



"Dragons' Thunder"

SPF Holds Ninth Secretary of Defense Strategic Policy Forum

~ Exercise Summary ~

The Institute for National Strategic Studies' (INSS) National Strategic Gaming Center (NSGC) held "Dragons' Thunder", the ninth in a series of Strategic Policy Forum exercises, at the National Defense University (NDU) on July 13, 2004. These crisis-simulation exercises, an initiative of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, are designed to give senior government officials insights into the nuance and complexity of policymaking in the current global security environment and to illuminate policy and organizational options. Over 120 Members of Congress have participated in one or more of the nine events.

Lt Gen Michael Dunn, NDU President, welcomed the Members of Congress and Executive Branch officials. Secretary of the Navy Gordon R. England opened "Dragons' Thunder," noting that he has found the exercises in which he has participated over the years to be very useful in illuminating various international challenges and policy options.

Fourteen Members of Congress participated in the Forum along with officials from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Joint Staff, U.S. Pacific Command, the Department of State, the National Security Council, the National Intelligence Council, the Central Intelligence Agency, and the Department of Commerce, as well as regional experts from INSS. The officials and experts were present to provide Members of Congress with perspectives on current policy, plans, and assessments, as well as advice with respect to notional developments in the exercise.

Exercise "Dragons' Thunder" provided the opportunity for information exchange and notional decision-making in the context of a major regional security crisis. Participants examined the gravity and complexity inherent in developing policy options in response to a postulated escalation of tensions between China and Taiwan. Participants explored how all instruments of national power might be employed to ensure U.S. strategic objectives were met during each phase of the exercise.

After the exercise was completed, Members of Congress briefed the Honorable Ryan Henry, Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Policy, on what they learned. Participants were afforded a better understanding of the risks and policy challenges attendant to defusing any future crisis in the Taiwan Straits.

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.