

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 36
Number 2 *Parameters Summer 2006*

Article 10

5-1-2006

From the Editor

Robert H. Taylor

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

Recommended Citation

Robert H. Taylor, "From the Editor," *Parameters* 36, no. 2 (2006), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.2307.

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

In This Issue . . .

The war against terror and an ever-increasing irregular threat have committed the United States and its partners to what is generally known in the vernacular of the American national security bureaucracy as the Global War on Terrorism. That descriptor, however, may not sufficiently take into account the protracted nature of such asymmetric threats. It is this extended view that has strategists and authors alike now describing this global struggle as the “long war.” “Perspectives on the Long War” is a compilation of four articles analyzing various aspects of this protracted war. In the first of these articles, Colin S. Gray examines the strategy governing the involvement of US forces in stability operations. “Stability Operations in Strategic Perspective: A Skeptical View” presents the author’s analysis of the foreign policy decisions and strategies outlined in the 2006 *Quadrennial Defense Review Report* (QDR). Gray places his analysis in the context of what he terms “the American way of war” and concludes that ideology is having a negative effect in terms of the US military’s ability to accomplish its primary objective in counterinsurgency operations, the protection of the public. In “Challenges in Fighting a Global Insurgency,” Lieutenant General David W. Barno (USA Ret.) provides readers with a soldier’s view of how America might successfully conduct a global counterinsurgency. The author believes we are at risk of failing to understand the very nature of the war we are fighting—a war of intelligence and perceptions. Barno warns that even an unbroken series of military victories in a global counterinsurgency will not ensure strategic success. He concludes that America’s military must seize ownership of “war-winning” as well as “war-fighting” if it is to accomplish its mission of defending the society it is pledged to protect.

Shawn Brimley presents our third entry in this quartet, “Tentacles of Jihad: Targeting Transnational Support Networks.” The author contends that the manner in which our enemies learn and adapt to pressure, along with how they recruit followers and resupply combatants, offers critical insights into the very nature of the long war. Brimley emphasizes that America needs a counterterrorism strategy based on understanding, targeting, and eliminating these transnational support networks. In concluding, he challenges the United States and its allies to better understand and shape the virtual and transnational battlefield if we are to be successful in defeating the tentacles of the global jihad. Our final article in this thematic presentation is Robert M. Cassidy’s historical perspective on the use of indigenous forces, “The Long Small War: Indigenous Forces for Counterinsurgency.” The author develops his thesis based on the belief that the use of indigenous forces in any counterinsurgency will not only yield significant increases in the quantity of troops on the ground, but also an exponential improvement in actionable intelligence. Cassidy provides an analysis of American and French experiences with indigenous forces in various counterinsurgencies. He then concludes with a recommendation that the employment of such forces should be under the direction of a joint or combined interagency counterinsurgency task force. What makes this recommendation unique is the structure of the task force. The author’s design would include elements from the armed services’ conventional forces, Special Operations Forces, the CIA, Department of State, and indigenous intelligence units. Such an organization would then be capable of carrying out the full range of counterinsurgency operations within any autonomous area.

Lou DiMarco examines the ability of armed forces to obtain timely, actionable intelligence through the interrogation of enemy combatants. “Losing the Moral Compass: Torture and *Guerre Revolutionnaire* in the Algerian War” is a revealing analysis of the dilemma faced by commanders when presented with the responsibility to maintain both the reality and perception of impeccable moral and ethical conduct and at the same time obtain timely intelligence. The author outlines the informal counterinsurgency doctrine introduced by senior French officers, *guerre revolutionnaire*, during the Algerian War. He provides the reader with the sobering conclusion that although the French demonstrated that aggressive tactical counterinsurgency operations combined with accurate intelligence could effectively eliminate insurgents, the methods used to obtain intelligence must always be just. The French experience reveals that torture is only marginally effective, with its practice almost always having negative strategic consequences. These are lessons the author believes the United States needs to keep in mind as it debates the merits of harsh interrogation methods.

The mass mobilization of the 18th century that was the hallmark of the French Revolution provides Audrey Kurth Cronin with the framework for analyzing the mass networked mobilization of the 21st century. In “Cyber-Mobilization: The New *Levée en Masse*,” the author compares the impact of the French Revolution on the age of modern warfare with the access individuals have to today’s networked communications. As part of her analysis the author places the concept of *levée en masse* in the Clausewitzian tradition (political, social, and historical) and then compares that with emerging communications capabilities in the 21st century. Cronin predicts that the current mass mobilization of communications will doom anything resembling Clausewitz’s “popular uprising” that was to lead to a unified, industrialized state. In fact, she predicts that 21st-century mobilization will only perpetuate factional violence and a return to individualized, mob-driven, and feudal forms of warfare.

“Beware of Boldness” is an examination of the lexicon associated with the ongoing defense transformation that calls for “bold and innovative leaders.” Conrad C. Crane presents a history of “innovative leaders” and their impact on military operations. The author’s analysis highlights the fact that in the American military, there are a number of reasons why senior military leaders have seldom been seen as “bold.” Crane asserts that leaders possessing a preponderance of assets seldom feel an obligation to take risks, unlike the underdog. Instead of promoting boldness, the author contends, America’s military should be advocating for leaders who know how to exploit opportunities, and who will take the prudent steps to mitigate risk. His analysis of the history surrounding America’s military leaders provides readers with an insight that comes true more often than not: Bold leaders end badly.

Dan Henk provides the final article in this issue, “The Environment, the US Military, and Southern Africa.” The author explores the increasing global concern related to environmental issues and the alleged disinterest of the United States in such matters. The article examines US engagement in Botswana, Namibia, and South Africa related to the environment. Henk’s analysis of military-to-military environmental partnerships between the United States and the countries of southern Africa reveals tremendous possibilities, if only there were some way to ensure a more concerted effort. Unfortunately, US military partnerships involving environmental issues with countries in southern Africa have produced only modest results. The author advocates a revitalization of relationships and a more active role by US and local militaries. He concludes that such a scenario will be possible only when America’s military better understands its role in international environmental partnerships. — RHT □