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From the Editor

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From the Editor

In This Issue . . .

This journal has always been recognized for airing differing views on many of the issues impacting American life in general and the nation's military in particular. The current issue is certainly reflective of that charter. Travis Sharp leads off with his thoughtful analysis of a proposal currently being discussed in the halls of Congress and the offices of various security experts; allocating the annual defense budget as a specific percentage of the gross domestic product (GDP). In "Tying US Defense Spending to GDP: Bad Logic, Bad Policy" the author summarizes the arguments advanced by advocates of this strategy to conclude that although calculating defense spending according to GDP may resonate rhetorically and politically it should be rejected as a legitimate policy option. Sharp acknowledges that even though GDP is one of the important metrics for determining defense spending, it fails to provide any insight into how much should be spent in a given period. He closes with the warning that pursuing such a policy would avoid the difficult apportionment choices required in today's volatile and uncertain world.

Controversy and contending ideas are the grist on which editors thrive. Certainly, there has been no greater controversy in recent military memory than the one associated with effects-based operations (EBO). In fact, the journal has been inundated with manuscripts touting the pros and cons of this concept. At the heart of the conundrum is General James N. Mattis's guidance to the US Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) staff on how EBO, NATO's effects-based approach to operations (EBAO), operational net assessment (ONA), and system-of-systems analysis (SoSA) would be utilized (or not) in future force development, training, and experimentation. It seemed only just that we draw on the original source of the argument, and thanks to our good friends at *Joint Force Quarterly (JFQ)* we were able to do just that. For the first time in more than 11 years we are reprinting an article. Leading our thematic feature "The Future of Effects-based Operations" is General Mattis's article that originally appeared in the 4th Quarter of 2008 issue of *JFQ*, "USJFCOM Commander's Guidance for Effects-based Operations." The accompanying counterpoint, "Effects-based Operations: More Important Than Ever," is authored by Colonel Tomislav Z. Ruby from the US Air Force. Ruby espouses the belief that General Mattis's memorandum not only fails to put the EBO issue to rest, it reinvigorates the debate. He concludes that rather than abandoning the concept, USJFCOM should move to create an organizational culture that champions the cause of EBO.

Nader Elhefnawy investigates the risks associated with the increased use of nuclear energy to offset world dependence on fossil fuels in "The Next Wave of Nuclear Proliferation." The author bases his thesis on an examination of the form this expanded use of nuclear energy might take; what this increase

will mean for the distribution of materials and technology; and the accompanying threats to security. Elhefnawy believes that any substantial increase in the use of nuclear energy to offset shortfalls in fossil fuels will, by the middle of this century, possibly tax the nonproliferation regime's surveillance and enforcement mechanisms beyond the breaking point.

In "A Concert-Balance Strategy for a Multipolar World" Michael Lind develops a thesis based on the belief that the United States is a superpower in search of a grand strategy. Readers will be struck by the author's assertion that this philosophical void is having a detrimental impact on the structure and purpose of the US military. He warns against America's pursuit of its current strategy of "US hegemony" or the suggested alternatives of "neoisolationism" and "offshore balancing." The author advocates a "concert-balance" strategy that does not require America to be the sole counter to the world's aggressors, relying instead on a concert or alliance of nations. Inherent in this new strategy is the rejection of the principles of dissuasion and reassurance as unilateral missions for the United States. Lind concludes with a description of the missions America's military may be required to undertake in the execution of a concert-balance strategy.

The second thematic feature in this issue examines a number of the issues associated with the ever-increasing utilization of "Contractors on the Battlefield." Mark Cancian's "Contractors: The New Element of Military Force Structure" provides readers with an in-depth analysis of the missions currently performed by contractors, insight as to how the role of contractors has evolved, and recommendations for the future employment of contractor personnel. The author bases his assessment on three guiding principles: that the majority of jobs currently performed by contractors should not be done by military personnel; provisions for bodyguards (where most problems have occurred) have viable options for change; and the restructuring (downsizing) of the military following the Cold War makes the use of contractors a necessity, not an option. Steven Schooner provides a rather pragmatic view of the impact contractors have on the battlefield in "Why Contractor Fatalities Matter." The author attempts to place the deaths of more than 1,350 contractor personnel in Afghanistan and Iraq into a context that equates these fatalities to those of military personnel. Schooner believes the average American does not fully appreciate the human cost associated with contractor fatalities and injuries. He asserts that neither the public nor the Congress can understand or influence US involvement in such conflicts without first knowing the level of the military's reliance on contractor personnel in the war zone. The author concludes his analysis with the declaration that the US government has increasingly delegated to the private sector both the right and responsibility to stand in harm's way, and if necessary, die for the country (acts previously restricted to the military profession).

Daniel Roper warns in “Global Counterinsurgency: Strategic Clarity for the Long War” that words have consequences, especially in the shaping of understanding and developing potential courses of action. His message is simple and direct; America’s policy of framing its war against extremists as a “War on Terrorism” has resulted in an erroneous paradigm for countering terrorism and insurgencies. Not only does this policy mischaracterize the enemy, it obscures an understanding of their techniques and impedes the development and implementation of a strategy to counter the acts of these enemies. The author outlines a number of steps the United States should take to refocus its strategic frame of reference to more effectively address remediating symptoms and the deeper causes associated with such threats. Roper calls for clear thinking supported by clear language; characterized by removing the phrase “war on terrorism” from the official lexicon and replacing it with more precise and descriptive terms. It is this clear articulation of this new strategy that will allow for the integration of all the elements of national power in the effective prosecution of America’s national security objectives.

Our final article in this issue is William McDonough’s “Time for a New Strategy.” The author examines the military and political strategies the United States has employed during the past five and a half years in Iraq. He reminds readers that as of July 2008, *The New Way Forward* (Surge Strategy) is coming to an end. The author believes the Iraqi government and its security forces have achieved many of the benchmarks and objectives outlined in that particular strategy. McDonough states, “Now is the time to significantly reduce the US presence in Iraq and temporarily supply the technical assistance and security training Iraq needs to solidify the hard-earned achievements and gains of recent years.” He warns that the real challenge is to get the drawdown of US military forces right. How should the United States configure its forces for future military operations in Iraq? The author concludes with some broad recommendations for this new strategy.

Saying goodbye to a true friend and professional is never easy. That is especially true when the one being farewelled is our Editorial Technician, Mrs. Joyce Eileen Fritz. After more than 13 years of service to the journal and its readers she has decided to retire. Joyce is the last of the *Parameters*’ team that was here when I assumed the editorship 11 years ago. Her tenure was characterized by an unparalleled dedication and a willingness to accept and master any task or challenge. She was singularly instrumental in the publication of more than 50 issues of the journal. Throughout her time with the journal Joyce was the primary source of the technical quality and excellence responsible for the journal’s current reputation in the military publication arena. To say she will be sorely missed by her many friends and hundreds of professional acquaintances is perhaps the ultimate understatement. We wish for nothing but the best for Joyce, Ray, and their entire family in retirement. — RHT □