

The 2nd Annual Joint Threat Anticipation Center Workshop Conference Report

April 3-5, 2006 - What Are National Security Threats?

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Day 2- April 4, 2006

Policy, Behavior, and Weapons of Mass Destruction in the Crucible of Strategic Culture: An Initial Framework for Comparative Analysis - Jeffrey S. Lantis, Associate Professor of Political Science, College of Wooster and Kerry Kartchner, Defense Threat Reduction Agency, Advanced Systems Concepts Office; Discussant: Joseph Masco, Professor of Anthropology, University of Chicago

Lantis discussed the evolution of the study of comparative strategic cultures by providing an overview of the literature.

Kartchner discussed the ways in which strategic culture can be policy-relevant, especially in cases involving WMD, by outlining his ongoing DTRA/ASCO-sponsored effort to develop case studies and other explanatory essays on this issue. (These will eventually be part of a curriculum package.) He highlighted one of the major hurdles in making the case for the role of strategic cultural understanding in policy decisions as learning how to frame the information in a way that is useful to the policy makers dealing with political realities.

Masco discussed Kartchner's undertaking with reference to his ongoing efforts to look at the long-term consequences of the US's nuclear efforts, specifically for those living around the Los Alamos community, as well as the effect of exercises such as the Manhattan Project on the long-term logic and rationale of the US's national security decisions (means of coordination, attitudes, how/what institutions are built). When looking at the issue of WMD, he suggested that we consider proliferation not only in terms of material, but also in terms of expertise. Activities involving WMD can link people across general areas of expertise and one needs to understand how those processes come together and how communication is conducted, and what that means in terms of decision making. Masco also discussed the US's current national security culture and suggested that today it is largely informed by the counter-terrorist campaign. Whatever security debate is the most dominant will inform the national security culture at any given moment. That "cultural notion" flows down into the masses through mass

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media. Therefore, how popular support for a government agenda is mobilized is an important area to analyze.