

# Introduction

We must renew the foundation of America's strength. In the long run, the welfare of the American people will determine America's strength in the world, particularly at a time when our own economy is inextricably linked to the global economy. Our prosperity serves as a wellspring for our power. It pays for our military, underwrites our diplomacy and development efforts, and serves as a leading source of our influence in the world.

—*The National Security Strategy of the United States*,  
May 2010

On August 24–25, 2010, the National Defense University held a conference titled *Economic Security: Neglected Dimension of National Security?* The conference explored the economic element of national power. Often ignored and misunderstood in relation to national security, the economy has been taken for granted for years, but its strength is the foundation of national security. Over 2 days, several keynote speakers and participants in six panel discussions explored the complexity surrounding this subject and examined the major elements that, interacting as a system, define the economic component of national security.

As the Nation begins to understand the imperative of putting its problem-solving apparatus into a global systemic context, that framework was used to explore the topic because, as Albert Einstein said, “We cannot solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.” And the linear solution sets we once used to solve simplistic problems are of little value in a world of complex systems.

This conference was designed around a systemic framework that could be used to develop a grand strategy surrounding the Nation's economy as a subsystem of national security. The panels and keynote presentations looked at the economic element of national power from different system views. Those views—including the role of debt, the government, industrial capability, energy, science, technology, and human capital—create a systemic view of what could be done to improve an understanding of the economic element of national power. Selected papers from the conference that represent these views comprise this volume.

Chapter one is a transcript of the comments made by opening keynote speaker David Walker. He contends that if the economic element of national power is neglected and misunderstood, nothing will be more dangerous to the Nation than the national debt and its unintended consequences for generations to come. His arguments are alarming and are critical for policymakers and every citizen to understand. He provides a common-sense approach to getting the Nation's financial house in order.

America's role in the world is based on its military and economic prowess and capability. In chapter two, John Morton traces the historical roots of the economy and its role in enabling the superpower status of the Nation. He also proposes that the United States needs an economic grand strategy and describes the road ahead.

No 21<sup>st</sup>-century economy can be secured without a steady supply of energy. Without adequate energy to power contemporary civilization, there is no security at all. In chapter three, Keith Cooley explains his approach to an energy plan, which includes a grand strategy that, if enacted, will support the Nation's future.

In chapter four, Louis Infante offers his approach to energy security. His National Energy Security Initiative describes a specific model that the Nation could use to manage the complexities of its entire energy system. This initiative would include mechanisms to improve the research and development policymaking decisions and strategies to make them real.

How can a nation be an economic or military superpower without a plan to ensure it has people with the right knowledge and capabilities throughout its society? In chapter five, Myra Shiplett and her team eloquently address this complex set of issues and how the United States will be well served only if its schools can produce individuals who can compete in a sophisticated and globally competitive 21<sup>st</sup>-century world.

It is probably impossible for the United States to have a robust economy and remain a superpower if its companies lose their ability to be innovative. In chapter six, Carmen Medina explores the many issues that surround what it means to have innovation as a major element of a nation's economy.