

# S O P D



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## 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, special forces, combat motivation, post-conflict operations and China's strategic culture.

Colonel William Darley of the US Army has written a compelling article on US operations in Iraq, putting the case for a shift of focus from military to 'values' operations, arguing that two 'civil religions' are colliding head on in Iraq. Stephen Biddle analyses the major combat phase of the Iraq war, and concludes that it was Iraqi incompetence as much as Coalition brilliance that helped the Coalition to such an inexpensive victory. Lieutenant Colonel Robert Cassidy argues in favour of a more intelligent employment of indigenous forces in Iraq, modelled on the historical experiences of the Indian Wars, and Lieutenant Colonel Craig Trebilcock, another US Army officer, offers his views of Iraqi cultural makeup and the subsequent implications. His analysis of the current situation in Iraq is thought-provoking and instructive.

Darley, Cassidy and Trebilcock's views of the War on Terror are well complemented by Thomas Henriksen and Rob Thornton, who offer lessons for today's soldiers from historical experiences of counterinsurgency in Israel and Northern Ireland respectively.

Thomas Johnson and M. Chris Mason offer an opportunity to 'know thy enemy' with their article on the Taliban. General Ward, Deputy Commander US European Command, gives his views on how post-conflict operations should be conducted.

Diverging from the overwhelming focus on the War on Terror, Christopher Spearin examines the implications of the increasing movement of special forces from state military organisations to private security companies.

Finally, on a regional topic of growing interest to Australia, Ralph Sawyer offers his expert analysis of China, dispelling many myths and providing insights into its motivations, strategic culture and capabilities for asymmetric warfighting.

Enjoy  
The Editors

**William M. Darley, 'Strategic Imperative – The Necessity for Values Operations as Opposed to Information Operations in Iraq and Afghanistan', *Air & Space Power Journal*, Vol. XXI, No. 1, Spring 2007, pp. 33–41.**

Colonel Darley argues that, rather than fostering a superficial and shallow understanding of 'culture' within the US armed forces, where such knowledge is treated simply as an 'enabler' of kinetic operations, culture must instead become the central focus of the US military's efforts. Darley articulates this argument by drawing on the concept of 'civil religions', which he defines as 'the key centrifugal force that unifies people in ethnic and national identity and shapes their values'. Essentially, Darley argues that it is civil religions that are the underlying cause of the incessant violence in Afghanistan and Iraq, and that, as such, US efforts should be focussed on the cultural battle, rather than the military battle, if victory is to be secured.

Darley characterises the two civil religions of the United States and the Middle East as polar opposites, and this is why, Darley believes, the current conflicts have raged so long. On the one hand, the civil religion of fundamentalist Islam espouses total subjugation of the individual to God via an Islamic theocracy, whilst, on the other hand, the US civil religion of individual freedom decrees that democracy and secular law are the supreme norms and that individual rights are paramount. The military, therefore, rather than focusing on simply killing insurgents, should be trying to change the cultures of Afghanistan and Iraq to more closely resemble their own. Indeed, 'the military's cultural study and training should focus on ... defeat[ing] the adversary by changing the culture that sustains him' [sic]. The evidently successful 're-education' programs carried out by the Allies in Germany and Japan after the Second World War are proof positive of the validity of—and possibility of success in—such operations.

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**'Culture is not merely one dimension of these conflicts; it is the battlefield.'**

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For the task of cultural conversion in the current war, Darley recommends the establishment of a 'missionary' organisation, operating within Iraq and Afghanistan, to 'convert' its populations to the US civil religion, in order to remove any basis of support for insurgents and terrorists, and to ensure democracy survives the eventual withdrawal of US and Coalition troops. This organisation is to draw 'tactics, techniques and procedures' from some of history's great proselytizers, such as the Jesuits, Marxists and even Mohammed himself. Darley does not, however, analyse how long such an operation would take or what it would entail.

Darley's argument is not without fault. Firstly, he conceives of the Middle East as having a singular civil religion. He also seems to overlook the fact that all of the cultural changes wrought by the empires and nations that he mentions were only possible after great bloodshed and destruction. Indeed, the two best examples of civil-religious conversion that Darley fields—Germany and Japan—required the devastation of a World War. Despite this limitation, there is merit within these arguments, if one is prepared to look beyond the somewhat insensitive 'religious conversion' metaphor that Darley employs throughout.

*Colonel William M. Darley, US Army, is Editor-in-Chief of Military Review at the Combined Arms Centre, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.*

**Robert M. Cassidy, 'Regular and Irregular Indigenous Forces for a Long Irregular War', *RUSI Journal*, Vol. 152, No. 1, February 2007, pp. 42–7.**

Indigenous forces are crucial for any counterinsurgency effort in foreign countries, particularly when coalition forces cannot afford large, ongoing deployments. Lieutenant Colonel Cassidy cites numerous US policy documents that recognise the importance of training and employing indigenous forces to conduct counterinsurgency in overseas theatres. Cassidy sets out to examine what historical experience can teach us about indigenous forces and how the United States can employ them more effectively to conduct counterinsurgency operations.

Cassidy draws on two US counterinsurgency campaigns: the 'Indian Wars' of the nineteenth century and the struggle against the Sandinistas in Nicaragua during the 1920s and 1930s. Both experiences, Cassidy argues, point towards a different and more effective strategy for countering insurgents than the more conventional operations currently underway in Iraq. He maintains that leaner, more mobile and smarter coalition forces, alongside more imaginatively employed indigenous forces, are the key to success.

During the 'Indian Wars', one US Army officer stands out in Cassidy's eyes: Captain George Crook. Crook developed several fundamental principles for 'Indian warfare', including the employment of native Americans as 'counter-guerrillas'. Unlike other officers, from amongst the

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**'The early employment of indigenous forces in a counterinsurgent role is ... essential ... to achieving the favourable end to any counterinsurgency campaign.'**

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very tribes he was fighting, Crook employed native Americans to infiltrate, psychologically unhinge and disrupt his enemy. He integrated friendly native Americans into his law-and-order system by directing them to arrest criminals. He paired his officers with key native American collaborators and scouts so that these highly individualistic warriors would bind themselves to his officers.

Furthermore, Crook studied his enemy in extraordinary detail, especially their culture and values, and all his efforts gained him great success. Such lessons are still relevant today, especially in Iraq.

Cassidy demonstrates that the US Marines had a similar experience in Nicaragua decades later, utilising local irregular and regular forces with equally positive results. The special river-boating skills of the Miskito tribe were employed to allow small patrols of Marines and Nicaraguan forces to penetrate deep into the sanctuary of Sandino's forces. These operations eventually succeeded in capturing Sandino's headquarters, which proved crucial to the safe conduct of the US-supervised elections.

These examples of creative thinking are still relevant today. Cassidy points to US experiences in the Horn of Africa, which, due to the employment of local forces, have been largely successful across the full spectrum of operations. Cassidy argues that such lessons should be employed in Iraq and Afghanistan, where smaller and faster Coalition forces could operate alongside more creatively employed indigenous forces to achieve the positive results of operations past.

*Lieutenant Colonel Robert M. Cassidy is a non-resident fellow with the Center for Advanced Defense Systems. He is also author of Counterinsurgency and the Global War on Terror: Military Culture and Irregular War.*

Craig P. Trebilcock, 'The Modern Seven Pillars of Iraq', *Army*, Vol. 57, No. 2, February 2007, pp. 25–33, < <http://www.ausa.org/pdfdocs/ArmyMag/Feb07/Trebilcock.pdf> >.

Lieutenant Colonel Trebilcock's article strongly questions the political direction of the war in Iraq, and within it he voices concern that political leaders in the United States are 'asking the wrong questions' in their search for an answer to Iraqi sectarian violence. Reflecting on his experiences, Trebilcock identifies seven key facts about cultural and political life in Iraq that show current US policy aims are unrealistic and unachievable. Furthermore, he also believes that the means the United States employs to achieve those ends are simply not helpful.

Central to Iraqi culture is the collective experience of a harsh, nomadic desert life. While the majority of Iraqis today do not have any experience of such an existence, argues Trebilcock, it is embedded deeply into the national psyche. In an environment where water and food were scarce, only the strong who had the power and will to secure those resources survived. Oftentimes, securing resources meant violent conflict. As such, fierce struggles for power, influence and resources, rather than peaceful negotiation, is the norm.

Tribal loyalty is also crucial to Iraqis. The patriarchal tribal system, in which tribal members work to secure wealth and power for their tribe, and not the nation-state, legitimises many actions that appear corrupt to Western observers. Trebilcock recalls that the 'Iraqi Freedom Forces'—raised by the United States to help liberate Iraq from Saddam Hussein—used their training and weapons to extort money from the Iraqi populace for personal and tribal gain.

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**'Building the parameters for mission success upon values and goals that the Iraqis themselves do not care for is potentially leading us toward a political defeat, despite our strength of arms.'**

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In the light of such realities, Trebilcock reasons, the current US strategy to 'surge' more troops into Baghdad, creating the conditions for democracy to flourish, makes little sense. The West's cherished notion of democracy is alien to the patriarchal, tribally loyal peoples of Iraq. It is hard for such 'zero-sum'—minded Iraqis to believe that everyone's needs can be satisfied simultaneously by a central democratic government. Sending more troops to secure Baghdad, therefore, is not productive. The real struggle, in Trebilcock's opinion, is to get Iraqis themselves to value democracy and to want an end to violence. Only then will the Iraqi Army have the will to defeat insurgents, and only then will the Iraqi national government be supported by the Iraqi people.

This goal, Trebilcock maintains, must be sought within the Iraqi cultural framework. The unfamiliar model of democracy must be shown to benefit Iraqis, their families and their tribes more than the familiar and ingrained model of tribal loyalty. Only then will any lasting success be achievable. Military forces have little relevance to such endeavours, and this is why the surge, Trebilcock feels, will be useless.

*Lieutenant Colonel Craig Trebilcock is a US Army Reservist and served in Iraq as a Judge Advocate. While serving in this capacity, he oversaw the Coalition's effort to reconstruct the Iraqi legal system.*

Thomas H. Henriksen, 'Security Lessons from the Israeli Trenches', *Policy Review*, No. 141, February/March 2007, pp. 17–31,

< <http://www.hoover.org/publications/policyreview/5516341.html> >.

The war in Iraq has been raging now for more than four years, and the end is not yet in sight. US thinkers are searching for answers, and many are looking to the counterinsurgency campaigns of Vietnam and Malaya for answers. Thomas Henriksen argues that Western forces are overlooking perhaps the most relevant example of COIN operations: Israel.

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**'Israel has faced terrorism, insurgencies, and ... existential threats from aspiring nuclear nations ... [making] it an intriguing case study.'**

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Since its formation in 1948, Israel has faced the full spectrum of issues confronting the United States and its allies today: terrorists, insurgents, conventional state armies and rogue nations pursuing WMD. Furthermore, Israel has been facing opponents with the same motivations and ideas as those now facing the United States and its allies in Iraq and Afghanistan. Despite all of this, Israel has managed to achieve far greater successes against terrorists and insurgents than have Coalition forces to date.

Henriksen identifies clear parallels with some initial Israeli approaches to their counterinsurgency campaigns and current Coalition actions in Iraq. One prominent example is the Gaza Strip. Israel began fighting this particular battle by conducting frontal battles with

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**'American practitioners of counterinsurgency have too often studied the lessons U.S. forces in the Vietnam War or the British in Malaya while neglecting the very relevant experiences of the Israel Defense Force ...'**

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those insurgents they could find in conventional-style operations. However, more nuanced tactics were required in the face of ongoing failures. Major General Ariel Sharon developed the idea of dividing Gaza into sectors, and then sending small elite groups into these sectors to learn the terrain, intermingle with the people and constantly monitor suspicious activity. This division severely hampered the communications and movement of terrorist groups; those that did

move risked detection and engagement by overwhelming force. Turncoat terrorists, disguised soldiers and Arab-speaking Israeli 'plants' all helped further infiltrate and disrupt terrorist operations. All of these tactics benefited Israel substantially, and are worthy of further study.

Henriksen also examines targeted killing operations. As leaders in terrorist and insurgent networks often represent significant 'centres of gravity', such operations clearly fit within current manoeuvre doctrine. However, Henriksen does not examine how such brutal operations are to be justified to democracies not under the threat of extinction.

Alongside conventional operations and a thorough 'hearts and minds' campaign—the current focus of operations in Iraq—the Israeli operations and tactics that Henriksen examines could be very effective. However, an eye must always be turned towards the legal and moral ramifications of utilising some of these tactics when not in a *de jure* state of war, especially targeted killings.

*Thomas H. Henriksen is a senior fellow with the Hoover Institution at Stanford University and at the US Joint Special Operations University. His latest book, The Transformation of American Power After the Berlin Wall, will be published later this year.*

**Rod Thornton, 'Getting it Wrong: The Crucial Mistakes Made in the Early Stages of the British Army's Deployment to Northern Ireland (August 1969 to March 1972)', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1, February 2007, pp. 73–107.**

Dr Rod Thornton's examination of the British Army's experience in Northern Ireland shows that their mistakes and problems bear a remarkable similarity to the Coalition's current difficulties in Iraq. Examining these mistakes, and seeing their similarities, painful as it may be, is necessary to demonstrate that there is indeed value in studying military history.

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**'The early years of the British Army's involvement in Northern Ireland are marked by crucial errors that had major strategic consequences.'**

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British efforts in Northern Ireland, Thornton argues, were almost uniformly disastrous. Ominously for a military operation, the chain of command was fractured from the beginning. The complex web of political masters overseeing the military's efforts did not hand down clear political guidance. Thornton also notes that military counterinsurgency operations can only buy time for permanent economic and political solutions. These were sadly absent in Ireland due to such political confusion. The implementation of similar political and social measures today in Iraq and Afghanistan is similarly problematic.

The tactics of the Irish Republican Army (IRA), much like those of insurgents and terrorists in Iraq today, forced the British Army into overreacting to many provocations, alienating it from the vast majority of the population. Use of improper conventional military tactics, such as cordon and search operations, further irritated already aggrieved civilian populations. The demonising of the British Army—caused by the Army's own actions—eroded almost all of the goodwill it had built up earlier, and engendered support for the IRA where none had previously existed. The military's actions, whilst noble in aim, were poorly conceived and executed, causing adverse shifts in public opinion that were almost impossible to reverse, severely damaging the British mission in Northern Ireland.

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**'It was a case of "know your enemy" and of employing the right tactics to use against them. Nuance needed to be employed ...'**

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The short timeframes in which results were expected further compounded the problem of overreaction and played into the hands of the IRA. When results were not forthcoming quickly, more drastic tactics, such as indefinite internment without trial and sensory deprivation techniques in interrogation, were adopted by the British Army. Despite some successes, these methods proved largely counterproductive, with further support for the IRA the result. Strong international condemnation and a decrease of domestic support followed. Public relations initiatives to counter such 'bad press' were lacking or were poorly conducted. The parallels between Ireland and Iraq are abundantly clear throughout Thornton's piece. It aptly demonstrates that the honest study of past mistakes is crucial to future success.

*Dr Rod Thornton is a lecturer at the UK Joint Services Command and Staff College.*

**Thomas H. Johnson and M. Chris Mason, 'Understanding the Taliban and Insurgency in Afghanistan', *Orbis*, Vol. 51, No. 1, Winter 2007, pp. 71–89.**

Commonly seen as a 'secondary front' in the War on Terror, Johnson and Mason believe that Afghanistan presents a real chance for success; consequently, operations there should be heavily reinforced by US, NATO and Australian forces. However, more so than additional troops, the current strategy in Afghanistan also needs to change, the authors contend, if a favourable outcome is to be reached.

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**'The common view of the Taliban as simply a radical Afghan Islamist movement is overly simple ...'**

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The religious nature of the Taliban is the starting point for this article. Within the Taliban, it is the Deobandi school of Islam that is recognised. This sect is taught at the *madrassas* from which the Taliban's leaders were recruited by Pakistani intelligence. The Deobandi school preaches, among

other things, an abolition of caste systems within Islam, including monarchies and feudal systems.

This religious aspect of the Taliban interacts with the tribal-political nature of Afghanistan and its history. The Ghilzai Pashtuns, from whose numbers the Taliban's senior leadership is almost exclusively drawn, have a long and bitter enmity with the Durrani tribes, whose monarchs have subjugated the Pashtuns for most of the past 300 years. Thus, when the Taliban began their march to power in the 1990s, their Deobandi-inspired hatred of monarchy greatly appealed to many people.

Combined with this powerful confluence of tribal-political and religious aspects is the third distinct element of the Taliban—the 'mad mullah movement'. This unique sociological phenomenon of the Pashtuns usually arises during times of economic or social hardship. The current leader of the Taliban, Mullah Muhammad Omar, exhibits all of the characteristics of such a leader, argue Johnson and Mason, including a reliance on mysticism and religious theatre for legitimacy.

These three factors help generate the widespread support that the Taliban enjoys in Pashtun border areas. Johnson and Mason argue that these factors can be counteracted by neutralising the charismatic Mullah Omar—through any means (not just by killing him)—and by improving the economic and social conditions that provide him with such a willing audience. Such activity is only possible if the US military begins to make the cultural education of its forces a greater priority. It will also require both the United States and NATO to substantially increase the resources for the reconstruction of Afghanistan. This is an area in which allies to the United States can make serious contributions—Australia's 1st Reconstruction Task Force is proof of this.

*Thomas H. Johnson is a research professor at the Naval Postgraduate School in California. M. Chris Mason is a senior fellow at the Center for Advanced Defense Studies in Washington, DC.*

**[Editor's Note: The LWSC has recently published a detailed study by Lieutenant Andrew Wegener, *A Complex and Changing Dynamic: Afghan Responses to Foreign Intervention, 1878-2006*, that examines many of these issues. For more information, see p. 13.]**

**William E. Ward, 'Toward a Horizon of Hope: Considerations for Long-term Stability in Postconflict Situations', *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 45, 2nd Quarter 2007, pp. 41–5.**

General Ward identifies a gap in post-conflict operations doctrine, one which he believes is fatal. He argues that post-conflict operations are insufficiently coordinated or timely. He insists that this results from an overly 'strategic' focus on the part of post-war military planners. Whilst this strategic focus is important, it is the 'tactical' questions of displaced and war-affected people—such as 'where will I sleep tonight?' and 'who will feed my family?'—to which the United States should devote more energy.

Ward notes that the United States loses the initiative in post-conflict situations by not addressing the provision of basic services and security. He cites the ongoing problems in Somalia, Bosnia and Palestine as examples of the United States, to varying extents, having 'dropped the ball'. The service vacuum is filled by opportunistic groups, such as Hezbollah in Lebanon or criminal militias in Somalia and Iraq, who then further complicate the US mission. Ward offers a tri-faceted plan he calls the 'horizon of hope' to help prevent the United States from losing the initiative in future operations.

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**'History shows that we have to be prepared to intervene early, with clear goals, authorities, and responsibilities ...'**

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Ward characterises the three elements of the 'horizon' as 'lines of operation'; these are security, economic and societal. The United States must provide the full spectrum of services that fall within these three areas to avoid a vacuum which opportunistic, anti-US/coalition groups will seek to fill. This immediate action, Ward argues, will deter any sort of flare-up of resentment and violence as happened in Iraq. The responsibility for the provision of such services is devolved to the host state as their capability increases. In order to ensure that all the services necessary to fulfil Ward's 'horizon of hope' are available immediately upon demand, Ward suggests that a joint, interagency task force be formed.

While Ward's idea is excellent, it fails to address one, perhaps critical, vulnerability: the need for specific cultural education. Many of Ward's peers have argued for better cultural education of their soldiers in order to avoid generating resentment amongst the host populace through the commission of cultural *faux pas*. It may seem obvious, but it is necessary to state that there are many different cultures worldwide. If there was to be a trained task force for post-conflict operations, as Ward desires, then this force would need to be an 'army of professors', both lingually and culturally adept enough to step into any culture quickly enough to 'retain the initiative'.

Despite this difficulty, Ward's argument provides an example of positive, pro-active thinking about how to conduct post-conflict operations, rather than reviews of failure. While these 'post-mortems' are important to ensure hard-won lessons are learnt, Ward's positive article shows that there is a 'Horizon of Hope' for military organisations as well.

*General William E. Ward, US Army, is the Deputy Commander, US European Command.*

**Stephen Biddle, 'Speed Kills? Reassessing the Role of Speed, Precision, and Situation Awareness in the Fall of Saddam', *Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 30, No. 1, February 2007, pp. 3–46.**

Many contemporary scholars regard the Revolution in Military Affairs, or RMA, as delivering Western military organisations from the burdens of mass and close combat. Stephen Biddle's article examines this idea in the light of US practice in the Iraq War and finds the proposition somewhat problematic.

Biddle examines the major combat phase of the Iraq War to determine if speed, precision and situational awareness were the dominant contributors to the Coalition's low casualty rate. What he concludes is that Iraqi incompetence, rather than Coalition brilliance, was a primary cause of the Coalition's overwhelming success.

The speed of Coalition forces was unable to prevent Iraqi forces from engaging them in close combat. Biddle presents numerous instances of close combat, including an intense battle between Iraqi paramilitaries and elements of the US 3rd Infantry Division in Baghdad. Biddle shows that the relatively low degree of damage caused by the Iraqis was a result of their poor tactics, marksmanship and positioning, rather than the speed or precision of the US forces.

Precision and standoff capability, argues Biddle, also cannot account for the low casualties suffered by the United States and its allies. The forces that did the most damage to the Coalition were light paramilitaries, who could not be reliably or consistently targeted by precision deep strikes. Biddle does admit, however, that the Iraqi memory of American air power during the first Gulf War significantly reduced the morale of Iraqi units during the 2003 Iraq War, significantly easing the Coalition victory.

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**'... Iraqi military mistakes were probably a necessary precondition for Coalition speed, precision and situation awareness to produce the 2003 outcome. Had the Iraqis used their existing equipment with greater skill, there is every reason to expect that Coalition casualties would have been radically higher.'**

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Biddle maintains that the endemic and incompetent positioning, training and leadership of the Iraqi forces during the war account more for the Coalition's low casualties than does any explanation resting upon superior speed, precision or situational awareness. Biddle recognises that these were all crucial factors in the Coalition victory, but, taken alone, they were insufficient. Biddle concludes that after Iraq, the United States should not reform its military forces to emphasise the qualities of speed and precision at the expense of mass and close combat ability. Biddle's analysis is thorough, of high quality, and supports the Australian Army's move to enlarge, harden and network itself for future operations.

*Stephen Biddle is Senior Fellow for Defence Policy at the Council on Foreign Relations. His most recent book is Military Power: Explaining Victory and Defeat in the Modern Battle.*

**Christopher Spearin, 'Special Operations Forces a Strategic Resource: Public and Private Divides', *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVI, No. 4, Winter 2006–2007, pp. 58–70, < <http://carlisle-www.army.mil/usawc/Parameters/06winter/spearin.pdf> >.**

Christopher Spearin addresses a crucial issue facing many Western military organisations today: the implications of the movement of special operations personnel from the public to private sector. He produces a clear and concise examination of this question.

Spearin traces the cause of this personnel shift to two major factors: higher salaries in the private sector and increased operational tempo. Spearin attributes low military pay, compared to the private sector, to artificial market forces. Due to the longstanding state monopoly on violence, there was simply no competition for military labour and so states held the upper hand. Private security companies (PSCs) have now introduced military labour competition, and states can ill afford to respond to high private wages to prevent personnel shifts. Furthermore, high operational tempos in Western militaries erode leave schedules and place a greater demand on special forces for training. The private sector, on the other hand, can afford to offer much more free time to its employees than can state militaries.

In response to these factors, the United States and Australia have initiated special forces retention schemes based around increased pay for critical occupations. Such measures in the United States have been only modestly successful, both because PSCs can pay even more than the state can, even after retention bonuses are considered, and because of the objections of regular forces to efforts to raise special forces pay. The public-private migration, Spearin concludes, is therefore inevitable.

But this is not necessarily a bad thing, he argues. He believes state governments should re-cast their conception of special forces soldiers not as people who should be controlled via retention bonuses, but as a 'strategic resource'. As such, states should focus not on how to maintain sole control over special forces, but on how to ensure this resource is best utilised to generate the desired effect on a case-by-case basis. As the largest consumers of PSC services, states should use their market clout to enforce industry regulation and standards, rather than passively accepting PSC services as they have to date. With retention an issue in the ADF, Spearin's article makes for interesting reading and may indeed show that this difficulty is, in fact, an opportunity.

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**'policymakers must consider how this resource [special operations soldiers] is best utilized and whether such a resource should be under government or private management.'**

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*Christopher Spearin is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Defence Studies at the Canadian Forces College. He has published numerous articles in journals such as the Journal of Conflict Studies and Contemporary Security Policy.*

Ralph D. Sawyer, 'Chinese Strategic Power: Myths, Intent, and Projections' in *Journal of Military and Strategic Studies*, Winter 2006/07, Vol. 9, Issue 2, < [http://www.jmss.org/2007/2007winter/articles/sawyer\\_cont-defence.pdf](http://www.jmss.org/2007/2007winter/articles/sawyer_cont-defence.pdf) >.

Ralph D. Sawyer laments the current state of Western scholarship regarding China. The institutionalised secrecy of the Chinese regime—mainly resulting from the centrality of deception and secrecy to China's strategic culture—is to blame for this poor body of literature.

Sawyer's objective is to draw back some of this secrecy. He maintains that China's alleged territorial integrity, ethnic and religious unity, and adherence to peaceful Confucian traditions are myths. Rather, China's history shows that ruthlessness and cruelty have long been hallmarks of its wars, evidenced by their perfection of incendiary and flood tactics—oftentimes used to wipe out entire cities.

Sawyer paints a sobering picture of modern China. He moves away from the usual rhetoric of 'China as threat' to a view of 'China at threat'. Sawyer sees internal instability caused by massive unemployment and the resentment generated by an unfair distribution of wealth as the problem within China. As he notes, China's history is full of violent and devastating clashes between large, poor underclasses and wealthy elites. Sawyer argues that the propensity of China's current elites for violent oppression of the protesting poor highlights this point. The highly interdependent nature of Western and Chinese economies means that any internal instability would also affect Australia. He also suggests that these internal pressures may force an otherwise peaceful China onto a belligerent course, in order to pacify internal dissent by unifying China behind a trumped-up external enemy.

Sawyer also delves in to what he characterises as 'Triple-S': systematic sabotage and subversion. This mode of warfare, which Sawyer anticipates China will pursue in the future, is deeply rooted in historical Chinese methods. Sawyer outlines how PRC citizens visiting target countries may be called upon to commit acts of sabotage, such as starting fires, in the event of a war. Agents would also be tasked with destroying dams, attacking city water supplies and similar activities. Diplomats and other agents may undertake activities to neutralise or distract key personnel in the target country.

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**'A strongly mounted program of Triple S would devastate the economy, entangle the military forces ... produce chaos and provoke widespread civil unrest.'**

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Considering this strategy, Sawyer argues domestic security measures require significant strengthening. However, most of the threat from subversive warfare, Sawyer contends, can be contained with several key measures. Sawyer's arguments are well backed with historical and documentary evidence, and demonstrate just how far asymmetry can be pursued in modern warfare. Sawyer's piece makes for interesting and challenging reading for the Western professional soldier.

*Ralph D. Sawyer is an associate of the Centre for Military and Strategic Studies at the University of Calgary. His latest publication is The Tao of Deception: Unorthodox Warfare in Historic and Modern China.*

*This month the LWSC recommends:*

**P. J. Norton, 'Let's Start Using Our Guns Again', *Australian Army Journal*, No. 326, July 1976, pp. 15–19.**

With the contemporary military debate squarely focused on combating insurgency and terrorism, it is easy to lose sight of the more traditional task of conventional warfare. Brigadier Norton's work draws this duty sharply into focus by examining the battlefield use of artillery.

Norton argued that, despite the flexibility and responsiveness afforded the Army by task-organised groupings—such as battle groups and task forces—these lower-level groups encouraged a focus on issues that required small units, light firepower and local areas of reference. Accordingly, the use that was made of artillery by these units was incoherent, largely ineffective, and had little reference to the higher priorities that would have predominated in high-intensity conventional operations.

Norton maintained that small, tactical training exercises also contributed to this restrictive, tactical view of operations. With units dispersed around the country, and with only relatively small units deployed overseas, large-scale exercises were rare. When they were conducted, artillery assets were infrequently and poorly employed. The exercises looked like parallel tactical actions rather than large-unit manoeuvres. Artillery was employed in small units, if ever, and largely stood silent.

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**'The basic fact remains, unless an Army understands the use of artillery and develops its full potential, it does not win battles.'**

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Norton points out that, throughout history, artillery has been decisive when applied systematically and in concentration. The French, Germans, British and United States have all enjoyed huge battlefield successes when artillery was concentrated, placed under centralised command at high levels, and then assigned, intact and *en*

*masse*, to support critical engagements. Battles of symmetric combatants generally bog down into slogging matches, Norton contends, and it is in this phase, after the initial manoeuvres of a campaign have been conducted, where artillery can be a 'war winner'. In the biggest slogging match of all—the Eastern Front of the Second World War—it was massed Russian artillery, often grouped into Divisions or Corps of guns, which proved decisive. Australia's experience in Vietnam is also illustrative, with massed Australian, New Zealand and US guns at Long Tan saving the diggers fighting there from being overrun. It is important to remember that this battle happened in the context of a supposedly low-intensity counterinsurgency campaign.

While the Army's contemporary operations do not routinely draw upon the heavy fire of the guns, the Army will one day again need the flexible and responsive heavy fire that only artillery can deliver. Army's Project Land 17 is testament to its commitment to artillery and acknowledgement of its crucial role in combined-arms teams. Whilst the issue of quality

equipment is crucial, the command and control considerations of artillery that Norton raises—such as concentration of fire and centralised command—are just as important. With the focus today on flexible organisations, which bring together small units for specific tasks, Norton’s article serves as a warning that artillery should not be divided. Norton’s article is crucial reading, therefore, for the senior Army officer.

*Brigadier P. J. Norton enjoyed a distinguished career in the Australian Army, serving in a number of Regimental appointments. He held numerous commands, and wrote this article when he was serving as Commander Field Force Artillery.*

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## NEW PUBLICATIONS

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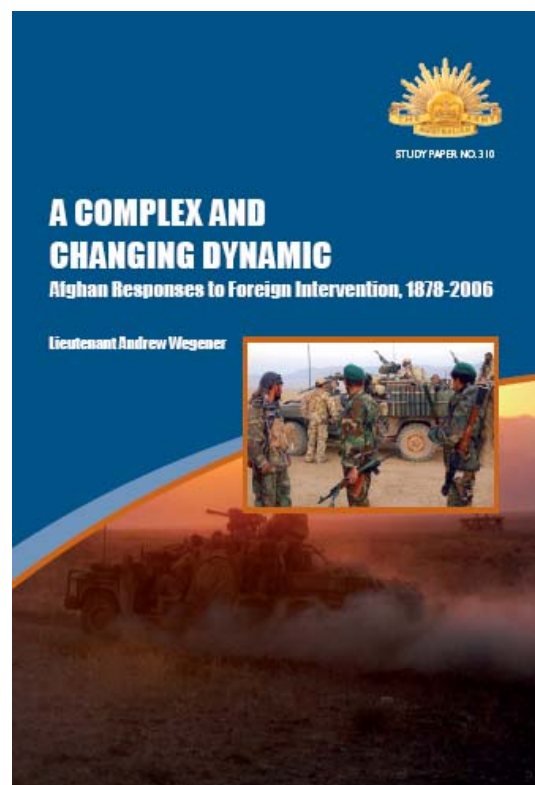
### *Study Paper Series*

The Land Warfare Studies Centre is pleased to announce the release of the latest volume in its Study Paper Series: Lieutenant Andrew Wegener’s *A Complex and Changing Dynamic: Afghan Responses to Foreign Intervention, 1878-2006*.

Lieutenant Andrew Wegener completed an honours degree in history at the Australian Defence Force Academy in 2006, for which *A Complex and Changing Dynamic* was awarded the UNSW University Medal. Wegener is also the recipient of the L.C.F. Turner Prize for outstanding performance in history honours. He is currently serving with 4th Field Regiment.

Wegener’s work is an insightful examination of the differing reception received by foreign powers that have intervened in Afghanistan. This work is exceedingly relevant to the Army, given the Government’s recently renewed and expanded commitment to the international mission in Afghanistan.

Wegener sets out to move beyond stereotypes and incomplete analysis. Rather, he examines the Afghan responses to recent interventions, most notably those conducted by the Soviet Union and the US-led Coalition, with reference to Afghanistan’s cultural, political and social history. Wegener succeeds in presenting a clear, concise and useful commentary on Afghanistan’s history, and how the unique elements of its national makeup shape its responses to intervention.



*A Complex and Changing Dynamic: Afghan Responses to Foreign Intervention, 1878-2006* is available from the LWSC at [http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/Publications/SP/SP\\_310.pdf](http://www.defence.gov.au/army/lwsc/Publications/SP/SP_310.pdf).