

## PRESS RELEASES

# CSBA Welcomes New Defense Journalism Fellows

February 7, 2022

Related Expert: Thomas G. Mahnken

Washington, D.C., February 7, 2022 - The Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA), one of the world's premier centers for understanding future international competition and conflict, today announced a new cohort of fellows for the CSBA Defense Journalism Seminar Series (DJSS).

This series is an in-depth professional education program for selected working journalists and aims to provide enhanced analytical tools for reporters who cover defense strategy, military technology and budgets, and contemporary national security processes. The current season begins on February 10 and will feature senior CSBA staff and leading outside experts on national security policy.

According to Dr. Thomas G. Mahnken, CSBA's President and CEO, "This incoming cohort of DJSS fellows represent an exceptional, diverse group of rising leaders in the media world. Building upon our previous seminars, DJSS is a key element of CSBA's mission to promote innovative thinking and writing on security and defense matters."



**Idrees Ali**

**Reuters**

Idrees Ali is a Pentagon Correspondent for Reuters based out of Washington D.C. He has covered the U.S. military for five years from Asia to Europe, with a particular interest in the Middle East. Prior to joining Reuters, he worked on an investigative series for the Washington Post on the killing of journalists by foreign intelligence agencies. He is from Karachi, Pakistan.



## **Matt Beinart**

### **Defense Daily**

Matt Beinart is a reporter with Defense Daily where he covers the Army, Congress and emerging technologies. He previously served as an editorial contributor with the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project in Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina. He is also a graduate of the Philip Merrill College of Journalism at the University of Maryland, College Park.



## **Rachel Cohen**

### **Air Force Times**

Rachel Cohen is an award-winning journalist who covers Air Force and Space Force personnel issues and operations for Air Force Times. She has reported on the military and the defense industry since 2016, from deep inside nuclear missile silos in California to the cabin of the new MH-139 helicopter over Philadelphia.

Before joining Air Force Times, Rachel covered the Air Force, Space Force and Congress for Air Force Magazine and Inside Defense. She has accompanied the Air Force chief of staff on official travel and reported on operations from military bases across the U.S. She has also written on federal and state agencies, the judiciary and more for Inside Health Policy, the Frederick News-Post (Md.) and the Washington Post.

The Michigan native graduated from American University in 2013. She lives with her husband and their dog in Maryland.



## **Megan Eckstein**

### **Defense News**

Megan Eckstein is the naval warfare reporter for Defense News. She began writing about the Navy and Marine Corps in 2011, covering budgets and acquisition programs for Inside the Navy and then Defense Daily. She worked for USNI News from 2015 to 2021 as a reporter and editor, expanding her coverage to include naval operations, concepts and exercises and covering international navies from four different numbered fleet areas of operations. Prior to covering the Navy, Megan covered local military and veterans issues for the Frederick (Md.) New-Post. She is a 2009 graduate of the University of Maryland.



## **Valerie Insinna**

### **Breaking Defense**

Valerie Insinna is a senior reporter at Breaking Defense, covering both the Pentagon and the Air Force. She previously worked as a staff reporter for Defense News, Defense Daily and National Defense Magazine, covering the nexus of defense budgets, policy and technology with a particular focus on military aviation. Her work has also been featured in The New York Times Magazine.

Valerie is the recipient of multiple defense reporting awards, including the National Press Club's Michael A. Dornheim award for defense journalism in 2020, which she won for a 12-part investigative series highlighting the F-35 joint strike fighter's critical technical deficiencies.

A St. Louis native, Valerie graduated from the University of Missouri's journalism program, where she minored in Japanese. When not writing about airplanes, Valerie can be found knitting, riding her Peloton, hanging out with her cats, or planning her next adventure.



## **Justin Katz**

### **Breaking Defense**

Prior to joining Breaking Defense, Justin Katz reported on the Navy and Marine Corps as an associate editor for Inside Defense, where he focused on the services' largest acquisition programs and congressional committees overseeing them. Justin has also covered the federal government's cybersecurity policies and programs for FCW and worked as a general news reporter in both Baltimore and Washington, D.C. Katz graduated from Flagler College in St. Augustine, Fla., in 2015 with a degree in communications focusing on journalism and is a native of Long Island, N.Y.



## **Amy Mackinnon**

### **Foreign Policy**

Amy Mackinnon is an award-winning national security and intelligence reporter at Foreign Policy. Originally from Scotland, she has reported from across Eastern Europe and was previously based in Moscow and in Tbilisi, Georgia, as senior editor for the crisis reporting site Coda Story. Mackinnon is a recipient of the Alfred I. duPont-Columbia award for her reporting on homophobic vigilantes in Russia. She speaks Russian and has a master's degree in journalism from the Newmark Graduate School of Journalism at CUNY, and a dual master's in Russian Central and East European Studies from the University of Glasgow and Corvinus University of Budapest.



## **Heather Mongilio**

### **U.S. Naval Institute News**

Heather Mongilio is the personnel reporter for USNI News, where she has covered the COVID-19 vaccination mandate. Previously, Heather covered the United States Naval Academy as a Report for America corps member with The Capital. Heather has a master's degree in science journalism from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and a bachelor's degree in journalism and psychology from American University. She previously covered health, crime and courts for local Maryland papers.



## **Ashley Roque**

### **Jane's Defense**

Ashley Roque is a senior reporter with Janes and is based in Washington, DC. In her current role she focuses on US Army, US Marine Corps and broader Pentagon coverage. Over the past two decades Ashley has covered defense and US politics for an array of publications inside and outside of the United States including Roll Call, Inside Defense and Shephard Media. Ashley holds a BA in English with a minor in journalism from Florida State University, and a master's degree in conflict transformation from the University of Basel.



## **Demetri Sevastopulo**

### **Financial Times**

Demetri Sevastopulo covers all aspects of the US-China relationship, ranging from foreign policy, national security and intelligence to trade, economics and business.

Demetri served as Washington Bureau Chief from 2015 to 2021, covering the White House, Trump administration and the 2016 and 2020 presidential races. During his more than 13 years reporting from Washington, he spent six years covering the Pentagon and intelligence agencies during the Bush and Obama administrations. He has interviewed everyone from Donald Rumsfeld to Donald Trump.

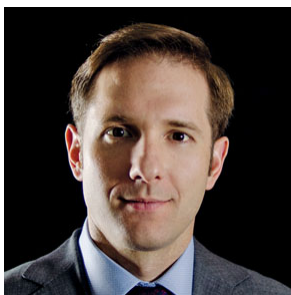
Since leaving his native Ireland three decades ago, Demetri has lived in Tokyo, Beijing, Hong Kong and Washington. Before returning to Washington in 2015, he spent five years in Hong Kong where he was South China Correspondent and served as Asia News Editor, running the FT daily news operations in the region.



**Alex Ward**

**POLITICO**

Alex Ward is a national security reporter and anchor of "National Security Daily." Before joining POLITICO, Ward was the White House and national security reporter at Vox. He was also an associate director in the Atlantic Council's Brent Scowcroft Center on International Security where he worked on military issues and U.S. foreign policy. And he previously wrote the #NatSec2016 newsletter for War on the Rocks where he covered the 2016 presidential election and the candidates' views on national security.



**Marcus Weisgerber**

**Defense One**

Marcus Weisgerber is the global business editor for Defense One — a GovExec property — where he writes about the intersection of business and national security. He is also the author of the Defense Business Brief, a weekly newsletter widely read throughout the defense, aerospace, military, government and investment communities.

Marcus has been covering defense and national security issues for more than 15 years, previously as Pentagon correspondent for *Defense News* and chief editor of *Inside the Air Force*. He has reported from the Middle East, Europe and Asia — oftentimes traveling with senior defense and military officials.

His work has been cited by the *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times* and many other U.S. and international publications. He has provided expert analysis on BBC, CNN, Fox News, MSNBC, NPR, SiriusXM and other television and radio networks. Marcus won a 2018 Neal Award for his coverage of the Pentagon and defense industry.

A native of Long Island, New York, Marcus holds a bachelor's in English/journalism from the University of New Hampshire. He and his wife reside in Alexandria, Virginia.

## **About the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments**

CSBA is an independent, nonpartisan policy research institute established to promote innovative thinking and debate about national security strategy and investment options. CSBA's assessments focus on key questions related to existing and emerging threats to U.S. national security, and its goal is to enable policymakers to make informed decisions on matters of strategy, security policy, and resource allocation.

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