

“Hole of Government” and other commentary on COVID-19 implications for strategic security

By Public Affairs Staff 08 May 2020



Implications for Indo-PACOM, for the Middle East, for the transAtlantic relationship, for the Army profession, USAWC faculty join Strategic Studies Institute researchers to examine strategic challenge and change in the COVID-19 era and beyond.

Research professors of the Army War College’s Strategic Studies Institute turned to the national security implications of the global COVID-19 pandemic. [READ ALL](#)

Find independent insights about these aspects of the COVID-19-related challenges, anticipated changes, and relevant recommendations for the Army and Defense Department:

[“Hole” of Government: What COVID-19 Reveals about American Security Planning](#) by Dr. Isaiah 'Ike' Wilson

"The COVID-19 pandemic is an exemplar of the new, complex, and most dangerous periods in our Nation’s history. What makes it so uniquely “dangerous” is the changed nature of the threats. They have all compounded largely because the root causes and underlying conditions have been allowed (passive voice is intentional here) to go for so long, unaddressed or underaddressed.

"The security dilemma of the 20th century international environment -- defined primarily by material-based security threats of a military nature -- has now given way to a new 21st century security dilemma: the "compound security dilemma."

... "Our existing structures and processes for planning and analysis are not sufficient for today's and tomorrow's needs.

"Compound security threats represent a change in the character, scope, and scale of challenges to our common defense and public welfare. While their hybrid nature is part of the equation, compound threats dramatically alter our public policy and force planning, sizing, and shaping calculations and algorithms. Under compound conditions, threats are not additive; they are multiplicative and, in many cases, exponential...."

"If the power equation, under compound security dynamics, can no longer muster and sustain the type, quality, and quantities of "force" needed to overmatch threats before they compound, then society may simply need a whole new equation. This might be the paradigm shift that many within military and public policy circles have debated The 2020 Novel Coronavirus pandemic may be its herald."

[Memorandum for SECDEF: Restore "Shock" in Strategic Planning](#) by Nathan Freier, Robert Hume, John Schaus – proposes new attention to "shock analysis," disciplined and rigorous strategic planning, creativity and intellectual freedom of action in strategic forecasting – to improve DoD's institutional resilience.

"...]T]he "known unknown" is where DOD needs to focus a greater portion of its future planning attention. This brand of shock exhibits four important characteristics.

"First, the "known unknown" is most often consistent with recognized and observable disruptive trends in the strategic environment. Second, it is prone to sudden or rapid onset with immediate wide-ranging effect. Third, its long-term impact is transformational for the entire enterprise. Finally, fourth, it is often foreseeable in strategic planning processes calibrated to look for it. And, it is foreseeable in enough detail for senior leaders, strategists, and planners to adequately account for it in some detail in their work."

[After COVID-19: American Landpower in Transatlantic Context](#) by Dr.

JOHN DENN

[Long-Term Implications of the COVID-19 Pandemic for the US Army](#)

by Dr. Steve Metz

[“Disaster Diplomacy” and the US Response to COVID-19](#) by Dr. C.

Anthony Pfaff

[COVID-19 and the Ethics of Military Readiness](#) by Dr. C. Anthony Pfaff

[Scenarios for a Post-COVID Middle East](#) by Dr. Christopher Bolan

[COVID-19 and Indo-Pacific Strategy: Korea is Up, China is Down, and the US \(For Now\) is Out](#) by John Schaus and Nathan Frierer

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