NSRI Task Order Concept

Potential Sponsor: USSTRATCOM / J7

Proposed Topic: Strategic Friction Points

<u>Objective and Scope</u>. An objective understanding of strategic risk (potential for war) is a fundamental requirement in any effort to prevent war. War between nations does not occur by accident, but is the result of friction within the international order between nation-states. To predict the potential for war it is necessary to understand the sources of friction across four broader categories (Economic, Ideological, Geo-Political, Resources) and how friction across these four strengthens or weakens the potential for war.

The USSTRATCOM Director of Training of Joint Exercises, Training, and Assessments seeks academic research support within the USSTRATCOM NSRI-NU UARC II core competencies, specifically as outlined in this Task Order. NSRI-NU shall utilize academic experts to conduct a literature review of relevant and recent academic work related to the potential for war amongst and between nation-states. NSRI-NU will also develop a methodology to measure the relative strength of friction for each of the four identified friction point categories, as well as the interaction amongst the four that results in a single friction assessment value (nominally between 0 and 1). This task will support the Command's assessment of risk as reported to the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Secretary of Defense. It will also serve as part of a model being developed for the new CJCSM 3105.1.

Tasks

<u>Task 1</u>: **Perform a broad literature review.** Conduct a broad literature review across relevant academic disciplines (Political Science, International Relations, Economics, etc.) to capture recent academic work that could be used to build a model for evaluating Economic, Ideological, Geo-Political, and Resource friction points between nation-states. Collate and provide an annotated bibliography of the research.

<u>Task 2</u>**: Develop a methodology to capture and measure the relative levels/strength of friction within the four identified categories between the United States and specific countries.** Methodology must capture level/strength of friction as a data point suitable for use in Bayesian modeling programs such as BayesiaLab 7 and AgenaRisk. Additionally, the methodology must develop a way to assess the importance of each of the friction points relative to each other within the context of the relationship between that country and the United States. The methodology must also provide a weighting scheme amongst the four friction categories and then produce an aggregate assessment of the overall friction level. Finally, NSRI-NU must provide an explanation that documents the methodology to include a graphical representation of how the elements of the model interact.

<u>Task 3</u>: **Identify specific major and critical sources of enduring friction within each of the categories (Economic, Ideological, Geo-Political, and Resource) between the United States and Russia, China, Iran, and North Korea.** Using the methodology developed in Task 2, assess how strong the friction is between the United States and Russia, China, Iran, and

North Korea.   Provide a specific list of the sources of the friction with a short (no more than 1 page for each friction point) explanation as to why each is a major or critical friction point. Additionally, provide a list of potential emergent critical friction points looking forward no more than 10 years.

Contact

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