

## New director of Army's Strategic Studies Institute to collaborate widely in developing new ideas for geostrategic puzzles

By Public Affairs Staff 10 January 2019



*Dr. Isaiah 'Ike' Wilson III is the new director of the Strategic Studies, the research and publication arm of the Army War College at Carlisle, Pa.*

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Dr. Isaiah 'Ike' Wilson III is the new Director of the Strategic Studies Institute, the research and publication arm of the Army War College at Carlisle, Pa. He envisions a new emphasis on external collaboration for the scholarly institute that serves as the Army's think tank and the Army War College's bridge to the academic, policy and think tank communities.

This change of leadership for the Strategic Studies Institute coincides with a strategy shift for the Army War College, according to USAWC Provost Dr. Jim Breckenridge.

"The Strategic Studies Institute will be a key element of the War College's deepened emphasis on collaborative research to investigate and provide insights on the Army's and the nation's most complex strategic problems,"

said Breckenridge. “The SSI Director will take the lead in forging a collaborative social network of leading researchers, and in the process build key long-term academic partnerships.”

“Dr. Wilson will be building on the 20-year legacy of Prof. Douglas Lovelace, who led the Strategic Studies Institute through a generation of growth and innovation. Under his leadership, the institute and its USAWC Press grew in audience and influence, and established the institute’s reputation for independent strategic research and analysis within the national security policy community,” said Breckenridge.

### ***Vision for the Strategic Studies Institute***

“I am especially excited to be joining SSI, its USAWC Press, and the Army War College at this particular time -- unquestionably, a time of significant change in geopolitical affairs, nationally and globally,” said Wilson.

“The time is right for the role of SSI,” he said. “This is an imperative moment to build greater and more unique partnerships for very complex and compound security challenges. Substantively, that will mean applying theory, lessons of history, and a solid grounding in contemporary practice to look at global transnational and transregional threats in light of vital and enduring U.S. national and global interests.

“My goal is to help the Strategic Studies Institute become the best in the world in generating ideas in three or four critical areas, incubating them, and using the USAWC Press to export those ideas among other communities of thought and practice – and, most importantly, in support of the U.S. Army, he said.”

Geostrategic analysis has always been SSI’s forte and we will build upon that, he said, noting that he and the SSI team have already started the cross-talk process for the new team’s first 60-90 days.

“I very much look forward to furthering the partnerships that SSI has always been good at -- with academics, with the policy and think tank community, and with joint and interagency communities: collaborative partnerships, all directed to the expansion and enlargement of thought generation, incubation and propagation.”

Wilson envisions the Strategic Studies Institute as the essential think tank in the Army’s eyes, first and foremost. “Any time of transition is a time to go back to the fundamentals, and our priority customer is our own Army,” he said. The institute benefits from its ability to focus on a pure approach to

geostrategic research puzzles on behalf of the Army and the nation, he noted.

How SSI executes its mission will matter, he noted.

Wilson expects to leverage a collegial collective teaming approach, building on the reputation of each SSI researcher as he guides them to create a new reputation as a team of teams and widen the community of practice, even as the SSI focuses its contributions more closely to several areas of deep analysis. On behalf of the Army War College, SSI will act as integrator for research and, in doing so, create new bridges between the college and external collaborators.

While anticipating the SSI transition plan, Wilson has reflected on his own transition from the direct action of an Army career to a new role in directing scholarly support for the Army. “Through a process of reflection about who I’ve been, what I’ve done and how I came about those choices, I’ve discovered that it’s a mission-oriented purpose-driven life I’m looking for, he said.

In the past 18 months, Wilson continued on the path of public service through scholarship with real-world policy impact. He served as senior lecturer for graduate level seminars at Yale University’s Jackson Institute for Global Affairs. He holds affiliations with West Point’s Modern War Institute as a senior research fellow; and with the nonpartisan New America think tank as an International Affairs Fellow. Wilson has served as subject matter expert in counter-terrorism strategy development; he advised and assisted in the development of new national strategies and action plans for the Republic of Macedonia’s National Committee for Countering Violent Extremism and Counter-Terrorism.

“One of the things I’m looking forward to doing is to take those affiliations and use them as bridges for future collaborative relationships,” he said. “SSI and the War College, more broadly, have had a huge shaping and inspiring impact on my own professional developments as both a soldier and a scholar over the course of my 28-years of uniformed service as an Army Officer and Joint Service Officer.

“This directorship offers me the opportunity to pay it back to SSI and the War College, and through our collective works, to pay it forward to our Army, the Joint Force, and ultimately, to our nation,” said Wilson.

### ***Background as soldier-scholar***

A 1989 graduate of the United States Military Academy at West Point, Col.

Isaiah Wilson III retired from a career as an Army aviator (AH-64 pilot), strategist, and professional military educator. His traditional military assignments included leadership of the US CENTCOM Commander's Initiative's Group, Chief of Plans for the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq, and leadership in several combat aviation units and critical staff assignments. He applied his practitioner experience across 20 years of teaching, primarily as an Academy Professor at West Point, where he was director of the American Politics, Policy and Strategy Department and founding director of West Point's Johnson Grand Strategy Program.

An established author, he published the book, "Thinking Beyond War: Why America Fails to Win the Peace" in 2007, and multiple books, monographs and articles addressing topics such as civil-military relations, counterinsurgency, the national security enterprise, Operation Iraqi Freedom, grand strategy, landpower, officership and the profession, and post-conflict operations.

Dr. Wilson has held faculty and teaching appointments at the National War College, George Washington University, Columbia University, and Yale University. Of his numerous professional affiliations, most notably he is a life member and former International Affairs Fellow (IAF) with the Council on Foreign Relations, a resident scholar with West Point's Modern War Institute (MWI), and an International Affairs Fellow with New America.