

# The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

---

Volume 40  
Number 4 *Parameters Winter 2010*

Article 9

---

11-1-2010

## From the Commandant

George S. Eckhardt

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

---

### Recommended Citation

George S. Eckhardt, "From the Commandant," *Parameters* 40, no. 4 (2010), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.2550.

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 Commandant*

---

MAJOR GENERAL GEORGE S. ECKHARDT,  
COMMANDANT, US ARMY WAR COLLEGE

*First published in the Spring 1971 issue of Parameters.*

The first issue of *Parameters* offers me the opportunity to greet each reader. I do so with a consciousness of close professional association, for every “subscriber” to The Journal of the Army War College almost certainly has an affiliation with or interest in the College itself.

This first issue also permits me to set down the rationale from which the theme to be conveyed by *Parameters* was derived.

Ideally, *Parameters* will help fulfill the charge made by Secretary of War Elihu Root in his 1903 dedicatory address when he called upon the College to garner “. . . the results of the best thought of the Army . . . .” The Army War College Journal can assist in carrying out the Secretary’s direction by disseminating this “best thought” to its readers.

Thematically, *Parameters* will be associated with the principles of the farsighted individual to whom this initial issue is dedicated, Elihu Root. In founding the Army War College, Secretary Root foresaw the need for integrating national and military strategies. Examining the best methods to achieve and maintain this integration remains today as our primary academic challenge at Carlisle Barracks.

Since the founding of the College, two world wars and numerous wars of lesser intensity have been fought; major organizational changes have taken place within the Executive Branch of the government, including the military establishment. Continued changes can be expected in organization and procedures as the government seeks more effective means for coordinating and directing the diplomatic, economic, psychosociological, and military instrumentalities of statecraft to support the attainment of national objectives.

In the conduct of foreign policy, the United States employs a substantial portion of all elements of its available national power. For example, US power is committed abroad in collective security arrangements with many nations of the world. Trade and economic aid, along with programs of military assistance, provide economic links and are responsive to mutual security interests. In a world grown small by reason of rapid communication and ease of travel, intercultural relations and informational activities occupy an increasingly important role in interstate relations. Forward deployments of US forces, maintenance of ready forces in peacetime, and participation in or support of internal defense (stability) operations in selected foreign countries represent military expressions of national power. The “showing of the flag” has become a relatively common occurrence in furtherance of US foreign policy. All components of national power must be coordinated carefully and employed skillfully if national objectives are to be attained.

Most substantive issues involved in national security are politico-military in character. The President, the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff are active participants in the decision-making process relative to these issues. Military staff assistants to these participants must acquire the highest quality of broadly based knowledge and professionalism so that they are both national advisers and military experts. Therefore, in addition to their specialized military knowledge, concerned and responsible members of the Armed Forces must possess a deep understanding of the goals, the power, and the policies of the United States, as well as those of allies, neutrals, or potential enemies. It is with the understanding that we can come to a full realization of three principal restraints to which military power in our country is subject:

- those which affect the decision to use it,
- those which condition how it is used, and
- those which control its dimensions.

It will be *Parameters'* objective, through the contents of its principal articles, to help in advancing this total understanding. To aid and supplement the means of attaining thought on such comprehensive matters, other corporate, provocative—and perhaps more easily assimilated—fare will be added to the standard regimen.

Following this lead, then, complementary to its stated purpose, *Parameters* can increase its usefulness by selecting articles for publication which will—

- enhance the professionalism of the military reader,
- provide others with a better understanding of the mission of the College, and
- share with the general readership the writings of individuals who have contributed to the fund of knowledge gathered and maintained by the College.

To that end, and with those orienting principles in mind, *Parameters'* platform has been constructed. Its strength will lie in the benefits derived from whatever usefulness it affords those who take notice of it.