

## Select Upcoming Events

### SMART WOMEN, SMART POWER: A CONVERSATION WITH CARLY FIORINA

Monday, April 6, 2015  
5 p.m.–7 p.m.

CSIS, 1616 Rhode Island Ave., NW

### EUROPEAN TRILATERAL NUCLEAR DIALOGUE: DEFENSE AND NATIONAL SECURITY GROUP

April 14–15, 2015

Paris, France

## Select Recent Events

### A NEW APPROACH TO THE NUCLEAR FUEL CYCLE

Featured members of the New Approaches to the Fuel Cycle (NAFC) project discussing their findings, recommended “best practices,” and their role in ensuring a secure and sustainable nuclear future.

### A COOPERATIVE STRATEGY FOR 21ST CENTURY SEAPOWERS: FORWARD, ENGAGED, READY

Featured Admiral Greenert, Admiral Zukunft, and General Dunford on how this new strategy will ground how the maritime services think, plan, and act.

### AGILITY, ACQUISITION, AND AMERICAN SECURITY

Featured Chairman Mac Thornberry on his plans for Department of Defense and acquisition reform in an era of sequestration and tight budgets.

## NOT SO FAST—U.S. DRONE EXPORT POLICY ISN'T AS “NEW AND IMPROVED” AS ADVERTISED

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When the United States announced last month a new policy governing the export of U.S. drones, news outlets **overwhelmingly declared** a coming flood of U.S. military drone sales around the world. The facts tell a different story.

The president’s policy is not new, will not lead to rapid proliferation of U.S.-made drones, and does nothing to clarify the confusion about why drones should be treated differently from other weapons systems. What the policy does is build on past, case-by-case decisions. The United States has previously sold military unmanned aerial vehicles, or UAVs, to several nations. For example, the Italian Air Force acquired Predators in 2004 and the more advanced Reaper derivative in 2010. On the opposite end of the size spectrum, the United States has sold the hand-launched Raven to partners ranging from the United Kingdom to Yemen.

If the February 17 announcement didn’t constitute a truly new policy on drone exports, how should one view these rules? To paraphrase The Who: Meet the new policy, same as the old policy. In working to articulate a unified policy to govern drone exports, the government assembled an amalgamation of existing policies and practices. This has some value in providing a clear starting point for government review of these sales and offering a set of principles that the United States can use with other nations.

However, the policy in no way lowers the barrier to exports established by various agreements, including the Missile Technology Control Regime, or MTCR. Under the MTCR, unmanned systems with a range greater than 300 kilometers and a payload above 500 kilograms—such as the Predator—are subject to strict controls including a “strong presumption of denial” for export. Although the new export policy may help speed decisionmaking, the larger and more capable UAVs will still be subject to enhanced controls.

What’s most disappointing about the policy is that it in no way distinguishes what makes drones new and different. Manned assets performing many of the same functions of a UAV would not trigger enhanced review, but under the new policy, the same capability would trigger the highest degree of scrutiny when the flight controls are located remotely. Paradoxically, the policy in no way addresses the truly new aspect of UAVs, their potential for increasing degrees of autonomy. Also left unclear is the distinction between commercial and military drones in this export policy. While military drones may be engineered to better survive combat conditions, commercial UAVs will offer an 80 percent solution in almost all missions.

## NOT SO FAST—U.S. DRONE EXPORT POLICY ISN'T AS “NEW AND IMPROVED” AS ADVERTISED (CONT.)

The U.S. drone export policy is a first step in providing a foundation from which policy can evolve, but it represents a missed opportunity to establish a forward-looking, enduring policy. And despite arguments to the contrary, it likely will not result in a wave of new U.S. drone exports. In fact, over time, it will almost certainly become more restrictive for UAV exports than intended. ■

## EAST ASIA SUMMIT DIPLOMACY: TIME FOR PROGRESS

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The recently announced summit among Japan, South Korea, and China is an important and overdue step toward reducing tensions in East Asia. The last trilateral meeting was in 2012. Since that time, tensions between China and Japan have risen significantly over China's actions in Japanese-administered islands (Japan's view), and Japan's “wrong view of history” regarding both the ownership of the islands and its position on sex-crimes committed during World War II (China's view).

Korea has not escaped rising tensions, either. As South Korea seeks to ensure its security against an aggressive and unpredictable North Korea, the United States has worked with South Korea to [deploy a THAAD battery](#)—a ground-based missile defense capability to intercept missiles at high altitude. Curiously, China has been outspoken against South Korea hosting this defensive capability. And Korea's longstanding concerns (aligned with China's) that Japan has not adequately understood or atoned for its acts in World War II continues to be a major point of division between two important U.S. allies in Asia.

Beyond security, there are important economic reasons for leaders of the three nations to meet. [Japan](#) and [Korea](#) have embarked on a robust program of quantitative easing—printing money by another name—that has sharply decreased the value of their currencies while simultaneously increasing the competitiveness of their exports. By contrast, China is struggling to maintain the value of the RMB, delicately balancing the need to spur exports (which benefit from a cheaper currency) with the need to enable its banks and companies to repay debts denominated in foreign currencies (which benefit from a stronger currency).

Just as countries throughout Asia seek signs of positive relations between China and the United States to provide reassurance that the region is not being pushed toward conflict, so too with relations among Japan, South Korea, and China. As the summit approaches, it will be important for these nations' leaders to create political space for cooperation, rather than take the largely zero-sum approaches seen now. ■

## Multimedia



**WATCH** Senator John McCain, Senate Armed Services Committee chairman, speak on his defense priorities for the 114th Congress.



**LISTEN** to a Smart Women, Smart Power podcast featuring Farah Pandith, the former and first-ever special representative to Muslim communities for the Dept. of State, discussing how to combat Islamic extremism.

## GARAGE BIOHACKING: A REALLY BAD IDEA

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Biohacking, a quasi-do it yourself editing process on living organisms, is further along than you may think. As Joi Ito, director of the MIT Media Lab, recently said, “A few years ago this would be Nobel Prize-winning stuff. Now you can do it in a kitchen.” Case in point: [Synbiota](#), a Toronto-based biotech organization, recently unveiled a [new kit to hack E. coli for \\$395](#). While several of today’s most important companies likewise started out of a garage (such as Apple, Amazon, and Google), providing biohacking capability to the general public presents unwanted security challenges in the near and long term.

In the near term, hacking of E.coli may seem harmless. However, someone with the means and access to our food could attempt to use the commercially available biohacking kit with the deadlier H30-Rx strain of E.coli, which is responsible for thousands of deaths in the United States every year. Longer term, trends in biotechnology may create the potential to edit life itself. Recent examples include [reengineering viruses like HIV to attack other viruses](#), [research to change a disease like avian flu \(H5N1\) and increase transmissibility](#), [dormant diseases coming back to life](#), and our ability to sequence [ancient DNA](#). [At this moment in time, we are less than 10 years away from someone having access to a serious pathogen, without direct access to the original virus](#). This means diseases such as the plague and smallpox or flu strains or even Ebola may be available for download in the not too distant future.

There is an opportunity now to start a dialogue about the ethics of these changes. [Some biologists have already taken a stand against making new editing techniques public in the hope](#) that we spend more time studying the long-term effects of such an approach. The policy community should join in this debate in order to identify ways to strengthen U.S. and global frameworks that can limit the security concerns that the coming proliferation of biotechnology capability may create. ■

## Media Highlights

“It accurately reflects a much greater sense of collaboration, which is producing a more coherent way ahead across the Department of the Navy.”

—Maren Leed to *Defense One* on the U.S. Navy’s new maritime strategy.

“I think when you’re talking about transnational groups like [the Islamic State] that aren’t affiliated with a particular state, putting a geographic limitation on it actually is harmful from a military perspective.”

—Stephanie Sanok Kostro to *Foreign Policy* on combating ISIS around the world.

## SAUDI ARABIA'S ENRICHMENT AMBITIONS

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As the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany (P5+1) inch toward a nuclear deal with Iran, senior Saudi officials have warned that “whatever comes out of these talks, we will want the same.” One key element in any agreement will be how to constrain Iran’s uranium enrichment capabilities, which can be used to create nuclear fuel or fissile material for nuclear weapons. Observers, citing Riyadh’s reluctance to formally forego uranium enrichment in its nuclear cooperation agreements and its quiet development of scientific expertise, have speculated that a final P5+1 deal that preserves Iran’s enrichment capability would spur Saudi efforts to acquire its own domestic enrichment program.

Although developing its own uranium enrichment technology is a theoretical possibility, most experts believe Saudi Arabia will try to buy enrichment equipment or an entire plant from an existing supplier. Supplier states within the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) agreed on specific criteria for enrichment and reprocessing transfers in 2011, but Saudi Arabia doesn’t meet many of those criteria.

There is another way, however. While there have long been rumors of clandestine Saudi-Pakistan nuclear cooperation, such cooperation on Saudi enrichment could be overt. Pakistan is not a member of the NSG and is unhappy that India is now being considered for NSG membership. Pakistan could legally sell Saudi Arabia enrichment technology; the only violation would be if Saudi Arabia did not make the proper declarations or submit the plant to International Atomic Energy Agency safeguards. Under the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Saudi Arabia could acquire sensitive enrichment technology (as long as it does not violate its safeguards agreement) and even accumulate stocks of highly enriched uranium, creating a latent nuclear weapons capability.

If Saudi Arabia pursued this path, other states might also be tempted to pursue sensitive fuel cycle technologies. These gaps in the nonproliferation regime raise questions about the efficacy of politically expedient “ad hoc” arrangements, and whether such arrangements should be supplemented with a more sustainable and principled approach toward the nuclear fuel cycle. ■

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## Recent Publications

**READ** “Mind the Gap: Spanning the Divide between Academics and Policy,” by Dr. Kathleen Hicks, for an analysis of the disconnect between these two worlds.

**READ** “Concrete Steps for the U.S. in the South China Sea,” by John Schaus, for insights into the conflicts over territories in the South China Sea.

**READ** “Iran: A Deal by Any Other Name,” by Sharon Squassoni, for answers to questions about the Iran nuclear talks.

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