

SSI--A small organization thinking big

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The Strategic Studies Institute is a small organization thinking big. With the global security environment changing at a dizzying rate, the United States is working to sustain its leading role in world security. As vital participants in this process, the Army's strategists and senior leaders must have a creative and critical understand of complex strategic issues. Since skill at strategy is something that must be developed and maintained over a career, SSI was designed to address this need through rigorous research and analysis-- something needed now more than ever.

The heart of SSI is a small group of renowned specialists on national security strategy and warfare, some civilian and some military. From its new building at Carlisle Barracks, SSI's experts produce analytical research which is distributed throughout the Army and the scholarly world. SSI also publishes some of the best analysis from a network of external researchers which it developed over several decades. SSI publications are used everywhere from the classrooms of the Army War College and civilian universities to the conference rooms of the National Security Council and Office of the Secretary of Defense. At the same time, SSI's experts influence national policy and explain the Army's contribution to national security by writing for leading policy and academic publications, providing media interviews and congressional testimony, and speaking to a wide range of audiences.

In addition to producing its own analysis, SSI helps bridge the Army and the wider community of national security experts. Following the Vietnam War, there was mistrust, even hostility between the U.S. military and the academic world. To address this, Army leaders instructed SSI to develop a broad program of academic engagement. After years of effort, this paid off in an extensive and beneficial cooperation that continues today. SSI now works with universities like Harvard, Princeton and Stanford to explore national security issues through conferences and workshops. SSI analysts and other War College faculty members give presentations at leading academic conferences, publish in major scholarly journals, and speak at prestigious colleges and universities. This relationship continues to provide the Army with the new ideas and differing perspectives so badly needed in a rapidly changing security environment.

SSI also takes great pride in providing the Army with constructive yet critical thinking. Reflecting the Army War College's policy of academic freedom, SSI's analysts sometimes disagree with official

positions or offer different perspectives. They are encouraged to do so as long as their analysis reflects careful thought and rigorous research, and helps Army leaders and strategists refine or expand their own ideas. This distinguishes SSI from organizations which provide analysis under contract. And it reflects a longstanding intellectual honesty on the part of Army leaders--it takes a confident organization to question its own assumptions, priorities, and conclusions.

Despite its small size, the Strategic Studies Institute addresses an extensive range of topics. Every year SSI publishes over 50 monographs and books, some written by SSI analysts, some by other members of the War College faculty, and some by external authors. These cover everything from drug trafficking to tactical nuclear weapons to the future of the U.S. military in the Middle East. Nearly every strategic issue important to the Army and the United States receives some attention through SSI's array of products. SSI also publishes an annual Key Strategic Issues list of topics identified by Army and Joint leaders for analysis. All of the Institute's publications are freely available in electronic form; many are reprinted or downloaded many thousands of times thus expanding the reach of SSI, the Army War College, and the Army.

But SSI is more than just publications. One of its most important roles is to host an annual strategy conference at Carlisle Barracks. Now in its 24th year, this brings a wide audience of strategy experts to the War College and provides an opportunity for War College students to interact with leading policymakers and strategic experts such as Richard Armitage, Martin Van Creveld, Michael Howard, Eliot Cohen, Colin Gray, Dick Cheney, Rupert Smith, and Richard Perle.

While SSI serves a wide audience, it remains an integral element of the Army War College. SSI publications are used extensively in the College's curriculum (and by other schools in the Professional Military Educational system). SSI's experts are in great demand as classroom speakers, mentors, and subject matter experts. The team of SSI's research faculty and the College's teaching faculty provide War College students with a rare wealth of experience and expertise as they develop into strategic leaders.