

EVALUATION OF THE 2015 DOD CYBER STRATEGY: MILD PROGRESS IN A COMPLEX AND DYNAMIC MILITARY DOMAIN

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In 2011, the Department of Defense (DoD) released its Strategy for Operating in Cyberspace, which officially recognized cyberspace as an operational domain akin to the traditional military domains of land, sea, air, and space. This monograph examines the 2015 DoD Cyber Strategy to evaluate how well its five strategic goals and associated implementation objectives define an actionable strategy to achieve three primary missions in cyberspace: defend the DoD network, defend the United States and its interests, and develop cyber capabilities to support military operations.

The topic of U.S. Federal cyberspace activities is well-documented in many sources, thus this monograph serves as a primer to provide senior policymakers, decisionmakers, military leaders, and their respective staffs with an overall appreciation for the complexities, challenges, opportunities, and risks associated with the development of military cyberspace operations. This report is limited to unclassified and open source information; any classified discussion must occur at another venue.

This monograph focuses on events and documents from the time frame of about 1 year before and 1 year after the 2015 strategy was released. This allows sufficient time to examine the key policies and guidance that influenced the development of the strategy, as well as follow-on activities for the impacts from the strategy. This inquiry has five major sections that utilize different frameworks of analysis to assess the strategy:

1. **Prima Facie Analysis:** This section is by intention only a superficial overview of the strategy. It explores the strategy and its public face as presented by DoD and addresses: What is the stated purpose of the strategy? What are its content and key messages?
2. **Historical Context Analysis:** The official roots of the DoD cyber strategy go back more than a decade, and this section reviews the docu-

ment's contents within the context of other key historical national defense guidance. The section focuses on two questions: Is this strategy consistent with previous strategies and current policies? What unique contributions does it introduce into the evolution of national security cyberspace activities?

3. **Traditional Strategy Analysis:** This section evaluates eight specific premises for good strategies that include the familiar elements of ends, ways, means, and risk. It also addresses three questions: Does the strategy properly address specific DoD needs as well as broader U.S. ends? Is the strategy appropriate and actionable? How may joint combatant commanders view the strategy?
4. **Analysis of Subsequent DoD Action:** This section explores the DoD cyber strategy's connections and influences to DoD guidance that followed its release. It will focus on two questions: How are major military cyberspace components—joint and Service—planning to implement the goals and objectives of the DoD cyber strategy? What plans has the Army put in place to support the strategy?
5. **Whole of U.S. Government Analysis:** This section examines DoD cyber activities from the perspective of a whole-of-government approach to national cybersecurity. This analysis focuses on two questions: Does the strategy support U.S. Executive direction? Does the strategy integrate with other the cyberspace-related activities of other U.S. Government departments and agencies?

This monograph concludes with a section that integrates the individual section findings and offers recommendations to improve future cyberspace strategic planning documents.

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