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From the Editor

Robert H. Taylor

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From the Editor

In This Issue . . .

Ralph Peters opens the feature on “Religious Fundamentalism and Strategy” with his look at the American response to the violent extremism emanating from the nations of Islam. He foresees an Islamic world that is far more hopeful than one might suspect in the wake of recent events. The author cautions America not to be blinded by oil or riveted on the Arab-Israeli conflict. Peters bases his vision on recent visits to various Islamic nations and a continuing analysis of the progressive and conservative forms of Islam. He concludes that the optimal engagement of Islamic extremism should take place on Islam’s “unsettled frontiers,” from Africa through Asia, in the Balkans, and in North America. Peters recommends that America follow the “roll-back” strategy of the Cold War, a strategy based on waiting for more propitious circumstances before reacting to extremists.

Brigadier General Krishna Kumar (Indian Army) suggests that religious fundamentalism and militancy are destroying South Asia’s ethnic diversity, and putting the region’s political secularism in danger of collapse. His insightful examination of the impact of “fundamentalists” and “fundamentalism” on the contemporary political environment of South Asia is extremely enlightening and troubling. The author’s historical review of religious extremism leads the reader to the realization that in any democratic, secular system, such as India, there is only one way to determine the good and bad in a religious movement—does it infringe on the rights and liberties of others within the democratic society?

David Kibble uses an analogy of Samuel Huntington’s 1993 seminal essay “The Clash of Civilizations,” to postulate that the conflict between the United States and bin Laden’s al Qaeda is based on a “clash of religions.” This clash, the author believes, comes from a lack of understanding about how the Muslim world views the West, and America in particular. The author has determined that many Muslims, especially in the Middle East, feel they are under attack from a secular West supported by technology and wealth. Kibble believes that because the West can exercise greater economic power, the clash is not just one of religion or values, but a clash between rich and poor. It is this perceived struggle between the rich and poor that permits the clash to be viewed as moral in nature, and therefore religious.

Richard Russell presents the first article in the feature “Attacking the ‘Axis of Evil’” and warns that the events of 11 September 2001 should serve as a wake-up call for America with regard to others who would follow al Qaeda’s lead. His investigation into those who could (or would) harm America with weapons of mass destruction leads to President Bush’s “axis of evil,” and specifically to Iraq. Russell advocates waging a war against Iraq “on its own merits,” however, not simply as part of a war against terror. He sees such a war as a continuation of business unfinished in the Gulf War. The author presents the reader with a campaign plan to destroy Saddam’s regime while still maintaining a balance of power in the region. Russell concludes by asserting Machiavelli’s dictum—a nation is safer if it is more feared than loved—in determining that now is the time for war against Iraq, regardless of world opinion.

Matthew Pape takes a rather pragmatic look at “Attacking the ‘Axis of Evil’” with his analysis of threats to America. He determines that many times threats are the results of influences or actions by an individual, vice a nation or its military. The author proposes that given the current international environment, assassination may be the logical and necessary means to counter these (asymmetric) threats. Pape presents an analysis of the popular arguments against easing the current ban on assassination—it would “bring us down to their level” and violate “international norms.” He contrasts such moral posturing with the necessity to send armies against some offending rogue state. The author leaves it to the reader’s conscience to determine “what we should or shouldn’t do” regarding assassinations.

Ali A. Jalali looks at the prospects for the creation of a new national army in Afghanistan. His historical review of the three previous attempts at organizing a national army reveals an unhealthy competition from tribal and local entities that doomed earlier attempts. Jalali concludes that the rebuilding of Afghanistan’s army is an essential element in the stabilization of the country and critical to the war on terrorism in South and Central Asia. The author cautions Americans to be prepared for a demanding and long-term engagement if there is to be any hope for a successful national military in Afghanistan.

David Kellogg examines what should be done to prevent illegal and immoral outcomes of warfare in her argument for “jus post bellum,” justice in the wake of war. Dr. Kellogg adroitly notes that the international law of war has barely begun to deal with the question of where to try cases in which the aggressor is a diffuse political or religious entity rather than a nation. In an evenhanded analysis the author reviews the history and actions of military tribunals, federal courts, and the recently established International Criminal Court in an attempt to determine what is the best legal venue for those not falling within the norms of international law. She concludes that whatever is decided to be the properly convened, constituted, and conducted court for such cases, the high moral purpose of jus post bellum must be a guiding principle.

Margaret Belknap takes another look at the relationship commanders have with representatives of the media. What has changed, or what needs to be changed, to ensure mutual success in this 24/7 global news environment? She examines the impact that the “CNN effect,” real-time coverage, is having on a commander’s ability to operate. Belknap cautiously suggests that strategic leaders and warfighters might use the fourth estate as a “strategic enabler,” to communicate objectives and desired end-states to a global audience, or in deception and psychological operations. The author explains that with the proliferation of 24/7 news networks, strategic decisionmakers must understand, anticipate, and plan for this new dynamic as never before.

Gregg Martin, George Reed, Ruth Collins, and Cortez Dial provide insight into one of the hot topics in the business, academic, and military worlds—mentorship. These Army officers and instructors at the US Army War College determine that although “mentoring” has been touted as a solution to a myriad of problems, the concept is not well understood, especially within the Army. The authors define for the reader what they believe mentorship should entail. Their conclusion requires that military leaders consider dramatically changing many of the rewards so ingrained in the Army’s present evaluation and advancement systems. — RHT □