



Chairman Reed selected:

Senator Alex Padilla is the first Latino to represent California in the U.S. Senate. He was appointed in January 2021 to complete the Senate term of Vice President Kamala Harris. The son of immigrants, Padilla grew up in the San Fernando Valley and studied Mechanical Engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He was drawn to politics in response to California's anti-immigrant Proposition 187. Padilla was elected to the Los Angeles City Council in 1999 and the State Senate in 2006. As California's Secretary of State, he oversaw a historic expansion of voting rights and voter participation. Padilla serves as Chairman of the Senate Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, and Border Safety. He is a member of the Senate Committees on Budget; Environment and Public Works; Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs; Judiciary; and Rules. Padilla lives in the San Fernando Valley with his wife, Angela, and their three sons, Roman, Alex and Diego.

The Honorable Dov S. Zakheim is Senior Advisor at the Center for Strategic and International Studies and Senior Fellow at the CNA Corporation. Previously he was Senior Vice President of Booz Allen Hamilton where he led the firm's support of U.S. Combatant Commanders worldwide. From 2001 to April 2004 he was Under Secretary of Defense (Comptroller) and Chief Financial Officer for the Department of Defense. From 2002-2004 Dr. Zakheim was DOD's coordinator of civilian programs in Afghanistan. From 1987 to 2001 he was both corporate vice president of System Planning Corporation and chief executive officer of its international subsidiary. From 1985 until 1987 Dr. Zakheim was Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Planning and Resources. Dr. Zakheim currently serves on numerous government, corporate, non-profit and charitable boards and lectures and provides media commentary on national security issues domestically and internationally. He is a 1970 graduate of Columbia University with a B.A., summa cum laude; studied at the London School of Economics; holds a doctorate in economics and politics at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford; and has been an adjunct professor at several universities including the National War College, Columbia University and Yeshiva University.

Chairman Smith selected:

Congressman Ro Khanna represents California's 17th Congressional District, located in the heart of Silicon Valley, and is serving in his third term. Rep. Khanna sits on the House Armed Services, Agriculture and Oversight and Reform committees, where he chairs the Environmental Subcommittee. Additionally, Rep. Khanna is the Deputy Whip of the Congressional Progressive Caucus, serves as an Assistant Whip for the Democratic Caucus, and is the Democratic Vice Chair of the House Caucus on India and Indian Americans. Rep. Khanna is committed to representing the people and ideas rooted in Silicon Valley to the nation and throughout the world.

Paul Arcangeli will be retiring from the House Armed Services committee on April 1st after 18 years with the committee, most recently serving as staff director. He has served in a variety of roles with the committee since 2004, including as deputy staff director, minority staff director, and staff lead for the Subcommittee on Readiness. Prior to joining the Committee, he served as the Director of the Department of Defense's Humanitarian Demining Training Center at Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri. Previously, he served as executive vice president for a company conducting innovative research in fuel, emissions, and environmental technologies. In 1999, he retired from the U.S. Army after serving as an explosive ordnance officer, as a maintenance officer, and as the Chief of the Information Technology Projects Division at the United States Military Academy, West Point. He holds a Master of Science in information technology from the **Naval Post Graduate School** and a Bachelor of Science in biology from the University of North Georgia.

Ranking Member Inhofe selected:

U.S. Senator Todd Young is the senior United States Senator from Indiana, a seat to which he was first elected in 2016 after serving three terms representing the Ninth Congressional District of Indiana in the U.S. House of Representatives. Through Sen. Young's work on the Endless Frontier Act, his service on the Foreign Relations Committee, the Commerce Committee, and in his military service, he has lived



at the intersection of emerging technology and geopolitical challenges for years. As a Marine, fresh out of from the Naval Academy, he served in one of the first units utilizing unmanned aerial vehicles — revolutionary technology at that time that has become relatively commonplace today.

Dr. Alexander Titus is a Product Strategy & Operations Lead at Google Research where he focuses on driving alignment between research priorities and Google’s product priorities. Before Google, Dr. Titus was the first Assistant Director for Biotechnology within the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Research & Engineering, where he was the technical and oversight lead for all relevant research and engineering matters across the biotechnology portfolio. Dr. Titus holds a Ph.D. in Quantitative Biomedical Sciences from the Guarini School of Graduate & Advanced Studies at Dartmouth College, where his work focused on cancer biology and artificial intelligence/machine learning applications in biology. He also holds a dual BS/BA in biochemistry and biology from the University of Puget Sound.

Ranking Member Rogers selected:

U.S. Representative Stephanie Bice represents the Fifth Congressional District of Oklahoma. Prior to her election to Congress, Bice served in the Oklahoma State Senate for six years. Before her public service, Bice worked in the private sector for eight years in financial oversight, business strategy and marketing for her family's technology company. In addition, she ran her own marketing company, and later helped lead a boutique digital marketing agency as vice president of business development. Rep. Bice is President of the Freshman Class and serves on the Cybersecurity and Military Personnel Subcommittees on the House Armed Services Committee.

Jason Kelly, Ph.D. is the co-founder and CEO of Ginkgo Bioworks. Ginkgo is a synthetic biology company headquartered in Boston, MA that programs cells for customers in the chemical, pharmaceutical, food and energy industries. Prior to Ginkgo, Jason received B.S. degrees in Chemical Engineering and Biology and a PhD in Biological Engineering all from MIT.

[Armed Services Committees Leadership Announces Selections for National Security Commission on Emerging Biotechnology \(senate.gov\)](#)

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Creighton Joins West Bend Mutual Insurance Board

(Biz Times 17 Mar 22)

Kathleen M. Creighton has been elected to the board of directors of West Bend Mutual Insurance Company in West Bend. Creighton recently transitioned from the U.S. Navy after a 33-year career, including six years as a Rear Admiral. She was one of a few Information Warfare Community Flag Officers specializing in cybersecurity, information technology (IT) solutions, network operations, and C4ISR capabilities. Creighton has led large organizations with global footprints for the past six years. These include Director, Command, Control, and Communications and Computers at U.S. Indo Pacific Command, where she directed cyberspace operations and enabled assured communications for 375,000 U.S. forces in theater.

Creighton brings communications, cybersecurity, IT, and cloud strategy policy and governance expertise to West Bend’s board. “Kathleen’s exceptional leadership and prestigious career within the U.S. Navy will bring a truly unique perspective to our already talented board. We’re pleased Kathleen has joined this impressive group,” stated Kevin Steiner, West Bend president, and CEO.

Creighton is a graduate of the University of Notre Dame and was commissioned through the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps program, where she graduated from the **Naval Postgraduate School** with a Master of Science in Information Technology Management.

[Creighton joins West Bend Mutual Insurance board \(biztimes.com\)](#)



President Biden Announces Key Regional Appointments for USDA, FEMA, and HUD

(The White House 17 Mar 22)

Today, President Joe Biden appointed the following individuals to serve in key regional leadership roles at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) at the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):

- Julia Wickard, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, Indiana
- Jeffrey Holmes, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, New Hampshire
- Steve Dick, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, South Dakota
- Deidre Deculus Robert, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Louisiana
- Lucas Ingvoldstad, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Nevada
- Erin Oban, USDA State Director, Rural Development, North Dakota
- Nikki Gronli, USDA State Director, Rural Development, South Dakota
- Perry Hickman, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Virginia
- Ryan Thorn, USDA State Director, Rural Development, West Virginia
- Thomas Sivak, FEMA Regional Administrator, Region 5
- Juana Matias, HUD Regional Administrator, Region 1
- Candace Valenzuela, HUD Regional Administrator, Region 6

These regional appointees will be critical to the President's efforts to rebuild communities most impacted by the pandemic, the economic recovery, and climate change. They bring deep expertise in their issue areas as well as critical relationships with federal, state, tribal, and local leaders. And, consistent with the President's commitment to building an administration that looks like America, these regional appointees represent the diversity of America and the communities they serve.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE (USDA)

The USDA's Farm Service Agency implements agricultural policy, administers credit and loan programs, and manages conservation, commodity, disaster, and farm marketing programs in each U.S. State. Its mission is to equitably serve all farmers, ranchers, and agricultural partners through the delivery of effective, efficient agricultural programs for all Americans. State Executive Directors oversee this work, ensuring the needs of local constituents are met and that USDA resources are distributed equitably and fairly.

USDA's Rural Development mission area is committed to helping improve the economy and quality of life in rural America. State Directors lead offices that offer grants, loans, and loan guarantees to help create jobs and support economic development and essential services.

Julia Wickard, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, Indiana

Hailing from her family's Hoosier homesteaded livestock and row-crop farm, Julia A. Wickard, her husband, and two children own and operate Wickard Livestock where they raise registered Angus cattle and Boer goats. Wickard embarked on a journey with the State of Indiana at the Indiana Department of Environmental Management (IDEM) in April of 2017 as the Government Affairs Director and Agricultural Liaison. Just a few short months following her arrival at IDEM, she was appointed as Assistant Commissioner in the Office of Program Support, while also maintaining her Agricultural Liaison role. Prior to IDEM, she served for eight years as the Indiana State Executive Director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA) where she led over 300 employees in 75 county offices in administering federal agricultural programs. She served as the Executive Vice President of the Indiana Beef Cattle Association, Chief Operating and Marketing Officer and Environmental and Natural

Resources Director at the Indiana Farm Bureau Inc., and was the Environmental and Natural Resources Director in the Office of the Commissioner of Agriculture. She has worked for the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, Inc. and served two members of Congress.

Wickard is a graduate of AgrInstitute's Indiana Agricultural Leadership Program and currently chairs the board of directors. She is a recipient of Indiana's highest honor from the Governor of the State, the Sagamore of the Wabash, and in 2019 was recognized as a Purdue University Agricultural Sciences Education and Communication Distinguished Alumni. Wickard is active in her community and enjoys spending time with family and exhibiting cattle and goats in the state and across the country.

Jeffrey Holmes, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, New Hampshire

Jeffrey Holmes is a fifth-generation farmer from Langdon, New Hampshire on property owned by the family since 1873. The farm was home to registered jersey cattle for over 80 years. Commodities currently produced on the farm include hay, corn, maple, timber, and firewood. Holmes' public service includes 22 years on the New Hampshire Farm Bureau (NHFB) Board of Directors with eight years as NHFB President, 15 years as the Langdon town moderator, FSA county committee member, and County Executive Director in the Cheshire-Sullivan County office. Holmes and his wife Lisa are the proud parents of two adult children, and are enjoying the arrival of a grandson born in 2021.

Steve Dick, USDA State Executive Director, Farm Service Agency, South Dakota

Steve Dick has served as the Executive Director of Ag United for South Dakota since January 2005. Within this capacity he worked with the South Dakota Farm Bureau, South Dakota Cattlemen, South Dakota Pork Producers, South Dakota Soybeans, South Dakota Corn Growers, South Dakota Dairy Producers, and the South Dakota Poultry Industries Association to organize events and activities connecting consumers with South Dakota farm and ranch families. Before joining Ag United, Dick served on Senator Tom Daschle's (D-SD) staff for a total of ten years in South Dakota and Washington, DC. In his last position with Senator Daschle, he served as the Agriculture Outreach Coordinator.

A native of southeastern South Dakota, Dick operates his family's farm near Canistota in McCook County where he grows corn and soybeans and feeds cattle. He has served on the boards for East Dakota Water Development District, South Dakota Ag Foundation, East Dakota Education Foundation, Sioux Valley Energy Operation Round-Up, and the West Central School District. He is a graduate of the University of South Dakota. Dick and his wife, Jeanne, reside in Hartford and are the parents to two children, Truman, a student at the University of South Dakota, and Eleanor, a student at West Central High School.

Deidre Deculus Robert, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Louisiana

Deidre Deculus Robert was born and raised in rural Mamou, Louisiana. She has been immersed in agriculture and rural development her entire life; her mother retired from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and father served on the Farm Services Agency State Committee. Robert has over two decades of legal, administrative, and executive management experience. Her legal career began in the Parish Attorney's Office of the City of Baton Rouge-Parish of East Baton Rouge as an assistant city prosecutor. During her 11 years with the City-Parish, she advanced to become the first female African American section chief. She worked for over six years as an assistant attorney general with the Louisiana Department of Justice, where she served as deputy director of the Public Protection Division, deputy director of the Litigation Division, and special litigation counsel assigned to defend the Louisiana Judiciary.

Recently, Robert served as the executive counsel for the Louisiana Department of Transportation and Development. Her responsibilities included managing legislative affairs on the federal, state, and local levels and supervising the innovative procurement/alternative delivery, and human resources of the agency. She collaborated with state and local partners advance infrastructure needs including rail, broadband, and bridges throughout the state. Previously, Robert served as general counsel of the Southern University and A&M College System, the only HBCU college system in the country. Robert has focused her passion for service with the Louisiana State Bar Association Diversity Committee and House of



Delegates; the Louisiana Bar Foundation as a fellow and board member; the Louis A. Martinet Legal Society; Junior League of Baton Rouge; Arts Council of Greater Baton Rouge, and more. She and her husband James reside on their ranch in Glynn, Louisiana with their two sons.

Lucas Ingvaldstad, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Nevada

A native Nevadan born and raised in Reno, Lucas Ingvaldstad attended the University of Nevada, Reno where he earned his Master of Science degree in Land Use Planning Policy in 2011 and a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology in 2005. In 2016, Ingvaldstad was acknowledged as the Young Alumni of Year by the College of Science and Mackay School of Earth Sciences.

Ingvaldstad's professional experience includes public policy, public affairs, legislative relations, stakeholder engagement, and business development. Ingvaldstad previously served as the Senior Director of Government and External Affairs for Eolus North America, a utility-scale renewable energy developer focusing on solar, wind, and battery storage projects throughout the Mountain West. Ingvaldstad directed legislative and regulatory strategies and closely engaged with elected officials and administrators to promote renewable energy development, to combat climate change and promote economic development. Before joining Eolus, Ingvaldstad served as a senior advisor to U.S. Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-NV), where he focused on energy, agriculture, and natural resource issues. Ingvaldstad was responsible for regularly communicating with Nevadans and stakeholders on issues relating to energy, public lands, water, natural resources, and economic development, and worked directly with Native American tribes. Ingvaldstad developed strategic outreach initiatives by collaborating with local governments, industry, nonprofit organizations, and advocacy groups, and played a key role in organizing the Lake Tahoe Summits and the National Clean Energy Summits. In Ingvaldstad spare time, he loves spending time with family, is an avid cyclist, and enjoys being outdoors, backyard gardening, and cooking.

Erin Oban, USDA State Director, Rural Development, North Dakota

Erin Oban grew up in a farm family in Ray, North Dakota, a small, rural community in the heart of Bakken oil country. Oban moved to Bismarck to further her education and received a bachelor's degree in Mathematics Education at the University of Mary. Oban's professional career began as a middle school math and technology teacher before gaining experience in nonprofit management, politics, and public service. She is currently employed as the Director of Community Engagement with the Central Regional Education Association where she supports efficiencies and effectiveness in education through partnerships between school districts and local, regional, and statewide organizations and agencies to provide programs and services for the students, families, and educators in their communities.

Oban was elected in 2014 and re-elected in 2018 to represent central Bismarck's District 35 in the North Dakota State Senate. Oban has become an effective and respected leader, rising most recently to the position of Assistant Senate Minority Leader. Throughout her two terms in the legislature, she has served on the Senate's Education, Energy and Natural Resources, Agriculture, Government and Veterans Affairs, and Political Subdivisions Committees. Oban has been thrice elected by her peers to serve on the powerful Legislative Management Committee and was twice appointed with bipartisan support as chairwoman of the legislature's Interim Education Policy Committees. Her leadership in the Senate on issues of importance has been recognized by many local and statewide associations. Oban makes her home in Bismarck with her husband, Chad, and their 5-year-old son, Evin.

Nikki Gronli, USDA State Director, Rural Development, South Dakota

Nikki Gronli grew up in Aurora, South Dakota. She received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Minnesota, and began her career in advertising and marketing in Minneapolis. She returned to South Dakota in 2001 and continued to work on some of the best-known brands in the region, including South Dakota Tourism. Gronli will be leaving her role as Marketing Specialist at SDN Communications where she oversaw the brand, traditional marketing, and educational events. This professional experience helped her achieve board positions with Dakota State University's Cybersecurity Industry Advisory Board and formerly, President of the Department of Defense STARBASE program. In her current role, Gronli has been an advocate for broadband expansion in South Dakota. Gronli



understands extending critical broadband infrastructure to under-served communities and tribal areas is key to diversifying South Dakota's economy.

Gronli is active in her community through numerous board and committee positions such as Minnehaha County Housing Redevelopment Committee, Siouxland Heritage Museum Board, and LEAD South Dakota, and recently served as vice chair of the South Dakota Democratic Party and chair of the Minnehaha County Democratic Party. Gronli and her husband Brian live in the rural Dell Rapids area, where they raised their four now-grown children. They are proud grandparents of two. In their downtime, they enjoy travel, hiking, and fishing – even in the winter.

Perry Hickman, USDA State Director, Rural Development, Virginia

Perry M. Hickman grew up in Tappahannock, Virginia and still resides in this small rural community. Hickman is a 1985 graduate of Virginia Commonwealth University and received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Administration and Management with a concentration in Real Estate and Urban Land Development.

Hickman has more than 20 years of combined sales experience in mortgage lending and telecommunications services. Hickman started his federal career with USDA Rural Development in April 2008, and he has primarily worked in the Rural Development Community Programs division to assist rural municipalities, non-profit corporations, and Tribal entities that seek federal financial assistance to enhance their ability to provide essential services for the orderly development of a rural community. Hickman has been a Rural Development National Office Senior Loan Specialist where he planned Public, Private, Partnership (P3) events with commercial lenders and other private sector partners. Annually, these P3 events accounted for obligating more than \$200 million of congressionally appropriated funds through the Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan Program. As the Virginia Community Programs Director, Mr. Hickman managed a \$750 million portfolio.

Ryan Thorn, USDA State Director, Rural Development, West Virginia

Born, raised, and educated in West Virginia, Ryan Thorn grew up the son of a coal miner and learned early in life the importance of hard work, serving others, and dedication to creating opportunities for rural communities. Thorn has 15 years of professional experience in the private and public sectors, working in the fields of public and government affairs and economic development. He previously served more than five years as Economic Development Manager for the Office of U.S. Senator Joe Manchin III (D-WV). In this role, he worked with local, state, and federal stakeholders to attract new and expand existing businesses, strengthen public infrastructure, develop a skilled and ready workforce, and create economically diverse and resilient communities across the state. Thorn is the first in his immediate family to graduate from college and is an advocate for lifelong learning. He holds a master's degree from West Virginia University, a bachelor's degree from West Virginia Wesleyan College, and is a board member of the Southern West Virginia Community and Technical College Foundation.

FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (FEMA)

Regional Administrators lead FEMA's 10 Regional offices and coordinate directly with the FEMA Administrator to support state, local, tribal, and territorial (SLTT) communities in their geographic area of operations delivering frontline services across the spectrum of preparedness, mitigation, response, recovery, and continuity programs. The Regional Administrators play a critical role in delivering timely, efficient, effective, and accessible federal assistance.

Thomas Sivak, FEMA Regional Administrator, Region 5

Thomas Sivak serves as the Deputy Director of Operations for Cook County, Illinois Department of Emergency Management and Regional Security. Sivak's key areas of emphasis are preparedness, planning, logistical response capabilities, information sharing and operational coordination across 135 municipalities. Throughout Sivak's 15-year emergency management and public safety career, he has proudly served both private and public sector organizations. He is skilled in and recognized as a subject



matter expert in safety, security, emergency management, disaster relief, pandemic response, and coordination.

Throughout his career, Sivak has served in leadership roles during major Emergency Operations Center and incident management activations as a result of major incidents and events. These include the 2012 Super Bowl, 2018 Mercy Hospital Active Shooter Incident, COVID-19 pandemic, civil unrest in May and August 2020, and Presidential Election Consequence Management. Sivak is a Certified Emergency Manager through the International Association of Emergency Managers and a graduate of the Executive Leadership Program at the **Naval Postgraduate School** Center for Homeland Defense and Security. He holds a Master of Science in Public Service Leadership from DePaul University, a Bachelors of Arts degree from Marquette University, and is originally from East Cleveland, Ohio.

Region 5 serves Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, Ohio, and Wisconsin.

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (HUD)

Regional Administrators lead HUD's 10 Regional Offices that directly serve state and local organizations. Regional Administrators oversee field offices across each state in their region and ensure the Department directly serves local communities. Regional Administrators play a key role in leading assignments of housing assistance funds within the region and coordinating those assignments with HUD headquarters.

Juana Matias, HUD Regional Administrator, Region 1

Juana Matias is a member of the Massachusetts Bar Association and served as the Chief Operating Officer for MassINC, a nonprofit, non-partisan public policy think and action tank and civic news organization. In this capacity, she oversaw the organization's internal operations, policy and advocacy strategy, development, and communications, and served as the main spokesperson with elected officials, policy makers, and the media. She also led efforts to strategically advance MassINC's research in policy areas which included the K-16 education continuum, housing choice, criminal justice reform, transit-oriented development, and racial and economic justice.

Previously, Matias served as the State Representative for the 16th Essex District, becoming the first Latina immigrant elected to the Massachusetts House of Representatives. During her time at the State House, she secured an 81% increase in local funding for her district, and sponsored key legislation that protected immigrant rights, stimulated the production of new affordable housing, promoted access to minority-owned and women-owned businesses, addressed inequities in our public-school systems, and expanded opportunities for working class Americans.

Region 1 serves Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Candace Valenzuela, HUD Regional Administrator, Region 6

Candace Valenzuela is a mother, an educator, and a former school board trustee. She credits HUD and public education with giving her the stability she and her family needed to thrive as she experienced food and housing insecurity throughout childhood. After becoming the first in her family to graduate college, Valenzuela has since devoted her life to fighting for opportunities for others. She first ran for her local school board to improve Texas schools, becoming the first Latina and first Black woman to serve on the Carrollton-Farmers Branch school board. While on the board, she worked to ensure that faculty and staff would be able to afford to live in the district they served, and that students would have a strong education to help them overcome life's challenges. Valenzuela was the Democratic nominee for Congress in Texas' 24th District in 2020. She previously worked as a development manager for Metrocrest Services, a half-century-old non-profit that has worked hard to fight hunger, housing insecurity, and unemployment in her community.

[President Biden Announces Key Regional Appointments for USDA, FEMA, and HUD | The White House](#)

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