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Caroline Baxter is the Director of the Converging Risks Lab at the Council on Strategic Risks. From 2021 to 2024, she served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Force Education and Training within the Office of the Secretary of Defense, in which capacity she served as the principal senior authority on the development of DoD policy relating to the cognitive and physical preparations required by the Joint Force. In this role, Baxter created and led numerous high-visibility coalitions charged with addressing foundational challenges facing the armed forces. Through her leadership, these coalitions forged a path-breaking methodology to strengthen operational resilience through deepening mission-centric knowledge of climate change; identified and secured billions of dollars of funding to close critical training gaps inhibiting mission success; and devised the means by which to track and support the learning outcomes of military education. For her work in DoD, Baxter was awarded the Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service, the highest award presented by the DoD to political appointees. Previously, Baxter spent over a decade conducting research on operational strategy, military doctrine, and operational readiness at the RAND Corporation. Over the course of her time at RAND, Baxter was detailed to DoD twice—first to the Air Staff, and then to the Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness where she served as Special Assistant to the Under Secretary. Baxter holds a B.A. with honors in International Relations from the University of St. Andrews, Scotland, and an M.A. in International Security Policy from the Columbia University School of International and Public Affairs.

