



World Affairs Council of Charlotte Underwriting and Table Purchase

WACC Speaker Series

David Salvo, Managing Director at the Alliance for Securing Democracy | Bret Schafer, Senior Fellow at the Alliance for Securing Democracy | Krystyna Sikora, Research Assistant at the Alliance for Securing Democracy

Thursday, May 29th, 2025

Charlotte City Club

VIP Reception: 11:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. | **Lunch:** 12:00 – 1:30 p.m.



David Salvo – Managing Director, Alliance for Securing Democracy

David Salvo is the managing director of the Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD) at the German Marshall Fund. He is an expert in Russian affairs and foreign interference with experience analyzing Russia and other authoritarian countries' toolkits to undermine democracy at home and abroad for more than 20 years. He joined ASD as a resident fellow in 2017 and his commentary on US-Russian relations, Russian foreign policy, and foreign interference has been featured on DW News, NPR, CNN, and more.

Before joining ASD, David served as a foreign service officer in the US Department of State, most recently as the deputy secretary of state's policy advisor for Europe, Eurasia, and international security issues. He also advised senior-level negotiators on protracted conflicts in the South Caucasus, worked on US policy toward NATO and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and served abroad in Russia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. He speaks Russian and Serbo-Croatian and has a basic knowledge of French.

David holds an M.A. from Georgetown University's Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies and a B.A. in government and Russian from Georgetown University. He is an avid music lover and plays in several Washington, DC-area bands, including a tribute band to the rock band Phish.



Bret Schafer – Senior Fellow, Alliance for Securing Democracy

Bret Schafer is a senior fellow for information manipulation issues at the Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD) at the German Marshall Fund. He is an expert in digital and computational propaganda, state-backed information operations, and technology regulation. Bret is the creator and manager of ASD's Hamilton 2.0 Dashboard, an online open-source tool that tracks the outputs of Russian, Chinese, and Iranian state media outlets, diplomats, and government officials. Bret has participated in conferences around the globe and advised numerous governments and international organizations. His research has been cited in the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and the Washington Post and he has appeared on CNN, NBC News, MSNBC, and more.

Before joining ASD, Bret spent more than ten years in the television and film industry, including in roles at Cartoon Network and Warner Brothers. He also worked in Budapest, Hungary as a radio host and in Berlin, Germany as a semi-professional baseball player in Germany's Bundesliga.

Bret holds an M.A. in public diplomacy from the University of Southern California and a B.A. in communications with a major in radio, television, and film from Northwestern University.



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Krystyna Sikora—Research Assistant, Alliance for Securing Democracy

Krystyna (Krysia) Sikora is a researcher at the Alliance for Securing Democracy (ASD) at the German Marshall Fund. Her research has focused on information manipulation, Polish affairs, and election security in the United States. Her writing has been published

in the EU Observer, Euractiv, the Fulcrum, and more. Before joining ASD, Krysia played professional soccer in Poland for two years.

Krysia holds an M.A. from Georgetown University's Center for Eurasian, Russian, and East European Studies, where she focused on right-wing populism, information manipulation, and democratic decline in Central and Eastern Europe, and a B.A. in political science and a certificate in policy journalism and media studies from Duke University.

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ABOUT WORLD AFFAIRS COUNCIL OF CHARLOTTE: The [World Affairs Council of Charlotte](#) is a non-profit, non-partisan organization supported by funding from individual and corporate member dues, foundations and contributions. By serving as a regional center for education and discussion of world affairs, WACC seeks to provide leadership for global thinking, believing that a broad perspective is necessary for effective competition in the global economy and for responsible citizenship in an increasingly interdependent political world.