



Senior Officer Professional Digest

Selected Readings from the World's Military Journals

Issue No: 14 Date: July 2003

CONTENTS

Clausewitz, Globalisation and the Nature of War

The New US War Machine

US National Security Strategy and Geopresence

Unorthodox Thoughts about Asymmetric Warfare

Strategic Leader Readiness and Asymmetric Warfare

The Protean Enemy

The Ideology of American Empire

Citizen Soldiers for the 21st Century

The CA's Introduction

Professional reading is a commitment to our Army's future. The Senior Officer Professional Digest (SOPD) has been designed to assist you to learn more about the issues that will shape the future of warfare. I commend the SOPD to you and ask that you make the time to read the articles and to reflect on their content.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "A. Lee", written in a cursive style.

Editor's Note

**Please note that the next issue of the SOPD will be published in August 2003. Previous editions of the SOPD, as well as the *Australian Army Journal*, are available online:
<http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/>**

Title	<i>Globalization and the Nature of War</i>
Author	Lieutenant Colonel Antulio J. Echevarria II
Publication Details	Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, PA, March 2003, 31pp., http://www.carlisle.army.mil/ssi/index.html

Synopsis

In this short monograph, Lieutenant Colonel Echevarria, Director of Strategic Research at the US Army's Strategic Studies Institute, argues that, although globalisation is changing every aspect of human affairs, war remains essentially Clausewitzian in nature. Echevarria defines globalisation as '*the spread of information and information technologies, along with greater public participation in economic and political processes*'. Greater connectedness has created danger, unpredictability, transnational threats and a proliferation of destabilising capabilities, but it has not changed the nature of war.

Contrary to the works of anti-Clausewitzians such as John Keegan, Russell Weigley and Martin van Creveld, Echevarria argues that, far from decreasing the central role of politics in war, globalisation has actually increased it. Conflict remains resolutely political at every level and, in particular, the War on Terrorism is foremost a war of political ideas. The author analyses Clausewitz's notion that war has a dual nature in that it is both *objective* (internal and universal in its nature) and *subjective* (external and specific in its nature). The objective nature of war refers to the elements that all wars have in common — violence, chance, friction and uncertainty — while the subjective nature of war refers to the elements that make

each war unique: force structures, doctrines, weapons systems, particular environments.

Both the objective and subjective natures of war interact, making war a chameleon and a trinity of *hostility*, *force* and *chance* — and ensuring that both the means and actors involved cannot be separated. The trinity is expressed in politics through the government, the army and the people. Clausewitz's idea of politics is thus broad. Echevarria argues that, in the era of globalisation, both al-Qa'ida and its Western opponents are locked into a protracted war in which politics is the primary force influencing war.

The political nature of the struggle is magnified by real-time access to military actions and control and influence at every level of conflict. The Islamist concept of *jihad* is a hostile ideology with a manifestation of 'blind natural force'. Chance and uncertainty continue in the form of the huge global information means at the disposal of adversaries. The flow of raw information is a reservoir that outpaces both analysis and synthesis, thus creating friction. The irony of more information is that it may lead to more uncertainty rather than less. Hence:

Contrary to what pundits have predicted, therefore, globalisation and the spread of information technologies still have not eliminated the elements of chance and uncertainty in war. In some cases, in fact, these elements may increase, especially if opponents use misinformation more frequently as a counter to knowledge-based warfare.

Echevarria suggests that there is one area of Clausewitz that probably requires revision in the global era: the theory of the *centre of gravity*. In a globalised operational environment in which adversaries can fight in vast, distributed networks, there may be no single centre of gravity. This reality places a premium on simultaneous rather than linear operations. Concepts of defence and attack may also require fresh balancing

unwilling, to contest it conventionally, but the aftermath of such wars, as Rumsfeld understated it, can be most “untidy”.

Boyer cites the then Chief of Staff of the Army’s testimony last February on the issue of the proper force size to maintain the peace in Iraq. General Shinseki’s opinion was that it would take ‘several hundred thousand’ troops to impose order and guarantee stability in post-Ba’athist Iraq. Those predictions were dismissed and even scoffed at by figures as senior as Vice President Cheney, Secretary Rumsfeld and Deputy Secretary Wolfowitz, but General Shinseki’s position has since been proven correct by postwar experience. General Franks comments that the force level could be reduced only in the best possible circumstances, but if the ‘fractious behavior’ continued in Iraq, the US force would have to remain for a longer period of time.

Boyer quotes General Franks on the enduring lessons of recent operations:

We certainly have become believers in precision. We’re certainly believers in unmanned aerial systems. What I think this confirmed for all of us is the value of training in the joint, combined and interagency world. That is transformational. If you ask yourself, ‘What are the real takeaways from this that are transformational? Where do we want to go in the future, that “joint fighting” is probably the largest lesson of all.’

Senior Officer Professional Digest

Article Title	US National Security Strategy and the Imperative of ‘Geopresence’
Author	General Gregory S. Martin, USAF
Publication Details	<i>Air and Space Power Journal</i> , Summer 2003, vol. XVII, no. 2, pp. 35–48

Synopsis

This article by a leading US Air Force general discusses the changed character of international security in which democracies face a new enemy, ‘*a supranational entity — one without borders, postured in a network of execution modes that hide in a global array of shadows, and [are] able to conduct operations on a global scale*’. The author argues that the imperatives of the 2002 National Security Strategy implies that the United States must possess a multifaceted strategy based on overseas presence and international alliances — what he calls the concept of geopresence. It is defined as follows:

[Geopresence] is a multi-dimensional strategy designed to provide access to all regions — a capability that comes from carefully selecting and engaging in the right locations politically and geographically, and putting into place those military structures that can present the appropriate balance of permanent and rotational forces able to meet all potential diplomatic and military requirements.

Geopresence requires a broad spectrum of regional cooperation and military-to-military engagement with forces in the right places. Such an approach would permit the US to exploit its economic, military and diplomatic power in order to operate in any area of the globe.

The aim should be to strengthen alliances and enhance cooperation and ‘*to conduct a sophisticated, proactive approach to prepare the geopolitical and diplomatic battle space*’. As

deterrence gives way to a greater focus on actively defending against a broad array of actors, there must be a capability for global force projection. General Martin suggests that the 2002 NSS requires acceptance of a new security paradigm based on moving from containment to embracement across a spectrum of conflict.

In the 20th century, the great struggle was democracy against totalitarianism; in the 21st century it is whether the democratic community can control chaos in troubled regions around the globe and uphold its interests and values. The concept of geopresence serves this new reality in three ways:

- Geopresence achieves better access, cooperation, interoperability and influence.
- Geopresence takes into account distance and force projection.
- Geopresence helps to disperse US bases and enhances flexibility.

During Operation *Enduring Freedom* in Afghanistan in 2001–02, the US confronted the need for global presence. EUCOM and CENTCOM had to support and conduct operations at great distance and new bases were created in Central Asia (Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan). Taken together, such operations represented a feat of diplomacy and coalition building. While the US has no ‘stationing template’, it needs to pursue a security cooperation strategy to fulfil the 2002 NSS. For the US in the future, geopresence will be vital because ‘*virtual presence really equals actual absence*’.

Title	‘Unorthodox Thoughts about Asymmetric Warfare’
Author	Montgomery C. Meigs
Publication Details	<i>Parameters</i> , Summer 2003, vol. XXXIII, no. 2, pp. 4–18

Synopsis

Former US four-star general, Montgomery Meigs, argues strongly in this article that current conceptions of asymmetric warfare are misguided, and indeed ‘many use the term with little understanding of its operational meaning’. Misconceiving the character of asymmetry has the potential to lead to dangerous miscalculations when assessing the current threat environment.

Meigs redefines asymmetric warfare as *‘the absence of a common basis of comparison in respect to a quality, or in operational terms, a capability’* and that *‘[t]rue examples of operational and strategic asymmetry are relatively rare’*. The author uses the methods of al-Qa’ida to illustrate his view that asymmetric methods are not new.

Meigs debunks the popular view that the German blitzkrieg victories over the French in 1940 provide an example of asymmetrical warfare. He points out that the major factors in the sudden collapse of French military were related to organisation, planning and political will rather than to materiel. The actual technological differences between the French and the Germans often favoured the former — particularly in terms of quality of armour and numbers of aircraft and pilots. The German victory in 1940 was largely a result of superior training and tactics. Because the relationship of asymmetry is to the means rather than the conduct of warfare, evidence from 1940 disproves the myth of German asymmetrical advantage. Meigs notes:

Errors strategic and operational, differences in tactical skill, and operational planning all contributed to French collapse and German success — but not asymmetry.

The author goes on to argue that a more accurate example of asymmetric advantage lies in US operations in the campaign in Afghanistan against al-Qa'ida and the Taliban. In the Afghan campaign of 2001–02, American technological superiority, information advantage and real-time precision targeting were a clearer demonstration of asymmetry. Similarly, the ability of the Taliban to break into small groups and blend into the local population and terrain gave Islamist fighters a form of defensive asymmetry.

The asymmetric advantage possessed by al-Qa'ida has been based on the organisation's ability to evolve new tactics aided by its cellular and compartmented structure. Embassy car bombings, the maritime strike against the *USS Cole* and the aerial attacks of 11 September were all different in character. Meigs notes that, by striking Western targets through asymmetric means, al-Qa'ida has the potential to destroy critical infrastructure such as transportation links, power grids, and integrated command and control systems.

General Meigs believes that the challenge for the US and the West is to develop '*a concept of operational art that is capable of countering the asymmetries of an opponent who uses the theater of unconventional warfare to achieve non-state objectives against nation-states*'. Conventional militaries must reform and reorganise in an effort to create new structures that merge their conventional and unconventional warfighting capabilities. The traditional hesitancy of Western militaries to engage in low-intensity conflict masks the reality that these threats now pose while '*focussing units intensely on the tasks needed to win in conventional combat is no longer sufficient for operational success across the spectrum of conflict*'.

Article Title 'Strategic Leader Readiness and Competencies for Asymmetric Warfare'

Author Colonel Thomas J. Williams

Publication Details *Parameters*, Summer 2003, vol. XXXIII, no. 2, pp. 19–35

Synopsis

The author is Director of the US Army Physical Fitness Research Institute at the US Army War College. He has a Doctorate in clinical psychology and has broad service including with Special Forces. In this article he suggests that the demands of broad-spectrum, increasingly 'unconventional' military operations will require training establishments and strategic leaders to foster specific leadership attributes and characteristics. To do otherwise is to risk 'military irrelevancy or impotency'.

The key theme in this article is the need to '*identify and adapt the attributes and methods required to ensure strategic leader readiness to counter, deter, or defeat operational and strategic asymmetric threats and war*'. To do this, military education systems and military cultures must emphasise 'conceptual and organizational adaptability and flexibility'. It is no longer enough for officers to describe themselves as 'warfighters' first and foremost. In contemporary conflicts, leaders need to be highly attuned to political, social, ethnic, economic and technological variables.

Colonel Williams argues that the nature of asymmetric warfare is that there is unlikely to be a decisive victory, at least on our side. In those circumstances we should be prepared for protracted asymmetric conflict, and policymakers will have even less control over the extent and duration of conflict.

Accordingly, there is a need for those that actually wage the

Senior Officer Professional Digest

conflict to develop greater levels of initiative if they are to counter and anticipate asymmetric threats.

Article Title	‘The Protean Enemy’
Authors	Jessica Stern
Publication Details	<i>Foreign Affairs</i> , July—August 2003, vol. 82, no. 4, http://www.foreignaffairs.org/

Synopsis

Professor Jessica Stern — the Harvard-based anti-terrorism expert, former member of the National Security Council staff and model for the Nicole Kidman character in the Hollywood film *The Peacemaker* — uses this article to describe the evolving and adaptable nature of the international terrorist network with al-Qa’ida at its heart. Her book, *The Ultimate Terrorists*, published in March 1999, established her as a leading authority on apocalyptic terrorism of the type later witnessed on 11 September 2001. She argues that the threat is ‘protean’, which is to say that it can readily assume different forms and characters. Professor Stern suggests that:

This capacity for change has consistently made the group more appealing to recruits, attracted surprising new allies, and—most worrisome from a Western perspective—made it harder to detect and destroy. Unless Washington and its allies show similar adaptability, the war on terrorism won’t be won anytime soon, and the death toll is likely to mount.

Professor Stern’s article provides an excellent round-up of the state of play in the War on Terrorism. She points out that the most successful Islamist terrorist groups have adapted what commenced for them as a moral crusade into a professional

raison d'être. What starts as a crusade becomes a career, and many groups shift their focus to perpetuating their cadres rather than achieving their objectives. Consequently, many of their actions are driven by the need to attract funding, achieve political power and acquire the status that will allow them to recruit widely.

Stern points out that a key element of the protean nature of these organisations is to develop alliances of convenience, often with unlikely partners. Consequently, there is alarming evidence that al-Qa'ida, a Sunni organisation, has developed close links with Hezbollah, a Shi's group. These links are now being underwritten by 'virtual' subcultures via web sites that preach and propagate the 'culture of jihad'. Ten minutes doing a google search will throw up literally hundreds of terrorist groups operating quite openly and preaching anarchist principles of propaganda by the deed. In those circumstances central control and leadership is not required since the disaffected carry out uncoordinated, but destructive, attacks against their common identified enemies.

Drawing on her own experiences in assisting in the nuclear disarmament of former Soviet republics, Professor Stern argues that the West needs to step up its efforts to prevent terrorist groups from getting hold of nuclear materials. The global system of disease monitoring needs to be upgraded, because initially it may be difficult to distinguish biological attacks from natural outbreaks. States need to face the challenge of innovating faster than the professional terrorists — something that their inherent inflexibility makes difficult, but which is essential if we are to counter the challenge posed by totalitarian and apocalyptic ideologues.

Senior Officer Professional Digest

Title 'The Ideology of American Empire'

Author Claes G. Ryn

Publication Details *Orbis*, Summer 2003, vol. 47, no. 3, pp. 383–97

Synopsis

This article questions the basis and direction of recent US foreign and military policy. Its author, Claes G. Ryn, warns that, by exploiting its unique unipolar advantage, the US could be creating long-term problems that dwarf the risk posed by short-term threats. The first page of the 2002 *National Security Strategy* committed the US to making the world 'not just safer but better', and this approach has established, in the author's view, 'a doctrine of American armed hegemony'.

Such a doctrine was anathema to George W. Bush before he was elected President. The author notes that, in his 2000 presidential campaign, Bush repeatedly called for a more 'humble' US foreign policy and expressed strong reservations about the wisdom of the US undertaking an interventionist foreign policy involving nation building. The hubris of imposing solutions on the world was something candidate Bush referred to as 'betrayed arrogance and an undue will to power that other countries might resent'.

The morning of 11 September 2001 represented the turning point in the ideology of the Bush Administration. Ryn observes that the attack on America could have elicited a different reaction, based on a surgical and limited response; instead it became the occasion and justification for a grandiose crusade. The rhetoric of the Bush Administration and its engagement with the world were transformed and became shaped by neo-conservative thinking. Bush's America came to represent universal democratic principles that were to be exported, creating a safer world.

Ryn describes the ideology of [American] empire as being characterised by a universal moralistic world-view on human nature based on freedom, equality and democracy. The underlying assumption of American universality is that it has become the historic mission of the US to remodel the world in its image. Proponents of the concept of universality illustrate their arguments with the rhetoric of ‘dogmatic commitment’.

The author compares American zealotry to that of the Jacobin movement during the French Revolution. Jacobin principles were first enunciated by the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and much of the military turmoil in Europe during the 1790s was a result of Jacobin radicalism.

Ryn labels American neo-conservatives as ‘neo-Jacobins’, and notes the presence of neo-conservative adherents in government, industry and the media. The author writes:

[American] neo-Jacobins are attached . . . to ahistorical, supranational principles that they believe should supplant the traditions of particular societies. The new Jacobins see themselves as on the side of right and fighting evil and are not prone to respecting or looking for common ground with countries that do not share their democratic preferences.

The words of Charles Krauthammer, a leading neo-conservative commentator are quoted: ‘Where our cause is just and interests are threatened, we should act — even if ... we must act unilaterally’. According to Ryn, influential neo-conservatives such as Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, former Chairman of the Defense Policy Board, and Presidential speechwriter David Frum (who penned the ‘Axis of Evil’ address) are ‘neo-Jacobins’ motivated by an idealistic, but ultimately impractical, utopianism.

Article Title 'Reflections on the Citizen Soldier'

Author Barry Strauss

Publication Details *Parameters*, Summer 2003,
vol. XXXIII, no. 2, pp. 66–77

Synopsis

The author, a professor of history and classics at Cornell University, argues that the current security crisis facing the United States requires a bigger military, but is not yet so grave as to require a draft. Based on his own research into the history of his own family at war, he suggests that the US would benefit from diversifying the number and range of civilians who do a term of service in the military. His argument is that it is not those currently serving in the military who need to consider the benefits of service, but those to whom the notion would never occur.

He admits that the experience of turning citizens into soldiers in both world wars was probably the worst way to staff an army, except for the fact that their service was needed. He goes further to spell out the advantages to the civil community of military service in an age of self-obsessed individualism. Military service is a core contributor to good citizenship—something that the beneficiaries of a stable and affluent democracy might lose sight of. Not only is an army that contains non-careerists more reflective of the general community, but it helps the military to be more receptive to the requirements that its civilian leadership places on it. He points out:

It is not good for the republic to have the military by and large represent only one portion of its body politic. It is not good for the citizens who make decisions about the military to have so little personal knowledge of the military. Arguably, if civilian

Senior Officer Professional Digest

politicians understood the military better, then the kind of military–civilian tensions that have bedevilled American politics in recent years would be reduced.

Professor Strauss points out that elite opinion has become increasingly estranged from the hard realities that underpin their comfortable way of life. He concludes that:

The current dogma in American elite universities too often amounts to saying that since war is bad, soldiers are bad as well. Little attention is paid to the idea of a just war or to the sacrifice that a soldier makes for his country. Instead, we need to teach our students that war is bad but surrender is worse; that war should be a policy of last resort but that, alas, it must sometimes be resorted to. We should teach them that it may not be easy to do a term of service in the military, but it is noble.