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Michael Fischerkeller Receives 2024 Larry D. Welch Award for Best External Publication

ALEXANDRIA, VA (June 2024) – Michael Fischerkeller received the 2024 Larry D. Welch Award for Best External Publication for “Cyber Persistence Theory: Redefining National Security in Cyberspace.” He co-authored the book with Emily Goldman, a cyber strategist at the U.S. Cyber Command, and Richard Harknett, a professor of political science at the University of Cincinnati, director of the School of Public and International Affairs and chair of the Center for Cyber Strategy and Policy. The book was published by Oxford University Press in 2022.

Michael is a research staff member in the Information Technology and Systems Division at the Systems and Analyses Center, one of the three federally funded research and development centers operated by IDA. IDA is a nonprofit corporation that operates research and development centers in the public interest answering the most challenging U.S. security and science policy questions with objective analysis leveraging extraordinary scientific, technical and analytic expertise.

IDA established the Welch award in 2011 in honor of retired U.S. Air Force General Larry D. Welch, who was IDA’s president from 1990 to 2003 and again from 2006 to 2009.

“This book exemplifies General Welch’s high standards of analytic excellence and relevance,” said IDA President Norty Schwartz.

National security in and through cyberspace rests on features that are distinctly different from the security paradigms associated with nuclear and conventional weapons environments. However, many countries base their cyber strategies on the model of war and coercion, which differs from the reality of state activities in cyberspace. The authors show that the reigning paradigm of deterrence theory cannot fully explain cyber conflict and offer an original approach that better aligns with the empirical experience of cyber activities in international relations. Their cyber persistence theory posits the existence of a distinct strategic environment supporting the logic of exploitation rather than coercion.

“It is an honor that our work on creating and implementing a theory of cyber persistence was selected among other exemplary papers for the Larry D. Welch Award for Best External Publication at IDA,” said Michael. “I am grateful to the selection committee for their time evaluating eligible publications and to my division leadership and colleagues, both internal and external to IDA, for their support.”

Michael holds a doctorate in international relations from the Ohio State University. He received the 2008 Andrew J. Goodpaster Award for Excellence in Research and the 2018 Larry D. Welch Award for Best External Publication. Michael is also a member of the Military Operations Research Society and the American Political Science Association.

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