



UNDER SECRETARY OF WAR
3030 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-3030

CLEARED
For Open Publication

4
Feb 12, 2026

Department of Defense
OFFICE OF PREPUBLICATION AND SECURITY REVIEW

JAN 30 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR CHAIR, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND INNOVATION BOARD

SUBJECT: Terms of Reference – Permanent Subcommittee on Strategic Options

Dramatic and continuing changes in geopolitics and technology have shaped both the challenges the U.S. military has sought to address, and the vulnerabilities strategic competitors and potential adversarial countries seek to exploit to undermine U.S. national security. Competing nations continue to develop operational doctrines that take advantage of perceived vulnerabilities in U.S. capabilities and leverage new technologies to threaten strategic deterrence and stability on a global scale. To meet growing threats to U.S. national security and ensure future military successes by building enduring advantages, the Department of War (DoW) must evaluate to what extent it can anticipate, respond to, and proactively prevent these threats from ever developing, or to dynamically respond to and mitigate their impacts. This includes deterring unprecedented actions and technologies, understanding new threats and susceptibilities, and developing new strategic capabilities.

I am tasking the Science, Technology and Innovation Board (“the Board”), through the establishment of the Permanent Subcommittee on Strategic Options (“the Permanent Subcommittee”), to identify concepts, capabilities, strategies, and courses of action in the scientific and technical enterprises that inform decision-making and serve to rebalance intervention cost and benefit to ensure U.S. operational dominance. Under the Board, the Permanent Subcommittee areas of consideration will include:

- New and novel uses of space assets,
- Employment of cyber systems,
- Development of new methodologies and countermeasures for electronic warfare,
- Rapid collection and use of strategic counterintelligence,
- Logistics resiliency both within the United States and abroad,
- Region- and circumstance-specific integrated deterrence,
- Existing and potential norms of behavior and escalation thresholds,
- Advanced undersea assets and operational concepts,
- Effective deterrence of adversarial coercive and malign activities in the gray zone,
- Additional considerations should include the adversary's attempts and operations to undermine U.S. dominance in the air, space, sea, and cyber domains.

The permanent subcommittee’s findings, observations, and recommendations will be presented to the full Board for its thorough, open discussion and deliberation at a properly noticed and public meeting(s), unless the meeting(s) must be closed in accordance with one or more of the exemptions found in subsection 552b(c) of title 5, U.S. Code. The Board will provide its findings and recommendations to the Under Secretary of War for Research and Engineering as the Sponsor of the Board. The nominal start date of the permanent subcommittee will be within 30 days of the initial appointment of the permanent subcommittee members.

I will be the sponsor of the permanent subcommittee. In support of this terms of reference (ToR) and the work conducted in response to it, the permanent subcommittee and Board has my full support to meet with Department leaders. The Board staff, on behalf of the Board, may request the Office of the Secretary of War and DoW Component Heads to timely furnish any requested information, assistance, or access to personnel to the Board. All requests shall be consistent with applicable laws; applicable security classifications; Department of Defense Instruction 5105.04, "Department of Defense Federal Advisory Committee Management Program"; and this ToR.

Material provided to the Board becomes a permanent part of the Board's records. All data/information provided is subject to public inspection unless the originating Component office properly marks the data/information with the appropriate classification and the exemption categories found in subsection 552(b) of title 5, U.S. Code before the data/information is released to the Board. The Science, Technology and Innovation Board has physical storage capability and electronic storage and communications capability on both unclassified and classified networks to support receipt of material up to the TS//SCI level.

The Board will operate in conformity with and pursuant to the Science, Technology and Innovation Board charter; chapter 10 of title 5, U.S. Code (commonly known as "the Federal Advisory Committee Act"); subsection 552b(c) of title 5, U.S. Code; and other applicable federal statutes, regulations, and policy. Individual Board members do not have the authority to make decisions or provide recommendations on behalf of the Board nor report directly to any Federal representative. The members of the Board are subject to certain Federal ethics laws, including section 208 of title 18, U.S. Code, governing conflicts of interest, and the Standards of Ethical Conduct regulations in 5 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 2635.



Emil Michael