

# S O P D



Senior Officer Professional Digest

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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.



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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 capitalist-authoritarian powers, China, India, Pakistan, counterinsurgency, terrorism, regime change, Eastern and Western ideas of conflict and civil-military relations.

Azar Gat presents a pointed case regarding the possibility that capitalist, authoritarian great powers, such as China, may once again come to the fore in international relations and that they may be equally as aggressive as those that preceded them. M. Taylor Fravel argues that, by examining PLA doctrine, China will remain defensively oriented for some time to come while Warren Cohen puts these arguments in to a broad historical context.

Robert Blackwill studies the future of the US–India bilateral relationship and Daniel Markey examines the state of US–Pakistan relations. Both conclude that pragmatic engagement is called for, despite the ideological or idealistic imperatives that may suggest other courses of action. Dennis Ross offers his opinions on fighting counterinsurgency in the Middle East, while Christiana Brafman Kittner demonstrates that focusing on the Middle East alone is not enough in the Global War on Terror.

The ethicist Jean Elshtain examines the subject of regime change in the context of just war theory. While Elshtain establishes that the theories regarding her argument are sound, Patrick Porter rejects the theory of Eastern and Western 'ways of war' in his article. Finally, from the US Strategic Studies Institute, Leonard Wong and Douglas Lovelace consider some of the problems with the interaction between senior civilian and military leaders, offering prescriptions for improvement in this crucial relationship.

Enjoy  
The Editors

Azar Gat, 'The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers', *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007, Vol. 86, Issue 4, pp. 59–69, <[http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/06/the\\_return\\_of\\_authoritarian\\_gr.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2007/06/the_return_of_authoritarian_gr.html)>.

In this article Azar Gat provides an overview of a sometimes overlooked threat to liberal democracies—the rise of non-democratic great powers. While many believe that the rise of capitalism heralds the triumph of democracy, Gat points out that this is not necessarily the case. In the near future it is almost certain that a resurgent Russia and an emerging China will take their places as great powers. Both are authoritarian capitalist regimes.

Gat questions the idea that liberal democracy emerged in the post–Cold War era due to the triumph of the market. He suggests that the success of democratic countries was not due to the inherent traits of liberal societies but more complex factors. The two examples often given for the superiority of liberal democracy are the advances Japan and Germany made after the Second World War. However, this practice tends to overlook other factors that could have led to the downfall of the two totalitarian systems, such as Germany and Japan's limited resource base compared to that of the Allied powers. Gat then argues that the subsequent downfall of Communist regimes was more due to the flaws in their economic systems than in their political organisations.

Gat's article is not mere speculation. China is for all intents and purposes a capitalist country, but not a liberal democratic one. Russia is moving away from the democratic reforms of the late twentieth century and towards an increasingly authoritarian political system. While various proponents of capitalism may insist that its rise will see an eventual development of a liberal democratic system in these two countries, Gat accepts that if they develop enough power they could form an economically advanced but non-democratic alternative to current democratic systems of organisation.

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**'All that can be said at the moment is that there is nothing in the historical record to suggest that a transition to democracy by today's authoritarian capitalist powers is inevitable, whereas there is a great deal to suggest that such powers have far greater economic and military potential than their communist predecessors did.'**

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While the emergence of a competing bloc does not necessarily mean liberal democracies will be driven to conflict with authoritarian regimes, Gat observes that it was the pursuit of autarky by the non-democratic capitalist powers that precipitated the two world wars of the twentieth century.

*Azar Gat is the Ezer Weizman Professor of National Security at Tel Aviv University and was the former Chair of the Department of Political Science at Tel Aviv University. He has been an Alexander von Humboldt Fellow, Fulbright Fellow and British Council Scholar. He is a Major in the Israeli Army Reserve.*

**M. Taylor Fravel, 'Securing Borders: China's Doctrine and Force Structure for Frontier Defense', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4-5, August-October 2007, pp. 705-37.**

In 'Securing Borders', M. Taylor Fravel examines People's Liberation Army (PLA) doctrine and force disposition in the light of several newly released Chinese strategy and policy documents.

Fravel argues that, because of the extent and remote nature of China's land borders, their defence remains a critical task for the PLA, and will prevent the Army from seriously considering any major offensive operations, at least into the mid-future. The inherent weakness of China's border districts, Fravel shows, is due to their ethnic makeup.

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**'The emphasis on Taiwan overshadows how the mainland's armed forces prepare for their core mission, defending the territorial integrity of the People's Republic of China.'**

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China's demography is principally Han Chinese, who account for 90 per cent of the population and inhabit the rivers and coastlines of China's central region. The remaining 10 per cent are ethnic minorities, and they primarily live in China's border areas. Fravel shows that these peoples often have kin on the other side of the border. The result is a porous border that opens up Chinese domestic affairs to external influence.

In response, the PLA maintains numerous light infantry units in its border zone to monitor cross border traffic and separatist sentiment. In the event of war, according to the PLA's frontier defence doctrine, these units are tasked with delaying any enemy incursion until the deployment of the PLA's heavy manoeuvre units from the interior of China.

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**'The national force structure for frontier defence suggests that its future ability to project military power far from its land borders will be limited in the next decade and beyond.'**

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Fravel argues that this comprehensively passive defensive posture, doctrine and force deployment of China's biggest military force—the PLA—demonstrates that China, at least in the near- to mid-term, will not seek to use its military force offensively. Accordingly, Fravel maintains that the oft-fielded argument that China's rise will be attended by great power conflict is problematic at best. This summary of China's land forces is clear and concise, and makes easy reading—a bonus considering the importance of the topic.

*M. Taylor Fravel is an Assistant Professor of Political Science at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is a Rhodes Scholar, and has published in numerous journals such as Foreign Affairs, International Security and The China Quarterly.*

**Warren I. Cohen, 'China's Rise in Historical Perspective', *The Journal of Strategic Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4-5, August-October 2007, pp. 683-704.**

In this piece, Warren I. Cohen offers the reader a comprehensive look at China's history, from its earliest beginnings in the second millennium BCE up to the present. What is clear from Cohen's

sweeping analysis is that the pivotal event in China's history—its colonial humiliation—occurred only recently. This is of considerable importance when one considers that China has been a distinct political entity for thousands of years.

China's prestige, sense of identity and cultural influence grew as its armies overran its neighbours. By the start of the Common Era, China controlled an empire that exceeded even Rome's. But mutinous generals oversaw its dismemberment and fragmentation. It was not until Khubilai Khan's reign in the thirteenth century that China was once again reunited into a coherent entity. Dynasties changed, but China's power remained stable from this point forward, until Europe's intervened in the eighteenth century. European nations, particularly the British, forced the Qing Dynasty to make lucrative concessions after its disastrous defeat in several wars.

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**'Chinese officials and intellectuals ... delight in condemning imperialism ... and in listing their grievances against the imperialists. Their complaints about past foreign transgressions against them are usually justified, but their professions of innocence are absurd.'**

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The Qing Dynasty collapsed in the revolution of 1911, which ushered in a period of warlordism and Japanese opportunism. During the Second World War, China suffered several crushing defeats, and Japanese troops ravaged the country. It was not until Japan's defeat in 1945 that China was free of foreign powers. The expulsion of nationalist Chinese forces from the mainland after a bitter civil war signalled a *de facto* victory for the communists. Once again, China was under a single regime.

Under the leadership of Mao Tse-Tung, the communists rebuilt the country, and today China is an economic powerhouse with great regional and global influence.

Chinese animosity and suspicion of Western powers, resulting from its period of colonial humiliation, has many implications for Australia. Cohen's examination of China's broader history offers senior officers valuable insight into an often overlooked aspect of this emerging superpower and its foreign relations.

*Warren I. Cohen is Distinguished University Professor of History at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He is also Senior Scholar with the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington DC.*

**Robert D. Blackwill, 'A Friend Indeed', *The National Interest*, May/June 2007, Vol. 89, Issue 3, pp. 16–19.**

Unlike the US relationship with Pakistan, the US relationship with India is much more stable, argues Robert Blackwill. While he is quick to point out that few things in international relations are certain, Blackwill writes that the US–India bilateral relationship will endure. This is, Blackwill maintains, because of the confluence of interests: their common democratic and free-market systems ensure that India and the United States will remain linked.

The relationship, however, does face challenges, including the yet-to-be-finalised United States–India nuclear energy pact, and India's possible reaction to a US military intervention in Iran. Yet despite their importance, Blackwill argues that these issues are minor, and will not have any

lasting effect on bilateral relations. The only issue that could serious damage the friendship between the two countries is Kashmir.

Jammu and Kashmir, long contested by both India and Pakistan, may yet again be a critical point of friction. Blackwill believes that the United States may be unable to support India with the vigour New Delhi now expects, for fear of alienating Pakistan—a key ally in the War on Terror. In this circumstance relations between India and the United States may cool precipitously. Blackwill is

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**‘In private, both Indian and American strategic planners worry about what would happen if China became more aggressive and engaged in worrisome external behaviour.’**

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optimistic, however, that even then the relationship would endure, especially since the spectre of a rising China looms large on the collective US–Indian strategic horizon.

Blackwill’s insight into India is a privileged one—he served as US Ambassador to India. His argument that the United States–India relationship will endure, and the insight into the problems that this relationship may face, is one that Australia should take note of as we seek closer links with the subcontinent.

*Robert D. Blackwill was Deputy National Security Advisor to President Bush and has also served as US Ambassador to India. He is currently President of the government consultants Barbour Griffith and Rogers International.*

**Daniel Markey, ‘A False Choice in Pakistan’, *Foreign Affairs*, July/August 2007, Vol. 86, Issue 4, pp. 85–102,**

**<<http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20070701faessay86407/daniel-markey/a-false-choice-in-pakistan.html>>.**

Daniel Markey’s article represents a pragmatic approach to the ideas and ideals of the Long War. Markey argues that the supposed choice between helping Pakistan’s army in its fight against terrorists and anti-democratic forces and supporting democracy in Pakistan itself has always been false.

Western critics of Pakistan’s President General Pervez Musharraf argue that the United States and its allies should ‘get tough’. This includes demanding that Pakistan intensify its fight against Islamic extremists, that it cut quasi-governmental links with terrorist groups and that Musharraf step aside so that a democratically elected civilian government can re-assume power. These critics advocate sanctions in the face of any opposition to their demands from Pakistan’s military leaders.

Markey, however, expects that such an approach will be counterproductive. He argues that the Pakistani military maintains its links with Islamic extremists only as a hedge against US abandonment. These extremist groups give Pakistan strategic leverage against India in Jammu and Kashmir, and against insurgents in Afghanistan and in Pakistan’s Federally Administered Tribal Area. Accordingly, Markey advocates continued and strengthened commitment to Pakistan. Deeper commitment to the US–Pakistan alliance would demonstrate commitment to the region and would loosen Musharraf’s dependence on extremists.

Furthermore, while the ideal outcome in Pakistan would be a civilian, democratically elected government, Markey maintains that this is not yet likely. The Army is the only state institution in Pakistan that is functional, and it has enormous economic clout due to its stakes in private and public industries. Sidelining the Army would be too destabilising, Markey argues, and so continued engagement with a view to future democratisation is the only pragmatic course of action for the near-term.

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**‘Neither coercive threats nor unfettered democracy is likely to yield near-term or sustainable success in the war on terrorism.’**

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Markey’s assertion—that choosing between the Army and democracy in Pakistan is a false choice—is made clearly and strongly. Without the Army, Pakistan would not defeat extremism, its economy would suffer, and its weak institutions would falter. Accordingly, the best option for the United States is continued and deeper commitment to Pakistan as an ally. To aim for anything less is courting disaster in this vital theatre of the Global War on Terror.

*Daniel Markey formerly was a member of the US State Department’s Policy Planning Staff, reporting directly to the Secretary of State. He is now Senior Fellow for India, Pakistan and South Asia at the Council for Foreign Relations in Washington DC.*

**Dennis Ross, ‘Counterterrorism: A Professional’s Strategy’, *World Policy Journal*, Spring 2007, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 19–31.**

As the sixth year of the Global War on Terror nears an end, Dennis Ross argues that it still has a long way to go. He believes that the length of the war is due as much to its inefficient prosecution as it is to the tenacity and survivability of the enemy.

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**‘Osama bin Laden and al Qaeda ... will not be discredited by non-Muslims. They will only be discredited by moderates within the Muslim world.’**

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Ross maintains that a sense of humiliation lies at the centre of many of the Middle East’s grievances. This stems from the seemingly imperialist foreign policy of the United States, from unfair treatment, especially of Arabs, after the First World War, and from the corrupt and ineffective regimes that retain friendly relations with the West, such as Egypt and Saudi Arabia. Religious extremists prey on these

perceptions, inflate them, and mobilise public opinion around them, Ross argues, while the media exacerbates tensions for profit as its wont.

Ross argues that in such a pervasively anti-American and anti-Western environment, only Middle Easterners can effect changes such as democratisation, institutional reform and the alleviation of corruption and poverty. Ross strongly recommends that the United States should support local reformers as opposed to trying to impose reform from the outside. Ross insists that it is only by establishing strategic dialogues with indigenous reformers, identifying and meeting their needs, and coordinating public diplomacy and diplomatic action with them, that real advances can be made in defeating radical Islam and associated terrorist forces.

While Ross advocates a case-by-case approach with each Middle Eastern country, he believes that the 'social safety net' that Islamic extremists provide through networks of mosques and charities represents the enemy's greatest advantage. Accordingly, Ross maintains that helping local, secular activists to establish rival networks throughout the Middle East will help damage and illegitimate those controlled by Islamic extremists.

Ross concludes, optimistically, that the United States and its allies have a real chance to succeed in the Global War on Terror. They have the resources and skills necessary to produce positive outcomes for disaffected Middle Easterners who have been co-opted by the extremist message. The Islamic fundamentalists, on the other hand, have only hatred and destruction at their disposal: they cannot build viable futures for their supporters.

*Dennis Ross was a Middle East envoy and chief peace negotiator for Presidents George H. W. Bush and Bill Clinton. He is currently a Distinguished Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.*

**Christiana C. Brafman Kittner, 'The Role of Safe Havens in Islamist Terrorism', *Terrorism and Political Violence*, Vol. 19, Issue 3, pp. 307–29.**

South America is often overlooked by researchers studying the emergence and evolution of Islamist terrorist groups. In this well-researched article, Christiana C. Brafman Kittner makes a thoughtful case that Islamic groups are exploiting geographic, political, social and economic conditions in South America to their advantage.

Her study focuses on the Tri-Border Area (TBA) where Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay meet. The author identifies four conditions for the establishment of safe havens by global terrorist networks—geographic features, weak governance, a history of corruption and violence, and poverty. Her position is buttressed by the fact that there is already evidence of Islamist terrorist groups exploiting these factors in the TBA. Brafman Kittner offers a number of recommendations, including infrastructure development, institution building, economic assistance and improved intelligence links.

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**'Terrorists see the diminishing control of borders as a means to increase their mobility ... as well [as] spread their ideology. Developing nations often lack resources to adequately control their borders ...'**

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While written within a US context, and dealing with a specific example in South America, this article would be of great interest to Australian readers. Many of the conditions Brafman Kittner identifies for the establishment of safe havens are evident in our near neighbours, and should be of concern to local strategic thinkers. While some commentators have previously mocked the idea of Islamist terrorists developing sanctuaries in the South Pacific, this article points out that safe havens can develop in areas with a low-level of Islamic influence, such as South America.

*Christiana C. Brafman Kittner is a Defense Analyst at Decisive Analytics Corporation in Arlington, Virginia.*

**Jean Bethke Elshtain, 'Terrorism, Regime Change, and Just War: Reflections on Michael Walzer', *Journal of Military Ethics*, Vol. 6, No. 2, pp. 131–137.**

Jean Bethke Elshtain's article builds upon Michael Walzer's seminal work of military ethics, *Just and Unjust Wars*. Elshtain tests this work against the realities of modern terrorism. While she points out that Walzer did not deal comprehensively with terrorism, the part of his work that he did devote to it remains highly relevant today. Elshtain maintains that Walzer's definition of the terrorist as a combatant outside of the normal ethical and moral laws that govern war is especially important to contemporary affairs. However, as Elshtain notes, Walzer is at pains to assert that, while terrorists may commit atrocities that ignore all standards of moral or ethical behaviour, counter-terrorists cannot treat them in the same manner—they are still human beings and are owed the natural rights that this basic fact demands.

However, there are elements of Walzer's work that Elshtain does take exception to—primarily his argument that it is morally unsound to intervene in a nation that is not currently committing a criminal act. Walzer sums up his argument by saying that aggression must be regarded as 'the criminal policy of a government, not as the policy of a criminal government.' Elshtain disagrees, arguing that governments with a history of criminal activity, or who are clearly preparing to commit criminal acts, such as Saddam Hussein's Iraq, are open to just and ethical attack and even regime change, because of the 'responsibility to protect'.

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**'There are times, and this is a tragic recognition, that justice cannot be served absent the use of coercive force.'**

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The responsibility to protect allows for states to intervene in the affairs of others if those states can be shown to be committing crimes of a sufficient magnitude against their own people. This responsibility, Elshtain argues, extends to preventing impending crimes, and the need to ensure that such harm is not inflicted again. Elshtain maintains that states that sponsor terrorism or that commit crimes such as genocide, or that have a record of committing such crimes, are open to intervention and regime change. Further, any state carrying out such intervention would be acting within ethical and moral bounds.

*Jean Elshtain is the Laura Spelman Rockefeller Professor of Social and Political Ethics in the Divinity School of the University of Chicago. She has published numerous books on ethics, and in 2003 she was appointed to the Council of the National Endowment for the Humanities by the President of the United States.*

**Patrick Porter, 'Good Anthropology, Bad History: The Cultural Turn in Studying War', *Parameters*, Vol. XXXVII, No. 2, Summer 2007, pp. 45–58,**

**<http://www.carlisle.army.mil/usawc/parameters/07summer/porter.pdf>.**

Patrick Porter takes issue with the current vogue for anthropological explanations of military conflict that divide opponents into intrinsically different Eastern and Western traditions. As Porter contends, such a dichotomy results in 'too many exceptions and qualifications that must be made to the picture' for such a theory to be viable. By relying on cultural traditions as a

means of explanation, conflict can naively and perhaps dangerously be analysed without taking into account the true driving factors behind its causation and continuation.

Porter does an excellent job of examining where the shift in strategic military thought towards a more cultural, anthropological appreciation of conflict and warfare has led, making allowances for where cultural insights have been helpful while pointing out the weaknesses in the 'culturalist interpretation'. Providing specific examples, the author highlights how, for every case of a Western or Eastern style of conflict, there are inevitably many exceptions.

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**'[T]he hypothesis of culturally determined "ways of war" ignores too many awkward contrary cases that cut across its neat frontiers.'**

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The essence of this article is that there are no clear linear trends, historical or contemporary, in the underlying culture of conflict. Porter concludes that the identification of Western and Eastern schools of warfighting is a fabrication. While culture is an important factor in understanding current events and predicting future strategic

directions, it should not dominate over other concepts such as power and weakness, geographical conditions and material circumstances. Conflict is too complex an endeavour to be reduced to simplistic answers based on cultural assumptions alone.

*Patrick Porter is a lecturer at the Defence Studies Department, Kings College London, Joint Services Command and Staff College.*

**Leonard Wong and Douglas C. Lovelace Jr., 'Knowing When to Salute'. Strategic Studies Institute Newsletter, July 2007, <<http://www.strategicstudiesinstitute.army.mil/newsletter/Jul2007.htm>>.**

Wong and Lovelace provide a refreshing and interesting interpretation of one aspect of the complex issue of civil-military relations. The two authors draw on a seemingly trivial incident they witnessed at the US Army War College to illustrate the pitfalls of a military organisation's 'can-do' attitude.

The authors argue that this attitude ensures that senior commanders will accept and attempt to enact any decision of their government, even if they know it to be flawed. The only other option the senior officers feel they have, other than compliance, is to resign. Wong and Lovelace challenge this idea; they point out that the material reality of an officer's career ensures that senior officers will rarely resign, no matter how flawed the policy. Accordingly, the two authors insist that resignation is not an effective mechanism for protesting bad policy – what officer would punish themselves by cutting short their career for a flaw in government policy?

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**'The admittedly provocative points advanced in this paper are offered in the hope of beginning a new dialogue on those issues.'**

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The authors believe that senior officers must do more than simply offer advice, and then carry out an order or resign. Wong and Lovelace accept that an officer's duty to offer professional military advice also implies a duty to offer that advice effectively: senior officers must ensure their opinions are conveyed properly and understood by policymakers. The authors offer a matrix of actions that they feel senior officers can resort to when facing the prospect of carrying out orders they know to be flawed.

While the principal of civil control of the military is sacrosanct, Wong and Lovelace offer the view that, in their relationship with the government, senior officers must ensure that their professional advice is heard so that effective policy is set for the benefit of the nation.

*Professor Douglas C. Lovelace Jr. is a former US Army Officer, and is director of the US Army's Strategic Studies Institute. Dr. Leonard Wong is also a former US Army Officer, and is Research Professor of Military Strategy at the Strategic Studies Institute.*

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## FROM THE VAULT

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*This month the LWSC recommends:*

**S.N. Gower, 'Self-Propelled Guns or Towed Guns', *Australian Army Journal*, No. 329, October 1976, pp. 34–43.**

Lieutenant Colonel S.N. Gower's article for the *AAJ* is particularly timely for present day military leaders and procurement managers. Writing in 1976, he puts forward a logical and succinct case for the Australian Army's acquisition of self-propelled guns. With Project Land 17 fast reaching the point of decision, Gower offers some germane insights regarding the virtues of tracked self-propelled gun versus towed ordnance.

At the time Gower was writing, the government's attention was focused on the Defence of Australia. Within this context, his comparison of self-propelled guns and towed guns pays particular attention to the uniquely rough and inhospitable terrain of Australia's northern areas. Gower demonstrates that towed artillery is easier to maintain, more reliable, cheaper to acquire and, over large distances, more mobile than self-propelled guns. However, the author insists that towed guns enjoy only a narrow margin of superiority in these respects, one which is dependent on the presence of a national support infrastructure that may not always be readily available in the vastness of Australia's north.

Gower's most important point is that only self-propelled guns can move with mechanised elements at the speed—and with the survivability—necessary for operations. Gower's conclusions are restrained and reasonable—he advocates a mix of systems, with a modest number of self-propelled guns to support mechanised forces on high tempo operations, and a larger number of towed guns to support motorised and light forces.

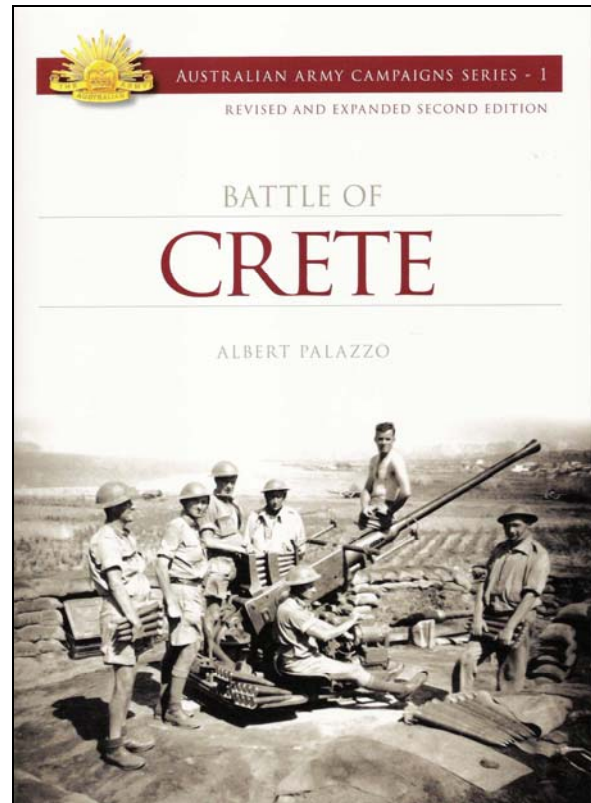
*At the time 'Self-Propelled Guns or Towed Guns' was published, Lieutenant Colonel Gower was Director Trials (Army) at the Service Laboratories and Trials Division. Previously, he had commanded a battery with 12 Field Regiment.*

### *Australian Army Campaign Series*

The Army History Unit announces the release of the latest addition to the Australian Army Campaign Series: Volume 1 – Albert Palazzo’s *Battle of Crete* (Revised and Expanded Second Edition).

Between 20 May and 1 June 1941 the Second World War came to the Greek island of Crete. The Commonwealth defenders consisted of Australian, New Zealand, and British refugees from the doomed Greek Campaign who had not recovered from defeat. Matched against them were crack German paratroopers and mountain soldiers who had only tasted victory.

Over eleven days the two sides fought a desperate action that generated tales of stubborn determination and reckless bravery on both sides. It was an innovative campaign—warfare’s first aerial invasion—and at times its outcome balanced on a knife edge. Richly illustrated, the *Battle of Crete* examines the commanders and decisions they made, the men who fought, and the weapons they used in this epic struggle for the island.



*Battle of Crete* is available to Australian Army personnel from the Army History Unit.