

Center for International Studies

The [Center for International Studies \(CIS\)](#) is the principal venue at MIT for research and training on international relations, security, political economy, and several other areas of scholarly and popular interest. Since its founding 67 years ago, it has grown to become one of the most productive and respected research institutions of its kind. A leader in scholarship, public service, public policy guidance, and education, CIS continues to broaden its scope while sustaining its longtime core strengths.

The center houses the Security Studies Program (SSP), the MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI), Seminar XXI, and the Program on Emerging Technologies (PoET), as well as several less formal activities and initiatives. Drawn mainly from the Department of Political Science, some 80 faculty, scholars, researchers, and fellows are affiliated with the center, joined by 40 administrative and support staff and graduate students.

The director is Richard J. Samuels, Ford International Professor of Political Science, and the executive director is John Tirman. In 2017–2018, Associate Professor of Political Science M. Taylor Fravel served as acting director while Professor Samuels was on sabbatical.

Several new developments and activities in AY2018 are worth highlighting:

- James Baker joined CIS as the year's Robert E. Wilhelm Fellow. Baker brought decades of experience in law and national security to the MIT community.
- The second annual briefing for consuls general based in New England convened in April, with CIS-affiliated scholars providing updates to the attendees on a range of topics.
- MISTI continued its vital role as the leading international education program on campus, sending hundreds of students abroad and offering new country programs and other learning and entrepreneurial opportunities.
- Among several successful Starr Forums, an exploration of the Trump-Putin relationship featuring journalist Julia Ioffe and chess champion Garry Kasparov drew an MIT audience of 500 and 30,000 more online.
- SSP's Vipin Narang and Taylor Fravel, both associate professors of political science, and senior research associate Jim Walsh were in high demand by the national news media to dissect the ongoing crisis in North Korea and East Asian security.
- Audrey Jiajia Li, a journalist from China, was the Elizabeth Neuffer Fellow this year. The fellowship, sponsored by the International Women's Media Foundation, was created in memory of Neuffer, a *Boston Globe* journalist who was killed in 2003 while reporting in Iraq. Audrey wrote for the *Globe* and the *New York Times* after a semester of classes at MIT.
- Jake Sullivan, an important Obama adviser on nuclear negotiations, was the keynote speaker at the Ruina Nuclear Age Speaker Series in November.

MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives

MISTI, the nation's leading applied international studies program, provides international education opportunities for MIT students and faculty through student internship, research, entrepreneurship, and teaching abroad programs; faculty funds; international events on campus; and partnerships with companies, research institutions, universities, and government agencies around the world.

MISTI operates 25 country and regional programs. Also, the Global Teaching Labs program added opportunities in Andorra; the MIT Global Startup Labs (GSL) program ran workshops in Azerbaijan, Belgium, Brazil, Germany, Mexico, Nepal, Peru, Rwanda, and South Africa; and the MISTI Global Seed Funds (GSF) program introduced new funds in Colombia, Spain, Africa, and Latin America.

The director of MISTI is J. Chappell Lawson, associate professor of political science, and the executive director is April Julich Perez.

MISTI Student Programs

MISTI offers MIT undergraduate and graduate students opportunities to intern, research, and teach abroad. These experiences are provided at no cost to the students. Students prepare for their placements through MIT courses in the language, history, and politics of the host country and a series of not-for-credit training modules developed by MISTI staff.

In 2017–2018, MISTI placed 1,247 students abroad. Of these placements, the majority were internships or research opportunities in companies, research institutions, or university laboratories. The Global Teaching Labs program sent 285 students to France, Georgia, Germany, Israel, Italy, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, Peru, Russia, Scotland, and Spain over Independent Activities Period (IAP). In addition, 63 students taught science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects during the summer through the China Educational Technology Initiative (CETI), the GSL program, and the Middle East Entrepreneurs of Tomorrow (MEET) program. The remaining placements were various opportunities made possible through MISTI. Overall, 2017–2018 MISTI student placements were as follows:

- 496 internships (companies, research institutions, nongovernmental organizations, government agencies, universities)
- 285 Global Teaching Labs
- 63 long-term teaching programs (CETI, GSL, MEET)
- 67 courses abroad (for credit)
- 23 externships
- 4 graduate school/postdoc placements
- 1 study abroad project
- 146 short-term research projects

- 26 facilitated or supported training programs
- 136 workshops

MISTI Global Seed Funds

The GSF program enables MIT faculty and research scientists to launch early-stage international projects and collaboration with colleagues abroad. Through an annual call for proposals, GSF awards funds that are used for international travel and meetings with international colleagues. Grantees must involve MIT undergraduate and graduate students in their projects. GSF comprises a general fund for projects in any given country and several country funds for projects in a particular country.

In 2017–2018, MISTI offered new funds in Colombia and Spain and in Africa and Latin America through the Global Partnerships Fund, bringing the total number of funds available to 23. MISTI received 253 applications from faculty and research scientists in 22 MIT departments and awarded 110 projects a total of \$2.2 million.

Collaborations

MISTI continued its partnership with the Legatum Center for Development and Entrepreneurship and the Martin Trust Center for MIT Entrepreneurship, whose staff created and facilitated training for the GSL program. MISTI also continued to collaborate with the MIT Innovation Initiative to provide opportunities for 35 part-time iDiplomats selected from among outbound MISTI students. The iDiplomats interview leaders in government, the corporate sector, and academia, as well as entrepreneurs, in order to develop in-the-field assessments of local innovation ecosystems. These experiences provide students with novel opportunities to gain a deeper understanding of local cultures and regional/national innovation ecosystems.

MISTI continued collaborations with other departments at MIT to offer additional student opportunities. MISTI-IROP (International Research Opportunities Program) internships enabled students to do research connected to MIT faculty collaborations at MISTI partner universities around the world. MISTI-PKG (Priscilla King Gray Public Service Center) interns worked in public service internships through the MISTI country programs.

Training and Campus Events

MISTI's country programs offer dozens of pre-departure and public events on international topics in politics, culture, science, technology, history, industry, and the humanities for the MIT community. During the 2017–2018 academic year, these events totaled more than 140 hours. This year, as a part of its pre-departure training programs for outgoing students, MISTI implemented a new online training program focusing on health and safety. MISTI also collaborated on a video with MIT's International Coordinating Committee to bring cultural resources to the community.

Security Studies Program

The Security Studies Program is a graduate-level research and education program; its senior research and teaching staff includes social scientists and policy analysts. A special feature of the program is the integration of technical and political analyses of national and international security problems. Security studies is a recognized field of study in the Department of Political Science, where courses emphasize grand strategy, causes and prevention of conflict, military operations and technology, and defense policy. Ford International Professor of Political Science Barry Posen is director of the program.

The program convenes seminars every Wednesday during both semesters that bring some of the most innovative thinkers on security to the center. It also sponsors several special events. Among the highlights are the following:

- On October 19, 2017, SSP held a special seminar titled *The U.S. Marine Corps in the Pacific: Assurance, Deterrence, and Warfighting*; the featured speaker was Lieutenant General David H. Berger, commander of the US Marine Corps Pacific forces.
- On November 8, SSP held its *Ruina Nuclear Age Speaker Series* with guest speaker Jake Sullivan, a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and Brady-Johnson Distinguished Practitioner in Grand Strategy at Yale University. The topic of his presentation was lessons in nuclear diplomacy.
- On March 6, 2018, Bates Gill gave a talk on “China’s New Strategic Forces: The PLA Rocket Force and the PLA Strategic Support Force: Implications for the United States.”
- On April 10, several members of the SSP faculty took part in the center’s second annual consuls general briefing, held at the Samberg Center. The event hosted representatives from 15 consulates in the Boston area.
- Also on April 10, SSP held its Doolittle Award Dinner. David W. Thompson, president and chief executive officer of Orbital ATK, received the 2018 Doolittle Award. His address, “The Role of Space Systems in National Security,” outlined the history of space systems as well as the need for continued innovation in both the civilian and military sectors.
- On April 26, The Nuclear Crisis with North Korea seminar and the biennial SSP alumni reception convened in Washington, DC.
- SSP held a seminar series titled *Focus on Russia* that considered a number of current issues in Russian politics and society. Speakers included Dimitar Bechev (research fellow at the Center of Slavic, Eurasian, and East European Studies, University of North Carolina), who discussed Russia and Turkey, and Andrey Kortunov (director general of the Russian International Affairs Council), who presented “Cold War 2.0.”

In addition, the program sponsored two talks at MIT’s Lincoln Laboratory: on May 18 Peter Krause of Boston College (an SSP alumnus) spoke on “How Human Boundaries Become State Borders: Radical Flanks and Territorial Control in the Modern Era, and on June 8 senior research associate Jim Walsh presented “Sanctions on North Korea: Effectiveness and Unintended Consequences.”

Sustaining a long tradition, SSP continued the Wednesday Seminar Series, which offers talks on topics relevant to national defense and international relations, including cybersecurity, China, Iraq, national security decision making, military technology, and military history. Speakers over the past year included academics, military officers, and think tank analysts. The speaker series is open to the entire MIT community and the general public.

SSP publishes an [annual report](#), a [quarterly digital newsletter](#), and a working paper series. In addition, several members of the program have made themselves available for a variety of media appearances. Program research is built around the interests of the faculty, graduate students' dissertations, and occasional commissioned projects. Key research areas are nuclear strategy and statecraft, change and stability in Asia, US foreign and defense policy, and internal conflict.

Researchers working in the area of nuclear strategy and statecraft are exploring the underlying logic of current nonproliferation strategies, particularly with regard to Iran and North Korea and in terms of resource allocation and counterproliferation policies.

Those studying change and stability in Asia are examining how China will manage active territorial disputes. Particular issues include the role of nationalism in shaping China's foreign policy, the implications of China's growing engagement within the Asian region, and securing Japan.

Those working in the area of US foreign and defense policy are examining the US strategy for global engagement. Topics include the nature and limits of US military power, the future of conventional warfare, and reassessments of the US grand strategy.

Researchers focusing on internal conflict are examining identity politics, particularly as it relates to political violence, civil war, counterinsurgency, and postconflict reconstruction.

SSP has a visiting fellows program in addition to the military fellows who rotate annually from the four US armed services. The Stanton Foundation has awarded funds to support several scholars on nuclear issues and a chair in political science. The program just completed its sixth year of the fellowship, which included one junior faculty fellow, one postdoctoral fellow, and one predoctoral fellow.

The Charles Koch Foundation awarded a new, two-year joint SSP–Harvard Kennedy School fellowship. It will support research addressing fundamental issues related to US grand strategy, foreign policy, and America's role in the world.

SSP receives major support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York to fund the program's research on global diffusion of power. It also received funding from the Stanton Foundation and the Frankel (MIT) Global Policy Fund, among other donors.

Program on Emerging Technologies

The activities of the Program on Emerging Technologies include retrospective studies on how risks have been managed in the past and prospective studies on the benefits and

risks of biological and information technologies. PoET research, education, and policy work is collaborative, with teams of technologists, natural scientists, and social scientists and policymakers working jointly on responsible innovation. Kenneth Oye, professor of political science and professor of data, systems, and society, is the director of the program.

PoET serves as a hub for the Synthetic Biology Policy Group, a network linking MIT, Harvard, Tufts, Stanford, North Carolina State University, Oxford, and Arizona State University. MIT-based projects focus on evaluations of safeguards to limit potential security, safety, and environmental effects of different applications. PoET fosters responsible conduct directly by providing leadership for the Broad Institute Bio-Foundry Safety Committee (chaired by Professor Oye) and the iGEM Safety Committee (co-chaired by Professor Oye).

Professor Oye's seminar and colloquium presentations over the past year included:

- "Communication and Governance of Emerging Technologies: The Case of Gene Drives" (Conference on Self Propagating Genetic Elements, University of Bremen, Bremen, Germany)
- "Proposal for a Workshop on Localization Safeguards and Data Needs" (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency Safegenes Retreat)
- "Cooperation" (National Academy of Sciences, Washington, DC)
- "Uncertainty and Effects of Emerging Technologies" (Workshop on Regulatory Scenarios for Proteins and Cell Therapies, University College London)
- "On Gene Drives: Mechanisms, Applications and Risk Governance Issues" (National Academy of Sciences Workshop on Future Directions for Laboratory Animal Law, Harvard Law School)
- "Governing Risks Associated with Next Generation Applications of Synthetic Biology" (EPFL, Lausanne, Switzerland; Arizona State University; and University of Tokyo)
- "A Survey of Issues on Trust in Precision Medicines" (Workshop on Trust in Precision Medicines, Geneva, Switzerland)
- "How Do Other Organizations Manage Such Responsibilities?" (From Paper to Practice: Implementing the Mining Code, United Nations International Seabed Authority Annual Session, Ocho Rios, Jamaica)

Articles stemming from the project's work this year included "Considerations for the Governance of Gene Drive Organisms" (*Pathogens and Global Health*), "A Roadmap for Gene Drives: Using Institutional Analysis and Development to Frame Research Needs and Governance in a Systems Context" (*Journal of Responsible Innovation*), and "Revisit NIH Biosafety Guidelines" (*Science*). Reports included "Transatlantic Patterns of Risk Regulation: Implications for International Trade and Cooperation" and "Institution Building for Data-Driven Innovation in the Korean Healthcare System."

Seminar XXI: Outreach to the Washington Policy Community

For more than three decades, CIS has hosted Seminar XXI, an educational program for senior military officers, government officials, and executives in nongovernmental organizations in the national security policy community. The program provides future leaders of that community with the analytic skills needed to understand other countries and foreign relations in general. A cohort of about 85 meets throughout the academic year in Washington, DC, and northern Virginia.

Fellows learn to recognize the assumptions that underlie assessments of foreign societies and to explore policy issues critical to American interests through a variety of lenses. At each session, eminent speakers present alternative perspectives from which to understand a given country or problem. The fundamental criterion for choosing fellows is that they currently hold or are expected to hold top posts in the military or government within the next three to five years.

The program just completed its 32nd year and now has more than 2,200 alumni, including several members of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Robert Art, Christian A. Herter Professor of International Relations at Brandeis University and an SSP senior fellow, directs Seminar XXI.

International Policy Lab

The International Policy Lab (IPL) enhances the impact of MIT research on public policy, serving the nation and the world in the 21st century. Specifically, IPL identifies policy-relevant research on campus, works with faculty members to articulate the policy implications of their work and distill it for policymakers, connects faculty directly with relevant policymakers, and provides the necessary coaching and communication training. Through these efforts, IPL ensures that the time researchers invest in policy outreach has the greatest possible effect.

Interest among MIT researchers in engaging with policymakers through IPL has been considerable. In 2017–2018, faculty submitted 40 proposals, nearly all of which received some financial and/or staff support. As a measure of IPL's growth, 13 projects were receiving support at the onset of AY2017. Likewise, interest from policymakers in engagement with IPL-supported researchers has been strong; most relevant policymakers rarely decline to meet with well-prepared members of the MIT faculty. At the end of the 2017–2018 academic year, IPL was working on more than four dozen projects with junior and senior faculty members (or senior research scientists) from all five schools at the Institute. The great majority of those who worked with IPL on projects completed in previous years sought to extend their collaboration in AY2018. Projects focused on issues such as health, the environment, big data, city planning, and economics and labor.

IPL also provided faculty training. In January 2017, IPL organized a communications training program with an outside organization (COMPASS) aimed at communicating research to a public policy audience. The program included two COMPASS trainers, a panel of public policy professionals, and one journalist. This collaboration continued in 2017–2018, with another 12 faculty members participating.

The work of the lab has resulted in dozens of meetings and informal collaborations with policymakers, the creation of networks among scholars and policy professionals, articles written for the popular press, and news media appearances.

This year IPL's founding director, Associate Professor Chappell Lawson, was joined by new co-director Noelle Selin, associate professor in the Institute for Data, Systems, and Society and the Department of Earth, Atmospheric and Planetary Sciences. Several other faculty members are affiliated with the program, and the managing director is Daniel Pomeroy.

Seminar Series

In addition to the SSP seminars, CIS offers three other regular series: the Myron Weiner Seminar on International Migration, the Emile Bustani Middle East Seminar, and the South Asian Politics Seminar.

Myron Weiner Seminar on International Migration

The Weiner seminar is the principal program of the Inter-University Committee on International Migration, a joint effort that includes faculty from Tufts, Boston University, Wellesley College, Brandeis, Harvard, and MIT. It is named in memory of Myron Weiner, a widely respected scholar of migration, MIT professor of political science, and former CIS director. This year's seminar presentations were as follows:

- Itty Abraham (National University of Singapore), "Another History of the Refugee Convention's Additional Protocol"
- Noelle Brigden (Marquette University), "The Migrant Passage: Survival Plays and Clandestine Journeys from Central America"
- Tally Kritzman-Amir (Harvard Law School Human Rights Program), "The Israeli Asylum System—From Social Exclusion to Deportation"
- Jessica Wolff (master of city planning candidate, Department of Urban Studies and Planning), "Land Use Planning Innovations in the Midst of a 'Migration Crisis': Transitioning to Long Term Refugee Housing in Hamburg, Germany"

Emile Bustani Middle East Seminar

This seminar was launched in 1985 through a generous gift from the family of Emile Bustani, an MIT graduate and extraordinary leader and businessman in Lebanon. Philip S. Khoury, Ford International Professor of History and associate provost at MIT, organizes the program. This year, the seminar featured four speakers:

- Leila Farsakh (University of Massachusetts Boston), "The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict Fifty Years after The 1967 War: Impasses and Opportunities"
- Peter Krause (Boston College), "Why the Palestinian, Zionist, and Algerian National Movements Competed, Fought, and (Mostly) Won"
- Salim Tamari (Institute of Palestine Studies), "Donald Trump's Generous Offer on Jerusalem"
- Safwan M. Masri (Columbia University), "Unfinished Revolution: The Challenge of Consolidating Tunisia's Democratic Gains"

South Asian Politics Seminar

Co-sponsored by the Watson Institute at Brown University, the Weatherhead Center for International Affairs and South Asia Institute at Harvard University, and the Center for International Studies, this seminar features leading analysts speaking on a range of South Asia issues. Professor Vipin Narang is the program's co-chair; Ashutosh Varshney, professor of political science at Brown (who earned his doctorate at MIT), chairs the seminar. This year's speakers and topics were as follows:

- Saad Gulzar (Stanford University), "Why Do Citizens Become Politicians? Experimental Evidence on Candidacy"
- Arjun Subramaniam (Harvard Asia Center), "War and Conflict in Contemporary India"
- Tara Beteille (World Bank), "The Contentious Politics of Teacher Transfers in India: A Way Forward"
- Soledad Artiz Prillaman (Harvard University), "When Women Mobilize: Dissecting India's Gender Gap in Political Representation"
- Maya Tudor (University of Oxford), "Is Nationalism a Democratic Resource? Evidence from India and Malaysia"
- Adam Auerbach (American University), "Client Preferences in Broker Selection: Competition, Choice, and Informal Leadership in India's Urban Slums"
- Nicholas Sambanis (University of Pennsylvania), "Violence Exposure and Ethnic Identification: Evidence from Kashmir"
- Alison Post (University of California, Berkeley), "Infrastructure Networks and Urban Inequality: The Political Geography of Water Flows in Bangalore"

Persian Gulf Initiative

This research initiative, begun in 2005, has produced books and articles on a range of topics pertaining to the Gulf and has convened several workshops. The two main areas of interest have been the human cost of war, prompted by the Iraq wars, and US-Iran relations. The initiative's leader, John Tirman, presented new work on the human cost of war at a conference at Oxford University and hosted renowned journalist Azmat Khan for a Starr Forum event featuring "The Uncounted," her *New York Times Magazine* investigative piece on war mortality in Mosul. Also, Tirman appeared with Khan and Mehdi Hassan in December on Al Jazeera America's *Upfront* to discuss Iraq war mortality. With respect to US-Iran relations, Tirman and his coauthors are progressing on a final book, the project's third, and continue to build a highly innovative online platform of thousands of documents with HyperStudio in MIT's Comparative Media Studies program.

Public Programs

In 2017–2018, CIS fostered a diverse and enriched public education program. The center's Starr Forums and public lectures continued to offer events on pressing global issues with leading academics, policymakers, and journalists. This year's events were well attended by the MIT community and beyond, and the dialogues were spirited

and informed. Videos of the events are posted on the center's YouTube channel and livestreamed via Facebook. Several forums are watched online by thousands of viewers. Starr Forums over the past year included the following:

"The Trump-Putin Phenomenon?" (featuring Julia Ioffe, Moscow-born American journalist who covers national security and foreign policy topics for *The Atlantic*, and Garry Kasparov, chairman of the Human Rights Foundation, Russian chess grandmaster, and former world champion)

"North Korea" (with MIT speakers Taylor Fravel, Vipin Narang, and Jim Walsh)

"Syria: Which Way Forward?" (with Steven Simon, former US National Security Council senior director for the Middle East and North Africa, and Robert Ford, former US ambassador to Syria)

"Is Democracy Dying?" (featuring Elizabeth and James Killian Professor of Economics Daron Acemoglu of MIT; journalist and 2018 Nieman Fellow Maria Ramirez; Yascha Mounk, lecturer in the Government Department at Harvard and author of *The People Versus Democracy*; and moderator Melissa Nobles, Sahin Dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences)

"Artificial Intelligence and National Security Law: A Dangerous Nonchalance" (with MIT Robert E. Wilhelm Fellow James Baker)

"The Uncounted: Civilian Victims of America's Wars" (moderated by MIT's John Tirman with guest speaker Azmat Khan, award-winning investigative journalist)

"Women's Empowerment: Are Global Development Organizations Helping or Hurting?" (with Nimmi Gowrinathan, founder and director of the Politics of Sexual Violence Initiative, and Kate Cronin-Furman, postdoctoral research fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School's Belfer Center)

"70 Years: Israel-Palestine—Reflections & Forecasts" (with Ford International Professor of Political Science Steven Van Evera of MIT; Professor Barry Posen of MIT; Eve Spangler, associate professor of sociology at Boston College; Salim Tamari, director of the Institute for Palestine Studies; Irene Gendzier, professor emerita of political science at Boston University; Arie Arnon, professor emeritus of economics at Ben-Gurion University; Leila Farsakh, associate professor of political science at the University of Massachusetts Boston; and Anat Biletzki, professor of philosophy at Quinnipiac University and Tel Aviv University)

During IAP, Public Programs hosted a film screening of *The Uncondemned*, a feature-length documentary about a group of young international lawyers and activists who fought to make rape a crime of war and the Rwandan women who came forward to testify and win justice where there had been none. The event was co-sponsored with the MIT Africa Program.

The CIS biannual newsletter, *précis*, was redesigned and expanded to a booklet of 30-plus pages. Another publication, the *Starr Forum Report*, was launched as a means to extend the reach of our public events. The *Starr Forum Report* and *précis* are available both in print and on the web. Each publication is widely available to all and is circulated to like-minded research centers, nongovernmental organizations, policymakers, and journalists.

In an effort to promote the center's work, the Public Programs staff manages the external website, the intranet site, email newsletters, and live streaming of our public events via Facebook. Also, the staff provides ongoing media support through news releases, direct media promotion and outreach, and news features and produces video shorts promoting our scholars.

The program continues to use social media, including Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter, to publicize the center's work. Analytics show that readership is wide and increasing. In the past year, we had 93,469 visitors to our website, along with 63,224 YouTube views. Our Twitter and Facebook feeds are reaching thousands of people as well.

John Tirman
Executive Director