This report is the final product of a project entitled “Prospects for the Emergence of Peer Competitors.” The project was intended to improve the understanding of Army intelligence analysts of the potential for the rise of a peer competitor to the United States and to construct a framework for thinking systematically about the emergence of such a competitor.

The report starts out by defining “peer competitor,” and then builds a framework for thinking about an emergence of a peer competitor, focusing on two main elements. One element consists of the pathways that a proto-peer could possibly take to evolve into a peer and perhaps a competitor. The other element consists of an overview of the strategies available to the dominant state (the hegemon) to counter the rise of a peer. The interaction of the two, represented analytically by way of a game-theoretic interaction of the decision-making rationales, can lead to an outcome ranging anywhere from accommodation to rivalry. The report then exercises the dynamics of the framework by using exploratory modeling techniques. The modeling effort presented here is more a reasoning than a forecasting tool, but it could be further developed into an operational tool in support of intelligence analysis and decisionmaking.

The intended audience for this report is the intelligence community, though analysts and scholars involved in long-term futures assessments also should find it of interest.

The research was sponsored by the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, U.S. Army, and was conducted in the Strategy, Doctrine, and Resources Program of RAND Arroyo Center. The Arroyo Center is a
federally funded research and development center sponsored by the United States Army.

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