



Senior Officer Professional Digest

Selected readings from the world's military journals

Issue No. 30
May 2005

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Compiled by:



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.



Editor's Note

The Land Warfare Studies Centre will be conducting the 2005 Rowell Profession of Arms Seminar on 23 June at the Telstra Theatre in the Australian War Memorial. Further details of the seminar are attached to this edition of the SOPD.

REGISTRATION FORM

PLEASE RETURN BY 20 JUNE 2005

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Rowell Seminar 2005

**Confronting Asymmetry: Military Conflict
in the Early 21st Century**

**Telstra Theatre,
Australian War Memorial
Thursday, 23 June 2005**





**The Australian Army
Land Warfare Studies Centre
presents the third annual
Rowell Profession of Arms Seminar**

**Confronting Asymmetry: Military Conflict
in the Early 21st Century**

**Telstra Theatre
Australian War Memorial
Thursday, 23 June 2005**

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0745 Registration

0830–0845 Welcome Address by Chief of Army

0845–0930 Keynote Speaker

Mr Max Boot, Senior Fellow, National Security Studies,
US Council on Foreign Relations
'Small Wars and the American Strategic Tradition'

0930–1015 Dr Coral Bell, Australian National University
'Asymmetric Wars'

1015–1045 Morning Tea

1045–1130 Ms Marites Vitug, Editor-in-Chief,
Newsbreak magazine, The Philippines
'The Threat of Terror in South-East Asia'

1130–1230 Mr Nick Warner, Department of
Foreign Affairs and Trade
*'The Australian Experience in the Solomon Islands: The DFAT
Perspective'*

1230–1330 Lunch

1330–1415 Assistant Commissioner Ben McDevitt,
Australian Federal Police
*'The Australian Experience in the Solomon Islands:
The AFP Perspective'*

1415–1510 Panel Session

Ms Margaret Thomas, AUSAID
LTCOL John Frewen, Australian Army
*'The Australian Experience in the Solomon Islands: Other
Government Agencies Acting in Supporting Role'*

1510–1530 Afternoon Tea

1530–1645 Mr Duncan Lewis,
Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet
'Emerging Security Structures for a Time of Uncertainty'

1645–1700 Closing Address by Chief of Army

Article	‘The Real World War IV’
Author	Andrew J. Bacevich
Publication Details	<i>The Wilson Quarterly</i> , vol. 29, no. 1, Winter 2005, pp. 36–61

SYNOPSIS

In this article the author Andrew Bacevich, a West Point graduate now a Professor of International Relations at Boston University, offers an alternative interpretation of reasons behind the current United States (US) involvement in the Middle East. Bacevich contends that this involvement effectively constitutes World War IV. He argues that, rather than seeing the post–Cold War era as the successor to the three great conflicts of the 20th century, the current US-led conflict in the Middle East actually began long before the Cold War ended. It began, he claims, when the United States put itself on a war footing a quarter-century ago, when it resolved to defend at all costs the limitless expansion of its oil-dependent way of life.

He explains that the commonly accepted meta-narrative of the past sixty years consists of three phases, beginning with the end of World War II, followed by the Cold War (World War III) and with the short-lived post–Cold War era that ended abruptly with the terrorist attacks on 11 September (9/11) and the beginning of World War IV. This three-part narrative is simple, neat but fundamentally flawed. Rather than being a single event, the Cold War occurred in two distinct phases. The first period essentially ended by 1963, following the Cuban Missile Crisis, after which a more predictable and stable relationship ensued between the Americans and Soviets. The second period lasted till 1989 and ended with the defeat of the Soviet Union mostly through its own ineptitude.

Based on this assessment Bacevich believes that, even before the fall of the Soviet Union, World War IV was already under way, and World War III and World War IV were in fact simultaneous rather than sequential, events. He contends that World War IV actually began in 1980 when the Carter administration moved from maintaining a ‘low profile and hidden hand’ approach to the Middle East to taking a more active military role, especially in the Persian Gulf. The Iranian Revolution and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan promoted this change in policy since these two events were perceived as threatening to the West’s oil supplies. Faced with this threat the ‘Carter Doctrine’ became sacrosanct. Therefore, according to the author, World war IV is well into its third decade, and its overarching motive remains the preservation of the American way of life through guaranteed access to oil.

This conflict was continued by the Reagan administration, which engaged in a series of forays into the Islamic world (Lebanon, Libya, Afghanistan and the ‘tanker war’) with mixed results. Worried about its ability to face a crisis in the Persian Gulf, the administration began a series of initiatives designed specifically to ramp up America’s

ability to wage World War IV. These initiatives paved the way for the subsequent actions of the administration of George H. W. Bush.

In the first period of World War IV (1980–1990) the United States viewed Iran as its main threat in the region while Iraq was courted as a potential ally. In the second period, following Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and its threat to America's oil supplies, Iraq became the main foe. Following the eviction of Iraq from Kuwait, the United States adopted a policy of 'containment with bombs', which was subsequently bequeathed to the Clinton administration. The United States continued in its attempts to contain Iraq while becoming entangled in overseas forays such as Somalia and was provoked by pinprick attacks by Osama Bin Laden until 9/11.

Following the 9/11 attacks, the United States for the first time openly acknowledged the existence of the conflict in which it had been engaged for the previous twenty years. However, it now couched the war in ideological terms ('freedom') rather than geopolitics ('oil'). The invasion of Iraq, the author concludes, was conceived by George W. Bush and his inner circle as a great crusade to reshape the Middle East in their own image but even if the United States prevails he predicts a bleak future where Americans may have to fight perpetual wars in the vain effort to satisfy the craving for limitless freedom.

Article	'Anthropology and Counterinsurgency: The Strange Story of their Curious Relationship'
Author	Montgomery McFate, Office of Naval Research
Publication Details	<i>Military Review</i> , vol. LXXXV, no. 2, March–April, 2005, pp. 24–38

SYNOPSIS

This article chronicles the long and often unhappy relationship between the academic discipline of anthropology and the profession of arms. Although told largely, but not exclusively, from an American perspective the article points out the value of cultural information in waging warfare for any armed force. As the title notes, the relationship has been a curious one, particularly in the United States, due to mutual neglect by both the military and anthropologists. The latter distrust the use to which their professional expertise will be put by military forces, while the former have rarely seen the value of possessing cultural intelligence about their foes.

While the need for cultural information is now being fuelled by the insurgency in Iraq, the author, by taking an historical perspective, demonstrates that the relationship has been not only a long one but at times quite a successful one. However, as the author points out, the current state of the academic discipline of anthropology, which has taken a distinct turn towards postmodernism, makes most of the information available in professional journals almost useless for military purposes. For example,

he quotes the title of one article that has appeared recently in the journal *Cultural Anthropology* as being ‘Material Consumers, Fabricating Subjects: Perplexity, Global Connectivity Discourses and Transnational Feminist Research’. With article titles such as this, it is not surprising to learn that an anthropologist recently took fourth place in a bad-writing contest. If the discipline is to be of use to the military once more, much will have to change in the university system, including a reconsideration of the ethical code under which anthropologists, like other social scientists, now operate.

As McFate points out, left to themselves, the armed forces can do great damage with an incomplete understanding of cultural information. The problem at Abu Ghraib prison was that interrogators, using a study of Arab culture and psychology conducted in the 1970s, believed that they could break the spirit of Iraqi males through sexual humiliation. This was a grave misreading of the ethnographic material. Thinking that they were creating a situation in which prisoners would do almost anything to prevent the dissemination of the photographs to family and friends, they instead destroyed the honour of their victims, which could then only be restored through appeasement of blood. As Bernard Brodie once said, ‘... bad anthropology contributed to bad strategy’. The author concludes that, while anthropologists may dislike and neglect the military, their expertise is necessary to many of the tasks currently confronting armed forces.

Article	‘Intervention, Stabilisation and Transformation Operations: The Role of Land Power in the New Strategic Environment’
Author	Dr Steven Metz and Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Millen
Publication Details	<i>Proceedings</i> , vol. XXXV, no. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 41–52

SYNOPSIS

In this article Dr Steven Metz and Lieutenant Colonel Raymond Millen, of the Strategic Studies Institute at the US Army War College, attempt to address the changing role of land power and land forces within what they believe to be the new global security environment. The key premise to their argument is that ‘a historic shift has taken place in the strategic environment as globalization and interconnectedness propel the concept of security in new, unforeseen directions’. The implications of this interconnection is that ‘every conflict [has] regional and global repercussions’. What this means is that internal conflict or intense repression is now the common concern of the world community.

Metz and Millen believe that US strategy is still adjusting to this reality. They outline the ‘revolutionary’ grand strategy, which must be defeated, not simply contained, in

this new strategic environment, instability and indirect aggression. Flowing from internal instability, aggression demands the actual transformation of an unstable state into one that is both stable and willing to adhere to the norms of the international community. Clearly, this is a reflection on the strategic rationale for US actions in the wider Middle East. Metz and Millen go on to describe the crucial role of land power in this new grand strategy.

According to the authors, land power is vital, as it is the key tool by which aggressive or conflict-ridden states can be transformed into stable ones. They posit that the primary function of the American military in this new security environment is therefore to conduct what they call Intervention, Stabilisation and Transformation (IST) operations. Before moving on to further examine IST in detail, Metz and Millen undertake a short analysis of how the United States has suffered strategically by failing to apply this approach in both Afghanistan and Iraq. The United States focused too heavily on ‘intervention’ operations, neglecting the equal requirements for ‘stability’ and ‘transformation’ operations. Focused on destroying the enemy, combat units quickly became exhausted, and operational-level commanders were short of military police, intelligence, engineer and civil affairs units that are required for maintaining order and securing populations centres. Interestingly for Australia, Metz and Millen also see ‘light infantry’ as a high-demand asset for modern IST operations.

Such operations are the means for projecting American power against a source of instability or proxy aggression, quickly stabilising the nation or region where the intervention takes place, but then undertaking the long and arduous process of transforming the state into a stable entity. In other words, IST operations ‘seek to ameliorate a problem rather than just deferring or containing it.’ Not surprisingly, Metz and Millen believe that IST operations must reflect the seamless integration of all the elements of national power (in Australian terms IST operations would be a ‘whole-of-government’ planning issue).

Finally, the authors offer some important thoughts for IST operations and the development of military forces. First, they call for a new concept of ‘counter-insurgency’ (to replace the old Cold War-era one) that takes into account protracted opposition. Second, they identify the need for advanced leadership education and training within armed forces on IST. Third, while IST may well be inter-agency in nature, Metz and Millen do see Defence as rightly having the ‘lead’ for both strategic and operational planning. Fourth, they discuss the need for specific units to perform IST while acknowledging that the British military has had success with using the same units for both warfighting and peacekeeping. Finally, they identify the need to enhance both the information and psychological operations capabilities within the military, as well as increasing the capability for ‘training teams’ to deploy for the purposes of training local security forces.

Article	'The Place of Management in Defence (and Defence Education)'
Author	Trevor Taylor
Publication Details	<i>RUSI Journal</i> , vol. 150, no. 2, April 2005, pp. 24–8

SYNOPSIS

Professor Trevor Taylor is the Head of Cranfield University's Defence Management and Security Analysis Department at the Defence Academy, Shrivenham. He argues that in the last forty years the professional study of management has expanded rapidly and is continuing to grow. With the increasing pressure to manage the modern defence organisation efficiently and a growing reliance on contractors to provide a broader range of services, it is time to consider 'whether and how military education should be part of the knowledge associated with the professional military officer'.

Professor Taylor asserts six reasons for the study of management by military officers:

1. While management should be of secondary relevance once the fighting begins, 'it is prior management effort that puts in place all the elements of capability that the commander needs for that operation'. To highlight his point, Taylor argues that the 'success of British pilots in the battle of Britain owed much to the aircraft development and building program initiated after 1933'.
2. There is an ethical dimension to making the best possible use of public resources, particularly in peacetime. He asserts that military organisations often lose sight of this point and instead focus on maximising their budgets.
3. Related to the previous point is that, from an intra-government perspective, Defence 'cannot be expected to fare well in debate if it cannot demonstrate both that it makes good use of what it receives and is constantly striving to do better'.
4. Military officers will need to be more skilled in the practices of management if they are to participate in the struggle for influence within the department. Taylor asserts that there is tension between civilian and military officers, and it is the civilian managers' understanding of management that will lead them to dominate defence, particularly in peacetime. Increasing integration of the civilian and military staffs is unlikely to lead to functioning effectively if 'one element is sensitised to the management perspective and the other is not'.
5. Military operations 'short of high intensity conflict contain elements where management thought and practice are relevant'. Taylor cites the many management-related activities that military commanders are required to perform in peace support operations to back up his assertion.

6. At a time when the nation does not have ‘unambiguous threatening adversaries’, the government has opted to pursue ambitious force projection goals while allocating limited resources. The expectation is that the government expects ‘non-defence benefits, such as employment, for its defence spending’. The onus is on the defence establishment to ‘minimize waste in its resource use’.

Professor Taylor concludes by arguing that ‘the design and construction of relevant military capability in a cost-effective manner is fundamentally a management task, and that the literature and thinking of Management as an academic subject is of great potential for the support of defence’.

Article	‘Cognitive Readiness in Network-Centric Operations’
Author	Nancy J. Wesensten, Gregory Belenky, and Thomas J. Balkin
Publication Details	<i>Proceedings</i> , vol. XXXV, no. 1, Spring 2005, pp. 94–105

SYNOPSIS

Wesensten, Belenky and Balkin, from the US Walter Reed Army Institute of Research, take a very interesting and alternative approach to thinking about network-centric operations in this article. Network-centric warfare (NCW) is the basis of doctrine and operations for the US Army, Navy and Air Force. Fundamental to NCW is the availability of accurate, detailed, real-time information at all levels of command and control. Unlike most NCW researchers, who focus on the many and varied information systems and technical aspects, the authors focus on the human aspects. They highlight that NCW operations and associated self-synchronisation put a premium on the performance of individual soldiers and small teams.

Fundamental to NCW is the notion that, with accurate, detailed information available at all levels, highly complex groups organise naturally (and optimally) from the bottom up (i.e. self-synchronisation). In this context, information superiority is advantageous only if it translates into decision superiority. According to the authors, self-synchronisation within groups prosecuting ‘aggressive actions’ is an ancient practice, likely drawing on cognitive modules shaped by our evolutionary history of hunting and fighting in small groups. They conclude that self-synchronisation is modelled by ‘flocking algorithms’ (similar to birds in flight) where one’s movement makes use of information regarding the location, speed and direction of the three or four closest flock mates. This behaviour is evident in ‘line of sight’-enabled small unit operations, where individual soldiers, seeing their comrades, manoeuvre towards an objective in support. Rather than being a revolution in the technical sense, NCW may be seen as taking advantage of innate human abilities and propensities.

As a result of their study, the authors believe that NCW might be better viewed as a technological evolution of the ‘line of sight’ capability on which military operations have always depended. By expanding line of sight, NCW revolutionises the extent to which maintaining cognitive capabilities in each individual soldier or operator becomes critical to successful operations. Taking this into the future, Wesensten, Belenky and Balkin posit that these cognitive ‘factors’ will increasingly be viewed as analogous to items of logistical resupply. They outline how soldiers in any future ‘networked force’ will have sensors and software incorporated into individual computers. These sensors and software will provide information on their ‘biomedical status’ with respect to performance degrading stressors to commanders. Commanders in turn will be able to use this information to manage ‘biomedical resupply’ (water, food, sleep) of their soldiers in order to sustain combat effectiveness and enhance performance.

Article	‘Transformation’
Author	Major General Robert Scales, US Army (Retd) and Vice Admiral Arthur Cebrowski, US Navy (Retd)
Publication Details	<i>Armed Forces Journal</i> , March 2005, pp. 22–8

SYNOPSIS

This article is a debate between two retired officers who have both shaped the US transformation program. General Scales is critical of the current US approach to transformation, which he thinks is too tied to high technology. Scales believes that US defence planners are developing weapons for a future clash with a peer competitor, when they should be concentrating on the threats at hand. For Scales the major shortcomings of the United States in Iraq are human and cultural, not technological. As he says, the enemy has a vote and he can choose to fight in a way that makes him invisible to systems that target electronic signatures. The technology required by the troops in Iraq should provide them with useful capabilities that can be employed in the current battle.

Vice Admiral Cebrowski notes several trends—including ongoing government support and contemporary military experience in Iraq—that indicate transformation is here to stay. One of the problems that Cebrowski sees is that the United States is using what he calls legacy processes in its defence planning and budgeting. There needs to be a new approach to thinking about defence so that US forces can keep up with its enemies. Cebrowski argues that opponents unable to defeat the United States on the conventional battlefield have turned to other strategies: irregular warfare or nuclear weapons to avoid the strengths of the American military. Under these conditions the United States needs to make greater distinctions between the types of research and development it conducts, ensuring that the capabilities developed meet America’s strategic requirements. Cebrowski closes by making the case for what he refers to as strategic spending. He believes that this type of spending would force

defence industry to create more technological options and better equipment in a shorter procurement cycle.

Article	‘Transforming UK Armed Forces’
Author	General Sir Michael Walker, Chief of Defence Staff, United Kingdom
Publication Details	<i>RUSI Journal</i> , vol. 150, no. 1, February 2005, pp. 45–8

SYNOPSIS

This article is based on the Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) lecture. The CDS provides an overview of those capabilities and qualities that will determine the success of the United Kingdom’s transformation program. He begins by noting that about one third of the UK forces are at present deployed in missions all over the world. He also notes that, since the end of the Cold War, defence planning has been driven by the need to change in order to keep up with an enemy who is seen fleetingly and emerges only in the most remote and inhospitable parts of the globe. To fight such an enemy and win, the United Kingdom requires forces that are flexible, sustainable and deployable. These considerations are now the key drivers of force transformation in the UK context. As Sir Michael says, ‘Transformation is about what is new and what we can do differently: it is a marriage of technology and ideas. Not for the sake of it, but through need.’

The CDS provides examples from *Operation Telic* (the UK name for the 2003 invasion of Iraq) of how capabilities belonging to all three services were networked in ways not possible in the past. For Sir Michael, success in the future will rely on new capabilities and old military traits such as adaptability and professionalism. Investment in future capabilities must be both effective and flexible. Old platforms can be adapted in a mix of sensor/weapons/software that will extend the life of equipment by adapting it to new uses. Technology, of course, counts for little without well-trained sailors, soldiers and airmen. Transformation will include a range of personnel issues that mean traditional structures may change, but only for the right reasons: greater operational effectiveness, a better work–life balance and job satisfaction. However, the armed forces deal in strategic first aid. To a large extent, the treatment, convalescence and cure are in the hands of politicians, civil servants, nongovernment organisations, police and ultimately the British people themselves. In the new security environment it is important to communicate the rationale and imperatives of both military capabilities and military operations. The media is another player that must be factored into an already complicated situation and one that should be dealt with constructively, rather than in an adversarial fashion.

The article ends by remarking that successful transformation in this complex environment will depend on both the new and the traditional. Ultimately, synthesis

comes down to employing new technologies and ideas, while preserving important human factors such as originality and unpredictability in the exercise of the operational art.

Article	‘Drawing Lessons from the Past: Historical Analysis of Stabilisation Operations’
Author	Colin Irwin and Alistair Morely, Historical Analysis Team, Defence Science and Technology Laboratory, United Kingdom
Publication Details	<i>RUSI Journal</i> , vol. 150, no. 1, February 2005, pp. 49–53

SYNOPSIS

In this article two operational analysts who are conducting an ongoing study into stability operations provide an overview of their initial findings. The article begins by giving the reader definitions of the main terms used by the study team. These terms are:

- stability,
- stabilisation,
- mission success,
- long-term success, and
- policy success.

Having defined their terms, the authors describe how they selected thirty-eight case studies from an initial one hundred stabilisation operations that occurred during the period 1900–2004. The case studies selected were considered to be most relevant to the current concerns of the British Army. These case studies were divided into categories of hostile environments (organised armed resistance) and permissive environments (the absence of an organised armed resistance). However, the majority of the case studies involved operations in hostile environments.

The first significant finding was that, in situations with a hostile environment, the prospects for long-term success were significantly reduced even when the military mission had been successful. With the security situation identified as the main factor determining success or failure, the authors moved on to look at other factors that could contain or defeat armed resistance. Not surprisingly, these other key factors included good strategy and doctrine, good intelligence, force ratios and whether the regime being supported was partially or wholly democratic. These and other factors are analysed in a series of statistical tables. The conclusions at this stage of the study are that, while the security situation was the most important factor, strategy, doctrine, the size of the force and democracy are force multipliers in determining a successful outcome for stability operations.

Article	‘Violent Beliefs’
Author	Hugo Slim
Publication Details	<i>RUSI Journal</i> , vol. 150, no. 2, April 2005, pp. 20–3

SYNOPSIS

Dr Slim argues that realist politics of interest often reduce religious belief to a ‘cover for the normal interest-based politics of greed and power’. While he agrees that this argument can be valid in some circumstances, Slim acknowledges that it underplays the view that religious belief can also genuinely drive war. Consequently, ‘religious belief must be analysed as a conviction politics and not simply as a political ploy’.

The article examines ‘religious mentality’, arguing that it differs markedly from the rational secular approach. The religious mind emphasises ‘faith, interpretation, paradox, parallel reality and ritual over reason, fact, logic and reality’. Slim discusses each of these elements of the religious mind but tends to focus on the importance of ritual to give power to a transcendent reality. He argues that ‘...ritual can be more real than reality itself because it is in ritual that one encounters and engages the transcendent or divine’. This idea of ritual is central to understanding religious violence. The author argues that terrorist attacks are often ritualised, and ‘spilling blood is not just the stuff of war but also the practice and power of ritual—the bringing about of God’s purpose’.

Slim then examines the need for analysts to understand the ‘eschatology’ of the religious as a primary source of belief and motivation. Eschatology refers to the ‘religious doctrines about God’s purpose and future of the world’. How religious groups interpret these doctrines is central to how they choose to act in the world. Monotheist groups can have a difficult time resolving the apparent paradoxes of a God that is both loving and violent.

If a group accepts an ‘activist theology of violence’, Slim argues that there are four ingredients that can lead it to develop a doctrine of extreme and indiscriminate violence. The first is the context in which it is shaped. While not all oppressed peoples are automatically violent, Slim argues that, ‘... there is no doubt that a personal and political situation which is felt and theologised as humiliating to God and His people can shape a corresponding theology which justifies violence, vengeance and retribution’. The second ingredient is the way in which it understands history. If a religious movement has a precise vision of the end of history, then the historical struggle can become very precise and God’s interests in day-to-day human history and politics is clear. The third ingredient is the emphasis placed on the role of ‘human agency’ within God’s divine plan: ‘If God is seen to need their help and the enemy is identified as evil and hostile, then a religious movement can adopt a military form and violent action becomes a religious obligation’. According to Slim, the fourth ingredient—the level of ‘dualism’—is the most critical in shaping ‘violent faith’. Dualism refers to both people and space. It is about ‘determining which group and which places are holy to God’. A dualist argument follows the logic that ‘If only

people who are true to God are pure and worthy then the rest must be challenged and cleansed.’

Slim concludes by highlighting the need for ‘political and military analysts to engage with and understand religious ideology and the political and military programmes that flow through them’.

Article	‘Trapped in the Dead Ground: US Counterinsurgency Strategy in Iraq’
Author	Alastair Finlan
Publication Details	<i>Small Wars and Insurgencies</i> , vol. 16, no. 1, March 2005, pp. 1–21

SYNOPSIS

In this article the author, a senior lecturer in Strategic Studies at the University of Wales, reassesses United States (US) counterinsurgency strategy in Iraq. He argues that its relative lack of success to date has been due to limited intelligence, a failure to secure political conditions that would enhance their counterinsurgency operations and an over-reliance on Israeli counterinsurgency methods that are not suitable to the conditions in Iraq. He suggests that the US counterinsurgency campaign is struggling in Iraq because US military planners have been placed in an extraordinarily difficult situation by their political superiors who have forced them into a strategic ‘dead ground’.

The flaws in US grand strategy concerning the invasion of Iraq, force levels and post-regime change planning have created almost insurmountable problems for military commanders in the new campaign against the Iraqi resistance. In essence the US forces in Iraq are not configured for counterinsurgency either in terms of numbers or orientation. The author suggests that strategies based on past experience are not an option for the United States in Iraq as it does not have the necessary manpower, either in uniform or even when supplemented with private military firms. Indeed, even the unconventional specialists such as Special Forces cannot provide a ‘magic bullet’ solution in the face of widespread resistance.

The article suggests that this failure of strategy has been in part due to the high political visibility of neoconservative ideology during the first Bush administration. It has led to a situation in Iraq where the outcome remains far from certain and the author proposes that the increasing escalation of insurgency has the potential to lead to a revolutionary transformation of Iraqi politics and society. He concludes that ‘the solution to the current imbroglio lies not on the battlefield but rather in the democratic process in the United States that will hopefully order the US military out of the dead ground’.