NATIONAL DEFENSE UNIVERSITY FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

STRATEGIC POLICY FORUM

"Dark Portal"

SPF Holds Sixth Secretary of Defense Strategic Policy Forum

~ Exercise Summary ~

Overview

The Institute for National Strategic Studies' (INSS) National Strategic Gaming Center (NSGC) held "Dark Portal", the sixth in a series of Strategic Policy Forum exercises, at the National Defense University (NDU) on February 24, 2004. These crisis-simulation exercises, an initiative of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, are designed to give senior government officials insights into the nuances and complexities of policymaking in the current global security environment and to illuminate policy and organizational options. Seventy-five members of Congress have participated in one or more of the six events. Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz again noted that the Strategic Policy Forum exercises are succeeding in building valuable dialogue and relationships between the Executive and Legislative branches of government.

Deputy Secretaries Wolfowitz and Loy opened SPF

Lt Gen Michael Dunn, NDU President, welcomed members of Congress, Executive Branch and state officials. Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz and Admiral James Loy, Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, opened "Dark Portal" with comments on progress in the war on terrorism and the challenges of securing U.S. critical infrastructure in the implementation of the Administration's National Strategy for the Physical Protection of Critical Infrastructure and Key Assets and National Strategy to Secure Cyberspace.

Participants included 14 Members of Congress, senior Executive Branch officials, military leaders, and state officials. Organizations participating included the Office of the Secretary of Defense and the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Homeland Defense; the Joint Chiefs of Staff; the Defense Information System Agency; the Department of Justice; the Department of Homeland Security's Information Analysis & Infrastructure Protection Directorate, the Department of Energy, the Federal Reserve Board, the Department of the Treasury, and state-level representation from Maryland and Oregon.

Addressing the Challenge of Critical Infrastructure Protection/Cyber-Security

Participants discuss policy recommendations regarding critical infrastructure protection and cybersecurity.

"Dark Portal" involved a series of physical and cyber attacks directed against the homeland. Participants examined the gravity, complexity, and difficulty inherent in responding to terrorist exploitation of the U.S critical infrastructure coincident with ongoing military operations and overseas deployment of U.S. Armed Forces. Participants also assessed the economic effects of such notional incidents and how the United States might respond once the perpetrator had been identified.

After the exercise was completed, Members of Congress shared their insights and policy recommendations with Principal Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Mr. Christopher "Ryan" Henry. The exercise provided participants with a better understanding of the interdependency of critical infrastructure sectors, how protection of key nodes is vital to national security, and how terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure could impact national defense efforts and the U.S. economy.

Participants cited some of the following insights:

- A coherent and prompt public information campaign is critical to preventing public panic.
- There has been a great deal of progress made to improve our nation's security, but there is a continuing need to improve and respond to new threats before there is another attack.
- The interdependencies between critical infrastructure sectors warrants continued discussion of the necessary protective measures.

Mr. Henry responded to the Members' comments, and thanked them for their participation and insights.

Comments from the bipartisan group of members of Congress focused on the unique educational benefits of such exercises. Here is an example of participant comments:

"Better intelligence, and better communications between the private sector and the federal, state and local levels are critical, and this exercise brought home that message. And it's also important for Members of Congress to be ready to help inform their constituents about what is happening whenever we have homeland security threats." -- *Rep. Ernest Istook (R-OK) press release.*
http://www.house.gov/apps/list/press/ok05_istook/wargame.html

Additional Information

More Strategic Policy Forum exercises are being planned. For further information, please contact Col Chris Goggins, USAF, Director, Strategic Policy Forum, at 202-685-4827 or e-mail at gogginsc@ndu.edu.