



EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to the third issue of Volume 6 of National Institute's online *Journal of Policy & Strategy*—a quarterly, peer-reviewed publication. Sadly, this issue notes the passing of former Senator John L. Kyl of Arizona. The late Senator Kyl was a true patriot and a champion of defending the American people against growing missile threats and ensuring a robust U.S. nuclear posture in the face of aggressive actions by America's enemies. His loss will be keenly felt, and this issue of the *Journal of Policy & Strategy* contains a special feature dedicated to him.

This issue's "Analysis" section includes four seminal articles on nuclear deterrence, chemical weapons, arms control, and Russian behavior. They include an excellent analysis by Michaela Dodge of the philosophical and methodological flaws in the U.S. approach to arms control over the past century; a review of the breakdown in deterrence of chemical warfare by John Mark Mattox; an assessment of the need for U.S. theater nuclear capabilities and the challenges associated with them by Christopher A. Ford; and a detailed analysis of the factors and motivations driving Russia's aggressive behavior by Stephen Blank.

Readers will also find the proceedings from three of National Institute's regular online symposia, or "webinars." These proceedings provide insights from multiple subject matter experts who participated in the symposia held in May, June, and July 2026. The topics covered included: "Toward a Free and Unified Korea—Resolving the Korea Challenge at Its Source"; "Assessing U.S. Nuclear Requirements for Deterrence"; and "Germany's New Military Strategy and Its Implications."

This issue of the *Journal of Policy & Strategy* also includes an interview with The Honorable Mark T. Esper, 27th Secretary of Defense and 23rd Secretary of the Army. Secretary Esper discusses a range of national security issues, including his views on the most significant overall threats to U.S. security, the most serious bureaucratic impediments to timely decision making within the Pentagon, and the importance of President Trump's Golden Dome initiative. He also comments on Russia's war against Ukraine, the current conflict with Iran, U.S. relations with NATO, and the adequacy of U.S. nuclear posture.

The "Literature Review" includes three reviews. The first, by Keith B. Payne, examines Michaela Dodge's recent *Occasional Paper* on *Enduring Arms Control Myths: A Century of Experience*. The *Occasional Paper* provides a comprehensive assessment of the faulty arms control pathologies that have governed U.S. arms control behavior resulting in agreements that typically failed to live up to their exaggerated expectations. The second review, by Michaela Dodge, examines David Holloway's book, *Nuclear Weapons: An International History*, which offers an account of the development of U.S. nuclear weapons and strategy, with shorter discussions of other states' nuclear weapons programs and efforts to minimize their spread. The third review, by David J. Trachtenberg, assesses Thomas Kent's book, *The Propaganda Manual of the Ukraine War, Information Warfare by Russia, Ukraine and Western Nations: Lessons Learned for Future Conflicts*. The book documents the successful and not-so-successful efforts of Russia, Ukraine, and the West to shape the narratives of Russia's war on Ukraine in ways that generate support for their respective policies and positions.

The "Documentation" section includes the written testimony of National Institute Senior Scholar and former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy David J. Trachtenberg on



Golden Dome before the Strategic Forces Subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services Committee on September 29, 2026; select excerpts from the August 27, 2026 remarks of Under Secretary of War for Policy Elbridge Colby before NATO's North Atlantic Council; select excerpts from Under Secretary Colby's August 5, 2026 remarks at the U.S. Strategic Command Deterrence Symposium in Omaha, Nebraska; and select excerpts from Secretary of War Pete Hegseth's remarks at the 2026 NATO Defense Ministerial in Brussels, Belgium.

This issue's "From the Archive" section includes an article on *Deterrence without defense: gambling on perfection*, by Keith B. Payne and Lawrence R. Fink, published in the Winter 1989 issue of *Strategic Review*; and a summary of *Maintaining Effective Deterrence* by Colin S. Gray, published by the U.S. Army War College on August 1, 2003.

Finally, this issue contains a special feature honoring the late Senator Jon L. Kyl of Arizona. It includes comments by Senator Kyl during the Senate's ratification debate on the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in 1999 and the importance of maintaining the credibility of the U.S. nuclear stockpile. Also included is Senator Kyl's joint testimony with The Honorable Madelyn Creedon on the 2023 Strategic Posture Commission's findings and conclusions. The Senator was a voice of reason, always willing to work across the aisle to achieve bipartisan consensus on issues most important to ensuring U.S. national security.

As always, we strive to bring you, our readers, a variety of informative and relevant commentaries and analyses that address some of the most critical national security issues of our time. We hope this issue of the *Journal of Policy & Strategy* meets your expectations and that you find the articles it contains enlightening and valuable. Above all, we greatly appreciate your interest in and support of the Institute's work.