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From the Editor

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From the Editor

In This Issue . . .

As we usher in a new year we begin a new era in America's defense and policy arenas. With the seating of President Obama and his administration the American people are certain to witness change in the manner in which their nation's leadership directs the military's role in national defense. The forgone drawdown of forces in Iraq and the accompanying surge into Afghanistan are but two of the more obvious changes accompanying this transformation, but they are not the only ones. The twenty-first century demands that the Nation utilize every strength and power at its disposal if we are to successfully champion America's interests abroad, while simultaneously protecting the homeland. This issue of *Parameters* captures some transitional guidance from the previous administration and combines it with a number of articles examining the basic tenets of our diplomatic and military strategies for the future.

In "Preserving Infrastructure: A 21st Century Challenge," the former Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Michael Chertoff, provides guidance for the protection and revitalization of America's critical infrastructure. Specifically, the author addresses the question of what should be the role of government in achieving maximum risk reduction while ensuring the most efficient use of resources. In this parting guidance to the Nation the Secretary presents examples of international and domestic initiatives that have identified assets and systems on which America is dependent and which require additional protection. He concludes with a recommended three-step process that addresses the need for the protection and maintenance of critical infrastructure and facilities.

Our thematic feature in this issue, "New Age Strategy," presents the work of three strategic practitioners. Certainly, Colin Gray needs no introduction to our readers or any student of strategic theory; and his presentation of "The 21st Century Security Environment and the Future of War" only serves to further his reputation. The author takes the reader on a tour de force of Western grand strategy and its impact on the future of war, utilizing the Thucydidean triptych of "fear, honor, and interest" to analyze the twenty-first century environment and the ability for nations to plan for the future conduct of war. Gray cautions, "If you spend a lot of time talking about the future you can forget that you do not really know the subject." He concludes with five pragmatic and sobering thoughts relating to the future military planners and practitioners may anticipate. Perhaps his most significant warning is that too many people have become fixated on the challenge posed by terrorism. Our second article in this feature is Shawn Brimley's

“Crafting Strategy in an Age of Transition.” The author believes we are at a major transition point in American history. A point where a severely strained military and an economic crisis have combined with the rise of regional powers, energy scarcity, climate change, and failing states to create a strategic environment with greater risk than the United States can prudently accept. The author analyzes our strategic inheritance and the evolving geopolitical context, and recommends a new defense strategy that is capable of protecting America’s interests during this time of transition. Brimley highlights three major “turnings” in America’s defense history leading to the requirement for a new grand strategy. Our final article in the feature is “COIN in the Real World” by David Haines. Haines espouses the belief that classic and contemporary counterinsurgency (COIN) doctrine is often applied to states that would have a difficult time, at best, translating the directed practices into reality. He uses examples of insurgencies in India and Thailand to demonstrate how the application of contemporary COIN practices is often beyond the means and capabilities of nations suffering from the threat of insurgency. Haines concludes that a more realistic approach to the execution of COIN would be to write a doctrine that accounts for the failings or inability of a particular state, and then measuring any success or failure against more rational metrics and expectations.

“Georgia’s Cyber Left Hook” is Stephen Korn and Joshua Kastenberg’s timely analysis of the July 2008 distributed denial of service attack directed against the nation of Georgia. They focus their assessment on the cyber events resultant of the Georgian-Russian hostilities in South Ossetia and their impact on America’s “cyber neutrality.” Korn and Kastenberg present an intriguing and informative analysis of events and implications that should be of major concern to every US policymaker and strategist. Based on their detailed examination of the international laws governing cyber conflict and the principle of neutrality, the authors conclude that the cyber warfare associated with the Georgia-Russia crisis is an indicator of the cyber scenarios likely to impact the United States.

Richard deVillafranca demonstrates his depth of experience and superb understanding of the Afghan culture in “Reconsidering Afghanistan: Time for an ‘Azimuth Check.’” The author postulates a thesis based on the belief that America and its allies are pursuing an ineffective strategy based on two critical mistakes. He then calls for an “azimuth check.” The first mistake focuses on what the author believes is the application of a western nation-building template to an Afghan culture that is unprepared and unwilling to inculcate it. The second (more dangerous) mistake is what the author terms an error in the identification of the correct strategic objective. He believes we have been led astray and have mistakenly redirected our efforts solely on the defeat of the Taliban insurgency. The author warns that America and its allies have lost their strategic focus on the real threat and mission. DeVillafranca calls for a broader, more regional approach

involving Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India in a strategy designed to defeat the Taliban and destroy its sanctuaries in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas.

In “United States-Iranian Relations: The Terrorism Challenge,” Gawdat Bahgat provides an examination of the United States’ relationship with Iran that goes beyond the contentious issues of nuclear proliferation, terrorism, and obstruction of the Arab-Israeli peace process. Bahgat focuses on Tehran’s ability to destabilize the region through its support of the Shia militias within Iraq and its belligerent policy toward the United States and Israel. The author analyzes the possibility of applying pressure on the Iranian government through support for opposition groups within the region, specifically the Mujahideen e-Khalq (MEK) in Iraq. He provides a detailed analysis of the evolution of the MEK, its ability to pressure Iran, and the lack of consensus in Europe and America on how to deal with the organization. Bahgat closes with a rather pessimistic view of the MEK’s future.

Our final article in this issue is Carol Armistead Grigsby’s call to renew the values that made our nation strong by re-creating a sense of national purpose. In “Binding the Nation: National Service in America” the author addresses the recurring theme of national service in the United States, but in a much more pragmatic and precise manner. She argues that now is the time for the new voices of leadership to champion the cause of civilian national service. She reviews the history of national service in America, including its limited successes and many failures. The author espouses a belief that with the new administration comes a time of renewed hope and determination that is required if we are to revitalize America’s commitment to civilian national service. Grigsby is unwavering in her call for a program of national civilian service that will contribute to a new sense of community, revitalize the connection between the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, and aid in the restoration of a strong civil-military relationship.

The “Review Essay” feature in this issue highlights Cole C. Kingseed’s insightful analysis of two well-respected authors’ examination of one of the more controversial operations of the Second World War, “The Anzio Campaign.” Kingseed’s masterful review of John S. D. Eisenhower’s *They Fought at Anzio* and Lloyd Clark’s *Anzio: Italy and the Battle for Rome—1944* provides readers with an entirely new perspective regarding the strategy and personalities that made this particular campaign so open to critique. In the end, Kingseed agrees with the authors’ conclusions that the Italian adventure was largely a disappointment for all involved; from the commanders on the ground to the British Prime Minister.—RHT □