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From the Editor

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From the Editor

The Spring 2014 issue of the *US Army War College Quarterly* opens with a special commentary by Michael G. Roskin, “The New Cold War.” Whether we accept his premise that we are now in a new Cold War with Russia and China, his recommendations for how to avoid some pitfalls of the “old” Cold War warrant consideration.

Our first forum, *On Military Interventions*, features two articles on ways to make interventions both more effective and more efficient. In “Options for Avoiding Counterinsurgencies,” David H. Ucko and Robert C. Egnell examine counterinsurgency missteps in Afghanistan, and discuss the merits of three alternative models. Regardless of the model, the authors remind us there are no easy solutions: military interventions require clarity of purpose and strategic commitment. Stephen Watts’s and Stephanie Pezard’s “Rethinking Small-Footprint Interventions” explores the utility of Thomas Shelling’s concept of “Tipping Points,” which indicate when conflict might shift decisively in one direction or the other. Such information can help policymakers decide whether and how to intervene in crisis situations.

The second forum, *Challenges for Pacific Command*, discusses recent developments in Pakistan and North Korea and their policy implications. In “Pakistan’s Changing Counterterrorism Strategy: A Window of Opportunity?” Michael Spangler suggests the United States can leverage changes in Pakistan’s counterterrorism focus to achieve stronger bilateral cooperation. Andrew Scobell and Mark Cozad shed useful light on the dynamic relationship between Beijing and Pyongyang in “China’s North Korea Policy: Rethink or Recharge?” One thing is clear—Xi Jinping and Kim Jong Un do not share the same vision for the future of the Asia-Pacific region; this relationship thus bears watching.

Our third forum, *Reconsidering Future War*, offers two perspectives on how defense departments and professional militaries should prepare themselves for future conflict. Robert A. Johnson’s “Predicting Future War” examines the factors that make prediction difficult, but maintains that historical understanding combined with cautious trends’ analysis can make for actionable, if tentative, forecasts. In “Forking Paths: War After Afghanistan,” Michael Evans takes on the cognitive challenge of thinking clearly about the future. He analyzes the track record of “futures studies,” and suggests that the fog of uncertainty surrounding the future is not impenetrable.

Our final forum, *Reserve Components: Point-Counterpoint*, contributes to the current debate over the optimal balance between Army Active and Reserve Components. James D. Campbell’s “The National Guard as a Strategic Hedge,” makes the case that US militia (National Guard) and other reserve components have long been indispensable and cost-effective partners for America’s regulars. However, Rick Morrison’s “Reserve Component Costs” argues that the Army Force Generation (ARFORGEN) Costing Model shows the cost-differential between Active and Reserve units is much smaller than one might think. ~ AJE

