

Resources

CSBA's research on the most pressing issues in US national security continues to shape the defense agenda. CSBA's research focuses on four main areas:

Strategy & Policy

Today, the United States confronts a number of challenges to its national security: the rise of China, a revisionist Russia, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disruption, and the spread of Islamic extremism. The United States finds itself tackling these challenges at a time when its primacy is increasingly contested and its economic foundation eroding. CSBA seeks to inform the development of U.S. strategy by developing innovative options to reconcile ends and means, and by identifying sources of enduring advantage to help the U.S. sustain its position and meet challenges of the 21st century.

Budget & Resources

CSBA plays an essential role in facilitating a more informed debate on defense budgeting and resourcing.

The perennial question for U.S. policymakers is: How much is enough? Following a long military buildup, the U.S. military confronts increasing pressures for cuts in defense spending in light of the United States' deteriorating fiscal situation. The Defense Department is entering what may be a protracted period of austerity which will require difficult budgetary and resourcing decisions.

CSBA's research program provides an independent source of budgetary analysis to help those both in and out of government understand budgetary trends; the near-and long-term implications of prospective trade-offs; the second-order consequences of changes to the defense program; and how they fit within the overall context of U.S. defense policy and strategy.

DOWNLOAD: Strategic Choices Tool Information Sheet (PDF)

Future Warfare & Concepts

CSBA specializes in thinking about the future of warfare. As President Dwight Eisenhower observed, “Plans are worthless, but planning is everything.” While it may be impossible to predict the future, thinking about the future is essential to formulate concepts and strategies that will be effective across the widest range of contingencies, and executable within projected resource limitations.

CSBA uses the methodology of net assessment to frame future military competitions. It evaluates the relative strengths and weaknesses of competitors and suggests sources of competitive advantage, while explicitly taking uncertainty into account. CSBA also utilizes scenario planning and wargaming to identify future trends and candidate operational concepts, understand emerging warfare regimes, and challenge preconceived notions of the future.

CSBA’s work has highlighted the increasingly non-permissive character of the security environment, such as the maturation and spread of anti-access/area-denial capabilities and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and disruption that threaten to negate the U.S. military’s traditional approach to power projection.

Based on insights gleaned through research, wargaming and exploration of future warfighting scenarios, CSBA has developed pathbreaking operational concepts to inform the U.S. military’s operational planning. These concepts serve as the “connective tissue” linking U.S. strategy with the defense program.

Forces & Capabilities

Sound force planning identifies, develops and fields forces and capabilities best aligned to support a given strategy. To this end it identifies needed changes in force structure, operational concepts, and system performance characteristics. Force planning requires thoughtful prioritization and risk balancing in considering how forces and capabilities should be sized and shaped.

CSBA’s research highlights attributes and characteristics of forces and capabilities best suited for the future security environment. In so doing it identifies critical gaps and seams in the current defense program and provides options for improving the U.S. military’s organization, training, equipment, and doctrine for meeting future security challenges.