

**MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, Ala. (September 26, 2025)** – The Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education has launched its 2026 Inspiring Doctrinal Innovation (IDI) Essay Contest. This exploration in advancing Airpower doctrine invites Airmen, Guardians, and AU students to tackle doctrinal challenges, bridging expertise with institutional learning. This contest investigates defending the homeland in a contested era and its doctrinal principles.

Airpower doctrine is sharpened when practitioners confront real-world imperatives, translating operational friction into concepts that safeguard the nation. By inviting Airmen, Guardians, and AU students to address critical infrastructure protection amid kinetic and non-kinetic threats, the contest bridges field expertise with doctrinal evolution. The Inspiring Doctrinal Innovation (IDI) Essay Contest now targets a mission-critical challenge: USAF posture for homeland defense.

Defending the homeland is a fundamental aspect of the Department of War's mission to protect the United States and its interests. Recent events in Ukraine and Russia underscore the need to protect critical infrastructure, preserving not only the will of the populace to prevail, but also the military's ability to project power.

The Joint Force relies heavily on a resilient national infrastructure. Considering likely vulnerabilities, historical precedents, doctrinal guidance, and emerging technologies, how should the USAF posture itself to minimize the impact of both kinetic and non-kinetic attacks on critical infrastructure within the homeland? Simultaneously, how can the USAF maintain its capability to deliver decisive airpower for the Joint Force Commander? Finally, what collaborative strategies should the Joint Force and civil agencies employ to defend the homeland against multi-domain threats?

Top entries earn \$1,000, Air University publication, command coins, and professional development, but influence extends further: past winners shaped PME and doctrine on AI, command and control, and Agile Combat Employment.

Every contributor elevates this discourse, but winners seize the chance to directly advance the force's intellectual edge. Step into this arena: sharpen your thinking, claim your voice, and help doctrine outpace the threats we face. Write tomorrow's victories!

DAF personnel and AU students can submit at: <https://auix.org/inspiring-doctrinal-innovation-essay-contest/>.