

The US Army War College Quarterly: Parameters

Volume 42
Number 3 *Parameters Autumn 2012*

Article 3

Fall 9-1-2012

From the Editor

Robert H. Taylor

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



Part of the [Defense and Security Studies Commons](#), [Military History Commons](#), [Military, War, and Peace Commons](#), and the [National Security Law Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Robert H. Taylor, "From the Editor," *Parameters* 42, no. 3 (2012), doi:10.55540/0031-1723.3052.

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 . . .

With this issue, we are proud to present an eclectic tour de force of a number of the challenges associated with the conduct of land warfare in the twenty-first century. Our authors explore themes as diverse as the future of American interests in the Middle East beyond 2030 to the rationale for British military failure in America during the 1780-83 period, and as consubstantial as democratization and war termination strategies for present-day Afghanistan. We are also quite pleased we have an opportunity to share the varied and insightful views of several active duty military and a number of foreign authors with our readers. Michael Eastman leads the charge with his analysis of the possibilities related to the strategies governing the employment of American land forces over the next twenty years. “American Landpower and the Middle East of 2030” provides an in-depth view of the fiscal realities facing the Department of Defense and the resultant interservice rivalry. The author utilizes this strategic context to develop a rather pragmatic view of future land force requirements, while acknowledging many may criticize his motivation.

The future of Afghanistan and why the American-led project of democratization has faltered provides the underlying thesis for Cora Sol Goldstein’s “The Afghanistan Experience: Democratization by Force.” The author draws on America’s experience at the conclusion of World War II in transforming two formidable enemies, Germany and Japan, to analyze why we have not been as equally successful in Afghanistan. She presents a number of competing explanations for the Coalition’s failure to achieve its original political objectives. Goldstein’s examination reveals that small wars (Afghanistan), when compared to global conflicts (WWII), simply do not create conditions that are supportive of nation building. This is especially true when the occupied population does not feel a vested interest in the transformative agenda.

“COIN is Dead—Long Live Transformation” is the first of three articles in our thematic feature, “Strategy, Stability, and Security.” The article is co-authored by several distinguished analysts in British military affairs: Matthew Ford, Patrick Rose, and Howard Body. The authors base their thesis on the belief that transformation has proven its usefulness in the initial victories in Afghanistan in 2001 as well as during the recent Libyan conflict in 2011. They are equally as certain counterinsurgency operations in Iraq and Afghanistan have proven less successful over the past decade. It is against this backdrop of operational experiences related to the initial defeat of the Taliban and the toppling of the Gaddafi regime the authors recommend that policymakers and defense professionals should confront what they term “defining moments” in an attempt to reassess the limits of national power, specifically, the application of military power. The authors see the key question facing Great Britain, and by extrapolation the United States, as being whether or not any nation should employ a “Western way of war” emphasizing stand-off capabilities, limited objectives, and short-term interventions; this new way of war should replace

the tools and techniques normally exercised in the more long-term and complex tactics and techniques associated with traditional COIN operations.

Our second article in the feature is also authored by another of our British colleagues, Christopher Tuck. “Afghanistan: Strategy and War Termination,” is the author’s attempt to answer four questions at the heart of conflict termination: who will win; is there an achievable peace; peace at what cost; and, can the war be terminated? Tuck believes it is not the fact that the Coalition executed “bad strategy” in Afghanistan that resulted in an inability to achieve a clear and attainable endstate. Rather, the author argues that despite a number of the difficulties associated with the current strategy, the continuation of the conflict is a direct reflection of a much larger phenomenon—it is easier to start wars than to end them.

Our final offering in this feature is Daniel Canfield’s perspective on the British experience in various campaigns in the American south during the period 1780 to 1783. The author believes “The War for American Independence,” when viewed from the British perspective, has extraordinary significance for contemporary practitioners of national and military strategy. “The Futility of Force and the Preservation of Power: British Strategic Failure in America, 1780–83” is Canfield’s analysis of British military and political failures during campaigns in the American southern colonies. He reminds readers that these campaigns deserve greater attention than they have received, primarily due to the fact that in a mere two generations following this conflict America replaced Great Britain as the leader on the world stage. Canfield points to the irony of America’s ascendancy, with its political, economic, and military costs that bear a remarkable similarity to those that once plagued her colonial master. He closes with a warning to America’s policymakers and strategists—British strategic failure in America should serve as a powerful reminder that long-term interests of the state can never fall victim to fear, a false sense of honor, or an overinflated view of what is militarily possible.

Our final article in this issue is authored by one of the journal’s stalwart supporters, Steven Metz. Dr. Metz’s “The Internet, New Media, and the Evolution of Insurgency” provides readers with insight regarding the motivation and capabilities of modern-day insurgents. The author builds his thesis on the history of various insurgencies and their attempts (out of weakness) to shift the focus related to conflict away from domains where they are at a disadvantage (conventional military) to those where morale and psychological characteristics matter more than tangible power. It is here where the insurgent attempts to achieve three enduring objectives: the insurgency must survive, it must strengthen itself, and it must weaken the structure or state it is opposing. Metz analyzes a number of factors that make networked insurgencies more prevalent in the contemporary security environment: the large ungoverned regions of the globe that provide insurgencies with anonymity and cover during their gestation; the marked decline in the use of insurgents as proxies since the end of the Cold War; and the number of new technologies and the systems for utilizing them—particularly the Internet and new media. The author leaves

the reader with a warning that the prevalence of dispersed, networked, transnational, terrorism-centric insurgencies that rely on the swarming tactics and operations associated with the utilization of technology, is both bad and good news. Bad in that such organizations are extremely difficult to defeat. The good news is these insurgencies are unlikely to attain decisive victory.

The “Book Reviews” feature again offers expert appraisals of an array of contemporary literature of interest to senior military, defense professionals, and academicians. Stephen Blank leads the charge with his review of Roger R. Reese’s *Why Stalin’s Soldiers Fought: The Red Army’s Military Effectiveness in World War II*; Ambassador Louis J. Nigro Jr. examines Joseph Nye’s *The Future of Military Power*; John Coffey analyzes *Strategic Vision: America and the Crisis of Global Power* by Zbigniew Brzezinski; Charles Allen looks at *Bridging the Military-Civilian Divide: What Each Side Must Know About The Other—And About Itself* by Bruce Fleming; and many more. These and the accompanying reviews are bound to have readers heading for their favorite bookstore or literary outlet. – RHT ☐