

## Strategic Uncertainty in National Security

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### Background questions about strategic uncertainty for national security.

#### 1. What is it?

- (a) What is strategic uncertainty? What is new about it? Did Alexander or Napoleon or Rommel face strategic uncertainty in the contemporary sense?
- (b) Can strategic uncertainty arise from small armed units, or does it only result from large military threats? In this age of instant global information and powerful weapons, isn't strategic uncertainty essentially tactical?
- (c) What are the geo-political or non-military dimensions of strategic uncertainty?
- (d) How does the assessment of strategic uncertainty impact government defense policy? How should it impact policy?
- (e) What are the strategic threats today? Terrorism, insurgency, conventional warfare? Are there regional differences: Europe, Middle East, North America, etc?

#### 2. What to do about it?

- (a) Doctrinal responses to strategic uncertainty. Is new doctrine needed? If so, what should it be?
- (b) Force build up. What type of force is needed? Should the emphasis be on joint special operations, or on conventional broad-capability forces (land, air, marine, naval)?
- (c) What is the role of intelligence assessment in managing strategic uncertainty? Emphasis on early warning, or emphasis on situational awareness and contextual understanding?
- (d) Who is responsible for identifying strategic uncertainty? What training do they need? What authority should they have? Should they be centralized or dispersed? How do military and civilian elements interact?
- (e) Organizational responses. What are the organizational implications of strategic uncertainty? What organizational structures are needed? What communication, control, and command protocols are appropriate? What are the methods for encouraging and improving organizational learning?
- (f) Methodological responses. The sources of strategic uncertainty are themselves highly uncertain. For instance, cyber is a new strategic threat. The future hides other (as yet unknown) innovations with strategic implications. What are methodologies for managing the strategically unknown future?