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## NEWPORT PAPERS

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A Series of Point Papers  
from the Naval War College and the  
Navy Warfare Development Command  
For Senior Leadership  
In Response to Critical Issues

Strategy / CONOPS / Doctrine / Decision

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United States Naval War College  
Navy Warfare Development Command  
Newport, Rhode Island

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**Newport Paper: 01**

**STRATEGY AND POLICY CONSIDERATIONS:  
THE TERROR WAR**

**Purpose:** Identify the scope of strategic issues policy makers must consider as the Terror War begins.

**Background:** History has taught us, and our recent experience has confirmed, that we must clearly understand the fundamentals of war:

Goals: Our goals and our enemies' goals.

Strategies: Alternative paths for achieving our goals and thwarting those of the enemy.

Assessment: How we know whether we are winning or losing.

End-State: The situation we desire at the end of the war.

Considerable effort must be expended to ensure we have explored all dimensions of the national-level strategy and policy issues so that we can clearly understand the context in which we are fighting.

**Discussion:** The following broad strategic questions and issues must be clearly understood as the Terror War unfolds:

**1. What are U.S. goals/objectives?**

?? What is our primary objective—the objective that must be accomplished in order for us to win?

?? What are our secondary objectives?

?? What are our immediate, midterm, and long-term objectives?

?? Should U.S. objectives be narrowly or broadly conceived?

?? What is our preferred end-state?

**2. What are our enemies' objectives?**

?? What are their primary and secondary objectives?

?? What are their immediate, midterm, and long-term objectives?

?? Are their objectives narrowly or broadly conceived?

?? Do they have a single set of objectives? Or do different actors have different objectives?

○ Do their objectives conflict?

?? Who do they see as their adversaries? What is their assessment of their adversaries?

?? What is their preferred end-state? Is there a shared vision of a preferred end-state?

### **3. What kind of war are we involved in?**

- ?? What kind of war do we want?
- ?? Can we define the terms of the war?
- ?? How do our adversaries view the nature of the conflict?
- ?? What is this war about?
  - Territory?
  - Resources?
  - Influence?
  - Ideology?
  - Religion?

### **4. Who/what are our enemies?**

- ?? Individuals?
- ?? Non-state actors?
- ?? States?
- ?? A coalition of state and non-state actors?
- ?? Ideology?

### **5. What are our enemies' strategies?**

- ?? Do their strategies serve their ends?
- ?? Have their strategies evolved? How might they evolve?
- ?? What is our adversaries' cost-benefit/risk-reward calculus?
- ?? What are their strengths and weaknesses?
  - What is their center of gravity?
- ?? What do they perceive as our critical strengths and weaknesses?
- ?? How might they attack our strengths and exploit our weaknesses?

### **6. What should U.S. strategy be?**

- ?? What are the alternatives? Which alternative strategy will best enable us to achieve our objectives and desired end-state?
- ?? What criteria should be used to assess strategic alternatives?
- ?? What are its offensive and defensive components?
- ?? How might our strategy evolve? What might cause it to evolve?
- ?? Should we mobilize for a protracted war?
- ?? What capabilities—diplomatic, political, military, economic, for instance—are required?
- ?? What limitations—diplomatic, political, economic, military, for instance—need to be compensated for?
- ?? How do we sustain U.S. popular support in a protracted war?
- ?? What are the costs and risks of a protracted war?
- ?? What might be the unintended consequences of our actions?
- ?? What actions might have effects harmful to our objectives?
- ?? What might be the international response to U.S. actions?
- ?? What international cooperation is required?

## **7. What are our coalition objectives and strategy?**

- ?? Do we need a coalition?
- ?? What are the advantages and disadvantages of a coalition?
  - What capabilities can only coalition partners provide?
  - What capabilities of ours can they reinforce?
  - To what extent may a coalition be counter-productive?
  - What if the military demands of our coalition partners conflict with their political desires?
- ?? How will we deal with likely differences in U.S. and coalition objectives?
- ?? How will we deal with the disparities between U.S. and coalition military capabilities?
- ?? How might a U.S.-led coalition anticipate or take advantage of the adversaries' mistakes?
- ?? What might be the international response to U.S./coalition actions?
- ?? How do we sustain coalition popular support in a protracted war?

## **8. For what purposes is military power applicable?**

- ?? What forms of military power are needed/most applicable?
- ?? What mix of access, defensive power projection and sustainment forces do we need?
- ?? Against which critical adversary strengths and weaknesses should we direct our capabilities?
- ?? How should we apply military power against the enemies' center(s) of gravity?

## **9. Assessments/End Game**

- ?? How do we determine how well we are doing? What are the metrics?
- ?? What strategic tradeoffs might we be confronted with?
- ?? What opportunity costs might we be confronted with?
- ?? How might others take advantage of our preoccupation with the Terror War?
- ?? What constitutes victory? How do we know when/if we've won?
- ?? What outcome(s) should we hedge against now???
- ?? What outcomes should be avoided at all costs?

**Recommendations/Actions:** The Newport Strategy Task Group will continue to address these questions and identify and assess alternatives for the consideration of policy makers.