

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 27
Number 3 *Parameters Autumn 1997*

Article 7

8-22-1997

From the Editor

John J. Madigan III

Follow this and additional works at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/parameters>

Recommended Citation

John J. Madigan III, "From the Editor," *Parameters* 27, no. 3 (1997), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.1838.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by USAWC Press. It has been accepted for inclusion in The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters by an authorized editor of USAWC Press.

From the Editor

From *Parameters*, Autumn 1997, pp. 2-3.

In This Issue . . .

Paul Van Riper and Robert H. Scales, Jr., argue that the debate over the preferred structure of the US military is in effect "a debate about the future of war itself." They challenge fashionable proposals to replace soldiers and Marines with unproven technologies, noting that assertions about the effectiveness of those technologies for distant punishment of adversaries remains very much a "theological" argument.

Steven Metz examines four possible world political structures and explores how each might shape decisions about military technology, force structure, and doctrine. Policymakers should understand, he concludes, that all four strategic environments can and most probably will coexist in the early decades of the next century.

Charles J. Dunlap, Jr., identifies and analyzes four "myths" upon which rests part of the debate about the future of warfare described by Van Riper and Scales. Dunlap cautions that our values and unexamined assumptions could put us at a severe disadvantage in neo-absolutist conflicts in which vicious adversaries, "made potent by emerging technologies," will not hesitate to turn those values against us.

Stephen P. Ferris and David M. Keithly argue that five "change agents"-- warfighting doctrine, technology, economics, the geostrategic environment, and politics--will define the forms and functions of 21st-century logistics. They conclude that future logistics will eventually converge around "strategic alliances" among customer, vendor, and logistician.

Ralph Peters posits a set of concepts upon which the armored force of the future will be based, briefly revisits the urban settings within which he believes much future conflict will occur, and then pits the force against adversaries ensconced in a metropolitan area. His demonstration of the challenges inherent in correlating forms and functions of future armed conflict will offer little comfort to traditionalists.

John R. Brinkerhoff argues that it is time to designate the brigade as the Army's basic combined arms formation and eliminate the division as an echelon of command and support. Asserting that history, technology, force structure, and personnel availability point to such a decision, he explores a number of the implications of his proposal for an Army seeking to shift from reactive to proactive responses to change.

David Fastabend, in a commentary on John Brinkerhoff's proposal, analyzes its implications for an expeditionary Army. While embracing the combined arms brigade, this author examines the corps and theater assets required to support Brinkerhoff's basic concept, then proposes to retain the division level with narrowly defined functions and vastly reduced support requirements.

Thomas R. Lujan uses cases within the current memory of anyone who has been a member of the active or reserve component of any service in the past decade to examine the Posse Comitatus Act. The author raises troubling issues about the use of the military in police operations in his discussion of the fundamentally different rules of engagement under which each works.

Charles L. Mercier, Jr., provides a systematic and detailed analysis of issues related to the possible use of chemical or biological weapons against the United States. He combines original research and access to key sources in a clear and comprehensive account of the duties of those who must think the unthinkable: how to respond to an assault by domestic or foreign terrorists on the people and institutions of this country.

Chris Seiple analyzes PDD-39, which assigned to DOD responsibility for what in a previous era would have been considered civil defense functions, in the context of his experience with the USMC's Chemical-Biological Incident

Reaction Force and its employment in Atlanta during the 1996 Olympics. He identifies a wide range of issues that will affect DOD's ability to carry out the Presidential directive.

Sean M. Maloney analyzes several recent instances of military support to civil authorities in Canada, highlighting the salutary effects of Canada's restructuring of its emergency preparedness organizations since 1988. His research contrasts US and Canadian structures and regulations for providing military assistance to their citizens.

Review Essays by Donald W. Boose, Jr., who presents his third annual survey of materials on Northeast Asia, and Russell W. Ramsey, with his first look at recent publications dealing with strategic issues related to the US-Mexican border, continue our efforts to inform readers of developments in various regions of the world. Among the *Book Reviews* is a set of three on the recent book by Army Major H. R. McMaster dealing with deficiencies in high-level policymaking during the Vietnam War.

An Editor's Lot . . .

A colleague recently opined that the journal seemed to be indulging in the "chicken little" school of journalism. The apparent cause of his concern was material in recent issues on the war on drugs, the plight of the defense technical and industrial base, and articles that considered dismal future states of the world.

To support the education, research, and outreach functions of the War College, the journal must be at or near controversy. Unsafe topics--ideas and issues whose rough edges have not yet been worn smooth by the passage of time--require our attention. This issue looks at a particularly disagreeable topic: the use of chemical or biological weapons by domestic or foreign terrorists against the United States. We want to keep current and rising leaders apprised of the implications of this and similar challenges, but our authors may have understated the problem.

In its 25 June 1997 issue, *Jane's Defence Weekly* (page 6) noted that the CIA and the French-based World Medical Association each had reported on the emerging possibility that "a new class of biological warfare agents could be developed and engineered to target specific categories of humans based on their biological makeup . . . [and that] it is possible to produce new organisms, exploit variations on organisms, or induce organisms to respond in new ways, such as producing synthetic bioregulators or chemical toxins." So while my colleague may have more to say once he sees the articles on domestic use of weapons of mass destruction, the journal cannot ignore such matters. Others can concern themselves with what happened; we must continue to seek insight into today.

Correction

In the review essay "Strategic Reading on Latin America: Long on Quality, New Rumbles from the Left" by Russell W. Ramsey, in our Winter 1996-97 issue, the publisher and date of one of the books considered were misidentified. The book *Fast Forward: Latin America on the Edge of the 21st Century*, coauthored by Scott B. MacDonald and Georges A. Fauriol, was released in 1997 and should have been listed as a product of Transaction Publishers. -- JJM

Reviewed 20 August 1997. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil