

Welcome to Defense & Strategic Studies Online

A Message from the Editorial Board

Dr. Christopher A. Ford, Editor-in-Chief
Dr. Gary L. Geipel
Dr. Kerry M. Kartchner
Col. Curtis D. McGiffin, USAF (ret.)

Welcome to our new online journal – *Defense & Strategic Studies Online* (DASSO) – of which we are pleased to roll out the first edition with the document you are reading. DASSO is new, but Missouri State University’s program in Defense and Strategic Studies (DSS) has been around for many years. It is our pleasure at DASSO to continue the DSS tradition of providing insight to the broader policy community – and encouraging deeper thought and debate therein – now through the new vehicle of an online publication in which to showcase work by Missouri State faculty and students, as well as by thoughtful guest scholars and experts.

The DSS program goes back to 1971, when Dr. William Robert Van Cleave (1935-2013) – a professor at the School of International Relations at the University of Southern California (USC) – established a new program there to provide graduate level education and training for students anticipating careers in national and international security affairs, policymaking, and teaching at the university level. As this description suggests, this was from its birth a program focused not upon increasing humanity’s sum total of academic knowledge *per se*, but upon using academic study to support policy *praxis* – that is, to increase the sum total of *policy wisdom*.

Dr. Van Cleave’s own career, after his service in the U.S. Marine Corps, was one that moved easily back and forth between the academy and policymaking circles. Among other things, for instance, he was a member of the U.S. delegation to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) with the Soviet Union, chaired an advisory committee for the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), served as an advisor on strategic policy and planning in the Office of the U.S.

Secretary of Defense, and advised Governor Ronald Reagan of California on defense policy and then ran the Defense Department transition team after Reagan won the presidential election of 1980.

This extensive experience in and with government policymaking – coupled with his experience in academia and with think tanks such as Stanford’s Hoover Institution, the National Institute for Public Policy, and the Center for Security Policy – taught Van Cleave the importance of interdisciplinary, practical, and policy-focused scholarship. He knew how critical it was for the knowledge-producers in the academic world to learn from those with actual experience in the complexities and responsibilities of statecraft and national defense, and how critical it was that scholarship provide actionable insight *to* such leaders as they work to protect and advance our country’s interests, deter aggression, and promote international security.

A “practitioner” mindset and a policy focus are thus, as it were, in our program’s “DNA,” focusing us upon phronetic knowledge in the Aristotelian sense – that is, insight providing grounds for reasoned judgement and action in the world. Van Cleave carried these points of emphasis with him when he brought DSS with him from USC to Southwest Missouri State University – now Missouri State University (MSU) – in 1987. Today, while still proudly at MSU, now as part of the [Reynolds College of Arts, Social Sciences, and Humanities](#) (RCASH), the DSS program is physically located in northern Virginia just outside of Washington, D.C., thus both symbolically and physically close to the seat of national decision-making in defense and strategic affairs. (At a time when American universities seem to be all but [falling over themselves to establish new outposts in the Washington, D.C., area](#), it’s also worth noting that our program has been here for nearly 20 years!) This proximity to the locus of national security decision-making allows us to draw upon a faculty of scholar-practitioners with deep practical expertise in what they teach to DSS graduate students, continuing the Van Cleave legacy.

This legacy, we believe, is as important now as ever it has been. Today, as was also the case when Van Cleave established the program in 1971, America is politically polarized and divided against itself, roiled by domestic antagonisms and collective national self-doubt, and

half-convinced that our country and way of life are not worth fighting for. America faced such challenges in Van Cleave's day, moreover, at a time when American confidence, strategic seriousness, and steadfast resolution were essential in the face of threats from dangerous great power adversaries – as is once more, alas, the case today.

In the face of American self-doubt and strategic unseriousness, as noted by former Deputy National Security Advisor and former DSS faculty member [J.D. Crouch](#), Bill Van Cleave “[spent much of his career fighting such foolishness.](#)” In this fight, it was Van Cleave's objective to wed scholarly insight to a statesman's practicality. In response to Soviet threats of his own period, he “taught students to see the world as it is and through the eyes of the policymaker,” and he “played a major role in mobilizing America to meet this threat and provided the intellectual guidance and wisdom to deal with it.” As Americans and the other free sovereign peoples of the world struggle with contemporary challenges of defense and security, DSS is proud of Van Cleave's legacy and determined to carry forward the tradition he established of facing such problems head-on, with clarity, integrity, and – where needed – brutal honesty.

What DSS has hitherto lacked, however, is a vehicle through which to collect and publish work by scholar-practitioners that explores contemporary defense and strategic studies issues in this spirit, and through which to make such insights available to the broader policy community. And that's where DASSO comes in.

With this new online journal, we aim to collect and make available just such work, in the form of essays offering scholar-practitioner insights into issues of national or international importance, in an easily readable form, and of a length long enough to wrestle seriously with serious things, but not so long that they would struggle to catch or keep the attention of busy policymakers. We will thus be seeking essays of generally between 2,000 and 4,000 words – though as you'll see from this first volume, we can be flexible about that! – and publishing them here.

We are tremendously excited about this new venture, and hope that in the months and years ahead you will find DASSO both interesting and thought-provoking.

With our thanks,

The Editorial Board

Meet Your Editorial Board:

The Hon. Christopher A. Ford (Editor-in-Chief) is Professor of International Relations and Strategic Studies with Missouri State University's School of Defense and Strategic Studies, as well as a Visiting Fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution and a Distinguished Visiting Fellow at Oxford University's Pharos Foundation. In prior government service, Dr. Ford served as U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation, also performing the duties of the Under Secretary for Arms Control and International Security. He is the author of *The Mind of Empire: China's History and Modern Foreign Relations* (2010) and *China Looks at the West: Identity, Global Ambitions, and the Future of Sino-American Relations* (2015).

Dr. Gary L. Geipel is a professor and director of the doctoral program at Missouri State University's School of Defense and Strategic Studies (DSS), as well as a Senior Associate at the National Institute for Public Policy (NIPP). Together with DSS students, he hosts the "Deterrence School" podcast. Earlier in his career, Dr. Geipel worked in the Graduate Fellows program of the Central Intelligence Agency, as a Senior Research Fellow and Chief Operating Officer of the Hudson Institute, and as a communications and global corporate-affairs executive in the biopharmaceuticals industry. He is the author of hundreds of articles and monographs in major magazines and newspapers as well as online, think-tank, and peer-reviewed publications.

Dr. Kerry M. Kartchner has been a Distinguished Faculty member with Missouri State University's School of Defense and Strategic Studies since 2007. He was formerly the State Department's Senior Representative to the START and ABM Treaty implementation commissions in Geneva, Switzerland, and Senior Advisor for Missile Defense Policy in the Bureau of Arms Control. He also served as a Senior Foreign Policy Advisor for the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA) in the Office of Strategic Research and Dialogues. He is the co-editor of *On Limited Nuclear War in the 21st Century* (2014) and the Routledge Handbook of Strategic Culture (2024).

Col. Curtis D. McGiffin, USAF (ret.) is Per Course Faculty with Missouri State University's School of Defense and Strategic Studies. He is a retired Air Force Colonel who spent most of his career serving, supporting, leading, or educating the nuclear weapons enterprise at various levels of command. Col. McGiffin is also a co-founder of the National Institute for Deterrence Studies, and previously served as Associate Dean of the School of Strategic Force Studies at the Air Force Institute of Technology, where he led a portfolio of nuclear deterrence education programs for the Air Force's professional continuing education effort. His decorations include the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, two Aerial Achievement medals, and the Air Force Meritorious Civilian Service Award. Finally, Professor McGiffin has published numerous articles and a book chapter on deterrence and participates in a weekly podcast.

Defense and Strategic Studies Online (DASSO) is produced by the Graduate School of Defense & Strategic Studies at Missouri State University. The views expressed herein are entirely those of the individual authors, and do not necessarily reflect those of anyone else at Missouri State University or elsewhere.

The Graduate School of Defense and Strategic Studies is fully accredited by the Missouri Higher Learning Commission and is certified by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

Are you a member or friend of the Missouri State University community with an interest in defense and strategic studies and who has something thoughtful to contribute to public discourse on such topics in this short essay format? We welcome essays, commentary, accounts and interpretations of original research, book reviews, and more. Contact DASSO's Editorial Board at DASSO@MissouriState.edu.

© Copyright 2024, Missouri State University School of Defense and Strategic Studies

**Missouri
State**

**SCHOOL of DEFENSE AND
STRATEGIC STUDIES**