Phil Axt

In the Sim: Deputy Simulation Director; Control Team Intelligence Co-Lead

In Real Life: Philip Axt is a veteran of the U.S. Army, U.S. Cyber Command, and U.S. Intelligence Community. A native of North Dakota, he graduated from the United States Military Academy and is currently studying for his JD at Yale Law School. He has worked for the U.S. Senate, and will clerk for the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Ya’ara Barnoon

In the Sim: Vice President

In Real Life: Ya’ara Z. Barnoon, a lawyer, most recently served on Hillary Clinton’s presidential campaign, on leave from Hughes Hubbard & Reed LLP. She is based in Paris and Washington, focusing on anti-corruption and internal investigations. Previously, she was a national security and human rights research associate at the Harvard Kennedy School of Government, and foreign affairs and nuclear proliferation consultant at Copeland Capital International. She holds a JD from Georgetown University Law Center and MA from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland.

Greg Biscone

In the Sim: Combatant Commander of U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) and U.S. Northern Command (NORTHCOM); Commander of NORAD

In Real Life: Lt. Gen. Gregory T. Biscone served as Inspector General of the U.S. Air Force, responsible for overseeing the inspection system for USAF forces, counter-intelligence operations, fraud and abuse, and criminal conduct. During his career he also served as Commander of the Office of Defense Representative in Pakistan; Director of Global Operations for the U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), Deputy Director of Operations for the U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM), and Assistant Director of Air and Space Operations for Air Combat Command. He is commanded two bomber wings: 5th Bomb Wing, Minot AFB, ND (B-52), and 509th Bomb Wing, Whiteman AFB, MO (B-2).
Capri Cafaro

In the Sim: U.S. Senator (R-ME), and Ranking Member, Senate National Security Committee. Consensus-seeking moderate Republican from a blue shipbuilding state.

In Real Life: Ohio state Senator Capri S. Cafaro has represented the 32nd Senate district since January 2007. Cafaro is a graduate of Stanford University with a degree in American Studies, and earned two masters degrees: an MALS with a concentration in International Studies from Georgetown University, and a Master's in Social Work (MSW) with a concentration in health and administration from The Ohio State University. Over the last several years, Cafaro has passed numerous bills into law, including regarding economic development and health care.

Andy Chow

In the Sim: Reporter / Editor

In Real Life: Andy Chow is a general assignment state government reporter with WOSU Public Media. He started his journalism career as an associate producer with ABC 6/FOX 28 in Columbus before becoming a producer with WBNS 10TV. Andy gained his in-depth knowledge of Statehouse issues while working for Hannah News Service. He also participated in the Legislative Service Commission's Fellowship program as a production assistant for “The Ohio Channel.” Andy earned his BA at Otterbein University.

Kent Conrad

In the Sim: U.S. Senator (D-ND), and U.S. Senate Majority Leader. Centrist pragmatist legislator and budget hawk.

In Real Life: Kent Conrad represented North Dakota in the U.S. Senate from 1987 to 2013. He served as Chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, and was Congress’s preeminent budget expert. He was chosen by Time magazine in 2006 as one of “America’s 10 Best Senators.” He also served on the Intelligence, Finance, and Agriculture Committees. Before election to the Senate, Conrad was North Dakota Tax Commissioner. He is now associated with the Bipartisan Policy Center. He received his B.A. from Stanford and MBA from George Washington University.

Rudy Hightower

In the Sim: Control Team; U.S. House Parliamentarian; U.S. Sixth Fleet Commander

In Real Life: Rudy Hightower II is a retired US Navy intelligence officer and veteran of Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He is a PhD candidate and instructor at the John Glenn College of Public Affairs at Ohio State, and runs a firm focused on modeling and simulation. He specializes in international security in the Ukraine / Black Sea region, failed and weak states, and policy analysis. He holds an MA from the Naval Postgraduate School.
Jo Ingles

**In the Sim:** Reporter / Editor

**In Real Life:** Jo Ingles covers politics and Ohio government for Ohio Public Radio and Television for the Ohio Public Radio and Television Statehouse News Bureau. Her work has been featured on national networks such as National Public Radio, Marketplace, the Great Lakes Radio Consortium, and the BBC. She is often a guest on radio and writes for Columbus Monthly and the Reuters News Service. She has won many awards for her work. She is President of the Ohio Radio and TV Correspondent’s Association, a board member for the Ohio Legislative Correspondent’s Association, and President of the Board for the Ohio Associated Press Broadcasters.

Ben Johnson

**In the Sim:** White House Communications Director

**In Real Life:** Benjamin Johnson is Director of Media and Public Relations at The Ohio State University. He joined Ohio State in February 2016 after spending six years at the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, the last five as Director of Communications. He has also worked as a radio reporter, producer and talk show host in Columbus, Newark, and Bucyrus.

Bob Kendrick

**In the Sim:** Reporter / Editor

**In Real Life:** Bob Kendrick co-anchors ABC 6 News at 5 and 6 as well as Fox 28 News at 10 and ABC 6 News at 11 with Yolanda Harris. Bob produces an ABC 6 segment called "On Your Side Champions" profiling people who do extraordinary things for their community. Prior to coming to Columbus, he anchored the news at KUSA in Denver and WFTS in Tampa.

Taylor Kline

**In the Sim:** U.S. Senate Parliamentarian / Committee Clerk; Congress Co-lead, Control Team

**In Real Life:** Taylor Kline is an attorney-advisor in the Office of General Counsel of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. Previously, was a Fellow in the Federal Legislation and Administrative Clinic at Georgetown University Law Center, law clerk to Judge Peter Dorsey of the U.S. District Court for the District of Connecticut, and law clerk at the U.S. Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pension Committee. She holds an LLM from Georgetown University Law Center, JD from Harvard, and AB from the University of Georgia.
Nicole Kraft

In the Sim: Media Lead, Control Team

In Real Life: Prof. Nicole Kraft is Assistant Professor in the Ohio State School of Communication. She spent 25 years as an award-winning reporter, editor, and magazine journalist, as well as doing public relations for professional sports and government communications. Her focus in teaching and research has been utilizing technology in journalism and global education. In 2015 Nicole was named an Apple Distinguished Educator, and spoke at SXSW.

Shaun Lyons

In the Sim: U.S. Senator (R-VA). Heir to blue-blooded political dynasty who returned to the Senate after serving as Secretary of State under George W. Bush.

In Real Life: Shaun Lyons is a lawyer at Carlile Patchen & Murphy LLP in Columbus. He focuses primarily on business litigation, securities law, and employment law. He has significant experience representing employers and employees in state and federal court proceedings and arbitrations, and has assisted clients with trade secret matters, contract actions, workers compensation defense, and legal issues relating to electronically stored information (“ESI”). Shaun drafts concise, precise, and persuasive legal memoranda and briefs on a wide variety of legal issues. He speaks Russian and Ukrainian. He holds a BA from Florida State and JD from Georgetown.

Pete Mansoor

In the Sim: President of the United States

In Real Life: Prof. Peter R. Mansoor is the General Raymond E. Mason, Jr. Chair of Military History at The Ohio State University. His 26 year U.S. Army career included command of an armored brigade in Baghdad in 2003-4, for which his unit received a Presidential Unit Citation for collective valor in combat. He served again in Iraq as the executive officer to General David Petraeus, the Commanding General of Multi-National Force-Iraq, during the period of the surge in 2007-2008. His several books include a history of this experience, Surge: My Journey with General David Petraeus and the Remaking of the Iraq War, which was a finalist for the inaugural Guggenheim-Lehrman Prize in Military History in 2013. Prof. Mansoor graduated first in his class from the United States Military Academy, holds an MSS from the Army War College, and MA and PhD degrees from Ohio State.

Zach Mears

In the Sim: Observer and Judge of Student Performance

In Real Life: After serving as Deputy Chief of Staff to Secretary of Defense Ash Carter and Chief of Staff to Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work, Zach Mears returned to Ohio State in 2016 to become Executive Vice President for National Security and Research Programs. He is also a non-lawyer Senior Advisor at the Washington law firm of Covington & Burling LLP. Before his most recent Pentagon tour, Zach served as Director for Strategic Planning at the National Security Council, where he co-authored the 2015 National Security Strategy of the United States. He received his BA from the University of Tennessee and his MA and PhD from Ohio State.
Colleen McMahon

In the Sim: Judge, U.S. District Court for the Western District of Washington (W.D.Wa.); Judge, Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (FISC); Judge of Student Performance

In Real Life: Colleen McMahon is Chief Judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of New York (S.D.N.Y.). In this capacity, she has handled numerous high profile cases concerning national security, white collar crime, and civil rights. Judge McMahon, from Columbus, OH, received her B.A. from Ohio State and J.D. from Harvard Law School. Before her appointment to the federal bench, she was a partner at the New York law firm of Paul, Weiss, Rifkind, Wharton & Garrison. She also served as a top aide to the U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations.

Tim McMahon

In the Sim: Combatant Commander, U.S. Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM)

In Real Life: Maj. Gen. McMahon (USAF, Ret.) served as Commander, 20th Air Force, the Air Force’s strategic missile command, responsible for nuclear deterrence operations and three operational ICBM wings. During his career he also served as Deputy Commander for Operations of Air Force Space Command, Director of Nuclear and Counterproliferation (XON) on the Air Staff at the Pentagon, Director of the Combat Operations Staff at the U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM), and Commander of the 341st Missile Wing at Malmstrom AFB, MT. Since retiring from the Air Force, Gen. McMahon has served as a senior advisor to the U.S. Air Force Chief of Staff on nuclear deterrence and nuclear operations, a mentor for senior Air Force officers, and Vice President of Northrop Grumman Corporation.

Joe Meyer

In the Sim: Reporter / Editor

In Real Life: Joe Meyer is an award-winning journalist with three decades of experience in Central Ohio media. He served as editor of Suburban News Publications and managing editor of ThisWeek News. He now runs his own communications, marketing, and public relations company, Meyer Media LLC.

Brian Perera

In the Sim: U.S. Senator (R-ID). Leader of Tea Party wing, former Governor of a red state who made a fortune in accounting.

In Real Life: Brian Perera is Assistant Vice President for State Relations in the Government Affairs Office of Ohio State. Previously, he served as Director of Finance for the Ohio Senate for 20 years, advising on the state’s budget and budget process. He is a graduate of Ohio State.
Bill Pohlman

In the Sim: U.S. Senator (I-ID). “The Wild Salmon”: Navy JAG and “first lawyer in space” who founded the enviro-friendly Wild Salmon Fish Farm; unpredictable Independent who shocked his red state by caucusing with Democrats.

In Real Life: Bill Pohlman is a retired litigation partner with Vorys, Sater, Seymour and Pease, LLC. While at Vorys, his practice focused on commercial litigation, securities and corporate-control litigation, class actions and multi-district disputes, and professional malpractice claims. Prior to joining Vorys, he was associated with K&L Gates in Pittsburgh, PA, and clerked for the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Michigan. He is a graduate of the Moritz College of Law at Ohio State, and Oberlin. Before law school, he was legislative assistant to the Speaker Pro Tempore of the Ohio House. He currently acts as principal of Pohlman Mediation Services, LLC, provides pro bono legal services to the Legal Aid Society of Columbus and the Ohio Justice and Policy Center, chairs the Fee Arbitration Committee of the Columbus Bar Association, and serves as legal advisor to the mock trial team at the Columbus School for Girls.

Lala Qadir

In the Sim: National Security Advisor (APNSA)

In Real Life: Lala Qadir is an Associate in the Washington law firm of Covington & Burling LLP. Her practice focuses on data privacy and security, national security, and government affairs. Her previous leadership and management experience includes serving as a strategic management consultant at Booz Allen, and Director of Strategy and Performance for the Abu Dhabi Judicial Department. She was a law clerk to Chief Judge James E. Baker of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces. She has a JD from Georgetown University Law Center, MPP from Harvard’s Kennedy School of Government, and a BA from Duke.

Kathleen Rice

In the Sim: Law Enforcement Lead & Intelligence Co-Lead, Control Team

In Real Life: Kathleen Rice is Counsel at Faegre Baker Daniels, advising clients on privacy and data security (practice co-lead), risk management, and compliance. Kathleen spent nearly 20 years in law enforcement, intelligence, and government affairs. Her experience includes serving as Counsel on the U.S. Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, FBI Assistant General Counsel, and Assistant U.S. Attorney. She clerked for the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida. She received her BA and JD from Notre Dame.

Dakota Rudesill

In the Sim: Simulation Director

In Real Life: Dakota Rudesill is Assistant Professor at the Moritz College of Law at The Ohio State University. Professor Rudesill has advised senior leaders in all three branches of the federal government. He did national security legislative work for the Senate Budget Committee and Sen. Kent Conrad. In the Executive Branch, he served on the Obama Transition and in the Office of the Director of National Intelligence (ODNI). In the Judicial Branch, Professor Rudesill was a law clerk to the Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit. He received his BA from St. Olaf College and JD from Yale.
Justin Schardin

**In the Sim:** Congress Co-Lead, Control Team; Seattle Mayor

**In Real Life:** Justin Schardin is Director of the Financial Regulatory Reform Initiative at the Bipartisan Policy Center in Washington. He has served in senior advisory roles to U.S. Sen. Kent Conrad and U.S. Sen. Byron L. Dorgan. During the 1990s tech boom and into the 2000s, Schardin founded and grew to 65 employees a web design and software startup. A longtime radio host, he covered the Iowa Caucuses in 2007-8 for *Campaigns & Elections*, before joining Barrack Obama’s 2008 campaign. He graduated from Boston University with degrees in economics and political science.

Rick Sinnreich

**In the Sim:** NATO Supreme Allied Commander – Europe (SACEUR); Combatant Commander, U.S. European Command (EUCOM)

**In Real Life:** Rick Sinnreich retired from the Army as a Colonel after a career that included command at every level through brigade, combat in Vietnam, teaching at West Point and Fort Leavenworth, and assignments on the Army, Joint, and National Security Council (NSC) staffs, as assistant executive to the Supreme Allied Commander Europe (SACEUR), and as Army Fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS). He helped found and directed the Army’s School of Advanced Military Studies, and has published widely in military and foreign affairs. Since retirement, he has participated in numerous Army and Joint studies and war games and advised other defense-related agencies, including RAND, DARPA, IDA, and the Foreign Service Institute.

Zach Space

**In the Sim:** U.S. Senator (D-WA), Chairman of the National Security Committee. Pragmatic former House Member representing Seattle, known for constituent service; former public defender and football All-American at University of Washington.

**In Real Life:** Zach Space represented Ohio in the U.S. Congress from 2007 to 2011. He is now a Principal at Vorys Advisors LLC, in Columbus, OH. He provides business and strategic government relations services to businesses and organizations. Zack and his father opened the law firm Space & Space Company, LPA, in 1986, and he worked as an attorney at the firm for nearly 20 years. Zack also worked as a public defender and served as special counsel to former Ohio Attorneys General Anthony Celebrezze and Lee Fisher. Zack received his JD from the Moritz College of Law at Ohio State. He received his BA from Kenyon College, where he was awarded All-American honors while playing football for the Kenyon Lords.
**Jon Spaner**

In the Sim: Homeland Security Lead, Control Team; Coast Guard District Commander

In Real Life: Capt. Jon Spaner (USCG, Ret.) is currently at McKinsey & Co. in Washington. During his two decade Coast Guard career, Jon served as Sector Commander for the USCG Sector San Diego, Director of Emerging Policy at USCG headquarters, Commanding Officer of Coast Guard Air Station Traverse City, Strategic Policy Advisor to Gen. John Abizaid, Commander of the U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM), and a White House Fellow in the George W. Bush White House in the years immediately following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. He has been a Sloan Fellow at MIT and International Affairs Fellow (IAF) at the Council on Foreign Relations. Last year, Capt. Spaner threw out the first pitch at a San Diego Padres game: [http://m.mlb.com/video/topic/6479266/v125791183/51715-capt-jon-spaner-throws-out-the-first-pitch](http://m.mlb.com/video/topic/6479266/v125791183/51715-capt-jon-spaner-throws-out-the-first-pitch).

**Lucas Sullivan**

In the Sim: Reporter / Editor

In Real Life: A graduate of Ohio State’s journalism program, Lucas Sullivan is an investigative and projects reporter for the Columbus Dispatch.

**Frank Titus**

In the Sim: Control Team

In Real Life: Colonel Frank A. Titus (USAF, Ret.) served as an Ohio Air National Guard JAG for 22 years and served with Tactical Air Command, Air Combat Command, Air Force Special Operations Command, and the United Nations. While serving with the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations Training Unit, he flew around the world training troops from 44 countries. He practiced law as a civilian for more than 30 years. He holds BA and MA degrees from Ohio State and JD from Capital Law School.

**Travis Tritten**

In the Sim: Reporter / Editor

In Real Life: Travis Tritten is the Capitol Hill reporter in Washington, D.C., for *Stars and Stripes*. Tritten covered government and politics for daily newspapers in South Carolina and Florida before joining *Stars and Stripes*. In 2015, he broke the story of Brian Williams having lied about his war experiences. He graduated from Ohio State in journalism.
**Mike Wagner**

*In the Sim:* Reporter / Editor  

*In Real Life:* Mike Wagner is an investigative and projects reporter for the *Columbus Dispatch.*

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**Mark Wagoner**

*In the Sim:* U.S. Senator (R-WA), Senate Minority Leader. Budget hawk, pro-Second Amendment Republican with national ambitions from a blue state.

*In Real Life:* Mark Wagoner served in the Ohio state Senate and House for eight years. In the Senate, he was Majority Whip and Judiciary Committee Chairman. Currently, he is a partner in the litigation practice group of Shumaker, Loop & Kendrick LLP in its Toledo and Columbus offices. He serves on the Ohio Constitutional Modernization Commission. He is a graduate of Georgetown University and Ohio State’s Moritz College of Law.