The effects of new information technologies are all around us. Change is abundant in everything from the computers on our desks to the cell phones in our pockets. For the most part, we welcome these changes and the improvements they herald in our lives. These changes have also affected the global balance of power in favor of the United States.

But along with the blessings and opportunities come dangers. Information that is readily available is available to friend and foe alike; a system that relies on communication can become useless if its ability to communicate is interfered with or destroyed. Because this reliance is so general, attacks on the information infrastructure can have widespread effects, both for the military and for society. And such attacks can come from a variety of sources, some difficult or impossible to identify. This book focuses on the opportunities and vulnerabilities inherent in the increasing reliance on information technology, looking both at its usefulness to the warrior and the need to protect its usefulness for everyone.

While the work was carried out under the auspices of the Strategy and Doctrine program of RAND’s Project AIR FORCE, which is sponsored by the U.S. Air Force, this volume draws on the expertise of researchers from across RAND in a variety of related disciplines. The primary audience of this work consists of Air Force leaders and planners, but it should be of interest to others interested in national security issues and information technology.

The Strategic Appraisal series is intended to review, for a broad audience, issues bearing on national security and defense planning.
Strategic Appraisal 1997: Strategy and Defense Planning for the 21st Century, dealt with the challenges the United States military faces in meeting the changing demands made upon it in a changing world. Strategic Appraisal 1996 assessed challenges to U.S. interests around the world, focusing on key nations and regions.

**PROJECT AIR FORCE**

Project AIR FORCE, a division of RAND, is the Air Force federally funded research and development center (FFRDC) for studies and analyses. It provides the Air Force with independent analyses of policy alternatives affecting the development, employment, combat readiness, and support of current and future aerospace forces. Research is being performed in three programs: Strategy and Doctrine, Force Modernization and Employment, and Resource Management and System Acquisition.