The growing availability of weapons-grade plutonium and uranium, as well as radioactive materials that could be used to produce a radiological dispersal device or “dirty bomb,” poses a grave threat to international peace and security and to the security of the United States. The existing nonproliferation regime has so far failed to address adequately international and national security concerns. Accordingly, a number of states, including the United States, have launched national and multilateral efforts to combat proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the security strategies of the United States that are relevant to an analysis of the legal and policy issues surrounding efforts to prevent or disrupt the illicit transport of weapons of mass destruction by sea. It is hoped that these materials will provide a foundation for the reader to evaluate the other contributions in this collection.

I. Introduction

International nonproliferation and counter-proliferation strategies cannot be considered in isolation from the national strategies of the participating states. The United States has developed a system of interlocking national, homeland and maritime security strategy documents...
which serve as the basis for its participation in the global proliferation security regime.\(^1\) Accordingly, this chapter begins with an outline of the national security strategies of the United States to serve as a background for the contributions of others on the legal, informational and operational issues surrounding maritime counter-proliferation operations. Each of the U.S. security strategy documents acknowledges the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and seeks to keep such weapons, their delivery systems and related materials out of the reach of rogue regimes and terrorists.\(^2\) Although some sections of the national strategy documents are classified, many of the provisions applicable to counter-terrorism and proliferation issues are in unclassified sections.

II. National Security Strategy of the United States

National security can be defined as the absence of threat to the nation’s principal values. In modern usage, it embraces not only physical security and territorial integrity, but also information security, cybersecurity, environmental security and minimum levels of nutrition and public health. The risks to America’s security in the present era may be divided into four threats,\(^3\) starting with the Great Power rivals, such as China, some of whose military officers have advocated a strat-

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1 “Strategy” refers to the art and science of developing and employing instruments of national power in a synchronized and integrated fashion to achieve theater, national, and/or multinational objectives. It is distinguished from “doctrine,” which refers to the fundamental principles by which the military forces or elements thereof guide their actions in support of national objectives. It is authoritative but requires judgment in application. See Joint Chiefs of Staff, *U.S. Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, Jt. Pub. 1–02.
