

## Strategic Issues List

**International Security Studies:** This category includes the nature and causes of war and peace, patterns of change and major global and regional trends, and contemporary problems and issues. Special emphasis is accorded the *non-military instruments of power—diplomatic, informational, economic—and how they relate to the military instrument of power* and affect global, regional, and national security conditions, problems, and issues. It also includes the study of national security strategy and the national security decision-making process, civil-military relations, critical contemporary regional and functional problems/issues, and interagency processes.

- **Deterrence:** Deterrence policy and strategy is being adapted to new forms and roles while also maintaining its traditional role in countering potential state use of nuclear weapons against the United States. Research and expanded thought leadership is needed to ensure the wisdom and credibility of new directions and dimensions of this foundational concept. Specific topics include strategic deterrence; nuclear and conventional deterrence/assurance; targets and strategies; extended/limited/tailored/minimum deterrence; deterring sub-state actors; declaratory policy.
- **Unconventional Weapons:** Studies on the future of conflict predict that Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) will continue to play a significant factor in military operations. How does national strategy direct the necessary ways and means to ensure that the United States is not deterred by adversarial use of unconventional weapons? What is the appropriate DoD role for enhancing regional partnerships and stability? Specific topics include definitions of WMD; foreign development of NBC weapons; nuclear-free regions; global response to CBRN terrorism; NATO CBRN defense; building partnership capability to strengthen allied defensive capabilities; regional presence/posture/basing; WMD interdiction; foreign consequence management.
- **Homeland Defense/Civil Support:** DoD has significant homeland defense responsibilities, all of which have complex and sensitive operational, legal, interagency, international, and command and control dimensions requiring near-term operational effectiveness balanced with long-term operational sustainability. This is especially true in developing an effective role for DoD forces in support of Homeland Security. Specific topics include federal response to WMD incidents; “whole of government” homeland security enterprise; defense critical infrastructure protection; resiliency; continuity of government; continuity of operations; nuclear survivability; civil defense/emergency preparedness; domestic consequence management; CBRN Response Enterprise.

**Military Studies:** This core area embraces the nature of war, general military history, history of the Air Force and air and space power, and military theory, doctrine, and strategy. It provides a solid foundation of the *nature and theories of war and methods of warfare*, yet draws these classic ideas into the present, as comparisons and contrasts are made with current operations.

- **Strategic Posture:** As recent strategy reviews and arms control agreements play out, and as we adapt and deepen our understanding of future deterrence and strategic requirements, it is necessary to review and adapt our force composition and posture to the new and emerging conditions and tasks. Specific topics include U.S. nuclear posture/policy; conventional and nuclear weapon use; DoD roles and missions; DOE roles and missions; triad versus dyad versus monad concepts; modernization of U.S. nuclear weapons.
- **Proliferation:** Proliferation of unconventional weapons is a constant challenge for the U.S. national security enterprise. Analysis is needed to address a range of policy questions: from dealing with rogues to possibilities of proliferation by friends; better addressing supply-side issues to effectively addressing demand-side concerns; integrating arms control imperatives to address proliferation drivers; and integrating policy and operational dimensions. Specific topics include nonproliferation activities; threat reduction and security cooperation; breakout of nation-state WMD programs; regional stability studies; domain awareness.
- **Unconventional Weapons:** Although Weapons of Mass Destruction have been a significant part of the world's concerns since 1945, U.S. forces have never been attacked by unconventional weapons since the end of World War I. Similarly, there has been no CBRN incident on U.S. soil caused by transnational sub-state groups. As a result, understanding the potential impact of WMD on military operations has been limited. Can we develop capabilities, doctrine, and plans for the range of military operations that may include WMD use without relevant experience? Specific topics include counterproliferation strategy; ISR support to countering unconventional weapons; counterforce (counterstrike) operations; integrated air/missile defense; global situational awareness; WMD forensics and attribution.

**Warfare Studies:** The central focus here is on the art of *employing military power* across the spectrum of operations. Focus is on war fighting and knowing the strategies, tactics, and doctrinal underpinnings of how best to achieve victory over the enemy. Topics in this area would involve the force structure, organizational structure, planning processes, supporting doctrine, and operational concepts that enable the US military to engage as a joint team across the full range of military operations. Warfare Studies include national military strategy; roles and missions; force structure; joint planning and joint doctrine; joint, combined, and multinational operations; core competencies; tactics; and air, space, and cyberspace warfare among others.

- **Arms Control and Disarmament:** As arms control and disarmament reclaim a spot at the top of the national security agenda, what are the issues and concerns for the Department of Defense and specifically the Services' strategic forces? What are the potential directions of future arms control that particularly affect the United States strategic force posture? What comes next from the arms control regime? How does the expected long-term strategic force drawdown affect Service equities? Specific topics include national defense nuclear infrastructure; nuclear drawdown/disarmament; transparency/verification; non-strategic nuclear weapons; New START Treaty; chemical and biological arms control efforts.

- **Unconventional Weapons:** The Air Force does not have a specific functional area that addresses the challenge of prevention of, protection against, and response to unconventional weapons. Because NBC weapons and CBRN hazards can be employed across the range of military operations, air and space operations can be significantly impacted. Operational analyses provide insights as to optimizing offensive and defensive capabilities, given limited resources and personnel, and within a conventional military construct and an “all hazards” approach. Specific topics include passive (CBRN) defense capabilities; installation CBRN preparedness; defense support of civil authorities; humanitarian assistance/disaster relief; health surveillance; medical countermeasures; emergency preparedness; threat reduction activities; WMD elimination; use of general forces or special operations forces.
- **Emerging Character of Conflict.** Being able to discuss possible future areas of conflict and adversary response is necessary to facilitate moving DoD from old ways of thinking to best postures for future scenarios. What types of conflict will resemble previous conflicts, which will be employed simultaneously, and where are new battle grounds emerging? Identify and analyze emerging technologies and their potential influence on future conflict. Specific topics include: future technologies for new unconventional weapons; CBR terrorism; nuclear terrorism; electromagnetic pulse effects; collapse of a nuclear weapons state; nuclear Iran; anti-access/area denial; Air Force Operating Concept.