



The Passport

World Affairs Council of the Monterey Bay Area (www.wacmb.org)

June 2021

Quick Takes: World Issues in the Age of Covid-19

June 15, 2021: James Russell, Naval Postgraduate School
US - Israeli Relations at the Crossroads?



The United States has long been Israel's most important ally and its leading security collaborator. Following the violence and unrest that flared around Gaza and Jerusalem in May 2021, some politicians have called for a shift in US relations with Israel. Dr. James Russell, a specialist on the Middle East at the US Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, provides a brief history of the US-Israeli relationship and summarizes the challenges facing this partnership in the twenty-first century.

James A. Russell is an Associate Professor in the Department of National Security Affairs at NPS, where he teaches courses on US foreign policy in the Middle East, military innovation, and national security strategy. From 1988 to 2001, he held a number of positions in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Affairs (Near East and South Asia). He earned his MA in Public and International Affairs from the University of Pittsburgh and his PhD in War Studies from the University of London.

June 30, 2021: Clinton Watts, Foreign Policy Research Institute
Surviving in a Social Media World of Hackers, Terrorists, Russians, and Fake News

Clint Watts discusses the rise of social media influence in the United States, drawing on his highly acclaimed book *Messing with The Enemy* (Harper Collins, 2018), which examines the ways that bad actors use social media platforms. He also describes the processes by which the illusion of increased preferences and choices influences the erosion of democratic norms.

Watts is a Foreign Policy Research Institute Fellow, and a Senior Fellow at the Center for Cyber and Homeland Security at George Washington University. He frequently appears as a national security contributor on NBC News and MSNBC. He has testified before four different Senate committees about Russia's information warfare campaign against the US and the West. He previously served as a US Army infantry officer and an FBI special agent. Clint Watts earned his BS from the US Military Academy and his MA from the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey.



Affiliate Report: Defense Language Institute

The Defense Language Institute Foreign Language Center at the Presidio of Monterey shares many values and interests with WACMB, and we are proud to have it as an affiliated organization. For the past two years, Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin Selzer has been DLI's liaison to WACMB. In early May, LTC Selzer informed us that he is moving on to his next duty station. We wish him well, and look forward to welcoming his replacement, LTC Daniel Bolton, who is due to arrive as this *Passport* goes to press. LTC Selzer sent these two items of interest about events at DLI:

- DLI has been administering Covid-19 vaccinations for more than four months now, vaccinating its own faculty, students, and staff, as well as those affiliated with other local military installations, including NPS. DLI's supply of vaccine is more than sufficient to meet the demand, and all age-related restrictions have been lifted. Covid-19 positivity rates at DLI remain extremely low. As a result, by the time you receive this *Passport*, DLI should be back to 100 percent in-person learning.
- DLI will host the Joint Foreign Area Officer (FAO) course in June. FAOs are described by the Army as "soldier statesmen," who develop expertise and language skills relevant to a particular region of the world. More than 200 officers and spouses will attend this course. As vaccination rates rise and the pandemic eases, we can look forward to having members of the DLI FAO community become involved once more in events around the Monterey Peninsula area that are related to international relations, such as WACMB programs.

Watch for the WACMB Survey!

As Covid-19 case numbers continue to drop, and restrictions on public gatherings are lifted, your WACMB board is looking forward to resuming the in-person luncheon meetings that were our standard practice before the pandemic. Our highest priority is the health of our members, particularly those with pre-existing conditions that make them more vulnerable to infection.

As we contemplate this re-opening, we want to hear your thoughts on which conditions would allow you to feel comfortable attending meetings in person. To do this, we will be emailing a survey to the members later in the month. Please fill yours out and return it as soon as possible, so that we will be able to include your thoughts in the decision-making process.

Discussion Group

The WACMB Discussion Group will meet on Monday, June 7, to discuss US foreign policy in Central America and its impact on immigration policy. This quite timely discussion will be held from 4:00 - 5:30 pm via Zoom.

The WACMB Discussion Group is facilitated by Judith Glickman and Boyd Haight. If you are interested in participating in the group, please send an email to info@wacmb.org and let them know. Come join the conversation!

New CSUMB Liaison

This month, WACMB is pleased to welcome Dr. Lawrence Samuels as CSUMB's new liaison to WACMB. Lawrence is the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and the Executive Director for the University Corporation. He holds a BA from UC Berkeley, and an MA and PhD from Stanford.

Welcome to our New Board Members

In May 2021, the Nominating Committee presented the board with a slate of seven names for consideration as board members. The board approved the slate unanimously. Six of those elected are new to the WACMB board; brief biographies of each can be found below. In addition, the board is delighted to welcome **Jerry Sullivan** back to the board after a hiatus following six years of service (which is required by the WACMB bylaws). Jerry has worn many hats over the years and knows every corner of this organization quite well. We are grateful for his continued service to WACMB!

Jenny Acuff: As the daughter of a US Foreign Service Officer, Jenny lived in various countries in South and Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa. She returned to the United States for college, earning a bachelor's degree in Political Science and International Studies from the University of Florida. Following a year teaching English in Orleans, France, Jenny enrolled in the International Policy and Development program at MIIS, where she focused on Migration, Tracking, and Human Security, and earned her master's degree in 2020. She looks forward to a career in development - perhaps in one of the countries where she grew up.

Boyd Haight: A fourth-generation Californian, Boyd was born and raised in Palo Alto. He earned a BS in Biological Sciences from Stanford and an MS in International Agricultural Development (Aquaculture) from UC Davis. An experienced international development professional, Boyd worked for the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization for nearly 40 years, living in the Central African Republic, Kenya, Zambia, Zimbabwe, and Italy, and working in over 50 countries. He also served as a Peace Corps and UN volunteer.

Sharad Joshi: An Associate Professor at MIIS's Graduate School of International Policy and Management, Sharad studies terrorism and nuclear weapons, with a focus on South and Southeast Asia. He is also an associate fellow for International Security at the UK's Chatham House think tank. He received a BA in Economics from the University of Rajasthan in Jaipur, an MA in Politics from Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, and a PhD in International Affairs from the University of Pittsburgh.

James Plotts: Recently retired after 26 years of US government service, James worked in Army intelligence, the Foreign Service, and the CIA. He was stationed in South Korea, the UK, Japan, Vietnam, Poland, Argentina, France, Norway, Denmark, and Iraq, working in signals intelligence, counterproliferation, sanctions, and counterterrorism. He was involved in multiple international negotiations, and had a recurring focus throughout his career on North Korean security issues. James has an MA in International Policy Studies from MIIS.

Jim Suchan: A Professor Emeritus at NPS, Jim taught in the Graduate School of Defense Management for over 32 years. He has published more than 40 articles in refereed journals, focusing on communication thinking, practice, and efficiency in organizations. He has been a Scholar in Residence at Rice, Notre Dame, and Michigan, and has consulted for numerous organizations, including IBM, South Central Bell, General Motors, and the IRS. Jim earned a BA and an MA at SUNY Buffalo, and a PhD from the University of Illinois (Urbana).

Robert Tomlinson: After 26 years in the Air Force, during which he commanded at the squadron and group level, Robert retired at the rank of colonel and began a career in academics. He is an Associate Professor of National Security Affairs in the Naval War College program at NPS, where he focuses on Shi'a representation in Lebanon and US policy in the Middle East. He holds a BA from Holy Cross, master's degrees from Golden Gate University and CSU Northridge, and a PhD in Modern Middle Eastern History and National Security Policy from Claremont Graduate University.

This is the monthly newsletter of the World Affairs Council of the Monterey Bay Area (WACMB). WACMB is a nonprofit, non-partisan organization established to promote the presentation, discussion, and study of international affairs. WACMB is a tax-exempt 501 (c) (3) organization, EIN-770301206. Contributions are tax deductible as permitted by law. WACMB sponsors monthly luncheons, discussion groups, and student scholarships.

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Passport Editor: Elizabeth Robinson