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**NAVAL COMMAND AND STAFF
ONLINE PROGRAM**

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**LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS
AND
THEATER SECURITY DECISION MAKING**

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**COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT**



**U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
NAVAL COMMAND AND STAFF ONLINE PROGRAM
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS (LPA) COURSE
AND
THEATER SECURITY DECISION MAKING (TSDM) COURSE
SYLLABUS AND STUDY GUIDE**

Foreword

This syllabus contains both an overview and detailed description of the Leadership in the Profession of Arms course of study, and the Theater Security Decision Making course of study in the College of Distance Education's Naval Command and Staff Online Program. Both course curricula were produced by the College of Distance Education's Theater Security Decision Making Department. This syllabus provides detailed session-by-session guidance, assignments, and study guide material for weekly class preparation.

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NC&S ONLINE PROGRAM
LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS (LPA)
AND
THEATER SECURITY DECISION MAKING (TSDM)

SYLLABUS AND STUDY GUIDE

1. Course Overview. This phase of the NC&S Online Program is divided into two separate and distinct courses of study over a period of 12 weeks. The first course is called *Leadership in the Profession of Arms* (LPA) and will comprise the first two weeks. The second course is called *Theater Security Decision Making* (TSDM) and will comprise the final 10 weeks. Although separate courses of study, both LPA and TSDM will be taught by the same professor over a contiguous 12-week period. However, students will earn a separate grade for both LPA and TSDM. This introduction to LPA and TSDM will outline the content and expectations of each of these courses as well as the student deliverables and intended course outcomes.

a. *Leadership in the Profession of Arms (LPA).* LPA is rooted in the premise that the profession of arms is maintained by leaders who build trust and confidence with the American people they serve. The degree of trust and confidence they foster is based on the combination of the leader's competence and character. As the global environment continues to evolve, so must those who lead in it. By continuously developing themselves and their people, leaders in the profession of arms are better prepared for increasingly complex future roles. The LPA sessions allow students to focus on themselves as leaders by reflecting on past performance and identifying potential growth areas. Students are given the time, space, tools, guidance, and encouragement to do the hard work. Through reflection and understanding of introspection, students can develop new competencies, strengthen their character, and enhance their ability to lead in complex environments.

The LPA sessions also examine the foundations of the profession of arms, which is understood jointly in the larger context of the national security enterprise. LPA asks students to examine and develop the foundations of the profession of arms beyond their own communities. Students will gain an appreciation for the complex environment they will encounter in more senior roles, and the imperative that their thinking needs to evolve as they lead at the operational level of war and beyond. Students should see themselves in the context of the profession of arms, exercising sound moral judgment guided by professional ethics, norms, and laws.

b. *Theater Security Decision Making (TSDM).* TSDM is the second course of study in this phase and is designed to engage intermediate-level military officers and U.S. Government civilians with the challenges and complexities that occur in the rapidly evolving national and international security environments. The curriculum covers a diverse array of national, regional, and global security issues, giving particular emphasis in three fundamental areas: 1) An understanding of the challenges and opportunities that exist within the contemporary security environment in which U.S. national security professionals operate—with specific focus on the U.S. combatant commands; 2) an understanding of the myriad actors (domestic and international, government and non-government) that seek to influence the U.S. national security policy making process, an appreciation for the actions and motives such actors may

levy to influence policy decisions, and the level of sway such actors/actions may have on U.S. national security policy; and 3) informed through an understanding of the security environment and an appreciation for the myriad actors and influences driving U.S. national security policy, the course will examine and hone the skills necessary for students to effectively research, assess, and develop a theater-level security strategy that advances U.S. interests.

2. LPA and TSDM Course Intent. The goal of the LPA and TSDM courses is to provide an educational experience that combines intellectual rigor and professional relevance to prepare students to be more effective participants in the national security enterprise's decision making environment. This may be as part of a major national security organization such as a combatant command or Service staff or when in command. The intended outcome of this graduate-level course is to foster Joint warfighting skills, regional awareness, strategic perspectives, critical thinking, and analytic rigor. These skills are required of national security professionals who will be working in a complex staff environment or when in command. These courses are integral to the development of Joint warfighters who can develop and execute national- and theater-level military strategies that effectively employ the armed forces in concert with other instruments of national power to achieve the goals of national security strategy and policy in the air, land, maritime, and space physical domains and the information environment (which includes cyberspace).

3. Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) Officer Professional Military Education Policy. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Instruction, CJCSI 1800.01G (dated 15 April 2024), sets the policies, procedures, outcomes, and responsibilities for both officer Professional Military Education (PME) and JPME. The instruction directs the Services and Service schools to comply with the Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP) by meeting the Joint Learning Areas (JLAs) which are broad categories of Joint knowledge to inform the JPME curricula and meet the requirements for Joint officer education. The education continuum for JPME-1 outlined in the OPMEP is intended to prepare mid-career officers to conduct operations and campaigns in Service-specific and Joint constructs and to be fully capable of serving as leaders and staff officers at the operational level of war. This syllabus will list the LPA and TSDM Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) for each individual session. In addition, the syllabus will also list the Naval War College's Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) that are supported by that session.

4. Learning Outcomes. The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) has directed that JPME maintain a current and relevant curriculum that provides graduates with the knowledge, skills, and attributes necessary to perform successfully across a competition continuum comprising armed conflict, competition below armed conflict, and cooperation in both traditional and irregular warfare contexts. The CJCS further directed that this be adopted through an outcomes-based military education (OBME) approach in its development, delivery, and assessment. Given this, "outcomes" will be an integral part of JPME and the LPA and TSDM curricula. The desired outcomes for the LPA and TSDM courses are referred to as Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and are listed below. The LPA and TSDM CLOs directly complement and support the Naval War College's Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for JPME-I. The Naval War College's PLOs are the same for all modalities of JPME-I, resident, the Fleet Seminar Program, the Naval Command and Staff (NC&S) Online Program, and NWC-at-NPS.

a. LPA and TSDM Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). The CLOs for LPA and TSDM are the key concepts, skills, or competencies that a student should be able to articulate,

demonstrate, or utilize—theoretically or pragmatically—after completion of the session(s) relevant to a particular CLO. Each CLO will be assessed for student mastery at various stages of the curriculum. Student mastery of each CLOs must be achieved in order to successfully complete LPA and TSDM. The syllabus page for each of the LPA and TSDM sessions will identify the relevant CLO(s) covered by that session as well as when and how the CLO(s) will be assessed. CLO-1 (below) outlines the learning outcomes required for the LPA course while CLOs 2-4 outline the outcomes required for the TSDM course.

- CLO-1** Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision making as a national security professional. (LPA focus)
- CLO-2** Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies. (IS focus)
- CLO-3** Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security. (FPA focus)
- CLO-4** Examine and apply the processes used to develop military strategy to achieve desired end-states and the relationship between ends, ways, and means to ensure the advancement of U.S. interests. (SDX focus)

b. NWC Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). The Naval War College's PLOs were approved by the President, Naval War College and the Joint Staff J-7 for all NWC JPME-1 modalities, resident, Fleet Seminar Program, NC&S Online Program, and NWC-at-NPS. The Naval War College JPME-I PLOs are achieved only after a student has successfully completed all assessments in LPA, TSDM, JMO, and S&W. The PLO most relevant to LPA will be PLO-3 while the PLO most relevant to TSDM will be PLO-2. The NWC's JPME-I PLOs are as follows:

- PLO-1** Demonstrate joint planning and joint warfighting ability in military operations and campaigns across the continuum of competition. (JMO focus)
- PLO-2** Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments. (TSDM focus)
- PLO-3** Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making. (LPA focus)
- PLO-4** Apply theory, doctrine, and seapower through critical, structured thought in professional, written communication. (S&W and JMO focus)

5. Course Approach:

a. LPA Course Approach. The LPA sessions will examine the foundations of the profession of arms, which is understood jointly in the larger context of the national security enterprise. LPA asks students to examine and develop the foundations of the profession of arms beyond their own communities. Students will gain an appreciation for the complex environment they will encounter in more senior roles, and the imperative that their thinking needs to evolve as

they lead at the operational level of war and beyond. Students should see themselves in the context of the profession of arms, exercising sound moral judgment guided by professional ethics, norms, and laws.

b. TSDM Course Approach. TSDM is focused at the theater-strategic level where students intensively study various regions of the world and analyze how U.S. foreign policy decisions impact theater security. The course follows the logic of analyzing national security through two distinct lenses: *International Security (IS)*, providing the international strategic context with a strong regional focus on USPACOM, and *Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)* focusing on U.S. national and organizational decision making environments. At the end of TSDM, course concepts will be synthesized via a *Strategy Development Exercise*, referred (SDX). Each student will develop an executive-level essay/product that identifies U.S. national interests, offers a strategic estimate of the Indo-Pacific theater over the next eight years, an outline of a theater strategy, and identifies the capabilities required to advance the strategy.

1) International Security (IS). The United States, its allies, and partners face an increasingly complex and interconnected global security environment marked by the growing specter of great power competition and conflict, while collective, transnational threats to all nations and actors compete for attention and finite resources. The IS portion of the course allows students to gain a holistic understanding of this dynamic environment, and how the U.S. aims to synchronize and coordinate all instruments of national power to achieve its national security objectives in support of U.S. national interests.

The IS sessions also examine the international system and the role of the U.S. within that system. In doing so it creates a solid foundation for the other two areas of emphasis which in turn examine the U.S. policy-making process and the challenges inherent with developing effective theater strategy.

When it comes to national security challenges, as mid-level national security practitioners it is critical to have a thorough and systematic understanding of the global security environment and the larger U.S. national strategic guidance that drives all Department of Defense (DoD) actions. This knowledge is essential to accurately frame a national security problem, comprehend the extant and future motivations, tensions, and opportunities in the international system, and craft options for senior leaders (e.g. combatant commanders) to exercise in pursuit of national interests.

The IS sessions achieve this through the sequential exploration of several relevant national security topics. Starting with examining America's place in the international system, the sessions explore international relations theory and grand strategy, U.S. national-level strategies (National Security Strategy (NSS), National Defense Strategy (NDS), National Military Strategy (NMS), and the Maritime Strategy), the Atlantic, Pacific, and Indian Oceanic Regions, the combatant commands and global integration, and future security challenges and opportunities. Throughout these sessions we'll offer a closer examination of the unique security challenges of the various combatant commands to include the role of USSTRATCOM in strategic deterrence and the role and challenges associated with emerging domains of technology as viewed through USCYBERCOM and USSPACECOM.

2) Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). Whether it's the decision to send cluster munitions to the Ukrainian armed forces, deploy U.S. troops to Iraq, launch sanctions against Russia, invest in local production of microchip processors, fund a new military platform, or increase/decrease the defense budget, policy decisions don't just "happen." The FPA sessions seek to expose students to the complexities of the national security decision making environment, the processes that make it work (or not), and the myriad factors that influence policy decision-makers and their subsequent decisions.

Why? Because the idea that "theirs not to reason why / theirs but to do and die," fails to consider that while military officers (the majority of our students) don't make policy, the DoD does influence policy and understanding the *how* and *why* decisions are made and influenced is a critical element for the education of national security professionals who may find themselves in a position, either directly or indirectly, where they must navigate the complex policy-making environment. As Colin Powell argued while speaking to students at the USNWC:

"...you need a better understanding of how politics works, of how public relations work, as to how you generate support for the armed forces of the United States... To make sure you understand the influences that are pressing on the Department and on your particular service. Because ultimately, we are answerable to the American people."

In short, the FPA sessions help students gain a deeper and greater appreciation of the policy-making environment so they are better equipped to "operate knowledgably and professionally" within it.

The FPA sessions expose students to the study of FPA as an academic discipline and how it will help them develop an "analytical toolkit" for investigating the policymaking process and resulting policy decisions. It will begin with a focus on the domestic policymaking environment with specific attention given to the formal institutions responsible for national security policymaking and execution (e.g., The Presidency, National Security Council, Interagency, Congress, etc.). It will also focus on other domestic "external" factors (e.g., public opinion, think tanks, the media, etc.) that can influence policy debates and decisions. FPA will also ask students to consider and reflect on international influencers on the policy-making environment (e.g., individual states like China and Russia, non-state actors like the Islamic State (ISIS), and international institutions like the United Nations or the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)) as well as the role that influences beyond territorial borders can play in shaping foreign policy decisions. The goal is to provide students with the skills needed to conduct a rigorous analysis of a complex national security decision, to determine the key influences on policy, and the ability to articulate how and why they were influential.

Overall, the FPA sessions are designed to give students conversancy in the national security policymaking process, the complexities and peculiarities of it, and their role in it as a national security professional.

3) Strategy Development Exercise (SDX). The final three weeks of TSDM will focus on the SDX. The SDX sessions will introduce students to the skills necessary to develop a theater-level security strategy outline with the objective being the ability to create a theater security strategy that focuses on the contemporary Indo-Pacific theater—the course’s final summative assessment. This student deliverable will be achieved by introducing students to each of the assessments deliverables which will enable them to break the task of strategy development into smaller, focused, and achievable parts. Although the final deliverable of a theater security strategy is the evaluated portion of this block, the process of researching, analyzing, assessing, and deciding strategy that advances U.S. interests is an invaluable aspect of the process.

Another key aspect of the SDX is that it will allow students to balance all of the realities examined in LPA, IS, and FPA to develop a realistic theater security strategy outline based on advancing U.S. interests. The SDX process will enable students to analyze and assess the current security environment, determine a vision for what they would like the theater security environment to look like in the future, and the decision-making process necessary to select an effective theater security strategy that balances risk, takes into account the realities of the domestic political system, considers the demands of global force management, and is able to achieve the desired objectives. This final deliverable will be accomplished through a comprehensive essay/product which allows students to demonstrate proficiency in each of the concepts discussed throughout TSDM.

6. Course Organization. LPA and TSDM will run sequentially over a 12-week period with the same Professor. Most weeks in LPA and TSDM will have three distinct sessions. This is to separate specific topics from one another (e.g. the Presidency and Congress) so that they can be examined individually while still being introduced in the same week. Despite the number of sessions, the student preparation materials (readings, videos, etc.) for each week will be the equivalent of 150 to 200 pages of reading. An observant student will note that some sessions have a significant number of readings with respect to quantity. This is intentional so that students may be introduced to many different aspects and viewpoints of a complex topic. Despite the quantity of readings/videos, most of them will be very brief in length with the total page count equivalent remaining within those outlined above. Similarly, some of the preparation material may appear to be dated with respect to their published date or content. This is also intentional. A number of our readings explore enduring topics whose origins one must understand to effectively analyze the current operating environment. For example, to appreciate the current NATO structure one must first understand and appreciate the history of the Cold War and the origins of NATO to ensure the collective security of the West against the Soviet Union. LPA and TSDM will include the following major elements:

1) Leadership in the Profession of Arms (LPA)	2 weeks	7 Sessions
2) International Security (IS)	4 weeks	12 Sessions
3) Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)	3 weeks	8 Sessions
4) Strategy Development Exercise (SDX)	3 weeks	6 Sessions

7. Course Requirements

a. Internet Connectivity. Connectivity to the Internet (via computer or tablet with internet and e-mail capacity) is required to access the Program's learning management system, Blackboard Ultra, located at <http://navalwarcollege.blackboard.com/>. Students should contact the Professor for any required assistance. A USERID and PASSWORD is sent to each student upon enrollment in the Program. Blackboard Ultra, supports multiple computer systems and internet browsers. However, Blackboard is optimized for Google Chrome, and as such, Blackboard may not provide the best experience if Chrome is not used. Note: Internet Explorer is no longer supported by Blackboard.

b. Individual Student Responsibilities. For both LPA and TSDM, students are expected to be fully prepared for each week's sessions and to actively contribute positively in the discussion boards (DBFs). An inquisitive attitude and the willingness by all students to engage constructively with peers and faculty are essential prerequisites for a successful graduate-level experience. The "one-third" rule is the keystone of the cohort approach. The first third is a well-constructed, relevant curriculum. The second third is a highly-qualified faculty to present the material and guide the sessions, and the final and most important third is the thorough preparation and active contribution of individual students.

c. Workload. Every effort has been made to provide for a consistent reading and preparation workload from week-to-week throughout the course. Both LPA and TSDM are graduate-level courses that as a general rule require the average student approximately 12 hours of preparation and contribution per week. Note that student deliverables such as formative assessments (FAs) and Summative Assessments (SAs) will be due throughout the course. Students should take careful note of the due dates for assignments as indicated in the schedule in order to plan far in advance for effective time and workload management.

d. Student Preparation. All student preparation materials (readings, videos, podcasts, etc.) must be completed each week in order to be a valued participant in the Discussion Board Forums. The goal of the cohort is to discuss national security issues informed by the preparation materials, not necessarily a review of each reading. From time to time, Professors may also identify (optional) recommended readings to provide additional background knowledge directly relevant to course concepts or to provide current insights into cohort discussions.

e. Study Guidance. For each session in LPA and TSDM, the syllabus page identifies five distinct areas. Each week's preparation should begin with a thorough review of the respective syllabus pages paying particular attention to the Guidance Questions listed in Section C. The five areas of each syllabus page include:

- 1) Section A (Session Overview) offers a brief overview of that session and where it fits within the overall LPA or TSDM course.
- 2) Section B (Objectives) identifies the session objectives for *that specific session*, the relevant LPA or TSDM Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), and the relevant Naval War College Program Learning Outcome (PLO).

- 3) Section C (Guidance Questions) outlines specific questions for that session which should be used to thoroughly prepare for cohort interaction and other assessments.
- 4) Section D (Student Preparation) materials, as mentioned above, are the required readings, videos, podcasts, etc., required for that session.
- 5) Section E (Student Deliverables) identifies any student deliverables required by that session and the associated suspense date.

f. End of Course Survey. An invaluable part of any learning experience is substantive feedback. In an effort to improve the learning experience, students will be required to complete a student survey on their experience in LPA and TSDM, the effectiveness of the curricula, assessments, and the Professor. Students must submit this on-line end of course survey in order to receive a final grade and course credit. All survey submissions are anonymous, and the anonymous data shared with Professors only after all grades have been finalized.

8. Attendance. Although NC&S is an asynchronous online course, students are expected to be active participants and stay current with all student preparation materials each week of LPA and TSDM. In addition, students are required to turn in all deliverables in accordance with the respective due dates published in Blackboard and the master LPA/TSDM schedule unless coordinated with the Professor (in writing) *prior* to the scheduled due date *and* receive the Professor's approval and a new due date for the deliverable (in writing).

9. Assessments. Assessments provide an opportunity for students to demonstrate mastery of the CLOs and PLOs. Assessments also serve as a means for feedback and interaction between the Professor and students, providing students with some measure of how they are doing at that point in the course. The Professor will assess student progress throughout LPA and TSDM using four means of assessment: discussion board forums (DBF), formative assessments (FA), summative assessments (SA), and student preparation and contribution.

a. Discussion Board Forums (DBF). DBFs provide an opportunity for students to interact with the Professor and fellow students as well as an opportunity to demonstrate understanding and application of course material. DBF interaction will occur throughout the LPA and TSDM sessions. DBFs are part of the overall requirements, and they are evaluated by the Professor as part of the student's preparation and contribution grade. A final preparation and contribution grade will be awarded at the end of LPA as well as TSDM which will be the average of all DBF grades earned. DBF are graded with a number and letter grade (e.g., 87/B+).

b. Formative Assessments (FA). FAs are ungraded assessments which offer students and Professors an opportunity to assess student progress and comprehension of course material prior to completing a graded assignment. Each FA is assessed by the Professor as either "meets standards" or "not yet." Although FAs are not graded, in order to meet standards, the student's work must be assessed at the equivalent of an 80/B- or better. All FAs must meet standards in order for a student to continue in the course. Any FA assessed by the Professor as "not yet" will need to be re-accomplished following thorough feedback and a remediation plan given by the Professor to the student. Remediation and successful completion of the FA must be completed within 48 hours of being assigned. Any student who receives a second "not yet" on

the same FA may be referred to the NSA Department Chair and considered for involuntary disenrollment for failure to progress in the course. TSDM will have 2 FAs, one each in IS and FPA. The following is a list of the TSDM FAs and their corresponding suspense date.

FA #	Type of FA	Effort	Due
FA-1	Short Essay	Individual	End of Week 5
FA-2	Short Essay	Individual	End of Week 8

c. Summative Assessments (SA). SAs are graded assessments that validate a student's mastery of the CLO(s) being covered by that assessment. SAs will be graded with a number and letter grade (e.g., 87/B+). To be considered passing, an SA must earn a grade of 80/B- or higher. Each of the SAs in LPA and TSDM must earn a grade of 80/B- or higher in order for a student to continue in the course. Any SA assessed by the Professor as being below a grade of 80 will need to be re-accomplished following thorough feedback and a remediation plan given by the Professor to the student. Remediation and successful completion of the SA must be completed within 7 days of being assigned. If the second attempt on the SA earns a passing grade, the student will earn a final grade on that SA no higher than 80/B-. Any student who receives a second failure on the same SA will be referred to the NSA Department Chair and considered for involuntary disenrollment for failure to progress in the course. SAs have a firm due date as outlined below. *Any late submission received after the due date without a written request from the student and written approval from the Professor will earn a grade no higher than 80/B-.*

d. Student Preparation and Contribution. The final means of graded assessment is student preparation and contribution as indicated by the DBFs. This assessment will be evaluated (with a numeric and corresponding letter grade) throughout the course based on how well a student prepared for each DBF, their effectiveness at applying applicable course concepts, demonstrating critical and creative thinking, and communicating these skills effectively via the DBFs. A final preparation and contribution grade will be awarded at the end of LPA as well as TSDM which will be the average of all DBF grades earned. DBFs are graded with a number and letter grade (e.g., 87/B+).

e. Timeliness of Assessments. All graded assessments are required to be turned in via Blackboard no later than the established due date and time as indicated on the master LPA and TSDM schedule. Requests for an extension on any individual assessment must be submitted to the Professor *in writing* prior to the originally established due date/time, and receive approval from the Professor, *in writing*, that establishes a new due date/time. Any graded assessment (SAs and DBFs) turned in past the originally established due date/time without a written request and approval will earn a grade no greater than 80/B-. Formative assessments turned in past the originally established due date/time without a written request and approval will be assessed a five (5) point deduction from the associated SA, but no lower than an 80.

NOTE: The academic week for the NC&S Online Program begins at 0001 Eastern Time (ET) on Friday and ends at 2359 ET on Thursday. All FAs and SAs for LPA and TSDM are due at the end of the academic week (2359 ET on Thursdays) unless otherwise indicated.

10. LPA and TSDM Graded Assessments. The following is a composite listing of the LPA and TSDM course requirements, type of effort, basis of evaluation, time due, and their relative weight. Note that LPA and TSDM will earn separate grades as they are separate and distinct courses.

ASSESSMENT	TYPE OF EFFORT	BASIS OF EVALUATION	DUE DATE	WEIGHT
SA-1 (LPA)	Individual	Ability to analyze a case study and apply course concepts in a logical & concise way. (CLO-1) PLO-3 Key Assessment	No later than 2359 ET at the end of Week 2	75% of LPA Grade
Preparation and Contribution (LPA)	Individual	Assessed quality of DBFs and DBF responses in LPA (CLO-1 and PLO-3)	Continuously throughout LPA	25% of LPA Grade
SA-2 (TSDM-IS)	Individual	Ability to research and analyze a dimension of International Security. (CLO-2 and PLO-2)	No later than 2359 ET at the end of Week 6	20% of TSDM Grade
SA-3 (TSDM-FPA)	Individual	Ability to analyze a case study and apply course concepts in a logical & concise way. (CLO-3 and PLO-2)	No later than 2359 ET at the end of Week 9	20% of TSDM Grade
SA-4 (TSDM-SDX)	Individual	Quality of SDX essay/product (CLOs 2-4) PLO-2 Key Assessment	No later than 2359 ET at the end of Week 12	35% of TSDM Grade
Preparation and Contribution (TSDM)	Individual	Assessed quality of DBFs and DBF responses in TSDM (CLOs 2-4 and PLO-2)	Continuously throughout TSDM (IS, FPA, SDX)	25% of TSDM Grade

a. Grading Criteria. Both LPA and TSDM course grades will be assigned based on grades earned for summative assessments and preparation/contribution in the respective course. Students must complete, with an 80/B- or better grade, each of the three NC&S core courses to earn JPME Phase

I certification. All work in the prescribed curricula for the intermediate program will be graded using the standards below.

- 1) The final grades in LPA and TSDM will be expressed as the unrounded numerical average of the weighted course assessments in the table above, to two decimal places, along with the corresponding letter grades with pluses or minuses.
- 2) General rubrics (in paragraph b. below) are provided so students will know the general performance criteria for summative assessments and student preparation and contribution.
- 3) Grades for all TSDM assignments are based on the standards set forth in the 2024 U.S. Naval War College Faculty Handbook (page 44), which states in part:

“Historical evidence indicates that a grade distribution of 35% - 45% ‘As’ and 55% - 65% Bs and below is commonly achieved by the overall NWC student population. While variations from this norm might occur from seminar to seminar and subject to subject, it will rarely if ever reach an overall ‘A’ to ‘B/C’ ratio of greater than or equal to an even 50/50 distribution.”

- 4) Unexcused tardy student work—that is, work turned in past the deadline without previous *written notification* from the student to the Professor and *written approval* from the Professor—will receive a grade of not greater than a B- (80). Professors are available to assist students with course material, to review a student’s progress, and to provide counseling as required. Students with individual concerns are encouraged to discuss them as early as possible so the Professor can render assistance in a timely manner.
- 5) All LPA and TSDM Course assessments are open-book and open-notes. Students may consult any of the student preparation materials or course resources while completing the assessments. Collaboration between students on assessments is NOT permitted unless specifically authorized in the assessment’s instructions. The use of commercially available computer software for proofreading a student’s work (e.g., Grammarly) prior to submission is not only authorized, but also highly encouraged.

b. Grading Standards. All graded activities in LPA and TSDM will be evaluated using the following rubrics:

- 1) *Summative Assessments.* In addition to the substantive criteria specified below, the written response must be editorially correct (spelling, punctuation, grammar, syntax, format, etc.).

A+	(97-100)	Work of truly superior quality. Organized, coherent, and extremely well-written response that offers a genuinely new understanding of the subject. Completely addresses the question(s). Covers all applicable major and key minor points. Demonstrates total grasp and comprehension of the topic. Ready to be published “as is” in a peer-reviewed journal. Demonstrates mastery of all Course Learning Outcomes evaluated.
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A	(94-96)	Work of exceptional quality. Demonstrates an outstanding grasp of the topic, addressing all major issues and key minor points. Organized, coherent and very well-written. Ready for publication in a peer-reviewed journal with minor edits. Demonstrates mastery of all Course Learning Outcomes evaluated.
A-	(90-93)	Work of very high quality and well above average graduate level. Demonstrates an excellent grasp of the topic. Addresses all major and most of the minor points in a clear and coherent manner. Demonstrates mastery of all Course Learning Outcomes evaluated.
B+	(87-89)	Solid work and slightly above average graduate level. Well-crafted answer that discusses all relevant important concepts with supporting rationale for analysis. Demonstrates mastery of all Course Learning Outcomes evaluated.
B	(84-86)	Average performance expected of graduate level. A successful consideration of the topic overall, but either lacking depth or containing statements for which the supporting rationale is not sufficiently argued. However, demonstrates acceptable mastery of all Course Learning Outcomes evaluated.
B-	(80-83)	Acceptable, but below average graduate work. Addresses the question and demonstrates a fair understanding of the topic, but does not address all key concepts or is weak in rationale and clarity. However, demonstrates acceptable mastery of all Course Learning Outcomes evaluated.
<B-	(<80)	Grades below a B- require remediation.

2) *Student Preparation and Contribution.* Student preparation and contribution will be graded at the conclusion of each DBF as a whole number on a 100-point scale. Preparation and contribution grades are determined by Professor evaluation of the quality of a student's preparedness and contributions to DBFs and DBF responses. The evaluation will consider a student's critical and creative thinking as demonstrated in written communication. All students are expected to have completed all student preparation materials, substantively contribute to each DBF and respond respectfully to DBF responses. When a student's contribution grade falls below a B- (or is in danger of it) the Professor will intervene and ensure that the student understands that a contribution grade of B- or better is required for successful completion of both the LPA course and TSDM course. The student will be provided with the opportunity to increase the contribution grade through remediation provided by the Professor. Remediation must be determined by the Professor to be of high quality to warrant an increase in the student's preparation and contribution grade. A final contribution grade below a B- will result in the student not successfully completing course requirements. The key criteria used to evaluate cohort preparation and contribution are:

A+	(97-100):	Contributions provide a wholly new understanding of the topic, expressed in a clear and concise manner. Demonstrates exceptional preparation for each session as reflected in the quality of contributions to DBFs. Strikes an outstanding balance of “listening” and “contributing,” engaging with classmates in a way that elevates the overall level of cohort discourse.
A	(94-96):	Contribution is always of superior quality. Unfailingly thinks through the issue at hand before comment. Can be relied upon to be fully prepared for every session, and contributions are highlighted by insightful thought, understanding, and in part original interpretation of complex concepts. Thoughts are expressed clearly and concisely, and engage with contributions of others.
A-	(90-93):	Fully engaged in cohort DBFs and commands the respect of colleagues through the insightful quality of their contribution and ability to understand, analyze, and build upon the comments of others. Ideas are generally expressed clearly. Well above the average expected of a graduate student.
B+	(87-89):	A positive contributor to session DBFs and advances the discussion in most DBFs. Contributions reflect understanding of the material. Contributes original and well-developed insights. Above the average expected of a graduate student.
B	(84-86):	Average graduate level contribution. Involvement in DBFs reflects adequate preparation for session discussions with the occasional contribution of original and insightful thought, with some consideration of others’ contributions. Ideas may sometimes be difficult to follow.
B-	(80-83):	Contributes, but sometimes engages without having thought through the issue well enough to marshal logical supporting evidence, address counterarguments, or present a structurally sound position. Sometimes expresses thoughts that are off-track, not in keeping with the direction of the discussion. Minimally acceptable graduate-level preparation and participation for individual sessions.
<B-	(<80):	Grades below a B- require remediation.

c. Grade Appeals

1) Formative Assessments: Formative Assessments are tools of various types used by the student and the Professor to measure a student’s progress toward mastery of Course Learning Outcomes. They are not graded events per se and, as such, are not subject to appeal.

2) *Failing Summative Assessments*: Following remediation, students receiving a grade of less than 80 (B-) on their second attempt to complete a Summative Assessment may appeal within 72 hours after receipt of the grade in order to continue in the course of study. Contested grades shall be appealed first to the Professor who assigned the grade, and then, if unresolved, to the National Security Affairs Department Chair. An additional grader will be assigned who will grade the submission in the blind (i.e., without specific knowledge of the initially assigned grade). This review may sustain, lower, or raise the assigned grade. If this review results in a grade of 80 (B-) or above, the student will receive a grade of 80/B- for the assignment and proceed with the course of study

3) *Preparation and Contribution Grades*: Students may only appeal preparation and contribution grades to the Professor who assigned the grade. That Professor will consider the student's feedback, make a final determination, and present the situation and the final determination to the National Security Affairs Department Chair.

4) *Final Course Grades*: A final course grade is not subject to review except for computational accuracy.

11. Academic Integrity

a. Honor Code. (Excerpted from the NWC 2024 Faculty Handbook) The Naval War College diligently enforces a strict academic code requiring authors to credit properly the source of materials directly cited in any written work submitted in fulfillment of diploma/degree requirements. Simply put: plagiarism is prohibited. Likewise, this academic code prohibits cheating and the misrepresentation of a paper as an author's original thought. Plagiarism, cheating, and misrepresentation are inconsistent with the professional standards required of all military personnel and government employees. Furthermore, in the case of U.S. military officers, such conduct clearly violates the "Exemplary Conduct Standards" delineated in Title 10, U.S. Code, Sections 3583 (U.S. Army), 5947 (U.S. Naval Service), and 8583 (U.S. Air Force).

b. Plagiarism. Plagiarism is the use of someone else's work without giving proper credit to the author or creator of the work. It is passing off as one's own another's words, ideas, analysis, or other products. Whether intentional or unintentional, plagiarism is a serious violation of academic integrity and will be treated as such. Plagiarism includes but is not limited to the following actions:

- 1) The verbatim use of others' words without quotation marks (or block quotations) and citation;
- 2) The paraphrasing of others' words or ideas without citation;
- 3) Any use of others' work (other than facts that are widely accepted as common knowledge) found in books, journals, newspapers, websites, interviews, government documents, course materials, lecture notes, films, etc., without giving credit.
- 4) Authors are expected to give full credit in written submissions when utilizing another's words or ideas. Such utilization, with proper attribution, is not prohibited by this code.

However, a substantially borrowed but attributed paper may lack the originality expected of graduate-level work; submission of such a paper may merit a low or failing grade but is not plagiarism.

c. *Cheating.* Cheating is defined as the giving, receiving, or using of unauthorized aid in support of one's own efforts, or the efforts of another student. Cheating includes the following:

- 1) Gaining unauthorized access to exams (FAs, SAs, etc.);
- 2) Assisting or receiving assistance from other students or other individuals in the preparation of written assignments or during tests, unless specifically permitted;
- 3) Utilizing unauthorized materials during assessments (notes, texts, crib sheets, generative AI, and the like, in paper or electronic form).

d. *Misrepresentation.* Misrepresentation is defined as reusing a single paper for more than one purpose without permission or acknowledgment. Misrepresentation includes the following:

- 1) Submitting a single paper or substantially the same paper for more than one course at NWC without permission of the instructors;
- 2) Submitting a paper or substantially the same paper previously prepared for some other purpose outside NWC without acknowledging that it is an earlier work.

e. *Actions in Case of Suspected Violations*

1) If a student's submitted written work appears to violate this code of conduct, the following procedures shall be followed:

(a) The Deputy Dean, CDE, will be notified and will initiate an investigation. The Department Chair will provide all supporting documentation. In the event that a formal investigation is warranted, the student will be informed of the nature of the case and be allowed to submit information on his/her behalf. The results of the investigation will be delivered to the Dean, CDE.

(b) The Dean, CDE, will forward the results of the investigation and a disposition recommendation to the Provost who will determine whether the case should be referred to the Academic Integrity Review Committee (AIRC).

(c) The Provost may elect to have the case settled by the Dean, CDE; or refer it to the AIRC, in which case the President, NWC will be notified of the pending action.

(d) If the case is forwarded to the AIRC, the AIRC will thoroughly review the case, interview the student if feasible, make findings of fact, and recommend appropriate action to the President via the Provost. This action may include any or all of the following:

- i. Lowering of grades on the affected work or on the entire course of instruction

(this will be a letter grade of F and a numerical grade of between 0 and 59).

ii. Inclusion of remarks in fitness reports.

iii. Letters to appropriate branches of the Service, agencies, offices, or governments.

iv. Dismissal from NWC.

v. Referral for disciplinary action under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, or for appropriate action under rules governing civilian personnel.

2) Violations discovered after graduation will be processed similarly and may result in referral of the matter to the current command or office of the individual concerned and, if appropriate, revocation of the NWC diploma, master's degree and JPME credit.

12. Diploma Offered. A Naval War College, College of Naval Command and Staff diploma may be earned through successful completion of all four core courses (LPA, TSDM, S&W, & JMO) through the NC&S Online Program. A diploma is awarded for satisfactory completion (overall grade of "B-" or higher) of the four core courses.

13. Key Personnel Contacts. If you require additional information in your studies or if interpersonal problems develop in a course that cannot be dealt with to your satisfaction by your Professor, please contact the following personnel:

Chair
National Security Affairs Department
College of Distance Education

Professor Michael W. Pratt
Tel: 401-856-5545
michael.pratt@usnwc.edu

NC&S Online Program Director
National Security Affairs Department
College of Distance Education

Prof. Bradley Hawksworth
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NC&S Program Manager
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NC&S Administrative Assistant

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LPA and TSDM Master Schedule

NC&S Online 3.0.4 LPA Schedule								
WEEK #	Sessions	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
Leadership in the Profession of Arms (LPA)								
1	LPA-1 LPA-2 LPA-3	START LPA SA-1 Open		DBF-1 Intro Post		DBF-2 Post		DBF-3 Post
2	LPA-4 LPA-5 LPA-6 LPA-7					DBF-2 & DBF-3 Resp		SA-1 Due END LPA
NC&S Online 3.0.4 TSDM Schedule								
WEEK #	Sessions	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY
TSDM's International Security (IS)								
1	IS-1 IS-2 IS-3	START TSDM SA-1 Open		DBF-1a Intro Post		DBF-4 Post		DBF-4 Response
2	IS-4 IS-5 IS-6					DBF-5 Post		DBF-5 Response
3	IS-7 IS-8 IS-9							FA-1 Due
4	IS-10 IS-11 IS-12							SA-2 Due
TSDM's Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)								
5	FPA-1 FPA-2 FPA-3	SA-3 Open				DBF-6 Post		DBF-6 Response
6	FPA-4 FPA-5 FPA-6							FA-2 Due
7	FPA-7 FPA-8							SA-3 Due
TSDM's Strategy Development Exercise (SDX)								
8	SDX-1 SDX-2 SDX-3	SA-4 Open				DBF-7 Post		DBF-7 Response
9	SDX-4 SDX-5					DBF-8 Post		DBF-8 Response
10	SDX-6							SA-4 Due END TSDM

NC&S ONLINE PROGRAM
LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS (LPA)
SYLLABUS AND STUDY GUIDE

Overview

The Leadership in the Profession of Arms (LPA) course focuses on the student's personal development as a leader and how they fit into organizational decision making. It is designed to prepare students for command and staff positions through the study of foundational leadership, self-reflection and decision making principles. These concepts will be revisited throughout the follow-on course, Theater Security Decision Making, especially in the Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) sessions and the Strategy Development Exercise (SDX).

In the TSDM International Security (IS) sessions students will consider many of the factors in the security environment that influence the formulation of strategy. The FPA sessions will highlight domestic and internal dynamics that shape how states develop and implement foreign policy decisions. But all of this takes place via individuals who are *led by someone*. That leader's views on ethics and professionalism, their experiences, their ability to think critically, and their education in such matters can have a profound effect on their decision making process. These factors ultimately impact the course of action they choose, both for themselves and their organization.

The profession of arms is maintained by leaders who build trust and confidence with the American people whom they serve. The degree of trust and confidence they foster is based on the combination of the leader's competence and character.

As the global environment continues to evolve, so must those who lead in it. By continuously developing themselves and their people, leaders in the profession of arms are better prepared for future positions of increasing scope, complexity, and uncertainty.

The LPA sessions give students the opportunity to focus on themselves as leaders, by reflecting on past performance and identifying potential growth areas. In LPA, students are provided time, intellectual space, tools, guidance, and encouragement to do the hard work of self-development. Through reflection and understanding, students will develop new competencies, strengthen personal character, and enhance their ability to lead in complex and dynamic environments.

Related to this, the complexity and challenges facing today's military leaders, even at the O-4/O-5 level, can have national and international security implications. They must take a wider view beyond just their "tactical-level" organization and consider factors such as external stakeholder expectations, alignment with the theater/strategic mission, how to effectively identify the best way forward from multiple courses of action, how best to implement change, and a host of other issues. Additionally, effective staff officers must consider the issues weighing on their higher-level leadership be it a joint task force commander, combatant commander, or other high-level official, to provide the best military advice. The LPA sessions, combined with the SDX, provide students an opportunity to think deeply about leadership and examine several decision making aspects

allowing them to serve more successfully in these command and staff assignments while considering “the larger picture” as it relates to theater-level security.

In sum, the LPA sessions highlight the importance of “the person in the machine” of the theater security environment presented in the IS and FPA sessions. Additionally, it provides an integral element of the TSDM SDX by highlighting the need for assessment, innovative ideas, courses of action and criteria, and how to develop an outline of a theater security plan.

The LPA session concepts include decision making theories, complexity, vertical development, heuristics and biases, moral perspectives, the profession of arms, self-assessment, empathy, humility, vulnerability, and trust, along with some organizational dynamics such as climate, culture, and change. This will help students define themselves as a leader and decision maker while also providing insights into their profession and other individual decision makers in the national security environment.

The sessions begin with an examination of decision making theories along with the concepts of complexity and vertical development. Differing definitions of the profession of arms are mostly descriptive definitions, articulating what a profession is, or its expected characteristics. They do not explain how one becomes a professional in their profession, nor who should be considered a professional. These questions will be explored during LPA-4. But as a starting point, it is important to understand that as individual leaders, YOU ARE the profession. As such, you have the responsibility to continue to grow yourselves and those you lead. This course provides a prescriptive view on what leaders must do to fulfill this professional obligation. The core components are:

Reflection – Understanding – Acceptance – Commitment

Reflection: Leaders in a profession must take an internal inventory to establish what their starting point is as a reference for further growth. Most people think they know who they are, but “It matters more how others see you.” Good leadership is based on an ability to influence others to achieve objectives. This requires developing relationships that allow others to be internally motivated enough to follow along. Those relationships include a host of dynamics, based on interpersonal interactions. Leaders must examine how others view them if they are to improve as leaders.

Understanding: The special expertise necessary for members in the profession of arms extends beyond technical competence to drive ships, fly aircraft, and support our global operations. Leaders must maintain an intellectual curiosity and take the time to dig deeper into concepts that expose them to personal development opportunities. The Navy Leader Development Framework 3.0 states, “The intensity of our self-guided learning efforts is perhaps the most direct reflection of our drive to be the best leaders possible.” Leaders need to understand the theories, various perspectives, and the science behind factors that influence them in leading. This knowledge provides the contextual framework behind who they are and develops their ability to become more adaptive thinkers.

Acceptance: When we look at ourselves, we must have the humility to acknowledge and accept that some elements of our character are strengths, while others are weaknesses. Leaders must understand and accept that external and cognitive factors influence their decision making. To develop as leaders, we need to examine these factors and the influence they have on our behaviors, decision-making, and belief systems. In accepting that we, and those we interact with, look at the world through different lenses, we can make better and more informed decisions.

Commitment: Unlike the many descriptive views on what comprises a profession, this course requires leaders to internalize their commitment to the profession and commit to developing others. As leaders in a profession, your fundamental responsibility requires a deliberate, active role in maintaining the profession. As you develop others and yourselves, you fulfill our obligation to preserve your profession.

The early LPA sessions focus on the individual. Here students will be introduced to several moral perspectives and models of decision making. They will consider topics ranging from humility (I don't know everything), to moral philosophy (how do I know what is right?), to self-awareness (how do others see me?), through decision science (heuristics & biases), Snowden's complexity, and to Kegan's vertical development.

The course flows quickly, as students develop a deeper sense of their role in their profession, and how reflection, understanding, acceptance, and commitment have a significant impact on their development. A key course objective is for students to find value in reflection. As one student put it, "Self-reflection is important. If this class made me realize anything, in addition to the lessons presented, it was that my growth went unchecked. I grew, but it was without reflection."

LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS-1

INTRODUCTION TO LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS (THEORIES, COMPLEXITY, AND VERTICAL DEVELOPMENT)

A. Session Overview

Everyone makes decisions. Decision science shows that when people make decisions, they use a combination of feeling, knowledge, and intuition. Too often they end up oversimplifying these decisions, ignoring facts that do not conform to their perception of reality and ultimately making a poor decision. This is not about hindsight – this is about opening our minds to seeing what is really around us, not just what we want to see. Leveraging work by Paul J.H. Schoemaker, J. Edward Russo, Daniel Kahneman, and Amos Tversky, we now understand far more about how decisions are made than ever before.

This session will also introduce the concepts of cognitive diversity, complexity, and a growth mindset and their impacts on the decision making process. In the TSDM course, students will gain an understanding of the volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous (VUCA) nature of the international security environment in which national security professionals make decisions. Students will then learn to apply the fundamental concepts of decision making, introduced in LPA, within the U.S. national security enterprise.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the LPA sessions, structure, assignments, and expectations.
 - Identify the backgrounds, expertise, and experiences of the students in the cohort.
 - Identify the various factors and contexts that are critical to decision making.
 - Understand the rational actor model, together with the advantages and disadvantages associated with this approach to decision making.
 - Understand “alternative” models to the rational actor model and the advantages and disadvantages associated with each.
 - Understand how different environments impact decision making.
 - Understand vertical development, and the role of mental complexity in developing self and others.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision making as a national security professional.

- Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What unique leadership experience or expertise do you bring to the cohort?
2. Reflect on your personal leadership style, strengths and weaknesses. How can self-reflection help you develop as a leader?
3. What are the factors critical to decision making, and how do differing contexts affect consideration of those factors?
4. What is the rational actor model of decision making, why is it important, and what are its underlying assumptions, strengths, and weaknesses?
5. For each “alternative” to the rational actor model, what are the key components of the model, its underlying assumptions, strengths and weaknesses?
6. How does Daniel Kahneman's cognitive model relate to the rational actor model?
7. How do the complex patterns and connections between ideas create competing interpretations of the problem?
8. What is vertical development and how do the LPA sessions support your personal vertical development?

D. Student Preparation (60 pp; ~30 min video)

1. National Security Affairs Faculty. “Leadership in the Profession of Arms and Theater Security Decision Making Online Syllabus,” Version 3.0.3, May 2026, (1-20). (20 pp)
2. National Security Affairs Faculty. “Decision Making Theories: A Primer,” Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, June 2020. Revised for the College of Distance Education by Professor Bradley Hawksworth, July 2024. (26 pp).
3. Video: Kahneman, Daniel. “10 Questions for Nobel Laureate Daniel Kahneman,” *Time*, 26 November 2011, (00:00-06:06). (~6 min)
4. Video: Berger, Jennifer. “Making Sense of Complexity,” YouTube video, 24 July 2017, (00:00-04:07). (~4 min)
5. Video: Cavallaro, Liz. “Complexity & Vertical Development,” *U.S. Naval War College*, 03 September 2021. (00-19:38). (~20 min)
6. Hill, Ryan. “Thinking Like a Round Table Leader,” *Journal of Character & Leadership Development*, 8(1), 116-130, 2021. (14 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Powell, Colin. "Spheres and Pyramids," in *It Worked for Me*, Harper Collins, 2010. (8 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: At the conclusion of LPA-1, students are required to complete an introductory discussion board forum (DBF-1). Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 1, students are required to complete a DBF-2 primary post. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 1, students are required to complete a DBF-3 primary post. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of LPA-7, students are required to successfully complete SA-1 addressing CLO-1 and PLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS-2

COMPLEXITY AND DECISION MAKING (HEURISTICS AND PITFALLS)

A. Session Overview

LPA-2 builds on the theories presented in LPA-1 and focuses on the process of decision making, specifically the part played by heuristics, rules of thumb, intuition, rationality, and dual-process thought. Heuristics are cognitive shortcuts that help speed up the decision making process, but that comes with inherent risk. Some examples of heuristics that will be introduced are recency bias (more recent events are overvalued), confirmation bias (information which confirms existing beliefs is overvalued), and primacy (information received first is overvalued). These concepts are used to better understand the specific ways in which individual decision makers are influenced by different factors. Students will also consider the concepts of perspective taking and the subject-object shift and how these tools can help to enhance the decision making process.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Comprehend how heuristics and biases affect decision making.
 - Apply information to discover different patterns and connections between ideas.
 - Examine complex problems to discover competing interpretations.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision making as a national security professional.
 - Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How do personal heuristics and biases affect one's decision making?
2. What are common decision traps, and how do they impact decision making?
3. How can one use knowledge of common decision traps to improve personal decision making, and the decision making of the organization?
4. How do the factors and contexts of decision making create complex patterns and connections between ideas?

D. Student Preparation (39 pp)

1. Williams, B. S. "Heuristics and Biases in Military Decision Making," *Military Review*, 90(5), 58-70, 2010. (13 pp)
2. Bazerman, Max H. and Dolly Chugh, "Decisions Without Blinders," *Harvard Business Review*, 84(1), 88-97, 2006. (9 pp)
3. Russo, J. E., & P. J. H. Schoemaker. "Decision Traps and How to Avoid Them." *Chemical Engineering*, 98(5), 181-185, 1991. (4 pp)
4. Hammond, John S., Ralph L. Keeney and Howard Raiffa. "The Hidden Traps in Decision Making," *Harvard Business Review*, 76(5), 47-52, 1998. (6 pp)
5. Soll, Jack B., Katherine L. Milkman, and John W. Payne. "Outsmart Your Own Biases," *Harvard Business Review*, 93(5), 64-71, 2015. (7 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: At the conclusion of LPA-1, students are required to complete an introductory discussion board forum (DBF-1). Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 1, students are required to complete a DBF-2 primary post. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 1, students are required to complete a DBF-3 primary post. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of LPA-7, students are required to successfully complete SA-1 addressing CLO-1 and PLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS-3

MORAL PERSPECTIVES

A. Session Overview

There are many different perspectives of moral behavior, and everyone has a slightly different approach to ethical dilemmas. This session exposes students to several philosophical perspectives on ethics and demonstrates their applicability to the military profession by using them in analysis and discussion. Philosophy can be extremely challenging and there is insufficient time in this course to delve deeply into any one school of thought, much less several. As a result, this session focuses on practical aspects of the major philosophical schools: virtue ethics, deontological (duty) ethics, consequentialist ethics, and stoicism.

Then the session builds on the premise that an individual formulates a moral world view based on various influences such as personal and social influences. This view, along with their preferred moral framework, can result in conclusions that vary significantly from person to person. In the case of national security professionals, that view must also be reconciled with the common demands and standards of the profession of arms, which will be explored in LPA-4. Ethics are important to consider as one engages in the continual leadership study necessary to take on greater professional responsibilities. At senior leadership levels, one's actions communicate deeper professional and ethical messages to subordinates and to the organization. Accompanying these ethical messages are also important implications concerning organizational values, trust, loyalty, standards of integrity, and stewardship. To that end students will be introduced to and practice applying an ethical decision framework for the military profession, to help them to make decisions which are ethically informed.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the four major moral perspectives.
 - Apply the four major moral perspectives to challenges within the profession of arms.
 - Understand one's own moral paradigm and how it affects decision making.
 - Comprehend the differences between moral failures and moral dilemmas.
 - Understand the ethical slippery slope that can often occur, especially among high-performance people in high-performance organizations.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision making as a national security professional.

- Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are the basic premises, strengths and weaknesses of each of the four major moral perspectives? Which do you tend to follow? When might you deviate from this perspective?
2. How do the four major moral perspectives relate to the application of military force, and the profession of arms?
3. What moral paradigm do you favor? Are you able to recognize the limits of this paradigm and expand your thinking when making decisions?
4. When have you faced a moral dilemma, either personally or professionally? How could it have become a moral failure?
5. Have you allowed prior successes to influence your decision making? How has/could this lead to incrementally more questionable decisions?

D. Student Preparation (41 pp; ~ 60 min video)

Note: Entries 1-4 below consist of a webpage with an embedded video. Students are expected to both read the page and watch the video.

1. Video: "Ethics Explainer: Deontology," *The Ethics Centre*, 18 February 2016. (00:00-03:10), (2pp; ~3 min)
2. Video: "Ethics Explainer: Consequentialism," *The Ethics Centre*, 01 November 2023, (00:00-04:03). (1 p; ~4 min)
3. Video: "Ethics Explainer: Virtue Ethics," *The Ethics Centre*, 01 November 2023. (2 pp; 00:00-03:19). (~3 min).
4. Video: "Ethics Explainer: Stoicism," *The Ethics Centre*, 24 September 2018, (00:00-05:30). (2 pp; ~5 min)
5. Video: Aaron Yarmel. "Introduction to Moral Theories: Golden Rule, Bentham, Mill, Kant, Aristotle," Aaron Yarmel Philosophy, 27 January 2021, (14:28-59:44). (~45 min)
6. National Security Affairs Faculty. "Personal Ethics and Moral Decision Making," Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, National Security Affairs Department, Newport, RI, May 2015. Revised by Professor Bradley Hawksworth, July 2024. (11 pp)
7. National Security Affairs Faculty. "A Tool for Thinking About Ethical Challenges," Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, National Security Affairs Department, Newport, RI, April 2016. Updated by Professor Bradley Hawksworth, July 2024. (2 pp)

8. Ludwig, Dean C. and Clinton O. Longenecker. "The Bathsheba Syndrome: The Ethical Failure of Successful Leaders," *Journal of Business Ethics*, 12(4), 265-273. 1993. (8 pp)
9. Walzer, Michael. "*Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations*," Third ed., New York: Basic Books, 2000, pp. 34-47. (13 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: At the conclusion of LPA-1, students are required to complete an introductory discussion board forum (DBF-1). Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 1, students are required to complete a DBF-2 primary post. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 1, students are required to complete a DBF-3 primary post. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of LPA-7, students are required to successfully complete SA-1 addressing CLO-1 and PLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS-4

THE PROFESSION OF ARMS

A. Session Overview

In the past, there has been little serious debate about whether the “profession of arms” is indeed a profession. However, the claim is now being reexamined in various circles. This examination has included a harder look at who exactly is considered a true “professional” within the military. Most would agree that the act of merely joining the military “profession” does not, ipso facto, make one a professional. But there is little consensus as to when exactly a member of the profession of arms becomes a military professional. In recent history, most discussions that attend to military professionalism have focused on various dimensions of military ethics, which were discussed in LPA-3, or civil-military relations, which will be considered in this session. This session will primarily look at military professionalism and the questions that should arise when students consider what exactly makes them a professional in the truest sense of the word. Placing these discussions into a decision making context, students will consider how the decisions of leaders within organizations at every level impact, and are impacted by, how the leader and organization understand military professionalism.

Accompanying the concept of military professionalism, civil-military relations is the study of the relationships between the military, the civilian government, and the population. In later sessions students will consider how interactions between civilian policymakers and military officers influence policy formation and implementation, as well as how the public's perception of the military might affect the viability of various policy options. This session provides an opportunity to reflect on the status of U.S. civil-military relations, as well as how the actions of military officers, politicians, civil servants, and citizens shape these key relationships.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Analyze views of military professionalism and how they may affect decision making.
 - Understand the issues and challenges faced by commanders and staff officers that complicate professional decision making.
 - Comprehend the relationships among the nation’s civilian leadership, the U.S. military, and American society at large.
 - Define civilian control of the military and why it is important in a democratic society.
 - Relate one’s own personal morals with obligations within the profession of arms.

- Learning Outcomes

- CLO-1: Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision making as a national security professional.
- Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How do differing views of military professionalism affect decision making?
2. What factors might complicate the decisions of commanders and staff officers to enhance military professionalism?
3. What is the role of the military in a democracy?
4. What does it mean for civilians to control the military? Is military professionalism sufficient to ensure civilian control, or are “external” control methods also necessary?
5. What role does military advice play in policymaking? What are the sources of civil-military friction in policymaking?
6. Are civilians responsible for understanding the military? What are the benefits or consequences if they do or do not?
7. What are the key challenges for contemporary U.S. civil-military relations?
8. How does your personal moral decision making compare to your obligations as a leader?

D. Student Preparation (50 pp; ~27 min video)

1. National Security Affairs Faculty. “Thinking Critically about the Military Profession,” Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, June 2013. Revised by Professor Bradley Hawksworth, July 2024. (22 pp)
2. Dempsey, Martin E., General, U.S. Army. “America’s Military – A Profession of Arms,” CJCS White Paper, 2012. (4 pp)
3. Cook, Martin. “Moral Foundations of Military Service,” *US Army War College Parameters*. 30(1), 117-129. 2000. (13 pp)
4. Howe, P. Gardner, RADM, U.S.Navy. “Professionalism, Leader Development Key to Future,” Naval War College, 19 May 2015. (6 pp)
5. Video: Hill, Donn H., BGen, U.S. Army. "Educating the Force on the Profession," *Army University Press*, 1 March 2021, (00:00-11:57). (~12 min)

6. “To Support and Defend: Principles of Civilian Control and Best Practices of Civil-Military Relations,” *War on the Rocks*, 6 September 2022. (5 pp)
7. Video: Brooks, Risa A. “Dr. Risa Brooks on the Theory and Paradoxes of Civil-Military Relations (Part I of 4),” 9 March 2020. (00:38-15:01). (~15 min)

Supplemental Materials

1. Davidson, Janine, “The Contemporary Presidency: Civil-Military Friction and Presidential Decision-making: Explaining the Broken Dialogue,” *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2013): 129 – 45. (16 pp)
2. Karlin, Mara E. “The Military’s Relationship with Its Overseers: The Crisis of Meaningful Civilian Control,” in *The Inheritance*, Ch. 4: 49-80. United States: Brookings Institution Press, 2021. (30 pp)
3. Video: Cohn, Lindsay. “NWC Talks: Civil-Military Relations with Lindsay Cohn,” U.S. Naval War College, 24 March 2020. (19 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 2, students are required to complete DBF-2 response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 2, students are required to complete DBF-3 response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of LPA-7, students are required to successfully complete SA-1 addressing CLO-1 and PLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

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LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS-5

SELF-ASSESSMENT

A. Session Overview

Two areas that are essential to being an effective national security professional and decision maker are the ability to think critically and self-assessment. At all levels, many national security professionals believe they are effective critical thinkers. For example, would most Americans agree that effective critical thinking was utilized during the prosecution of the Vietnam War? What about the 20-plus years of the Global War on Terrorism?

In reality, many people are unable to articulate exactly what constitutes critical thinking. Simply put, critical thinking is the ability to think clearly and rationally. It includes the ability to engage in reflective and independent thinking. Someone with critical thinking skills can: (1) understand the logical connections between ideas (2) identify, construct, and evaluate arguments (3) detect inconsistencies and common mistakes in reasoning (4) solve problems systematically (5) identify the relevance and importance of ideas and (6) reflect on the justification of one's own beliefs and values.

Critical thinking is not a matter of accumulating information; it is a specific skill acquired over time based on practice and reflection. A person with a good memory and who knows a lot of facts is not necessarily a good critical thinker. Critical thinkers seek relevant sources of information, deduce likely consequences from what they find, and know how to make use of that information in solving problems.

Critical thinking should not be confused with being argumentative or critical of other people. Although critical thinking skills can be used in exposing fallacies and bad reasoning, it can also play an important role in cooperative reasoning and constructive tasks. Used effectively, this form of thinking helps one acquire knowledge, improve one's theories, and strengthen arguments. Critical thinking can be used to enhance work processes. It is also an essential prerequisite for being an effective participant in LPA.

Self-assessment is a skill closely related to critical thinking. In LPA-2, we began to consider bias in decision making. This session asks us to look more closely at our own personality and how bias may affect our decision making.

Students will be provided background on the personality assessment conducted prior to this session. Students will explore the importance of individual reflection and how they might best use the information found in their self-assessment. This will be useful in both their current position and what they anticipate as their next assignment.

Character is a major component in how we see ourselves, and how we see and judge others. Like many concepts in this course, everyone has an idea of what character is but can rarely articulate it, much less do so succinctly and accurately. Character is inextricably linked to self-awareness, leadership, and mentoring. The personal assessments should be viewed as an opportunity to identify new doors that can be opened to further develop as a leader, as well as

gaps that could be addressed.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Examine how critical thinking is tied to national security professions.
 - Understand why improving the quality of one's thinking leads to greater awareness of situations and self.
 - Understand the results of the personality assessment tool and its importance.
 - Understand the idea of individual reflection as it applies to self-assessment.
 - Assess individual traits and the relationship between self-awareness and leader development.
- Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
 - CLO-1: Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision making as a national security professional.
 - Supports NWC PLO 3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Why is critical thinking a vital skill for national security professionals to possess?
2. What results will a well-cultivated critical thinker achieve?
3. Do any of the results of your personality assessment surprise you? Why or why not?
4. How will reflection help you to understand results and implement a development plan?
5. What individual traits do you value as/in a leader, and how does self-awareness help you develop those traits?

D. Student Preparation (28 pp; ~70 min video)

1. Paul, Richard and Linda Elder. "Critical Thinking in Everyday Life: 9 Strategies," Modified from the book *Critical Thinking: Tools for Taking Charge of Your Learning and Your Life*. The Foundation Thinker's Guide Library, Foundation for Critical Thinking. 2001. (6 pp)
2. Gerras, Stephen J. and Leonard Wong, "Moving Beyond the MBTI," *Military Review*, 92(6), 54-57, 2016. (5 pp)

3. Vinney, C. "Understanding the Big Five Personality Traits," ThoughtCo. 27 September 2018. (7 pp)
4. Bigfive-test.com "Free open-source BigFive personality traits test," <https://bigfive-test.com/> (~10 min)
5. Video: Andersen, Gene R., "Big 5 SA LPA," U.S. Naval War College, College of Leadership and Ethics, Dec 2023. (~60 min)
6. DiBella, Anthony J. "Military Leaders and Global Leaders: Contrasts, Contradictions, and Opportunities," *Prism*, 4(3), 28-37. 2013. (10 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Paul, Richard and Linda Elder. "The Miniature Guide to Critical Thinking Concepts and Tools, Seventh Edition," The Foundation Thinker's Guide Library, *Foundation for Critical Thinking*, 2014. (5 pp)
2. Video: Mattis, General James, USMC (ret). Secretary of Defense, 2017-2019. "Critical Thinking: Our Greatest Weapon to Winning Tomorrow's War?," A speech given to *The U.S. Naval Institute*, 25 October 2023, (2:00 – 49:33). (~47 min)
3. Kaufman, Scott B., "Can Personality Be Changed?," *The Atlantic*, 26 July 2016. (4 pp)
4. Sharot, Tali, "How to Motivate Yourself to Change Your Behavior," YouTube video. 28 October 2014. (17 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 2, students are required to complete DBF-2 response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 2, students are required to complete DBF-3 response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of LPA-7, students are required to successfully complete SA-1 addressing CLO-1 and PLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS-6

EMPATHY, HUMILITY, VULNERABILITY, AND TRUST

A. Session Overview

Empathy, humility, vulnerability, and trust are key leadership factors. While these are trending concepts in leadership, they also have deep roots in ethical and philosophical study. Reflecting on LPA-2 (Complexity and Decision Making) students can see how these concepts can help to avoid bias; and reflecting on LPA-5 (Self-Assessment) they can see how they can enhance critical thinking and self-assessment. In this session, students explore empathy, humility and vulnerability individually, and how they work together to build trust, and improve decision making.

Along with these concepts, the session will also consider perspective taking as a decision making approach. Closely linked to empathy, being able to consider how others perceive a problem is an important method to drive consideration of alternate approaches. This skill is vitally important in the VUCA environment in which national security professionals formulate strategy and make decisions. Finally, this session will look at the growth mindset and how it helps to drive continuous learning and improvement.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of empathy, humility, vulnerability, and trust in decision making.
 - Comprehend how subject-object relationships and mental complexity can shape a leader's ability to frame problems effectively.
 - Understand the concept of a growth mindset and its relationship to decision making in a VUCA environment.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision making as a national security professional.
 - Supports NWC PLO 3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How do empathy, humility, and vulnerability help to build trust in relationships? How does this promote or hinder decision making?

2. How can considering subject-object relationships and competing interpretations of the problem help a leader frame a problem effectively?
3. How does a growth mindset improve decision making in a VUCA environment? Are there any drawbacks?

D. Student Preparation (17 pp; ~ 40 min video)

1. Frei, Frances and Anne Morris. "Begin With Trust," *Harvard Business Review*. May-June 2020, 112-121. (9 pp)
2. Gourguechon, Prudy, "Empathy Is An Essential Leadership Skill -- And There's Nothing Soft About It," *Forbes*, 26 December 2017. (4 pp)
3. Video: Hogan, Robert. "Robert Hogan on the Importance of Humility in Leaders," *Hogan Assessments*, YouTube video, 29 March 2020, (00:00-04:52). (~5 min)
4. Video: Brown, Brené. "Embracing Vulnerability," *Sounds True*. 07 January 2013, (00:00-05:55). (~6 min)
5. Video: Syed, Matthew. (2019). "Pursuing Cognitive Diversity," YouTube video, 20 September 2019, (00:00-06:56). (~7 min)
6. Video: Facts Verse. "Photos That Will Make You Appreciate Life from Others Perspectives," YouTube video, 22 February 2018, (00:00-06:00). (~6 min)
7. Platt, Michael, Vera Ludwig, Elizabeth Johnson, and Per Hugander. "Perspective Taking – A Brain Hack That Can Help You Make Better Decisions," *Knowledge At Wharton*, March 2021. (4 pp)
8. Video: Syed, Matthew. "Why You Should Have Your Own Black Box," YouTube video, 31 May 2016, (00:00-15:33). (~16 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 2, students are required to complete DBF-2 response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 2, students are required to complete DBF-3 response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of LPA-7, students are required to successfully complete SA-1 addressing CLO-1 and PLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

LEADERSHIP IN THE PROFESSION OF ARMS-7

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE, CLIMATE, AND CHANGE

A. Session Overview

Crucial to exercising sound leadership is the ability to understand the importance of organizational culture and climate. The Encyclopedia of Applied Psychology defines organizational culture as follows: “A term used to refer to the configuration of values, implicit assumptions, and understandings that are expressed in overt statements, patterns of behavior, and interpretations of symbols that distinguish one organization from others.” Organizational culture is a shared, collective phenomenon, and can exist at many levels. For example, the U.S. Navy has an organizational culture which differs from the other armed services. And within the naval service there are the individual warfare communities, and within these there are different sub-communities, each with their own cultural artifacts and organizational essence. Again, consider for example the organizational culture, similarities and differences within the surface warfare community between the aircraft carrier and amphibious communities. Having a keen appreciation for the nuances and intricacies for the unique organizational culture within which you are leading and operating will greatly increase the effectiveness of your leadership and decision making.

Organizational climate, on the other hand, as explained in this session’s third reading, “...refers to an employee’s long-lasting perception of the working environment...every organization has a unique climate.” It essentially answers the question, “What is it like to work here?” and is influenced by elements such as flexibility, responsibility, standards, rewards, clarity, and team commitment. It is important to note that an organization may possess a strong culture but poor organizational climate, and that your individual leadership style will have a substantial impact on both. It is the responsibility of leaders at every level to work tirelessly to ensure that both the culture and climate of our organization are as strong and positive as possible due to its significant impact on mission accomplishment.

The successful leader, regardless of the level, must learn how to maximize their influence both up and down the chain of command. For mid-level leaders, decisions are rarely made based on one’s positional authority. As such, this session also examines how mid-level leaders can use what power and influence they do have in order to lead, albeit from the middle.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Comprehend the concept of “organizational culture,” its levels or layers, and how leaders influence or are influenced by organizational culture.
 - Comprehend the concept of “organizational climate,” its constituent elements, and how the individual actions of leaders can add or detract from a positive organizational climate.

- Evaluate the relationship between organizational culture, climate, and leadership.
- Understand how mid-level leaders can influence change in their organization.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision making as a national security professional.
 - Supports NWC PLO 3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does organizational climate differ from organizational culture, and how are they related?
2. How have you impacted climate in your organization?
3. How have you influenced organizational culture, and how has that same culture impacted you?
4. How does organizational culture influence strategy and leadership approach, and how do strategy and leadership approach influence culture?
5. What are challenges that mid-level leaders may face, and what skills are helpful in navigating those challenges?
6. How can you apply what you learned about yourself in the previous sessions to help you develop as a mid-level leader?

D. Student Preparation (40 pp)

1. Kotter, John, P. "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," *Harvard Business Review*, 85(1), 96-103. 1995. (8 pp)
2. Watkins, Michael. "What Is Organizational Culture? And Why Should We Care?," *Harvard Business Review*, 15 May 2013. 2-5 (4 pp)
3. Jay, Shani. "What Is Organizational Climate? 7 Steps to Improve Yours," *Academy to Innovate HR*, 21 March 2022. (6 pp)
4. Sullivan, Edward, and John Baird. "How to Lead When You're Not in Charge," *Fast Company*, 24 March 2021. (3 pp)
5. Nickerson, Jackson. *Leading Change from the Middle: A Practical Guide to Building Extraordinary Capabilities*, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2014. Chapter 1 pp 1-19 (19 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Pratt, Michael W. "Power and Influence," Adapted from National Security Affairs Faculty Paper. Newport, RI: Naval War College faculty paper, June 2023 (8 pp)
2. Miller, Billy and Ken Turner. "Leading Organizational Change: A Leader's Role," Fort Leavenworth, KS: Command and General Staff College, August 2013. (9 pp)
3. U.S. Navy, Leadership and Management Education and Training Division. "Navigating a New Course to Command Excellence," 1-6. (6 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 2, students are required to complete DBF-2 response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the LPA sessions in week 2, students are required to complete DBF-3 response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of LPA-7, students are required to successfully complete SA-1 addressing CLO-1 and PLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

THEATER SECURITY DECISION MAKING (TSDM)
SYLLABUS AND STUDY GUIDE
INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

International Security Sessions Overview

The International Security (IS) block of TSDM focus on the myriad elements of the ever-changing and dynamic international security environment. It draws its theoretical basis from international relations theory and comparative politics to analyze the complex challenges and opportunities posed by these elements, and how they affect the formulation of coherent national and theater strategies. Students are challenged to comprehend U.S. national and theater strategies in the context of fundamental elements of strategy, and how best to employ the national instruments of power, and particularly the military instrument, to advance and defend U.S. national interests.

The IS sessions concentrate on five main themes spread across the next four weeks:

1. International Security Environment

The first theme is an overview of current global security challenges from both state and non-state actors, transnational challenges such as terrorism, pandemics, transnational criminal organizations, and climate change, and introduces the idea of strategic competition.

2. National Strategies

This theme considers the National Security Strategy (NSS), the National Defense Strategy (NDS), the National Military Strategy (NMS), and Maritime Strategy. These are considered with respect to the linkages between them, and through the lenses of International Relations Theory. Throughout, we consider how the national tools of power contribute to strengthening national security during peace rather than war, as the latter is the focus of the Joint Maritime Operations course.

3. Combatant Commands

What impact do the combatant commands (CCMDs) within the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) have in the international security environment? This next theme examines the CCMDs, the regional challenges they face, how they coordinate and execute operations within the previously discussed ocean regions, and the role they play in advancing and defending U.S. national interests. We will focus attention on USSOUTHCOM and USPACOM, the primary theaters as defined by the 2025 National Security Strategy.

4. Oceanic Regions

The fourth theme shifts focus to a closer examination of security dynamics within the ocean regions of the world, which present both challenges and opportunities for U.S. national

security. As a framework to this study, the sessions will explore the three major global oceanic regions that figure most prominently in the achievement of U.S. national security objectives: the Pacific Ocean Region, the Indian Ocean Region, and the Atlantic Ocean Region. Students will explore each region's deeper political, geographic, socio-economic, security, and diplomatic dynamics. Throughout this study the sessions will focus on the most pressing strategic opportunities and challenges to the U.S. vision of a "free, open, prosperous, and secure world" – chief among them the rise of China (or the People's Republic of China (PRC)) and the return to the world stage of an aggressive Russia.

5. Deterrence and Future Security Challenges

The IS sessions conclude with a brief overview of deterrence theory and a consideration of future security challenges. The final two IS sessions are dedicated to examining emerging domains of warfare and the impact of technology, as well as a look forward to the future challenges and opportunities in the international security environment that could shape the strategic decision making calculus of the United States in the 21st century.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-1

THE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

A. Session Overview

This introductory session provides a foundational understanding of the international security environment, including the complexity of transnational threats and strategic competition, and how these intersecting challenges effect U.S. national security interests. The spectrum of global security challenges is never static and is increasingly diffuse. As stated by the former Director of National Intelligence, Avril Haines, in the 2024 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, “During the next year, the United States faces an increasingly fragile global order strained by accelerating strategic competition among major powers, more intense and unpredictable transnational challenges, and multiple regional conflicts with far-reaching implications.” Some have opined that the contemporary international security environment can be summed up in the acronym “VUCA”: volatile, uncertain, complex, and ambiguous.

It is also important to understand that competition remains a fundamental aspect of international relations, as actors in the international community (both state and non-state) seek to advance and protect their national interests. As such we will also look at the concept of the “competition continuum”, as introduced in Joint Doctrinal Note 1-19, which “describes a world of enduring competition conducted through a mixture of cooperation, competition below armed conflict, and armed conflict.”

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Identify and assess security challenges to the United States in the current international environment.
 - Examine and evaluate the differences in scope and impact between threats emanating from state actors versus non-state actors.
 - Comprehend the elements of the competition continuum model and how states compete in the 21st century security environment.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO 2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What is the most pressing national security issue for the United States today in current

international security environment?

2. What does strategic competition look like through a regional lens?
3. What are some of the legacies of the Cold War and post-Cold War periods? Are these legacies pertinent to today's security environment, why or why not?
4. What role do non-state actors play in the international security environment?
5. On what part of the competition continuum model should the United States focus? Does it vary by country, region, or domain? Why?
6. How are transnational challenges likely to shape the future security environment? Which transnational challenges are most important? How do they interact with state dynamics?
7. What are the direct and indirect security ramifications from climate change? How do they impact U.S. national security? What responses are possible?

D. Student Preparation (48 pp; ~20 min video)

1. *Joint Chiefs of Staff*. Joint Doctrinal Note 1-19, 03 June 2019, 1-11. (11 pp)
2. Video: "Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community," *Office of the Director of National Intelligence*, House Select Committee on Intelligence, (28:35-48:32) 18 March 2026. (~20 min)
3. McQuaid, Julia, Pamela G. Faber, and Zack Gold. "Transnational Challenges and U.S. National Security: Defining and Prioritizing Borderless Threats," *Center for Naval Analyses*, November 2017, 3-19. (16 pp)
4. Jones, Seth. "The Future of Competition: U.S. Adversaries and the Growth of Irregular Warfare," Washington: *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2021. (9 pp)
5. Clarke, Colin. "Trends in Terrorism: What's on the Horizon in 2025?" *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 10 January 2025. (4 pp)
6. Bunde, Tobias, Sophie Eisentraut, and Leonard Schütte, eds. "Munich Security Report 2025. Multipolarization." February 2025, pp. 9-11. (3 pp)
7. Appling, Scott, A., et al. "Pivoting the Joint Force: National Security Implications of Illegal, Unregulated, and Unreported Fishing," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 4th Quarter 2022. (5 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Video: "UN Chief on Transnational Organized Crime, Growing Challenges & New Threats," United Nations, YouTube video, 07 Dec 2023, (00:48-09:13). (~8 min)
2. O'Rourke, Ronald. "COVID-19: Potential Implications for International Security Environment— Overview of Issues and Further Reading for Congress," Congressional

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: At the start of TSDM, new students are required to complete an introductory discussion board forum (DBF-1). Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the IS sessions in week 3, students are required to complete a DBF-4 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-2

AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

A. Session Overview

With an understanding of the international security environment, this session will introduce the fundamental questions that must be answered to think critically about the future of U.S. national security and foreign policy decisions.

The role of the United States in the 21st century is a complicated one, marked by the return of “strategic competition” as introduced in this session. In 2019, William J. Burns, (then Director of Central Intelligence) stated, “Today’s world is more crowded, complicated, and competitive than at any point in my three and half decade diplomatic career. The global order that emerged after the end of the Cold War has shifted dramatically, creating unprecedented challenges for American statecraft.”

The United States, like all sovereign states, operates within the international system, defined as the network of states, organizations, and individuals that interact on a global scale. The international system forms the framework for international relations, outlining who interacts with whom, how they interact, and the rules of engagement. Countries set their foreign policy and develop diplomatic relations within this system. And like the security environment, the international system is constantly evolving as states work together and establish international agreements.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the role of the international system in the contemporary international security environment.
 - Understand the evolution and debate about the United States’ place in the international system.
 - Comprehend the regional dimension of U.S. foreign policy.
 - Understand the concepts of balance of power, balancing, and bandwagoning.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO 2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How has America's role in the international system changed across its history? What explains these changes? To what extent are the changes due to domestic factors and to what extent are they due to international factors?
2. Is former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's contention that the United States is the "indispensable nation" true or hubris? Would it be more acceptable to state that the United States is the "indispensable partner"?
3. In today's security environment, should the United States, as former President John F. Kennedy stated in his Inaugural Address, be willing to "...pay any price, bear any burden, meet any hardship, support any friend, oppose any foe to assure the survival and the success of liberty"?
4. How does the U.S. national security establishment define U.S. regional foreign policy priorities?
5. How has geopolitics driven U.S. priorities? How do concepts like Anne-Marie Slaughter's "chessboard" or the "web" help in determining U.S. regional foreign policy priorities?

D. Student Preparation (56 pp; ~29 min video)

1. Zakaria, Fareed. "The Self-Doubting Superpower," *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2024. (10 pp)
2. Gates, Robert. "The Dysfunctional Superpower," *Foreign Affairs*, 29 September 2023. (8 pp)
3. Brands, Hal. "The Overstretched Superpower," *Foreign Affairs*, 18 January 2022. (8 pp)
4. Video: "Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy," YouTube video, 20 January 1961, (02:45-09:16). (~7 min)
5. Video: "U.S. as the Indispensable Nation: A Roundtable Discussion," Charles Koch Institute, 29 August 2016, (0:00-06:17). (~6 min)
6. Gvosdev, Nikolas K. "The Regional Dimension of U.S. Foreign Policy," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 2022. (9 pp)
7. Stolberg, Alan, B. "The International System in the 21st Century," The U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Studies, *Strategic Studies Institute*, U.S. Army War College, 2012, 137-145. (9 pp)
8. Kundnani, Hans. "What is the Liberal International Order?" *German Marshall Fund*, 2017. (12 pp)
9. Video: Slaughter, Anne-Marie. "The Chessboard and the Web," *The MacMillan Report*,

Yale University, YouTube video, 08 December 2015, (00:00-15:43). (~16 min)

Supplemental Materials

1. Video: Gates, Robert M. “Exercise of Power: American Failures, Successes, and a New Path Forward in the Post-Cold War World.” The Aspen Institute, YouTube video, July 2, 2020, (00:00-58:40). (~59 min)
2. Video: Zoellick, Robert B. “America in the World: A History of U.S. Diplomacy and Foreign Policy,” Hoover Institution, YouTube video, 01 April 2021, (00:00-15:42). (~16 min)
3. Video: “The International System,” UK Defense Studies Education and Training, YouTube video, 26 May 2020, (00:00-14:51). (~15 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: At the start of TSDM, new students are required to complete an introductory discussion board forum (DBF-1). Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the IS sessions in week 3, students are required to complete a DBF-4 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-3

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: THEORIES AND GRAND STRATEGIES

A. Session Overview

As observed in the IS session readings and videos to this point, the world is constantly changing; it is no surprise that the relationships between states are also dynamic. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, it is more important than ever to understand how states interact with each other and the impact of those interactions on each other and their citizens.

Having considered the complexity of the international security environment system in IS-1 and the evolution of America's place in the international system in IS-2, this session considers some major international relations (IR) theories that seek to explain why and how states behave the way they do in the international system. Particular emphasis will be given to the three prominent schools in American IR: Realism, liberalism, and constructivism. Each theory has its own strengths and weaknesses, and no single theory can fully explain the complex world of international relations. However, by understanding the different theories, one can better understand the world and make more informed decisions about how to interact with other states in achieving and protecting U.S. national interests.

This session then builds upon the previous lessons on the global security environment by examining the concept of "grand strategy", which Dr. Hal Brands at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies states is, "...[the] purposeful and coherent set of ideas about what a nation seeks to accomplish in the world and how it should go about doing so." To put it plainly, a grand strategy is a long-term plan that integrates all aspects of a state's instruments of national power. It is not just about winning wars; it is about promoting and defending national interests in a variety of ways, including preventing wars, and maintaining peace while meeting those interests, then winning any war that 'lesser' attempts have failed to resolve.

It can be difficult to develop and sustainably implement a successful grand strategy in a dynamic security environment, while maintaining public support that often requires sacrifice and strategic patience. For the military, the nation's strategic choices have implications for force posture, design, and level of defense spending. Despite the challenges, grand strategy is an important tool for achieving national interests.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Achieve a basic understanding of IR theories, how they differ in explaining relations between states, and the implications of those differences for the conduct of foreign policy.
 - Apply IR theories to real-world events, analyzing them and drawing out the different conclusions and implications for U.S. behavior.

- Understand the different variations of grand strategies and how they shape and inform the pursuit of national interests.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO 2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How helpful are IR theories for understanding and explaining the interaction between states? Are any more convincing than the others?
2. What would the various IR theories have to say about China's rise, or Russia's invasion of Ukraine, or U.S. foreign policy?
3. In IS-2, you were introduced to Anne-Marie Slaughter's concepts of "web and chessboard." If the chessboard is a synonym for geopolitics, does a chessboard approach tend to align with realism?
4. Does Slaughter's "web" focus on institutions and connectivity lend itself to liberal or constructivist approaches?
5. What would you consider to be the most effective grand strategy for the United States to pursue today?

D. Student Preparation (37 pp; ~24 min video)

1. Synder, Jack. "One World, Rival Theories," *Foreign Policy*, 26 October 2009. (9 pp)
2. Video: "Steve Smith on Bringing International Relations Theory to Life," *Oxford Academic*, YouTube video, 03 January 2014, (00:00-05:56). (~6 min)
3. Brands, Hal. "The Meaning and Challenge of Grand Strategy," in *What Good Is Grand Strategy? Power and Purpose in American Statecraft from Harry S. Truman to George W. Bush*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014, 1-16. (16 pp)
4. Reveron, Derek S. and Nikolas K. Gvosdev. "National Interests and Grand Strategy," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security*, edited by Derek S. Reveron, Nikolas K. Gvosdev, and John A. Cloud. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 43-52. (9 pp)
5. Video: Walt, Steven. "What Grand Strategy for America? Why Offshore Balancing is Best," *Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs*, Brown University, YouTube video, 07 November 2016, (04:30-17:14). (~13 min)

6. Layton, Peter. "Rethinking Grand Strategy," *Small Wars Journal*. 06 June 2018. (3 pp)
7. Video: Mearsheimer, John. "The U.S. Grand Strategy Since Independence," *International Relations and Politics*, YouTube video, 14 April 2022, (00:00-05:18). (~5 min)

Supplemental Materials

1. Posen, Barry, and Andrew L Ross. "Competing Visions for U.S. Grand Strategy." *International Security* 21, no. 3, 1996, 5–43. (29 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: At the start of TSDM, new students are required to complete an introductory discussion board forum (DBF-1). Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Discussion Board Forum: During the IS sessions in week 3, students are required to complete a DBF-4 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-4

NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY, NATIONAL INTERESTS, AND INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

A. Session Overview

The U.S. Congress mandates that the Executive Branch of the U.S. Government (USG) submit a wide range of strategy documents, which are designed to create internal coherence on foreign and defense policy within the executive branch, across the USG and provide a basis for Congress to fund security priorities to achieve national interests.

The primary document that defines the United States' national security interests, objectives, and goals - in effect the U.S. "grand strategy" - is the National Security Strategy (NSS). The NSS is the President's vision for achieving national security objectives and safeguarding the United States' well-being in a complex international security environment. It is a road map that outlines the most pressing security threats, both domestic and international, and lays out a course of action for addressing them. As mentioned above, the NSS ensures a coordinated effort across various USG agencies, and addresses proposed uses of all instruments of national power to achieve the nation's security goals, thereby fostering a unified response to challenges. By identifying potential threats and crafting proactive solutions, the NSS strengthens the United States' ability to defend itself and achieve its interests.

Sent by the President to Congress to communicate the Executive Branch's national security vision, the NSS is required to include a discussion of the United States' national interests, commitments, objectives, and policies, along with defense capabilities necessary to implement U.S. security plans and deter threats. As such it provides a foundation for subsequent national security policies and strategies, which will be examined in IS-5.

Having looked at the concept of grand strategy in IS-3, this session also focuses attention to examining national interests. National interests are essentially a country's priorities in the international arena. These priorities, like security or economic well-being, are what a country wants to achieve or protect.

In short, understanding the national interests of various states helps in determining what objectives those states are trying to achieve. There can be debate about what exactly constitutes a national interest, with some arguing for a narrow focus on security and economics, while others believe it should encompass broader values like human rights. Regardless of the definition, national interests play a vital role in shaping a state's course on the world stage. The strategist must understand the types of national power (and their limitations) and appreciate that national interests can be difficult to define or agree upon, and their endurance is questionable depending on the political leadership of the state.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives

- Comprehend the purpose of the NSS and how it defines U.S. national security concerns and efforts to address them.
- Examine the coordination between the ends, ways, and means in formulating strategy.
- Analyze how well the NSS lays out key U.S. national interests and priorities.
- Evaluate how well the NSS provides guidance for U.S. military and national security planners in formulating strategy.
- Analyze the role national interests play in strategic thinking and the formation of strategy.
- Comprehend the instruments of national power and their role in shaping strategy.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Has the NSS become no more than a rhetorical exercise? Why have an NSS? Does the unclassified nature of the NSS impact its effectiveness? Should the NSS be abolished? Why or why not?
2. How evident is a grand strategy in the NSS? Are the guiding strategic documents effective in spelling out the long-term competition challenges facing the United States? How effective are the U.S. ends, ways, and means as expressed?
3. What are national interests and why are they important? How do vital, important, and peripheral national interests affect a state's strategic calculus?
4. Why is there so much difficulty determining and prioritizing national interests?
5. When designing strategy, how can a state achieve balance with the various tools of national power?
6. Does overemphasizing one instrument of national power place strain on the other instruments?

D. Student Preparation (71 pp; ~13 min video)

1. The White House. National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Washington, DC: *White House*, November 2025. (29 pp).

2. Chin, John J., Kiron Skinner, and Clay Yoo. "Understanding National Security Strategies Through Time." *Texas National Security Review* 6, no. 4 (2023). (11 pp)
3. Reveron, Derek S. and Nikolas K. Gvosdev. "National Interests and Grand Strategy," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security*, edited by Derek S. Reveron, Nikolas K. Gvosdev, and John A. Cloud. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 35-42. (7 pp)
4. National War College, *A National Security Strategy Primer*, 2018, pp. 15-35. (17 pp)
5. Kagan, Robert. "A Free World If You Can Keep It: Ukraine and American Interests." *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2023. (7 pp)
6. Video: Mariano, Stephen. "What is a National Security Strategy and Why Have One?" Africa Center for Security Studies, 03 February 2017. (~13 min)

Supplemental Materials

1. Nation, R. Craig. "National Power," in *The U.S. Army War College Guide to National Security Studies, Volume I: Theory of War and Strategy*, edited by J. Boone Bartholomees, Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College, 2008. (12 pp)
2. Mead, Walter Russell. "America's Sticky Power." *Foreign Policy*, 2004. (7 pp)
3. Video: "Defined: Instruments of National Power," YouTube video, 13 March 2021, (00:00-07:03). (~7 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the IS sessions in week 4, students are required to complete a DBF-5 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-5

U.S. DEFENSE STRATEGIES: NDS, NMS, AND MARITIME STRATEGY

A. Session Overview

IS-4 explored how the NSS provides a foundation for lower-tier U.S. national security policies and strategies. With the NSS providing a holistic view of the objectives and goals of the United States are, and how all elements of national power are generally going to be combined to achieve them, the next “tier” of U.S. strategic guidance to examine is the National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the National Military Strategy (NMS).

The NDS is a critical element for ensuring U.S. national security and is signed by the Secretary of Defense. It outlines how the DoD will address potential threats, defend national interests, and achieve the goals set forth in the NSS primarily using the military instrument of power. By clearly defining priorities and allocating resources accordingly, the NDS helps maintain a strong military force capable of deterrence and conflict resolution across the competition continuum. It also fosters collaboration with allies and partners, promoting international stability. Regularly updated to reflect the evolving global landscape, the NDS is a blueprint for safeguarding a nation's peace and prosperity.

Taking it a step further, the NMS, signed by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), is the next step in the succession of nested strategic documents. The NMS is one of the core documents that provides the common thread to integrate and synchronize the activities of the Joint Staff, combatant commanders (CCDRs), Services, and combat support agencies. It translates the broad security goals of the NSS and NDS into concrete military objectives. By outlining these objectives and preferred military actions, the NMS helps focus military activities and resource allocation. This ensures the U.S. Joint Force is prepared to address the most pressing threats, deter adversaries, and achieve U.S. national security goals. In essence, the NMS acts as a guide, ensuring the military is manned, trained, equipped, and strategically positioned to safeguard the nation's interests as outlined in the NDS and NSS.

All of these strategic documents inform and provide overarching guidance for how the U.S. Armed Services man, train, and equip their forces, and how CCDRs formulate their individual theater strategies to achieve U.S. national interests as directed by Title 10 U.S. Code.

Having examined the guidance provided by the NSS, NDS, NMS, this session then looks at the current maritime strategy developed by the U.S. Navy, U.S. Marine Corps, and the U.S. Coast Guard: “Advantage at Sea: Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power,” also known as the Tri-Service Maritime Strategy (TSMS). The TSMS provides the conceptual foundation for how the maritime services will work to achieve the national security objectives set forth in the NSS, NDS, and NMS.

With over 95,000 miles of shoreline, the United States has always been a maritime nation. From its colonial founding, the country’s economic and political ascendancy has been facilitated and underpinned by its mastery of the maritime domain, the realm of 90% of global trade. As outlined in the TSMS, America’s maritime services—the Navy, the Marine Corps

and the Coast Guard—provide the tools of such mastery, ranging from diplomacy, force projection, maneuver warfare within littoral spaces, coastal defense, defense of the global commons, law enforcement and environmental protection, among other activities.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Identify and analyze major themes of current U.S. military strategic guidance.
 - Understand the nested and aligned nature of U.S. national security documents.
 - Understand the core components of the NDS.
 - Understand how the NMS provides detailed planning guidance to the Joint Force.
 - Understand key security challenges and opportunities facing the U.S. maritime services.
 - Examine current debates within the maritime services regarding future force structures and concepts.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does strategic competition impact U.S. defense strategy?
2. What are the areas of alignment and agreement between the NDS and NMS? Are there any areas that are not?
3. What are the major current and future challenges to the U.S. Joint Force? What important conversations are not happening?
4. Does this NDS establish clear priorities for DoD?
5. Does this NMS establish clear priorities for the Joint Force?
6. What are the key operational concepts in each maritime service and what are some potential synergies related to these concepts that could link the different maritime services with each other and partner navies?

D. Student Preparation (60 pp; ~22 min video)

1. Department of War. 2026 National Defense Strategy. Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 23 January 2026, pp. 1-32. (32 pp)
2. Joint Chiefs of Staff. National Military Strategy of the United States of America. Washington, DC: *Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 08 May 2023. (6 pp)
3. Berger, David H., Michael M. Gilday, and Karl L. Schultz. "Advantage at Sea, Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power," Department of the Navy, December 2020. (20 pp)
4. Video: Chief of Naval Operations. "Chief of Naval Operations Releases Navigation Plan for America's Warfighting Navy." YouTube video, 18 September 2024. (~22 min)
5. Chief of Naval Operations. "U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions - One Pager," 06 February 2026. (1 pp)
6. Chief of Naval Operations. "The Hedge Strategy - Placemat," 06 February 2026. (1 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Rubel, Robert C. "Command of the Sea: Why It Is Essential to U.S. Maritime Strategy," *Proceedings* Vol. 150/1/1,451, January 2024. (4 pp)
2. Mahnken, Thomas G. "A Maritime Strategy to Deal with China," *Proceedings* Vol. 148/2/1,428, February 2022. (7 pp)
3. O'Brien, Robert C. "U.S. Maritime Priorities for a New Era of Competition," *Center for Maritime Strategy*, 21 December 2023. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the IS sessions in week 4, students are required to complete a DBF-5 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-6

THE COMBATANT COMMANDS AND GLOBAL INTEGRATION (USCENTCOM, USAFRICOM, USTRANSCOM)

A. Session Overview

This session begins with an overview of the Unified Command Plan (UCP), the Combatant Commands (CCMDs), and their role in developing theater strategy (a major requirement of your SDX). There are currently 11 CCMDs – four with transregional responsibilities and seven with assigned physical areas of responsibility (AORs). CCMDs with transnational responsibilities operate world-wide across geographic boundaries and provide unique capabilities to other regionally oriented CCMDs and the Services, while CCMDs with an assigned AOR operate in clearly delineated areas of responsibility and have a regional military focus.

As Joint Publication (JP) 1-0 makes clear, “Joint force decision making with a transregional, all-domain, and multifunctional context may require the integration of Joint Forces with a global perspective.” As such, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) plays a critical role in the global integration of U.S. military forces. The concept of global integration emphasizes a more unified approach across all branches of the armed forces, ensuring a strategic perspective that considers threats and resources on a global scale. The CJCS advises the President and Secretary of Defense on how to best allocate forces and develop joint capabilities. This includes planning, decision making, and force management, all aimed at giving the U.S. military a competitive advantage in a complex and interconnected world. The concept of global integration allows students to consider the DoD’s approach to address transregional challenges in multiple domains within the contemporary international security environment.

Although the number of student preparation materials provided below in paragraph C may seem to be a lot, many are simply short primers or articles designed to offer you as the national security practitioner the necessary breadth of information required to comprehend the critical role of the CCMDs play in achieving U.S. national interests.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the origins and purpose of the UCP.
 - Understand the origins, roles, and responsibilities of CCMDs.
 - Examine how CCMDs develop theater strategy, and how theater strategies contribute to concept development and identify required capabilities for the Joint Force.
 - Analyze the importance of global integration and its impact on the CCMDs.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Why did the United States feel it needed regional CCMDs? Is the current structure still effective? What changes might be warranted?
2. What are the most effective ways for CDRs to work together? What is the most effective role for the Joint Staff?
3. Do CDRs have ‘too much’ power relative to the Services or the Joint Staff? Do they have too much sway in the execution of U.S. foreign policy?
4. How important is theater strategy? How do the CCMDs affect DoD capability requirements and force planning?
5. How should the U.S. military best prioritize global and regional threats? Is DoD adequately structured to meet this challenge?

D. Student Preparation (53 pp; ~22 min video)

1. McInnis, Kathleen J. “Defense Primer: The Department of Defense,” Congressional Research Service, updated 22 January 2025. (2 pp)
2. Pratt, Michael W. “The Unified Command Plan,” Faculty paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI, January 2021. Revised Summer 2024. (10 pp)
3. Video: Coffey, Ross. “NWC Talks: Combatant Command 101” *U.S. Naval War College video*, 10 August 2021, (00:00-14:39). (~14 min)
4. Nicastro, Luke, A. and Cameron M. Keys. “Defense Primer: United States Transportation Command.” Congressional Research Service, 12 December 2022. (2 pp)
5. Reveron, Derek S., James L. Cook., and Ross M. Coffey. “Competing Regionally: Developing Theater Strategy”. *Joint Force Quarterly* 104, 1st quarter 2022, 48- 61. (8 pp)
6. Lucas, Nathan, J. and Brendan W. McGarry. “United States Central Command.” Congressional Research Service, 16 December 2022. (2 pp)
7. U.S. Central Command. Theater Strategy: People, Partners, and Innovation. *Headquarters, U.S. Central Command*, 08 June 2023. (4 pp)

8. Video: "U.S. Africa Command posture statement," *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 14 May 2026, (19:22-23:56) (~5 min)
9. Eaglen, Mackenzie, "Putting Combatant Commands on a Demand Signal Diet," *War on the Rocks*, 09 November 2020. (6 pp)
10. Video: "The Debrief Episode 5: Global Integration for an Interconnected Security Environment," U.S. Naval War College, YouTube video, 09 November 2023, (01:09-12:53). (~12 min)
11. Lee, Caitlin. "The U.S. Military's Force-Management Tug-of-War," *War on the Rocks*, 23 March 2022. (6 pp)
12. Conway, Tim. Information Paper, Subject: Global Force Management. Suffolk, VA: *Office of the J-35*, 2023. (4 pp)
13. Gvosdev, Nikolas, and Derek Reveron. "Geography, Bureaucracy, and National Security: The Legacies of the Cold War and Post-Cold War Periods," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 29 June 2023. (9 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Freedberg, Jr., Sydney, J. "Joint Staff Must Boost Global Coordination; No New Powers Needed: J5," *Breaking Defense*, 27 April 2017. (3 pp)
2. Dunford, Joseph F. "The Character of War and Strategic Landscape Have Changed." *Joint Force Quarterly* 89, 2018. (3 pp)
3. Garamone, Jim, "Global Integration Seeks to Buy Leaders Decision Time, Increase 'Speed of Relevance'," *DoD News*, 02 July 2018. (5 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the IS sessions in week 4, students are required to complete a DBF-5 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-7

THE PACIFIC OCEAN REGION: FOUNDATIONS AND SECURITY CHALLENGES (USPACOM)

A. Session Overview

This is the first of three sessions that will explore the three oceanic regions most significant to U.S. security considerations: the Pacific Ocean Region, the Indian Ocean Region, and the Atlantic Ocean Region.

According to the CIA World Factbook, “the Pacific Ocean is the largest of the world’s five ocean basins (followed by the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, Southern Ocean, and Arctic Ocean). It is about 15 times the size of the United States and covers about 28% of the global surface (almost equal to the total land area of the world). Strategically important access waterways include the La Perouse, Tsugaru, Tsushima, Taiwan, Singapore, and Torres Straits. The decision by the International Hydrographic Organization in the spring of 2000 to delimit a fifth world ocean basin, the Southern Ocean, removed the portion of the Pacific Ocean south of 60 degrees south. For convenience and because of its immense size, the Pacific Ocean is often divided at the Equator and designated as the North Pacific Ocean and the South Pacific Ocean.”

China’s ascendancy on the world stage is the most significant geopolitical development of the 21st century and is the main strategic competitor of the United States in the Pacific Ocean region. By area it is the world's largest, and most powerful non-democratic state in the international community. China possesses the world's second largest population, and significant global economic, social, and political influence. It is also a state confronting significant challenges, including demographic decline, economic slowdown, and regional instability. The state of the U.S.-China relationship has important implications for everything from global health and nuclear proliferation to economic growth and the threat of major war.

The strategic competition between the U.S. and China is the defining challenge of our time, as its outcome will have a significant impact on the world order. Both the 2025 NSS and 2026 NDS emphasize the challenge that China poses to U.S. national security interests; As such, the United States must be prepared to compete effectively with China across the competition continuum to protect its interests and values. The U.S. combatant command primarily engaging in this strategic competition with China is USPACOM, but each CCMD has a significant supporting role considering the global reach and ambitions of China.

As is well known, the United States and China have very different interests and values, and forming agreements on many substantive issues will be challenging. While this competition could lead to conflict, it could also lead to cooperation. This session introduces key elements of China’s domestic politics, China's rise and future trajectory, the U.S.-China relationship, and U.S. strategy. It also explores U.S. allies, its relations, and their actions and interactions, including specific regional dynamics that play a major role in U.S. policy considerations. The region is the home of many of the United States’ key alliances, including Japan, Australia, The Philippines, South Korea, and Thailand. Understanding the national interests, ambitions, and

vision of the region's international actors, and how to work in concert with like-minded partners in the Pacific is essential to the United States' long-term objective of achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of the Pacific Ocean Region to U.S. national security.
 - Understand the challenges of great power competition in the Pacific Ocean Region and analyze shifts in both the balance of power and in Chinese domestic politics and assess their implications for the U.S.- China relationship.
 - Understand the importance and origins of the U.S. treaty system within the Pacific Ocean Region.
 - Understand the importance of the Pacific Ocean Region to the global economy.
 - Understand the vulnerabilities of the Pacific Ocean Region, including rising great power competition, and the role the wider Indo-Pacific community may play in addressing them.
 - Assess the impact of initiatives like BRICS and the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD).
 - Understand the rationale between examining U.S. national security interests through the lens of ocean regions.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are the key alliances in the Pacific Ocean Region and how did they form?
2. Is the U.S.-PRC rivalry all-encompassing? Are there areas for cooperation and, if so, what are they? Is the U.S.-PRC rivalry a zero-sum game?
3. Should the U.S. seek to “win” great-power competition against China, or should it seek to “manage” great-power competition with China?
4. What are the key interdependencies linking the various states within the Pacific Ocean Region?

5. What are China's goals in the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)? Is it a serious challenge to U.S. and global interests? Why or why not? What is the likely future of the BRI?
6. How might different IR theories imply different U.S. policy options in regard to the PRC? How likely is conflict between the U.S.-PRC, and how can it be avoided?

D. Student Preparation (83 pp; ~11 min video)

1. Gvosdev, Nikolas, and Derek Reveron. "Geography, Bureaucracy, and National Security: The New Map," Foreign Policy Research Institute, 20 July 2023. (10 pp)
2. The White House. Indo-Pacific Strategy of the United States, Washington, DC: *White House*, 11 February 2022. (14 pp)
3. Campbell, Caitlin, Keys, Cameron, M., and Luke A. Nicastro. "U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM)," Congressional Research Service, 05 March 2024. (2 pp)
4. Video: "U.S. Indo-Pacific Command posture statement," *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 21 April 2026, (38:00-45:44). (~8 min)
5. Manyin, Mark, E, and Liana Wong "South Korea: Background and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, updated 27 March 2025. (2 pp)
6. Chanlett-Avery, Emma, Kronstadt, K, Alan and Bruce Vaughn. "The "Quad": Cooperation Among the United States, Japan, India, and Australia," *Congressional Research Service*, 30 January 2023. (2 pp)
7. Manyin, Mark, E, Cimino-Issacs, Cathleen, D., Kitamura, Kyla, A., and Caitlin Campbell. "U.S.-Japan Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, updated 05 November 2024. (2 pp)
8. Brands, Hal and Michael Beckley. "China Is a Declining Power—and That's the Problem." *Foreign Policy*, 24 September 2021. (13 pp)
9. Department of Defense, Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2024," Washington DC: Department of Defense, 18 December 2024, vi-xii, 1-19 (29 pp)
10. Video: "Indo-Pacific Islands: Caught in Between U.S.-China Competition," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, YouTube video, 10 August 2022, (00:00-03:28). (~3 min)
11. Lee, Rachel, M., "The North Korea Conundrum: Pyongyang's Strategic Calculus and Future Trajectory," *Georgetown Journal of International Studies*, 31 May 2023. (3 pp)
12. Lawrence, Susan, V. "Taiwan: Background and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, 26 December 2024. (2 pp)

13. Cimino-Issacs, Cathleen, D., Kitamura, Kyla, H., and Mark E. Manyins. “Indo-Pacific Economic Framework for Prosperity (IPEF),” Congressional Research Service, 22 July 2024. (2 pp)
14. Campbell, Caitlin, Lum, Thomas, and Ben Dolven. “China-Philippines Tensions in the South China Sea,” *Congressional Research Service*, 23 January 2024. (2 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Video: “The Debrief Episode 2: Understanding Regions through Oceans,” U.S. Naval War College, YouTube video, 26 September 2023, (00:00-11:46). (~12 min)
2. Nicastro, Luke, A. “U.S. Defense Infrastructure in the Indo-Pacific: Background and Issues for Congress,” *Congressional Research Service*, 06 June 2023, 1-10, SCAN remainder. (5 pp)
3. Westad, Odd Arne. “What Does the West Really Know About Xi’s China?” *Foreign Affairs*, 13 June 2023. (5 pp)
4. Economy, Elizabeth. “China’s Alternative Order,” *Foreign Affairs*, 23 April 2024. (9 pp)
5. Video: “A Secretive Chinese Force Is Becoming the U.S. Military’s Biggest Challenge,” *Wall Street Journal*, 22 January 2024, (00:00-07:23) (~8 min)
6. Lum, Thomas and Bruce Vaughn. “The Pacific Islands,” *Congressional Research Service*, 25 January 2024. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-9, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-8

THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION: FOUNDATIONS AND SECURITY CHALLENGES (USPACOM)

A. Session Overview

The Indian Ocean is the third largest of the world's five ocean basins (after the Pacific Ocean and Atlantic Ocean, but larger than the Southern Ocean and Arctic Ocean). In regard to total area, it is almost seven times the size of the United States. Four critically important access waterways that impact the Indian Ocean Region are the Suez Canal (Egypt), Bab el Mandeb (Djibouti-Yemen), Strait of Hormuz (Iran-Oman), and Strait of Malacca (Indonesia-Malaysia). Similar to the Pacific Ocean, the decision by the International Hydrographic Organization to delimit a fifth world ocean basin, the Southern Ocean, removed the portion of the Indian Ocean south of 60 degrees south latitude.

Economically, the Indian Ocean Region connects the resource-rich eastern coast of Africa and the Middle East to Asia's labor markets and manufacturing industries. It is home to some of the world's busiest shipping lanes and major energy resources. As a result, it is a focus of competition and cooperation among major powers as well as a target for transnational threats such as terrorism, piracy, and illegal trafficking. In addition to these challenges, the Indian Ocean Region is also facing the effects of climate change, which is exacerbating existing problems such as sea level rise, drought, and flooding. These effects are likely to have a significant impact on the region's security concerns in the years to come.

Within the Indian Ocean Region, not only is one emerging great power, India, present, but also a number of key middle powers (Pakistan, Indonesia, Iran, and South Africa) are located in the region, even as U.S., Chinese, European and Russian interests have increased in the 21st century. As such, the region is defined not only by the global competition among the great powers but also by a series of regionally based rivalries in the Middle East and in South Asia. The two main rivals in the Indian Ocean Region are China and India. China has been expanding its military presence in the region, building ports and other facilities in states such as Sri Lanka, Pakistan, and Djibouti. India is also expanding its military presence in the region, and it has been working to strengthen its ties with states such as the United States, Japan, and Australia.

The U.S. combatant command responsible for this ocean region is the USPACOM. The United States has been the dominant power in the Indian Ocean Region for decades, but its relative influence is waning. China is now the world's second-largest economy, and it is investing heavily in the region. The United States is concerned with China's growing military presence in the region, and it is working to counter China's influence. These interconnected security challenges make this oceanic region perhaps the most dynamic in terms of future challenges, especially given the importance of this region to the global economy and security balance.

The Indian Ocean Region is a center for global commerce, and a conduit for global trade and investment. It is also a region fraught with military tensions, including rising nuclear weapons capabilities, and persistent antagonism over various territorial and sovereignty claims. These threats are complex and interconnected, and they pose a significant challenge to the security

of the region and U.S. interests.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of the Indian Ocean Region to U.S. national security.
 - Understand the challenges of great power competition in the Indian Ocean Region and analyze shifts in both the balance of power and in Chinese domestic politics and assess their implications for the U.S.-China relationship.
 - Understand the importance of the Indian Ocean Region to the global economy.
 - Understand the vulnerabilities of the Indian Ocean Region, including the major 21st century security challenges facing the states in the Middle East.
 - Identify emerging trends and potential future challenges to security in the Indian Ocean Region.
 - Understand the influence of non-state actors (e.g., terrorist organizations, militias) on regional security.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO 2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO 2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does India view its role in the QUAD? How does the United States view India's role?
2. What are the security implications of the proliferation of ballistic missiles and other weapons technologies in the region?
3. How important is the role of India in potentially denying the PRC access to the Indian Ocean Region?

D. Student Preparation (48 pp; ~17 min video)

1. Baruah, Darshana M., Nitya Labh, and Jessica Greely. "Mapping the Indian Ocean Region." Carnegie Endowment for Peace, 15 June 2023. (21 pp)

2. Graham, Jeffrey D. "Building an Enduring U.S.-India Partnership to Secure a Free, Open, and Prosperous Indo-Pacific Region." *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 4th Quarter (October 2022): 23-38. (8 pp)
3. Baruah, Darshana and Caroline Duckworth. "We're Thinking About the Indian Ocean All Wrong," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2022. (2pp)
4. "Challenges and Solutions for Maritime Security in the Indian Ocean." *Stable Seas Report*, 05 May 2021, 1-20. (10 pp)
5. Video: "Indian Ocean Politics: Why Is It So Strategically Important?" Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, YouTube video, 03 March 2021, (00:00-02:13). (~2 min)
6. Liechtenstein, Michael. "The Changing Balance in the Indian Ocean," *Geopolitical Intelligence Services*, 15 March 2023. (2 pp)
7. Himberger, James, and Kaush Arha. "An Indian Ocean Strategy Is Key to Prevailing Over China," *The National Interest*, 01 September 2024. (3 pp)
8. "India's Growing Influence," *The Economist: The World Ahead 2024*, 11 November 2023. (1 pp)
9. Bhatt, Pooja. "The Indian Ocean is Witnessing a Surge in Russian Military Exercises," *The Diplomat*, 13 December 2023. (2 pp)
10. Grossman, Derek. "Why Most of the Indo-Pacific Tiptoes Around Russia," *RAND Corporation*, 07 April 2022. (2 pp)
11. Video: "How India Controls China's Main Weakness: The Malacca Strait," Kakome, 12 March 2023, (00:00-15:15). (~15 min)
12. *The Economist*. "The QUAD Finally Gets Serious on Security," 30 January 2025. (2 pp)
13. Video: "What is BRICS, and Which Countries Want to Join, and Why?" *Reuters*, 21 August 2023, (00:00-02:22). (~2 min)

Supplemental Materials

1. Miller, Manjari Chatterjee, and Claire Harris. "India's Efforts to Strengthen Indian Ocean Security," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 18 July 2023. (2 pp)
2. Samaranayake, Nilanthi. "Connecting West and East: Indian Ocean Security and the US Indo-Pacific Strategy," *East-West Center's Asia Pacific Bulletin*, Number 698, 18 October 2024. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-9, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-9

THE ATLANTIC OCEAN REGION: FOUNDATIONS AND SECURITY CHALLENGES (USSOUTHCOM/USEUCOM)

A. Session Overview

The trans-Atlantic relationship between the United States and Europe is long enduring and extremely important for U.S. security as it encompasses most of America's treaty allies. This enduring relationship is due to the dense web of economic, political, and informational ties that stretch across the Atlantic. As the former U.S. Permanent Representative to NATO, R. Nicholas Burns noted, "Europe is our largest trade partner. Europe is the largest investor in the American economy. Europe contains the greatest number of American allies in the world - treaty allies through the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) - so Europe is of vital importance to the United States."

As such, it is obvious that the Atlantic Ocean is a vital region for the United States. When Latin America and West Africa are included, the Atlantic Ocean Region becomes both the critical nexus for securing U.S. geopolitical and geo-economic interests as well as facilitating the projection of U.S. power around the world. Four U.S. combatant commands share responsibility for the Atlantic Ocean (U.S. European Command, U.S. Africa Command, U.S. Southern Command, and U.S. Northern Command), making it a very dynamic and complex region regarding the coordination and synchronization of the use of the military instrument of national power.

The United States has long been the dominant regional power, but its traditional dominance is increasingly being challenged. Trans-Atlantic security encompasses more than the relationship with Europe. It is also a major strategic region for China and Russia, which are increasingly competing with the United States for regional influence. China has been building its navy and air force, has been conducting more regional military exercises, and is building military and intelligence facilities in Cuba. With major investments in the region, China has been increasingly using its economic power to gain political influence. Russia has been expanding its military presence in the Arctic, and it has also been conducting more military exercises in the Atlantic. This session will explore these security dynamics as well as some others that impact this important region.

Russia's 21st century has been a period of both challenge and opportunity. After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, Russia grappled with economic instability and a new political landscape. Under Vladimir Putin's leadership and influence, Russia has sought to reassert itself as a major power on the world stage, leveraging its vast natural resources and military strength. However, democratic backsliding and heightened tensions with the West over the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine have complicated these efforts.

U.S. European Command, Gen. Christopher G. Cavoli, characterized Russia as a "chronic threat" during his April 2024 testimony to the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Since the February 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine, U.S. led economic sanctions have

sought to punish the Russian state and restrict funds for its war effort. The growth of NATO, to now include Finland and Sweden, and Russia's turn toward other like-minded authoritarian regimes (i.e., China, Iran, North Korea) have further isolated the country. Russia's future will likely depend on its ability to navigate these challenges and develop its economy while still maintaining its global influence.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of the Atlantic Ocean Region to U.S. security.
 - Understand how the trans-Atlantic relationship, especially NATO, impacts U.S. security and its position in the world.
 - Understand the dynamics of trans-Atlantic relations and the challenges of enlarging the Atlantic community.
 - Assess the difficulties in forging an overarching “Atlantic” strategy from the Arctic to the South Atlantic.
 - Understand the Russian national security objectives in the 21st century.
 - Evaluate competing U.S. strategies toward Russia and produce recommendations for U.S. strategy.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does the partnership between Europe and the United States enable the West to “write the rules” of the international order? How does this enhance U.S. leadership within the international community?
2. The “trans-Atlantic” community initially started as a formulation to describe relations between Europe and North America. Should the concept be widened to encompass West Africa and Latin America? How does this overlap with a geopolitical or geo-economic conception of “the West”?
3. How does NATO sustain a security community between North America and Europe? How does it prioritize challenges from Russia, China, the Middle East and Africa?

4. How does the development and expansion of economic and technological ties across the Atlantic community benefit U.S. national security?
5. What are principal U.S. security considerations in the Western Hemisphere? To what extent does the trans-Atlantic relationship help address those concerns? Could Europe play a greater role in the region, and how would the U.S. view such engagement?
6. How do Russian and Chinese security challenges manifest in the Atlantic Ocean Region? What are the Russian and Chinese strategic objectives?

D. Student Preparation (42 pp; ~17 min video)

1. McInnis, Kathleen, J., Brendan W. McGarry, and Paul Belkin “United States European Command: Overview and Key Issues.” Congressional Research Service, 30 March 2022. (2 pp)
2. Video: “U.S. European Command posture statement,” Senate Armed Services Committee, 12 March 2026, (28:32-32:32). (~4 min)
3. Shedd, David, Skinner, Kiron, and James Jay Carafano. “Why America Needs a Strategy for America’s Backyard,” The National Interest, 05 January 2021. (3 pp)
4. The White House. “Fact Sheet: 32 Countries Launch the Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation,” 18 September 2023. (2 pp)
5. Azubalis, Audronis. “NATO and the Global South. Preliminary Draft Report of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly,” 25 March 2024. (15 pp)
6. Video: “U.S. Southern Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 19 March 2026, (30:22-33:41). (~3 min)
7. Jones, Bruce, and Daniel S. Hamilton. “The Promise of a Free and Open Atlantic,” *Brookings Institution*, 20 September 2023. (2 pp)
8. “Does the new Partnership for Atlantic Cooperation Mark a Sea Change in Transatlantic Relations?,” *Atlantic Council*, 20 September 2023. (2 pp)
9. Brizzi, Matteo. “Shaping a Pan-Atlantic Community: An Opportunity for the European Union,” *CeSPI*, 14 March 2022. (3 pp)
10. Video: “What is the NATO Strategic Concept?,” *NATO*, YouTube video, 14 June 2022, (00:00-02:15). (~2 min)
11. Wall, Colin, and Pierre Morcos. “Invisible and Vital: Undersea Cables and Transatlantic Security,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 11 June 2021. (4 pp)
12. Mahadzir, Dzirhan. “NATO Launches Baltic Sentry Mission in Baltic Sea,” U.S. Naval Institute, 15 January 2025. (2 pp)

13. Herd, Graeme. "Russia's 21st Century Imperialism," George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies, 08 December 2021. (3 pp)
14. Duclos, Michel. "Russia's National Security Strategy 2021: the Era of "Information Confrontation," Institute Montaigne, 08 February 2021. (3 pp)
15. Video: "How Russia is Taking Control of the Arctic." The Guardian - It's Complicated, YouTube video, 25 January 2024, (00:00-05:53). (~6 min)
16. Video: The Kremlin Playbook in Europe. Center for the Study of Democracy. 15 December 2020. (~5 min)
17. Barrios, Ricardo, and Karla I. Rios. "China's Engagement with Latin America and the Caribbean," Congressional Research Service, 23 June 2023. (2 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Mattox, Gale A. "The Transatlantic Security Landscape in Europe," in The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security, 05 February 2018. (12 pp)
2. Borck, Tobias and Jack Senogles, "Russia's War on Ukraine: Implications for the Middle East and North Africa," Royal United Service Institute, 10 March 2022. (3 pp)
3. Sany, Joseph. "To Counter Russia's Aggression, Invest in Africa," USIP, 06 July 2022. (3 pp)
4. Simon, Luis. "NATO's China and Indo-Pacific Conundrum," NATO Review, 22 November 2023. (4 pp)
5. Chiriac, Olga, R. "The 2022 Maritime Doctrine of the Russian Federation: Mobilization, Maritime Law, and Socio-Economic Warfare," Center for International Maritime Security, 28 November 2022. (5 pp)
6. Schwarzenberg, Andres B. "Russia's Trade and Investment Role in the Global Economy," Congressional Research Service, 17 January 2023. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-9, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-10

DETERRENCE: CONCEPTS AND THEORY (USSTRATCOM)

A. Session Overview

Deterrence is the art of convincing an adversary that the costs of taking an unwanted action are greater than the possible benefits. Part of the larger concept of coercive diplomacy, deterrence has a long history as a strategy used by leaders and governments to manage and prevent conflict. Though the use of deterrence has been around for millennia, deterrence as a formal theory was developed largely in the post-World War II nuclear environment as an effort to better understand these new weapons and their effects. However, deterrence theory also has important implications for strategy in the conventional domain. Deterrence is now complicated by an environment that has a more complex array of threats, new domains such as cyber and space, and a broader range of actors. This session will examine the fundamental concepts of deterrence theory, the challenges with implementing a successful deterrent strategy, and how the theory is applied in practice.

Throughout the Cold War, nuclear weapons and theories of nuclear deterrence were central to U.S. strategy and defense planning. This was a paradox: nuclear weapons were unlikely to be used, but their destructive power demanded continual thinking and planning about their role in protecting U.S. national security. In the years following the Cold War, as the threat of an existential nuclear conflict appeared to recede, analysts gave far less thought to nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence. Over the past decade, however, the nuclear question has resurfaced, not only because of increased competition with China and Russia, but also because of North Korea's advancing nuclear capabilities and ongoing concern over a potentially nefarious Iranian nuclear program.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Examine the basic concepts of deterrence theory and assess their utility in the current and future security environment.
 - Apply deterrence theory to current security challenges.
 - Examine and assess the structure of the U.S. nuclear force, the plans for modernization, and the U.S. strategy in the 2022 Nuclear Posture Review.
 - Analyze the impact of Russian nuclear threats and Chinese nuclear modernization on deterrence theory.
 - Understand and evaluate the concept of integrated deterrence.

- Learning Outcomes

- CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
- Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are the basic concepts of deterrence? How does a state construct a credible deterrence commitment? What role does rationality play in deterrence calculations? What are the important distinctions in the different types of deterrence?
2. What are the challenges for states to "extend" deterrence to protect allies?
3. How well do deterrence concepts hold up in today's evolving international security environment? Do traditional concepts of deterrence apply to the domains of space and cyberspace? If not, why not, and how does deterrence theory need to adjust to account for these two domains?
4. What is the meaning of "integrated deterrence"? How is it different from earlier conceptions of deterrence and is it useful?
5. What is the best approach to deter a Chinese invasion of Taiwan? Is deterrence the correct strategy to address this security challenge?
6. How large do you think the U.S. strategic nuclear force should be? Should the size, composition, and capability of certain parts of the force be adjusted? If so, how?
7. What is your assessment of the arguments for and against U.S. nuclear modernization? Can the United States afford the current modernization plan for its strategic nuclear forces? If not, what should the priorities be?

D. Student Preparation (60 pp; ~30 min video)

1. Mazzar, Michael, J. "Understanding Deterrence," *RAND*, 19 April 2018. (11 pp)
2. Biddle, Tami Davis. "Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners," *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2020), 94-109. (10 pp)
3. Video: Deterrence 101 – Foundations of Deterrence, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, CSIS video, 08 December 2021, (00:00-17:39). (~18 min)
4. Hadley, Greg. "U.S. Won't Update Nuclear Posture Review: Pentagon Policy Chief," *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, 05 March 2026. (1 pp)
5. U.S. Department of Defense. "2022 Nuclear Posture Review" in the *2022 National Defense*

Strategy of the United States of America, Washington, DC: Secretary of Defense, October 2022. (23 pp)

6. Fink, Anya, L. "Defense Primer: Strategic Nuclear Forces." Congressional Research Service, 18 November 2024. (2 pp)
7. Weaver, Greg, and Amy Woolf. "Requirements for Nuclear Deterrence and Arms Control in a Two-Nuclear-Peer Environment," *Atlantic Council*, 02 February 2024. (9 pp)
8. Video: The Debrief: "Contemplating the Unthinkable: Making Nuclear Deterrence Credible." *U.S. Naval War College*, YouTube video, 09 November 2023, (01:29-07:52). (~8 min)
9. Video: "U.S. Strategic Command posture statement," *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 26 March 2026, (32:25-36:04). (~4 min)
10. Fink, Anya, F. "Congressional Commission on the U.S. Strategic Posture," *Congressional Research Service*, 01 April 2024. (2 pp)
11. Raine, John. "The Erratic Results of Deterrence Against Non-State Armed Groups," *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 02 April 2024. (2 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Schelling, Thomas C. *Arms and Influence*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966, 35-59. (24 pp)
2. Sacks, David and Ivan Kanapathy. "What It Will Take to Deter China in the Taiwan Strait," *Foreign Affairs*, 15 June 2023. (4 pp)
3. Mazarr, Michael J. and Ivana Ke. "Integrated Deterrence as a Defense Planning Concept," *RAND*, June 2024, 1-35. (35 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-11

EMERGING DOMAINS: TECHNOLOGY, CYBER, AND SPACE (USCYBERCOM, USSPACECOM)

A. Session Overview

A constant theme that emerges when examining the international security environment is the dynamic nature of the environment. As such the rapid advancement of technology is creating a new landscape of security concerns and challenges which states are being forced to address. This session examines the advance of technology, and the cyber and space domains; specifically their impact on the international security environment.

Technology

Advances in technology influence national and theater security strategies, decision making, and force design. It is an imperative that national security professionals have an understanding that, as former CJCS Gen Mark A. Milley, USA, stated in July 2023, “Geostrategic competition and rapidly advancing technology are driving fundamental changes to the character of war. Our opportunity to ensure that we maintain an enduring competitive advantage is fleeting.” Although there are many areas this session could cover on the topic of technology, three of the most consequential are the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), unmanned systems, and hypersonic weapons. These are the topics on which this session will focus.

The rapid development of AI has brought a new layer of complexity to international security. Concerns range from autonomous weapons making decisions on life and death to AI being used to spread dis/misinformation and manipulate populations. Biases in AI systems could exacerbate existing tensions, while the potential for theft of sensitive data or manipulation of algorithms by hostile actors raises the specter of major cyberattacks. The United States and other like-minded states are grappling with how to ensure responsible development and use of AI to prevent conflict and maintain stability.

The rise of unmanned military systems, like aerial drones or unmanned ground vehicles (UGV), is creating another new set of international security challenges. In the maritime domain the use of both unmanned surface and subsurface vehicles are growing exponentially. Concerns in this area include the proliferation of these weapons to non-state actors and the potential for accidental or unauthorized use leading to civilian casualties. Additionally, the blurring of lines between military and commercial drones makes attribution for attacks difficult, raising questions about how and when to retaliate. These powerful technologies are constantly evolving, and as with AI, the United States, other like-minded states, and IGOs such as the United Nations and the European Union are scrambling to develop regulations and norms to prevent their destabilization of international security.

Finally, hypersonic missiles are at the cutting edge of weaponry, traveling at mind-boggling speeds exceeding five times the speed of sound. This extreme velocity allows these destructive weapons to cover vast distances in a fraction of the time compared to most traditional missiles, making them difficult to intercept, potentially destabilizing the balance of power between

states and raising the risk of regional conflicts escalating. Additionally, the speed of these weapons could compress decision making times in a crisis, increasing the chances of miscalculation. Currently, the United States, Russia, and China are in a race to develop and deploy these powerful weapons, raising concerns about their impact on international security.

Cyber and Space Domains

Increasingly, cyberattacks are a major concern for the United States and all states within the international community due to an increasing reliance on digital infrastructure which makes all sectors of society more vulnerable to data breaches, disruption of critical services, and manipulation by malicious actors. States and non-state actors alike are developing more sophisticated tools to disrupt critical services, steal sensitive data, and manipulate information. This raises concerns about potential attacks on power grids, financial institutions, health institutions and even democratic processes. The interconnectedness of the internet makes it difficult to pinpoint the origin of attacks, further complicating international efforts to establish norms and hold perpetrators accountable. The U.S. combatant command responsible for the cyber domain is U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM).

International security in outer space is also facing new threats. The increasing number of satellites orbiting Earth creates a congested environment, with debris from collisions or anti-satellite tests posing a risk to critical infrastructure. Additionally, military powers are developing capabilities to disrupt or destroy satellites, threatening communication and navigation systems relied upon globally. Furthermore, the aforementioned advent of cyberattacks are emerging as a related concern, with states and non-state actors targeting ground stations and satellites themselves. The newest CCMD, U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM), is responsible for the space domain. Overall, these issues highlight the need for international cooperation to establish norms and regulations for responsible behavior in both cyber and space, ensuring their continued use for peaceful purposes.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand how unmanned systems are changing the nature of warfare.
 - Analyze the implications of unmanned systems for force structure and decision making.
 - Analyze how hypersonic weapons could destabilize the balance of power between states.
 - Analyze the challenges hypersonic weapons pose to deterrence strategies.
 - Understand how cyber threats can impact international peace and stability, the role of cyberspace in geopolitical competition, and the challenges of international cooperation in cyberspace.
 - Analyze how cyberattacks can disrupt critical infrastructure, economies, and political systems.

- Analyze the potential for cyberwarfare and its implications for international relations.
 - Understand emerging challenges in cyberspace, such as the weaponization of artificial intelligence and the rise of cyber-enabled disinformation campaigns.
 - Understand the critical role space-based technologies play in modern military operations and U.S. national security.
 - Evaluate the challenges of maintaining peaceful uses of outer space in an era of increasing competition.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Understand the impact the moral, ethical, and professional responsibilities and challenges associated with being a national security professional have on decision making.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.
 - Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms to operational decision making.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are the long-term geopolitical ramifications of a world where some states have a significant advantage in AI capabilities?
2. How can we ensure that AI development benefits all states and contributes to global stability?
3. How will AI-powered autonomous weapons systems change the nature of warfare?
4. How is the easy accessibility and affordability of unmanned systems impacting U.S. national security interests?
5. How will the increasing autonomy of unmanned systems impact national security decision making and accountability in warfare?
6. How might hypersonic weapons affect existing deterrence strategies and the balance of power between states?
7. What are the challenges of enforcing international law and norms in cyberspace, given its borderless nature?
8. What role do non-state actors play in cyberattacks, and how can they be held accountable?

9. With the increasing number of states and private companies with spacefaring capabilities, how can international cooperation be fostered to ensure a peaceful and sustainable space environment?
10. What are the biggest challenges posed by the weaponization of space, and how can existing treaties be strengthened or new ones created to prevent an arms race?

D. Student Preparation (42 pp; ~37 min video)

1. Sayler, Kelley, M. “Defense Primer: Emerging Technologies,” Congressional Research Service, 04 November 2024. (2 pp)
2. Video: “AI in the Military: Gen Milley on the Future of Warfare.” 60 Minutes Overtime, YouTube video, 08 October 2023, (00:00-04:07). (~4 min)
3. Lamparth, Max, and Jacquelyn Schneider. “Why the Military Can’t Trust AI,” Foreign Affairs, 29 April 2024. (4 pp)
4. “The War in Ukraine Shows How Technology is Changing the Battlefield,” The Economist, 03 July 2023. (4 pp)
5. Video: “The Future of War,” The Economist, YouTube video, 04 July 2023, (00:00-16:38). (~17 min)
6. Sayler, Kelley, M. “DOD Replicator Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, 02 December 2024. (2 pp)
7. Tucker, Patrick. “Navy Envisions ‘Hundreds of Thousands’ of Drones in the Pacific to Deter China,” Defense One, 16 February 2024. (2 pp)
8. Sayler, Kelley, M. “Defense Primer: Hypersonic Boost-Glide Weapons,” Congressional Research Service, 01 November 2024. (2 pp)
9. Video: “The Race to Build Hypersonic Missiles,” Wall Street Journal, YouTube video, 31 May 2022, (00:00-07:21). (~7 min)
10. Video: “U.S. Cyber Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 28 April 2026, (01:37:04-01:41:05). (~ 4 min)
11. Theohary, Catherine, A. “Defense Primer: Cyberspace Operations,” *Congressional Research Service*, 29 November 2024. (2 pp)
12. U.S. Department of Defense. Summary 2023 Cyber Strategy of the Department of Defense. Washington DC: *U.S. Department of Defense*, 12 September 2023. (12 pp)
13. Video: “U.S. Space Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 26 March 2026, (27:15-32:11). (~5 min)
14. The White House. United States Space Priorities Framework. Washington DC: *The White*

House, 01 December 2021. (5 pp)

15. Switzer, Robert, and Jennifer DiMascio. "Defense Primer: U.S. Space Command," Congressional Research Service, 04 December 2024. (2 pp)
16. "War in Space is No Longer Science Fiction," *The Economist*, 31 January 2024. (5 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Flournoy, Michele, A. "AI is Already at War: How Artificial Intelligence Will Transform the Military," *Foreign Affairs*, 24 October 2023. (8 pp)
2. "The Growing Role of Fighting Robots on the Ground in Ukraine," *The Economist*, 19 April 2024. (1 pp)
3. "How Oceans Became New Technological Battlefields," *The Economist*, 03 July 2023. (3 pp)
4. Ackerman, Elliot, and James Stavridis. "Drone Swarms Are About to Change the Balance of Military Power," *Wall Street Journal*, 16 March 2024. (1 pp)
5. Video: "How Ukraine's Boat Drones Sank a THIRD of the Black Sea Fleet and Changed Naval Warfare Forever," *Daily Mail*, 15 March 2024, (00:00-13:12). (~13 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-12

THE FUTURE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A. Session Overview

This final IS session in TSDM serves as an opportunity to reflect back on the myriad elements that constitute the international security environment and discuss the possible challenges and opportunities to international security that are emerging in the coming decades of the 21st century.

As illustrated via the material and topics covered throughout the IS sessions, the evolving international security environment presents a complex landscape of challenges and opportunities. Traditional threats like interstate conflict, geopolitical competition and nuclear proliferation persist, while issues like “gray zone” operations by U.S. adversaries, resource scarcity due to climate change, the race for control of the Arctic / Antarctica and the weaponization of emerging technologies loom large.

However, these very challenges also open doors for cooperation. Increased global interconnectedness necessitates international collaboration to address transnational threats. Technological advancements, if harnessed for good, can create tools for conflict prevention, communication, and disaster response. The ability of the United States to navigate this complex environment, foster diplomacy, and prioritize collective security will be paramount to achieving U.S. national security objectives and in shaping a more stable future.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand how states engage across the competition continuum to advance their interests in both the contemporary and future international security environment.
 - Understand the risks and challenges climate change will present to U.S. national security interests in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond.
 - Comprehend the implications to U.S. national security of the cooperative efforts between authoritarian powers.
 - Understand the importance of the North Atlantic Treaty Alliance (NATO) to U.S. national security.
 - Understand the challenges of gray zone operations.
 - Comprehend the implications of the growing geopolitical competition for control of the Arctic Ocean Region.
 - Understand the potential benefits of emerging technology to advance international security and stability.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Do the conflicting visions of the international order between the United States (and its allies) and the rising tide of authoritarian powers (i.e., China, Russia) mean that future global conflict is inevitable? Why or why not?
2. What are the implications of the expansion of NATO to international security?
3. Is the future of the Arctic Ocean Region going to be determined by the parameters of the U.S.-China-Russia strategic competition?
4. How is climate change affecting geopolitics and security interests in the Indo-Pacific? What risks and challenges do they present, and how can regional states best predict, prevent, and mitigate those challenges?
5. What challenges do expanding “gray zone” operations by China, Russia, and other state and non-state actors present to international security?
6. What factors affect relations across the Taiwan Strait and, particularly, the likelihood of conflict? How do concepts like the security dilemma, deterrence, diversionary theory, audience costs, economic integration, and identity help us understand these issues? How are these factors likely to change in the coming years and what do they imply for U.S. policy toward China and Taiwan?
7. Projecting forward into the coming decades of the 21st century, how do you foresee the role of emerging technologies impacting international security?

D. Student Preparation (55 pp; ~18 min video)

1. Brands, Hal. “The Next Global War,” *Foreign Affairs*, 26 January 2024. (5 pp)
2. Kotkin, Stephen. “The Five Futures of Russia,” *Foreign Affairs*, 18 April 2024. (12 pp)
3. Bekkevold, Jo Inge. “NATO’s Remarkable Revival,” *Foreign Policy*, 11 September 2023. (3 pp)
4. Erickson, Andrew, S. Collins, Gabriel, B. and Matt Pottinger. “The Taiwan Catastrophe: What America—and the World—Would Lose If China Took the Island,” *Foreign Affairs*, 16 February 2024. (15 pp)

5. Mastro, Oriana Skylar. "The Next Tripartite Pact? China, Russia, and North Korea's New Team Is Not Built to Last," *Foreign Affairs*, 19 February 2024. (9 pp)
6. Yoshihara, Toshi, and Casey Nicastro. "The Chinese Military's Challenges in the 2030s," *The National Interest*, 03 April 2025. (4 pp)
7. Video: "Understanding Gray Zones," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, YouTube video, 07 December 2018. (00:00-04:17). (~4 min)
8. Video: "The race for the Arctic is ramping up. Here's why," *DW News*, YouTube video, 25 November 2022, (00:00-13:50). (~14 min)
9. Carlstrom, Gregg. "The Power Vacuum in Middle East," *Foreign Affairs*, 06 March 2024. (4 pp)
10. Humble, Kristin. "War, Artificial Intelligence, and the Future of Conflict," *Georgetown Journal of International Affairs*, 12 July 2024. (3 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. "A New Era of High-Tech War Has Begun," *The Economist*, 06 July 2023. (2 pp)
2. Ignatius, David. "China is Serious About Winning the New Space Race," *Washington Post*, 20 July 2023. (2 pp)
3. Video: "The Debrief Episode 14 - Always Above: Space Force and the New Frontiers," *U.S. Naval War College*, YouTube video, 03 April 2024, (00:00-25:54). (~26 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of IS-12, students are required to successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

THEATER SECURITY DECISION MAKING (TSDM)

SYLLABUS AND STUDY GUIDE

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

While the International Security sessions considered the international security environment, the next three weeks focus on Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). FPA is designed to enhance the professional competence of students who will serve as practitioners in the national security environment—such as a combatant command staff, a Service staff, or when in command. FPA sessions will increase student understanding of the skills required of an advancing national security professional through exposure to the range of domestic and international actors and influences that can affect national security decisions and the formulation of national security and defense policy.

As emphasized in the overview of TSDM, whether it is the decision to send cluster munitions to the Ukrainian armed forces, deploy U.S. troops to Iraq, launch sanctions against Russia, invest in local production of microchip processors, fund a new military platform, or increase/decrease the defense budget, national security policy decisions don't just "happen." The FPA sessions seek to expose students to the complexities of the national security decision making environment, the processes that make it work (or not), and the myriad factors that influence decision makers and their subsequent national security decisions

Throughout the FPA sessions students will explore the roles of formal actors and institutions, including the executive branch, the National Security Council (NSC), interagency partners, and Congress, in shaping national security policy. Additionally, students will examine the influence of a variety of domestic actors—such as the media, public opinion, lobbyists, and think tanks—on the policymaking process. Beyond domestic influences, FPA sessions also explore the impact of international actors, including states, non-state actors, international institutions, and alliances, all of which play a role in shaping the national security policy decision making environment. Lastly, students will consider issues beyond borders that can shape U.S. national security policy and its implementation

Why does all of this matter? Because Alfred Lord Tennyson's idea that "theirs not to reason why / theirs but to do and die," fails to consider that while military officers (the majority of JPME students) don't make policy, the DoD does influence policy and understanding the *how* and *why* decisions are made and *influenced* is a critical element for the education of national security professionals who may find themselves in a position, either directly or indirectly, where they must navigate the complex policymaking environment. As Colin Powell argued while speaking to students at the Naval War College in June 1990:

"...you need a better understanding of how politics works, of how public relations work, as to how you generate support for the armed forces of the United States... To make sure you understand the influences that are pressing on the Department and on your particular service. Because ultimately, we are answerable to the American people."

In short, it is intended that the FPA sessions help students gain a deeper and greater appreciation of the policymaking environment so they are better equipped to “operate knowledgably and professionally” within it. Overall, the FPA sessions are designed to give students conversancy in the national security policymaking process, the complexities and peculiarities of it, and their role in it as a national security professional.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-1

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS FOR PRACTITIONERS

A. Session Overview

The introductory session of FPA lays the foundation and introduces the basic theories underlying foreign policy analysis. To do so, the session briefly reviews some of the constitutional and statutory authorities granted to national security policy makers. These formal authorities are vital elements of the policy-making process, but they only tell part of the story in that various informal actors and elements can also play a critical role in influencing policy processes and decision making. FPA is designed to increase students' appreciation of these international, domestic, and bureaucratic forces that profoundly influence every organization involved within the national security enterprise. This introductory session is designed to familiarize national security professionals with the increasingly diverse and demanding elements that can influence future policy.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Define foreign policy analysis and understand the complexities of foreign policy decision making at the national and theater levels.
 - Identify the key domestic and international actors and factors, as well as the decision making processes and authorities that profoundly impact national security affairs.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Foreign policy decisions may be less about what a president or other leaders want and more about what options are possible given political and systemic constraints. What are some of those constraints? How might they affect a foreign policy decision?
2. Should military officers study policy analysis? Why or why not?
3. Why is it important for national security professionals to dissect foreign policy decisions?
4. Decision makers inevitably must act with incomplete information. Foreign policy analysts face similar informational challenges. What information would be especially important in

a foreign policy context, and what data is easiest to come by, harder to come by, and nearly impossible to come by?

5. What tools and methods can analysts use to better understand foreign policy actions and their consequences?

D. Student Preparation (38 pp; ~ 33 min video)

1. Knott, Stephen F., Andrew Stigler, and Nikolas K. Gvosdev. "Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis," Faculty paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2015. Revised for the College of Distance Education, Summer 2025. (20 pp)
2. Video: "The Debrief Episode 1: Analytic Perspectives of Foreign Policy Decision-Making." National Security Affairs Department, U.S. Naval War College, 27 September 2023, (00:00 – 33:18)
3. Gvosdev, Nikolas K. "Should Military Officers Study Policy Analysis?" *Joint Forces Quarterly*, 76, (2015): 30-34. (4 pp)
4. Blanchette, Jude, and Ryan Hass, "The Taiwan Long Game: Why the Best Solution is No Solution," *Foreign Affairs*, 20 December 2022. (14 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Blankshain, Jessica D. and Nikolas K. Gvosdev. "Understanding Foreign Policy Analysis," Faculty paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2015. Revised for the College of Distance Education, Summer 2023. (16 pp)
2. Blankshain, Jessica D. and Andrew L. Stigler, "Applying Method to Madness: A User's Guide to Causal Inference in Policy Analysis," *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 3 (2020): 76-89. (12 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the FPA sessions in week 7, students are required to complete a DBF-6 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-8, students are required to successfully complete SA-3 addressing CLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-2

THE PRESIDENCY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

A. Session Overview

As outlined in Article II of the Constitution, the president is vested with executive power and is the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of the United States. While many observers argue that the Constitution created an “invitation to struggle” between Congress and the president for control of the nation’s foreign and defense policies, during the last two centuries, wars and other national emergencies have increased the power of the presidency relative to the legislative branch. Various technological developments, from the rise of radio, television, and social media, to the advent of nuclear weapons and artificial intelligence, have also enhanced the power of the presidency, with some critics arguing that this led to the creation of an “imperial presidency.” This session examines the power of the presidency in national security affairs, addresses the evolution of presidential power via unilateral executive actions, and considers how cognitive biases and processes can influence decision making.

Understanding the presidency as an institution is crucial for military officers and national security practitioners as the president serves as the central node in the national security decision making process. Beyond the individual occupying the office, the presidency consists of a vast network of advisors, agencies, and bureaucratic structures—including the National Security Council (NSC), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Department of Defense (DoD), the Department of State (DoS), and the Intelligence Community—that influence policy formulation and execution. The president’s ability to shape national security policy is not only a function of constitutional authority but also of institutional capacity, political dynamics, and advisory structures.

For national security professionals, grasping how the presidency operates, including how decisions are made, how information flows, and how a president’s personal characteristics may influence decision making is important for understanding the broader strategic context. Furthermore, the president’s interaction with Congress, the courts, the media, and a host of international actors can play a pivotal role in shaping military strategy and national security priorities. Taken together, by understanding the institution of the presidency, national security professionals can better anticipate policy shifts, navigate bureaucratic processes, and contribute more effectively to the development and implementation of strategies in support of national security.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Analyze the Constitutional powers vested in the president and identify the tools available in shaping and implementing national security policy.
 - Understand the role of, and tools available to the president in shaping and implementing the national security agenda.

- Analyze how the interpretation of the executive power of the president in the Constitution often leads to disagreement in and with the legislative branch in areas related to theater and national security.
- Examine how an individual decision maker can be affected by their experiences, expertise, biases, heuristics, emotions, and belief systems.
- Identify the role of risk and uncertainty in cognitive processes that impact decision making in policymaking.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What Constitutional powers are reserved for the president? What powers are not explicitly directed in Article II of the Constitution, and how has executive authority developed and evolved?
2. Are personal qualities important in understanding how presidents perform their duties, as the readings suggest? How might their approaches impact their ability to accomplish U.S. national security objectives?
3. How have presidents shaped and/or utilized their administrations to help them make decisions?
4. The president's inner circle has unique access to the president. How have presidents organized and integrated advisors into policy decisions? What are common trends, and what are the outliers?
5. Presidents bring a wide variety of experiences and influences with them into the office. How do those shape their national security policy agendas and their decision making?
6. What cognitive paradigms (reflexes, habits, intuition, synthesis, leadership traits) have presidents relied upon in the past?

D. Student Preparation (38 pp; ~ 28 min video)

1. The Constitution of the United States, Article II. (2 pp)
2. Video: Knott, Stephen. "NWC Talks, Presidential Power and National Security," U.S. Naval War College, 2019, (00:00 – 17:15)

3. Howell, William G., “Chapter 1: Presidential Power in the Modern Era,” in *Power without Persuasion: The Politics of Direct Presidential Action*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003. (22 pp)
4. Gvosdev, Nikolas K., Stephen Knott, and Thomas Nichols, “The President, the Presidency and Theater Security,” Newport, R.I.: Naval War College faculty paper, 2016. Revised for CDE by Christopher Faulkner Spring 2023. (14 pp)
5. Video: Blankshain, Jessica. “The Cognitive Perspective,” U.S. Naval War College, 19 August 2020, (00:00 – 10:50)

Supplemental Materials

1. Brattebo, Douglas M. and Tom Lansford. “The Presidency and Decision-making,” in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security*, edited by Derek S. Reviron, Nikolas K. Gvosdev, and John Cloud, 97–110. New York: Oxford University Press, 2018. (13 pp)
2. Dickerson, John. “The Hardest Job in the World. What if the Problem Isn’t the President—it’s the Presidency?” *The Atlantic*, 321, no. 4 (2018): 47-63. (16 pp)
3. Gvosdev, Nikolas K., Jessica D. Blankshain and David A. Cooper. “Cognitive Perspective,” in *Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy: Translating Theory into Practice*, Ch. 4: 88-124. 2019. New York: Cambridge University Press. (32 pp)
4. Gvosdev, Nikolas K., Jessica D. Blankshain and David A. Cooper. “Case No. 5: Military Strike against Syria (2017),” in *Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy: Translating Theory into Practice*, 406-410. 2019. New York: Cambridge University Press. (6 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the FPA sessions in week 7, students are required to complete a DBF-6 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-8, students are required to successfully complete SA-3 addressing CLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-3

THE INTERAGENCY PROCESS AND THE NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

A. Session Overview

The interagency decision making process, at both the national and the theater levels, develops policy and coordinates the entire range of agencies and departments charged with U.S. national security. This session primarily focuses on the NSC, how it was created, how it is generally organized, how it changes with each president, and how it helps the president (ideally) make better and more well-informed policy decisions. It also considers the variety of top-level officials involved in decision making, the formal/informal relationships, internal rivalries, and palace intrigue that impact national security decision making. Understanding how these individuals relate, gain access, and interact with the president can help explain the ultimate policy or decision that results.

This session also introduces the organizational process bureaucratic politics, and palace politics perspectives that can be helpful for analyzing national security decision making. The organizational process perspective views organizations as habitual actors with distinct legal foundations, missions, cultures, and structures that systematically process information and produce policy options and actions. In contrast, the bureaucratic politics perspective highlights organizations as strategic actors represented by individuals in key positions, where bargaining among senior leaders—who advocate for policies that align with their agency’s interests—often leads to compromises shaped by competing bureaucratic priorities. Lastly, the palace politics perspective considers how advisors and bureaucrats maneuver for access, influence, and control over policy, often shaping outcomes as much as formal institutional processes do.

A deep understanding of formal interagency processes and informal jockeying for influence by senior decision makers is both valuable and vital for national security professionals, as it directly influences how policies are crafted, debated, and implemented. While the NSC serves as the primary coordinating body for national security decision making, its effectiveness depends on a range of factors including the personalities, bureaucratic dynamics, and competing organizational interests within the interagency system. Military officers and national security professionals must recognize that policy decisions are rarely made in isolation; rather, they emerge from negotiations, compromises, and sometimes friction among key stakeholders, including key executive agencies like the DoD and DoS, among a host of other agencies. Grasping the formal and informal power structures, access points, and influence networks within the interagency process can help national security professionals more effectively navigate their positions, provide critical insights, and understand how strategic decisions evolve from initial discussions to final implementation.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the role of the NSC and NSC Staff in facilitating the interagency process.

- Understand the general structure of the interagency process at the national and theater levels.
 - Understand the competing missions of the agencies participating in national security policy development.
 - Identify the challenges in promoting coordination of national security policy across the various agencies and departments of government.
 - Analyze how the interagency process at both the national and theater levels work to prevent or minimize contradictions in U.S. policy.
 - Identify the behavioral characteristics and limitations of organizations, such as a major staff, in formulating and implementing effective policies.
 - Identify the behavioral characteristics of and competing cultures inside different types of military and civilian organizations.
 - Examine the possible cascading and reinforcing effects of organizational behavior and process on mission accomplishment.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How has the NSC changed over time, and what led to these changes?
2. What issues does the NSC primarily address? How does the NSC facilitate interagency interaction, and what challenges may be brought about by the NSC?
3. What are some potential challenges with interagency coordination at the theater-level? How might these challenges imperil national security?
4. What are the distinctions between the organizational process perspective and bureaucratic politics perspective?
5. Every government organization—whether a department, agency, Service, or staff—develops its own culture. How do different cultures and sub-cultures impact the way in which organizations operate internally and externally?
6. How might national security professionals operating in the national security policy arena navigate the dynamics of organizational processes to assure mission success?

7. Why is this perspective termed "palace politics," and how does it help in analyzing national security decision making?

D. Student Preparation (44 pp; ~ 45 min video)

1. Schake, Kori. "The National Security Process," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security*, edited by Derek S. Reveron, Nikolas K. Gvosdev, and John Cloud, New York: NY: Oxford University Press, 2018, Ch. 7: 123-132. (9 pp)
2. Chollet, Derek. "The National Security Council: Is it Effective or Is it Broken?" in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security*, edited by Derek S. Reveron, Nikolas K. Gvosdev, and John Cloud. New York: NY: Oxford University Press, 2018, Ch. 6: 111-121. (9 pp)
3. Video: Blankshain, Jessica. "The Organizational Process Perspective," U.S. Naval War College, 17 August 2020, (00:00 – 12:58)
4. Video: Blankshain, Jessica. "Bureaucratic Politics Perspective," U.S. Naval War College, 17 August 2020, (00:00 – 10:22)
5. Video: Blankshain, Jessica. "Palace Politics Perspective," U.S. Naval War College, 17 August 2020, (00:00 – 5:53)
6. Murray, Shoon and Anthony Quainton. "Combatant Commanders, Ambassadorial Authority, and the Conduct of Diplomacy," in *Mission Creep: The Militarization of Foreign Policy*, edited by Gordon Adams and Shoon Murray, 166–191. Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2014. (20 pp)
7. Carter, Alexander. "Improving Joint Interagency Coordination: Changing Mindsets," *NDU Press*, 1 October 2015. (6 pp)
8. Video: "The Debrief Episode 10: The Interagency and the Indo-Pacific," National Security Affairs Department, U.S. Naval War College, 2 February 2024, (00:00 – 20:10)

Supplemental Materials

1. Gvosdev, Nikolas K., Jessica D. Blankshain and David A. Cooper. "Organizational Process Perspective," in *Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy: Translating Theory into Practice*, Ch. 10: 125-161. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. (34 pp)
2. Gvosdev, Nikolas K., Jessica D. Blankshain and David A. Cooper. "Bureaucratic Politics Perspective," in *Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy: Translating Theory into Practice*, Ch. 6: 162-191. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. (34 pp)
3. Gvosdev, Nicholas, Jessica Blankshain, and David Cooper. "Palace Politics Perspective," in *Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy: Translating Theory into Practice*, Ch. 7: 192-223. 2019. New York: Cambridge University Press. (30 pp)

4. Grier, Peter. "Misplaced Nukes," *Air and Space Forces Magazine*, 26 June 2017. (8 pp)
5. Tecott, Rachel. "Why America Can't Build Allied Armies: Afghanistan is Just the Latest Failure," *Foreign Affairs*, 26 August 2021. (4 pp)
6. Gates, Robert M. "Chapter 5: Beyond Iraq: A Complicated World," in *Duty: Memoirs of a Secretary at War*, 171-177. 2014. New York: Alfred Knopf. (6 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the FPA sessions in week 7, students are required to complete a DBF-6 primary post and response posts. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-8, students are required to successfully complete SA-3 addressing CLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-4

CONGRESS AND U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY (OVERSIGHT, AUTHORIZING, APPROPRIATING, AND DOD RELATIONS)

A. Session Overview

As the constitutional scholar Edwin Corwin once famously observed, the Constitution is an “invitation to struggle for the privilege of directing American foreign policy.” Although many scholars and casual observers argue that the executive branch dominates when it comes to national security policymaking, and arguably has grown more emboldened in this arena, the legislative branch does have the ability to significantly influence national security policy. Article I of the Constitution grants Congress certain “enumerated” powers regarding national security: to declare war, raise and support armies, provide and maintain a Navy, make rules for regulating the land and naval forces, and organize the militia, calling it into federal service when necessary.

This session examines the roles and responsibilities of Congress in national security and in providing oversight of executive branch departments and agencies, including the military establishment. As Kay King, former Vice President of the Washington Program at the Council on Foreign Relations noted in a 2010 report, “When Congress fails to perform, national security suffers, thanks to ill-considered policies, delayed or inadequate resources, and insufficient personnel. Without Congressional guidance, allies and adversaries alike devalue U.S. policies because they lack the support of the American people that is provided through their representatives in Congress.”

This session also considers two additional essential questions: how do policy makers decide what programs and how much to spend on defense, and what role(s) does Congress play in these decisions? Understanding Congress’s role in national security is critical for national security professionals, as legislative decisions and actions directly impact defense policy, military operations, and resource allocation. Congress provides critical checks and balances through its constitutional powers of oversight, authorization, and appropriation. The ability of Congress to approve budgets, confirm key national security appointments, and conduct hearings ensures that military and intelligence agencies remain accountable to the public and operate within legal and strategic guidelines.

Overall, the dynamics between Congress and the executive branch can shape national security policy decisions, as partisan divides, institutional prerogatives, and electoral considerations influence legislative support or opposition to presidential initiatives. For national security professionals, understanding the legislative process, the role of key committees—such as the Armed Services and Foreign Relations Committees—and the influence of individual members of Congress is vital for anticipating national security decisions or shifts and navigating the often-complex relationship between the legislative and executive branches.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives

- Analyze the structure of Congress and its role in passing laws, appropriating funds, and conducting oversight of the executive branch, as well as the processes that the legislative branch employs to influence national security policy.
- Analyze how Congress works with the executive branch, especially the Department of Defense, to establish effective national security policies, institutions, and processes.
- Comprehend the role of Congress in the annual defense budgetary process.
- Understand the policy decision making and lawmaking systems and processes that drive U.S. defense spending.
- Identify the oversight role of congressional committees and sub-committees, particularly those involved in the annual congressional defense budget process.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What powers does Congress have in creating, shaping, and influencing national security policy?
2. What limitations exist that prevent Congress from fully exercising its authority in the area of national security?
3. How and why has Congress delegated (or abdicated) its authority to the executive branch? How might Congress reclaim its Constitutional authority in the area of national security?
4. How do the Services, combatant commands, and other military professionals communicate with Congress? How does this impact national security, defense authorizations, and appropriations?

D. Student Preparation (65 pp; ~ 44 min video/podcast)

1. The Constitution of the United States, Article I. (4 pp)
2. Serafino, Nina M., and Eleni G. Ekmektsioglou. "Congress and National Security," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security*, edited Derek S. Reveron, Nikolas K. Gvosdev, and John A. Cloud, New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2018, Ch. 9: 151-182. (27 pp)
3. Video: "The Debrief Episode 4: Congress: Your Partner in National Security," National Security Affairs Department, U.S. Naval War College, 9 November 2023, (00:00 – 18:09)

4. Podcast: “How is Congress Involved in Foreign Policy (with Jordan Tama),” *The American Enterprise Institute: Understanding Congress Podcast*, Episode 39, 2 October 2023, (00:00 – 26:40)
5. Congressional Research Service. “Defense Primer: The National Defense Authorization Act Process,” and “Defense Primer: Defense Appropriations Process,” with additional commentary by Naval War College faculty, April 2020. (10 pp)
6. Brose, Christian. “Bureaucracy Does its Thing,” in *The Kill Chain: Defending America in the Future of High Tech Warfare*, 206–224. New York: Hachette Books, 2020. (20 pp)
7. Robertson, Noah. “The Pacific Problem,” *Defense News*, April 2024. (4 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Zielinski, Rosella Cappella, and Samuel Gerstle. “Paying the Defense Bill: Financing American and Chinese Geostrategic Competition,” *Texas National Security Review*, 6, no. 2, 2023, 57-78. (19 pp)
2. “Defense Resourcing for the Future. Final Report from the Commission on PPBE Reform.” *Commission on PPBE Reform*, March 2024, 1-11. (10 pp).
3. Sharp, Travis. “Chapter 2: Hardwired for Hardware: Congressional Adjustments to the Administration’s Defense Budget Requests, FY 2016 to FY 2023,” *Center for Strategic and Budgetary Analysis*, 2023, 11-33. (15 pp)
4. U.S Naval War College Faculty. “Congress and the Creation of USSOCOM,” faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, May 2013, 1-13. (11 pp)
5. Guenov, Tressa, and Tommy Ross. “At a Crossroads, Part I: How Congress Can Find Its Way Back to Effective Defense Oversight.” *War on the Rocks*, March 9, 2018. (10 pp)
6. Murphy, Chris. “National Security is Stronger When Congress is Involved. Here’s How We Get Back to the Table.” *War on the Rocks*, July 20, 2021. (5 pp)
7. Beavers, Elizabeth. “Congress Needs to Do More than Just Exercise Its War Powers.” *War on the Rocks*, 19 March 2024. (5 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-6, students are required to complete FA-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-8, students are required to successfully complete SA-3 addressing CLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-5

DOMESTIC INFLUENCES ON U.S. FOREIGN POLICY

A. Session Overview

While formal domestic state institutions can clearly influence national security decision making there are a host of other domestic factors that can have a direct or indirect influence, including the media, public opinion, lobbyists, interest groups, and think tanks. Former National Security Advisor, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and Secretary of State Colin Powell observed that while the media cannot create policy, “it does create the environment in which the policy is made.” The media can support or undermine the messages being sent out by governments and militaries, substantiate or challenge their claims, and enhance or tear down their credibility. Its influence extends to public, international, and elite opinion, which can either constrain or embolden U.S. policymakers. However, the American public is often less engaged with foreign policy and national security, giving presidents considerable latitude in decision making.

This session also explores public opinion as a significant force in shaping policy and how decision makers seek to influence it to advance their preferred policy options. In a democracy, the role of the public can become increasingly important in the area of national security and foreign policy during times of crisis or armed conflict. Beyond the media and public opinion, lobbyists, interest groups, and think tanks operate as key intermediaries between policymakers, the private sector, and academia. Each of these entities offer research, analysis, and advocacy that can guide or influence decision making. These organizations, some with deep ties to political and military leaders, play an increasingly significant role in shaping national security priorities, funding decisions, and even military strategies.

Understanding the influence of the various domestic actors on U.S. national security decision making is essential as these forces shape the broader policy environment in which decisions are made. Though they may not create policy, they play a pivotal role in shaping narratives, framing issues, and influencing public perception of national security matters. A policy’s success or failure can often hinge on how it is presented and perceived, both domestically and internationally. As these actors and factors continue to grow in influence, national security professionals must develop an awareness of their impact, understanding how policy debates are shaped outside formal government structures and how such influence can affect strategic decision making at the highest levels.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Critically assess the role of the media in influencing policy and legislative decisions in defense and national security areas.
 - Analyze the role of public opinion in national security policy formulation and what influences can affect it.

- Assess the potential influence of think tanks, lobbyists, interest groups, and other non-state actors on national security decision making.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does the media influence public opinion and vice versa?
2. How do both public opinion and the media influence decision makers?
3. Does the media constitute an interest group with an independent agenda?
4. Does public opinion constrain national security decision making? How responsive should national security leaders be to public opinion?
5. Why does the U.S. military care about its public image?
6. Why are special interest and lobby groups formed? How and why do they express their policy preferences, and to what extent do they influence the policy decision-making process?
7. What are think tanks, why do they exist, and what, if anything, makes them influential?
8. What impact might think tanks have on national security and foreign policy decisions?

D. Student Preparation (45 pp; ~ 32 min video)

1. Faulkner, Christopher. "Media, Public Opinion, and U.S. Foreign Policy." Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, College of Distance Education, Newport, RI, March 2023. (9 pp)
2. Podcast: "Foreign Policy Versus Public Opinion." *A Better Peace: The War Room Podcast*, U.S. Army War College, 19 January 2024, (00:00 – 32:21)
3. Gvosdev, Nikolas K. "Deploying Influence and Expertise: Think Tanks, Interest Groups and Lobbyists in the Theater Security Enterprise," Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, National Security Affairs Department, Newport, RI, 2012. Revised for the College of Distance Education by Professor Christopher Faulkner, Spring 2023. (28 pp)
4. Levinson, Chad. "Think Tanks and American Interventionism," *War on the Rocks*, 24 November 2021. (9 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Baum, Matthew, and Phillip Potter. "Media, Public Opinion, and Foreign Policy in the Age of Social Media." *The Journal of Politics*, 81 no. 2, (2019): 747-756. (Read only sections: "The World as it Was," 748-749; "What Has Changed?" 749-751; "Conclusion," 755). (4 pp)
2. Philbrick, Ian Prasad. "If Biden Wanted to Ease U.S.-China Tensions, Would Americans Let Him?" *The New York Times*, 27 June 2023. (2 pp)
3. Walcott, John. "Why the Press Failed on Iraq," *Foreign Affairs*, 29 March 2023. (10 pp)
4. Christopher M., and Kevin Marsh. "The Politics of Weapons Procurement: Why Some Programs Survive and Others Die." *Defense and Security Analysis* 27, 4 (2011), 359-373. (13 pp)
5. Huang, Reyko. "Armed Rebel Groups Lobby in DC, Just Like Governments. How Does that Influence U.S. Policy?" *The Washington Post*, 6 February 2020. (3 pp)
6. Video: "Interview with Professor Nickolas Gvosdev on Influencing Defense Policy: The Role of Think Tanks, Lobbyists, and Interest Groups in National Security," U.S. Naval War College, Spring 2023, (00:00 – 39:00).
7. Freeman, Ben. "The Ukraine Lobby Two Years Into War," *Responsible Statecraft*, 22 February 2024. (4 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-6, students are required to complete FA-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-8, students are required to successfully complete SA-3 addressing CLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-6

INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCES: STATES AND NON-STATE ACTORS

A. Session Overview

The international system is an increasingly complex environment. The dynamic nature of the international security environment means that both military and national security professionals are facing a continued and growing demand for knowledge and, with it, are increasingly in positions where they are tasked with unpacking the complexities of the system and the actors within it. While states are still considered the principal actors in the modern international system, and therefore influential on the foreign policy behavior of other states, other non-state actors yield significant influence in national security policy development and the decision making process. Non-state actors like violent extremist organizations (VEOs such as the Islamic State or Hamas) and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (e.g., Human Rights Watch, SpaceX), are just some of the important actors that can influence national security policy options and decisions.

The nature, goals, and actions of these actors and elements can have substantial implications for U.S. national security and defense-related policy. For mid-career national security practitioners, understanding the complexities of the international system is essential for effectively navigating global security challenges and national security responses. The interconnected nature of modern conflicts, economic dependencies and interactions, and diplomatic engagements means that decisions made by U.S. policymakers must account for a wide range of state and non-state actors, each with their own interests, motivations, and capabilities. Recognizing the influence of other states and non-state actors enables national security professionals to anticipate emerging threats, identify opportunities for cooperation, and craft strategies that align with broader U.S. strategic objectives. Moreover, a deep comprehension of how different actors interact within the international system allows national security professionals to operate more effectively within Joint, interagency, and multinational environments, ensuring that U.S. national security efforts are well-coordinated, adaptable, and informed by a nuanced understanding of global dynamics.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Explain the nature of the modern international system and the distinction between sovereign states and nations and why an appreciation of those distinctions is relevant to mid-career national security professionals.
 - Identify the range of non-state actors (multinational corporations (MNCs), violent extremist organizations (VEOs), transnational criminal organizations (TCOs), NGOs, and super empowered individuals) that can influence national security.
- Learning Outcomes

- CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision-making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
- Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Are states not still the primary actors in the modern international system? How has this changed over time, if at all?
2. How do different types of states (i.e., weak, strong, autocratic, democratic) impact U.S. national security policy decision making?
3. How do non-state actors, particularly VEOs, influence U.S. policy decisionmakers? How has past experience in addressing various VEOs influenced current national security policy debates?
4. In what ways do super-empowered individuals influence national security decisionmakers and the policymaking process?

D. Student Preparation (32 pp; 13 min video)

1. U.S. Naval War College Faculty. "Global Influences on Policy Decision Making: States and Non-State Actors" Faculty Paper, Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2020. Revised for the College of Distance Education, Summer 2024. (10 pp)
2. Video: "Inside Look at U.S. Navy Response to Houthi Red Sea Attacks." *CBS News: 60 Minutes*, 18 February 2018, (00:00 – 13:09)
3. Walt, Stephen. "The United States Has Less Leverage Over Israel Than You Think." *Foreign Policy*, 21 March 2024. (3 pp)
4. Clarke, Colin. "The Islamic State Never Went Away." *Foreign Policy*, 10 April 2024. (4 pp)
5. Satariano, Adam, Scott Reinhard, Cade Metz, Sheera Frenkel, and Malika Khurana. "Elon Musk's Unmatched Power in the Stars," *New York Times*, 28 July 2023. (10 pp)
6. Powers-Riggs, Aidan. "Taipei Fears Washington is Weakening Its Silicon Shield," *Foreign Policy*, 17 February 2023. (5 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Bajoghli, Narges and Vali Nasr. "How the War in Gaza Revived the Axis of Resistance." *Foreign Affairs*, 17 January 2024. (9 pp)
2. O'Donnell, Lynne. "Al Qaeda is Back – and Thriving – In Afghanistan." *Foreign Policy*, 22 March 2024. (4 pp)

3. Decker, Audrey. “The Pentagon is Increasingly Relying on Billionaires’ Rockets. And It’s Ok with That,” *Defense One*, 20 April 2023. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-6, students are required to complete FA-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-8, students are required to successfully complete SA-3 addressing CLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-7

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: INSTITUTIONS AND ALLIANCES

A. Session Overview

As defined by Harvard Law School, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) are entities “created by treaty, involving two or more nations, to work in good faith, on issues of common interest. In the absence of a treaty an IGO does not exist in the legal sense.” IGOs have become increasingly visible – and arguably more important – actors in international politics, particularly in the post-WWII era. The nature, goals, and actions of these entities can have substantial implications for U.S. national security and defense-related policy.

This session focuses specifically on the role and influence of IGOs and alliances on U.S. foreign policy decision making, considering the way such institutions can shape global norms, facilitate multilateral agreements, serve as platforms for information exchange and policy coordination, and/or constrain decision-makers. Through participation in various IGOs, the United States often aims to set and influence international norms/trends, gain insights and perspectives from allies and adversaries, adjust policies to align with global standards, and leverage resources and expertise that these organizations can provide. Engagement in IGOs can also influence the United States in other ways, increasing the ability of the United States to exercise soft power and diplomacy, build alliances, and advocate for its vital national interests on the global stage. Pressure from IGOs and their accountability mechanisms can also influence U.S. foreign and national security policy decision making by encouraging compliance with international norms and agreements. Overall, IGOs can serve as crucial arenas that shape the direction of U.S. national security policy through dialogue, competition, cooperation, and collective action with other member states.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the role and significance of IGOs like the United Nations (U.N.) and alliances like NATO in the international system.
 - Identify key IGOs relevant to U.S. national security and foreign policy and their respective areas of influence.
 - Consider how participation in IGOs shapes U.S. national security and foreign policy priorities, strategies, and decision-making processes.
 - Evaluate the benefits and challenges of multilateralism in the context of U.S. national security and foreign policy, considering IGO engagement.
 - Reflect on the role of IGOs in shaping global governance and the implications for U.S. leadership and influence.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision-making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How do various international institutions (i.e., the U.N.) influence national security policy decision-makers, if at all?
2. How might distinct IGOs shape and influence U.S. national security policy priorities and strategies?
3. What are the benefits and challenges of engaging with IGOs in advancing U.S. national security policy objectives? What are the consequences if/when the United States does not work through IGOs?
4. Consider U.S. alliances, both formal and informal. How do these security relationships influence national security decision making and policy? How might an analyst know?

D. Student Preparation (59 pp; ~ 13 min video)

1. U.S. Naval War College Faculty. "Global Influences on Policy Decision-Making: Intergovernmental Organizations," June 2020. Revised for the College of Distance Education, Summer 2024. (10 pp)
2. Raustiala, Kal and Viva Iemanja Jeromnim. "Why the UN Still Matters," *Foreign Affairs*, 7 June 2023. (9 pp)
3. Cohen, Jared and Ian Bremmer. "The Global Credibility Gap," *Foreign Affairs*, 6 December 2023. (17 pp)
4. Brands, Hal and Peter D. Fever. "What are America's Alliances Good For?" *Parameters*, 47, no. 2, 2017, 15-30. (15 pp)
5. Radin, Andrew. "Reconsidering U.S. Decision-making Within NATO After the Fall of Kabul," *War on the Rocks*, 25 October 2021. (8 pp)
6. Video: "National Security Leaders Worry About U.S. Failure to Ratify Law of Sea Treaty," *CBS News: 60 Minutes*, 24 March 2024, (00:00 – 13:02)

Supplemental Materials

1. "The United Nations System: Frequently Asked Questions," *Congressional Research Service*, 22 September 2023. (1-3; 8-10; 15-18). (9 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-8, students are required to successfully complete SA-3 addressing CLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-8

BEYOND BORDERS: INFLUENCES ON U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY

A. Session Overview

Success in national security policy often hinges not just on capabilities or intent, but on how actions are perceived by others. Understanding how foreign actors, whether heads of state or local actors, perceive legitimacy, authority, and action in specific geopolitical contexts is important if not imperative. This session introduces concepts such as operational awareness and strategic empathy which can be useful for anticipating how foreign actors may interpret and respond to U.S. foreign policy.

Operational awareness refers to the ability to identify and assess context in which one operates, including factors like regional norms, historical experience, and leadership structures that can shape political behavior within a given environment. It enables practitioners to understand the conditions under which decisions are made, both by allies and adversaries, and to avoid misinterpretation or misalignment in policy implementation. Strategic empathy, in turn, is the disciplined application of perspective-taking to forecast and anticipate actions/reactions, assess risk, and inform the development of effective policy and operational outcomes.

This session examines the challenges such awareness contributed to suboptimal outcomes in post-2003 Iraq, where insufficient attention to local dynamics ultimately hindered U.S. foreign policy efforts and derailed expectations. Through this case, students will refine their ability to apply analytical frameworks to real-world challenges in which perceptions, not just intentions, shape outcomes. Strengthening these competencies enables national security professionals to contribute more effectively to strategy development, operational planning, and mission success in complex environments.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand ways in which a national security professional needs to consider local and regional factors in planning and executing policies, particularly the impact on the success or failure of operations.
 - Consider how key local and regional dynamics such as historical experience, political structures, and prevailing norms can influence how foreign actors perceive legitimacy and authority.
 - Analyze how mismatches between U.S. foreign policy intentions and local perceptions can produce resistance, instability, or strategic challenges.
 - Analyze and explain the influential factors in a complex national security case.
- Learning Outcomes

- CLO-1: Understand the professional and ethical responsibilities and challenges associated with decision-making as a national security professional.
- CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision-making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
- Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How do local and regional dynamics such as historical grievances or local norms shape how foreign actors perceive legitimacy and respond to U.S. foreign policy?
2. Has the U.S. effectively assessed and adapted to the political and societal environments in countries where it has operated (e.g., Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq)? How might improved regional awareness inform future national security planning and execution?
3. How can misreading elements of the local decision making environment contribute to foreign policy challenges or operational friction?
4. Why did the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) persist in its showdown with Grand Ayatollah Sistani? What lessons can be learned from this experience in Iraq that could translate to other theaters?

D. Student Preparation (48 pp)

1. U.S. Naval War College Faculty. "The Importance of Assessing the Operational Environment for U.S. Foreign Policymaking," Naval War College faculty paper, Newport, RI, Aug 2021. Revised for the College of Distance Education, Summer 2024. (20 pp)
2. Gvosdev, Nikolas, K. "The Ayatollah Versus the Ambassador," Naval War College faculty paper, Newport, RI, 2010. (15 pp)
3. Graff, Garrett. "Orders of Disorder: Who Disbanded Iraq's Army and De-Baathified Its Bureaucracy?" *Foreign Affairs*, 5 May 2023. (13 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of FPA-8, students are required to successfully complete SA-3 addressing CLO-3. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE

A. Session Overview

The Strategy Development Exercise (SDX) is TSDM's capstone event that synthesizes all TSDM concepts and the "key assessment" for PLO-2. As the course's synthesizing event, the SDX provides students with an opportunity to exercise concepts learned throughout TSDM while also demonstrating mastery of the CLOs and PLO-2. In the LPA sessions students examined the significance of critical thinking, the various ways in which decisions are made, and the challenges associated with effective decision making—especially within the profession of arms. The IS sessions provided students with an overview of the ever-changing international security environment that the United States must consider while trying to advance U.S. interests. The FPA sessions allowed students an opportunity to analyze the myriad actors, factors, and processes that must be considered in the development of national security policy in each of the organizational, domestic, and international environments. Here in the SDX sessions, students are given the opportunity to synthesize the concepts covered throughout TSDM and demonstrate their application in a written deliverable focused on the USPACOM theater.

As illustrated in the IS and FPA sessions, the complexity and challenges facing today's military leaders, even at the O-4 and O-5 levels, can have national and international security implications. As such, today's military leaders must take a wider view beyond just their "tactical level" organization and consider factors such as identifying vital U.S. interests in various theaters of operation, the differing challenges, roles and missions of the various combatant commands, stakeholder expectations (foreign and domestic), alignment with theater-, regional-, and strategic-level missions, how to effectively advance U.S. interests from multiple courses of action, identifying the requisite capabilities needed to achieve success, and a host of other issues. The SDX sessions incorporate the concepts and themes examined in TSDM and synthesize them into the real-world theater security decision making environment. This synthesis provides students with an invaluable opportunity to think more deeply about the real-world challenges facing today's national security professionals at the theater level. The goal is to enable students to serve more effectively in command and staff assignments while considering "the larger picture" as it relates to theater-level national security.

Focus: As the capstone event for TSDM, students must demonstrate their understanding of the concepts covered throughout the course as well as the ability to apply these concepts through a practical exercise focusing on USPACOM and the Indo-Pacific region over the next eight years. The SDX encourages whole of government solutions to the challenges and opportunities facing USPACOM over the next eight years, but primary emphasis should be placed on DoD concepts and capabilities—the "M" in diplomacy, informational, military, and economic instruments of national power (DIME).

Approach: Over the next three weeks, the SDX sessions will guide students through the critical thinking and planning processes necessary for the development of a theater strategy. Students are not writing a complete regional or theater strategy. Instead, students are providing

an executive level product (not to exceed 1,500 words) that can facilitate development of DoD-level products that provide a strategic overview of the USPACOM theater. Concepts and capabilities should represent the important Doctrine, Organizational, Training, Material, Leadership and Education, Personnel, or Facilities (DOTMLPF-P) requirements across the DIME that are necessary to advance the strategy, accomplish strategic objectives, and achieve the strategic vision. Though students are tasked with providing a USPACOM theater strategic outline, the realities of the need for interagency cooperation and whole of government approaches should be considered. The subsequent sessions will clearly outline the requirements of the SDX and the expected deliverables.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the SDX scenario, processes, products, and student deliverables.
 - Understand the process and format for coordinating each of the SDX deliverables, the methodology for providing and receiving feedback to/from fellow students, and the timing for providing feedback via Discussion Board Forums.
- SDX Objectives
 - Identify and prioritize the four (4) most significant U.S. national interests in the USPACOM theater, distinguishing between vital, important, and peripheral interests in the context of long-term strategic competition.
 - Using existing strategic guidance (NSS, NDS, NMS) on national priorities and preferences, conduct a theater strategic assessment of the USPACOM theater over the next eight (8) years
 - Develop a coherent theater strategic outline that links clearly defined strategic *ends* to operational and institutional *ways*, grounded in the realities of the projected security environment.
 - Construct a list of four (4) prioritized capabilities (*means*) necessary to carry out the theater strategic proposal. Determine and defend the relative priority of the listed capabilities and how these *means* are linked to the *ways* to achieve the desired objectives (*ends*).
 - Apply the *ends–ways–means* construct to evaluate strategic sufficiency, internal logic, feasibility, and *risk* across time, domains, and operational theaters.
 - Assess risk arising from misalignment or shortfalls in *means*, and recommend mitigations or adaptations to ensure strategic success in a resource-constrained environment.
 - Communicate strategic reasoning clearly and concisely, demonstrating the ability to justify strategic choices through evidence, doctrinal grounding, and sound logic.

- Learning Outcomes

- CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
- CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision-making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
- CLO-4: Examine and apply the processes used to develop military strategy to achieve desired end-states and the relationship between ends, ways, and means to ensure the advancement of U.S. interests.
- Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance

The SDX deliverables include the following components organized into an executive-level essay/product not to exceed 1,500 words:

1) A clearly defined, rank-ordered list of the four (4) most significant U.S. interests in the USPACOM theater.

- Identify and prioritize the four (4) most significant U.S. national interests in the USPACOM theater, distinguishing between vital, important, and peripheral interests in the context of long-term strategic competition.
- Analyze current national strategic priorities and present a list of U.S. national security interests in the theater.
- Once identified, the hierarchy of U.S. national interests should form the foundation of the “*Golden Thread*” or cohesive theme for the strategic proposal.
 - What does the United States hope to accomplish?
 - Why does the United States need to accomplish these goals?
 - All U.S. strategies must serve and be traceable to national interests, and the level of investment is directly tied to the level of importance of those interests.

2) A USPACOM theater strategic estimate over the next eight (8) years.

- Using existing strategic guidance (NSS, NDS, NMS) on national priorities and preferences, conduct a theater strategic assessment of the USPACOM theater over the next eight (8) years.

- Identify and evaluate the four (four) most significant major trends over the near (0 to 2 year) and medium (3-8 year) term that may challenge the ability to advance and defend U.S. interests. A SWOT analysis may be helpful in achieving this task.
 - Consider both the likelihood and the severity of various potentially negative events/trends in the region.
 - Clearly identify how each of these trends will evolve over the near term (0-2 years) and medium term (3-8 years). (e.g., more significant in the near term or continuing to evolve in severity from the near term to the medium term)
 - Conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis may be useful here.

3) A USPACOM theater strategic outline.

- Having determined the most significant major trends that would need to be addressed to ensure U.S. interests in the region are secure, develop a theater strategic outline (challenges/opportunities, *ends*, *ways*) of a strategic approach from the USPACOM perspective.
 - What is the vision or desired strategic end-states for the theater in both the near and medium time period?
 - Consider threats and opportunities in terms of likelihood and severity as well as urgency and order of occurrence.
 - Describe and discuss concepts (*ways*) required to achieve the strategic objectives.
 - Develop a coherent strategic outline that links clearly defined strategic *ends* to operational and institutional *ways*, grounded in the realities of the projected security environment outlined in the theater strategic estimate.
 - Explain the challenges and risks in the proposed strategy and discuss risk mitigation initiatives.
 - Consider alignment with national strategic direction from the NSS, NDS, NMS.

4) A prioritized list of required capabilities.

- A list of four (4) prioritized capabilities (*means*) necessary to carry out the strategic proposal. Determine and defend the relative priority of the listed capabilities and how these *means* are linked to the *ways* to achieve the desired objectives (*ends*).
- Conceptualize these as capabilities across the DOTMLPF-P. They can be hardware, doctrine, organization, skills, personnel, etc. Discuss how these *means* would work in the field, and how they would help to achieve the desired strategic outcomes.

D. Student Preparation (21 pp, ~20 min video)

1. National Security Affairs Faculty. “Leadership in the Profession of Arms and Theater Security Decision Making Online Syllabus,” Version 3.0.4, Aug 2026, (108-130). (22 pp)
2. Video: Pratt, Michael W. “Strategy Development Exercise Overview,” July 2025. (~20 mins)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the SDX sessions in week 10, students will submit a DBF-7 primary post for the first two SDX deliverables (U.S. interests and theater strategic assessment). The Professor will assign students to a Discussion Board Forum group comprised of a small number of students from within the cohort. Following their primary DBF post, students will be required to provide feedback via DBF response post to at least one fellow students from their group. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of SDX-5, students are required to successfully complete SA-4 addressing CLOs 2-4 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-2

NATIONAL INTERESTS: THE FOUNDATION OF STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A. Session Overview

USPACOM is the largest and most dynamic geographically oriented combatant command spanning a region that is home to over half the world's population, 38 states, six of the world's 20 largest economies, and a complex mix of emerging powers, historical rivalries, and transnational threats. As the strategic focus of U.S. national security increasingly shifts toward the Indo-Pacific, understanding how to align theater security strategy with enduring U.S. national interests has never been more critical.

This session offers students an opportunity to examine the intersection of U.S. strategic objectives and theater-level planning within USPACOM. Students will explore how national interests—such as maintaining a free and open Indo-Pacific, deterring aggression, ensuring freedom of navigation, and promoting regional stability—inform the development and execution of theater strategy. Given the combination of strategic theory, policy analysis, case studies, and operational design students have studied throughout TSDM, this portion of the SDX will enable them to assess how the command can translate strategic guidance into campaign plans that deter adversaries, reassure allies and partners, and shape the security environment. The goal of the session is to equip students with the ability to critically assess and contribute to the formulation of theater strategies that are both responsive to dynamic security challenges and grounded in long-term U.S. strategic objectives.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Identify and prioritize U.S. national interests as articulated in strategic documents (e.g., NSS, NDS) and explain their relevance to the Indo-Pacific region.
 - Understand the geopolitical and security dynamics unique to USPACOM
 - Describe the role of theater strategy in linking national-level policy and guidance to operational and tactical execution within a geographic combatant command.
 - Evaluate how USPACOM aligns theater campaigns and posture to support U.S. national interests and deter adversary aggression.
 - Examine the tools and mechanisms available to a combatant commander, such as security cooperation, force posture, access agreements, and integrated deterrence.
 - Understand how theater strategy is developed and adapted in response to dynamic security conditions.

- Critically reflect on the challenges of coalition and partner coordination in the region, and the role of alliances and partnerships in advancing U.S. interests.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-4: Examine and apply the processes used to develop military strategy to achieve desired end-states and the relationship between ends, ways, and means to ensure the advancement of U.S. interests.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are vital U.S. national interests, and who defines them?
2. What are the primary U.S. national interests in the Indo-Pacific region, and how have they evolved in recent strategic guidance?
3. How do national interests differ from policy goals, values, or preferences?
4. How do the National Security Strategy (NSS) and National Defense Strategy (NDS) inform USPACOM's theater strategy?
5. Is a theater strategy truly strategic if it is not explicitly grounded in national interests? Why?
6. In what ways does the concept of a free and open Indo-Pacific align with or diverge from traditional U.S. strategic interests?

D. Student Preparation (40 pp)

1. The White House. National Security Strategy of the United States of America. Washington, DC: *White House*, November 2025. (29 pp)
2. Reveron, Derek S. and Nikolas K. Gvosdev. "National Interests and Grand Strategy," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security*, edited by Derek S. Reveron, Nikolas K. Gvosdev, and John A. Cloud. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018, pp. 35-42. (7 pp)
3. National War College, A National Security Strategy Primer, 2018, pp. 15-35. (17 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Chin, John J., Kiron Skinner, and Clay Yoo. "Understanding National Security Strategies Through Time." *Texas National Security Review* 6, no. 4 (2023). (11 pp)
2. Kagan, Robert. "A Free World If You Can Keep It: Ukraine and American Interests." *Foreign Affairs*, January/February 2023. (7 pp)
3. Video: Mariano, Stephen. "What is a National Security Strategy and Why Have One?" *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 03 February 2017. (~13 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the SDX sessions in week 10, students will submit a DBF-7 primary post for the first two SDX deliverables (U.S. interests and theater strategic assessment). The Professor will assign students to a Discussion Board Forum group comprised of a small number of students from within the cohort. Following their primary DBF post, students will be required to provide feedback via DBF response post to at least one fellow students from their group. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of SDX-5, students are required to successfully complete SA-4 addressing CLOs 2-4 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-3

STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT: LINKING STRATEGY TO REALITY

A. Session Overview

Retired Admiral William McRaven, former commander of U.S. Special Operations Command and the leader credited with the successful operation that killed Usama bin Laden famously said, “You need to know where you are before you can determine where you want to go.” This is a powerful reminder that self-awareness is crucial for setting goals and achieving success. Understanding the current situation, including skills, resources, limitations, threats, opportunities, etc., is essential before one can effectively develop a strategy that achieves one’s desired aspirations. Before any national security professional can determine where they want to go, they must first determine where they are. This session provides students with the essential concepts, critical thinking tools, and strategic frameworks necessary to evaluate complex and dynamic security challenges in today’s most consequential region: the Indo-Pacific. As the United States’ primary theater for strategic competition in the 21st century, the Indo-Pacific presents a unique blend of geopolitical opportunity and military risk. National security professionals within USPACOM must continually assess and adapt to a rapidly evolving landscape shaped by great power rivalry, technological disruption, alliance dynamics, and gray-zone coercion—the very same goal of the SDX.

This session will provide students with insights necessary to assess the challenges facing USPACOM in the Indo-Pacific region and how well it is postured to assist in advancing U.S. interests. This session also introduces a structured assessment methodology in the form of assessing an organization’s strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats, frequently referred to as SWOT.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Conduct a comprehensive security environment assessment tailored to the Indo-Pacific, apply joint strategic concepts, and recommend theater-level strategies that advance U.S. national objectives while mitigating operational and strategic risk.
 - Analyze the fundamentals of assessment, its key elements, and critical factors.
 - Understand what is and is not important to assess as part of an organizational assessment.
 - Describe the advantages of assessing a situation from the perspective of the four SWOT categories: (internal) strengths and weaknesses, (external) opportunities and threats.
 - Discuss the delineation of internal and external assessment factors.
 - Comprehend the linkage between assessment integrity and decision quality.

- Learning Outcomes

- CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
- CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
- CLO-4: Examine and apply the processes used to develop military strategy to achieve desired end-states and the relationship between ends, ways, and means to ensure the advancement of U.S. interests.
- Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

Foundational Questions:

1. What is the geographic, demographic, economic, and political composition of the Indo-Pacific region?
2. What are the enduring U.S. national interests in this region, and how are they prioritized (vital, important, peripheral)?
3. What is the strategic vision or end-state the United States seeks to achieve in the Indo-Pacific?

Threat and Risk Assessment:

1. Who are the primary state and non-state actors challenging regional stability?
2. What are the emerging threats across military, informational, economic, cyber, and gray-zone domains?
3. What flashpoints (e.g., Taiwan Strait, South China Sea, Korean Peninsula) have the greatest risk of escalation?

Alliances and Partnerships:

1. Who are the key allies and partners, and how do their interests align or diverge from U.S. objectives?
2. What is the state of regional multilateral institutions and security architectures (e.g., AUKUS, Quad, ASEAN)?
3. How do strategic partnerships enhance or limit U.S. deterrence and influence?

Military Posture and Capability Assessment:

1. What is the current U.S. and allied force posture across the Indo-Pacific?
2. What security-related capabilities (*means*) are necessary to deter aggression and support regional stability?
3. How is the U.S. implementing concepts like Integrated Deterrence, building enduring advantages, campaigning, and Distributed Maritime Operations?

Strategic Trends and Outlook:

1. What are the key political, technological, economic, and military trends shaping the Indo-Pacific over the next 2–8 years?
2. How will China's continuing rise, North Korea's military trajectory, and climate-induced instability affect regional dynamics?
3. What are the implications of strategic competition for U.S. influence, readiness, and strategic messaging?

Strategic Risk and Mitigation:

1. What are the key risks to U.S. strategy (e.g., overextension, alliance friction, escalation)?
2. How can U.S. policy balance deterrence with diplomacy, reassurance with readiness?
3. What are the indicators of strategic success or failure in this theater?

D. Student Preparation (64 pp; ~7 min video)

1. Pratt, Michael W. "Assessment," Newport, R.I.: Naval War College faculty paper, Newport, R.I. July 2024. Adapted from the National Security Affairs Faculty paper, May 2014. (9 pp)
2. National Security Affairs Faculty. "SWOT and Structured Assessment," Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, April 2010. Revised for the College of Distance Education by Professor Michael Pratt, July 2024. (13 pp)
3. Video: "How to Perform a SWOT Analysis," On Strategy. October 19, 2016, (0:00-7:02). (~7 min)
4. Paparo, Samuel J., Admiral, USN, Commander USINDOPACOM. "U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Posture Statement," April 2025. (25 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the SDX sessions in week 10, students will submit a DBF-7 primary post for the first two SDX deliverables (U.S. interests and theater strategic assessment). The Professor will assign students to a Discussion Board Forum group comprised of a small

number of students from within the cohort. Following their primary DBF post, students will be required to provide feedback via DBF response post to at least one fellow students from their group. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of SDX-5, students are required to successfully complete SA-4 addressing CLOs 2-4 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-4

TRANSLATING OBJECTIVES INTO ACTION: LINKING ENDS TO WAYS

A. Session Overview

The Indo-Pacific region represents one of the most strategically significant—and complex—theaters in contemporary U.S. foreign policy. With a dynamic blend of geopolitical rivalry, economic interdependence, contested domains, and diverse regional actors, the formulation of strategy in this area demands a precise and thoughtful linkage between political objectives (*ends*) and the military or interagency methods (*ways*) devised to achieve them.

This session allows students to build upon what they examined in the IS sessions by further exploring how strategic *ends*—such as deterrence, regional stability, and freedom of navigation—are translated into *ways*, such as the application of military presence, Joint Force posture, security partnerships, and forward deterrence concepts, to name a few. As part of the SDX, students will critically examine how strategy is shaped by regional dynamics, alliance structures, and the challenge of managing escalation in a competitive security environment.

Effective strategy in the Indo-Pacific is not just about resources or presence—it's about *purpose*. This session challenges students to think deeply about whether U.S. strategic *ways* truly support the stated *ends*. Students should evaluate real-world examples, consider both the clarity of U.S. objectives and the credibility of the paths that are being taken to achieve them. Previous IS sessions focused on issues such as developments in the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, advancement of nuclear weapons and missile technology by the DPRK, or the efficacy of integrated deterrence. These sessions provided students with the necessary background and skills to assess the adequacy and coherence of current U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific region.

Broadly conceived, strategy is an instrument of policy in both war and peace. In general, when considering national security, strategy describes how the national instruments of power, including military *means*, are applied to achieve national interests (*ends*). As such, strategy constitutes a continual dialogue between policy on the one hand and such factors as geography, technology, and resources on the other. Using national-level strategic documents (NSS, NDS, NMS, and U.S. maritime strategy) as guides, combatant commanders develop theater strategies (as discussed in IS), which are defined in joint doctrine as “concepts and courses of action directed toward securing the objectives of national and multinational policies and strategies through the synchronized and integrated employment of military forces and other instruments of national power.” To start this process, the combatant command should have a firm understanding of U.S. interests in the region and then develop *ways* to advance and defend those interests.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives

- Develop a coherent strategic framework that links clearly defined strategic *ends* to operational and institutional *ways*, grounded in the realities of the projected security environment.
- Understand the connection between desired objectives/outcomes (*ends*) and the strategic concepts, courses of action, or methods (*ways*) employed to achieve the desired objectives.
- Assess the strategic *ends* guiding U.S. military engagement in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Evaluate the *ways* the Joint Force and interagency community employ to pursue those *ends*.
- Analyze the coherence between political aims and military strategy within a competitive regional environment.
- Identify risks and friction points that arise from misalignment or overreach in linking *ends* to *ways*.
- Propose alternative strategic approaches that strengthen regional deterrence and align with U.S. national interests.
- Why must risk be taken into account in decision making?
- Understand risk identification, calculation, acceptance, and mitigation on a decision.
- Comprehend the *ways* and *means* of establishing, measuring, and comparing sets of alternatives to arrive at the best course of action to pursue to achieve desired objectives.
- Understand rational decision making and explain and apply a rational decision making process.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-4: Examine and apply the processes used to develop military strategy to achieve desired end-states and the relationship between ends, ways, and means to ensure the advancement of U.S. interests.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Do the selected strategic concepts, courses of action, or methods (ways) clearly and logically support the strategic objectives/outcomes (*ends*)?
2. Is there a direct cause-and-effect relationship between the *ways* chosen and the outcomes (*ends*) desired?
3. Are the *ways* appropriate to the level of war (strategic, operational, tactical)?
4. Do the *ways* reflect a clear understanding of the problems or challenges the strategy seeks to address?
5. Are the *ways* consistent with national or theater-level strategic guidance (e.g., NSS, NDS, theater campaign plans)?
6. Do the *ways* take into account the strategic environment, including political, military, and cultural factors?
7. Have alternative *ways* been considered, and why were these *ways* selected over others?
8. Can the *ways* be executed with available or attainable *means*?
9. Are the *ways* feasible given known constraints (e.g., rules of engagement, political will, international support)?
10. Do the *ways* effectively account for potential adversary responses or counter-strategies?
11. What risks arise from the chosen *ways*, and how can they be mitigated?
12. Are there any gaps between the *ends* and the *ways* that could jeopardize the strategy?
13. What are the options for addressing identified risks, and how does one decide between these options?

D. Student Preparation (50 pp)

1. Department of Defense. National Defense Strategy of the United States of America. 23 January 2026, pp. iii-23. (24 pp)
2. Pratt, Michael W. "Deciding Strategy," Newport, R.I.: Naval War College faculty paper, July 2024. Adapted from the National Security Affairs Faculty paper, May 2011. (14 pp)
3. Reveron, Derek S, James L. Cook, and Ross M. Coffey, "Competing Regionally: Developing Theater Strategy," Joint Forces Quarterly, First quarter 2022. (12 pp)

Supplemental Information

1. Video: “What is Strategy? It’s a Lot Simpler Than You Think,” *Harvard Business Review*, February 23, 2022, (0:00-9:31). (~9 min)
2. Pratt, Michael W. “Implementation: The Art of Execution,” Newport, R.I.: Naval War College faculty paper, July 2024. Adapted from the National Security Affairs faculty paper, April 2011. (13 pp)
3. Pratt, Michael W. “Domains of Implementation.” Newport, R.I.: Naval War College faculty paper, July 2024. Adapted from the National Security Affairs faculty paper, May 2010. (10 pp)
4. Pratt, Michael W. “Assuring Organizational Excellence.” Newport, R.I.: Naval War College faculty paper, July 2024. Adapted from the National Security Affairs faculty paper, May 2012. (13 pp)
5. Pratt, Michael W. “Counting What Counts.” Newport, R.I.: Naval War College faculty paper, July 2024. (10 pp)
6. Simons, R. “Control in an Age of Empowerment.” *Harvard Business Review*. 1995; 73 (2): 80-88. (6 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the SDX sessions in week 11, students will submit a DBF-8 primary post for the first two SDX deliverables (U.S. interests and theater strategic assessment). The Professor will assign students to a Discussion Board Forum group comprised of a small number of students from within the cohort. Following their primary DBF post, students will be required to provide feedback via DBF response post to at least one fellow students from their group. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of SDX-5, students are required to successfully complete SA-4 addressing CLOs 2-4 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-5

OPERATIONALIZING STRATEGY: LINKING WAYS TO MEANS

A. Session Overview

This session allows students to explore the critical role of linking operational *ways* with the appropriate *means* to achieve clearly defined strategic *ends* in the context of joint and theater-level operations. Bridging the gap between conceptual strategy and practical implementation enables students to understand and apply the logic of strategic design, resource allocation, and campaign planning within the Indo-Pacific region.

As part of the SDX, students should examine how strategic objectives (*ends*) inform the development of operational approaches (*ways*) and how the integration and application of joint capabilities (*means*) are essential to successful execution. Emphasis is placed on aligning available and projected resources—including personnel, platforms, logistics, enablers, and interagency or allied contributions—with the chosen courses of action.

Through case studies and collaborative planning exercises, students have assessed historical and contemporary operations to identify the factors that drive or constrain the linkage between *ways* and *means*. Special focus will be given to identifying **risk** resulting from misalignment, shortfalls, or overreach, and to developing **adaptive strategies** under conditions of uncertainty and resource limitations.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Construct a rank-ordered list of capabilities—Joint, interagency, and multinational—that represent the necessary *means* to implement the proposed strategy effectively.
 - Analyze strategic *ends* and their implications for operational planning.
 - Develop coherent operational *ways* that directly support strategic objectives.
 - Assess and apply joint, interagency, and multinational *means* in support of selected *ways*.
 - Identify risks and propose mitigation strategies when *ends*, *ways*, and *means* are misaligned.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.

- CLO-4: Examine and apply the processes used to develop military strategy to achieve desired end-states and the relationship between ends, ways, and means to ensure the advancement of U.S. interests.
- Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Will the selected operational *means* and *ways* logically and effectively support and achieve the strategic objectives?
2. Are the available *means* sufficient, suitable, and sustainable for the selected *ways*?
3. What joint, interagency, or multinational capabilities can be employed to support the operational *ways*?
4. Does the selected strategy sufficiently leverage all instruments of national power (DIME) in the operational approach?
5. If *means* are limited, how would one prioritize operational efforts? What tradeoffs must be made?
6. How can one reframe or adapt operational *ways* to align with constrained *means*?

D. Student Preparation (12 pp)

1. Joint Chiefs of Staff. National Military Strategy of the United States of America. Washington, DC: *Joint Chiefs of Staff*, 08 May 2023. (6 pp)
2. Groves, Bryan. "Strategic Discipline and Developing the 2022 National Military Strategy." *The National Interest*, 10 March 2023. (6 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Berger, David H., Michael M. Gilday, and Karl L. Schultz. "Advantage at Sea, Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power," *Department of the Navy*, December 2020. (20 pp)
2. Video: Chief of Naval Operations. "Chief of Naval Operations Releases Navigation Plan for America's Warfighting Navy." YouTube video, 18 September 2024. (~22 min)
3. Chief of Naval Operations. "U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions - One Pager," 06 February 2026. (1 pp)
4. Chief of Naval Operations. "The Hedge Strategy - Placemat," 06 February 2026. (1 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Discussion Board Forum: During the SDX sessions in week 11, students will submit a DBF-8 primary post for the first two SDX deliverables (U.S. interests and theater strategic assessment). The Professor will assign students to a Discussion Board Forum group comprised of a small number of students from within the cohort. Following their primary DBF post, students will be required to provide feedback via DBF response post to at least one fellow students from their group. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of SDX-5, students are required to successfully complete SA-4 addressing CLOs 2-4 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-6

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE (SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT 4)

A. Session Overview

The Indo-Pacific region remains the strategic epicenter of 21st-century geopolitical competition, where the intersection of U.S. national interests, regional dynamics, and great power rivalry will shape the global order for years to come. As future national security leaders and strategic planners, you must be prepared to assess complex environments, align national objectives with achievable strategies, and articulate the capabilities required for joint force success.

In this session, you will develop a strategic essay/product that challenges you to think critically and creatively about U.S. engagement in the Indo-Pacific region over the next 8 years. You will begin by identifying the core U.S. national interests at stake in the region and then conduct a strategic assessment of the anticipated security environment, accounting for trends in state behavior, regional alliances, military modernization, and non-traditional threats, to name a few.

Building from this foundation, you will develop a strategy outline that aligns clearly defined strategic *ends* with the appropriate *ways* and *means*, ensuring internal coherence and feasibility. Finally, you will provide a prioritized list of required capabilities that USPACOM must field or enhance to execute the proposed strategy outline effectively.

This exercise is not only about strategic formulation—it's about strategic clarity, logic, and rigor. The ability to link interests to strategy, and strategy to capabilities, lies at the heart of successful theater security decision-making. Your task is to make that linkage compelling, coherent, and grounded in realistic analysis.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Identify and prioritize U.S. national interests in the Indo-Pacific region, distinguishing between vital, important, and peripheral interests in the context of long-term strategic competition.
 - Conduct a strategic assessment of the Indo-Pacific region over the next eight (8) years, identifying key security, political, economic, and technological trends that may impact USPACOM's ability to advance interests in the region.
 - Develop a coherent strategic framework that links clearly defined strategic *ends* to operational and institutional *ways*, grounded in the realities of the projected security environment.

- Construct a rank-ordered list of capabilities—joint, interagency, and multinational—that represent the necessary *means* to implement the proposed strategy effectively.
 - Apply the *ends–ways–means* construct to evaluate strategic sufficiency, internal logic, feasibility, and *risk* across time, domains, and operational theaters.
 - Assess risk arising from misalignment or shortfalls in *means* and recommend mitigations or adaptations to ensure strategic success in a resource-constrained environment.
 - Communicate strategic reasoning clearly and concisely, demonstrating the ability to justify strategic choices through evidence, doctrinal grounding, and sound logic.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-3: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision-making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-4: Examine and apply the processes used to develop military strategy to achieve desired end-states and the relationship between ends, ways, and means to ensure the advancement of U.S. interests.
 - Supports NWC PLO-2: Create theater military strategies designed for contemporary security environments.

C. Guidance

Draft an executive-level essay/product not to exceed 1,500 words that effectively achieves each of the requirements identified below and takes into account the feedback received from the Professor and fellow students.

- 1) **A clearly defined, rank-ordered list of the four (4) most significant U.S. interests in the USPACOM theater.**
 - Identify and prioritize the four (4) most significant U.S. national interests in the USPACOM theater, distinguishing between vital, important, and peripheral interests in the context of long-term strategic competition.
 - Analyze current national strategic priorities and present a list of U.S. national security interests in the theater.
 - Once identified, the hierarchy of U.S. national interests should form the foundation of the “*Golden Thread*” or cohesive theme for the strategic proposal.
 - What does the United States hope to accomplish?

- Why does the United States need to accomplish these goals?
- All U.S. strategies must serve and be traceable to national interests, and the level of investment is directly tied to the level of importance of those interests.

2) A USPACOM theater strategic estimate over the next eight (8) years.

- Using existing strategic guidance (NSS, NDS, NMS) on national priorities and preferences, conduct a theater strategic assessment of the USPACOM theater over the next eight (8) years.
- Identify and evaluate the four (four) most significant major trends over the near (0 to 2 year) and medium (3-8 year) term that may challenge the ability to advance and defend U.S. interests. A SWOT analysis may be helpful in achieving this task.
 - Consider both the likelihood and the severity of various potentially negative events/trends in the region.
 - Clearly identify how each of these trends will evolve over the near term (0-2 years) and medium term (3-8 years). (e.g., more significant in the near term or continuing to evolve in severity from the near term to the medium term)
 - Conducting a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis may be useful here.

3) A USPACOM theater strategic outline.

- Having determined the most significant major trends that would need to be addressed to ensure U.S. interests in the region are secure, develop a theater strategic outline (challenges/opportunities, *ends*, *ways*) of a strategic approach from the USPACOM perspective.
 - What is the vision or desired strategic end-states for the theater in both the near and medium time period?
 - Consider threats and opportunities in terms of likelihood and severity as well as urgency and order of occurrence.
 - Describe and discuss concepts (*ways*) required to achieve the strategic objectives.
 - Develop a coherent strategic outline that links clearly defined strategic *ends* to operational and institutional *ways*, grounded in the realities of the projected security environment outlined in the theater strategic estimate.
 - Explain the challenges and risks in the proposed strategy and discuss risk mitigation initiatives.
 - Consider alignment with national strategic direction from the NSS, NDS, NMS.

4) A prioritized list of required capabilities.

- A list of four (4) prioritized capabilities (*means*) necessary to carry out the strategic proposal. Determine and defend the relative priority of the listed capabilities and how these *means* are linked to the *ways* to achieve the desired objectives (*ends*).
- Conceptualize these as capabilities across the DOTMLPF-P. They can be hardware, doctrine, organization, skills, personnel, etc. Discuss how these *means* would work in the field, and how they would help to achieve the desired strategic outcomes.

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: At the conclusion of SDX-5, students are required to successfully complete SA-4 addressing CLOs 2-4 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

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