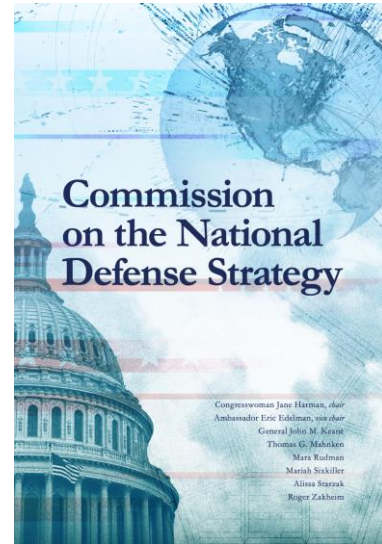


Commission on the National Defense Strategy

A Brief Summary

Timeline

- Dec 2021 FY22 NDAA passed, requiring an independent commission
- Feb 2022 Russia/China “no limits” partnership
Full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine
- Oct 2022 Unclassified National Defense Strategy (NDS) released
- July 2024 Commission’s [Final Report](#)



Some Key Points

“The threats the United States faces are the most serious and most challenging the nation has encountered since 1945 and include the potential for near-term major war. The United States last fought a global conflict during World War II, which ended nearly 80 years ago. The nation was last prepared for such a fight during the Cold War, which ended 35 years ago. **It is not prepared today.”** (p. v)

‘China and Russia’s “no-limits” partnership, formed in February 2022 just days before Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, has only deepened and broadened to include a military and economic partnership with Iran and North Korea, each of which presents its own significant threat to U.S. interests. This new alignment of nations opposed to U.S. interests creates a real risk, if not likelihood, that conflict anywhere could become a multitheater or global war.’ (p. vi)

“The Commission finds that the U.S. military lacks both the capabilities and the capacity required to be confident it can deter and prevail in combat. It needs to do a better job of incorporating new technology at scale; field more and higher-capability platforms, software, and munitions; and deploy innovative

operational concepts to employ them together better. **The war in Ukraine has demonstrated the need to prepare for new forms of conflict and to integrate technology and new capabilities rapidly with older systems.”** (p. vii)

“The Commission finds that the U.S. defense industrial base (DIB) is unable to meet the equipment, technology, and munitions needs of the United States and its allies and partners. A protracted conflict, especially in multiple theaters, would require much greater capacity to produce, maintain, and replenish weapons and munitions.” (p. vii)

“Fighting an actual conflict with a peer competitor, such as China or Russia... would affect the life of every American in ways we can only begin to imagine.” (p. 21)

“Deterring such conflict demands that the United States demonstrates the ability and will to do all these things—and **within the next two or three years**. This, in turn, demands an all elements of national power approach and public support.” (p. 22)

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“The only viable course of action”

“Russia intends to outlast the West’s willingness to support Ukraine and then seek what it would find to be a favorable outcome to the war. If Russia gains control over Ukraine, its border (including Belarus) with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) member states would stretch from the Arctic to the Black Sea, presenting significantly more demands for deployed NATO forces. Russia would be an emboldened and likely stronger power, requiring NATO to build and deploy additional forces, potentially at the expense of other locations where those resources could be applied. **The only viable course of action is to increase the scale, capability, and freedom to use the materiel provided to Ukraine so that it can push Russia back.**” (p. 8)

Some Recommendations

“The recommendations throughout this report will require increased resources and the political will to engage internationally that requires the support of a well-informed public. The American people will need to pay for the increases in federal outlays to build the force needed. The American public will have to produce the people to serve in the military, the public sector, and the industrial base. While it is incumbent on political leaders—particularly the President—to make the case for the need for a strong and engaged United States, **it cannot be done without the public’s support.**” (p. 26)

“Congress should pass a supplemental appropriation immediately to begin a multiyear investment in the national security innovation and industrial base. **The supplemental funding should support U.S. allies at war**; build industrial capacity, including infrastructure for shipbuilding and the ability to surge munitions production; increase and accelerate military construction to expand and harden facilities in Asia; secure access to critical minerals; and invest in a digital and industrial workforce.” (p. 75)

Links

- [NDS Commission Final Report](#) (July 2024)
- [Senate Armed Services Committee Hearing](#) (July 30, 2024) *
- [House Armed Services Committee Hearing](#) (Sep. 18, 2024)
- [2022 National Defense Strategy](#) (Oct. 2022)

* In his opening remarks at this hearing, Sen. Roger Wicker (ranking member) stated “this may possibly be the most important hearing we will have this year.”

