



CJCS Reading List & Recommended Sections for PINNACLE Attendees 19 Feb 2026



Reminder –students **complete 1 of the first 4 books** on this list (A-D) & USTRANSCOM & NDU selects small sections from all 7 books for everyone.

- A. **Ubiquity** (Buchanan). Large-scale catastrophic events are predictable, inevitable features of complex systems; challenges leadership mindsets.
Recommend Chapter 1 (pgs. 3-24 of 243 total, LOE 1). Summarizes chaos in science & human history; aligns w/ TCCC's view of dynamism.
- B. **On The Psychology of Military Incompetence** (Dixon). Incompetence rooted in the CDR's psych. makeup & the rigid nature of military organizations.
Recommend Chapter 2 (pgs. 13-24 of 451 total, LOE 3). Describes how GOs must both process & disseminate info systematically to win.
- C. **The Tragic Mind** (Kaplan). Thesis = "tragic mindset," or a leader's capacity to confront realities of defeat, is an essential, overlooked aspect of high command.
Recommend Chapters 11-Epilogue (pgs. 93-115 of 115 total, LOE 3). Considers civilian & military mindsets on restraint, winning, & authorities.
- D. **The Art of Command** (Laver & Matthews). Effective military command has no single formula & the achievements of strategic objectives are multifaceted.
Recommend Chapter 6 (pgs. 155-176 of 261 total, LOE 1). Case study of GEN Hap Arnold developing future tech of air power and space domain.
- E. **If Confirmed** (Punaro). Global perspective on how the selection of top civilian & military officials shapes a nation's strategic posture & global interactions.
Recommend Chapter 1 (pgs. 16-42 of 300 total, LOE 4). Explains the foundation and importance of the confirmation process.
- F. **Strategic Intuition** (Duggan). Strategic breakthroughs come from deep knowledge & a clear state of mind to generate innovative solutions.
Recommend Chapter 10 (pgs. 159-170 of 178 total, LOE 2) Explains concepts of strategic intuition within the framework of military "grand strategy."
- G. **Risk** (McChrystal). Strat leaders build resilient orgs. capable of handling global uncertainty, including systems that distribute and manage risk internally.
Recommend intro & Chapter 1 (pgs. 1-15 of 287 total, LOE 4). Relevant strategic overview to a proactive day-long discussion on CCMD/global risk.