

## **“By National Security Professionals, for National Security Professionals”**

by

Christopher A. Ford

One of the great strengths of Missouri State University’s School of Defense and Strategic Studies (DSS) is its dedication to educating national security practitioners through a strong focus not just upon intellectual understanding but also upon approaching this as a field of *applied* knowledge. As you will have already gathered from the earlier essays in this issue of DASSO celebrating DSS’ 20<sup>th</sup> year in the Washington, D.C., area, we seek to educate national security *practitioners*, and informing wise *praxis* has been a central preoccupation of this program ever since its establishment at the University of Southern California (USC) in 1971 by our DSS “Founding Father,” Professor William Van Cleave.

There is an old saying – from *Maxims for Revolutionaries*, an appendix to George Bernard Shaw’s 1905 play, *Man and Superman* – that runs: “He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches.” Shaw sharpens this message by adding further in his *Maxims* that “[a]ctivity is the only road to knowledge.”

Shaw’s aphorism seems rather unfair to academics, of course, and is quite unlikely to be entirely accurate. Yet there is at least a kernel of truth in them, in that activity – that is to say, “doing” – is a powerful route to knowledge, and that those who have “done” things in the world can bring insight of enormous value to education. William Van Cleave was a notable national security practitioner himself, of course, and it is with his example in mind – that of the practical and realistic national-security scholar-practitioner, closely engaged with theory and broader lessons from history, but also

relentlessly focused upon the importance of practical insight from real-world national security experience and the “sausage-making” of actual policy development – that DSS has tried populate its academic “bench” of educators ever since. And we like to think we’ve done a pretty good job of it, bringing together a remarkable group of experts who *teach* for us in large part precisely because they have shown themselves to be so good at *doing*.

One can illustrate this point by looking at the broad range of positions that have been held by current members of the DSS faculty. In the tables that follow, we have drawn upon the faculty list appearing on the DSS website as of August 2025 – the point at which we opened our new offices in Arlington, Virginia – in order to compile a list of national security-related roles that have been occupied at various points by one or more of our current DSS faculty. These positions range across departments and agencies of the U.S. Executive Branch – including the Defense Department, State Department, National Security Council Staff, and the U.S. Congress – as well as positions in national defense-related higher education and in major national think tanks and national laboratories.

The list is long and impressive, and demonstrates not just the deep repertoire of real-world national security experience the DSS program makes available to the students in its doctoral, Master’s, and certificate programs. With apologies to George Bernard Shaw, we don’t think graduate students should have to choose between “doers” and “teachers.” They can have both.



## U.S. Department of Defense

- Acting Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
- Acting Assistant Secretary of Defense for Strategy, Plans, and Capabilities
- Deputy Under Secretary of Defense for Policy
- Deputy Undersecretary of Defense for Technology Security Policy and Counterproliferation Policy
- Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy
- Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Forces Policy
- Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Crisis Management
- Director of the Defense Technology Administration
- Director for Requirements, U.S. Army
- Brigadier General, U.S. Army
- Director of Space Strategy and Policy, U.S. Space Force
- Chairman, Strategy Policy Panel, U.S. Strategic Command
- Director, Office of Missile Defense Policy
- Chief of Operations for Defense Threat Reduction Agency Operations and Integration Directorate
- Senior Advisor, Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense
- Assistant for Counterproliferation Policy, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy
- NATO Operations Chief, Office of the Secretary of Defense for Policy
- Member of Strategy, Concepts, and Initiatives Team, Office of the U.S. Secretary of Defense
- Strategic Trends Research Manager, Defense Threat Reduction Agency
- Senior Deterrence Analyst, U.S. Strategic Command
- Technical Nuclear Analyst and Senior WMD Scientist, Department of the Air Force
- Physical Scientist, U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency



### **U.S. Department of State**

- Acting Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security
- U.S. Ambassador and Special Envoy for the Six-Party Talks with North Korea
- Assistant Secretary of State for International Security and Nonproliferation
- U.S. Special Representative for Nuclear Nonproliferation
- Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
- Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary of State for Arms Control and International Security
- Senior Advisor for Strategic Planning, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation
- Senior Advisor for Missile Defense Policy, Bureau of Arms Control
- Biological Policy staff, Bureau of International Security and Nonproliferation



### **National Security Council Staff**

- Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for WMD and Counterproliferation
- Director for Proliferation Strategy (x2)
- Director for Intelligence Programs



### **U.S. Intelligence Community**

- Assistant Director for National Intelligence Mission Performance, Analysis, and Collection for the Director of National Intelligence
- Senior Advisor to the Director of National Intelligence
- Senior GEOINT Authority Collection, National Geospatial Intelligence Agency
- Director of Intelligence, NATO
- Consultant to the Director of National Intelligence
- CIA officer, Special Intelligence Service
- CIA officer, counterterrorism
- CIA analyst, Directorate of Analysis



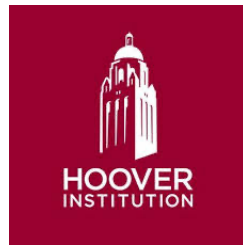
### **U.S. Congress**

- General Counsel, Senate Select Committee on Intelligence
- Chief Legislative Counsel, Senate Foreign Relations Committee
- Professional staff, Senate Armed Services Committee
- Staff Director, Senate Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations
- Professional staff, Armed Services Committee, House of Representatives
- Professional staff, Judiciary Committee, House of Representatives



## National Security Education

- Director of the George C. Marshall European Center for Security Studies
- Vice President for Academic Affairs, Marine Corps University
- Dean of Students, National Defense University
- Dean, Defense Threat Reduction University
- Commandant, Defense Nuclear Weapons School
- Director, Center for Hemispheric Defense Studies, National Defense University
- National Security Studies Department Chair, National Defense University
- Chair in Ethics and the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College
- Professor, University of Nebraska, Omaha
- Professor of Strategy and Policy, U.S. Naval War College
- Senior Research Fellow at National Defense University
- Professor, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base
- Policy Fellow, Center for the Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction, National Defense University
- Adjunct Professor School of Strategic Force Studies, U.S. Air Force Institute of Technology
- Professor, Georgetown University
- Associate Dean, School of Strategic Force Studies, U.S. Air Force Institute of Technology
- Adjunct Professor, Georgetown University
- Director of the Center for Study of Weapons of Mass Destruction, National Defense University
- Distinguished Research Fellow, National Defense University
- Dean of Academics, Institute of World Politics
- Professor, Command & Staff College, Marine Corps University
- Professor, American University School of International Service
- Professor, School of Advanced Air and Space Studies, Maxwell Air Force Base
- Adjunct professor, Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service
- Director of the Security Studies Program, Westminster College
- Adjunct Professor, Institute of World Politics



### Think Tanks and Commissions

- President, Institute of World Politics
- Co-founder, National Institute for Public Policy
- Co-founder, National Institute for Deterrence Studies
- Senior Vice President, American Foreign Policy Council
- Commissioner, Congressional Commission on the Strategic Posture of the United States
- Member, Senior Study Group on Strategic Stability, U.S. Institute of Peace
- Senior Fellow, Hudson Institute
- Visiting Fellow, Hoover Institution



**Sandia  
National  
Laboratories**

### Independent Expert Bodies

- Director for Defense and Special Programs, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory
- Assistant Director, Defense Capabilities & Management Team, Government Accountability Office
- Board of Managers, Sandia National Laboratory
- Global Security External Advisory Board, Sandia National Laboratory
- Consultant, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory

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### About the Author

**Christopher Ford** is DASSO's Editor in Chief and a professor with the School of Defense and Strategic Studies. The views expressed herein are entirely his own, and do not necessarily represent those of anyone else.