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From the Acting Editor in Chief

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From the Acting Editor in Chief

Welcome to the Spring 2023 issue of *Parameters*. This issue consists of an *In Focus* special commentary and the *SRAD Director's Corner* focused on Afghanistan, three forums, and two *Reviews and Replies*.

When I was initially assigned to the Strategic Studies Institute two decades ago, one of my first projects was an analysis of the Army's reaction to defeat in Southeast Asia. Entitled *Avoiding Vietnam*, the study found that the Army as an institution tried to purge Vietnam from its memory while turning to the 1973 Arab-Israeli War for lessons (the monograph can be downloaded at: <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/monographs/814/>). The only Army forum featuring thoughtful analysis of the Vietnam experience was in the pages of *Parameters*. Again, I see an institution ignoring detailed inspection of its defeat in Afghanistan while focusing instead on large-scale combat operations in Ukraine. And so, I intend to provide a forum in *Parameters* to fill that analytical gap.

In our single *In Focus* essay, "Defeat in Afghanistan: An Autopsy," Joseph J. Collins rejects the claim that the United States' nation-building effort was a major factor in its defeat. He argues that the factors contributing to the US failure include the historical difficulty in governing Afghanistan, the Afghan republic's two inefficient and corrupt governments, an ineffective US strategy, operational shortcomings by US forces, an inadequate Afghan military, Pakistan's duplicitous policy, and the strength and determination of the Taliban.

The issue's first forum, *Military and Civilians*, includes two articles exploring the Women, Peace, and Security (WPS) framework and the Department of Defense's new *Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan*. In "Enhancing US Global Competitiveness through Women, Peace, and Security," Brenda Oppermann argues that the Department of Defense could significantly improve its success along the competition continuum by leveraging the WPS global policy framework, supporting gender equality, and embracing the value of women's diverse roles in global security. In "Factoring Gender into Kinetic Operations," Jody M. Prescott illustrates how US military practice fails to consider the gendered effects of kinetic actions when planning or executing operations

and argues that the implementation of the Department of Defense's new *Civilian Harm Mitigation and Response Action Plan* provides an opportunity to close this gap.

Our second forum, *Strategy*, features two essays providing different perspectives on how to address strategic problems. In "Climate Change: An Opportunity for INDOPACOM," Catherine A. B. Reppert contends that US Indo-Pacific Command should plan for climate change, asserting it supports the primary objective of countering China, operationalizes climate change response for US commanders, and offers a less threatening means to develop partnerships. In "Daoism and Design: Mapping the Conflict in Syria," Ned Beechinor Marsh and Heather S. Gregg combine the fundamentals of Dao De Jing philosophy with the US military design process to offer a new perspective for analyzing complex security problems, devising management strategies, and planning military operations. They contend this approach provides insights for dealing with the seemingly intractable situation in Syria.

The third forum, *Future Force*, includes two articles exploring personnel considerations for US leadership as they assess the effectiveness of the military. In "The Case for an Army Stability Professional," Andrew B. Colvin challenges the US Army to reevaluate the professional education provided to active-duty officers working in military government and stability operations and proposes the Army develop a new functional area for officers assigned to this field. In "Minotaurs, Not Centaurs: The Future of Manned-Unmanned Teaming," Robert J. Sparrow and Adam Henschke contest Paul Scharre's vision of "centaur warfighting" and the idea that autonomous weapon systems will replace human warfighters. They argue that the manned-unmanned teams of the future are likely to be "minotaurs," teams of humans under the control, supervision, or command of artificial intelligence, and explore the ethical issues raised by "minotaur warfighting."

In the fifth installment of the *SRAD Director's Corner*, "Afghanistan: The Logic of Failing, Fast and Slow," George Shatzer focuses on the failure of the US-led war and reconstruction campaign in Afghanistan. He reviews *The Forty-year War in Afghanistan: A Chronicle Foretold* by Tariq Ali and *The Fifth Act: America's End in Afghanistan* by Elliot Ackerman. He brings personal experience to bear in his review, painting a picture of why the United States failed in Afghanistan and posing these failures as lessons that must be learned before the next war. The books also provide insights for strategists attempting to plan for security in the region. ~CCC