



Economic Defense Analytics

A New Era for Economic Defense and Deterrence

As the Department of War (DoW) shifts to a wartime footing to reestablish credible deterrence, the economic domain has emerged as a decisive theater of conflict. The Economic Defense Unit (EDU) requires analytical partners who understand not only the theoretical principles of economic statecraft but also the operational realities of enforcing them in a contested global commons.

For over 80 years, CNA's Center for Naval Analyses has served as the federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) for the Department of the Navy. We analyze operational warfare and strategic policy to optimize impact and potential outcomes. This document outlines how CNA's specialized capabilities in maritime economic security, economic wargaming, and gray zone analytics can directly support the EDU's mission to fortify the US industrial base, secure critical supply chains, and counter adversary economic coercion.

Maritime Economic Security and Supply Chain Defense

The "Arsenal of Freedom" relies on global maritime supply chains that are increasingly vulnerable to interdiction and disruption. CNA's maritime analysts do not just track ships; we analyze the systemic vulnerabilities of the global maritime transportation system that the EDU must protect to ensure wartime production capacity.

We specialize in:

- **Data-Driven Analytics.** CNA analyzes how adversaries, particularly the People's Republic of China, leverage civilian merchant fleets for military logistics. CNA can help the EDU distinguish between purely commercial activity and state-directed economic warfare, ensuring that US defensive measures targeting adversary economies are precise and effective.
- **Wargaming and Scenario Planning.** The complexity of economic warfare requires rigorous stress-testing before policies are implemented. CNA's Gaming and Integration Program is a world leader in designing wargames that move beyond kinetic combat to simulate complex whole-of-government problems, including industrial mobilization and economic shocks.

A Selection of CNA Economic Defense Wargames

- **Arsenal of Policy** wargame for Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Industrial Base Policy
- **National Maritime Strategy** and **Shipbuilding** wargames for US Maritime Administration and Joint Staff
- **At Any Cost** game on illegal, unreported, and unregulated (IUU) fishing
- **CAMOLAND Clothing and Textile Industrial Base** tabletop exercise for Defense Logistics Agency
- **Sentinels of the Sea** tabletop exercise on regional maritime domain awareness for US Pacific Fleet

- **Supply Chain Disruption and Alternatives Analysis.** CNA’s analysts model the flow of critical raw materials (e.g., rare earth elements, energetics precursors) through contested chokepoints. We can provide the EDU with chokepoint vulnerability assessments that predict how localized maritime disruptions such as a blockade in the Strait of Malacca would impact domestic production rates of key munitions.

Together, these core competencies in data analytics, wargaming, and supply chain disruption and alternatives analysis position CNA to tackle the toughest US economic defense challenges.

National Security Through Economic Defense

Adversaries are currently waging a “gray zone” war against the US economy—using tactics that degrade our national power while remaining below the threshold of armed conflict. CNA’s analytics teams are uniquely positioned to expose and counter these strategies.

- **Counter-Coercion Strategy.** Adversaries frequently use economic coercion, such as banning imports of specific goods, to punish US allies. CNA analyzes this coercion, identifying historical patterns that may be useful in understanding future impacts. We can support the EDU in developing pre-planned responses that trigger automatic DoW support for allies targeted by predatory trade practices.
- **The Political Economy of Proxy Warfare.** CNA’s experts in Russia, China, and other critical regions can provide analyses regarding how adversaries finance their proxy forces. We can provide analysis on the economic lifelines of these groups—often

linked to illicit maritime trafficking—providing the EDU with the intelligence needed to identify the financial arteries of hybrid threats.

- **Information Warfare in the Economic Sector.** Modern gray zone tactics include weaponizing information to shock stock markets or panic consumers. CNA’s information environment analysts can track adversary narratives designed to undermine confidence in the US dollar or the stability of the defense industrial base, allowing the EDU to deploy “truth-based” counter-narratives that stabilize markets.

Partnering with CNA

America’s renewed focus on defense revitalization is an ambitious, multi-faceted endeavor, including economic defense. CNA offers proven expertise and innovative thinking to translate these national priorities into concrete results. Our long-standing support to the Navy, Coast Guard, and Department of Transportation attests to our commitment and capability. We understand the stakes, and we stand ready to help turn vision into reality.

A Selection of CNA Analyses on China’s Economic Statecraft

- Safeguarding US Navy Assets from CCP Economic Access: A Handbook
- PRC Views of Dual-Use Microelectronics
- Huawei Technologies: Connections to the Chinese Party-State and Military
- Guiding Innovation: PRC Technology Prioritization
- PRC National Innovation System for AI

About CNA

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 the 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.

To learn more about CNA’s capabilities in maritime and defense revitalization, contact Dr. Randall Gentry at gentryr@cna.org.