# Risk Management for National Defense:  A Systems Thinking Approach

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**Abstract:**  The topic of risk deserves better theoretical underpinnings and dialogue, especially within the context of national military strategy.  Systems thinking offers ideas and tools with the potential to improve strategic risk management.  Systems thinking is a methodology and philosophy for learning.  Effective risk management for national security requires continual learning, synthesis, and adjustment of activities based upon this learning.  A broad risk management framework centered on three general activities drives the present research and discussion of systems thinking applied to risk management.  This research identifies salient concepts from systems thinking that create opportunities for critical learning across the proposed framework.  The fundamental contribution of this work includes a theoretical framework for risk management reinforced with salient concepts from systems thinking.  Recommendations for the practical application of risk management integrated with systems thinking are also presented.

*Keywords:* Risk Management, Systems Thinking, Security Strategy