

# Senior Manager Course in National Security

## DoD National Security Studies Program

The four-week Senior Manager Course in National Security is for GS/GM-15s and O-6s. The course is conducted by The Elliott School of International Affairs of The George Washington University and the MIT Security Studies Program. Classes for the program are held in Washington, D.C and the program includes a field trip to New York City. The course examines the three “concentric circles” that make up the U.S. defense environment. Through lectures, briefings, site visits, and a simulation exercise participants acquire an analytic framework for understanding the challenges facing U.S. national security and defense policymaking. Starting at the inner circle, the course considers the various departments in the executive branch, interagency cooperation, and the effective implementation of strategy and unity of effort. The next circle consists of the wider policy community, including Congress, the media, businesses, think tanks, and Non-Governmental Organizations, all of which influence budgets, procurement decisions, and defense priorities. The international community makes up the final circle where global trends in economics, ideology, and social organization have profound effects on U.S. national security.

### *This course focuses on developing three critical areas:*

- *Defense Management Skills*: through a range of specially developed skills courses in the analytical tools and techniques of policy analysis
- *Foundational Knowledge*: through instruction, active learning, policy briefings, and table-top exercises focused on the defense environment
- *Understanding of Key Issues*: through instruction, policy briefings, field trips, and site visits

### *Some of the specific topics addressed include:*

Security Challenges in the 21st Century  
DoD and Its Place in the Policy World  
Policy Integration: Challenges and Proposed Reforms  
The Legislative Role in Foreign and Defense Policy: Budgeting and Oversight  
The Wider Policy Community and Other Actors: Media, Think Tanks, NGOs  
Regional Challenges: South Asia, China, Northeast and Southeast Asia, Russia and its Near  
Abroad, Turkey, Latin America, the Middle East, Africa  
The Problems of Weak and Failing States and the role of the UN  
Homeland Security after 9/11  
Transnational Security Threats  
The Long War and Counterinsurgency  
The Campaign in Iraq and Afghanistan  
The War to Peace Transition - Reconstruction and Stabilization  
Stopping the Spread of WMD: State and Non-State Challenges, the Biological Weapons Threat  
New Security Challenges: Energy, Climate Change, Economic Security and Demographic Shifts

The course culminates with a two-day simulation exercise designed around a central case study. The exercise helps hone the participants’ management skills and prepares them to successfully use the substantive expertise and analytical skills developed during the course.