

# S O P D



Senior Officer Professional Digest

January 2008, Issue 56

## Contents

### 2 ARTICLE SUMMARIES

Dishonest Doctrine *by Ralph Peters*

COIN of the Realm *by Colin H. Kahl*

3 Training Foreign Police *by Walter C. Ladwig III*

4 The Care and Feeding of Your Interpreter *by Robert E. Lucius*

The Role of the Artillery in Afghanistan *by David W. Grebstad*

5 Buying Time in Afghanistan *by Carl Robichaud*

6 Avoiding the system reboot *by Shawn Brimley and Vikram Singh*

7 Who Lost Iraq? *by James Dobbins*

Up Periscope *by Andrew Davies*

8 The Great Leap backward? *by Elizabeth C. Economy*

### REFLECTIONS

9 The Sources of Soviet Conduct *by George Kennan*

### NEW PUBLICATION

10 *Organising Complexity*

The **Senior Officer Professional Digest** is a publication of the Land Warfare Studies Centre. Feedback regarding this publication is welcome and should be addressed to the Director.



### Land Warfare Studies Centre

Ian Campbell Road  
Dunroon ACT 2600  
Australia  
+61 2 6265 9624

[lwsc.publications@defence.gov.au](mailto:lwsc.publications@defence.gov.au)

**In response to an increasing number of requests for articles recommended within the *SOPD*, the Editors would like to inform our readers that articles cannot be provided by the LWSC due to reasons of copyright law. To obtain any articles, please follow the URLs if provided or direct all requests to your local branch of the Defence Library Service.**

### MESSAGE FROM THE EDITORS

This month the Editors of the *Senior Officer Professional Digest* recommend ten articles drawn from professional and academic journals on the subjects of counterinsurgency (COIN), police training, interpreters, artillery, Afghanistan, Iraq, submarines and China.

Ralph Peters' latest contribution to the counterinsurgency debate is heavily critical of the new US COIN field manual, while Colin H. Kahl's article serves as something of a rebuttal, questioning the wisdom of Peters' 'coercionist' thinking. Walter C. Ladwig focuses on training foreign police for COIN, and Robert E. Lucius provides excellent guidance for the use of interpreters—another essential requirement in today's operations. To the other end of the spectrum, David W. Grebstad's piece on artillery shows that, with some creative thinking, even the guns can be used in lower-intensity operations.

Moving from the tactical to the strategic level, Carl Robichaud presents a new strategy to combat the Taliban, and Shawn Brimley and Vikram Singh argue that the many tactical and strategic adaptations already in place should not be forgotten by US and Coalition forces. James Dobbins builds on this point, maintaining that Coalition forces must use setbacks in Iraq as lessons to help build future forces and strategies.

Finally, shifting focus to Australia's region, Andrew Davies has written a piece on the growth of regional submarine forces, while Elizabeth C. Economy presents an article regarding the alarming degradation of China's environment and its security implications.

Also this month, the Editors are pleased to introduce a new section to the *SOPD*, entitled 'Reflections', which will replace the 'From the Vault' section of previous issues.

Enjoy  
The Editors

**Ralph Peters, 'Dishonest doctrine', *Armed Forces Journal*, December 2007, <<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2007/12/3144330>>.**

Regular readers of the *SOPD* may remember an article by Ralph Peters that was included in the July 2007 *SOPD* ('Learning to Lose'). In 'Dishonest doctrine', Peters reiterates some of the themes of that earlier work, particularly that by pursuing doctorates at civilian institutions, military officers have adopted an approach to history that is of little military utility. By this he means that in the writing of the new US Army and US Marine Corps counterinsurgency (COIN) manual, the authors developed a theory first, then judiciously picked and chose examples that fit their preconceived ideas. Peters points out, for example, that while Malaya is cited as an example of a successful counter insurgency operation, the campaign against the *Mau Mau* in Kenya is not, despite the fact that it was also successful.

---

**'Education, clearly, is not synonymous with intellectual integrity. Doctrine should be written by successful battlefield commanders, not by doctors of philosophy playing soldier.'**

---

Peters also revisits the idea that it is battlefield experience, not academic learning, that is required to write doctrine. While there are few who would dispute that experience in the field is an invaluable contribution to understanding, Peters does, at times, appear a hostage to his anti-intellectual biases, and his direct style of writing borders on being *too* direct. But the reader should not dismiss what he has to say—Peters is right when he says that '[w]e have to get doctrine right', and the reasons he gives for doctrine going wrong are examples that should be heeded by all military organisations.

*Ralph Peters is a retired US Army Lieutenant Colonel and distinguished military commentator. His latest book is Wars of Blood and Faith.*

**Colin H. Kahl, 'COIN of the Realm: Is There a Future for Counterinsurgency?', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Iss. 6, November/December 2007, pp. 169–76.**

Colin Kahl considers in this article the new US Army and Marine Corps counterinsurgency (COIN) manual.

Colin Kahl is generally positive about the manual, rising to its defence against those who he would label as belonging to the 'coercion' school of COIN, such as Edward Luttwak and Ralph Peters. While Kahl argues that the 'clear, hold, build' approach embodied within the new COIN manual is sound, and its emphasis on peaceful engagement, persuasion and above all on the 'winning of hearts and minds' is correct, 'coercionists' propose a different tack. As Kahl's label suggests, these figures want a strategy based on violent intimidation of the host populace, to 'out-terrorise the insurgents' in Luttwak's words. Ralph Peters briefly outlines this particular argument in his article 'Dishonest Doctrine', as reviewed above. Kahl concludes that, despite the apparent logic of the

coercion school, its historical record of success is poor. For example, the *Wehrmacht's* violent anti-partisan campaign in Yugoslavia during the Second World War and the Red Army's indiscriminate use of violence in Afghanistan in the 1970s and 1980s are two major examples of the failure of coercion.

Kahl's article offers a strong defence of the more conciliatory approach to COIN as found in General Petraeus' manual, while still pragmatically recognising that it is a concept of operations fraught with difficulty. In so doing, Kahl highlights many of the salient points of the new US COIN manual, providing a brief and succinct overview of this critical new document for those not familiar with it.

---

**'Whether or not the directives of the COIN FM succeed in Iraq, the general model it embraces probably represents the best of many bad approaches to counterinsurgency.'**

---

*Colin H. Kahl is an Assistant Professor of Security Studies at Georgetown University and a Fellow of the Center for a New American Security.*

**Walter C. Ladwig III, 'Training Foreign Police: A Missing Aspect of U.S. Security Assistance to Counterinsurgency', *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 26, Iss. 4, pp. 285–93.**

Police forces remain the fundamental tool of the fight against all criminality—even criminality as heinous as terrorism. Therefore, Walter C. Ladwig argues in this article that the training of foreign police forces should form a crucial part in the strategy of the Global War on Terror.

While Ladwig's focus is the United States—especially when he makes suggestions for institutional and statutory reform, his underlying thesis is universally valid. Ladwig argues that police forces are crucial to counterinsurgency (COIN) because they can contribute very effectively to the crucial 'hold' phase of any 'clear, hold, build' COIN operation. While recent experience in Iraq and Afghanistan has shown that military forces excel at clearing areas of insurgents, they are, by virtue of their separation from society, unable to live and work 'amongst the people' as readily as the police. Their familiarity with the human and physical terrain helps police forces to build the trust and contact vital for the development of reliable human intelligence sources. Such intelligence is crucial—recent operational experience has shown that investigatory police work based on human intelligence is one of the foundations for success against terrorists and insurgents.

---

**'From Iraq to Afghanistan to the Philippines, effective police forces are a key component of efforts to combat insurgency.'**

---

In Afghanistan, an honest and capable police force could greatly enhance the legitimacy of its government, and indeed the ineffectiveness of the police force is one of the most often cited reasons for disaffection among the people. While it remains the United States' primary task to train the Afghan Police, Ladwig points out that the

focus on deploying large numbers of poorly trained police is counterproductive. Poorly trained police are more prone to corruption, infiltration and incompetence, all of which can alienate the people.

While police assistance has always been recognised in Australian policy circles as important, it has not received significant attention. ADF personnel would do well, therefore, to read this article, and consider how to shape their reconstruction and assistance efforts in light of the arguably problematic United States police-training program. Moreover, they should read Ladwig to identify the most useful attributes that local police can bring to the fight against the Taliban and other terrorist organisations, and determine how to apply and develop these attributes wherever possible.

*Walter C. Ladwig III is a scholar of Merton College, University of Oxford.*

**Robert E. Lucius, 'The Care and Feeding of Your Interpreter', *Marine Corps Gazette*, Vol. 9, Iss. 11, November 2007, pp. 61–5.**

The expansion of operations into areas of the world not considered important until recently has forced military organisations to respond to a whole series of cultural challenges. One of the greatest of these is language. While armed forces have acknowledged that they require a greater depth of language skills, they remain heavily dependant on interpreters and will continue to do so for the near future.

In this article, Robert E. Lucius gives a good introduction to working with an interpreter. Much of what he considers may seem rudimentary, but it is often the basics that are overlooked in situations where an interpreter is needed, especially by those who are monolingual. In a military context, jargon, terminology and initialisms only compound the difficulty of clearly translating the meaning of a message from one language to another. Lucius touches upon this and the many other factors that need to be considered if an interpreter is to be used successfully. As members of the ADF continue to be deployed to regions where they are expected to interact with people with whom they do not share a common language, more soldiers are going to be dependant on interpreters. Keeping in mind the points raised in this article may help make such situations a success.

---

**'Effective interpretation requires a tremendous range of knowledge, a breadth of skills, and an innate capacity that most people lack.'**

---

*Lieutenant Colonel Lucius is the Marine Attaché and American Legation United States Naval Attaché, US Defence Attaché Office, Hanoi, Vietnam.*

**David W. Grebstad, 'The Role of the Artillery in Afghanistan', *Canadian Army Journal*, Vol. 10, Iss. 3, Fall 2007, pp. 13–26.**

Artillery is not usually thought of as a useful tool in counterinsurgency campaigns, often being dismissed out of hand as simply too powerful and too indiscriminate. Yet, as David W. Grebstad reports, the Canadian Army has successfully employed its guns in Afghanistan, complementing its use of another non-traditional force in counterinsurgency (COIN)—armour.

Grebstad believes that the artillery can provide battle-winning support to the infantry in COIN, just as it has traditionally done in conventional wars. In COIN, the infantry are called on to operate in small, dispersed units close to the people, where APCs, IFVs and heavy organic firepower are often not appropriate or deployable. Engagement ranges are close, and small infantry patrols cannot generate the necessary firepower to overwhelm the enemy and achieve victory in every encounter. Artillery, Grebstad argues, provides that overmatch. The author notes, however, that the artillery cannot operate in accordance with orthodox doctrine, and that new techniques and protocols are required.

---

**‘Since the deployment of a battery of M777 Howitzers to the Afghanistan theatre, the Canadian Army has come to dominate the battlespace through greater range and lethality.’**

---

The Canadian Army has demonstrated by its use of tanks and artillery in Afghanistan that the full toolkit of combined arms operations remains open to commanders in COIN operation. Grebstad’s article therefore makes excellent reading for commanders and senior officers, as it offers concrete proof that artillery can be used in COIN, and suggests points to keep in mind when using it. More importantly perhaps, it offers a snapshot of an operation that proves the continuing and universal validity of the combined arms model of operations.

The Canadian Army has demonstrated by its use of tanks and artillery in Afghanistan that the full toolkit of combined arms operations remains open to commanders in COIN operation. Grebstad’s article therefore makes excellent reading for commanders and senior officers, as it offers concrete proof that artillery can be used in COIN, and suggests points to keep in mind when using it. More importantly perhaps, it offers a snapshot of an operation that proves the continuing and universal validity of the combined arms model of operations.

*Captain David Grebstad graduated from the University of Manitoba with a BA in 1996. As a member of C Battery, Royal Canadian Horse Artillery, he served as a forward observation officer in Afghanistan supporting the 3rd Battalion, Princess Patricia’s Canadian Light Infantry in 2003. He currently serves as an Instructor-in-Gunnery with the 67 (Depot) Battery.*

**Carl Robichaud, ‘Buying Time in Afghanistan’, *World Policy Journal*, Vol. 24, Iss. 2, Summer 2007, pp. 1–10.**

In ‘Buying Time in Afghanistan’, Carl Robichaud argues for a modest change in direction in order to buy time for the implementation of what he sees as a more pragmatic goal for that country.

The author maintains that Afghanistan cannot be the perfectly functioning democracy that many in the West would like. Rather, Robichaud suggests that the Coalition’s ambitions should be lowered to a more achievable level. Afghanistan may never be a ‘light on the hill’, but at least it can be made reasonably stable and coherent. Robichaud argues that, to this end, the United States, NATO, Australia and the other Coalition members should focus development aid on those parts of Afghanistan that have already been secured against the Taliban, rather than the current approach of targeting aid on projects in the most insecure areas of the country. This would serve to stretch the scant development funds available even further by relieving donors of the large security overheads that attend development in the country’s most dangerous provinces. Success of these projects would also serve as a potent example of the benefits of cooperation with the Coalition.

---

**‘Success in Afghanistan is possible, but will require a break from the patterns of the past, which have focused resources on narrowly conceived military goals.’**

---

Moreover, Robichaud maintains that those development projects that do go ahead are those that seek to counter Taliban influence, rather than those that simply provide for the greatest needs of the Afghan people. While the efforts of the Australian Reconstruction Task Forces have a more nuanced focus than this, it is nevertheless an important criticism of the reconstruction and development activities currently underway in Afghanistan, and one that Australian commanders and strategists should heed.

Robichaud's argument is convincing for a country like Australia whose contribution to overseas deployments will only ever be relatively modest. Available resources, therefore, must be targeted precisely if they are to have the desired effect, and Robichaud's article offers a different and very reasonable approach to providing the necessary precision. The author's supporting points also build strongly on his central thesis, and make for interesting and engaging reading on their own. Robichaud's article is, therefore, crucial reading for all senior officers and policymakers.

*Carl Robichaud is director of the 'Afghanistan Watch' program at The Century Foundation in the United States, which recently released the report he co-authored, entitled Rule of Law: The Missing Priority.*

**Shawn Brimley and Vikram Singh, 'Averting the system reboot', *Armed Forces Journal*, December 2007, <<http://www.armedforcesjournal.com/2007/12/2981245>>.**

Shawn Brimley and Vikram Singh have written a brief, interesting piece with a clear point: do not forget the tactical and operational lessons of counterinsurgency (COIN) learned in Iraq. To this end, Brimley and Singh offer a computer analogy, likening the armed forces to a computer that may be 'rebooted' if certain 'computer errors' occur, causing a loss of the lessons learned in Iraq.

---

**'Eleven years after the last American soldier left Vietnam, Andrew Krepinevich published "The Army and Vietnam", a blistering critique of failure to adapt during the war ... We do not want some Army major to write "The Army and Iraq" sometime after 2020 ...'**

---

Brimley and Singh make a simple, but important point for all military organisations that have participated in the Iraq war—because COIN and similar activities will increasingly be the mission armed forces are called upon to undertake, the lessons learned must be retained, and not abandoned in the aftermath of possible failure. Of course, the US Army's experience after Vietnam is close to the author's minds. They point to several important innovations learned during the Vietnam War that

were subsequently abandoned, and then relearned at great cost in soldier's lives in Iraq. Recent innovations, such as the US Army 'Human Terrain Teams' are one such adaptation to COIN that may be lost in a 'system reboot'. In the Australian context, invaluable experience in raising and operating Reconstruction Task Forces could possibly be lost from the Army's institutional memory when that commitment ends. Accordingly, avoiding the sort of circumstances in which these and similar vital lessons may be forgotten is important for senior officers, and Brimley and Singh's article offers insight into how and why such circumstances may arise.

*Shawn Brimley and Vikram Singh are Fellows at the Center for a New American Security in Washington, DC. Shawn Brimley previously worked at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a leading Washington security think tank, while Vikram Singh recently finished working for the Office of the Secretary of Defense.*

**James Dobbins, 'Who Lost Iraq?; Lessons from the Debacle', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Iss. 5, September/October 2007, pp. 61–74.**

In light of the recent announcement to draw down Australian forces in Iraq, and the probable withdrawal of most US troops in the next few years, former US Assistant Secretary of State James Dobbins' article is timely. He argues that, despite achieving less than what was sought in Iraq, Coalition forces should not remove counterinsurgency and nation-building from their military, diplomatic and political toolkits just yet.

Dobbins maintains that the lessons learned on operation in Iraq should be institutionalised within the United States armed forces through training and new doctrine. To abandon its hard-won lessons runs the risk of incurring the same high cost of unpreparedness the United States suffered after Vietnam. Australian officers and policymakers should take heed of this point too, as it is equally applicable to Australia.

On the other hand, Dobbins argues, lessons should not be taken too far: the military should not be significantly restructured based on experience in Iraq. The Army is still the only force capable of defeating a symmetrical state opponent, and as such should be primarily shaped for this task. Rather, while some changes should be made to the armed forces in light of the lessons of Iraq, Dobbins insists that intelligence agencies and the diplomatic corps should take up the lead role in the War on Terror. He believes that these bodies have achieved most of the successes to date in this conflict. Australian experience has been similar, with the Australian Federal Police providing most of the counterterrorist (CT) assistance to Indonesia in the wake of the Bali bombings, while Australian diplomatic efforts prior to the attack paved the way for this cooperation. This was Australia's most significant CT operation, and was the largest disruption of terrorist efforts in the region that Australia has yet achieved.

'Who Lost Iraq?' makes excellent reading for the Australian military, diplomatic and policy communities. Dobbins' article presents a well reasoned interpretation of how future US administrations may react to the war in Iraq, and it is offered with all the authority and insight of a senior public servant who has served under both Presidents Clinton and Bush junior. Dobbins' article, therefore, offers a broad and valuable insight into how Australia's key ally may reposition itself over the coming years.

*James Dobbins is Director of the International and Security Defense Policy Center at the RAND Corporation. He has served as Assistant Secretary of State for both President Bill Clinton and President George W. Bush, and was also President Bush's first envoy to Afghanistan.*

**Andrew Davies, 'Up Periscope', *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 152, Iss. 5, October 2007, pp. 64–9.**

---

**'The degree of activity in the submarine field is impressive.'**

---

At a time when Asian countries are accelerating their spending on modern, high-tech conventional armaments, Australia must be alert if it is to maintain its qualitative edge over potential regional state adversaries. Andrew

Davies' article provides an excellent aid to understanding procurement in one critical regional capability: submarine forces.

Davies presents a brief but to-the-point overview of the boats and weapons currently in service with regional navies and the weapons systems soon to enter service or currently under consideration. While not of direct relevance to senior Army readers, Davies' article will help inform the type of joint-force decisions senior officers may need to make in the future, and give them insight into the ways in which regional submarine forces may expand or constrain Australian military options in the event of war.

*Andrew Davies is the Director of Operations and Capabilities at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.*

**Elizabeth C. Economy, 'The Great Leap Backward?: The Costs of China's Environmental Crisis', *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 86, Iss. 5, September/October 2007, pp. 38–59.**

Elizabeth Economy has assembled an impressive array of statistical evidence indicating the truly staggering cost that China's rapid economic development has inflicted on the environment.

While awareness of this damage is now widespread, Economy's article is unique in that she explains why China's apparently comprehensive and ambitious targets to reduce environmental damage are likely to fail. The heart of her argument is that Chinese local governments will continue to ignore the central government's directives to implement changes to environmental laws. This is a surprising point given that China's central government is widely believed to exercise unyielding control over the entire country. Economy demonstrates comprehensively that, in this particular case, this is simply not true.

---

**'China's leaders have ratcheted up their rhetoric, setting ambitious environmental targets ... The rest of the world seems to accept that Beijing has charted a new course ... Unfortunately, much of this enthusiasm stems from the widespread but misguided belief that what Beijing says goes.'**

---

While China has become a key partner of Australia it is also in Australia's interests that China's growth becomes sustainable and less damaging to the environment. Accordingly, senior officers and bureaucrats must remain abreast of the links between China's economic development and environmental stress, and Economy's article provides just such an analysis. This article will help those senior leaders remain cognisant of the issues facing China's environment, and help them to correspondingly plan Australia's future strategy regarding this issue.

*Elizabeth C. Economy is C.V. Starr Senior Fellow and Director for Asia Studies at the Council on Foreign Relations. Her latest work is *The River Runs Black: The Environmental Challenges to China's Future*.*

*'Reflections' has been designed by the Editors of the SOPD to showcase the most influential texts from history regarding operations, strategy and politics. This month the Editors of the SOPD recommend:*

**George Kennan, *The Sources of Soviet Conduct*, 1947,**  
<<http://www.historyguide.org/europe/kennan.html>>.

George Kennan served as the Moscow chief of mission, and consultant to US Ambassador to the Soviet Union during 1944 to 1946. During this period, he wrote the now famous 'Long Telegram', outlining his view of the Soviet Union, and how it and international communism could be successfully opposed without war. While the telegram does not mention the term 'containment', it was Kennan's views that shaped that US strategy for the defeat of the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Kennan's study of Russian history, and his long personal experiences of Russian life, culture and politics allowed him to identify communism's internal weaknesses, and suggest ways that the United States could apply 'soft power' to bring about the Soviet Union's collapse. In so doing, Kennan showed that soft power could have a hard edge.

---

**'This means we are going to continue  
for a long time to find the Russians  
difficult to deal with.'**

---

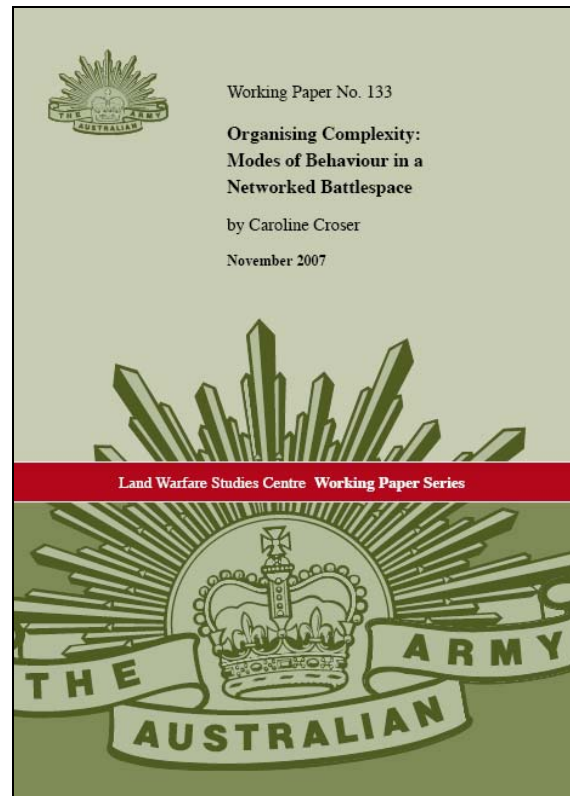
Today, in the fight against Islamic extremism, no similar conceptual document exists, and the only strategy for dealing with Islamic extremism is military confrontation. Kennan understood that an ideology could not be destroyed by force alone, and that the only way to defeat communism was with

other weapons—trade, free enterprise, individual liberty and democracy. Kennan's 'Long Telegram' is offered here, therefore, to suggest a framework around which senior officers and policymakers may shape their debates and ideas on how to defeat Islamic extremism, without the resort to force.

***Working Paper Series***

The Land Warfare Studies Centre is pleased to announce the release of the latest volume in its Working Paper series: Caroline Croser's *Organising Complexity: Modes of Behaviour in a Networked Battlespace*.

This paper examines two powerful motivators in US defence policy: the pursuit of network-centric warfare and the imperatives of counterinsurgency. It explores the often noted points of incompatibility between the two, before arguing that a more productive way of understanding their interaction is to examine the ways in which the two are being hybridised in practice in the testing ground of Operation *Iraqi Freedom*. The paper draws on fieldwork with the US Army's 1st Cavalry Division that explores their use of a particular command and control technology, Command Post of the Future (CPOF), during their first rotation in Operation *Iraqi Freedom* in 2004. This paper is an excellent introductory analysis of the applicability of advanced military technology to asymmetric missions.



*Organising Complexity: Modes of Behaviour in a Networked Battlespace* is available from the Land Warfare Studies Centre at [http://www.defence.gov.au/Army/lwsc/Publications/WP/WP\\_133.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/Army/lwsc/Publications/WP/WP_133.pdf)