From the Editor

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In This Issue . . .

Wolfgang W. E. Samuel recalls the Berlin Airlift from the perspective of a child living in the British Zone of Occupation near RAF Station Fassberg, a former Luftwaffe base. The article, excerpted from a book-length manuscript, shows a 13-year-old German boy--a refugee in his own country--reacting to the US and British effort to sustain a recent foe in the face of the Soviet threat to Berlin. This deeply moving memoir is a fitting tribute to those who flew the planes and those who supported them, 50 years ago, during one of the first great crises of the Cold War.

John Hillen and Michael P. Noonan note the absence of geopolitical considerations during NATO's selection of three central European states to join the Alliance. They conclude that if NATO nations continue to ignore the geopolitical aspects of their policies and strategies, the Alliance risks becoming "a mere shadow of its former self."

Adolf Carlson reviews briefly the history of North Africa and then analyzes regional programs to develop or acquire weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them. He notes the potential threat to the Alliance of such activities, NATO's so far inadequate response to that threat, and the danger that any Mediterranean conflict could spread well beyond its littoral, concluding that "NATO's North African policies for the next century need a military dimension."

Stephen J. Blank examines Russia's relationships with the Baltic states--primarily but not exclusively Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia--since the 1997 Paris and Madrid conferences. Russia's wild swings in policy toward the three small Baltic countries, he concludes, "signify Russian frustration" and "suggest how unreliable and unpredictable a partner Russia really is in Europe."

John W. Brinsfield invites the Army to reflect on its current search for "consistency between [its] values and its professed ethical principles." Noting that we are in the third cycle of self-inspection since the end of World War II, he concludes that "virtue ethics" and current models of character development are necessary but not sufficient to sustain soldiers who "face the possibility of death, disfiguring wounds, or the guilt which may come with casualties sustained in combat."

Antulio J. Echevarria II shows how US and other military and civilian futurists a century ago missed the mark in anticipating technology's effects on warfare. He uses nonlinearity theory and RAND's assumption-based planning model to examine the quest for certainty, concluding that we need a "blend of formalism and intuitive insight" to cope with planning in uncertain times.

Thomas K. Adams demonstrates how information technologies, biology, and nanotechnology are influencing one another as each discipline evolves, noting how discoveries in any of them can accelerate changes in the others. Pundits to the contrary, he concludes, there is no "guarantee that the United States will dominate" these fields, nor that violence will disappear from a world influenced by these and related technologies.

Frederick W. Kagan argues that information supremacy as we presently define it may be unattainable in future conflicts. He demonstrates why this is so with an economic model based on the concept of embargoes, in the process encouraging the US armed services to move beyond simplifying assumptions that may conceal unprecedented challenges related to information operations in peacetime and in conflicts.

Ryan Henry and C. Edward Peartree cite examples of the limited influence that technologies have had on conflict as the basis for asking what we really mean by the term "information warfare." They observe that "technological changes in warfare have generally proven ephemeral," and conclude that asymmetric responses, whether in tactics, strategy, or

technology, "will always upset the best-laid technology-based plans."

Review Essays in this issue continue Lawrence G. Kelley's chronicle of change within the former Soviet Union and contemporary Russia, while Richard S. Friedman assesses economic intelligence and industrial espionage, and Jeff Kojac compares and analyzes recent perspectives on amphibious operations.

Connections . . .

In his article "Radical Destabilizing Effects of New Technologies" Thomas Adams observes that "just as information science helped in genotechnology, biotech and infotech come together to assist the development of nanotechnology. Computer modeling makes much of this research possible, while analogies from DNA formation become the basis for building nanodevices." Similarly, Antulio Echevarria offers complexity theory as a way to approach planning in periods of uncertainty. A common process in complexity involves "genetic algorithms," reflecting the use of biological evolution as a metaphor for a way to solve extraordinarily complex problems. Computers run the algorithms, quickly finding "fit" solutions to problems that were considered intractable whenever traditional linear searches failed to find an "optimal" solution.

What Adams calls the "mutually reinforcing nature" of developments in seemingly unrelated fields is the basis for an article in the *Army Times* of 29 June 1998. There, on page 27, is an account of the creation of a computer process, based on "a set of microbe-mimicking algorithms," which can be used either to protect or to attack computer networks. The algorithms are reported to work by measuring the pattern of "quantum microbes, which exist at a lower level than electrons" in a network. This process, in turn, is possible because each computer apparently generates a unique pattern of these microbes as a function of the "commands, services, or functions performed by the network."

Computer microbes? The article suggests they've been recognized for some time. What seems to be new is that they previously had been considered to be random or chaotic. Now that they appear in patterns and can be put to work, they rate a headline and a title: "electronic ebola."

The apparent blurring of boundaries among disciplines may simply reflect the search for metaphors and analogies to help specialists understand one another. Alternatively, maybe there's unity where we've insisted there had to be difference. Philosopher's stone, anyone?

A Note for Authors . . .

The Internet is cited increasingly in manuscripts we receive, and while the authenticity of such material has not been challenged by our readers, the ephemeral quality of those postings gives an editor pause. Scholarship rests on the visibility and reliability of one's sources, both to confirm the author's research and to serve as a point of departure to take the author's ideas to the next level. In the interests of specificity, authors are asked henceforth to add the date of retrieval to any citations obtained electronically from Internet sources. -- JJM

Reviewed 12 August 1998. Please send comments or corrections to carl_Parameters@conus.army.mil