



“Dragons’ Thunder”

SPF Holds Seventeenth Secretary of Defense Strategic Policy Forum

~ Exercise Summary ~

The Institute for National Strategic Studies’ (INSS) National Strategic Gaming Center (NSGC) conducted *Dragons’ Thunder*, a tabletop exercise examining cross-Taiwan Strait tensions, at the National Defense University (NDU) on May 22, 2006. The seventeenth in a series of Strategic Policy Forum events, these crisis-simulation exercises, an initiative of Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, are designed to give Members of Congress and senior government officials insights into the complexity of policymaking in the current global security environment. In addition, they serve to illuminate policy and organizational options for ensuring national security and the pursuit of U.S. interests. More than one hundred Members of Congress have participated in the SPF events, with many taking part in several exercises.

Lieutenant General Michael Dunn, USAF, President of NDU, welcomed the Members of Congress and Executive Branch officials. The Honorable Peter Rodman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, opened the forum by emphasizing the importance of exercises such as *Dragons’ Thunder* to developing a strategy for responding to potential crises in East Asia. He also asserted that these exercises serve as an effective way to study decision-making processes, which are essential to the formulation and execution of policies, and noted the importance of dialogue between Executive and Legislative branches in addressing the complex security threats confronting our nation.



NDU President, Lt Gen Michael Dunn, and incoming NDU President, MajGen Frances Wilson, discuss the exercise with Hon. Peter Rodman, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs.

Four Members of the House of Representatives participated in this forum along with representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Departments of Commerce and State, the National Security Council, and the National Defense

University. These officials were present to provide the Members with insights on current policies, plans, capabilities, and assessments, as well as expertise with respect to scenario developments in the exercise.

Dragons' Thunder provided a forum for information exchange and collaborative decision-making in the context of a postulated international crisis. Participants examined the gravity, complexity, and difficulty inherent in responding to an escalating crisis in the East Asian region. The exercise examined possible U.S. responses to the emergence of cross-Strait tensions between the People's Republic of China and Taiwan. Topics discussed during the exercise included Taiwan's status, U.S. policy adherence to the one China policy based on the three communiqués and the Taiwan Relations Act, economic relationships, and the ability of regional and global actors to influence events in East Asia.



NDU Senior VP, AMB Johnnie Carson, and Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs, Robert Wilkie, discussed the importance of exercises such as *Dragons' Thunder*.

impact of East Asian instability. Overall, the participants found the exercise to be a very valuable experience.

Additional Information:

More Strategic Policy Forum exercises are planned for this year. For further information, please contact Col Chris Goggins, USAF, Director, Strategic Policy Forum, at (202) 685-4827, or by email at gogginsc@ndu.edu.

You may also consult our webpage for new information on upcoming events by going to <http://www.ndu.edu/INSS/SPF>.

Immediately following the exercise, Members of Congress shared their insights and policy recommendations. Participants noted that *Dragons' Thunder* afforded them a better understanding of the complex relationship between China and Taiwan, the international implications of any deterioration in cross-Strait relations, as well as the difficulties inherent in formulating U.S. policy in response to possible conflict between China and Taiwan. They also observed that the exercise highlighted the potential economic impact of a conflict and the need for continued improvement in cooperation and coordination among the United States, its allies, and other regional and global partners to mitigate the