



EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the first issue of Volume 6 of National Institute's online *Journal of Policy & Strategy*—a quarterly, peer-reviewed publication. In this initial 2026 issue, the “Analysis” section includes several thought-provoking articles by Keith Payne, Michaela Dodge, Blaine Ravert, and Santiago Spadilero. The topics deal with Germany's views on the desirability of an independent nuclear deterrent, the political and military value of the U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile force, the impact of emerging technology on the presidential war powers debate, and the Trump Administration's new approach to Latin America as reflected in the November 2025 *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*.

This issue also includes an interview with Wess Mitchell, former Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs and author of the book *Great Power Diplomacy: The Skill of Statecraft from Attila the Hun to Kissinger*. In the interview conducted by Michaela Dodge, Dr. Mitchell discusses the importance of diplomacy as an essential tool to advance U.S. national interests abroad and assesses the evolution of U.S. diplomatic statecraft as an “instrument of strategy,” especially in an era of great power competition.

This issue of the *Journal of Policy & Strategy* also includes proceedings from National Institute's regular online informational symposia, or “webinars,” moderated by David Trachtenberg. These proceedings reflect the views of subject matter experts who participated in three different symposia held in September, October, and December 2025. The topics covered included: “Challenging the Arms Control Mythology: A Century of Experience”; “Ending the Threat from Iran”; and “Should the United States Resume Nuclear Testing?”

This issue's “Literature Review” includes two reviews. The first, by Michaela Dodge, examines *The End of Everything: How Wars Descend Into Annihilation*, by Victor Davis Hanson. The book chronicles multiple conflicts over the centuries and how human nature increases the risk of extreme catastrophe. The second review, by David Trachtenberg, critiques a report on *Nuclear Disarmament Summits: A Proposal for Rejuvenating Progress Toward a World Free of Nuclear Weapons*, written by Kelsey Davenport, in which she calls on leaders to “pursue bold, creative steps to reduce nuclear risk and reverse the buildup of nuclear weapons capabilities.”

The “Documentation” section includes select excerpts from the January 2026 State Department's *Agency Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2026-2030*; the Department of Defense's *2026 National Defense Strategy: Restoring Peace Through Strength for a New Golden Age in America*, published in January 2026; and selected excerpts from the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee, *Hearing to Receive Testimony on Strategic Competition in an Unconstrained, Post-New START Treaty Environment*, held on February 3, 2026.

Finally, this issue's “From the Archive” section presents a 2006 article by Colin S. Gray, co-founder of the National Institute for Public Policy, entitled, “Out of the Wilderness: Prime-time for Strategic Culture.” In the article, Dr. Gray contends that strategic thought encapsulates “the engine of thought and behaviour,” noting that its “principal function is to make sense of the world for us.” He calls strategic culture “vitally important” to understanding the nature of both friends and foes and how “different security communities think and behave somewhat differently about strategic matters.”

As always, we seek to bring you, our readers, a variety of informative and thought-provoking commentaries and analyses relevant to today's most critical national security issues. We hope this issue of the *Journal of Policy & Strategy* meets your expectations and that you find value in the pages that follow. Above all, we thank you for your interest in and support of the Institute's work.

