From the Editor in Chief

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Welcome to the Summer 2024 issue of Parameters. We open this issue with a special “In Memoriam” by General Charles A. Flynn, Commander US Army Pacific, honoring the life and legacies of our director and consummate colleague, Carol V. Evans. We dedicate this issue to her. General Flynn’s memoriam is followed by an In Focus commentary entitled, “What American Policymakers Misunderstand about the Belt and Road Initiative” (BRI), by Zenel Garcia and Phillip Guerreiro; they argue the grand-strategic and geopolitical framing American policymakers typically use to interpret the BRI ignores the origin of the program and its fragmented nature.

Our first forum, Russia-Ukraine War, includes two articles. The first of these, “The Combat Path: Sustaining Mental Readiness in Ukrainian Soldiers,” by Oleh Hukovskyy et al. reviews the Combat Path Debriefing technique developed by the Armed Forces of Ukraine to support psychological resilience, unit readiness, and combat performance. The second article, “Understanding Russian Disinformation and How the Joint Force Can Address It,” by Michael Kelley suggests several proactive measures US defense leaders can take to counter Russia’s disinformation strategy. Kelley warns Russia will continue to dominate information warfare if the United States fails to take steps to negate its influence.

The second forum, Middle East, features three articles. In the first, “The Dynamics of US Retrenchment in the Middle East,” Paul MacDonald and Joseph Parent examine existing retrenchment theories to determine if the current geopolitical environment in the Middle East supports that approach. In their view, conditions favor American retrenchment because forward military deployments do not positively influence potential threats in the region. The second article, “Iraq’s Ministry of Interior: NATO, Capability Building, and Reform,” by Andrea Malouf, outlines 10 NATO and Allied failures that stymied efforts to reform Iraq’s police and the Ministry of Interior. The forum closes with “Raven Sentry: Employing AI for Indications and Warnings in Afghanistan” by Thomas Spahr, who shows how a talented group of military personnel collaborated with commercial-sector experts to develop an AI model called Raven Sentry to predict attacks on Afghan district and provincial centers.
The third forum, *Professional Development*, contains two articles. In the first, “Closing the Gap: Officer Advanced Education STEM+M (Management),” Leon Robert and Carl Wojtaszek claim the Army has made little progress in providing the current officer corps with a science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and management (STEM+M) education. They offer recommendations for closing the STEM+M gap through advances in higher education and the adoption of talent management practices. The second article, “Operating Successfully within the Bureaucracy Domain of Warfare: Part One,” by Jeff McManus, discusses the first three of 10 fundamentals (politics, personalities, and pressure) that policy professionals should consider when navigating the bureaucratic domain of warfare and maintaining trusted access to senior decisionmakers.

The Summer issue concludes with two new forums—*A Major’s Perspective* and the *Civil–Military Relations Corner*. In the former, Brennan Deveraux discusses the challenge of revitalizing professional discourse within the Army, codified as the four-point platform by the Harding Project, and shares his personal experiences with professional writing. Carrie Lee then provides an overview of the US Army War College Civil–Military Relations Center and its annual conference.

Finally, in a special review essay, Patricia Shields, a friend and contributing editor of the *Parameters* editorial board, offers her unique perspective as the editor in chief of *Armed Forces & Society* for 23 years and reflects on the 50-year evolution of this field of study. ~AJE