

EXECUTIVE **D**ECISION **M**AKING

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PREFACE

THIS IS THE SECOND TEXTBOOK that supports the Executive Decision Making Course of the National Security Decision Making Department of the U.S. Naval War College. The first text, *Resource Allocation: The Formal Process* describes the people, processes and products that establish our national strategies, determine the nature of our force structure, propose defense programs and policies, and see them through the federal budget process. The formal process is the programmatic and budgetary machinery of the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the services, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the unified commands, and the defense agency staffs that many of us will someday join.

This text is concerned with the skills defense executives need to solve complex problems and make good decisions. We believe that critical and structured thinking—a combination of high quality analysis, rationality, and professional judgment—form the best approach for solving complex problems. To help us equip our students to think critically, this book is built around a decision-making framework that emphasizes analysis, the coin of the realm in defense resource allocation; indeed chapters 3 through 9 are a field guide to analysis as currently practiced in the Department of Defense.

The Executive Decision-Making Framework in Appendices 1 and 2 is the backdrop for this book because adding structure to problem solving greatly facilitates selecting the best alternative by allowing us to approach the parts of a problem incrementally. The book follows the framework through its phases: Definition, Analysis, Decision, Reconciliation, and Execution. The framework, although typical in many ways of numerous decision-making frameworks, is exceptional because it places a high premium on reconciling a decision with other interested parties. Despite its hierarchical structure, the Department of Defense is very much a consensus-oriented institution. Negotiating skills become increasingly important as officers and civilian defense professionals become more senior; therefore we have devoted a separate chapter and significant course time to reconciliation.

This sixth edition text was originally and primarily authored by CDR Doug Hancher and is the successor to previous efforts by the Executive Decision Making faculty (under a variety of names). It retains the same overarching themes. The first is the emphasis on rational analysis begun by Dr. Warren Rogers in the early 1970s when Admiral Stansfield Turner dramatically reshaped our war college. Later that decade, Dr. Bill Turcotte elevated our analytical approach to the executive level and emphasized its linkage to decision making. The third major theme is the insertion of reconciliation that was pioneered by Dr. Steve Fought at the end of the 1980s. Dr. Ken Watman increased our emphasis on rationality and decision-making theory and added our examination of risk and uncertainty.

Prof. Andy Mackel produces the seminal third edition of this book, single-handedly taking the text into the computer age, moving it past an amalgamation of loosely bound readings. Without their efforts, and those of the rest of the faculty, past and present, this text would not have its current form.

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