

Security and Democracy Forum

Quarterly Dispatch (November 2025)

With our second installment of the Quarterly Dispatch, the Security and Democracy Forum has big news: WE'RE OFFICIAL! We received our 501(c)3 determination from the IRS. That means donations are now tax-deductible and opens up a whole new lane of collaboration and partnerships for the organization. Many of you have asked how you can get more involved so we put together a fun little challenge: [Play SDF Supporter Bingo](#). Five in a row wins a prize. Thank you for your support along the way. -Graham Markiewicz, SDF Executive Director

New Report: Competing with China Without Compromising

Our new policy paper, *Competing with China Without Compromising: How the United States Can Uphold Democratic Values While Engaging in Strategic Competition*, examines how the United States can and must compete effectively with China without replicating its authoritarian methods. This report argues that values-based competition is not only ethically necessary but strategically superior to authoritarian approaches that sacrifice long-term competitive advantages for short-term tactical gains. [Download the report here.](#)

The Founders' Fellowship Underway

Our inaugural cohort is off to a strong start. The class includes 12 fellows, one quarter of whom are military veterans. Collectively, they have authored more than 30 publications, hold or are pursuing 12 master's degrees, and speak 12 languages. The program features conversations with foreign policy practitioners, national security experts, and thought leaders. Fellows also have access to SDF resources and are developing original opinion pieces for publication and community engagement.

Featured! National Defense Magazine

SDF Executive Director Graham Markiewicz published insights on the Army Transformation Initiative in the National Defense Magazine Commentary Section: *Don't Sideline Lobbyists Who Know Acquisition Systems*. In it, he argues that reform is needed and can take place, but it must include all stakeholders to make lasting change. [Read more here](#), or in print if you can find it.

Now Open: National Security Essentials Course

The *Security and Democracy Forum* has launched a new professional development course designed for early-career policy professionals, veterans, and civic leaders. *National Security Essentials* covers the fundamentals of how America's security institutions actually work, from the NSC and interagency process to Congress's power of the purse. If you want to

understand how decisions are made, how budgets move, and how strategy becomes policy, this course is for you. [Learn more or enroll.](#)

Top Reads This Month



[Debunking the Myth of Russian Invincibility](#)

From SDF Chair of Eurasian Studies, Stephen Cekuta, and kicking off an on-going series that explores conflict in the region, this elucidating op-ed brings deep research to the dialogue, noting that Russia presents a facade of impenetrability, but is more vulnerable than they might seem.



[America's Rare Earth Gambit: A Strategic Imperative or Government Overreach?](#)

The Security and Democracy Forum was founded as a place for debate and discussion. In a first of its kind for our organization, this op-ed shares opposing view points of a developing national security issue: intervention in private markets. Not sure how you feel about this issue? This is a great place to start and hear both sides.



[When Justice Becomes a Weapon: Lessons from Afghanistan and Milwaukee](#)

This op-ed draws on experience as an Army infantry officer in Afghanistan, where locals might accuse neighbors of being Taliban in order to settle personal scores or gain control of resources. In a recent Milwaukee case, one man framed another in an attempt to derail testimony against him. These incidents, whether in a war zone or a U.S. city, are symptoms of the same problem: tribalism weaponizing public institutions for personal gain. The piece looks at how this dynamic erodes trust, distorts priorities, and poses real national security risks when law enforcement or military assets are used to prosecute private vendettas.

Get Involved

We're actively looking for [volunteers, contributors, and advisors](#) to join our growing team. Right now, we're especially in need of an operations manager. We're seeking a detail-oriented, mission-driven volunteer to help manage the internal operations of our growing organization. This is an ideal role for someone with experience in nonprofit

administration, program coordination, or startup operations who wants to help build infrastructure that supports public impact.

Call for Submissions

Have an idea that belongs in the national conversation? We welcome op-eds, analysis, and long-form essays from practitioners, academics, and emerging voices. Our editorial team is especially interested in topics that intersect with DIMEFIL dimensions of power: diplomacy, information, military, economics, finance, intelligence, and law. [Pitch us your piece!](#)

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