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# CNA Research Highlights

July 2025

## About This Newsletter

This publication contains highlights from CNA's research for the third quarter of FY 2025. The highlights include work from CNA's federally funded research and development center (FFRDC), the Center for Naval Analyses, as well as from CNA's Institute for Public Research (IPR).

If you would like more information about a particular study, please email inquiries@cna.org.

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# China, Russia, and Global Security

## Deterring China's Use of Force in the Space Domain: A Proposed Scorecard for Weighing the Risks

***Authors:*** *Kevin Pollpeter, Elizabeth Barrett, and April Herlevi*

DRM-2024-U-039152-1Rev

This report examines the evolving deterrence dynamics between the United States and the People's Republic of China (PRC) in the space domain. The People's Liberation Army is acquiring and developing a range of counterspace capabilities and related technologies, including kinetic-kill missiles, ground-based lasers, and co-orbital satellites, as well as the space surveillance capabilities that enable their use. Deterring the PRC from attacking US space assets will be challenging in multiple ways, and the US is unlikely to be able to deter China from all types of space attacks. For this study, we used deterrence theory to examine key aspects of US and PRC approaches to the space domain and then suggest 10 factors that could affect the United States' ability to deter China in space. We organized these factors based on the military balance of power unique to space, how challenger (PRC) views could affect deterrence, and the role of international norms. Of the 10 factors examined, only two—the overall military balance and the PRC's growing dependency on space—are likely to increase the ability of the US to successfully deter China in the space domain. US policy-makers should continue to build space resilience, increase space domain awareness, and consider how the US would respond to potentially escalatory actions in space, such as attacks on missile warning satellites or attacks that produce significant debris.

## Intersections: Technology, National Security, and US-China Strategic Competition: Issue 14, May 2025

***Authors:*** *Chris Cairns, April Herlevi, John Mahoney, and Carita Reid*

DNL-2024-U-039879-Final4

Written by CNA's China and Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Division, Intersections is a news digest describing the interplay between the PRC's technology acquisition and defense industrial base development efforts, US and partner nation responses, and critical and emerging technology risks and challenges with military implications.

## Quantity Has a Quality All of Its Own: The Transformation of Russian Intelligence Operations Since the Ukraine Invasion

***Author:*** *Elena Grossfeld*

IOP-2025-U-041545-Final

In this report, the author examines a visible shift in Russian intelligence activities. Before Russia's 2022 full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia carried out precision intelligence operations, but since the invasion, it has adopted a broader, quantity-driven strategy that includes sabotage, intelligence collection, and influence efforts. This shift aligns with broader trends in Russian military and strategic thinking. This report also explores the implications of this shift for Russian intelligence efficacy and resource management, as well as for the future of Russian intelligence operations. Ultimately, the author argues that Russia's growing reliance on mass-scale, less specialized tactics could redefine the effectiveness and scope of its intelligence efforts moving forward.

# Maritime Industry

## CNA Maritime Dialogue: The US Commercial Shipbuilding Industry and National Defense

***Authors:*** *John Milton, Dmitry Filipoff, and Gerald M. Meyerle*

CCP-2025-U-042068-Final

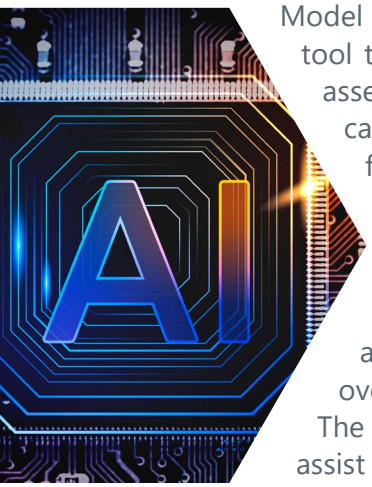
About 35 leaders from industry and government met at CNA's offices in Arlington, Virginia, for a structured dialogue on commercial shipbuilding in the United States held under Chatham House Rule (not for attribution). The focus of the May 7 dialogue was national security, especially shipbuilding in support of wartime mobilization. This document summarizes that discussion.

# Artificial Intelligence and Technology

## CNA's Artificial Intelligence (AI) Maturity Model for Government Agencies

***Authors:*** *James M. Baney, John Mahoney, Kevin Inks, and Yee San Su*

IIM-2024-U-039908-1Rev




The CNA Artificial Intelligence Maturity Model for Government Agencies is a tool that helps government agencies assess and improve their AI capabilities. It defines a framework for the AI-related activities that government agencies perform, and it provides a benchmark that agencies can use to evaluate how they are developing, using, and overseeing AI for their missions. The maturity model is designed to assist government agencies advance their AI capabilities in the following ways: helping agencies understand their current AI maturity levels by comparing their activities against a standard, enabling agencies to specify their goals related to AI maturity, and identifying specific milestones that agencies can target to incrementally increase maturity levels as they fill capability gaps.

# Homeland Security

## Best Practices for Countering Malign Influence

***Authors:*** *Megan McBride, Pamela Faber, Kaia Haney, Patricia Kannapel, Samuel Plapinger, and Heather Wolters*

DIM-2025-U-041133-Final

The US government has long sought to counter foreign malign influence, but the solutions of previous generations have been unable to overcome the challenges of the modern media environment. Fortunately, a growing field of research is focused on identifying techniques and strategies to help increase resilience to such malign influence. Drawing on a comprehensive literature review, this guide summarizes best practices from the literature, including when to use an intervention, how to describe it to participants, and how to design it for maximum efficacy.

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## About CNA

The CNA Corporation (CNA) is a not-for-profit analytical organization dedicated to the safety and security of the nation. With nearly 700 scientists, analysts, and professional staff across the world, CNA's mission is to provide data-driven, innovative solutions to our nation's toughest problems. It operates the Center for Naval Analyses—the Department of the Navy's federally funded research and development center (FFRDC)—as well as the Institute for Public Research. The Center for Naval Analyses provides objective analytics to inform decision-making by military leaders and ultimately improve the lethality and effectiveness of the joint force. The Institute for Public Research leverages data analytics and innovative methods to support federal, state, and local government officials as they work to advance national and homeland security.



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