



U.S. NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
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Theater Security Decision Making

National Security Affairs Department
Fleet Seminar Program



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NAVAL WAR COLLEGE
COLLEGE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
THEATER SECURITY DECISION MAKING (TSDM) COURSE
SYLLABUS AND STUDY GUIDE

Foreword

This syllabus contains an overview and detailed description of the Theater Security Decision Making course of study. Prepared for the College of Naval Command and Staff for use in the Fleet Seminar Program of the College of Distance Education, this syllabus provides detailed session-by-session guidance, assignments, and study guide material for weekly class preparation.

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THEATER SECURITY DECISION MAKING (TSDM) COURSE

SYLLABUS AND STUDY GUIDE

1. Course Overview. The National Security Affairs (NSA) Department prepares and delivers two separate and distinct Fleet Seminar Program (FSP) courses over the 34-week term. The first course, Leadership in the Profession of Arms (LPA), comprises the first five weeks of the term. The second course, Theater Security Decision Making (TSDM), comprises the remaining 29 weeks of the term. Although LPA and TSDM are separate courses of study, both will be taught sequentially by the same Professor over a contiguous 34-week period. However, students will receive a separate final grade for each course. This TSDM syllabus outlines the course content, student expectations, and applicable NSA Department policies, many of which will remain consistent across both LPA and TSDM.

TSDM is designed to engage intermediate-level military officers and U.S. Government civilians with the challenges and complexities of the rapidly evolving national and international security environments. The curriculum examines a diverse range of national, regional, and international security issues, with particular emphasis on three fundamental areas. First, students develop an understanding of the challenges and opportunities within the contemporary security environment in which U.S. national security professionals must operate, with specific attention to the role of U.S. combatant commands. Second, students examine the many domestic and international actors/factors—both governmental and non-governmental—that seek to influence the U.S. national security policymaking process, including their motivations, methods, and potential effect on policy decisions. Third, informed by their understanding of the security environment and the actors/factors that shape U.S. national security policy, students develop and refine the skills necessary to research, assess, and develop products that will inform a theater-level security strategy that advances U.S. interests within a combatant command's theater.

2. Course Intent. The goal of TSDM is to provide a graduate-level educational experience that combines conceptual rigor with professional relevance in order to prepare students to be more effective participants in the national security decision making environment. Whether serving on a combatant command staff, Service staff, Joint or interagency organization, or in command, students must be able to think critically, assess complex security challenges, and contribute meaningfully to the development and execution of strategy. The intended outcome of TSDM is to strengthen students' Joint warfighting skills, regional awareness, strategic perspective, critical thinking, and analytic rigor. These competencies are essential for national security professionals operating in complex staff environments or exercising command responsibilities. The course is further designed to help develop skilled Joint warfighters who can contribute to national- and theater-level military strategies that effectively employ the military instrument of national power, in concert with other instruments of national power, to achieve the objectives of security strategy and policy across the air, land, maritime, cyber, and space domains.

3. Officer Professional Military Education Policy (OPMEP). 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 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 I 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.

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 achieved through an outcomes-based military education (OBME) approach in its development, delivery, and assessment. Given this, OBME concepts will be an integral part of JPME and the TSDM curriculum. The desired outcomes for TSDM are referred to as Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and are listed below. The 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, FSP, Naval Command and Staff Online Program, and Naval War-College-at-Naval Postgraduate School. In addition to CLOs and PLOs, CJCS Special Areas of Emphasis (SAEs) will also be covered in TSDM. SAEs are Chairman-directed topics intended to keep JPME curricula current, relevant, and responsive to emerging operational and strategic requirements.

a. TSDM Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs). The CLOs for TSDM identify the key concepts, skills, and competencies students are expected to articulate, demonstrate, or apply—both theoretically and practically—upon completion of the sessions associated with each CLO. Student mastery of the CLOs will be assessed at various points throughout the curriculum. To earn credit for TSDM, students must demonstrate mastery of the required CLOs by successfully completing the corresponding Summative Assessments (SAs). The syllabus page for each TSDM session identifies the relevant CLO(s) addressed in that session and indicates when and how those CLO(s) will be assessed. CLOs 1–3, listed below, define the required learning outcomes for the TSDM course.

CLO-1 Analyze the international security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies. (IS focus)

CLO-2 Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security. (FPA focus)

CLO-3 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. Naval War College 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 Naval War College JPME I modalities. 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. An SA

evaluating a PLO represents the “Key Assessment” for a specific course and assesses whether a student has achieved competency in that PLO. The PLO aligned with TSDM is 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 decision making. (LPA focus)
- PLO-4** Apply theory, doctrine, and seapower through critical, structured thought in professional, written communication. (S&W and JMO focus)

c. Special Areas of Emphasis (SAEs). There are two types of CJCS’s SAEs that will be covered in TSDM. The first are enduring (SAE-E) which address persistent and strategic priorities. The second type are periodic (SAE-P) which address current or emerging priorities that require temporary emphasis across JPME programs. Because some SAEs are outside the scope of the TSDM course, SAEs that are addressed in a particular TSDM session will be identified along with relevant CLOs and PLOs.

5. Course Approach. TSDM is organized around the theater-strategic level of analysis, where students examine key regions of the world and assess how U.S. foreign policy decisions shape—or are shaped by—theater security conditions. The course approach analyzes and synthesizes U.S. national security through two complementary lenses. The first, *International Security* (IS), provides the broader international and regional strategic context, with particular emphasis on the USINDOPACOM area of responsibility. The second, *Foreign Policy Analysis* (FPA), examines the U.S. national and organizational decision making environments that influence the development and implementation of security policy. At the conclusion of IS and FPA, students synthesize these concepts through the *Strategy Development Exercise* (SDX), where students will research, develop, and deliver an executive-level group presentation that identifies prioritized U.S. national interests, provides an eight-year strategic estimate of the Indo-Pacific region, outlines a theater-level strategy, and rank orders the capabilities required to support and advance that strategy.

a. International Security (IS). The United States, its allies, and partners face an increasingly complex and interconnected international 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 sub-course in TSDM allows students to gain a holistic understanding of this dynamic environment, and how the United States aims to synchronize and coordinate all instruments of national power to achieve national security objectives in support of U.S. national interests.

The IS sub-course also examines the international system and the role of the United States 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 international 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 U.S. national interests.

The IS sub-course achieves 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, Indian, and Arctic oceanic regions, the combatant commands and global integration, the impact of technology, and future security challenges and opportunities. Throughout these sessions IS will offer a closer examination of the unique security challenges of the various combatant commands to include the role of strategic deterrence and the challenges associated with global force management in a resource limited environment.

b. Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA). Whether the issue involves conducting kinetic operations against Iran's nuclear capabilities, deploying U.S. forces to Iraq, imposing economic sanctions on Russia, investing in domestic microchip production, funding a new military platform, or increasing or decreasing the defense budget, national security policy decisions do not simply "happen." They emerge from complex decision making environments shaped by situational factors, formal institutions, informal networks, competing interests, organizational processes, political pressures, and domestic and international influences. The FPA portion of TSMD introduces students to these complexities and examines the processes, actors, and factors that shape how national security decisions are made.

This matters because, as Alfred, Lord Tennyson wrote in his poem, *The Charge of the Light Brigade*, the 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, DoD does influence policy and understanding *how* and *why* decisions are made and influenced is a critical element for the education of national security professionals who may find themselves directly or indirectly responsible for informing, advising, supporting, or executing decisions within a complex policymaking environment. As former CJCS General Colin Powell argued while speaking to students at the Naval War College:

"...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 this sense, the FPA sub-course helps students develop a deeper appreciation of the policymaking environment so they are better prepared to operate knowledgeably and professionally within it.

The FPA sub-course introduces students to foreign policy analysis as an academic field and provides an analytical toolkit for examining the policymaking process and the decisions that result from it. FPA begins by examining the domestic policymaking environment, with particular attention to the formal institutions responsible for national security policymaking and execution, including the Presidency, the National Security Council, the interagency process, Congress, and the broader executive branch. It explores various analytical perspectives such as organizational process, palace politics, and cognitive factors that can impact the decision making process. It also examines domestic influences outside formal government structures, such as public opinion, think tanks, interest groups, the media, and other actors that can shape policy debates and affect decision making.

FPA also requires students to consider the international influences that affect U.S. national security policy. These include individual states, such as China and Russia; non-state actors, such as the Islamic State; and international organizations and institutions, such as the United Nations (UN) and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). By examining both domestic and international influences, students learn to assess how actors beyond formal U.S. policymaking institutions can shape the policy environment, constrain available options, and affect the decisions of senior leaders.

Overall, the FPA sub-course is designed to give students greater fluency in the national security policymaking process, including its complexity, constraints, and distinctive features. The goal is to help students conduct rigorous analysis of complex national security decisions, identify the key influences that shaped those decisions, and clearly articulate how and why those influences mattered. This understanding better prepares students to serve as informed, effective, and professionally grounded participants in the national security enterprise.

c. Strategy Development Exercise (SDX). The final weeks of TSDM culminate in the SDX, which requires students to synthesize and apply the core concepts developed throughout IS and FPA. Together, IS and FPA provide the intellectual foundation necessary to understand, assess, and develop effective theater-level strategy—the goal of the SDX. IS helps students evaluate the international security environment, identify key threats and opportunities, understand regional dynamics, and interpret the strategic guidance that shapes U.S. objectives. FPA complements this perspective by examining how national security decisions are developed, influenced, constrained, and implemented within the U.S. policymaking environment.

The SDX requires students to integrate these two perspectives in a practical, theater-focused exercise. Students must understand the external security environment in which U.S. interests

are articulated, advanced, and defended while also accounting for the foreign policy decision making processes that shape how the United States defines interests, establishes priorities, allocates resources, manages risk, and develops theater-level strategy. In doing so, the SDX moves students beyond the study of strategy as an abstract concept and requires them to engage in the disciplined process of strategic analysis, judgment, and choice.

Building on IS concepts, students identify U.S. national interests, assess the contemporary Indo-Pacific security environment, evaluate key trends, threats and opportunities, and consider the national and theater-level guidance that informs strategic objectives. Building on FPA concepts, students also consider the policymaking realities, institutional constraints, domestic political considerations, resource limitations, global force management demands, and decision making dynamics that shape how strategy is developed and implemented. This integration is essential because effective theater strategy must be both strategically sound and politically, institutionally, and operationally feasible.

The SDX is structured to help students break the complex task of strategy development into smaller, focused, and achievable components. Students are introduced sequentially to the major elements of the final assessment, including the identification of U.S. national interests, development of a theater strategic estimate, articulation of desired theater outcomes, selection of strategic approaches, assessment of risk, and identification of the capabilities required to advance the strategy. Although the synthesized final product is the evaluated deliverable, the process of researching, analyzing, assessing, and making strategic choices in support of U.S. interests is a central part of the learning experience.

Through the SDX, students develop a vision for the desired Indo-Pacific theater security environment over an eight-year horizon and identify strategic approaches designed to advance U.S. interests within that environment. They must balance ambition with feasibility, align ends with ways and means, and account for risk, resources, political constraints, and operational realities. Ultimately, the SDX enables students to demonstrate proficiency in the central concepts of TSDM and to show that they have achieved the intended outcomes articulated in the TSDM CLOs and PLO-2.

6. Course Organization. Each week in TSDM, there will be two distinct sessions. This structure separates specific topics so they may be examined individually while being introduced during the same week and examined via Socratic dialogue. Despite the number of sessions, the student preparation materials (readings, videos, podcasts, etc.) for each week will be roughly equivalent to 125 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 number of readings and videos, most of them will be very brief in length with the total page-count equivalent remaining within the limits outlined above. Similarly, some of the preparation material may appear dated with respect to their published date or content. This is also intentional. A number of readings explore enduring topics whose origins must be understood to effectively analyze the current security environment. For example, to appreciate how the role strategic deterrence currently plays

in U.S. national security strategy, one must first understand and comprehend the origin of deterrence theory and how it has been applied in the past to achieve U.S. national security objectives. TSDM will include the following major elements:

1) International Security (IS)	22 Sessions
2) Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)	22 Sessions
3) Strategy Development Exercise (SDX)	14 Sessions

7. Course Requirements.

a. Individual Student Responsibilities. Students are expected to be fully prepared for each seminar session and to contribute actively and constructively to Socratic discussions. An inquisitive attitude and a willingness to engage thoughtfully with peers and faculty are essential to a successful graduate-level seminar experience. The “one-third” rule is the keystone of the seminar approach. The first third is a well-constructed, relevant curriculum. The second third is highly qualified faculty who present the material and guide discussion. The final and most important third is the thorough preparation, active participation, and meaningful contribution of each student.

b. Workload. Every effort has been made to maintain a consistent reading and preparation workload from week to week throughout TSDM. As a graduate-level course, students should generally expect to devote approximately three (3) hours of preparation for every one hour of class time. Accordingly, students should anticipate approximately nine (9) hours of preparation each week in addition to the three-hour seminar. Students should also note that additional deliverables, including FAs, SAs, exercises, and group presentations, will be due throughout the course. Students are expected to review assignment due dates carefully and plan well in advance to manage their time and workload effectively.

c. Student Preparation. All student preparation materials, including readings, videos, podcasts, and other assigned materials, must be completed prior to class, as they serve as the foundation for informed and substantive Socratic discussion. Student preparation is a fundamental component of the Preparation and Contribution grade students will earn in TSDM. The goal of the seminar is to engage TSDM topics through Socratic discussion informed by the preparation materials, not simply to review each assigned item. Some syllabus pages may also identify “Supplemental Materials,” which provide optional readings or resources that offer greater depth on topics covered during that week’s sessions. From time to time, Professors may also identify optional recommended readings to provide additional background knowledge directly relevant to course concepts or to offer more current insights for seminar discussion.

d. Study Guidance. For each TSDM session, 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 course.

- 2) Section B (Objectives) identifies the session objectives for that specific session, the relevant CLOs, the supported Naval War College PLOs, and any relevant SAEs for that specific session.
- 3) Section C (Guidance Questions) outlines specific questions for that session that should be used to thoroughly prepare for seminar discussion.
- 4) Section D (Student Preparation) materials, as mentioned above, are the required readings, videos, podcasts, etc., for that session. Supplemental materials may be offered for some sessions but are optional.
- 5) Section E (Student Deliverables) identifies any student deliverables and the associated suspense date.

e. Case Preparation. Case studies are frequently used in TSDM to provide intellectual stimulation, demonstrate application of course concepts, and to develop student abilities to analyze, synthesize, and solve complex problems using the knowledge and skills honed throughout the course. Students will be tasked with analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating the case study material. Those efforts must be completed prior to seminar sessions so that Socratic discussions can focus on deeper exploration of the concepts involved and analysis of the issues contained in the case. In some cases, the case preparation will include an interactive exercise during seminar where the student's full preparation and participation in seminar will be essential.

f. End-of-Course Survey. Substantive feedback is an invaluable part of any learning experience. To support continuous course improvement, students are asked to complete a survey on their TSDM experience. IS will have a dedicated mid-course survey and FPA and SDX will combine for an end-of-course survey. These surveys seek student feedback on the curriculum, assessments, and Professor effectiveness. Students must submit the end-of-course survey in order to receive a final grade in TSDM. All survey submissions are anonymous, and survey data will be shared with the Professor only after final grades have been submitted.

8. Attendance. Students are expected to attend every seminar meeting during the 29 weeks of TSDM. Attendance is defined as a student's physical presence in any FSP meeting (exercise or discussion), whether it is in the home seminar or at another FSP location, as outlined in paragraph 8a below. *Any student who does not attend a seminar meeting at an FSP location for that week shall be considered absent. There is no distinction between "excused" and "unexcused" absences; a student is either physically present for a seminar meeting or not.* A student who is absent from three (3) or more seminar meetings is, by accreditation standards, not eligible to receive credit for TSDM, which is a required component of both the Naval War College M.A. degree and JPME I certification. Upon reaching the maximum number of absences, or when the absence is anticipated, the specifics of the situation will be reported by the seminar Professor to the NSA Department Chair and Program Manager in Newport. A case-specific determination regarding eligibility for the Naval War College M.A. Degree, Naval War College Diploma, and JPME I certification will be made by the Dean, CDE.

a. Attendance at an Alternate In-Person Seminar. FSP is structured so that any student who cannot be physically present in their normally assigned seminar on any given week may attend

another physical location and earn credit for their attendance. Students are responsible for advising their Professor in advance of any anticipated absence, as well as assisting their Professor in coordinating participation with another seminar. For example, if a student assigned to the Washington Navy Yard seminar is traveling on temporary duty (TDY/TAD) to San Diego, the student will need to let their Navy Yard Professor know that they will be absent from seminar due to a TDY and of their desire to attend the San Diego seminar rather than incur an absence. The student's Professor would coordinate via email with the gaining Professor in San Diego to facilitate the student's attendance, provided there is space available. Once coordinated, the student's Professor will put the student in touch with the gaining Professor via email so that the student can coordinate any requirements from the gaining Professor. After the student has attended a seminar at the alternate location, the Professor of the visited seminar will advise the Professor of the home seminar of the student's actual attendance and level of Preparation and Contribution.

b. Request for Attendance in an Alternate Virtual Seminar. If an in-person seminar at another FSP location is not available, a student may request to be included in one of the two TSDM virtual seminars *only if the student meets the requirements to qualify for attendance and if space is available*. In keeping with CDE policy, all requests for attendance in a virtual seminar *must be only for operational reasons where an in-person seminar option is not available, or the student is SIQ (sick in quarters)*. Students should be as proactive as possible in anticipating and requesting a seat in one of the two TSDM virtual seminars, as there are a limited number of spaces available each week. If the student's reason for absence meets the requirements to warrant an assignment to an alternate virtual seminar, the student will then fill out the virtual seminar request attendance form found on the seminar's Blackboard site. Once filled out, the student will send the completed form to their Professor who will ensure the validity of the student's request and forward the student's form along with a recommendation for approval to the NSA FSP Program Director. The information required for approval must include the following:

- 1) Student's name, email address, home seminar location, and Professor's name.
- 2) Date the request was created.
- 3) Date(s) and virtual location student is requesting attendance (East Coast Virtual meets on Tuesdays at 1730 EST; West Coast Virtual meets on Thursdays at 1730 PST).
- 4) Reason for virtual seminar request.
- 5) Additional comments or amplifying remarks that explain the reason for the virtual seminar request.

c. Approval of Attendance in an Alternate Virtual Seminar. If approved, the NSA FSP Program Director will email the student, the home Professor, and the gaining virtual Professor to confirm approval for attendance and the corresponding dates. Following the written approval, the student will coordinate with the gaining virtual Professor for any specific requirements for their pending attendance. Following the student's attendance in the virtual

seminar, the Professor of the virtual seminar will advise the Professor at the home seminar of the student's actual attendance and level of Preparation and Contribution.

d. Requirements for Attendance in a Virtual Seminar. In order to earn credit for attendance in a virtual seminar—whether permanently assigned or visiting—students *must have full access to Blackboard via the internet and have and maintain the ability to transmit and receive both audio and video so that they may be full participants in the seminar experience.* Students must also be in a quiet and private location where their full participation can be expected without any distractions for themselves or classmates. If full audio and video capabilities are not available or the student is not in an appropriate private location, they will be asked to leave the virtual seminar and will not earn attendance credit for the session(s) missed. Examples of locations that are *not* appropriate for virtual seminar attendance include (but are not limited to) airports, moving vehicles, commercial eating/drinking/shopping establishments, or any area open to the public that could be distracting to other members of the seminar or where others might overhear student discussions meant to be for non-attribution.

e. Requirements for Seminar Absence. If a student is unable to attend an in-person seminar and has not been approved to attend a virtual seminar for the affected week or weeks, the student must submit a written essay for each missed TSDM session. The Professor will assign a minimum of two Guidance Questions from the relevant syllabus pages for each missed session. If both sessions in a given week are missed, the student must answer four (4) total questions—two from each session. Each response should thoroughly address the assigned Guidance Questions and may not exceed 500 words per session (approximately 250 words per question). The essays must be of sufficient quality to demonstrate to the Professor that the student has mastered the CLO(s) and key course concepts for the missed session(s). This submission does not remove the recorded seminar absence, but it helps ensure the student has engaged substantively with the missed material. The quality of the written submission will be included as part of the student's overall Preparation and Contribution grade.

9. Assessments. The Professor will assess student progress throughout TSDM using three means of assessment: formative assessments (FAs), summative assessments (SAs), and student Preparation and Contribution.

a. Formative Assessments (FAs). FAs are ungraded assignments that provide students and Professors an opportunity to assess student progress and comprehension of course material before the student completes a graded assignment. Each FA is assessed by the Professor as either “Meets Standards” or “Not Yet.” Although FAs do not receive a numerical grade, a student's work must be assessed as equivalent to an 80/B- or better in order to meet standards. Students must successfully complete all FAs to continue in the course. Any FA assessed as “Not Yet” must be re-accomplished in a manner determined by the Professor. Re-accomplishment will occur only after the Professor provides the student with substantive feedback and a remediation plan. The student must complete the remediation and successfully resubmit the FA within 48 hours of being assigned the remediation. Any student who receives a second “Not Yet” on the same FA will be referred to the NSA Department Chair and may be considered for involuntary disenrollment for failure to progress in the course. There are eight (8) FAs in TSDM, as indicated below.

FA #	Type of Assessment	Effort	Due
FA-1	Short Essay	Individual	Week 10
FA-2	Group Presentations	Individual/Group	Weeks 12-15
FA-3	Short Essay	Individual	Week 20
FA-4	Group Presentation/Exercise	Individual/Group	Week 27
FA-5	Group SDX Briefing 1	Group	Week 29
FA-6	Group SDX Briefing 2	Group	Week 30
FA-7	Group SDX Briefing 3	Group	Week 31
FA-8	Group SDX Briefing 4	Group	Week 32

b. Summative Assessments (SAs). 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. The SAs in 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 must be re-accomplished in a manner determined by the Professor. Re-accomplishment will occur only after the Professor provides the student with substantive feedback and a remediation plan. The student must complete the remediation and successfully resubmit the SA within 7 days of being assigned the remediation. 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 be 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 an 80/B-.* There are three (3) SAs in TSDM, as indicated below.

SA #	Type of Assessment	Effort	Due
SA-1	Analytic Research Essay	Individual	Week 16
SA-2	Case Analysis Essay	Individual	Week 28
SA-3	Group SDX Presentation	Group	Week 34

c. Student Seminar Preparation and Contribution. The final means of graded assessment is student seminar Preparation and Contribution. This assessment will be evaluated (with a numeric and corresponding letter grade) throughout the course based on how well a student prepared for each seminar and their effectiveness at applying applicable course concepts, demonstrating critical and creative thinking, and communicating these skills in seminar discussions, in-class exercises, and other course activities. TSDM will have a combined Preparation and Contribution grade based on cumulative performance across each of the TSDM sub-courses (IS, FPA, SDX).

***An important note regarding seminar Preparation and Contribution grade.** Thorough preparation for each seminar, meticulously absorbing student preparation materials, and substantive contributions during seminar discussions are key aspects of the learning construct.

Students will therefore be assessed on the cumulative quality of their individual seminar Preparation and Contributions. Student contribution is assessed by its quality. The goal is not to measure the number of times students have spoken, but how well they have demonstrated that they have prepared and understood the subject matter, enriched discussion, and contributed to a positive and active learning dynamic. This caliber of commitment requires students to arrive prepared to take part in every seminar discussion by absorbing the readings, listening attentively, thinking critically, and offering informed comments on session topics. Students are expected to prepare for and be thoughtfully engaged in each seminar session.

10. TSDM Graded Assessments. The following is a composite listing of the TSDM course requirements, type of effort, basis of evaluation, time due, and their relative weight:

ASSESSMENT	TYPE OF EFFORT	BASIS OF EVALUATION	DUE DATE	WEIGHT
SA-1 (IS)	Individual	Ability to conduct research and explore an in-depth USINDOPACOM security challenge. (CLO-1 and PLO-2)	After IS-22 in Week 16	25%
SA-2 (FPA)	Individual	Ability to analyze a case study and apply course concepts in a logical, compelling, and concise way. (CLO-2 and PLO-2)	Prior to SDX-1 in Week 28	25%
SA-3 (SDX)	Group Briefing	Quality of SDX product development, presentation, and Q&A responses. (CLOs 1-3) (PLO-2 Key Assessment)	During SDX-13 in Week 34	30%
Preparation and Contribution (TSDM)	Individual	Quality of student seminar Preparation and Contribution in seminar discussions and written thought pieces.	Continuous Weeks 6-27 (IS & FPA) and Weeks 28-34 (SDX)	20% (5% each for IS/FPA and 10% for SDX)

a. Grading Criteria. A course grade will be assigned based on grades earned for SAs and Preparation and Contribution. Students must complete, with an 80/B- or better grade, each of the Naval War College core courses (LPA, TSDM, JMO, S&W) for the master's degree program and receipt of JPME Phase I certification. All work in the prescribed curricula for the intermediate program will be graded using the standards below.

1) Final course grades 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 10b. below) are provided so students will know the general performance criteria for SAs and student Preparation and Contribution.

3) Grades for all TSDM assignments are based on the standards set forth in the 2024 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 'Cs' can be expected from the overall NWC student population. While variations from this norm might occur from seminar to seminar and from 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) Late work submitted without prior written approval—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). Work submitted more than 14 days late without the prior *written approval* of the Professor will be referred to the NSA Department Chair and may result in the student's removal from the course. 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. In any case, work submitted more than 30 days past the due date will be referred by the Professor to the NSA Department Chair and Program Manager in Newport, with disenrollment the likely outcome.

5) All 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 or required by the Professor. 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 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)	Very good quality and indicative of graduate-level work. 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)	Good work, but slightly below graduate-level performance. 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 well 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)	Failing and require remediation.

2) *Student Seminar Preparation and Contribution.* Seminar Preparation and Contribution will be graded at the end of TSDM 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 seminar discussions, projects, exercises, and other course activities. The evaluation will consider a student's critical and creative thinking as demonstrated in oral or written communication when contributing to seminar activities. All students are expected to have completed all student preparation materials, substantively contribute to each seminar session, and to listen and respond respectfully when fellow students or the Professor offer ideas. This overall expectation underlies all criteria described below. Interruptive, discourteous, disrespectful, or unprofessional conduct or attitude detracts from the overall learning experience for the seminar and will negatively affect the contribution grade. When a student's contribution grade falls to a B- or below (or trending toward 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 each sub-course of TSDM (IS, FPA, SDX). The student will be provided 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 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 seminar contribution are:

A+	(97-100):	Preparation and 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 discussions. Strikes an outstanding balance of “listening” and “contributing,” engaging with classmates in a way that elevates the overall level of seminar discourse.
A	(94-96):	Preparation and 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 seminar, 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):	Preparation and Contribution are always of excellent quality. Fully engaged in seminar discussions and commands the respect of colleagues through the insightful quality of their contribution and ability to listen to, 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):	Expected graduate-level Preparation and Contribution. A positive contributor to seminar meetings who joins in most discussions and whose contributions reflect understanding of the material. Contributes original and well-developed insights. Above the average expected of a graduate student.
B	(84-86):	Slightly below average graduate-level Preparation and Contribution. Involvement in discussions reflects adequate preparation for seminar 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):	Below average graduate-level Preparation and Contribution. Contributes, but sometimes speaks out 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 lessons.
< B-	(<80):	Failing and requires remediation.

c. Grade Appeals

1) *Formative Assessments*: FAs are tools of various types used by the student and the Professor to measure a student's progress toward mastery of CLOs. 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 an SA 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 NSA 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. If the initially assigned grade is sustained or lowered, the student may further contest the newly assigned grade by submitting, in writing and within 48 hours of receipt of the grade, a request that his/her appeal be taken to the Dean, CDE. The determination of the Dean, CDE is final. During the appellate process for an SA grade, the student must satisfactorily complete follow-on coursework and graded assignments, if any, in order to remain in the course pending resolution of the appeal.

3) *Passing Grade on Summative Assessments*: Students must meet submission deadlines for appeals of unsatisfactory SA as discussed above, but may appeal a graded event for which they receive a grade of 80 (B-) or above within fifteen (15) days after receipt of the grade. Contested grades shall be appealed first to the Professor who assigned the grade, and then, if unresolved, to the NSA 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. In the event this grade is also subsequently contested, the student must submit, in writing and within 48 hours of receipt of that grade, a request that the appeal be taken to the Dean, CDE. The determination of the Dean, CDE is final.

4) *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 NSA Department Chair.

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

11. Use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI)

a. Background. Artificial intelligence (AI) literacy is an essential element of information literacy. GAI tools continue to evolve rapidly, including DoD-approved secure platforms that are available only to authorized users, and access to such tools is not uniform across the Naval War College's student body. The guidance under this paragraph follows that of Naval War

College Instruction (NAVWARCOLINST) 5230.1 which is applicable to all Naval War College JPME students.

b. Definitions

- 1) *GAI*: Digital systems or platforms that use machine learning and natural language processing algorithms to automatically generate content, including text, images, audio, or video.
- 2) *Academic Integrity*: The commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility in student work.
- 3) *Student Academic Work*: Student work produced as part of course standard assignments, including, but not limited to assignments, essays, exams, research projects, term papers, and presentations.

c. Use of GAI in TSDM. The use of GAI in all TSDM student deliverables will only be authorized when approved in writing on the individual assignments found on the TSDM learning management system and only for that student deliverable. If authorized, students must strictly adhere to student responsibility and adherence to academic integrity as outlined below.

d. Student Responsibility

- 1) Students are individually responsible for verifying the accuracy, quality, and reliability of any AI-generated content incorporated into their work.
- 2) Students are responsible for identifying, confirming, and reviewing source material referenced by any AI outputs and to ensure that those sources are correctly cited according to academic standards and policies as outlined in the TSDM syllabus.

e. Adherence to Academic Integrity

- 1) All students' academic work must fully comply with the Naval War College's standards for academic integrity as defined in the TSDM syllabus and the Naval War College Faculty Handbook. Falsification of the origin of content by omitting GAI tool attribution constitutes academic dishonesty and will be subject to discipline as outlined in the TSDM syllabus and Naval War College Faculty Handbook.
- 2) Any use of GAI as a source of information, ideas, or opinions must be cited in the same manner as any other external source would be. If external sources are not allowed on a specific student deliverable, then GAI use as a source is also prohibited. If GAI is authorized for a specific student deliverable, it will be approved in writing on that specific student deliverable. The use of any GAI information on such a deliverable must be cited as part of the assignment. The method and format for citing any such GAI information will be outlined in the individual student deliverable as found on the TSDM learning management system.

12. Academic Integrity

a. Honor Code. (Excerpted from the 2024 Naval War College 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, GAI, 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 Naval War College without permission of the instructors;
- 2) Submitting a paper or substantially the same paper previously prepared for some other purpose outside Naval War College 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 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 the Naval War College.
- 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 to the current command or office of the individual concerned and, if appropriate, revocation of the Naval War College diploma, master's degree and JPME credit.

13. Diploma Offered. A Naval War College, College of Naval Command and Staff diploma may be earned through successful completion of all core courses (LPA, TSMD, JMO, and S&W)

through the Fleet Seminar Program. A diploma is awarded for satisfactory completion (overall grade of “B-” or higher) of the core courses.

14. General Schedule of Seminar Meetings. Seminars meet one evening per week, for 180 minutes of class time. The schedule showing meeting dates for the year is contained in Annex A.

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

National Security Affairs
Department Chair
College of Distance Education

Prof Michael W. Pratt
Tel: 401-856-5545
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National Security Affairs
Fleet Seminar Program Director
College of Distance Education

Prof Michael J. Mooney
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National Security Affairs
IS Course Director
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National Security Affairs
FPA Course Director
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National Security Affairs
SDX Course Director
College of Distance Education

Prof Steven L. Shinkel
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steven.shinkel@usnwc.edu

ANNEX A

TSDM MASTER COURSE SCHEDULE ACADEMIC YEAR 2026-2027 (Each meeting will be 3.0 hours of class time)

FSP Meeting #	Week of	Session Number	Session Title
THEATER SECURITY DECISION MAKING			
<u>International Security (IS)</u>			
6	12 Oct	IS-1 IS-2	The International Security Environment America's Place in the International System
7	19 Oct	IS-3 IS-4	International Relations: Theory and Grand Strategies National Interests and Instruments of National Power
8	26 Oct	IS-5 IS-6	Political Economy and the Industrial Base Strategic Deterrence and Nuclear Force (USSTRATCOM)
Summative Assessment 1 Proposal Due <i>Prior</i> to IS-7			
9	2 Nov	IS-7 IS-8	China and Russia in the 21 st Century U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS)
FA-1 Due <i>Prior</i> to IS-9			
10	9 Nov	IS-9 IS-10	U.S. Defense Strategies: NDS and NMS U.S. Maritime Strategy
11	16 Nov	IS-11 IS-12	The Combatant Commands, Global Integration, and Global Force Management Homeland Defense and the Western Hemisphere (USNORTHCOM)
23 – 27 Nov Thanksgiving Break			
FA-2a Due in IS-13 and FA-2b Due in IS-14			
12	30 Nov	IS-13 IS-14	The Atlantic Ocean Region: Foundations and Security Challenges (USEUCOM) The Arctic Ocean Region: Foundations and Security Challenges (USEUCOM and USNORTHCOM)
FA-2c Due in IS-15 and FA-2d Due in IS-16			

13	7 Dec	IS-15	Latin America and International Security (USSOUTHCOM)
		IS-16	The Middle East and International Security (USCENTCOM)
FA-2e Due in IS-17			
14	14 Dec	IS-17	Africa and International Security (USAFRICOM)
		IS-18	The Indian Ocean Region: Foundations and Security Challenges (USINDOPACOM)
21 Dec – 1 Jan Holiday Break			
FA-2f and FA-2g Due in IS-20			
15	4 Jan	IS-19	The Pacific Ocean Region: Foundations and Security Challenges (USINDOPACOM)
		IS-20	Cyber, Space, and International Security (USCYBERCOM and USSPACECOM)
Summative Assessment 1 Due <i>After</i> IS-22			
16	11 Jan	IS-21	The Impact of Technology and International Security
		IS-22	The Future International Security Environment: Challenges and Opportunities
<u>Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA)</u>			
17	18 Jan	FPA-1	Foreign Policy Analysis for Practitioners
		FPA-2	Case Study: The Cuban Missile Crisis (1962)
18	25 Jan	FPA-3	Two-Level Games: Sources of Influence in Foreign Policy Decision Making
		FPA-4	Understanding Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics
19	1 Feb	FPA-5	The Presidency and National Security
		FPA-6	The Interagency Process, National Security Council, and Palace Politics
FA-3 Due <i>Prior</i> to FPA-7			
20	8 Feb	FPA-7	Congress' Role in National Security
		FPA-8	Case Study: Intervention in Beirut (1982-1983)
21	15 Feb	FPA-9	Funding Foreign Policy: Authorizing, Appropriating, and DoD Relations
		FPA-10	Defense Budgeting, Acquisitions, and Innovation

22	22 Feb	FPA-11 FPA-12	Civil-Military Relations Case Study: Deciding the Iraq War (2003)
23	1 Mar	FPA-13 FPA-14	Diplomacy: The Role of the State Department Economics: Instrument of National Power and Warfare
24	8 Mar	FPA-15 FPA-16	Information: Strategic Communication and Intelligence Organized Pressure: Lobbyists, Interest Groups, and Think Tanks

Summative Assessment 2 Released *After* FPA-16

25	15 Mar	FPA-17 FPA-18	The Media and Public Opinion States and Non-State Actors
26	22 Mar	FPA-19 FPA-20	Intergovernmental Organizations: Institutions and Alliances Beyond Borders: Influences on U.S. National Security

FA-4 Due in FPA-22

27	29 Mar	FPA-21 FPA-22	Future Foreign Policy Challenges and Opportunities Synthesis Case Study
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Summative Assessment 2 Due *Prior* to SDX-1

Strategy Development Exercise (SDX)

28	5 Apr	SDX-1 SDX-2	National Interests: Foundation of Strategy Development SDX Product Development
FA-5 Due in SDX-3			
29	12 Apr	SDX-3 SDX-4	Strategic Assessment: Linking Strategy to Theater Environment SDX Product Development
FA-6 Due in SDX-5			
30	19 Apr	SDX-5 SDX-6	Translating Objectives into Action: Linking Ends to Ways SDX Product Development
FA-7 Due in SDX-7			
31	26 Apr	SDX-7 SDX-8	Operationalizing Strategy: Linking Ways to Means SDX Product Development
FA-8 Due in SDX-9			

32	3 May	SDX-9 SDX-10	SDX Phase One Product Synthesis SDX Product Development
33	10 May	SDX-11 SDX-12	SDX Phase Two Reframing Moment SDX Product Development

Summative Assessment 3 and Key Assessmentn of PLO-2 Due in SDX-13

34	17 May	SDX-13 SDX-14	SDX Phase One and Phase Two Presentations TSDM Course Synthesis
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ANNEX B

TSDM – INTERNATIONAL SECURITY STUDY GUIDE

International Security Sessions Overview. The International Security (IS) sessions of the TSDM course focus on the myriad elements of the ever-changing and dynamic international security environment. They seek to equip students with the ability 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 subsequently challenged to comprehend U.S. national and theater strategies in the context of fundamental elements of strategy, and how best to employ the instruments of national power (particularly the military instrument) to advance and defend U.S. national interests. The IS sessions concentrate on five main themes spread across the 22 sessions:

- **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, transnational criminal organizations, illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing, and introduces the idea of strategic competition and irregular warfare - which is a designated Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) “enduring” special area of emphasis (SAE-E) for JPME.
- **National Strategies.** This theme considers the U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS), the U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS), the U.S. National Military Strategy (NMS), and U.S. maritime strategy. Throughout, we consider grand strategy types and how different types of international relations theory, U.S. national interests, and the instruments of national power influence the formulation of U.S. strategy. Of note, this theme also examines the concept of “strategic deterrence” – which is a designated Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) “periodic” special area of emphasis (SAE-P) for JPME - and its role in U.S. strategy.
- **Combatant Commands.** What impact do the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) combatant commands (CCMDs) have within the international security environment? The third theme considers the CCMDs, the regional challenges they face, how they coordinate and execute operations within the previously discussed oceanic regions, and the role they play in advancing and defending U.S. national interests. We also examine the concept of “global integration” and the DoD framework of “global force management” (GFM) which is yet another CJCS SAE-P for JPME, and how both impact the CCMDs’ abilities to achieve U.S. national objectives with the instruments of national power.
- **Oceanic Regions.** The “oceanic regions” 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 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, the Atlantic Ocean Region, and the Arctic Ocean region. Students will assess 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 “that America remains the world’s strongest, richest, most powerful, and most successful country for decades to come...”¹ Chief among these are matters concerning the defense of the U.S. homeland, Western Hemisphere, the rise of China (or the People’s Republic of China (PRC)), and the return to the world stage of an aggressive Russia.

- **Changing Character of War and Future Security Challenges.** The final theme involves an overview of how the character of war in the 21st century is changing as a result of the emerging domains of warfare such as cyber and space and the impact of new technologies such as artificial intelligence and unmanned systems, as well as 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.

This study guide is the primary reference for the IS sessions. Student preparation materials should be approached in the order listed, using the session overview as an introduction to understanding the general scope of the session topic. The diversity of the IS readings provides not only an opportunity to examine course concepts, but also an overview of international security dynamics and alternative perspectives. Despite the number of sessions, the student preparation materials (readings, videos, etc.) for each week will be the equivalent of approximately 120 (+/-) 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 international security environment.

International Security Deliverables. The primary student deliverable for the IS sessions is a publication-quality analytic research paper (SA-1) that applies appropriate course concepts and mastery of CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

¹ The White House. 2025 National Security Strategy, November 2025.

ANNEX B
TSDM – INTERNATIONAL SECURITY
STUDY GUIDE

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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 affect U.S. national security interests. The spectrum of global security challenges is never static and is increasingly diffuse. As stated in March 2026 by the Director of National Intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard:

- “The IC [Intelligence Community] assesses that the Homeland faces a variety of threats in the coming year, including our top concerns: transnational organized crime, illicit drug trafficking, migration, the threat of Islamist ideology and terrorism, major power competition, and WMD threats.”
- “The global security environment is becoming more complex. The risk of global economic fragmentation is rising, and emerging technologies such as AI and quantum computing are expected to have a significant impact on national security. Furthermore, armed conflict is becoming more common globally, major power competition continues, and military capabilities among state and nonstate actors are improving. Intensifying competition over supply chains and technological primacy, more diverse threats in key domains, and unresolved or potential regional conflicts create interconnected risks.”
- “China, Russia, Iran, and North Korea view the U.S. as a strategic competitor and potential adversary, perceiving it as a threat to their respective interests and ambitions, and seek to counter and undermine U.S. influence and power through a range of diplomatic, economic, and military means.”

Many international security scholars have opined that the contemporary international security environment is similar to that which occurred following the break-up of the Soviet Union and 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, students will also look at the concept of the “competition continuum,” as introduced in Joint Doctrine 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 nations compete in the 21st Century security environment.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-E 1: Irregular Warfare.
 - Supports CJCS SAE-P 3b: Data, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Of the international security threats articulated by the 2026 Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community, which is the most serious, and which is the most manageable?
2. How are both state and non-state actors attempting to compete in the current security environment and achieve their national interests without “firing a shot”?
3. On what part of the competition continuum model should the U.S. focus? Does it vary by state, region, or domain? Why?
4. How are transnational challenges likely to shape the future security environment? Which transnational challenges are most important? How do they interact with state dynamics?

D. Student Preparation (57 pp; ~20 min video)

1. Joint Chiefs of Staff. Joint Doctrine 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) 19 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, 3-10. (7 pp)
4. Jones, Seth. “The Future of Competition: U.S. Adversaries and the Growth of Irregular Warfare,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 2021. (9 pp)

5. Clarke, Colin. “Trends in Terrorism: What’s on the Horizon in 2026?” *The Soufan Center*, 08 January 2026. (4 pp)
6. “Easier to Start, Harder to Win,” *The Economist*, 28 May 2026. (8 pp)
7. Poast, Paul. “A New Era of World War Has Arrived,” *New York Times*, 12 April 2026. (2 pp)
8. Dunford, Joseph, Frances Townsend, and Michael Morrell. “AI Isn’t the Future of Our National Security. It’s the Present,” *Real Clear Defense*, 17 April 2026. (2 pp)
9. “The Rising Importance of the Global South in 2025: A New Pillar of Multipolar Power,” *Beyond the Horizon*, 03 June 2025. (4 pp)
10. Applebaum, Anne. *Autocracy, Inc: The Dictators Who Want to Rule the World*. New York: Doubleday, 2024, 8-19. (10 pp)
11. Office of the Director of National Intelligence. “Annual Threat Assessment of the U.S. Intelligence Community,” 18 March 2026. (SCAN)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-2

AMERICA'S PLACE IN THE INTERNATIONAL SYSTEM

A. Session Overview

With an understanding of the international security environment in hand, this session will now introduce the fundamental questions that must be answered to think critically about the future of U.S. national security and foreign policy decisions. Despite general impressions among many, the United States has been significantly engaged globally since its founding, with policies evolving based on its relative strengths, the global environment, and security requirements. During World War II, the U.S. was the “great arsenal of democracy.” Phrases such as “Speak softly but carry a big stick,” and the “indispensable nation,” are a few others with which students may also be familiar.

The role of the United States in the 21st Century is a complicated one, marked by the return of “strategic competition” as introduced in IS-1. In 2019, William J. Burns, former Director of Central Intelligence, stated, “Today’s world is more crowded, complicated, and competitive than at any point in my three-and-a-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.” Seven years removed from that statement one could say that Burns’ observations are even more true today given the many consequential geopolitical events that have occurred regarding international security.

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 relationships within this system. And like the international security environment, the international system itself is constantly evolving as states work together and establish international agreements.

As history demonstrates, the role of America in the international system is determined by the United States’ world view and priorities as determined by its national leadership. Students should think how America views its place in the international system when examining the 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the origin and concept of the international system.
 - Assess the role and the place of the United States within the international system.
 - Understand the concepts of balance of power, balancing, bandwagoning, and the ‘security dilemma’ within the international system.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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?
2. How do concepts like Anne-Marie Slaughter's "chessboard" or the "web" help one understand America's interaction within the international system?
3. What is the "balance of power" and why is it an important concept to understand in the international system?
4. How has the concept of the "security dilemma" impacted the interaction of states within the international system?

D. Student Preparation (31 pp; ~53 min video)

1. Video: "Inaugural Address of President John F. Kennedy," YouTube video, 20 January 1961, (02:45-09:16). (~7 min)
2. Video: "U.S. as the Indispensable Nation: A Roundtable Discussion," *Charles Koch Institute*, 29 August 2016, (0:00-06:17). (~6 min)
3. Video: Rubio, Marco. "Secretary Marco Rubio Remarks at Munich Security Conference," 2026 Munich Security Conference, 14 February 2026, (00:00-22:03) (~22 min)
4. Fontaine, Richard. "The Sound of Munich: Autonomy, Anxiety, and the Twilight of Transatlantic Order," *War on the Rocks*, 16 February 2026. (4 pp)
5. 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)
6. Video: CFR Education, "What is the Liberal World Order?" YouTube video, 26 October 2020, (00:00-07:55). (~ 8 min)
7. Bekkevold, Jo Inge. "The Golden Age of Multilateralism Is Over," *Foreign Policy*, 12 September 2025. (4 pp)
8. Bergmann, Max. "How America Blew Its Unipolar Moment," *Foreign Policy*, 26 May 2025. (3 pp)

9. Walt, Stephen, M. “Does Anyone Still Understand the ‘Security Dilemma’?” *Foreign Policy*, 26 July 2022. (3 pp)
10. Gvosdev, Nikolas K. “The Regional Dimension of U.S. Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 2022. (8 pp)
11. Video: “The Chessboard and the Web,” *Yale University*, YouTube video, 08 December 2015, (01:29-10:39) (~10 min)
12. The White House. National Security Strategy of the United States of America. November 2025. (SCAN)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-3

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS: THEORY AND GRAND STRATEGIES

A. Session Overview

As observed in the cumulative 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 other states and their citizens.

Having considered the complexity of the international security environment in IS-1 and the evolution of America's place in the world 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. 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 these basic 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.

Building upon the previous lessons on the global security environment, we turn to examining what has been termed "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." Grand strategy 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.

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 employment, design, and level of defense spending. Despite the challenges, grand strategy is a critical tool for achieving national interests. This session defines and explores five competing grand strategies that range from the most activist in nature (primacy, liberal internationalism, and selective engagement) to least activist (offshore balancing and strategic restraint).

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Comprehend IR theories, how they differ in explaining international relations, 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-1: Analyze the international 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 international relations? Are any of them more convincing than the others? Which ones?
2. What would the various IR theories have to say about China's rise, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, or current U.S. foreign policy?
3. In IS-2, students were introduced to Anne-Marie Slaughter's concepts of "web and chessboard." If the chessboard is a metaphor for geopolitics, with which IR theory does a chessboard approach tend to align?
4. What would you consider to be the most effective grand strategy for the U.S. to pursue today? Why?
5. How has America's grand strategy evolved over its 250 years of existence?

D. Student Preparation (50 pp; ~24 min video)

1. Snyder, 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. Layton, Peter. "Rethinking Grand Strategy," *Small Wars Journal*. 06 June 2018. (3 pp)
4. 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)

5. Henke, Marina, E. "Best Practices in Grand Strategy Design," *The Strategist*, Texas National Security Review, Vol 8, Issue 2, Spring 2025. (9 pp)
6. O'Hanlon, Michael. "Grand Strategy and Defense Strategy in America's First 250 Years" in *To Dare Mighty Things*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2026, 4-7. (3 pp)
7. 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, 43-48. (5 pp)
8. 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)
9. 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)
10. Herman, Arthur. "The Five Keys of Donald Trump's Grand Strategy," *The National Interest*, 12 May 2025. (2 pp)
11. Acree, George. "The Fleeting Phoenix: Why Grand Strategy is Impossible in a Constitutional Republic," *U.S. Army War College War Room*, 16 April 2026. (3 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-4

NATIONAL INTERESTS AND INSTRUMENTS OF NATIONAL POWER

A. Session Overview

Having looked at the concept of grand strategy in IS-3, we now focus attention on examining national interests and instruments of national power. National interests are essentially a state's priorities and/or objectives within the international system. These priorities, like security or economic well-being, are what a state wants to achieve or protect; some are enduring while others may change based upon shifts in the national leadership or the international security environment.

National power, on the other hand, is the means to achieve those goals. These means are then used in various ways to achieve national interests. There are different dimensions of power that contribute to a state's overall strength; strategists often talk about “hard power” or “soft power.” In today's world, national power is increasingly measured by a combination of hard and soft power elements. A state that can effectively wield both types of power is more likely to achieve its goals on the international stage. A common framework used for understanding the different instruments of national power available to a state is by the acronym D-I-M-E: diplomatic, informational, military, and economic power. Scholars and strategists often expand the definition of the instruments of national power by including other distinct subcategories of the instruments of national power in addition to the standard D-I-M-E framework such as financial, intelligence, and law enforcement (i.e., D-I-M-E-F-I-L).

In short, understanding national interests helps us know what objectives states are trying to achieve, and national power shows the potential means they can use to achieve those objectives. 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 power (and their limitations), appreciate that national interests can be difficult to define or agree upon, and recognize that their endurance may vary depending on the political leadership of the state.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Analyze the role national interests play in strategic thinking and the formation of strategy.
 - Examine the dimensions of national power and their role in shaping strategy.
 - Understand the difference between instruments and elements of national power.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 national interests and why are they important? Who determines what they are?
2. How do vital, important, and peripheral national interests influence a state's strategic calculus?
3. Why is there so much difficulty determining and prioritizing national interests?
4. What are the consequences of overemphasizing one instrument of national power over another?
5. Which instrument of national power is most consequential in achieving national interests? Why?

D. Student Preparation (54 pp; ~9 min video)

1. 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, 35-42 (7 pp)
2. National War College. "A National Security Strategy Primer," 2018, 15-35. (17 pp)
3. 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, 2012. (8 pp)
4. Video: "What is Diplomacy?" *The National Museum of American Diplomacy*, YouTube video, 16 October 2023, (00:00-06:19). (6 min)
5. Video: "Gray Zone Tools: Information Warfare," *Center for Strategic & International Studies*, YouTube video, 07 December 2018, (00:00-02:53). (~3 min)
6. The Joint Staff. "Joint Publication 1-0: Warfighting," 27 August 2023, I-3 – I-4. (2 pp)
7. Bellafiore, Robert. "The Age of Economic Warfare," *City Journal*, 28 March 2025. (2 pp)
8. "Lessons from Japan's Efforts to Wean Itself Off Chinese Rare Earths," *The Economist*, 04 December 2025. (2 pp)

9. Pezzullo, Michael. “The Geography of American Power,” *The Strategist*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, 28 February 2025. (3 pp)
10. Tarquinio, J. Alex. “Soft Power Is Making a Hard Return,” *Foreign Policy*, 06 August 2023. (3 pp)
11. McGriffin, Curtis. “DIMET: Shaping the Age of “Techno-Strategic” Power,” *National Institute for Public Policy*, 22 September 2025. (10 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-5

POLITICAL ECONOMY AND THE INDUSTRIAL BASE

A. Session Overview

While the TSDM course is focused on security issues and decision making, it is important to remember that most states usually do not face existential threats and are equally concerned with the strength of their economic health. Moreover, economic activity can constitute a basis for either conflict or conflict resolution, and a state's economy is the primary factor in its ability to use either coercive force or significant incentives in international bargaining. Thus, it is essential for a national security professional to understand the basics of how economic systems work, interact, and how certain economic systems provide a sovereign state with various and unique degrees of leverage.

Political economy is a field that studies the interwoven relationship between political and economic systems. It examines how political institutions, economic systems, and societal interests interact to shape the distribution of resources and power. In the context of international security, it provides a framework for understanding how economic interdependence, trade relationships, and financial systems influence state behavior, conflict, and cooperation. For example, states that are deeply integrated through global markets may be less likely to engage in direct conflict due to the high economic costs, while competition over critical resources—such as energy, rare earth minerals, or strategic trade routes—can heighten tensions. Political economy also highlights how tools like sanctions, foreign aid, and development policy function as instruments of statecraft, allowing countries to pursue security objectives without direct military action. As a result, international security is not solely determined by military capabilities, but is deeply intertwined with economic resilience, global supply chains, and the governance structures that regulate them.

This session will also look at more complex questions of how economic power works, how states act to resist or circumvent the exercise of economic power, and the relationships between economics and politics (both domestic and international).

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the basic structure and institutions of the international economic system, including processes of globalization and de-globalization.
 - Understand how economic power is formed and used and learn to analyze its likely effects.
 - Comprehend the relationships between political and economic systems and learn to incorporate them into strategic thinking.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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. States choose whether their economy will serve the state's interests or whether state security serves economic interests. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each approach?
2. How do states pursue economic power? What are the respective roles of cooperation and competition in the international system? Why isn't it purely competitive?
3. Most observers see the world as becoming more multipolar, especially in economic terms. What do you think this means, and what can/should the U.S. strategy be going forward?

D. Student Preparation (27 pp; ~10 min video; ~20 min podcast)

1. Podcast: Cohn, Lindsay P. "Introduction to Political Economy, Part I Comparative and Part II International," 2025, Podcast audio, "Global Economics as a National Security Weapon," generated by Notebook LM, 18 May 2026. (00:00-22:05) (~20 min)
2. Cohn, Lindsay P. "Introduction to Political Economy, Part I Comparative and Part II International," 2025. (SCAN)
3. Schilde, Kaija E, Norrin M Ripsman, and Rosella Cappella Zielinski. "The Political Economy of Security," in *The Oxford Handbook of U.S. National Security*, edited by Derek S. Reveron, Nikolas K Gvosdev, and John A. Cloud. Oxford University Press, 2018. (9 pp)
4. Video: Petrova, Magdalena. "We traced what it takes to make an iPhone, from its initial design to the components and Raw Materials Needed to Make it a Reality," *Inside an Apple iPhone: Where Parts and Materials Come From*, CNBC video, 14 December 2018, (00:00-06:51). (~7 min)
5. "A Visual Guide to Critical Materials and Rare Earths," *The Economist*, 25 March 2025. (4 pp)
6. Rowan, Linda, R. "Rare Earth Elements and U.S. Supply Chains," *Congressional Research Service*, 04 March 2026. (2 pp)
7. Cimino-Isaacs, Cathleen D. "World Trade Organization," *Congressional Research Service*, 30 July 2025. (2 pp)

8. Video: “What Is Globalization? Understand Our Interconnected World,” *CFR Education*, YouTube video, 01 September 2021, (00:00-03:28). (~ 3 min)
9. Neenan, Alexandra, G. “Defense Primer: U.S. Defense Industrial Base,” *Congressional Research Service*, 15 December 2025. (2 pp)
10. Kellogg, Anita. “Operationalizing Economic Statecraft: A New Imperative for the Pentagon,” *War on the Rocks*, 16 April 2026. (2 pp)
11. Davies-Gould, Nigel. “The Coming Crisis in Russia’s Political Economy,” “The International Institute for Strategic Studies,” 18 May 2026. (6 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-6

STRATEGIC DETERRENCE AND NUCLEAR FORCE (USSTRATCOM)

A. Session Overview

The concept of strategic deterrence is the keystone of U.S. defense strategy, and an SAE for JPME. Strategic deterrence underwrites all DoD planning and helps ensure that integrated deterrence concepts, plans, and capabilities work as designed. A simple definition of 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 of implementing a successful deterrence 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. However, as Joint Publication 1-0 reminds us, “There is no conceptual or operational starting or stopping point for strategic deterrence—it is perpetual.” Over the past decade, 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 potential Iranian nuclear weapons program.

The 2026 U.S. National Defense Strategy (NDS) centers deterrence on maintaining strong military capabilities and convincing adversaries they cannot achieve their objectives, rather than relying solely on the threat of retaliation. It emphasizes “peace through strength,” prioritizes deterring China as the primary strategic challenge, and reinforces nuclear and homeland defense as key pillars. The strategy also highlights the importance of alliances, while expecting partners to share more responsibility in sustaining regional deterrence.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Comprehend the difference between strategic deterrence and nuclear deterrence.

- Comprehend the fundamentals of strategic deterrence theories, concepts, and supporting capabilities, including nuclear force composition (i.e., weapons, delivery systems) and missions.
- Apply deterrence theory to current international security challenges.
- Comprehend the role strategic deterrence plays in U.S. strategy.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-E 2: Strategic Deterrence and Countering Weapons of Mass Destruction.
 - Supports CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are the basic concepts of deterrence? How does a state construct credible deterrence? What role does rationality play in deterrence calculations?
2. What are the challenges for states to "extend" deterrence to protect allies?
3. What is the difference between strategic deterrence and nuclear deterrence?
4. What is the difference between compellence and deterrence?
5. Which concept is more effective: deterrence by denial or deterrence by punishment?

D. Student Preparation (39 pp; ~22 min video; ~23 min podcast)

1. Podcast: Mazarr, Michael J. "Understanding Deterrence," RAND, 19 April 2018, Podcast audio, "How Perception Prevents Global War," generated by Notebook LM, 20 May 2026, (00:00-23:17). (~23 min)
2. Mazarr, Michael J. "Understanding Deterrence," *RAND*, 19 April 2018. (SCAN)
3. Biddle, Tami Davis. "Coercion Theory: A Basic Introduction for Practitioners," *Texas National Security Review* 3, no. 2 (Spring 2020), 94-109. (10 pp)
4. Video: Deterrence 101 – Foundations of Deterrence, *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, CSIS video, 08 December 2021, (00:00-17:39). (~18 min)

5. Hadley, Greg. "U.S. Won't Update Nuclear Posture Review: Pentagon Policy Chief," *Air & Space Forces Magazine*, 05 March 2026. (1 pp)
6. Williams, Heather and Nicholas Adamopoulos. "Trump's New Nuclear Architecture for Modernization and Arms Control," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 13 March 2026. (7 pp)
7. Video: "U.S. Strategic Command posture statement," *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 26 March 2026, (32:26-36:05). (~4 min)
8. Fink Anya, L. "Defense Primer: Strategic Nuclear Forces," *Congressional Research Service*, 01 April 2026. (2 pp)
9. "Nuclear Weapons: Who Has What at a Glance," *Arms Control Association*, March 2026. (4 pp)
10. Fink, Anya, L. "U.S. Extended Deterrence and Regional Nuclear Capabilities," *Congressional Research Service*, 06 February 2026. (2 pp)
11. Fink, Anya, L. "Defense Primer: U.S. Strategic Command (STRATCOM)" *Congressional Research Service*, 25 March 2026. (2 pp)
12. Fink, Anya, L. "Congressional Commission on the U.S. Strategic Posture," *Congressional Research Service*, 10 December 2025. (2 pp)
13. Edmund, Chick. "The Balance of Nuclear Deterrence in Europe after the Cold War," *Small Wars Journal*, 14 January 2026. (2 pp)
14. Raine, John. "The Erratic Results of Deterrence Against Non-State Armed Groups," *International Institute for Strategic Studies*, 02 April 2024. (2 pp)
15. Fuhrman, Matthew. "U.S. Allies and Adversaries Are Attempting Nuclear Deterrence without Weapons — Will It Work?" *War on the Rocks*, 07 April 2025. (5 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-7

CHINA AND RUSSIA IN THE 21ST CENTURY

A. Session Overview

China's ascendancy on the world stage is the most significant geopolitical development of the 21st Century. 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, second largest economy, and significant international social and political influence. It is also a state confronting significant internal 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 current National Security Strategy and National Defense Strategy 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. 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 towards China.

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. Since its start in 2022, the war in Ukraine has had profound impacts on Russia from its military, economy, and foreign relations to name but a few areas.

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 depend on its ability to navigate these challenges and develop its economy while still maintaining its global influence.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives

- Understand key elements of China's national interests and the strategy being used to achieve them.
- Comprehend how China utilizes the instruments of national power to achieve its national objectives.
- Evaluate and compare China and the United States using the instruments of national power.
- Understand key elements of Russia's national interests and the strategy being used to achieve them.
- Comprehend how Russia utilizes the instruments of national power to achieve its national objectives.
- Evaluate and compare Russia and the United States using the instruments of national power.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-E 1: Irregular Warfare.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Is China a rising or declining power? How do China and the United States compare when looking at each through the lens of the instruments of national power?
2. What are the basic elements of China's national security strategy?
3. Why does China want to control the East and South China Seas' land formations, surrounding waters, and potentially all water within the "ten-dashed line"? What are the implications for the United States and for regional states?
4. What are the basic elements of the Russian national security strategy?
5. How does the growing cooperation and engagement between Russia and other authoritarian powers threaten the rules-based international order?
6. How do Russian actions in the "gray zone" create security issues for the United States and Europe?

D. Student Preparation (57 pp; ~5 min video; ~21 min podcast)

1. Doshi, Rush. *The Long Game: China's Grand Strategy to Displace American Order*. London: Oxford University Press, 2022, 1-14. (13 pp)
2. Sutter, Karen, M., and Michael D. Sutherland. "China's "One Belt, One Road" Initiative: Economic Issues," *Congressional Research Service*, 16 May 2024. (2 pp)
3. Jones, Seth, G, et al. "Competing Without Fighting: China's Strategy of Political Warfare," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 02 August 2023, 8-15. (6 pp)
4. Podcast: U.S. Department of Defense. "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2025," 23 December 2025, generated by Notebook LM. 21 May 2026, (00:00-21:15). (~21 min)
5. U.S. Department of Defense. "Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China 2025," 23 December 2025, (SCAN).
6. Sharman, Christopher, H. "Mao Goes Maritime," *Proceedings*, Vol. 152/5/1,479, May 2026. (3 pp)
7. Barrios, Ricardo. "China Primer: China's Global Development Initiative," *Congressional Research Service*, 08 September 2025. (2 pp)
8. Brands, Hal, and Michael Beckley. "China Is a Declining Power—and That's the Problem," *Foreign Policy*, 24 September 2021. (7 pp)
9. Cooper, Julian. "Russia's Updated National Security Strategy," *NATO Defense College*, 19 July 2021. (4 pp)
10. Luzin, Pavel and Evgeny Roshchin. "Russia's Strategy and Military Thinking: Evolving Discourse by 2025," *Center for European Policy Analysis*, 24 April 2025. (7 pp)
11. Jones, Seth. "Russia's Shadow War Against the West," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, March 2025. (11 pp)
12. Video: "The Kremlin Playbook in Europe – State Capture of Cyprus," *Center for the Study of Democracy*, YouTube video, 15 December 2020, (00:00-4:51). (~5 min)
13. Fink, Anya, L. "Russia's Nuclear Weapons," *Congressional Research Service*, 22 April 2026. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-8

U.S. NATIONAL SECURITY STRATEGY

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 to Congress, which are designed to create internal coherence on foreign and defense policy within the Executive Branch itself, 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 dangerous world. 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.

By statute, 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 subordinate national security policies and strategies, which students will examine in IS-9.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Comprehend the purpose of the NSS and how it defines U.S. national interests and efforts to address them.
 - Examine the coordination between the ends, ways, and means in formulating strategy.
 - Evaluate how effectively the NSS provides guidance for U.S. military and national security professionals in formulating strategy.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does the current NSS define national interests and how does it propose addressing them?
2. Does the unclassified nature of the NSS impact its effectiveness? Should the NSS be abolished? Why or why not?
3. How evident is a “grand strategy” type within the current NSS?
4. How clearly are ends, ways, means, and risk expressed in the current NSS?
5. What is the greatest strength of the current NSS? What is its greatest weakness?

D. Student Preparation (47 pp; ~22 min video)

1. Pavel, Barry, and Alex Ward. “Purpose of a National Security Strategy,” *Atlantic Council*, 28 February 2019. (2 pp)
2. DuMont, Malia. “Elements of National Security Strategy,” *Atlantic Council*, 28 February 2019. (5 pp)
3. Chin, John J., Kiron Skinner, and Clay Yoo. “Understanding National Security Strategies Through Time.” *Texas National Security Review* 6, no. 4 (2023). (11 pp)
4. The White House. National Security Strategy of the United States of America. November 2025, pp. 1-29. (29 pp)
5. Video: “What Are the Core Pillars of the New National Security Strategy?,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, YouTube video, 05 December 2025, (00:00-02:16). (~2 min)
6. Video: “Trump's New National Security Strategy and How it May Play Out in 2026,” *Washington Week PBS*, YouTube video, 02 January 2026, (00:00-20:12). (~20 min)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-9

U.S. DEFENSE STRATEGIES: NDS AND NMS

A. Session Overview

IS-8 explored how the NSS provides a foundation for subsequent U.S. national security policies and strategies. With the NSS providing a holistic view of what 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 students will examine is the National Defense Strategy (NDS), and the National Military Strategy (NMS).

Signed by the Secretary of Defense, the NDS is a critical document that outlines how the DoD will address potential threats, defend national interests, and achieve the goals set forth in the NSS. 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 the United States’ peace and prosperity utilizing the military instrument of national power.

Taking it a step further, the NMS (signed by the CJCS) is another core document that provides a common thread to integrate and synchronize the activities of the Joint Staff, CCMDs, U.S. Armed 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 to 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.

Both of these strategic documents provide overarching guidance and inform 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 USC. IS-10 will provide more information on how the maritime services have incorporated this guidance, while IS-11 will discuss the role of the CCMDs.

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 current NDS.
 - Understand how the current NMS provides guidance to the Joint Force.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How have U.S. defense strategies evolved over the years? What was the driving force for the changes?
2. What are the major current and future challenges to the U.S. Joint Force?
3. Does the current NDS establish clear priorities for the DoD?
4. Does the current NMS establish clear priorities for the Joint Force?

D. Student Preparation (37 pp; ~30 min video)

1. O'Hanlon, Michael. "America the Assertive," in *To Dare Mighty Things*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2026, 223-236. (13 pp)
2. Lykke Jr., Arthur, F. "Defining Military Strategy," *Military Review*, January-February 1997. (4 pp)
3. Department of Defense. National Defense Strategy of the United States of America. 23 January 2026, pp. iii-23. (16 pp)
4. Video: "To Receive an Update on the National Defense Strategy," *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 03 March 2026, (46:00-1:15:34). (~30 min).
5. Singer, Peter. "Men lie, strategies lie—numbers don't," *Defense One*, 12 February 2026. (4 pp)
6. Joint Chiefs of Staff. National Military Strategy of the United States of America. 08 May 2023. (SCAN as an example of an NMS; to be updated when new NMS is released).

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of IS-9 in Week 5, students are required to successfully complete FA-1 addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-10

U.S. MARITIME STRATEGY

A. Session Overview

Having thus far examined the guidance provided by the NSS, NDS, and the NMS, IS-10 looks at the current maritime strategy endorsed 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 (the Navy, the Marine Corps and the Coast Guard) will work together in coordination to achieve the U.S. national security objectives set forth in the NSS, NDS, and NMS.

Maritime strategy is a central component of international security, shaping how states use naval power to protect economic interests, project force, and maintain stability across the world’s oceans. Because roughly 90 percent of global trade moves by sea, control of critical chokepoints and sea lines of communication—such as the Strait of Hormuz, South China Sea, and Suez Canal—is vital to both economic prosperity and national security. Maritime strategy encompasses not only traditional naval warfare, but also deterrence, power projection, freedom of navigation operations, and the protection of undersea infrastructure like communication cables. In an era of great power competition, particularly in the Indo-Pacific, maritime forces play a key role in deterring conflict and reassuring allies, while also managing risks of escalation in contested waters. As a result, international security is deeply tied to the ability of states to secure maritime domains, ensure the free flow of commerce, and maintain a stable balance of power at sea.

With over 95,000 miles of shoreline, the United States has always been a maritime nation. From its colonial founding, the United States’ economic and political ascendancy has been facilitated and underpinned by its mastery of the maritime domain. As outlined in the TSMS, America’s maritime services provide the means and ways of such mastery, ranging from diplomacy, force projection, maneuver warfare within littoral spaces, coastal defense, defense of the global commons, law enforcement and port protection, among other activities.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand key security challenges and opportunities facing the U.S. maritime services.
 - Analyze maritime strategy documents and their suitability for the maritime security environment.
 - Comprehend the maritime services’ contribution to the Joint Force toward the ends defined in the National Security Strategy, National Defense Strategy, and National Military Strategy.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. 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?
2. What are some urgent and long-term challenges facing the maritime services? Does the TSMS provide an effective pathway forward to address these challenges?
3. What does the rise of Chinese naval power mean for U.S. maritime strategy and how should the United States respond?
4. How does the imperative for the United States to ensure free and open access of maritime chokepoints impact U.S. maritime strategy?
5. What is the most important or impactful piece of guidance in the CNO's "Fighting Instructions"? Why?

D. Student Preparation (48 pp; ~35 min video; ~8 min podcast)

1. Video: "The Stakes at Sea," *Brookings Institution*, 02 June 2023, (00:00-03:19). (~3 min)
2. Jensen, Benjamin, Mackenzie Eaglen, and Henry H. Carroll. "What the New National Security Strategy Means for Naval Forces," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 18 December 2025. (4 pp)
3. Podcast: "Advantage at Sea, Prevailing with Integrated All-Domain Naval Power," Department of the Navy, December 2020, Podcast audio, "Securing the Contested Global Commons," generated by Notebook LM, 19 May 2026. (00:00-05:52) (~6 min)
4. 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. (SCAN)
5. Mahnken, Thomas G. "A Maritime Strategy to Deal with China," *Proceedings* Vol. 148/2/1,428, February 2022. (7 pp)
6. Video: "CNO Releases U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions at Naval War College," *Naval War*

College, YouTube video, 09 February 2026, (00:00-32:30). (~32 min)

7. Chief of Naval Operations. “U.S. Navy Fighting Instructions - One Pager,” 06 February 2026. (1 pp)
8. Chief of Naval Operations. “The Hedge Strategy - Placemat,” 06 February 2026. (1 pp)
9. Podcast: “Summary of U.S. Marine Corps Force Design Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress,” Congressional Research Service, 24 November 2025, Podcast audio, “Looking at Marine Corps Force Design,” generated by Notebook LM, 21 May 2026, (00:00-01:47) (~2 min)
10. “Summary of U.S. Marine Corps Force Design Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress,” *Congressional Research Service*, 24 November 2025. (SCAN)
11. Shapiro, Zach. “How the Coast Guard is Planning for the 2040s and Beyond,” *U.S. Coast Guard*, 05 August 2025. (1 pp)
12. Stubbs, Bruce. “Maritime Dominance Must Include the U.S. Coast Guard,” *Proceedings*, Vol. 152/4/1,478, April 2026. (4 pp)
13. 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)
14. Latham, Andrew. “From Sea Control to Seabed Control,” *Real Clear Defense*, 29 April 2026. (3 pp)
15. Vandenengel, Jeff. “National Policy and the Panoceanic Navy,” *Proceedings*, Vol. 152/3/1,477, March 2026. (14 pp)
16. Reveron, Derek. “Why America Needs a Four-Ocean Navy,” *Center for International Maritime Security*, 20 March 2026. (7 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-11

THE COMBATANT COMMANDS, GLOBAL INTEGRATION, AND GLOBAL FORCE MANAGEMENT

A. Session Overview

What are the U.S. combatant commands? This session seeks to answer that very question; it provides an overview of the Unified Command Plan (UCP), the CCMDs, and their role in developing theater strategy. There are currently 11 CCMDs – four with transregional responsibilities and seven with assigned physical areas of responsibility (AORs). CCMDs with transregional responsibilities operate worldwide 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 geographic areas and have a regional military focus. Of note, individual CCMDs are often designated by the CJCS as a “coordinating authority” (CA) for planning, assessing, and recommending changes to plans such as global campaign plans (GCP), regional campaign plans (RCP), or functional campaign plans (FCP).

CCDRs also maintain responsibility for developing combatant campaign plans (CCP) that address their respective area and functional responsibilities. A CCP incorporates intermediate objectives and tasks from GCPs, RCPs, and FCPs. The CCP is, therefore, the principal operational plan for execution of a CCMD’s theater and global responsibilities for all priority challenges. The CCP balances the risks and opportunities of the command and simultaneously accounts for all assigned theater and problem-focused tasks to provide an integrated campaign plan spanning the CCMDs’ assigned responsibilities.

As 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.” The CJCS plays a critical role in the global integration of U.S. military forces. This concept 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 addressing transregional challenges in multiple domains within the contemporary international security environment.

Global Force Management (GFM) is a framework used by the DoD to allocate and manage U.S. military forces effectively and another CJCS SAE for JPME. GFM is the action that links the Joint Force to operational demand. Specifically, it is the way the DoD answers CCMD force requirements with force provider capabilities and capacities. The GFM process establishes strategic command and control (C2), strategic posture, and insight into global military force availability. These processes are executed to support military plans and operations, which are guided by national strategy.

Simply put, the GFM process is designed to ensure the right troops, equipment, and resources are in the right place at the right time, whether for ongoing operations, emergency response, or long-term strategic planning. As such, GFM integrates various processes, including force assignment (matching forces to specific missions), force apportionment (prioritizing forces for specific scenarios), and force allocation (providing forces based on current needs). This system aims to align military capabilities with global strategic objectives while maintaining readiness for unforeseen contingencies and is a vital tool for optimizing military operations and ensuring efficiency in responding to diverse challenges across the globe. While GFM may not be a part of your daily duties within the DoD or USG, it impacts every element of the U.S. military, so it is essential for students to have a baseline understanding of this framework.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the purpose of the UCP.
 - Understand the origins, roles, and responsibilities of CCMDs.
 - Analyze the importance of global integration and its impact on the CCMDs.
 - Comprehend the purpose, capabilities, and limitations of the GFM processes.
 - Comprehend the directed readiness, assignment, allocation, apportionment, and assessment processes consistent with applicable guidance, policy, and doctrine.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3c: Global Force Management.

C. Guidance Questions

1. Why did the United States initially create regional combatant commands?
2. Is the current CCMD structure still effective? What changes might be warranted, if there are any, and why?
3. Do CCDRs have 'too much' power relative to the U.S Armed Services or the Joint Staff? Do they have too much sway in the execution of U.S. foreign policy?
4. What is the difference between assignment, apportionment, and allocation in the GFM process?

5. How does the GFM process help CCDRs in executing their military objectives within their AOR? How does it hinder them from doing the same?

D. Student Preparation (37 pp; ~72 min video)

1. Pratt, Michael W. “The Unified Command Plan,” Faculty paper, *Naval War College*, Newport, RI, January 2021. Revised Summer 2026. (10 pp)
2. Video: Coffey, Ross, “NWC Talks: Combatant Command 101,” *Naval War College* video, 10 August 2021, (00:00-14:39). (~14 min)
3. Reveron, Derek S., James L. Cook., and Ross M. Coffey. “Competing Regionally: Developing Theater Strategy,” *Joint Force Quarterly* 104, 1st quarter 2022, 55-61. (5 pp)
4. The Joint Staff. “CJCSI 3141.01F: Management and Review of Campaign and Contingency Plans,” 31 January 2019, A-3 – A-7. (5 pp)
5. Pillai, Chad. “Developing a Combatant Command Campaign Plan: Lessons Learned at U.S. Central Command,” *Modern War Institute*, 16 June 2021. (5 pp)
6. Video: Conway, Tim. “Introduction to Global Force Management,” *Naval War College*, 10 January 2025. (12:29-44:23, 50:31-1:05:33, 1:15:05-1:17:35, 1:18:30-1:27:05). (~ 58 min)
7. Conway, Tim. “Introduction to Global Force Management,” Slide Presentation. *Naval War College*, 10 January 2025. (SCAN)
8. The Joint Staff. “Joint Publication 3-0, Joint Campaigns and Operations,” Global Integration, Global Force Management, and Dynamic Force Employment. 18 June 2022, IV-4 - IV-8. (2 pp)
9. Eaglen, Mackenzie, “Putting Combatant Commands on a Demand Signal Diet,” *War on the Rocks*, 09 November 2020. (6 pp)
10. Feikert, Andrew. “Defense Primer: U.S. Special Operations Forces,” *Congressional Research Service*, 19 November 2025. (2 pp)
11. Keys, Cameron M. and Luke Nicastrò. “Defense Primer: United States Transportation Command,” *Congressional Research Service*, 12 December 2024. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and

IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-12

HOMELAND DEFENSE AND THE WESTERN HEMISPHERE (USNORTHCOM)

A. Session Overview

The Western Hemisphere, encompassing North, Central, and South America, remains a vital focus for U.S. homeland defense and international security. The 2025 NSS emphasizes that the United States will “strengthen partnerships across the hemisphere to secure our borders, enhance regional stability, and counter emerging threats,” while the 2026 NDS highlights that the DoD will “prioritize the defense of the homeland and the Western Hemisphere by maintaining credible deterrence, enhancing regional partnerships, and ensuring rapid response capabilities.” Central to this approach is the “Trump Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine, which asserts that the U.S. will act proactively to deter threats in its hemisphere rather than waiting for them to reach American territory, reinforcing a forward-leaning defense posture.

Homeland defense encompasses a broad range of missions, including detecting and interdicting trafficking of illicit drugs, weapons, and people; countering cyber-attacks on critical infrastructure; preventing terrorist infiltration; and supporting pandemic and disaster response. U.S. forces coordinate closely with regional partners through joint exercises, intelligence sharing, and capacity-building initiatives to ensure rapid deployment and operational readiness. As the NDS notes, the U.S. will “invest in capabilities that allow for flexible and rapid deployment across the hemisphere to protect American interests and prevent crises from escalating,” integrating diplomacy, defense, and development to safeguard the homeland while promoting stability and security throughout the region. Since the 9/11 attacks, homeland defense has become a key priority for the Department of Defense. For example, USNORTHCOM was created in 2002 as the lead organization for defending the U.S. homeland from direct attack and providing U.S. military assistance to civil authorities in the event of manmade and natural disasters. In addition to protecting the homeland and critical infrastructure from a sophisticated array of missile threats, USNORTHCOM provides support to U.S. civil authorities for border security and combatting narco-terrorism.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of the Western Hemisphere to U.S. national security.
 - Understand the role USNORTHCOM plays in defending the U.S. homeland.
 - Analyze and assess the security threats facing the U.S. homeland.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does USNORTHCOM define its core mission in an era where the homeland is no longer a sanctuary?
2. How does USNORTHCOM's relationship with allies and partners differ from other geographic combatant commands?
3. How is USNORTHCOM adapting to long-range precision strike threats from near-peer competitors?
4. What does it mean for the U.S. to prioritize the Western Hemisphere over other regions, as the 2025 National Security Strategy suggests?
5. Does the "Golden Dome" undermine or reinforce nuclear deterrence?

D. Student Preparation (33 pp; ~45 min video)

1. Video: "U.S. Northern Command posture statement," *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 19 March 2026, (26:26-30:17). (~4 min)
2. Seelke, Clare Ribando, and Robert Switzer. "Defense Primer: U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)" *Congressional Research Service*, 25 June 2025. (2 pp)
3. Video: "Defending the Homeland," *Air & Space Forces Association*, YouTube video, 18 March 2026, (04:06-18:02). (~14 min)
4. McCusker, Elaine. "Protecting the Homeland," *American Enterprise Institute*, 08 October 2025. (2 pp)
5. Starling-Daniels, Clementine, and Amy Cowley. "The Border and Beyond: Homeland Defense in an Era of New Strategic Threats," *Atlantic Council*, 03 July 2025. (9 pp)
6. Berg, Ryan. C. "Experts React: The NSS and Washington's New Approach to the Western Hemisphere," *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 10 December 2025. (3 pp)
7. Berg, Ryan, C., and Joseph Ledford. "Trump's Western Hemisphere Pivot Is Real," *Foreign Policy*, 19 December 2025. (4 pp)
8. Dennis, Hannah D., and Ronald O'Rourke. "National Security Strategy: Potential Implications for DOD of Prioritizing the Western Hemisphere and China" *Congressional Research Service*, 18 December 2025. (2 pp)

9. Video: “Strategic Port Investments in the Western Hemisphere and the Implications for Homeland Security,” *House Homeland Security Committee Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security*, 11 February 2025, (22:35-41:26). (~20 min)
10. Holmes, James. “China Could Build an “Island Chain” Around America,” *The National Interest*, 01 March 2025. (4 pp)
11. Dennis, Hannah D. “Defense Primer: U.S. Ballistic Missile Defense,” *Congressional Research Service*, 30 December 2024. (2 pp)
12. Defense Intelligence Agency. “Golden Dome for America: Current and Future Missile Threats to the U.S. Homeland,” 13 May 2025. (1 pp)
13. Video: “U.S. Homeland Defense and Trump’s Golden Dome,” *Wall Street Journal Opinion*, YouTube video, 10 June 2025, (00:00-07:13) (~7 min)
14. Singh, Stavan and David Luckey. “Targeting Cartels as Terrorists Puts New Tools in Play,” *RAND*. 09 April 2025. (2 pp)
15. Dennis, Hannah D., Kamarek, Kristy N., and Nicholas M .Munves. “Defense Primer: Defense Support of Civil Authorities,” *Congressional Research Service*, 09 April 2025. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-13

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

A. Session Overview

This is the first of four sessions that will explore the oceanic regions most significant to U.S. security considerations: the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, the Pacific Ocean Region, and the Indian Ocean Region. IS-13 addresses the Atlantic Ocean Region as it plays a crucial role in the United States' focus on the Western Hemisphere.

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, and 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 the littorals of Latin America and West Africa are added, 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 Atlantic Ocean region remains a cornerstone of international security, linking North America, Europe, Africa, and South America through dense networks of trade, communication, and military cooperation. It carries a substantial share of global commerce and undersea data traffic, making secure sea lines of communication and subsea infrastructure essential to economic stability. The region also serves as a critical strategic corridor for military mobility, enabling reinforcement, deterrence, and power projection among allies.

Collective defense in the Atlantic is anchored by NATO, which binds the United States and European partners in a shared security framework. The 2026 National Defense Strategy (NDS) reinforces this importance while emphasizing burden-sharing, prioritizing homeland defense and calling for allies to assume greater responsibility. It highlights a strategic focus on "defend[ing] the U.S. homeland" and strengthening partnerships to maintain deterrence.

The 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy (NSS) provides the broader strategic context, emphasizing that U.S. foreign policy must focus on "the protection of core national interests" and that not every region can receive equal attention. It frames strategy as a "concrete, realistic

plan” linking national objectives with available means, underscoring prioritization and selectivity in global engagement.

Together, these documents highlight a shift toward realism, prioritization, and alliance burden-sharing. Despite this recalibration, the Atlantic Ocean region remains indispensable to international security as a vital connector of economic power, military cooperation, and collective defense.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of the Atlantic Ocean Region to U.S. security.
 - Understand how the trans-Atlantic relationship, especially NATO, bolsters U.S. security and its position in the world.
 - Understand the north-south linkages in trans-Atlantic security and the role of the Western Hemisphere and Africa in securing the Atlantic basin.
 - 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.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

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. 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?
5. How do Russian and Chinese security challenges manifest in the Atlantic Ocean Region? What are the Russian and Chinese strategic objectives in the region?

D. Student Preparation (35 pp; ~20 min video)

1. Video: The Debrief Episode 2” Understanding Regions Through Oceans,” *Naval War College*, YouTube video, 26 September 2023, (00:00-11:46). (~ 12 min)
2. Video: “U.S. European Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 12 March 2026, (28:32-32:32). (~4 min)
3. Dennis, Hannah D. and Anya L. Fink. “Defense Primer: United States European Command,” *Congressional Research Service*, 05 February 2026. (2 pp)
4. Jones, Bruce, and Daniel S. Hamilton. “The promise of a free and open Atlantic,” *Brookings Institution*, 20 September 2023. (2 pp)
5. Ashford, Emma. “A Better Trans-Atlantic Relationship Is Entirely Possible,” *Foreign Policy*, 23 March 2026. (4 pp)
6. Video: “What is the NATO Strategic Concept?,” *NATO*, YouTube video, 14 June 2022, (00:00-02:15). (~2 min)
7. Video: “The Transatlantic Economy 2026,” *Foreign Policy Institute*, YouTube video, 16 March 2026, (00:00-01:26). (~2 min)
8. Hamilton, Daniel S. and Joseph P. Quinlan. “The Transatlantic Economy 2026,” *Foreign Policy Institute*, 2025, 3-7, 58-60. (6 pp)
9. Wall, Colin, and Pierre Morcos. “Invisible and Vital: Undersea Cables and Transatlantic Security,” Center for Strategic and International Studies, 11 June 2021. (4 pp)
10. De Freitas, Marcus Vinicius. “Transatlantic Relations in Times of Transition,” *Policy Center for the New South*, PB-56/24, 22 October 2024. (7 pp)
11. Al Anyaoui, Karim. “The Atlantic Ocean: A New Frontier for Global Cooperation and African Growth,” *Brookings*, 11 February 2025. (2 pp)
12. Koenig, Nicole, and Leonard Schutte. “European Union: A Perfect Polar Storm,” Chapter 4, Munich Security Conference Report, February 2025. (7 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-14

THE ARCTIC OCEAN REGION: FOUNDATIONS AND SECURITY CHALLENGES (USNORTHCOM/USEUCOM)

A. Session Overview

The Arctic Ocean, the smallest and shallowest of the world's oceans, is defined by its location around the North Pole, encompassing the area north of the Arctic Circle at approximately 66.5°N latitude. It is bounded by North America, Greenland, Northern Europe, and Siberia, and includes marginal seas such as the Barents, Chukchi, Beaufort, and Kara Seas. The ocean is characterized by permanent and seasonal sea ice, unique ecosystems, and extreme environmental conditions, including polar nights and low temperatures that challenge navigation and human activity. Three U.S. combatant commands operate in Arctic regions. European Command (USEUCOM), Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM), and Northern Command (USNORTHCOM) each have substantial equity in the Arctic, stemming from the geographic extension to the North Pole of their respective areas of responsibility.

In recent years, the Arctic Ocean has become a growing focal point of international security due to melting sea ice, which is opening new shipping routes like the Northern Sea Route and granting access to significant untapped natural resources, including oil, gas, and rare minerals. These developments have intensified geopolitical competition, as nations such as the United States, Russia, Canada, and China increase their military presence, conduct surveillance operations, and invest in ice-capable naval forces. At the same time, the Arctic remains an arena for international cooperation through agreements on scientific research, environmental protection, and maritime safety. This combination of strategic importance, economic potential, and environmental vulnerability makes the Arctic Ocean a critical and contested region in international security.

The 2025 NSS does not explicitly discuss the Arctic Ocean as a distinct region, which is a notable departure from earlier strategies. However, the Arctic is still implicitly addressed through broader themes in the strategy. The NSS emphasizes securing the Western Hemisphere, protecting critical supply chains, and maintaining access to strategically important locations—all of which apply to the Arctic due to its growing importance for resources, shipping routes, and great-power competition.

In short, the 2025 NSS largely subsumes the Arctic into a wider hemispheric and economic security framework rather than treating it as a standalone priority, signaling a shift away from region-specific Arctic policy toward a more generalized, interest-driven approach.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of the Arctic Ocean Region to U.S. security.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does the shift toward a multipolar international order reshape Arctic power balances?
2. How will competition over oil, gas, rare earth minerals, and fisheries shape state behavior in the Arctic Ocean?
3. Is security of the Arctic Ocean Region a vital, important, or peripheral U.S. national interest? Explain why.
4. What are the implications of Russia's military modernization and expanded Arctic basing for NATO's northern posture?
5. How should the U.S. and allies respond to China's self-declared status as a "near-Arctic state" and its growing scientific, economic, and dual-use presence in the region?

D. Student Preparation (30 pp; ~23 min video; ~24 min podcast)

1. Nesheiwat, Julia. "Why the Arctic matters to the United States," *Atlantic Council*, 25 February 2026. (3 pp)
2. Conley, Heather, A. "The Arctic Great Game, and Why America Risks Losing It," *Foreign Affairs*, 24 June 2025. (5 pp)
3. Imai, Kyoko, Connor McPartland, and Audrey Roh. "A Framework for US-Japan Cooperation in the Arctic," *Atlantic Council*, 28 May 2026. (4 pp)
4. 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)
5. Pollock, Greg. "Assessing Russian Intentions in the Arctic," *Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies*, 24 April 2025. (2 pp)
6. "The Looming Military Threat in the Arctic," *The Economist*, 12 August 2025. (2 pp)
7. Pollock, Greg. "From Catching Mice to Breaking Ice: Understanding China's Arctic Ambitions," *Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies*, 09 December 2025. (6 pp)

8. Moerbe, Wes. “Hybrid Threat in the Arctic-Pacific,” *Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies*, 04 April 2025. (2 pp)
9. Moerbe, Wes. “Preserving and Protecting Maritime Power via the Arctic-Pacific,” *Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies*, 19 March 2025. (2 pp)
10. Podcast: Auerswald, David. “All security is local: Arctic defense policies and domain awareness,” *Atlantic Council*, 30 March 2022, Podcast audio, “Tripwires in the Arctic,” generated by Notebook LM, 25 May 2026, (00:00-23:48). (~24 min)
11. Auerswald, David. “All security is local: Arctic defense policies and domain awareness,” *Atlantic Council*, 30 March 2022. (SCAN)
12. Maritime Risk Symposium 2025. “Executive Summary and Key Takeaways,” *Ted Stevens Center for Arctic Security Studies*, 07 July 2025, 5-9 (4 pp)
13. Video: “Arctic Security in an Era of Global Competition: Safeguarding U.S. Interests in Frigid Waters,” *House Subcommittee on Transportation and Maritime Security and the Subcommittee on Counterterrorism and Intelligence*, 26 March 2026, (2:01:00-2:17:00). (~17 min)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-15

LATIN AMERICA AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (USSOUTHCOM)

A. Session Overview

Although often overlooked on the international stage, Latin America holds a significant position in international security for a multitude of reasons. The region is “generally understood to consist of the entire continent of South America in addition to Mexico, Central America, and the islands of the Caribbean whose inhabitants...shared the experience of conquest and colonization by the Spaniards and Portuguese from the late 15th through the 18th century as well as movements of independence from Spain and Portugal in the early 19th century.”² The U.S. combatant command primarily responsible for this region is U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM), although USNORTHCOM works in close coordination with USSOUTHCOM on issues such as drug trafficking and migration.

Latin America plays a central and increasingly strategic role in international security, particularly due to its proximity to the United States. While the region has relatively low levels of interstate conflict, it faces persistent transnational threats such as narcotrafficking, organized crime, and irregular migration—issues that directly affect U.S. homeland security. The 2025 U.S. National Security Strategy underscores this priority, emphasizing the need to secure “the homeland and the Western Hemisphere” and to address threats emerging “closer to home.”

At the same time, the reemergence of a “Trump Corollary” to the Monroe Doctrine—which frames the hemisphere as a zone of privileged U.S. interest—has had significant implications for the region. This approach seeks to limit the influence of external powers such as China and Russia, while encouraging governments aligned with U.S. strategic objectives. However, it has also generated concern among Latin American states about sovereignty, autonomy, and the potential return of interventionist policies. As a result, Latin America remains central to global security, where regional stability, great power competition, and U.S. strategic priorities intersect.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the major 21st century security challenges facing Latin American states.
 - Explain the influence of the United States on security issues in Latin America.
 - Assess the growing role of China, Russia, and other external actors in Latin America's security dynamics.
 - Identify emerging trends and potential future challenges to security in Latin America (e.g., climate change, water scarcity, demographic shifts).

² <https://www.britannica.com/place/Latin-America>

- Understand the influence of non-state actors (e.g., terrorist organizations, militias, transnational criminal organizations) on security in Latin America.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are the biggest security challenges and opportunities facing Latin America in the coming decades?
2. Should the United States maintain its traditional role as a security guarantor in Latin America, or should it cede more responsibility to regional organizations?
3. How is the growing influence of China and Russia impacting security in Latin America, and what are the implications for the United States?
4. Should the definition of security in Latin America be expanded to include non-traditional threats like poverty, inequality, and environmental degradation?
5. How are transnational threats evolving in Latin America, and how can the region cooperate with international partners to combat them more effectively?

D. Student Preparation (45 pp; ~12 min video; ~2 min podcast)

1. Video: “U.S. Southern Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 19 March 2026, (30:22-33:41). (~3 min)
2. Dennis, Hannah D., and Joshua Klein. “Defense Primer: U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM),” *Congressional Research Service*, 21 July 2025. (2 pp)
3. Berg, Ryan, C. “Insulate, Curtail, and Compete: Sketching a U.S. Grand Strategy in Latin America and the Caribbean,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 11 May 2023. (19 pp)
4. Video: “Mexico Is Building a \$7.5 Billion Trade Route to Compete with Panama Canal,” *Wall Street Journal*, 23 September 2024, (00:00-08:42). (~9 min)
5. De la Fuente, Erich, and Eduardo A. Gamarra. “Latin America’s Changing Web of Risks,” *Americas Quarterly*, 07 November 2025. (3 pp)

6. De la Fuente, Erich, et al. “2025 Latin America Country Risk Index and Analysis,” *Adam Smith Center for Economic Freedom*, 2025. (SCAN)
7. Holmes, James. “China's Maritime Moves in South America: A Wake-Up Call for U.S. Leadership,” *The National Interest*, 18 November 2024. (2 pp)
8. “China’s Growing Influence in Latin America,” Council on Foreign Relations, 06 June 2025. (5 pp)
9. Farah, Douglas and Marianne Richardson. “Dangerous Alliances: Russia’s Strategic Inroads in Latin America,” *National Defense University Press*, 21 December 2022, 1-8, SCAN remainder. (8 pp)
10. Sanchez, Wilder, A. “Beyond Venezuela and Cuba: The U.S. Military’s Future Operations in the Western Hemisphere,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 23 April 2026. (3 pp)
11. Osborn, Catherine. “Latin American Countries Boost Ties to Africa,” *Foreign Policy*, 27 March 2026. (2 pp)
12. O’Neil, Shannon, K. “Latin America’s Munich No-Show Was a Big Mistake,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 17 February 2026. (1 pp)
13. Podcast: Meyer, Peter, J. “Organization of American States: In Brief,” *Congressional Research Service*, 07 May 2026, Podcast audio, “Snapshot of the Organization of American States,” Generated by Notebook LM, 25 May 2026, (00:00-01:53). (~2 min)
14. Meyer, Peter, J. “Organization of American States: In Brief,” *Congressional Research Service*, 07 May 2026. (SCAN)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-16

THE MIDDLE EAST AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (USCENTCOM)

A. Session Overview

The Middle East occupies a significant position within the global security landscape and is a region marked by complex and enduring geopolitical tensions. There are competing definitions of which states comprise the “Middle East” (a Eurocentric term coined in the 19th century). Generally, it can be defined as, “...the lands around the southern and eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, encompassing at least the Arabian Peninsula and, by some definitions, Iran, North Africa, and sometimes beyond... In addition, geographic factors often require statesmen and others to take account of Afghanistan and Pakistan in connection with the affairs of the Middle East.”³ The U.S. combatant command primarily responsible for this region is U.S. Central Command (USCENTCOM); the regional area of responsibility for USCENTCOM in fact does include Pakistan and Afghanistan due to the geographic linkages referenced above. It also includes Egypt, although that state is on the African continent.

The Middle East occupies a pivotal role in international security due to its concentration of energy resources, strategic geography, and enduring relevance to great power politics. Key maritime chokepoints such as the Strait of Hormuz and the Suez Canal make the region indispensable to global trade and energy flows; disruptions in these areas can have immediate effects on global markets and security planning. Beyond geography, the region’s political and military developments continue to shape broader patterns of international order, alliance behavior, and external intervention.

A major driver of contemporary instability has been the Israel– Hamas War, which has intensified regional polarization and drawn sustained diplomatic, military, and humanitarian involvement from external actors, including the United States and European partners. The conflict has also heightened tensions across adjacent theaters, influencing deterrence calculations among regional states and non-state actors, while reinforcing the Middle East’s role as a focal point of global crisis management and diplomacy.

U.S. engagement in the region remains significant. The 2025 NSS emphasizes enduring priorities such as “Israel’s security...freedom of navigation...and securing energy supplies,” while also stating that “the days in which the Middle East dominated American foreign policy...are...over.” This reflects a partial shift toward burden-sharing, even as core commitments remain intact. At the same time, U.S. military activity has continued to shape the regional security environment. The 2025 strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities marked a significant escalation in efforts to constrain nuclear proliferation risks. In addition, Operation Epic Fury, the U.S. military campaign against Iran, reflects an expanded effort to target Iranian military infrastructure and degrade capabilities associated with missile production and power projection.

³ <https://www.britannica.com/place/Middle-East>

Despite relative fluctuations in U.S. prioritization compared to other global regions, the Middle East remains central to international security due to its energy significance, ongoing conflicts, maritime chokepoints, and its continued role as a key arena of competition and cooperation among major powers including the United States, Russia, and China.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the major 21st century security challenges facing the states in the Middle East.
 - Identify emerging trends and potential future challenges to security in the Middle East (e.g., water scarcity, demographic shifts).
 - Evaluate the role of international cooperation in addressing U.S. regional security challenges in the Middle East.
 - Understand the influence of non-state actors (e.g., terrorist organizations, militias) on regional security.
 - Understand the impact of the Middle East on global energy security and economic stability.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How do ongoing regional conflicts in the Middle East impact international security and U.S. national security objectives within the region?
2. To what extent do sectarian tensions within the Middle East contribute to broader regional instability? Does this dynamic have an impact beyond the immediate region?
3. How is the competition for resources, like water and oil, affecting security dynamics in the region?
4. What role do external powers, such as the United States, Russia, and China, play in shaping security issues in the Middle East? How do the interests of these external actors sometimes clash and contribute to regional tensions?

D. Student Preparation (55 pp; ~13 min video)

1. Video: “U.S. Central Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 14 May 2026, (14:36-19:16) (~5 min)
2. Lucas, Nathan, J. and Brendan W. McGarry. “United States Central Command.” *Congressional Research Service*, 16 December 2022. (2 pp)
3. U.S. Central Command. “Theater Strategy: People, Partners, and Innovation,” 08 June 2023. (SCAN as an example of theater strategy; to be updated when new strategy is released.)
4. “The Security Environment in the Middle East,” *The Heritage Foundation*, 15 April 2026, 1-15. (14 pp)
5. Kerr, Paul, K. “Iran and Nuclear Weapons Production,” *Congressional Research Service*, 26 March 2026. (2 pp)
6. Blanchard, Christopher M. et al. “U.S. Conflict with Iran,” *Congressional Research Service*, 26 March 2026. (11 pp)
7. “Backgrounder: The Axis of Resistance,” *The Middle East Institute*, 06 January 2026. (8 pp)
8. Chaziza, Mordechai and Carmela Lutmar. “China’s Strategic Engagement in the Middle East,” *Asia Policy* 20(3), July 2025. (10 pp)
9. Kozhanov, Nikolay. “Russia is Weakened, but its Influence in the Middle East Should Not be Underestimated,” *Chatham House*, 11 December 2025. (2 pp)
10. Brown, Phillip. “Middle East Oil,” *Congressional Research Service*, 03 March 2026. (1 pp)
11. Funairole, Matthew, P. et al. “The Strait of Hormuz in 8 Charts,” *The Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 22 April 2026. (4 pp)
12. Video: “Iraq Is Building a \$17 Billion Trade Corridor to Bypass the Suez Canal,” *Wall Street Journal*, 18 March 2025. (00:00-07:53). (~ 8 min)
13. U.S. Department of State, “Fact Sheet: U.S. Security Cooperation with Israel,” 25 April 2025. (1 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and

IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-17

AFRICA AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (USAFRICOM)

A. Session Overview

Africa plays a significant and evolving role in international security, shaped by internal challenges, demographic pressures, economic growth, and increasing involvement from global powers. It is the second-largest continent by geographic area and the second-most populous continent globally, with an area of approximately 11.6 million mi² and a population of over 1.4 billion people. Africa has 54 countries fully recognized by the United Nations, two independent states with limited or no recognition (Western Sahara and Somaliland), and several territories (mostly islands) controlled by non-African countries. The U.S. combatant command responsible for this vast region (excluding Egypt which is in USCENTCOM) is U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM).

Many African states continue to face security threats such as terrorism, civil conflict, and political instability. Groups like Boko Haram and Al-Shabaab operate across borders and contribute to regional insecurity. Demographic change is one of the most important factors shaping Africa's future role. The continent has the fastest-growing population in the world, with a large youth population. This creates major economic potential but also serious risks. If governments cannot provide enough jobs, education, and services, high youth unemployment can fuel unrest, migration, or recruitment into armed groups. Rapid urbanization adds pressure, as cities expand faster than infrastructure and governance can keep up. Economic and governance challenges remain significant. Poverty, inequality, and weak institutions in some states can increase instability and limit effective responses to crises. At the same time, climate change is intensifying droughts and resource scarcity, contributing to conflict over land and water and increasing displacement. Despite these challenges, Africa's economic clout is growing. Many countries are experiencing steady economic expansion, and the continent is rich in critical natural resources such as minerals, energy, and rare earth elements that are essential to global industries. As a result, Africa is becoming more influential in global markets and supply chains, increasing its strategic importance in international security.

The 2025 NSS reflects a selective approach to Africa, stating: "Not every country, region, issue... can be the focus," and emphasizing that, "The purpose of foreign policy is the protection of core national interests." In practice this means the United States primarily engages in Africa in areas such as counterterrorism, access to strategic resources, and geopolitical competition.

External powers are playing an increasing role. China has expanded its influence through large-scale infrastructure and investment projects under the Belt and Road Initiative, strengthening its economic and political presence. Russia focuses more on military and security involvement, including partnerships with governments and the use of proxy military forces like the Africa Corps. Overall, Africa is both a region facing complex security challenges and a rising economic and strategic force. Its growing population, expanding economic influence, and importance in global resource supply chains make it increasingly central to international security, while competition among major powers further elevates its global significance.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the major security challenges facing African states in the 21st century.
 - Identify emerging trends and potential future challenges to the security of Africa (e.g., water and food scarcity, internal conflict, demographic shifts, foreign influence, etc).
 - Evaluate the role of international cooperation in addressing African security challenges.
 - Understand the influence of both state and non-state actors on security in Africa.
 - Evaluate the effectiveness of different strategies for promoting peace and security in Africa (e.g., diplomacy, sanctions, nation-building).
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How can African states address the root causes of terrorism, such as poverty and lack of opportunity, while also combating VEOs? What role should external powers, such as the United States, China, and Russia, play in these efforts?
2. Does the United States have a clear vision to support peace efforts within Africa?
3. How can the international community better balance security assistance with development aid to address the root causes of conflict in Africa?
4. What are China's national security objectives in Africa? What actions is China taking on the continent to achieve them?
5. What are Russia's national security objectives in Africa? What actions is Russia taking on the continent to achieve them?

D. Student Preparation (47 pp; ~7 min video)

1. Video: "U.S. Africa Command posture statement," *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 14 May 2026, (19:22-23:56) (~5 min)

2. U.S. Africa Command. “U.S. Africa Command Theater Strategy 2024-2033: African Partner Led, U.S. & Ally Enabled,” 2024. (SCAN as an example of theater strategy; to be updated when new strategy is released.)
3. Video: “Africa’s Shifting Security Map: Ten Years on, a Continent under Strain,” *Africa News*, YouTube video, 20 April 2026, (00:00-01:29). (~2 min)
4. “Ten African Security Trends from 2025 in Graphics,” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 17 December 2025. (11 pp)
5. “The Widening Scope of Africa’s Militant Islamist Threat,” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 06 April 2026. (4 pp)
6. “Violent Extremism in the Sahel,” *Council on Foreign Relations*, 05 May 2026. (5 pp)
7. Wane, El-Gassim. “Africa at a Crossroads: Pan-Africanism, Global Disorder and Collective Security,” *Amani Africa*, 27 February 2026. (3 pp)
8. “Africa’s New Role in a Changing World: Strategic Alliances, Homegrown Innovation and Sustainable Growth,” *Business Insider Africa*, 03 September 2025. (2 pp)
9. “The future of Africa will be shaped by investment rather than aid,” *The Economist*, 19 March 2026. (1 pp)
10. “Could China help make Africa a factory for the world?,” *The Economist*, 29 April 2026. (1 pp)
11. “China’s Critical Minerals Strategy in Africa,” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 09 December 2025. (4 pp)
12. “China Widening Its Influence in Africa through Expanded Security Engagements,” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*, 10 June 2025. (4 pp)
13. Barrios, Ricardo, Caitlin Campbell, Nicolas Cook, and Michael D. Sutherland. “China and Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Congressional Research Service*, 31 January 2025. (2 pp)
14. Arieff, Alexis, et al., “Russia’s Security Operations in Africa,” *Congressional Research Service*, 08 April 2026. (2 pp)
15. “Mapping a Surge of Disinformation in Africa,” *Africa Center for Strategic Studies*. 13 March 2024. (8 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take

place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-18

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

A. Session Overview

The Indian Ocean is the third largest of the world's five ocean basins. Regarding 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). In addition to the Pacific Ocean Region that is examined in IS-19, U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM) is the U.S. combatant command also primarily responsible for this region.

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.

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 interest has increased in the 21st century. As such, the region is defined not only by the current global competition among the great powers but also by a series of regionally based rivalries in the Middle East and 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 United States has been the dominant power in the Indian Ocean Region for decades, but its relative influence is being challenged. 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 Indian Ocean 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. As previously mentioned, the 2025 NSS highlights the broader Indo-Pacific as a priority theater, emphasizing the need to maintain freedom of navigation and secure global supply chains. This places the Indian Ocean at the center of U.S. strategic thinking as a connective space between regions. As a result, the Indian Ocean Region remains indispensable to international security, serving as a hub for global trade, energy security, and geopolitical competition.

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.
 - Understand the importance of the Indian Ocean Region to the global economy.
 - Understand the dynamics of the India-China rivalry and how it manifests itself in regional affairs.
 - Assess the coalition-building efforts of initiatives like BRICS and the Quad.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How does the Indian Ocean region factor into great power competition with Russia and China?
2. Is the Indian Ocean region merely a keystone connecting the Pacific and Atlantic regions? Conversely, are there risks of thinking of the Indian Ocean as a subunit of the larger Pacific Ocean region?
3. How effective is the QUAD at promoting security in the Indian Ocean Region?
4. How does India hedge between Russia and China, on one hand, and its U.S., European and Asian partners on the other? How does hedging impact regional competition?
5. Why does China seek to play a greater role in this region? How do key regional powers assess the Chinese role? How does this create opportunities for the United States?

D. Student Preparation (64 pp; ~15 min video)

1. Baruah, Darshana M., Nitya Labh, and Jessica Greely. "Mapping the Indian Ocean Region," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 15 June 2023. (21 pp)
2. Baruah, Darshana M., and Caroline Duckworth. "We're Thinking About the Indian Ocean All Wrong," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2022. (2 pp)
3. Baruah, Darshana M. "Surrounding the Indian Ocean: PRC Influence in the Indian Ocean." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, Congressional Testimony, 18 April 2023. (7 pp)

4. Gopal, Gayathry. "The New Age of Maritime Multilateralism in the Indian Ocean," *The Diplomat*, 16 January 2026. (5 pp)
5. Meghe, Anshu. "India's Maritime Dominance," *Real Clear Defense*, 29 May 2024. (3 pp)
6. Video: "How India Controls China's Main Weakness: The Malacca Strait," *Kakome*, 12 March 2023, (00:00-15:15). (~15 min)
7. Chang, Gordon G., "America Gains a Foothold in the World's Most Critical Chokepoint," *The Hill*, 15 May 2026. (2 pp)
8. "The Indian Ocean's Maritime Security Dilemma," *South Asia Journal*, 25 March 2025. (4 pp)
9. Pant, Harsh V., and Sayantan Haldar. "Jostling for Primacy: India's China Challenge in the Indian Ocean," *Observer Research Foundation*, 27 June 2025. (5 pp)
10. Jain, Diksha. "Russia's Strategic Forays in the Indian Ocean Region," *Centre for Land Warfare Studies*, Issue Brief No. 417, January 2025. (6 pp)
11. "The QUAD Finally Gets Serious on Security," *The Economist*, 30 January 2025. (2 pp)
12. "What Is the BRICS Group and Why Is It Expanding?," *Council on Foreign Relations*, 26 June 2025. (5 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned "region" impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-19

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

A. Session Overview

This session covers the final ocean region examined in the international security portion of TSDM: the Pacific Ocean Region. While IS addresses each ocean region separately, in reality together the Indian and Pacific ocean regions form one region when it comes to U.S. military operations and strategy: the Indo-Pacific. The U.S. combatant command primarily responsible for this widespread region is the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM). It would be fair to state that most people fail to truly comprehend the size of this region. The “tyranny of distance” has become somewhat of a cliché, but nonetheless it is especially true when it comes to this region. As one U.S. Admiral told a defense analyst, “In effect, the Indo-Pacific sea space is the equivalent of three Atlantic Oceans.”⁴ This session will focus on the Pacific Ocean Region. Per 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 Pacific Ocean region is central to international security due to its scale, economic importance, and role in great power competition. Spanning critical sea lines of communication, it connects major economies in Asia and the Americas and carries a substantial share of global trade. The region includes key maritime chokepoints such as the South China Sea and the Taiwan Strait, where freedom of navigation and territorial disputes have significant implications for global commerce and stability.

The Pacific is also the primary theater for strategic competition between the United States and China. Military modernization, island-building, and competing territorial claims contribute to rising tensions, particularly in East Asia. Regional allies and partners—including Japan, Australia, and South Korea—play key roles in maintaining deterrence and a rules-based order.

The 2025 NSS underscores the Indo-Pacific as a priority theater for U.S. strategy, emphasizing the need to maintain a “free and open” region and to strengthen alliances. This reflects the region’s importance not only for military balance but also for economic resilience, supply chains, and technological competition.

⁴ The United States and Indo-Pacific Defense Operations: Adding Prompt Strike to the “Fight Tonight Force” | Defense.info

As a result, the Pacific Ocean region is indispensable to international security, linking global trade, military power, and geopolitical rivalry in a way that will shape the future international order.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of the Pacific Ocean Region to U.S. national security.
 - Understand the origins and importance of the U.S. treaty system within the Pacific Ocean Region.
 - Understand the vulnerabilities of the Pacific Ocean Region, including rising great power competition, and the role the wider Pacific community may play in addressing them.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are the key U.S. alliances in the Pacific Ocean Region and how did they form?
2. How does geography impact U.S. national security strategy for this region?
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. Is there a role for regional security organizations in the Pacific Ocean Region? Or should the United States stay focused on its hub-and-spokes alliance model?
5. What are the greatest security concerns of the CDR, USINDOPACOM?

D. Student Preparation (46 pp; ~8 min video)

1. Video: “U.S. Indo-Pacific Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 21 April 2026, (38:00-45:44). (~8 min)
2. Campbell, Caitlin, and Hannah D. Dennis. “Defense Primer: U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM),” *Congressional Research Service*, 05 February 2026. (2 pp)

3. 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)
4. U.S. Department of State. "The United States' Commitment to Maritime Security in the Indo-Pacific," 23 September 2025. (2 pp)
5. Beyond the Horizon. "U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy in the 2025 National Security Strategy," 07 December 2025. (5 pp)
6. "What the Indo-Pacific Thinks of the New U.S. National Defense Strategy," *Atlantic Council*, 29 January 2026. (4 pp)
7. Holmes, James. "Sea Control is Enough," *Proceedings*, Vol. 152/5/1,479, May 2026. (4 pp)
8. Longo, Daniel J., Mark E. Manyin, and Liana Wong "South Korea: Background and U.S. Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, 06 April 2026. (2 pp)
9. 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)
10. Cimino-Issacs, Cathleen, D., Kitamura, Kyla, A., Longo, Daniel J., and Mark E. Manyin. "U.S.-Japan Relations," *Congressional Research Service*, 03 March 2026. (2 pp)
11. Mix, Derek, E., and Jared G. Tupuola. "AUKUS and Indo-Pacific Security," *Congressional Research Service*, 03 March 2025. (2 pp)
12. Nicastro, Luke, A. "The Pacific Deterrence Initiative," *Congressional Research Service*, 25 November 2024. (2 pp)
13. Tupuola, Jared, G. "The Pacific Islands: Background and Issues for Congress," *Congressional Research Service*, 07 November 2024. (2 pp)
14. Campbell, Caitlin. "Taiwan: Defense and Military Issues," *Congressional Research Service*, 09 February 2026. (2 pp)
15. Campbell, Caitlin, William Piekos, and Ben Dolven. "China Primer: South China Sea Disputes," *Congressional Research Service*, 22 December 2025. (2 pp)
16. Hamilton, Robert, E. "Setting the Stage: An Overview of Chinese and Russian Interests and Influence in the Indo-Pacific," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, 15 December 2024, 6-12. (6 pp)
17. Gettinger, Daniel M., and Mary Beth D. Nikitin. "North Korea's Nuclear Weapons and Missile Programs," *Congressional Research Service*, 29 April 2026. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-20

CYBER, SPACE, AND INTERNATIONAL SECURITY (USCYBERCOM/USSPACECOM)

A. Session Overview

A constant theme that emerges when examining the international security environment is the dynamic nature of the environment. This session examines two specific aspects of the advance of technology and their impact on the international security environment: the domains of cyber and space. The U.S. combatant command responsible for the cyber domain is U.S. Cyber Command (USCYBERCOM), while the newest CCMD, U.S. Space Command (USSPACECOM), established in 2019, is responsible for the space domain.

Cyberspace has become a core domain of international security, shaping both state power and global stability. Modern economies, militaries, and critical infrastructure rely on interconnected digital systems for communication, finance, energy distribution, and command and control. Disruption in this domain can produce immediate, real-world consequences, as seen in incidents like the SolarWinds cyberattack and the Colonial Pipeline ransomware attack, which demonstrated the vulnerability of both government and private-sector networks.

Cyber operations provide states and non-state actors with asymmetric tools to pursue strategic objectives below the threshold of armed conflict. Major powers such as the United States, China, and Russia increasingly compete in this domain through espionage, influence operations, and offensive cyber capabilities. This environment complicates deterrence, as attribution is often difficult and responses can risk escalation.

The 2025 NSS underscores the growing importance of cyber, emphasizing the need to defend “critical infrastructure and digital ecosystems” and to build resilience against persistent cyber threats. It highlights collaboration with allies and the private sector as essential to securing networks and maintaining technological advantage.

Outer space has become a central domain in international security, underpinning both military operations and global economic systems. Space-based capabilities—such as communications, intelligence, and navigation satellites like the Global Positioning System—enable precision warfare, global connectivity, and financial synchronization. As a result, modern societies and militaries are deeply dependent on secure access to space. Disruption to these systems could degrade command and control, weaken deterrence, and create cascading effects across civilian infrastructure.

The 2025 NSS explicitly recognizes space as a decisive arena of competition, stating that future military power will be shaped by “domains where U.S. advantages are strongest...including...space.” This reflects a broader shift toward viewing space not simply as a support domain, but as a warfighting environment in its own right. The strategy also emphasizes the importance of technological innovation and integration with the private sector to maintain resilience and superiority in contested domains.

At the same time, increasing competition among major powers—including the United States, China, and Russia—has heightened concerns about the weaponization of space. Counterspace capabilities, such as anti-satellite weapons and cyber operations, threaten critical infrastructure in orbit. Yet governance mechanisms remain limited, with agreements like the 1967 Outer Space Treaty providing only a basic legal framework. Consequently, outer space is both an enabler of global stability and a potential domain of conflict, making it indispensable to contemporary international security.

Despite evolving norms and limited governance efforts, cyberspace remains a contested and rapidly changing domain. Its centrality to economic function, military effectiveness, and political stability makes it a domain that impacts every instrument of national power.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - 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 (AI) 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: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What are the challenges of enforcing international law and norms in cyberspace, given its borderless nature?

2. The digital divide leaves certain states in the international system more vulnerable to cyberattacks. How can international efforts bridge this gap and improve global cybersecurity?
3. What role do non-state actors play in cyberattacks, and how can they be held accountable?
4. 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?
5. How can we differentiate between legitimate space exploration and potential military activities?
6. What is the role of space assets in modern warfare, and how might it change in the future?

D. Student Preparation (53 pp; ~24 min video)

1. Video: “U.S. Cyber Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 28 April 2026, (01:37:04-01:41:05). (~4 min)
2. The White House. “President Trump’s Cyber Strategy for America,” March 2026. (4 pp)
3. Harding, Emily. “What Does the New Cyber Strategy Really Mean?,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 09 March 2026. (4 pp)
4. Theohary, Catherine, A. “Defense Primer: Cyberspace Operations,” *Congressional Research Service*, 29 November 2024. (2 pp)
5. Bakalynskyi, Oleksandr and Maggie McDonough. “Learning the Lessons from Ukraine’s Fight Against Russian Cyber Warfare,” *Atlantic Council*, 06 November 2025. (2 pp)
6. Rovner, Joshua. “Everything, Everywhere, All at Once? Cyberspace Operations and Chinese Strategy,” *War on the Rocks*, 25 March 2024. (4 pp)
7. Harding, Emily. “U.S. Cyber Capabilities to Deter and Disrupt Malign Foreign Activity Targeting the Homeland,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 13 January 2026. (4 pp)
8. Pakkam, Anusha. “The Evolving Interpretation of the Use of Force in Cyber Operations: Insights from State Practices,” *Leiber Institute*, 25 November 2024. (4 pp)
9. Schmitt, Michael, N. “A Policy Approach for Addressing the “Cyber Attacks” and “Data as an Object” Debates,” *Leiber Institute*, 19 September 2025. (6 pp)
10. Video: “U.S. Space Command posture statement,” *Senate Armed Services Committee*, 26 March 2026, (27:15-32:11). (~5 min)
11. DiMascio, Jennifer. “Defense Primer: U.S. Space Command (SPACECOM),” *Congressional Research Service*, 12 September 2025. (2 pp)

12. Pumroy, Kyle, J. “Military Human Spaceflight: A Key Component to American Space Superiority,” Slide presentation, 21 May 2026. (5 pp)
13. Video: “Orbits of Influence: Emerging Threats to U.S. Space Security and Foreign Policy Implications,” *House Foreign Affairs Europe Subcommittee*, YouTube video, 29 April 2026, (14:15-29:58) (~15 min).
14. Klein, John, J., and Clementine G. Starling Daniels. “Countering Russian Escalation in Space,” *Atlantic Council*, 21 January 2026, 3-10. (5 pp)
15. Dugger, Alan, T. “Space as a Gray Zone: The Future of Orbital Warfare,” *Modern War Institute*, 14 February 2025. (5 pp)
16. Hille, Katherin, et al. “Inside China’s plans to fight in space,” *The Financial Times*, 27 April 2026. (4 pp)
17. Erwin, Sandra. “Beyond Launch: SpaceX’s Expanding Role in U.S. Defense,” *Space News*, 16 May 2025. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-21

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON INTERNATIONAL SECURITY

A. Session Overview

The penultimate session of the IS curriculum serves as a companion to the topics of cyber and space discussed in IS-20 and continues to explore how advances in technology influence national and theater 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 regarding the topic of technology from a national security perspective, it can be argued that two of the most consequential are the introduction of artificial intelligence (AI), and unmanned systems. As both are specifically mentioned in the 2026 NDS and are primary drivers of the aforementioned changing character of war, these are the topics on which this session will focus.

AI and unmanned systems are transforming international security by revolutionizing military operations, enhancing surveillance, precision strikes, and data analysis. These technologies reduce risks to human soldiers but raise concerns about ethical issues, accountability, and the potential for rapid escalation in conflicts. The development of autonomous weapons has sparked a new arms race, with countries racing to develop AI-driven military systems, increasing the risk of miscalculations or unintended confrontations.

These systems also introduce new vulnerabilities, particularly in cybersecurity, as they depend on networks that can be hacked or manipulated. The widespread use of AI and unmanned systems by non-state actors, such as terrorist groups, poses a growing threat, leading to asymmetric warfare where less powerful entities can disrupt more traditional military forces.

The integration of AI in warfare presents significant ethical and legal challenges, including questions of accountability when autonomous weapons make life-and-death decisions. International law may need to evolve to address the implications of AI on warfare and civilian protection. Additionally, AI’s role in military strategies could complicate arms control efforts, as autonomous systems blur the lines between offensive and defensive technologies.

On a positive note, AI and unmanned systems have the potential to support humanitarian and peacekeeping operations, helping to deliver aid, protect civilians, and improve decision-making in conflict zones. However, the broader impact of these technologies on global stability, diplomacy, and strategic balance remains a complex challenge that requires careful regulation and international cooperation.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives

- Analyze the opportunities, risks, and challenges posed by AI in the international security environment.
- Understand how unmanned systems are changing the nature of warfare.
- Analyze the implications of unmanned systems for force structure and decision making.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.
 - Supports CJCS SAE-P 3b: Data, Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence.

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 will AI-powered autonomous weapons systems change the character of warfare?
3. How can the United States avoid an AI arms race between competing powers?
4. How are the easy accessibility and affordability of unmanned systems impacting U.S. national security interests?
5. How will the increasing autonomy of unmanned systems impact decision making and accountability in warfare?

D. Student Preparation (47 pp; ~25 min video)

1. Sayler, Kelley, M. "Defense Primer: Emerging Technologies," *Congressional Research Service*, 06 January 2026. (2 pp)
2. Department of Defense. "Artificial Intelligence Strategy for the Department of War," 09 January 2026. (5 pp)
3. Linn, Thomas, C. "International Security in the Age of Artificial Intelligence," Faculty Paper, College of Distance Education, *Naval War College*, 06 May 2025. (15 pp)
4. Harper, Jon. "Combatant commands to get new generative AI tech for operational planning, wargaming," *Defense Scoop*, 05 March 2025. (1 pp)

5. Vincent, Brandi. “Joint Chiefs Chairman Wants ‘Global Risk Algorithm’ to Help Measure Threats Worldwide,” *Defense Scoop*, 10 September 2025. (1 pp)
6. Video: “How the U.S. military is using AI in warfare,” CBS News, YouTube video, 26 May 2026, (00:00-01:54). (~2 min)
7. Video: “The AI Arsenal That Could Stop World War III,” TED Talks, YouTube video, 08 April 2025, (00:00-10:39) (~10 min)
8. Bondar, Kateryna. “Unpacking Iran’s Drone Campaign in the Gulf: Early Lessons for Future Drone Warfare,” *Center for Strategic and International Studies*, 10 March 2026. (4 pp)
9. Saylor, Kelley, M. “DOD Replicator Initiative: Background and Issues for Congress,” *Congressional Research Service*, 21 January 2026. (2 pp)
10. Video: “Drone Arms Race Transforms War in Ukraine, with U.S. Now Learning Lessons,” *60 Minutes*, YouTube video, 29 March 2026, (00:00-13:22). (~13 min)
11. Holmes, James. “Can Drones Replace Navy Destroyers? Yes and No,” *The National Interest*, 15 September 2025. (3 pp)
12. Pettyjohn, Stacie, and Molly Campbell. “Hellscape for Taiwan: Rethinking Asymmetric Defense,” *Center for New American Security*, 26 February 2026. (12 pp)
13. “Smart Tech is Making War a Dumber Choice,” *The Economist*, 28 May 2026. (2 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

For FA-2, students will be assigned to one of seven groups—the Atlantic Ocean Region, the Arctic Ocean Region, Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Cyber or Space. Each group will be tasked to present a 10–12-minute PowerPoint briefing in seminar on how their assigned “region” impacts international security and addressing TSDM CLO-1. Presentations will take place in the corresponding sessions at the beginning of IS-13, IS-14, IS-15, IS-16, IS-17 and IS-20. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

INTERNATIONAL SECURITY-22

THE FUTURE INTERNATIONAL SECURITY ENVIRONMENT: CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A. Session Overview

Throughout the IS sessions students were exposed to a wide variety of topics concerning the dynamic character of the international security environment, strategic guidance, and strategy formulation. This final session of the IS portion of the TSDM course serves as an opportunity to reflect on the myriad elements that constitute the international security environment and look forward; debating the possible challenges and opportunities to international security that are emerging in the coming decades of this century.

As illustrated via the five IS themes and the readings and videos within each session, 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, the race for control of the Arctic/Antarctica ocean regions and the weaponization of emerging technologies loom large. Transnational threats continue to place pressure on states when it comes to making decisions regarding the allocation of finite resources in the pursuit of achieving one’s national security objectives.

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.
 - Comprehend the implications of the cooperative efforts between authoritarian powers 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/Antarctica ocean regions.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the international 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 CJCS SAE-P 3a: Strategic Deterrence in the 21st Century.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What future international security scenario is most likely to come to fruition in the next ten years? Why?
2. Do the conflicting visions of the international order between states mean that future global conflict is inevitable? Why or why not?
3. Is the future international security environment going to be determined by the parameters of the U.S.-China-Russia strategic competition? Why or why not?
4. What role can “middle powers” play in the stability of the future international security environment?

D. Student Preparation (45 pp; ~6 min video; ~21 min podcast)

1. Aylward, Mary Kate, et al. “Welcome to 2036: What the World Could Look Like in Ten Years, According to Nearly 450 Experts,” *Atlantic Council*, December 2025. (7 pp)
2. Brands, Hal. “Three Scenarios for a Post-Trump World,” *Foreign Policy*, 23 March 2026. (9 pp)
3. Winnefield, James, A. “The Principal Challenge: Arresting the Decline of the Global Operating System,” *Orbis*, 16 March 2026. (3 pp)
4. Predd, Joel, B., et al. “Thinking Through Protracted War with China: Nine Scenarios,” *RAND*, 26 February 2025, iv-vii. (3 pp)
5. Yoshihara, Toshi, and Casey Nicastro. “The Chinese Military’s Challenges in the 2030s,” *The National Interest*, 03 April 2025. (4 pp)
6. Stricklett, Sue Gosh. “The Indian Ocean Gap in U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy,” *Real Clear Defense*, 29 May 2026. (5 pp)
7. Charap, Samuel, and Hiski Haukkala. “Europe’s Next War,” *Foreign Policy*, 17 February 2026. (7 pp)

8. Podcast: Hooker, Richard, D. “Putin’s Next Move? Five Russian Attack Scenarios Europe Must Prepare For,” Atlantic Council, 12 February 2026, Podcast audio, “x,” Generated by Notebook LM, 28 May 2026, (00:00-22:34). (~22 min)
9. Hooker, Richard, D. “Putin’s Next Move? Five Russian Attack Scenarios Europe Must Prepare For,” *Atlantic Council*, 12 February 2026. (SCAN)
10. Blackwill, Robert, D., and Richard Fontaine. “No Limits? The China-Russia Relationship and U.S. Foreign Policy,” Council on Foreign Relations, Council Special Report No. 99, December 2024, 4-7. (3 pp)
11. Shidore, Sarang. “Can Middle Powers Gel?,” *Foreign Policy*, 23 March 2026. (4 pp)
12. Video: “Could There Be Conflict Over Antarctica?,” *The Economist*, 2025. (00:00-02:29) (~2 min)

E. Student Deliverables

At the conclusion of IS-22 in Week 11, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-1—an analytic research paper addressing CLO-1. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard.

ANNEX C

TSDM – FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

STUDY GUIDE

Foreign Policy Analysis Sessions Overview. The Foreign Policy Analysis (FPA) sessions provide students with an opportunity to develop a critical understanding of the domestic and international influences that can shape national security policy at the theater level. An appreciation for the complexity of the foreign policy making environment—and the often-cumbersome processes it entails—is essential for any national security professional. As military officers and civilian leaders progress from tactical roles to broader operational and strategic responsibilities, a firm grasp of how policy is formulated and influenced becomes increasingly important. Through these sessions, students will develop the ability to analyze complex, multidisciplinary national security issues by examining the range of domestic and international actors and forces that impact national security decision making. They will also gain insight into how national security policies are developed and implemented across multiple organizational levels, from within individual agencies or Services and cabinet-level departments such as the U.S. Department of Defense (DoD), U.S. Department of State (DoS), etc., to the broader U.S. Government (USG) and the international system.

- a. **Division I: Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis.** FPA 1-2 lays the foundation for FPA sessions by introducing students to the basic theory underlying policy analysis and briefly reviewing the relevant constitutional and statutory authorities granted to the nation's policymakers, as well as providing a notional framework used for analyzing complex foreign policy case studies. The division then examines a seminal foreign policy analysis case: The Cuban Missile Crisis, considering the myriad factors influencing decision makers during thirteen days in October 1962. The Cuban Missile Crisis case serves as the first in a series of case studies aimed at challenging students to apply analytical tools and critical thinking to enhance understanding of U.S. foreign policy decision making.
- b. **Division II: The U.S. National Security Environment.** FPA 3-17 comprises the majority of the FPA sub-course. They examine how national- and theater-level security policy is devised and implemented within the U.S. government. Constitutional authorities, along with important reforms such as the National Security Act of 1947 and the Goldwater-Nichols Act of 1986, will help inform the discussions in these sessions. Students will gain a deeper understanding of the various analytical perspectives in the academic field of FPA, as well as the role played by the presidency, the National Security Council, interagency partners, Congress and its committees/sub-committees, the media, lobbyists, think tanks, and so on within the policy making process. In addition, students will be expected to gain a broad understanding of the complex world of force planning, including the realities of force planning, and will revisit some of the formal processes that help translate strategies into defense priorities and action.
- c. **Division III: International Influences on National Security Policy** (FPA 18-20) examines the forces, actors, and factors in the international system that affect the decision making process and the development of policy. National security professionals, as they

advance in their careers, will be confronted with international political, cultural, religious, and ideological issues, all of which can influence U.S. national security policy and its implementation. Students will examine each of these issues throughout the seminar, culminating in a complex case study that requires the integration and application of the concepts covered across the FPA sessions.

- d. **Division IV: FPA Synthesis.** FPA 21-22 allows students to examine a future-oriented foreign policy challenge designed to prepare them for an environment in which policymakers and practitioners must anticipate emerging foreign policy decisions and dynamics. The scenario and issues introduced in FPA 21 will serve as the foundation for FPA 22, a synthesis case study requiring students to integrate and apply the analytical tools, techniques, and concepts developed throughout the FPA course in a future-oriented security situation. Using these frameworks, students will analyze a complex national and/or theater security issue and identify relevant factors within the domestic-internal (e.g., staff and organizational dynamics), domestic-external (e.g., think tanks, media, and public opinion), and international environments, including both U.S. and global considerations.

Foreign Policy Analysis Focus. 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 comprehension of the role of the national security professional through understanding:

- The range of domestic and international actors and influences that can affect the decision making process and formulation of national security and defense policy.
- The formal (and informal) processes through which significant national security policy decisions are made and how decisions can shape and/or alter theater security policy.

Foreign Policy Analysis Guidance. The FPA study guide (Annex C) is the primary planning document for the FPA sessions. For each session, it will provide a session overview, the objectives and learning outcomes covered in that session, general guidance for seminar preparation, the required student preparation (readings, videos, podcasts, etc.), and outline any student deliverables and their associated suspense. Student preparation materials should be approached in the order listed, using the session guidance as an aid.

Foreign Policy Analysis Deliverables. Students are expected to complete all preparation materials prior to each session. The major graded deliverable (Summative Assessment 2) requires students to conduct a rigorous analysis of a complex foreign policy case.

ANNEX C

TSDM – FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS

STUDY GUIDE

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-1

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS FOR PRACTITIONERS

A. Session Overview

From the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, to the decision to invade Iraq in 2003, to the decision to supply military materiel and intelligence to Ukraine in 2022, history shows that national security policy is rarely the product of formal authority alone. Behind every major decision, complex domestic, bureaucratic, and international forces are at work, often driving decisions as much as, or at times more than, formal authorities, statutes, or constitutional provisions. Understanding these forces is at the heart of FPA.

Serving as the first of two sessions in Division I: Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis, this session lays the foundation for the study of foreign policy decision making by introducing the basic theories and frameworks of FPA. It also briefly reviews the constitutional and statutory authorities granted to national security policymakers, setting the foundation for discussions on the formal structures that shape the policy making environment. However, as the examples above suggest, formal authorities tell only part of the story. Informal actors and elements ranging from public opinion, bureaucratic infighting, interest group lobbying, media narratives, and international pressures, routinely shape, constrain, or accelerate foreign policy decisions.

FPA is specifically designed to increase student appreciation for these diverse domestic, bureaucratic, and international influences that affect every organization involved with national security decision making. This introductory session is designed to familiarize all national security professionals, especially those at the combatant command level, with the increasingly diverse and demanding pressures that shape future national security policies.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Describe the general requirements and content of FPA sessions.
 - Identify the key domestic, international, and theater-level actors, as well as the bureaucratic processes that profoundly impact national security affairs.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 limitations. What are some of those restraints? How might they affect foreign policy decisions?
2. This session introduces concepts like “two-level games” and “levels of analysis” that will be explored in greater detail throughout the FPA sessions. What are your initial thoughts/impressions on the basic concepts behind these terms? In broad terms, how might they explain how international and domestic political systems interact to influence foreign policy decision making?
3. Should military officers study foreign policy analysis? If so, why? If not, why? Why might it be beneficial for national security professionals to dissect and analyze 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 are easiest to come by, harder to come by, and nearly impossible to come by? What tools and methods can analysts use to better understand foreign policy actions and their consequences?

D. Student Preparation (41 pp; ~33 min video)

1. U.S. Naval War College Faculty, "Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis for Practitioners," Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, Summer 2026. (25 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, (1st Qtr, 2015): 30-34. (4 pp)
4. 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

Prior to the start of FPA-7 in Week 20, students are required to successfully complete FA-3 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-2

CASE STUDY: THE CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS (1962)

A. Session Overview

Few moments in American history better illustrate the stakes and complexity of national security decision making than the Cuban Missile Crisis. For 13 days in October 1962, the United States and the Soviet Union moved perilously close to nuclear war. At the core of the confrontation were Soviet missiles in Cuba, capable of striking most of the U.S. homeland. In a fog of uncertainty, conflicting intelligence, and competing policy recommendations, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev and U.S. President John F. Kennedy sought to achieve their geostrategic and political objectives while desperately working to avoid nuclear catastrophe. Long heralded as a model of presidential decision making, deeper examination reveals a far more complicated and nuanced process, marked by bureaucratic friction, domestic and international political constraints, misperceptions, and improvisation.

A key objective of the FPA sessions is to help students dissect and understand the United States' national security decision making processes, using cases like the Cuban Missile Crisis to highlight the enduring challenges of foreign policy making. An appreciation of the complex—and at times cumbersome—nature of this process is vital for any national security professional. This case study serves as the first in a series of cases throughout the FPA sessions that will demand increasingly sophisticated application of analytical frameworks, critical thinking skills, and the ability to generate meaningful explanatory power when evaluating U.S. foreign and national security decision making. The crisis remains among the most studied cases in the national security canon precisely because its core dilemmas—nuclear signaling, escalation management, deterrence credibility, and crisis decision making under extreme uncertainty—are far from resolved, as Russia's nuclear rhetoric during the war in Ukraine, China's accelerating nuclear buildup, North Korea's expanding arsenal, Iran's nuclear ambitions and regional proxy network, and the persistent risk of miscalculation between India and Pakistan all make clear.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Analyze and explain the influential factors in a complex national security case.
 - Identify the various actors and factors in the Cuban Missile Crisis that impacted U.S. decision making and how they impacted the decisions.
 - Assess how different analytical perspectives can be used to provide a more complete understanding of the forces active in foreign policy decision making.
 - Assess how such an understanding might be useful in determining probable outcomes of ongoing national security decisions.

- Learning Outcomes

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

C. Guidance Questions

1. Consider how both the United States and the Soviet Union viewed the crisis. Why did the Soviet Union attempt to place offensive missiles in Cuba in the first place?
2. Why did the U.S. choose to respond to the Soviet missile emplacement with a quarantine of Cuba? Why not make an alternative decision? Why respond at all?
3. Why did the Soviet Union decide to withdraw the missiles?
4. How might the Cuban Missile Crisis inform our understanding of nuclear deterrence, escalation management, and crisis decision making today? Consider how the lessons of October 1962 apply to contemporary flashpoints, including Russia's nuclear signaling during the conflict in Ukraine and growing tensions in the Indo-Pacific.

D. Student Preparation (50 pp; ~55 min video)

1. Allison, Graham. "The Cuban Missile Crisis," in *Foreign Policy: Theories Actors Cases*, 3rd edition. Edited by Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne. Oxford University Press, 2016, 256-272. (15 pp)
2. Video: "The Cuban Missile Crisis: At the Brink," *PBS*, 1992, (00:00 – 54:45).
3. "The World on the Brink. John F. Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis," *John F. Kennedy Presidential Library* (Review each day of the 13 Thirteen Days). (6 pp)
4. Radchenko, Sergey, and Vladislav Zubok. "Blundering on the Brink: The Secret History and Unlearned Lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis," *Foreign Affairs*, 03 April 2023. (20 pp)
5. Allison, Graham. "Putin's Domsday Threat: How to Prevent a Repeat of the Cuban Missile Crisis in Ukraine," *Foreign Affairs*, 05 April 2022. (9 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of FPA-7 in Week 20, students are required to successfully complete FA-3 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-3

TWO-LEVEL GAMES: SOURCES OF INFLUENCE IN FOREIGN POLICY DECISION MAKING

A. Session Overview

Whether negotiations over an Iranian nuclear deal to stop the development of a nuclear weapon or contemporary tensions with the PRC surrounding U.S.-Taiwan relations, such interactions reveal a critical truth about U.S. foreign policy: it is shaped by both domestic political dynamics and by international factors. At the intersection of these two arenas lies a far more complicated story of how national security policy is truly made.

Serving as the start of Division II: The U.S. National Security Environment, this session unpacks the complexity of policy making at the national and theater levels, examining how security policy is devised and implemented across the U.S. government. Building directly on concepts introduced in the previous two sessions, students will now move beyond the simplistic "black box" assumptions of the rational actor model to explore the real-world influences that domestic and international actors exert on foreign policy decision making.

Central to this exploration is the formal introduction of the concept of two-level games, first articulated by political scientist Robert Putnam. While students encountered elements of this paradigm during their analysis of the Cuban Missile Crisis, this session provides a structured theoretical framework for understanding how leaders must simultaneously negotiate at two interconnected levels: the international arena (Level I) and the domestic political landscape (Level II). Through a detailed case study of the 2009–2015 Iran nuclear negotiations that culminated in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), and through consideration of U.S.-Taiwan relations today, students will see how two-level dynamics can define the limits or opportunities of foreign policy choices and shape the outcomes of critical national security decisions.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Examine two-level games as a foreign policy decision making framework.
 - Understand the importance of other states' foreign policy decision making processes.
 - Apply the two-level game framework to a case study to evaluate a U.S. foreign policy decision.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 is the two-level games framework? How does it help to explain how international and domestic political systems interact to influence U.S. national security policy making?
2. Why is it important to understand the motivations and domestic political systems of other states when conducting foreign policy analysis?
3. How can FPA tools be adapted to better understand decisions outside the U.S. context?
4. What domestic actors were influential in the Iranian nuclear negotiations, and how? What international actors/influencers were impactful, and how?
5. How does the Taiwan issue fit into the two-level games' framework? Who are the influential players, both domestically and internationally?

D. Student Preparation (52 pp; ~8 min video)

1. Gvosdev, Nikolas K., Jessica D. Blankshain and David A. Cooper. "Domestic Politics," in *Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy: Translating Theory into Practice*, Ch. 9: 284-296. 2019. New York: Cambridge University Press. (12 pp)
2. Video: Blankshain, Jessica D. "Two-level Games," U.S. Naval War College, 21 August 2020, (00:00 – 7:54).
3. Gvosdev, Nikolas K., Jessica D. Blankshain and David A. Cooper. "Other Countries," in *Decision-Making in American Foreign Policy: Translating Theory into Practice*, Ch. 10: 334-345, 360-367. 2019. New York: Cambridge University Press. (18 pp)
4. Hurst, Steven. "The Iranian Nuclear Negotiations as a Two-Level Game: The Importance of Domestic Politics," *Diplomacy and Statecraft* 27, no. 3 (2016): 545–567. (16 pp)
5. Hirsh, Michael, "Why the U.S. is Headed for a Long War with Iran," *Foreign Policy*, 12 May 2026. (6 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of FPA-7 in Week 20, students are required to successfully complete FA-3 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-4

UNDERSTANDING ORGANIZATIONAL PROCESS AND BUREAUCRATIC POLITICS

A. Session Overview

From the Joint Staff in the Pentagon, to a combatant command headquarters overseas, to a bureau at the State Department, military and interagency organizations are central to how the United States formulates and implements national security policy. Their structures, cultures, and processes profoundly shape how information is managed, decisions are made, and policies are carried out. Military and civilian staffs are essential components of the U.S. national security enterprise, each serving a multitude of purposes and performing a wide range of tasks. While every staff is to some degree unique, major organizations—whether military or civilian—tend to follow recognizable patterns of behavior and employ specific standard operating procedures (SOPs).

Understanding these patterns enables national security professionals to anticipate potential actions and reactions within the policy making process. Organizational structures affect how staffs gather and analyze information, assign work, set priorities, and make key decisions. Over time, organizations also develop distinct internal cultures that further influence behavior, communication, and operational dynamics.

For national security professionals working within major staffs, recognizing the influence of organizational behavior is critical. A clear grasp of these dynamics can not only influence individual performance but also helps mitigate frustration by distinguishing between factors within one's control and the larger institutional forces at play. Professionals who can navigate and influence their organizational environments are far better positioned to contribute meaningfully to their staffs' missions—and to the broader objectives of U.S. national security.

Alongside the organizational process perspective, this session introduces the bureaucratic politics perspective—a complementary framework that examines how decisions emerge from bargaining, negotiation, and competition among key players within and across organizations. Where the organizational process perspective focuses on how institutional structures and SoPs shape behavior, the bureaucratic politics perspective directs attention to the individuals within those structures: their interests, their institutional positions, and the pulling and hauling that shapes national security decisions. Together, these two perspectives provide a richer and more complete picture of how the U.S. government formulates and implements policy.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - 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 on mission accomplishment.
 - Apply both the organizational process and bureaucratic politics perspectives to better understand how organizational behavior and individual bargaining shape U.S. foreign policy decisions.
 - Identify the key features of the bureaucratic politics perspective and how individual and institutional interests shape the policy making process.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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.
 - Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms at the operational level of war.

C. Guidance Questions

1. How do the organizational process and bureaucratic politics perspectives each differ from the rational actor model? What distinct explanatory power does each offer for understanding how national security decisions are actually made?
2. Every government organization—whether a department, agency, Service, or staff—develops its own culture. How do different cultures and subcultures impact the way in which organizations operate internally and externally? Can you think of examples in your own career of instances where organizational behavior affected decision making, processes, or practices?
3. How do the organizational process and bureaucratic politics perspectives help explain instances where organizational behavior or bureaucratic dynamics influenced foreign policy decisions?
4. 'Where you stand depends on where you sit.' How does this axiom apply to high-stakes national security decisions? Consider how bureaucratic politics shaped the range of options and outcomes during the Cuban Missile Crisis—and how similar dynamics might play out within a combatant command or interagency environment today.
5. How does organizational inertia within large bureaucracies undermine strategic adaptation, and what mechanisms—internal or external—might force meaningful organizational change?

D. Student Preparation (76 pp; ~23 min video)

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. 11: 162-191. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019. (30 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. Grier, Peter. "Misplaced Nukes," *Air and Space Forces Magazine*, 26 June 2017. (8 pp)
6. Tecott, Rachel. "Why America Can't Build Allied Armies: Afghanistan is Just the Latest Failure," *Foreign Affairs*, 26 August 2021. (4 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of FPA-7 in Week 20, students are required to successfully complete FA-3 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-5

THE PRESIDENCY AND NATIONAL SECURITY

A. Session Overview

As outlined in Article II of the U.S. 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 and television 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 expansion of presidential power is evident throughout American history. During the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln asserted sweeping executive authority, including the suspension of *habeas corpus* without congressional approval. Franklin D. Roosevelt’s use of emergency powers during the Great Depression and World War II further entrenched expectations of a strong executive. In the Cold War, Harry Truman reinforced this trend by committing U.S. forces to Korea without a formal declaration of war. More recently, post-9/11 national security measures under President George W. Bush, such as the authorization of surveillance programs and military tribunals through executive orders, have reignited longstanding debates over executive overreach. As these examples illustrate, crises, technological change, and evolving threats have repeatedly shifted the distribution of power toward the president, raising enduring questions about accountability, limits, and the role of the Executive relative to Congress in national security governance. This session tackles these questions related to checks and balances, and others, examining the power of the presidency in national security affairs.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Analyze the Article II powers vested in the president and identify the tools available in shaping and implementing foreign policy.
 - Understand the role of, and tools available to, presidents in shaping and implementing the national security agenda.
 - Analyze how interpretations of Article II outlined in the Constitution conflict with Article I and the power of the Legislative branch in areas related to theater and national security.
 - Examine how an individual decision maker (the president) 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 foreign policy decision making.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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, 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 have impacted their ability to accomplish U.S. national security objectives?
3. Presidents bring a wide variety of experiences and influences with them into the office. How do those shape their foreign policy agendas and their decision making?
4. What cognitive paradigms (reflexes, habits, intuition, synthesis, leadership traits) have presidents relied upon in the past?
5. How have different presidents approached the decision making process? How do management style, risk tolerance, and reliance on personal advisors shape presidential effectiveness in national security—and what distinguishes those who navigated crises successfully from those who did not?

D. Student Preparation (66 pp; ~17 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. 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. Bator, Francis. "No Good Choices: LBJ and the Vietnam/Great Society Connection," *Diplomatic History* 32, no. 3 (June 2008): 309–340. (32 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of FPA-7 in Week 20, students are required to successfully complete FA-3 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-6

THE INTERAGENCY PROCESS, NSC, AND PALACE POLITICS

A. Session Overview

The interagency decision-making process, at both the national and theater levels, develops policy and coordinates the activities of the departments and agencies charged with advancing U.S. national security objectives. While interagency coordination in national security affairs occurs at the national level through the National Security Council (NSC), the NSC staff assigned to support it, and various interagency working groups, similar coordinating efforts occur at the theater level as well. The interagency process is distinctly American in both its scale and complexity, reflecting the enduring tension between the United States' expansive global commitments and the constitutional system of checks and balances designed to constrain the concentration of power.

Many departments and agencies beyond the Department of Defense and Department of State possess important national security-related responsibilities and, as a result, are active participants in the interagency process. Even policy decisions that are primarily military in character can be directly shaped by non-military agencies, bureaucratic interests, and competing institutional priorities. Studying the interagency process can help increase effectiveness as a national security professional and is essential to understanding how foreign and national security policy is developed within the Executive Branch.

This session focuses directly on the NSC, how it was created, how it is generally organized, how it has changed across administrations, and how it ideally helps presidents make better-informed policies and decisions. It also examines the senior officials involved in decision-making, the formal and informal relationships that shape policy development, and the “palace politics” that can influence outcomes. Understanding how these individuals relate to, gain access to, and interact with the president can help explain the policies and decisions that ultimately emerge from the process. The session also introduces the interagency dimensions of policy making and implementation at the theater level.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Assess the role of the NSC and NSC Staff in facilitating the interagency process.
 - Analyze the general structure of the interagency process at the national and theater levels.
 - Assess the competing missions of the agencies participating in national security policy development.
 - Identify the challenges in promoting the coordination of national security policy across the various agencies and departments of government.

- Understand the concept of palace politics and its applicability to FPA.
- Analyze how the interagency process at both the national and theater levels works to prevent or minimize contradictions in U.S. policy.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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. Why is this perspective termed "palace politics," and how does it help in analyzing foreign policy decision making? What examples stand out from the readings to illustrate the palace politics approach? What are other cases where similar dynamics may be at work?
2. How has the NSC changed over time, and what has led to these changes? What issues should the NSC primarily address? How does the NSC facilitate interagency interaction, and what challenges may be brought about by the NSC?
3. Compare and contrast the different individuals selected to serve as Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (APNSA). Were there common themes across administrations?
4. What are some of the main challenges with interagency coordination at the theater-level? How might these challenges imperil national security?

D. Student Preparation (67 pp; ~60 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. Gagliano, Joseph. "The White House," in *Naval Officer's Guide to the Pentagon*, edited by Fred W. Kacher and Douglas A. Robb. Naval Institute Press, 2019, 188–199, (Stop at "White House Military Office"). (12 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. Video: "Gatekeepers: The White House Chief of Staff," *Harvard Kennedy School Institute of Politics*, 12 September 2017 (00:00 to 45:00).

5. 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)
6. Bick, Alexander. "Planning for the Worst: The Russia-Ukraine 'Tiger Team.'" In *War in Ukraine: Conflict, Strategy, and the Return of a Fractured World*, ed. Hal Brands. Johns Hopkins University Press, 2024. (10 pp)
7. Podcast: "Unifying the Interagency Against Wicked Problems," podcast audio generated by Notebook LM, 25 May 2026, (00:00-15:54). Podcast informed by supplemental materials 1 and 2.

Supplemental Materials

1. Carter, Alexander. "Improving Joint Interagency Coordination: Changing Mindsets," *NDU Press*, 01 October 2015. (6 pp)
2. Video: "The Debrief Episode 10: The Interagency and the Indo-Pacific," National Security Affairs Department, U.S. Naval War College, 02 February 2024, (00:00 – 20:10).

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of FPA-7 in Week 20, students are required to successfully complete FA-3 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-7

CONGRESS' ROLE IN NATIONAL SECURITY

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 policy making, the Legislative Branch does have the ability to significantly influence national security policy. Article I of the Constitution grants Congress certain 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 Congress' roles and responsibilities in crafting legislation dealing with national security and in providing oversight of Executive Branch departments and agencies, including the military establishment. Student preparation materials highlight the interplay between military officers and other national security professionals with elements of the Legislative Branch with the intent of lessening what Admiral William Crowe (USN), former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), described as an understanding gap: “Congress does not understand the military well, and the converse is also true.” Students should also gain insight into the influence of outside actors (e.g., interest groups, lobbyists, and think tanks) on the congressional agenda. These actors will be discussed in greater detail in follow-on sessions.

One of the most visible interactions between DoD and Congress involves the annual budget. National leaders develop a strategy, determine what capabilities are required to achieve its objectives, and articulate how military forces are expected to be employed in the service of national strategy. However, given that resources are finite, as discussed in IS-11, the DoD must balance different and competing priorities and allocate available resources. In turn, both the White House—which is charged with preparing the overall budget of the federal government—and Congress—which, per the Constitution, holds the power of the purse—must assess the DoD's budget submission and come to a final resolution regarding priorities and funding. This session introduces the importance of the power of the purse while FPA-9 examines Congress' role in authorizing and appropriating (funding).

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 policy.
 - Examine how and why military officers and other national security professionals interact with the Legislative Branch.

- Analyze how Congress interacts with the Executive Branch, especially the DoD, to establish effective national security policies, institutions, and processes.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 policies?
2. What limitations exist that prevent Congress from fully exercising its authority in the realm of national security?
3. How and why has Congress delegated its authority to the Executive Branch? How might Congress reclaim its Constitutional authority in the realm of national security?
4. How do military professionals interact with Congress, and how do these interactions impact national security?

D. Student Preparation (65 pp; ~26 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. Podcast: "How is Congress Involved in Foreign Policy (with Jordan Tama)," *The American Enterprise Institute: Understanding Congress Podcast*, Episode 39, 02 October 2023, (00:00 – 26:40).
4. Tama, Jordan. "The Surprising Bipartisanship of U.S. Foreign Policy," *Foreign Affairs*, 06 July 2023. (8 pp)
5. 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)
6. 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*, 09 March 2018. (10 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

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-8

CASE STUDY: INTERVENTION IN BEIRUT (1982-1983)

A. Session Overview

The Reagan administration's decision to deploy U.S. Marines to Lebanon in the early 1980s stands as an important example of presidential decision making under conditions of extreme international complexity. Confronted with mounting violence following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and the destabilization of Beirut, U.S. leaders were forced to navigate a rapidly shifting geopolitical landscape, characterized by sectarian conflict, superpower competition, and fragile alliances. Reagan's decision was shaped not only by the international environment but also by a range of domestic factors, including public opinion, congressional pressure, and the role of front-line military and diplomatic actors operating under ambiguous conditions. The interpersonal dynamics within the Reagan administration, including tensions between members of the NSC, further complicated the decision making process.

This case has enduring relevance because it vividly illustrates how foreign policy decisions are rarely the product of deliberative and rational decision making. Instead, they often emerge from the interplay of multiple forces: organizational routines, bureaucratic interests, cognitive biases, alliance dynamics, and public pressures. For national security professionals, the Beirut case demonstrates how theoretical concepts introduced in FPA, such as two-level games, bureaucratic politics, organizational behavior, and bounded rationality, play out in practice. This case study offers critical insights into the full breadth of the policy environment and serves as an early warning about the dangers of mission creep, unclear political objectives, assigning the military to pursue non-military objectives, and the limits of military power in complex civil conflicts—lessons that remain highly relevant today.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Analyze and explain the influential factors in a complex national security case.
 - Analyze the domestic and international influences on both senior policymakers and national security organizations in the assessment and prioritization of national security threats and challenges.
 - Analyze how Congress works with the Executive Branch, especially the Department of Defense, to establish effective national security policies, institutions, and processes.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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.

- Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms at the operational level of war.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What were the international and domestic factors that influenced the President's initial decision to deploy Marines to Lebanon to facilitate the withdrawal of Palestinian fighters from Beirut? Which would you identify as most influential and why?
2. How did the deliberations and arguments within the administration change in the debate over returning the Marines to Beirut in the wake of the massacres at Sabra and Shatila?
3. How accurately did decision makers in Washington perceive the influences—both domestic and international—that ultimately had an impact in determining the success of their policy?
4. What role did Congress play in exercising oversight of the Executive Branch? Was it in line with their Constitutional authority? Was their oversight sufficient? Why or why not?
5. National security professionals must consider political, social, military, and economic factors when advising their military and civilian superiors. What are the necessary and relevant factors when making strategic and operational recommendations?

D. Student Preparation (25 pp; ~55 min video)

1. Gvosdev, Nikolas K. “Case Study: Lebanon Revisited,” in *Navigating the Theater Security Enterprise*. U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, 2017, Ch.10: 219-246. (25 pp)
2. Video: “Retreat from Beirut,” *Frontline*, 26 February 1985, (00:00 – 54:35).

E. Student Deliverables

Prior to the start of FPA-7 in Week 20, students are required to successfully complete FA-3 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-9

FUNDING FOREIGN POLICY: AUTHORIZING, APPROPRIATING, AND DOD RELATIONS

A. Session Overview

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.”

Earlier sessions have illustrated the importance of Congress in national security, highlighting friction between the Legislative and Executive Branches. This session continues that conversation by focusing on two essential questions: how do policymakers decide what and how much to spend on defense, and what role(s) does Congress play in these decisions? Decisions on defense spending result from interactive Executive and Legislative Branch decision making systems and processes. This session will outline the national security decision making processes and dynamics that result in annual defense bills and address their long-term, strategic implications for national defense in an era of strategic change.

National security professionals cannot ignore the impact that strategy, resources, and domestic politics play in meeting the needs of the nation’s warfighters, the combatant commands, and the Joint forces they employ in support of our national interests. Budgetary constraints and political influences result in planning and programming decisions that have associated risks to mission execution within both the current and future security environment. Congress is not only empowered with the ‘power of the purse’ but also with congressional oversight on the annual defense budget process, Title 10 of the United States Code (USC), the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), military promotions, and so on. DoD leaders interact with those committees regularly and are often required to provide testimony and reports on requested resources. Taken together, this session provides an introduction and overview of that interaction.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - 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 authorizations and appropriations.
 - Consider the myriad policy factors that impact defense spending decisions, both internal to the DoD and from external actors, interests, and influences.

- Analyze the trade-offs that are often involved in defense spending decisions and consider how these trade-offs might impact long-term force planning.
- Identify the oversight role of congressional committees and sub-committees, particularly those involved in the annual congressional defense budget process.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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. Why is the federal budget cycle designed the way that it is? Is it effective? Why or why not? What impacts do time, domestic politics, or international dynamics have on the authorizations and appropriations processes?
2. How do the Services and combatant commands communicate with Congress? How does this impact defense authorizations and appropriations?
3. How does Congress influence what the DoD can plan for, build, and buy? How does this impact foreign policy decision making?

D. Student Preparation (45 pp; ~3 min video)

1. 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)
2. Video: “Congressional Appropriations Process.” *University of Maryland, School of Public Policy*, 18 September, 2020, (00:00 – 2:33).
3. 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)
4. Video: “Strengthening US Shipbuilding: Congress's Role in Maritime Revitalization.” The Atlantic Council, May 1, 2025, (06:40 – 39:00).
5. 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)
6. “Defense Resourcing for the Future. Final Report from the Commission on PPBE Reform,” *Commission on PPBE Reform*, March 2024, 1-11 (SCAN). (10 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-10

DEFENSE BUDGETING, ACQUISITIONS, AND INNOVATION

A. Session Overview

As the United States confronts an increasingly complex security environment defined by strategic competition, rapid technological change, persistent regional instability, and the growing integration of military and non-military tools of statecraft, the Department of Defense (DoD) plays a central role in shaping and executing U.S. foreign and national security policy. Its influence extends far beyond traditional warfighting into diplomacy, security cooperation, and budgetary politics at both the national-strategic and theater-strategic levels. This session examines how the DoD shapes, influences, and executes U.S. policy by analyzing the distinct roles played by the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), the Services, and combatant commands. Special attention is given to the expanding influence of combatant commanders, who today oversee activities ranging from regional engagement and crisis management to security sector assistance and budget advocacy.

The session also explores the intersection of long-term force design strategies and the realities of the defense budgeting process. Students will review the Planning, Programming, Budgeting, and Execution (PPBE) system and assess how bureaucratic friction, Service rivalries, and institutional inertia affect defense planning and resource allocation. As discussed in IS-21, particular emphasis is placed on how emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and hypersonic weapons, are reshaping defense priorities and complicating traditional processes for aligning military strategy with foreign policy objectives.

Despite shifts in the global balance of power, the United States remains the world's dominant military actor. Understanding how the DoD operates internally, how it influences broader national strategy, and how it adapts to technological change and evolving threats is critical to comprehending the full picture of contemporary U.S. foreign policy decision making.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Comprehend the structure, hierarchy, and functions of the DoD and subordinate organizations in U.S. national and theater security decision making and policy processes.
 - Understand the role that DoD entities play in developing and implementing national defense and military policy.
 - Examine how various defense establishment entities sometimes arrive at different conclusions during foreign policy deliberations.
 - Comprehend the role of the combat commanders in identifying capability gaps and resourcing needs.

- Consider the opportunities and challenges of defense budgeting, acquisitions, and innovation.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 DoD organizational structure affect the formulation of defense policy? Does DoD culture differ from other agencies?
2. How do individual Service cultures affect policy formation at the DoD level?
3. Where are the friction points among the Secretary of Defense, JCS, combatant commanders, and Service Secretaries?
4. What are the DoD's bureaucratic interests, and how does the organization protect those interests in the political bargaining and compromise at the executive level?
5. What are the cascading effects on the DoD from internal changes or surprising events around the globe that have strategic impact? How do decisions at the Joint Staff level impact combatant commands?

D. Student Preparation (56 pp; ~34 min podcast)

1. McInnis, Kathleen J. "Defense Primer: The Department of Defense," *Congressional Research Service*, updated 08 November 2022 (SCAN). (2 pp)
2. Podcast: "A Look Inside the Pentagon," podcast audio generated by Notebook LM, 25 May 2026, (00:00 – 24:33). Podcast informed by supplemental material 1.
3. O'Hanlon, Michael E. "Defense Budgeting and Resource Allocation," In *Defense 101: Understanding the Military of Today and Tomorrow*, Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2021. (Read only: Chapter Introduction 44-46; "The Big Picture: Broad Definitions and Processes," 46-52; "Breakdowns of the U.S. Department of Defense Budget," 52-55; "The Acquisitions Budget," 56-58; and "Conclusion: Defense Budgeting and Grand Strategy," 81-84). (15 pp)
4. Sapien, Joaquin. "The Inside Story of How the Navy Spent Billions on the "Little Crappy Ship," *ProPublica*, 07 September 2023. (18 pp)
5. Lipton, Eric. "Faced With Evolving Threats, U.S. Navy Struggles to Change," *The New York Times*, 04 September 2023. (5 pp)

6. Robertson, Noah. “Pacific Problems: Why the US Disagrees on the Cost of Deterring China,” *DefenseNews*, 03 April 2024. (6 pp)
7. O’Hanlon, Michael E and Alejandra Rocha. “Strengthening America’s Defense Industrial Base,” *Brookings*, 20 June 2024. (10 pp)
8. Eaglen, Mackenzie, “Putting Combatant Commands on a Demand Signal Diet,” *War on the Rocks*, 09 November 2020 (SCAN – Review from IS-11). (6 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. McMillan, Joseph and Franklin C. Miller. “The Office of the Secretary of Defense,” in *The National Security Enterprise: Navigating the Labyrinth*, edited by Roger Z. George and Harvey Rishikof, Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2nd edition, 2017, Ch. 6: 120-135. (14 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-11

CIVIL-MILITARY RELATIONS

A. Session Overview

Civil-military relations is the study of the relationships between the military, the civilian government, and the broader civilian population. In the context of FPA, particular attention is given to how the interactions between civilian policymakers and military officers influence the formation, interpretation, and execution of national security policy. Analysts also consider how public perceptions of the military, including factors such as levels of trust and confidence, can shape the political environment and affect the range of viable policy options available to decision-makers.

A well-functioning system of civil-military relations is critical to ensuring both effective policy outcomes and the maintenance of democratic norms. Strains or breakdowns in these relationships can lead to blurred lines between civilian and military roles, confusion over strategic priorities, or challenges to civilian control of the armed forces. Conversely, strong professional norms, clear communication, and mutual respect between civilian leaders and military officers help uphold accountability, civilian supremacy, and effective governance.

This session offers an opportunity to reflect on U.S. civil-military relations, examining both enduring principles and evolving dynamics. It explores how actions taken by military leaders, elected officials, civil servants, and the public contribute to shaping this foundational aspect of American national security. By analyzing key issues such as military advice to civilian leadership, the role of retired officers in public debates, and societal perceptions of the armed forces, students will develop a deeper understanding of how civil-military interactions influence foreign and national security policy making.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Comprehend the relationships among the U.S. military, American society at large, and the nation's civilian leadership.
 - Define civilian control of the military and why it is important in a democratic society.
 - Analyze the factors that affect U.S. senior military and civilian leadership's perspectives on force planning and the use of force and how this can influence foreign policy.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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.
- Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms at the operational level of war.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What is the role of the military in a democracy?
2. What role does military advice play in policy making? What are the sources of civil-military friction in policy making?
3. Do members of the military view themselves as superior to civilian policymakers? Is it a problem if they do? What policy or other changes might alter this perception?
4. Are civilians responsible for understanding the military? What are the consequences if they do or do not?
5. What are the key challenges for contemporary U.S. civil-military relations?

D. Student Preparation (57 pp; ~29 min video; ~ 21 min podcast)

1. “To Support and Defend: Principles of Civilian Control and Best Practices of Civil-Military Relations,” *War on the Rocks*, 06 September 2022. (SCAN).
2. 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)
3. Video: “The Role of the Military in a Democracy,” *George Washington’s Mount Vernon*, November 10, 2023, (00:00 – 17:54 and 41:40 – 52:55).
4. 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)
5. Podcast: “Debates Over Civilian Control of the Military,” podcast audio generated by Notebook LM, 26 May 2026, (00:00-21:13). Podcast informed by supplemental materials 1 and 2.
6. Smith, Jason. "Military Neutrality Is Fidelity," *Lawfare*, 30 December 2025. (11 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Schmidt, Todd. “Civilian Control of the Military: A Useful Fiction?” *Military Review*, January-February 2023. (5 pp)

2. Crosbie, Thomas, and Anders Klitmoller. "Beyond the Neutral Card: From Civil-Military Relations to Military in Politics." *Real Clear Defense*, 20 December 2023. (4 pp)
3. VanLandingham, Rachel E. "The Burden That Should Not Be Theirs: How Congress Turned the Military into the Last Check on Illegal War," *War on the Rocks*, 04 March 2026. (11 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-12

CASE STUDY: DECIDING THE IRAQ WAR (2003)

A. Session Overview

On 20 March 2003, a United States-led coalition launched the invasion of Iraq, Operation Iraqi Freedom, an operation that ultimately led to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein's government. This session examines the events, dynamics, procedures, and perspectives that played a role in what was arguably the most consequential U.S. military operation of the post-Cold War era. Students will be offered an opportunity to assess the extent to which Iraqi actions and misperceptions, U.S. interagency deliberations, and domestic and international dynamics, may have contributed to the likelihood of war. U.S. perceptions played a role as well. Congressional dynamics included legislators who offered reservations but ultimately passed an authorization for the use of military force (AUMF). Former Senior Intelligence Officer Paul Pillar stated, "9/11 made it politically possible for the first time to persuade the American people to break a tradition of not launching offensive wars."

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Analyze and explain the influential factors in a complex national security case.
 - Comprehend the factors that led to the decision to invade Iraq militarily.
 - Assess the role of perceptions, calculations, ethics, and beliefs in the processes that led to this decision.
 - Examine the role of Congress in authorizing the use of military force.
 - Analyze both the American and Iraqi perspectives on the unfolding diplomatic, and ultimately military, confrontation.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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.
 - Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms at the operational level of war.

C. Guidance Questions

1. What motivated the United States to take offensive action against Iraq? What are the factors and events that drove this decision? Was there dissent? If so, who/why?
2. What Iraqi actions, both in the years prior and in the weeks and months immediately preceding the invasion, played a role in the decision process?
3. What were the U.S. assumptions and beliefs that motivated this decision? Was the decision the product of a rational process? Did cognitive factors impact the development of the policy of confronting Saddam Hussein?
4. How did the broader Bush Administration approach the threat from Iraq? Were certain individuals more influential? If so, who and how? How was influence exercised?
5. George W. Bush stated that he "had tried to address the threat from Saddam Hussein without war." Was the war in Iraq something that could have been avoided based on the case study materials?

D. Student Preparation (74 pp)

1. Stieb, Joseph. *The Regime Change Consensus: Iraq in American Politics, 1990-2003*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2021: 189-247 (Read only: "Bush's Case for War" 192–214). (22 pp)
2. Woods, Kevin, James Lacey, and Williamson Murray. "Saddam's Delusions: A View from the Inside," *Foreign Affairs*, 85, no. 3, 2006, 2-26. (23 pp)
3. Bush, George W. *Decision Points*, New York: Crown Publishers, 2010, 223-253. (29 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Stieb, Joseph. "Rethinking Gore-War: Counterfactuals and the 2003 Iraq War," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, October 2023, 1-30. (30 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-13

DIPLOMACY: THE ROLE OF THE STATE DEPARTMENT

A. Session Overview

As discussed in IS-4, diplomacy is the foremost instrument of statecraft to manage foreign relations, minimize external threats, defuse regional crises, and advance U.S. security and prosperity in the global arena. Put simply, diplomacy may be thought of as the art of managing interactions with friends and foes alike to find common ground and advance national interests. Diplomatic success is often measured by crises resolved or conflicts avoided, while diplomatic failures can lead to war or loss of influence. Diplomats represent U.S. citizens and the president in remote outposts, war zones, and bustling capitals, building enduring relationships that allow the U.S. to manage global challenges, provide unique understanding and insights to policymakers on emerging threats and opportunities, and protect American citizens abroad. This session will identify and analyze the key players, processes, and dynamics involved in using diplomacy as an instrument of national power and the influence that diplomatic tools and institutions can have on U.S. foreign policy decision making.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand how the Department of State, through its embassies and consulates, conducts foreign policy overseas.
 - Understand the nature, conduct, and challenges of diplomacy.
 - Explore the various actors involved in diplomacy, and how they might approach diplomacy differently.
 - Analyze the potential advantages of diplomatic interaction, as well as the challenges and obstacles that can thwart diplomatic initiatives.
 - Examine a case of successful diplomacy.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 is a country team, and how does it function? What challenges do country teams face in competing with strategic rivals? How do combatant commanders work with and through country teams?
2. Based on the readings, in a world full of organizations and bureaucracies, what examples can you identify where one-on-one diplomacy made a difference?
3. Is diplomacy the United States' biggest weakness, as the student preparation materials suggest? If so, how? If not, what is, and why?
4. Where and in what ways has diplomacy been influential and/or successful in U.S. foreign policy?

D. Student Preparation (48 pp; ~29 min video; ~20 min podcast)

1. Cloud, John A. and Damian Leader, "Diplomacy, the State Department, and National Security," 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. 10: 185-195. (8 pp)
2. Video: "The Debrief: Diplomacy and the State Department," National Security Affairs Department, U.S. Naval War College, 9 November 2023, (00:00 – 29:00).
3. Hutchings, Robert. "American Diplomacy and the End of the Cold War in Europe," in *Foreign Policy Breakthroughs: Cases in Successful Diplomacy*, edited by Robert Hutchings and Jeremi Suri, 148-172. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2015. (20 pp)
4. 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)
5. Podcast: "The View from the State Department: An Interview with a Former U.S. Ambassador and Deputy at AFRICOM," U.S. Naval War College, Summer 2026, (00:00 – 20:00).

E. Student Deliverables

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-14

ECONOMICS: INSTRUMENT OF NATIONAL POWER AND WARFARE

A. Session Overview

The United States increasingly relies on economic power as a frontline instrument of national security policy. In an era defined by strategic competition with China and Russia, the tools of economic statecraft—sanctions, export controls, tariffs, trade agreements, and financial instruments—have moved from the periphery of foreign policy to its center. The 2022 sanctions regime imposed on Russia following its invasion of Ukraine, the sweeping export controls targeting China’s semiconductor industry, and the ongoing debate over tariff authority all reflect a broader transformation in how the United States wields economic power. Yet economic statecraft is a double-edged sword, as the same openness and interconnectedness that amplifies American leverage also creates vulnerabilities that strategic competitors can exploit. Understanding how and why the United States deploys these tools—and where they succeed or fail—is essential for national security professionals operating in today’s environment.

Crafting economic policy as an instrument of foreign policy is a complex, interagency endeavor involving multiple departments and agencies with distinct authorities and equities. The Department of the Treasury administers sanctions and monitors financial flows, while the Department of Commerce oversees export controls and trade remedies, and the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) negotiates trade agreements, each with different institutional cultures, stakeholders, and relationships with Congress and the private sector. The Executive branch has accumulated significant independent authority over tariffs and sanctions in particular, raising important questions about congressional oversight and the separation of powers. This session examines these actors and their tools, analyzing how coercive instruments such as sanctions and export controls compare to positive incentives such as trade, investment, and development assistance, and challenges students to consider when economic tools work, when they fall short, and what domestic and international trade-offs they entail.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Identify and differentiate the multiple actors involved in economic statecraft.
 - Distinguish the primary tools of economic statecraft and analyze how they may be wielded in deterrent and friendly scenarios.
 - Evaluate the limitations of economic statecraft – where it is most likely to succeed and where it frequently fails.
 - Explore the role of the interagency process in foreign economic policy making.

- Consider the challenges and trade-offs the United States faces when confronted with the dilemma of protecting national security but also retaining its lead in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and other cutting-edge technologies.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 is the purpose of economic statecraft, and what is the track record of its success in the United States? What are the obstacles and limitations?
2. What considerations should policymakers give to the use of coercive economic tools, and what are the domestic costs?
3. How does the United States use economic “carrots” such as trade, loans, and economic assistance, and how effective have these tools been?
4. How have economic tools been used to make war more difficult for strategic competitors?

D. Student Preparation (61 pp; ~20 min podcast)

1. Cloud, John and Nikolas Gvosdev. “How U.S. Economic Policymaking is Distinct from its National Security Counterpart,” in *A Policy Analysis Reader*, National Security Affairs Department, U.S. Naval War College, 2018. Revised by Professor Andrea Cameron, 2024. (16 pp)
2. Podcast: “Economic Statecraft and the New National Security Toolkit,” podcast audio generated by Notebook LM, 30 May 2026, (00:00 – 25:00).
3. Barry Eichengreen. “What Money Can’t Buy: The Limits of Economic Power,” *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2022. (9 pp)
4. Barnes, Julia and Ana Swanson. “Commerce Dept. Is on the Front Lines of China Policy,” *The New York Times*, 8 December 2024. (3 pp)
5. Mackinnon, Amy. “Russia’s War Machine Runs on Western Parts,” *Foreign Policy*, 22 February 2024. (9 pp)
6. Miscik, Jami, Peter Orszag, and Theodore Bunzel. “Geopolitics in the C-Suite,” *Foreign Affairs*, 11 March 2024. (6 pp).

7. Diaz, Chris and Aroop Mukharji. "Beyond Strategy: Executing Economic Security Policy," *War on the Rocks*, 11 April 2025. (8 pp)
8. Looney, Adam and Elena Patel. "Why does the executive branch have so much power over tariffs?" *Brookings*, 15 January 2025. (10 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Jentleson, Bruce. "Economic Sanctions: What, Who, Why, and How," In *Sanctions: What Everyone Needs to Know*. Oxford University Press, 2022.
2. Daniels, Mario and John Krige. "What are Export Controls and Why Do They Matter?," *In Knowledge Regulation and National Security in Postwar America*. University of Chicago Press, 2022. (pp 18–28, "National Security: The US Way of Seeing the World" through "Bureaucratic Structures")

E. Student Deliverables

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-15

INFORMATION: STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INTELLIGENCE

A. Session Overview

From Russian disinformation campaigns targeting U.S. foreign policy objectives in Africa, to Chinese cyber intrusions targeting classified data, the battles over information and intelligence now sit at the center of strategic competition. Understanding both domains is critical to advancing U.S. national security objectives across diplomatic, military, and economic fronts.

This session identifies and analyzes the key players, processes, and dynamics involved in using the informational instrument of national power to advance U.S. national security objectives. It explores the critical role of information as both a tool of influence and a domain of competition, focusing particularly on the concepts of strategic communication and narrative construction—how states craft, project, and adapt messages to shape perceptions, build credibility, and achieve strategic effects. The session also examines the relationship between intelligence and policy making, and intelligence as the foundation for developing effective information strategies for gaining an edge across all instruments of national power.

Special emphasis is placed on the growing influence of emerging technologies—including artificial intelligence, cyber capabilities, and social media platforms—and the increasingly important roles played by private sector actors in shaping the global information environment. Students will also assess how adversaries, both state and non-state, exploit information operations, misinformation, and disinformation campaigns to challenge U.S. interests and destabilize democratic societies.

Building on students' understanding of the Executive Branch and the domestic political system, this session encourages a forward-looking application of FPA concepts, asking students to critically evaluate how information and intelligence are wielded in today's interconnected world and how it might evolve in future competition and conflict.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the importance of strategic narrative/communication and how “shaping the narrative” is an important instrument of national power.
 - Evaluate how emerging tech and open-source information can shape the intelligence process.
 - Assess the United States government’s use of information through various cases.
 - Consider if/how intelligence can influence policy decision makers.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 are the forums for U.S. national security decision makers to coordinate on strategic messaging? What obstacles do such coordination face?
2. What are the challenges and opportunities for the U.S. government in using information in a networked world both as intelligence and as a messaging tool/narrative?
3. How does the U.S. government's use of information differ from that of authoritarian governments?
4. Do authoritarian governments possess structural advantages in strategic communication and information operations compared to democratic states like the United States? Why or why not, and what implications might this have for U.S. foreign policy decision making?

D. Student Preparation (43 pp; ~21 min podcast)

1. Goddard, Stacie. "Rhetoric, Legitimation, and Grand Strategy," In *The Oxford Handbook of Grand Strategy*, ed. Ronald Krebs and Thierry Balzacq. Oxford University Press, 2021. (9 pp)
2. Stradner, Ivana and Anthony Ruggiero. "America is Still Losing the Information War," *Foreign Policy*, 10 March 2023. (5 pp).
3. Goldenziel, Jill and Daniel Grant. "Information Resilience: Countering Disinformation and Its Threat to the U.S. Alliance System," *War on the Rocks*, 15 November 2023. (8 pp)
4. Podcast: "Do Leaders Discount Intelligence?," podcast audio generated by Notebook LM, 29 May 2026, (00:00-21:39).
5. Morell, Michael and David Gioe. "Spy and Tell: The Promise and Peril of Disclosing Intelligence for Strategic Advantage," *Foreign Affairs*, 23 April 2024. (16 pp)
6. Lazarus, Samuel Henry. "The Ultimate Price of Prediction Markets," *Council on Foreign Relations*, April 26, 2026. (5 pp)

Supplemental Materials

1. Jervis, Robert. "Why Intelligence and Policymakers Clash," *Political Science Quarterly* 125, no. 2 (2010): 185–204. (19 pp)

2. Marrin, Stephen. "Why Strategic Intelligence Analysis Has Limited Influence on American Foreign Policy," *Intelligence and National Security* 32, no. 6 (2017): 725–42. (17 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

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FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-16

ORGANIZED PRESSURE: LOBBYISTS, INTEREST GROUPS, AND THINK TANKS

A. Session Overview

From the halls of Washington D.C.'s think tanks, to the offices of powerful lobbying firms, domestic non-governmental actors increasingly shape the debates, and sometimes the outcomes, of national security policy. Over the past half-century, a networked community of think tanks, lobbyists, consultants, and advocacy organizations has expanded dramatically in size, scope, and influence, a trend now mirrored in capitals around the world.

This session provides additional information on and insights into this often-obscure world of domestic non-governmental influence in foreign policy and national security decision making. Students will examine the types of power and influence these actors possess, the mechanisms they use to access and shape the perspectives of decision makers, and the ways in which they seek to influence legislation, budget priorities, strategic narratives, and public opinion. Special attention will be given to the strategies used by think tanks and lobbyists to frame policy debates, build coalitions, and insert research and advocacy into the policy making process.

Understanding this network of non-governmental influence is increasingly essential for national security professionals operating at the strategic and theater levels. Those who recognize how these domestic external actors can impact U.S. decision making will be better equipped to navigate the policy environment, assess the origins of proposals and pressures, and ultimately contribute more effectively to the development of sound national security strategies.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Identify the missions and roles of think tanks, lobbyists, and consultants in influencing policy and legislative decisions in the defense and national security realms.
 - Comprehend how these institutions (and individuals) function, why they function the way(s) they do, what stakes and interests they have in policy decision making processes, what influence they might or might not have on decisions, and the implications for policymakers.
 - Assess the potential influence of think tanks, lobbyists, and other domestic non-state actors or non-governmental organizations in the formation of policy.
 - Assess how and why both domestic U.S. actors and non-U.S. interests (including other governments) might seek to lobby the U.S. government.
 - Develop the ability to critically assess the sources of support, information, analysis, and products these institutions use and generate, as well as the networks they employ to try to influence policy decisions.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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. Consider the statement, “most people...come to the subject [of interest groups and lobbying] predisposed to disliking them.” Do you agree? Why or Why not? Where does this disposition come from?
2. 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?
3. What are think tanks, why do they exist, and what, if anything, makes them influential? What impact might they have on national security affairs, particularly at the theater level?
4. What are the arguments, if any, for including lobbyists in the legislative process?
5. How do foreign policy-oriented think tanks compete for space in the marketplace of ideas, and how can they influence U.S. policymakers?

D. Student Preparation (65 pp; ~13 min video)

1. 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 2026. (30 pp)
2. Video: “How the Pentagon Falls Victim to Price Gouging by Military Contractors,” *CBS News: 60 Minutes*, 21 May 2023, (00:00 – 13:25).
3. Levinson, Chad. “Think Tanks and American Interventionism,” *War on the Rocks*, 24 November 2021. (9 pp)
4. Freeman, Ben and Nick Cleveland-Stout. “Quincy Brief #68: Big Ideas and Big Money: Think Tank Funding in America,” *Quincy Institute*, 03 January 2025. (10 pp)
5. Whitlock, Craig and Nate Jones. “Retired U.S. Generals, Admirals Take Top Jobs with Saudi Crown Prince,” *The Washington Post*, 18 October 2022. (13 pp)
6. Huang, Reyko. “Armed Rebel Groups Lobby in DC, Just Like Governments. How Does that Influence U.S. Policy?,” *The Washington Post*, 06 February 2020. (3 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-17

THE MEDIA AND PUBLIC OPINION

A. Session Overview

From the "CNN effect" during humanitarian crises in Somalia and Bosnia to the rapid spread of information (misinformation and disinformation) on social media, the media and public opinion have become powerful forces in the national security environment. Although the media cannot create policy directly, as former National Security Advisor, CJCS, and Secretary of State Colin Powell observed, "it does create the environment in which the policy is made."

This session examines how media and public opinion can both support and undermine government and military initiatives, substantiate or challenge official narratives, and enhance or erode national credibility. Media influence can shape public sentiment, international perceptions, and elite opinion alike, creating conditions that either constrain or embolden U.S. policymakers. Special attention will be given to how media framing and agenda-setting impact policy debates, crisis responses, and strategic communications.

Modern technologies, from 24-hour news cycles to social media platforms, have created new opportunities for public opinion to influence decision making, often in near real time. Yet the American public's frequent inattentiveness to national security issues has also allowed presidents considerable leeway in foreign policy. This session provides students with an opportunity to explore the complex relationship between public opinion and national security policy, including how public sentiment is formed, and at times leveraged, within the policy making process.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Critically assess the role of the media in influencing policy and legislative decisions in the defense and national security realms.
 - Comprehend how various media institutions and outlets function, what stakes and interests they have in policy decisions, and what impact they might or might not have on decisions.
 - Examine how media coverage affects national security decision making.
 - Analyze the motivations and consequences of leaking on national security.
 - Analyze the role of public opinion in democratic policy making and what influences can affect it.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 would you characterize the relationship between the U.S. military and American news media outlets?
2. How does the media influence public opinion and vice versa? How do both public opinion and the media influence decision makers? Does "the media" constitute an interest group with an independent agenda?
3. How does public opinion influence and/or impact foreign policy decision making? How responsive should national security leaders be to public opinion?
4. Does the media influence DoD? If so, how? Why does the U.S. military care about its public image?
5. Why is the U.S. military so trusted compared to other public institutions? What are the implications of that trust—are there potential downsides (for the military or the nation)?
6. Think about today's media ecosystem. How does the political fragmentation and polarization of news sources and the rise of social media as a main information source for many people in the U.S. affect foreign policy making? What new challenge for national security might it pose?

D. Student Preparation (39 pp; ~11 min video; ~32 min podcast)

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. Revised Summer 2026. (15 pp)
3. Aday, Sean. "The U.S. Media, Foreign Policy, and Public Support for War," in *The Oxford Handbook of Political Communication*, edited by Kate Kenski and Kathleen Hall Jamieson, 2018, Ch. 23: 315-326. (10 pp)
4. Video: Woodruff, Judy. "Exploring the Links Between Political Polarization and Declining Trust in News Media," *PBS News Hour*, 31 July 2024 (00:00 – 11:44)
5. 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).

6. Walcott, John. “Why the Press Failed on Iraq,” *Foreign Affairs*, 29 March 2023. (10 pp)
7. 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).

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-18

STATES AND NON-STATE ACTORS

A. Session Overview

From the rise of the Islamic State to the influence of global tech and military firms like SpaceX, Anduril, or OpenAI, today's international security environment is shaped by far more than just state actors. Military and national security professionals must increasingly navigate a complex web of forces that influence U.S. policy choices and constrain or expand strategic options.

This session marks the first of three sessions within Division III: International Influences on National Security Policy. Division III examines the external forces emanating from the global community that affect U.S. national security decision making and the development of foreign and defense policy. As discussed throughout the IS sessions, the international system has grown increasingly dynamic and complex, creating a persistent demand for deeper knowledge and more nuanced analysis by national security practitioners.

While states remain the principal actors in the modern international system, a wide range of non-state actors also wield significant influence on policy development and decision making. Armed groups such as the Islamic State and Hamas, non-governmental organizations like Human Rights Watch, and powerful private-sector actors such as SpaceX are just a few examples of entities capable of shaping the policy environment in ways that directly impact U.S. national security interests.

Understanding the nature, goals, and actions of these diverse global actors—and how they interact within the broader international system—is critical for professionals involved in Joint military policy development and execution. Those who can unpack the complexities of the modern international system will be far better positioned to anticipate challenges, leverage opportunities, and contribute meaningfully to U.S. security strategy in an increasingly interconnected world.

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.
 - Understand current trends reinforcing or weakening state sovereignty.
 - Identify the range of non-state actors (MNCs, violent extremist organizations, transnational criminal organizations, NGOs, and foundations) that can affect national security and defense policies.
 - Assess how non-state actors reinforce or weaken the sovereignty of states.

- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 still the dominant actors in foreign policy decision making, or has globalization shifted influence toward non-state actors?
2. How do different types of states (i.e., weak, strong, autocratic, democratic) impact U.S. foreign policy decision making?
3. How do non-state actors, particularly non-state armed groups, impact U.S. policy decision makers? How has past experience in addressing various non-state armed groups influenced our future policy debates?
4. In what ways do super-empowered individuals influence national security decision makers and the policy making process?

D. Student Preparation (43 pp; ~26 min video)

1. National Security Affairs Faculty. “Global Influences on Policy Decision Making: States and Non-State Actors,” Faculty Paper, U.S. Naval War College, College of Distance Education, Newport, RI, Summer 2026. (15 pp)
2. Video: “Inside Look at U.S. Navy Response to Houthi Red Sea Attacks,” *CBS News: 60 Minutes*, 18 February 2024, (00:00 – 13:09).
3. Clarke, Colin. “The Islamic State Never Went Away,” *Foreign Policy*, 10 April 2024. (4 pp)
4. Walt, Stephen. “The United States Has Less Leverage Over Israel Than You Think,” *Foreign Policy*, 21 March 2024. (3 pp)
5. Reinsch, William Alan and Jack Whitney. “Silicon Island: Assessing Taiwan’s Importance to U.S. Economic Growth and Security,” *CSIS*, 10 January 2025. (5 pp)
6. 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).
7. Video: “Palmer Luckey on Making Autonomous Weapons for the U.S. and its Allies,” *60 Minutes*, YouTube video, 18 May 2025. (00:00 – 13:20)

8. Shaw, Mark and Romain Le Cour Grandmaison. "Haiti is in a Political and Criminal Crisis that Should Not be Ignored," *War on the Rocks*, 29 April 2025. (6 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-19

INTERGOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS: INSTITUTIONS AND ALLIANCES

A. Session Overview

Intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) are formal institutions composed of two or more states that cooperate on issues of shared interest. These organizations are typically established through treaties or formal agreements, which provide the legal foundation for their existence and activities. Over time, IGOs have become increasingly visible—and in many cases increasingly influential—actors in international politics. Their policies, actions, and institutional priorities can shape diplomatic relations, economic policy, security cooperation, conflict management, and international norms in ways that carry significant implications for U.S. foreign, national security, and defense policy.

This session focuses specifically on the role and influence of international organizations 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 interests on the global stage. Pressure from IGOs and their accountability mechanisms can also influence U.S. foreign 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. foreign policy through dialogue, competition, cooperation, and collective action with other member states.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Understand the role of IGOs, such as NATO and the UN, in foreign policy decision making and global governance, including their implications for U.S. leadership and influence.
 - Identify key IGOs relevant to U.S. foreign policy and their respective areas of influence.
 - Consider how U.S. participation in IGOs shapes foreign policy priorities, strategies, and decision making processes.
 - Evaluate the benefits and challenges of multilateralism in the context of U.S. foreign policy, considering IGO engagement.

- Explore case studies in session materials illustrating how IGOs have influenced specific U.S. foreign policy decisions or initiatives.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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 (e.g., the UN) influence policy decision makers, if at all?
2. How might distinct IGOs shape and influence U.S. foreign policy priorities and strategies?
3. What are the benefits and challenges of engaging with IGOs in advancing U.S. foreign 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 (47 pp; ~13 min video; ~22 min podcast)

1. National Security Affairs Faculty. "Global Influences on Policy Decision Making: Institutions and Alliances," Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, College of Distance Education, 2026. (15 pp)
2. Brands, Hal and Peter D. Fever. "What are America's Alliances Good For?," *Parameters*, 47, no. 2, 2017, 15-30. (15 pp)
3. Radin, Andrew. "Reconsidering U.S. Decision-making Within NATO After the Fall of Kabul," *War on the Rocks*, 25 October 2021. (8 pp).
4. Podcast: "Legacy or Liability? Auditing U.S. Alliances to Compete with China," podcast audio generated with Notebook LM, 29 May 2026, (00:00 – 22:34). Podcast informed by supplemental material 1.
5. 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).
6. "The United Nations System: Frequently Asked Questions," *Congressional Research Service*, 22 September 2023. (SCAN: "Summary"; 1-3; 8-10; 15-18). (9 pp)

7. Raustiala, Kal and Viva Iemanja Jeromnim. "Why the UN Still Matters," *Foreign Affairs*, 7 June 2023. (9 pp.)

Supplemental Materials

1. Chivvis, Christopher S., et al. "Legacy or Liability? Auditing U.S. Alliances to Compete with China." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 2025

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-20

BEYOND BORDERS: INFLUENCES ON 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 the 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 national security professionals 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 how failures to understand local dynamics contributed to suboptimal outcomes in post-2003 Iraq, where insufficient attention to political, social, and cultural realities 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 toward 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-2: 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.
 - Supports NWC PLO-3: Apply the organizational and ethical concepts integral to the profession of arms at the operational level of war.

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 and strategic empathy 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 (54 pp)

1. National Security Affairs Faculty. "The Importance of Assessing the Operational Environment for U.S. Foreign Policymaking," Naval War College faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, Aug 2021. Revised by Professor Christopher Faulkner, Summer 2026. (20 pp).
2. Gvosdev, Nikolas, K. "The Ayatollah Versus the Ambassador: The Influence of Religion on Politics in Post-Saddam Iraq," Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, National Security Affairs Department, 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)
4. Vowell, J.B., and Craig Evans. "Operationalizing Strategic Empathy: Best Practices from Inside the First Island Chain," *The Strategy Bridge*, 16 November 2022. (6 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-21

FUTURE FOREIGN POLICY CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

A. Session Overview

From responding to emerging threats like autonomous weapons proliferation to navigating potential conflicts over Arctic resources, future national security decisions will demand not only tactical agility but strategic foresight. Effective national security professionals must be able to anticipate the actors, forces, and dynamics that will shape policy making to better inform decisionmakers before decisions are made.

This session marks the beginning of Division IV: FPA Synthesis and shifts students from primarily retrospective analysis toward the application of FPA concepts to future-oriented and integrative national security challenges. The objective is to analytically identify the actors, factors, powers, influences, and institutional dynamics that would likely affect a major policy decision in a plausible future context. Students will be expected to move beyond retrospective case studies and instead apply their understanding of the policy making ecosystem to forecast how U.S. foreign policy might be decided under new, complex conditions.

A detailed grasp of the U.S. foreign policy making apparatus, including the formal authorities, informal actors, bureaucratic frictions, and external influences explored in previous sessions, is essential to building this kind of strategic foresight. Developing the ability to anticipate challenges and opportunities in the policy environment is a critical skill for national security professionals operating at the strategic and theater levels.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Analyze and comprehend the range of policy actors, factors, dynamics, and influences that could affect U.S. policy regarding a critical national security concern.
 - Apply FPA concepts and tools to determine the art of the possible in a hypothetical future-oriented policy making situation.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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. The fictional (but realistic) scenario involves a surprise invasion by the People's Republic of China (PRC) of Taiwan-administered islands (Quemoy and Matsu) that lie just offshore

from the PRC mainland. What, if anything, would the U.S. government be likely to do in response?

2. How would uncertainty about PRC intentions influence U.S. decision making across the Executive Branch, Congress, and military leadership? What initial policy responses would be available, and what internal debates might arise?
3. The student preparation materials provide insights into how U.S., PRC, and Taiwanese officials reacted to past crises, particularly related to the three Taiwan Straits Crises (1954–55, 1958, and 1995–96). How did myriad domestic and international dynamics and pressures affect policymakers? How has Beijing perceived and responded to past crises involving the United States?

D. Student Preparation (62 pp)

1. U.S. Department of State, Office of the Historian. “The Taiwan Straits Crises: 1954–55 and 1958,” In *Milestones: 1953–60*. Washington, DC: Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Department of State. (2 pp)
2. Smith, Paul. “A Lesson from 1958 Could Help Deter China from Taking Taiwan,” *Defense One*, 1 May 2025. (2 pp)
3. Mann, Jim. “Crisis Over Taiwan,” in *About Face: A History of America’s Curious Relationship with China from Nixon to Clinton*, 315–338. New York: Alfred Knopf, 1999. (23 pp)
4. Wu, Xinbo. “Managing Crisis and Sustaining Peace Between China and the United States,” *United States Institute of Peace*, 2008. (Read only: 7–10; 23–37). (17 pp)
5. Gordon, Susan, and Michael Mullen. “Introduction,” in *US-Taiwan Relations in a New Era: Responding to a More Assertive China*. Independent Task Force Report No. 81, New York, NY: Council on Foreign Relations, June 2023. (3 pp)
6. Chien, Amy Chiang, John Liu, and Paul Mozur. “Fight or Surrender: Taiwan’s Generational Divide on China’s Threats,” *The New York Times*, 05 August 2022. (5 pp)
7. Glaser, Bonnie S. and Bonnie Lin. “The Looming Crisis in the Taiwan Strait,” *Foreign Affairs*, 02 July 2024. (10 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

FOREIGN POLICY ANALYSIS-22

SYNTHESIS CASE STUDY

A. Session Overview

Whether countering gray zone activities in Europe or managing contested security environments in the Indo-Pacific region, theater-level challenges today demand an integrated understanding of domestic, international, and organizational forces. As explored in the previous session, effective national security professionals must be able not only to respond to emerging challenges, but also to anticipate the actors, dynamics, and institutional pressures that will shape future policy decisions and the broader security environment.

This session serves as the culminating session of FPA. Building directly on the future-oriented analytical forecasting conducted in the previous session, students will move from anticipating future policy environments to applying key FPA concepts within a contemporary theater security case study. As the “Introduction to Foreign Policy Analysis” reading from FPA-1 noted, “It has never been more important for a national security professional to understand the range of international and domestic actors and influences that can impact theater security.” This session operationalizes that insight by requiring students to engage deeply with the policy analysis of a complex theater-level issue.

Students will apply FPA concepts to assess how domestic and international influences, interagency dynamics, organizational behavior, and other factors shape U.S. decision making in a real-world security environment. Special attention will be given to understanding how bureaucratic structures, institutional interests, alliance considerations, and domestic political pressures interact within the U.S. national security system. Building on the strategic foresight and forecasting skills developed in the previous session, students will integrate these elements to enhance their ability to navigate the complexities of the policy making environment and provide informed strategic recommendations.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Using the tools, techniques, and concepts presented in FPA sessions, analyze a contemporary national- and theater-level security issue and identify relevant factors in both the domestic and international environments, including U.S. and global elements.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-2: 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. The FPA sessions were designed to provide an in-depth examination of the actors, their motivations, the structures of decision making, and the broader context in which ... policy choices are formulated. How can FPA concepts be used to analyze this case/crisis?

D. Student Preparation

1. Students will utilize FPA-21 preparation materials for this session. Additional materials will be provided by the Professor(s) both prior to and during this session.

E. Student Deliverables

During FPA-22 in Week 27, students are required to successfully complete FA-4, an in-class case analysis and presentation addressing CLO-2. Specific guidance for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

No later than the start of SDX-1, students are required to submit and successfully complete SA-2 addressing CLO-2. Specific instructions for this deliverable can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

ANNEX D

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE

STUDY GUIDE

Strategy Development Exercise Overview. The Strategy Development Exercise (SDX) is the TSDM synthesizing event, the final summative assessment, and the “key assessment” for PLO-2. The SDX is a two-phase event in which students actively apply concepts from the IS and FPA sub-courses. Each seminar will play the role of a USINDOPACOM Joint Planning Group (JPG). As the course’s synthesizing event, the SDX provides students an opportunity to exercise concepts learned throughout TSDM while also demonstrating mastery of the CLOs and PLO-2. The IS sessions provided students with an overview of the ever-changing international strategic environment that the United States must consider while trying to advance U.S. national interests. The FPA sessions allowed students an opportunity to analyze the myriad actors, factors, and processes that should shape the development of national security policy in each of the organizational, domestic, and international environments. In the SDX sessions, students are given the opportunity to synthesize the concepts covered throughout TSDM and demonstrate their application in a group PowerPoint presentation focused on the USINDOPACOM 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 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 the IS and FPA sessions and synthesize them into the theater security decision making environment. This synthesis provides students with an invaluable opportunity to think more deeply about the 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.

The SDX Process. As the TSDM capstone event, 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 USINDOPACOM and the Indo-Pacific region over the next eight years.

- a. SDX Phase One:** In SDX Phase One, SDX-1 through SDX-10, each working group must produce and present an executive-level 30-minute PowerPoint presentation covering USINDOPACOM for the J-5 Director (the Professor or presiding official). The presentation will have four distinct deliverables: 1) clearly identified U.S. interests in the

Indo-Pacific region; 2) a strategic estimate of the future USINDOPACOM security environment over the next eight years; 3) a sub-heading-level outline of a theater strategy for USINDOPACOM that includes desired *ends* and *ways*; and 4) a list of four capabilities (*means*) that will be necessary to achieve or advance the strategic *ends*.

- b. SDX Phase Two:** In SDX Phase Two, SDX-12 through SDX-13, the working groups will be presented with a “reframing moment” (by the Professor) that will describe a significant “event” within the Indo-Pacific region. The working group must critically assess the effectiveness and suitability of their strategic proposal in light of the reframing moment. Utility, strengths and weaknesses, potential blind spots, and missing concepts or capabilities must all be considered in this critical analysis. It is said that no plan survives first contact with the enemy. In addition to the critical strategy analysis of their Phase One products, the JPGs will accomplish a policy analysis relying on FPA concepts where they will be given three policy options tied to the reframing moment and analyze which one they would choose and why given international, organizational and individual factors that influence policy making. Phase Two of the SDX provides the JPG with the opportunity to assess how their plan survived and propose potential policy options.
- c. SDX Product:** In SDX-13, the required JPG products will be delivered in two briefings. First is a 30-minute PowerPoint briefing covering the Phase One required elements. The second product (which immediately follows the first) is a second PowerPoint briefing (no more than 15 minutes) discussing the results of the critical assessment of their strategic proposal following the reframing moment. Following the 30-minute Phase One briefing and the 15-minute Phase Two briefing, there will be 15 minutes of questions and answers (Q&A) with the Professor and guest panelist (if there is one). Each JPG will designate at least three briefers, but all students are expected to participate in the Q&A. Slide templates will be provided by the Professor to help keep the focus on content.
- d. Approach:** Over the course of the next seven 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, they are providing an executive-level presentation that can facilitate development of CCMD products (such as a combatant command theater campaign plan identified in IS-11) that provides a strategic overview of the USINDOPACOM theater. Concepts and capabilities should represent the important Doctrine, Organizational, Training, Materiel, Leadership and Education, Personnel, Facilities, and Policy (DOTMLPF-P) requirements across the instruments of national power that are necessary to advance the strategy, accomplish strategic objectives, and achieve the strategic vision. Though students are tasked with providing a USINDOPACOM theater strategic outline, the realities of the need for interagency cooperation and whole-of-government approaches should be considered. The subsequent SDX sessions will clearly outline the requirements of the SDX and the expected deliverables.

SDX Deliverables Guidance. The SDX Phase One deliverables include the following components organized into a 30-minute executive-level PowerPoint briefing:

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

- For SDX purposes, students should take as given the current NSS and NDS guidance for the national theory of security, concept of national interests, and identification of sources of threat. An essential element of this component is the *prioritization of national interests and the understanding of what that prioritization implies*. Not all national interests are vital national interests. The country does not have the means to serve all interests at the same level of importance. But national strategic guidance can be a bit vague on priority levels of national interests. This is where students can stake their flag and make a case for which interests are vital, which are important, and which are peripheral in the Indo-Pacific region.
- Once identified, the hierarchy of interests should form the foundation of the “*Golden Thread*” or cohesive theme for the strategic proposal. What does the United States hope to achieve? Why does the country 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. If U.S. national interests are not clearly defined and aligned to the theater strategic products, the creation and sustainment of a “*Golden Thread*” will be very difficult to accomplish..

2) A USINDOPACOM theater strategic estimate over the next eight years.

- Produce a description of the region’s significance to U.S. security and interests, especially upcoming threats and opportunities. Consider how the USINDOPACOM theater fits into the U.S. global security picture. JPGs should:
 - Evaluate the four most significant major trends in the USINDOPACOM theater over the near-term (0-2 years) and medium-term (3-8 years) that may challenge the United States’ ability to advance and defend its interests in the region.
 - Consider what is happening in terms of demographics, economics, politics, the environment, military trends, etc., both within the region and in that region's relationships with important outside actors.
 - Conduct a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis analyzing USINDOPACOM over the next eight years.
 - Consider the U.S. military position in the region and relationships between the neighboring combatant commands and states, regional organizations, sub-state actors, as well as with other U.S. government agencies working in the region. Where might CCMD interests and preferences align with those of other actors, and where might there be tension? Given there are multiple CCMDs bordering on the Indo-Pacific region, what tension might exist between them?
 - Consider both the likelihood and the severity of various potentially negative events/trends in the region.

3) A USINDOPACOM theater strategic outline.

- Produce a sub-heading-level outline of the strategic approach from the USINDOPACOM perspective.
 - Having determined the trends the United States would need to influence to achieve its goals, students must develop the outline of a strategic approach to the USINDOPACOM theater *within a global context*. In other words, students should not plan in a vacuum but should consider how their strategic proposal may impact U.S. strategy on a global scale.
 - What is the vision or desired strategic end-state or outcome (**ends**) for the USINDOPACOM theater in both the near-term (0-2 years), and medium-term (3-8 years) 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 strategic objectives. This is the sub-heading-level discussion that goes beyond a catchy bumper sticker and gets into the concepts the student proposes to achieve strategic goals. These concepts can be outside the scope of the DoD.
 - Are there other actors the United States will need to influence to arrive at the desired end-state or outcome? What forms of leverage might the United States have over these actors? How can the United States exert that leverage at the least cost and without violating important principles?
 - Explain the challenges and risks in the proposed strategy outline and discuss risk mitigation measures (avoid, accept, manage, transfer).
 - Consider alignment with national strategic direction from the U.S. NSS, NDS, and NMS.

4) A prioritized list of four required capabilities.

- A list of four prioritized capabilities (**means**) necessary to carry out the regional strategic proposal. Determine and defend the relative priority of the listed capabilities.
 - Conceptualize these as capabilities across the DOTMLPF-P. They can be hardware, doctrine, organization, skills, personnel, etc. Discuss how it would be executed in the field, and how it would help to achieve the desired strategic outcomes.
 - Capabilities do not have to be solely DoD focused or military in nature. At least three of the four capabilities identified by the JPG must be DoD focused or military in nature. However, if one of the required capabilities is outside the scope of the DoD, the briefing should discuss the possible policy implications, actors, and processes to attain the required capability.

The SDX Phase Two deliverable includes the following components organized into an executive-level PowerPoint briefing not to exceed 15 minutes:

1. A critical analysis of the Phase One strategic proposal and policy options that examines the major regional national security event outlined in the reframing moment.
 - Assess and brief how well the JPG's strategic proposal meets the events described in the reframing moment.
 - Based on the reframing moment, identify and brief any potential weaknesses or blind spots discovered in the strategic proposal.
 - Based on the reframing moment, identify and brief any areas of the strategic proposal where the JPG could strengthen its effectiveness, and detail how it would do so.
 - Identify all areas of the strategic proposal that effectively address and mitigate the effects of the reframing moment.
 - Based upon the three policy options presented, describe and discuss foreign policy analysis considerations to include domestic actors/factors, international actors/factors, two-level game factors, organizational, bureaucratic process, and individual or organizational challenges to your recommended policy option.
 - Consider national interests and the JPG's Phase One products in your policy option suggestion.

ANNEX D
STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE
STUDY GUIDE

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STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-1

NATIONAL INTERESTS: THE FOUNDATION OF STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

A. Session Overview

This SDX introductory session provides students with a thorough outline of the SDX requirements, a review of each session's purpose, and an opportunity to ask questions to ensure all students are working with the same understanding of the deliverables. To help ensure each JPG meets expectations, they will be given an opportunity to present a short brief to the Professor on each of the four deliverables in Phase One. These briefings are FAs and will occur over the course of the SDX development process. The Professor will offer the JPG feedback on the quality of the briefing, offer suggestions for improvement, and validate that the JPG has a solid foundation on which to develop the next portion of their briefing.

To ensure each student has an opportunity for maximum participation and input into the SDX product, seminars with 12 or more students will be broken up into two separate JPGs. The Professor will divide students into two separate JPGs with an equitable number of students in each. Seminars with 11 students or less will have a single JPG. No JPG will have more than 11 students or fewer than six.

USINDOPACOM is the largest and most dynamic regionally 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. The U.S. has enduring national interests that intersect with myriad regional actors. 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 USINDOPACOM. 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. Drawing on 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

- Understand the SDX scenario, processes, products, and student deliverables.
- 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.
- Evaluate how USINDOPACOM 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, alliances, force posture, access agreements, and deterrence concepts.
- 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.
- SDX Phase One Objectives
 - Understand and apply TSDM course concepts.
 - 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 USINDOPACOM’s ability to advance U.S. 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.

- SDX Objectives in Phase Two Reframing Moment
 - Critically analyze and assess the Phase One strategic proposal in response to a major regional national security event.
 - The JPG must prepare a set of slides (3-5) to present the results of their critical analysis and policy response option recommendation.
 - These slides will be presented after the 30-minute Phase One presentation, and prior to the Q&A period. The JPG is allotted 15 minutes to present its Phase Two presentation. Phase Two slides are due to the Professor no later than 24 hours prior to the start of SDX-13.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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 does the current NSS inform USINDOPACOM's theater strategy development?
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 (106 pp, ~25 min video)

1. TSDM Course Syllabus, Academic Year 2026-2027, read entire Annex D and scan grading rubric. (46 pp)

2. Video: Shinkel, Steven L. "Strategy Development Exercise Overview," U.S. Naval War College, April 2026. (~25 mins)
3. Reveron, Derek S, James L Cook, and Ross M Coffey. "Competing Regionally: Developing Theater Strategy," *Joint Force Quarterly*, 104, 2022. (12 pp)
4. The White House. National Security Strategy of the United States of America. November 2025. pp. 1-29 (29 pp)
5. 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)

Supplemental Material

1. Heffington, Steven, Adam Oler, and David Tretler, eds. "A National Security Strategy Primer." Washington, DC: National War College, National Defense University, 2025. pp. 1-5, 15-16. (7 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessments 5-8. The JPG will be required to present four briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the first four briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-5 Prioritized list of top four U.S. interests briefed in SDX-3.
- FA-6 Theater strategic estimate briefed in SDX-5.
- FA-7 Theater strategic outline briefed in SDX-7.
- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-2

SDX PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

A. Session Overview

This session provides JPGs with valuable time together on-site, in seminar, to develop FA-5's four prioritized U.S. interests and receive Professor feedback before being briefed in SDX-3.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Identify and prioritize four 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 USINDOPACOM.
 - Describe the role of theater strategy in linking national-level interests, policy and guidance to developing theater strategy within a geographic combatant command.
 - Evaluate how USINDOPACOM aligns theater campaigns and posture to support U.S. national interests and deter adversary aggression.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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 the JPG's four prioritized U.S. national interests in the Indo-Pacific region?
2. What distinguishes between vital, important, and peripheral interests in the context of strategic competition?
3. What factors did the JPG use to determine the four prioritized interests?

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessments 5-8. The JPG will be required to present four briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the first four briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-5 Prioritized list of top four U.S. interests briefed in SDX-3.
- FA-6 Theater strategic estimate briefed in SDX-5.
- FA-7 Theater strategic outline briefed in SDX-7.
- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 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 THEATER ENVIRONMENT

A. Session Overview

Each of the JPGs will present FA-5, a 10-minute PowerPoint briefing on their four rank-ordered U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific theater. Following the briefing and feedback from the Professor, SDX-3 will begin.

As retired Admiral William McRaven, USN, 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 USINDOPACOM 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 USINDOPACOM in the Indo-Pacific region and how well it is postured to assist in advancing U.S. interests. This session also introduces SWOT as a structured assessment methodology.

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-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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 are the key trends in geographic, demographic, economic, military, and political trends 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 region?

Threat and Risk Assessment:

1. Who are the primary state and non-state actors challenging regional stability?
2. What are the emerging threats across the instruments of national power?
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 of the United States 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, BRICS)?
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 deterrence by denial, 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 (47 pp; ~7 min video)

1. Pratt, Michael W. “Assessment,” Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, 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*. 19 October 2016, (0:00-7:02). (~7 min)
4. U.S. Indo-Pacific Command posture statement, April 2026. (25 pp)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessments 5-8. The JPG will be required to present four briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the first four briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-5 Prioritized list of top four U.S. interests briefed in SDX-3.
- FA-6 Theater strategic estimate briefed in SDX-5.
- FA-7 Theater strategic outline briefed in SDX-7.
- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-4

SDX PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

A. Session Overview

This session provides each JPG with valuable time together on-site, in seminar, to develop the FA-6 theater strategic estimate and receive Professor feedback before being briefed in SDX-5.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, not to exceed 10 minutes in length, that offers a theater strategic estimate over the next eight years that is in line with the JPG's prioritized list of U.S. interests, the theater strategic outline, and a rank-ordered list of capabilities.
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, not to exceed thirty minutes in length, that outlines the JPG's four Phase One deliverables.
 - Incorporate Professor feedback and guidance into the JPG's Phase One deliverables and presentation.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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. Has the JPG incorporated the feedback and guidance offered by the Professor for their prioritized list of U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific region?
2. Has the JPG fully developed a theater strategic estimate for USINDOPACOM over the next eight years that addresses each of the requirements as outlined in SDX-1?

3. Is the JPG fully prepared to deliver a PowerPoint briefing, approximately 10 minutes in length, that outlines a USINDOPACOM theater strategic estimate over the next eight years at the beginning of SDX-5?

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessments 6-8. The JPG will be required to present briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-6 Theater strategic estimate briefed in SDX-5.
- FA-7 Theater strategic outline briefed in SDX-7.
- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-5

TRANSLATING OBJECTIVES INTO ACTION: LINKING ENDS TO WAYS

A. Session Overview

Each of the JPGs will present FA-6, a 10-minute PowerPoint briefing on their theater strategic estimate of the Indo-Pacific theater over the next eight years. Following the briefing and feedback from the Professor, SDX-5 will begin.

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 a deterred China, regional stability, and freedom of navigation, are translated into *ways*, such as the application of Joint Force posture, security partnerships, and forward deterrence concepts, to name just 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. This session provides 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 factors such 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 strategies. Strategy is defined in Joint Publication 5.0 as “an idea or set of ideas for employing the instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and multinational objectives. Strategy is also the art and science of determining a future state or condition (*ends*), determining the possible approaches (*ways*) ... to achieve the intended objective all the while managing the associated risk.” 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 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*.
 - Explain why risk must be considered in developing strategy.
 - Propose alternative strategic approaches that strengthen regional deterrence and align with U.S. national interests.
 - Understand risk identification, calculation, acceptance, and mitigation in a decision-making process.
 - Comprehend the *ways* and *means* of establishing, measuring, and comparing sets of alternatives to arrive at the best course of action to achieve desired objectives.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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. Do the *ways* reflect a clear understanding of the problems or challenges the strategy seeks to address?
4. Are the *ways* consistent with national or theater-level strategic guidance (e.g., NSS, NDS, and theater campaign plans)?
5. Do the *ways* consider the strategic environment, including political, military, regional and cultural factors?
6. Have alternative *ways* been considered, and why were the chosen *ways* selected over others?
7. Can the *ways* be executed with available or attainable *means*?
8. Are the *ways* feasible given known constraints (e.g., rules of engagement, political will, international support)?
9. Do the *ways* effectively account for potential adversary responses or counter strategies?
10. What risks arise from the chosen *ways*, and how can they be mitigated?
11. Are there any gaps between the *ends* and the *ways* that could jeopardize the strategy?
12. What are the options for addressing identified risks, and how does one decide between these options?

D. Student Preparation (58 pp)

1. Department of Defense. National Defense Strategy of the United States of America. 23 January 2026. (32 pp)
2. Pratt, Michael W. "Deciding Strategy," Faculty paper, U.S. Naval War College, Newport, RI, 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 Materials

1. Video: “What is Strategy? It’s a Lot Simpler Than You Think,” *Harvard Business Review*, 23 February 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)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessments 6-8. The JPG will be required to present briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-6 Theater strategic estimate briefed in SDX-5.
- FA-7 Theater strategic outline briefed in SDX-7.
- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-6

SDX PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

A. Session Overview

This session provides the JPGs with valuable time together on-site, in seminar, to develop the FA-7 theater strategic outline and receive Professor feedback after being briefed in SDX-7.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, approximately 10 minutes in length, that offers a theater strategic outline over the next eight years that is in line with the JPG's prioritized list of U.S. interests, the theater strategic estimate, and a rank-ordered list of capabilities.
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, not to exceed thirty minutes in length, that outlines the JPG's four Phase One deliverables.
 - Incorporate Professor feedback and guidance into the JPG's Phase One deliverables and presentation.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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. Has the JPG fully developed a theater strategic outline for USINDOPACOM over the next eight years that addresses each of the requirements as outlined in SDX-1?
2. Is the JPG fully prepared to deliver a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation at the beginning of SDX-7?

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessments 7-8. The JPG will be required to present briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-7 Theater strategic outline briefed in SDX-7.
- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-7

OPERATIONALIZING STRATEGY: LINKING WAYS TO MEANS

A. Session Overview

Each of the JPGs will present FA-7, a 10-minute PowerPoint briefing on their strategic outline for the Indo-Pacific theater. Following the briefing and feedback from the Professor, SDX-7 will begin.

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
 - Understand the operational meanings of *ways* and how they relate to *means* and achieving strategic objectives.
 - Assess operational approaches (*ways*) and identify key capability gaps and determine what capabilities (*means*) or concepts need to be developed to support the strategy.
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, not to exceed 10 minutes in length, that offers a rank-ordered list of four capabilities that supports the JPG's prioritized list of U.S. interests, the theater strategic estimate, and the theater strategic outline.
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, not to exceed 30 minutes in length, that outlines the JPG's' four Phase One deliverables.

- Learning Outcomes

- CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
- CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
- CLO-3: 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)

7. Joint Chiefs of Staff. National Military Strategy of the United States of America, 08 May 2023. (6 pp)
8. 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)

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessments 7-8. The JPG will be required to present briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-7 Theater strategic outline briefed in SDX-7.
- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-8

SDX PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

A. Session Overview

This session provides JPGs with valuable time together on-site, in seminar, to develop FA-8, four prioritized capabilities and receive Professor feedback before being briefed in SDX-9.

This session also provides the JPGs time to begin to consolidate and synthesize the four deliverables briefed in FAs 5-8 in preparation for SDX-13.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, approximately 10 minutes in length, of the four prioritized capabilities that supports the JPG's prioritized list of U.S. interests, the theater strategic estimate and theater strategy outline.
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, not to exceed 30 minutes in length, that outlines the JPG's four Phase One deliverables.
 - Incorporate Professor feedback and guidance into the JPG's Phase One deliverables and presentation.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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. Has the JPG incorporated the feedback and guidance offered by the Professor?
2. Is there a coherent link and discernible "*Golden Thread*" between each of the Phase One deliverables?

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessment 8. The JPG will be required to present briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-9

SDX PHASE ONE: PRODUCT SYNTHESIS

A. Session Overview

Each JPG will present FA-8, a 10-minute PowerPoint presentation on their four required capabilities. Following the briefing and feedback from the Professor, SDX-9 will begin.

This session also provides JPGs time to consolidate and synthesize the four FA 5-8 deliverables in preparation for SDX-13. This session also allows JPGs time to conduct an optional rehearsal for Phase One deliverables, if desired.

This week's two sessions conclude the SDX Phase One. Edits in response to SDX-9 feedback should be incorporated into the final SA-3 presentation products and will be due to the Professor (with no additional updates) no later than 24 hours prior to the start of SDX-11. This version of the Phase One briefing will be the same version presented and graded in SDX-13.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, approximately 10 minutes in length, of the four prioritized capabilities that support the JPG's prioritized list of U.S. interests, the theater strategic estimate and theater strategy outline.
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, not to exceed thirty minutes in length, that outlines the JPG's four Phase One deliverables.
 - Incorporate Professor feedback and guidance into the JPG's Phase One deliverables and presentation.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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. Has the JPG incorporated the feedback and guidance offered by the Professor for each of the Phase One deliverables?
2. Is there a coherent link and discernible “*Golden Thread*” between each of the Phase One deliverables?
3. Has the JPG reviewed the SDX Phase One Presentation Checklist?

SDX PHASE ONE PRESENTATION CHECKLIST

CONTENT

- Meets SDX requirements
- Demonstrates clear understanding of TSDM course concepts
- U.S. interests, strategic estimate, strategy outline, and four required capabilities aligned, consistent, and mutually supporting
- Innovative while aligning with existing U.S. strategic guidance
- Makes a strong case for feasibility

STRUCTURE

- Material logically presented with an easily recognizable “*Golden Thread*” which ties the whole strategic proposal together from start to finish
- Distinctly describes the four required Phase One deliverables
- Key concepts are evident and clearly articulated
- Strong concluding position

SUPPORT

- Credibility of material
- Assumptions validated
- Relevance to theme
- Verbal / Visual presentation synergy

STYLE

- Persuasively presented
- Professional and engaging
- Pace, tempo, clarity of delivery
- Audience engagement
- Though a slide template is provided, JPGs must still ensure slides are not overcrowded and graphs, tables, or images are appropriately sized for audience legibility

MISCELLANEOUS

- Completed within 30 minutes allotted time limit
- Responds well to questions
- Managed discussion
- All members participated in Q&A

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Formative Assessments 8. The JPG will be required to present briefings throughout the development of the SDX Phase One product. Each of the briefings will focus on one of the four Phase One deliverables and be approximately 10 minutes in length:

- FA-8 List of four rank-ordered capabilities briefed in SDX-9.

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-10

SDX PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

A. Session Overview

This session provides each JPG onsite seminar time together to synthesize and refine each of the four Phase One SDX deliverables in preparation for the graded SA-3 presentation in SDX-13. Special attention should be given to timing, ensuring there is a Golden Thread that clearly connects the JPG's thought process for each deliverable, and ensuring the material is presented in a clear, concise, and compelling manner.

Each of the JPGs will have until 24 hours prior to the beginning of SDX-11 to provide a final copy of their completed Phase One briefing slides to the Professor. After the Phase One briefing has been submitted, no additional changes or updates may be made to the briefing material.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Effectively organize, develop, and communicate a presentation, not to exceed 30 minutes in length, that outlines the JPG's four Phase One deliverables.
 - Incorporate Professor feedback and guidance into the JPG's Phase One deliverables and presentation.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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

None.

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-11

SDX PHASE TWO REFRAMING

A. Session Overview

Phase Two of the SDX consists of two parts, a critical strategy assessment and a policy analysis section. The JPG will have 15 minutes to present SDX Phase Two. The critical strategy assessment provides each JPG an opportunity to put their Phase One strategic proposal to the test during a fictional national security event within the Indo-Pacific region. To demonstrate the practical feasibility and utility of the proposed strategy, JPGs will be presented with a “reframing moment” at the beginning of SDX-11 that describes a specific set of events within the region. The objective of Phase Two is to test the JPG’s ability to apply and critically assess their own strategic proposal. Additionally, the students will make a policy recommendation from three options provided in the reframing moment.

Throughout TSDM, students have been asked to critically analyze grand strategy and foreign policy case studies; now the JPG must turn that critical light upon their own ideas. Each JPG will critically analyze and assess how their strategic proposal meets the challenge described in the reframing moment and determine potential areas of weakness or blind spots, as well as areas where their proposed theater strategy is well suited to meet the challenge. JPGs are encouraged to be thorough in their critical analysis and seek to determine areas where they could strengthen the effectiveness of their strategy considering the events of the reframing moment. Likewise, if the JPG determines that their strategic proposal effectively mitigates the effects of the reframing moment, those findings should be highlighted as well.

The reframing moment includes policy options for responding to the events of the reframing moment. This requires the JPGs to utilize FPA terms and concepts, to consider actors, factors, and processes that explain why their recommended policy action was selected. The policy analysis portion should consider domestic actors, levels of analysis, two-level games, National Security Establishment tensions and relevant process issues to justify their answer. The JPG is allotted 15 minutes to present its Phase Two presentation. JPGs will need to balance between critical strategy assessment and policy analysis sections.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Critically analyze and assess the Phase One strategic proposal in light of a major regional national security event.
 - Analyze three given policy options in light of the reframing moment and make a recommendation based upon FPA terms and concepts and justify why the JPG chose the selected option.

- The JPG must prepare a set of slides (3-5) to present the results of their critical analysis. These slides will be presented after the 30-minute Phase One presentation, and prior to the question-and-answer period. Phase Two slides are due to the Professor no later than 24 hours prior to the start of SDX-13.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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

None.

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-12

SDX PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

A. Session Overview

This session provides the JPGs with valuable time together on-site, in seminar, to develop SA-3 Phase Two products.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Critically analyze and assess the Phase One strategic proposal in light of a major regional national security event.
 - The JPG must prepare a set of slides (3-5) to present the results of their critical analysis. These slides will be presented after the 30-minute Phase One presentation, and prior to the Q&A period. The JPG is allotted 15 minutes to present its Phase Two presentation. Phase Two slides are due to the Professor no later than 24 hours prior to the start of SDX-13.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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. Has the JPG critically analyzed and assessed how the strategic proposal meets the challenge described in the reframing moment?
2. Has the JPG determined potential areas of weakness or blind spots, as well as areas where the proposed theater strategy is well suited to meet the challenge?
3. Has the JPG been thorough in the critical analysis and sought to determine areas where they could strengthen the effectiveness of the strategy considering the events of the reframing moment?

- If the JPG determines that their strategic proposal effectively mitigates the effects of the reframing moment, those findings should be highlighted as well.

D. Student Preparation

1. The entirety of the TSDM curriculum.

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-13
SDX PHASE ONE AND PHASE TWO PRESENTATIONS
(SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT 3)

A. Session Overview

JPGs will deliver their Phase One and Phase Two presentations to the Professor as SA-3. The Professor will award an overall group grade for each JPG that is consistent with the Presentation Grading Rubric below. The Phase One briefing will be no longer than 30 minutes, followed by the Phase Two briefing, which will be no longer than 15 minutes. Following the Phase One and Phase Two briefings, there will be a 15-minute Q&A period with the Professor.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Demonstrate an understanding of TSDM course concepts and PLO-2 through the application of SDX deliverables.
 - 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 years, identifying key security, political, economic, and technological trends that may impact USINDOPACOM's ability to advance U.S. 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 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.

- Critically analyze and assess the Phase One strategic proposal considering a major regional national security event.
- Select a policy option that will most effectively address the events of the Phase Two reframing moment.
- Learning Outcomes
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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

None.

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

Summative Assessment: During SDX-13, each JPG must successfully present its SA-3 SDX briefing and be prepared for Q&A addressing CLOs 1-3 and PLO-2. Specific instructions for this requirement can be found on Blackboard with additional guidance provided by the Professor.

SDX Phase One Evaluation Rubric					
Category	High-Quality-(Above-Expected-Graduate-Level-of-Performance)	Very-Good-(Expected-Graduate-Level-of-Performance)	Acceptable-(Below-Expected-Average-Graduate-Level-of-Performance)	Poor-(Well-Below-Expected-Average-Graduate-Level-of-Performance)	Comments
National-Interests	Clearly-identifies-and-prioritizes-U.S.-interests; the-entire-proposal-is-consistently-and-logically-anchored-to-these-priorities.	Identifies-and-prioritizes-interests; but-Phase-One-products-has-inconsistent-connections-to-them.	Identifies-some-interests-but-fails-to-prioritize-them. Some-interests-are-unclear-and-prioritization-isn't-developed.	Does-not-identify-U.S.-national-interests-within-the-region.	
Theater-Strategic-Estimate	Comprehensive-overview-(military, economic, political, social, environmental)-with-near-(0-2-yr)-and-medium-term-(3-8-yr)-timelines; clear-SWOT-analysis; considers-regional-impact-and-interagency-challenges.	Broad-overview-(military, economic, political, trends)-with-near-and-mid-term-timelines; SWOT-clearly-identified; considers-regional-impact-on-global-strategy.	Partial-overview; fails-to-examine-key-National-Security-Strategy-areas; focuses-only-on-military-challenges; SWOT-and-regional-impact-not-identified.	Fails-to-provide-an-overview-or-communicate-impacts-on-national-security-interests.	
Theater-Strategy-Outline	Clear-near/mid-term-conditions-considering-threat-severity; concise-heading-level-detail; concepts-(ways)-describe-activities, resources, actors, processes, and-policy; risk-and-mitigation-discussed.	Near/mid-term-conditions-consider-threat-severity; effective-descriptions; concepts-describe-some-activities/resources; risk-presented-but-insufficient-mitigation-discussed; aligns-with-guidance.	Fails-timelines; idealistic-conditions; vague-heading-titles; fails-to-consider-process-or-policy; clear-gaps-in-risk-or-in-interagency-coordination-presented; disconnects-in-alignment-with-national-guidance.	Conditions-outside-8-year-horizon; idealistic; ineffective-one-word-titles; sub-heading-detail-not-presented; drastically-departs-from-guidance.	

Required-Capabilities	Four-prioritized-capabilities-(Means); logical-connections; DoD-centric-(DOTMLPF-P)-and-Whole-of-Government-considerations-(actors, processes, and-CCDR-staff-coordination).	Four-prioritized-capabilities-with-logical-connections; communicates-employment-in-the-field-but-does-not-consider-acquisition-(actors-or-processes).	Four-capabilities-are-not-clearly-prioritized-and-are-not-clearly-tied-to-the-strategic-proposal.	Fails-to-present-four-distinct-capabilities-or-fails-to-connect-them-to-the-proposal.	
Organization, Timing, & Delivery	Clear-"Golden-Thread"; (logical-theme)-cohesion; smooth-transitions; minimum-3-speakers; clear-speech; completed-within-28-30-minutes.	Clear-organization; theme-present-but-not-effectively-used-as-a-Golden-Thread; minimum-3-speakers; struggles-with-delivery; completed-within-26-31-minute-time.	Logical-order-but-no-theme-developed; elements-are-disconnected; fewer-than-3-speakers; lacks-rehearsal; exceeds-32-minutes.	Not-organized-logically; logic-and-connections-cannot-be-determined; exceeds-33-minutes-or-is-under-25-minutes-and-doesn't-explain-products.	
Style-and-Format	Uses-template; error-free; tables-and-images-are-readable; effective-use-of-white-space.	Uses-template; minor-errors; some-overcrowding-of-slides.	Does-not-use-template; significant-grammatical-errors; tables-or-images-are-too-small-to-read.	Slides-aren't-coherent-and-completely-detract-from-the-communication-of-the-proposal.	

This rubric is intended to serve as a general guide for assessment and feedback. ¶
Overall Comments:

SDX Phase Two Evaluation Rubric			4	3	2
Category	High-Quality (Above-Expected-Graduate-Level-of-Performance)	Very-Good (Expected-Graduate-Level-of-Performance)	Acceptable (Below-Expected-Average-Graduate-Level-of-Performance)	Poor (Well-Below-Expected-Average-Graduate-Level-of-Performance)	Comments
Critical-Analysis	Thorough process and methodology; clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses; identifies blind spots, opportunities, and mitigation.	Analysis process applied but omits one or more elements; over-highlights strengths or weaknesses; blind spots not considered.	Shallow analysis; simplistic conclusions (e.g., "we got it all right" or "start over").	No critical analysis conducted or demonstrates inability to apply course analysis techniques.	
Organization and Timing	Completed within 15 minutes; analysis is organized and balanced in allotted time.	Completed within 16 minutes; poor time management results in analysis elements being cut short.	Brief takes more than 16 minutes to complete. Brief is less than 7 minutes and doesn't provide analysis. Presentation significantly lacks organization.	Brief takes more than 17 minutes to complete. Presentation is completely disorganized.	
Style and Format	Uses template; error-free; readable graphics; effective visual communication.	Uses template; minor errors; some overcrowding or lack of white space.	Does not use template; significant errors; graphics too small to read.	Slides are disjointed; illogical and detract from the seminar's proposal.	
<i>This rubric is intended to serve as a general guide for assessment and feedback.</i> Overall Comments:					

SDX PHASE ONE PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Expected Outcomes

National Interests

- Presentation clearly identifies U.S. national interests within the Indo-Pacific region. National interests are prioritized, and entire strategic proposal is consistently and logically anchored to these interests in accordance with their priority level.

Theater Strategic Estimate

- Acknowledging time limitations, the presentation provides a comprehensive overview of the USINDOPACOM security environment including military, economic, political, demographic and other trends. Estimate is presented in near-term (0-2 year) and medium-term (3-8 year) timelines. U.S. strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats in the theater are clearly identified. The likelihood and severity of threats and challenges is considered and communicated. Regional impact to U.S. global strategy and possible seams and challenges to interagency and whole of government efforts are considered and communicated.

Theater Strategy Outline

- Clearly presents desired theater conditions for both near-term (0-2 year) and medium (3-8 year) time frames. Desired conditions consider the likelihood and severity of threats and challenges identified in strategic estimate. Heading-level detail is provided through concise descriptions of desired conditions within the theater. Sub-heading-level detail is provided through concepts (*ways*) that comprehensively describe activities, required resources, actors, processes, and policy implications necessary to accomplish strategic heading-level objectives. Risk to each concept is presented and mitigation is discussed. Strategy closely aligns with existing U.S. strategic guidance.

Required Capabilities

- Presents four capabilities (*means*) required to carry out its theater strategy. Capabilities are presented in a defensible prioritized order with clear, logical connections to elements of strategic proposal. DoD-centric capabilities are conceptualized across the DOTMLPF-P. Whole of government capabilities are presented with consideration of actors and processes used to attain the capability, as well as whether regional CCDR staff is required to effectively coordinate across the interagency to integrate the capability in the region.

Effective Organization, Timing, and Delivery

- Presentation has a clearly identifiable “*Golden Thread*” (logical connective theme) that consistently ties all elements together and ensures cohesion between interests, strategic estimate, desired conditions, strategy, and required capabilities. Helps ensure audience retention and impact. Verbal transitions between elements and speakers are smooth and

efficient. A minimum total of 3 different speakers are utilized (2 in Phase One, 1 in Two). Presenters speak clearly with minimal verbal pauses and minimize distracting movement or body language. The brief is completed within the allotted 30 minutes.

Effective Style and Format

- Slides use the provided template. Written portions are free from grammatical or spelling errors. All tables, graphs, or images are sized to allow the audience to read and understand the content. Slides are not overcrowded and make use of white space to allow for effective visual communication in concert with spoken narration.

SDX PHASE TWO PRESENTATION RUBRIC

Expected Outcomes

Critical Analysis

- The JPG applies a thorough and effective process of critical analysis against their strategic proposal. A methodology is developed or utilized to ensure a holistic examination of all elements of their strategic proposal. Strengths AND weaknesses are clearly and evenly identified and discussed as appropriate. Blind spots are considered and presented. Possible opportunities are identified in relation to strengths, while possible mitigation efforts against weakness are presented.

Effective Organization and Timing

- The brief is completed within the allotted 15 minutes. Phase Two elements provided sufficient time for all desired points to be made.

Effective Style and Format

- Slides use the provided template. Written portions are free from grammatical or spelling errors. All tables, graphs, or images are sized to allow the audience to read and understand the content. Slides are not overcrowded and make use of white space to allow for effective visual communication in concert with spoken narration.

SDX Q&A RUBRIC

Expected Outcomes

- JPG members effectively answer all questions in a clear and concise manner. The JPG employs a question fielding strategy that makes efficient use of time and JPG member knowledge. The JPG avoids piling on to one question, allowing one to three members to contribute to the answer, while leaving ample time for additional questions from the Professor. The JPG ensures participation of all members in either the presentation speaking roles or the question-and-answer period.

STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT EXERCISE-14

TSDM COURSE SYNTHESIS

A. Session Overview

This session completes the JPME-I TSDM portion of the FSP curriculum. This session is designed to synthesize the key themes, concepts, and strategic insights explored throughout the TSDM course. In today's complex and dynamic global environment, effective leadership and informed decision making are essential to maintaining U.S. national security, regional stability, and the credibility that is essential in the profession of arms.

This final session offers students an opportunity to reflect on how decision making, strategic thinking, and policy analysis converge to shape outcomes in both operational theaters and institutional settings. Here we will reflect on how senior leaders navigate uncertainty, build trust across cultures and Services, and apply theater-level decision making to challenges you will face in the future. Emphasis will be placed on integrating lessons learned into your professional development and preparing you for future responsibilities in increasingly Joint, interagency, and multinational environments.

Through guided discussion and reflection, students will leave with a deeper understanding of their role as a steward of the profession of arms, one who leads with character, makes sound decisions, and contributes meaningfully to national security objectives. This is also an opportunity to provide feedback on improving the course.

B. Objectives

- Session Objectives
 - Reflect on integrating leadership principles, ethical frameworks, and decision making models that assess and respond to complex challenges related to national security.
 - Reflect on critical thinking skills and judgment in synthesizing course concepts to inform leadership behaviors and decision making under uncertainty.
 - Reflect on personal and professional development as a Joint leader and articulate ways to continue contributing to the profession of arms through mentorship, stewardship, and lifelong learning.
 - Reflect on the strategic-level considerations that shape theater- and national-level security decision making, including geopolitical dynamics, domestic factors, interagency coordination, and alliance/partner engagement.
 - Apply course knowledge holistically to evaluate past and future operational challenges, demonstrating an integrated understanding of strategy, leadership, and Joint warfighting.

- Address end-of-course administrative issues as required.
- Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)
 - CLO-1: Analyze the global security environment and how U.S. national security interests influence the development of U.S. security strategies.
 - CLO-2: Analyze the factors that influence national security decision making and the relationships between the institutions responsible for U.S. national security.
 - CLO-3: 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 LPA and/or TSDM course themes and concepts were most valuable to you professionally?
2. Did LPA and/or TSDM provide professional relevance to your future professional success?
3. How well did the course integrate real-world scenarios or current operational challenges?
4. What were the most valuable takeaways you have gained from completing LPA and/or TSDM?
5. What areas of the LPA and/or TSDM courses would you improve upon?

D. Student Preparation

None.

E. Student Deliverables

None.