

CASO Panel.

“Key Issues in South and Central Asia and China.”

(Senior leader Introduction).

19 March 2024

Good afternoon and Thank You for attending our next Cultural and Areas Studies Office INDOPACOM series of sessions.

Thanks to all who have made this event possible; U.S. Army Cultural and Area Studies Office (CASO), Command and General Staff College (CGSC), the Army University and CGSC staffs and especially the panel members. And for those who have taken the time to attend in person or online to learn and benefit from this great program, thanks for being here.

The Cultural and Area Studies Office, known as CASO, jointly with multiple partner organizations continue its series of events and discussions in support of the U.S. National Security and National Defense Strategy objectives across the spectrum of conflict. An important goal of these discussions, related analysis, and recommendations to broaden our understanding of the regional and global geopolitical dynamics in support of our missions across the country and globally.

China and Russia challenge our national security interests in different regions of the world and China is specifically referred by our senior leaders as the "pacing threat," and a "systemic challenge" to our global interests, starting in the INDOPACOM region. Today's panel could not be more timely....

Responding to these profound national security challenges, today, we at the Army University and U.S. Army Command and General Staff College continue our series of discussions with a focus on the INDOPACOM Theater of operations. Today's panel, which is sponsored by U.S. Army Cultural and Area Studies Office (CASO) of the Command and General Staff College (CGSC), continue addressing strategic challenges which China and Russia are posing for the U.S. and our allies in the region. The topic of our CASO panel today is: ***“Key Issues in South and Central Asia and China.”***

Today's session includes three panel members:

- ***Mr. Brent Christensen, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service (Department of State)*** for over 22 years, ***currently serving as Foreign Policy Advisor (POLAD) to the Commander of U.S. Strategic Command.*** His most recent overseas assignment was as the Political/Economic Counselor, and frequent Acting Deputy Chief of Mission, at the U.S. Embassy in Dhaka, Bangladesh. He has served in a variety of other roles involving South Asian issues, including as a Pearson Fellow on the House Foreign Affairs Committee Subcommittee on the Asia-Pacific, Deputy Director of the Office of Regional Security and Arms Transfers in the Bureau of Political-Military Affairs at the Department of State, and interim Director for South Asia at the National Security Council.
- ***LTC Moore is a Foreign Area Officer (South Asia).*** His last assignment was as the Senior Defense Official and Defense Attaché to the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh at U.S. Embassy, Dhaka. He served at the Defense Intelligence Agency and in the J5 of USINDOPACOM as a Security Cooperation Desk officer and chief of current operations branch. He served in India, attending the Defense Services Staff College (DSSC) in Tamil Nadu, India and at U.S. Embassy, New Delhi. LTC Moore was an adviser to the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Department of Border Enforcement (DBE), and was a partner to an Afghan National Army artillery battery.
- ***Dr. Robert Baumann is a historian of Russia and Central Asia.*** He taught at the Command and General Staff College for 35 years. He also spent 4 years working as a Ministry of Defense Education Advisor to the

Armed Forces Academy of Uzbekistan between 2016 and 2023 under the auspices of the US Defense and Security Cooperation Agency. Baumann holds a B.A. in Russian from Dartmouth College and a Ph.D. in History from Yale University. Back in 1979-1980 he conducted doctoral research at Moscow University as a Fulbright-Hayes Fellow. Subsequently, he conducted numerous research trips to Russia and taught briefly at the Bashkir State University in Ufa in 1992.

- ***Our Moderator is Dr. Mahir Ibrahimov*** (known as Dr. I.), ***Director of CASO***. **Background highlights:** Deputy platoon commander, Soviet Army, Russia/Baltics; Senior Middle East Expert, Moscow, USSR; Helped open the first embassy of independent Azerbaijan/ senior diplomat, Washington, DC; FSI, Department of State; Operation Iraqi Freedom, Iraq, (featured as linguistic 'genius'); First senior U.S. Army Culture/Language Advisor during COIN; U.S. CSA Study/mission to Ukraine. He is regularly invited to Europe in support of NATO partners with his regional and global expertise. Author or editor of six books. Dr. I.'s expertise is featured in BBC World News, Los Angeles Times, and other global venues. He is fluent in five languages and versed in many cultures.

The complete bios of the panel members and the moderator can be accessed at CASO website.

The opinions and discussion points during the session are those of the speakers and the moderator, and do not necessarily represent official positions of the United States government.

Without further ado I would like to turn the floor over to Dr. I., who will continue moderating throughout the session.

Educate to Win!
Thank you!