

Strategy

strategy

US national security strategy has always driven our national military strategy—explicitly in the recent past and probably implicitly before the mid-1980s.

Operational art's development in the 1970s began a renaissance in military thinking that continues to bear fruit. We began to measure a US military officer's success by more than just tactical proficiency. The military discovered it had a crucial interest—and even an inherent responsibility—in the political process, at least insofar as it concerned national security strategy development. Strategy took on a new meaning. Purely military strategy was no longer sufficient and was even dangerous when not linked to the national strategy—as our experience in Vietnam adequately demonstrated.

While the president was clearly responsible for enunciating and communicating US national security strategy to the American people, the defense secretary's role in the process was strengthened, even mandated, as a result of the passage of the Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.

The military's capability to execute US national strategy in the form of national military strategy made senior military leaders' involvement in national security strategy development paramount. The following articles, dating back to 1956, grapple with this issue from different perspectives and furnish a basis for understanding relationships we probably take for granted today.

