MAY 2023

# Revitalizing Strategic Analysis for a New Era of Competition

By Anthony H. Cordesman, Benjamin Jensen, and Adrian Bogart

The current methods and processes used across the U.S. government to analyze national security fall far short of the requirements necessary to meet the needs of the nation. **Strategic analysis** has become too limited and does little more than set broad goals without describing how to integrate military power with other instruments of statecraft or assess their true costs. Moreover, it struggles to keep up with the rapid military and economic changes in rival states such as Russia and China.

The result is inevitable: stilted progress and diminishing marginal returns. Efforts to align the national security enterprise, such as the recent **Joint Concept for Competing**, stall inside a bureaucracy that struggles to translate concepts and goals into realistic plans and budgets. Absent a revitalization of wargames, net assessment, red teaming, and data science—methods that stress analyzing alternatives and competitive decisionmaking—twenty-first-century strategy will remain a collection of hollow promises.

## *The Need for a Truly Integrated Mix of National Security Strategies*

Current approaches to strategic analysis often fail to tie strategy to the plans, programs, and budgets across the federal government. This failure is all too clear in the FY 2024 budget requests. There is no integrated national security strategy of the kind called for in the Joint Concept for Competing. The Department of Defense (DOD) request does not have a matching national security section in the budget requests for the Departments of State, Homeland Security, or Energy. In addition, the steadily rising costs of the Department of Veterans Affairs are not tied to any integrated plan for military personnel in the DOD. In other words, there is no proper accounting for the cost of securing the nation's interests.

There is only a marginal effort to link the DOD's military budget requests to national strategy or annual threat assessments. The secretary of defense and chairman of the Joint Staff no longer issue the annual posture statements used to help ensure strategy was openly tied to planning, programming, and budgeting data. The **FY 2024 defense budget request** illustrates these failures. The budget summaries

only cite vague strategic goals, and the detailed budget documents are little more than shopping lists for the individual military services and defense agencies. Even when some budget requests have titles such as "**Pacific Deterrence**" and "**European Deterrence**" that have the potential to outline a strategy for a given combatant command or region, they are not tied to other agencies or a larger, whole-of-government plan accessible to Congress and the public at large.

There is no longer a serious effort to present a strategy-driven program budget. The summary of the FY 2024 budget shows that the last three defense budget requests have each called for a different pattern of increase in the Future Years Defense Program (FYDP). Yet these increases are not tied to strategy or any other explanation beyond changes in the costs of the new requests by each military service. Strategy is more than the sum of service shopping lists.

Absent a clear assessment of costs, ends and means are impossible to align. The result is a blind man's bluff. The nation will either lose a major war it could have avoided or bankrupt the republic in pursuit of vague strategic objectives.

At a more detailed level, strategic analysis is not being properly exploited to address critical changes in the need for jointness, such as **Joint All Domain Command and Control** (JADC2), in a manner that ties them to global contingency plans and emerging technology such as **artificial intelligence and machine learning** (AI/ML). Combatant commands need more than just interoperable battle networks. They need plans that adapt to regional change—integrating partners and taking advantage of commercial technology—and connect to assessments integrated with larger national strategic ends and clear-eyed budget analysis. They need ways of understanding the civil and military alignment of key partners and how changes therein can shift major planning assumptions and make entire concepts of operation untenable. In other words, strategic analysis has to be a living system that **constantly updates** as conditions change beyond the existing bureaucratic structure of "tanks" and National Security Council deliberations.

## *The Need for Better Strategic Analysis*

The failure to integrate strategy and assess resources creates dangerous blind spots. As a result, the current U.S. approach to strategy often:

- Seeks to set stable mid- to long-term strategic and force planning goals in a world of massive ongoing political and technological change and uncertainty rather than highlight critical issues and uncertainties and allow for regular updating and revision;
- Decouples the military and civil aspects of U.S. policy and fails to properly address many aspects of (1) the growing civil and military competition with China, including its efforts to dominate key regions through programs such as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), and (2) competition with Russia, which has expanded to efforts such as OPEC+, Russian deployments in Syria, new oil and gas export projects, and Russia's use of mercenaries;
- Talks about a rules-based system where only a limited number of the more developed states broadly follow the rules and where Russia, China, and most of the developing world increasingly pursue their interests in their own way;

- Fails to focus on the need to offer alternatives to confrontation and war and to examine both the longer-term outcomes of current efforts at extended deterrence and options to achieve a stable outcome beyond fighting and short-term conflict termination;
- Focuses on U.S.-driven deterrence of predictable forms of war as the key objective rather than the entire global range of U.S. security interests and the ability to use multiple instruments of power to meet a range of contingencies, including through competition, peacebuilding, and conflict prevention;
- Focuses on how strategic partners can play a role in war planning rather than creating broad and stable strategic partnerships refined through dialogue and wargaming;
- Downplays the value of U.S. power projection, security assistance, and foreign aid capabilities in dealing with contingencies that do not involve threats from China and Russia;
- Develops force posture and procurement goals that assume that the future is far more predictable than is the case and ignores that virtually all U.S. active uses of force since 1945 have been against unanticipated threats that emerged relatively suddenly, particularly instances where the initial strategy of warfighting generally failed to produce either victory or a stable post-conflict outcome;
- Lists vague strategic goals that are decoupled from broad comparative net assessments of capabilities and trends while also struggling to analyze shifts in global economic and political power;
- Largely ignores the need to create a broad structure of military and civil incentives and options to create regional and global stability—and the critical role of development assistance in linking U.S. and foreign interests; and
- Does not effectively address the actual implementation of the strategy nor the need to integrate plans, programs, and budgets to shape U.S. forces and commitments to match strategy.

The result is a strategic miasma. The United States' current strategic efforts seem far more focused on a possible near-term war over Taiwan than on forging an effective set of global strategic partnerships that combine military initiatives with political and economic efforts. Similarly, the United States risks leading an increasingly reluctant coalition aiding Ukraine in its current fight without any clear strategy for a future security structure in Europe and dealing with Russia after the war.

U.S. national strategy and annual assessments discuss the threat from Iran and North Korea in vague terms but fail to address detailed military strategies for dealing with these threats and make these options accessible in broad, unclassified forms. Moreover, they do not provide any clear plans for the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and largely ignore the roles and needs of U.S. strategic partners in regions such as the Persian Gulf, Middle East, and Southeast Asia, who have increasing doubts about the United States' level of commitment.

In Washington and across the capitals of its allies and partners, those who actually shape U.S. and partner strategies—a collection of individuals ranging from elected officials, senior advisers, and military officers to analysts and academics—struggle to analyze the challenges of a world in transition. Instead, they seek narrow solutions to complex problems. The resulting strategy often recommends the least-bad current option, defaulting to short-term military responses and limp economic sanctions that lack long-term, resource-informed competitive strategies or options for cooperation.

The world has evolved to the point where this approach is unacceptable. As the Joint Concept for Competing notes, economics, technology, trade, infrastructure, and critical minerals are as important to securing U.S. interests as nuclear weapons and conventional forces. Rushing to implement sanctions without clear political and economic strategies does not **stop dictators** from using force against their own peoples or other states, nor does it provide a basis for dealing with failed leadership, governance, and development. Worse still, using tools such as sanctions not only falls short of the predicted results, it tends to push a cohort of states away from a common rules-based order and toward finding some alternative to the **U.S. dollar**.

If anything, China, not the United States, has made progress toward a real integrated strategy by mixing its massive rise in military spending with civil programs such as the **BRI**. The map of these Chinese efforts shows how carefully they are tied to China's strategic goals, and some estimates indicate that China had invested **$1 trillion** into the effort as of 2022.

The closest comparative U.S. effort consists of the still unrealized promises of the **U.S.-led Blue Dot Network**, a G7 initiative now on its third name change and struggling to make headway. The net result is that U.S. strategy relies on the **rusting sword** of security assistance efforts and arms transfers when plows are needed in the form of development aid and infrastructure investments. Bureaucrats in multiple federal agencies struggle to integrate civil and military policy for a new world defined by complex multipolar **networks**. The strategic focus is on negative aims and denying authoritarian access rather than on outmaneuvering technocrats and thugs in Beijing and Moscow.

## *Creating an Art of Strategy for the Twenty-First Century*

In short, the United States' use of the art of strategy is atrophying at a time when it is most needed. Strategic analysis needs to make far better use of tools such as **net assessments**, **red teaming**, and **wargame** excursions that analyze longer-term competition across multiple instruments of power as well as examine current plans, programs, and budgets—and their level of jointness—in greater detail. Moreover, if the United States is going to deter more wars than it starts, it needs strategies that focus on framing practical trade-offs in its use of influence, forces, and resources to help shape an evolving global structure.

Despite the best intentions in adding new modifiers such as "integrated" in front of old words such as **deterrence**, those who try to shape current strategy debates—and that includes the authors—tend to prioritize ways and means around service-centric military capabilities and domains. A strategy is incomplete if it does not include both military and civil priorities, look beyond warfighting to the world the United States is seeking to create, and articulates clear policy objectives for building and maintaining strategic partnerships. Understanding the inherent trade-offs, opportunities, and risks associated with integrating multiple instruments of power is impossible without **scenario-based analysis** and wargames that analyze **competition** over time.

Just as **each war is unique**, each military and civil strategy for achieving security and U.S. political and economic goals should be tailored and adaptable to the situation and the needs of partners the United States relies on to create a global **network** based on mutual interest. Military power is brittle when it is not integrated with economic policy, diplomacy, and a clear-eyed assent of the resources the nation is willing and able to allocate to secure its interests. It is worth stressing that, at times, U.S. opponents are often more realistic in addressing these issues than Washington, and here it is critical to emphasize

the point that strategists ranging from Sun Tzu to Liddle Hart have placed on looking at the other side's strategy and the "other side of the hill."

Despite their overtly transactional approach to statecraft, China, Russia, and Iran have made serious efforts to address the needs of their clients and build inroads in key regions. China uses civil aid, loans, investment, and broad initiatives such as **the BRI** as its equivalent of major weapons programs. Its efforts to expand its power and influence closely match its security assistance and military efforts. What authoritarians lack in values, they compensate for in unity of effort.

China has shown that control over international sources of **critical minerals** and seeking to lead in **critical technologies**, **manufacturing capacity**, **trade, foreign investment, and infrastructure** are all equally critical parts of strategy. To use infrastructure as an example, each new **port** is a future base. Each new "road" is a line of communication that not only supports trade but military and political interests as well.

The Chinese Communist Party has many faults and blind spots, but U.S. strategy has been far too slow to design meaningful countervailing plans. The United States needs to do far more to align its strategic interests with national and private sector **technology investments** to create a unity of effort often absent in the West. It needs to build upon the glimmers of hope from **U.S. Agency for International Development programs** that promote democratic accountability using **digital technologies** and public-private partnerships for infrastructure investments, but the clock is ticking.

Understanding these trends requires competition and cooperation games more than traditional wargames, which tend to focus on the first battle of the next war. Too often, wargames turn strategic problems into tactical boxes absent a past or future. As a result, wargames often show the art of battle and miss both the path dependence of politics (i.e., the road to crisis and war) as well as the looming threat of the future and risk of protracted conflict (i.e., branches and sequels linked to divergent scenarios). Furthermore, tactical boxes often punt on hard-to-conceptualize questions about **cyber strategy** and population dynamics, including shifting sentiment across **generational divides** and how **computational propaganda** can erode public support.

## *Looking Beyond Deterrence and a Rules-Based Order*

U.S. strategy across multiple documents at the national and military levels talks about preserving a **rules-based order** in a world filled with violence and instability. In the process, the resulting set of strategic plans needs to examine the options for creating a more stable world or consider the fact that many potential partners are more concerned with civil development and their own strategic goals. The result is a set of ideas that appear disconnected from the world people live in and that risk coming off as hypocrisy.

The current focus on a war with China over Taiwan is a clear case in point that warns about the limits of a U.S. strategy based too narrowly on deterrence and warfighting. Yet, even without any war—whether two years from now or at any predictable point in the future—there is no current prospect for a rules-based system that extends much beyond the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries this generation.

Projections by the **United Nations** and the **U.S. Census Bureau** show that the entire OECD—whose rules scarcely align—amounts to about 1.3 billion people out of a world of some 8 billion. Nations such as Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea that are clearly outside the current rules-based system account

for 21 percent of the world's population. Similarly, current studies of global violence, such as the work of the **Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project**, show that non-OECD states not tied to these core U.S. competitors mean at least another 25 to 35 percent of states are outside of the rules-based order.

## *Addressing Grand Strategic Goals*

U.S. strategy has recently tended to set broad goals, implement methods to achieve them that are far too vague, and pay little attention to long-term cost-effectiveness. National security leaders rarely define key plans and programs and do not attempt to define real-world budgets based on a realistic accounting of time and cost. The national security bureaucracy seems to have lost the art of managing complex **planning, programming, and budgeting systems** that tie plans and goals to effective and more realistic national security budgets.

Even where there is a focus, it tends to be overly militaristic at the expense of broader goals. When U.S. strategy focuses narrowly on military plans and force posture, it is easily outflanked by Chinese officials focused on trade and investment. This mismatch requires a return to deeper net assessments that look at multiple **levels of analysis** and integrate multiple instruments of power. In other words, most of the world is focused on local and regional problems linked to complex social, economic, and environmental concerns, not U.S. war plans.

## *Dealing with Complexity and Uncertainty*

National security leaders in Washington need to back away from slogans and over-simplification to accept the sheer complexity and uncertainty of the modern world. These leaders discuss integrated deterrence and a **rules-based national order**, but fully integrating U.S. forces into all-domain operations alongside partners remains a costly struggle. The United States does not fight alone, and the more exquisite its technology becomes, the more difficult its partners find it to maintain interoperability.

Beyond technical concerns, modern **battle networks** struggle to visualize and describe competition in a manner that shows the political limits of allies and partners and how plans in Washington may not match planning in allied capitals such as Tokyo and Berlin. Even if the United States does create a coalition, an integrated battle network will be a costly failure if it does not help political leaders forge unified strategic objectives. Tactical integration does not automatically translate into strategic alignment.

## *Focusing on Creating Real-World Capabilities and Results*

As noted earlier, U.S. strategy often appears disconnected from realistic implementation plans, cost analysis, and budgeting. From the outside, it sometimes appears that U.S. efforts to shape an effective strategy are not making use of net assessments to visualize and describe the opportunity costs of the policies and investments required to secure a **competitive advantage**.

Political and economic costs are key issues, particularly when they involve expensive new forces. Military programs are subject to **diminishing marginal returns**, and the defense community has yet to wean its addiction to expensive and exquisite programs where cheap and reliable would do. Services push to buy new toys without first **restocking depleted munitions** and building multinational, multiyear production and procurement capabilities required to scale. And there is rarely a discussion

about the opportunity cost of military forces relative to expanding development assistance or reducing the national debt. As a result, U.S. strategy becomes overly militaristic and subject to inflation; new forces cost more and buy less security and influence.

## *Going from Strategy Based on Hope and a Crystal Ball to Analysis*

Simplified slogans are not the way to address a complex world. U.S. national security planning tends to ignore **complexity** in pursuit of rational strategic goals **too far into the future**. Yes, planning requires abstract scenarios, but these ideal types should interact with events beyond "tank" meetings in the Pentagon and National Security Council deliberations during a crisis. Real strategy **analyzes feedback loops and change**, not just lofty goals in the future.

U.S. strategists need to face the fact that each new crisis, technology, and enemy tactic—as well as changes in political leadership and the global economy—will suddenly change the country's strategic priorities on an almost annual basis. This temporal dimension involving more frequent feedback loops stresses national security planning systems designed for scenarios two to five years in the future. Strategists should always consider the long term but should also face the fact that they live in a volatile world filled with economic and political uncertainty that will continue to be driven by acute **demographic shifts**, climate change, and events such as the Covid-19 pandemic. The system stands on the edge of chaos, where catalytic change—both positive and negative—is increasingly more likely and frequent.

Strategy should **learn from history** and embrace tracing past patterns of continuity and change to understand possible futures. The hardest lesson is humility and understanding catalytic change. Events from 1945 to date—Korea, Vietnam, the Balkans, the break-up of the former Soviet Union, the Iraq wars, Afghanistan, and Ukraine—have all shown that prior strategies could not predict the next major crisis and set the right goals for deterrence and warfighting even five years into the future. They have also shown the need for political leaders to make major strategic shifts in a matter of months. This insight produces the need for more flexibility and a broader range of net assessments, wargames, and red teaming activities that support adaptive planning.

Change is likely to become a constant in the 2020s. The world has seen massive changes in the structure of the global economy and cuts in the **U.S. share of global manufacturing** and its **science, technology, engineering, and medicine capabilities**. Technological change is ushering in the **Fourth Industrial Revolution**, which will almost certainly alter social conventions and domestic as well as international politics over the next generation. These issues will require new approaches to strategy at every level. As much as past planning prioritized warfighting, the strategy should be tied to both civil and military goals as well as competition in economics and technology.

To address a world prone to sudden and rapid change, strategic planning tools such as net assessment, wargaming, and red teaming should be based on analyzing interdependent decisionmaking across different domains and regions of global competition. Rather than large, one-issue studies, the craft of strategic analysis needs to return to a series of ongoing global competition games and competitive studies (i.e., Team A/B) that provide iterated updates to decisionmakers across a broad range of interconnected issues.

This model existed in the 1980s when the Office of Net Assessment **experimented** with novel techniques, including expert-system AI models, to run global wargames with multiple analytical excursions. Given the larger number of states and issues weighing on modern strategies, revitalizing

this mixed-method, iterated games and campaign models offers a way to navigate along the edge of chaos. The future of strategy lies in embracing complexity, not reducing it.

## *Dealing with the World and Not Just the Worst-Case Risks*

In short, the United States needs strategies for a complex and changing world and not just plans aligned against the worst-case scenario. The United States is locked into a **multi-region, multistate, and multi-stakeholder** competition with a wide range of major and smaller powers for the foreseeable future. As a result, there is a need to develop new approaches to net assessment, wargaming, and red teaming that embrace this complexity and use the **promise of data science** to establish analytical baselines.

These mixed-methods efforts should prioritize understanding escalation and understanding how lofty political objectives and military strategy collide with economic realities. U.S. strategies should balance deterring worst-case scenarios with shaping long-term civil and military competition on a global basis. That means managing the **risk of escalation**—to include off-ramps for all parties—and looking beyond the prospect of war and near-term conflict termination to examine the hard realities of post-conflict settings and economic dislocation.

These studies should also think beyond narrow conventional military perspectives to the wider range of issues likely to create flashpoints between great powers in the twenty-first century. U.S. strategies should look at issues such as food security and environmental change as they relate to global access and influence, as well as arms control and the stability of the firebreak between conventional and nuclear conflict. The absence of major war is not the only prerequisite for gaining a competitive advantage in the twenty-first century. Access to energy, food, and resources will play a crucial role.

Furthermore, how wars end has the potential to shape long-term trends, creating a need for alternative futures analysis. The war in Ukraine is a case in point and one that may well be more important than the risk of a war with Taiwan. The war in Ukraine will not end tomorrow, and any settlement that does not create a stable peace may leave the world in an even more unstable place for decades. At the same time, a war with China about Taiwan is not pre-ordained to start in the next two years, and if one does occur, neither the United States nor China is likely to "win" in any lasting sense.

The result is far more likely to redefine "zero-sum gain" and lead to a major increase in global competition. This competition will almost certainly involve increased military spending and deployments, proxy wars across the Global South replaying the tragedy of the Cold War in the twenty-first century, and economic competition that limits global GDP growth and prosperity. More than that, it would force China into far closer relations with Russia, lead to an even sharper revival of a three-way nuclear arms race, and push other states to choose China and Russia or the United States as their preferred strategic partners.

This means that the art of strategy should focus on identifying how actors with opposing interests assess their options over time, with an eye toward finding competitive advantages while mitigating risks. Red teaming, combined civil and military net assessments, and advances in data science and AI/ML all offer ways to approach this analytical challenge.

**Red teaming** is essentially alternative analysis, a collection of techniques improvised and refined over hundreds of years for looking at "what if" questions, often with **dialectical reasoning**. Red teaming supports strategic analysis by injecting empathy and humility into assessments, helping strategists see

the competition from the other side of the map and reducing the tendency toward multiple **forms of bias**, including groupthink and confirmation bias.

**Net assessments** are a collection of tools for understanding competitive interactions. As reports such as the DOD's **China Military Power** have shown, it is as important to carry out net assessments of the civil sector as well as the military sector and to look at alternative military and civil futures on a regional and global level. It is also clear that such net assessments need to focus as much on strategic partners, allies, and nonaligned states as on U.S. and threat forces.

There is also a clear need to create a more transparent strategic marketplace that lends itself to comparative studies using novel technologies. Data science is just a new name given to statistical analysis. The world is awash in data, creating a need to identify significant patterns and extrapolate them as analytical baselines. Too often, strategy hides from math with tired quotes like "all models are wrong, and some are useful" and "correlation isn't causation"—ideas addressed in undergraduate-level research methods classes.

Rather than hiding from quantitative analysis and relying solely on **historical cases**, analogies, and broad generalizations, the complexity of the modern world requires embracing both. Leaders need to know what the **probability of war** is based on historical trends and what conditions are more or less likely to cause a **militarized dispute** or **international crisis** to escalate into a major war. These baseline estimates can help tailor red-team studies and provide starting conditions for wargames and net assessments. Just as the Office of Net Assessment pioneered using expert-system AI to run global wargames in the early 1980s, the U.S. national security community should explore how to use generative AI models for comparative strategic analysis, synthesizing thousands of studies and helping leaders gain perspective.

These tools and models will not replace human judgment and creativity at the heart of good strategy. The models also will require more focus on research methods and teaching leaders not used to being challenged on how to ask questions and analyze model-driven findings. It will require grooming a new cohort of strategic leaders that think more like philosophers and hypothesis-testing scientists than bureaucrats.

## *Making Whole-of-Government Use of the Delphi Method*

There are also ways to transform a "hole in government" into a "whole-of-government" approach. There is already more than enough funding for research studies across the federal government to invigorate a new wave of games, net assessments, and alternative analysis studies. The challenge is the structure of the bureaucracy and the lack of a transparent marketplace where leaders can compare studies and divergent findings.

The federal government relies heavily on **federally funded research and development centers** for research. These quasi-public entities do fantastic work but often crowd out the market for strategic analysis and tend to charge more for studies than traditional universities or think tanks.

In fact, there is no clear understanding across the federal government or in the private sector of just how much a wargame, study, or new statistical model should cost. A lack of transparent pricing is a recipe for market capture and paying more for studies than necessary. Making prices transparent and more readily accessible to the public—and Congress—would create a more functional research

marketplace. The DOD showed a possible solution with its **Warfighting Lab Incentive Fund**, which pooled resources to sponsor wargames but required the findings to be captured and accessible.

The simple act of pooling data on studies and their costs would open the door to comparative analysis. Leaders could see where studies converge and diverge and use the differences to ask new questions, forging strategy as a series of bets. The pool of studies would become a new Oracle of Delphi.

Years ago, groups such as RAND pioneered the **Delphi Method** to compare where experts agreed and disagreed, treating experts as an oracle. The Delphi Method lends itself to new forms of analysis linked to generative AI and the use of **large-language models** to synthesize and analyze a large corpus of text. Imagine a program such as **Microsoft's Copilot**, **Open AI's ChatGPT**, or **Google's Bard** that had access to the full range of strategic studies funded by the federal government as well as foundation-funded initiatives and other open-source credible treatments.

Rather than just seeing where "experts" agreed and disagreed, generative AI could synthesize and explain the nature of the disagreement. Imagine if a senior leader—from the deputy secretary of defense to the national security adviser—could have hundreds of studies compared and contrasted within seconds, saving time and freeing up resources to develop new strategies. It is completely unacceptable that the mass public has access to large language models and national security leaders do not.

## *Getting Strategy Less Wrong*

There will still be sharp limits to what even the best strategy can accomplish. To quote baseball legend Yogi Berra, "It's tough make predictions, especially about the future." This paper only begins to address the range of requirements and tools necessary to revitalize strategic analysis. It is an opening step that is meant to help create a dialogue for recalibrating the art of strategy to address the rapidly evolving challenges of the twenty-first century.

More net assessments, wargames, red team studies, and statistical models will not solve every strategic problem. Done right, these efforts will expand the marketplace of ideas and empower debate and dialogue across the national security community. Leaders need these debates more than they need trivial **bureaucratic turf and resource squabbles** that define too much of day-to-day government interactions.

Any strategic analysis effort that looks beyond the narrow parameters of today's strategic efforts and brings strategy back into interagency efforts—and defense planning, programming, and budgeting—will produce real benefits. It will allow the United States to make more effective use of its defense and other national security resources and work more effectively with its strategic partners.

Such a focus will also allow leaders to make U.S. strategy more effective at influencing the behavior of hostile, partner, and neutral states as well as the public at large. Unclassified versions should always show in depth that the United States offers positive options, ways to avoid escalating the level of competition or creating conflict, and ways to support partners that offer them clear competitive advantages. There will always be a need for classified portions of some strategies, but unclassified strategies can be a key, nonviolent weapon of influence. ■

***Anthony H. Cordesman*** *is the Emeritus Chair in Strategy at the Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, D.C.* ***Benjamin Jensen*** *is the senior fellow for future war, gaming, and strategy in the International Security Program at CSIS and a professor of strategic studies at the Marine*

*Corps University School of Advanced Warfighting.* ***Adrian Bogart*** *is a former research assistant in the International Security Program at CSIS.*

*This report is made possible by general support to CSIS. No direct sponsorship contributed to this report.*