

CSBA

Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments



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Dr. Thomas G. Mahnken is President and Chief Executive Officer of the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

He is a Senior Research Professor at the Philip Merrill Center for Strategic Studies at The Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS).

He currently serves as a member of the Congressionally-mandated 2022 National Defense Strategy Commission and as a member of the Army Science Board. His previous government career includes service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy Planning from 2006–2009, where he helped craft the 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review and 2008 National Defense Strategy, in the Office of Net Assessment, and in the Non-Proliferation Policy Office in the Office of the Secretary of Defense. He served as a member of the 2018 National Defense Strategy Commission and on the Board of Visitors of the United States Marine Corps University. He served on the staff of the 2014 National Defense Panel, 2010 Quadrennial Defense Review Independent Panel, the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction, and the Gulf War Air Power Survey. He served for 24 years as an officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve, including tours in Iraq and Kosovo.

In 2009 he was awarded the Secretary of Defense Medal for Outstanding Public Service and in 2016 the Department of the Navy Superior Civilian Service Medal. In 2025, he received the Joseph J. Kruzel Memorial Award for Distinguished Public Service from the International Security Section of the American Political Science Association.

Dr. Mahnken is the author of *Net Assessment and Military Strategy: Retrospective and Prospective Essays* (Cambria Press, 2020), *Learning the Lessons of Modern War* (Stanford University Press, 2020), *The Gathering Pacific Storm: Emerging U.S.-China Strategic Competition in Defense Technological and Industrial Development* (Cambria Press, 2018), *Arms Races in International Politics from the Nineteenth to the Twenty-First Century* (Oxford University Press, 2016), *Strategy in Asia: The Past, Present, and Future of Regional Security* (Stanford University Press, 2014), *Competitive Strategies for the 21st Century: Theory, History, and Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2012), *Technology and the American Way of War Since 1945* (Columbia University Press, 2008), and *Uncovering Ways of War: U.S. Intelligence and Foreign Military Innovation, 1918–1941* (Cornell University Press, 2002), among other works.

Education

B.A. in History and International Relations (summa cum laude)

University of Southern California

National Security Fellow

John M. Olin Institute for Strategic Studies

MA and Ph.D in International Affairs

Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS)

Areas of Expertise

- Future Warfare
- Defense Planning
- Strategy
- Intelligence
- International Strategic Studies